

The One Year Discipleship Plan:

Becoming a Faithful Follower of Jesus

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)



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Introduction: The One Year Discipleship Plan

Welcome to The One Year Discipleship Plan. This plan for discipleship is designed to grow followers of Jesus to maturity in their faith in Christ while they, in turn, are leading others to maturity in Christ. There are 52 lessons, resulting in a study each week for an entire year. After approximately 6 months, each person is expected to begin taking at least one other person through the plan, beginning with Lesson 1. Each person should now begin praying for the Lord Jesus to identify the other people that they will begin to disciple as they grow themselves. In this way we begin to fulfill Jesus' commission of making disciples, which he has given us in Matthew 28:18-20 and reinforced by the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:2.

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'" Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

"And these things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will be able to teach others also." 2 Timothy 2:2 (NIV)

In these passages of Scripture, we learn many things about what we are to be focused on as followers of Jesus. First, Jesus has full authority to issue this command to us. Second, he makes it clear that disciples are made, not born into Christian families or because they join a church. Disciples are made, and therefore it is a process to become a disciple. Clearly, it is essential that we become disciples ourselves if we are to make other disciples. Next, we see that a disciple is a person who has committed to follow Jesus and learn from him, all that he has commanded. Baptism is something each follower of Jesus should do to show that they now identify with Jesus as his disciple. Next, these verses assure us that we have Jesus present with us in this process and that this process of disciple making is to take place all over the world. No language or people group is to be left out of this commandment to make disciples. Finally, this process of making mature followers of Jesus is to be carried out by current followers of Jesus. The current generation of followers of Jesus are to produce the next generation of followers.

This One Year Discipleship Plan is one way to help us obey Jesus' command in Matthew 28:18-20. Are you willing to commit to this plan to become a disciple of Jesus and to lead others to maturity in him by taking them through this plan?

Declaration of Commitment:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Suggestions for how to use the Discipleship Plan most effectively:

1. Find a partner or small group to work through the Discipleship Plan together. Having other people involved with us helps keep us accountable and on track with the plan, and we in turn can provide the same for them. In addition, we can be a source of encouragement to those working with us and our discussions can be helpful to the understanding of everyone involved. This plan can be used in families, church groups, prison ministries, Bible Study groups of all sorts, or even just two people working together. When you begin using it to disciple someone else you can disciple more than one person at a time.
2. Select a time each week that is best to work though this Plan. Then, stick to that time for doing the lessons or meeting with those who are going through the Plan with you. Each lesson can either be done before meeting together and discussed at the meeting, or it can be done during the time of meeting together.
3. Each week you should review the Scripture verses included in each lesson more than once. The objective of the Plan is not to complete it as quickly as possible, but as thoroughly as possible. That means that we can continue throughout the week to keep reading and rereading the verses in the lesson for greater understanding and application of those verses.
4. Do not move on to the next lesson until you have completed and understood the current lesson. Each one is designed to build on the one before it. Again, the objective is not to complete it as quickly as possible, but as thoroughly as possible.
5. You may prefer to use a separate notebook or journal to record your observations. In addition, there are several pages where notes can be taken.

The One Year Discipleship Plan:

Becoming A Faithful Follower of Jesus

Part 1

How Are We Saved From Our Sin?

Lesson 1

1. Examine the following Scriptures and write out what they say about our sin condition:

Romans 3:10-12

Romans 3:23

Romans 5:12

Ephesians 2:1-3

2. Examine the following and write out the penalty for our sin without forgiveness from Jesus Christ:

Romans 6:23

Revelations 20:11-15

3. Examine the following and write out what happens when our sins are forgiven because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ:

Romans 5:1

Romans 5:8-11

Ephesians 2:4-10 and 2:13

Romans 6:23

4. Examine the following and write out what we must do to receive forgiveness of our sin and salvation through Jesus Christ:

Mark 1:14-15

Acts 2:38

John 1:12 and 3:16

Romans 10:9-10

Ephesians 2:8-9

Lesson 1 Summaries:

1. *Everyone has sinned since Adam and Eve first sinned, and are guilty before God. Sin is any thought or speech or action that is against the will of God.*
2. *The penalty for sin is judgment by God and separation from God forever unless God forgives our sin.*
3. *God loves us even in our sin and offers us forgiveness because of the sacrifice of Jesus for our sin. This is God's grace that is shown to us. Grace means he has given us what we do not deserve; forgiveness. He has given us forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus when instead we deserved his wrath and judgment.*
4. *Jesus calls us to turn from our sin and trust completely in his sacrifice for our sin in order to be forgiven and saved from judgement. There is nothing we can do to earn our salvation; it is by faith alone in what Jesus has done for us that we become saved. We respond to what he has done for us by repenting of our sin and trusting in him alone as our Savior. Again, sin is any thought or word or action that is against the will of God. Repenting means I no longer see those sins in my life as something I can continue doing. By repenting I am now willing to turn away from those sins that I once freely committed. Faith or belief means that I will completely trust, rely and depend on Jesus for forgiveness of my sin and for strength to live according to his will for me. Repentance and faith go together as one response to the sacrifice of Christ for us.*

Have you repented of your sin and trusted in Christ alone for your salvation? If you have not, and you want to do that now, you can pray something like this to express your commitment to repent and believe in Christ: "Lord Jesus, I confess to you that I am a sinner and deserve your judgment. But I am willing, now, to turn from my life of sin and instead trust in you and follow you. Thank you for being the sacrifice for my sin and for forgiving me as I trust in you. I trust you now to save me from my sin and I now confess you as my Lord and Savior." This prayer must be a reflection of what is truly happening in your heart and not just words that you speak. We must sincerely desire to trust in Christ for our salvation and live according to his will.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Application: Write out Romans 3:23; 5:8; 6:23 and 10:9-10 to help you memorize them.

Keep repeating them until you have memorized them as a reminder of how you came to salvation and to be able to share them with other people you know.

Write out now all of the things and people that you can think of to thank God for that has led to your salvation:

Write out what it feels like to know that your sin is forgiven and that you are loved forever by God and now have peace with him:

Write out all of the obstacles you face now in following Jesus and pray for Jesus to work in your heart in each of these things. Pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to give you victory in these areas.

Notes:

What Happens When We Become Saved?

Lesson 2

1. Examine the following and write out every spiritual blessing that we now have as a follower of Christ:

Ephesians 1:3-14

Ephesians 2:19-22

2. Examine Romans 8:1-39 and write out all of these blessings we have as a child of God:

3. Examine the following and describe the quality of life we can now live in Christ:

2 Corinthians 5:17

Ephesians 5:1-12

Romans 6:1-14

Galatians 5:16-26

Lesson 2 Summaries:

1. *When I am saved by faith in Christ, I am one of God's holy people and am not lacking any spiritual blessing. In addition, I am chosen by him, adopted as his child, bought back from bondage to sin and marked as belonging to Jesus by the Holy Spirit who now lives in me.*
2. *When I am saved by faith in Christ, I am no longer condemned for my sin, I have been set free from that penalty. I have the Holy Spirit that enables me to live a life that is pleasing to God and pray prayers that God hears. In addition, God works in all situations in my life to bring good and has worked in my life to bring me to himself. Nothing can separate me from his love for me, even death.*
3. *When I am saved by faith in Christ, I now live a new life as a new creation of God. Where my life before salvation was controlled by temptation and sin, I am now able to resist sin and live in victory over it. I am no longer forced to sin by my old sin nature, now I am able to choose to live in obedience to God. The Holy Spirit within me, as a new creation in Christ, enables me and empowers me to walk in victory over sin. As I continually walk in obedience I find greater freedom from the control of sin in my life.*

Application: Write out your statement of thanks to God for all of these blessings and your commitment to live a new life in the power Jesus gives us. Also, write out Ephesians 2:8-9 and memorize these verses.

Why Should We Be Baptized?

Lesson 3

1. Examine the following and write out what all of these people did right after repenting of their sin and trusting in Jesus for their salvation:

Acts 2:37-38

Acts 8:26-38

Acts 10:44-48

Acts 16:25-34

Matthew 28:18-20

2. Examine the following and write out what baptism symbolizes for the new believer in Christ:

Romans 6:3-4

I Peter 3:18-22

Colossians 2:12

3. Examine the following and write out the difference between baptism by water and baptism by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:13

Ephesians 1:11-14

Lesson 3 Summaries:

1. *In each situation, all of these people were baptized AFTER they believed in Jesus for their salvation; not before. Baptism is something that we do as a follower of Jesus Christ AFTER we have repented and trusted in him for our salvation. The word for baptism means to be placed under water and raised up out of it. Therefore, Biblical baptism means that in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit we are submerged in water and raised up out of it. This is our public testimony of our faith in Christ for salvation.*
2. *Baptism symbolizes our identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Baptism does not wash away our sin in reality, it symbolizes what Jesus has already done in washing away our sin by his sacrifice. Just as a wedding is a public ceremony to show the love and commitment that two people have already made to each other before the wedding day, so baptism is a public ceremony to show the relationship we now already have with Jesus because of what he has done for us and what we have done by repenting and trusting in him.*
3. *According to 1 Corinthians 12:13, every believer in Jesus Christ is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. This means that we experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit that makes us a member of Christ's body of followers when we believe in Christ. It can also be seen as our being marked as belonging to Christ by the presence of the Holy Spirit within us. As we shall see in further lessons, there can be later gifting and empowering by the Holy Spirit for ministry. But, the presence of the Holy Spirit from our conversion to Christ guarantees that we will receive our inheritance in Christ.*

Application: Have you been baptized AFTER repenting of your sin and trusting in Jesus?

Circle YES or NO.

If you circled yes, when were you baptized and where?

If you circled no, what is keeping you from identifying now with Jesus as your Savior? If you have not been baptized, write out the reasons for being baptized from the Scriptures you examined above and compare those reasons with the reasons why you have not. What do you believe is God's will for you with baptism?

Write out and memorize Romans 6:4 as a reminder about the meaning of baptism.

What Is The Bible?

Lesson 4

The Bible is God's written word to us in 66 different books. The 39 books that make up the Old Testament were written over a period of roughly 1,000 years and cover a time span from Creation to about 450 years before Jesus. The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language and deals with God's creation of the world and man, man's sin against God, God's provision for a relationship between man and himself, the creation of Israel as his people and all of the struggles with Israel as they await their coming Messiah; Jesus. The 27 books of the New Testament cover a time span from the birth of Jesus to about 70 years after his death. These books were written in the Greek language. They deal with the coming of Jesus, the life and ministry of Jesus and the founding of the Church after Jesus is resurrected and ascends into heaven. They also deal with how followers of Jesus are to live in obedience to him.

Let's break the books down into their different groups.

List the first 5 books of the Old Testament:

1. <i>Genesis</i>	2.	3.	4.	5.
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These books were written by Moses around 1400 years before Jesus and tell us how God formed Creation, how man sinned against God, how God judged man and how he formed the nation of Israel, his chosen people.

List the next 12 History books of the Old Testament:

1. <i>Joshua</i>	2.	3.
4.	5.	6.
7.	8.	9.
10.	11.	12.

These books deal mostly with God's dealings with his chosen people, Israel. They describe both their faithfulness to God among some and the sinfulness among others. They also describe God's responses to their actions.

List the next 5 Poetry Books of the Old Testament:

1. *Job*
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

These books describe God's dealings with people and are intended for worship as much as for their value in teaching us about God.

List the next 5 books of the Major Prophets:

1. *Isaiah*

- 2.

- 3.

- 4.

- 5.

These books contain God's speaking to his people through individual prophets who spoke for him. They are called the Major Prophets because they are longer books.

List the 12 books of the other Prophets:

1. *Hosea*
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

These books contain even more of God's speaking to his people through individual prophets who spoke for him. They are called the Minor Prophets because they are shorter books.

List the first 4 books of the New Testament:

1. *Matthew*

- 2.

- 3.

- 4.

These books are called the Gospels, which means "good news," and covers the life and mission of Jesus from his birth to his death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead.

List the next book in the New Testament:

1.

The book of Acts covers the history of the foundation and spread of the church through preaching the Gospel after Jesus ascended into heaven.

List the next 21 books, or letters of the New Testament:

1. *Romans*

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

20.

21.

These letters were written to churches or individuals and cover a wide range of topics that have to do with Christian belief and living.

List the last book on the New Testament:

1.

This book is a book of prophecy concerning the return of Jesus to earth to rule, God's judgment of the ungodly and a promise of a new heaven and a new earth for those who persevere in the faith.

Application: Write out and memorize Psalm 119:105 as a reminder of how important is God's word for us and how studying it can benefit us.

Notes:

How Did We Get The Bible?

Lesson 5

1. What do these parts of the Bible (passages) teach us about how we got the Bible?

2 Timothy 3:16

2 Peter 1:19-21

2. What do these passages teach us about how important it is to read or listen to the Bible?

2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16

Psalm 119:9; 119:89

Hebrews 4:12

Romans 15:4

Psalm 19:7-8

3. What do these passages teach us about how important it is to obey what God's word says?

Psalm 119:97-106; 129-138

James 1:19-25

Lesson 5 Summaries:

- 1. The Bible is the only book that was written by people who were moved directly by the Holy Spirit to write God's truth. Therefore, it is God's word to us, not the words or thoughts of people that they came up with from their own minds and memories. Since it is from God, and God is perfect, then we know the Bible, in those original words by the Holy Spirit to these authors, are completely without mistakes and can be completely trusted for truth in this life. That is why we call the Bible the Holy Bible, or Holy Scriptures. It is because the Bible is different and set apart from any other book that has ever been written.*
- 2. These passages each affirm the importance of God's Word as giving us instruction, direction, encouragement, correction and conviction that is spoken to us by God as we read the Scriptures. We do not have to wonder about or search for what God is saying to us. He speaks these things through his written word, the Bible.*
- 3. These verses affirm that God's Word to us is not just for reading and understanding, but for obeying and doing. God gives us his truth so that we may understand, but then he expects us to live out that truth by doing what we are called to do in the verses we read. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to do those things effectively, but it is foolishness to read God's Word and then ignore what it says. We must obey what we read.*

Application: Are you regularly reading a Bible and listening to what God is saying through his written word to us? Are you currently doing what you are reading about from the Bible? Write out and memorize 2 Timothy 3:16 as a reminder to us of how we got the Bible.

