

Discipleship 201

7 lessons in basic Christianity (Part II)



Including in-class discussion and materials for personal study

Grace Evangelical Free Church
Know Jesus Louisville, KY
2012

Grow in Jesus

Go with Jesus

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This material was written by Darin Anderson (Darin@gracelouisville.org) and is available for adaptation and/or duplication for the purposes of Christian ministry or individual spiritual growth, but is not for sale or profit. Other curriculum and resources are available for free download at gracefusion.weebly.com/resources.html

Lesson 7 - Fellowship

Big Idea: believers grow best in authentic Christian community

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – that fellowship is sharing life – the joys and struggles – with other believers
- Feel – motivated to bless others in the body of Christ
- Choose – to share a current struggle with a trusted Christian friend

Discussion Starter:

- **What are the top one or two things that have helped you grow as a follower of Jesus?**
- **What role did other believers play in your early growth as a disciple?** How important was Christian community in your pursuit of Jesus?
- **What is one of your most lasting memories from a small group or discipling relationship?**

Every believer is a follower of Christ – a disciple being trained by the Master. So by definition we are all learners who should be growing in our understanding of our Master's teachings and our obedience to them. Several things contribute to growth: solid Biblical teaching, spiritual disciplines, life-changing circumstances (often of the painful variety), service in ministry (our topic for next week) and Christian community. Andy Stanley calls these the 5 Faith Catalysts: Practical Teaching, Private Disciplines, Pivotal Circumstances, Personal Ministry and Providential Relationships (*Ignite*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, 2005).

Jesus made it clear by his example and by his direct instruction that his followers would grow best in community with one another. In fact, he made love for one another the defining mark of his true followers (John 13:35). So claiming to be a disciple of Christ apart from the church is Biblically impossible. Love for God naturally and necessarily results in love for His people (1 John 4:7-11).

Fellowship (Greek = koinonia) builds on the root noun for “common” (koinos) and so expresses a sharing or participation together with someone in a two sided relationship of giving and receiving. For the ancient Greeks, koinonia went beyond the mere sharing of material goods or even of mutual commitment to a city-state but pictured the total harmony of the universe, including the relationship between God and people. The Greeks passionately pursued fellowship with the gods through sacred meals. This is in marked, and somewhat surprising, contrast with the Old Testament practices of the Jews. The OT seems to deliberately avoid the use of fellowship terms to describe the God-human relationship, not referring to people as “sharers with God” but rather as “servants of God.”

But in the New Testament, fellowship with God in Christ is a prominent theme, especially for Paul.

- 1 Cor. 1:9 – “God is faithful, by whom you were

“A vision we give to others of who and what they could *become* has power when it echoes what the Spirit has already spoken into their souls.”

Larry Crabb
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called into **fellowship** with his son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

- 1 Cor. 10:16 – "Is not the cup of thanksgiving... a **participation** in the blood of Christ?"
- Rom. 6:4,6,8 – "Buried... Die... live **with Christ**... crucified with Christ."
- Rom. 8:17 – "Suffer **with Christ**."
- Col. 2:12 – "buried... raised **with Christ**."
- Eph. 2:6 – "raised up and seated **with Christ**."
- Php. 3:10 – "**Fellowship of sharing** in his sufferings."
- 1 Pet. 4:13; 5:1 – "**Share** in Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed."

Fellowship with Christ (or with the Spirit – Php. 2:1) naturally and necessarily leads to fellowship with other believers. After all, we are united together in the BODY of Christ – all of us together! As one body, we have an organic and unavoidable interdependence!

Bible Focus: 2 Cor. 8-9

- Read 2 Cor. 8:1-5,9
 - For whom is Paul raising money in this whole section? Why? (see Rom. 15:25-28)
 - In what circumstances did the Macedonian churches give? To what degree of sacrifice did they give? How did they view their gift?
 - What enabled them to be so generous in such difficult times? (v. 5,9)
- Read 2 Cor. 8:13-15
 - What kind of equality is Paul describing here? Is this communism or something else? What return will the Corinthians receive by sharing now?
- Read 2 Cor. 9:6-14
 - What principles for giving does Paul outline here? What kind of harvest does God promise the generous giver (v. 10)?
 - What results come from generous sharing? (vv. 12-14)
 - Why is financial sharing such a powerful illustration of the fellowship of the early church? (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32)
 - What does the failure to share material things reveal? (James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:17)

Fellowship is first of all sharing in the very life of Christ – dying with him in order to be raised up with him, sharing in his sufferings in order to also share in his glory one day. Out of the overflow of this intimate connection with Christ comes fellowship with other believers, who are also bound to Jesus – the head of the body of which we are all a part. So all believers in the universal, world-wide church ARE connected to one another in a very real sense – we are one, even though we are separated by many miles and many languages. As one body, we should rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn (Rom 12:15). When one part of the body suffers, we should all suffer (1 Cor. 12:26). Our own physical bodies should remind us – every time we stub a toe or have a headache – of the believers around the world who are suffering right now. And this concern should move us to both prayer and action!

"We live out the gospel by killing an already defeated enemy and surrendering ourselves to the energy and prompting of the Holy Spirit in our new hearts."

Larry Crabb
Connecting p. 86

On a local level, in our little church body, fellowship should be the defining character of our community – a mutual concern for one another, a sharing of one another's joys and burdens, successes and struggles. If this would truly and consistently take place, there would be far fewer instances of deep depression, far less marital strife, less financial struggle and much greater freedom and victory in Christ. Larry Crabb, after 30 years in Christian counseling, argued that most counseling would be unnecessary if the church would provide the deep, intimate connections between people it is designed to facilitate. Here is a sketch of his vision of **Connecting**.

- We need to move beyond “fix-what’s-wrong” treatments and “do-what’s-right” accountability to become a true healing community.
- What we all really need is the life of God Himself, poured out into us so we can resist our bad temptations and release the good he has placed inside of us.
 - This is what God does for every believer: 1) he provides a taste of Christ delighting in us – of total acceptance and a vision of who we will become; 2) he searches for the good he has placed within us, affirming this goodness and value and; 3) he exposes what is bad in us (and often is causing us pain) in order to lead us back to his grace that will change us.
- This is precisely what we need to do for one another: 1) offer total acceptance and share a vision of who the person can become; 2) search for the good God has already placed within them and; 3) help expose the sin that is causing pain in order to lead them to forgiveness and healing at the cross.

“When two people connect... something is poured out of one and into the other that has the power to heal the soul of its deepest wounds and restore it to health.” (xi)

“CONNECTING is a kind of relating that happens when the powerful life of Christ in one person meets the good life of Christ in another.” (66)

“The core battle in everyone’s life is to relate well to God, to worship him, enjoy him, experience his presence, hear his voice, trust him in everything, always call him good, obey every command (even the hard ones), and hope in him when he seems to disappear. That’s the battle the community of God is called to enter in each other’s lives.” (150-1).

“It is the actual life of God, the energy with which the Father and Son relate to each other, a set of inclinations put in our hearts by the Spirit and kept alive by his presence. It is a power that is most fully released as we develop a compelling and awe-inspiring vision of who another person is and what he or she could become because of the gospel.”
 Larry Crabb
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“The energy that fills a truly qualified helper includes far more than ‘mere’ compassion, it involves engagement that goes miles beyond listening skills; it offers probing wisdom and life-giving words that provide more than the promise to pray, gestures of support, and bits of advice.” (175).



Connecting is a commitment to see beyond the junk on the outside, the sins that so often surface in our relationships, and to look for the good that we know God has

placed within each of His children. By sharing with someone else a vision of who God is helping them become, we can encourage them to repent of and reject the sin that is hurting them and come back to Christ to be forgiven and set free. As a church, we are developing a ministry of **Biblical counseling** to provide “intense personal discipleship” for those with ongoing struggles – to help them identify the idols of their hearts, the sins they are clinging to, in order to find freedom and victory in Christ.

Personal Study 1 – A Picture of Partnership

Fellowship is often translated in the New Testament as “sharing” or “participation” in the joys and struggles of other believers. But in the book of Philippians the word *koinonia* conveys even more: partnership. Paul first gives thanks to God for the *koinonia* in the gospel the Philippians had shown, “from the first day until now” (Php. 1:5). It becomes plain in chapter four that this partnership included financial support – a “sharing with me in the matter of giving and receiving” (4:15-16). Take some time today to study this powerfully encouraging book!

Read It! Philippians

Study It!

Today let’s do a word-study on “*koinonia*” in this short letter from Paul – looking at each use of the word in its specific context. First write down how the word is translated, maybe comparing a few different versions (see biblegateway.com). Then, by studying the verse and its context, write out a definition of the word. Finally, write out some principles that emerge about fellowship and how it is applied in each case.

	Translation and meaning of “<i>koinonia</i>”	Principles and application
1:5	“Partnership” – participation, sharing in the work	Fellowship is more than just sharing a meal now and then – it is joining together in the work of the gospel!
2:1	“Fellowship” – communion with, sharing in the Spirit	
3:10	“Fellowship” – sharing in Jesus’ sufferings, experiencing the same	
4:14-15	“Sharing” – participating in struggles with, giving material gifts	

Apply It!

- What can you do to increase your “partnership in the gospel” – maybe with a missionary overseas or an organization you support...? Have you recently considered going on a short term missions trip yourself?
- Paul assumes that believers have “fellowship with the Spirit” – what does he expect of us because of that communion we all share (Php. 2:1-4)?
- What does “sharing in the sufferings of Christ” look like in your life right now?

Personal Study 2 – One Anothering

At the heart of Christian community are our relationships with each other. Do we, as members of Christ's body, demonstrate the truth of our unity in Him, and pour out His love to one another? Or do we more often focus on ourselves – our own desires and preferences – causing disunity in the church and harm to one another? Take some time to read the passages below and write out the commands, that all end with “one another.”

Read It! Study It!

- ❖ John 13:14,22,34;
- ❖ John 15:12,17
- ❖ Rom. 12:10,16;
- ❖ Rom. 14:19;
- ❖ Rom. 15:5,7,
- ❖ 1 Cor. 12:25
- ❖ Gal. 5:13,15;
- ❖ Gal. 6:2
- ❖ Eph. 4:2; 25, 32;
- ❖ Eph. 5:19,21
- ❖ Php. 2:3
- ❖ Col. 3:13,16
- ❖ 1 Thes. 4:9,18;

Apply It!

- Which of these “one anothering” commands are you strongest in?
- Which is an area in which you need to grow?
- Whom do you sense God calling you to love or serve today?
- What can you do to obey Jesus' command today?

- ❖ 1 Thes. 5:11,13
- ❖ Heb. 3:13;
- ❖ Heb. 10:24-25
- ❖ James 5:9,16
- ❖ 1 Pet. 1:22;
- ❖ 1 Pet. 4:9-10; 5:5
- ❖ 1 Jn. 1:7; 3:11,23; 4:7,11

Personal Study 3 – Overflowing

We looked earlier at the book of Ephesians and saw the beautiful symmetry of the book – balancing three chapters of inspiring theology with three chapters of challenging exhortation. The first half establishes that in Christ believers are loved, alive, united and victorious. The second half challenges us to “therefore, live” in light of this truth. Five times this command is repeated (4:1; 4:17; 5:1-2; 5:8 and 5:15). The final command to live with wisdom in an evil world is followed by another command that explains how we can carry this out: “Be filled with the Spirit...” Then Paul uses five participles to describe what will result when a community of believers is filled with the Spirit of God.

Read It! Ephesians 5:15-21

Study It! (English Standard Version)

¹⁵ Look carefully then
how you walk,
not as unwise but as wise,
making the best use of the time,
because the days are evil.
¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish,
but understand what the will of the Lord
is.

And do not get drunk with wine,
for that is debauchery,
but **be filled with the Spirit.**

- (1) **addressing one another** in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
- (2) **singing** and
- (3) **making melody** to the Lord with your heart,
- (4) **giving thanks** always and for everything
to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
- (5) **submitting to one another** out of reverence for Christ.

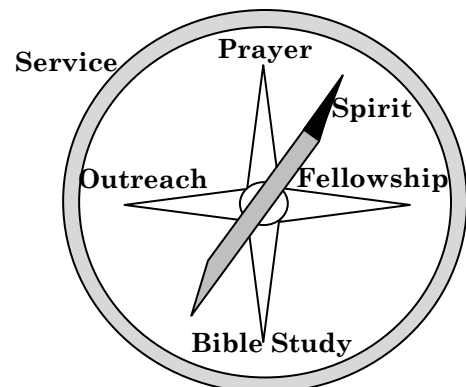


- What is significant about the contrast between “getting drunk” and “being filled with the Spirit”?
- Of the five participles that flow out of being filled, which ones are mainly internal - for the individual believer, and which are communal - for relationship with other believers?

