



CLASS STUDIES

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

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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.

For personal use: *These lessons are great for personal Bible studies. The beginning student and the experienced Bible student will find these concepts helpful for being “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” (1 Peter 3:15)*

Group studies: *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 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

Table of content

Lessons on Salvation

THE STORY OF PAUL (Page 3)

ACTS 2:38 EXPLAINED (Page 4-5)

THE SINNERS PRAYER (Page 6-7)

WHAT DO EARLY CHURCH FATHERS WRITE ABOUT BAPTISM? (8-11)

DO WE NEED HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM/GIFTS? (Page 12-19)

THE IMPORTANCE OF GRACE (Page 20-24)

Lessons on the Church and Bible authority

WHO TO FOLLOW IN RELIGION? (Page 25-26)

THE TRUE CHURCH/BIBLE AUTHORITY (Page 27-37)

EARLY HISTORY OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC (38-41)

BIBLE STUDY IS A MUST TO SPIRITUALLY SURVIVE (Page 42-48)

CONCLUSION AND SPECIAL THANKS (Pages 49-50)

The Story of Paul

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

Saul was educated in the teachings of the law. And though misplaced, this man was religiously devoted 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 persecuted and killed Christians, (Acts 9:1-21 Corinthians 15:9) in all good conscience, (Acts 23:1), due to that belief.

Food for thought: We too can have a religious education. We can have misplaced zeal in our religious behavior. We can live a life in all good conscience. And still be lost.

How Saul was saved: 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. Once 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 in Jesus 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.*"

Notes:

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. Which in Greek means **“1519 eis (a preposition) – properly, into (unto) – literally, “motion into which” implying penetration (“unto,” “union”) to a particular purpose or result.”** <https://biblehub.com/greek/1519.htm> This word “for is “eis and it has the same meaning as the English word. Why am I pointing this out? Some people falsely say this word means something else to ignore this Bible verses teaching.

This chapter says: be “baptized.” But 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/dept/penalty against us. The word remission is another term that is used for “forgiveness.”

What is the Gift of the Spirit?

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

In scripture we read that 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 as a 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 gift of the spirit is secondary to being baptized. Once one is baptized, they have remission of sins/they are forgiven. Yet one must first be baptized to receive this gift. This gift comes when one first joins with Christ (Reference **Galatians 3:26-27/Romans 6:1-7**) in water which leads to the blessing of the spirit. We must first be born of water, to be born spiritual birth of the Spirit. **(John 3:5)**

This gift of the spirit by water is different from that of the *baptism of the Holy Spirit*. This baptism does not give salvation, like what we read about in **Acts 2:38. Here is an Old Testament example that further explains this concept:**

In the Bible you can read of wicked King Saul and the soldiers he sent to murder David, We read that they received the Holy Spirit when they were trying to kill David. This was God's way of foiling their plot to slay this righteous man. Read [1 Sam 19:18-24](#)

Notes:

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 (of a perfect unblemished lamb **Exodus 12:5**) 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**). Peter further details this through divine inspiration. (**1 Peter 1:19**)

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 this baptism into 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 its 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, "to walk in the light" 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**).

Notes:

What do early "church fathers," write about baptism?

(I'm not going to write a bio of these men: I encourage you to study and research these figures online and in reliable texts. I'd ignore the catholic branding of ownership of these men. This group calls many notable Christians throughout Biblical and secular history "saints.") John the Apostle lived the longest of the Apostles, he died: around 99 AD at about age 88 years)

Irenaeus: The student of Polycarp who was a Bible student of the Apostle John and historically met John mentioned the Bible passage of [John 3:1-8](#).

“And [Naaman] (for context see [2 Kings 5:1-18](#)) dipped himself . . . seven times in the Jordan’. It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but [this served] as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions, being spiritually regenerated as newborn babes, even as the Lord has declared: ‘*Except a man be born again through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*’ —**Irenaeus, Fragment 34 Date: 190 A.D.**

Besides proof of someone trained by the Apostle John's apprentice as saying baptism saves (from **John 3:1-8**), this story also helps highlight the manner of what grace is.

In the reference of Naaman, we readd that he did not earn or deserve to be cured. This was of grace and yet it was expected that this Syrian general and enemy of Isreal follow God's instructions to receive His mercy. Is not belief, repentance, and baptism, any different?

Early church father quotes: You won't find "sinners' prayer" in the Bible or mentioned/referenced by these historical writers. Baptism is quoted as necessary for salvation for the next 500 years. The sinner's prayer is relatively a new concept that was born in America in the early 1800s. And really took root during the 20th century under Billy Graham.

