

CLASS STUDIES

*GROUNDING PRINCIPLES ON
SALVATION
THE CHURCH/BIBLE AUTHORITY AND
BIBLE STUDY*

Written by Joseph Sullivan

Preface

These lessons deal with fundamental grounding principles. Principles that share necessary truths on salvation, the church (in relation to Bible authority) and the study of the Word.

Some suggestions for studying the content of this lesson. Have a student each in turn, read a small paragraph section. After reading that section have that student and adjacent students, look up the scriptures in the section, to read. Once the paragraph and scriptures have been read, the teacher should discuss the verses being read, in the paragraph. The teacher should also ask questions about what was read and discuss what was in the section.

You will notice that each lesson varies in length of content. If you cover a shorter lesson, then go onto the next lesson. Some lessons will take multiple classes to finish.

I want to give a special thanks to my father and mother, Bill and Jeanne Sullivan. They have been my north star. Their loyalty to God and His Word, has been an unchanging example, throughout the years.

May God bless you in your studies of His precious Word.

Joseph Sullivan

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The Story of Paul

The Apostle Paul was once called Saul. This man was very sinful, (**1 Timothy 1:15**). Saul's bad behavior came from his misplaced zeal towards God.

Saul was educated in religious matters. And was religious in action, (**Acts 22:3**). In this mindset Saul falsely believed Jesus was not God's son. Saul believed the Christian faith was heresy.

He killed Christians, (**1 Corinthians 15:9**) in all good conscious, (**Acts 23:1**), due to that belief.

We too, can have a religious education. We can have misplaced zeal in our religious behavior. We can live a life in all good conscious. And still be lost.

While traveling to a city called Damascus to hurt more of God's people, (**Acts 22:5**) God appeared to Saul, (**Acts 9:3-4**). When Saul saw the Lord, he believed and confessed the name of Jesus, (**Acts 22:8-10**).

The Lord told Saul to keep traveling to the city of Damascus. There Saul "*would be told what to do.*" Saul obeyed God's commandment to go to Damascus to learn His will. When the Lord appeared on the road, Saul was blinded, (**Acts 9:6-8**).

When Saul arrived at Damascus, he was repentant to the point of sorrow. Saul's sorrow caused him to neither eat nor drink for 3 days, (**Acts 9:9**).

Yet did any of these things wash his sins away and save him? Saul had believed and confessed the name of the Lord. Saul had fasted in repentant sorrow. Saul prayed as a sinner a sinner's prayer, yet in all these things, Saul was not saved.

A Christian, named Ananias was sent from God (**Acts 9:11**), to Saul. Ananias told him the gospel, (**Acts 22:12-16**) and healed Saul of his blindness. This healing miracle did not save Saul. What saved Saul?

When sharing the gospel, Ananias spoke the words in **Acts 22:16**, "*And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized (This Greek word is Baptizo and it means immersion) and wash your sins away, calling on His name.*"

Acts 2:38 Explained

The passage of Acts 2:38 is best explained a few verses earlier. At Pentecost, Peter speaks to a Jewish crowd in **Acts 2:36**, saying *“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”* When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, *“Brothers, what shall we do?”*

The Jews heard they had killed the Lord, they were (emotionally) pierced with the Word. The Word is called God’s sword that divides and penetrates the heart, (**Hebrews 4:12**).

These were the same Jews, Christ prayed about. While on the cross, Jesus prayed for these men to be forgiven, (**Luke 23:34**). God provided them a means for such forgiveness, (**Acts 2:23;36-38**).

When these Jews heard the Word, they had remorse. Some who are pierced and are emotionally cut, choose to turn from, not towards the truth. When the Jews heard the Word, a message to them that said, they had killed Jesus in (**Acts 7:51-54**), they were pricked to the heart, as were the Jews in (**Acts 2:37**). Yet these Jews choose to ignore the message and to kill the messenger of the Word. They killed Stephan. He became the first martyr.

Continuing in Acts 2...

In **Acts 2:38** *“Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”*40 *With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”* 41 *Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”*

Peter did not say to those in (**Acts 2:37-38**), when they asked, “what shall we do?” to “pray the sinner’s prayer,” to “accept Jesus into their heart,” etc.

The Apostles had just received the Holy Spirit, (**Acts 1:4; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-5**). Peter under the inspiration of the Spirit said, “*Save yourselves from this corrupt generation,*” (see also **Philippians 2:12**). He admonished them to save themselves after telling them to “*be baptized.*”

Peter said, be baptized “for” (in the Greek, the word “for” is “eis.” It is the same as the English word in meaning. Why am I pointing this out? Some people falsely say this word means something else).

Be “baptized” for what? Be baptized for, “*the remission sins.*” The Greek word remission (aphesis) means the cancellation of a debt, charge, or penalty. When we do as God asks in baptism, we cancel the sinful charge/debt/penalty against us. The word remission is another term that is used for “forgiveness.”

The Sinner's Prayer

Have you read the Bible from cover to cover? If you have you will know the modern term, the "sinner's prayer," is not in the Bible. In the Old Testament, it was animal sacrifice that atoned for sin, (**Leviticus 4:20-35**).

(In the following passages we will read different facts about salvation. When we are finished reading the passages, we will see the whole picture of salvation. We can make anything out of an incomplete Bible context and message, by picking one verse and ignoring another verse on a related Bible theme. We must look at all the Biblical points of salvation to see its overall teaching).

In the New Testament salvation came by a different sacrifice. The Bible says Jesus, was the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world, (**John 1:29**).

This forgiveness of sins came about by first believing in Christ in faith, (**John 3:16**), then through the public (**Matthew 10:32**) confessing of Jesus's name in faith, (**Romans 10:9-10**), which a few verses later, in verse 13, is the context for the phrase, "calling on His name," in faith see (**Romans 10:9-13**).

In this confession, the Ethiopian eunuch in (**Acts 8:36-39**), confessed Christ and was baptized, after hearing about Jesus. We are saved through faith. But saving faith, acts, (**James 2:19-20**). To die to sin's control and power, we must die spiritually in baptism, (**Romans 6:1-7**). Dying to sin, leads to sanctification and eternal life, (**Romans 6:22**).

Baptism joins us with Christ, in faith, (**Galatians 3:26-28**) to raise us anew, (**Colossians 2:12**). Baptism washes away our sins, (**Acts 22:16**).

In the year 62 AD, Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:4-6**, that "there is one baptism." Peter also wrote about baptism in **1 Peter 3:20-21**. He wrote this epistle during the same time period, as Paul did, in AD 62. In giving a parallel to the flood during Noah's day, Peter writes and says water baptism saves. In earlier days there were other baptisms, (John's baptism of repentance, the baptism of fire). None of these baptisms saved. We now see there is now only one baptism. This baptism is of water and saves. As Romans 6 has taught, we are saved through the baptism of Christ.

Those who are baptized are commanded to first repent, (**Acts 2:38**), to be forgiven. Repentance is mentioned in (**Romans 6:15-18**), as part of the behavior we must exhibit in dying to sin and unifying with Christ, in baptism, (**Romans 6:1-4**).

We need to repent to spiritually arise and be new... (**Romans 6:4-11**). We need to repent to put off the old man, (**Ephesians 4:22**). That is why, repentance plays an important part in baptism. We must repent first, to be born again of water and of His Spirit, (**John 3:5**). We can't be a new person, if we stay in our sins. Baptism then sanctifies us through it's washing, (**1 Corinthians 6:11**).

When we rise up to live a new life, we must strive walk in that life. We must be faithful to God's Word, to receive what is promised, (**Revelation 2:10/Matthew 24:13**).

When we are striving to walk as Jesus commands us, we can have forgiveness in prayer when we slip up, (**1 John 1:5-9**). But we must not use God's grace as a license to willfully sin, (**Jude 4/Romans 3:8**). Such behavior needs to be repented of.

If we have faith, call on Jesus' name and do good deeds, yet choose to sin and ignore God's commands, we will not be saved, (**Matthew 7:21-23**).

Deliberate lifestyle sin insults the gift of grace and Jesus' sacrifice, (**Hebrews 10:26-31**). The writer later says in the chapter of Hebrews, to not shrink back from faith, but to persevere in trial and hardship, to receive what is promised, (**Hebrews 10:32-39**). When it comes to following God, we will reap what we sow, (**Galatians 6:7-9**).

