

*School of Kingdom Advancement*

*Lessons for Growth  
in Christ*

*A 52 Week Discipleship  
program for new believers,  
churches, and small groups  
wanting to go deeper in  
biblical foundations*

**ENGLISH VERSION - For Mozambique**

*Written By: Eric Weaver*



# Instructions for this book

## How to teach the lessons

1- Choose a leader for the group. The chosen leader needs to have good character and have the ability to lead discussion in a small group.

2- Follow the directions on the lesson. The directions are in bold writing. The most common directions will be Read, Teach, Discuss, Review, and Pray. Each lesson starts with asking the group if anyone has testimonies from the teaching or assignment from the previous lesson. Strongly encourage interaction and response. These are short lessons, so if there is no discussion among the group and all you do is read, it will only be a 5 minute class. Some lessons have "Discuss" sections. Make sure most people in your group give a response to the questions. Make sure that the lesson includes everyone. The leader needs to teach, guide, and encourage others to respond. Each lesson also ends with prayer. Pray together. The topic of prayer is given at the end of the lesson. Most lessons have an assignment. The assignment should be done on their own during the week. Give the assignment and hold people accountable to do it. Lives are not just transformed by hearing. Lives are changed when they take action on what they have learned.

3- All the scripture needed for each lesson is printed on the page, if you do not have a bible, you are still able to conduct the study. Everything you need is in this book.

**There are two options, a or b, for how to structure your classes. Choose what is best for your church.**

- The lessons are numbered 1-52. There are 52 weeks in a year. If you want to teach them all in one year with no breaks, then just follow the lesson number.
- If it is better for your church to do shorter studies, we have also divided all 52 lessons into four levels. Each level can be taught in 12-14 weeks. Complete level one. Take a break for some weeks, then continue with Level 2 until you have completed all 4 levels. We provide this option because some people might find it difficult to commit to a full year of lessons, but if they are separated into smaller sections with a break after each level, they might find it easier to commit.

4- You can run multiple discipleship classes simultaneously. For example, if all your members have already started the discipleship program but then there are new members or converts that join the church, choose a different day and someone to lead a new group and immediately restart while the original group continues. Do not wait for the first group to finish. It is very important to get new members and converts involved and receiving a good foundation in Christ quickly. Share the book among all the group leaders.

5- These lessons are designed to be used as a bible study and not as Sunday preaching. The pastor should continue to preach as normal on Sunday with his own material. These lessons provide the members of the church the opportunity to build friendships, learn to discuss biblical topics, and be held accountable to put action to what they learn.

*You are welcome to print other copies. Digital versions are available to download at [www.aygministries.org/resources](http://www.aygministries.org/resources)*

# Instructions for this book

**There are three main objectives for this book:**

**To train all current church members**

The lessons in this book were chosen specifically to help and strengthen all church members no matter how long they have been a Christian. These studies establish foundational doctrine and address many struggles and failings within individuals and the church. All current church members should go through this course.

**To teach new believers and establish them in a firm faith.**

Many new believers struggle to enter and remain in the church because they feel like an outsider, don't feel welcomed, or don't know how to start in their faith in Jesus. Use this book as a "new believers" bible study. When new believers are added to your church, immediately plan with them to start this study. This will build a necessary foundation from the very start of their walk with Christ.

**To plant new churches.**

After your evangelism team has gained new converts in a new zone, choose someone from your church to lead a church plant in that area. Send them with this book once a week to the new area. These lessons will help establish true faith in Jesus and correct doctrine within the new church. These teachings will also help establish people of good character who will eventually be able to lead the new church plant.

-

# Table of Contents

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Pg #</b>
1	<i>Creation and our Purpose</i>	1
2	<i>We need Jesus</i>	2
3	<i>How to receive salvation</i>	3
4	<i>Repentance</i>	4
5-7	<i>Grace</i>	5-7
8-11	<i>I am transformed</i>	8-11
12-13	<i>Holy Spirit</i>	12-13
14-16	<i>Baptism</i>	14-16
17-18	<i>Baptism in the Holy Spirit</i>	17-18
19	<i>The Church</i>	19
20	<i>Be saved from this Perverse generation</i>	20
21-24	<i>Prayer</i>	21-24
25-26	<i>Worship</i>	25-26
27-30	<i>Communion</i>	27-30
31-35	<i>Fear</i>	31-35
36-40	<i>Giving</i>	36-40
41-45	<i>Marriage</i>	41-45
46-50	<i>Leadership</i>	46-50
51	<i>Judgement and Jesus' Return</i>	51
52	<i>Love</i>	52

## Creation and our Purpose

**Discuss:** Why did God create people?

**Read:** Genesis 1:27 So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

**Teach:** God created people to be like Him. So when we know what God is like, we will understand why He created us and what He expects from us.

**Discuss:** What are some of the greatest characteristics of God? What is He like?

**Read:** 1 John 4:7-8 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God because God is love.

**Read:** 1 John 4:16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.

**Teach:** The greatest characteristic of God is love. He is love! He created us to be like him, so we were created to love Him and be loved by Him and to love others. This is our greatest purpose.

**Read:** *Matthew 22:36-40* "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

**Teach:** These commandments reveal our purpose and why God created us. If we do these two commandments, we will also please God in all other areas.

*1 Corinthians 13:3* If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

**Teach:** If we live our whole lives and neglect to enter into a relationship of love with God, we have missed the plan and purpose that God created us for.

**Discuss:** How can you grow in your love toward God?

**Prayer:** Everyone pray for a greater understanding of God's love, and ask Him to help you love Him and others more.

**Assignment:** Make time every day by yourself to pray and worship and talk to God.

## We Need Jesus

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies from last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** God created us for the purpose to love him and be in relationship with him.

**Teach:** Our purpose in life is to remain in the love of God and enter His kingdom.

**Discuss:** How do you think that we can remain in the love of God?

**Read:** John 15:9 Jesus said, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love, If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love."

**Teach:** We remain in the love of God by obeying the commands of God. When we obey God's commands we are holy just as he is holy. In 1 Peter 1:16 God says, "be holy, because I am holy."

**Teach:** There exist a large problem. Everyone has disobeyed God and because of this no one is holy. If you are not holy like God, then you can not remain in his love and enter his kingdom.

**Read:** Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 15:50 Now this I say, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; not does corruption inherit incorruption.

**Teach:** This verse is saying that all people have been corrupted by sinned and are not holy. Therefore, by our own power, we can not enter the kingdom of God or have eternal life.

**Teach:** Without God's help we cannot have our sins removed and forgiven. If our sins aren't forgiven we will be punished for all the ways that we have disobeyed God. The result will be that the sinner will go to hell forever. We need God's help.

**Read:** Revelation 20:15 If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

**Teach:** God made a solution. He sent the Son of God, Jesus, to the earth. Jesus was God but in the form of a man. Jesus grew up and experienced all the trials that humanity goes through. He understands our lives and weaknesses. Jesus lived without sin and at the end of his time on the earth he was crucified and died. His death was then the payment for our sins. Only someone that had no sin could pay the penalty for someone else's sin.

**Read:** John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Teach:** After Jesus had been dead for three days, God raised him to life again.

**Read:** Acts 2:24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

**Teach:** Jesus now has the authority to forgive your sins and make you holy so that you can come into relationship with God and have eternal life. Jesus makes us Holy! We need him.

**Pray:** As you pray thank God that he loves you so much that he sent Jesus to come and take our punishment and make us holy. He has saved us from death and Hell!

**Assignment:** Find at least one person this week and tell them how much God loves them.

## How to Receive Salvation

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** To remain in the love of God you must obey and be holy. Everyone has failed this and deserves punishment. God sent Jesus to take our punishment for us and take our sins away.

**Discuss:** How do you receive salvation?

**Read:** John 3:16-21 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

**Teach:** To be saved from the punishment of sin you must believe that only Jesus can pay your penalty for sin and save you. Receiving salvation is simple, you must believe in Jesus just as the scripture says above.

**Read:** Romans 10:9 If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

**Teach:** To believe and to have faith are the same. Faith in Jesus is the only thing that saves us. Read: Ephesians 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith.

**Teach:** When God sees that you have faith in what he did for you, he then gives you forgiveness and salvation through his gift of grace. Grace means to give something to someone when they don't deserve it. Jesus didn't have to die and take your punishment upon himself. He did this because he loves you all so much and doesn't want to lose you.

**Discuss:** Can you receive salvation just by being a member of a church?

**Answer:** No! The only door to salvation is by having faith in what Jesus did for you.

**Prayer:** As you pray, confirm and confess your faith in what Jesus did for you. Confess that you have sinned and need his forgiveness. Thank him for how much he loves you.

**Assignment:** Ask a family member or neighbor if they know how to receive salvation. If they don't answer well, tell them what you learned about being saved through faith in Jesus.

# Repentance

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** God loves you. He wants you to love him. Sin takes us away from God. We are saved from the punishment of sin through faith in Jesus' death and resurrection.

**Discuss:** What is repentance?

**Answer:** Repentance means being so sorry for something you did wrong that you change your actions. Many people think repentance is just to be sorry, but just to be sorry isn't full repentance. Repentance occurs when you turn away from your sinful actions. Repentance isn't just talk. It is action.

**Read:** These are words from John the Baptist. Matthew 3:2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

**Read:** Matthew 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

**Read:** Mark 6:12 The disciples went out and preached that people should repent.

**Teach:** John the Baptist, Jesus, and Jesus' disciples all focused on the message of repentance. Specifically, they taught that repentance is essential for your participation and entry into the kingdom of God.

**Teach:** As we learned in lesson 3, we receive salvation only by faith in Jesus. You cannot work for or pay for your own salvation. It is the work of Jesus.

**Read:** Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. You are not saved by works, so you have no reason to boast.

**Teach:** Repentance is the product of true faith. If you truly believe in what Jesus did for you, the actions of your life will change to support what you believe. If you say you believe in Him but you do not choose to change, this shows God and everyone else that you actually do not have faith. When you begin your life with Jesus, through salvation, you should have the desire to change your actions to those that please him.

**Read:** James 2:17 Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

**Read:** Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. 'then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

**Pray:** Look into your life. Repent and truly desire to change any area of your life that you know doesn't please God. Ask for His power to help you completely turn from sin so you can remain in Him.

**Assignment:** Make time every day this week to ask God to continue to show you areas of your life that need change and repentance. Be willing to change your ways. Listen for God.



## Grace: Gods Gift to Us

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** We are created for to know and love God, but our sin separates us from Him. Jesus paid that penalty for our sins by dying on the cross and we receive salvation when we believe in what Jesus did for us. As we believe we also repent. This means that we change the actions of our life to please God.

**Discuss:** What is grace?

**Teach:** Grace is when you receive something you don't deserve or didn't work for. An example is if your friend was put in jail for a crime they were guilty of but you paid their fine so that they could be released without staying in prison for their full punishment time. In this example, you are the one giving grace to your friend. They deserve to spend the full amount of time in jail for the crime, but you gave them grace by paying their penalty for them. It was their responsibility, but you helped them do what they could not do in their own power. Did they deserve it? No! But you helped them anyway. Did they work for their freedom? No! But you gave them freedom anyway.

**Teach:** This is a great example of what Jesus did for us. We were guilty of sinning against God. The punishment we deserve is to be separate from him and be in the prison of Hell forever. But Jesus came as a man to suffer and die in our place. He received our punishment so we didn't have to go to hell for eternity and be punished. He freed us from eternal death, hell, and the slavery to sin.

**Read:** Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. You are not saved by works, so you have no reason to boast.

**Teach:** You can not earn salvation. You can not earn forgiveness. You can not enter God's presence and know him intimately by your own works. You can not work for the gifts of God like they are a salary at a job. God will never be in debt to you. God is not obligated to give you anything. But because of grace,

**Teach:** Salvation is a gift, and the one receiving it is never the one who works to pay for it. The giver of the gift is the one who works for and pays for the gift. If the person who receives the gift must work for it, it is no longer a gift but a wage. You do not work for salvation like it is a wage that God must pay you. Jesus already worked for your salvation and paid for it with his blood. We need to place our faith in him and he will give us salvation as a gift for free.

**Read:** Romans 4:4-5 Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.

**Teach:** If you could work to earn your own salvation then you wouldn't need grace, and you wouldn't need Jesus. If people could gain salvation with their own actions then there was no reason for Jesus to pay your penalty for you.

**Group exercise:** Memorize scripture. The leader will read this verse many times for the people to hear, and then the leader will help the whole group say the verse together until everyone can repeat it clearly. Ephesians 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.

**Assignment:** Continue to recite this verse throughout the week. Write it down if you can.

**Prayer:** Take time to thank God deeply for the grace he has given you. Thank him for the eternal life he has given you for free. Thank him for taking your punishment so you don't have to be punished.