Historical refence sources:

A. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinner%27s_prayer#:~:text=Others%20believe%20it%20originated%20as,in%20the%20early%2020th%20century

B. <https://www.9marks.org/review/the-origins-of-the-altar-call-and-the-sinners-prayer#:~:text=The%20two%20most%20significant%20catalysts,Billy%20Graham%20and%20Bill%20Bright.>

Sources of early "church fathers" mentioning the necessity of baptism:

Note: These men reflect the views and ideas of the early times of the budding new kingdom of the church and Christian faith. Though the texts are not inspired, they are historical from these early times. Though these writers are flawed humans, they do unite under this one theme. Which reflects many of the perspectives of the early church during these early times.

"And when we come to refute them [the gnostic], we shall show in its fitting- place, that this class of men have been instigated by Satan to a denial of that baptism which is regeneration to God, and thus to a renunciation of the whole [Christian] faith...For the baptism instituted by the visible Jesus was for the remission of sins"

Irenaeus, Against Heresies 21:1-2 Date: 189 A.D.

"I have heard, sir,' said I [to the Shepherd], 'from some teacher, that there is no other repentance except that which took place when we went down into the water and obtained the remission of our former sins.' He said to me, 'You have heard rightly, for so it is"

Hermas, The Shepherd 4:3:1-2 Date: 80 A.D.

"As many as are persuaded and believe that what we [Christians] teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, and instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we pray and fast with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father . . . and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, 'Unless you are born again, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"

Justin Martyr, First Apology 61 Date: 151 A.D.

"For since you have read, O Trypho, as you yourself admitted, the doctrines taught by our Savior, I do not think that I have done foolishly in adding some short utterances of His to the prophetic statements. Wash therefore, and be now clean, and put away iniquity from your souls, as God bids you be washed in this laver, and be circumcised with the true circumcision... The command of circumcision, again, bidding [them] always circumcise the children on the eighth day, was a type of the true circumcision, (Romans 2:28-29) by which we are circumcised from deceit and iniquity through Him who rose from the dead on the first day after the Sabbath, [namely through] our Lord Jesus Christ"

Justin Martyr, Dialogue of Justin with Trypho, a Jew 18 & 41 Date: 160 A.D.

“Our Christ, by being crucified on the tree, and by purifying [us] with water, has redeemed us, though plunged in the direst offenses which we have committed, and has made [us] a house of prayer and adoration... “the mystery of saved men appeared in the deluge. For righteous Noah, along with the other mortals at the deluge, i.e., with his own wife, his three sons and their wives, being eight in number, were a symbol of the eighth day, wherein Christ appeared when He rose from the dead, forever the first in power. For Christ, being the first-born of every creature, became again the chief of another race regenerated by Himself through water, and faith, and wood, containing the mystery of the cross; even as Noah was saved by wood when he rode over the waters ...I mean, that by water, faith, and wood, those who are afore-prepared, and who repent of the sins which they have committed, shall escape from the impending judgment of God.”

Justin Martyr, Dialogue of Justin with Trypho, a Jew 18 & 41 Date: 160 A.D.

“Then said Jesus unto them, ‘I have been given all authority in heaven and earth; and as my Father has sent me, so I also send you. Go now into all the world, and preach my gospel in all the creation; and teach all the peoples, and baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; and teach them to keep all whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you all the days, unto the end of the world”

Tatian the Syrian, The Diatesseron 55 Date: 170 A.D.

“Moreover, those things which were created from the waters were blessed by God, so that this might also be a sign that men would at a future time receive repentance and remission of sins through water and the bath of regeneration—all who proceed to the truth and are born again and receive a blessing from God”

Tehophilus of Antioch, To Autolyucus 12:16 Date: 181 A.D.

“Regarding [baptism], we have the evidence of Scripture that Israel would refuse to accept the washing which confers the remission of sins and would set up a substitution of their own instead [Ps. 1:3–6]. Observe there how he describes both the water and the cross in the same figure. His meaning is, ‘Blessed are those who go down into the water with their hopes set on the cross.’ Here he is saying that after we have stepped down into the water, burdened with sin and defilement, we come up out of it bearing fruit, with reverence in our hearts and the hope of Jesus in our souls”

Barnabas, Letter of Barnabas 11:1–10 Date: 74 A.D

“When we are baptized, we are enlightened. Being enlightened, we are adopted as sons. Adopted as sons, we are made perfect. Made perfect, we become immortal . . . ‘and sons of the Most High’ [Ps. 82:6]. This work is variously called grace, illumination, perfection, and washing. It is a washing by which we are cleansed of sins, a gift of grace by which the punishments due our sins are remitted, an illumination by which we behold that holy light of salvation”

Clement of Alexandria, The Instructor of Children 1:6:26:1 Date: 191 A.D.

