

Class 201:

Building A Rich Spiritual Life

We are so glad you have chosen to invest in your personal growth by participating in this class. Over the next two weeks, you will learn the basic skills that you will need to be a successful disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This class is will be completed in two sessions. Sessions will contain steps. Each session is intended to be interactive, so feel free to ask questions and connect with your instructor.

Unless otherwise noted, all scriptures quoted in this booklet are from the New Living Translation of the Bible. For this class, your instructor is: Christian Cole

Your instructor's phone number is 717-476-4529 and his email address: christian@lwccff.org

Guiding Scriptures

Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, **just as your soul prospers.** 3 John 2

Epaphras, a member of your own fellowship and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect, fully confident that you are following the whole will of God. Colossians 4:12

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. Ephesians 4:14-15

The Goal of This Class

That I will _____ to the habits and practices necessary for spiritual maturity.

Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy. Romans. 6:19

We will focus on the Six Basic Habits every Christian needs to develop in order to grow to spiritual maturity. This class will:

1. Equip you with the skills you need to begin these habits and practices.
2. Talk about the lifestyle you need, to continue these habits and practices.

What is Spiritual Maturity?

This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Ephesians 4:13

Understanding Our Walk With Jesus Christ

JUSTIFICATION -> SANCTIFICATION -> GLORIFICATION

What Is Justification?

Justification is the free and gracious gift of salvation by God bestowed on those who receive by faith the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

It's the moment of salvation.

What Is Sanctification?

To _____ something is to set it apart for special use; to "sanctify" a person is to make him holy.

It's the process that we'll spend the rest of our life on becoming more like Jesus.

This involves the healing and discipleship process.

What is Glorification?

It's our "future glory" (Romans 8:18) where we will be with God in eternity. Essentially, our eternal life with Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Maturity is Being like _____.

13 This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. 15 Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. Ephesians 4:13-15

Facts about Spiritual Maturity

1. It's not _____.

You don't wake up one day and become spiritually mature all of a sudden.

You must dedicate and put in the time.

You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid

food. For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right. Hebrews 5:12-13

2. It's a process.

12 Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. 13 For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. Philippians 2:12-13

Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All glory to him, both now and forever! Amen. 2 Peter 3:18

3. It takes discipline.

Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. 1 Timothy 4:7

No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. Hebrews 12:11

Understanding Discipleship

There is a difference between being a believer and being a disciple. Jesus had many fans of His miracles, but few followers (disciples). To be a disciple is to be a dedicated follower of Jesus, no matter what comes. It's the difference between coming to the Cross (salvation), and going through the cross (true discipleship).

You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. James 2:19

1. Mature believers are called disciples .

2. A disciple loves Jesus and lives in relationship with Him, and lives for Him. Because of the love that the disciple receives from their Father, they pour that love out on others.

3. A disciple is a _____ , someone who becomes like his/her leader.

- A disciple is teachable, and humble.

4. I cannot be a disciple without being disciplined .

5. The more disciplined I become the more God can use me . .

6. The mark of a disciple is bearing your cross . . And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:27

7. How often am I to do this? Daily . .

Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me." Luke 9:23

8. What is involved in "taking up your cross"? Whatever it takes to give Christ first place in my life! It's submitting to His plan and will and living a focused, disciplined life of following after Jesus.

9. A disciple is filled with the _____ of God and practices the habits talked about in this lesson.

The Six Habits of a Disciple

How can I become a disciple? Develop disciple habits .

Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to **know your Creator and become like him.** Colossians 3:9-10

- By following these habits, we begin to live in our "new nature."

1. Habit #1 - Daily Time With God

Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32

2. Habit #2 - _____

But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father. John 15:7-8

3. Habit #3 - Fasting

But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. Matthew 6:17-18

4. Habit #4 - _____

"You must set aside a tithe of your crops—one-tenth of all the crops you harvest each year. Bring this tithe to the designated place of worship—the place the lord your God chooses for his name to be honored—and eat it there in his presence. This applies to your tithes of grain, new wine, olive oil, and the firstborn males of your flocks and herds. Doing this will teach you always to fear the lord your God. Deuteronomy 14:22-23

5. Habit #5 - Fellowship

So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." John 13:34-35

6. Habit #6 - _____

Matt 28: 18. "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. **19** Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. **20** Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Defining & Developing a "Habit"

7 And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. Titus 2:7

22 throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. 23 Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. 24 Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. Ephesians 4:22-24

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (www.merriam-webster.com) defines “habit” as:

- a. a settled tendency or usual manner of behavior
- b. an acquired mode of behavior that has become nearly or completely involuntary

Practice is the actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it.

Developing habits determines your destiny:

Sow a thought, reap an act.

Sow an act, reap a habit.

Sow a habit, reap a character.

Sow a character, reap a destiny.

1. Habit #1 - Daily Time (ALONE) With God

This habit is the key to all the other habits. Do this one thoroughly and you will easily do the other habits. All habits are rooted in this one habit.

