

NEXT STEPS FOR NEW BELIEVERS

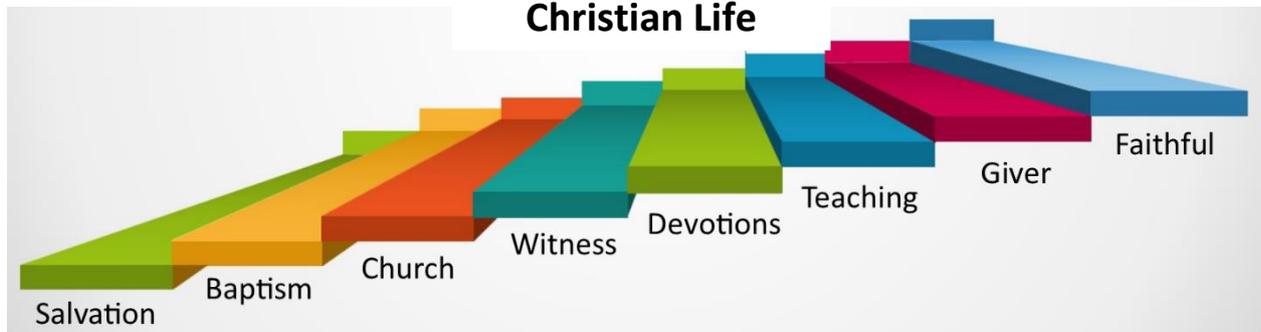
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Introduction: This Bible study series of 8 lessons is written to provide guidance for the new Christian who wants to follow Jesus Christ. In Psalm 37:23, David wrote, “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.” David’s son Solomon wrote, “A man’s heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.” (Proverbs 16:9) God’s Word directs our steps in the way of righteousness. We will discover the steps taken by the Apostle Paul who had formerly killed Christians, yet became one of the greatest preachers of the Christian faith. What will be the next step in your journey?

This study series is designed to be studied with a Christian teacher in a class, small group, or an individual. All verses are taken directly from the King James Bible. If studied in a group, each person is encouraged to participate by reading the questions and Bible verses.

Eight Steps in the Christian Life



The following eight lessons will be studied:

- 1) Chapter 1 – Salvation: Born into God’s Family
- 2) Chapter 2 – Baptism: First step of a Newborn Believer
- 3) Chapter 3 – Church: Growth in the family
- 4) Chapter 4 – Witness: Testimony of New Life
- 5) Chapter 5 – Devotions: Walking with God
- 6) Chapter 6 – Teaching: Maturity of the believer
- 7) Chapter 7 – Giver: Service of a Believer
- 8) Chapter 8 – Faithful: Finish with a Godly Legacy

Salvation: *Born into God's Family*



Introduction: Saul was born in Tarsus (Acts 21:39), which is in the modern country of Turkey. He grew up a privileged Roman citizen (Acts 22:28). His family was from the Israelite people of the tribe of Benjamin. It was from this tribe that God had chosen Israel's first king – Saul! (Phil. 3:1-5), Saul was given prestigious training in Jerusalem under the Rabbi Gamaliel. (Acts 5:34), He became a religious zealot enforcing the Jewish laws. (Gal. 1:13,14) Though he was religious, he did not have a relationship with God.

I. The Realization of Being Lost (Acts 9:1-9)

While traveling to Damascus, Syria, Saul was on a mission to destroy the young followers of the Way – the people who believed in Jesus Christ. These Christians did not adhere to the strict Jewish laws, and they believed Jesus was God who came to earth and died on the cross to pay for their sin. They even believed that Jesus, through the power of God, was raised back to life again! Saul believed that he must stop them from spreading this message to others!

On the way to Damascus, a bright light shown from heaven, knocking Saul off his horse. He had a conversation with Jesus, the very one whom he was fighting against! Jesus is the light of the world and can show us the way of truth if we follow him. But if we reject him, then we are blinded by the light, rather than guided by it...because we are going the wrong way!

- A. Honesty vv.1-7 – Saul finally admitted who he was in God's eyes. He was bad, but to others he seemed good. (Rom. 3:10-19) He was religious, law-abiding, proud, self-righteous, but still was God's enemy and had lost his way; Saul had to get his eyes off of himself.

Does it bother you to hear God's words in Jeremiah 17:9? It says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked..." Does it bring fear, knowing that God sees everything you say and do? Are you honest enough to acknowledge that you can't save or change yourself.

- B. Humility vv.3-4,8-9a – Saul was blinded. He was told to go to a Christian who would help him. God gives grace to the humble (James 4:6)

What is your response to the light of God's Word? Are you too proud to admit you have rebelled against God and need Jesus to save you? Are you willing to ask others for help?

- C. Hunger v9b – Saul didn't eat for three days; he was interested in knowing the truth about spiritual things. Matthew 5:6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.

Many people never hunger for truth, and are satisfied to remain blinded by religion. They are content with cultural acceptance and physical comforts. They only think about this life.

