



PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP

Training Manual for people in India and its neighboring countries

Personal Discipleship Training

A ministry of All Nations Church and Asia Evangelical College and Seminary

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www.anconnuri.com

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Introduction

Personal Discipleship Training Manual

Welcome to the Personal Discipleship Training. You are about to embark on an exciting journey with a trainer (*also known as a disciple, a spiritual parent, and a mentor*), designated to help you become more like Jesus. This is no ordinary journey, as it may transform, uplift, and alter your dreams and visions for Christ's church. At the end of this journey, don't be surprised to discover yourself many steps closer to Jesus and strengthened by the Holy Spirit to lead a victorious Christian life as a disciple of Christ.

Please, keep the following pointers in mind as the Holy Spirit chisels and molds you to become more like Jesus:

The personal discipleship training is designed to...

1. Help you grow in the likeness of Jesus and become an obedient disciple of Christ (Ephesians 4:15).
2. Equip you so that you may be ready to train others to grow and mature in Christ.

The personal discipleship training is carefully divided into three sections to help you become a solid disciple of Christ...

1. Fellowship with Jesus:
 - i. Who is Jesus Christ? *Jesus is God who came to us as a man to give us eternal life.*
 - ii. What has Jesus done for us? *Jesus died and was resurrected to heal and restore us. By placing our trust in Jesus, we can replace our bad karma with his good karma.*
 - iii. What is Jesus doing now? *Jesus was resurrected from the dead and presently dwells among us.*
 - iv. Believe in Jesus: *In Jesus, we experience the power of a renewed life and growth in faith.*
2. Fellowship: Quiet time with God:
 - i. The theory and practice of Quiet Time: *A relationship with Jesus through QT is necessary in order to have fellowship with and to know Him.*
3. Growth: Bible Study Lessons for Personal Discipleship
 - i. The assurance of salvation: *We gain the assurance of salvation when we commit our intellect, emotions, and will to our Lord, Jesus Christ.*
 - ii. The attributes of God: *To live a life pleasing to God, we need to know God more deeply.*
 - iii. The Word of God: *God's Word teaches us about His saving grace and how to daily connect with Him.*
 - iv. Prayer: *Prayer unleashes God's power in our life so that we may lead a victorious life in Christ Jesus.*

- v. **Fellowship:** *God is pleased when a community of believers comes to Him in worship, as one in Christ.*
- vi. **Witnessing:** *Every Christian is called to witness and to share personal testimonies about the person, Jesus Christ, not some theories or philosophies about Him.*
- vii. **The Spirit-filled life:** *The Spirit-filled life is a life dependent on the Holy Spirit, while enjoying His power and guidance in one's Christian journey.*
- viii. **Overcoming temptations:** *Temptations come from the devil to cause us to be powerless and to lose inner peace. We can overcome these temptations by passionately loving and devoting ourselves to the Lord.*
- ix. **Obedience in the Christian walk:** *Obedience to Christ necessitates that we follow His commands and perfect plans, even at the expense of what is valuable and precious to us.*
- x. **Ministry:** *All Christians are called to participate in the Kingdom ministries. To serve effectively and develop our spiritual gifts, we need to be thoroughly trained and equipped.*
- xi. **How can I train others?** *Now that your training is complete, your focus needs to be placed on how you can in turn discipleship train others for Christ.*

Please, remember that the training manual in and of itself is not going to transform you into a disciple. Your obedience to Christ and to the work of the Holy Spirit is what's going to enable you to become a disciple that God has appointed you to be.

We have every confidence that it was God who has carved out this *special season* for you and your trainer to connect and grow together. Several months of discipleship training is not going to be *a walk around the park*. Yet, with the help of the Holy Spirit (Colossians 1:29), you will not only complete the training with flying colors but also be thoroughly equipped to transform India and its neighboring countries for the Lord.

Are you ready? Are you ready to take on this wonderful challenge to become a reliable disciple of Christ (2 Timothy 2:2), to increase God's realm in and around your church?

Jesus commanded us to take up the cross and follow Him, and to make disciples. Will you follow Him and become his disciple first, and then make disciples for him?

In Christ alone,

All Nations Church
Asia Evangelical College and Seminary
(March of 2011)

How to use this training manual?

Grasping the theme gives you an overview of what the session entails. Memorizing the theme along with the session's memory verses will help you remember the topic and its contents.



The **introductory paragraph** provides a focal point. It sets the tone and helps you smoothly move into the session.

Grasping the Theme

Prayer unleashes the power in our lives so we may have a life in Christ.

The **main points** describe how the session is organized. They guide you through the session and help you *connect the dots* in the contents.