“Now faith occasions this for us even as the Elders, the disciples of the Apostles, have handed it down to us. First of all, it bids us to keep in mind that we have received baptism for the remission of sins in the name of God the Father and in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was incarnate, died and rose again, and in the Holy Spirit of God. This baptism is the seal of eternal life and the new birth unto God that we should no longer be the sons of mortal men but of the eternal and perpetual God.”

Irenaeus, The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching, Date: 192 A.D.

There are more quotes, but you get the idea. Type "early church fathers' views on baptism" to find link sources. Keep in mind there were false teachers during that time as well. Gnostics who say sinful immorality is accepted by God, who say Jesus was not God, etc. Such man-made ideas will stand out from the Bible teachings.

Yet what connects this theme of baptism is the unified writings/ideas of the views that came from the early church fathers. The unified history of these writings from reliable sources speak to authenticity. What makes baptism for salvation unique in the early historical writings is the unity that these teachings give for decades, (beginning during the life of the Apostles and shortly after the end of Apostles....all the way up through a 500 year period of historical writings on this subject).

Bible references about baptism for salvation:

Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:20-21; Acts 2:37-38; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:1-23; John 3:5; Acts 8; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 16:25-40; 1 Cor 6:11; etc.

Do we need Holy Spirit Baptism

Purpose of the Holy Spirit in Christ's life:

Thought provoking questions:

*Why did Jesus do miracles during His earthly ministry? **John 3:2/Acts 2:22***

*How did Jesus do these miracles? **Acts 10:38***

Examples in Acts of the baptism of Holy Spirit: The Bible distinctly mentions and sets apart Holy Spirit baptism, by name in two different instances in the book of Acts. 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 customs 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 **Acts 2** 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 speak in foreign languages (as **Acts 2:1-4** says) and to prove they spoke God's divine truth by the signs they did. The Holy Spirit's gifts were given to them in Jerusalem (**Acts 1:8**) for when they began to proclaim the gospel all the world (**Mark 16:15-20**). 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 for the forgiveness of sins, is not the same as someone receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. How saved people received the Holy Spirit, in the New Testament was through the Apostles laying their hands on them and imparting the Spirit. You will notice when you read **Acts 8**, that people believed and were baptized for salvation. But those who were baptized did not receive 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.

What does Acts 8 teach on the Holy Spirit?

Does the Holy Spirit always come on those who accept Jesus, believe, and are baptized to be saved? Here is the outline of Acts chapter 8 in matters of the Holy Spirit baptism and the Bible examples of salvation:

Philip the evangelist proclaims Christ in Samaria. Signs were performed to confirm the teachings of the gospel:

Acts 8:4 "Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. 5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. 6 And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were *paralyzed, or lame were healed*. 8 So there was much joy in that city."

Simon the magician believes and accepts Jesus, and others believe and is baptized, after hearing news about the Savior. They hear and follow the precious Word of God that Phillip shares. They don't receive the Holy Spirit baptism. Are they not saved?

Acts 8:9 "But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. 10 They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, o "This man is the power of God that is called Great." 11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.

12 "But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles 2 performed, he was amazed." (Acts 2:38/Acts 22:16)

These above verses are a good example of the Acts baptisms that are pointed out in the Bible. That it's water not of the Holy Spirit baptism. That belief and acceptance of Jesus does not mean the Holy Spirit baptism will come on a person. If God felt it warranted, would He not have sent such a baptism of fire on these people? We read that a sinner, a witch turned to God, he believed and was baptized. People also believed and were baptized. They accepted Jesus. And yet...they did not receive the Holy Spirit baptism.

Let's continue reading...for further explanation.

Acts 8:14 “Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, (even in this it was conditional in coming to Him in prayer on God giving the Spirit via the Apostles laying their hands on them) 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.”

- People teach that Holy Spirit baptism saves: If belief and accepting Jesus means salvation, why did they not receive the Holy Spirit baptism? If the Holy Spirit baptism is what saves? We read that these people received the Word of God, and they had put their faith in Jesus. They were baptized. And yet the Holy Spirit baptism had not come to them. If this baptism came on those who accepted Christ don't you think they would have received this baptism of fire?
- We read in **Acts 8** that the Apostles (Peter and John – who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost) were asked to come all the way down from Jerusalem to lay their hands on the new believers in Samaria, for them to receive the Holy Spirit This was over a 2-hr. walk. If this baptism was a necessary occurrence the Apostles would not have had to make that trek to lay their hands on these new Christians.

Since the 12 Apostles died out 2,000 years ago....

And the qualifications of being an Apostle was that of seeing Jesus, (**Acts 1:21-26**) as well as being able to do the signs of an Apostle, like raising the dead, healing the incurable sick, restoring the paralyzed and the crippled, etc. (**2 Corinthians 12:12**)

And since Paul says he was the LAST of the Apostles whom Jesus appeared to, (**1 Cor 15:3-9**) then we have no more Apostles like these men today.