## Grace: The Fruit of Grace

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** We can not remove our own sin and save ourselves. We are saved by believing in Jesus and that he was punished and died on the cross so that we don't have to die and go to hell. We receive grace from God. We can not earn his grace, but it is given as a free gift.

**Group exercise:** Practice the memory verse from last week together. Ephesians 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.

**Discuss:** If a guilty prisoner was set free, what should he do with his freedom?

**Discuss:** Grace has set you free from sin and death. What should you be doing with your life because of the grace you have received?

**Read:** Romans 5:21-21 But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

**Teach:** If you were in prison for doing bad and someone paid for you to be released, how foolish would it be to return to your bad actions. Won't you find yourself back in the same prison again? This example of a prisoner teaches us a spiritual truth. We should never use the grace, by which Jesus freed us, to continue in the sin that bound us to begin with. Jesus didn't pay to save your soul just for you to use grace as an excuse to continue sinning.

**Read:** Romans 6:20-23 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Teach:** Grace sets us free from the control and power of sin. Grace empowers us to do what is right. Grace gives you the ability to do the good works that God created you to do.

**Read:** Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.

**Teach:** Your works can not get you grace. Only faith in Jesus can get you grace. But, when you get grace it empowers you to do the works that please God.

**Teach:** Grace produces fruit in your life. The fruit of grace is that you do good works. You sin less, you do more works unto God, and you walk in His character.

**Group Exercise:** Add more to the memory verse from last week. Repeat it over and over with the group until everyone can say it. Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. You are not saved by works, so you have no reason to boast.

**Assignment:** Continue repeating this memory verse through the week. Write it if you need to.

**Pray:** Ask God to help you use the power of his grace to break the power of sin in your life and also give you the power to do good works for him.

## Grace: Do not Abuse Grace

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** We can not remove our own sin and save ourselves. We are saved by believing in Jesus and that he was punished and died on the cross so that we don't have to die and go to hell. We receive grace from God. We can not earn his grace, but it is given as a free gift. Grace is given so that we can know God, do good works and walk in his character.

**Discuss:** Do you think that after you receive God's grace it remains with you no matter what you do, or can you lose the grace of God in your life? Explain your answer.

**Teach:** There are two main ways to lose God's saving grace in your life.

**Teach:** Reason #1. You will fall from God's grace if you begin to believe that your actions save you and not the sacrifice of Jesus. Remember, He did all the work for you to be saved. There is no way for you to work for your own salvation. We need to totally rely on the forgiveness of Jesus and have faith in him.

**Read:** Galatians 2:21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing.

**Read:** Galatians 3:3 Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?

**Teach:** In the two scriptures above, we see the apostle Paul rebuking one of the churches because they were no longer recognizing and relying on the grace of God to save them, but they began to trust in their own acts of righteousness to keep them connected to God. They thought that if they did enough good things, obeyed all the laws of Moses, and followed the traditions that everyone else was doing in church, then they would please God.

**Teach:** Reason #2. You will fall from God's grace if you abuse God's grace. Grace is like a tool. It must be used the way God intended it or it doesn't work. Grace was given to bring us close to God. It was not given so we could remain far away from God and keep sinning.

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

**Teach:** Jude shows that if we use grace as an excuse to sin, then we deny Jesus with our actions.

**Read:** Matthew 10:32-33 Jesus said. "Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny them before my Father in heaven."

**Teach:** If we choose to remain in a lifestyle of sin, we will be denying Christ with our actions. If our lifestyle shows that we are rejecting Christ then we are abusing God's free gift of grace, and Matthew records Jesus saying that if we deny him, we will be denied before God the Father. Do not abuse the precious gift of grace that Jesus gave you.

**Assignment:** Grace produces Godly action. Ask God to help you, through his grace, to help a friend or a neighbor. Maybe they need food, prayer, help to the hospital, a repair on their house, or help in the field.

**Pray:** Confess any continual sin and ask God to give you his grace to overcome it. Ask forgiveness and repent for any way you have abused grace or tried to earn favor with God in your own strength.

I am Transformed

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** God created us to be loving and holy just like him. Our sin keeps us from relationship with God and makes us unholy. Jesus paid for our sins so that we could be holy like him and come into a relationship of friendship and love with God forever. He has given us grace so that we can have eternal life in Him.

**Read:** John 3:1-3 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him." Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."

**Teach:** Nicodemus really wanted to know God and about his kingdom, but Jesus began to teach him that to know him and enter his kingdom you must be transformed. He was teaching Nicodemus that a person can not enter eternal life in our physical sinful nature. We must be born again. This new birth is not a physical birth, but it is a spiritual birth.

**Read:** Ephesians 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins

**Teach:** The people that this scripture was talking about were obviously not dead physically. It is saying that because they were sinners they were dead spiritually and had no eternal life. They needed their spirits to be born and come alive. This is what Jesus was explaining to Nicodemus. We all need our dead spirit to be born of God and come to life. This new life comes as we place our faith in Jesus Christ.

**Read:** 1 John 5:11-12 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

**Read:** Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins

**Teach:** When our sin is removed by the grace that Jesus gave us, we are born again. Before we put our faith in Jesus Christ our spirit is dead because of sin and we are away from God. When we place our faith in Jesus for our salvation, we come to life and God makes us into a new creation.

**Read:** Colossians 1:21-23 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel.

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

**Discuss:** If God has forgiven your sins how does he see you? Now that you are a Christian, what has changed?

**Group Exercise:** Memorize scripture. The leader will read this verse many times for the people to hear, then the leader will help the whole group say the verse together until everyone can repeat it clearly. 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

**Assignment:** Find at least one person this week and tell them about God's love for them and about the salvation that Jesus gives.

**Pray:** Divide into groups of two. Each person will ask the other what they can pray for them about. Do not start praying for the person until you hear from them what they need prayer for. Pray for each other.

## I am Transformed- Ambassadors

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** When our sin is removed by the grace Jesus gave us, we are born again. Before we put our faith in Jesus Christ our spirit is dead because of sin and we are away from God. When we believe in Jesus for our salvation, we come to life and God makes us a new creation.

**Teach:** Now that we have been born again in the spirit and we are a new creation in God's kingdom, we need to understand our new identity.

**Discuss:** You are a new creation now. What does this mean? What kind of creation are you? What are you supposed to do? Do you keep living like before or does God expect you to walk differently now that you are a new creation?

**Read:** Colossians 1:22-23 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel.

**Teach:** This scripture shows us that through our faith in Jesus, all our faults have been taken away and God has made us holy. So, as a new creation, you are now holy! But, we have a responsibility not just to continue walking in our old way of life. We must continue to grow in faith. We must remain firm in what we believe and not return to the ways of the world.

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Teach:** From this scripture, we learn that we are now ambassadors. An ambassador is a person who is representing their home country in another country that they have been sent to. They represent their home country's culture, laws, ideas, power, military, people, and leadership. Because we are born again into the Kingdom of God, our job is to be his ambassadors and to represent him and his kingdom in the world. This world is no longer our home. We are now in this world to represent our true king, who is God, and our true home, which is the kingdom of God.

**Read:** Ephesians 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household,

**Teach:** Our actions should now be in obedience to God. As we are obedient, our actions will show who he is to the world and that we are his children. As ambassadors of Christ, we must follow his example in speech, actions, faith, power, and relationship with the Father.

**Prayer:** Pray that you will be God's ambassador on the earth and represent him well through the new life that he has given you.

**Assignment:** Make time during the week to talk to the people in your house about some things you are learning. Lead them in a prayer.

## I am Transformed- Child of God

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** We are new creations because we have been born again in the spirit. Now that we are new, we are holy and right with God. We are now responsible to represent him to the world as his ambassadors.

**Read:** John 1:12-13 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

**Teach:** You have been born again by the Spirit of God. You are now part of his family. You are a child of God.

**Read:** Colossians 1:12 and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

**Teach:** As a child of God, you have an inheritance you can receive from your Father. This inheritance is available for you to receive and participate in right now. You do not have to wait until you die to experience the kingdom of heaven.

**Discuss:** What type of things exist in the kingdom of God that you can have and participate in right now?

**Teach:** we have access to the fullness of the kingdom of God. His nature is now our nature. We can now walk in the character and power of God. We can live with his thoughts and desires. We can perform miracles. We can treat other people in the way God would treat them. The voice of God can direct us. We can cast out demons and have victory over the devil. We can preach the Word of God. We even have access to the angels of heaven and their help with ministry on the earth.

**Read:** Ephesians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

**Teach:** If it exists in the kingdom of God, through faith, it can be manifested through you to the glory of God. Jesus has blessed you with every spiritual blessing that exists in the heavenly realms. Raise in faith and begin walking in the inheritance God has given you. You are his child!

**Read:** 1 John 4:17 This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world, we are like Jesus.

**Teach:** This verse shows us that we can expect to be able to do things just like Jesus. Let your faith rise!

**Prayer:** Ask God to help increase your faith and trust in him. Ask him to help you walk more in Jesus's attitude and power. Pray that God will reveal to you where your faith is weak.

**Assignment:** Find a person who is sick or in pain and pray for them. Expect God to heal them. Follow up with them to see if God did the miracle.

## I am Transformed - Don't look Back

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** We are new creations. We have been born again. We are now Holy. We are children of God and because of this we have an inheritance from God. We have access to all the blessings of God that exist in heavenly places.

**Read:** Luke 9:62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

**Teach:** There are many Christians that have accepted Jesus as their savior, but they continue to look back at their past and return to some of the thoughts, sins, or actions of the past. Remember our past lessons. God transformed you and made you new in holiness and righteousness. You are his child. The old person that you were is gone. If you continue to look back and not fully accept the new person that God has created you to be then you will stumble and fall away just like the man that is trying to plow a field but keeps looking back to where he was rather than where he is going.

**Read:** Philippians 3:12-14 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

**Discuss:** What are some of the things that are from a person's past that, if they don't leave them, will make it hard for them to serve the Lord?

**Teach:** There are many things from our past that can hinder us like: temptation to return to past sin, ungodly friendship, or even guilt and regret from things that happened in the past that make you feel unworthy to walk with God. You must trust the transformation that God did in you. The old you is gone, and God made you new when you accepted Jesus as Savior. Your past is gone, and your guilt is gone. You are worthy because of the blood of Jesus. Do not run back to what God has saved you from.

**Read:** Hebrews 12:1-2 let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

**Teach:** Trust and accept the truth of God. We must trust that the eternal reward of serving God is better than the temporal reward of returning to sin or punishing ourselves with needless guilt. Stop calling yourself a sinner. That was the old person before Christ made you new. Now you are a clean, guilt free, child of God that can represent him and walk in his power. Don't try to resurrect the old you!

**Discuss:** What is something from your past that continues to cause you trouble in your walk with God?

**Prayer:** Repent of the things that you haven't given God from your past and ask him to give you revelation and strength to walk with new life as a child of God.

**Assignment:** Choose a day to fast and pray. During this fast, seek God for greater intimacy with him and that you would understand all the ways Christ has transformed you and made you new.

## Holy Spirit

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** When we place our faith in Jesus, God transforms us into a new creation, and we are spiritually born into his kingdom. We are no longer sinners, and we should not let past experiences or failures keep us from walking as a new creation.

**Discuss:** Who is the Holy Spirit?

**Teach:** There is only one God, but he expresses himself in three ways: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. God the Father is the Almighty, Jehovah God. Jesus is the Son of God. He is God who came in the flesh. And the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God that fills and empowers God's people.

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Teach:** This scripture reveals all three expressions of God and how each minister to us. We also see that the Holy Spirit's ministry is to fellowship with the believers.

**Teach:** The Holy Spirit is mentioned from the first part of the Bible until the last. But it was not until Jesus died and was resurrected that the Holy Spirit was sent to individual believers to fill them and empower them. When we have faith in Jesus, and through his sacrifice we are made holy, then the Holy Spirit can come into us. The Bible tells us that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. God must dwell in a holy place. It is only through Jesus taking our sins away that we can be holy and receive the Holy Spirit to live in us and be one with us.

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.

**Discuss:** What does the Holy Spirit do?

**Teach:** The Holy Spirit lives in us to help, counsel, teach, advocate, convict, empower, intercede, produce godly fruit, empower us to witness, and speak through us.

**Read:** John 14:26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

**Read:** Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

**Read:** Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

**Prayer:** Ask Father God to fill you with the Holy Spirit.

**Assignment:** Ask another Christian that is not part of your discipleship group about their relationship with the Holy Spirit. Do they know who he is and what he does? Have they been filled with his power.