Prayer is the natural overflow of a meaningful time with Scripture. Prayer to God completes the fellowship element of our relationship with Him. Respond back to God in prayer. He speaks to you through His Word. In this session, share your heart with the One who longs for a deeper relationship. Prayer is means by which the power of God is released in life. Personal battles and battles for the kingdom in prayer, and the cause of Jesus Christ is thus

Main points:

1. What is prayer?
2. To whom do we pray?
3. Who can pray?
4. Why do we pray?
5. When do we pray?
6. What should be included in prayer?
7. How can we pray with confidence?

Through prayer you gain the power and the privilege to be used by God to help change lives. This power is often unavailable to us primarily because of our unbelief. The disciples of the first century knew how to pray and claim in faith the power of our omnipotent God to help change the course of history. We serve the same God today and the same power is at work in us and through us when pray.

Notes:

The **opening questions** are designed to motivate you. They help you ease into the session.

The **study section** provides an in-depth coverage of what the Bible says about a particular topic.

The **Personal questions** help you reflect upon and apply the contents to your everyday Christian life. The question numbers correspond to the study section numbers.

Opening Question:

- ✦ Where do you usually pray?
- ✦ How often do you pray?
- ✦ For how long do you pray?

Personal Question (1,2):

- ✦ How is praying to the God of the Bible in the name of Jesus through the ministry of the Holy Spirit different from praying to Hindu gods?

Prayer is communicating with God of the Bible

Prayer is simply communicating with God of the Bible. It is a dialogue between two persons who love each other - God and you. As children of God, we are invited to approach the throne of grace with confidence. (Hebrews 11:6)

Closing Question:

1. What is prayer?

The **section topics** help you summarize the study contents.

To know exactly what prayer is, we need to know about the widely held misconceptions about prayer:

- i. Prayer is not meditation by oneself. It is offered to the living God.
- ii. Prayer is different from making requests to gods in other religions. Prayer must be offered in His name, by those who believe in Christ. (John 16:24)
- iii. Prayer is not only about making requests. The main purpose of prayer is to deepen our relationship with God.
- iv. Prayer is not only offered in public but starts alone in a small room. (Matthew 6:6)
- v. Prayer is not repeating meaningless religious words. Prayer is the deliverance of specific intentions.

The **food for thought** section provides examples, stories, and comments that are relevant to the Bible study.

Prayer offered in the name of the Father through the ministry of the Holy Spirit is validated by Jesus. Interpreted to God the Father before, what should the trainee believe in? (Hebrews 11:6)

The **notes section** is for you to jot down your thoughts, questions, and more.

b. Who intercedes for us as we pray? (Romans 8:26-27, 34)

Notes:

The **closing questions** help the trainee to reflect upon all relevant points in the session.

Introducing Personal Discipleship Training

1. The spiritual decay in the 21st century church

- a. Losing power
- b. Losing life
- c. Losing members
- d. Too much emphasis on saving souls but too few on training up disciples for Christ

Early church Christians had power and life, proclaimed the Gospel without a hint of hesitation, and rewrote cultures within their proximities (Acts 2:42-47; 7:54-59)

2. Points to remember for sound discipleship training

- a. Lay people must be encouraged discipleship train the church (lay involvement).
- b. Lives need to be shared and encouraged (life sharing)
- c. Power and life must be communicated (life communication)
- d. Reproducing disciples is the highlight of discipleship training (2 Tim. 2:1-2 and Matthew 28:18-20)

3. Launching a personal discipleship training in your church

- a. The senior pastor engages in a “one on one” or “one on two” discipleship training with the key leaders in the church.
- b. The key leaders then provide the training to other members of the church.
- c. The members continue making disciples

4. The benefits for implementing the discipleship training in your church

- a. Your church is spiritually healthy
- b. Lay people share similar visions as the senior pastor
- c. Lay people are equipped with a tool to teach other members
- d. Members are encouraged to work together in generations to provide ministries in and outside of the church.

Considerations for Effective Discipleship Making

1. Discipleship Making Philosophy

- a. We promise to build up the local church through the discipleship making endeavor
- b. We are producing Christ's disciples and not ours.
- c. We serve as spiritual parents to our disciples.
- d. We commit to continuously reproducing Christ's disciples

2. Discipleship Methodology

- a. Duration
 - i. About 16 weeks (4/1/11)
 - ii. Best to meet for 2 hours each time
- b. Place
 - i. At church, public places, coffee shops, and other comfortable places
- c. Time Allocation
 - i. QT and life sharing (20 minutes)
 - ii. Praise and worship (10 minutes)
 - iii. Homework check (10 minutes)
 - iv. Content discussion (70 minutes)
 - v. Closing and intercessory prayer (10 minutes)
- d. Homework Checkup
 - i. Check memory verses
 - ii. Check QTs
 - iii. Check Sunday reflection notes
 - iv. Be considerate
- e. Understanding Your Disciples
- f. Grasping the theme and preparing reflective questions
- g. Asking your disciples to write a testimony towards the end of the PD Training (2-3 pages)
- h. Recruit an intercessory prayer partner and an accountability partner



FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS:

- 1. Who is Jesus Christ?*
- 2. What has Jesus done for us?*
- 3. What is Jesus doing now?*
- 4. Believe in Jesus!*



SESSION 1

Who is Jesus Christ?