Daily time with anyone requires you to hear their words. God is speaking, and when you understand how He speaks, it is hard to get enough of it.

To hear Him speak, you got to get used to hearing His voice. That happens through spending time in the Word of God, your Bible!

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. **28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me... John 10:27-28

How to Get a “Grasp” on your Bible

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Hear God’s Word

So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ. Romans. 10:17

Ways to Hear God’s Word:

- Attend Liberty Worship Center
- Read, or listen, to the Bible online at: www.bible.com
- Choose any translation that works for you. I especially recommend NLT, The Passion, NIV • Many other resources online: Blue Letter Bible, (hear sermons on almost any passage)

But there is a problem with our hearing, that you should be aware of. We forget 95 % of what we hear after 72 hours.

How to improve your hearing:

1. Teach yourself to be ready and eager to hear God.

BE _____ AND BE FERTILE SOIL!

Still other seed fell on fertile soil. This seed grew and produced a crop that was a hundred times as much as had been planted!" When he had said this, he called out, "Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand." Luke 8:8

How sweet your words taste to me; they are sweeter than honey. Psalm 119:103

2. Deal with attitudes that prevent hearing God.

"So pay attention to how you hear. To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But for those who are not listening, even what they think they understand will be taken away from them." Luke 8:18

A Blocked Mind: Is ...fear, pride or bitterness preventing me from hearing God?

A Superficial Mind: Am I really serious about wanting to hear God speak?

A Preoccupied/Distracted Mind: Am I too busy or concerned with other things to concentrate on what God has to say?

GET RID OF DISTRACTION - IN YOUR TIME WITH GOD PUT DOWN THE TECHNOLOGY AND HEAR FROM HIM.

3. Confess any _____ in your life.

So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. James 1:21

4. Take notes on what you hear.

So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1

Keep a Spiritual Notebook or _____! For example, try to summarize (each day) what God is speaking to you that day

I can't stress how much journaling with the Lord will increase your hearing from Him, and also keep record of the things that God has spoken to you.

5. Act on what you hear.

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. James 1:22

But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. James 1:25

How often should I read God's Word? Daily .

He must always keep that copy with him and read it daily as long as he lives. That way he will learn to fear the lord his God by obeying all the terms of these instructions and decrees. Deuteronomy 17:19

Suggestions for reading God's Word:

Read it systematically - Having a plan and reading with an organized approach help you get more out of what you read.

Use a Reading Plan - There are many reading plans available at www.bible.com.

Read different translations - Bibles are translations from the original texts; Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for most of the New Testament.

Read the Bible aloud.

If I read approximately 15 minutes a day, I can read through the Bible once a year.

Study God's Word

And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth. Acts 17:11

Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15

Most Christians have read the Bible but never truly studied it. The difference between Bible reading and study is that you get all of the right study tools out and spend time laboring over scriptures. The secret of effective Bible study is having the right tools and knowing how to **ask the right questions** .

Some resources for Bible study:

a. www.blueletterbible.org - An online source to a lot of great Bible study resources with

links to even more material.

b. Bible Handbooks

Richard's Complete Handbook (Word)
Haley's Bible Handbook (Zondervan)
Eerdmans's Bible Handbook (Eerdmans)

c. Other Study Tools

The New Bible Commentary (Eerdmans)
The New Bible Dictionary (Eerdmans)
The Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible (Baker)
The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands (Moody)

I also encourage you to go deeper with Kineo Ministry training school or Penndel SOM locally.

Daily Quiet Time

Think about establishing for yourself, a quiet time is a daily time that is set aside to be alone with God to get to know Him through the Bible and prayer. This is a time more about hearing his voice, than about requesting, explaining, or debating. Hear Him and do what He says!

The Importance of a Daily Quiet Time

1. Your time alone with God should be the top priority in your schedule!
 - a. Because He created you, He knows best how to live!
 - b. This life is only the beginning. Eternity will be spent with Him! Get to know Him now.

2. We were created to have _____ with God.

This means that when we spend time with God we're doing what we were created to do.

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27

Then the lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person. Genesis 2:7

When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the lord God among the trees. Genesis 3:8

"Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends." Revelation 3:20

3. Jesus died to make a relationship to God possible.

God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:9

4. Personal time alone with God was Jesus' source of _____ .

JESUS IS THE BEST LEADER BECAUSE HE LEADS BY EXAMPLE

Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray.
Mark 1:35

But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer. Luke 5:16

Then, accompanied by the disciples, Jesus left the upstairs room and went as usual to the Mount of Olives. Luke 22:39

5. Every person who has been effective in service for God developed this habit. Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, Paul, etc.

6. You cannot be a healthy Christian without it!

But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Matthew 4:4

I have not departed from his commands, but have treasured his words more than daily food.
Job 23:12 How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word. Psalms 119:9

The Purpose of a Daily Time with God

a. To give devotion to God.