## Holy Spirit - Receive

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** Now that the sacrifice of Jesus has made us into a new creation that is holy and clean, we can receive the Holy Spirit into our lives. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God we can continually fellowship with.

**Discuss:** How do you receive the Holy Spirit?

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

**Teach:** People receive the Holy Spirit to live in them when they believe in Jesus for their salvation. His presence in your life is the proof that you are saved and the guarantee that you will receive your inheritance from God and eternal life. He makes his home inside the believer.

**Teach:** Once the Holy Spirit of God lives in you, you now have the ability to be led by him in your thoughts and actions. This is called walking in the Spirit. We could only walk in the flesh before we receive salvation and when the Holy Spirit was not in us. The ways and desires of the flesh are always against the ways of the Spirit.

**Read:** Galatians 5:16-17 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. The flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh.

**Teach:** As you submit your life to the Spirit of God, you will begin to manifest the character of God through your life. You will be able to act, think, and speak like him. He will transform how you walk through life so that your life reflects him.

**Discuss:** If you have the Spirit of God in your life, how should your life's actions be different than before you were saved?

**Read:** Galatians 5:22-25 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things, there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

**Teach:** We need to make a deliberate decision each day to submit to the Spirit of God in us and allow his character, desire, and fruit to be shown through our lives.

**Pray:** Open your heart and pray that you would have a greater awareness of the Holy Spirit and that he would help you submit to him in all circumstances so that your life will give glory and testimony to God.

**Assignment:** Spend the first 15 to 30 minutes each day in prayer. Focus on the presence and voice of the Holy Spirit. Remember, if you believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit is in you.

# Baptism

## Part 1

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** Now that the sacrifice of Jesus has made us into a new creation that is holy and clean, we can receive the Holy Spirit into our lives. The Holy Spirit comes into a person when they believe in Jesus.

**Discuss:** Why is baptism so important in a believer's life?

**Teach:** The first thing to understand about baptism is that the Bible commands all believers to be baptized. There is significance, power, and transformation that occurs through baptism. We must be baptized.

**Read:** Matt. 28:18-19 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 the Holy Spirit."

**Read:** Mark 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

**Teach:** Baptism was first introduced by John the Baptist. John the Baptist's ministry started a few years before Jesus began ministering. John's purpose was to prepare the people's hearts to receive all that Jesus would bring. The main way that John accomplished this was to baptize people. This baptism was to show the decision of the person to repentance and be separated from sin. This spiritually powerful action prepares the person's heart to receive the Kingdom of God.

**Read:** Matt. 3:1-2 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

**Read:** Matt. 3:6 Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. Read: Matt. 3:11 "I baptize you with water for repentance."

**Teach:** Later, after Jesus had ascended back into Heaven, Peter preached the first gospel message. After he spoke, the people were so convicted by his sermon that they began to ask him what they needed to do. He responded that they needed to repent and be baptized.

**Read:** Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

**Teach:** If a believer wants to have fellowship with the Spirit of God and interact with all that is available within the Kingdom of Heaven, they must be obedient to repent and be baptized. Through these actions, we experience a powerful union with God. The way to access the Kingdom of Heaven is always through repentance, and baptism is a necessary part of repentance.

**Pray:** Pray that God would reveal to you the power and importance of baptism in a deeper way so that you can walk in the spiritual transformation it brings.

**Assignment:** Pray for someone you know who is going through a difficult time. Pray for them every day. One of the days, go and visit them or call them. Encourage them and pray for them during your visit.

# Baptism

## Part 2

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** Baptism is a command of the Bible for all believers. Through baptism we experience a union with God and a transformation through this act of repentance that is the doorway into the Kingdom of heaven and the fullness of what Jesus paid for us to walk in.

**Read:** Romans 6:1-10 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

**Teach:** Many people teach that baptism is just a public confession of faith. But through scripture we can see that its importance and power is much more than just a ritual or confession. As shown in Romans 6, baptism is the spiritual union between man and Christ. We are joined to his action of death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism is the choice that the believer makes to completely separate themselves from their old sinful life and receive a new transformed life.

**Read:** Matthew 16:24-25 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it."

**Teach:** When you are baptized and go under the water, you are putting your old life to death just as Jesus died. As you are buried under the water, just as Jesus was buried in the earth, the sinful person that you were stays in the tomb. As you are raised out of the water, just as Jesus was raised from the dead, you are resurrected as a new spiritual creation. Sin should no longer control you.

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

**Teach:** Baptism is not just a ritual or public testimony. It is a spiritual transformation and union with Jesus.

**Discuss:** Have you been baptized? If you have been baptized, did you understand the transformation and union that happened? Did it bring transformation to your life, or did you do it as a ritual?

**Pray:** Pray for God to open your heart to the revelation of the full power of baptism.

**Assignment:** During the week, ask three people, that you know have been baptized, what their experience was like and how they understand baptism. Do you believe that it was a true experience for them or was it just a religious ritual?

## Baptism - Answering Questions

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** Baptism is a command of the Bible for all believers. Through baptism we experience a union with God and a transformation through this act of repentance that is the doorway into the Kingdom of heaven and the fullness of what Jesus paid for us to walk in.

**Discuss:** Who has the authority to baptize a new believer?

**Teach:** The person who baptizes the other does not need to be a leader of the church or the district. Any mature believer who has a biblical understanding of baptism and can teach the new believer the significance of baptism can baptize another person. There is nowhere in the Bible that says that a specific leader must baptize new believers.

**Read:** Matthew 28:19 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.

**Teach:** In this scripture, Jesus is commanding all of his followers to disciple and baptize others. He didn't just take his top leaders aside and tell them that only the leaders can baptize others.

**Discuss:** When should a new believer be baptized?

**Read:** Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**Teach:** Peter said these words to a crowd of people who wanted to receive salvation. He did not say to them to just simply raise a hand or pray a prayer for salvation. Instead, he told them to repent and be baptized. This shows that baptism should be done immediately after a person is converted. It is a necessary step in the transformation and strengthening of the convert. Every story of baptism in the Bible shows us that the new convert was baptized immediately after salvation. Do not wait until Easter. It is not good to only have baptisms one time a year when you have new converts. As soon as they are saved, teach them about the importance of baptism, and baptize them.

**Discuss:** Where should you baptize a person?

**Teach:** There is no command about where to baptize a person. Do not add to scripture what is not in scripture. Whatever water is sufficient to fully submerge a person will be fine. This can happen in a lake, river, or tank. The act of baptism is what is important. It is not important what type of water you use.

**Discuss:** How old should a person be when they are baptized?

**Teach:** After you teach a person, if the person understands salvation and baptism in a way that they can

repeat it back to you, then they can be baptized. Understanding is more important than age.

**Pray:** Divide in groups of two. Each person can share a prayer request. Pray one for the other.

**Assignment:** If you have not been baptized, make a plan within your group to be baptized this week.

Week 11

# Baptism - In the Holy Spirit

Part 1

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** Now that the sacrifice of Jesus has made us into a new creation that is holy and clean, we can receive the Holy Spirit into our lives. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God that we can continually have fellowship with.

**Discuss:** What is the difference between receiving the Holy Spirit when you believe in Jesus, and when a believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit?

**Teach:** There are two distinct initial interactions that a believer experiences with the Holy Spirit. The first interaction is when the believer receives the Holy Spirit into their life and body at the moment of salvation. The second interaction that we can experience is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Holy Spirit does not automatically occur the moment that someone is saved. It comes with seeking. We will see in scripture that these two interactions with the Holy Spirit are distinct from one another.

**Read:** John 20:22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

**Teach:** At the time that Jesus breathed on the disciples in this scripture he had just risen from the dead, but he had not yet ascended back to heaven. The disciples were not baptized by the Holy Spirit until the day of Pentecost which occurred ten days after Jesus ascended back into heaven to stay with the Father.

**Read:** Acts 1:4-5 On one occasion, while Jesus was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

**Teach:** These two distinct interactions that a believer has with the Holy Spirit are powerful and necessary for a healthy, and effective life. We have already discussed many of the benefits of receiving the Holy Spirit in lesson 13. It is also important to know the benefits and transformation that come to a believer when they are baptized in the Holy Spirit.

**Read:** Jesus says in Acts 1:8 "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

**Teach:** In this scripture, we learn two main benefits of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. The first is that the believer will be filled with the power of God. The second is that, with this power, the believer can be an effective witness throughout the world. The power of God that comes from the Holy Spirit is the physical manifestation of signs, wonders, and miracles, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit that Jesus said should be the fruit of all believers. Through the Holy Spirit, God's power is also manifested as the boldness and inspiration to preach the word of God.

**Pray:** Pray that, as a church, you all would begin to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit. Tell God you want all he has available for you and not just a small portion.

**Assignment:** Pray each day that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to baptize you just like the disciples prayed and waited for the Holy Spirit to come.

# Baptism - In the Holy Spirit

## Part 2

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** The Holy Spirit comes to live in us when we receive salvation. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separate experience where we are filled with the power of God and boldness to spread the gospel.

**Discuss:** How do you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

**Teach:** Just like any other blessing from God, we are baptized in the Holy Spirit by asking God in faith.

**Read:** Luke 13:11-13 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

**Read:** John 14:12-14 "I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have done, and they will do even greater things, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

**Teach:** Through these scriptures, Jesus teaches that God is a good Father and will give you the good gift of the Holy Spirit if you ask. We also learn that God wants to use us to do powerful things to bring him glory and if you ask anything in Jesus' name he will do it. If you want to be baptized in the Holy Spirit so that your life may glorify God through his power at work in you, He will honor your request.

**Discuss:** How do you know when you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit?

**Teach:** From scripture and the testimonies of Christians today, we find that when a person is baptized in the Holy Spirit, they experience a powerful physical manifestation. Many times, they will begin to speak in tongues as the Spirit empowers them. Sometimes a person will be filled with joy and laughter, or even fall to the ground. Others may feel heat or electricity flowing through their bodies, and sometimes, people shake under the power of God. In that moment, people may also prophesy or be used in other gifts of the Spirit. Each person's encounter with God may differ.

**Read:** Acts 2:2-4 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

**Read:** Acts 19:6 When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

**Teach:** The baptism of the Holy Spirit is always given to a believer to empower and equip them to live in right standing with God and spread the gospel. Do not receive this baptism and do nothing with it.

**Pray:** Ask God to baptize you in the Holy Spirit. If someone in your group has already received this baptism, then have them lay their hands on you and pray for you to receive also. If you don't receive right away, do not be discouraged. Keep seeking!

**Assignment:** If you were not baptized in the Holy Spirit today, spend time praying daily to receive. If you did receive it, pray every day for an increase.

# The Church

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** The Holy Spirit comes to live in us when we receive salvation. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separate experience where we are filled with the power of God and boldness to spread the gospel.

**Discuss:** How do you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

**Teach:** Just like any other blessing from God, we are baptized in the Holy Spirit by asking God in faith.

**Read:** Luke 13:11-13 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

**Read:** John 14:12-14 "I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have done, and they will do even greater things, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

**Teach:** Through these scriptures, Jesus teaches that God is a good Father and will give you the good gift of the Holy Spirit if you ask. We also learn that God wants to use us to do powerful things to bring him glory and if you ask anything in Jesus' name he will do it. If you want to be baptized in the Holy Spirit so that your life may glorify God through his power at work in you, He will honor your request.

**Discuss:** How do you know when you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit?

**Teach:** From scripture and the testimonies of Christians today, we find that when a person is baptized in the Holy Spirit, they experience a powerful physical manifestation. Many times, they will begin to speak in tongues as the Spirit empowers them. Sometimes a person will be filled with joy and laughter, or even fall to the ground. Others may feel heat or electricity flowing through their bodies, and sometimes, people shake under the power of God. In that moment, people may also prophesy or be used in other gifts of the Spirit. Each person's encounter with God may differ.

**Read:** Acts 2:2-4 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

**Read:** Acts 19:6 When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

**Teach:** The baptism of the Holy Spirit is always given to a believer to empower and equip them to live in right standing with God and spread the gospel. Do not receive this baptism and do nothing with it.

**Pray:** Ask God to baptize you in the Holy Spirit. If someone in your group has already received this baptism, then have them lay their hands on you and pray for you to receive also. If you don't receive right away, do not be discouraged. Keep seeking!

**Assignment:** If you were not baptized in the Holy Spirit today, spend time praying daily to receive. If you did receive it, pray every day for an increase.

## Be Saved From This Perverse Generation

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** In the last lesson, we learned what the church is and why it is important to be a part of the body of Christ and fellowship with others.

**Discuss:** Why is it important to change our actions after we are saved?

**Read:** Acts 2:38-40 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord will call." With many other words, he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."