Do we need Holy Spirit Baptism?

The Bible distinctly mentions and sets apart Holy Spirit baptism, by name in two different instances.

When Holy Spirit baptism happens, it is mentioned as being accompanied by signs. We of course can't have such a baptism without the Spirit being present.

Apostles are specifically mentioned as having received the Holy Spirit baptism in, (**Acts 1:5;8 - Acts 2:1-4**).

Cornelius and his Gentile family also received the Holy Spirit baptism. It was a shock to the Jews, when it came to this household, see example of Cornelius and his family, (**Acts 10:44-48 - Acts 11:15-17**).

If this was a normal occurrence for Gentile believers being saved, it would not have been a shock to the Jews to hear about Cornelius and his house, receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Yet earlier in Acts, we see people being saved, who did not receive the baptism of the Spirit, (**Acts 8:4-8;12**). In this chapter, even a baptized believer, Simon offered money for the Holy Spirit and its power, (**Acts 8:9-25**).

The Jews, did not think non-Israelites (except for practicing Mosaic converts), would be accepted by God. But Peter after explaining to the Jews in Jerusalem, what had happened, to Cornelius and his family, (**Acts 11:1-14**), made it clear to them through what God had done, that this perspective was false, (**Acts 11:15-18**).

Peter sees God accepting this Gentile family and says, *“that God does not show favoritism 35 but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right,”* (**Acts 10:34-35**).

For Cornelius and his family to be accepted by the Jews, (without adhering to Jewish costumes and law) God chose to give a divine sign of acceptance through this miraculous act.

Why did the Apostles receive Holy Spirit baptism?

The Apostles received Holy Spirit baptism, in order to guide them in God's divine oracles, (**John 16:13; John 14:26; John 15:26**). These men were given miracles to prove they spoke God's divine truth, (**Mark 16:20**). The Apostles had the divine authority to bind in spiritual matters, for they were guided by the Spirit, (**Matthew 18:18**).

How did Christians back then get the Holy Spirit? Baptizing someone in the name of Jesus is not the same as someone receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. How

people received the Holy Spirit, in the New Testament was through the Apostles laying their hands on them and imparting the Spirit.

Notice when you read Acts 8, you will see that people were baptized. But those who were baptized, had not received the Spirit. They had to wait till the Apostles came up from Jerusalem. When John and Peter arrived and placed their hands on the baptized believers, that's when they received the Spirit.

Acts 8:12 *“But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. 14 Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.”*

Other examples of Apostolic laying on of hands.

In Acts 19, notice again the same parallel. People were baptized in Jesus' name, then they had the Apostles place their hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit.

Acts 19:1 *“It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. 2 He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said to him, “No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” 3 And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” And they said, “Into John’s baptism.” 4 Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.”*

The Purpose of the Holy Spirit

The Apostles had the Holy Spirit to give the divine truth of God and to confirm the Holy Spirit's revelation, that was given to them. Through the laying on of hands, the Apostles enabled others to receive the Spirit for this purpose, as well.

Mark 16:17 *“These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; 18 they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” 19 So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.”*

The Spirit's role was to give God's oracles, till all the Spirit's revelation was given/made known. When many of the Apostles had died and others were well advanced in years, we read that this role had been accomplished.

The Bible says we have all inspired scripture for God's desired work for us to do. **2 Timothy 3:16** *"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."*

The Bible says we now have everything we need for our lives, through the truth of Jesus.

2 Peter 1:3 *"seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."*

We read in matters of the faith, (Christian teachings - **1 Timothy 4:6;/Philippians 1:27**) that it has once for all been delivered.

Jude 3 "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints."

Since we have all the inspired truth, the Spirit's role for the Apostles is accomplished. We don't need the laying on of hands to impart the Spirit of revelation. Nor do we need the power of signs, to confirm these new divine truths.

Another fact for revelation, is in the Apostleship. We don't have such men today. Back then an Apostle had to be one who was an eye witness of the Lord, (**Acts 1:21-23**). In this passage, Peter gave certain stipulations for electing the Apostle Matthias. Peter gave these directives to Matthias, for the reason, an Apostle needed to be "a witness with us of his resurrection." (**vs 22**).

Even Paul saw the Lord, (**Acts 22:6-8**). When Jesus appeared to Paul, He appeared to him last, as one abnormally born, for He had persecuted the church, (**1 Corinthians 15:8-10**). The term says Paul was the "last" one Jesus came to for Apostleship. This means there are no others who will come after Paul.

An Apostle also had to show irrefutable signs that they had the Spirit's power, (**2 Corinthians 12:12**). Do you see the dead being raised today, the lame walking, the paralyzed being healed? No.

If we had Apostles today, you would see such divine miracles publicly performed on streets, etc. Such action would create great interest and would bring about crowds, (**Acts 5:12-16**). In the age of media and social tweets and video posts, such news would be spread even faster. Yet we don't hear such reports.

Some people will say we must be baptized by the Holy Spirit to be saved. Nowhere in the Bible does God say this.

Here's a good example: Saul received the Holy Spirit while trying to kill David. Yet Saul was a murderer and was rejected by God as king. Was this man saved? No.

1 Samuel 19:9 *"Now there was an evil spirit from the LORD on Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand, and David was playing the harp with his hand. 10 Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, so that he stuck the spear into the wall. And David fled and escaped that night.*

11 Then Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him, in order to put him to death in the morning. 20 Then Saul sent messengers to take David, but when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing and presiding over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul; and they also prophesied.

22 Then he himself went to Ramah and came as far as the large well that is in Secu; and he asked and said, "Where are Samuel and David?" And someone said, "Behold, they are at Naioth in Ramah." 23 He proceeded there to Naioth in Ramah; and the Spirit of God came upon him also, so that he went along prophesying continually until he came to Naioth in Ramah. 24 He also stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

The One Baptism:

Look with me at two passages...

First passage is in **Ephesians 4:4** *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*

Ephesians was written around AD 62

Second passage is in **1 Peter 3:21** *(read if you wish, also v 20 for full context). "and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ..."*

1 Peter was written around AD 81

Now...if the Bible says in Ephesians that there is one baptism and we read around 20 years later, that the baptism that still around is "water," "that now saves you..." Then we can infer by necessary inference (common reasoning) that we only have one baptism now. And it's not the Holy Spirit kind.

What is the Gift of the Spirit?

People say...**Acts 2:38** says we get the gift of the Spirit through water baptism. That this gift is Holy Spirit baptism. What is the gift the Spirit gives us? What does the Bible say?

It is the Spirit who sanctifies us through Christ's death, when we accept and follow God's will for our salvation.

1 Corinthians 6:11 *"And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name (authority) of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."*

That's why Paul says for those (now saved Christians) who heard the message of salvation in...and responded to the message, that they were given the Spirit mark of salvation.

Ephesians 1:13 *"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory."*

The importance of Grace

What is grace? The Greek word for grace, is “charis,” (<https://biblehub.com/str/greek/5485.htm>) and means: favor. The Bible story of Jesus mentions God’s favor towards us. We read that God’s son, died for us. His death was not something we deserved. But Jesus died for us regardless. Even while we were still enemies of God, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:6 *“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

In this concept, we can say we are saved through grace... It is not of ourselves. We don’t deserve the death of Christ. We don’t deserve the promise of heaven. We don’t deserve to have our sins forgiven. God’s grace is a gift. We can’t earn it. We are not worthy of the blessings that come from grace.

Ephesians 2:6 *“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

Notice the context, “saved, through faith...” This means there is an element that we need to possess to be able to receive this offering. Does our ability to do so make us worthy of this gift, of course not.

But if you received a gift of a 10,000-dollar check from someone, that was undeserved, (a gift of grace), would you still not have to do your part?

Would you not need to endorse/sign the check, take it to the bank and deposit it? Do any of these actions make you worthy of receiving such a generous gift? No.

If a stranger payed for medicine you needed, because you could not afford it. If the medicine could save your life and you did not merit such kindness, would that not be a gift of grace? If you were given the medicine as a gift, would the gift work? Only if you followed the instructions on the prescription bottle. Does that detract from the gift or make you worthy of someone's gift, of course not.

In this above context of (**Ephesus 2:8**), we read, we must have "*faith.*" We see in this verse that we "*are saved by grace through faith.*"

But what type of faith is saving faith?