Grasping the Theme:

- ✚ *Jesus is God who came to us as a man to give us eternal life.*

Main Points:

1. *Jesus was fully man*
2. *Jesus is fully God*
3. *Statements of those who were close to Jesus*

Those who knew Jesus spoke intimately of Him as one who was in “very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness” (Philippians 2:6). Amazingly, crammed into this human form was the awesome nature of God with all His divine attributes. Yes, our Lord Jesus Christ is “the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15) and “God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him” (Colossians 1:19). Jesus did not just teach about God or show an example of God; He thought and lived as God on earth for 33 years. This is how Jesus described Himself, “Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

We might ask, “How is it possible for a human being to be fully God?” The Bible teaches us that Jesus was God before He put upon Himself a human form. In other words, Jesus was God who volitionally became a man to live among us to give us a new birth. Certainly, it requires a great faith to believe that Jesus is fully God and at the same time fully man. However, unless we believe that Jesus is a perfect God-man, it is impossible for us to receive the gift of new birth which leads us to eternal heaven (*nibbana*).

Opening Questions:

- ✚ *Is it easy or difficult for you to believe that Jesus was fully man, yet fully God? Please, share.*

Personal Question (1a-d):

- ✚ *How does the fact that Jesus was fully man comfort and strengthen you?*

The Hindu View of Jesus

Hindus believe that Jesus was one of the avatars (incarnations of God). They believe that gods, specifically Vishnu, took on human or animal forms to perform certain feats that would preserve true Hindu teaching.

Some Hindus believe that Jesus spent His so-called silent years (ages 12 to 30) at the feet of Hindu masters in India and that it was their teachings that Christ proclaimed during His ministry.

1. Jesus was fully man

- Where did Jesus grow up? What was His nationality and birth place? (Matthew 2:1, 23)
- What was His childhood like? (Luke 2:52)
- How do the following verses portray Jesus?
 - Matthew 4:2:
 - John 4:6:
 - Mark 4:38:
 - John 11:35:
- How is Jesus similar to and different from us? (Hebrew 4:14-16)
- What do Hindus say about the humanity of Christ? How would you counter their view?

Notes:

Matt. 2:1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi^[a] from the east came to Jerusalem.

Matt. 2:23 and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

Luke 2:52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.
Matt. 4:2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

John 4:6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

Mark 4:38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

John 11:35 Jesus wept.

Hebrew 4:14-16 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven,^[a] Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Personal Question (2):

- ✚ How does the fact that Jesus is fully God enthrall and empower you?

Jesus is one and only incarnated God:

While most Hindus believe that Jesus was just another divine self-embodiment of an avatar god, the Christians believe that He was the one and only incarnation of a true God.

2. Jesus is fully God

- a. Some people have claimed Jesus as a benevolent person, the founder of Christian religion, while others have delineated Him as a prophet. Today, we want to explore what Jesus has to say about Himself? (John 10:30)
- b. In some ways, the statement, “I and the Father are one,” seems rather conceited and self-righteous. Nevertheless, this statement is true, and we discover more statements like this in the Scriptures:
 - i. In John 5:23-24, Jesus says that He shall be praised as much as _____ is praised.
 - ii. In John 14:9, Jesus says that whoever has seen Him has seen _____.
 - iii. In John 10:30-33, why did the Jews want to stone Jesus?

Notes:

John 10:30 “I and the Father are one.”

John 5:23-24 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

²⁴“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.

John 14:9 Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

John 10:30-33 I and the Father are one.”

³¹ Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, ³² but Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?”

³³“We are not stoning you for any good work,” they replied, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.”

Personal Question (3a):

- ✚ Once Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” After hearing an answer, Jesus pulled out another question, this time directed to the disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” If Christ had addressed the same question to you today, how would you answer?

Closing Question:

- ✚ How has your view of Jesus changed since you have received Him as your Savior?

For next session:

- ✚ Read Mark 1-7
- ✚ Preview session 2 (What has Jesus done for us?) by completing its study questions
- ✚ Memorize Isaiah 53:5-6
- ✚ Summarize Sunday message
- ✚ Do your Quiet Times

3. Statements of those who were close to Jesus

- While we value the self-made claims of Jesus Christ, we also esteem the testimonies given by those who were close to Jesus. What did those who knew Jesus say about Him?
 - Matthew 14:33:
 - Matthew 27:54:
 - John 20:28:
- What is the common thread tying these verses?

Notes:

Matthew 14:33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Matthew 27:54 When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

John 20:28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”



SESSION 2

What has Jesus done for us?