**Teach:** This verse has been the foundation of all our previous lessons. Peter teaches this crowd of new believers four truths to be saved and live as powerful children of God. #1. Repent. #2 Be baptized. #3 Receive the Holy Spirit. #4 Be saved from this perverse generation. Let's focus on #4 today.

**Teach:** When Peter tells the people to be saved from this perverse generation, he is telling them that they need to stop participating in the sinful practices of humanity. To love and serve God we must change our actions to those that please him and bring life, and we need to reject all the actions of humanity that dishonor God and bring death. In John 14:15 Jesus says: "If you love Me, keep My commandments.

**Teach:** Being a disciple of Christ requires that we give up our old sinful habits and walk in purity.

**Read:** Luke 9:23-25 Then Jesus said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose their soul?"

**Teach:** Jesus is talking about two different kinds of life, which are: the temporal sinful life of the flesh and the eternal righteous life of the Spirit. He is saying that if you are not willing to give up your temporal sinful life, you will lose it, and you will lose eternal life also. You will lose everything. But, if you are willing to give up your temporal sinful life to follow him, Jesus will give you the eternal righteous life.

**Read:** Galatians 5:19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

**Teach:** We must separate ourselves from the sinful perverted ways of the world and walk like Christ.

**Confess:** Confess areas of your life that you know you need to change to honor God more.

**Pray:** Repent of these wrongs that you have continued in, then pray for each other that each person would have God's grace and strength to get free from sinful relationships, lifestyles, or situations.



## Prayer - What is Prayer?

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** In the previous lessons we learned that as we are transformed by the Spirit of God through repentance, baptism, and being filled with the Holy Spirit, we also have the responsibility to separate ourselves from the worldly way a living and live a life pleasing to God.

**Discuss:** What is your definition of prayer?

**Teach:** The definition of prayer from the dictionary is: to speak to God either privately or publicly in order to express love, admiration, or thanks or in order to ask for something.

**Teach:** The simplest definition of prayer is: Our communication with God.

**Teach:** Because God desires continuous relation with us, this requires communication. You can not maintain a good relationship with anyone without continuous communication. We even see Jesus showing this example when he was ministering on the earth. He would pray to God the Father in public and in private. On many occasions Jesus would leave everyone and pray.

**Read:** Mark 1:35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

**Teach:** In the book of Matthew, Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray. This teaching was intended to help the disciples know what types of things to talk to God about. This prayer example wasn't meant to just be recited over and over. Let's look at this prayer from Jesus.

**Read:** Matthew 6:9-13 Jesus said, "This is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, holy is your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

**Teach:** This prayer shows that even a simple short prayer can have many parts. #1: This prayer starts with praise and adoration for who God is. #2 Next there is a declaration that he wants God to manifest his will and power in the earth and through humanity just like it exists in heaven. #3 He asks for life's necessities like bread. These necessities can be physical or spiritual because the bible refers to bread as being both what we eat in the natural and the word of God that we need to feed our spirits with. #4 Repentance and forgiving others should also always be a part of prayer. This continually aligns us with the grace of God, closes the door of opportunity for the devil, and keeps your relationships with others healthy. #5 The last part of this prayer shows the importance of asking God to help keep us pure from temptation, the devil, and all the things of sin that come to destroy our lives. He is the only one with the strength and power to deliver us from the ways of life that destroy us.

**Teach:** When you pray, expand each part of this prayer and make requests and thanksgiving to God that are specific to your life depending on what you are going through. Use your own words and talk to God as you would a person that you love deeply. He is always ready to hear you.

**Pray:** Right now, everyone find a place to pray alone for 15 minutes.

**Assignment:** Make sure that you pray at least 30 minutes per day every day this week.

## Prayer - Faith

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** In the last lesson we learned that prayer is the way that we communicate with God. We use prayer to give praise, thanks, love, and requests to the Lord.

**Discuss:** What do you think are some of the most important components of prayer?

**Teach:** Three very important components of prayer are: #1 Faith, #2 Motive, #3 Forgiveness toward others. You will learn about the first two now, and in later lessons you will learn about forgiveness.

**Teach:** Prayer without faith does not receive God's attention. Romans 10 tells us that to receive salvation we must confess with our mouth and believe in our heart all that Jesus did for us. Confession is like a prayer, and belief is our faith. Everything that God has for us is accessed when we speak and believe. A simple empty prayer isn't enough. Prayer must be backed with faith.

**Read:** James 1:6-8 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

**Read:** Luke 17:6 He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you.

**Teach:** You can see that if you do not have firm belief in what you are saying or asking in prayer you will not see a response from God. Faith pleases God greatly. When we put our full faith and trust in God to move upon a situation, he hears us.

**Read:** Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

**Read:** John 15:7-8 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

**Teach:** Prayer is an expression of our love and relationship with God. As we live our lives to know him and love him, we begin to know his words and his will. This helps us to trust him and have greater faith. Then we are able to pray prayers of faith that produce fruit.

**Discuss:** What did you learn from this lesson? Have you struggled with doubt when you pray? What can a person do to build more faith?

**Pray:** Ask forgiveness for any areas of doubt, and then pray that God would help build your faith.

**Assignment:** Each night this week before bed, pray with your family about the necessities of your life.

## Prayer - Motives

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** Prayer is the way that people communicate with God. There are three main components that make prayer effective which are: faith, motives, and forgiveness.

**Teach:** Motives can be defined as the reason that we do something.

**Discuss:** What are some good motives (or reasons) for prayer? What are some bad motives for prayer?

**Teach:** Your motive for praying is important. God knows the intention of our hearts. When your motive is not in line with God's heart, he cannot respond or act upon our request.

**Read:** Matthew 6:5-8 Jesus said, "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

**Teach:** Be careful of hypocrisy in your prayers. This happens when someone's motivation to pray is to impress others by sounding really spiritual. They pray only to be heard by others so that people can praise them. With this motive, you will receive no reward from God because your heart is full of pride.

**Teach:** Jesus also talks about praying in private with the door closed. Does he mean that it is wrong to pray in public or pray with the door open? No! His point is that your prayer life should first be built just between you and God. Once you have established prayer with pure motives and intimacy with God, then even the prayers that you make in public will be effective. If you only pray at church or in public to make others think that you have a strong relationship with God when you never even talk to him when you are alone, your relationship with God is fake. God will not answer.

**Teach:** The last thing that we learn from this scripture is that you can speak straight to the point with God and you don't have to repeat yourself over and over like people from other religions or even the witchdoctors. Don't say the same thing again and again just to impress people with your noise, or because you think God will listen more because of your continued noise and emotion. More words and noise do not equal more faith. It is not noise that please God, it is faith.

**Read:** James 4:2-3 You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

**Teach:** This scripture reveals that God will only respond to prayers that are in line with his desires and character. If your motive for praying is just to gain things in your life to please your flesh but do not benefit you or others spiritually in a way that draws you closer to God and glorifies him, you will not receive what you ask for. We need to pray from a place of unity with God and not from selfishness.

**Pray:** Ask God to show you any area that you have had wrong motives when you pray. Repent and ask God to restore to you a pure heart so that you can communicate effectively with God.

**Assignment:** Separate one whole day this week to go to the bush by yourself to pray and seek God.

## Prayer - Forgiveness

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** Prayer is the way that people communicate with God. There are three main components that make prayer effective which are: faith, motives, and forgiveness.

**Teach:** Motives can be defined as the reason that we do something.

**Discuss:** What are some good motives (or reasons) for prayer? What are some bad motives for prayer?

**Teach:** Your motive for praying is important. God knows the intention of our hearts. When your motive is not in line with God's heart, he cannot respond or act upon our request.

**Read:** Matthew 6:5-8 Jesus said, "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

**Teach:** Be careful of hypocrisy in your prayers. This happens when someone's motivation to pray is to impress others by sounding really spiritual. They pray only to be heard by others so that people can praise them. With this motive, you will receive no reward from God because your heart is full of pride.

**Teach:** Jesus also talks about praying in private with the door closed. Does he mean that it is wrong to pray in public or pray with the door open? No! His point is that your prayer life should first be built just between you and God. Once you have established prayer with pure motives and intimacy with God, then even the prayers that you make in public will be effective. If you only pray at church or in public to make others think that you have a strong relationship with God when you never even talk to him when you are alone, your relationship with God is fake. God will not answer.

**Teach:** The last thing that we learn from this scripture is that you can speak straight to the point with God and you don't have to repeat yourself over and over like people from other religions or even the witchdoctors. Don't say the same thing again and again just to impress people with your noise, or because you think God will listen more because of your continued noise and emotion. More words and noise do not equal more faith. It is not noise that please God, it is faith.

**Read:** James 4:2-3 You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

**Teach:** This scripture reveals that God will only respond to prayers that are in line with his desires and character. If your motive for praying is just to gain things in your life to please your flesh but do not benefit you or others spiritually in a way that draws you closer to God and glorifies him, you will not receive what you ask for. We need to pray from a place of unity with God and not from selfishness.

**Pray:** Ask God to show you any area that you have had wrong motives when you pray. Repent and ask God to restore to you a pure heart so that you can communicate effectively with God.

**Assignment:** Separate one whole day this week to go to the bush by yourself to pray and seek God.

## Worship - Worship in Spirit

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** Prayer is the way that people communicate with God. There are three main components that make prayer effective, which are: faith, motives, and forgiveness.

**Discuss:** How would you explain worship?

**Teach:** The definition of worship is: the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for God.

**Teach:** To understand what God desires from our worship, we will read a story about Jesus talking to a woman. Jesus was a Jew and the woman was a Samaritan. Jews and Samaritans were not friends and they had different ideas about how to worship God. The Samaritan woman could tell when she talked to Jesus that he was a powerful man of God, so she decided to ask him where was better to worship, in the temple in Jerusalem or on the mountain of the Samaritans. His answer helps us all to know what true worship is.

**Read:** John 4:21-24 "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

**Discuss:** What do you think it means to worship God in Spirit?

**Teach:** In the context of the story, the best meaning of worshipping in Spirit, is that it does not matter the location where you worship God. Jesus was showing the woman that worshipping God isn't only about going to a temple or a church to meet with God. God is looking for people who will worship him in any place, at any time.

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 6:19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?

**Teach:** This scripture shows us that people that believe in Jesus are the temple of God. God dwells in people, not just in buildings. Because of this union that we have with God, we should interact with him everyday and in whatever place we are. We should not just wait until a church service to worship God and pray. As we worship in Spirit, we will find that our desire is to talk to God and express our love to him all the time and in every place.

**Teach:** By dying on the cross and raising from the dead, Jesus has paid the price to forgive and remove your sin. When your sin is removed, you become holy in God's eyes and the Holy Spirit comes to live in you. You are the Church! Everywhere you go you should be in communion with God. This is what it means to worship in Spirit.

**Pray:** Ask God to help you be more aware of him every day and not just when you go to church.

**Assignment:** Make time every day, by yourself, to sing and pray and enjoy fellowship with God.

## Worship - Worship in Truth

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** The type of worship that God desires is worship that is in Spirit and in truth. Worship in the Spirit means that we are continually in union with God, and we should worship him in any place at any time.

**Teach:** We will read the same scripture from last week and study the second aspect of worshipping God.

**Read:** John 4:21-24 "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

**Discuss:** How does a person worship in truth?

**Teach:** To understand what worshipping in truth means you must first understand that worship is not just singing, dancing, or playing an instrument. True worship originates from a much deeper place than what is expressed outwardly. Worship must come from your deepest beliefs, pure motives, and love for God. If your worship is not founded upon these things you will not connect with God, even though to everyone else around, you will look as if you are very spiritual. Just as you have already learned about prayer, you must have pure motive. For God to receive your worship, you must also have pure motive. We should worship God because we love him, not just to impress other people.

**Read:** Romans 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

**Teach:** This scripture shows that to have true and proper worship we need to offer our whole body to God. This means that all the actions of our life to be done to please God. Worship isn't just music that we make toward God, it is the actions of our life. How do you talk? Are you honest? Do you steal? Do you work hard? Do you help others? How do you treat people? How do you conduct every action of your life? If you are living to please God and obey him in your actions, then everything you do becomes true worship to God.

**Read:** Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

**Teach:** If you only worship God at church with your song and dance but you do not honor him with your actions every day, then the songs you sing will mean nothing. The motives of our heart and all the actions of our life is what make our worship true and pleasing to God.

**Pray:** Divide into groups of two, ask the other person what they need prayer for and then pray. When you are done praying, then tell the other person what you need prayer for so they can pray for you.