II. The Recognition of Who is Lord (Acts 9:5,6, 10-16)

Paul's attitude toward God changed when he had an encounter with the Lord Jesus. Saul said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6) Paul's desire was to forfeit everything in life that was gain to him that he may win Christ. (Phil. 3:7,8)

A. Jesus has authority over all men vv5,6

*618 times in the New Testament Jesus is called “Lord”! It is interesting to note that there are 613 commands in the Old Testament...if Jesus is our Lord, we will want to obey his commandments!

No matter who you are, what titles you have earned, or education received, you still will be accountable to the Most High God. There is one Creator and Final Judge, and you must surrender to Him. Have you given up trusting in your own goodness and realize only Jesus is truly good? Saul finally gave up depending on his merit, placed himself under the Lord Jesus’ authority, and willingly obeyed what Jesus said.

B. Jesus has knowledge of all things vv10-14

Jesus knew where Saul was on the road and met him there. Jesus knew that he needed to break Saul of his self-dependence. He also knew of a man in Damascus that could help Saul. This disciple named Ananias was used of God to welcome Saul into the family of God!

Jesus knows where to meet you and what it will take to get you from living your life your way to following Jesus. God uses His people to lead the lost and blind to the way of truth.

C. Jesus has plans for all believers. vv15-16

Jesus cares about each child of God. He saved Saul for a purpose. Saul would be a witness to the Gentile people. This would bring great glory to God. Why did God create you? Rev. 4:11

III. The Reception of Eternal Life (Acts 9:17)

- A. When we receive Jesus Christ, we receive eternal life. (Rom. 6:23, John 1:12)
The Holy Ghost convinces the world (John 16:8-11)
1. Sin – We must respond by repentance of our sin/ unbelief. Acts 20:21
 2. Righteousness – We must put our faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ
 3. Judgment – We must ask for mercy from God’s judgment. Romans 10:13
- B. When we receive Jesus Christ, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. I Cor. 6:19
He becomes our Comforter, teacher, and guide. John 16:7,13
- C. When we receive Jesus Christ, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit. Eph. 1:13
We can never lose our salvation. John 10:30
We can know that we are saved. I John 5:12,13

Colossians 2:6 – Have you received Jesus as your Lord? Is the Holy Spirit living within you? Does he convict you of sin, convince you of salvation, console in sadness, comfort in suffering, conform you to the Scriptures? Have you understood and confessed the following?

- I am a sinner condemned before God.
- I can only be forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ.
- I believe that Jesus died in my place and rose again back to life.
- I must turn from my way/ unbelief, and trust Jesus alone to save me.
- I will call on Christ to give you the gift of eternal life.

Do not be like the Governor Festus who told Paul, “Almost thou persuades me to be a Christian.”

Baptism: *The First Step of a New Believer*



Introduction: The Christian life is a life marked by following the person, teachings, and example of Jesus Christ. In our last lesson, we learned about the change Christ made in the life of Saul. We will learn more about his life in the Book of Acts from the Holy Bible. He travelled and started many Christian churches. God used him to write many letters to the early churches. He said to the church of Corinth, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (I Cor. 11:1) Paul sent Timothy to remind them of “my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.” I Cor. 4:16,17

Before we come to faith in Christ, we are in sin. We are naturally born into sin because of the first many Adam. When we are born again of God’s Spirit, we are positionally placed in Christ, and many new things are begun. Paul wrote in II Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, and behold, all things are become new.” Paul himself had new life in Christ. He had received a new name...Before, Saul was his name. (This name was after the first king of Israel). Now his new name was Paul. The name *Paul* means “small”. He was proud before, but now he is humble. His new master became Jesus Christ. When you believe on Jesus Christ, then His Holy Spirit comes to live in your life. When the Spirit of the living God moves into your life, be assured that He will make many changes!

Other people are not able to see the Holy Spirit in your life, but they should see a difference in your behavior. How are you able to show them your new life and the love of Christ? If Jesus is your Saviour, then you must be thankful. If Jesus is your Lord, then you will desire to obey God’s Word.(Luke 6:46) If you are God’s son or daughter, then you should be like Jesus Christ. You have a new life and family. As a newborn baby, you will begin to grow.

As a baby learns to walk, he must focus on the first step. As God’s children, we also, must take the first step of a new believer.

Today, we will learn about the next step for the new believer. (Acts 9:18) – After receiving salvation, Paul took baptism. Baptism is a simple way to identify with Christ and his church. This is what Christ commanded his followers to do.

A. The Priority: our obedience to Christ (Matthew 28:19,20)

1. Importance – Jesus told his own disciples to baptize other believers.
2. Instruction – We baptize in the name of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Spirit).
3. Implication – How can we teach others if we don’t first obey God’s command?

B. The Picture: Our Resurrection in Christ (Romans 6:1-6, Gal. 3:24-27)

Baptism is not able to give salvation, but rather it is an illustration to show the Gospel.