So, if the Holy Spirit baptism does not need to come on people when they are saved, and the Apostles can't travel around the world to lay their hands on people today, does that mean we must have tongues of fire, miracles of power come on us, to be saved?

Final Bible study thoughts on Acts 8:

What does the Bible say about Simon?

Acts 8:18 “Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, “Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” 20 But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!

21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.” 24 And Simon answered, “Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me. 25 Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.”

What do we read here? When the Apostles came, the Apostles did not give the Holy Spirit to everyone. They made a discernment on different individuals. An example of this is Simon. He HAD to ask the Apostles for the Holy Spirit to come on him and they said no, due to his heart...

Ethiopian Eunuch: We will read of another person who like Simon, had believed and was baptized and yet did not receive the Holy Spirit baptism.

- *Let's read the final verses in **Acts 8** about Philip the evangelist. In this story in [Acts 8:26-34](#) Philip meets Ethiopian eunuch and shares the gospel message of Jesus with him. Immediately after the Ethiopian heard the salvation story what does he request?*

Acts 8:36 “34 So the eunuch answered Philip and said, “I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?” 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”

37 Then Philip said, “*If you believe with all your heart, you may.*” And he answered and said, “*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*”

38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. 39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.”

- Philip shared the gospel with an Ethiopian. This man believed in Jesus, he confessed his faith and was baptized in water. Which again is immersion. Here in this text, it says he went down into the water. If these mentioned activities were not essential, they would not have been done. And yet the Holy Spirit baptism did not fall on him. Did Philip forbid the Ethiopian from leaving till the Apostles could come up from Jerusalem to place their hands on him? NO.
- Did Philip say his belief, and acceptance of Jesus, that his confession and baptism, did not count for salvation, till the Holy Spirit baptism came on him? NO.
- We read that Philip left. He was picked up by the Holy Spirit to another location to do evangelism and that the Ethiopian man, went away rejoicing over his salvation.

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."

Even saved believers like Timothy, who helped Paul preach the gospel in doing missionary work (Acts 16:1-10) later received the Spirit through the laying on of hands. (1 Timothy 4:14 / 2 Timothy 1:6)

Recorded examples of salvation in the book of Acts:

| Hear Gospel | Believed | Repented | Confessed | Baptized | When? | Blessings |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Three Thousand Acts 2:1-47 | | Repented 2:38 | | Baptized 2:38, 41 | That Day 2:41 | Sins Forgiven Received HS 2:38 |
| Samaritans 8:5-12 | Believed 8:12 | | | Baptized 8:12 | When believed 8:12 | |
| Simon 8:13 | Believed 8:13 | | | Baptized 8:13 | | Therefore, saved Mark 16:15-16 |
| Ethiopian Eunuch 8:26-40 | Believed 8:37 | | Confessed 8:37 | Baptized 8:38 | After confession of faith – 8:36-38 | Went on way rejoicing 8:39 |
| Saul 9:1-18; 22:1-16 | | | | Baptized 22:16 | Without delay 22:16 | Sins washed away 22:16 |
| Cornelius 10:1-48; 11:1-17 | Believed 15:7 | | | Baptized 10:48 | After command 10:48 | Was saved 11:14 |
| Lydia 16:14-15 | | | | Baptized 16:15 | When she heard 16:14-15 | |
| Jailer 16:25-40 | Believed 16:31-32 | | | Baptized 16:33 | Same hour of night – 16:33 | Rejoiced 16:34 |
| Corinthians 18:8 | Believed 18:8 | | | Baptized 18:8 | When they believed and heard – 18:8 | Washed, Saved 1 Cor. 6:11, 15:2 |
| Ephesians 19:1-7 | | | | Baptized 19:5 | | |
| Hear Rom. 10:17 | Belief John 3:16 | Repent Luke 13:3 | Confess Mt. 10:32-33 | Baptism Rom. 6:3-7 | Immediately 1 Peter 3:21 | Salvation from Sin |

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.**” See also **Acts 14:3***

Hallmarks of having the gifts of Holy Spirit... people who claim to have the Holy Spirit, ask them if they can do all these things today? Can they handle deadly serpents, (get bite) can they drink hemlock (poison) can they speak in various different foreign languages, (can they speak French, German, Russian, Japanese, etc.) Can they cure the incurable, save the dying, heal the paralyzed and crippled, raise the dead? Christ could and the Apostles could. Those who claim to have the Holy Spirit power as **Mark 16:17-20** says, should be able to do these things as well.