Honor the lord for the glory of his name. Worship the lord in the splendor of his holiness.
Psalms 29:2

In all that he did in the service of the Temple of God and in his efforts to follow God’s laws and commands, Hezekiah sought his God wholeheartedly. As a result, he was very successful.

2 Chronicles 31:21

“You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power.
For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased.”
Revelation 4:11

But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way.
John 4:23

b. To receive _____ from God.

“Show me the path where I should go, O Lord; point out the right road for me to walk.
Lead me...” Psalms 25:4

Two Things To Do In A Quiet Time

1. Consider Your Way with Him - REALIGN WITH HIM.

Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. Proverbs 4:26

Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Proverbs 3:6

2. Commit Your Day To Him

Commit everything you do to the lord. Trust him, and he will help you. Psalms 37:5

c. To gain delight in God.

Take delight in the lord, and he will give you your heart's desires. Psalms 37:4

You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever. Psalms 16:11

FACT: The better I get to know Christ, the more I love him . .

WE NEED TRANSFORMATION, NOT JUST INFORMATION!

The objective of your quiet time is not to study about Christ, but to actually spend time with Him!

d. To grow daily to be more like Jesus.

And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. 2 Peter 1:4

The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus. Acts 4:13

Suggestions On How to Begin a Daily Quiet Time

(Find what works best for you)

1. Select a specific time and stick to it!

The best time to have a quiet time is when I am at my best .

Reasons for considering a morning quiet time:

- a. The example of Bible characters: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Hannah, Job, Hezekiah, David, Daniel, Jesus, etc.
- b. It seems logical to begin the day with it.

c. "The best time to tune your instrument is before you play the concert, not after."

d. It demonstrates that meeting with God is your first priority. You give him the first part of your day. e. You are likely to be more rested, your mind is less cluttered, and it is often the quietest time!

2. Whatever time you set, be consistent and diligent .

How Long Should a Quiet Time Be?

- a. If you're beginning, start with 15 minutes and let it grow.
- b. Don't watch the clock
- c. Emphasize quality, not quantity

Choose a Special Place to Get Alone

Then, accompanied by the disciples, Jesus left the upstairs room and went as usual to the Mount of Olives. Luke 22:39

Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray. Mark 1:35

Begin With the Right Attitudes - CHECK YOUR _____

"Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation. I will be honored throughout the world."
Psalms 46:10

Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in your instructions. Psalm 119:18

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. Matthew 6:33

Follow a Plan and Stick To It

There are many reading and study plans available on www.bible.com.

A Prayer of Commitment

Father, I realize that I was created to have fellowship with you. Thank you for making this privilege possible through Jesus' death. I know that daily fellowship with You is to be the most important thing in my life. I now want to commit myself to spending at least some time every day with you in a quiet time of Bible reading and prayer. I am trusting in your strength to help me be consistent. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Notes: _____

Habit #2 - Prayer

Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. Romans 12:12

I pray because I can't help myself. I pray because I'm helpless. I pray

because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God. It changes me. - C.S. Lewis

6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Philipians 4:6

How to Revitalize Your Prayer Life

Approach prayer with the right attitude.

“When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. “When you pray, don't babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! **Matthew 6:5-8**

- a. Be real and sincere v5: “When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites...”
- b. Don't try to impress others . “where everyone can see them”
- c. Don't try to impress God . “pray to your Father in private”
- d. Be relaxed . “v6: But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray” e. Figure out your own heart , “your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!”

Use the model Jesus gave us - The Six Parts of Prayer

Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. “If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins. Matthew 6:9-15

I. Praise: I begin by _____ my Love for God .

KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO. HE IS THE GOD OF ALL HEAVEN AND EARTH, BUT HE'S ALSO YOUR FATHER.

v9, Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.

Praise God for who He is. Keep your heart focused on gratitude.

Thank God for what He has done. Be grateful for what He has accomplished!

Ask Him to help you never do anything to detract from His greatness. “May your name be kept Holy” Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise. Give thanks to him and praise his name.

II. Commit yourself to _____ Him and accomplishing His

purposes. v10, May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Purpose: I commit myself to God's purpose and will for my life

Pray for God's will to be done:

- In your family
- In your church
- In your ministry
- On your job
- In your future
- In your city
- In the United States and the world

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Romans 12:2

III. Ask him, humbly to provide for you

v11, Give us today the food we need,

Provision: I ask God to provide for my needs

What needs can I pray about? All of them .

And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? Romans 8:32

You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. James 4:2

KEY: Have the courage to be specific .

Write down your requests, with a promise you are claiming from the Bible, and expect an answer!

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Philippians 4:6

IV. Ask him to forgive you and to help you choose to forgive

v12a, ...and forgive us our sins...

Four Guidelines to Forgiveness:

1. _____ the Holy Spirit to reveal every sin that YOU committed!