Grasping the Theme:

✚ *Jesus died and was resurrected to heal and restore us. By placing our trust in Jesus, we can replace our bad karma with His good karma*

Main Points:

1. *Jesus is the Messiah*
2. *Jesus died on the cross to remove our sins (bad karma).*
3. *The benefits we have received through Christ's death on the cross*

The law of karma encourages people to do *good*. The sad news is that no one is able to successfully live up to the ideals of karmic law. As a result, people are succumbed to the consequences of the cyclic law of karma. Jesus gained abundant karmic merit through His sacrifice on the cross.

That's right! He gained unlimited karmic merit by laying down His life for those whom He loved. The wonderful news is that Jesus is *eagerly waiting* to impute (transfer) His karmic merits on those who are willing to embrace Him as their Savior.

The Karmic law is the moral law imprinted on our hearts by God. The Bible says that Jesus came to fulfill the law not to abolish it (Matt. 5:17). Jesus not only fulfilled all karmic laws (moral laws in the OT) but also removed all bad karma in us by dying for us on the cross. Even though Jesus had committed no bad karma (1 Peter 2:22), He loved us enough to bear our bad karma in His body so that we might die to bad karma and live in righteousness (1 Peter 2:24).

By placing your trust in Jesus today, you too can replace your bad karma with Christ's good karma.

Opening Question:

- ✚ While on earth, Jesus provided many wonderful ministries. What is one ministry that you distinctly remember?

Personal Question (1a-c):

- ✚ Why did Jesus spend so much time ministering to those who were sick and looked upon as sinners by the society? (Matthew 4:23; Mark 2:15)
- ✚ Would Jesus care for the dalits (the untouchables) of India with the same intensity? Why or why not? Please, share.

Personal Question (1e):

- ✚ Even though Jesus had never sinned, He died on the cross to nullify our sins, to heal and to restore us. How does such a selfless act make you feel?

1. Jesus is the Messiah

- Please, read Matthew 11:2-6. How does Jesus respond to a query posed by John, “Are you the Messiah that I have been waiting for?”
- How does Matthew describe Christ’s ministry on earth? (Matthew 4:23)
 - Teaching:
 - Preaching:
 - Healing:
- With whom did Jesus spend much time? (Mark 2:15)
- Despite the fact that Jesus led a sinless life, how did He end up on the cross? (Mark 15:15, 25)
- Even though Jesus had absolutely no bad karma, He died on the cross like criminals and murderers. Why did Jesus die in such a manner?
 - Mark 10:45
 - Romans 5:8

Notes:

Matt. 11:2-6 When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples³ to ask him, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”

⁴ Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵ The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy^[a] are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ⁶ Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”

Matthew 4:23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Mark 2:15 While Jesus was having dinner at Levi’s house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.

Mark 15:15 Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Personal Question (2a):

✚ *The Bible says that the reason Jesus died on the cross was to remove our sins. Are there any sins or bad karmas in your life that need to be taken care of at the cross?*

The Merits of Jesus

Jesus needs to be viewed as Karmic Christ who has gained immeasurable merit through His substitutionary death on the cross. His grace (karmic merit) is sufficient to blot out the sins (the demerits) of all human beings.

2. Jesus died on the cross to remove our sins (bad karma)

- a. What does the Bible say about the consequences of sin? (Romans 3:23)

- b. By dying for us on the cross, what has Christ gained? (Eph. 1:7)

Notes:

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

Eph. 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

Personal Question (3a-b):

- ✦ What blessings of God have you observed in the lives of other Christians as a result of their accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior?

Closing Question:

- ✦ What blessings have you experienced in your life by welcoming Christ into your life?

Christ's abundant karmic merit gained at the cross can be imputed (transferred) to those who accept Him as their personal Lord and Savior (Matt. 5:17).

For next session:

- ✦ Read 1 Cor. 15 and Revelations 1-6
- ✦ Preview session 3 (What is Jesus doing now?) by completing its study questions
- ✦ Memorize Romans 6:4 and Ephesians 1:22
- ✦ Summarize Sunday message
- ✦ Do your Quiet Times

3. The benefits we have received through Christ's death on the cross

- What benefits have been rendered to us by Christ's death on the cross?
 - Ephesians 2:13-14
 - Colossians 1:20
- What other benefits have we received as a society as the result of Christ's death on the cross?
 - Ephesians 2:14-15
 - Ephesians 5:24-25
 - Ephesians 6:1,4
 - Ephesians 6:5, 9
 - Colossians 1:20

- Teaching
- Preaching
- Healing

3 Years of Ministry

- Dying
- Resurrecting
- Giving life

3 Days on the Cross

Notes:

Eph. 2:13-14 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,
Colossians 1:20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.
Eph. 5:24-25 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.
²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her
Ephesians 5:9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)



SESSION 3

What is Jesus doing now?