*I knew of a young man who claimed to have the gifts of the spirit, he told a friend with brain tumor he'd lay his hands on him to heal the cancer. This older man was excited, he thought he was cured. But when visiting the doctor was told he still had the brain tumor cancer. Many people leave thinking they are cured when the laying on of hands is done, only to find they still are dying of a illness. For stories of tragic deaths from “faith healing” google “**faith healing killing people.**”*

The Spirit's miraculous role was for the Apostles 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 Apostle Paul writes this truth. The Bible says through the Word, we now are able to be equipped for every spiritual work God wants us to do in matters of divine truth. 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.”*

We now have everything we need for our lives, through the truth of Jesus.

- The Apostle Peter says (through inspiration) speaks this truth. **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.”*

The term “the faith,” is still used of different belief systems today, when we talk about the Islamic faith, the Buddhist faith, etc. We will read below in Jude the exhortation to keep the (Christian) faith. The Bible details the meaning of this term “the faith,” further in **1 Timothy 4:6** as

describing the Christian belief/doctrine that comes from the teaching of the In Jude we will also read 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.”*
- *In fact, if any other new revelations/gospels are given today, other than God’s gospel/Bible, the scripture says that those who follow that revelation are accursed. We have no new divine revelation. Anyone who preaches a new gospel/revelation (divinely means good news), man or angel is accursed **Galatians 1:6-8***

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 reason for revelation is in the Apostleship. We don’t have such men today. Back then an Apostle had to be one who was an eyewitness 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. Do you see people being bitten by deadly serpents and drinking poison today? No. Yet this is what those with the Holy Spirit could in the Bible. [Mark 16:14-19](#)*

If hospitals could be emptied and the incurable cured and the dead raised we would certainly hear about it in this digital age where everything is recorded, posted on social media, and broadcast on cell phones. What is streamed online in India can be seen in Africa...and throughout the world. When a video is novel in the world it becomes “viral” overnight globally.

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: King Saul and the soldiers he sent 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...

Ephesians was written around AD 62

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."*

1 Peter was written around AD 61

Second passage is in **1 Peter 3: 20** *"who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22"*

Now...if the Bible says in Ephesians by the Apostle Paul that there is one baptism and we read that the Apostle Peter says that this baptism is **"water," "that now saves you..."** Then we can infer by necessary inference (common reasoning) that we only have one baptism now. That this is water baptism. It's not the Holy Spirit kind of baptism.

These two passages complement one another by unifying a divine message that there is one baptism, and it is of water.

"Baptism for repentance" and the "baptism of the Spirit" were done away with by this point they both served their purpose. You don't hear about tongues of fire falling on people and such miraculous noise as to draw the whole city, as you read about in **Acts 2**. People who claim to have the Spirit can't speak new languages as those at Pentecost did. If tongues of fire, and miracles of the Spirit still existed we'd hear about it on the TV, social media and read about it in the newspaper. There would be a huge following of such groups. Yet all we hear is silence.

The importance of Grace

What is grace? The Greek word for grace, is “charis,” (<https://biblehub.com/str/greek/5485.htm>) means divine favor. It expresses God will to “freely extend to give Himself away to people.” 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, earned or merited. But Jesus died for us regardless. Even while we were still enemies of God, Christ died for us. We cannot save ourselves. We are powerless to do such a thing. The death of the Savior was a offering of love 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 paid for medicine you needed, because you could not afford it. If that 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. But you still have to do your part.

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 and confess His name, (**Luke 8:28/ Mark 5:7**). 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. Belief, confessing Jesus and good deeds alone are not acceptable to God. There were Jews who believed in Jesus yet were still in their sins. (**John 8:31-34**) The passage shows that those Jews who believed also had to obey Him to be set free from sin and its slavery. Many Jews believed and yet refused to follow Him. (**John 12:42**) Is such a faith pleasing to God?

Marriage and God: True faith is shown in having the right heart towards God in love. (**Galatians 5:6**) And true love follows God. (**John 14:15;21-24 1 John 2:3-5**) In a healthy relationship that we have with our spouse, we show our sincere faith and love in them by how we *treat that person*. Our relationship with God is not different. No man says, "I love you" and mistreats or ignores his wife. No woman says she believes in her husband and doubts him at his word, betrays his confidence and belittles his spirit. Love speaks to commitment in the person that is loved. Faith in someone speaks to supporting that person and in showing trust/fidelity that individual. God calls this spiritual relationship with Him as a marriage. And like marriage there can be betrayal. (**Ezekiel 16:1-22/Jeremiah 2:2**)

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 faith have been acceptable to the Lord? Below is another Bible example.

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?”
26 “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.”