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. Psalm 139:23-24

2. Confess each sin specifically . .

People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.
Proverbs 28:13

3. Make restitution to others where possible.

“So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, 24 leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.” Matthew 5:23-24

4. By _____, accept God’s forgiveness.

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. 1 John 1:9 .

VI. Ask Him for help to stay strong

“And don’t let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.”

1. You will never stay strong without help.

2. Be humble enough to admit that you need help

Habit #3 - Fasting

“And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. Matthew 6:16

Some notes from Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough by Elmer L. Towns

The spiritual discipline of fasting has fallen into such widespread disuse today that people do not know its value. Fasting is not an end in itself; **it is a means by which we can commit and submit ourselves in obedience to Him. We don't make God love us any more than He already does if we fast or if we fast longer!** One of the greatest spiritual benefits of fasting is becoming more in tune to what He wants us to become and do.

1. Jesus practiced fasting.

a. Fasting is a spiritual discipline practiced by Jesus. His example shows the believer that fasting and prayer are to accompany each other. After successfully bringing a demon out of a possessed youth, Jesus told the disciples the importance of prayer and fasting.

Afterward, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, "Why couldn't we cast out that evil spirit?" Jesus replied, "This kind can be cast out only by prayer." Mark 9:28-29

The disciples were unaware of the power that can be called upon as a result of fasting.

b. Jesus' time in the desert just before temptation by Satan was a time of prayer and fasting.

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry. Matthew 4:1-2

Jesus' example also shows us that we are to fast and pray before major events. Jesus knew he would face Satan's full power. He was fully prepared to combat the temptations of Satan after drawing close to the Father through the disciplines of prayer and fasting. Fasting brings us spiritual clarity so that we can hear God's voice to our prayers - not so that He can hear us better. Fasting allows us to tap into the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Jesus called _____ to fast.

"And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. Matthew 6:16

a. Fasting was apparently a common practice among the followers of John and the Pharisees. When questioned about why his disciples did not fast also,

Jesus replied, "Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast." Matthew 9:15

b. Jesus also gives the disciples specific instructions to follow when they fast not if they fast. "And when you fast..." Matthew 6:16a

c. Fasting is an important spiritual discipline that was practiced by Jesus. Fasting is often accompanied by prayer. It draws us closer to God.

3. Jesus taught His disciples the appropriate way to fast.

"And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. Matthew 6:16-18

a. Jesus tells us that fasting is a covenant between us and God. In biblical times, people washed their

faces and put oil on to keep their skin from drying. In Jewish custom, when fasting, one would not put on the skin oil, making their faces look unhealthy.

- b. According to Jesus, however, we are to dress and groom ourselves as we normally do and are to conduct relationships in the usual manner, not bragging about the fast. Drawing attention to ourselves when we are fasting, yields an earthly reward - the attention of man. If our heart is in it and our attitude is right, God rewards us by revealing His will.

4. When should I fast?

Christians should fast when faced with situations requiring wisdom.

- a. New Testament examples of fasting show us that it occurred.

1. Regularly .

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry. Matthew 4:1-2

2. At _____.

Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night and prayer. Luke 2:37

3. With prayer .

So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way. Acts 13:3 17

4. With the elders .

Paul and Barnabas also appointed elders in every church. With prayer and fasting, they turned the elders over to the care of the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. Acts 14:23

5. What are God's expected outcomes of our fasting?

- He expects us, through our fasts, to more clearly hear his vision for accomplishing his will in the world. Also to have our spirit strengthened over our flesh, giving us the ability to discern His voice more clearly.

Isaiah 58:5-7 is the best scripture about fasting in the Bible

You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like reeds bending in the wind. You dress in burlap and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? Do you really think this will please the lord?

“No, this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people. Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help.

7 THINGS TO NOTE ABOUT GOD'S CHOSEN FAST

1. Loose the chains of injustice . (What am I doing that is unfair, unkind, or hurtful) .

2. Untie the cords and yokes (What am I tied to that I really ought to get free from: debt, agreements, implied agreements)

3. Set the _____ free (Where am I taking advantage of people unjustly)

4. Share your food with the hungry (Who can I share food with?)

5. Provide the poor wanderer with shelter . (Who can I help a roof over their head?)

6. When you see the naked, to clothe him. (who can I clothe)

POINTS 4-6 WHO CAN I BE GENEROUS TOWARDS???

WHO CAN I TAKE CARE OF? When we fast we take our eyes off of ourselves and put them on God and others. We often get so caught up in our own world that we can't hear what God wants to speak and can't see the need in the world around us.