1. When we enter the water, it symbolizes Christ when He died on the cross in our place.
2. When we go down into the water, it represents Christ when He was buried in the tomb.
3. When we come out of the water, it is a picture of Christ's Resurrection from the grave.

a. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. (Rom. 1:16)

b. The Good news is that Christ died, was buried, and rose again for our sin (I Cor. 15:3,4)

C. The Purpose: Our identification with Christ (I Cor. 6:11)

Baptism is an outward expression of an inward possession. When we are in Christ, then His Holy Spirit comes to live inside us.

1. Baptism is an ordinance of the local church (Acts 2:38-42)

Water baptism associates the believer with Christ and the Church. What must happen before being added to the church? Salvation and baptism

2. Baptism is only for believers (Acts 8:36-38). How must it be done? Go into the water and come out of the water. (Mt. 3:16, John 3:23)

3. Our opportunity to publically testify to the world.

a. Believers heard and believed God's Word, received the Holy Spirit, and received baptism. (Acts 10:44-48)

b. Believers believed, confessed, and showed works. How? (Acts 19:18,19)

c. Believers in Thessalonica turned from their idols to the true living God. (I Thess. 1:9)

How have you personally believed on Christ and publically confessed Him to the world? What is different in your life? Is Jesus your Lord? If so, have you taken the first step of obedience? Do you love Christ? yes or no Will you obey God's Word? Have you taken baptism? If not are there any idols in your life? What important decision must you make?

Review questions: Why should we be baptized? Who should take baptism?

What is the picture (meaning) of baptism? What is the method of baptism performed?

Why do some not take baptism? How did other believers show they had turned to God?

Have you been saved? Have you been baptized?

Church: *Growth in the Family*

Introduction: The next step after Paul was saved and baptized is found in Acts 9:19. He was “with the disciples which were at Damascus. When he later travelled to Jerusalem, he determined to join himself to the disciples. (v.26)

Here he was strengthened physically and spiritually. The body of believers in a local area is called the church. This is God’s plan for fellowship and development of believers. This is God’s family. This environment is for the protection, feeding, and multiplication of believers.

I. The Meaning of the Church

The word *church* comes from the word “ekklesia”, meaning “A called out assembly”. In the Old Testament, God’s chosen people were the Israelite nation. When Christ came, He established a New Covenant for all people. This is His bride, the local church. A local church is an organized body of baptized believers meeting in a specific place for the purpose of winning souls, training the saved, observing the ordinances, and generally carrying out whatsoever Christ commanded. Matthew 28:19,20 – This was Christ’s last command!

II. The Master of the Church

1. Christ started and promised to build His church. Matthew 16:18
*He called his disciples to be with him! Mark 3:14
2. Christ is the head of the church. – Ephesians 5:23
3. Christ loved and gave himself for the church. – Ephesians 5:25

III. The Meeting of the Church Acts 2:42**A. Apostle’s Doctrine – Hearing from God**

Instruction in what they had been taught by Christ and God’s Word

B. Fellowship – Hearing from Each Other

Partnership (participation), social conversation, communion, distribution

C. Breaking of Bread – Remembering Christ

True Worship: Reflection and reverence of Christ, sing, observing elements (Lord’s Supper), teaching, preaching of Christ

D. Prayer – Talking to God

Prayer for the needs of each other, wisdom, power, direction, obedience

Summary: **Need to include in our services:** Preaching the Word of God (to reprove, rebuke, exhort), Evangelization of the unbelievers, Teaching the Scripture for believers, Singing to praise and worship God, Prayer for each other and missionaries, Giving an offering of income, Testifying of God’s work in one’s life, Fellowshiping (Talking) with each other, Periodically, we will observe the Lord’s Table

Did You Know? How many days of the week did the early church interact with one another according to Acts 2:46-47? Heb. 10:25 – It is important, if you are to grow in Christ, to be with the Church regularly!

IV. The Mentorship in the Church

Acts 9:17-19 – When Saul received meat, he was strengthened. (He had not eaten for three days.) He was with Ananias, and with the disciples which were at Damascus. Saul preached Christ. But many in other towns did not believe he was a true believer. In fact, many wanted to kill him! (vv23,24)

V22 – increased more in strength... the disciples helped him escape (v.25). v.26 – in Jerusalem, he sought to join himself to the disciples.

It is in the local church, you will find family and friends. (For many this is the only place!) It is in the local church you will be fed and increase in strength. (spiritual growth through preaching and teaching the Word of God) It is with the local church you will learn to go help others know Christ. It is from the local church you will be sent to tell others, start churches.

As an infant needs to be fed, so a new believer needs to receive meat to become strong. There should be a parent (mentor) who specifically assumes the responsibility. Stephen left a Godly influence in his death as Saul held the coats. Ananias is used of God to help guide Saul to Christ. But look who helps him thereafter. Who was the mentor that disciplined Saul?

v.27 – “But Barnabas took him” It is the Christian believer’s responsibility to join with believers, but it is the mature Christian’s responsibility to take the new believer and mentor him. (teach, guide, show by example).