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. *“Faith without deeds is dead.” No dead faith will be pleasing to Him in this life or in the next.*

- If I believe God and don't follow Him, but murder, commit incest, rape, etc. I won't be accepted by the Lord. When talking with a person about the Bible. I was told by a college student in CA that all he needed was just to believe in Jesus. This young man said God would not mind if he raped, murdered, because all Jesus expected of him was belief.
- The teachings of the Word say otherwise: Evil behavior will have eternal punishment. While it is true that Bible condemns those who are unbelieving towards God the scripture also condemns many other things that are done in disobedience to Him. **(Revelation 21:8)**. *All will have to give an account.*

Faith and Grace

Does the right faith earn us, Heaven? Does this right faith make us worthy of Christ dying for our sins? Of course not. But as the Bible does show us, 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 will fail to accept the grace of God. **(Hebrews 12:14-15)**

When we understand the role of true faith in relation to grace, we can better understand the below passages like **Hebrews 5:9; 2 John 8-9; 2 Peter 1:3-11; Hebrews 10:36-37; Revelation 2:10; Revelation 20:11-15, etc.**

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.” NKJV***

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 and do so as God instructed. **Genesis 6:9-17**. **And the Bible says.... In v 22 “Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him.”**

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. You will read this Syrian commander was instructed to do certain things in faith to receive this healing.

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?

Other examples of alive faith being shown for grace to happen. These examples did not make the individuals worthy of such blessing. But they did have to do their part.

- God grace would act to destroy the city Jericho by knocking down the giant walls of Israels enemies. But the Jews had to do their part to receive this gift from the Lord. They had to walk, sound trumpets, shout, etc. [Joshua 5:13-6:27](#)
- When the Israelites betrayed God, they were punished with being bitten by snakes. The Jews had to do their part to be healed. They had to leave their sick beds, their tends and walk to where a pole was to look at a image they were told to look at. And image that reminded them of their sin and punishment. [Numbers 21:5-9](#)

Grace should not be used as an excuse to ignore God and His will. 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. The Bible condemns such attitudes.

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).

Notes:

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 lose 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. Before the Bible was written the Apostle were given these abilities 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 the 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, that 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. When we speak religiously, it needs to come from these sources. We can't bind what the Spirit is silent on. When we instruct, we must use the Bible to equip others spiritually. (**2 Timothy 3:16-7**) God expects us to use the Word to help people. Silence is the same as indifference.

Yet we must judge only when we first judge ourselves and are not found lacking. (**Matthew 7:1-5**) For those who teach when in unrepented sin, like the misuse of the tongue this premise is indeed true. (**James 3:1-2**) Such people should not judge others as teachers by giving instruction. Yet for those who are watching their life and doctrine closely they should impart truth to save themselves and their hearers. (**1 Timothy 4:16**)

No one is above instruction when sin is present when the scripture calls for it. (**Galatians 6:1-2**) This may save a soul from death. (**James 5:19-20**) That is what the Bible is supposed to be used for equipping others for "*every good work.*" All are supposed to teach the truth to the world and those who are baptized into Christ. (**Matthew 28:18-20**) But everything we speak must come from the Word. (**1 Peter 4:11/Proverbs 30:5-6**)

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 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 sharing speech about the 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. We must not go beyond what is written.

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 warns about 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 severe 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!***"

For a further in-depth Bible study on church structure and financial Bible teachings for congregation application you can download my Bible lesson book

"The Authority of the Scriptures in the Church"

You can also download this book for free at our Bible bookstore link here

<https://www.churchofchriststreetcampusevangelism.com/church-of-christ-evangelism---free-material-store-page.html>

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 to change your desired testament/will? Would you like someone to change 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 now. 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 instead choosing to be disciples of these men.

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 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 add to God's Word or subtract from it.

The book of Revelation (**Revelation 22:18-19**) mentions we are not to change the oracles within it. Such oracles in this sacred book are the very same themes that are universal in the New Testament in matters of doctrine, faithfulness, salvation, church obedience, judgement and eternity, etc.

The example of Moses shows us that we are not to change the instructions God has given us. (**Numbers 20:7-12**) 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 is 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 as the *Bible commands*. (**Ephesians 5:23-24**)

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 word 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*. They are to guide the sheep in the great Shepherd’s words. (**1 Peter 5:1-4**). The Bible says the Elders have a role in guiding their local church in the truth.

Acts 20 also says, Elders are to defend against false teaching. They must oppose those who distort the truth. These men are to support the truth. **Notice there is no other leadership governing in the church**, (Popes, Priests, Universal Council, etc.,). The Bible is silent on this. As outlined in past Bible passages we must respect the silence and authority of God’s will in scriptures. If the Lord wanted a special council or a man over all the churches/kingdom upon the earth, don’t you think He would have asked for it?