7. Not to turn away from your own flesh and blood . (have I been generous with my own family?).

Through prayer and fasting, we will have a clearer plan of action to

Nine Biblical examples demonstrating the power of fasting (from Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough by Elmer L. Towns)

- a. **The Disciples Fast** - to be freed from deep-rooted sin (Matthew 17:21): Jesus cast out a demon from a boy whom the disciples had failed to help. Apparently they had not taken seriously enough the way Satan had his claws set in the youth. The implication is that Jesus' disciples could have performed this exorcism had they been willing to undergo the discipline of fasting.
- b. **The Ezra Fast** - to solve problems (Ezra 8:23): Ezra the priest was charged with restoring the Law of Moses among the Jews as they rebuilt the city of Jerusalem by permission of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, where God's people had been held captive. Despite this permission, Israel's enemies opposed them. Burdened with embarrassment about having to ask the Persian king for an army to protect them, Ezra fasted and prayed for an answer.
- c. **The Samuel Fast** - to free the oppressed (1 Samuel 7:6): Samuel led God's people in a fast to celebrate the return of the Ark of the Covenant from its captivity by the Philistines, and to pray that Israel might be delivered from the sin that allowed the Ark to be captured in the first place.
- d. **The _____ Fast** - to break the yoke of fear (1 Kings 19:4-8): Although Scripture does not call this a formal "fast", Elijah deliberately went without food when he fled from Queen Jezebel's threat to kill him. After his self-imposed deprivation, God sent an angel to minister to Elijah in the wilderness.
- e. **The Widow's Fast** to provide for the needs (1 Kings 17:6): God sent the prophet Elijah to a poor, starving widow ironically, so the widow could provide food for Elijah. Just as Elijah's presence resulted in food for the widow of Zarepath, so presenting ourselves before God in prayer and fasting can relieve our hunger today.
- f. **The Paul Fast** - to gain insight for decisions (Acts 9:9): Saul (later re-named Paul) was struck blind by the Lord in the act of persecuting Christians. He not only was without literal sight, but he also had no clue about what direction his life was to take. After going without food and praying for three days, Paul was visited by Ananias, a Christian, and both his eyesight and his vision of the future were restored.

g. **The Daniel Fast** - to gain a healthier life or for healing (Daniel 1:8): Daniel and his three fellow Hebrew captives demonstrated in Babylonian captivity that denying themselves pagan foods, as directed by God, made them healthier than others in the king's court.

h. The _____ **Fast** - to enhance our testimony of Jesus (Luke 1:15): Because John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus, he took the "Nazarite" vow that required him to "fast" from or avoid wine and strong drink. This was part of John's purposefully adopted lifestyle that designated him as one set apart for a special mission.

i. **The Esther Fast** - to protect us from the evil one (Esther 4:16, 5:2): Queen Esther, a Jewess in a pagan court, risked her life to save her people from threatened destruction by Ahasuerus (Xerxes), king of Persia. Prior to appearing before the king to petition him to save the Jews, Esther, her attendants, and her cousin Mordecai all fasted to appeal to God for his protection.

6. The rewards of fasting.

a. God speaks through the prophet Isaiah and describes what will happen when we approach Him in prayer and fasting and with the proper heart.

"Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the lord will protect you from behind. Then when you call, the lord will answer. 'Yes, I am here,' he will quickly reply. "Remove the heavy yoke of oppression. Stop pointing your finger and spreading vicious rumors! " Isaiah 58:8-9

7. Some practical suggestions for fasting.

a. Take fasting _____ and prayfully. Fast when you face a difficult situation or decision seeking divine intervention in your life.

b. Start slowly and end slowly. Skip a meal or two and take that time to pray. Increase your fasting time gradually. Complete a fast by eating small amounts of easily digested foods. Do not starve and binge. It is advisable to continue to drink water during a fast. Some cultures fast throughout the day, but have a meal after sunset.

c. Four kinds of fasts are identified by Dr. Rex Russell in What the Bible Says About Healthy Living as follows:

- The "Normal Fast" is going without food for a defined period during which only liquids are ingested. The duration is determined by the individual.
- The "Absolute Fast" allows no food or water at all.
- The "Partial Fast" omits certain food or is on a schedule that includes limited eating. A partial fast could mean omitting one meal a day or eating only certain foods, such as fresh vegetables for several days.
- The "Rotational Fast" consists of eating or omitting certain families of foods for designated periods. For example, grains may be eaten only every fourth day.

d. Consider your personal health. If you have any health problem, you should check with your physician before fasting, especially for extended periods.

e. Time your fast to coincide with that of your spouse or close friend. Spend the meal time together praying and studying the Word.

f. Keep a journal to record your experiences and document spiritual growth.

Habit #4 - Tithing

On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once. 1 Corinthians 16:2

Jesus: You should tithe, yes.

23 "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. **You should tithe, yes**, but do not neglect the more important things. Matthew 23:23

My Giving Reveals My Spiritual Maturity

Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving. 2 Corinthians 8:7

Six Benefits of Giving

1. Giving makes me more like God . .

"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

2. Giving draws me closer to God . .

Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. Matthew 6:21

3. Giving is the antidote to _____ . .

Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to

use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life. 1 Timothy 6:17-19

4. Giving strengthens my faith . .

Trust in the lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding....Honor the lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Proverbs 3:5,9

5. Giving is an investment for eternity . .

Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life. 1 Timothy 6:18-19

6. God _____ me in return .

Blessed are those who are generous, because they feed the poor. Proverbs 22:9

The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.
Proverbs 11:25 Good comes to those who lend money generously and conduct their business fairly. Psalms 112:5

What the Bible Teaches About Tithing

What is tithing?