**Assignment:** Explain to a friend this week about what it means to worship in Spirit and truth.

## Communion - Jesus and the New Covenant

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** God desires worship that is in Spirit and in truth. Worship in the Spirit means that we are continually in union with God, and we should worship him in any place at any time. Worshiping in truth is when your motives for worship are pure and the actions of your life are done to honor God.

**Discuss:** Why do you think we celebrate communion?

**Teach:** To understand communion better it is important to understand the Feast of Passover from the Old Testament. When the Israelites were slaves to the Egyptians, God sent Moses to set them free. The king of Egypt would not free the people, so God sent many disasters on the Egyptians. The last disaster was that the Lord would pass through the land and kill the first born from all the families and livestock. God told the Israelites to kill a lamb for each family, take its blood and smear it on the door frame. When the Lord went through the land on the night of Passover, he killed the firstborn of every family except for the families that had the blood on their doors. If the Lord saw the blood a lamb on the door, then he would pass over that house and no one would die. That night, all the first born of the Egyptians died, but all the Israelites were saved. Then the king of Egypt freed the Israelites from slavery.

**Read:** Exodus 12:13 The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

**Teach:** The blood of the lamb saved them from death, and it freed them from slavery. When Israel was freed from Egypt God made of covenant with Israel. He gave them laws and told them that if they obeyed them all they would continue to be his people and he would bless them.

**Read:** Exodus 19:5-6 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

**Teach:** The Israelites continued to sacrifice animals to please God and cover their sin, but it was never enough to take away their sin and make them holy. They continued to disobey God and could not be made holy in their own strength.

**Teach:** When Jesus came, he fulfilled the Old Covenant by becoming the Passover Lamb for us. When we receive him as Lord, his blood covers us and removes our sin. We are freed from death and we are no longer slaves to sin. He makes a New Covenant with us with his own blood. He makes us holy by his work and not our own.

**Read:** Hebrews 10:10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

**Teach:** Jesus made a New Covenant with us in his own blood. When we take communion, we remember the price that Jesus paid with his blood to free us from sin and death and give us eternal life.

**Pray:** Pray for your nation and your leaders.

**Assignment:** Take a walk through your village. Find someone you don't know and see if you can pray for them.

## Communion - Body and the Blood

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** Jesus made a New Covenant with us in his own blood. When we take communion, we remember the price that Jesus paid with his blood to free us from sin and death and give us eternal life.

**Discuss:** What does the wine and bread of communion represent?

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**Teach:** The bread represents Christ's body. When he was crucified, he was beaten beyond recognition. When his body was being broken through all the torture, he paid for the healing of our bodies and souls, and he took on himself the punishment that we deserved for our sins. We break and eat the bread to remember and give thanks for Christ's body.

**Read:** Isaiah 53:4-6 4 Surely, he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

**Teach:** The wine, or juice, represents the blood of Jesus. Jesus' blood was spilled for the forgiveness of our sin. It is his blood that established a new covenant. This new covenant is a promise of our salvation because of his death on the cross. The old covenant through Moses required the people to work for their own salvation, but with the new covenant we are saved and made righteous before God because of the payment of blood that Jesus gave on our behalf. We drink the wine, or juice, to remember and give thanks for the blood of Jesus that gave us the promise of salvation.

**Read:** Matthew 26:27-28 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

**Teach:** The main reason that Jesus commanded us to take communion was to remember and give thanks for all that Jesus accomplished for us when he suffered and died. It is a time to give deep honor and reverence to Jesus. When we take communion with a pure heart it will help us to appreciate God's love and grace for us. When we remember the severity of the cross and the pain that Jesus went through, this will help us to stay in unity with him and not take his sacrifice for granted.

**Pray:** Give God thanks for the great price that he paid for your salvation. Pray also for anyone that is sick, because through the broken body of Jesus he paid for our healing.

**Assignment:** Take a small offering and buy some bread and juice. Bring them to the group next week so that you all can take communion together.



# Communion - Warning and Instructions

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** Jesus made a New Covenant with us with his blood. When we take communion, we remember the price that Jesus paid with his blood and body to free us from sin and death, bring us healing, and save our souls. Remember, you will be taking communion together at the end of the lesson.

## **A Warning About Communion**

**Teach:** Taking communion is a beautiful expression of our faith and gratitude toward Jesus, but scripture gives us a warning concerning how we should take it.

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 11: 27-30 So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

**Teach:** In this scripture Paul corrects the church. Many people were treating communion like a common meal. Others were using the opportunity to get drunk on the wine. Others may have been taking communion while at the same time continuing in a life of sin. Paul was showing them that communion is a holy act between a person and God. Our hearts should be humble, grateful, and repentant before God as we honor and remember his sacrifice. Paul teaches that if we take communion in an unworthy way and our hearts are not right with God then judgement comes upon us and can even bring sickness and death. Always, God's objective is to have people with an honest heart for him, not just people with ungrateful hearts that abuse his grace and disregard the power of his sacrifice.

## **How to Take Communion**

**Teach:** The Bible doesn't give us specific rules on how to take communion. We need to simply follow what Jesus did from scripture and focus on our gratefulness and remembrance of Christ's sacrifice.

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**Teach:** Before you come together, the leader should prepare by breaking small pieces of bread into a bowl and preparing the juice. When the time of ministry comes, you can pass out the bread and juice. When everyone has received, the leader can give a time for people to examine their hearts and repent. Then, they can read the passage of scripture from 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. Hold out the bread, pray, and give thanks for Christ's body. Then everyone can partake for the bread. Hold out the juice, pray, and give thanks for Christ's blood. Then everyone can drink.

**Pray:** Purify your heart before God and speak your thankfulness to Jesus for his sacrifice.

**Assignment:** Take communion together as a group.

# Communion - Answering Questions

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** We need to be careful to take communion with a pure heart or we could be under the judgement of God. We also learned how to administer communion.

**Teach:** Communion and baptism are two actions that are always debated. These debates have to do with the correct way to administer them. Many rules have been made through different religions and denominations. Some of these rules are not necessarily scriptural. Do not complicate the acts of baptism and communion because you are more eager to follow the traditions of man rather than just following the example of scripture. The scriptures will always lead you to examine your heart. Traditions of man will only focus on the rules and the outside appearance of the ceremony. Remember God is more interested in your heart and your motives being pure.

**Read:** 1 Samuel 16:7 for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

**Discuss:** Who can give communion?

**Teach:** There is no distinction in scripture about who must administer communion. Just like with baptism, it must not be limited to just a high leader. If you are a believer that has repented, you can take communion and lead others into taking it also.

**Discuss:** How old should you be before you can take communion?

**Teach:** Again, the Bible does not give an age. We need to rely on a person's understanding to know when they are ready to participate. A person needs to know why they are doing it and believe in the covenant that they are entering into with God by taking communion.

**Discuss:** When should you take communion?

**Teach:** Many people only take communion on Easter. Jesus didn't want you to only take communion once a year. Communion shouldn't be treated as a ritual or ceremony. It should be treated as part of our intimate relationship with our creator. Jesus told his disciples in 1 Corinthians 11 that "WHENEVER they take communion they should do it to remember him." The word, WHENEVER, signifies that it should be done often and is not limited to a certain day.

**Discuss:** Where should you take communion?

**Teach:** The most common place to take communion is with other believer at a church. This is good, and communion should be taken with the whole church body more than just once a year. But, taking communion is not just limited to a church service. You can do it by yourself or with your family or in a small prayer group. You also don't have to always do it in the church. The Bible doesn't limit us on the amount of time we do it, who administers it, or where we do it. It just gives us the instruction to do it in an honorable way, with a pure heart to remember what Jesus did for us.

**Pray:** Pray for the leadership of the church: Local, District, and Provincial.

**Assignment:** Have communion at home this week just between you and Jesus.

## Fear

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** There exists many ideas and rules that man has made up about communion. We need to be careful to just follow the example that Jesus gave us in scripture and participate in communion because of our love and honor toward God and not to just perform an outward ceremony.

**Discuss:** Is there any type of fear that is good?

**Teach:** The only good form of fear is the fear of the Lord.

**Read:** Proverbs 9:10 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

**Teach:** Fearing the Lord means that you understand that he is all powerful, he is the ultimate judge for our lives, and that his love and grace shouldn't be abused. This understanding brings fearful reverence that actually produces wisdom in your life. This knowledge of God and the wisdom that it produces can help you stay free from sin, destruction, death, and hell.

**Discuss:** What are different ways that ungodly fear can manifest in your life?

**Teach:** Fear has many forms. Worry, embarrassment, insecurity, fear of man, fear of pain suffering or death, fear of failure, fear of spirits and witchcraft, or fear of punishment are just some forms of fear. Many people also deal with fears of specific activities, or situations. All these types of fears are not of God and are always a trap of the enemy.

**Read:** 2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.

**Teach:** Fear is not from God! Fear is a tool and deception of the devil and is always used to separate you from God and his purposes. Fear causes its victim to stop all forward progress with the Lord and become spiritually paralyzed, or it causes its victims to retreat from God and run to other things.

**Teach:** Fear can also be a spirit as the scripture above says. If we give into the fears that the enemy brings, we also risk opening our lives for the demonic spirit of fear to come in and influence us continually.

**Teach:** Fear always reveals a weakness in our relationship with the Lord. It reveals a lack of trust, faith, and love.

**Read:** Mark 4:39-40 "He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

**Pray:** Ask the Lord to help reveal areas in your life that you have a form of fear. Ask forgiveness for not trusting him with this area of your life and command the spirit of fear to leave.

**Assignment:** During your prayer times at home this week, continue to ask God to reveal areas of fear, worry, or insecurity in your life and ask him for the help and wisdom to overcome them.

## Fear - Freedom from Fear

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** Fear comes in many forms and is not of God. It is sent by the enemy to paralyze our pursuit of God or cause us to retreat from our purpose and relationship with God.

**Teach:** There are three main keys to breaking fear off your life. These keys are trust, truth, and love.  
LOVE Read: 1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

**Teach:** Love is one of the most powerful weapons against fear. First, if you realize the power and depth of God's love for you and you stay in this love it will bring confidence between you and God. You won't fear judgement and punishment and it will give you the boldness to obey him in any circumstance. Also, if you strive to walk in love toward other people just as Christ loves you, this love will compel you to push past your fears in order to value other people and show them the love of God. This is what it means to lay your life down for someone. Love empowers you to put your fears, desires, and comforts aside for the benefit of others.

**Read:** John 15:13 The greatest form of love is this, that you lay down your life for your friends.

TRUST Read: Romans 8:15 The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to be sons.

**Teach:** Many times, because we live in a physical world and we don't see God with our eyes, we can easily forget about how powerful and faithful God is. Many times, people will forget how close God is to them and how involved in their lives he is. Throughout the bible, God speaks to people and commands them to not be afraid because he is with them. Trust in him! He is with you and won't leave you. He is all powerful. He is faithful. He knows what you need. You are his child. Don't worry or be afraid of anything!

TRUTH Read: John 8:31-32 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

**Teach:** If fear of any form exists in your life it is because you are putting more confidence in the deception and the lies of the enemy. For every lie that the enemy brings to you, there is a truth in the teachings of Jesus and the bible that will destroy that lie and bring you the courage to break free from your slavery to fear. Jesus will never lead you wrong. Listen to him and be free!

**Discuss:** What are some fears that you have struggled with in your life?

**Pray:** Ask forgiveness for listening to the spirit of fear and not trusting God. Command the spirit of fear to be broken off your life. Ask God to fill you with truth and boldness and love.

**Assignment:** As you pray each day, take time to ask God to reveal any other areas of fear in your life. As he shows you, pray over those fears in the same way that you just did.

## Fear - Fear of Spirits

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** There are three main weapons to break fear off your life. They are trust, truth, and love.

**Teach:** The spirit realm is very real and very active around us all the time. Everything in the natural is connected to the spirit realm because it came from the spirit realm.

**Read:** John 1: 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

**Teach:** This scripture is teaching that everything that exists was created through Jesus. What is in the natural was created from the spirit realm. Because the natural and the spiritual are connected, the natural world can still be influenced by the spirit realm. There are only two sources of influence: God and his kingdom, and the devil and his kingdom. There is only goodness and light that comes from God, or evil and darkness that comes from the devil.

**Read:** Ephesians 1:19-21 That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

**Teach:** God is the most powerful. He has no equal. The devil is under the authority of Jesus. Jesus is more powerful and above all other spirits, people, titles, and authorities.

**Read:** Isaiah 45:5 I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God.

**Teach:** Before we can conquer our fear of the devil and all the evil spirits that are under his command, we need to fully receive the truth that he has no authority over God. God is more powerful and has full authority. God and the devil are not equals. The devil is a created being and God is not. God is infinitely more powerful. His character and attributes of goodness are infinitely greater than any evil of the devil.

