

Serving Others

Ongoing Accountability Group
Lessons For Lifelong Disciples



Disciplemaking Book 4



Brooklyn
Evangelical Free
Park Church
God's Heart for ALL People

Be With Me: Ongoing Accountability Group Lessons for Lifelong Disciples

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Other Books in this Small Group Series:

Come and See (Level 1): Small Group Lessons for Spiritual Seekers – Book 1
Come and See (Level 2): Small Group Lessons for Growing Believers – Book 2
Follow Me: Basic Accountability Group Lessons for Christ Followers - Book 3

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Detailed Definition of a Disciple

As a church you are committed to making disciples of Christ Jesus in obedience to His Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20). But what is a disciple of Jesus Christ? A disciple is a believer who is in the process of becoming more like Christ: displaying His character, daily living out His values and disciplines, answering Christ's call to a life of service to others. This is a basic definition of a disciple but growing as a follower of Jesus is also a process. Each book in this small group series is based on a Detailed Definition of a Disciple that provides a sequential outline of the disciple's growth process and the transformational indicators from the four phases of Jesus' ministry described in the Gospels. The following is a general description of the growth phase covered in this fourth and final book in this disciplemaking small group series:



SERVING OTHERS: Demonstrating God's love by using gifts and abilities to serve within the church, the community and beyond.

PART 1: BE WITH ME Faithful Witnesses to Motivated Ministers

General Description: A disciple who has completed this phase has become a genuinely maturing follower of Jesus. He/she is a bold and resourceful witness to the gospel, having learned to be fruitful even in the face of rejection, suffering, or sacrifice. He/she has life and ministry experience so that he/she not only walks consistently with the Lord, but has developed the character, skills, and training to lead other disciples into leadership and service.

Major Intent: To deploy disciples as disciplemakers, leaders or helpers of ministries, those who can reproduce the training, character, and functions they have acquired by following Jesus. To further challenge and support disciples to maintain basic habits and add new habits; to deepen their Christian character and resemblance to Jesus Christ.

Duration: 20 - 22 months.

Disciple's Involvement:

- Works alongside key leaders.
- Leads or serves in a ministry.

Commitment: Willing to give life for Christ; continues to be mentored by other ministry leaders.

Distinctives:

- Highly committed. Dedicated disciple and servant.
- Deployed in ministry using service or leadership gifts.
- Continued growth process with focus on more advanced habits and character.
- Spend quality time with mentor and other Christian leaders.

PART 2: REMAIN IN ME Motivated Ministers to Lifelong Disciplers

General Description: A disciple in this phase is sustaining all that he/she has gained as humble servant of Christ completely sold out to Him and in love with Him. They exhibit the fruit of the Spirit and remind an observer of what Jesus must have been like. They are a leader of leaders

or a trainer of other servants. They serve others constantly in a significant way focused on their area of giftedness. They are reproducing themselves in other faithful disciples!

Major Intent: To sustain a lifestyle of increasing Christ-likeness and spiritual reproduction.

- Build and maintain the character, obedience, faith and fruitfulness described throughout the New Testament.
- Provide ongoing accountability relationships for love, support and continued spiritual growth.
- Deploy in service or leadership.

Duration: Lifelong, abiding in Christ for a lifetime.

Disciple's Involvement:

- Continues to lead or serve in ministry according to spiritual giftedness.
- Trains disciples and emerging leaders for spiritual growth and ministry.

Commitment: Completely yielded to Christ, willing to follow Him at all cost.

Distinctives:

- Fully devoted follower of Christ.
- Sustains ongoing accountability relationships with a mentor or other Christian leaders.
- Lifelong growth in more advanced habits and character.
- Focus on training others in spiritual growth, personal ministry and leadership.

Transformational Indicators: By the end of this phase a disciple...

BE WITH ME Faithful Witnesses to Motivated Ministers

1. Correctly handles and teaches God's Word—the Bible. 2 Timothy 2:15
2. Has a proper view of money and material possessions Hebrews 13:5
3. Understands the reason for and use of spiritual gifts in the church. 1 Corinthians 12:7
4. Consistently practices basic Christian disciplines while adding new ones. John 8:31
5. Continues in ministry with a godly mindset. 1 Timothy 4:16
6. Continues in effective outreach as a laborer in the harvest fields. Matthew 9:36-38
7. Maintains Christ-honoring relationships with family, the local church, other believers & non-believers. John 13:35
8. Multiplies oneself by modelling and apprenticing others in ministry. 2 Timothy 2:2
9. Engages in spiritual battle and exercising spiritual authority. 1 Corinthians 4:2
10. A disciple is willing to suffer, lose all, or die for Christ's sake. Luke 14:27

REMAIN IN ME Motivated Ministers to Lifelong Disciples

1. Serves faithfully on earth with a heart longing for heaven and Christ's return. Philippians 3:20
2. Pursues a deeper understanding of the character of God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Revelation 17:14
3. Submits fully to Lordship of Christ. John 20:29
4. Leads in unifying the Body of Christ. John 17:21
5. Defends the faith in key matters of doctrine. 1 Peter 3:15
6. Has developed an intimate knowledge of God resulting in praise and adoration. Philippians 2:9-11
7. Trains disciples and emerging leaders for spiritual growth and ministry, training others to train others. Matthew 28:19



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“Serving Others” - Small Group Lesson Format

Note to Leaders: Remember that your groups are generally closed to new members and visitors so that you can develop a high level of trust and accountability. Be sure to do acts of service together outside of your discussion time as well. You may use the following small group discussion series in any order that you choose. You may skip any that do not fit your group or purpose. Be flexible and ready to help your members grow.

Lesson Series:

- **Financial Principles (6 lessons)**
- **A Study of Philippians (10 lessons)**
- **Good and Godly Attitudes (11 lessons)**
- **Enriching Relationships (6 lessons)**
- **The Armor of God (4 lessons)**
- **A Study of Values (11 lessons)**

Ongoing Accountability Group Small Group Format

CONNECTING

1. Share about what has happened throughout the previous week.
2. Share quiet time Bible Reading Highlights, significant entry from your spiritual journal or insights from personal Bible study.
3. Break into review groups and review the verse you have memorized within the past week.

SEEKING GOD (Drawing Near to God)



1. Conversational prayer is a very effective way to pray in a small group. It is a prayer that unites people in conversation with God and with each other. Like normal conversations, anyone can speak (pray) as many times as they wish and several people will often pray in agreement for the same request. **Begin your time by praising God for who He is and what He has done.
2. Are there any personal roadblocks, challenges or fears that you would like to discuss regarding your life? What should we pray about today that would make a difference for you?

To maximize prayer time and allow greater opportunity for personal sharing, break into subgroups of 3-4 people. This is especially important if your group is more than eight people.

LOVING ONEANOTHER (Deepening Spiritual Growth)



The foundation of spiritual growth is your understanding of God's Word. We grow best as we combine obedience to the Bible in the context of close accountability relationships.

USE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SMALL GROUP LESSON DISCUSSION GUIDES HERE.



(Note: you may choose to have the prayer time follow the Bible discussion, sharing Christ or Serving section)

SHARING CHRIST (Declaring the Good News)



1. During the past month, how have you sought to build relationships with the unbelievers on your *Prayer, Care and Share* list (or others) in order to direct them toward Jesus Christ?
2. What outreach activity might we do as a group or with another ministry of our church in order to reach out to our unsaved friends?

SERVING OTHERS (Demonstrating God's Love)



1. Give a brief update on your personal ministry.
2. Christians should be known by the good works they do within the community. What service project or act of kindness could you do as an individual, as a group or with others ministries of the church in order to demonstrate Christ's love in a tangible way?

CLOSING

Close in prayer and enjoy refreshments and fellowship together.



FINANCIAL PRINCIPLES

Financial Principles The Shrewd Manager

1. What is the difference between a manager and an owner?

In what way(s) are you an owner?

In what way(s) are you a manager?

2. Read *Luke 16:1-2*. What was the manager accused of doing?

What did he do with this prospect? (*Luke 16:3-9*)

Why did Jesus call this man “shrewd”?

3. What are some ways we can put worldly wealth to the best use?

How can money produce eternal benefits? (*Matthew 6:19-21*)

4. Who gives us the power to gain wealth? (*Deuteronomy 8:18*)

Discuss this quote: “It’s not how much you make, but what you do with it that really counts.”

5. Share your own experiences with *Proverbs 3:9-10* and *Luke 6:38*.

6. Back to the *Luke 16* story... is there a relationship between how we handle “worldly wealth” and our spiritual growth?

7. Share ways that will encourage each other in how to become better managers of what God (the owner) has given us.



Financial Principles The Seeds Of Prosperity

1. List all of the things that make for a good life, a prosperous life.
2. What do we learn that God wants for us to have in *3 John 2*? What does the part in this verse, "Above all things", imply to you?
3. What are some of the things that cause poverty?
4. Read *Psalms 1:1-3*. What do we learn about tree planting and prosperity?