Notice in Ephesians 3:16-19, as Paul concludes the first half of the book with a prayer, that the key to living in fullness is experientially knowing the love of Christ. If I am not walking in the fullness and power of the Spirit, the answer is to come back to the gospel of Jesus' love and His grace that overflows to me through his sacrifice. The gospel is what transformed us in the first place, bringing us from death to life. And the gospel is what continually fills us, as we continually bring our sins to Jesus and ask Him to cleanse us and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Now look at the result of this deep, ongoing reflection on Jesus' love (Eph. 3:19): being filled up with the fullness of God Himself!

Apply It!

- How “full” do you feel right now? Why do think that is?
- What are you doing to seek the filling of the Spirit?
- What might be preventing His filling in your life?
- Remember the Compass – let the Spirit guide you through Prayer, Bible study, fellowship, outreach and ministry!
- Spend some time meditating on Paul's prayer in 3:14-21 – Make that your prayer today!



Lesson 8 - Service

Big Idea: all believers are called and gifted to build up the body by serving one another

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – that fruitful ministry must be Spirit-filled and Spirit-led
- Feel – encouraged that they are gifted and called to ministry
- Choose – to use their God-given gifts and abilities to serve others

Discussion Starter:

- **What is a strange ability that you have – a “stupid human trick” you can do?**
- **When is a time you have felt very fruitful and fulfilled in ministry?**
- **The old adage, “20% of the people do 80% of the work” often rings true... What do you think keeps people from serving in ministry in the church?**

Our Provision

Here is a visual progression of how salvation takes place:



“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.” Romans 8:28-30

The baptism of the Spirit takes place at the moment of **salvation**. When a person receives Jesus by faith (John 1:12) he becomes the temple or dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16). No longer does the holy presence of God remain safely distant from people in the most holy place of a temple building. Believers – individually and corporately – are the temple. We are declared righteous based on the completed work of Christ that is accounted to us by God's grace and through our faith (Eph. 2:8-9) and the Spirit of God comes to dwell in our hearts. So in Christ we **ARE** holy judicially, and through the Holy Spirit we may **BECOME** holy practically.

Our calling as forgiven children of God, then, is to live out in **practice** the truth of our **position** in Christ by means of the **provision** of the Holy Spirit. All who have trusted in Christ have a new identity in Him (2 Cor. 5:17) that will result in the fruit of a changed life as the Holy Spirit instructs, guides and empowers them. Once the heart has been changed (Jer. 31:33), the behavior will naturally change as well (Matt. 7:16). The Christian life is simply walking with the Lord, keeping in step with the Spirit of God who dwells in our hearts.

Our Practice

Living out the truth of who we are in Christ – the message of Ephesians:

Position	Practice
"In Christ... with Christ." (chs. 1-3, see above)	"Therefore live a life worthy of the calling you have received." (4:1)
"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." (4:22-24)	"So you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking." (4:17)
"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children..." (5:12a)	"...and live a life of love." (5:12b)
"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord." (5:8a)	"Therefore... live as children of light" (5:8b)
"...not as unwise, but as wise." (5:16b)	"Be very careful, then, how you live..." (5:16a)

This is the **normal** expectation of every believer and is not reserved for leaders or for exceptional moments in life. Another metaphor Paul uses to illustrate the Christian life is being "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). This, too, is given as a command to all believers as an ongoing pattern of their individual and corporate lives.

This passage describes the **results** of being filled with the Spirit:

- **Worshipful Edification:** "addressing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs"
- **Joyful Celebration:** "singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart"
- **Continual Appreciation:** "giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father"
- **Mutual Submission:** "submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ"
 - "Wives to your husbands..."
 - "Husbands love your wives..."
 - "Children obey your parents..."
 - "Fathers train your children..."
 - "Slaves obey your masters..."



The phrase translated "be filled with the Spirit" here could be more literally rendered, "be filled **by** the Spirit." This would communicate that the Holy Spirit is the personal means by which we connect with the fullness of the Godhead. Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21 reveals that the **content** of Spirit filling is "all the fullness of God (v. 19). Notice how powerful, inspiring and Trinitarian this prayer is:

“For this reason I kneel before **the Father**... I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power **through his Spirit** in your inner being, ¹⁷so that **Christ** may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is **the love of Christ**, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of **all the fullness of God**. ²⁰Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹**to him be glory** in the church and in **Christ Jesus** throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” Ephesians 3:14-21

The mind-blowing reality is that the almighty Creator of the universe has chosen to make his home in the hearts of transformed sinners like you and me! The purpose of this filling by the Spirit is **to glorify God** – to reveal the amazing extent of His mercy, goodness and grace.

So our calling as new creations in Christ is to live by the Spirit – to walk with him day by day and moment by moment. Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 3 gives some significant clues about how we can experience the fullness of life and joy God longs for us as his dearly loved children.

The Way of Spirit Filling: Ephesians 3:14-19

<p>“For this reason I kneel before the Father... I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”</p>	G	1. Fullness is a gift from God – so we must pray and ask for this gift.
	O	2. Fullness is continual and ongoing – not a one time experience, but a daily pursuit.
	F	3. Fullness is both a fact (Jesus does live in my heart) and a faith goal (I must constantly recognize him and invite him in by faith).
	O	4. Fullness comes from a personal, experiential knowledge of the outpouring of Jesus’ love.
	R	5. Fullness requires divine resources – God’s power – we cannot manufacture it on our own.
	T	6. Fullness is a Trinitarian encounter – seeking the Father, by means of the Spirit, in the personal love of the Son.
	H	7. Fullness is a foretaste of heaven , when we will fully experience the wonder and majesty of God.

My S.H.A.P.E. for Ministry

Spiritual Gift

1 Cor. 7:7b : "But each person has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that."

What Am I Gifted To Do?

Hear

A passionate inner **compulsion** to do something productive and beneficial to others.

1 Tim. 3:1--"Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task."

What Do I Have A Passion To Do?

People are rarely fruitful in their ministry unless they have a heart for it, a passion.

Abilities

Those tendencies and skills an individual has inherited and/or developed through experience and training.

Ex. 31:3 & 4: "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts - to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver, and bronze ... and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship."

What Natural Talents & Skills Do I Have?

Personality

Unique temperament traits that influence how one works with others and acts in response to circumstances.

Your ministry will be most effective & fulfilling when you are using your GIFTS and ABILITIES in the area of your HEART'S DESIRE in a way that fits your PERSONALITY and takes advantage of your EXPERIENCES!

Am I more oriented toward people or tasks?

Do I tend to be more structured or spontaneous?

Do I usually prefer up front or behind the scenes ministry?

Experiences

Life situations, training and exposure that have allowed you to test your *SHAPE* in the past.

Spiritual experiences – Heb. 5:12-13; Painful experiences – 2 Cor. 1:4

Educational experiences – Prov. 4:13; Ministry experiences – 2 Cor. 9:13

What experiences has God built into my life to help me serve others?
Personal Study 1 – My Place in the Body

I. I Belong!

1 Pet. 2:9-10 – *“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”*

Eph. 2:19 -- *“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household.”*

To whom & to what group do I belong?

This means I am of value to God and I am now included in God's people – the church!

II. I'm Gifted! You not only belong, you're also gifted.

I have natural abilities

Each of us are better at identifying what we are *not* good at rather than what we are. But each of us are filled with natural abilities. Maybe not to the degree that we will excel in them and get recorded in history books - but abilities which can make an eternal difference in the lives of others. We'll talk more about this in later in the seminar.

As a believer I also have spiritual gifts. I have not been overlooked.

What do you think a spiritual gift might be? How would you define it?

Often as we look around at people in the church we might conclude: *"I know that a lot of folks in the church have these spiritual gifts, but when God was passing them around, He passed by me."*

If you're a believer in Jesus Christ, this is not so. In each of the four main passages that teach about spiritual gifts it clearly states that every believer has received at least one gift.

Rm. 12:3,6 -- *"...think of yourself with sober judgement, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you...We have different gifts, according to the grace given us..."*

1 Cor. 12:7 -- *"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."*

Eph. 4:7 -- *"But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it."*

I Pet. 4:10 - "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

Who has spiritual gifts?

III. I'm Valuable!

I Cor. 12:15-18 - "If the foot should say...not a hand...it would not for that reason cease to be a part of the body. And if the ear should say...not a eye...If the whole body were an eye...But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be."

What does this metaphor of the body of Christ teach us about our ministry in the church?

Eph. 4:13, 16 - "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ...From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."

**By exercising my spiritual gifts I will help my church to grow.
Without my ministry, my church is incomplete.**

IV. I'm A Minister!

**How many pastors does Grace Evangelical Free Church have?
About how many ministers does Grace have?**

"(God) has given....pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of ministry, so the body of Christ may be built up." Eph. 4:11-12

The pastors are the Preparers/Equippers.

The people are the Ministers.

What ministry do you believe God has entrusted to you in the body?

What is Ministry?

Definition: (Greek "diakoneo"= to serve)

"Ministry is using whatever God has given me to serve Him and the needs of others."

Read Acts 6:1-7

Why were the first deacons needed?

On what basis were these men chosen?

What did their service help to facilitate (v. 7)?

Personal Study 2 - What are Spiritual Gifts?

A spiritual gift is a supernatural capacity to develop an ability to serve in a way that produces spiritual results

A spiritual gift is a capacity to develop an ability to serve others in a special way within the context of the Body of Christ which is sovereignly given by the Holy Spirit to every believer.

Our English phrase "spiritual gift" is based upon two Greek words in the NT

The first is found in **1 Cor 12:1**, ***pneumatikos*** = **literally spirituals** or "things of the Spirit"; which means that the gifts are divine in their source. Translators have supplied the word *gifts* to fit the context.

The second word "*gift*" is found for example in **1 Cor 12:4**. The Greek word found here is ***charisma*** or plural ***charismata***. It simply means gift and it is closely related to the word *charis* which means grace. These special abilities for ministry are gifts of God's grace.

Source = Holy Spirit

Nature = spiritual capacity to develop an ability

Purpose = to serve others

Summary of Biblical Truths

1. Every Christian has at least one spiritual gift

Rm. 12:3; 1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10

All 4 chapters in which spiritual gifts are listed contain a direct statement stating that each believer has a spiritual gift for service.

- Rm 12:3 "*I say to every person among you... God has allotted to each a measure of faith... vs 6 And since we have gifts that differ... let each exercise them.*"
- 1 Cor 12:7 "*But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*" 12:11 The Spirit "*distributes to each one individually just as He wills.*"
- Eph 4:7 "*But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift.*" & then the gifts are listed.
- 1 Pet 4:10 "*As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*"

2. Only believers have spiritual gifts

1 Cor. 12:27--"*Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.*"

3. The Holy Spirit decides what gifts you get

1 Cor. 12:11, 18--"*All these are the work of the one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.*"

4. You can't choose or earn your spiritual gift

1 Cor. 12:31--"But eagerly desire the greater gifts"

Eph 4:7--"But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it."

5. No single gift is given to everyone

1 Cor 12:28-30--"And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles...Are all apostles?..."

6. No one receives all the gifts

1 Cor 12:15-21--"...The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!'"

7. I am to develop the gifts God gives me

1 Timothy 4:14-15 "Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you ... take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress may be evident to all."
(NAS)

A spiritual gift is not an instant ability, but rather a "capacity" to develop an ability.

8. Even the same gifts vary in degree from one person to the next

Rm. 12:3--"...think of yourself with sober judgement, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."

Mt. 25--Parable of the Talents

9. I will be held accountable for the faithful use of my gifts

1 Pet 4:10 --"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

Matthew 25

10. Spiritual gifts are not for my edification, but for the benefit of others

1 Cor. 12:7--"Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

When we fail to contribute our gifts to the church the result will be an impoverishment.

"Others are the poorer when we do not exercise our gifts. We have been given our capacities for their profit. Nothing but immoral selfishness withholds that which has been designed and provided by our Lord for the profit of others." -- McRae, *Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts*, p. 34.