Below you will read that knowing there is a God, is not enough. The devils believe in Jesus. Genuine faith is what God accepts. God accepts faith that comes from a heart that is loving and obedience towards Him. The right faith is a faith that has the right attitude towards God.

Is it enough to just believe and say Lord, Lord?

Read (**Matthew 7:21-23**) on the wrong type of faith.

Let's read what type of faith we are to have to be accepted by God.

James 2:14 *"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? 15 Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."*

This implies there are two kinds of faith. A faith that is dead through indifference to God's commands, and a faith that is alive through having the right attitude in seeking to please God.

18 "But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that —and shudder. 20 You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?"

This passage clearly says devils believe and belief alone without the right spirit (in trying to follow God), is USELESS. The following examples below are of those who had the right faith. Read carefully, the type of faith they had. Was it a useless faith? Or was there faith the right type of faith?

21 "Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. 24 You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

Abraham's faith was complete when showed it. This type of faith made him righteous and God's friend. God called Abraham to offer up Isaac. What if Abraham ignored the Lord? What if he had said, "I have faith. I don't need to do anything?" Would that have been acceptable to the Lord?

25 "In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?"

Rahab did not just sit around and say, "I believe in God, that is enough." She had to do certain things to be accepted by God in faith.

If I believe God and don't follow God, but murder, commit incest, rape, etc. I won't be accepted by God. Evil behavior will have eternal punishment, (Revelation 21:8).

Again, what does the Bible say...?

26 "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead."

Does this right faith make us worthy of Christ dying for our sins? No. But we must do our part in having the right heart, to accept this gift.

If we don't have the right heart in how we choose to accept this gift. We can fail to accept the grace of God. How?

By being unholy or allowing what is wrong to spring up, etc. Again, we must have the right faith in how our attitude is shown towards God. Such a right attitude comes from following Him.

Hebrews 12:15 *"See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; 16 that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal."*

Yes, if we are unholy, we won't see God. This eternal gift of grace will be lost. **Hebrews 12:14** *"Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord."*

Read two Bible examples of grace:

Noah and the Ark

Due to unrepentant sin and wickedness God choose to destroy the corrupt world by a flood. But in **Genesis 6:8** the Bible says... *"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."*

God choose to spare Noah and his family. This was of grace. The Lord could have let Noah and his family die. But He did not. But did that mean Noah in his faith towards God did not need to do anything? Since it was of grace, did that mean Noah could sit around and wait for the flood to come?

What does the Bible say? The below passage says God told/commanded Noah to do certain things in response to the grace Noah and his family were given to be saved. Did that make Noah worthy of God sparing Him? No. But Noah still had to do his part in building the ark.

Genesis 6:9 *"This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. 10 Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. 11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. 12 God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. 13 So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to*

all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.”

14 So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. 15 This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high.” 16 “Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. 17 I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.”

Naaman and his leprosy

The following passage gives us another example. God choose to restore Naaman, a man who had leprosy, (a flesh-eating disease). This favor from God was undeserved and unmerited. It was a gift of grace. Naaman was a commander of the army of Syria. This nation hated the Israelites and waged war on God’s people. Yet God still gave Naaman a chance. If Naaman had the right heart in following God, he could accept this gift.

2 Kings 5:10 *“Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, “Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed.”*

11 But Naaman went away angry and said, “I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. 12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn’t I wash in them and be cleansed?” So, he turned and went off in a rage.

13 Naaman’s servants went to him and said, “My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, ‘Wash and be cleansed’!” 14 So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God

had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.”

Notice it was not enough to just acknowledge God in faith. Believing in God was not enough to get the grace of healing. Naaman had to have the right type of faith, in following God, to accept the gracious gift of healing. When God, (through the Bible) asks us to do things for our highest good and spiritual well-being, should we not also do as asked?

Grace should not be used as an excuse to ignore God. This is the wrong attitude. And those who do this will be lost. Grace should not be an excuse to disobey God. This perverts what grace is and makes it into a license for wickedness.

Jude 4 *“For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.”*

Those who live like this and advocate such behavior are lost. As the Bible says in... **Romans 3:8** *“Why not say—as some slanderously claim that we say—“Let us do evil that good may result”? Their condemnation is just!”*

See also, (**Romans 6:1-2**).

Who to Follow in Religion?

When people don't understand the Bible teachings of scriptural authority, we get religious divisions and confusing man-made doctrinal contradictions.

The reason for this lesson is to share from the Bible what it says on how we get authority and how we are to apply it. If we are to be pleasing to God and do what He wants, we need to know this important topic and learn its truths. Let's look at where the Bible says we get religious authority in making our decisions.

First let's look at some passages that say Jesus Christ, (as God) is our source of authority

Matthew 28:16 *"Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

From this passage we read that Christ has ALL authority, (**vs 18**). From which He commissioned the Apostles to impart His authoritative teachings, (**vs 20**).

Christ's authoritatively spoke in the Father's Name, (**John 5:43**) and in the Father's words, (**John 12:49**).

In His authoritative teachings from the Father, Christ confirmed His message as divine, by the miracles He did, (**John 14:11-12; Acts 2:22**).

His Apostles were guided by the Holy Spirit, whom the Father would send in Christ's name/authority. The Spirit would also bring to their minds all the truths Christ had taught. They were led by the Holy Spirit, (**John 14:26; John 15:26**). Since these men were inspired/guided by the Holy Spirit and knew Christ's truth, God gave these men religious authority to bind and lose, (**Matthew 18:18**).

The Apostles were teaching Jesus' words and standards and thus could bind and loose in His authority. They also had the Spirit to guide them in such activity.

The Apostles were men who could raise the dead, heal the unhealable, cure the blind, drive out demons, and the whole world stood up and took notice. Such miracles were a mark of an Apostle, (**2 Corinthians 12:12**).

We don't see such wonders and signs from men today, they were given to confirm the divine words that were spoken.

The Bible says, we now have all the revelations of God. We have all the beliefs/the things of faith handed down through the revelation of the Apostles, (**Jude 3**).

Through the knowledge of Christ's truth, we have everything we need for living a godlike/spiritual life, (**2 Peter 1:3-4**).

The authoritative teachings of Christ were taught through the Apostles. From the inspiration the Apostles had through the Spirit, they wrote the revelations of God.

From them, we now have all inspired scripture, to do every good Bible work, God wants of us, (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**).

No other should speak another "Gospel," other than what the Bible has given us through the Apostles/inspired men, (**Galatians 1:6-10**). See also (**1 Peter 4:11**).

Paul wrote to the saints to, "*walk in line with the truth of the Gospel,*" (**Galatians 2:14**). These Christians were choosing to listen to others and follow uninspired men instead of the inspired Gospel truths.

We read that Jesus is our authority, (**Hebrews 1:1-4**). The words Christ spoke came by the Father's will, (**John 12:49/John 14:10**).

We read the Apostles are a reliable Bible source of authority. For they spoke what Jesus had given them to say, (**1 Corinthians 14:37**).

The Apostles were led by the Spirit after being told by Jesus to wait in Jerusalem. While in an upper room, these men received power from the Holy Spirit, (**Acts 1:4-5;8/Acts 2:1-4**).

By receiving this power, the Apostles confirmed what Jesus had said to them. Jesus foretold that some would not taste death till they saw the kingdom (kingdom is synonymous with church - **Mathew 16:17-19**) come with power.

As Christ told the Apostles to wait for that power, it indeed did come. In this power, the Spirit confirmed the divine message of inspiration by signs and miracles, (**Mark 16:20**).

We follow the Apostles spiritual example, because they were guided by the Spirit. When such men are inspired to speak and do spiritual things, we should pay attention. For this reason, we are commanded to follow them, (**Philippians 3:17; Philippians 4:9**). We also follow them, because they followed Christ, (**1 Corinthians 11:1**).

The Apostles had the authority, (**1 Thessalonians 4:2**) from Christ and were guided by the Spirit, into Christ's truth, (**Ephesians 3:4-5**). Let us, therefore pay attention to what they show us.

The True church/Bible authority

How are we to worship God, to be pleasing to Him?

Does it matter if we follow God's teachings on church worship?

The Bible makes it clear that we must obey God to be pleasing to Him.