SEVEN SEEDS OF PROSPERITY

Seed #1 – Trust. What do we learn from *Proverbs 28:25*? What does it mean to make God your source?

Seed #2 – Diligence. What does the word diligence mean?

What do we learn from *Proverbs 14:23*?

Why do we have to stand up to laziness?

Seed #3 – Wisdom. What can we learn from these verses?
Proverbs 28:20

Proverbs 28:22

Proverbs 13:11

What does the Bible tell us to do when we need more wisdom? (*James 1:5*).

Seed #4 – Can Do. Why is this so important for having a successful and prosperous life? Why does the "can do" spirit best exemplify the Christian life of faith?

Seed #5 – Discipline. Talk about this: "Nothing in your life is going to manage itself." Why is discipline a necessary ingredient in having a prosperous life?

Seed #6 – Generosity. What do we learn in *Proverbs 14:31*? If generosity is the seed of prosperity, what is greed the seed of?

Seed #7 – Perseverance. Have someone share an experience in which they persevered and it paid dividends.

Financial Principles Financial Freedom

1. What does the concept “Financial Freedom” mean to you?
2. Do people **plan** to get into financial difficulty?
3. According to *2 Corinthians 9:8-11*, what is it that God desires for our lives?
4. What is the condition for an abundant harvest (financially, relationally, etc.) in our lives according to *2 Corinthians 9:6*?
5. What value does a plan have in our financial freedom? (Discuss and apply *Jeremiah 29:11*)
6. Where do you plan to be financially one year from now, five years from now, 20 years from now?
7. What is **your plan** to accomplish your objectives?
8. According to *2 Chronicles 31:21*, what are some important elements in our plans for succeeding?
9. The Lord is concerned about the motivation for our financial plans. What kinds of plans will God bless? (*Proverbs 19:21*)
10. What is to be our proper perspective on God’s financial blessings according to *Ecclesiastes 5:18-19*?
11. To experience financial freedom, what lessons are to be learned from:
 - a. *Proverbs 24:33-34*
 - b. *Proverbs 20:4*
 - c. *Proverbs 13:4*

Read *Psalms 37:1-7*. Pick out the action words and discuss how prayer relates to each one and the outcome of our financial plans (or any other plan) when submitted to the test of prayer and Scripture.



Financial Principles Triumph Through Tithing – Part 1

1. What is the definition of a tithe?
2. According to *Leviticus 27:30*, to whom does a tithe belong?
3. Where is the tithe to be given (*Malachi 3:10*)

Principles of Tithing

1. Tithing is a biblical principle
 - a. Who started tithing before the Law of Moses? (*Genesis 14:20*)
 - b. According to *Genesis 14:23*, who made Abraham rich?
 - c. What does the Bible say about tithing in *Deuteronomy 14:22-28*?
 - d. What is the teaching about tithing in Israel and when Jesus came on the scene in *Matthew 23:23*?
 - e. The one reason we should tithe is because?
2. Tithing is a kingdom principle
 - a. What are we taught in *Matthew 6:33*?
 - b. The Lord's Prayer teaches us that the Kingdom is to be where, in our order of priorities?
 - c. Who is responsible to see God's work is done on this earth? How much does it cost to do God's work on this earth?
 - d. Who is it that makes the ministries of our church possible?
 - e. How important is the success of the ministry of your church to you?
3. Tithing is a financial principal
 - a. Why is tithing the first step toward solving money problems?
 - b. What is there about tithing that helps people to learn how to manage the rest of their money?
 - c. If a person is robbing God of the tithe, how can they expect God to help them in their financial life?
 - d. Why is it so difficult for us to let go of the tithe when we do not have enough money to cover all of our expenses?

Financial Principles

Triumph Through Tithing – Part 2

Name some of the “good fruit” you want to be remembered by.

According to *Luke 6:43-45*, how is this “fruit bearing” possible?

1. Tithing is a blessing principle
 - a. What is God’s desire for us according to *3 John 2*?
 - b. What are we promised if we will bring the tithe into the storehouse in *Malachi 3:10*?
 - c. *Malachi 3:10*?
 - d. If we tithe, what are we promised in *Malachi 3:11*?
 - e. What is the promise that we are given if we will tithe off the top by giving God the first fruit in *Proverbs 3:9-10*?
 - f. What is the law of proportionate return taught in *2 Corinthians 9:6* and *Luke 6:38*?
 - g. *Luke 6:38*?
 - h. Talk about this statement: God blesses obedience.

2. Tithing is a spiritual principle
 - a. What kind of a giver does God delight in and love? (*2 Corinthians 9:7*)
 - b. Talk about this statement: “Tithing has nothing to do with how much money you make. It is easier to tithe when you make a million dollars than it is when you make ten dollars. The principle is, will you give God the first tenth off the top that belongs to Him?”
 - c. Tithing is a matter of the heart. What did Jesus say about treasures in the heart in *Matthew 6:21*?
 - d. Talk about this statement: Until God gets your money, He does not have your heart. Why is this true?
 - e. When you get paid what is the first thing you should do: pay your tithe or pay your bills? Why do you say so?
 - f. In respect to tithing, what does it mean in *1 John 1:7* where it teaches that we are to walk in the light?

What are the good results of walking in the light and tithing? And, what are the bad results of refusing to walk in the light and give God the tithe that belongs to Him?

3. Tithing is an eternal investment principle
 - a. Of all the investments, what is the best, most lasting investment a person can make?
 - b. What is the one investment that you can never go wrong or lose on?
 - c. (*Matthew 6:19-21*)
 - d. Take a couple of minutes and write a personal covenant that you want to make with God about the tithe.



Financial Principles Live Within Your Means

1. What is the first step to solving your money problems, according to *Proverbs 3:9-10*?
 - a. What is the fruit?
 - b. What does it mean to tithe off of the top?
 - c. Who does the tithe belong to, according to *Leviticus 27:30*?
 - d. When we tithe off the top we have taken the first step to financial success and are successful in this step. Talk about this: "Success breeds success." How does being successful in this area help us to gain success in other areas of our finances?
2. What does it mean to "live within your means?"

Ten steps to living within your means (After the "first fruits" are brought to the Lord.)

1. Take responsibility for your own finances.
 - a. In money matters, what is the teaching of the parable Jesus told in *Luke 19:11-26*?
 - b. If we do a good job of managing what we have been given, what is the promise of *verse 26*?
 - c. Talk about this: "No one will manage your money for you."
2. Evaluate where you are in your cash flow.
 - a. How would a person go about doing this?
 - b. What is cash flow?
 - c. Right now, are you living "within" your means or "above" your means?
 - d. Have you asked God to be your senior partner in all financial matters?
3. Put a stop to all impulsive buying. Have you ever bought something on impulse and the next day you wish you had not bought it? When you have the impulse to buy something, what are some good questions to ask yourself?
4. Get out of the debt trap
 - a. How would you define good debt?
 - b. How would you define bad or depressing debt?
 - c. What was the teaching of *Proverbs 22:7*?
 - d. If someone is in the debt trap, what are the steps for them to take to get out?
 - e. What do you think about charge cards? Are they something we should have or not have?
5. Increase your income potential. What is the teaching of *Proverbs 15:5*?
6. Before making major financial decisions, gather information and seek sound advise.
 - a. What is the teaching in *Proverbs 18:13*
 - b. What is the teaching in *Proverbs 12:15* and *Proverbs 15:22*?
7. Make a budget and live within it.
 - a. Why is it a good idea to give different family members an allowance to live within?
 - b. How does one go about making a budget?
8. Raise your standard of living when you can afford it.
 - a. What is the teaching of *Proverbs 24:27*? What is the principle here?
 - b. Why do you think so many people today are living on a higher standard of living than they can afford and what are some of the results of this?
 - c. Save ten percent of everything you make. What is the teaching of *Proverbs 27:12*; *21:20*?
9. Make God your source. Read together the promise of *Philippians 4:9*. Have someone in your group share how God has supplied a financial need that they have had.

A STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS



A Study of Philippians Spiritual Blessings From God

Philippians 1:1-11

Lesson 1

This letter was written by Paul from prison (more than likely, during his two-year confinement in Rome (Acts 28:30)). Paul also had spent some time in Philippi. Remember how he and Silas had been in jail when God caused an enormous earthquake which broke everyone's chains and busted down the doors? They were then able to lead the jailer to salvation in Jesus Christ (Acts 16:25-34). Paul had some strong feelings for the people in Philippi as you will see.

1. Who are your Christian friends that give you strength and courage in the tough times?
2. Timothy was apparently with Paul when he wrote (Philippians 1:1-2). What emotions did Paul feel as he thought of the Philippian church? Why? (1:3-5)
3. How were the Philippians in partnership with Paul? (1:4-5)
4. Who are those partners in life who will stand with you in difficult times?
5. What was Paul confident about? (1:6)
6. How did Paul's circumstances (being in prison) affect his attitude toward his friends in Philippi? (1:7-8)
7. What was Paul's prayer for the Philippians? (1:9-11) What results did Paul seek?
8. How is Paul's prayer for the Philippians a good prayer for you to copy?
9. Who are those that you are ready to stand beside in their time of trouble?
10. What can you do this week to encourage a brother or sister in their Christian journey?