1. Biblical listing of gifts

Rm 12:3-8	1Cor 12:8-10,28-30	Eph 4:11
Prophecy	Word of wisdom	Apostleship
Service (Helps)	Word of knowledge	Prophecy
Teaching	Faith	Evangelism
Exhortation	Healing (3)	Pastoring
Giving	Miracles (3)	Teaching
Leadership	Prophecy (3)	
Mercy	Discernment	
	Tongues (3)	
	Interpretation (2)	
	Apostleship	
	Teaching (2)	
	Helps (Service)	
	Administration	

2. It appears likely that the above 3 lists are not exhaustive but suggestive.

3. Categorization of Gifts

a. Peter breaks them into two broad categories (1 Peter 4:11)

Speaking & Serving

Arrangement in the three lists appears almost haphazard, so can't conclude that any categorization is definite. Some interpret 1 Cor 12:4-6, where three words are used in reference to the gifts--gifts, ministries, effects/manifestations, to mean there are three categories.

b. For study purposes there are a number of helpful ways to categorize the gifts. One such natural way is the following:

<u>Support Gifts</u>	<u>Service Gifts</u>	<u>Sign Gifts</u>
Apostleship	Service	Miracles
Prophecy	Exhortation	Healings
Evangelism	Giving	Tongues
Pastoring (Shepherding)	Leadership	Interpretation of tongues
Teaching	Administration	
	Mercy	
[Equipping Gifts; Eph 4:11-12]	Wisdom	
	Knowledge	
	Faith	
	Discernment	

Spiritual Gift Definitions

A - Apostleship (Contemporary):

Planting new churches and giving leadership in the initial stages of development until a pastor can assume leadership. (Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 12:28)

B - Prophecy (Contemporary):

Using God's Word to publicly or privately challenge those in sin to repent. (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12)

C - Evangelism

Clearly communicating the gospel to unbelievers beyond one's natural sphere of influence so that many become Jesus' disciples and responsible members of the church. (Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5)

D - Shepherding (Pastoring)

Assuming a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of others.

E - Teaching:

Clearly explaining and effectively applying God's Word. (Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28)

F - Service (Helps):

Meeting practical needs of individuals or groups in order to free them to exercise their own spiritual gifts. (Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28)

G - Exhortation:

Motivating others to godly action, offering encouragement, guidance, and consolation through God's Word. (Rom 12:8)

H - Giving:

Liberally and cheerfully using one's own financial resources to further God's work. (Romans 12:8)

I - Mercy:

Feeling genuine empathy and compassion for individuals who suffer distressing physical, mental, or emotional problems, and cheerfully reflecting Christ's love to alleviate suffering. (Romans 12:8)

J - Spiritual Gift Wisdom (Contemporary):

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by deriving sound principles from a knowledge of God's truths and applying them to vexing situations. (1 Cor 12:8)

K - Spiritual Gift of Knowledge (Contemporary):

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by analyzing, systematizing, and summarizing Biblical truth in a manner that assists God's people to obtain deeper insights into divine truth. (1 Cor 12:8)

L - Spiritual Gift of Faith:

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by envisioning what God wants to do in seemingly impossible situations, and with extraordinary confidence, trusting God to accomplish His work. (1 Corinthians 12:9)

M - Spiritual Gift of Discernment:

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by intuitively sensing the likelihood of doctrinal error or hypocrisy of life and then objectively evaluating if there is. (1 Cor 12:10; 1 Jn 4:1; 1 Thess 5:21; Heb 5:14; Matt 16:23)

N - Spiritual Gift of Hospitality:

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by providing an open home along with an open heart to those in need of food, lodging, and fellowship. (1 Peter 4:9)

O - Spiritual Gift of Administration:

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by planning, coordinating and organizing people, resources, and time for effective ministry. (1 Cor 12:28)

P - Spiritual Gift of Leadership:

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by instilling vision, motivating, and directing others by words and example toward the accomplishment of a ministry objective. (Rom 12:8)

Q - Spiritual Gift of Cross-Cultural Ministry:

The capacity and desire to effectively serve God through whatever other spiritual gifts one has in a second culture.

R - Spiritual Gift of Celibacy:

The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by remaining single without frustration for the express purpose of dedicating an unusual amount of time to ministry and devotions.

➤ **Of these spiritual gifts, which ones do you think might be in your top 3?**

➤ **Ask a close friend what he or she thinks your primary spiritual gift(s) are:**

1 Pet 4:10 - *As each one has received a special gift, **employ** it in serving one another, as good **stewards** of the manifold grace of God.*

➤ **What does this verse teach us about our spiritual gifts?**

➤ **What is significant about being called stewards or managers of God's grace?**

➤ **How are you currently using your spiritual gifts to build up the body?**

➤ **What could you start to do in order to better employ the gifts God has given you?**

Lesson 9 - Proclamation

Big Idea: our mission as followers of Christ is to make disciples of all nations

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – that all believers are expected to share their faith verbally with others
- Feel – inspired by the grace of God and the beauty of the gospel
- Choose – to pray for an opportunity to share the gospel this week in word and deed

Discussion Starter:

- **How did you come to faith in Christ? Who shared the gospel with you and helped you understand and respond to it?**
- **Why do we tend to be so reluctant to share our faith with people?**
- **What are some things that encourage and motivate you to share the gospel?**

Bible Focus: Matt. 28:18-20

- **What is the main command in the Great Commission?**

In English, in many translations the first command appears to be “Go.” But in the Greek this verb is a participle that modifies the main verb: “**make disciples.**” So a more accurate grammatical rendering would be, “as you go, make disciples.” Two other participles also modify this main verb: “baptizing them... and teaching them to obey.” Baptism was the public demonstration of conversion – the way a person announced that he had become a disciple of Jesus (as opposed to Rabbi Gamaliel or John the Baptist). And the teaching was not to be simply passing along information but training disciples to obey all that Jesus had commanded. All of this was followed by the promise that would make obedience possible: Jesus’ presence all the way to the end!

The Great Commission provides a fitting and inspiring conclusion to Matthew's gospel. But Jesus said many other things to his followers during the 40 days between his resurrection and ascension (Acts 1:3). According to Luke, Jesus' final words were another promise of his presence and another exhortation to spread the word: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Those four geographic markers provide a structure for the unfolding story in Acts. The Word of God – the good news about Jesus – advances throughout Jerusalem (Acts 1-7) into Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-12) and then to the ends of the known world at that time (Acts 13-28).

“The place to begin is where people are open to the Spirit of God. There is no point in trying to kick open a locked door. Go where there is evidence of spiritual renewal and work out from there as the Spirit prepares the way.”

Robert Coleman

The Master's Way of Personal Evangelism, p. 26

There are two keys to this powerful advance of the gospel:

- 1) The Holy Spirit's **power**, activated through **prayer** and
- 2) The bold **proclamation** of believers, even (or especially) in **persecution**

The Spirit's Power & Prayer

For each passage below mark down who prayed and what happened soon after:

Scripture	Who Prayed	What Happened
Luke 1:13	Zechariah	Birth of John announced
Luke 3:21	Jesus	Baptism, Holy Spirit descends
Luke 6:12		
Luke 9:28		
Luke 22:39		
Acts 1:14,24	Believers	Chose Matthias, Holy Spirit came
Acts 2:42		
Acts 4:31		
Acts 8:15		
Acts 9:11		
Acts 10:2	Cornelius	Gentiles receive Holy Spirit
Acts 12:5		
Acts 13:3		
Acts 14:23		
Acts 16:25	Paul and Silas	Released from prison, jailer and family saved
Acts 20:36		
Acts 28:8	Paul	Healed official's father, many healed on island

Luke makes the connection between prayer and the Holy Spirit unmistakable. At every critical turning point in the narrative someone prays and the Spirit's power is unleashed in a new way. A pastor friend of mine frequently says, "Much prayer, much power." Christian leaders throughout history have testified to this principle.

- **How have you experienced the connection between prayer and the Holy Spirit's presence and power in your life and witness?**

- **Why do you think God set it up this way** – using prayer as our means to access the Spirit's power?

- **Why do we so often neglect or put off what should be our first priority – prayer?**

Believers' Proclamation & Persecution

Our mission as Jesus' followers is to make disciples of all nations. This will involve going, baptizing and teaching them to obey. But in his last words to his disciples, Jesus expanded on their mission by saying, "You will be my witnesses..." This phrase drew upon a longstanding legal tradition in the Old Testament. Altars were set up as visible "witnesses" of agreements between people and tribes (Gen. 31:44,48). The judicial system required two or three witnesses to convict of serious crimes (Num. 35:30). The book of the Law itself was a witness against the people (Deut. 31:26), that they knew the truth and had agreed to obey God's commands. The word was always used in this kind of legal, covenantal sense – until Isaiah.

Isaiah was a prophet during the reign of King Hezekiah in Jerusalem, when the Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel and took those ten tribes into exile (2 Kings 17). God graciously spared Hezekiah and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, in response to their humble pleas (2 Kings 19:1). Isaiah's prophecies mix dark foreboding of coming judgment with joy-filled visions of Israel's coming deliverance by the Servant of the LORD. His book has two major parts – chapters 1-39 and chapters 40-66. The second part opens with words of "comfort" for God's people (40:1), followed by the familiar prophecy of the forerunner who would prepare the way for the Lord's coming (40:3-5; Luke 3:4-6). "The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it" (40:5). Then a command is given to "cry out," to declare that the lives of men are fleeting (40:6-8), but God's word stands forever. And His Word is good news that His faithful will stand up and shout saying, "Here is your God!" (40:9-10). That chapter closes with some of the most beautiful poetry in Scripture – describing the LORD as "the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth... He gives strength to the weary... those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles." (40:28-31).

Isaiah 41 describes the sovereignty and power of the LORD over kings and the course of history – foretelling events long before they take place (41:26). Israel is presented as the "servant" of the LORD, the chosen one that God will uphold and deliver (41:8-10,14). The Servant is further described in 42 as one anointed by the Spirit to "bring justice to the nations" (42:1,4). In language foreshadowing chapter 61 (that Jesus quotes as his mission statement in Luke 4), the Servant will be a "covenant for the people and a light to the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives..." (42:6-7).

The Glory of the Lord will be revealed to all men (40:5)

- Good news will be proclaimed that the LORD is here (40:9-10)!
 - **PROTECTION:** The "servant" of the LORD (God's faithful people) will be upheld and delivered from enemies (41:8-14)
 - **SALVATION:** The "Servant" of the LORD (Messiah) will bring justice to the nations, as a covenant for his people and a light to the gentiles (42:1-7) through his sacrificial suffering on their behalf (Is. 53)
 - **PROCLAMATION:** God has called witnesses to testify on His behalf, that He alone is God and there is no other (43:9-11; 44:8).

"Humans, no matter how faithful, passionate, or ingenious, can't save a soul. God has to do it... God doesn't need my help... If we will firmly believe that God has to do it, we will also be free to accept His incredible invitation to be involved."

Dave & Judy Brower
Pray & Watch, pp. 53,57,59

Read Isaiah 43:1-13

- What does God say to His people in v.1?
- What does God promise His people in v. 2?
- What does He promise in vv. 5-7?
- What are the witnesses from the nations called out to prove in v. 9?
- What are God's witnesses called on to prove in v. 10?
- What makes God absolutely unique (vv. 11-13)?
- What does God further promise in 44:2-3?
- What further proof for His uniqueness does God provide in 44:6-8?

2 Kinds of Witnesses:

1. **LEGAL:** The basic meaning for the term “witness” (Greek: *martus*) is eye-witness – one who has seen or experienced something firsthand and so can testify to the fact that it occurred.
2. **CONFSSIONAL:** But even in the Old Testament the word takes on a broader meaning (in Is. 43 & 44) to include the spiritual convictions of people based on their faith (which, in the case of the LORD, is well supported by eye-witness experiences).

In the New Testament we see these two concepts combined in the first generation of apostles (Luke 24:44,48; Acts 1:22). Paul was only an eye-witness through spiritual visions, but was the prominent preacher in Acts as a “witness for Christ” (Acts 22:15). Similarly, Stephen was called a witness (Acts 22:20 - *marturos*), though there is no evidence he was among those who saw the risen Christ firsthand. And for his testimony, like many prophets before him, he was killed (Acts 7:58). Thus, over time, the word “witness” came to mean “martyr”: one who testifies for Jesus and is executed for it.

Just as opposition to Jesus increased throughout his public ministry, so opposition to the gospel and its preachers increased in the book of Acts. God's

“If what matters most is people finding Jesus, then it means trading in our everyday lives in the context of time to find real life in the context of eternity! It means using every circumstance of life to remind us that time is nothing, eternity is everything, and the people around us need Jesus. It matters more. More than my pain, more than my joy, more than my success, more than my failure, more than my marriage, more than my house or my job, even more than raising nice kids.”

Neal & Judy Brower
Pray & Watch, p. 31

prophets have always faced persecution for delivering His message of repentance. (It was the false prophets who got all the applause – Luke 6:26.) The theme of persecution runs all the way through Acts, often intersecting with the themes of prayer and the Spirit's power.

In Acts 12:1-2 we see King Herod executing James, the brother of John. Peter is thrown in prison, but in response to the prayer of God's people, an angel sets him free (this time it's the guards who get executed – 12:19). But look at this striking contrast:

Read Acts 12:21-25

- What happened to King Herod? Why? (vv. 21-23)
- In immediate contrast, what happened with the word of God? (v. 24)
- What is the significance of these contrasting observations?

The Word Advances in ACTS

Is there a connection between the growth of the church and opposition to the gospel?
 Are Christians, in a sense, more “blessed” when they are hated, persecuted, rejected and scorned?