Barnabas was the “Son of Consolation” (Acts 4:36); Barnabas took Saul, brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them his testimony. He accepted him, accompanied him, and accounted for him. This is a Spiritual leader showing maturity and responsibility for a new believer with a bad reputation. Barnabas had noticed Saul. He watched him and saw that Christ had truly changed his life. While others doubted and questioned, he was willing to risk his own reputation. He reached out and personally took an interest in this former terrorist.

We each need a mentor in life and we each need to mentor others. This is what discipleship is about. This was modeled by Jesus to his disciples. (Acts 1:1 – do and teach). Jesus demonstrated through his life, and taught with his lips. Jesus took the disciples individually and brought them with him. The disciples learned from him and were to reproduce this as they received the Great Commission. He involved them in his mission.

Paul learned from Barnabas and repeated the process. He came alongside others like Timothy and Titus, Aquila and Priscilla and took interest in them. He included them in his life and spent time with them. We must do the same if we are to win the trust and hearts of the lost around us. We must find others we can show hospitality toward and get involved in their life. They will learn from us, and we will learn from them! Find someone (believer or unbeliever) whom you can accept as your friend - just the way they are; accompany them on their journey of life – and bring them along our path; and account for them (encourage them by including them in the work of the Lord.) Make a place for others. Take them with you.

Perhaps you are still young and you have not received the help of older Godly people. Be glad they are interested in your life and want to include you! Write down a name of someone you look to as a mentor (Barnabas) who can help guide you. Or write down the name of someone (Titus) you can take with you and you can guide.

Witness: *Testimony of New Life*



Introduction: Acts 9:20-22 – Paul had gone to Damascus to persecute Christians. After meeting Jesus Christ, he began to preach to others about the Lord Jesus Christ. He preached that Jesus was the Christ (God’s chosen way of salvation). He proved to the skeptical Jews that Jesus was the Christ. It takes boldness to tell others of Christ. This comes from being Spirit-filled and fellowshiping with fellow believers. But you ought to be able to explain why Jesus is the way, truth, and life. This comes from being personally convinced of the truth from the Bible. There is historical proof, scientific proof, and Biblical proof that the Bible is true and Jesus changes sinners. But the greatest proof is that of a transformed life!

I. The Power of a Witness

The greatest tool of a Christian preacher is his personal testimony. If Christ is real to you and has changed your life, you will want to tell others about him! This is one of the ways you know you are a Christian. We learned that salvation comes when we repent of our sin of unbelief and put our faith alone in Jesus Christ. If Christ is your Lord, you will want to obey him. Just like Saul, you will also want to follow the Lord in believer’s baptism and become a part of a local church. In the previous lesson, we learned that Saul was with the disciples, and he joined himself with the disciples wherever he went.

Now we find that Paul was boldly confronting the unbelievers he used to work with. This would be like a Muslim terrorist converting to Christ and telling his ISIS friends about Christ. Or a Buddhist monk turning to Christ and sharing his testimony to his friends in the monastery. Christianity has never been a secret religion. Jesus did his miracles and taught publically. His death, burial, and resurrection was open for others to see. He is the Light of the world. He told his followers they would be also be lights. Like a city on a hill, we cannot be hidden. (Matthew 5:14) When a person truly knows Christ, he will confess Christ to the world.

II. The People Who Witness

In Acts 1:8, Jesus told His followers “... ye shall be my witnesses.”

1. What is a witness? A witness is someone who tells another what they saw. This is simply a testimony of our experience of meeting Christ. We must share our story with unbelievers of how Christ changed our life. We are not called to be judges, but rather witnesses.

2. Who should witness? Those who have personally met Christ may introduce others to Him. Many know about Jesus (intellectually), but do not have a relationship with him (experientially).

Acts 9:6, 17-20 – Paul thought he was serving God, yet was his enemy before meeting Jesus. Now he had the truth, and felt the responsibility to preach the gospel. I Corinthians 9:16

3. Why should we witness? Christ’s disciples have been commanded to be his witnesses. Unless we tell, people will not hear. If they don’t hear, they cannot believe. Romans 10:14 We cannot withhold good news from them to whom it is due. Proverbs 3:26

Illustration: There is a story about some lepers who found food during a time of famine. I Kings 7:9 – They declared, “We do not well.” Don’t commit the sin of selfishness.

Ezekiel 33:1-9 – The responsibility of the watchman is to warn others of coming judgment.

4. When and Where should we witness? Acts 1:8 – “...after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. (prayer) Acts 5:42 – “And daily in the temple and in every place, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.”