Grasping the Theme:

 *Jesus was resurrected from the dead and presently dwells among us.*

Main Points:

1. *Jesus was resurrected from the dead*
2. *Jesus is with God*
3. *Jesus is superior to all things*
4. *Our faith in the resurrected Christ*

After dying for us on the cross, Jesus resurrected from the dead in three days. He became the first fruit of all living, unlocking the doors for others to experience new birth in God's heavenly place (*nibbana*). For many of us, *nibbana* may seem like a far-fetched place, however the Bible claims that it is even more authentic than the earth we live in (Rev 21; 2 Peter 3:13). In order to enter this heavenly place though, we must be born again in Christ Jesus.

Jesus is cheering us on to unite with Him in that eternal place once we depart from this earth, intervening at significant junctures to ensure that we journey there safely. He did not just earn enough karmic merits to remove our sins but provided a way for the believers to live with Him eternally. In this sense, we are Christians living in the gap of reality between the present world and the eternal world to come.

Opening Question

✚ At the core of the gospel lies the truth that Jesus rose from the dead. How excited are you about this truth? Please, share.

Personal Question (1a-c):

✚ Have you ever had doubts about the historicity of Christ's resurrection? Do you have any doubts it presently?

A final rebirth in Christ

Hindus want to escape the cycle of reincarnations. They do not want to be born again. Hence, when we converse with a Hindu, it is important that we stress the final rebirth of Christians into God's everlasting kingdom.

1. Jesus was resurrected from the dead

- a. What did Jesus say will happen soon after His death on the cross? (Matthew 16:21)

- b. Who witnessed Jesus after His resurrection from the dead? (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

- c. What did Jesus say to His disciples after His resurrection? (Matthew 28:18) How did Paul describe the resurrected Christ? (Romans 1:4)

Notes:

Matthew 16:21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance^[a]: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas,^[b] and then to the Twelve.⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Romans 1:4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power^[a] by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

Personal Question (2):

- ✚ *Where is Jesus now?
What is He doing on your behalf?*

Personal Question (3):

- ✚ *Jesus is God, and He is superior to all things. How does this truth affect your worldview?*

With much patience and love

When communicating the gospel to Hindus, we need to approach them with much patience and love. The Hindus will receive Jesus when they see that Christ has a greater power than their Hindu gods; they need to witness and experience the power of the resurrected Christ released in their lives (i.e. healings, answers to prayer, and so on). So, it is critical for us to earnestly pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal His power and to break down the walls of their unbelief.

2. Jesus is with God

- Where did Jesus go after His resurrection? (Acts 1:9-11)
- Where is Jesus at the present moment? (Eph. 1:20)
- What was the core of disciples' message after Jesus ascended into heaven? (Acts 2:32; 4:33)

3. Jesus is superior to all things

- Over what aspects of this life is Jesus presently superior? (Eph. 1: 21)
- What two things are placed under Christ's feet as a result of His victory on the cross? (Eph. 1: 22)
- How is Jesus exalted in Philippians 2:9-11?

Notes:

Acts 1:9-11 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Ephesians 1:20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.

Acts 2:32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

Acts 4:33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all Ephesians 1:2-22 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.

²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,

Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,

Personal Question (4b):

- ✚ *It's possible for people to respect Christ without fully believing in the historicity of His resurrection. On what grounds do you believe that Jesus rose from the dead?*

Closing Question:

- ✚ *Jesus was resurrected from the dead to give us life. Knowing this truth, how would you live out your Christian life differently?*

For next session:

- ✚ *Read John 1-7*
- ✚ *Preview session 4 (I believe in Jesus!) by completing its study questions*
- ✚ *Memorize John 1:12 and John 3:16*
- ✚ *Summarize Sunday message*
- ✚ *Do your Quiet Times*

4. Our faith in the resurrected Christ

- How does the faith in the resurrected Jesus influence our daily living as Christians? (Romans 6:4-5)
- If Jesus did not rise from the dead, what problems might Christians face? (1 Cor. 15:14-19)
- What evidences point to the fact Jesus rose from the dead? (biblical, historical, archaeological, scientific, and anthropological facts, and more)

Notes:

Romans 6:4-5 ⁴ 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. ⁵ 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.

1 Cor. 15:14-19 ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.



SESSION 4

I Believe in Jesus!

Grasping the Theme:

 *In Jesus, we experience the power of renewed life and growth in faith.*

Main Points:

1. *Jesus loves me, and I believe in Him*
2. *Transformations*
3. *Newly established relationship*
4. *Review: Fellowship with Jesus*

History reveals that Jesus died on the cross two thousand years ago. He also resurrected from the dead in three days. He ascended into heaven and is sitting on the right-hand side of God's holy throne. On the last day, together with the Father God, Jesus will judge the living and the dead. These are the truths found in the Scriptures. However, to be saved from our shame and guilt, it is not enough just to know these facts. We must believe with all of our hearts that Jesus has enough merits to give us a new birth which leads us to heaven.

Believing means that we personally receive Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. It is only when we accept Jesus into our hearts that we can experience the joy of salvation, not only in this life time but also in the eternity to come.

Opening Question:

✚ Have you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? Please, share with your mentor how you came to receive Him in your life.