Previous Occurrence	Growth Result
Jesus' resurrection & ascension	120 ref in 1:15; addition of Matthias to complete the 12
Peter's speech at Pentecost	3000 Jewish “souls” were added to their number (2:41) “So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls” (2:41).
	The Lord added daily, those being saved (2:47) “praising God and having favor with all the people . And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved” (2:47)
Peter & John arrested for preaching boldly and healing man	“But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand ” (4:4)
	Full number were one in heart and soul – shared everything “great grace was upon them all” (4:33)
Barnabas gives gift, Ananias & Saphira withhold part and die	“And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things (5:11)
Signs and wonders done	“None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem . And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women” (5:14)
Sanhedrin reprimand and beating	“Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name” (5:41)
Complaint emerged among Hellenist widows:	“Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number...” (6:1)
Having chosen the 7 to come alongside the apostles in service	“And the word of God continued to increase , and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith” (6:7)
Opposition to Stephen → martyrdom... (ch. 7).	“Now when they heard these things they were enraged , and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right

	hand of God" (7:54-55).
Great persecution broke out → scattered (ch. 8)	Philip → Samaria – proclaimed the Christ many paid attention b/c of the signs → "So there was much joy in that city" (8:8).
Saul converted and begins to preach, opposed and flees	"So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied " (9:31).
Peter restores Dorcas to life	"And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord" (9:42).
Peter preaches to the Gentiles in Cornelius' home	"While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word" (10:44).
Circumcized party (who had also "received the word" 11:1) opposed Peter – he explained	"When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life" (11:18).
Men of Cyprus and Cyrene, scattered in the persecution , preached even to Hellenists	"And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord" (11:21).
Apostles sent Barnabas, a good man...	"And a great many people were added to the Lord" (11:24).
Barnabas got Saul	"For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians" (11:25).
Herod killed James; seized Peter and put him in prison; Angel struck him down b/c he did not give glory to God	" But the word of the Lord increased and multiplied " (12:24).
Paul & Barnabas preach in Pisidia Antioch – Jews rise up to oppose them, so they turn to the Gentiles, who rejoice. The Jews stir up persecution , so they move on to Iconium.	" And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region... And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit" (13:49,52).
Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and persuaded the crowds to stone Paul .	"When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (14:21).
Paul and Silas deliver the decisions from Jerusalem about including the Gentiles.	"So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily " (16:5)
Paul and Silas beaten and thrown in prison, preach the word to the jailer.	"And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God" (16:34)
Mob in Thessalonica threw Paul and Silas out , who went to Berea to preach the Word, where it was received. Then the Jews came from Thes. And stirred up the crowds there in Berea.	" Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men" (17:12).
Some philosophers in Athens mocked Paul , but others listened.	"But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them" (17:34).
Jews in Corinth opposed and reviled Paul , so he went next door, turning again to the Gentiles.	"Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized" (18:8).
Paul returned to Ephesus (as he had hoped) and prayed that	"This continued for two years,

they would receive the Holy Spirit. For 3 months he tried to persuade the Jews there, but some became stubborn, refusing to believe and speaking evil of the Way – so he turned again to a secular lecture hall.	so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks " (19:10).
7 sons of Sceva beaten up , trying to use the names of Jesus and Paul to drive out demons. Fear fell on everyone in Ephesus and led to mass confession and burning of scrolls and magical items.	"So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily " (19:20).
<p>22And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. 24But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. (20:22-24)</p> <p>13Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (21:13)</p>	
Jews from Asia seize Paul, lock him in the temple and try to kill him , beating him. Roman soldiers intervene, arresting him, binding him with 2 chains and sending him to the barracks.	Acts 22 sermon to crowd in Jerusalem.
Paul was nearly flogged with whips, but revealed his Roman citizenship.	Acts 23 provocative message to Pharisees and Sadducees.
After Paul stirs up the Pharisees against the Sadducees and the Tribune has to rescue him, the Jews form a plot not to eat or drink until they killed him . But Paul's nephew heard of it and the Tribune sent him to Caesarea with a strong escort.	
Paul is taken as prisoner to Governor Felix in Caesarea. The high priest and other Jews accuse him of stirring up riots and profaning the temple.	Acts 24 testimony before Felix and his court.
Paul is left in prison for 2 years, the new Governor, Festus leaves him in prison as a favor to the Jews. The Jews again plan an ambush to kill Paul, and Festus tried to expose him, but he appealed to Casear.	Acts 25 testimony before Festus, then Acts 26 testimony before King Agrippa and Bernice and their court.
Ignoring Paul's pleas to avoid the dangerous season for sailing, the ship's voyage to Rome runs into a fierce storm. For 14 days they fight the storm, eating nothing. Some soldiers tried to escape on their own, but the Centurion trusted Paul and kept them together. Others tried to kill the prisoners, but again the Centurion kept Paul alive.	
After reaching the island of Malta safely, Paul is bitten by a snake – making the natives think he must be cursed. But he survives the snake bite and they then conclude he must be a god. Paul healed an island leader, then many others.	"And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. 10They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed" (28:9-10).
Paul testified to the Jews in Rome.	"And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved" (28:24).
The Jews reject Paul and the gospel, so Paul once again turns to the Gentiles, quoting Isaiah's prophecy that the people would reject the salvation of God.	"He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, 31proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance" (28:30-31).

Personal Study 1 – Jesus' Missionary Method

When Jesus sent his disciples out ahead of him to proclaim the kingdom and prepare towns for his arrival, he provided some essential principles for evangelism and missions. Since our commission from Jesus himself is still to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:18-20), we would be wise to accomplish this mission by following the lead of our master!

Read It! Luke 10:1-12

Study It!

- How did Jesus send his disciples out? (10:1 – i.e. were they alone on the mission?)

- Where did he send them? (10:1)

- What key principles do you see in 10:2?

- What kind of expectations did he give his disciples? (10:3)

- What significance is in the specific instructions? (10:4)

- What does a "man of peace" provide for the missionaries? (10:5-7)

- What are their instructions when welcomed in a town? (10:8-9)

- What are their instructions when they are not welcomed? (10:10-12)

Apply It!

- What is the role of prayer in evangelism and missions?

- What kind of response should we expect as we share the gospel with people?

- What principles should guide our approach to evangelism?

- For whom is God calling you to pray today? Remember to Pray and WATCH for opportunities the Lord will bring to share the good news with those around you!

Personal Study 2 – Paul’s Missionary Method

Luke, the physician and companion of Paul, wrote both the gospel that bears his name and the Acts of the Apostles. These two volumes were meant to be read and studied together (Acts 1:1-2), as the second clearly builds on and completes the stories and themes introduced in the first. In the gospel of Luke, as Jesus’ teaching ministry grows opposition builds until he is finally killed in Jerusalem. Likewise in Acts, as Paul’s missionary preaching spreads the gospel throughout the known world, persecution increases until he is finally imprisoned in Jerusalem (and then sent off to Rome). But nothing can stop the advance of God’s Word (6:7; 12:24; 19:20).

Today, let’s study Paul’s approach to sharing the gospel on his first missionary journey.

Read It! Acts 13:1-5; 14:1-7, 21-28

Study It!

- How were Barnabas and Saul identified and sent out as missionaries? (13:3)

- They were sent out by the church at Antioch, but who really sent them? (13:4)

- Where did they start their proclamation of the Word of God? (13:5; 14:1) Why there, in Jewish synagogues? (13:46; Rom. 1:16)

- What was the typical response to their preaching? (14:1-2)

- What role did signs and wonders play in their ministry? (14:3)

- How did they respond to persecution? (14:5-7)

- After winning some converts, how did they follow up later? (14:21-22)

- What was the result of their missionary work? (14:23; in other words – what was the connection between gospel-preaching and church-planting?)

Apply It!

- What is the role of prayer in sending missionaries and going as missionaries?

- What kind of response should we expect as we share the gospel?

- What principles should guide our approach to evangelism?

- For whom is God calling you to pray today? Remember to Pray and WATCH for opportunities the Lord will bring to share the good news with those around you!

Personal Study 3 – Paul’s Gospel Message

As we proclaim the gospel in order to make disciples, we must balance two critical tasks: accurately explaining the true message of Jesus and effectively engaging our target audience. We must never compromise the truth of the gospel. But we do have to consider how to convey the data points of the message in ways that people can understand and relate to (this is called **contextualizing** the message). This doesn't mean we will never offend people – the very nature of the gospel is offensive to the self-righteous. But it does mean that we should be sensitive to the cultural setting we are in and the religious background of the people we are addressing.

Read It! Acts 13:13-41

Study It!

- Where and when did Paul and his team start their preaching ministry? (13:14)

Keep in mind that Paul was trained as a Pharisee (Acts 22:3), and so would have been recognized as an authorized Rabbinical teacher in all Jewish synagogues. This provided an open door for preaching ministry all over the known world – since the Jewish people had been scattered around the Mediterranean for hundreds of years, and wherever they gathered, a synagogue was established!

- To whom is Paul speaking? (13:16)
- How does Paul open his message? (13:17-22) Why do you think this was effective with this particular audience?
- Based on this Jewish foundation, how does Paul introduce the gospel? (13:23-25)
- What are the essential data points of the gospel message that Paul communicates? (13:26-33; 38-39)
- How does Paul support his message? (13:25,27,31,33-35)
- How does Paul drive home his message? (13:40)
- For further study – explore how different people responded to this preaching (13:42-52)

Apply It!

- How would you sum up the essential elements of the gospel – the data points that must be expressed to truthfully and accurately communicate the way of salvation God has provided?

- How did Paul contextualize the gospel for the audience in Pisidian Antioch? How did he make it relevant and understandable for them?

- How do you think Paul measured his success? (e.g. 13:48-52)

- As you think about someone you are praying to share the gospel with – how could you make the gospel clear for them, based on their culture and background?

- What are your goals for evangelism this year? How will you measure your success?

Lesson 10 - Demonstration

Big Idea: the loving actions of believers should powerfully support our proclamation of the gospel

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – that God is concerned about the poor and suffering, so we should be
- Feel – challenged to build a relationship across socio-economic lines
- Choose – to pray for an opportunity to share the gospel this week in word and deed

Discussion Starter:

- **What is the clearest image in your mind of poverty? When have you most clearly seen this tragic reality for yourself? How did it affect you?**
- **What is the church's responsibility toward the poor? What is the believer's responsibility to the poor?**
- **When have you seen holistic ministry in action – ministering the gospel in both word and deed?**

Bible Study – Poverty and Justice

- **Does care for the poor affect someone's salvation?** Be careful! This is a trick question... What principles emerge from each of these passages?
 - Matt. 25:31-46
 - Luke 16:19-31
 - 1 John 3:17

“If God’s Word is true, then the United States today stands in blatant defiance against God’s norms for society. Anyone who seeks to be biblical must demand an end to the scandal of poverty in the richest nation on earth.”
 Ron Sider, *Just Generosity*, p. 75

Scripture is clear on two things related to judgment: 1) each person will be judged according to what he or she has done (Rev. 20:12); 2) our eternal fate is not based on our works but on our relationship with Jesus Christ (Rev. 20:15; John 3:36, etc.). We know that “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). But we also know that our works, as believers, will be tested with fire, “and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work” (1 Cor. 3:13). **So during our short time on earth, we are to be faithful stewards of every resource God has given us** (e.g. Matt. 25:21).

- **How central to Jesus’ mission and ministry was ministry to the poor and marginalized** (Luke 4:18-19; 6:20-26)?
 - How did Jesus view his own mission (Luke 19:10)?

- Who was Jesus' target audience (Luke 5:31-32)?

- **Is care for the poor limited to the community of God's people?** (e.g. Lev. 25; Deut. 15)
 - Is there a priority toward God's people? (Gal. 6:2,5,10)

 - What is the responsibility of family members? (e.g. Ruth, 3,4; 1 Tim. 5:16)

 - What is the proper role of government? (Rom. 13; 1 Kings 10:9)

 - How big a deal is the way we treat the poor among us? (What was the primary reason God sent his people into exile? See Amos 2:7; 5:11; 6:4,7; 7:11,17; Is. 10:1-3; Mic. 2:2; 3:12; Jer. 5:26-29.)

Check out this excerpt from Ron Sider's excellent book, *Just Generosity* (p. 69):

The Pentateuch provides at least five important provisions designed to help those who could not help themselves:

1. The third year tithe was to go to poor widows, orphans, and sojourners, as well as the Levites (Deut. 14:28-29; 26:12).
2. Laws on gleaning stipulated that the corners of the grain fields and the sheaves and grapes that dropped were to be left for the poor, especially widows, orphans, and sojourners (Lev. 19:9-10; Deut. 24:19-21).
3. Every seventh year, fields were to remain fallow and the poor were allowed to reap the natural growth (Ex. 23:10-11; Lev. 25:1-7).
4. A zero-interest loan was to be available to the poor, and if the balance was not repaid by the sabbatical year, it was forgiven (Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:35-38; Deut. 15:1-11).
5. Israelites who became slaves to repay debts went free in the seventh year (Ex. 21:1-11; Lev. 25:47-53; Deut. 15:12-18). And when the freed slaves left, God commanded, their temporary 'master' was obligated to provide liberally, giving the former slaves cattle, grain, and wine (Deut. 15:14) so they could again earn their own way.