Matthew 7:21 *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22"Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles?' 23"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness."*

Hebrews 5:9 *"And, once made perfect, he (Christ) became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him."*

God commands we worship in a certain way. Should we not, thus listen to His Word, in matters of worship?

- **Christ/His truth: The authority of the church**

The Bible calls the church, Christ's spiritual body, (**Ephesians 1:22-23**).

We join His church, when we are saved in baptism, (**1 Corinthians 12:13**). When we join His church, we become members of His body for service, (**1 Corinthians 12:12;14-23/Romans 12:4-5**).

We must submit to Jesus' truth in the matters of the church, (such church matters as worship, giving, etc). We must do this for Christ has the headship/authority to govern the church.

Ephesians 5:23 *"For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything."*

In the book of Revelation Christ's church is called a golden lampstand, (**Revelation 1:20**). We read we need to remain obedient to His truth, to remain His church (**Revelation 2:4-5**).

In the following passage we will read that Christ has one church and that His church has one faith.

Paul tells the Ephesians in **Ephesians 4:4** *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”*

It’s important to know what the Bible term for “faith,” (or “the faith”) is. The term “the faith” or “faith” relates to the convictions/beliefs that come from the truth, (**1 Timothy 4:6**). When people are not obedient to the faith, (**Acts 6:7**) they have left the faith, (**1 Timothy 4:1**).

In matters of such divine revelation of truth, we read that “the faith” has for all time been delivered/revealed, to the saints, (**Jude 3**).

We have all inspired scripture, for every good work God wants of us, (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**). From such knowledge of Christ’s truth, we have everything we need for a spiritual life, (**2 Peter 1:3-4**). If His truth meets all our spiritual needs, we have no more need for more revelation.

In matters of revelation, the Bible says, we must submit to Christ.

In worship we must do all that He has given us authority to do.

Colossians 3:17 *“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name (authority) of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”*

The words *“whatever you do in word or deed, do all in His (authority) name,”* means nothing should be added, that Christ has not given us authority to do, in word or deed, in matters of worship.

We are not to add to His Word. To say something is of Him, (**1 Peter 4:11**) when God has not given it in revelation is a lie. The Lord needs nothing added, His truth is perfect, (**Proverbs 30:5-6**).

- **Where do we get authority?**

As we have read, the Bible says we get authority through Christ’s teaching. Jesus said to His Apostles that He has all authority. He told them they are to teach what He has commanded them. Part of Christ’s teaching to His

Apostles were for them to baptize in His name, so others could be accepted as His disciples. This command was also for salvation, (**Mark 16:16**).

Matthew 28:16 *“But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

His teachings must be followed if we are to be God disciples, (**John 8:31**). Such teachings equip us for His works of service, (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**).

We must know His truth, in order to know how we are supposed to conduct ourselves within His house. If a congregation is to be accepted as His, it must follow His truth.

1 Timothy 3:15 *“but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.”*

To have unity, we need to be in Christ. This was the Lord’s prayer to the Father right before He died on the cross, (**John 17:20-21**). This was Jesus’ wish for us.

Jesus is called the shepherd. If we are willing to be guided as His sheep, and listen to His voice, we will be counted as His, (**John 10:14-16**). We do not need to listen to other voices from uninspired men, in matters of religion, (**John 10:5**). For there is one spiritual flock and one heavenly shepherd, Christ.

- **Inspired Men**

Christ said He had all authority, to His Apostles (**Matthew 28:17-20**). In this context of authority, He then commanded the Apostles to teach His words. To confirm these words of truth, these men were given the Spirit,

(**Acts 1:4-5, Acts 1:8/Acts 2:1-4**) to perform miraculous signs and wonders, (**Mark 16:14-20**).

The Apostles were guided into “*all truth*” by the Spirit, (**John 14:26 /John 16:13**). Therefore, we should listen to what they taught and practiced.

This puts **Matthew 18:18** in context. If the Spirit was to guide the Apostles in truth, then what they bound and loosed would be under divine guidance.

We need to look to the inspired example these men showed. What the Apostles spiritually practiced is commanded of us to follow, (**1 Corinthians 11:1/Philippians 3:17/4:9**).

We need to note that all the words of Jesus’ came from the Father (**John 12:49**) and was also given by the Spirit. When One in the Godhead speaks, They all speak.

- **Religious Denominational Divisions**

Read the below passage. Notice in this passage the Bible says, God’s people must be united. United in what? Is it talking about being united in politics, football teams, etc. No, of course not. They must be united in one mind and judgement. Not divided. In matters of truth. The word “Denomination” means division. How are we to be united as this passage says? By being enriched in speech and knowledge of God. In such spiritual matters of truth, in what Christ gave us in His authority, we must agree.

The inspired Apostle writes in **1 Corinthians 14** *“I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge... 10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name (authority) of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.”*

How are people divided from the teachings of the Word of God? We cease to have unity with God’s truth, when we choose man’s uninspired teaching

over Gods. Through the knowledge of God, we must be united together in the same mind and spiritual judgement.

We must avoid “brethren” who seek to divide us from the doctrine of Christ. We must study to know the Bibles truth, to avoided being deceived by their false teachings.

Romans 16:17 *“Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”*

As we have read earlier, the Bible says there is one “faith,” (**Ephesians 4:5**). We are not to add man made teachings to God’s truth.

We should not add to the Bible, the uninspired teachings of men. God says people who do this are offering up vain worship. Such people have a wrong heart.

Matthew 15:8 *“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”*

This passage clearly states we need to eliminate uninspired creeds, books, rules, from uninspired men. When we follow such, we are following the wrong sources for religious authority.

In matters of religious teaching, we should only speak God's oracles. That means we should not advocate things the Bible is silent on. We should not be teaching things that add or subtract from His Word. We should only speak His oracles of truth, (**1 Peter 4:11**).

What are the Bible teachings for worship?

- **We are to give in church**

Upon the first day of the week, (**1 Corinthians 16:2**).

How do we add to this command? We give on another day. How do we subtract from this command? We don't give at all.

We are not to give grudgingly, but as we have purposed, (**2 Corinthians 9:6-7**).

The New Testament does not say to give a specific sum.

We are to use church funds as the Bible teaches. If we add/subtract from what the Bible says, we are changing His pure Word. We should not ignore God's preferences, for our own. That's what Paul warned about. Paul said people would distort (change) the truth to make disciples after themselves, (**Acts 20:27-30**).

When a group of people divide from the truth to follow creeds, from uninspired men, they form a denomination.

How the church is to use its funds

1. The church is to preach the gospel

Christ commanded the Apostles to tell the world the gospel. Then told them to teach others what He had commanded them, (**Matthew 28:19-20**). The church did this, by devoting themselves to the Apostles teachings, (**Acts 2:42**).

Should preachers be paid? Paul the inspired Apostle says, preachers should be paid to preach, (**1 Corinthians 9:14**).

2. The church is to help needy saints

In matters of benevolence the church is to help Christians in need.

A church can help another congregation that has needy saints. Churches in Macedonia and Achaia helped the needy saints in Jerusalem, (**Romans 15:25-26**). The Christians in Jerusalem were hurting due to a sever famine, (**Acts 11:27-30**).

For a local church to help a saint, that person must truly be in need. A needy saint must first look to finding support from one's family, before the saint's congregation can help, (**1 Timothy 5:3-10**). In matters of financial help, accountability must first start at the home, (**2 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:8**).

When it comes to helping people, who are not Christian, we can look to the teachings of the Bible in matters of individual/personal responsibility.

Helping people is our duty that God expects of us as individuals, (**1 Timothy 6:18**). But we must make sure they are first willing to help themselves, (**2 Thessalonians 3:10**). We need to be part of the solution not part of the problem.

How can we add to God's Word in church financial matters? We add to the truth of God's Word, when we use His church money for things the Bible does not advocate? We add to His teachings, when we use church funds for secular events, like ice cream socials, date nights, paintball games, etc.

God's church/Kingdom is spiritual in nature, Christ said... in **John 18:36**, *"My kingdom is not of this world..."* His Kingdom is not about worldly, non-Bible based things, and it's not for secular recreation, entertainment. God is silent on such activities and aims. If He does not advocate such activity, then neither should we.

In any act of worship, we must just teach and practice what God says in His gospel. To add to His Word is to distort it. To teach something else than what the Bible says in religion, is to teach a false gospel.