What Does The Bible Say About How God Exists?

Lesson 6

1. Examine the following and write out what it tells us about how God exists:

John 4:24

Deuteronomy 6:4

Isaiah 46:9

James 2:19

2. Examine the following and write out what they tell us about God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit:

Matthew 3:16-17 and 6:9

John 1:1 and 1:14-18 and 20:26-28

Isaiah 9:6

Acts 5:3-4

2 Corinthians 3:17

Psalm 139:7

3. Examine the following and write out what they teach us about God:

John 4:24

1 Timothy 1:17 and 6:13-16

2 Timothy 2:11-13

Psalm 139:7-10

Deuteronomy 5:26

1 John 3:20

Hebrews 10:23

James 1:17

4. Examine 1 Corinthians 13:9-13 and write out what it tells us about understanding how God exists as we are now and how we will be able to understand him in eternity:

Lesson 6 Summaries:

1. *Scripture clearly states that God is one spiritual being. There is only one God, not more than one God. There are no other gods beside the One God.*
2. *Scripture clearly tells us also that the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God. Therefore, God exists as one God in three spiritual persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father is not the Son or Holy Spirit, the Son is not the Father or Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is not the Father or the Son. They are separate spiritual persons or beings. However, Scripture is clear that each one is fully God and not any less God than the other two. Therefore, with each being fully God, but there being only one God, we know that the three together are one God, not three gods. We call this union of Father, Son and Holy Spirit the Holy Trinity since Scripture clearly states there is only one God, yet also states that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all God.*
3. *God is a spirit and is therefore invisible. He is an eternal spirit and is present in all of His Creation. He knows all things and all possibilities and is able to do anything he chooses to do. He keeps all of the promises he makes and in addition to that, he does not change. He stays exactly as he is.*
4. *This passage in 1 Corinthians 13 reminds us that we can only partially understand these things here on earth, but that we shall be able to fully understand them in eternity when we are in the presence of God.*

Application: Write out and memorize Deuteronomy 6:4-5 as a reminder of who God is and how we should respond to him.

What Do We Know About Who God Is And What He Does?

Lesson 7

1. Examine the following Scriptures and write out all of the things we learn here about God:

Isaiah 6:1-5

1 Peter 2:23

Deuteronomy 4:31

1 John 4:7-11

Exodus 32:10-12

Exodus 34:6-7 and 34:14

1 Corinthians 10:22

2. Examine the following Scriptures and write out what it says about God's work in Creation:

Genesis 1

Hebrews 11:3

Revelation 4:11

Acts 14:14-17

3. Examine the following Scriptures and write what it tells us about God's work in the world:

Psalm 33:10-11

Daniel 2:20-23 and 4:34-35

Isaiah 14:26-27 and 46:8-10

Colossians 1:15-17

4. Examine the following Scriptures and describe how God reveals himself to us:

Psalm 19:1-6

Romans 1:18-20

Lesson 7 Summaries:

- 1. God is holy, just, merciful and loving. God hates evil and is jealous for the worship of His people. However, He is patient and compassionate with sinners.*
- 2. God created all things from nothing in six days and rested on the seventh. God created man in his image; meaning that God created man with a mind to think, a will to make choices, with emotions to feel, with a desire for relationships and with a spirit that will exist for eternity. He continues to work in His Creation and uses it to bring blessing to people.*
- 3. God is in control of all that exists in creation and what occurs in history. He will judge all evil and nothing can stop God from achieving His will.*
- 4. God has revealed himself and that he is the Creator through Creation. No one who has ever lived in Creation can say that there is no evidence that God exists because it is all around them through what has been created.*

Application: Write out and memorize Psalm 19:1 as a reminder of how God has revealed himself to us.

Write out a prayer thanking God for the ways you see Him reveal himself.

Who Is Jesus Christ?

Lesson 8

1. Examine the following and write out what we learn about Jesus before he became man:

John 1:1-3

Colossians 1:16-17

1 Corinthians 10:1-4

2. Examine the following and write out what was involved in Jesus becoming man:

Matthew 1:18-25

John 1:14-18

Philippians 2:6-7

1 Peter 2:22

3. Examine the following and write out what we learn about Jesus' humanity:

Matthew 4:2 and 26:37

Luke 23:46 and 24:39

John 19:28 and 20:27

4. Examine the following and write out how we can know God through Jesus:

John 14:6-10 and 17:3

Hebrews 1:1-3

Lesson 8 Summaries:

1. *Jesus Christ is God the Son and has always existed with the Father and worked in creating everything with him. Jesus continues to work in holding all things together and without his work the universe would self-destruct.*
2. *Jesus was conceived in the virgin Mary by a miracle of the Holy Spirit and took on human form. When he left the glory of Heaven to become man, he remained God the Son and took upon himself human flesh. He was fully God and fully man at the same time. However, he was completely without sin. He became what he was not (man), but remained what he was (God), in order to become the perfect sinless sacrifice for sin.*
3. *Jesus experienced humanity in things such as hunger, thirst, temptation and death. However, as God the Son, he proved power over death by rising from the dead.*
4. *These verses tell us that we know God through knowing Jesus Christ. When we know him, we have eternal life through him. Through what God created we can know about him, but only through a relationship with Jesus, God the Son, can we know God in a relationship and hear what he is saying to us. It is only through knowing Jesus Christ that we can have eternal life.*

Application: Write out and memorize John 1:14 as a reminder of how Jesus was revealed to us.

What Has Jesus Done For Us?

Lesson 9

1. Examine the following and write out what Jesus' sacrifice for our sins means to us:

Hebrews 9:27-28

Romans 3:21-26

Philippians 2:8-11

1 John 2:2

2. Examine the following and write out each time Jesus appears to someone after being raised from the dead:

John 20

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

3. Examine the following and write out the effect that Jesus' resurrection from the dead can have on us:

1 Corinthians 15:50-57

John 5:28-29

4. Examine the following and write out what Jesus will do as the risen Son of God:

1 Timothy 6:13-16

Acts 1:11

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

Revelation 19:11-21

Lesson 9 Summaries:

- 1. Jesus Christ died in our place for our sin so that we would not have to face God's judgment for the sins we committed. Since he became a sacrifice for us we can be forgiven for our sin and do not have to face the wrath of God ourselves.*
- 2. All of these appearances by Jesus after being crucified proves that he was raised from the dead to life again and was victorious over death itself.*
- 3. Jesus' resurrection from the dead means that we also have victory over death if we know him. We do not need to fear death because it is not the end for us; only the beginning of life with Jesus in heaven.*
- 4. As the risen Lord, Jesus has promised to return to establish his kingdom on earth and to bring justice by destroying his enemies.*

Application: Write out and memorize 1 Corinthians 15:55-56 as a reminder of our victory over death.

Which lost person in your life will you share this good news with today? Pray now and take that first step to tell them.

Who Is The Holy Spirit?

Lesson 10

1. Examine the following and write out where God the Holy Spirit is at work:

Psalm 139:7-10

John 16:5-11

2. Examine the following and write out what else you discover about God the Holy Spirit and his work with followers of Jesus:

John 14:15-18

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

3. Examine the following and write out what the Holy Spirit does when it comes to our salvation:

John 1:13-14

John 3:1-8 and 16:7-8

Ephesians 1:13-14

Titus 3:4-7

1 Corinthians 12:13

4. Examine the following and write out what the Holy Spirit does for the person that repents and trusts in Christ:

Romans 8:9-11 and 8:26-27

John 16:12-15

1 Corinthians 2:12-15

Lesson 10 Summaries:

1. *The Holy Spirit is God's Spirit that is at work in the world bringing conviction and awareness of sin and coming judgment because of sin. He is always present wherever a follower of Jesus may go.*
2. *Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be in his disciples as a helper and therefore he lives within us. We are to honor God with our bodies as the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.*
3. *The Holy Spirit is the one who convinces us we are sinners and in need of salvation. He is also the one who comes to live in us when we repent and causes us to have new life or rebirth through Christ. He also guarantees that we belong to Christ and will stay with him. Finally, he baptizes us into the body of Christ followers and therefore includes us in the family of God's people.*
4. *The Holy Spirit comes to live within us and gives us victory over being controlled by sin. He teaches us truth and enables us to know truth from the lies of the world and the devil. In addition, he helps us in our prayers so that they are heard by God.*

Application: Write out and memorize Psalm 139:7-8

How Does The Holy Spirit Help Us?

Lesson 11

1. Examine the following and describe how the Holy Spirit helps us to be more effective followers of Christ:

Ephesians 5:15-21

Galatians 5:16-26

2. Examine the following and describe this ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives:

2 Corinthians 7:9-11

Galatians 5:16 and 5:25

3. Examine the following and write out the various gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to followers of Christ:

1 Corinthians 12:7-10

Romans 12:6-8

Lesson 11 Summaries:

1. *To be filled with the Holy Spirit means to put ourselves under his control and we will produce fruit in our lives that is different from the sins of our flesh. We cannot live a victorious life by our strength or consistently live in obedience to God. We must rely on the Holy Spirit's power to obey God's will and do things his way in order to be victorious over the control of sin in our lives. To be filled with the Holy Spirit means that we are under his control and influence as we go about our daily lives. When that happens, we will produce good spiritual fruit.*
2. *The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin in our lives so that we repent. When we follow his leading in repenting and obeying, we are walking with the Spirit and not living by the flesh.*
3. *The Holy Spirit enables believers to serve God by using gifts he has given them. Since you looked at this in Lesson 10, what more have you discovered about what your gift or gifts may be?*

Application: Have you prayed about God's direction for your gifts and service to him?

Circle Yes or No

What is the most difficult thing in your life right now when it comes to following the Holy Spirit and doing things God's way?

Will you pray about the Holy Spirit giving you victory in this area of your life?

Write out and memorize Ephesians 5:18 as a reminder of how we should submit to the Holy Spirit.

How Do We Study The Bible?

Lesson 12

There are four basic steps to studying the Bible so that it speaks to us and effects our lives:

R – Read or listen to the passage of the Bible that you are studying at least three times.

E – Examine the passage in its context and define unfamiliar or key words. Here, we are trying to discover what the main truth of that section of Scripture is about.

A – Apply the meaning of the passage to your life today. What does it mean to you?

D – Do what it says to do or think or believe or pray, or stop doing what it says to stop doing or thinking or believing.

Example: Matthew 6:9-15

First, READ or listen to this passage at least three times slowly. Read or listen also to the passages before and after the one you are studying.

Next, EXAMINE this passage of Scripture by asking questions about the passage, such as: who is speaking or writing, who is the audience, what is the subject matter, what does the passage before and after have to do with this passage, and what words appear that I do not understand? We ask questions so we can get answers to help us understand the original meaning.

Summary: In this passage Jesus is speaking to his disciples about how to pray. In the section before this he is speaking about how *not* to pray. Now he talks about things to say in prayer to God the Father in heaven. He says his disciples should speak to him first about God's name, God's kingdom and God's will before they talk to him about their needs. In speaking to him about his name, they are to respect his name at all times. That is what "hallowed" means. In speaking about God's kingdom, they are asking that it would come. His kingdom is not a physical kingdom yet, but a kingdom of the heart where people make Jesus king of their lives. When disciples pray for his kingdom to come, they are asking for people to submit to his authority and obey him as king. They are also asking for his kingdom to appear on earth with him at his return. When they pray for his will to be done as it is done in heaven, they are praying that they will obey him completely and immediately, just like in heaven. So, they are praying for their spiritual relationship with God before they pray about the other things they need, like daily bread. After asking for the things they need, disciples are to ask for his forgiveness of sin and a willingness to forgive other people the way he forgives them. Finally,

they are to ask him to give strength in facing temptation and to keep them from sin. All of these things we discover when we carefully EXAMINE the passage.

Third, we APPLY what we have discovered by praying to God for these things in our lives right now. It's not enough to know what the Bible says, we need to understand what it means to us. We need to make decisions about what we should do differently after studying a section of God's Word, the Bible. In this case, we learn that we need to speak to God about our spiritual needs and our physical needs, but our spiritual needs are most important. All of this prayer, except daily bread, is about our spiritual needs and obedience. That is what we most need to pray about. Now I have decided what this means to me. That is application.

Finally, we commit to DO the things we have just prayed about for ourselves. Is it never enough to simply know what we should do unless we do those things. The Bible is given to us to not only know God and know about God, but especially to obey him. This is where many followers of Jesus fall short in Bible study. We learn what the Bible is saying, what it is saying to us, but we have to complete our study by doing what it is telling us to do.

Application: Write out what you find when you EXAMINE Matthew 6:9-14.

Write out what these things mean to you personally about prayer:

Write out what changes you need to make to begin doing what this passage tells us to do:

How Do We Pray To God?

Lesson 13

There are also four things that we do when we pray to God. God speaks to us through studying his Word and we speak to him through prayer. These are the four parts of prayer.

P – Praise God

R – Repent of our sin

A – Ask God for the things we need

Y – Yield to God's Will

After studying Matthew 6:9-15, we can now see all four of these things in the way Jesus taught his disciples to pray.

First, We PRAISE God for being our Father in heaven. We give him praise for who he is and what he does. We are also to focus on those things that we are thankful for when we praise him. This focuses us on what God has already done for us before we even consider what we ask him for. The more we praise God, the more we are reminded of his goodness and love and the less we are concerned about ourselves.

Next, we REPENT of our sin against God. In Matthew 6:12 and 1 John 1:8-9 we are to ask forgiveness for our sin. We confess our sin to God, which means agreeing with him that we have sinned, and ask him to cleanse us. We are agreeing with God that our sin is wrong and that we are willing to give it up and obey him. We confess any and all sin that we know of before God when we repent, not just some of them. Also read 1 John 1:5-10 for more context on confessing sin to the Lord.

Next, we ASK God for the things we need. In Matthew 6:11 Jesus tells us to ask for our daily bread. In other words, we are to ask for the things we need for ourselves and others we know. It may be many things, but God already knows what they are. Matthew 6:8 tell us that. But we ask most for the spiritual things we need, like help in facing temptation, help in submitting to his will, forgiving other people as we have been forgiven and other needs.

Finally, we YIELD to God by asking that his kingdom comes and his will is done in our lives. In other words, we submit to his authority and ask for God to help us live his way by his will. We make him our king and obey him in his kingdom and we pray for the help of the Holy Spirit to do that effectively.