A Study of Philippians Peace and Purpose in Prison

Philippians 1:12-30

Lesson 2

1. Paul was a prisoner under "house arrest" while awaiting trial in Rome. What are some of the "prison experiences" (job, finances, family issues, marriage problems, etc.) that you have had or are now experiencing that look like hindrances to the fulfillment of God's plan for your life?
2. How had Paul's imprisonment affected his ministry and the spread of the Gospel? (Philippians 1:12-14)
3. Paul had a purpose that transcended his circumstances. In fact, as long as that objective was met, he rejoiced. What was that purpose? (1:15-18)
4. What purpose or objectives do you wish to see become reality? What results would bring you great joy no matter who received the credit for their accomplishment?
5. Was Paul a spiritual optimist or pessimist? Compare how he viewed the two alternatives before him:
 - a. (1:21) If death, then. . .
 - b. (1:22-26) If life and freedom, then. . .
6. How are you allowing God to help you see the good that can come out of each of the options in your future? How do you struggle with feeling like everything in life has to go according to your plan?
7. How did Paul want believers to live regardless of their circumstances? (1:27-30)
8. What is one of the toughest challenges you have experienced as a Christian who is seeking to "conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ?"
9. What can you do this week to encourage another Christian who is seeking to honor Christ in the midst of life's challenges?



A Study of Philippians Taking on Christ's Attitude

Philippians 2:1-11

Lesson 3

1. When you hear the word "selfishness" what comes to your mind?
2. In Philippians 2:1 the "if" clauses in the original Greek language speak of certainties and could be translated "since." These are speaking of realities, not questionable things. What are the realities Paul lists that Christians possess?
3. In what practical ways did Paul exhort the Philippian people to show the unity which was theirs in Christ? (2:2)
4. How have you seen or experienced these practical demonstrations of love within the body of Christ?
5. How does self-centeredness effect relationships? What did Paul have to say about self-centeredness? (2:3-4)
6. How is Christ our best example of humility and unselfishness? (2:5-8)
7. Christ's focus was not on getting ahead and exalting Himself. However, what did God do as a result of the attitude and actions of Christ? (2:9-11)
8. How does Christ's example of humility and service challenge our natural tendency toward self-centeredness?
9. What steps can you take this week to imitate Christ's example and attitude in your relationships?

A Study of Philippians Shining Examples for Christ

Philippians 2:12-18

Lesson 4

1. How do people behave differently when one of the following authority figures are present compared to when they are absent: teacher, parent, policeman, employer or supervisor?
2. Paul has just illustrated obedience to God by using Christ as the ultimate example. In light of Christ's obedience what does Paul command the Philippian people to do now that he is absent from them? (Philippians 2:12)
3. Paul says that the Philippian Christians are to "work out" their salvation with fear and trembling (2:12). Does this mean that Christians are to "work for" their salvation? Can we be saved by our works? (Ephesians 2:8-9)
4. Have you ever felt as if you had to "work for" or "earn" your salvation? What have you done to overcome this false idea?
5. What help can Christians count on as they seek to live in a way that pleases God? (2:13)
6. Even though we cannot earn our salvation by what we do, it is still very important how we act and think. What instructions did Paul give for everyday Christian living? (2:14-16)
7. What godly qualities make Christians "shine like stars" in this dark world?
8. How did Paul view his own life? (2:17-18)
9. How does God want to help your life "shine" this week? Where and to whom has He sent you?



A Study of Philippians

The Blessing of Christian Friendships

Philippians 2:19-30

Lesson 5

1. Who was your best friend when you were growing up? What do you look for in a friend now?
2. In this passage of Scripture, Paul writes about two friends that are with him while he awaits trial in Rome; Timothy and Epaphroditus. How does Paul describe Timothy? (Philippians 2:20-24)
3. How does Timothy's life serve as a good example of the challenge that Paul gave to the Philippian people in Philippians 2:2-4?
4. Who would be an example of a "Timothy" in your circle of Christian friends and why do they stand out as an illustration of obedience to Paul's challenge in Philippians 2:2-4?
5. Who was Epaphroditus and why did the Philippians send him to Paul? (2:25)
6. In what ways can you be a "courier" of blessing in God's kingdom?
7. Why did Epaphroditus want to return to see the Philippian people? (2:26)
8. What had happened to Epaphroditus and why were the Philippians to welcome him home with great joy and honor? (2:27-30)
9. This week, how can you look out for the interests of the Lord rather than your own interests?

A Study of Philippians

Where Do You Place Your Confidence?

Philippians 3:1-11

Lesson 6

1. Of all your achievements in life, personal or professional, which one or two stand out to you as most significant?
2. What did Paul ask the believers in Philippi to do? (Philippians 3:1)
3. Evidently there were some false teachers that were trying to influence the Philippian people by suggesting that they follow Jewish law and tradition in order to be an acceptable Christian. These false teachers are often referred to as Judaizers. How did Paul refer to them? (3:2)
4. What three characteristics are true of those that Paul described as "the circumcision," the true believers and followers of Jesus Christ? (3:3)
5. What did Paul list as his Jewish credentials and accomplishments? (3:4-6)
6. How did Paul view his past accomplishments and privileged background in light of his relationship to Jesus Christ? (3:7-8)
7. What hope did Paul have for obtaining a right standing before God? (3:9)
8. What longings and aspirations did Paul declare to the Philippians? (3:10-11)
9. Why should our identity and confidence be in Jesus Christ?
10. Are there things that you are placing your confidence in that should be counted as "rubbish" for the sake of knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection?



A Study of Philippians Pressing Toward the Goal

Philippians 3:12-4:1

Lesson 7

1. What kind of sports or recreational activities have you competed in or enjoyed during your lifetime?
2. In what ways was Paul's spiritual life like that of a disciplined athlete? (Philippians 12-14)
3. How did Paul call the Philippians to think like him? (3:15-16)
4. How did Paul want believers to act like him? (3:17)
5. What kind of race are you running for Christ? How would you compare yourself to Paul?
6. How did Paul describe God's enemies? (3:18-19)
7. What kind of opposition do you face in living as a Christian?
8. What hope should we Christians have that will hold us steady through the marathon race of life and help us "stand firm in the Lord?" (3:20-4:1)
9. What is the "prize" that Paul is talking about in this passage? (3:14; 20-21)
10. What spiritual workout or training this week will help you run your Christian race and keep you focused on the goal to win the prize for which God has called you?

A Study of Philippians Maintaining Your Peace

Philippians 4:2-9

Lesson 8

1. As a child, who was the one person in your family that you had the most difficulty getting along with? What were the results of this?
2. Apparently two ladies, Euodia and Syntyche, were the source of a recent (and major) conflict in the church at Philippi. Paul appealed to them publicly to settle their differences (Philippians 4:2-3). What alternative did he suggest rather than squabbling over disagreements? (4:4-5)
3. How do you cope with conflict? Do you attack or withdraw? Fight or flight?
4. In verse 5 Paul states that, "the Lord is near." The return of Christ is the next great event in God's prophetic schedule. How should an awareness of Christ's imminent return affect a person's attitude? (4:5)
5. What did Paul say about being anxious about life's circumstances? (4:6)
6. What did Paul say to do instead of worrying? (4:6-7)
7. What are the eight qualities listed in verse 8 and how would you define each? (4:8)
8. How could these qualities help shape a person's thinking?
9. How successful are you in following these eight qualities? Where do you need the most work in your thought life? What can and will you do about it this week?



A Study of Philippians Joy in Every Situation

Philippians 4:10-13

Lesson 9

1. When have you been in the greatest need financially?
2. What was this time like, and how do you look back on it now?
3. What situation was Paul in at the time of the writing of this letter?
(Philippians 1:12-14)
4. What was his response to his circumstances? (4:11)
5. How does Paul illustrate the contrast between being in need and having plenty?
(4:12)
6. What did Paul claim to be true of himself, no matter what circumstances he found himself in? (4:12)
7. Did Paul live a fairly comfortable life, or was his contentment tested by challenges and suffering? (2 Corinthians 11:23-29)
8. Paul claimed to know the secret of being content in any and every situation. What does he indicate is that secret of contentment? (4:12-13)
9. What challenges of life are you facing and how can you find strength and contentment through trust in Jesus Christ? How can you apply Philippians 4:13 to your life this week?

A Study of Philippians

Maintaining A Spirit of Contentment

Philippians 4:14-23

Lesson 10

1. Tell about a time when your heart was full of thanksgiving and gratitude for the help that you received from a friend.
2. What were Paul's comments and thoughts regarding the help he received from the believers at Philippi? (Philippians 4:14)
3. How had the Philippians supported Paul in the past? (4:15-16)
4. What was it that Paul wanted for the Philippians? (4:17)
5. What can you do to be ready to help others when they are in need?
6. What was Paul's financial situation? (4:17-18)
7. What was Paul's response to the generosity of the Philippian people? (4:18-19)
8. How did Paul say that God would reward those who had been so generous? (4:19)
9. What can you do to develop an attitude of confident expectation in all circumstances?
10. Whom did Paul wish to receive honor, thanks, and praise? (4:20)
11. Is there someone that God wants you to help this week who is in need of some resource that you can offer?