The bottom line for us as followers of Christ is that we are called to walk as he walked, to "follow in his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). Jesus spent most of his time with uneducated fishermen, formerly sinful tax-collectors and prostitutes. He touched and ate with people that no one else would go near. He brought the good news of the kingdom to the people that were hungriest for it – and he demonstrated the truth and power of the message he proclaimed by literally letting himself be killed for others. The way of Jesus is

the way of the cross (Luke 9:23)– the way of sacrifice and suffering. All other allegiances, even within our families, must be yielded to our rabbi and master (Luke 14:26). These are difficult teachings – but Jesus made no apologies. In fact, the message of the kingdom is so much better than anything this world has to offer, we should REJOICE to surrender everything for the joy and satisfaction of pleasing our King.

Several books have come out recently addressing especially evangelicals on this very issue:

- **Just Generosity** by Ron Sider (1999)
- **The Irresistible Revolution** by Shane Claiborne (2006)
- **Crazy Love** by Francis Chan (2008)
- **Radical** by David Platt (2009)
- **When Helping Hurts** by Fikkert and Corbett (2009)

Coming into the 20th century, most fundamental believers were so focused on distancing themselves from liberals that were watering down the gospel that they moved away from virtually all ministries that smacked of liberalism – ministries like poverty relief. At the end of that century there was a resurgence among evangelicals to re-engage the world we live in, making a real, tangible difference in Jesus' name. Now most evangelical missions and many evangelical churches are actively pursuing "holistic" ministries that address both the physical and spiritual needs of people. We move into peoples' lives with both the **proclamation** of the gospel and a **demonstration** of God's love in Christ.

- How have you seen this balance of proclamation and demonstration, of words and actions, effectively minister to lost people?

- How has our church, in the past, tried to show the love of Christ in practical ways?

- What are some ways we could – as individuals or as a church – better demonstrate the love of Christ for our "neighbors" in town?

Personal Study 1 – The Rich and Poor

Jesus said more about money than he did about heaven and hell. You might say that money is the “window to the soul.” Luke, in his gospel account, places an even stronger emphasis on Jesus’ view of the rich and poor than the other gospel writers. A comparison of the Beatitudes in Matthew and Luke reveals a striking difference in what each writer was communicating, under the Spirit’s inspiration:

Read It & Study It!

Matthew 5:3-10	Luke 6:20-26
³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.	²¹ Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.
⁵ Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.	²² Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.
⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.	²³ “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets.
⁷ Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.	²⁴ “But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.
⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.	²⁵ Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.
⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.	²⁶ Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets.
¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	

Most scholars today have concluded that Jesus delivered similar sermons at two different places and times. Matthew’s account is called the “sermon on the mount,” and Luke’s is the “sermon on the plain,” based on the descriptive notes each author supplies about the events.

- What similarities are there between these two sets of “beatitudes” or blessings?
- What differences do you see?

- What significance do you find in those differences?
- In Luke's passage, what is the connection between wealth and popularity, poverty and persecution?

- What is it about being "rich, fat, happy, and cool" that can be spiritually dangerous?

- What is it about being a "poor, hungry, sad reject" that can be spiritually helpful?

Apply It!

- What is most convicting or challenging to you as you read these beatitudes?

- What is most encouraging?

- What does your current use of money reveal about your soul? Would God say that you are blessed, or would he say, "Woe to you..."?

Personal Study 2 – Reversals

Luke's theme of ministry to the poor is rooted in his presentation of the kingdom as a place where roles are reversed – where the humble are exalted (Mary – 1:52) and the great are brought low (Zechariah – 1:20; Herod – Acts 12:23). The term, “poor” came to mean “oppressed” in the Old Testament, since they were vulnerable to the exploitation of the rich. So being poor, in this context, conveys more than material lack of resources, but an overall weakness that leads to dependence on the Lord. (This background goes a long way to explaining Matthew's, “poor in spirit.”) Notice how the “rich fool” loses everything when he dies (Luke 12:13-21), while the disciples – who have given up everything – will be cared for by God (Luke 12:22-34). At a dinner party, Jesus used seat assignments as an object lesson about how honor will be assigned at the coming Messianic banquet – “for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 14:11). But the clearest and most alarming role reversal is recounted in Luke 16. [Note: these observations are adapted from I. Howard Marshall's excellent book, *Luke: Historian and Theologian*.]

Read It! Luke 16:19-31

Study It!

- How is the rich man described (v. 19)?
- How is the beggar described (v. 20-21)?

- What happened to both men (v. 22)?

- Where were the two men taken (vv. 22-23)?

- How is the rich man described after he died? (vv. 23-24)

- According to Abraham's response, why is the rich man in hell? (v. 25)

- What can be done for people who are in hell (v. 26)?

- What was the rich man's request (vv. 27-28,30)?

- By his own admission, what did the rich man fail to do in his lifetime (v. 30)?

- What do you think he needed to repent of (stop doing)?

- What does Abraham's final response foreshadow about the response people would have to Jesus (v. 31)?

Apply It!

- Is your current life situation more like the rich man or Lazarus?

- How many people do you know (or know about) that are currently living in poverty and misery?

- What do you feel the Holy Spirit may be prompting you to do in response to this study?

Personal Study 3 – Jesus' Mission

Jesus stood up in his hometown, read from Isaiah's scroll and then pronounced, "Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). He clearly saw his life and ministry as the fulfillment of prophetic expectations (Luke 24:44). Much of this fulfillment in Isaiah (and then in Luke) is seen in reversals: prisoners set free, blind receive sight, poor hear good news, the oppressed receive justice (Is. 61). And Jesus validated his ministry by pointing to the fact that he was doing these very things (Luke 7:21-22). The long-awaited restoration of the "kingdom" to Israel had arrived in the person and work of Jesus! His followers would quickly learn that while the kingdom had come in a spiritual sense – with Jesus reigning in the hearts of his people – the final consummation of perfect justice and peace would await his second coming. So now, as we await the return of our King, we labor and strive to offer his abounding love to those around us – a love that cannot help but touch them at their point of need.

Read It & Study It!

- Luke 4:18-19 – What was Jesus anointed and sent to do? (Read Is. 61 for more details):

- Luke 7:22 – What evidence did Jesus give to prove he was the Messiah?

- In Luke 5 & 7, what kinds of people did Jesus get involved with? What did he do for each of them?
 - 5:12 _____
 - 5:18 _____
 - 5:27 _____
 - 7:2 _____
 - 7:11 _____
 - 7:12 _____
 - 7:37 _____

- 7:34,39 - How did the religious leaders view Jesus' interaction with these people?

Apply It!

It has long been observed that Jesus paid special attention to outsiders – to those pushed aside who tended to be ignored or abused: lepers, prostitutes, tax-collectors, cripples, sinners... At least some of the reason for this is found in the fact that they were “poor” in the sense of being very aware of their need for help – both physically and spiritually. Jesus explained his behavior saying, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Luke 5:31-32). And he did not keep people at arm's length, but touched the untouchable and invited “unclean” sinners into intimate table fellowship (5:30).

- As followers of Jesus, with what kinds of people should we seek to build relationships?

- If we follow Jesus' example, what kinds of ministries might we develop to reach out to these outsiders?

- What kinds of results should we expect from this kind of ministry? (See Luke 14:12-14).

- What is one step you could take today, to demonstrate the love of Christ to someone?

Lesson 11 – Disciple-Making

Big Idea: the key to changing the world for Christ is investing in a few disciples, who will become disciple-makers

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – that reaching large crowds is not as important as effectively building into a few faithful disciples
- Feel – encouraged that exponential change is possible through Jesus' strategy
- Choose – to select and invest in one or two people to start training

Discussion Starter:

- **What were the first things Jesus did in his earthly ministry?**
- **On what basis did Jesus choose his disciples?** What does it appear he was looking for?
- **With whom did Jesus spend most of his time?** Why do you think he invested his time in this way?
- **What was Jesus' usual approach with large crowds of people?** How did he feel about them? How did he treat them?

The Master Plan of Evangelism (Robert Coleman)

1. Selection

- "Jesus concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow." (27)
- "One cannot transform a world except as individuals in the world are transformed, and individuals cannot be transformed except as they are molded in the hands of the Master." (30)

"One must decide where he wants his ministry to count – in the momentary applause of popular recognition or in the reproduction of his life in a few chosen men who will carry on his work after he has gone. Really it is a question of which generation we are living for."

Robert Coleman

The Master Plan of Evangelism p. 39

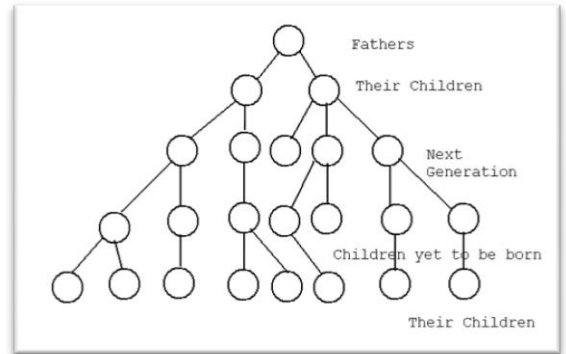
2. Association

- "Having called his men, Jesus made a practice of being with them. This was the essence of his training program – just letting his disciples follow him...He was his own school and curriculum." (41)
- "There is simply no substitute for getting with people, and it is ridiculous to imagine that anything less, short or a miracle, can develop strong Christian leadership." (49)

- “With Jesus’ ministry, “knowledge was gained by association before it was understood by explanation... One living sermon is worth a hundred explanations.” (42)

3. Consecration

- “It soon became apparent that being a disciple of Christ involved far more than a joyful acceptance of the Messianic promise: it meant the surrender of one’s whole life to the Master in absolute submission to his sovereignty.”(52)
- The example of obedience: “The cross was but the crowning climax of Jesus’ commitment to do the will of God. It forever showed that obedience could not be compromised – it was always a commitment unto death.” (57)
- The importance of obedience: “...no one can ever be a leader until first he has learned to follow a leader.” (58)



4. Impartation

- “That is why he lost no opportunity to impress on his followers the deep compulsion of his own soul aflame with the love of God for a lost world. Everything he did and said was motivated by this consuming passion. His life was simply the revelation in time of God’s eternal purpose to save for himself a people. Supremely this is what the disciples needed to learn, not in theory, but in practice.”(62)
- “In this light, evangelism was not interpreted as a human undertaking, but as a divine project which had been going on from the beginning and would continue until God’s purpose was fulfilled. It was altogether the Spirit’s work. All the disciples were asked to do was to let the Spirit have complete charge of their lives.”
- “The very ability to give away our life in Christ is the proof of its possession...The Spirit of God always insists on making Christ known.” (67,69)

5. Demonstration

- “(Jesus) did not ask anyone to do or be anything which first he had not demonstrated in His own life, thereby not only proving its workability, but its relevance to his mission in life.” (76)

6. Delegation

- “Jesus was always building his ministry for the time when his disciples would have to take over his work, and go out into the world with the redeeming gospel.” (79)
- “Evangelism is not an optional accessory to our life. It is the heartbeat of all that we are called to be and do. It is the commission of the church which gives meaning to all else that is undertaken in the name of Christ.” (88)

7. Supervision

- “Jesus made it a point to meet with his disciples following their tours of service to hear their reports and to share with them the blessedness of his ministry in doing the same thing. In this sense, one might say that his teaching rotated between instruction and assignment. What time he was with them, he was helping them to understand the reason for some previous action or getting them ready for some new experience. His questions, illustrations, warnings, and admonitions were calculated to bring out those things that they needed to know in order to fulfill his work, which was the evangelization of the world.” (89)
- “He did not expect more from his disciples than they could do, but he did expect their best, and this he expected always to be improved as they grew in knowledge and grace. His plan of teaching, by example, assignment, and constant checkup, was calculated to bring out the best that was in them.” (94)
- “It is crucial that those engaging in the work of evangelism have personal supervision and guidance until such time as they are matured enough to carry on alone.” (95)

8. Reproduction

- “Jesus intended for the disciples to produce his likeness in and through the church being gathered out of the world. Thus his ministry in the Spirit would be duplicated many-fold by his ministry in the lives of his disciples.” (97)
- “This is the new evangelism we need...men and women who want only for Christ to produce his life in and through them according to his won good pleasure.” (105-6)

“The wandering masses of the world must have a demonstration of what to believe—they must have a mentor who will stand among them and say, ‘Follow me, I know the way’...Yet we must realize that the kind of energy that Christ needs does not happen by accident...If we are to train people, we must work for them. We must seek them. We must win them. Above all, we must pray for them...wherever they are, they must be reached and trained to become effective witnesses of our Lord.”(109-110)

Bible Focus: John 1:35-42

- **What did Andrew conclude about Jesus based on John’s assertion that he was “the Lamb of God?”** (v. 41; vv. 27,29,30,32-34) How important was John’s testimony about Jesus in the calling of the first disciples?