Application: Write out all of the things you think are great about God and all of things you are thankful for from him.

Write out all of the sins that you need to turn from doing and be forgiven for by God.

Write out all of the things that you want God to do or provide, spiritual and physical, then ask him to do them or provide them according to his will, in his time.

Write out a statement of your willingness to obey God and live your life according to his will.

How Do We Worship God?

Lesson 14

1. Examine the following and describe what God is praised for, how he is praised, and who praises him:

Psalm 95:1-7

Psalm 98

Psalm 100

2. Examine the following and write out the attitude that we should have as worshippers:

Hebrews 12:28

Revelation chapters 4 and 5

3. Examine Romans 12:1-2 and write out what is different about worship from what we have seen in the other verses:

4. Examine Hebrews 13:15 and Psalm 150 and note who is to be the object of our worship:

5: Examine Psalm 73 and describe the feelings of the Psalmist in the first 16 verses. Next, describe what changed his mind in verse 17. Why did worship change his mind?

Lesson 14 Summaries:

1. *The Psalms are a collection of Hebrew songs. Here, worship is giving praise and thanksgiving to God in word or song for all he has done in Creation and salvation. It is done by his people who humble themselves before him.*
2. *As worshippers of God, we should have an attitude of total humility and bow before him as we consider his greatness. This scene in heaven shows the respect that all of the heavenly beings have as they worship God.*
3. *Here we see that how we live before God and use our gifts to serve him is another way that we worship God.*
4. *God himself is always to be the object of our worship and the reason we worship. We are offering him a gift of praise when we worship. Many people worship God for the experience they can get out of worship for themselves. This is not the reason we worship.*
5. *The Psalmist is angry over the injustice that he sees in the world and the fact that the most wicked people seem to be the most prosperous and successful. However, in verse 17, he states he came to the sanctuary of God, which is another way of describing worship. In worshipping God, he was able to see things from the proper perspective. He then saw God as great and eternal and the wickedness of people and treasures of this earth as being temporary. His worship of God and focusing on the greatness of God enabled him to see life on this earth in the proper perspective rather than being caught up in jealousy for the things the wicked enjoy.*

Application: Write out and memorize Romans 12:1-2

How Do We Give To God?

Lesson 15

1. Examine 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 and list all of the things that impress you about the giving of these Christians:

2. Examine 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 and write out the kind of attitude we should have in our giving:

3. Examine the following and write out what things we should not do when it comes to giving to the Lord:

Matthew 6:1-4

Mark 12:41-44

Lesson 15 Summaries:

- 1. Giving to the Lord begins with us giving ourselves to the Lord. Therefore, everything we have needs to belong to him. We are only keeping for him what belongs to him. As a result of that understanding of what we have, we can give to others generously even when we have little ourselves.*
- 2. God wants us to give generously and with joy since we are able to give back some of what he has given to us. The more we give, the more we are blessed by God for our generosity.*
- 3. We are not to give to get attention from people so that they praise us for our generosity. We do not give to put on a show for people. Instead, God is pleased when we give sacrificially rather than from our extra.*

Application: From all of these verses we have looked at, we see that God is much more interested in us giving with the right attitude of joy and generosity, giving in a way that is a sacrifice to us, and giving with thanksgiving for all he has given us. Those things are more important than the amount that we give. Write out your commitment to give to the Lord. How will you begin giving consistently to the Lord? Be specific.

Write out and memorize 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 as a reminder about giving to the Lord.

How Do We Serve God?

Lesson 16

1. Examine Romans 12:1-8 and write out what is necessary for us to serve God:

2. Examine the following and list all of the spiritual gifts you read about there:

1 Corinthians 12

1 Corinthians 14

3. Examine the following and write about what is necessary for us to use our gifts in a way that is pleasing to God:

1 Corinthians 13

Romans 12:9-10

Lesson 16 Summaries:

- 1. We see that we are to give ourselves as a sacrifice to the Lord, and one way to do that is to use the gifts that he has given us to serve him.*
- 2. There are many gifts that the Lord has given to the people in his church. Which of these gifts, along with those in Romans 12, do you think you may have:*
- 3. Our service to God must always be motivated by our love for others, not to draw attention to ourselves. Other people must always be the object of our service and using our gifts to meet their needs. We should never compare our gifts and service with others as some kind of competition for blessing. That would make our service something selfish and not pleasing to God.*

Application: Commit to pray about what gifts God has given you and how he wants to use you in service for his kingdom. Write out a prayer about this:

Write out and memorize 1 Corinthians 14:12 as a reminder about spiritual gifts.

How Do We Tell Others About God?

Lesson 17

1. Examine Mark 5:1-20 and write out what Jesus told the man to go tell people:

2. Examine the following and write out what we need to tell people from the Scriptures about their need for salvation:

Romans 3:23

Romans 5:8

Romans 6:23

Romans 10:9-10

Acts 3:19

3. Examine the following and write out the reason that we are to tell others about Jesus.

Acts 1:6-8

Matthew 28:18-20

Lesson 17 Summaries:

- 1. Telling other people about Jesus begins with telling them about what he has done for us. We testify about what he has done for us by telling our story of how he saved us from our sin.*
- 2. These verses outline what a person needs to know about salvation. They need to know that they are sinners and need a Savior. They need to know that Jesus loves them and has become the sacrifice for their sin. They need to know that they must repent of their sin and confess him as their Savior to be saved.*
- 3. Jesus commanded his disciples to tell others about him throughout the world. Notice that in Matthew he is in Galilee when he tells them this, and in Acts he is on the Mount of Olives, a completely different place. That means Jesus told this to his disciples over and over again. How important must it have been for them tell others about him?*

Application: How important is it for us to tell others about him?

Make a list of the people you know that need to know Jesus among your family and friends. Begin praying that the Lord will work in their heart so that they want to know him.

Commit to memorizing these verses; Romans 3:23; 5:8, 6:23, Acts 3:19 and Romans 10:9-10 so that you can tell them about Jesus from Scripture.

Write out your testimony, which is simply your story of salvation. Be prepared to share with the group next week.

What Is The Church?

Lesson 18

1. Examine the following and summarize what this tells us about the beginning of the church.

Matthew 16:15-18 and 28:16-20

Acts 1:4-8 and 2:1-41

2. Examine the following and write out everything we learn here about the kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven.

Mark 1:14-15

Matthew 13:1-50

3. Examine the following and write out what you learn here about the church.

1 Corinthians 1:2

Ephesians 1:22-23

1 Thessalonians 1:1

Colossians 1:18

Hebrews 12:23

4. Examine the following and note the qualities of church leadership and how it is to be organized and respected.

1 Peter 5:1-4

1 Timothy 3:1-13

Titus 1:5-9

Hebrews 13:17

5. Examine Acts 2:37-47 and list the activities that the church performed in order to accomplish the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel and growing people in their faith.

Lesson 18 Summaries:

1. Jesus determined to create the church after he ascended into heaven, but spoke about it before that. The church actually began about 10 days after Jesus ascended to heaven when the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost and empowered them to establish the church. **The church is God's visible representation on earth of those who have been saved by Jesus.** The church exists to glorify God by proclaiming his good news of salvation and teaching people to mature in their faith until Jesus returns.

2. Jesus spoke of the church as yet to come while he was preaching the good news of the kingdom; which was already present. In other words, Jesus was calling people to repent for forgiveness of their sin and submit to God's authority by faith. That is how they entered the kingdom and how we still enter God's kingdom. But God's kingdom now is an invisible, spiritual kingdom. It is worth giving up everything to enter. But it will become an actual kingdom on earth when Jesus returns.

What is the difference between the church and the kingdom? Now, the kingdom of God is God ruling in our hearts by faith when we turn from sin and make him the king of our lives. The church is not a building but the people living today who have entered God's kingdom. The church began on the day of Pentecost, but the kingdom of God is eternal and has existed since God created man. The church will end when Jesus returns, but God's kingdom and rule over all of his creation will last forever. The church exists only for a time and a purpose, whereas the kingdom of God is eternal and never ends. The kingdom of God in Mark, Luke and John is the same as the kingdom of heaven in Matthew.

3. The church exists in two forms: the universal church is all believers throughout the world who have entered into God's kingdom by repentance and faith. It also exists as individual groups of believers that meet in one place who have spiritual leaders who lead them. We call this the local church. The universal church, represented by local churches, is the body of Christ in the world over which he is the head and authority.

4. Local churches are to be led by elders, also called bishops or pastors in other parts of the New Testament, who are responsible for the spiritual leading, teaching and oversight of a local church. There are also deacons who are responsible for carrying out other ministry matters of the church beyond the spiritual matters the elders care for. The local church is a gathering of believers in Christ but must have recognized leaders in these positions to be an actual church. Believers are to respect these leaders and submit to their godly leadership.

5. We see here four activities that the church was doing and all local churches should be doing. The church should engage in worship; fellowship, which is caring for the needs of one another; discipleship and evangelism. Any healthy church is to be doing all four of these things. In addition, the local church baptizes new believers, as we have already seen and celebrates the Lord's Supper or Communion, which we will see in the next lesson.

Application: Write out and memorize Acts 2:42-47

Notes:

What Does Celebrating The Lord's Supper Mean?

Lesson 19

1. Examine the following and describe what Jesus is telling his disciples and showing them regarding the bread and cup:

Matthew 26:17-30

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

2. Examine 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 and write out the warnings Paul gives this church about observing the Lord's Supper the wrong way:

Lesson 19 Summaries:

- 1. Jesus was showing his disciples what his coming sacrifice would mean by using bread as a symbol for his body and the cup as a symbol for his blood. When he broke the bread, he was showing how his body would be broken as a sacrifice for sin. With the cup he was showing how his blood would be shed to provide forgiveness of sin. He told his disciples to do both of these things in the future to remind themselves of his sacrifice for their sin. Therefore, when we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we are remembering Jesus' sacrifice for our sin with the symbols of bread and the cup.*
- 2. These believers in Corinth were abusing the Lord's Supper by observing it in a sinful way. They were focused on themselves and their eating and drinking, even getting drunk, rather than focusing on Jesus and remembering his sacrifice. Before observing the Lord's Supper each follower of Christ should examine themselves to make sure they are participating correctly and not in a sinful way.*

Application: Write out and memorize Mark 14:22-24 as a reminder of the meaning of the Lord's Supper.

What Do We Know About Angels?

Lesson 20

1. Examine the following and note what we learn in these verses about angels.

Psalm 8:3-5; 89:5-7 and 148:2-5

Daniel 10:10-14

Revelation 12:7-9

2. Examine the following and determine what else we learn about the nature of angels:

James 2:19

Luke 8:1-2 and 8:27-35

Matthew 22:30

3. Examine the following to determine what holy angels do in serving God:

2 Samuel 24:15-17

Hebrews 1:13-14

Acts 12:6-11

Revelation 8:2-5

Daniel 4:17

4. Examine the following. List some of the things that demons do in opposing the work of God.

Ephesians 6:10-13

Matthew 8:28-34

Revelation 16:12-16

Summary of Lesson 20:

1. *Angels are created spiritual beings that are organized into various levels of authority. They exist as either holy angels that serve God, or fallen angels, also called demons, princes or evil spirits, that resist the work and plans of God in creation.*
2. *Angels are able to think and reason, have emotions like fear, can join forces with other angels, do not marry like people and can apparently inhabit animals.*
3. *Holy angels assist God in his work in the world, guide in the affairs of nations, minister to believers and punish the enemies of God.*
4. *Demons are spiritual forces of wickedness that promote idolatry and false worship, afflict people mentally and physically, causing suffering, and generally work against God's plans in the world.*

Application: Memorize Hebrews 1:13-14 as a reminder of what Holy Angels do is serving God and us.

What Do We Know About Satan?

Lesson 21

1. Study these verses concerning Satan, the head of demons, and write out what he does to oppose God:

1 Timothy 3:6

Genesis 3:1-5

1 Peter 5:8-9

Colossians 2:15

John 8:44

Matthew 4:1-11

Ephesians 6:10-13

2 Corinthians 4:4

2. Study Revelation 20:3-10, and write out what the future holds for Satan:

3. Examine the following and note how the Enemy, Satan, seeks to influence us and how he works to destroy our faith.

John 8:42-47

Ephesians 4:26-27

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

Colossians 2:13-15

Summary of Lesson 21:

1. *Satan is the head fallen angel of wickedness who pridefully rebelled against God and led other demons in rebellion against God. He is a murderer and a liar, an accuser of believers, and tempts people to sin. In addition, he wages spiritual war against believers and deceives unbelievers about the Gospel.*
2. *Satan and his demons have experienced defeat already by Christ's death on the cross and will spend eternity in the lake of fire as judgment.*
3. *Satan influences us by getting us to believe lies about ourselves, God and himself. He convinces us and tempts us to believe what is not true and whenever we believe and act on his lies, we are doing his will. Whenever we believe and act on the truth of the Bible, we deny the lies of Satan and he has no control over us. The battle we have is primarily a battle of what we chose to believe. False ideas and lies can come from the culture, our upbringing, people in our lives and even lies we tell ourselves at times. These ideas and thoughts that do not come from God's Word must be rejected. If we allow them to remain, we allow them to have a negative effect on our lives.*

Application: The other way we allow him to influence our lives is by not confessing sin and instead continuing in that sin. One example is Ephesians 4:27 where we can allow conflicts with other people to go unresolved, and when we refuse to forgive them of their sins against us. In the next section we will look more carefully at several things, like unforgiveness or continuing to practice sin, that can keep us from living in victory over sin and the schemes of the Enemy.

Write out and memorize James 4:7 as a reminder of how to deal with the schemes of the Devil.

How Do We Walk In Spiritual Victory Over The Enemy

Lesson 22

Examine the following and note the difference between Jesus and Satan, and in what Jesus tells us and what Satan would like for us to believe.

John 1:14

John 8:32

John 8:42-47

Summary: Jesus is full of truth and tells us that it is truth that sets us free. Satan tells us lies that seek to influence us by believing those lies. Therefore, we must seek to know and believe the truth about God and ourselves if we are to walk in spiritual victory and freedom. In Lessons 22 and 23 we are going to make a list from Scripture of the truths that we are going to believe about God and about us to replace the lies we have believed in the past.