As Paul warns in **Galatians 1:6** *"I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!"*

What are the Bible teachings for worship?

- **We are to sing praise to God**

We read that God has commands us to sing in church worship, (**Colossians 3:15-17**). We read Christ alone has given us authority for worship and for activities related to His church.

Colossians 3:15 *“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body (body synonymous for church Ephesians 1:22-23); and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name (authority) of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”*

In worship we are commanded to sing. God tells us to not add/subtract from His Word. If we subtract from this command by having a chorus, (where some people sing), then we change God's command. The command is for all of God's people to sing. If we remove people and add instruments to His command and have a jazz concert and no one sings, we sin again, for God command is for us to sing to Him.

If we add to His command to sing, through the use of instrumental music to our singing, we err, for God says about worship, *“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name (authority) of the Lord Jesus...”* Has Christ taught anywhere for us to use instruments?

No. He tells uninspired man to not add to His Words. To abide in the truth and not go beyond it. We are to worship within the confines of the lines God has marked out for us.

We are not to not go beyond His teachings, (**2 John 9**) *“Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.”*

The Old Law

You may ask what about the Old Testament, they used instruments in worship? They also offered up animal sacrifices, did circumcisions, had ceremonial rites, abstained from certain foods, observed no work on the Sabbath, had religious New Moon festivals, etc. Do we do any of these things? No. People (many times) were put to death, when they did a deliberate sin, under the Old Testament Law, (**Numbers 15:30**).

The Bible says Christ has delivered us from the Old Law/Covenant to His Law, (the Law of the Spirit). The Old Law was called the *“Law of sin and*

death,” (**Romans 8:1-2**) for when people deliberately sinned, under that Law, it meant being put to death.

But we are no longer under the Old Law. Christ put an end this law, (**Romans 10:4/Colossians 2:14-16**).

See also (**Hebrews 8:7;13/Galatians 3:16;19**).

The New Covenant is Christ’s will/Testament. Established in His death, (**Hebrews 9:15-17**). Would you like someone changing your desired testament/will? Would you like someone changing what you put into it, by adding or subtracting from your will? Christ has established His covenant through the shedding of His blood for you, (**Matthew 26:28**). Who are we to change His teachings?

Does that mean the Old Testament is irrelevant? No, we can still learn from its examples (**1 Corinthians 10:6-11**). The Old Testament shows us Gods attitude towards what is right and wrong.

By reading the Old Testament, we see God does not like His Word being messed with. The Lord did not like it then and does not like it know. His attitude does not change, (**Hebrews 13:8**). Through the Old Testament we can find prophetic truths about Christ, which can encourage us and strengthen our hope in Him, (**Romans 15:3-4**).

Remember Nadab and Abihu. They were priests under the Old Law, who offered up unauthorized fire before the Lord, because it suited them. They choose to go outside of God’s authoritative framework to do what pleased them. The Lord said these men dishonored Him as unholy, for doing what He had not authorized in worship, (**Leviticus 10:1-3**).

But people will ask, “but if what I want in religion accomplishes a good thing. How can that be wrong?” But in whose eyes, yours, mine, or Gods? It’s not a matter of what we think is right. What counts is what God says is right.

Remember King Saul’s example of sin in the Old Testament? Saul was not supposed to burn an offering to God. That was the role of the priests. Yet Saul thought he knew best. God said otherwise. The Lord valued obedience over Saul’s sacrifice, (**1 Samuel 13:5-14**). This was a continual

flaw with the Israelite's in the Old Testament. They did in their own eyes what they thought was right, (**Judges 17:6/Judges 21:25**).

Just because we think we know what is best, does not make it Biblically correct, (**Proverbs 14:12**). Nor is such behavior spiritually pleasing to God. If God had wanted it done, don't you think He would have mentioned it?

When we follow Christ, we are His disciples (**John 8:31-32**). When we follow uninspired men, who distort the truth, (**Acts 20:29-30**) by adding or subtracting from God's teachings, we are their disciples.

When you add or subtract ingredients from your grandma's recipe, it's no longer, your grandma's recipe, it's something else.

When you change a dead man's will, by adding what you would rather have in that will, ignoring that man's wishes, you distort his will into something that man did not want done. In our previous reading, we saw Christ's New Convent/Testament, is His will for us.

Attending church

When it comes to worship, we are commanded to attend when the saints meet, (**Hebrews 10:24-26**). We are to make this our first priority, (**Matthew 6:33**).

When we meet to worship, it needs to be in the right (attitude) spirit. We need to worship in His truth, (**John 4:23-24**).

Prayer and Bible study

When we worship, God tells us we are to talk to God in prayer and listen to Him through His Word. When we have church Bible class and hear Bible based sermons, we do as God wants, (**Acts 2:42**).

What are the Bible teachings for worship?

The Bible says we are to observe the Lord's Supper

Why do we observe the Lord's Supper?

Reasons below...

Christ observed the Lord's Supper. He did this as an example for His followers. We are commanded to remember Him.

Mark 14:22 *“While they were eating, He took some bread, (Which was Passover bread **Mark 14:1;12-22**. Note: Passover bread was unleavened bread **Exodus 12:15**) and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, “Take it; this is My body.” 23 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 And He said to them, “This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 “Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine, (which was grape juice, commonly used in Jewish times for drinking) until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”*

Leaven in the Bible spiritually represents sin, (**1 Corinthians 5:6-8**). In doing this Supper we remember Christ as our Passover lamb. This lamb took away the sins of the World, through His sacrifice, (**John 1:29**).

We are supposed to follow His spiritual example and Jesus did the Supper. **1 John 2:6** *“the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.”*

Jesus said the Lord’s Supper was necessary for eternal life. We need to eat and drink what spiritually (symbolically) represents Him.

John 6:53 *“So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. 54 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.*

55 For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. 56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. 58 This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever.”

We are to practice the Lord’s Supper in remembrance of His death on the cross.

1 Corinthians 11:23 *“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”*

25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."

The term in (**Mark 14:22, Matthew 26:26, Luke 22:19**), of "breaking bread" is used of the church when they met to remember Christ. The Lord commanded us to "*do this in remembrance of me...*"

Jesus took bread and broke it.

Mark 14:22 "*While they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He "broke it" ...*

The assembled disciples got together and broke bread.

Acts 20:7 "*On the first day of the week we came together to "break bread." Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight."*

Acts 2:42 "*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the "breaking of bread" and to prayer."*

We need to note this act was not a common meal, (**1 Corinthians 11:20-22;33-34**). This action was a memorial practice to remember Christ, not to fill the belly.

The disciples did the Lord's Supper on each first day of the week. When God establishes a day for remembrance, then on that day, it should to be remembered.

God's commands are absolute. When God say's don't kill or commit adultery, it is an absolute command. We are to observe these commands all the time. Not just occasionally. The Lord's Supper is the same.

Though we are not under the Old Law today, (**Gal 3:16;19/Col 2:14-17**), we can see examples from the Old Testament. The Jews observed each and every Sabbath, because God said, "*observe the Sabbath,*" (**Exodus 20:8**).

God did not say “observe each and every Sabbath.” Yet if the Jews neglected this absolute command they died. If they decided to skip a Sabbath, God put them to death, (**Exodus 31:15**). Same with the Feast of weeks, it was to be observed every 7 years, not just on the 7 years, when the Jews felt like observing this festival, (**Leviticus 25:4**).

Changing worship: How do we add to the command to remember Christ in the Lord’s Supper? We can add to this command when we add root beer to the Lord’s Supper or pizza. How do we subtract from the command to remember Christ in the Lord’s Supper? We subtract from this commanded, when the Bible elements, (unleavened bread/fruit of the vine) for the Lord’s Supper are removed.

We are not to change the instructions God has given us. It’s presumptuous, arrogant, and vain to worship God any other way, then the way HE WANTS TO BE HONORED.

Worship is about God, not us. Church worship is an event about Him.

Here a good story illustration:

A young boy named Dave, had a Birthday party the following day. Dave told his mom he wanted chocolate cake and no veggies. Dave’s mom, Jane, knew that chocolate cake was Dave’s favorite cake and that her son hated vegetables.

On the day before the party, Dave also asked his mom, to not invite any clowns. Dave said to his mom, that he was afraid of them.