GOOD AND GODLY ATTITUDES

Good And Godly Attitudes Attitude Check

1. What difference does your attitude make...
 - a. In your family relationships?
 - b. In your church relationships?
 - c. In the way you do your work?
 - d. In your health?

2. What are the results and consequences of a bad attitude? (*Mark 7:14:20*)

3. When our attitude is bad, what are the steps we can take to have a transformed attitude? (Before beginning these steps, read *Philippians 2:13* and answer this question: Who is it that works within us to continually transform and recreate our attitude?)

Step 1 (*1 John 1:9*)

Step 2 (*Matthew 6:14-15*)

Step 3 (*Matthew 5:23-25*)

Step 4 (*Romans 12:19*)

Step 5 (*Romans 12:21*)

4. In the closing part of this lesson practice *James 5:16*. Put a chair in the middle of the circle and ask anyone who needs the power of God to help them change their attitude to come take their turn sitting in the Love Seat. Then lay hands on them as a group and pray for healing, cleansing and transformation of their attitude.



Good And Godly Attitudes Positive Or Negative: The Choice Is Yours

1. When can you remember your words getting you in trouble? What happened?
2. What do we learn about the importance of speaking positive words from *James 3:9-12*. According to these verses, what kind of words come out of your mouth? If you say something negative about another person, how do you feel?
3. What kind of an atmosphere does speaking positive words create? How does it make you feel? How does it make other people feel?
4. No matter what happens, look for the positive and you will find it. Review the narrative in *Numbers 13-14*.
 - a. Whose decision was it for the children of Israel to move into the promised land of Canaan?
 - b. What was the majority report? Read *Numbers 13:18, 23, 28, 31-32*.
 - c. What did they do that people today still do? What should we never do because when we do it, always defeats us? What kind of thoughts about themselves did they get as a result of doing this? (*Numbers 13:33*)
 - d. In *Chapter 14* we see that the negative leaders infected the people with their negativity. What else happened? In *Numbers 14:11*, what did God say to Moses? If you were God, how would you feel if your children forgot the wonderful things you had done for them?
 - e. How do you think God feels when we become so negative, complain and forget what He has done?
 - f. As you read the *14th Chapter*, what was the consequence of their centering on the negative?
 - g. Joshua and Caleb gave the minority report. See *Numbers 13:30*. What did they report? And in *Numbers 14:30* what was their result of positive thinking?
5. In the situation that you are in right now, if you are in a nit-picking, negative, destructive cycle, how do you get out of it? Read *Philippians 4:4-8* to see how to take charge of your thought life.
6. When we have negative emotions, how do we keep from surrendering to them?
7. How can we work through them and replace them with positive ones?

For example, with God's help we can replace:

Anger with
Fear with
Complaining with
Guilt with
Feeling sorry for oneself with

Good And Godly Attitudes Bitter Or Better – The Choice Is Yours

1. Talk about a person you know who has gone through a difficult experience but has come out of it with a better attitude. Also talk about a person who has gone through an emotional hurt and come out of it a bitter person.

What is the difference between these two kinds of people?

2. Discuss this statement: “Keep your heart right, even when it is sorely wounded.”
3. Read *Hebrews 12:14-15*. How does bitterness begin, what does it grow into, and what does it cause?

How is bitterness contagious?

Why is the worst kind of bitterness the kind that we take on towards another person, even though that person has not willfully done anything to us personally?

4. If you were going to tell someone how to prevent bitterness, what would you say?
5. What do we learn about bitterness in *Acts 8:18-25*?
6. In what way is bitterness destructive?
 - a. To health?
 - b. To relationships?
 - c. To our perspective and ability to see clearly?
 - d. To our spiritual relationship with Father God?
7. What is the cure for bitterness? Read *Ephesians 4:29-32*.



Good And Godly Attitudes Healthy Or Sick – The Choice Is Yours

1. Describe a healthy attitude. Describe a sick attitude.
2. List some unhealthy attitudes that are dangerous to your health.
3. A few years ago a Christian writer (Bruce Larson) wrote a book with the title, "There's A Whole Lot More to Health Than Not Being Sick." What do you think he means by this title?
4. There is a direct relationship between attitude and health. A new field of research called psychoneuroimmunology (PNI) has discovered hard evidence demonstrating that the brain and the immune system communicate with each other. In other words, sick attitudes lower the immune system. What happens when your immune system has been lowered?
5. Read the story in *2 Kings 5:1-15* and answer this question: Why did the prophet Elisha tell the servant to have Naaman dip in the dirty Jordan river seven times? Along with the disease of leprosy, what else was wrong with this Commander of the Army?
6. Which comes first: the attitude or the action?
7. Are Christians exempt from getting sick in their attitude? How subtle is getting a sick attitude? Are sick attitudes contagious?
8. What is the difference between a healthy church and a sick church? Is a church that causes people to be cynical, harsh, fretful, divisive, full of hate, a healthy church or a sick church?
9. Go through the steps and experience God's cure for a sick attitude:
 - a. Stop the denial.
 - b. Open up to the Holy Spirit.
 - c. Take responsibility for your own negative attitude and that is a sin. Sin is destructive. A sick attitude is destructive.
 - d. Confess your sick attitude to God and ask for forgiveness. "When you confess your sin, He is faithful and just to forgive you, and cleanse you." (*1 John 1:9*)
 - e. Restitution – go and make it right. If you are at odds with another person, go and ask them to forgive you. Give forgiveness to them. Do not argue about who is right or wrong but simply let forgiveness flow.
 - f. Receive the cleansing of the Holy Spirit, He is your friend. He is with you and He wants to purify your attitudes, cleanse our all the debris, take away all of the bitterness, cynicism, and set you free.
10. Have someone in your group share the sick attitude that they have had and how God has helped them to get healed out of that.

Good And Godly Attitudes Learning To Be Thankful In All Things

1. Write down four things that you are thankful for.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
2. What is the teaching of *1 Thessalonians 5:18*? What happens when we put this into practice?
3. According to *Psalms 145:1-2*, what is the example we are given by the psalmist as to how and when to give praise to God?
4. *Psalms 145:3*. Define God's greatness as it applies to your own life.
5. According to *Psalms 145:4*, what is it that we are to do with our children and youth of our church? How are you doing this?
6. From *Psalms 145:5-7*, pick out the action words, the verbs. What should our response be to the goodness in our life?
7. In *Psalms 145:10-12*, for what reasons does God reveal His glory, power, and His majesty?
8. In *Psalms 145:13*. Regardless of what uncertainties may surround us in our world, what is the source of our security, our confidence for the future?



Good And Godly Attitudes Praise To A Personal God

The scene:

The prophet Isaiah is writing these positive words during a very stressful time. He and his people are surrounded by increased wickedness and the coming destruction of foreign nations. Even in the midst of unfavorable circumstances, we too can say with humble boldness, "O Lord, you are my god." *Isaiah 25:1-5* sounds like a psalm.

1. Isaiah praised God for his **faithfulness**, verse 1.
 - a. What are some of the names of God that continue to encourage you as you worship?
 - b. What are some recent evidences of God's faithfulness in your life?
 - c. What is one life experience that reminds you of God's perfect timing?

2. Isaiah praised God for His **power**, verses 2-3.
 - a. What is one of your favorite parts of God's awesome creation?
 - b. Share some personal promises of God's power such as *Ephesians 3:20; Luke 11:9-10; Philippians 4:19*.
 - c. What need do you have right now where you are trusting God's power?

3. Isaiah praised God for His **shelter**, verses 4-5.
 - a. When you were a child, what/who was your "emotional shelter" when things became stormy?
 - b. What "storm" or "heat of the desert" is affecting you right now?
 - c. How does God want to shelter you? Will you let Him?

PRACTICE THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Choose one or two of these to share with others in your group:

If you were to move to a poor, primitive country, what three things would you most miss from your current life?

If you could relive any part of your life, what part would it be and why?

What are three things you are most thankful for in your life right now?
What are some of the things you do to show your thankfulness?

What person in your life has been the best example of love? Explain how.

Has there been a time in the past year or two when God seemed especially real or close to you? If so, explain.

Good And Godly Attitudes Attitudes That Lead To Better Health

1. Contrast the following:
 - a. Healthy and unhealthy view of God.
 - b. Healthy and unhealthy view of other people.
 - c. Healthy and unhealthy view of self.
 - d. Healthy and unhealthy view of material things..
 - e. Healthy and unhealthy view of sex.
 - f. Healthy and unhealthy view of church.
 - g. Healthy and unhealthy view of church leadership.
 - h. Healthy and unhealthy view of lay people in ministry.