So far, in this Discipleship plan, we have been learning the truth about God, ourselves and the Devil, or Satan. But there still may be things that we may be believing that are not true and that are negatively affecting our lives. Ask the Lord Jesus in prayer to reveal to you any lies that you may still be believing about him, yourself and Satan that you need to confess as sin to God, and state that you are rejecting and refusing to believe those lies. These lies can come through things others have told us, or sometimes through participating in false religion or any spiritual practices that are not from the Bible. We need to confess these as sin, repent of them and reject them.

Application: Ask the Lord to reveal to you all sin that needs to be confessed and then write out your confession and rejection of all sin that the Holy Spirit brings to mind. Keep going with your list on the back of this page until you have written all the sins and false beliefs that the Holy Spirit brings to your mind. For example:

I confess that I have _____ and I repent of this and reject it.
I confess that I have _____ and I repent of this and reject it.

(Repeat this for as many sins that come to mind)

Notes:

Then consider praying a simple prayer like this and repeat it, or something similar regularly, whenever you find yourself struggling in this area: *Lord, I thank you that your Word says you are faithful and just to forgive my sins. Thank you that the blood of your precious Son, Jesus, was sufficient to pay the penalty for all my sins. I am trusting in that truth alone for my forgiveness. I have confessed the sin of _____ and have turned from it. But I find myself tempted in this area. Your Word says that when I am tempted you will provide a way of escape for me. Show me that way of escape. I choose to follow you and submit to you in all areas of my life.*

What Are Truths That I Must Believe About God?

Lesson 23

Write out the truth that you find in each of these verses:

God is (John 14:6) _____

God is (Psalm 103:8) _____

God is (Revelation 4:11) _____

God is (Isaiah 6:3) _____

God is Ephesians 2:4) _____

God is (Philippians 2:13) _____

God is (Job 42:2) _____

God is (Psalm 45:6) _____

God is (Revelation 1:8) _____

God is (Psalm 46:1) _____

God is (Psalm 47:7) _____

God is (Daniel 4:3) _____

God is (Hebrews 4:14) _____

God is (Hebrews 13:6) _____

God is (2 Peter 3:9) _____

God is (Revelation 22:20) _____

God is (Psalm 107:1) _____

God is (Psalm 111:3) _____

God is (Revelation 1:17-18) _____

God is (Psalm 135:5) _____

God is (Psalm 142:5) _____

God is (Psalm 144:2) _____

God is (Psalm 145:8-9) _____

God is (1 John 1:9) _____

God is (1 John 4:16) _____

God is (Psalm 139:1-6) _____

God is (Colossians 1:15-17) _____

God is (James 1:17) _____

God is (Hebrews 10:23) _____

God is (1 Timothy 1:17) _____

God is (1 Timothy 6:15-16) _____

God is (1 John 4:8) _____

God is (Exodus 34:14) _____

God is (Luke 1:37) _____

God is (Psalm 104:1) _____

Application: Now, pick out 3 of the above verses about God that you will memorize this week.

Write out each of the 3 verses below to help you begin memorizing them.

What Are Truths I Must Believe About Myself In Christ?

Lesson 24

In Christ I am (Colossians 1:21-22) _____

In Christ I am (John 1:12) _____

In Christ I have (Romans 5:1) _____

In Christ I am not (Romans 8:1) _____

In Christ I am (John 15:15) _____

In Christ I am (Colossians 2:13-14) _____

In Christ I am (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) _____

In Christ I am (Philippians 3:20) _____

In Christ I am (Ephesians 1:4) _____

In Christ I am (Ephesians 1:5) _____

In Christ I am (Ephesians 2:4-5) _____

In Christ I am (Ephesians 2:6-10) _____

In Christ I have (Ephesians 2:18) _____

In Christ I am (1 Corinthians 12:27) _____

In Christ I am (Colossians 3:3) _____

In Christ I am (Romans 8:28) _____

In Christ I am (Romans 8:29) _____

In Christ I am (Romans 8:30) _____

In Christ I will (Revelation 2:7) _____

In Christ I am (Revelation 1:5-6) _____

In Christ I will (Revelation 2:11) _____

In Christ I will (Revelation 2:26-27) _____

In Christ I will (Revelation 3:5) _____

In Christ I will (Revelation 3:12) _____

In Christ I am (Romans 5:10) _____

In Christ I am (1 Corinthians 12:13) _____

In Christ I am (Galatians 2:20) _____

In Christ I can (Philippians 4:13) _____

In Christ I am (1 John 3:1) _____

In Christ I am (1 John 4:4) _____

In Christ I have (1 John 5:1) _____

In Christ I have (1 Peter 1:3) _____

In Christ I have (1 Peter 1:4) _____

In Christ I have (1 Peter 1:5) _____

In Christ I will (John 10:27-28) _____

In Christ I am (Matthew 5:13-14) _____

In Christ I have (Colossians 3:3) _____

In Christ I am (2 Corinthians 5:17) _____

Application: Now, pick out 3 of the verses above that you will memorize this week. Write out each of the 3 verses below to help you begin memorizing them.

Why Is Forgiveness So Important?

Lesson 25

One of the things that keeps us from walking in victory is refusing to extend forgiveness to those who have wronged us. Examine the following and write out what we are supposed to do when we are wronged or someone sins against us.

Matthew 6:9-13

Ephesians 4:31-32

2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Matthew 18:21-35

Summary: Forgiveness is not a feeling or an emotion. Forgiveness is a decision we must make. It's a decision to not hold someone's sin against us, against them, any longer. We must decide to forgive even when we don't feel like forgiving. Jesus demands that we forgive other people the same way he forgives us. When we forgive, we are not excusing the sin against us or saying that someone will not answer for their sin against us. We are instead leaving them to the justice of God and releasing them from our unforgiveness. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you the people that you need to forgive now and declare that you are now forgiving them for their sin against you. For example:

I forgive _____ for _____

I forgive _____ for _____

(Continue on page 62 listing everyone that you need to forgive.)

Then consider praying this sample prayer: *Lord Jesus, I confess that I have not forgiven these people, but today I decide to forgive them because I have already been forgiven by you. I leave them in your hands to deal with according to your righteousness. I will no longer hold their sin against them. Thank you for forgiving me and now I pray that I can continue to forgive others as I have been forgiven. Amen.*

Next, pray for the Lord to reveal to you all the people that you have sinned against that you may need to seek forgiveness from. These are people that may need to forgive you. List them below.

I need to seek forgiveness from _____ for _____

I need to seek forgiveness from _____ for _____

(Continue with all the names that are brought to your mind.)

Then consider praying a prayer something like this: *“Lord Jesus, I have sinned against you and against these people. Please make a way for me to confess my sin to them, whenever it is appropriate, and ask for their forgiveness. I know you have forgiven me but I want to have their forgiveness also, so please work in their hearts to enable them to forgive me as well. Amen.”*

Notes:

How Do We Deal With Sinful Actions, Beliefs and Thoughts?

Lesson 26

Examine the following and write out what we learn about how to deal with sinful thoughts and actions.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

James 4:7

Romans 6:11-14

Galatians 5:19-21

Ephesians 4:25-31

1 John 1:8-10

Summary: Every sinful thought and action must be changed to become obedient to Jesus. Every sin must be confessed, repented of and rejected. If we do not, they become areas of rebellion that the Enemy can use to hinder our faith and walk with Jesus. We must ask the Lord to reveal to us any sin that exists in our lives that need to be brought into obedience to Christ. Every sin requires confession and repentance. (Consider the following list, which are examples, but there may be many others not listed: pride, sexual lust and immorality, abortion, dishonesty, lying, cheating, envy, stealing, idolatry, drunkenness, witchcraft, greed, anger, unbiblical divorce, gossip, drug use, racism, etc.) List each sin that the Holy Spirit brings to mind and agree with the Lord Jesus that it is sin, repent of this sin and reject it as not acceptable in your life. Ask the Lord for the strength and grace to gain full victory over it.

For example: I confess that _____ is sin and I repent of it and reject it as something that cannot remain in my life. (keep on listing and repenting of all the sins that are brought to mind. Use page 63).

Consider praying something like this: *Lord Jesus, I confess that I have practiced these sins and even have allowed them to control my life. I now repent of them, reject them and thank you for cleansing me of them. Fill me with your Holy Spirit so that I can live in victory over them and not be a slave to them any longer.*

Application: Write out and memorize 2 Corinthians 10:5 as a reminder of how to deal with these sins.

Notes:

Why Is Submission To Authority So Important?

Lesson 27

1. Examine the following and write out what we learn about the problem of pride:

James 4:6

Proverbs 16:18

1 John 2:16

Proverbs 18:12 and 15:33

2. Examine Romans 13:1-7 and write out our responsibility to submit to the authorities and laws that we are to live under.

3. Examine the following and write out our responsibilities to submit to leaders in our families, work and churches.

Ephesians 5:21-32

1 Peter 2:13-17

Ephesians 6:1-3

1 Peter 2:18-23

Colossians 3:18-21

Hebrews 13:7

Hebrews 13:17

Lesson 27 Summaries:

1. *The Lord is opposed to those that are prideful and lack humility. This pride is the root of rebellion and often leads to the destruction of the prideful person.*
2. *We are to obey the laws where we live and submit to their authority because God has established law and order and the people that enforce them as a blessing for us. To rebel against the authority that God has put over us is to rebel against God.*
3. *God has established an order of authority in the home beginning with father. The father is to be under the authority of Jesus himself. The wife is to respect and submit to the authority of the husband and the children are to be under the authority of their parents. In the same way, at church the leaders are to be respected and at work, workers are to submit to the authority of those over them.*

Application: Write out Proverbs 16:18 and memorize it as a reminder of the problem pride can be for us. Also, pray about and ask the Lord to reveal to you any areas of prideful rebellion that you need to confess and repent of now.

What Happens At The End Of Time?

Lesson 28

1. Examine the following and note what we learn here about the return of Jesus to earth:

Acts 1:11

Matthew 24:36-44

James 5:7-8

1 Thessalonians 5:1-5

Revelation 16:15

Summary:

2. Examine the following and write out the details of what happens with unbelievers and followers of Christ when Jesus returns:

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Revelation 19

Summary:

3. Examine the following and note what things will be like on the earth as we get close to the return of the Lord:

Matthew 24:3-14

Revelation 6:1-17

2 Peter 3:3-13

Summary:

4. Now, examine the following and note the details of what will take place right before and with the return of the Lord:

Daniel 9:25-27

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Revelation 3:10

Revelation 13;

Revelation 7

Revelation 19:11-21

Revelation 20:1-5

Summary:

5. Examine the following and write out what happens after the 1,000 years are over.

Rev. 20:7-10

Revelation 20:11-15

Revelation 21

Revelation 22:1-7

Summary:

Lesson 28 Summaries:

1. *Jesus Christ will return to earth at a time that is unknown to anyone but the Father. His return will take place suddenly and will be totally unexpected for unbelievers in Christ. However, followers of Jesus are to patiently expect his return and not be caught unprepared.*

2. *Those believers who have died before his return will have their bodies resurrected and will join those that are still alive in being caught to meet Jesus in the air and will remain with him forever. This is known as the “Rapture” of the church. They will celebrate the marriage feast of Jesus while Jesus will destroy his enemies that remain on earth.*

3. *There will be much violence, sinfulness and persecution of followers of Jesus leading up to the time of his return.*

4. A seven-year period of intense tribulation will take place leading up to the return of Jesus and especially the last half of this period when the Antichrist will emerge to rule the world and intensely persecute followers of Jesus. During that time, God will pour out his wrath on all unbelievers who are followers of the Antichrist but God will protect his people. They will not be subject to the wrath of God but will be persecuted by the Devil, the Antichrist and the False Prophet. Jesus will slay these enemies at his coming and will bind Satan for 1,000 years. The believers in Jesus that were resurrected and caught up to be with Jesus, and event called the Rapture, will rule with Jesus for 1,000 years and be with him forever. This 1,000 year rule of Jesus and his followers is called the Millenium.

5. At the end of the Millenium, Satan will be freed for a short time before being judged and put in the lake of fire forever along with all of those of all time that have rejected Jesus. Believers in Jesus, however, will join Jesus forever in a new heaven and new earth with no suffering, sorrow or pain ever again.

Application: Consider Matthew 24:14 and decide what you are going to do to make sure the Gospel is preached to all the earth.

Notes:

What Happens At The End Of Our Time?

Lesson 29

1. Examine the following and write out what happens when we die:

Hebrews 9:27

James 2:26

2 Corinthians 5:6-10

Luke 16:22-23

2. Examine the following and write out what we learn about rewards and responsibilities in heaven:

1 Corinthians 3:10-15

Revelation 20:6

Lesson 29 Summaries:

1. We die when our soul leaves our body. For followers of Jesus, our soul goes immediately into the presence of Jesus where we remain until our bodies are resurrected at the coming of the Lord. For unbelievers, they go to hell to await final judgment after the 1,000 years. There is no way to change their future now.

2. Believers in Jesus are rewarded in heaven according to their service to Jesus here on earth. As well, believers rule with Jesus during the Millenium.

Application: Are you prepared for death? Are you ready to meet Jesus at any time?

The One Year Discipleship Plan:

Becoming a Faithful Follower of Jesus

Part 2

Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else, to the nearby villages, so I can preach there also. That is why I have come. Mark 1:38 (NIV)

Dr. Chip Johnston

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Introduction to Part 2:

In the first part of the Discipleship Plan, we did what is called a “Topical” study of the Bible. A topical study takes a subject, or topic of Scripture, and looks at many different verses from many different books to determine what the Bible, as a whole, says about that subject. The previous 28 lessons covered the basic areas of the Christian life from this approach. Now, with this basic foundation established, in part 2, we are going to take a different approach. We are now going to do what is called an “Expository” study of the Bible. An expository approach to Bible study should become our main approach since it takes entire books and passages of Scripture in the context that they were written originally. Each book of the Bible was written at a certain place and at a certain time for a certain reason by a certain person. It has a place in history and reason for being written, that we call the historical context. It is written in different types of literature; such as poetry in places, prophecy in places, stories in places, letters in other places and so on. We call this a literary context, and each type of literature has different rules for interpretation. With topical studies we have to be very careful to not take verses out of their context to make them mean something they were not intended to mean. With expository studies, we are much less likely to take verses out of context since the study of the broader context becomes our starting point.