**Teach:** Only when you trust in the greatness of the power of God will you be able to be freed of the fear of the devil and evil spirits. In Africa, evil spiritual activity is common. Witchdoctors are prevalent, along with curses, demonic possession, torment in the night, and ancestral spirits, and false prophets. The deception and fear that the enemy brings in Africa are many and they all cause bondage and torment. Even many Christians live in fear of the devil, demons, and curses. But, when we walk in fear, this shows that we have no trust that God is greater than the devil. Fear exists when you have greater faith in the power of the devil and bad spirits than the power of God.

**Read:** James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

**Teach:** Do not fear the devil or anything that comes from him. Submit your thinking, your heart, and your trust to God and the devil will flee. God is greater!

**Pray:** Repent for any area in your life that you have walked in fear and not faith. Ask God to help you trust him alone so that you can be free of fear!

## Fear - Defeating the Enemy

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** There are three main weapons to break fear off your life. They are trust, truth, and love.

**Teach:** The spirit realm is very real and very active around us all the time. Everything in the natural is connected to the spirit realm because it came from the spirit realm.

**Read:** John 1: 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

**Teach:** This scripture is teaching that everything that exists was created through Jesus. What is in the natural was created from the spirit realm. Because the natural and the spiritual are connected, the natural world can still be influenced by the spirit realm. There are only two sources of influence: God and his kingdom, and the devil and his kingdom. There is only goodness and light that comes from God, or evil and darkness that comes from the devil.

**Read:** Ephesians 1:19-21 That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

**Teach:** God is the most powerful. He has no equal. The devil is under the authority of Jesus. Jesus is more powerful and above all other spirits, people, titles, and authorities.

**Read:** Isaiah 45:5 I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God.

**Teach:** Before we can conquer our fear of the devil and all the evil spirits that are under his command, we need to fully receive the truth that he has no authority over God. God is more powerful and has full authority. God and the devil are not equals. The devil is a created being and God is not. God is infinitely more powerful. His character and attributes of goodness are infinitely greater than any evil of the devil.

**Teach:** Only when you trust in the greatness of the power of God will you be able to be freed of the fear of the devil and evil spirits. In Africa, evil spiritual activity is common. Witchdoctors are prevalent, along with curses, demonic possession, torment in the night, and ancestral spirits, and false prophets. The deception and fear that the enemy brings in Africa are many and they all cause bondage and torment. Even many Christians live in fear of the devil, demons, and curses. But, when we walk in fear, this shows that we have no trust that God is greater than the devil. Fear exists when you have greater faith in the power of the devil and bad spirits than the power of God.

**Read:** James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

**Teach:** Do not fear the devil or anything that comes from him. Submit your thinking, your heart, and your trust to God and the devil will flee. God is greater!

**Pray:** Repent for any area in your life that you have walked in fear and not faith. Ask God to help you trust him alone so that you can be free of fear!

## Fear - Fear of Man

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** God is much more powerful than the devil. We do not need to fear witchcraft or any other influence of the demonic if we are united with Christ. If Christ is in you and you believe that he is more powerful than the demonic, then the demonic will have no access to you. Do not be afraid!

**Teach:** The fear of man is when you change your actions or abandon what you believe because you are afraid of how another person may view you or act toward you.

**Teach:** We are to trust God fully and not compromise what we believe just because someone opposes, persecutes, curses, or manipulates us.

**Read:** Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

**Teach:** We can not allow the enemy to use the thoughts, attitudes, words, or beliefs of others to take us away from God's paths. When our life comes to an end we will only be judged by God, not all the other people that we allowed to influence us.

**Read:** Luke: 12:4-7 Jesus said, "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body had been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

**Teach:** The point of the scripture above is not so much on the threat of God sending you to Hell. The point that Jesus wants you to see is that God is the ultimate judge and authority over your life, not other people. So, if you are living for God and are doing his works, then you shouldn't allow your fear of other people to stop you.

**Example:** Common fears #1. Christians are afraid to evangelize or speak their faith to their family and friends. #2 Some Christians are afraid to resist their families pressure to participate in rituals from the witchdoctors. #3. Some pastors are too afraid to confront, discipline, or remove unqualified or sinful leaders in the church. These are only a very small number of examples of how people give up their faith and obedience toward God because they are afraid of people.

**Read:** Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.

**Teach:** We need to share the same convictions and unbreakable faith that Paul showed in this scripture. No matter what others think, say, or do to you, you need to live and speak in a way that you are not ashamed of what you believe.

**Pray:** Repent for any time that you suppressed your faith because you were afraid of what people would think or do to you. Ask God for boldness to stand for your faith in all circumstances.

**Assignment:** Choose a day to go out in groups of two and evangelize this week.

# Giving - Tithe and Offering

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** No matter what others think, say, or do to you, you need to live and speak in a way that you are not ashamed of what you believe. Do not be afraid of what man can do to you. Trust God!

**Teach:** Giving and being generous are important aspects of our relationship with God. Throughout the Bible we are taught to obey God and give tithe and offering.

**Teach:** There are two different terms in the Bible that refer to giving which are: tithe and offering. Tithe is a gift to the Lord that all believers should be faithful to give. It is ten percent of the profits of your life. For example, if you receive 500MT salary, you should give 50MT to God. If you harvest 100 KG of food, you should bring 10 KG to God. Offerings are any other form of gift that you bring to the church, or give to help a specific need or person. Offerings are given in addition to your tithe. A tithe should stay consistent according to your profits, but an offering is a situational gift that you give as you are moved in your heart to help or bless.

**Read:** Leviticus 27:30 "A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord."

**Read:** Proverbs 3:9-10 Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

**Read:** Malachi 3:10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

**Discuss:** Why is it important to bring give tithes to the Church?

**Teach:** God established tithing as a way to fund, continue, and advance the work of God. In the Old testament everyone in the land brought tithes to the temple to help sustain the needs of the priests and people that worked in the temple. Their jobs were to work in the temple and minister before the Lord and help the people. The tithes of the people were payment for the temple workers. Some of the tithes were also used to help the poor, orphans, and widows. In the same way, the tithes that church members give to the church are necessary for helping sustain the life of the pastor, helping with urgent needs of people, feeding widows and orphans, materials needed for ministry, and spreading the gospel.

**Teach:** Whether you are rich or poor, you should be faithful to the Lord with giving. When people are generous and faithful, God's blessing and increase come. Many of the scripture about giving come with promises from God that he will sustain you. Do not fear, but be faithful to God. We should never have an attitude that says, "I'm too poor, so the work of God should be someone else's responsibility."

**Discuss:** From the teaching, describe the difference between a tithe and an offering.

**Pray:** Ask for God to build your faith and trust in the area of tithe, offering, generosity, and giving.

**Assignment:** Next week, each person bring an offering. It can be food or money. Find a family outside of the church that is in great need. Give the offering to them. Pray with them and share the gospel.



## Giving - Motives and Principles

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** Giving and being generous are important aspects of our relationship with God. Throughout the Bible we are taught to obey God and give tithe and offering.

**Teach:** It is important that we have the right motives for giving our tithes and offerings. We also need to understand God's unchanging principles about giving to him and to others. The scripture below clearly reveals God's will for our motives, and reveals his principles.

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 9:6-8 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

**Teach:** Motive for giving – Our motive should be to generously bless the Lord with our obedience. We should not be motivated to give because we feel guilty if we don't. We should not be motivated to give also by a person pressuring us to give or because of our own pride. Our gifts of tithes and offerings should be given with joy. God loves a cheerful giver. We should give because we love God, we love the work of the church, we love to help others, and we love to see the Gospel reach the lost. God doesn't recognize you and give you reward just because you did what he said. He recognizes you and blessing comes because you obeyed him with a pure heart and correct motives.

**Read:** Luke 16:15 Jesus said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight.

**Teach:** Principles of giving – The first principle that we see in the verse that we read from 2 Corinthians is that if you don't give then you don't receive. In this scripture, God is revealing that the principles of planting and harvesting in the physical are just as true in the spiritual. It would be foolish to think that if you only plant a hand full of seed that you would be able to feed your family with that harvest for the next year. In the same way, if you are reluctant to be obedient and continually plant good seed in God's kingdom, then do not be surprised when you are lacking all good things that you need for your life spiritually and physically.

**Teach:** The second principle of giving is that if you give, you will receive. As our motives are correct and we are faithful to give generously, God will supply you with what you need spiritually and physically so that you will succeed in every good work. Many people stay in spiritual need and physical need because they only give God the few crumbs of bread that are left in their lives instead of what he has asked for. We need to trust God and have faith even in how we give our tithes and offerings.

**Discuss:** What should your motive and attitude be when you give to God?

**Discuss:** What are the two unchanging principles we discussed about giving?

**Prayer:** Pray that God will break you free from a mindset of poverty and give you a generous heart.

**Assignment:** Choose a day this week to have 30 minutes of prayer and worship with your family.

# Giving - Reject the Ways of Man

## Part 1

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** We need to give tithes and offerings to God with joyful, generous motives. If we do not plant much seed, we do not receive much harvest. If we give generously, God supplies all we need in life.

**Teach:** There are some ideas, traditions and practices that have come into the church that need to be rejected and corrected. Some of these are bata mesa, primera semana, and any forced obligation to give. Also, to promise position or praise for anyone that gives is not biblical. All of these tactics are used to manipulate members of the church with pride or shame to give more money. God will not honor this. We need to handle finances in a godly way that honors God and his character. The scriptures below will help show from the Bible why these traditions are wrong.

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

**Read:** Jesus said, 6 "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

**Teach:** It is important to give with correct motives. People should be obedient to give tithes and offerings because they love the Lord and want to see people helped and be salvation. Unfortunately, because of pride, greed, laziness to teach, and lack of biblical knowledge, leaders depend on ungodly tactics to motivate people to give. We can not trust in the strategies of man. We must trust God's way.

**Read:** Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

**Teach:** Even though the practices of bata mesa, primera semana, and other forms of manipulative ways of taking offerings are part of African church tradition and accepted within the church does not mean that it is supported by God and the bible. As we study the scripture above, you will find that these ways of taking offering are against scripture. These practices were birthed in the wisdom of man and not God's wisdom. Because of honoring man's wisdom above God's, the end result is destruction, division, death, and fruitlessness within the area of finances in the Church.

**Teach:** In the next lesson you will learn more specifically why these forms of taking offerings are not healthy for the church and against the Bible.

**Discuss:** Read the scriptures again from 2 Corinthians and Matthew 6 and discuss how the different forms of bata mesa, primera semana, and other forms of obligated offerings are not biblical.

**Pray:** Ask God to give you greater understanding from the bible on how to please him through giving.

**Assignment:** At home, evaluate your average weekly income and calculate what you should be giving to the Lord every week. Obey him, not man! Trust and do not fear!

# Giving - Reject the Ways of Man

## Part 2

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** We need to give tithes and offerings to God with joyful, generous motives. Many of the practices used in Africa to take offering are against Bible and God's heart. We need to strive to please God in how we give and not just submit to the traditions of man that entered the church.

**Discuss:** Why is Bata Mesa against scripture?

**Teach:** There are many forms of Bata Mesa. Some are competitions between multiple churches, and some are competitions between different groups within the church like mothers, fathers, and youth. The offering time is separated by church or group. Each has their turn to deposit their offering in the plate or chair. Many times this is with songs and dancing. Many times people will circle the chair many time while holding their money above their heads and then dropping it in the chair part by part. The money is then counted and announced. Then the losers are given an opportunity to give again so that they won't have the shame of being the loser.

**Read:** Matthew 6:2 "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

**Teach:** This scripture makes it clear that Bata Mesa is not biblical. Bata Mesa is mostly done with music, dancing, and an outward demonstration to the rest of the church. This is what Jesus said not to do. He said not to announce your giving in public with a big demonstration and music! When you do this it does not please God because you are doing it to fill your own pride by receiving recognition from other people. You will receive no reward from God because you have settled to receive praise from people.

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 9: 7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

**Teach:** This scripture also shows that Bata Mesa is not biblical. Giving should be done by each believer because they want to love and obey God. This scripture shows that you should decide the amount to give in your heart between you and God before the time of offering. Bata Mesa is a tradition that was developed by men acting in the flesh as a way to manipulate the pride and emotions of people so that they will give more. A person should never be manipulated into obeying God. The scripture above says that you should not give under compulsion. This means you should not be motivated to give by the pressure of any person. Only be motivated to give because of your love for God.

**Teach:** Every week, you should prepare your ten percent tithe and bring it to the church. You should know how much money you made that week and prepare your offering before you arrive. If a special offering is taken during a service to help with certain situations in the church or to help a member's needs, in that moment, you should pray and decide between you and God the amount to give. Do not be manipulated by any man or pride.