Concerning those whom God has mentioned. The Bible tells us that should submit to those (elders) 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 role over a local congregation. Notice in the book of Titus, an Elder is also called an Overseer/Bishop. Such qualifications are to have believing faithful children, to be mature in the faith, etc.

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

Bonus page:

EARLY HISTORY OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

It is a matter of historic record within the New Testament church and within secular recorded history, the early church did not use instrumental music in worship.

1. **Church Bible teachings:** It's not recorded as a command or shown in the New Testament as an example of church worship. We show the church sung. ([1 Corinthians 14:15](#)) even Christ sung with his disciples when they assembled together when remembering Jesus' upcoming death. Which the church does now and is known as the "Lord's Supper." ([Matthew 26:26-30](#)) We are commanded to sing in worship, ([Colossians 3:15-17/ Ephesians 5:19](#)) but never to "play the instrument."

Since Jesus says commands us to worship Him in "truth and spirit." ([John 4:24](#)) And to not add man-made rules to worship, ([Matthew 15:8-9](#)) we need to make sure we teach/practice only the council of God ([1 Peter 4:11](#))

2. What about Old Law examples of instrument music?

In the Old Law, we read of divinely inspired men, (guided by the Holy Spirit) like King David, ([1 Samuel 16:13](#)) who promoted this activity in temple worship ([2 Chronicles 7:6](#)). The Holy Spirit showed men (under the Old Law), how to worship by such divinely guided examples. As well as by commandment. For King David also prescribed instruments to be used in worship. ([Ezra 3:10-13](#)) Instruments are also frequently mentioned in the inspired Psalms. David even commanded such worship (in Psalms) to be done in the Old Testament. ([Psalm 150:1-6](#)) For information about Old Testament teachings on instrumental music see this article as [online link](#) or [PDF article](#).

3. Yet the Bible says we are not under the Old Law, ([Colossians 2:14;16/ Ephesians 2:15](#)) This Law is meant to prepare people for when Jesus came. ([Galatians 3:23-25](#)) But when Abrahams Seed (Jesus) was born this law was replaced by Christ's truth. ([Gal 3:19;16](#))
 - A. Under the Old Law we are supposed to circumcise children on the 8th day ([Leviticus 12:3](#)). Under the Old Law people who broke the Sabbath, which is the Fourth Commandment which requires rest on the Sabbath from routine work ([Exodus 20:8-11](#)) including doing any small activities like cooking ([Exodus 20:23-25, 29-30](#)), the kindling of fire ([Exodus 35:2-3](#)) warranted the death penalty ([Exodus 31:14-15](#)).
 - B. Under the Old Law those who cursed God ([Leviticus 24:10-16](#)) and disobeyed parents were put to death. ([Deuteronomy 21:18-21/Leviticus 20:9](#)) Under the Old Law we could not eat pork, ([Deuteronomy 14:8](#)) or eat seafood, like shrimp, lobster, scallops, oysters. ([Leviticus 11:9, 12](#)).
 - C. Under the Old Law certain feasts were commanded to be observed, like the "feast of weeks," in which all the males are required to travel to Jerusalem to attend ([Exodus 23:14-17; 34:22-23; Deuteronomy 16:16](#))

The “feast of harvest,” had the men commanded to “present an offering of new grain to the Lord” ([Leviticus 23:16](#)). This offering was to be “two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah” which were made “of fine flour . . . baked with leaven.” The offerings were to be made of the first fruits of that harvest ([Leviticus 23:17](#)). There are other feasts, but you get the point.

If people are truly faithful to the spirit and letter of a law, they will obey all of it. We either have to obey all the Old Testament Law or none of it. This includes Old Law themes of instrumental music.

4. Secular Church History on instrumental music and singing in worship/church:

The last Apostle, the Apostle John died around 99 AD. Here is the timeline beginning from the earliest secular writings on church worship in matters of singing and instruments in worship.

Early church father quotes:

CLEMENT of ALEXANDRIA (150–215 AD)

“Let the pipe be resigned to the shepherds, and the flute to the superstitious who are engrossed in idolatry. For, in truth, such instruments are to be banished from the banquet [worship – RD]...the one instrument of peace, the Word alone by which we honor God is what we employ. We no longer employ the ancient psaltery, and trumpet, and timbrel, and flute” (Clement, The Instructor, 2:4)

The Lord fashioned man a beautiful, breathing instrument, after His own image and assuredly He Himself is an all-harmonious instrument of God, melodious and holy, the wisdom that is above this world, the heavenly Word. ... the Word of God scorned those lifeless instruments of lyre and cithara. By the power of the Holy Spirit He arranged in harmonious order this great world, yes, and the little world of man too, body and soul together; and on this many-voiced instruments of the universe He makes music to God, and sings to the human instrument. “For thou art my harp and my pipe and my temple.” (Clement, Readings p. 62)

TERTULLIAN (155–230 AD)

Tertullian lists the acts of worship as "when the scriptures are read, or the psalms are chanted, or sermons are preached, or prayers are sent up" (On the Soul, 9.4; On Prayer, 27-28).