The Gospel of Mark is a great expository study. It is the story of Jesus’ life and ministry. We call this “narrative” literature because it is written in the form of a story. When studying any book of the Bible, we always want to begin by answering the questions of who wrote it, where or when was it was written, if possible, to whom was it written, and most importantly, why it was written. Then, as we study each part or passage, we want to know where Jesus is speaking, to whom is he speaking, what is he saying or doing, all to better help us understand why he is saying or doing what he is saying or doing. Expository study of a passage, in its context, is not only a method we use for studying the Bible, it is a skill we want to develop so that these study questions become automatic for us anytime we read the Bible. This expository study of the Gospel of Mark is designed to not only teach you about the life and ministry of Jesus, but also to teach you skills in how to study any part of the Bible from here on. Use the sections titled “Notes” to write any additional thoughts or questions.

When we began this Discipleship Plan, the commitment was not only to be discipled yourself, but to also prepare to disciple someone else. Have you already begun to fulfill that commitment? If not, are you praying about who you can now begin taking through this plan? Who are you discipling? _____ . If you are not, what is keeping you from discipling someone else? What next needs to happen for you to begin discipling someone else while you are being discipled yourself?

Introduction to the Gospel of Mark

The Gospel of Mark is considered by many scholars to be likely the first Gospel, or account of Jesus' life, to be written. It is difficult to say with accuracy exactly when Mark wrote this Gospel or where he was when he wrote it. However, writings by early Christians outside of the Bible suggest that Mark wrote originally to Christians in Rome who were suffering persecution under the wicked Emperor Nero. Nero was a power crazed dictator that many historians believe was responsible for setting Rome on fire. He then blamed the Christians for the fire that destroyed most of the city. Following that, he put many of them to death, most notably Peter and Paul. Mark's Gospel was likely an attempt to encourage the Christians there to faithfulness in the midst of persecution. Like all of the New Testament, Mark was written originally in the Greek language. The content of the Gospel seems to point toward a more Gentile audience than a Jewish audience, which is what the church in Rome was at the time. Even though Mark was not an actual disciple of Jesus as one of the twelve, it is believed that Peter was his source of material. 1 Peter 5:13 indicates the close relationship between Peter and Mark and places them together at Babylon, which was another term for Rome. This would likely have been between 60-68 AD, during the terrible reign of Nero. The first 10 chapters of Mark are devoted to the three-year public ministry and teaching of Jesus, while the last 6 are devoted to Jesus' final week and resurrection. This tells us how much importance Mark placed on the end of Jesus' ministry and his sacrifice for sin and resurrection. The Gospel begins with the early stages of Jesus' ministry and covers about a three-year period until his ascension into heaven.

Since all four Gospels; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were all written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we have four different accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus. Even when there are differences among the four Gospels, we can see these accounts as different witnesses to the same events. Mark's Gospel is the shortest in length of the four and provides the most concise account of Jesus' life and teaching.

Read the entire Gospel of Mark from start to finish. Take as long as you need to read the entire book. However, the more quickly you read through the book, the more you will be able to see an overview of it. This is the first step in studying a book of the Bible. It helps us to see the bigger picture of the entire book before we begin examining the details of each part. Then, as you read, write out anything that you find notable and any questions that you have.

As you read the Gospel of Mark, refer often to the map located on page 75 to identify the locations of the events taking place!

Important Terms:

There are several very important words that come up again and again in Mark's Gospel that must be understood in order to better understand the book:

Repent – Greek word: metanoia. Metanoia has at its core a change of mind with regard to sin but is more used for how I'm willing to live. It is an obedient response to Jesus (Matt. 12:41) and a call to discipleship. As an example, If I am walking down a road going one direction, to repent means that I turn around and walk the opposite direction. If I am living my life in disobedience to God and against his will for me, to repent means that I am willing to stop living that way and instead submit to God's will and begin living in obedience to him.

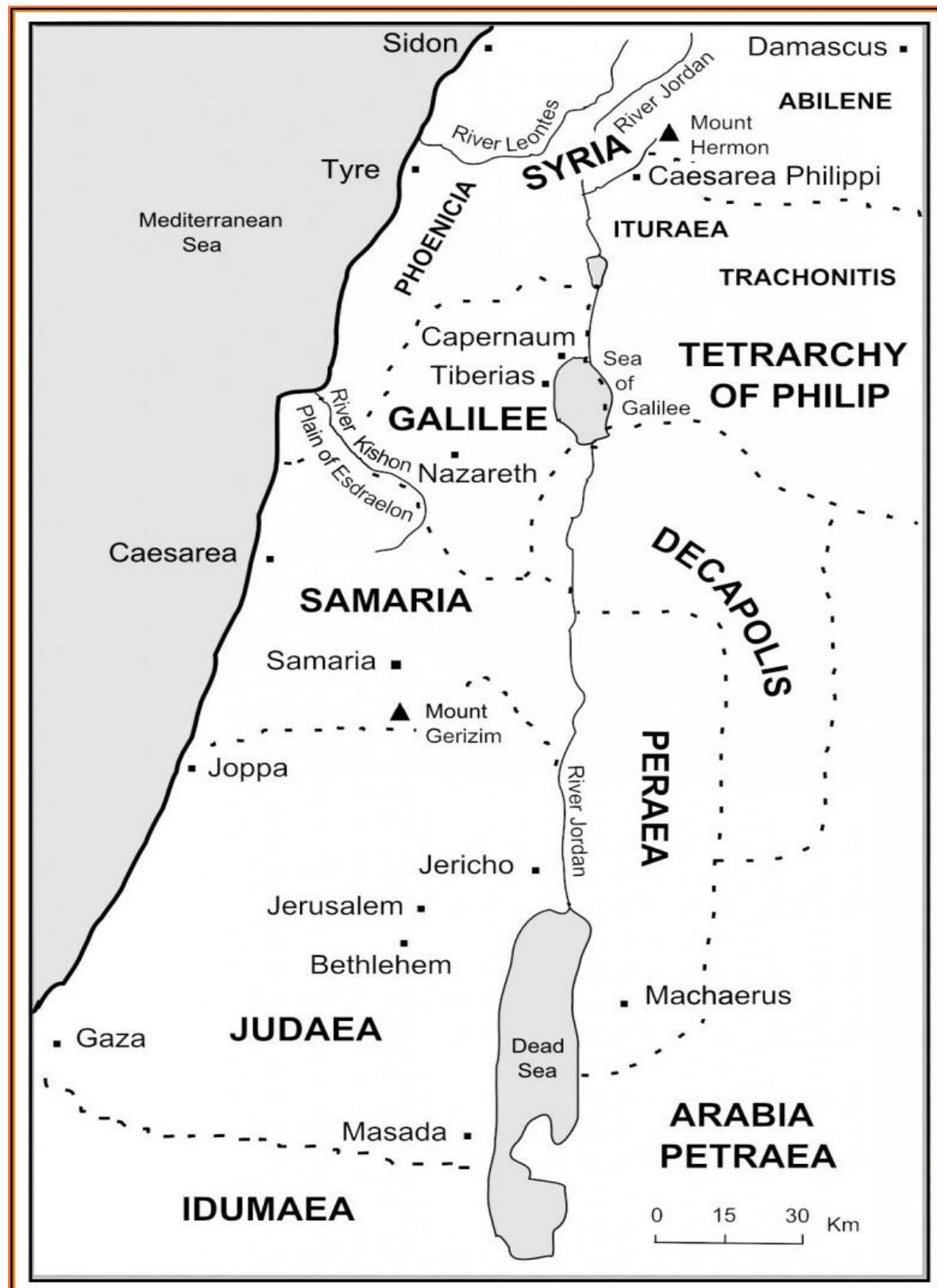
Faith – Greek word: pistis (noun) pisteuo (verb). Pistis is not merely an intellectual agreement about God but instead is a wholehearted trust, reliance and dependence on God. Faith is exercised from the heart more than the mind. It is like a muscle. The more it is exercised, the stronger it becomes.

Kingdom – Greek word: basilea. Basilea is the rule or reign of a king. It is both a present reality in submitting to the authority of Jesus, but a coming future reality that will be realized fully with Jesus' return. To enter the kingdom is to submit to the rule of Jesus in a person's life. We do that by repentance and faith. That is how we enter God's kingdom. It is the message Jesus preached in calling people to repent and believe the good news.

Gospel – Greek word: euangellion (noun) euangelizo (verb). Gospel means "good news," either the news itself or the proclamation of good news in the verb form. In Jesus' ministry it was the good news that a person could be forgiven of their sin by repenting and believing that Jesus was the Messiah. Later in the New Testament, it came to include belief in Jesus rising from the dead.

Baptism – Greek word: baptizo. It means to dip or immerse. John was immersing people who repented, in the Jordan river, to symbolize their cleansing from sin since they were now forgiven. Baptism in water symbolizes forgiveness and cleansing from sin. However, according to verse 7, his message was also that one was coming after him who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. In other words, there was a time coming when those who repented and trusted in Jesus for salvation would also receive the Holy Spirit, along with forgiveness of their sins.

Keep these definitions in mind as you go through your study.



Lesson 30

Mark 1:1-8

Read verses :1-8 of chapter 1 concerning John the Baptizer and note everything you learn about him from these verses:

Are you sure you have not missed anything about him? Look again:

Why do you think Mark begins the gospel about Jesus Christ with a description of the life and ministry of John? Consider Isaiah 40:3 in your answer.

Describe in your own words what you think a “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” means:

Summary: Approximately 650 years before John and Jesus were born, the prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of John as a messenger to prepare the way for the Lord. His message, according to verse 4, was a message of repentance that enabled one to be forgiven, followed by a baptism to symbolize the cleansing from sin that resulted from the repentance.

Application: Have you repented of your sin and been baptized? If not, what is keeping you from doing these things?

Mark 1:9-13

What is the difference between Jesus' baptism and everyone else that John baptized?

If Jesus had no sin to repent of, why did John baptize him?

Why did the Holy Spirit immediately send Jesus into the desert and what happened there?

Summary: Jesus was the sinless Son of God. He had no sin to repent of and therefore was not baptized for the same reason as everyone else. His baptism was instead a public declaration of him being God's Son and that the Holy Spirit was upon him. Just as baptism publicly showed repentance and forgiveness for everyone else, Jesus' baptism was the public occasion for the Father to recognize Jesus as his beloved Son and for everyone to see the Holy Spirit had come upon him. Having been identified as the Son of God publicly, Jesus immediately went into the desert for forty days to prepare for his public ministry.

Mark 1:14-20

If you could choose between John the Baptizer or Jesus to be your pastor, which would you choose and why?

What is the same and what is different in the preaching of Jesus and John from verse 4 and verses 14-15?

Why do you think that the disciples were so anxious to leave everything and follow Jesus?

What promise did Jesus make to them and what does it mean to become a fisher of men?

Summary: It is so important to see Jesus preaching the same message of repentance that John preached. Jesus then added a call to believe the good news. The word "gospel" means good news. Jesus was calling people to repent and believe the Gospel. What was that good news? The news that a person could be forgiven of their sin by repenting and believing that the kingdom of God was near; it was believing that Jesus was the Messiah. Clearly the fishermen recognized this or they would not have been willing to leave everything to follow Jesus. Jesus promised to make them fishers of men, meaning they would also begin preaching the Gospel and calling people to repent.

Application: Are you prepared to leave everything to follow Jesus? Are you willing to walk away from anything in your life that the Lord wants you to leave? Can you be a disciple of Jesus without this kind of commitment to him?

Lesson 31

Mark 1:21-34

Read about this day in the life of Jesus, from start to finish, and decide what must have been so difficult about it. What do you think were the greatest challenges? Was it casting out the demon, healing Peter's mother-in-law, or the crowds that came after sundown?

Why would Jesus not let the demon speak?

What was so amazing to the people?

Why did everyone come after sunset?

Summary: Jesus began the day in the synagogue, the Jewish house of worship, and while speaking a demon began shouting to Jesus. He was calling him the "Holy One of God," which Jesus wasn't yet ready for people to know publicly. So, he silenced the demon and cast it out. Then, he healed more people, including Peter's mother-in-law. The rest of the people came after sundown because the Sabbath, the day of rest, was now over and they could move about freely. Once again, he silenced the demons so they wouldn't reveal to the crowds who he was until he was ready. We will see why in the next section.

Mark 1:35-39

What surprises you about what Jesus did after such a long day of ministry? What does this tell us about the value of prayer?

What surprises you about Jesus' response to his disciples when they found him?

What does this tell us about the priority Jesus had in ministry? Was it healing people or preaching the good news?

Summary: Verse 38 is one of the most important verses in the New Testament because it tells us what Jesus had as his priority in ministry: it was preaching above healings and miracles. Why? Of all the people Jesus healed, how many of them eventually died? Correct; all of them! Was the healing, then, temporary or permanent? Correct again; temporary! Of all the people who responded to the Gospel with faith and repentance and were saved, was their forgiveness temporary or permanent? Correct, it was permanent! That's why Jesus was more concerned about the spiritual needs of people than their physical needs. Salvation that results from preaching the good news is eternal, while all the miracles and healing are temporary.

Application: What can we learn from that priority in Jesus' ministry? How might it effect our prayer life? How might it affect our conversations with people?

Lesson 32

Mark 1:40-45

What impresses you about Jesus' response to the leper?

Why did Jesus command him to tell no one, but instead go to the priest?

Summary: Jesus did not want a reputation as merely a healer, or for the crowds to be distracted with the idea that he was the Messiah. They expected the Messiah to be a new king, a political savior, and had been waiting for one for centuries. They expected him to overthrow the Roman government and restore power to Israel. That was NOT why Jesus came, and therefore why he kept the demons from revealing who he was. Neither did he want to be known primarily as a healer. Instead, Jesus proves in this chapter that he came to be the Savior from sin and that was the focus of his ministry. The greatest needs of people are always spiritual and Jesus is therefore the answer to our greatest needs. That is why it is so important to preach the good news, the Gospel, because that is how people experience eternal life when they repent and believe.

Mark 2:1-12

What impresses you about the man that was paralyzed? What impresses you about his friends? How much faith did they all demonstrate?