2. Talk about this statement: “There’s a whole lot more to health than not being sick.”

3. Read *Acts 4:12*. Who is it that came to bring salvation? In what name do we find salvation?
 - What does the word “salvation” here mean?
 - Is it only forgiveness of sin or does it mean more?
 - What is the total plan of redemption that God has for us?
 - What is it that we are to be redeemed from and restored to?

4. Read *Luke 15:11-31*. List the three characters and one word that describes their attitude and then tell if it is healthy or unhealthy.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

5. In *Hebrews 12:15*, what unhealthy attitudes are we warned against? What is the result of this attitude when we allow it to take root within us?

6. How does one change an unhealthy attitude into a healthy one? What is the miracle cure that Jesus came to give to us?

7. In developing a wholeness attitude, what do we need to do? (*Mark 12:3*) How does this affect our attitude?

8. In order to have healthy attitudes, what do we need to feed our minds?



Good And Godly Attitudes Confidence Without Conceit

1. Describe how a person talks who is lacking in self-confidence. How do you feel when you are around this kind of person? Would you want to follow them as a leader? Do you enjoy being around them? Why?
2. Describe a person who puffs himself up and comes on as being overly confident. How do they talk? How do you relate to this person? How do you feel when you are around them?
3. Is it possible to be over-confident? How does the Bible describe this in *Romans 12:16*? What is it called?
4. What do we learn about confidence from *Hebrews 10:35*?
5. What do we learn about confidence from *Isaiah 30:15 and 32:17*?
6. Who is our perfect example of a person who lived on this earth who had confidence without conceit? Talk about his life and illustrate.
7. Why is it important to distinguish between who you are and what you do? Where does most of your own self-worth come from? “Who you are” or “What you do”? What is the problem when your self-worth comes from what you do?
8. After reading the verses, complete the following “I am’s” and talk about them:
 - a. *Psalms 8:3-5*. I am...
 - b. *Galatians 6:4*. I am...
 - c. *Romans 8:1*. I am...
 - d. *Romans 12:5*. I am...
 - e. *Romans 12:3*. I am...
9. Where does our confidence come from? (*Philippians 4:13*)
10. What is the difference between your self-talk when you say “I can’t” and your self-talk when you say “I can”? Can a person change the way they talk to themselves?
11. According to *Matthew 22:37-39*, two anchors to having confidence without conceit are:
12. Why is it important to help your kids find something in which they excel?

Thought question: Is self-confidence something that comes primarily by keeping after it or does it come as a by-product of living in a right relationship with God and a life of service to others? What do you think?

Good And Godly Attitudes How To Escape The Swirl Of Selfishness

1. List some things that selfish people do.

2. Where does the swirl of selfishness take us?
 - a. What did David say about himself? (*Psalm 51:3*)

 - b. What did Isaiah say about himself? (*Isaiah 6:5*)

 - c. What did Paul say about himself? (*1 Timothy 1:15*)

 - d. What do you say about yourself?

3. How do we break out of the swirl of selfishness?
 - a. *John 4:34*

 - b. *John 5:30*

 - c. *John 6:38*

4. How did Jesus know the will of God? (*Mark 1:35; 6:46*)

5. How do we know the will of God?

What is our greatest problem – knowing the will of God or doing the will of God?

6. Have someone share an experience when they have struggled with the swirl of selfishness until they let go of it and gave it to God.



Good And Godly Attitudes The Championship Principle

1. In your own words, finish this sentence: "A person who is dedicated is:
2. What kind of dedication does it take to live the Christian life? (*Mark 8:34-35*)
3. Why is it important to choose what is worthwhile to dedicate our lives to? List those things, which you consider to be more worthwhile and want to dedicate your life to accomplishing.
4. What do we learn about the dedication of Jesus in *Hebrews 12:1-4*?
5. In *Hebrews 12:1*, what does it mean when it says, "Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles?" How do you apply this to your own life?
6. In *Hebrews 12:2*, what is it that we are to do that makes all the difference?
7. Describe the dedication that is necessary to have a good marriage.
8. Describe the dedication that is necessary to be successful in business.
9. Describe the dedication that is necessary to be successful in Christian living.
10. Do you think self-discipline is positive or negative? Why do you think so?
11. Talk about this statement. "Give God your best and He will do the rest."
12. Read *Hebrews 12:5, 11* and answer how even hardship can help us win the race.
13. Who is the winner we are following that will lead us to victory?

ENRICHING RELATIONSHIPS



Enriching Relationships To Bless And Be Blessed

Regardless of what has happened (or not happened) in our lives, all of us have a God-given need to be **blessed**.

1. What are some words that describe what a blessing means?
2. What happens in our lives if we feel someone's blessing?
3. What happens in our lives if we feel (even subconsciously) the lack of someone's blessing?
4. How is a person who feels a lack of parental blessing likely to feel about God? Why?
5. *Genesis 27* records that Esau lost his father's blessing to his brother Jacob.
 - a. How did that happen?
 - b. How did Esau respond?
 - c. What was Isaac's response?
 - d. How were the two blessings different?
6. The five parts of Scriptural blessing. (Reference: *The Blessing*, by Gary Smalley and John Trent)
 - a. **Meaningful Touch**, *Genesis 27:26* What are some ways this can be done? Why is this so important to the way God has created us?
 - b. **Spoken Words**. *Genesis 27:27* List some things that can be said to a person beyond, "I love you." Why is it sometimes difficult to accept words of blessing?
 - c. **Expressing High Value**. *Genesis 27:28*. If something has value, it has what? Why is it so important to choose words of high value when we bless a person? (*James 3:3-12*)
 - d. **About a Special Future**. *Genesis 27:29*. What affect does a "word picture" have on a child? Relate a personal experience of this from your own life (positive or negative).
 - e. **A Personal Commitment**. *Genesis 27:33*. Why is this such an important part of a blessing? Name one person who needs to hear your active commitment to their future today.
7. Discuss this quote (C. Neil Strait):

"Take from a man his wealth, and you hinder him; take from him his purpose, and you slow him down. But take from a man his hope, and you stop him."

Enriching Relationships The Miracle Of Forgiveness

1. Have you ever held a grudge against someone? What negative effect did it have on your life?
2. Read *Psalms 130:1-4*. What is the main truth that we learn from this passage?
3. An unforgiving spirit may take many forms. Define each of these three:
 - a. Resentment:
 - b. Bitterness:
 - c. Hate:
4. Read *Ephesians 4:22-32*. What does Paul have to say about an unforgiving spirit and what are we to do?
5. How can an unforgiving spirit hurt you more than it hurts another person?
 - a. What can it do to you physically?
 - b. How can it cause you to send out negative messages?
 - c. How can it make you an emotional slave to the other person?
 - d. How can it take you out of fellowship with God? (*1 John 1:7*)
6. Discuss this together: “Without forgiveness there are no enduring relationships.” Why is this true?
7. When we refuse to forgive another person, what does it do to the grace and forgiveness of God in our own life? (*Matthew 6:12*)
8. Some guidelines in asking for forgiveness...
 - a. How soon should we do it? Why?
 - b. Should we identify our own sins or the other person's? Why?
 - c. If the other person is hesitant to forgive us (for whatever reason), what should be our response?



Enriching Relationships Partners Together

1. Think of yourself and your special abilities as a part of the human body. For example: eye, ear, hand, nose. Which part are you and why?
2. Read *1 Corinthians 12:20*. How is the church like a body?
3. How is the spiritual body of Christ formed? (*1 Corinthians 12:4-12, 18*)

What is the common bond or connection? (*1 Corinthians 12:13*)

4. Why is it important that there be diversity? (*1 Corinthians 12:14-20*)

Can a believer excuse himself/herself from being active in the body since he/she is not like others?

5. Is it possible for a part of the body to exist alone?

Can you live the Christian life to the fullest without being active in the church? Why?

6. Perhaps you or someone you know lives without a part of their body. What is it like?
 - a. How important are your brothers and sisters in Christ to you?
 - b. How does the suffering or rejoicing of someone in your group or church affect you? (*1 Corinthians 12:25, 26*)

7. What is the problem when everyone wants to do the same thing in the body?

Enriching Relationships Love Can Be Repaired

1. What do you think is hardest: repairing a relationship or discarding it and living with the consequences?

2. Can love be repaired when self-esteem has been damaged? If so, how?

3. Can love be repaired when a person chooses to live with the selfish life?

What does selfishness do to a marriage?

What does selfishness do to a parent-child relationship?

What does selfishness do to a friendship?

4. What did the prodigal son say to the father that tells us he was choosing the selfish life? (*Luke 15:11-12*)

What can we do when people make the wrong choices? (*Luke 15:13-21*)

What does our Heavenly Father do when we choose wrongly? (*Luke 15:22-24*)

5. Can love be repaired when we act like the older brother and cling to bitterness? Why not? (*Luke 15:25-32*)

What are we to do if we have bitterness?

Review the complete story of the prodigal son in *Luke 15:11-32* and identify the steps that led to the repairing of the love relationship between the father and son.