“Tithe” means a 10th part.

What is the difference between a “Tithe” and an “Offering”?

A “Tithe” is giving 10% of my income.

An “Offering” is anything I give above my tithe.

Why should I tithe?

1. Because God commands it .

“One-tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain from the fields or fruit from the trees, belongs to the lord and must be set apart to him as holy.” Leviticus 27:30

2. Because Jesus _____ it . .

“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. **You should tithe, yes**, but do not neglect the more important things. Matthew 23:23

3. Tithing demonstrates that God has 1st place in my life. .

Bring this tithe to the designated place of worship—the place the lord your God chooses for his name to be honored—and eat it there in his presence. This applies to your tithes of grain,

new wine, olive oil, and the firstborn males of your flocks and herds. Doing this will teach you always to fear the lord your God. Deuteronomy 14:23

4. Tithing reminds me that _____ was given to me by God.

Remember the lord your God. He is the one who gives you power to be successful, in order to fulfill the covenant he confirmed to your ancestors with an oath. Deuteronomy 8:18

5. Tithing expresses my gratitude . .

What can I offer the lord for all he has done for me? Psalms 116:12

All must give as they are able, according to the blessings given to them by the lord your God. Deuteronomy 16:17

6. God says that refusing to tithe is robbing from Him!

“Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me! But you ask, ‘What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?’ You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,” says the lord of Heaven’s Armies, “I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! Malachi 3:8-10

7. Tithing gives God a chance to prove he loves me and wants to bless me!!

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,” says the lord of Heaven’s Armies, “I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! Malachi 3:10

8. Tithing proves that I really love God . .

“If you love me, obey my commandments.” John 14:15

Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving. I am not commanding you to do this. But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches. 2 Corinthians 8:7-8

What should I tithe?

The first part of what I earn, not the leftovers . .

Honor the lord with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine. Proverbs 3:9-10

Where should I tithe?

Where I worship . .

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,” says the lord of Heaven’s Armies, “I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test! Malachi 3:10

When should I tithe?

On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once. 1 Corinthians 16:2

Giving With The Right Attitude

1. Give willingly . .

So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God. 2 Corinthians 9:12

2. Give joyfully . .

You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." 2 Corinthians 9:7

3. Give _____ . .

Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. 2 Corinthians 9:6

They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do. 2 Corinthians 8:5

A Prayer of Commitment

"Father, I know you love me and want what's best for me. I recognize that all I have, or ever will have comes from you. I am more interested in pleasing you than in having more possessions. I want you to have first place in my life, and I am willing to begin tithing as you have commanded. Out of gratitude for all you've done for me, and in expectation that you will continue to provide for me, I commit myself to returning at least the first 10% of all I earn back to you. I want to begin investing for eternity. Help me to remain faithful to this commitment. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Habit #5 - Fellowship

And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. Hebrews 10:25

Why is Fellowship So Important?

1. I _____ in God's Family with other believers.

Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith. Galatians 6:10

So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. Ephesians 2:19

...so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. Romans 12:5

The Christian who is not committed to a group of other believers for praying, sharing, and serving,

so that he is known, as he knows others, is not an obedient Christian. He is not in the will of God. However vocal he may be in his theology, he is not obeying the Lord. -Dr. Ray Ortland

2. I need _____ to grow spiritually.

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. Hebrews 10:24

Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble...A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12

3. I need accountability to grow spiritually

As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend. Proverbs 27:17

You must warn each other every day, while it is still “today,” so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. Hebrews 3:13

Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. Galatians 6:1-2

4. Christ is present when we fellowship together.

“For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.” Matthew 18:20

5. There is _____ when people pray together.

“I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you.” Matthew 18:19

6. Fellowship is a witness to the world.

I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. John 17:21

7. I am obligated to every other Christian.

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. 1 Peter 4:10

There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. 1 Corinthians 12:5

The One Anothers of Fellowship - A Partial List

Serve one another Galatians 5:13

Accept one another Romans 15:7

_____ one another Colossians 3:13

Greet one another Romans 16:16

Bear one another’s burdens Galatians 6:2

Be devoted to one another Romans 12:10

_____ one another Romans 12:10

Teach one another Romans 15:14

Submit to one another Ephesians 5:21

_____ one another 1 Thessalonians 5:11

GOD'S VISION FOR FELLOWSHIP

All the believers devoted themselves to **the apostles' teaching**, and to **fellowship**, and to sharing in meals (**including the Lord's Supper**), and to **prayer**. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity—all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Acts 2:42-47

1. **Bible Study** "The Apostle's teaching"
2. **Fellowship – share life** ...and to the fellowship...
3. **Sharing** ... and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper)...
2. **Prayer** ...and to prayer...