Why did Jesus tell the man that his sins were forgiven at first, rather than tell him to get up and walk? Look carefully at verses 10-11.

Who does have authority to forgive sins except God? Who was Jesus declaring himself to be?

Summary: This was not just the healing of a man that was paralyzed, it was a statement that Jesus had the authority to forgive sin. Since only God can forgive sin, Jesus was declaring himself to be God. The Jewish teachers accused him of blasphemy, but if he was God, he was not blaspheming. In chapter 1 we see him casting out demons and healing people. More importantly, he was preaching the good news and calling people to repent and believe the good news. Now in chapter 2 we see him now declaring himself to be God by forgiving sin.

Application: Are you prepared to give Jesus full authority over your life: Which parts of your life are you refusing to bring under obedience to Jesus? That tells us where we are refusing to give him authority. List all of the areas of your life right now that you have not given over to Jesus to control:

Lesson 33

Mark 2:13-17

Tax collectors were some of the most disliked people of the day because they made a living by over taxing people. Many of them became very wealthy as a result. Why would Jesus call someone like that to follow him? Look carefully at verse 17.

Why were the Pharisees so critical of Jesus for eating with Levi and the other tax collectors?

What did Jesus mean about not coming to call the righteous but sinners?

Summary: The religious people of the day, the Pharisees, had nothing to do with people like Levi. They considered them to be unclean sinners. They considered themselves to be righteous. That is why they were so critical of Jesus for eating with sinners. In their mind, righteous people didn't associate with sinners. Jesus changed that completely. He came to save sinners. The righteous people didn't think they needed a savior because they were trusting in their righteous works. We learn from this that self-righteousness, like that of the Pharisees, keeps us from Jesus.

Mark 2:18-3:6

What is the connection between Jesus and his disciples not fasting and new wine in old wineskins? What is so confusing about this?

What does that have to do with picking and eating grain on the Sabbath?

What was the problem with Jesus healing a man on the Sabbath?

Why were the Jewish leaders so critical of Jesus' actions in these cases and why did they want to kill him?

Summary: Jesus makes it clear that it is a time of celebration for his disciples since he is with them, not a time for fasting. The Pharisees are judging Jesus in all of these situations on how he is keeping the Law of Moses as they define it. However, Jesus is not there to meet their expectations. He is doing something new and different with the coming of the kingdom, and people only focused on keeping the Law of Moses are not accepting of him. He is putting the needs of people, like the man with the shriveled hand, above traditions. The chapter begins with Jesus doing something unexpected and continues throughout. The kingdom that he is preaching does not fit the traditions of the Pharisees. It is something totally new. It is new wine in old wineskins or new cloth on an old coat. The new does not fit with the old. It is so offensive to the Jewish leaders that they are ready to kill him.

Application: What old things from your past need to be removed from your life? What expectations do you have for the Lord? What is your reaction when he does not meet your expectations?

Lesson 34

Mark 3:7-19

What impresses you most about this summary of Jesus' ministry? Look at the map and identify all of the areas that people came from to see Jesus.

What was the mission that Jesus intended for his disciples?

Summary: People came from several regions to see Jesus as news about him spread. From those following him he designated twelve of them to be "apostles," which means "to send" since Jesus was sending them to preach and cast out demons as he had been doing.

Mark 3:20-34

What were the Pharisees saying about Jesus' power to do miracles? Why did Jesus call this blasphemy?

What was Jesus' family concerned about?

Who does Jesus call those that are closest to him by faith?

Summary: Jesus had the Holy Spirit descend upon him at his baptism, but the Pharisees were saying that it was an evil spirit within him. That is why he said they were blaspheming the Holy Spirit; they were calling the Holy Spirit a demon. Even Jesus' family was concerned that he had gone crazy and came to rescue him. But Jesus made it clear that those closest to him are the ones that obey him, even above his own family members. We learn from this how important it is to obey Jesus in order to remain close to him.

Application: What do you most need to do now to obey Jesus?

Notes:

Lesson 35

Mark 4:1-20

Why does Jesus begin to use parables to teach people? (Look carefully at verses 10-12)

In this parable, identify what each of these represents:

Seed refers to ...?

Sower refers to ...?

Path refers to ...?

Rocky places refer to ...?

Thorns refers to ...?

What do you think is the main point of this parable?

Remember, this parable is about the kingdom of God, so what does it teach us about how things work in God's kingdom?

Summary: Jesus began teaching in parables because, depending on the spiritual condition of the listener, a parable either revealed truth or kept truth from them. For those with ears to hear, those who were spiritually seeking truth, parables were like a picture story that revealed spiritual truth. But many in the crowds were not there really seeking truth. Some were there to criticize, like the Pharisees, while others were there to be entertained by the miracles. For those people, Jesus' truth in the parable was not understood. However, this is a great lesson Jesus is teaching about the fact the different people react differently to hearing the Gospel. Some people respond well at first, but either Satan deceives them into disbelieving it or they find the way of faith in Jesus difficult and give up. Other people, however, become excited about the good news at first, but they don't make it a priority in their lives and it never produces fruit or changes them. Finally, there are those with ears to hear, who accept the good news and it produces great blessing in their lives.

Application: Have you responded to the Gospel and made it the priority in your life?

What kind of growth and change is happening in your life because of the Gospel?

Mark 4:21-34

What does this parable about the lamp have to do with the kingdom and the parable of the Sower?

What does the parable of the growing seed teach us about the kingdom?

What is the parable of the mustard seed about?

Summary: Each of these parables, except the one about the lamp, have to do with growing something. Here Jesus adds some things about God's kingdom in addition to what he has already said in the parable of the Sower. Responding to the good news of salvation by repenting and believing the good news will result in change in that person. You may not understand how the change is happening, but God is causing the growth. That's the parable of the growing seed. Likewise, even though there may be few people at first that are willing to respond well to the Gospel, God will cause his kingdom to grow to great size. That's the parable of the mustard seed. But we must make God's kingdom our priority. What we put into our growth in faith will be in proportion to the blessing it is to us, and the more we put toward seeking God's kingdom, the more growth and blessing will happen in our lives. That is what the parable of the lamp is about. We must make our relationship with God our top priority, otherwise we will lose the growth we have already gained. With spiritual growth in God's kingdom, we are either moving ahead or losing what we have gained according to how much we are seeking God.

Application: What is the most important thing in your life right now? What must become the most important thing for you? What do you most need to change in your life for that to happen?

Lesson 36

Mark 4:35-41

Why do you think that the disciples woke Jesus up when he was sleeping? Was it so that he would save them from the storm?

If they awakened him to save them, they would be showing faith. What does Jesus say about their faith in verse 40?

What does Jesus say is the opposite of faith in verse 40?

Were the disciples more afraid of Jesus or the storm? (Look carefully at verse 41)

Summary: The Sea of Galilee was known for terrible weather because the cool air coming down from the hills would meet the warm air of the water, much lower, and cause great storms. Jesus was sleeping in one of these storms, which was so bad the disciples thought they were going to die. They woke Jesus up because the situation was so severe, not because they thought he would save them. They didn't expect him to do what he did. That is why they were more afraid of Jesus after the storm than they were of the storm itself. That is why Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith. They had never seen this kind of power. All they had seen him do was heal the sick and cast out demons. Calming the storm was something far more amazing to them. They didn't believe Jesus had this kind of power and that is why fear was controlling them. Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith because they didn't believe he could do something like this. Jesus, teaches us, therefore, that he has power over all of his Creation and that faith in him will eliminate fear of circumstances. But when fear is in control, we know that faith is lacking.

Application: What are you most afraid of in your life? Which is greater; Jesus or the thing that you are most afraid of? Is there anything in your life that that is too powerful for Jesus?

Mark 5:1-20

What does Mark tell us about the condition of this man living among the tombs of dead people?

What is the reason for his condition?

What is different about the way Jesus lets this demon speak from what we have seen before?

How would it effect the people of this area to lose all of these pigs?

After Jesus healed this man, what did he tell him to do?

Summary: This area across the Sea of Galilee was a largely Gentile area. We see that because of the large herd of pigs. In Jewish areas, Jesus refused to allow the demons to speak because he didn't want to draw more attention to him being the Messiah, yet. In a Gentile area, they weren't expecting the Messiah so it didn't matter as much what they said there. Also, when Jesus healed in Jewish regions, he often told them not to tell anyone about the healing. He didn't want people to come for physical healing more than the spiritual truth. Here, he tells this man to go tell people what Jesus has done for him. Did this man know the Scriptures? Had he been a follower of Jesus for years? No, none of these. Yet, Jesus told him to go tell people what had happened to him. We need to tell people what Jesus has done for us, even if they have questions we can't answer. We don't need to know everything about Jesus or the Bible to tell people about his work in our lives.

Application: what is keeping you from telling people what Jesus has done for you?

Lesson 37

Mark 5:21-43

Where is Jesus now; is he still in the Gentile area or back in the Jewish area and what difference does it make?

What is different about these healings from the ones we have seen so far in the Gospel of Mark?

What is similar and different about the fear of the synagogue leader in verse 36, and the fear of the disciples in the storm?

What is similar with the woman healed of bleeding, and the disciples in the storm AFTER Jesus did the miracle?

In both situations, the people involved had _____ that Jesus was able to meet their need.

Summary: Just after the storm where Jesus' disciples didn't expect him to save them, both the synagogue leader and the woman came to Jesus for a miracle. They believed he could do something even though they were suffering in their circumstances. In both cases, Jesus did not disappoint them, but met their need.

Application: What do you need to face in your life right now, with faith in the power of God, rather than fear?

Notes:

Lesson 38

Mark 6:1-6

What are the most important issues in how people received Jesus in his hometown?

When people rejected Jesus as the Messiah and saw him only as a man, how did it effect Jesus' ministry to them?

Mark 6:7-13

Why did Jesus place all of these restrictions on his disciples before he sent them out?

How effective were the disciples in fulfilling the mission?

What was connection between preaching repentance and healing people of physical and spiritual issues?

Summary: In Jesus' hometown he was viewed as simply the carpenter or the son of the carpenter; not the Messiah. Therefore, they were not able to receive the ministry Jesus may have been able to provide. They didn't believe in who he was. On the other hand, the disciples had very effective ministry under Jesus' authority in sending them. They were calling people to repent, just as Jesus did, as well as healing them and casting out demons.

Mark 6:14-29

Why was there such confusion about who Jesus was even beyond his hometown?

How do we understand God allowing this to happen to his servant John? Compare with John 3:27-30 for your answer.

What price did John have to pay in remaining faithful to God's truth rather than compromising for the sake of a king?

Summary: Just as we saw at the beginning of the chapter, there was much confusion about who Jesus was and how to respond to him. Herod wasn't sure either, after he had put John to death. We understand that John had fulfilled his mission of announcing the Messiah. Even John said Jesus must increase and John must decrease. It was his time to go to the Lord, but he remained faithful to the end, even though his faithfulness would cost him his life.

Application: What price are you willing to pay to remain faithful to Jesus? Are you experiencing persecution now for remaining faithful to Jesus? If we are not experiencing any opposition because of our faith in Jesus, what might that tell us about how faithfully we are living?

Lesson 39

Mark 6:30-56

What was Jesus' priority for the disciples after the ministry trip? What does that tell us about having a balance of rest and activity when it comes to ministry?

What surprises you about the way the disciples want to feed the people after just having done miracles on their trip?

How is this similar to Jesus calming the storm? Is this similar or different from what Jesus has done before?

What does Jesus do, himself, after this ministry activity of feeding all of these people?

What surprises you about the reaction of the disciples while seeing Jesus walking on the water?

Summarize Jesus' miracles in this chapter and write out all that you learn about him, from them?

Summary: Jesus clearly teaches a balance between ministry activity and rest. Not only does he teach it, but he practices it himself. But the focus again is on Jesus doing miracles beyond what the disciples have seen before. As a result, they doubt in circumstances or show fear in others, rather than trusting in the power of Jesus. Just because we have not seen God do something doesn't mean our faith should be limited.

Application: What are you learning about the need to rest from ministering to people at times? What are you learning about putting limitations on what Jesus can do, yourself?

Lesson 40

Mark 7:1-23

In verse 6, how gentle was Jesus with the religious leaders who put their religious traditions above the commandments of God?

How did they use their traditions to avoid obedience to God's commands in verses 9-13?

Summarize what Jesus is teaching about where sin comes from and how that is different from what the religious leaders were teaching:

Mark 7:24-37

What is different about this woman in verses 24-30, and how does that effect the miracle she receives?

How is the deaf, mute man also different from others Jesus healed, and what was different about his healing?

Summary: The Pharisees, the religious leaders, were far more concerned about washing their hands before eating than they were about keeping God's commands to take care of their parents. Instead, they found a way around that by using their traditions. By calling their possessions "Corban", they could still use them for themselves, rather than using them to take care of their parents, yet still say those things were dedicated to God. That is why Jesus calls them hypocrites. That sin is the sin of greed, and it comes from within a person. That is what really makes us unclean, not eating with unwashed hands.

The woman that Jesus healed and most likely the man that was deaf, were Gentile. Jesus healed her daughter without even being there. Both the woman and the man showed great faith in coming to Jesus for healing, even though they were not Jewish. Much more faith than in some Jewish areas like his hometown.

Application: How do these stories challenge you to trust Jesus more with the pressures and struggles in your own life? Can you identify some of those problems now that you need to trust Jesus with more than you are?

Lesson 41

Mark 8:1-26

Detail the differences in this feeding of the multitude from the one that occurred chapter 6:

What did Jesus mean by his warning to watch out for the "...yeast of the Pharisees and Herod?"

What is still lacking in the faith of the disciples, and how is that similar to our faith at times?

Compare the healing of the blind man here with the deaf man in chapter 7, and note the similarities and differences:

Summary: Jesus clearly performed another miracle of feeding another large crowd of people. However, his disciples are worried about where they can get bread. Jesus rebukes them for their lack of understanding and faith. Yeast is what is unseen in bread, but its effect is to cause it to rise. In the same way, Jesus is warning his disciples to watch out for the negative effect of the Pharisees and Herod. Both of them were opposed to Jesus and the Gospel.

Application: Think about the way you pray and trust the Lord. Do you put limitations on him? Are your prayers too small because you lack faith to pray for miracles? Do you believe Jesus is still a miracle working God? If so, how do you show it? What evidence can you offer for this kind of faith?