“Disciples must be brought to maturity. There can be no substitute for total victory, and our field is the world. We have not been called to hold the fort, but to storm the heights.”

Robert Coleman
The Master Plan of Evangelism p. 95

- **How well did Andrew and Simon know Jesus before he called them from their boats?** (see Mark 1:16-20; Matt. 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11)

- **We often talk about someone “receiving Jesus,” – is that an accurate way to describe what happened with the calling of the 12 disciples?** What is a better way?
- **How did Simon hear about Jesus?** (v. 40-41)
- **In these and other passages, how do you see the principles of Selection, Association, Consecration and Impartation at work in Jesus’ ministry?**

Group Discussion:

- Let’s focus on the first four of the eight principles Coleman outlines. **Do you agree or disagree with his premise – that Jesus’ strategy was to invest in a few, rather than reaching the masses?**
- **How have you seen the first 4 principles applied in a church, ministry or discipling relationship?**
- **Who do you know at our church that is an active disciple-maker, meeting with and investing in a few disciples?**
- **How much of our time and energy as a church, and as individuals, is devoted to programs to reach the masses as opposed to investing in the training of a few faithful disciples?** Does this reality need to be evaluated and possibly adjusted?

“The aim of Christian ministry is not to build attendance on Sunday, bolster the membership role, get more people into small groups or expand the budget... The fundamental goal is to make disciples who make other disciples, to the glory of God. We want to see people converted... followed up and established as mature disciples of Jesus; and... to be trained in knowledge, godliness and skills so that they will in turn make disciples of others.”

Marhsall & Payne
The Trellis and the Vine p. 152

“In most of the churches we know and visit, the problem is that there is not nearly enough one-to-one personal work happening. Structured activities and group events have taken over, and those on the pastoral team spend their time organizing and managing, rather than chasing and discipling and training people... The focus has shifted away from individuals and their growth as disciples, to activities and events and growth in numbers.” (*The Trellis and the Vine*, p. 153)

growth by addition					growth by multiplication				
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	4	8	16
6	7	8	9	10	32	64	128	256	512
11	12	13	14	15	1,024	2,048	4,096	8,192	16,384
16	17	18	19	20	32,768	65,536	131,072	262,144	524,288
21	22	23	24	25	1,048,576	2,097,152	4,194,304	8,388,608	16,777,216
26	27	28	29	30	33,554,432	67,108,864	134,217,728	268,435,456	536,870,912

The Master Plan of Evangelism

[The following materials adapted from the EPCA church planting bootcamp, 2009, assembled by Bruce Redmond, Church Planting Director for the Southeast District.]

“Are our efforts to keep things going fulfilling the great commission of Christ? Do we see an ever-expanding company of dedicated people reaching the world with the gospel as a result of our ministry? That we are busy in the church trying to work one program of evangelism after another cannot be denied. But are we accomplishing our objective?”

(Coleman p.19)

WHAT IS OUR OBJECTIVE?

1. What did Jesus say His objective was while He lived on earth?
 - a. Luke 19:10

 - b. John 10:10

2. According to Jesus, what are the primary objectives of the church?
 - a. Matthew 28:19-20

 - b. John 20:21

 - c. Acts 1:8

WHAT IS OUR STRATEGY?

Form follows function (p.20).

“We must know how a course of action fits into the overall plan God has for our lives if it is to thrill our souls with a sense of destiny. This is true of any particular procedure or technique employed to propagate the gospel. Just as a building is constructed according to the plan for its use, so everything we do must have a purpose. Otherwise our activity can be lost in aimlessness and confusion.” (Coleman)

3. Write out your definition of Evangelism.

4. Coleman explains that this book is not a study of Jesus' evangelistic methods, but of His evangelistic strategy, or principles. What is the difference between the two?

5. What are some strategies we could use as individuals and as church or small group this year to win people to Christ?

Personal Study 1 – Selection

“Jesus’ concern was not with programs to reach multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow.” (Coleman p. 27)

IN THE BEGINNING

1. How did Jesus begin His 3 year earthly ministry?
2. Why was this His initial objective?
3. Did Jesus’ earliest efforts at soul winning have a great impact on religious life of His day?
4. So why did He do His ministry that way?

THE DISCIPLES

5. Look at Paul’s instruction to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2. How is this similar to Jesus’ strategy? Write out the progression of the passage.

6. How many men did Jesus choose to work with?

“One cannot transform a world except as individuals in the world are transformed, and individuals cannot be transformed except as they are molded in the hands of the Master.”

(Coleman p. 30)

7. What are good principles to use when deciding how many disciples it is wise to work with?
8. Did Jesus have the same relationship with each of the 12?
9. With whom did He share a more special relationship? Why?
10. Does Jesus’ strategy of “concentration upon a few” mean that He neglected the needs of the masses?

“Though He did what He could to help the multitudes, He had to devote Himself primarily to a few men, rather than the masses, in order that the masses could at last be saved.”

(Coleman p.36)

11. What are the names of the 12? (Matthew 10:2-4)
12. What kind of men were they? What do you know about the 12 that gives you insight on their background, personality, occupation, etc.?
13. Why might Jesus have chosen these kind of men?
14. What do you think would be good characteristics to look for in a disciple?
15. Three characteristics to look for are FAT people:
 - a. **F**aithful
 - b. **A**vailable
 - c. **T**eachable

“One must decide where he wants his ministry to count – in the momentary applause of popular recognition or in the reproduction of his life in a few chosen men [women] who will carry on his work after he has gone. Really it is a question of which generation we are living for.”

(Coleman p.39)

15. What person(s) will you place a priority on winning and/or training?

Personal Study 2 – Association

“Having called his men, Jesus made a practice of being with them. This was the essence of his training program – just letting his disciples follow him...He was his own school and curriculum.”

(Coleman p.41)

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

1. Read Mark 3:13-19, the passage about the appointing of the 12 disciples. What does it say is the purpose of the designating of the 12?
2. In Luke 8 and 9 we see at least a dozen experiences where the disciples were able to share with Jesus as they were with him. Read the passage and record the opportunities the disciples had here.

3. Did Jesus spend more or less time with the disciples in the second and third years of His ministry?

4. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared ten times before His ascension. (Matt. 28:1-10; 16-20; Mark 16:9-20; Luke 24:13-35; 36-53; John 20:10-18; 19-23; 24-29; 21:1-14; Acts 1:3-9) To what groups of people did He appear? Why do you think this is?

FOLLOW – UP

5. Coleman estimates that about half of people who profess faith and join the church eventually fall away (p. 49)? He attributes this to a lack of relational follow up with new believers – a lack of close association with them. To what extent do you agree?

6. Jesus very clearly demonstrated the importance of personal follow-up, not only with His disciples, but of others as well. Look up the following verses to see examples of this.
 - a. Luke 19:1-9

 - b. John 4:39-42

 - c. Mark 10:46-52

7. In summary, what is the best way to “follow-up” somebody?

“There is simply no substitute for getting with people, and it is ridiculous to imagine that anything less, short or a miracle, can develop strong Christian leadership.”
 (Coleman p. 49)

“With Jesus’ ministry, “knowledge was gained by association before it was understood by explanation... One living sermon is worth a hundred explanations.”
 (Coleman p.42)

Personal Study 3 – Consecration

“It soon became apparent that being a disciple of Christ involved far more than a joyful acceptance of the Messianic promise: it meant the surrender of one’s whole life to the Master in absolute submission to his sovereignty.”
 (Coleman p.52)

1. What does the word “consecrate” mean?

2. What does the word "disciple" mean?

*"...no one can ever be a leader until first he has learned to follow a leader."
(Coleman p.58)*

CONDITIONS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

3. What three conditions for discipleship are mentioned in the gospel of John?
a. John 8:31

b. John 13:35

c. John 15:8

4. Read Luke 9:57-62. What did Jesus say to each of the 3 men who came to Him as prospective followers? What did He mean?

a. V. 58

b. V. 60

c. V. 62

5. What do the following verses tell us about Jesus' commitment to the will of God?

a. Luke 22:42

b. John 4:34

c. John 5:30

d. John 15:10

6. Read John 14:15,21,23 and 15:10

a. What does God say is the way to express love for Him?

b. What act of obedience did Jesus perform that supremely expresses His love? (See John 15:13, Romans 5:8)

"The cross was but the crowning climax of Jesus' commitment to do the will of God. It forever showed that obedience could not be compromised – it was always a commitment unto death."
(Coleman p.57)

7. There are definitely benefits to obedience. Coleman says, "There would be no development of character or purpose...without it." What are some other benefits to obedience?

- a. John 8: 31-32
- b. John 13:15-17
- c. John 14:21

COSTS OF DISCIPLESHIP

8. Read Luke 14:25-33. This passage lays out for us the cost of following Christ (discipleship). What costs are mentioned in the passage?

9. What are other costs mentioned in:
- a. Luke 16:13
 - b. Luke 18:22

"Absolute obedience to the will of God, of course, was the controlling principle of the Master's own life. In his human nature he continually gave consent to the will of his Father which made it possible for God to use his life fully according to its intended purpose."

(Coleman p.57)

"We are engaged in warfare, the issues of which are life and death, and every day that we are indifferent to our responsibilities is a day lost to the cause of Christ."

(Coleman p. 59)

Are you willing to "consider the costs" of following Christ? Can you "accept" the costs?

Personal Study 4 – Impartation

“That is why he lost no opportunity to impress on his followers the deep compulsion of his own soul aflame with the love of God for a lost world. Everything he did and said was motivated by this consuming passion. His life was simply the revelation in time of God’s eternal purpose to save for himself a people. Supremely this is what the disciples needed to learn, not in theory, but in practice.” (Coleman p.62)

THE EXAMPLE OF IMPARTATION

1. What does the word “impartation” mean?

2. When God gives something to us, it is always with the understanding that we would turn around and give it away. What are some specific things the Lord has us give in response to what has been given to us?
 - a. Matthew 10:8

 - b. John 13:34

 - c. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

 - d. Colossians 3:13

3. What is another verse that we looked at that exemplifies the idea of impartation?

4. Jesus was the perfect example of giving to His disciples what had been given to Him by His Father. What were some of the things that Jesus imparted to His disciples?
 - a. John 16:33

 - b. John 17:13

 - c. John 17:22

 - d. Matt. 16:19

5. What does Christ want us to impart?

6. One of the ways Jesus imparted this self-giving love to His disciples was by embracing what they disdained and rejecting what they valued. What were those things?
 - a. Physical satisfaction
 - b. Poverty
 - c. Humiliation
 - d. Prestige
 - e. Death
 - f. Popular acclaim
 - g. Sorrow

THE POWER TO IMPART

7. While Jesus lived on the earth, the Father could impart Himself to His disciples through the person of Jesus. How does God impart Himself to us today?

8. Read Acts 1:8 again. What did Jesus say would be the result of the coming of the Holy Spirit?

9. Besides giving us power to share our faith, what other roles does the Holy Spirit play in evangelism?
 - a. Mark 13:11

 - b. John 16:8

 - c. John 16:14

"In this light, evangelism was not interpreted as a human undertaking, but as a divine project which had been going on from the beginning and would continue until God's purpose was fulfilled. It was altogether the Spirit's work. All the disciples were asked to do was to let the Spirit have complete charge of their lives."

"The very ability to give away our life in Christ is the proof of its possession...The Spirit of God always insists on making Christ known."

(Coleman p.67-69)

Lesson 12 – Disciple-Making

Big Idea: As disciple-makers, we need to invest in and equip people to start making disciples themselves

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – that the goal of disciple-making is sending people, not keeping them
- Feel – challenged to give leadership and ministry away
- Choose – to encourage and empower someone they have been building a relationship with

Discussion Starter:

- **How were you trained and prepared for the job you are doing now, vocationally?**
- **How do you think most jobs at church get done? How much training do most people receive before they are given responsibility?**
- **How did Jesus train and equip his disciples? What were his key strategies to prepare them as disciple-makers?**

Bible Focus: 2 Timothy

- Read 2 Tim. 1:11-14 – What does Paul instruct Timothy to keep and guard (vv. 13-14)? Where did these things come from? Whose help will Timothy need to faithfully guard this good deposit?
- Read 2 Tim. 2:1-2 – Where should Timothy's strength come from? What is Timothy to pass on? To whom is he to pass it on? Why is this task so important?
- Read 2 Tim. 3:10-12 – How did Paul invest in and equip Timothy for the work he was doing?
- Read 2 Tim. 3:14-16 – What is Timothy to continue in? Why can he be confident to do so?
- What is the purpose of Scripture (3:15)?
- What is Scripture useful for (3:16)?
- What are the results of the faithful ministry of the word (3:17)?
- Read 2 Tim. 4:1-2 – What task should be central to Timothy's ministry?
- Read 2 Tim. 4:6-8 – What may have motivated Paul to write this letter? What does this reality teach us about the importance of investing in and equipping disciples?