Personal Question (1a-c):

✚ What actions have you taken to express your faith in Jesus?

1. Jesus loves me, and I believe in him

- a. When God declared His love for the world, His passion included everything in it: the nature, creations, our society, and so on. However, the Bible says His love was particularly directed towards the human beings (John 3:16).

- b. Because God loved the world, He sent His own son, Jesus. ***What did Jesus do for the world? For you?*** (John 3:16)

- c. What does it mean to believe in Jesus Christ?
 - i. Romans 10:9-10

 - ii. John 1:12

 - iii. Acts 2:38

Notes:

John 3:16 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.

Romans 10:9-10 ⁹ If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

John 1:12 ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

Acts 2:38 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.

Personal Question (2a-b):

- ✦ What transformations have taken place in your life since you have received Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

Three paths to salvation

In Hinduism, people are saved by committing to one of the three ways:

1. The “**way of works**” – by observing all the laws and obligations of the Hindu scriptures.
2. The “**way of knowledge**” – by denying one’s life and seeking salvation in a mystical realization of identity with gods.
3. The “**way of devotion**” – by totally committing oneself to the worship of a particular god or goddess; in this case, one’s deity will do all that is necessary to save.

2. Transformations

- a. What transformations typically take place when we receive Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior?

i. Now:

ii. In the future:

iii. In the Past:

- b. What sort of transformations can we anticipate for someone who has accepted Jesus Christ?

i. In his/her family (Acts 16:30-31)

ii. Among his/her neighbors (1 John 4:11)

iii. In the society (Mathew 5:13-16)

Notes:

Acts 16:30-31 ³⁰ He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”

1 John 4:11 ¹¹ Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Matthew 5:13-16 ¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. ¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Personal Question (3):

- ✚ How deeply are you connected to Jesus?
- ✚ How deeply are you connected to your church community?

Christian Witness to Hindus

The key to Christian witness to Hindus (as is true with other religious groups) is to engage the person, not the religion of the person.

Because Hinduism in general does not stress humanitarian efforts, outreach projects such as works of mercy, and building educational facilities and hospitals have had great success in introducing the gospel of Christ.

In the face of the perplexity engendered by the diversity of Hindu beliefs, the assurance of truth and salvation evidenced by Christians has spoken loudly to Hindus.

Loving relationships that do not recognize the boundaries of caste or social status have led numerous Hindus to receive Jesus Christ.

Moreover, spiritual power encounters, whereby people are set free from the bondage of demons by the power of the Holy Spirit, have also brought people to salvation in Christ Jesus.

3. Newly established relationship

- a. When we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and Lord, a special relationship is forged between God and us; instantly, we become God's people (1 Peter 2:9) and His children (John 1:12). Moreover, in Christ, we are given opportunities to build relationships with other Christian brothers and sisters. **How does Romans 12:5 describe this relationship?**

- b. Christians become one in the body of Christ. We call this the church. Although the present church is hardly perfect, it is an entity purchased by Christ's blood. **How does Ephesians 5:23 describe the relationship between Jesus and the church?** (Ephesians 5:23)

Now is time to commit to Jesus Christ. Would you give your life to Jesus to experience His resurrected power in your life today?

Notes:

1 Peter 2:9 ⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

John 1:12 ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

Romans 12:5 ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Ephesians 5:23 ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

Closing Question:

- ✚ Are you presently experiencing **the joy of salvation** in your life? Please, share.

4. Review: Fellowship with Jesus

- a. **Who is Jesus?** Jesus is God who came to us as a man.
- b. **What has Jesus done for us?** Jesus led a perfect life but died on a cross to remove our bad karmas or sins.
- c. **What is Jesus doing now?** Jesus resurrected from the dead and is now reigning over every aspect of our life.
- d. **I believe in Jesus!** When you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, your life and the world around you will positively transform.

Please, write a prayer reflecting on the works of the cross and your personal relationship with Jesus.

Prayer:

For next session:

- ✚ Read Psalm 1, 5, & 199
- ✚ Preview Q.T. session by completing its study questions
- ✚ Memorize Psalm 1:2-3 and Joshua 1:8
- ✚ Summarize Sunday message
- ✚ Write a prayer
- ✚ Do your Quiet Times

III Quiet Time:



The theory and practice of Q.T.

Grasping the Theme:

- ✦ *A relationship with God through QT is necessary in order to have fellowship with and to know Him.*

Main Points:

1. *Carving out a quiet time with God*
2. *Reasons to deepen our relationship with God*
3. *Points to consider when spending QT with God*
4. *Applying God's Word in our daily life*

An intimate relationship between God and us is forged when we commit our lives to Christ. Our relationship with Christ cannot be severed; it is a lasting relationship (Romans 8: 35-39). To deepen this relationship, we need to daily spend time with God. To receive His guidance, to be more like Christ, and to become an obedient disciple of Christ, we need to inculcate ourselves with the Word and depend on Him through our earnest prayers. As it is important to engage in quality time with God, we also need to spend quantity time with Him. The time that we spend personally with God is called Quiet Time (QT) or a time of devotion.