**Pray:** Repent for wrong motives that you have had when giving offerings. Ask for a heart of generosity.

**Assignment:** Each day, pray that God would set you free from slavery to money and that you would have his heart of generosity.

# Giving - Reject the Ways of Man

## Part 3

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** We need to give tithes and offerings to God with joyful, generous motives. Many of the practices used in Africa to take offering are against the Bible and God's heart. Bata Mesa is not biblical because of how it is done as a public show and manipulate the pride of our flesh.

**Discuss:** Why is Primera Semana against scripture?

**Teach:** Primera Semana is when a group of churches agrees to meet for a joined service on the first Sunday of every month. This is done as a strategy to generate larger offerings. The motive is money. The churches either come prepared to participate in a Bata Mesa competition offering like we discussed in the previous lesson, or they are obligated to bring a specific amount that all the churches decided on. Neither one of these practices are biblical or healthy for our churches.

**Example:** All 10 churches in a district are obligated to bring 500 Mts to the Primera Semana. The first month all the churches arrive and the hosting church receives 4500 Mts. The same happens the second month with the next church. But, the third month, because of distance, finance for transport, food expense, and a lack of funds in the church box, two churches decide not to come. The hosting church only receives 3500 Mts and now they are upset because they were faithful to give to the other churches but some churches weren't faithful to give to them. Now they feel that the two churches that didn't show up owe them. Some churches become offended at the others that didn't give. The ones that didn't give feel shameful and are now in debt to the others. This is not how churches should operate. Now, an open door has been given to the devil to cause division within the district because of money. This is not good!

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 9: 7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

**Teach:** Again, we are using the same scripture from the previous lessons. No individual or church should be forced to give a predetermined amount or participate in a manipulative competition with offerings. This does not please God and many times does not produce good attitudes between people and churches. Many times the product is divisions, pride, shame, and greed.

**Read:** John 17:22-23 Jesus prayed, "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— 23 I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity."

**Teach:** Jesus desires unity. These practices with money in the church do not promote unity. When you have competitions, you have winners and loser. This produces pride on one side and shame on the other. And with obligated Primera Semana offering, while many times they seem great at first, in the end, they produce debts, shame, jealousies, and division.

**Teach:** Gathering all the churches together is good, but not if the priority is money. Come together to glorify the Lord, love one another, and grow in the Lord.

**Pray:** Ask God to help restore godly giving in your church and restore any divisions caused by money.

**Assignment:** Talk with a neighbor about Jesus this week and pray for them.

# Marriage - God's Design

## Part 1

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review: Truth #1** about marriage: God created marriage as a way for us to express and experience love and intimacy. Marriage is also intended to be the only institute through which we have children.

**Teach:** This lesson will continue to teach you the five truths that are revealed in the following scripture.

**Read:** Matthew 19:4-6 "At the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.""

**Truth #2.** Marriage is only meant to be experienced between a male and a female.

**Read:** Hebrews 13:4 Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

**Teach:** Homosexuality and all other sexual behavior that is done outside God's design for marriage is considered sexual immorality. This type of lifestyle carries heavy consequences. As you will read in the next scripture, a sexually immoral lifestyle can disqualify you from inheriting the kingdom of God.

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 " Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."

**Truth #3.** When you get married you need to be able to manage your own household.

**Teach:** The Bible says that when a man and woman decide to get married, they leave their parents and become one. This means that they are unified and form a new household where the new husband is the head of his home and family. As you marry, you should prepare your own place and take responsibility to care for your own family. Also, the parents of newly married people need to not be controlling over the things of their life. The newly married people are adults and need the freedom to rule their own household.

**Teach:** I have witnessed many marriages that are wounded or ruined because of the misplaced authority of the parents and in-laws of a married couple. Sometimes when the parents hear of difficulties in the marriage of their children, they give unbiblical demands in areas that they no longer have authority. Sometimes the parents hear that there is arguing and disagreements, or especially when the wife in the new marriage cannot produce children, the parents will tell their child to abandon the marriage. This is not of God. The parents may continue to give counsel to the child if the child is willing, but they no longer have the authority to try to separate the marriage. The new husband is the head of his new family. Also, our main scripture says to not allow anyone to separate what God has brought together. That also applies to the parents of the married couple.

**Pray:** Ask for the Lord to bring conviction to the church for all who are practicing sexual immorality so that they repent. If you are guilty of sexual immorality, repent today and turn back to God.

# Marriage - God's Design

## Part 2

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching?

**Review:** Truth #2 and #3 about marriage: Marriage is to be shared only between a man and a woman. Also, when a man and woman marry, they form a new family unit under the authority of the new husband because they have left their parents' home.

**Read:** Matthew 19:4-6 "At the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

**Teach:** Today we will learn about the fourth truth found in the scripture above. Remember there are five total. Refer to the last lessons for the first three truths.

**Truth #4:** The two become one.

**Discuss:** What does God mean when he says that when a man and woman marry they become one?

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 6:15-17 "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit."

**Teach:** From this scripture we learn many things. First, we learn that two people become one, not just by getting married, but rather by consummating their relationship by having sex. This should only be done within marriage which is God's design. But as you see from the scripture above, through the sins of having sex outside of marriage, a person is still making themselves one with the other person.

**Teach:** We also learn that becoming one with the other person isn't just physical but spiritual. We are joined to God in the spiritual, and what we do in the physical is always attached to our spirit. Sexual relations join people physically, spiritually, and emotionally. The sins, impurities, curses, and even the disease of one person is transferable to another through sex. How can a person be united with God if they are living a life of sin and trying to join that life with God? They cannot. This is why Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 6 that anyone who practices sexual immorality will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**Discuss:** What can happen when people become one by having sex with someone that they aren't married to?

**Answer:** Some consequences are: separation from God, discipline and judgment from God, becoming parents before you are ready, broken families with no fathers, passing on sin and lack of morals to your children, disease and death (through sexually transmitted disease like HIV and others,) transfer of curses and demonic oppression, and emotion and spiritual damage through broken relationships that cause heart break, bitterness, hatred, unforgiveness, lack of trust, and feelings of abandonment.

**Assignment:** Are there changes needed in your current relationship? This week, write down the changes you need to make so that your relationship honors God. If you aren't in a relationship yet, write down a commitment to God as to how you will conduct a godly relationship in the future.

# Marriage - God's Design

## Part 3

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** Truth #4 about marriage: When two people come together sexually they become one. This type of unity and relationship should only be experienced inside of marriage.

**Read:** Matthew 19:4-6 "At the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

**Teach:** You will learn about the fifth truth from the scripture today. To learn about the first four you will need to reference the previous lessons.

**Truth #5:** Marriage is a covenant before God and should not be broken.

**Teach:** Marriage should be a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman. From the scripture above we can see that God is the one that brings marriages together, and since God is the greatest authority, no one else has the right to separate or terminate that union. Marriage is of God, not man. No one, including friends, family, parents, and even the husband or the wife in the marriage has the right to separate what God has joined.

**Teach:** The command of the bible that says that no one should separate the marriage has no end date. Marriage is until death.

**Read:** Romans 7:2 "By law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law that binds her to him."

**Teach:** A deeper principle that is important to understand is that God gave us marriage as a way to understand Him. How God expects us to act in marriage is already perfectly demonstrated by how Jesus acts toward us. If you want to have a godly healthy marriage, we must follow the example of Jesus in how He loves us, will never abandon us, is completely faithful to us and is patient with us. We should never break the covenant of marriage because we will be abandoning the character and image of Christ that we are called to live by.

**Read:** Ephesians 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

**Read:** Hebrews 13:5 "God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"

**Read:** Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

**Pray:** Take time to repent of any way that you have not acted with the character of Jesus toward your spouse. Ask God to soften your heart so that you can treat your spouse with the character of Jesus.

**Assignment:** Do something special this week just to show your spouse that you are thinking of them and that you love them. Some ideas are to buy a small gift, go on a walk together, write a short letter, or do a task for them that you know would bless them and make them feel special.

## Marriage - Am I Really Married?

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** Truth #5 about marriage: Marriage is a covenant before God and should not be broken. God is the one that brings marriages together, and no one else has the authority to terminate the marriage.

**Discuss:** How do you know for sure that you are married?

**Teach:** In Mozambique, defining marriage has become very difficult. Marriage is very important to God, therefore, it is important that we can clearly distinguish who is married and who is not. If a distinction does not exist, then there is no way to know whether your relationship is honored by God or is sinful.

**Teach:** There is no exact law or example in scripture that indicates how a marriage ceremony needs to be done, but the bible does have many examples that indicate that what defines a couple as being married is when the couple participates in an official ceremony. There is specific mention of the weddings of Jacob (Genesis 29), Samson (Judges 14), King David (1 Samuel 18), and King Solomon (Song of Solomon 3). Jesus and his disciples attended a wedding in John 2. Also, it is discussed in Revelation chapter 19, that there will be a wedding celebration of the Lamb of God (that is Jesus) to the church. The only way that we can clearly define that a couple is married is if there is a specific event at which the couple is promised to one another for life.

**Teach:** Also, scripture speaks often of wedding preparations, wedding clothes, wedding banquettes, wedding songs, wedding gifts, and people specifically chosen to accompany the bride and groom during the wedding. All these facts show that there is a biblical expectation of a specific day and event that indicates the start of an official marriage.

**Teach:** Marriage is viewed in different ways throughout the culture of Mozambique. There are family agreement weddings where a dowry is paid. There are religious (church) weddings, and legal weddings through the government.

**Teach:** It is our strong suggestion that when you get married, it is best to complete the requirements of all three types. Your conscience will forever be clean, and no one will be able to challenge the legitimacy of your marriage. But, at minimum, we expect that you participate in one of the three types. Within the ceremony, it is important to verbally share your covenant to one another before God and the people present. If the only ceremony that you fulfill is the dowry, it is very important that it is in honor to God and doesn't include any form of religious tradition or witchcraft contrary to the word of God. Honor the Lord in the ceremony because it is He alone that brings you together!

**Pray:** Pray that the importance of marriage and the fear of the Lord would come upon every Christian so that this sin that has overcome our lives and churches would be taken out.

**Assignment:** If you haven't yet made your marriage official, ask God what your first step should be and start organizing. Do not wait!!! Do something. Make no more excuses!



# Marriage - Defeating the Enemies of Marriage

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** The bible indicates that a marriage starts with a ceremony or celebration. When you participate in an event like this, then it is clear to everyone that you are married.

**Discuss:** What are some enemies of genuine marriage?

**Teach:** The verse from Matthew 19 that we have been studying was spoken by Jesus. He was quoting the scripture from Genesis 2:24, in the beginning of the bible, where it says that God made man and woman to leave their parents and become one flesh. It is important to understand that humanity, the devil, culture, and sin always try to change the purity and principles of marriage that God established from the first moment he created man and woman.

**Teach:** The most common ways in the African culture that the purity and principles of marriage are destroyed are through adultery, polygamy, and fornication. These sins are against God's design for marriage. In this lesson you will learn what these sins are.

**Teach:** Adultery is when you seek to have sexual relations with someone other than your spouse. Polygamy is when you marry more than one spouse. Adultery and polygamy are similar, because they both involve someone in the marriage breaking their covenant by having sex with or marrying another person outside of the original marriage. Remember, God said that ONE man and ONE woman shall leave their parents and become ONE. God does not say that THREE, FOUR, or FIVE shall become one.

**Read:** Matthew 5:27-28 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery within his heart."

**Teach:** There is no way to have multiple wives without committing adultery with the first wife. From the scripture above Jesus teaches that the sin of adultery occurs in our hearts first. If you are already married and you are looking at other women besides your wife in a way that you want to marry them also and be sexually intimate with them, you have sinned against God and your wife.

**Read:** 1 Timothy 3:2 "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, and able to teach."

**Teach:** It is clear from the scripture above that Christian leaders are to only have one wife. If a person has a marriage situation outside God's design and purpose, then they are not qualified to lead the people. The example displayed by the life of a polygamist church leader will lead the others members into sin as well.

**Teach:** Fornication is when a person has sex before having a wedding. Fornication brings two people together to become one, through sex, outside of godly covenant. Sex is meant only for marriage. Many times, people who fornicate will have sexual relations with multiple people before marriage. This is not of God. God didn't create you to become "ONE" with multiple people. One means ONE.

**Pray:** Pray that God will give you a new heart that loves and obeys his ways and runs from the sin and lust of the world.

## Leadership - Qualifications

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching?

**Review:** Three main enemies of Genuine marriage are adultery, polygamy, and fornication. These are all forms of sin and are against God's design for marriage.