Lesson 42

Mark 8:27-38

Locate Caesarea Philippi on your map and note its location. It marks Jesus' turning for Jerusalem for the last time, and him being more direct with his disciples about what is going to happen there.

Why do you think that there is still so much confusion about who Jesus is after all this time?

Does Jesus care more about what the crowds are believing about him, or what his disciples are believing about him? Are they correct?

Why is there such a strong rebuke of Peter when he tells Jesus that Jesus cannot die?

Stop your study for the moment and consider whether there are things in your life that you are putting above the Lord's will for you? What is there, currently, that you are making a higher priority for yourself than what the Lord most wants you to become focused on. What things of man do you have more in mind than the things of the Lord? Commit this to prayer and ask the Lord to make these areas clear to you if they are not already.

Look at verses 34-9:1 again and write out the connection between them and what just occurred with Peter here in verse 33:

Was Peter denying himself and taking up his cross to follow Jesus or was Peter insisting on Jesus doing what Peter wanted him to do? What about you? Are you willing to deny yourself and put the plans God has for you above your own? What is the first thing you would do to begin denying yourself and taking up your cross?

Summary: This is a very important section concerning what the future holds for Jesus, and him telling his disciples about it. Of course, they don't want to hear anything about him dying. How could he possibly become their new king if he dies? Peter is actually bold enough to insist that Jesus give up this idea of dying and rising from the dead, which is exactly the plan the Father has for Jesus. Therefore, Peter was putting his own plans above the will of God. He was not willing to deny himself and die to his own will. Instead, he was trying to convince Jesus to do Peter's will.

Application: Think about your own prayer life and whether you do the same thing at times. Do you actually pray in such a way that you are trying to convince God to do what you want done, or are you instead in submission to whatever God's will is for you, regardless of whether you like it or not?

Mark 9:2-12

Imagine being Peter, James or John while Jesus was changing in appearance right before their eyes. What would you have been thinking?

Moses and Elijah were two of the most prominent leaders of God's people in the Old Testament. What do you think was the significance of them being there with Jesus?

Look carefully at verse 7 and note what Peter, James and John were supposed to receive from this experience?

Read Malachi 4:5-6 for an idea of why the Jews were expecting Elijah to come. Who does Luke 1:17 identify as the one who fulfills this prophecy?

Summary: Jesus took his three closest disciples to the mountain where this meeting occurred between himself, Moses, Elijah and God the Father. The text does not say here what they discussed but that the ordeal was terrifying to the disciples. The Father reminded the disciples that Jesus was his Son and that they should listen to him. That was the message for them. In asking about Elijah, Jesus informed them that the prophecy had already been fulfilled, which was through John the Baptist. He came before Jesus and by this time he had been put to death by Herod.

Application: How do you react to this presentation of Jesus as greater than Moses and Elijah, since they were God's servants, but Jesus is his Son? What difference should that make in our worship of Jesus?

Mark 9:14-32

Look carefully at verse 19 and note Jesus' frustration. Is he frustrated with the people, his disciples, or both, and what are they lacking that is so disappointing to Jesus? (Verse 23 is a clear indicator)

How do you identify with the father in verse 24? How do you struggle at times with the same problem?

What do you think Jesus means in verse 29 about "this kind only coming out by prayer?"

Why do you think the disciples are still struggling so much with understanding God's plan for Jesus dying and rising again?

Summary: Jesus here seems very frustrated with the lack of faith of this whole generation of people toward the Messiah, but especially with his disciples. Apparently, they didn't think about expressing faith through prayer to cast out this demon, but were likely resting on their own strength. The father of the boy, on the other hand, does have faith but is struggling with too little faith. He believes, but also struggles with unbelief. Meanwhile, the disciples are still unable to understand that the Messiah is going to die and rise again. This does not fit their idea for him and therefore they can't receive it.

Application: Consider your own level of trust in the Lord. How would you rate it? Is it high, medium, or low? Do you trust him but also struggle with not trusting him at times? Are you willing to take this to the Lord in prayer and ask him to work within you so that your faith is increased?

Lesson 43

Mark 9:33-50

This section of chapter 9 contains several separate, but related events and ideas. Read the entire section and see what conclusions you can draw about how they relate to one another.

Why do you think the disciples would be discussing which of them is the greatest after their failure with the demon?

What is the connection between the child and being a servant of the Lord?

What is the motivation behind the disciples trying to stop a man from driving out demons?

How seriously should we take allowing sin in our lives, and what should we do to deal with it?

Summary: After failing to cast out a demon, the disciples, amazingly, enter into a discussion about who is the greatest among them, which is an example of pride. Using a child as an example, Jesus teaches them about humility, which is the opposite. He also rebukes them for trying to stop someone from doing ministry because the man was not one of them. This is also an indication of pride. Jesus then teaches them about the seriousness of sin and how seriously they must treat it. He is not calling them to actually pluck out eyes and cut off hands, since these would not stop their sinning anyway. Instead, this is a figure of speech about dealing seriously with sin in our lives. This requires humility, but purifies us when we deal with it. It also enables us to be at peace with others, rather than in conflict, due to pride. All of these incidents are connected around the themes of pride, humility, sin and repentance.

Application: Consider this passage and your own struggles with pride and the need for humility. What do you need to deal with in this area, and what other areas of sin in your life do you need to seriously address, that you may have been tolerating or ignoring?

Lesson 44

Mark 10:1-12

Jesus was confronted by the Pharisees who were wanting him to settle a debate between two Jewish positions on divorce. One group was very strict and allowing almost no reason for divorce. The other was very liberal and allowed many. Which of the two positions does Jesus seem to favor?

What do we learn here about God's plan for marriage?

Summary: This section in Mark's Gospel does not include the reason of adultery for divorce, that we find in Matthew. Nevertheless, we see Jesus taking a very strict approach to divorce and affirming that God's plan for marriage is one man and one woman for life. This is not a complete teaching on the whole subject of divorce and remarriage, but it sets the basic principles.

Mark 10:13-31

Read the entire passage of verse :13-31. It may seem disconnected but Mark has a common theme running through both of them; the theme of what is necessary to enter heaven? This section answers the question from different perspectives.

What quality of a child is necessary for entering heaven?

What quality is the wealthy man lacking for entering heaven?

Why were the disciples amazed at what Jesus said to him?

What promise does Jesus offer to those who are willing to leave everything to follow him?

Summary: Jesus here again uses a child, as in chapter 9, as an example of humility and trust. Children were not exalted in that culture and often viewed as unimportant. Likely that is why the disciples were trying to keep them away. Jesus will not allow that and affirms their importance to him, but stresses that childlike humility and faith are necessary to enter heaven. The rich young man is trusting in his obedience to the Law to get him into heaven. Jesus has bad news for him. He learns that he must be willing to surrender everything to the Lord to enter heaven; which is something he was not willing to do. In Jewish culture, wealth was a sign of God's blessing. That is why the disciples were so shocked at Jesus' conversation with the wealthy man. On the other hand, Jesus promises great blessing, both here and in eternity, for those who are willing to humbly submit to Jesus in every area and express childlike faith in him.

Application: What in your life is keeping you from a full and complete surrender to the Lord? Are there things that you are unwilling to give up that are more important to you than following Jesus? Do you need to confess that to Jesus now and ask him for strength to remove these things from your life?

Mark 10:32-34

Why were the disciples so amazed that Jesus would go to Jerusalem, and the people following in the crowd so afraid?

Do you think Jesus' answer gave them any comfort?

Summary: Jesus was walking into suffering in going to Jerusalem since all of his opposition was centered there. That is why his disciples were amazed he would do that. However, Jesus informs them that it is worse than they thought. He is actually going to die there but rise again. He is telling them yet again about this event that is coming, yet they don't understand what it is all about.

Mark 10:35-45

What is so amazing about the request of James and John and how do the other disciples react to it?

What must one do to become great in the Kingdom of God?

Why is this so difficult?

What example did Jesus set for us as a servant?

Summary: In this event, James and John ask for the highest places of authority in Jesus' kingdom. They see greatness as the world of their day saw greatness; the higher the position, the greater the person. The more people you are over, the greater you must be. Jesus turns that thinking completely upside down and teaches them the greatest person in his kingdom is the one that serves the most people. Jesus himself was the example of this by giving his life for the sins of the many.

Application: How do you see people around you? Do you relate to them by what they can do for you, or do you relate to them by what you can do for them? Do you see people as being here to serve you, or being here to serve them? Being great is Jesus' kingdom depends on how you answer those questions.

Mark 10:46-52

What are the differences and similarities between this healing and others we have seen before?

Why do you think Mark included this healing here in the Gospel? Note on your map where Jericho is located.

Summary: This is the last account of Jesus' activity before entering Jerusalem for his final week. Jericho is close by and this happened on the way there. Like other accounts, this is a Jewish man that believed Jesus could heal, which is exactly what Jesus did. This event marks the turning point in Mark's Gospel. From here we will see Jesus in his final week in the city.

Application: What are you believing God for that will require a miracle for it to happen?

Lesson 45

Mark 11:1-11

What surprises you most about what happens in Bethpage?

Read Zechariah 9:9 and decide what is the significance of the unridden colt?

When the crowd shouts “Hosanna” again and again, which means “Save” or “Save us,” which salvation do you think they are asking about? Spiritual salvation or political freedom?

Summary: This event is known as the Triumphal Entry. In ancient times a king or ruler would be welcomed into a city much like this, only they would be mounted on a horse. Zechariah tells us that Jesus' choice reflects his humility. The crowd, meanwhile, wants to welcome him as king, but they see him as a political king. They want him to save them from Roman occupation. They are not looking for a savior from their sin, they want a savior from their oppression. In Luke's account he mentions that Jesus then wept over the city for not recognizing the time was upon them for salvation from their sin, and they would later suffer judgment. (Luke 19:40-44)

Application: What are you seeking from God, to rescue you from, that has nothing to do with your salvation? Do you often seek God to address your physical needs more than your spiritual needs? Are you more concerned with being happy or being holy? These are the kinds of questions that help us determine whether we are focused more on physical things, relationships, freedoms, money, etc. rather than on growing in obedience to Christ. Not that physical things don't matter to the Lord, we just need to realize that our spiritual growth matters more.

Mark 11:12-14; 20-25

At this time of the year, fig trees would have leaves but no ripe figs yet. Obviously then, this story about the fig tree is a lesson about something else? What do you think this might actually be about? Consider what it has to do with the cleansing of the Temple.

Mark 11:15-19

What do you think of this expression of anger on behalf of Jesus? Do you think he was justified in his actions? Why?

Summary: The cursing of the fig tree is actually related to the cleansing of the Temple. Since people were expected to make a sacrifice, they often had their own animals rejected as imperfect and were forced to buy others at much higher prices. They also had to change their Roman coins into acceptable money to pay their Temple tax. This was also done for a very high price. What was happening at the Temple, which was supposed to be the worship of God, was actually a scam by the leaders to make money. In a similar way, the fig tree appeared to be a fruitful tree, but was in fact barren and offered nothing to anyone, just like the religious leaders in the Temple. The worship in the Temple, and the rest of Jewish, spiritual leadership, is as unfruitful as the fig tree. It appeared very religious, but was empty of anything that was useful to the worshippers. Just as the tree was judged and cursed, so would be the religious leaders of Israel. Real worship involves real faith in the Lord.

Application: How would you describe your worship of the Lord? Is your worship sincere and honest, or do you just go through the motions? Once again, what are you believing the Lord for that will require a miracle to bring about?

Mark 11:27-33

What impresses you most about how Jesus handles his opposition?

What do you think the Jewish leadership was looking for in asking Jesus about his authority? Were they really interested in knowing the truth or were they more looking for something to use against him?

Application: What can we learn from Jesus in this situation?

Lesson 46

Mark 12:1-12

In this parable, let's break down who each group represents:

The Vineyard Owner represents?

The farmers?

The servants of the Owner?

The Owner's son?

What is the main idea of this parable?

What does the reaction of the Jewish leaders tell us about how they understood the parable?

Summary: This a classic parable about God sending one prophet after another prophet to the Jewish people, only to have them reject the prophets. Finally, he sent his son, but they have killed him. As a result, they were executed and the vineyard given to others. In this case, Jesus is clearly teaching about his coming death at the hands of the Jewish leaders, who have rejected him and will suffer judgment for it. The Jewish leaders knew it was directed at them and therefore were anxious to get rid of him.

Application: When it comes to parables, we do not try to define every element with its representative. We instead look at the main parts in order to get the main idea. However, the audience that Jesus is speaking to when he uses a parable is a real clue to what he intends for a meaning. This was for the opposition to Jesus, so he is telling them what the future holds for them, given their rejection and killing of him that is yet to happen.

Mark 12:13-17

What is similar and what is different in this encounter with Jesus' opposition compared to the last encounter that we just looked at?

What was the real motive of those questioning Jesus?

What do we learn from this encounter?

Summary: Once again, Jesus faces his opposition but this time they are setting a trap. If he says they should pay their taxes, the crowd will not like his answer. If he says they should not pay their taxes, they can turn him in to the Romans. It seems like a trap, but Jesus answers in such a way that leaves them speechless. He avoids the trap by teaching they should pay taxes, but what is owed to God is an even greater priority and should be given to God even more freely.

Application: What do you owe to government and what do you owe to God? Which get most from you? Do you pay more in taxes than you give to the Lord? If the answer is yes, what problem do you see with that?

Mark 12:18-27

Once again, what similarities and differences do you see in this encounter with Jesus' opposition from the two previous ones?

The Sadducees were a group of usually wealthy, powerful individuals that used Scripture alone for their beliefs, especially the first five books of the Bible. Since they found no evidence for a resurrection there in the Old Testament, they didn't believe in it. However, is their understanding of the Old Testament, correct?

Summary: Jesus corrects the Sadducees on two points; the resurrection and the power of God. They doubted both. We learn along the way that there will be no marriage in heaven, but there will definitely be resurrection by the power of God. Jesus is again speaking of his future as he speaks about a resurrection, in addition to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.

Application: How you think it would affect your life if you did not believe in Jesus' resurrection or your own?

Lesson 47

Mark 12:28-34

What is the difference between this encounter between Jesus and his opponents and the previous ones we have looked at?