When the mother heard his wishes, she went out and got for the party, strawberry cake, a clown and a salad. Jane got these things because she wanted them.

Since the party was for Dave, was this appropriate? Did Jane’s actions honor her son’s Birthday wishes?

Like Dave, God also has a special event. The Lord’s special event is each Sunday. We gather to honor God in worship, by doing what He wants us to do from His Word. Church is not about pleasing our own self interests. Church is about Jesus and doing what He wants from the truth.

If the church belongs to Christ, (**Ephesians 1:22-23**) and was founded by Christ, (**Matthew 16:18-19**), then it should be viewed as His. In the Bible, we read of descriptive terms for the Lord's church.

The church is given such terms in the Bible, as the church of Christ, (**Romans 16:16**), and the church of God, (**Acts 20:28**). Note these are not titles, but descriptions of what the church is. The church belongs to Christ/God and thus should be termed as such. Why name Christ's church after some other person, if the church belongs to Jesus. He is the one who purchased the church through His death, (**Acts 20:28**). Find a church that is described as belonging to Christ. Find a church that submits to Christ's truth.

Eldership and Deacons

The local church is guided in the truth by older men, who are called “Elders.” These men are given the name Bishop or Overseer. These names come from the same Greek word episkopos. This Greek work means to oversee.

The term Overseer and Bishop are interchangeable in the Bible. If you read (**1 Timothy 3:2/1 Peter 2:25**) using the King James version, the passages will say, “Bishop.” If you read these passages using the New American Standard version, the passages will use the term “Overseer.”

In (**Acts 20:17;28-30**) you will read the Elders are called, Bishops/Overseers. In this passage of Acts, the Elders are also called (poimén) Shepherds. Since a Shephard oversees the flock, such descriptions connect well with one another.

Elders are also called Pastors (**Ephesians 4:11**). This is a Latin word that has stayed in our Bibles from earlier translations. This Latin word (parochus) in English means Shephard.

The Bible does not lump the role of a Preacher (Evangelist) with a Pastor. Notice in **Ephesians 4:11**, they are distinct from each other.

As Acts 20 says, the local church is under the oversight of the Elders of that church, who are to spiritually feed God’s church people, (**Acts 20:28-32**). This means the Elders work at a local church. Their relationship role is autonomous/singular to the church. Elders are supposed to guide their own local church, (**1 Peter 5:1-4**).

Elders are to defend against false teaching. They must oppose those who distort the truth. These men are to support the truth. They are to guide the sheep in the great Shepherd’s words.

Notice there is no other leadership governing in the church, (Popes, Priests, Universal Council, etc,). The Bible is silent on this. The Bible says the Elders have a role in guiding their local church in the truth.

We should submit to those over us in the flock, (**Hebrews 13:17**). Such men are to be honored, (**1 Timothy 5:1**).

We should not add what God has left silent in the matters of His church and worship. **Colossians 3:17** *“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name (authority) of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”*

The standards for being an Elder are recorded in the Bible. Elders must meet certain qualifications to be appointed, (**1 Timothy 3:1-7/Titus 1:6-9**). It's important that men meet such qualifications to be accepted in this leadership. Notice in the book of Titus, an Elder is also called an Overseer/Bishop.

Deacons are often associated with Elders. Deacons are helpers of the Eldership in matters of church work. They too must be appointed, (**Acts 6:1-5**). They too must have qualifications, (**1 Timothy 3:8-12**).

Prophecies of Revelation that we are not to change?

What is the prophecy of Revelation we are not supposed to add to or subtract from Revelation 22?

Revelation 22:18 *"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. 19 And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll."*

This passage shows God's attitude towards those who mess with His divine Word, (see also **Proverbs 30:5-6**).

Specifically, the prophecy in Revelation 22, is about 4 main things in Revelation.

These things detail what the WHOLE Bible teaches directly in its message as well as indirectly in its underlining themes.

When you thus change any of Jesus' truth shown below and the concepts it is connected too, you are changing the overall Bible message and specifically the Book of Revelation.

The main theme's mentioned in Revelation that corresponded to the overall Bible message are...

1. Obedience: The book tells of the need to obey Him and to repent of sin. (**Revelation 2:5/Revelation 3:3**)

We overcome through holding fast and keeping His Works. (**Revelation 2:24-26/Revelation 3:11-12**).

2. Revelation warns of Christ's second and final coming (**Revelation 3:11/Revelation 16:15**), which immediately leads too...

3. God's Judgement of the good and the bad, of those who follow in His truth and of those who don't. (**Revelation 20:12-13**)

4. Revelation talks about the heavenly reward for those who obeyed God and of eternal punishment of hell for those who did not. (**Revelation 21:6-8; 27/Revelation 20:14-15**)

In the chapter of Revelation 22, we are told to not add or subtract from this book. We read in the same chapter, (**Revelation 22:12-15**), themes that are mentioned in all of what the Bible espouses.

Second Coming - 12 *"Look, I am coming soon!"*

Judgement and Reward - *"My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done."*

Obedience - (Baptism **Acts 22:16/1 Peter 3:21**) 14 *"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city."*

Disobedience - 15 *"Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood."*

Bible Study is a must to Spiritually Survive

Christian families are dying out:

In the 40's and 50's Christians were known as "walking Bibles." Now days, must Christians don't even know how to defend basic Bible facts. Google "Biblical illiteracy statistics." You will find shocking studies. In the US Country, "only 20 percent of Americans say they've read the entire Bible at least once. And only 22 percent say they systematically read through a section of the Bible a little each day. A third of Americans never read the Bible on their own." (Source: <https://factsandtrends.net/2017/07/10/discipling-in-an-age-of-biblical-illiteracy>)

The Bible commands us to "*grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord,*" (2 Peter 3:18). Yet most Christians refrain from maturing in Christ, through actively studying the Word. Many 50-year-old Christians, who've been to church most of their lives...cannot quote a Bible passage, (other than John 3:16). Must Christians tend to just reserve reading the Bible, to Sunday sermons and Wednesday night Bible studies. If such Christians bother to attend faithfully, to study the Word, they will get on average, less than 3 hrs of Bible study, a week. Which is not much.

Many Christians eat more meals, sleep more, watch more TV, do more hygiene, do more recreation, etc, then they tend to their souls. How messed up is that. Most Christians can't defend the convictions they hold with scripture, not even if they have a Bible in hand.

Many families are losing their children to the world, in their teenage years. Parents fail to study regularly with their families. Many parents tend to reserve such Bible training to the church. Grounding our kids, in the Word must include our personal accountability to teach them.

Reasons to Study:

We need to study to better discern what is right and wrong. Many saints have been in the church for years, yet don't know enough to teach others the truth. Such people don't know the deep truths. They need to continue in the basic's, due to lack of progressive/regular study.

Hebrews 5:12 *“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.”*

Self-analysis:

Am I doing what I should in Bible study?

When people go to church, to hear a sermon or engage in a Bible study, they partake of 2-4 Bible teachings a week, if that. Which is not a lot. Let me ask you a question. Do you only eat two to four times a week in meals? No, of course not! You'd get frail and slowly die! You'd starve to death. Would you only feed your kids 2-4 meals a week? No, you'd have child care come knocking at your door.

In the Bible we read that His truth is necessary as spiritual milk for us to grow by. We need to crave its nutrients as babies crave a mother's milk.

1 Peter 2:2 *“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”*

We will read passages, that say the Bible is compared to food. God says we need to depend not only on bread but on the Word for our wellbeing. If we need to eat daily to thrive physically, should we not expect our spirits of needing regular spiritual nourishment, as well? We must feed the mind.

Deuteronomy 8:3 *“He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.”*

God calls His Word food. What do the following verses say about how our response should be to His Word?

Jeremiah 15:16 *“Your words were found and I ate them, and your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; For I have been called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.”*

Psalm 119:103 *“How sweet are your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”*

We should enjoy partaking in His spiritual food. It should be sweet to our spiritual tastes. His truth should be our delight and joy.

God's Word should be treasured. We should value His truth more than anything in this world.

The Bible is said to be more valued than food, as Job says.

Job 23:12 *“I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.”*

The Bible says its message, is more important than food. Food, (like oxygen and water), is necessary for our physical survival. As with food, God says we need His spiritual Word, for our spiritual survival.