Notes:

Opening Question:

✚ What do you do to deepen your relationship with Jesus Christ?

Personal Question (1b-e):

✚ Do you daily set aside a quiet moment with God? If so, describe your quiet times with Him?

1. Carving out a quiet time with God

- a. How did Jesus spend His days? (Matthew 4:23)
- b. How do you spend your days? Jot down the things you do in the course of a day in the order of most time spent.

Daily Item	Time Spent
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	

- c. Jesus was often busy providing ministries, but that did not hamper Him from drawing close to His Father. What did Jesus consider as a priority in His life? (Luke 5:15-16)
- d. What did Jesus do as He began a new day? (Mark 1:35)
- e. How do you spend your morning hours?

Notes:

Matthew 4:23 ²³ Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Luke 5:15-16 ¹⁵ Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. ¹⁶ But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Mark 1:35 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.

Personal Question (2b):

✦ How would you assess your relationship with Jesus? Would you say that your present relationship with him is strong or weak? Please, share.

2. Reasons to deepen our relationship with God

- a. David was a man after God’s own heart, and consequently, was used greatly to fulfill God’s will (Acts 13:22). He was able to please God, because he was engaged in a deep relationship with Him. ***How did David deepen his relationship with God?*** (Psalms 5:3 and 143:8)

- b. Here are some reasons why we spend daily QT with God:

- i. ***To have a personal relationship with God***

Romans 8:39 tells us that once forged, our relationship with God cannot be severed. However, to deepen our relationship, it is necessary for us to continue our fellowship with Him. There are several ways to encourage this fellowship. One way is to have intimate moments with Him through QTs.

Notes:

Acts 13:22²² After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.

Psalms 5:3 In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.

Psalms 143:8 Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life.

Romans 8:39³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Personal Question (2aii):

- ✚ What has occupied your mind lately?
- ✚ How would you allow God's Word to guide and protect you from the struggles of this life? Please, share.

ii. To receive His guidance and protection

- Guidance through the Word of God (Psalm 119:105)
- Protection through the Word of God (Psalms 119:133)
- Answers to our prayer through the Word of God

iii. To take after His character, personality, and life (2 Corinthians 3:18)

- For Christians to serve as *salt and light* of this world and make Christ known, we need to be more like Jesus, emulating His characters and deeds.
- For our lives to be transformed, we need to engage in a personal relationship with God.

iv. To carry forth His good work (Luke 5:15-16, Mark 1:35)

- To serve Jesus and to establish His kingdom on earth, we need to first receive His power and direction during our quiet moments with Him.

Notes:

Psalms 119:105 Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.
Psalms 119:133 Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me.
2 Corinthians 3:18 ¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate^[a] the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
Luke 5:15-16 ¹⁵ Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses.
¹⁶ But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.
Mark 1:35 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.

Personal Question (3):

✦ What elements (factors) have held you back from spending quiet times with God? How can you overcome these elements (factors)?

3. Points to consider when spending Quiet Time (QT) with God

- a. **Start with praise:** Praise prepares our heart to hear His voice and to seek His will.
- b. **Ask for the help of the Holy Spirit:** Holy Spirit is the author of the Bible and as such, He can help us understand the Scriptures.
- c. **Listen actively to the Word:** God wants to comfort, warn, direct, and instruct us through His Word:
 - First, **read aloud** the given text several times.
 - Second, **meditate** on the Scriptures and consider the attributes and characters of God (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit)
 - Third, **allow the Word to speak** to your heart.

Notes:

Personal Question (3e-f):

✦ Have you ever shared with someone how the Holy Spirit touched, encouraged, and strengthened you while you were engaged in QTs? If so, please tell your mentor how your sharing blessed that individual.

- d. **Apply the Word practically:** Meditating on the Word without applying its content is like growing a fruit tree and not expecting the tree to bear fruits. When God touches, encourages, nurtures, and rebukes you, apply His teaching in your life.
- e. **Pray for an obedient heart:** Ask the Holy Spirit to encourage you to faithfully submit to the Word.
- f. **Share with others how the Word has touched and transformed your life:** Tell others how the Holy Spirit has touched and transformed you through the Word. As you share the grace you have received, your relationship with others will also deepen.
- g. **One approach to effectively spend QT with God is to utilize P.R.E.S.S.:**
 - P: Pray for a moment
 - R: Read His Word
 - E: Examine His Word
 - S: Say back to God in prayer
 - S: Share with others

Notes:

Personal Question:

- ✚ How do you apply God's Word in your life? Do you apply it personally, practically, and possibly?

- ✚ Please, share a QT application with your mentor to ensure that you are effectively applying God's Word.

Closing Question:

- ✚ Please, share how God has recently strengthened and blessed you through one or two of your QTs.