EUSEBIUS (260–339 AD)

Eusebius summarizes Christian worship as "The singing of psalms and recitation of other such words as have been given us from God" (Church History X.iii.3).

The unison voices of Christians would be more acceptable to God than any musical instrument. Accordingly in all the churches of God, united in soul and attitude, with one mind and in agreement of faith and piety we send up a unison melody in the words of the Psalms. (Commentary on Psalm 91

In his "Commentary on Psalms" he says

Throughout the world—in cities, in villages, and in the country—in all the churches of God the people of Christ, who have been chosen out of all the nations, send up, not to the native gods nor to demons but to the one God spoken of by the prophets, hymns and psalmody with a loud voice so that the sound of those singing can be heard by those standing outside.

CHRYSOSTOM (347–407 AD)

They all met together and in old time and responded to the Psalms in common. This we do also now, but then among all there was one soul and one heart (Homily XXXVI, On 1 Corinthians, 14:33). If one enters the sacred chorus of God, there is no need of a musical instrument... (Chrysostom, Exposition on the Psalms, 42.2-3; Patrologia Graeca 55:158-159)

There are more quotes from near the final time of the last Apostles death up to 700 years of instrumental music being condemned.

5. When was instrumental music first introduced (during church worship) in history?

- A. *The American Encyclopedia, volume 12, page 688 states, "Pope Vitalian is related to have first introduced organs into some of the churches of Western Europe, about - 670 A. D., but the earliest trustworthy account is that of the one sent as a present by the Greek emperor Constantine Copronymus to Pepin, King of the Franks in 775."*
- B. **It may also surprise many to know that when the various religious denominations were formed, many of their leaders opposed the use of mechanical instruments in worship.**

"The organ in the worship of God is an ensign of Baal"

- **Martin Luther, reformer and founder of the Lutheran Church**

"Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews"

- **John Calvin, founder of the Presbyterian Church**

"I have no objections to the instrument in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen"

- **John Wesley, founder of the Methodists Church**

One the greatest Baptist preachers ever, quoted 1 Corinthians 14:15 and added, "I would as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery."

- **Charles Spurgeon**

Sources:

- <https://www.northwestcofc.org/why-does-the-church-of-christ-not-use-mechanical-instruments-of-music-in-worship.html>
- <https://bethelcornerstone.org/2018/09/10/quotes-on-no-musical-instruments-in-the-church/>
- <https://www.truthmagazine.com/archives/volume24/TM024121.html>

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, most 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). Most 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 basics, 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 childcare 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."

Psalms 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.”*

Closing of this lesson material:

Thank you for your interest in spiritual issues. It's rare and it speaks highly of you. These lessons are great for further reflection and for use in future studies with people you meet. Many ideas (within this book) relate to people who seek answers on topics of church and salvation. Many core Bible passages are outlined in this book on vital topics.

Feel free to print part or the whole lesson book to use as you wish. Feel free to distribute (for free) this content. There is no copyright. All glory goes to our Heavenly Father in this written work as well as praise to those who have helped in the creation of this work.

Bible study materials:

In matters of Bible truth, I encourage you to find helpful Bible study resources to use in your Bible studies. I will list some excellent ones below.

- **Muscle and Shovel**

This book is a story of a man's life finding God. Michael records the Bible studies he had that transformed him. This is one of the best books I've read in helping me with my Bible studies. For those who want to grow, I recommend this material.

<https://www.michaelshankministries.com>

- **Big Picture**

This book goes through the Old Testament to the New Testament, unifying a divine message of Gods overall "Big Picture" theme for our lives. My second favorite Bible study book next to Muscle and Shovel.

<https://www.amazon.com/Big-Picture-Bible-Kenneth-Craig/dp>

For more books [I've written](#), and other excellent Bible study books [written by evangelists and Bible scholars](#), please see my online website www.churchofchristevangelism.com



A special thank you to my parents Bill and Jeanne Sullivan: The phrase “You train a household; you train generations,” is true. What parents have taught their children lives on in grandchildren and into the future legacies of faith. Mom and Dad invested much into their family by being active in training me and my brothers. I am indebted to their years of commitment to the truth and their love towards our Lord. They lived the gospel and showed us what Christlike attitudes should be in how to treat others in the ways of peace and forgiveness.

I pray this Bible lesson has blessed you.

Many warm wishes to you.

- Joseph Sullivan