Enriching Relationships How To Handle Criticism In A Positive Way

1. Caution: This lesson is for the strong and those who want to be strong! **Guarantee:** You will be criticized. What are the two ways you can handle criticism that is directed toward you?
2. Even Jesus our Lord (whose motives were pure and character spotless) was criticized:
 - a. *Matthew 11:9*
 - b. *Mark 2:16*
 - c. *John 8:48*
3. Read *1 Peter 2:21-23*. Discuss some of the ways Christians can expect criticism from the other people around them.
4. **Seven Positive Ways to Handle Criticism**
 - a. **Ask, “Is this constructive or destructive?”** What can you discover by a person’s attitude when they are criticizing you?
 - b. **Determine not to waste energy fighting destructive energy.** Read the story from *Luke 9:51-56* and discuss the lesson for us in Jesus’ example.
 - c. **Try to understand who this person is to you.** Read *Proverbs 27:4-7*. What difference does a person’s motive have in the giving of criticism?
 - d. **Ask, “Is this from a crowd or one person?”** How is it possible to put lesser value on a criticism if it only comes from one person?
 - e. **Ask, “Is there some truth in what has been said?”** Read *Hebrews 12:5-11*. What is the difference between discipline and punishment?

How has God used constructive criticism from someone as a learning/growing opportunity for you?
 - f. **Determine to please God first and then people.** What are the chances that we will **always** please everybody?
What does the Bible teach us about the source of our self-worth?
 - g. **Go on the offensive with a positive action.** Read *Romans 12:21*. Name some creative ways of putting love into action after you have been criticized.

“THERE IS NO GREATER INVITATION TO LOVE
THAN LOVING FIRST.”
St. Augustine (354-430)

Enriching Relationships Lord, What About Him/Her?

Soon after the resurrection of our Lord, Peter was asked three times, “Do you love me?” It was a very personal question and Peter answered very positively. Then after Jesus indicated the kind of death Peter would experience, Peter changed the subject! Read about it in *John 21:20-23*

1. When have you compared yourself to another person and came up on the “minus” side. When have you compared yourself to another person and came up on the “plus” side?
2. Why is it never a good idea to compare ourselves with each other?
3. When Peter asked, “Lord, what about him?” what did Jesus answer (in your own words)?
4. List some things that other Christians seem to be able to do that go against what God has shown you?
5. Why is it so important that we each walk in the light that God so faithfully and individually gives to us?
6. Read *1 John 1:5-7*. In a practical way, what does it mean to walk in the light as opposed to walking in the darkness?
7. What is the message in *1 John 1:7* because of the word “if”? What are the two great benefits of personal obedience?
8. What hope does John give in *1 John 1:9-10* and *2:1-2*, when we fail to live the light of His love?
9. In your spiritual life, what way(s) are you still a **child**...so much to learn? In your spiritual life, what way(s) are you an **adult**...at the peak of your strength?
10. How have you experienced growth recently by “walking in the light?”
 - _____ A scripture passage has come alive to me.
 - _____ I have forgiven someone who sinned against me.
 - _____ I have served my family instead of demanding to be served.
 - _____ I have a stronger desire to live my life God’s way.
 - _____ I have given up a destructive habit.
 - _____ I am more willing to seek God’s wisdom in the choices I make.
 - _____ The joy of the Lord has been my strength.
 - _____ Little things do not worry me like they used to.
 - _____ I have shared my faith with another person.
 - _____ God has given me a healthy self-love.



CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Christian Service Broken To Bless

1. What kind of benefits might come out of an experience of being broken?
2. Read *1 Peter 5:5-10*.
 - a. Who does God oppose and who does He give His grace and help to?
 - b. If you humble yourself instead of rebelling when hard times come and submit to God's leadership in your life, what will He do?
 - c. When suffering and tough times come, who is it that we must look out for so that we are not destroyed?
3. Read *1 Peter 5:10* together and have someone in your group share how, after they suffered for a while, God has restored them and what good has come out of this experience?
4. Make a list of people of faith, both in the Scriptures and in your experience that God has greatly used after they have experienced brokenness?
5. Talk about this quote: "In love's service, only broken hearts will do."

Believe it or not – Trouble can be good for you!

1. What do we learn from *Romans 8:28*?
2. What are some of the troubles that came into Joseph, the dreamer's life?
3. What would have happened to Joseph if he had stayed home and had been pampered and spoiled by his father?
4. What fine tuning in Joseph's character do we see come out when he comes to face to face with his brothers who have betrayed him? (*Genesis 45*)
5. Read Joseph's great testimony in *Genesis 50:20* and talk about what it means and how we apply it to our lives.

TURN YOUR PAIN INTO GAIN

1. What would we do without caring persons?
2. Where did the Good Samaritan in the Bible learn to have compassion? How do we learn to have compassion? How many compassionate people do we need in our church?
3. In your relationships, how are you relating daily to others? In what ways can you improve your relationships?

IN EVERY ADVERSITY LOOK FOR A STRIKING OPPORTUNITY

1. Share different experiences of how adversity has been turned into an opportunity for ministry and service.
2. What are the things a person can learn through adversity to make them more effective in ministry?

THANK GOD YOU'VE BEEN BROKEN TO BLESS

1. What have we received because of the brokenness of Jesus? (*Isaiah 53:5-6*)
2. How is God using your brokenness right now to bless the lives of others?
3. How is He going to use your brokenness to bless others in the future?



Christian Service Improve Your Serve

1. In the newspaper recently was a headline, "THE WAY TO BE GREAT IS TO SERVE OTHERS." Why is this an unusual one in our society today?
2. In *Romans 12:1*, what does it mean to give God "a living sacrifice?" How is this to be lived out in daily life and what is "reasonable service" and "spiritual worship?"
3. What are some ways that you, right now, serve others in Christ's name? What are some additional ways that you would like to serve?
4. Who is our perfect model for living service? (*Mark 10:45*) What do you learn from this example?
5. Does a life of service come naturally? Why?
6. Read *Matthew 20:20-24*. What was wrong with Mother Zebedee's request? How did it make other disciples feel?
7. Read *Matthew 20:25-28*. How does God's way of service differ from the ways of getting to the top in this world?
8. What do we learn about Paul and why he was effective in his service to Christ? (*1 Corinthians 2:1-5*)

Quote: "It is amazing what can be done for God when we don't care who gets the credit."

9. Why is it hard to play second fiddle? How many second fiddle players does God need? Can any ministry be effective without second fiddle players?

Why do some people hold back from serving? What are some of the joys and benefits that come into a person's life when they really take hold of the concept of being God's servant by serving others in the name of Jesus?

Christian Service

A Remarkable Story About Teamwork

Read *Mark 2:1-12*

1. In *Mark 2:1*, what exciting news spread throughout Capernaum?
2. In *Mark 2:2*, how many gathered in the house and what “good problem” resulted? Would you rather belong to a church that had stagnation problems or growing problems? Why?
3. In *Mark 2:2*, what did Jesus do?
4. In *Mark 2:4*, who opened a hole in the roof and why? Characterize qualities you see in those who opened a hole in the roof. What do you see about their faith? What do you see about their compassion? Who was it they were trying to help?
5. What did Jesus say to the paralytic?
6. Does this statement surprise you? What does unforgiven sin do?
7. What do we learn about the spirit of cooperation from these men who brought the paralytic to Jesus? List some of the things that we can do together that we can never do without cooperation in the church? (*Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*)
8. Talk about how Jesus is the answer to people’s needs today and what we can do to bring people with needs to Jesus?
9. In *Mark 2:6*, how did the teachers of the law react to all of this? When Christians are trying to help people, is it to be expected that some will criticize? How do we handle unjust and unfair criticism of our ministry? Who is it that we want most of all to please?
10. How did Jesus deal with His critics in *Mark 2:8-11*?
11. In *Mark 2:10*, what did Jesus have the authority to do? What authority does Jesus give us who make up His church? (*Matthew 16:19*) Who is it that is to carry on His ministry of forgiveness and healing in this world in His name?
12. What finally happened to the paralytic in *Mark 2:16*?
13. What should be our response to every miracle of Christ that we see performed in another person’s life or in our own?
14. Write down three miracles you have seen recently and praise God for them.
15. Who do you think patched up the roof? What important ministry in the church does this illustrate and write down all of this kind of ministry you can think of that is needed in your own local church.



Christian Service Sowing And Reaping

1. What is a parable?
2. Why did Jesus use parables when He taught?
3. Read the parable in *Mark 4:1-8*. List the four types of soil.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
4. Read *Mark 4:13-20*. What are some things that will prevent us from harvesting a good crop?
5. What are some things that will produce an overflowing, abundant crop?
6. Read *Hosea 10:12*. Share from your own experience what has happened when you planted “good seeds of righteousness” and how you reaped love.

What does the phrase “break up your unplowed ground” mean to you? What could be some “unplowed ground” in your spiritual life?

7. What are the blessings that are promised if you do break up your unplowed ground?
 - a. *Hosea 10:12*
 - b. *Proverbs 11:18*
 - c. *Psalms 92:14*
 - d. *Psalms 126:5*
 - e. *Romans 2:10*
 - f. *Galatians 6:7-10*
 - g. *John 15:16*
8. Think about your own life and share with your group a part of your life where you need a “good harvest”. What kind of seeds are you going to start planting today to ensure an abundant harvest in the future?