“Despite the almost limitless number of contexts in which it might happen, what happens is the same: a Christian brings a truth from God’s word to someone else, praying that God would make that word bear fruit through the inward working of his Spirit. That’s vine work. Everything else is trellis.” (39)

Marshall & Payne
The Trellis and the Vine p. 39

The Master Plan of Evangelism (Robert Coleman)

9. Selection

10. Association

11. Consecration

12. Impartation

13. Demonstration

- “(Jesus) did not ask anyone to do or be anything which first he had not demonstrated in His own life, thereby not only proving its workability, but its relevance to his mission in life.” (76)

14. Delegation

- “Jesus was always building his ministry for the time when his disciples would have to take over his work, and go out into the world with the redeeming gospel.” (79)
- “Evangelism is not an optional accessory to our life. It is the heartbeat of all that we are called to be and do. It is the commission of the church which gives meaning to all else that is undertaken in the name of Christ.” (88)

15. Supervision

- “Jesus made it a point to meet with his disciples following their tours of service to hear their reports and to share with them the blessedness of his ministry in doing the same thing. In this sense, one might say that his teaching rotated between instruction and assignment. What time he was with them, he was helping them to understand the reason for some previous action or getting them ready for some new experience. His questions, illustrations, warnings, and admonitions were calculated to bring out those things that they needed to know in order to fulfill his work, which was the evangelization of the world.” (89)
- “He did not expect more from his disciples than they could do, but he did expect their best, and this he expected always to be improved as they grew in knowledge and grace. His plan of teaching, by example, assignment, and constant checkup, was calculated to bring out the best that was in them.” (94)
- “It is crucial that those engaging in the work of evangelism have personal supervision and guidance until such time as they are matured enough to carry on alone.” (95)

16. Reproduction

- “Jesus intended for the disciples to produce his likeness in and through the church being gathered out of the world. Thus his ministry in the Spirit would be duplicated many-fold by his ministry in the lives of his disciples.” (97)
- “This is the new evangelism we need...men and women who want only for Christ to produce his life in and through them according to his won good pleasure.” (105-6)

“Training is the engine of gospel growth. Under God, the way to get more gospel growth happening is to train more and more mature, godly Christians to be vine-workers – that is, to see more people equipped, resourced and encouraged to speak the word of God prayerfully to other people...” (90)

Marhsall & Payne
The Trellis and the Vine p. 90

“The wandering masses of the world must have a demonstration of what to believe- they must have a mentor who will stand among them and say, ‘Follow me, I know the way’ ...Yet we must realize that the kind of energy that Christ needs does not happen by accident...If we are to train people, we must work for them. We must seek them. We must win them. Above all, we must pray for them...wherever they are, they must be reached and trained to become effective witnesses of our Lord.”(109-110)

Group Discussion:

Last week we worked through the first four steps in Jesus' master plan of evangelism: how he selected certain men, associated with them and built into their lives. Then he consecrated them, calling them to 100% commitment, and as they left everything to follow him, he imparted himself to them. “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one” (John 17:22). Through this gift of himself, and later the Holy Spirit, the disciples would be empowered for ministry.

The next four steps in Jesus' plan included demonstration – modeling incarnational, relational ministry that touched the untouchable and showed God's love in word and deed. Jesus early on began to delegate responsibility, sending his followers out to preach the kingdom and prepare the way for his arrival. Much of his instruction was on the job training, debriefing and supervision of the ministry they were doing. His was no sterile classroom lecture – Jesus' training was hands-on and required the full commitment of his disciples. And all of it was leading to reproduction, when they would be fully prepared to make disciples of Christ, in the power of His Spirit.

- **When learning a new truth or skill, why is it important to practice it? Why did Jesus send his disciples out to teach and heal so early in his ministry (e.g. Luke 9:1-6; 10:1-11)?**

“This is what God is now doing in the world: Spirit-backed gospel preaching leading to the salvation of souls. It’s his program, his agenda, his priority, his focus, his project... he is gathering a new Christ-centered people as his very own; a quiet, steadily growing profusion of leaves on the great vine of his kingdom.”

Marhsall & Payne
The Trellis and the Vine p. 35

- **What gave Jesus the confidence to entrust ministry to untested disciples (see Luke 10:21)?**
- **After Jesus ascended into heaven, leaving the work to his followers, what did people notice about these men (see Acts 4:13)? What had Jesus done to prepare them so well for the work they would have to do?**
- **How are we applying these principles at our church? How could we improve at this as individuals and as a church?**

Personal Study 1 – Demonstration

Jesus was always demonstrating how to live before His disciples. Coleman points out three prominent habits the disciples could not have missed: Jesus' prayer life, his absolute confidence in Scripture and his focus on winning souls for the kingdom. First of all, Jesus frequently withdrew to pray and commune with his father. This habit was so consistent, they eventually asked him to teach them how to do it (Luke 11:1-11). Jesus' use of Scripture clearly demonstrated its central importance to his life and ministry. And nearly everything Jesus did was for the purpose of saving souls or training disciples. Through their close association with him as their rabbi and master, the disciples naturally picked up these values and habits, simply from his example.

1. What other areas of life can you think of that Jesus demonstrated to the disciples?

2. What do the following verses say about the prayer life of Jesus?
 - a. Matthew 14:23

 - b. Mark 1:35

 - c. Luke 6:12

3. Jesus very clearly demonstrated the importance of knowing and using Scripture in life. Can you think of specific instances where He did this?

4. What do the following verses say about the benefits of Scripture to our lives?
 - a. Psalm 119:11

 - b. Psalm 119:105

 - c. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

 - d. Hebrews 4:12

“(Jesus) did not ask anyone to do or be anything which first he had not demonstrated in His own life, thereby not only proving its workability, but its relevance to his mission in life.”

(Coleman p.76)

Personal Study 2 – Delegation

“Jesus was always building his ministry for the time when his disciples would have to take over his work, and go out into the world with the redeeming gospel.”

(Coleman p.79)

1. How soon after His relationship with the disciples began did Jesus send them on an evangelistic mission?
2. Did He give them any responsibility before that?
3. After that first year, Jesus sent the 12 on their first mission. Before letting them go, however, He gave them some briefing instructions. In a sense, He outlined for them explicitly what He had been teaching them implicitly all the time. Read Matthew 10, and the corresponding passages in Mark 6:7-13 and Luke 9:1-6. What were the instructions He gave and the principles behind them?
 - a. Matthew 10:1; Mark 6:7; Luke 9:1-2
 - b. Matthew 10:5-6
 - c. Matthew 10:8-10
 - d. Matthew 10:11; Mark 6:10; Luke 9:4
 - e. Matthew 10:16-32
4. Much of what is recorded of Jesus' post-resurrection conversation with His followers has to do with the very task of winning people to Himself. Jesus' clearly delegated the work of evangelism to be carried on after He ascended into heaven. Look up the following verses to see exactly what He said.
 - a. John 20:21
 - b. John 21:15-17
 - c. Matthew 28:18-21; Mark 16:15-18
 - d. Acts 1:8

“Evangelism is not an optional accessory to our life. It is the heartbeat of all that we are called to be and do. It is the commission of the church which gives meaning to all else that is undertaken in the name of Christ.”

(Coleman p. 88)

Personal Study 3 – Supervision & Reproduction

"Jesus made it a point to meet with his disciples following their tours of service to hear their reports and to share with them the blessedness of his ministry in doing the same thing. In this sense, one might say that his teaching rotated between instruction and assignment. What time he was with them, he was helping them to understand the reason for some previous action or getting them ready for some new experience. His questions, illustrations, warnings, and admonitions were calculated to bring out those things that they needed to know in order to fulfill his work, which was the evangelization of the world."

(Coleman p. 89)

SUPERVISION

1. How would you define supervision?
2. Why do you think it was important that Jesus supervise the disciples as he began to hand the ministry over to them?
3. Yesterday we looked at how Jesus delegated an evangelistic assignment to the Twelve. What did the disciples do after completing the task? (Mark 6:30, Luke 9:10)
4. Jesus then sends out the seventy-two (Luke 10:1-16). After they return, Luke records that not only did the disciples share with Jesus, but that Jesus also instructs them. Read Luke 10:17-22. What different components are involved in Jesus' supervision?
5. Read Matthew 14:13-21, 22-33 and Matthew 16:5-12. What do these incidents tell you about the disciples need for supervision?

"He did not expect more from his disciples than they could do, but he did expect their best, and this he expected always to be improved as they grew in knowledge and grace. His plan of teaching, by example, assignment, and constant checkup, was calculated to bring out the best that was in them." (Coleman p.94)

"It is crucial that those engaging in the work of evangelism have personal supervision and guidance until such time as they are matured enough to carry on alone."
(Coleman p.95)

*"We have not been called to hold the fort, but to storm the heights."
(Coleman p.95)*

REPRODUCTION

"Jesus intended for the disciples to produce his likeness in and through the church being gathered out of the world. Thus his ministry in the Spirit would be duplicated many-fold by his ministry in the lives of his disciples."

(Coleman p.97)

1. What does reproduction mean?

2. What would it look like to reproduce yourself in the lives of one of your disciples?

3. Read John 15:1-17, 26-27.
Who is the vine? Branches? Vinedresser?
 - a. What is the purpose of the vine and the branches?
 - b. What happens to the branches that do not bear fruit?
 - c. What happens to the branches that produce fruit?
 - d. What kind of fruit is being produced?
 - e. How does fruit last?

4. What does Matthew 7:17-20 say about this issue of bearing fruit?

5. What does Coleman explain about the primary verb in the words of Christ in His Great Commission? What are the participles?

6. Read Matthew 9:35-38.
 - a. What was Jesus' response when He saw the crowds?

 - b. What did He tell His disciples to do?

 - c. Why is what He instructed them to do significant?

7. What is the test of any work of evangelism?

8. What are the criteria on which any evangelistic effort should base its success?

*"This is the new evangelism we need...men and women who want only for Christ to produce his life in and through them according to his own good pleasure."
(Coleman p.105-6)*

Personal Study 4 – The Master & Your Plan

*"Everyone has to live by some plan. The plan is the organizing principle around which the aim of life is carried out. We may not be conscious of the plan in every action, or even know that we have a plan, but nonetheless our actions invariably unfold some kind of a pattern at the center of things."
(Coleman p.107)*

1. What is the plan of your life? Are you aware of one? What is the purpose for which you are driven?

2. Who do you intend to be Master of your life?

3. What will be your mission?

4. Must everybody's method be exactly the same? What should be the same for everybody?

5. What do you want to be remembered for? If you died right now, would you be remembered for that?

6. What would you say is the greatest desire of your life? Does the way you live your life right now reflect that?

"The wandering masses of the world must have a demonstration of what to believe- they must have a mentor who will stand among them and say, 'Follow me, I know the way' ...Yet we must realize that the kind of energy that Christ needs does not happen by accident...If we are to train people, we must work for them. We must seek them. We must win them. Above all, we must pray for them...wherever they are, they must be reached and trained to become effective witnesses of our Lord."
(Coleman pp.109-10)

7. What is your concept of success?

"It might well be that some cherished plans of our own making may have to be redirected, or perhaps abandoned altogether...In all probability our whole concept of success will have to be reevaluated."
(Coleman p.107)

8. Do you think your concept of success needs to be adjusted at all?

"But whatever the particular form our methodology takes, Jesus' life would teach us that finding and training people to reach people must have priority."
(Coleman p.108)

9. Can you identify any stumbling blocks, or things that might distract you from pursuing a lifelong life-style of evangelism and discipleship? If so, what can you do to avoid these pitfalls?

"The main thing is to help them keep growing in grace and in knowledge...We will need to exercise patience, for their development very likely will be slow and encumbered with many setbacks. But as long as they are honestly seeking to know the truth, and are willing to follow it, they will someday grow up to maturity in Christ."
(Coleman pp.113-14)

"Probably many of those we start out with will think it too much and fall by the way. We might as well face it now...Yes, there will be disappointments. Those who do come through, and go out to project our life into harvest fields, will be a source of increasing joy as the years go by...We are not primarily living in the present."
(Coleman p.115)

"The world is desperately seeking someone to follow. That they will follow someone is certain, but will that person be one who knows the way of Christ, or will he or she be one like themselves leading them only on into greater darkness?"
(Coleman p.116)

Lesson 13 – Church Planting

Big Idea: The natural results of disciple-making are new believers, new leaders and new churches

Objectives: as a result of this lesson, learners will...