5. How should we witness? Paul often told others how he met Christ. See Acts 22:1-18; Acts 26:2-23 We learn from Paul’s testimony, there are three things to tell others: a. What you were like before you met Christ. John 3:18 b. What circumstances led you to come to know Christ. John 6:45 c. What changes have taken place since meeting Christ? II Corinthians 5:17 Remember, it is not just what you say, but how you say it. Ephesians 4:15

III. The Three Parts of a Testimony

Three parts of Paul’s testimony in Acts 22, 26 He had been brought to trial before political rulers. He simply shared how his life was before he met Christ – persecutor; what happened when he met Jesus – light; and how his life was different after Jesus became his Lord – witness.

My personal testimony: I grew up religious, good works, but afraid. I had read the Bible and knew my sin condemned me. But I learned how Jesus took my place. He loved me and died on the cross for my wrong doings. He conquered Satan, sin, and the grave when he rose again three days later. I humbly admitted I was going the wrong way and needed Jesus to change me. I received him as my only way of salvation! He gave me peace and a hope for a life worth living!

Share in three parts how you came to receive Christ as your Saviour.

- 1) How did you hear about Jesus? _____
- 2) When did you realize you were a sinner and put your faith in Jesus?

- 3) What changes occurred after you received Jesus as your Saviour?

Put it together: I _____ was _____ years old when I heard about Jesus. _____ showed me from the Bible that I was a sinner and needed forgiveness for my sin. I realized I need Jesus to be my Saviour and on the date of _____, I put my trust in Jesus alone to save me. Since that day, my life has given evidence that God has saved me and given me new life by the following changes:

_____, _____,
_____, _____

The word for *witness* is also sometimes translated as *martyr* in the Bible. All of Jesus’ disciples suffered martyrdom because of their faith in Christ. These witnesses were skinned alive, drowned, crucified upside down, and torn apart by horses. Paul was eventually beheaded because of his testimony. If you are not willing to share Christ with your neighbors, family, friends, and co-workers, what makes you think you would share Christ with the Prime Minister? Who do you need to tell that you are a Christian? Simply tell them what Jesus did for you!

Devotions: *Strength from walking with God*



Introduction: Act 9:22 Paul “increased the more in strength.” It is important to be strong. Earlier we learned that Paul was strengthened by others in the church. There is always the help from others that you need. You need fellowship and accountability; you need to be challenged in God’s service. But there comes a time where you need to take the initiative to increase in strength yourself by spending time with God. There is the natural development of a baby from being fed milk to eating food by himself. A baby must be pushed in a stroller and carried by its parents. But after time, he learns to walk on his own. This is the result of growth developed by one’s own strength.

You must learn to be strong by God’s grace. When no one else is around, you need to know how to grow in God’s Word, avoid temptation, and overcome depression. In Acts 16:25, we learn that Paul and Silas were put in prison. What did they do? They did not get angry with God, but rather they prayed and sang. Nehemiah said, “the joy of the Lord is my strength.”

What we do together with the church is good practice for what you should do in your home. We sing, pray, and read the Bible together. This strengthens all who come and participate. But it is not sufficient for your personal growth: you need to learn to worship God when alone and with your family.

I. Why to increase in strength: Personal Development by the Word

I Peter 2:2 – As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow...

II Tim. 3:15 – From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures...

II Timothy 3:16 – The man of God may be perfect (mature) prepared to work.

A. Walking with God is a Privilege

1. God had spoken with Adam and Eve. But when they disobeyed His command, Adam and Eve hid from God’s presence. (Genesis 3:8)

2. Why is it impossible to hide from God’s presence? God is everywhere. (Psalm 139:1-7)

Even though sin separated man from God, God still made a way to reconcile man to Himself. God sacrificed an animal in the place of man. The blood provided a covering for sin, for it showed that the sin had been punished. Jesus is the final Lamb that was slain for our sins. Because of this atonement for sin, man can be made right with God and enjoy fellowship.

3. Name the two men who walked with God. Enoch and Noah (Genesis 5:22; 6:9)

B. Walking with God means to follow Him continually.

God desires to have constant fellowship with man.

4. God says that any man may enjoy His presence. We must hear his voice and open the door. (Revelation 3:20)

5. Jesus said that his sheep hear his voice and follow him. (John 10:27)

II. How to increase in strength: Private Devotions in the Word

A. Approach God's Throne – PREPARE YOUR HEART

1. Come before his presence with singing. (Psalm 100:1,2)
2. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving; (Psalm 100:4)
...and into his courts with praise: (Psalm 100:4)

B. Apply God's Word – READ THE BIBLE

3. Jesus told his disciples to search the scriptures. (John 5:39)
4. The people in the church in Berea searched the scriptures daily. (Acts 17:11)
5. Read one book at a time (I Timothy 4:13)
6. Study one subject at a time (II Timothy 2:15)
7. Memorize one verse at a time (Psalm 119:9)
8. Meditate one word at a time (Psalm 1:2)
9. Copy (Write) one book at a time (Deuteronomy 17:18)

*“Reading without meditation is unfruitful; meditation without reading is hurtful; to meditate and to read without prayer upon both is without blessing.” – William Bridge, Puritan Writer
George Mueller's discovery was that after meditating on Scripture, he was better able to experience a meaningful prayer time.*

C. Ask God's Help - PRAY

10. If Christ's words abide in you, you can ask, and it shall be done... (John 15:7)

When it was laid upon George Muller's heart to pray for anything, he would search the Scriptures to find if there was some promise that covered the case. Sometimes he would search the scriptures for days before he presented his petition to God. And then when he found the promise, with his open Bible before him, and his finger upon that promise, he would plead that promise, and so he received what he asked. He always prayed with an open Bible before him.

11. Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. (Matthew 21:22)
12. Pray to thy Father which is in secret. (Matthew 6:6)
13. Jesus prayed early in the morning in a solitary place. (Mark 1:35)
14. Daniel prayed three times a day. (Daniel 6:10)
15. David prayed in the evening, morning, and at noon (Psalm 55:17)

Parts of Prayer:

Adoration: a response to the greatness of God. This is praising God for who he is.

Thanksgiving: a response to the goodness of God. This is thanking God for what he has done.

Confession: a response to the holiness of God. This is confessing our sin to God

Supplication: a response to the generosity of God. This is petitioning God for our needs.

Challenge:

Everyday this week, spend some time thanking and praising God; then read and meditate on some Scripture, and finish with prayer.

NEXT STEPS FOR NEW BELIEVERS

Lesson 6

Teaching: *Maturity of the Believer*



Introduction: We learned last week the importance of growing in the Word of God. But this is not only for your personal benefit, but for others. We need to spend time with God if we want to live a Godly life. There are many benefits of being in God's presence. When we spend time with God in His Word, we learn how to overcome temptation, we receive wisdom for making decisions, and obtain joy in our daily life! *"The temptation of the ministry is to want to do something for the Lord before spending time with Him."* William Booth

Acts 11:19-26 – The believers from Jerusalem started to scatter when persecution came. (Acts 8:1) They preached the Word and the Lord Jesus. God was with them, and many believed, and turned to the Lord. This is the result of when a Christian preaches the truth.

This is the story of Antioch. They were now newborn believers in God's family and required care by mature Christians. They needed someone to teach them.

When the leaders in Jerusalem had heard that there were many new believers in Antioch, they sent a mature man to investigate. Barnabas was glad and encouraged them to stay faithful. Many were added to the Lord. He went and brought Saul to Antioch. A whole year they assembled with the church, and taught much people. What did this mean that they taught the people? The believers became disciples (learners), who were called Christians "followers of Christ".

This is the desire of any Christian worker and leader. We must not be content to preach the Gospel and see people believe on Christ and receive Him as Saviour. But it is also our responsibility to help the new believers grow in their new faith.

The purpose for regular meetings and Bible teaching is to help believers become disciples and followers of Christ. This is why it is so important that each person be faithful to all the meetings of the church. It is vital that the teacher come to class, but what good is it if the student also does not come?

I. Who should be taught? Believers/Disciples (Acts 11:20,21,26)

Acts 14:21-23 – Specific messages to specific groups: each group becomes smaller.

- A. Preached to the city - This is a general Gospel message to All
- B. Taught many - This is a foundation of Discipleship to Many
- C. Confirmed the disciples - This is the challenge to Faithfulness in the Word to Some
- D. Ordained elders - This is the training of Leadership to Few

II. Who should be teachers? (Acts 11:22-25)

- A. Mature Believers – "Good, Full of the Holy Ghost and of Faith"

Hebrews 5:11-14 - What is the writer's exhortation here? They were ignorant when they should have been educated. They were immature when they should have been experienced.

B. Faithful Believers – “faithful men, who shall be able to teach...”

II Timothy 2:2 - The teacher’s frustration is to have to continually repeat the same lesson over and over. For a student to not want to listen makes teaching futile. This is why Paul tells Timothy to commit what he has learned to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

III. What should be taught? The Word of God (Acts 11:26)

Acts 18:1, 8-11 – We see the progression of new Christians: they believed, were baptized, and taught God’s Word the Holy Bible. It was characteristic of Paul everywhere he went to teach the Word of God to others. Preaching the Gospel is essential, but people must grow by careful teaching.

A. Teach Christ (The life, ministry, and purpose). Acts 5:42

B. Teach the Commands of Christ. Matthew 28:20

1. The Greatest Command - Matthew 22:37,38 “Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart...and thy neighbor as thyself.”