Spiritual famine

God punished the Israelites for repeatedly rejecting Him and the Word. He refused to give them the truth. The very thing they had refused to accept.

Hosea 8:11 *“The days are coming,” declares the Sovereign Lord, “when I will send a famine through the land—not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.¹² People will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of the Lord, but they will not find it. ¹³“In that day “the lovely young women and strong young men will faint because of thirst.”*

Many people are starving themselves to death, spiritually. How can a spouse or a parent willingly bring about a famine in his/her household? Yet many families are starving to death.

Complete diet

People may hear the truth, but still get an incomplete spiritual diet. If we don't read our Bibles and are sitting at the feet of inept teachers and preachers, we are not getting the whole council/message of God.

People need all of the Bible food groups. If you ate only bread, would that be healthy? If you ate only nuts would that be healthy? You get the point. We need a well balance diet.

We need all of the teachings of truth, not sectioned out parts.

Here are scriptures that talk on this point:

Acts 20:27 *“For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.”*

Jeremiah 26:2 *“Thus said the Lord; Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word.”*

Acts 5:20 *“Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.”*

By offering half a message, (instead of the whole truth) we get a watered-down message. Such teachings contribute to the dumbing down of a local church. When such saints become weak due to poor congregational sources of education, they lose strength (of conviction) in their beliefs. Weak beliefs create weak lifestyle practices from the Word. With time such people stop coming to church all together. Those that are largely dependent on others for Bible teaching, will die spiritually. Allowing ourselves to become emaciated on a poor spiritual diet, only leads to death.

We must not allow ourselves to starve to death. We need to be holding onto the Word and know what is sound in doctrine (complete truth) and what is error, (watered down, distorted truth).

Titus 1:9 says *“holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”*

We need to know the Bible, to know what truth is and what is a distorted half message. If we only listen to others and depend solely on them, we are in danger of being led astray. How to rectify this? When it comes to families, we must daily teach our kids. Don't put it all on the preacher and Bible class teachers.

Teach your families

Timothy was raised in a home of faith, (**2 Timothy 1:5**). He was trained in the Word from childhood.

2 Timothy 3:14 *“You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”*

Training children was commanded of the Israelites...

Deuteronomy 6:6 *“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”*

Abraham was picked of God to train his family. This was required of the Patriarch, for receiving the promises of the Lord.

Genesis 18:18 *“Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. 19 For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”*

Christians are told to instruct their families in the Word.

Ephesians 6:4 *“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”*

But how can we train our families, if we don't first train ourselves? We need to impress the message of truth on our hearts and minds. We can't

do that without regular Bible study. We should know the Word so well, that it's as if we are literally carrying the truth on us. Only when we know the truth can we teach it to our children.

Deuteronomy 11:18 *“You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 19 You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up.”*

Personal review:

Am I studying the Bible like I should?

To grow in the Word, we need to make study a priority. This behavior is a must for our spiritual growth in life.

Let us read the Bible daily.

Notice, the mark of the wise man. He avoids evil influences and delights in God's truth.

Psalm 1:1 *“Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, 2 but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. 3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.”*

People who are always in the Word will be people who talk about the Word to those they love, (spouse, family, etc). People who read the Word, will be strengthened to observe what is written therein. We become what we feed our minds.

Joshua 1:8 *“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”*

Have the Word to overcome the Devil

In order to know God, we need to know His words. We need to have His Word abide in us to overcome Satan's influence.

1 John 2:14 *"I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one."*

Consistent Bible study is a must!

We need to do regular Bible study to watch closely our doctrine and lifestyle practices. This is essential for our salvation and for the salvation of those we love.

1 Timothy 4:15 *"Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. 16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."*

To look at God's truth intently and to avoid forgetting His words, we need to make Bible study a regular priority. Such people who are intent on the Word, will find blessing within the Word.

James 1:23 *"Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do."*

Bible study is a must to know Jesus' truth and His precious promises.

We must know His Word to live a godly life. We must know what God teaches to escape the evils of this world by living that godly life.

2 Peter 1:3 *"His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and*

goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”

Knowledge is part of our spiritual growth

In **2 Peter 1:5-11** you will read...

We must study to grow in the aspects of Bible character, (self-control, perseveres, etc. **vs 5-7**).

We must study to grow, to be effective in the truth on the Word, (**vs 8**).

We must study to grow, to avoid atrophy. Study and maturity will help us to not forget what God has done for us, (**vs 9**).

When we study to grow, to better ensure our calling, (**vs 10-11**).

2 Peter 1:5 *“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.*

8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. 10 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, 11 and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

We need to place the truth within us, through study the Bible, to avoid the pitfalls of slipping into sin.

Palms 37:31 *“The law of their God is in their hearts; their feet do not slip.”*

Psalms 119:11 *“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”*

If we are to retain our families in the faith, through teaching them the Word, we must first have the habits of study installed in our own lives. It is not only important for our children but is fundamentally essential for our own wellbeing.

Bible study idea's for personal growth:

1. Mark up your Bible with scriptures. Find a page in the Bible that talks on Baptism for salvation, for example, then find other passages and write them all in that page location. Mark that page with a sticky "post it" color flag. Turning to such a page, makes facts related to a specific topic, easy to reference. You can quickly learn the passages through studying such a page. It helps to have a journaling Bible. They have a lot of page writing spaces for recording Bible truths. But this is optional.
2. Read your Bible daily at least an hour. Make it applicable and pray on what you read. Try to create a desire and longing for the Word, through maxims. Focus on your desire. Try to stoke it. Write a maxim and put it on the mirror in the bathroom or bedroom to read daily. Try to read the maxim and stir up your desire daily. Pray to God daily to help you with these issues.
3. Memorize a passage each week. I write a memory verse on paper. I carry the paper with me and look at the verse throughout the day, while watching tv, walking, sitting at the stop light, sitting in a doctor's waiting room, etc. Find out what ways work best for you.
4. Further down the road, when ready, pick a theme and try to write a short article from the Bible passages on that theme, this will require a lot of study and research. Such work will cause in-depth Bible study learning. When comfortable with that, try to write a longer article or sermon on a specific Bible theme. Make this a monthly routine, then with time a weekly routine.
5. Regularly teach a Bible class, either a new convert class, a kid's class, a lady's class, a church class or a home study group class, if possible. There is no better way to learn then through this method.

6. The more you read the more you will want to read. For the more you read the more you will grow spiritually. This will create stronger Bible convictions and principles that will help you to cherish the Bible above anything else this world can offer. Fan this desire, feed it, love it, and nurture it.

Idea's on tutoring children in the Word.

How to prevent the youth from slipping through the cracks: Sad truth is, most families lose their sons and daughters to the world in the teenage years or in the college years. Sad truth is, most churches lose their young people when they get to be at a certain age of maturity. I will mention two ways to keep this from happening.

The first way is for the parents. The second way that shall be mentioned, is geared to the Bible class teachers. I include the Bible class teachers, due to the simple fact, most parents don't make their kids a spiritual priority. This apathetic problem of indifference with parents, will be emphasized in this lesson.

For Parents:

Fathers and mothers need to persevere in studying their Bibles closely. Then they can ground their children in the Word of God. This study needs to be done to save one's family. This study also needs to be done to save, oneself. How can you teach your kids the truth, if you are weak in the Bible?

1 TIMOTHY 4:16 *"WATCH YOUR LIFE AND DOCTRINE CLOSELY. PERSEVERE IN THEM, BECAUSE IF YOU DO, YOU WILL SAVE BOTH YOURSELF AND YOUR HEARERS."*

As the passage states, Bible study needs to be a daily practice. Going over key principles of Christian fundamentals in moral living, salvation, the church work, Bible authority, in curriculum needs to be studied and discussed. Find a good lesson book to study and read with your family.

Connect Bible study with a special event that leaves a positive memory, (some examples: cook some homemade cookies, light some candles, sit outside at sunset, etc.)

Make it out to be a special occasion, (not only in your attitude during the study, but in the activities that surround the Bible study event). Your attitude towards the Bible study and the memory firming circumstances, will make this more special in the eyes of your kids. Not saying Bible study is not special or worthy, in itself. I am saying if you tie it to a positive experience and a “special tradition,” it leaves a bigger emotional/memory impression on young minds.

1 Timothy 4:16 says, to look at one’s life in connection to the truth. This passage says to look at the Word closely and to persevere in the Word. The best way to impress the truth upon yourself and your family, is in applying what you read from the Bible.