THE ARMOR OF GOD



The Armor of God Dressed For Success

Ephesians 6:10-24

Lesson 1

1. If you were to dress for spiritual success, what would you wear?
2. How did Paul tell the believers to dress for spiritual success? (Ephesians 6:11)
3. Why do Christians need to put on the armor of God? (6:11-12)
4. Do Christians really need to stay dressed in the full armor of God all the time? (6:13)
5. Why do you think Paul used the detailed description of a Roman soldier's armor to explain the Christian's defense for spiritual warfare?
6. List and describe the pieces of spiritual armor that God instructs Christians to "put on". (6:14-18)
7. How would you describe the armor of God in your own words?
8. What does God tell all Christians to do? (6:14)
9. What last piece of armor did Paul tell all Christians to take up? (6:17-18) What is the significance of this piece of armor, how is it different from the other items listed and why is it important?
10. What pieces of armor are you missing? How can you correct that?

The Armor of God Belt, Breastplate and Shoes

Ephesians 6: 14-15

Lesson 2

1. What items of clothing usually attract your attention? Shoes? Shirt? Pants? Skirt? Dress? Belt? etc.
2. What commands do you find in Ephesians 6:10-13?
3. What does Paul say to justify these commands? Why do we need to obey them? (6:10-13)
4. Having said all that he did in Ephesians 6:10-13, Paul shifts from the earlier commands of "put on" to the urgent command, "stand firm" which implies a sense of withstanding or standing "against" evil powers. He begins the "Dress for Success" listing of the full armor of God with the assumption that the Christian soldier has already put on what three items? (6:14-15)
5. Read Isaiah 11:5 and describe the symbolic meaning of the belt of the Messiah.
6. In Ephesians 6:14, "Truth" appears to be symbolic of the believer's character, integrity and faithfulness. Why is it important that our beliefs and convictions line up with God's Word and revelation?
7. The "breastplate of righteousness" refers to moral uprightness of character, strict honesty and conduct that is according to moral principles. The symbolism is used of God in Isaiah 59:17. How is the Christian warrior's character his defense in spiritual battle?
8. Read Isaiah 52:7 describing one bringing good news. These messengers customarily ran barefooted. Here, in Ephesians 6:15, the focus is on standing firm rather than running swiftly. A Roman soldier's sandals had soles thickly studded with nails. How can the gospel provide you with stability and surefootedness as well as "peace" in the midst of spiritual battle?
9. Do you know the Truth of God's Word adequately enough to say that you have moral character or do you question whether or not you are acting with integrity? What can you do to obtain confidence and surefootedness as a Christian?



The Armor of God Shield of Faith, Helmet of Salvation

Ephesians 6:16-17

Lesson 3

1. What are some of the most common temptations faced by people in our culture today?
2. Review Ephesians 6:14-15. In addition to the armor listed there, what does Paul tell the Christian soldier to "take up?"
3. In Bible times the soldier was protected from the arrow by his shield because it prevented the arrow from penetrating the body. However, the flaming arrow presented a greater threat because an arrow that had been dipped in pitch could continue to burn. If the shield were to catch on fire the soldier would be forced to cast it aside therefore exposing himself to greater danger. How are Christians exposed to great danger when they cast aside their faith and put their trust in something other than God?
4. The shield suggested here is a large door-shaped shield 2 1/2 feet wide by 4 feet long. Often made of wood, the shield was covered with layers of leather which could be soaked in water before battle in order to put out the flaming arrows of the enemy. What is faith and how is it like this Roman shield?
5. Some of the flaming arrows of our spiritual enemy are temptations toward worry, fear, anxiety, depression, and discouragement. How does faith defend against these attacks?
6. In verses 14-16 there is a mandate or command "to stand" using the belt, breastplate, shoes and shield. In verse 17 the mandate is "to take," meaning "to receive" as from God both the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. What significance, if any, do you see in this second command "to receive" the helmet and sword?
7. The Roman helmet was originally made of leather strengthened with bronze and equipped with cheek pieces. It was a heavy, decorative and expensive item which had an inside lining of felt or sponge and a crest made of horsehair. Only an ax or hammer could pierce a heavy helmet. Here, the "helmet of salvation" refers either to present safety from the devil's attacks or to the "hope of salvation" as a future deliverance. How does Paul use this metaphor of a helmet in 1 Thessalonians 5:8?
8. How does knowing that God provides salvation through Jesus Christ give you protection for daily spiritual battle?
9. How is "doubting your salvation" or attempting to "earn your salvation by works" like a soldier taking off his helmet in the midst of battle?
10. How can you strengthen your "hope" or "assurance" of salvation?

The Armor of God The Sword of the Spirit

Ephesians 6:17

Lesson 4

1. Do you see weapons such as guns, knives and swords as offensive or defensive weapons? Why?
2. The Christian soldier is commanded to receive (take) from God the helmet of salvation and the "Sword of the Spirit" which is the Word of God. The major theme of this passage is standing one's ground under spiritual attack (read Ephesians 6:10-13). Can the sword be used to help the Christian soldier stand his ground?
3. The Greek word used in Ephesians 6:17 for "word" is "rhema" which denotes that which is spoken. Rhema (as distinct from logos) in this passage refers not to the whole Bible as such, but to the individual scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need (see Matthew 10:19-20). Why is it important to have studied and memorized the Bible in preparation for the spiritual battles of life?
4. Read Matthew 4:1-11, the record of Jesus' spiritual battle with the tempter. What was the first temptation presented to Jesus and how did he respond?
5. When the devil tempted Jesus a second time what did He do to add credibility to His demand? (Matthew 4:6)
6. What role did the scriptures play in Jesus' resisting temptation?
7. Tell about a time when God gave you "rhema," (individual scriptures which the Spirit brought to mind in a time of need)?
8. Jesus had obviously studied and memorized the Scriptures so that He was prepared for spiritual battle. What other prerequisite had He also fulfilled? (Matthew 3:16; 4:1; Ephesians 5:18; 6:17-18)
9. What can you do to live a life that is yielded to the Holy Spirit and has a firm grasp of the Bible prepared to handle the "Sword of the Spirit" in spiritual conflict?



A STUDY OF VALUES

Values Series

Honesty

Joshua 6

Lesson 1

1. Tell about someone you know who has illustrated honesty and integrity. Was this a family member, neighbor, co-worker, business owner, etc.?
2. How important is honesty in personal friendships? What happens to a relationship when dishonesty is discovered?
3. What does God's Law state about honesty? How were the children of Israel to deal with one another? (Leviticus 19:11; Exodus 20:16)
4. How did the Apostle Paul address this issue regarding the way Christians were to deal with each other? (Ephesians 4:25, 28)
5. In Joshua 6 we find the account of the fall of Jericho at the hands of the Israelites. God had commanded Joshua and the people to destroy the city and everything in it except Rahab, the woman who had assisted the Israelite spies (Joshua 6:17-18). What instructions had been given regarding articles of silver, gold, bronze and iron? (6:19)
6. How did the Israelites act regarding the Lord's command at Jericho? (7:1)
7. What bad thing happened because of Achan's dishonesty? (7:2-5)
8. Did Joshua know why trouble had come upon the Israelites? How did he find out what the problem was? (7:6-15)
9. What dishonesty was finally uncovered that had brought the Lord's anger against the children of Israel? (7:16-23)
10. After the sin had been revealed and corrected, the Lord restored His blessing to the Israelite army (Joshua 8:1). Take inventory of your own life, is there any hidden sin or dishonesty that you need to confess to the Lord? Read Psalm 51:1-12 as an example of getting honest with God. Also read 1 John 1:9 to be reminded of God's readiness to hear from you.
11. Is there someone that you need to speak to this week to correct some dishonesty between you?



Values Series

Self-Control

Galatians 5:22-23

Lesson 2

1. How would you define "self-control?"
2. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and identify the positive qualities that church leaders should have as well as the negative traits that should be absent. Is self-control included in this list?
3. What was the common character quality that Paul wanted Titus to teach the various groups under his care? (Titus 2:1-8; 11-12)
4. What motivation did Paul offer for living a life of self-control? (1 Thessalonians 5:2-8; Titus 2:13-14)
5. What did the Apostle Peter have to say about self-control? (1 Peter 1:13, 4:7; 5:8; 2 Peter 1:6)
6. Lack of self-control is well illustrated by the acts of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19-21). Describe what someone's life is like when they lack self-control.
7. What happens when Christians yield control of their lives to the Holy Spirit? (Galatians 5:16, 22-25)
8. Ephesians 4:22-28 and Colossians 3:5-14 illustrate the "Put-off, Put-on Principle." Identify what Paul says Christians are to "Put-off" and what they are to "Put-on." Discuss how "putting on" the new self through the power of the Holy Spirit can displace the acts of the sinful nature.
9. In what area of life do you want greater self-control? What can you "put-on" that will help you establish self-control in this area?