2. Final Command - Matthew 28:18-20 “Go ye therefore and teach all nations...teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”

C. Teach all the Counsel of God. (purpose and will of God) Acts 20:27

The Will of God:

1. The salvation of all men. (I Timothy 2:4)

2. Present your body to God in sacrificial service. (Romans 12:1,2)

3. Give yourself to serve other believers. (II Corinthians 8:5)

4. Keep yourself morally pure. (I Thessalonians 4:3,4)

5. Give thanks in every situation. (I Thessalonians 5:18)

IV. How should the Word of God be taught? Some suggestions

1. Questions – How you will get their attention

2. Visual – How you will keep their attention

3. Introduction – Creating interest in today’s story

4. Story – The Bible lesson you will teach.

5. Application – What the story means to the listener

6. Promotion – Get the listener excited about the next story.

Conclusion: Everyone who is a Christian is a teacher to someone else. You have an influence on others and can make a difference. Jude v.24 - Teach with compassion... Jesus spoke to the multitudes, but he spent his time teaching a few men. Everyone can teach someone through your words and example.

Giving: *Service of a Believer*



Introduction: Acts 11: 30, 12:25 – Paul was teaching with Barnabas in Antioch for one year. There came news that a great famine was coming. It negatively affected the church in Jerusalem. So the disciples in Antioch took up an offering for the brethren in Judaea. The money was carried by Barnabas and Saul. They returned to Antioch after finishing this ministry.

Each one of us must consider what the next step God wants us to take. Are you a believer? You must take the step of salvation. Then you must obey God in believer's baptism. You need to grow in the fellowship of the local church. You need to share the Gospel of Christ with the unbelievers around you. You need to find your strength daily by spending time in the Word of God and prayer. In the last lesson, we learned the importance of teaching others. This requires that you know what God's Word teaches and be strong in your faith.

Today we learn from the life of Paul that he was not only a faithful teacher, but a dependable servant. He was willing to travel and give the offering to needy believers. v.29 - The work of God involves many people and different responsibilities. Everybody can do something. Paul wasn't the only one giving to meet the believer's needs.

I. Shared Responsibility: Every disciple gave something.

In the Old Testament, people gave a tithe. A tithe is 10% of your income. This is the least we should give to God's work. This is how the people honored God with what He already gave them. God blesses a giving heart. Someone who did not give the tithe was called a thief. (Malachi 3:8) God blesses cheerful givers as we will see.

II. Different Ability: Everybody gave according to his ability.

Not everybody can give the same amount of money. Someone who makes a thousand rupees each week will tithe a hundred rupees to the church. This is called the tithe (10 percent) A man who makes 5,000 rupees a week will give 500 rupees tithe. Other needs may arise that the church will decide to help with. Perhaps, there is someone with a medical bill or in need of food. This is called a love offering. This is why the church in Antioch gave a special offering to the believers suffering in Judea.

III. Christian Priority: They gave to help the brethren in Judea.

There are many people in need of help everywhere. Jesus said, that we will always have the poor with us. We should not be indifferent or selfish. But there is a lesson to learn here. Who did the church give help to during the famine? The Christian brethren.

After the earthquake, there were many Christians who had needs. Christian churches in America sent money to provide some help for churches here in Nepal. Galatians 6:10 says, As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. When churches help other churches in need, it is a good testimony to their Hindu and Buddhist neighbors. They see that Christians love and help each other.

IV. Church Authority: They delivered the money to the elders.

There was an order to how the money was delivered and dispersed. There is protection in leadership. The Godly leaders will know who needs the help and how the money should be given.

Some villages that received help after the earthquake had the leaders gather together and had a paper with all the families' names written down. They divided up the bags of rice equally and took great care that everyone was accounted for and helped.

Giving to worldly organizations is not wrong, but often is not a good idea. Much corruption goes on and money wasted. However, when you give to the church and through the church, the money should be used for the spreading of the Gospel. To give someone food, helps them for a day; but when you can give them Jesus, you help them for eternity!

There are two kinds of people: Givers and Takers. Which kind of person are you? Giving people are happy people. Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35 As you mature and become more like Christ, you will want to be a giver. Christ gave his life for us! Why can't I give my heart and life to Him?

Below are some lessons about giving that Paul shares about some of the first churches.

1. If you have received God's grace, give. (II Cor. 8:1)
2. If you are poor, give. (II Cor. 8:2)
3. If you have a need, give to someone else's need! God shall supply every need (Phil. 4:15)

In the days of the early church, we learn that money was given to the poor saints (members of local churches); the pastor of the church so he could dedicate his time to the Word and prayer; and Gospel preachers sent out to start new churches. Paul received offerings for his itinerant ministry, and often worked to provide for his own needs and the needs of others.

4. If you want to show that you love Christ, give! (II Cor. 8:8)
5. If you love your brother, give! (II Thess. 1:3)
6. If you give, give voluntarily (II Cor. 8:3)
7. If you give, give generously (II Cor. 9:6)
8. If you give, do it cheerfully (II Cor. 9:7)

What can I give?

- 1) Time – with God, others
- 2) Thanks – sacrifice of praise
- 3) Talents – gifts, abilities, steward
- 4) Treasure – money (give to help meet needs, Bibles)
- 5) Trust – Be a true friend: learn to listen and not gossip
- 6) Tracts – "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee..."