How do you think this greatest commandment to love God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength, applies to you?

How would you judge yourself as to how well you are loving other people as you love yourself?

Why is it more important to love God this way, than to love people as yourself? Why is the first commandment the greatest and the second one placed second?

What does Jesus mean about the man asking the question, who is “not far” from the kingdom of God?

Summary: In this encounter, Jesus seems to be asked a sincere question, rather than one that is intended to be a trap. Jesus responds by quoting Deuteronomy 6:4-5, making it our highest priority to love God with all that we are and all that we have. As we love God with total submission of all we are and have, we follow that by loving our neighbors by caring for them the way we take care of ourselves. By answering in agreement with Jesus, this man indicates that he understands what is really important in a relationship with God. As a result, he is definitely not as far away as the others who were opposing Jesus.

Application: Take a minute to examine your life in prayer. Are there any areas of your life that you are unwilling to submit to the Lord and accept his will? Are there areas of unconfessed sin that needs to be put away from you? These kinds of questions help us understand whether we really are loving God with all that we are and have. Secondly, do you find yourself putting your needs above the needs of others? If so, we are not loving others as ourselves. What most needs to change with regard to your love for God and others?

Mark 12:35-40

In quoting Psalm 110:1; Jesus poses a question about himself to the crowd? What do you think is the correct answer?

Why does Jesus now include this warning to Jewish leaders that are false teachers?

Summary: Jesus is saying that the Messiah, himself, would humanly descend from David when he took human form, but as God the Son, he is David's Lord. That is how he could be both a son of David and the Lord of David. After all of these encounters with his opponents, Jesus now summarizes his warning about their actions. This is in direct contrast to his actions as the Messiah. These teachers of the law would use the judges and courts to take advantage of people who were without the money to defend themselves.

Mark 12:41-44

What impressed Jesus so much about the giving of this widow, despite giving such a small amount?

Why would Mark include this story here after talking about the greed of the teachers of the law?

Summary: Jesus clearly is impressed with the percentage this widow gave; not the amount. She gave all she had. This is clearly a case of loving God with all that you have; the greatest commandment. In contrast, the teachers of the law are more interested in taking from widows, not giving like this widow has done.

Application: How would you describe your giving to the Lord? Does it resemble this widow? If not, what needs to change in your thinking and giving to become more like this?

Lesson 48

Mark 13:1-37

Look carefully at verses 1-4 and determine exactly what the disciples are asking Jesus about? How many questions are they asking and what do they assume is connected?

Why does Jesus begin his answer with a warning against believing false prophets? How much of a role will false prophets play in the end times?

What will be other signs, according to verses 5-8, that will come before the actual time of the end?

According to verses 9-13, what will happen to followers of Jesus as we progress further toward this time of the end?

Look carefully at verses 14-23 and determine if Jesus is answering the question of when these things will happen, or what the signs will be?

According to verses 24-27, what event will follow the distress of those events?

What does the lesson of the fig tree in verses 28-37 teach us about being prepared for these events?

Summary: Mark 13 is one of the most difficult chapters to understand in this Gospel. Even though the disciples may have thought that the destruction of the Temple would happen at the same time as Jesus' return, they were mistaken. They are connecting those events in their question, but that is not how it will happen. They are separate events. Therefore, Jesus gives an answer to their question that moves back and forth between the two separate events. In 70 AD, just 40 years after Jesus speaks these words, the Roman army under the general Titus, destroyed Jerusalem. That is when the Temple was completely torn down. Therefore, some of what Jesus says, in reply, refers to this event alone. Verse 2 is an example. On the other hand, we are still waiting for Jesus to return. That event has not taken place. Some of the parts of Jesus' answer refers to that event, like verses :24-27 especially. We need to look at the individual verses to see which they are referring to. Some verses refer to both events, like verses :6-23. We call this a multiple fulfillment of the prophecy. However, more than answering the question of when this all will happen, Jesus is more concerned that the disciples prepare properly and are ready. They must avoid false teaching, and know that they will face persecution for following him to the end. Followers of Jesus must constantly be aware of what is happening in time, and be prepared for the Lord's return by remaining faithful to Jesus rather than being deceived by false teachers.

Application: Are you ready for the Lord's return? What must you need to do to become more prepared? What commands to Jesus' disciples in this chapter most applies to you?

Lesson 49

Mark 14:1-9

Why were the Jewish leaders afraid of a riot if they arrested Jesus?

Why do you think Jesus received the very expensive gift and praised the woman for what she did?

Is Jesus telling them that they should ignore the poor, or that he is worthy of sacrificial worship?

Summary: Jesus not only makes it clear that this expensive perfume was a worthy gift for him, he again mentions his coming death. The people that objected to the perfume being used this way saw it as being wasted. Clearly, they were not recognizing how worthy Jesus was of this kind of worship or sacrifice.

Application: What is Jesus worthy of when it comes to your worship or sacrifice? Is there a limit to what we should be willing to give to him? Are you currently giving all that you have for him?

Mark 14:10-26

Why do you think Judas was willing to betray Jesus to the Jewish authorities?

What impresses you most about the preparations for the Passover meal?

Was Judas responsible for his sin even though his betraying Jesus was part of God's plan?

What do we learn about celebrating the Lord's Supper from what happened here at the Passover meal?

Summary: Judas may have had more than one reason for betraying Jesus to the Jewish authorities, but even that sinful action was part of God's plan. God's plan to provide a sacrifice for sin though the death of Jesus could not be destroyed by the sinful actions of a person, but in fact, God used it for good. However, Judas was still responsible for his sin. The Passover meal teaches us that the bread and the cup symbolize the body and blood of Jesus that was sacrificed for our forgiveness. Therefore, whenever we celebrate the Lord's Supper we are remembering that sacrifice.

Application: How often do you think about Jesus' sacrifice for your sin? Do you regularly celebrate it with the Lord's Supper?

Mark 14:17-31

How does Peter's denial of Jesus compare with Judas' betrayal of Jesus?

What do you think motivated Peter to deny that he would betray Jesus? Read Proverbs 16:18 to help with your answer.

Summary: Peter was clearly making a prideful statement about not denying Jesus and was putting himself above the others in his devotion to Jesus. Proverbs 16:18 reminds us that relying on ourselves, rather than on God's strength, is a path to failure. That is the path Peter took in trusting in his own strength to do God's will.

Application: Where are you trusting in your own strength rather than the Lord's strength to do God's will?

Mark 14:32-52

What do you think is so upsetting to Jesus about the upcoming cross?

What do we learn about the disciples here and what they are able to do at this important time?

What do we see as the most important thing for Jesus; avoiding the cross or fulfilling the will of the Father?

While Jesus is being arrested, what do we see that is still motivating Peter's actions?

What impresses you about how Jesus handles his arrest?

Summary: As we shall soon see, there was very good reason for Jesus to be so upset about the coming cross. However, he is still fully committed to doing the Father's will no matter what price he has to pay. Meanwhile, we see Peter and the disciples acting again and again in the power of their own flesh and therefore, failing to do the will of God. They did not pray when they should have, and therefore were unprepared for the test that came when Jesus was arrested.

Application: How committed are you to doing God's will in your life, even when it means sacrifice? What actions can you point to in order to determine whether you are, or are not living with God's will as your priority?

Mark 14:53-65

Is Jesus still trying to keep his identity hidden, or has something changed from early in his ministry? What do you think has changed?

What is the effect of Jesus openly stating that he is the Son of God? Look at Exodus 3:14 to explain how the Jewish leaders understood his answer.

Why is there such a violent reaction from the Jewish leaders?

Summary: Jesus is now openly declaring that he is the Son of God because the time has come for his crucifixion. He knows that those who have rejected him as the Messiah will consider it blasphemy if he claims to be God, or the Son of God. He also knows that they will demand his death for what they consider to be blasphemy. However, Jesus is prepared to die according to the will of the Father as a sacrifice for sin, not because he has committed blasphemy.

Application: How much love for you, must Jesus have, to undergo this treatment for your forgiveness? Do we learn anything about the kind of treatment we can expect from those that hate Jesus?

Mark 14:66-72

Go back and look at verses :29-31 to remind yourself of Peter's promise to be faithful to Jesus. What has changed?

What do you think was motivating Peter in verses :29-31 and what do you think is motivating Peter's actions now?

Which statements did Peter make that he would most like to take back?

Summary: Peter was very prideful and trusting in himself when he promised to remain faithful to Jesus, no matter what. Now, with Jesus arrested, his hopes of Jesus becoming the new king are gone. He was motivated by pride earlier, now he is motivated by discouragement, so much so that he denies he even knows Jesus. He clearly still does not understand Jesus' mission as Messiah and instead is disappointed when Jesus does not meet his expectations.

Application: Can we learn anything from Peter about acting in pride, rather than in humility? Proverbs 16:18 tells us that "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." (ESV) What about you? Is pride more often behind your words and actions or humility?

Lesson 50

Mark 15:1-15

What do you think was motivating the crowd to do what they did?

What was motivating Pilate to do what he did?

What is motivating Jesus to do what he did?

Summary: The Jewish leaders needed the Roman governor, Pilate, to execute Jesus. So, they handed him over to Pilate and then stirred up the crowd to call for his crucifixion. Pilate, meanwhile, cares about keeping the crowd happy so that they do not revolt, even though he knows Jesus is not guilty of the charges. Through all of this false accusation, Jesus is faithful to what he knows to be the will of his Father. Therefore, he only speaks the truth to Pilate about who he is in reality, and admits to being the King of the Jews.

Application: Here we see the difference between remaining faithful to the will of God, despite the cost, and being motivated by our own selfish desires; like the leaders, the crowd and Pilate. Where do you think you most need to grow in this area of remaining faithful to God's will?

Mark 15:16-41

What was the reason that the Roman soldiers treated Jesus as they did?

How do you explain the treatment of the crowd and the other criminals that Jesus suffered?

How does this description of Jesus' crucifixion affect you mentally, spiritually and emotionally?

What do you think Jesus was expressing when he cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (ESV)

Why do you think Mark mentions all of these things happening after Jesus died?

Summary: Jesus is still rejected as the Messiah by the Romans and the crowd. They can only mock and insult him as a failure. However, Jesus is willing to suffer these unspeakable abuses, even though he was completely innocent, because he was accomplishing something much greater, the payment for sin so that sinners could be forgiven. Therefore, the opinions of people didn't matter in light of his commitment to fulfill God's will for him. He was faithful to the point of death, being judged by his Father for the sins of others; not his own, so payment could be made for their sin. His death meant that he experienced the wrath of his Father, whereas before he had only known the love of the Father. The spiritual torment of the cross, for Jesus, was therefore, worse than the physical. But his death accomplished a way for sinful people to know God personally, which was symbolized by the tearing of the curtain of the Temple, which separated people from God, except the High Priest. Even the Roman centurion, who had previously mocked Jesus, was now convinced he was the Messiah.

Application: What does the cross mean for you? How grateful are you for Jesus' sacrifice and what do you think should be your response?

Lesson 51

Mark 15:42-16:8

Why was it so important that the body of Jesus be cared for quickly?

Do you think there was any question that Jesus had actually died from crucifixion?

What is so important about Jesus actually dying? (Look back to Lesson 1)

Why do you think Mark included this detail about Mary seeing where the body of Jesus was laid?

Summary: With the Sabbath coming at sundown, when no one was able to move around for 24 hours, it was critical that Jesus' body be cared for quickly. Joseph, along with Nicodemus, were granted his body; wrapped it, and placed it in a tomb. Finally, the opening to the tomb was sealed. There is no question therefore, that Jesus was actually and completely dead. The fact that Mary was able to see the tomb where Jesus' body was placed, meant that there would be no mistake which tomb was later found empty. If Jesus had not really been raised from the dead, several people would have known where the body was located. But as we shall see, it was the same tomb that was found empty because Jesus had risen from the dead.

Application: What impresses you about the courage of Joseph; and as we know from John's Gospel, Nicodemus also, who took the body of Jesus and placed it in the tomb? What was at risk for them in identifying with Jesus? What risk are you willing to take in identifying yourself as a follower of Jesus?

Lesson 52

Mark 16:1-20

What is significant about the women going to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body with spices?

What was it about the news from the angel, about Jesus rising from the dead, that made the women so afraid?

What is so important about Jesus physically rising from the dead? (Read 1 Corinthians 15)

After verse 8, the earliest copies of Mark do not include the following verses. However, the other Gospels do include the same basic information. Therefore, we are going to look at these verses as well. Why do you think everyone was so slow to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead?

How would you summarize these final instructions to the disciples about what comes next?

Summary: There is no question that Jesus was raised from the dead and appeared to his followers, even as they were in disbelief. His resurrection from the dead proved his power over death itself, and also proved that everything he said about being put to death and rising again could be completely believed. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy that he gave about himself. But beyond this display of power over death and faithfulness to his word, Jesus also gave his followers orders to be obeyed from that point forward. Those orders were to go to all the world with the news that he was risen, and proclaiming that people must do what Jesus had already been calling them to do; repent and believe in him. Matthew 28:16-20 affirms this, along with Acts 1:8, even though both commandments are given in different locations. Clearly, Jesus issued these commands of what to do, as his followers, over and over again. He also promised that his power would accompany the message that his followers were to take to the world.

Application: What difference does Jesus' rising from the dead make in your life? What do you think is your responsibility to carry out these orders, from Jesus, as one of his followers? When and where are you going to begin?

Conclusion: Now that you have studied the Gospel of Mark, the life and teaching of Jesus, what difference will it make in your life? A disciple of Jesus is a follower of Jesus, who lives to follow and obey Jesus' will for their life. You have now been through this Discipleship Plan in order to prepare you as a disciple of Jesus to do exactly that; to live now to fulfill his will for your life. Now that you have the biblical knowledge to be a disciple, it becomes a matter of your will to live this way. Are you willing to live as a disciple of Jesus? As we have already learned, it requires the power of the Holy Spirit to live, fruitfully, this way. But we must first be willing. Are you willing to live in obedience to Jesus' will for your life? Are you willing to take others through this Discipleship Plan so that more disciples can be made and others can live in obedience to Jesus? This is what Jesus has called us to do as his followers. Are you willing to make other disciples?

Yes, I am willing to commit to make more disciples:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