Values Series Courage

Joshua 1:9

Lesson 3

1. Who comes to mind when you think of a courageous individual? Why are they so courageous, where does their courage come from?
2. After Moses had died, the Lord God spoke to Joshua. What commands or instructions did God give to Joshua and what encouragement did He offer? (Joshua 1:1-9)
3. What was Joshua's greatest reason for having great courage? (Joshua 1:9)
4. In the New Testament we read about Peter one of Jesus' closest friends and followers. Describe how courageous Peter was when things got difficult for Jesus. (Luke 22:33-34; 54-62)
5. See Acts 4:1-20. Here Peter is put in jail then brought before the rulers in Jerusalem. How would you describe Peter's courage while facing such strong opposition? (Acts 4:13, 18-20)
6. What was the source of Peter's great courage? (Acts 4:8)
7. What can Christians do to gain greater courage in order to live boldly and obediently for Jesus in a hostile world? (Acts 4:23-31)
8. Where do you go for strength and courage, to your own resources or to God? Pray together that the Holy Spirit will fill you with Himself and strengthen you to live courageously for Jesus Christ.



Values Series

Obedience

1 Samuel 15:22

Lesson 4

1. How would you define obedience? Can you think of an illustration of obedience in daily life?
2. Read Psalm 119:97-104. What benefits do you see that are a result of obedience to God's commands, laws and instructions?
3. What spiritual principles did Moses present to the children of Israel to instruct and motivate them regarding obedience to God? (Deuteronomy 28:1-2,15)
4. The example of King Saul:
 - a. What was God's command to King Saul? (1 Samuel 15:3)
 - b. What was Saul's level of obedience? (1 Samuel 15:8-9)
 total rebellion
 complete obedience
 partial obedience
 - c. How did God react to Saul's level of obedience? (1 Samuel 15:11)
 - d. When confronted by Samuel, how did Saul respond? (1 Samuel 15:13-15, 21)
 - e. What principle did God teach through the prophet Samuel? (1 Samuel 15:22-23)
5. As Christians, what should be our motivation for active obedience to God? (John 14:15, 23-24; 15:10)
6. Based on your current desire and effort to identify God's commands and obey them, rate your level of "loving obedience."
 I'm living in loving obedience to God's revealed will.
 I need to diligently seek to know God's commands for I desire to obey.
 I know that I could do better in obeying what God has already shown me.

Values Series Loyalty

1 Chronicles 29:18

Lesson 5

1. Tell about someone who has been loyal to you. This might be a Christian friend, a family member, someone in the work place or a childhood friend.
2. What are characteristics that describe loyalty?
3. Read 1 Samuel 19:1-7; 20:16-17,41-42. Describe the loyalty between Jonathan and David.
4. Why should there have been rivalry instead of loyalty between these two men?
5. Consider the story of Naomi and her daughter-in-law, Ruth (Ruth 1). How did Ruth demonstrate tremendous loving loyalty to Naomi?
6. As Christians, what is one reason that Paul gives for remaining loyal and interdependent on one another? (Romans 12:4-5)
7. Read Romans 12:9-13. How should Christians demonstrate loving loyalty to one another?
8. King David offered a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing as the people presented gifts for the building of the temple. He prayed that the Lord would keep the hearts of the people loyal to God forever (1 Chronicles 29:18). How can we demonstrate our loving loyalty to God?
9. List those to whom you want to affirm your loving loyalty this week:
10. How will you express or demonstrate your loving loyalty to those you have listed above?



Values Series Loving (Part I)

John 13:34-35

Lesson 6

1. When you were a child, from whom did you receive a lot of love? How did that person demonstrate love to you?
2. What qualities do you associate with love?
3. Is love a feeling that overwhelms you, then prompts you to positive action or do you first choose to love, then demonstrate that commitment through positive action?
4. What qualities does love have according to the Apostle Paul?
(1 Corinthians 13:4-8)
5. Which of these qualities do you need to trust God to develop and demonstrate in your life?
6. How could a person exercise spiritual gifts, personal sacrifice, service, even martyrdom and yet have these things be counted as worthless? (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)
7. Read John 13:34-35. What actions might indicate the kind of love that Jesus is referring to here when He commands His followers to love one another?
8. When have you suspected that someone was a Christian because of observing their "love in action?"
9. "Love really counts the most when it is difficult or costs the most." How do you respond to this statement?
10. In what context of life are you trusting God to love through you?

Values Series Loving (Part II)

Romans 5:8

Lesson 7

1. When have you been shown unconditional love even though you were not acting in a very lovable manner?
2. What is so unique about the kind of love that God has demonstrated for mankind? (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8)
3. Read the story told by Jesus in Luke 15:11-32. Based on the two son's actions, which son might you expect the father to love and which might you expect him to resent?
4. How did the father respond to the return of the younger son? (Luke 15:20-24)
5. How have you personally experienced the forgiving love of God the Father?
6. How did the older brother act when the younger son returned? Based on his response, how would you describe his love for the younger brother? (Luke 15:29-32)
7. What does this story of forgiving love from a father reveal about God's love toward mankind? Toward you?
8. When considering your life during the last few weeks, whom do you most identify with in this story, the younger son, the older son or the father?
9. Think of how you can demonstrate God's unconditional love. To what "undeserving" person can you extend love and forgiveness this week?



Values Series Kindness

Matthew 25:34-40

Lesson 8

1. What is kindness? Share examples of acts of kindness shown to you or kindness you have shown to others. What impact did these acts have?
2. Read Ephesians 4:32. If we are to treat each other with kindness, why is it important that we forgive one another?
3. One of the best illustrations of human kindness is found in Jesus' story of the Good Samaritan. What makes this such a great example of kindness? (Luke 10:25-37)
4. Do only great acts of kindness find favor with God? (Matthew 10:42)
5. What does Jesus ask of us if we are to be His followers? (Matthew 25:34-40)
6. What about our enemies or those who do evil? How should they be treated? (Romans 12:17-21)
7. There is a popular phrase which states: "Practice random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Would you change it in any way? How?
8. How do the hypocrites do their "acts of righteousness?" How does Christ say we should act? (Matthew 6:1-4)
9. What is one act of kindness that you will perform this week? Write down a description of the act of kindness and the person to whom you will show it.

Values Series Humility

Philippians 2:1-11

Lesson 9

1. How would you describe a humble person? Can you give an example of a humble person from your own experience?
2. How did Christ's life teach us to live with humility? How did He display humility in His relationships?
3. What does an authentic Christian life, lived in humility, look like? Read Philippians 2:1-11 and identify at least four ways we can live in humility.
4. Discuss why these behaviors do or do not demonstrate humility:
 - ___ being a doormat for others
 - ___ respecting other's opinions
 - ___ being bold and assertive
 - ___ showing kindness to those from all walks of life
 - ___ putting yourself down
 - ___ telling others of your righteous deeds
 - ___ accepting leadership positions
5. Read Proverbs 11:2; 13:10; 16:5. How can pride be a barrier to our spiritual growth and living by God's word?
6. Identify great leaders in the Bible. How did their lives show humility? Is there a relationship in their lives between obedience and humility?
7. Read James 3:13-18. Contrast "deeds done in humility that comes from wisdom" and those done with "envy and selfish ambition." Identify well-known people who have lived by each of these values and describe their impact on others.
8. How are you doing with your humility? Rating yourself in this area is very difficult, but give it a try:
 - ___ I'm humble and proud of it!
 - ___ I feel okay about this area . . . I think.
 - ___ I really need more humility.



Values Series

Expressing Thankfulness

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Lesson 10

1. List several things that you are thankful for.
2. According to Ephesians 5:20, how often are we to give thanks?
3. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. List three things that we are to do that will help us be overcomers.
4. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18, does it say to thank God "for everything" or "in everything?" What difference does this make?
5. What circumstances are you now going through which are difficult for you?
6. How can you or have you been expressing thanksgiving to God even during these difficulties?
7. Read Luke 17:11-19. How did it effect Jesus when nine of the men healed never returned to say, "thank you?"
8. What "thank you's" have gone unspoken to God in your life? What will you say or do to demonstrate your gratitude to Him?
9. What "thank you's" need to be expressed to other people who have been kind or helpful to you?
10. How will you express your gratitude to them this week?

Values Series

Forgiveness

Matthew 18:21-35

Lesson 11

1. In your own words, define forgiveness.
2. In what way does an unforgiving spirit hurt you more than it hurts anyone else?
3. Why did Jesus teach us to pray these words, "Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors"? (Matthew 6:12)
4. According to Matthew 18:21, how many times are we to forgive someone who has sinned against us?
5. Study the Parable of the two debtors in Matthew 18:22-35. What is the one central teaching that we can apply in our lives?
6. What are some excuses that you have heard for not forgiving someone?
7. Who is our great example of forgiveness? Read Ephesians 4:32 and Galatians 3:13.
8. Who is someone that you need to forgive with God's help? Write their name below and ask God to help you live out your forgiveness this week.