Habit #6 - Witnessing

This is one of the most neglected Christian practices and habits!

A study conducted by the Barna group says that between 90-95% of Christian's have never shared their faith with an unbeliever, and 64% believe that it is their responsibility to share their faith. That's 36% of believers who don't believe it's their responsibility.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
Acts 1:8

THE SPIRIT OF GOD CAME SO YOU COULD BE A WITNESS.

What Is Witnessing?

Witnessing involves _____ to Christ.

In the early church, "witnesses" were those persons who had actually seen and heard what Jesus did and said. The twelve disciples and their contemporaries, both believers and non-believers, provide first hand accounts of Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection. The record of their observations and experiences is part of the Scripture. We can read their personal accounts which "witness" about the Savior to us as believers. So, to paraphrase John 21:29a, because we have "seen" Jesus through our study and experiences, we believe.

Today, to non-believers will include testimony of what we have seen and heard from God; but that testimony, although credible evidence to believers of real encounters, often falls on the world's deaf ears.

Yet, the reaction of the world should not be the measure by which we determine our efforts to bring people to Jesus.

Neither should our witness be done in such a way that the unsaved become "turned off" to the Savior because of our strategy. We must learn to witness so that "we" do not become an **obstacle** in the process. Our methods must bring the man and woman of the world to the realization that: Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me." John 20:29

Why Should I Witness?

1. Jesus told His Disciples to witness. The _____ commands His followers to go and make disciples of all nations.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19

- a. Jesus also told the disciples that they would not use their own strength to witness but could rely on the _____ to guide their actions.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

- b. He also warned us of the **consequences** of failing to witness to others.

"If anyone is ashamed of me and my message in these adulterous and sinful days, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he returns in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Mark 8:38

- c. We, as His disciples, have a clear mandate from God to witness or **testify of Him** . .

Now get to your feet! For I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant and witness. Tell people that you have seen me, and tell them what I will show you in the future. Acts 26:16

- d. If our goal is to **be like Jesus** , we must venture into the world and follow His lead.

When Jesus heard this, he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do." Then he added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.' For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners." Matthew 9:12-13

2. Jesus set an example for us as a witness.

- a. He placed himself **among** _____ (Zacheus)

Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. Matthew 9:10

- b. He **loved** those who did not love Him.

If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even

corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. Matthew 5:46-47

c. His life was one of _____. His life and actions gave witness to the glory of God.

“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:28

d. He taught others that which God directed and gave **testimony** about His **relationship** to the Father. So Jesus told them, “My message is not my own; it comes from God who sent me.” John 7:16

“But I have a greater witness than John—my teachings and my miracles. The Father gave me these works to accomplish, and they prove that he sent me. And the Father who sent me has testified about me himself. You have never heard his voice or seen him face to face...” John 5:36-37

“For I have come to you in my Father’s name, and you have rejected me. Yet if others come in their own name, you gladly welcome them.” John 5:43

Witnessing is a matter of following the model Jesus set for us.

1. We are to minister to our family

But Jesus said, “No, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been.” Mark 5:19

2. ...and to everyone else with whom we live and work.

Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way. Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ. 1 Peter 3:15-16

3. He commands His disciples to witness through _____ . .

“So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” John 13:34-35

4. We are to witness through our service by putting others before ourselves.

In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. Matthew 5:16

Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse

you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world. 1 Peter 2:12

5. The Holy Spirit will give us His _____ and His wisdom as we bring others to Jesus.

However, some of the believers who went to Antioch from Cyprus and Cyrene began preaching to the Gentiles about the Lord Jesus. The power of the Lord was with them, and a large number of these Gentiles believed and turned to the Lord. Acts 11:20-21

6. Telling the “Good News of the Gospel” is central to the act of witnessing.

Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place. 1 Corinthians 15:1-2

I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23

7. We are to _____ and share, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, our testimony of what Christ has done for us. .

And Jesus Christ was revealed as God’s Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross—not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit, who is truth, confirms it with his testimony. So we have these three witnesses—the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and all three agree. Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about his Son. All who believe in the Son of God know in their hearts that this testimony is true. Those who don’t believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don’t believe what God has testified about his Son.

And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God’s Son does not have life. 1 John 5:6-12

To write your personal testimony:

1. Write several sentences about who you were and what you wanted to stop being.
 “I was a liar, a cheat, and a thief”.
 Don’t glorify your sin and don’t exaggerate.
2. Write about how Jesus became real to you.

“I suddenly became aware of how dirty I was and how much I needed help”

Talk about the day you encountered Jesus, spend some time explaining your experience and what happened.

3. Write about how He has changed you:

“And now, He has given me the ability to want better for myself.”

Talk about your new life in Christ and what you’ve experienced since you’ve met Jesus.