We are each one member of the whole body. (I Cor. 12:12-27) God gives different spiritual gifts to different believers to help others in the local church. The only way for a church to grow stronger and in number is if each person takes personal responsibility to give in the areas they have a desire and ability. Some can play the guitar or piano. Others may teach or preach. Some can make tea and clean the room. Everyone can invite others. You need to find a job and do your part. Every Christian should give something to help their church.



Introduction: I Cor. 4:16,17 - The steps of the Christian life should be a priority for each of us. There are important decisions we each will make in life: Where to live, what career to have, and who to marry. But I would submit to you, that if there are any steps that you have not yet taken that we have learned in the previous lessons, then it would be a mistake to make other important decisions of life without first obeying Christ in these areas.

Let us review the previous steps:

- Salvation
- Baptism
- Church family
- Personal witness to the lost
- Devotional time with God
- Teaching others the Bible
- Being servant and giver

The final lesson we learn from Paul's life is in the area of faithfulness. It was Paul's desire not only to do right, but also to finish his life doing right. In Acts 20:17-38, we learn that Paul is visiting with the church leaders from Ephesus for the final time. This is his farewell message to them.

I. Reflection on Ministry vv 17-21

- A. V18 He was present with them in all seasons, both good and bad.
- B. V19 He served alongside them.
- C. V20 He taught them God's Word to help them. Anytime someone loves you enough to tell you the truth, appreciate it - even if it hurts. A doctor may give you a painful shot, but it is intended to improve your health. Be grateful for the spiritual leadership God places in your life and honor them.
- D. V 21 He testified to all ethnic groups of repentance and faith.

There is no other way of making peace with God. You are a wicked sinner by birth and are an enemy deserving the eternal wrath of a Holy God. The only way to have your sin forgiven is through the completed work of salvation by Jesus' death and resurrection. You may have the hope of eternal life if you abandon your religion and reliance on good works, and put your complete dependence on Christ alone.

Life is short, eternity is long. Man naturally only seeks to please himself with the pleasures this world offers. Yet, our existence goes so much longer after we die. We will live forever with God in Heaven or in separation burning in the lake of fire. Are you a child of God? Eternity is a long time to suffer. Your life is short, prepare to meet God.

II. Determination to Finish vv 22-27

This is Paul's Legacy. How will you be remembered?

- A. Paul was unmovable by persecution – I Cor. 15:58

Paul was willing to stand alone. II Timothy 4:16,17

Sometimes you will feel all alone. But God is with you. Those who have changed the world refused to listen to the criticism of negative people. Those who made a difference were those who stood for what they believed in.

Lady Jane of England became the ruler in 1558. But nine days later her sister Mary Tudor murdered her. Lady Jane Grey was a Christian and only 15 years old at this time! She gave the rest of her life to Jesus. She was strong in spirit and remained faithful to Jesus Christ, even though she would die for her Christian faith!

It is rare to find a born again believer who knows what he believes, takes a stand, and stands alone when necessary. Paul was unashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (Romans 1:16) Perhaps you are afraid of what others will think of you. But how can they know the truth of Jesus if you hide your light and keep your faith a secret? Have you truly been born again? Have you taken baptism? Have you told your family and friends? You must not be ashamed and even stand alone, if you will leave a faithful legacy.

B. Paul was unstoppable in his race.

Heb. 12:1-3 You cannot properly finish your race, if you don't take the next step God wants you to take! You must choose who you desire to please.

C. Paul was unblameable in his ministry

He had been faithful to his calling: Apostle to Gentiles, servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He had warned the lost. He had taught the believers. What does God want you to do? Are you going to do right? Is there an area in your life that is to be blamed? A character trait that is ungodly? How will people remember you?

We each must be pure in our motive: love God and seek to please him, not men. (Col. 3:23)

We must be pure in our morals and relationships. (I Tim. 5:22)

We must flee youthful lusts and keep ourselves pure. (II Tim. 2:22)

We must be faithful to our wife. (I Tim. 3:2)

We must not serve God for financial gain. (I Tim. 3:3)

We must train our children in a godly home. (I Tim. 3:4)

We must be faithful to good doctrine. (I Tim. 4:6)

We must be an example of the believer in our thoughts, words, and behavior. (I Tim. 4:12)

We must be committed to preaching God's Word. (II Tim. 4:2)

We must be students of God's Word. (II Tim. 2:15)

We must be students of God's Word. (II Tim. 2:15)

III. Final Thoughts vv 28-38

A. Beware of false teachers

B. Be people of the Bible. Protect and strengthen others in the Word of God

C. Be givers...pathway of blessing

Conclusion: **II Timothy 4:6-8** – Paul looked forward to meeting God. He had finished right, and had a crown awaiting him. There is no excuse to not serve God. In fact, we have every reason to be faithful to the Lord every step of the Christian life!