- Know – that church planting is central to God's plan of redemption
- Feel – encouraged that nothing can stop the advance of the gospel
- Choose – to actively pray for a church planting movement in our city

Discussion Starter:

- **How do you feel about change? What is the last major change that took place in your life? How did you respond to it?**
- **Why is reproduction both natural and necessary for all healthy, growing things? Would you say this is also true for churches? Why or why not?**
- **Have you ever been involved in any way with a church plant? Share about the joys and challenges of that experience.**

Church planting is all the rage these days. Most denominations have bought into the critical need in our country for more healthy, dynamic churches – and have concluded that starting new churches is the most effective way to reach people in our ever changing society. You may have opinions about the volume and style of the music, the content of the sermons and the massive investment in marketing, but it has become almost impossible to ignore the church planting movement that is underway both here and around the world.

Now, while the buzz is new, church planting goes all the way back to the book of Acts. As the gospel advanced from Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria, the result was new churches. Like a prairie fire gaining momentum, the Word began to spread throughout the known world. Everywhere that people responded to the good news, they were gathered into believing communities, with elders appointed to teach, care for and oversee their growth (Acts 14:23). Yet even as each body grew and multiplied (1 Thes. 1:7-8), the believers saw themselves as part of one united church (Acts 9:31).

“The local church is the only hope for our world. The Church is not a human invention, simply a man-made organization... It is a divine, God-ordained, Christ-commissioned organism created to be an extension of the work of Jesus Christ. Its purpose is to offer salvation, wholeness, healing and transformation to a sin-sick world.”

Stephen Gray
Planting Fast Growing Churches, p. 31

Today we will see three truths from Scripture about church planting:

1. **The church (and therefore church planting) is central to God's plan** of redeeming a people for himself, so
2. **Church planting is not an optional pursuit for some**, but is the responsibility of every believer and every church and;
3. **It is going to take all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people!**

Bible Focus: Ephesians 3:6-11

- **What was the mystery God revealed to Paul** (v. 6; and Peter in Acts 10:34-35)? What was Paul's special calling (v. 8)?
- **How has God chosen to make his wisdom known in the world (v. 10)?** ["through the church."]
- How long has God been planning this (v. 11)? **Was the church God's plan B?**

The fact is that God has chosen to reveal his glory to the world **through the church!** As people hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and are joined together with him (Eph. 2:4-6), they automatically become members of his body (Eph. 2:13,15; 3:6; 4:4). It is Biblically unthinkable to be a follower of Jesus Christ and not be vitally connected to a local body of believers – a church! Speaking to division in the local body in Corinth, Paul reminds the believers there that, "you yourselves are God's temple." While there is clear application of this principle for individuals (1 Cor. 6:19), the context here is the corporate unity of the church. Paul concludes that "all are yours, and you are of Christ and Christ is of God" (3:22-23). All believers belong to one another, we are organically and spiritually connected like the parts of a body to our living head, Christ.

So wherever the gospel goes, the church automatically and necessarily goes with it.

"Wherever two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matt. 18:20). Jesus made this statement regarding how to handle a brother who has sinned against you. So Jesus' presence and authority, even for church discipline, are promised when just two or three people gather in his name. The size of the church doesn't matter. A handful of believers gathering for worship and instruction, under the authority of qualified elders, is a church. This is what motivated Paul to write so much, and with so much passion, to the churches he had helped plant (or had heard about). The name of Jesus was at stake, and his body would either be built up or torn down.

Scripture is clear that **the church is the key to God's plan** of extending salvation to the ends of the earth. Jesus promised to build the church and guaranteed that it would not fail (Matt. 16:18). In the great commission, every believer is charged to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19) – a command that will result in evangelism, missions and thereby the planting of new churches. So just as disciple-making is not an optional activity for a special class of Christians, so **church planting is expected of all of us.**

Finally, **it is going to take all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people.** Our mission takes us to all nations because Jesus' vision was to spread the knowledge of the LORD throughout the earth (Is. 11:9; 60:3). As Paul became "all things to all men" in order to save as many as possible (1 Cor. 9:22), so we must think like missionaries and find ways to creatively reach out to people of every race, culture, socio-economic status and neighborhood.

Bible Focus: 1 Cor. 9:19-27

Paul's concern in this chapter is to establish his rights as an apostle, under the authority of Christ. One right granted to pastors and elders in the early church was compensation for their ministry of the word (1 Cor. 9:14; 1 Tim. 5:17-18). As a tentmaker, Paul was usually able to conduct his ministry without depending on financial support, setting an example of hard work and willing sacrifice for the sake of the gospel. So in this sense, Paul says he is free and obligated to no person (1 Cor. 9:19).

- **Though he is free, how does Paul view himself in relation to other people (v. 19)?** What is his goal?
- **What is Paul's strategy to accomplish this soul-winning goal (vv. 20-22)?** What do you think this looked like? How do you think it worked out practically?
- **To what extent was Paul devoted to his mission (vv. 24-27)?** How does this compare to our usual attitude toward evangelism and church planting?
- **What are the implications of this passage for our evangelism and church planting efforts?**
- **What are some next steps we could take to keep the vision of church planting alive in our church body?**

Top 10 Reasons to Plant Churches

10. **Because New Churches are Needed** - most American churches are in plateau or decline, and thousands are closing every year¹
9. **Because America is Mostly Unchurched** – less than one in five people is in church on any given Sunday (17.5%, Dave Olsen – theamericanchurch.org)
8. **Because America is Changing** – there will soon be no majority culture in most metro areas, and new churches (some multi-ethnic!) are needed to reach the nations coming to our door
7. **Because it Works** - "Planting new churches is the single most effective evangelistic methodology known under heaven." C. Peter Wagner²
6. **Because we Believe Jesus' Promise** – to build a victorious church (Matt. 16:18)
5. **To Impact our Community** – extending Jesus' love into new areas and among less reached people groups
4. **To Renew the Body of Christ** – with new ideas, new leaders and deeper faith
3. **To Reach the Lost** (Luke 19:10)
2. **To Fulfill the Great Commission** (Matt. 28:18-20)
1. **To Magnify God's Glory** (Eph. 3:10,21)³

"The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for the 1) numerical growth of the Body of Christ in any city, and the 2) continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city. Nothing else - not crusades, outreach programs, parachurch ministries, growing mega-churches, congregational consulting, nor church renewal processes - will have the consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting. This is an eyebrow raising statement. But to those who have done any study at all, it is not even controversial."

Tim Keller, "Why Plant Churches", published in *The Movement – Redeemer Urban Church Planting Center e-Newsletter* (February 2002), 1.

¹ Win Arn argues 85% of America's churches are declining, and another 14% are only growing by transfer, not conversion growth. So only 1% of our churches are growing by conversion growth! Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches*, p. 32

² Evangelical churches less than 3 years old win 10 people to Christ for every 100 in attendance; churches from 3-15 years old win 5 people for every 100; and churches over 15 years old win 3 people to Christ for every 100. Bruce McNicol, *Christianity Today*, "Churches die with dignity," Jan. 14, 1991, p. 69.

³ This list is adapted from Pastor Aaron Wojnicki's "Why We Plant Churches," March 2, 2008.

Personal study 1 – Church Planting in Acts

The groundwork for the explosive expansion of the early church was already firmly in place by the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit arrived. The Jewish people had long been prepared for the coming of Messiah, so the preaching of the early church was naturally focused on them. Recognized Jewish teachers, like Paul, gained an immediate audience in synagogues that were scattered throughout the Mediterranean. Plus, the 3,000 that responded to the gospel on that day of Pentecost included Jews from all over the place. Many of them became the first missionaries and church planters, carrying this good news back home with them!

Obviously the main character in the gospels is Jesus. In Acts you might guess that the main character is Peter or Paul. But the reality is that the central character in the book of Acts is the Word of God. Different preachers proclaim the Word, and some, like Paul, circle back to visit the disciples they have made. But the Word steadily advances throughout the book, moving from Jerusalem to Samaria, then Antioch, throughout the Mediterranean region and finally to Rome!

Read it!

Next to each reference in the book of Acts, mark down who preached the word and who responded to it:

Acts Reference	Preacher	Audience
2:41		
4:4		
4:31		
6:7	“And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.”	
8:4		
8:14		
8:25		
10:44		
11:1		
11:19		
12:24	“But the word of God increased and multiplied.”	
13:5,7		
13:44,46 13:48-49		
14:3		
14:25		
15:35		
16:32		
17:11		
18:11		
19:10		
19:20	“So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.”	
20:32	“And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace , which is able to build you up and to give you the	

Study it! Acts 13:42-52

- After preaching the gospel in Pisidian Antioch, what was the initial response of those gathered in the synagogue (v. 42-43)?
- How many gathered to hear the Word the following Sabbath (v. 44)?
- Why do you think the Jews were jealous of the crowds listening to Paul (v. 45)?
- How did Paul respond to their abusive talk (v. 45-46)?
- On what basis did Paul redirect his preaching to the Gentiles (v. 47)?
- Who responded to the message (v. 48)?
- How do you think “the word of the Lord spread through the whole region” (v. 49)?
- How did the disciples respond to the increased persecution (vv. 50-52)?

Apply It!

- What can stop the advance of God's Word?
- How does this truth encourage you?
- Who do you know right now that seems to be open and responsive to the gospel? How can you make contact this week to proclaim the word?
- How are you experiencing opposition in your evangelism? How do you think God would have you respond to it?

Personal Study 2 – Conclusion and Calling

Congratulations! You have finished this workbook, and hopefully grown closer to your Lord and Savior in the process. The concepts in this material are not meant to be learned one time and then set aside, but are timeless principles that can guide us throughout our Christian walk.



We should always maintain the perspective that it's all about Jesus (lesson 1), and it's not about me. God is working for His own purposes and His own glory – we are supporting actors that step into the big story for the briefest of moments. And yet, in His grace, God has chosen to pay the price for our sins through Jesus infinite sacrifice. So we have been transformed (lesson 2) completely by the gospel – the old self is gone forever and the new self is wrapped around us like a holy, white robe. Remembering and resting in the truth of my identity in Christ – loved, alive, forgiven and free – will provide great strength and assurance through the ups and downs of life. It is also helpful to recognize the cyclical nature of the spiritual life (lesson 3). We are never standing still, but are always moving closer to Christ or drifting away from him. Sin can lure us away into the whirlpool of death. But the Spirit will lovingly lead us into fullness and joy if we will walk faithfully with Him.

In a way, knowing God is impossible and will be our focus for eternity. But in another way, there are simple things we can do to know God better right now. We can learn to accurately study His word (lesson 4). We can set aside priority time to meet with him in prayer (lesson 5). We can live in the holiness Jesus has given us, through the power of the Holy Spirit (lesson 6). This is the essence of the gospel – that we can know the Almighty Creator of the universe in a real and personal way!

Even as we reach up to know God, we are moved by His love to love and serve His people. Every believer is a part of the body of Christ and so is called to authentically share the joys and burdens of other believers (lesson 7). The heart of connecting is seeing past the sin we all have on the surface of our lives to help each other see the good God has placed inside of us so we can live it out together. Like the parts of the body, each member has been given spiritual gifts that, when directed by their head and used in concert result in mutual benefit and missional effectiveness (lesson 8). As we discover our S.H.A.P.E. for ministry – the way God has uniquely designed each one – we will be more fruitful and fulfilled and the body will function as it should.

The gospel was not meant to be hidden and protected, but to be passed on and proclaimed all over the world. We are the witnesses God has called to testify to His uniqueness, goodness and glory, declaring to the world, "Behold your God!" (lesson 9). The church truly is the only hope for the world. Our words should be supported by loving actions that demonstrate the reality that God has changed us in Christ (lesson 10). The love of Christ compels us to love our neighbors in both word and deed.

Finally, Jesus' strategy to change the world involved the exponential multiplication of disciples and churches. Just as the early church spread throughout the known world in the first centuries after Jesus, so the gospel and the kingdom has continued to expand as faithful disciples have entrusted the unchanging message to faithful men and women who would in turn train and equip others (lessons 11 & 12). The result of this

disciple-making strategy will inevitably be worldwide missions and church planting movements (lesson 13).

All of these principles of discipleship are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. The five habits we have practiced throughout – prayer, Bible study, fellowship, outreach and service – provide consistency and discipline for the growing disciple. And, like the needle on the compass that always points true north, the Holy Spirit will guide and direct our steps as we seek and submit to His leading.



The Word of God will continue to advance, breaking down walls, humbling the proud and lifting up the humble. Nothing can stand against the church that our Lord Jesus continues to build. The only question is whether we will make the most of the opportunities the Lord gives to us – whether we will strategically invest our lives in the kingdom. Our prayer and our confidence is that God is raising up a generation of faithful disciplinarians who will carry the life-changing message of the gospel to the nations in preparation for the glorious coming of our Lord!

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Being confident of this: that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Philippians 1:3-6