How To Start And Maintain Good Habits

Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus...Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

2 Thessalonians 5:16-18, & 23

Seven Steps to Developing Good Habits

1. _____ on God .

Rely on God’s power to help you establish the habit. Remember, Satan does not want you to develop habits that help you grow spiritually and make you like Christ, so he will do all he can to tempt you, cause you to slip, and discourage you. PRAY!

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. 2 Timothy 1:7 For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him. Philippians 2:13

2. **Desire** .

You must start with a strong desire. You must be internally motivated. External motivations don’t last. If you start only half-heartedly, you will never make it to the success point.

3. **Decision** .

Begin right now! Don’t wait! Don’t procrastinate! You don’t slide into a new habit. “One of these days” never arrives. You must have a starting point. It’s easier to break a bad habit today than it will be tomorrow!

Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest. Ecclesiastes 11:4

4. **Declaration** .

Announce your intentions publicly. Make a covenant or resolution. The power of a vow is

awesome. It is particularly powerful if you put your commitment into writing.

Make vows to the lord your God, and keep them. Let everyone bring tribute to the Awesome One. Psalms 76:11

5. _____

Never allow an exception until the new habit is securely rooted in your life. Each lapse will be fatal. A single slip unwinds many turns at first. Continuity and success at the start is essential. Never be swayed by “just this once” The act of yielding weakens the will and reinforces your lack of self control. It takes 3 weeks to become comfortable with a new habit and it takes another 3-4 weeks (doing it daily) for it to become part of your life.

It takes **7 to 21** repetitions to learn something!

6. **Do it!** .

Whenever you feel the slightest urge or prompting to practice this new habit - DO IT THEN! Don't wait. Seize every opportunity to reinforce your habit. Those feelings will not last, so whenever you feel inclined to perform your new habit, do so.

7. **Double up** .

Get a partner who will support you and encourage you. Find someone who is willing to hold you accountable and check up on you, especially in the early days before the habit is firmly rooted in your life.

And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. Hebrews 10:25

Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Answer Key:

Goals For This Class:

Commit

What is Sanctification:

“sanctify”

Spiritual Maturity is Being like Jesus.

Facts About Spiritual Maturity

It's not automatic.

Understanding Discipleship:

A disciple is a learner

A disciple is filled with the Spirit of God.....

The Six Habits of a Disciple

2. Habit #2 - Prayer

4. Habit #4 - Tithing

6. Habit #6 - Witnessing

How to improve your hearing:

BE EXPECTANT AND BE FERTILE SOIL!

3. Confess any sin in your life.

Keep a Spiritual Notebook or Journal!

The Importance of a Daily Quiet Time

Fellowship.

4. Strength.

The Purpose of a Daily Time with God

b. To receive direction from God.

Begin With the Right Attitudes - CHECK YOUR HEART

Habit 2 Prayer

Praise: I begin by expressing my Love for God .

Commit yourself to honoring Him

Four Guidelines to Forgiveness:

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal every sin that YOU committed!

4. By faith, accept God's forgiveness.

Habit #3 - Fasting

2. Jesus called us to fast.

4. When should I fast?

2. At church .

7 THINGS TO NOTE ABOUT GOD'S CHOSEN FAST

3. Set the oppressed free

*Through prayer and fasting, we will have a clearer plan of action to **hear God**.*

Nine Biblical examples demonstrating the power of fasting

d. **The Elijah Fast**

h. **The John The Baptist Fast**

7. Some practical suggestions for fasting.

a. Take fasting seriously and prayerfully.

Habit #4 - Tithing

3. **Giving is the antidote to materialism .**

6. **God blesses me in return .**

Why should I tithe?

2. Because Jesus commends it . .

4. Tithing reminds me that everything was given to me by God.

Giving With The Right Attitude

3. Give generously . .

Habit #5 - Fellowship

Why is Fellowship So Important?

1. I **belong** in God's Family with other believers.

2. I need **encouragement** to grow spiritually.

5. There is **great power** when people pray together.

The One Another of Fellowship - A Partial List

Forgive one another Colossians 3:13

Honor one another Romans 12:10

Encourage one another 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Habit #6 - Witnessing

What Is Witnessing?

Witnessing involves Bringing Others to Christ.

Why Should I Witness?

1. Jesus told His Disciples to witness. The Great Commission commands

Jesus also told the disciples that they would not use their own strength to witness but could rely on the Holy Spirit to guide their actions.

2. Jesus set an example for us as a witness.

a. He placed himself among non-believers (Zacheus)

c. His life was one of **sacrifice and service** . His life and actions gave witness to the glory of God.

Witnessing is a matter of following the model Jesus set for us.

3. **He commands His disciples to witness through love. .**

5. **The Holy Spirit will give us His power and His wisdom as we bring others to Jesus.**

7. **We are to prepare and share, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, our testimony of what Christ has done for us. .**

How To Start And Maintain Good Habits

1. **Depend on God**

5. Determination