When you study with your family, try to include your spouse, if possible. Your spouse’s examples of influence, (both positive or negative) can affect your kids. It is important they have good examples from both parents if possible.

After doing a Bible study lesson, try to make an application from that lesson. Give an application that you and your family can do.

Examples: If you read together, **James 1:27**, that talks about visiting widows, you and your family can plan a day to visit some of the older ladies at church or in the nursing home.

If you and your family read about not neglecting the assembly, in **Hebrews 10:25**, then tell them how proud you are of them, when they are at church. Make it a special occasion, by taking them out for ice cream afterwards, etc. When you do this, you can let them know how much it means to you, that “they care about God so much.” Such activities, of course can be done on rare occasions. But it does affirm, that you are valuing them, for what they are doing.

If you and your family read about evangelism from **Jude 23**, then give your family an assignment to invite one of their friends to church with them.

If you read a passage, like **1 Thessalonians 5:18**, that says we are to give thanks to God, then create a family event that focuses on praising God. Drive to the beach to watch the sunset or start a bonfire in the back yard. Gather together to sing songs and give prayers of thanksgiving to God.

The more your family study's and applies the Bible, the more your children will be rooted to His will and work. You have heard the saying if you act loving, when your angry at someone you begin to feel loving? This is true towards one's feelings for God. If your children act loving towards God, in how they are applying His Word, such feelings will start to come.

When your family does such activities, give them positive reinforcements: through words of praise, rewards, special activities, etc. When you give such reinforcements, you further enforce such behavior. Of course, we also have the other side of the coin. As parents, we need to discipline our family's bad behavior, as well.

I see a sad trend in today's churches. I see kids who know what the Bible teaches on salvation. I see them wanting to be baptized yet are denied by members of the church. If they know what they need to do and are aware of the Bible teachings, we should not hold them back. They are at the ripe age of humility and earnestness. This is the best time to mold them, teach them, convert them, save them, ground them, get them busy in church work, inside and outside of worship.

Many times, when kids get older, they drift away. They were not grounded in the Bible and thus have no root in the Word, (**Mark 4:6;16-17**). The attitudes that could have been capitalized on, in their younger years, were ignored.

For families to spiritually grow, parents need to take their children to church. Parents need to make sure the church has a good Bible based, preacher. This is serious. I've seen families fall away, when the Word is watered down or distorted.

A family needs to also make sure the Bible class teacher is teaching truth and key grounding principles. These are your kids after all. I have seen kids grow up and live in sin, because of the false or weak teachings of Bible class teachers, who influenced them negatively. Make sure you know what people are teaching your kids and that you know the character of the

teacher. Also, encourage your kids to share what they learned. Keep apprised of what is being taught.

For Bible Class Teachers:

The following passage is not talking to a specific group of people, (like parents, preachers, etc). The passage is telling people to know the Bible and share the Bible to save “your hearers.” This application can be applied to many groups, including, Bible Class Teachers.

1 TIMOTHY 4:16 *“WATCH YOUR LIFE AND DOCTRINE CLOSELY. PERSEVERE IN THEM, BECAUSE IF YOU DO, YOU WILL SAVE BOTH YOURSELF AND YOUR HEARERS.”*

Tips for grounding students.

A Bible class teacher needs to teach in Sunday school and Wednesday night classes, core concepts of church work, moral living, salvation, Bible authority, etc. Not watered-down “fun time” activities, like drawing and making paper art projects. If a student is old enough to read, talk and comprehend basic themes, then they should be taught those themes.

You have two classes with your students a week. Teaching twice a week, is not as effective in influencing a student, as a family unit is, in their daily studying each evening. But as a teacher, you are still essential. Especially if the home unit is not doing what it should do in such matters of grounding their children in the Word. Sadly, most family’s place such responsibilities on the church.

Ideas on how to bond with your students and increase your influence:

Teachers don’t always hold as much sway in the classroom as the student’s parents. This is due to a lack of emotional influence and time investment the teacher has in the time given. Teachers are looked at as an authority figure. Yet despite this position of influence and the regular interactions with the students at class, the teacher must do more, to build repour. It is important to build a friendship with the students for an

emotional connection. Building an emotional connection, will promote bonding. This will further help the teacher build a stronger influence.

A teacher should interact with the students outside of class, to better build connections with the classmates.

Examples:

A teacher can invite the students over for a devo night with their parents. The get together can include pizza and games afterwards. A teacher can invite the students/parents to get ice cream after church.

When you take the time to build bonds of friendship, it will further improve your influence with them. Let the kids know you care. If you're an authority figure as a teacher, you will have credence in what you say. But if you're also a (responsible) friend as well, you will have their emotional trust and acceptance in what you teach. A stranger does not sway as well as a friend, in matters of influence. Make sure you're not a stranger to your students.

Focus on creating positive reinforcement activities with the students. Build a reward system when they come to church for Bible class. Reward the students for things like, showing up for attendance, having their lessons done, doing a given assignment, memorizing a Bible verse, etc.

Have a chart to mark points (with stickers) of their success. Have an end of the year celebration party for those who got a lot of stickers on the board. Note: the students don't have to be perfect to have rewards or a celebration. The point is to get them to try to do their best.

When they have accumulated the designated points for a reward, you can treat them to something special.

Examples:

Do a group outing at C'C's pizza. Have them pick from a prize bag, (that has stuff inside, like a cross necklace, Bible hero doll, etc). Make sure the items in the prize bag is relevant to the age group and is stuff they would like. Create a weekly Bible based activity with the students to do. Such events can be done in the class or out of the class. The focus is to train

the students in leadership roles. These roles need to be Bible oriented to help them act out the Word regularly in their lives.

Note: Giving positive reinforcements (from a reward system or from praise) in your assignments is important.

Examples of group assignments:

When teaching on the importance of praising God, have the boys do song leading, in Bible class. Record the singing. Watch the video with the class. Praise them for the job they did.

When teaching about service, train the girls how to make unleavened bread. Invite the students to visit the elderly shut ins from church, with you. When teaching the class about encouragement, have them write cards. Have the students greet an older lady at church or a visitor with you.

You can also, give the students assignments, that they can do at home. Have them write down the details on what they did, to share with the class.

Ground the students in core concepts. Reinforce those concepts by the assignments you give each week. This will make a difference in shaping their external actions into internal conditions. By interacting with the students, (as a friend) you will also better establish a bond with the students.

Get the students to take initiative and do things outside of the group, as well, to earn more chart points. The more the class applies Bible concepts, the more they will change from within.

Being a Bible class teacher is not the same, as a parent in influence. But if a teacher is focused on the above points, the teacher will be effective.

What you teach them, can stay with these kids for a lifetime. The bonds you make with the students, can influence them for good. Even after they have grown up, your past training can stay with them.

The applications you install in the children can be the developmental triggers to help them stay in His church and come to Christ, instead of leaving the congregation for the world's allurements.

For teaching lessons:

I have each of the students read a section (like a paragraph) of the lesson. When a section is read, we talk about it. I ask the students questions in relation to the content being studied. I have the class look up and read the scriptures, that are connected to what is being read. The scriptures are then discussed in relation to the lesson.

At the end of the class I have the students play a Bible game, (this can be applied to home studies, too). It's fun on occasion to make a game out of the study and quiz the students on what was in the lesson.

Game idea's:**Red light, green light game:**

You've heard of red light, green light. But instead of turning around to allow kids to run towards you, as the "green light" you ask a student a Bible question. If that student gets it right, they can walk ahead one step. If not, they stay where they are. Then ask the next student a Bible question. Whoever tags the teacher, by getting the most questions right, wins.

Team work game:

Divide the class into two teams, ask a team a Bible question, after they talk with each other, (make sure they do this first as a team,) have a class mate on the team give you the answer. If the answer is right, they get a point, if the answer is wrong, they don't. Whoever gets the most points, wins. This game can be played with individual class members, as well.

One leg to zero game:

Have the students spread out and spaced out from each other. Ask each student by turn a Bible question. If a student gets the question right, they keep a leg, if the student does not, they try to hold still on one leg, while standing. Go around the room, and ask each student a question, if the one-legged student gets it right, he is safe, if he gets it wrong, he sits down. The last person who remains standing, wins the game.