**Discuss:** In your opinion, what makes a good leader?

**Teach:** It is God's design that the church has leaders. They are the ones that are to teach, preach, give counsel, bring vision, raise and appoint new leaders, and correct those in error.

**Read:** 2 Timothy 4:2 "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction."

**Read:** Ephesians 4:11-13 "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

**Teach:** These scriptures above show us many of the responsibilities of a church leader.

**Teach:** We need leaders, but it is important to have the right leaders. Just because someone does some of the work of a leader, does not mean they are ready or qualified for the position. They must meet the requirements from God that are written in the bible regarding their character and motives. They must also have good testimony amongst their family and community. The next scripture shows us the biblical requirements for a leader of the church.

**Read:** 1 Timothy 3:1-7 "Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap."

**Teach:** The list from scripture above is also found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Titus 1:5-9. The bible is very clear about the type of character required for a leader. When a leader is chosen, the first priority is to verify that their character is worthy of leadership. Many times, leaders are chosen because of their age, position in the community, their social level, or certain abilities; but none of these things will bless the Lord, or benefit the church spiritually. The leader must first have godly character. The motive and purity of the leader's heart needs to be evaluated first by the scriptures before they are given position.

**Pray:** Pray for the pastor and leaders of your church that their motives would be pure and they would lead the church with the heart of God.

# Leadership - Serving the People

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching and assignment?

**Review:** Church leaders are necessary and have many responsibilities, but it is important to choose leaders that first have biblical character. Only establish leaders that are qualified according to the Bible.

**Discuss:** In your opinion, how should the mentality of a church leader be different from a leader in the world?

**Read:** 1 Peter 5:2-4 "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away."

**Teach:** You will learn 4 truths about leadership through the scripture above.

**Teach: Truth #1** A church leader must lead and care for the people. Every leader that is given responsibility is there not for their own gain. They are there to serve. A church leader should be the greatest servant of all in whatever area of ministry they are leading. They are there to care for the people.

**Read:** Matthew 20:26-28 "whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

**Teach:** People are like sheep, and the leader is like a shepherd. A good shepherd walks in front of the sheep and leads them to the right place. A leader must stay in unity with God and seek Him for vision for the church. A good leader doesn't just maintain the church, he leads all the people to growth, maturity, and advancement. A leader must know where they are going.

**Teach: Truth #2** A leader must serve from love and not obligation. If a person truly loves God, they will also love people because people are who God loves. Leadership should be motivated by your love for God and people. From this love, then you choose to obey God's call and serve the people. You cannot say that you love God and not love others.

**Read:** 1 John 4:20 "Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen."

**Teach:** Some leaders only lead because they feel obligated. They feel that if they don't, then they will disappoint God or people. But a leader that only leads because they feel obligated will never be a good leader, because they will not truly love the people and serve them. A leader should take joy in their job.

**Pray:** Lay your hands on the leader of the bible study and any other leader in the group and pray for them and their families.

**Assignment:** During the week, pray God will help you to love people deeper so however you serve people will please God and have the right motive.

1. ***Don't use your position as an opportunity for dishonest gain.***
2. ***Don't use your position to oppress***

## Leadership - Pure Motives

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching and assignment?

**Review:** Truth #1 - Church leaders should lead and care for the people of the church. Truth #2 - They also need to lead with a heart of love, and not from feeling obligated.

**Read:** 1 Peter 5:2-4 "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."

**Teach:** Truth #3 from the scripture above – A leader cannot use his position for dishonest gain. This means that your priority for preaching, or leading in the church, should not be to gain money or possessions, and that you should not use your position to manipulate or lie to people so that they will give you money that only benefits you.

**Discuss:** What are some of the ways that you have witnessed pastors using their positions to gain wealth in an ungodly way? How did others respond when they found out?

**Read:** 1 Timothy 6:3-5 "If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain."

**Teach:** In these verses, Paul is teaching Timothy to be careful to not allow leaders and teachers to come into the church that have wrong motives and bad doctrine. This type of leader is prideful and will cause arguments and divisions. They don't walk in truth, and will often only walk with a fake appearance of godliness, only to deceive people into giving them money and material things.

**Read:** 1 Timothy 6:10 "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

**Teach:** Even leaders in the church can lose their true faith if the priority of their ministry is to gain material wealth, and not to grow the kingdom of God and serve the people.

**Teach:** 2 Corinthians 2:17 "Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God."

**Example:** Some ways that leaders use their position for dishonest gain are: Stealing from the offering, charging for prayer or blessings, or searching for foreigners to send money, and then lying to them about their ministries to gain personal benefit. Sometimes a district pastor or high leader will travel to the churches under him just because he knows that he will receive offerings. This type of leader wants many churches under him not because he cares to serve them, but because he can have access to more material offerings.

**Pray:** Pray that the leaders of the church would serve from love, and a spirit of corruption and greed will be removed from the church.

**Assignment:** Find a secret place with God one day this week and spend many hours with him.

## Leadership - Don't Abuse your Position

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching and assignment?

**Review:** Truth #3 – A leader should not use their leadership position to gain wealth in ungodly ways. Their priority should be to serve the people with their position, and not in finding ways to rob them.

**Read:** 1 Peter 5:2-4 “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”

**Teach:** Truth #4 from the scripture above - Leaders should not use their position to oppress others. God doesn't appoint leaders of the church for the church members to glorify and serve that leader. A Godly leader should not ever seek to be served, but they should live to serve others.

**Read:** Matthew 20:25-28 “Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.””

**Teach:** From this scripture, we see Jesus show this truth of leadership. Jesus was God in the flesh. He was much greater than all people of the earth, but even he stepped out of heaven and served the people. He didn't use his title and authority to sit in the best seats, eat the best food, or to gain riches or popularity. He didn't abuse his disciples by making them do all the worst jobs while he did nothing. Even though he was God, he didn't promote himself in front of others. This is the example we follow.

**Teach:** Do not use leadership positions to exalt yourself over others. Jesus strongly condemned this. Listen to his instruction to leaders.

**Read:** Matthew 23:5-12 “Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called ‘Rabbi’ by others. “But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

**Discuss:** Do you see leaders and pastors of churches doing the things you just read in the scripture? Do they always sit in the best places in the church and at meals? Do they prioritize wearing fancy clothes to impress people? Do they take pride in their title and expect everyone to address them with this title? Do you think God is pleased with this type of leader?

**Teach.** A leader that pleases God will be humble and not seek praise from people. They will live their life discipling, serving, and loving the people they were called to. They will not use their position to gain power or to elevate their pride.

**Pray:** Whether you are a leader or not, pray that you would be humble and love and serve people well.

# Leadership - Protecting and Encouraging Leaders

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching?

**Review:** Truth #4 – Leaders should not use their position to oppress others. A leader has their position not so that they can be exalted and be served, but so that they can serve the people.

**Teach:** This lesson will teach you how to protect your leaders, and how to discipline those that fail.

**Teach:** In this country, lying, stealing, and corruption are common. Stories of leaders that have fallen into sin are many. Because of this, it is also common that many church members don't fully trust their pastor and leaders. When people of the church hear accusations or gossip about one of their leaders, many times they instantly believe the gossip and begin to spread it instead of dealing with the accusations according to the Bible.

**Read:** 1 Timothy 5:19-20 "Do not accept an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning."

**Discuss:** According to the scripture above, if you hear something bad about your pastor or leader, what should you do?

**Teach:** If you hear a bad report about your leader, you should question who told you. Ask if they witnessed the situation. If they didn't, they are just gossiping, and you should not accept their testimony. Do not talk about the situation any further with anyone. False accusations can be very dangerous for a ministry. Remember, the enemy always wants to cause division and destroy the church.

**Discuss:** What is a witness?

**Teach:** Read the scripture from above again from 1 Timothy. Pay attention to the word "witnesses." This word is very important. A witness is someone who directly saw or participated in a situation. We must only receive accusations about a leader if it is confirmed through multiple witnesses. If the person accusing the leader didn't personally see the situation, or was not directly involved, then they are just gossiping to stir up problems. Protect and honor your leaders. Don't accept every rumor about them.

**Teach:** If the accusation comes to you with the testimony of two or three witnesses, then treat the accusation as true and the church must take action. If it was the pastor of the church that sinned, the other church leadership should communicate the situation with the District leadership and he can announce the situation to the church and decide the discipline necessary. If one of the leaders in the church that is under the pastor sinned, then the pastor needs to announce the situation in front of the church and implement the proper discipline. With any leader, if the situation is very bad, they may need to be taken out of leadership.

**Discuss:** Why is it important to announce the failure to the church?

**Teach:** It is necessary to announce the failing of a leader to the church because if the members see that no discipline was brought to the leader, the other members will think that since their leader can sin with no consequence, then they can too. Where a leader fails, the members will fail also.

**Pray:** Repent of any time that you accepted gossip about your leader when you didn't know for certain.

# Judgement and the Return of Christ

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching?

**Review:** You should not receive accusations against your leaders if there aren't multiple witnesses. If a leader does fail, they should be corrected in front of the church.

**Teach:** Jesus will return one day to unite all true Christians to himself and bring final judgment to the people of the earth. Jesus spoke many times of his return and what we should be doing until He comes.

**Read:** Matthew 25:31-32 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, just as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."

**Teach:** When Jesus brings judgment to the world you will only be sent to one side. If you have received salvation through believing in Jesus and making Him Lord of your life, you will go into His kingdom and eternal life. If you do not believe in Jesus or surrender your life to Him, or you say you believe in Him but by your actions you are proven to be a hypocrite, then you will go to eternal punishment in hell.

**Read:** Matthew 25:46 "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

**Teach:** No one knows exactly when Jesus will return. Jesus warned His disciples many times that when He returns, He needs to find them faithful and working for the kingdom. If someone says that they know exactly when Jesus will return, do not listen to them.

**Read:** Matthew 24:42 "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."

**Teach:** Those that truly believe in Jesus and go to eternal life will also be judged by the actions of their life. This will be a judgment to determine your eternal reward. Jesus is preparing your eternal reward, position, and inheritance; and this will be determined by the work you accomplished for the kingdom of God. His followers will not be judged for their sin and be punished because through His sacrifice on the cross He has forgiven them. Your faithfulness during this short life will determine the magnitude of your eternal reward.

**Read:** Revelation 22:12 "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to reward each one as his work deserves."

**Teach:** Do not play games with your life. Your life is too valuable to take a chance and possibly be cast away from Jesus. Always be ready. Obey Him. Do the works of God. Become a mature Christian that acts like Jesus. Love Him deeply, and love others. You never know the moment of your death, or the moment when Christ will return. Always stay faithful.

**Pray:** Ask the Lord to help you stay alert and faithful until the end.

**Assignment:** Ask someone if they know where they will spend eternity. Share the gospel.

**Testimonies:** Are there any testimonies about last week's teaching or assignment?

**Review:** Jesus will return one day and judge all people. Sinners will go to eternal punishment, and the righteous will go to eternal life. Jesus will then judge the righteous and give them a reward, depending on their faithful works that they accomplished for His kingdom.

**Teach:** For the last lesson of this book, we will discuss love. Why? Because love is what brings meaning to Christianity. Christianity without a continual relationship with God and expression of love to people is just meaningless religion.

**Read:** 1 Corinthians 13:2-3 "If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing."

**Read:** Matthew 22:36-40 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

**Discuss:** In your opinion, why is love the greatest commandment?

**Teach:** The number one reason that love is the greatest commandment is because 1 John 4:8 says that "God is Love." We were made to be like God, and because He is the full expression of love, then we should prioritize a life of love. Love is the only way to connect with God. It is also the responsibility of all Christians to help unbelievers know God. If we don't act like Him with our love, it will be difficult for unbelievers to know God. We are the expression of God to the world, our love reveals Jesus.

**Read:** John 13:35 "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

**Teach:** The second reason that love is the greatest commandment is because if all of the actions of your life are motivated by love, then you will not sin. All the laws and commands of God involve two areas of your life. First, is your relationship with God and second is how you relate with others. This is why in Matthew 22:40 Jesus said, "All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." It is very simple; if your actions are all done in the true love of God, you will never sin. Love fully pleases God.

**Discuss:** What does love mean to you?

**Teach:** It is very important that you understand God's definition of love. God is love. We find the truth about love by knowing God and studying the life of Jesus. True love is not self-centered. A person who truly loves God and others will prioritize blessing others more than themselves. Do not express love in the way of the world. Worldly love is self-centered. Show the world Jesus through your life and love!

**Read:** John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that a person will lay down his life for his friends."

**Pray:** Pray that God would reveal all self-centered thinking, so you can love with a pure heart.

**Assignment:** This week find a way to lay aside your agenda to help a family member or neighbor.