For next session:

- ✚ Read Matthew 1-7
- ✚ Preview session #1 (*The Assurance of Salvation*) by completing its study questions
- ✚ Memorize John 15:7 and Phil. 4:6-7
- ✚ Summarize Sunday message
- ✚ Do your Quiet Times

4. Applying God's Word in our daily lives

- a. What is the difference between applying God's Word and simply reading through it? (Psalm 119:15, 97)

- b. For the Word of God to be a lamp upon our feet and a light upon our path (Psalms 119:105), we need to daily apply God's Word in our lives. Here are three ways to effectively apply His Word:
 - i. **Personally:**
 - ii. **Practically:**
 - iii. **Possibly:**

- c. It's not easy to be regularly engaged in QTs, especially when we are affixed to our busy schedules. Please, consider the following advices to get into the habit of consistently doing your QTs:
 - i. Discipline yourself to daily offer your devotions to God (1 Timothy 4:7; 1 Cor. 9:25-26).
 - ii. Find a fellow Christian with whom you can share your QTs (Hebrews 10:24-25, 2 Timothy 2:2).
 - iii. Do not get discouraged when you miss a QT or two. Get back to it as soon as possible.

Notes:

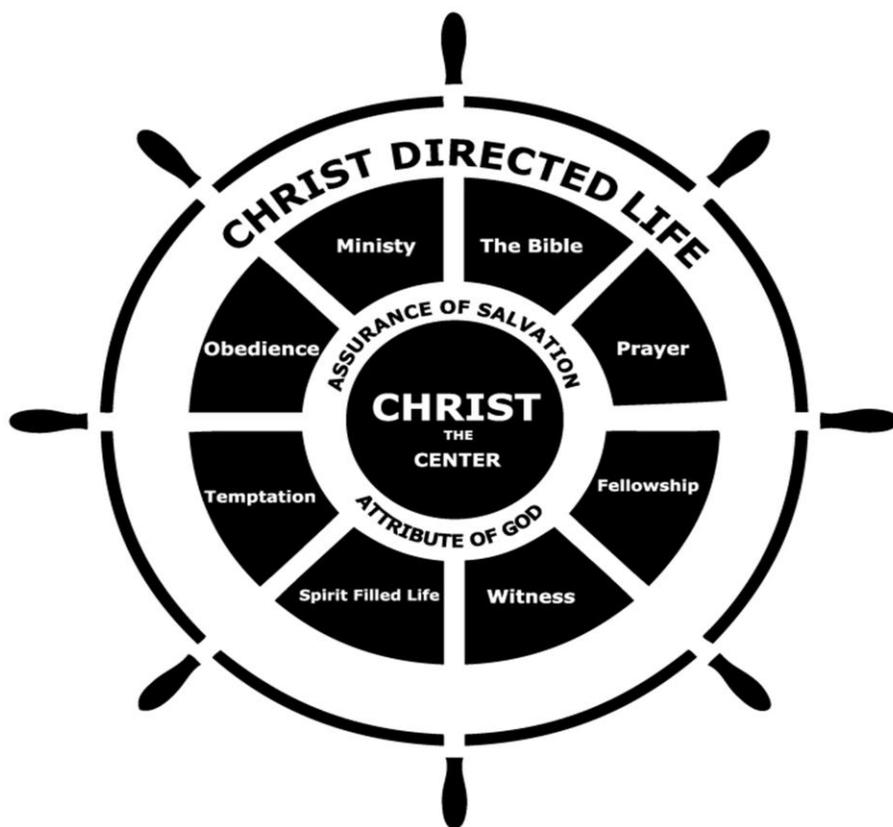
Psalms 119:15 I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.
Psalms 119:105 Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.
1 Timothy 4:7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly.
1 Corinthians 9:25-26 ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶ Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air.
Hebrews 10:24-25 ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.



GROWTH

Through Personal Discipleship

**An
OVERVIEW**



Jesus at the Center

Galatians 2:20; John 15:5

The key to living a victorious Christian life is to place Christ at the center of everything that we do. When we allow Christ to take precedence in our life, in essence, we are asking Him to direct and rule over every aspect of our life. ***Is Jesus Christ situated at the center stage of your life today?***

Our desire in life is to grow into His likeness. As we become more like Christ, we can bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

Unfortunately, putting on the likeness of Christ and putting off our old selves are hardly an easy task. Hence, we must depend upon the Holy Spirit to recalibrate our minds so to emulate Christ's heart. This dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit is an action that God is hoping that all Christians take to draw closer to Him.

The helm illustrated in the previous page reminds us that our lives must be Christ driven. The illustration provides the following topics of study to enable us to grow into the likeness of Jesus:

1. The Assurance of Salvation

1 John 5:13; John 5:24

2. The Attributes of God

1 Chronicles 29:11-12; Psalms 36:5-6

3. The Word of God

1 Peter 2:2; 2 Timothy 3:16

4. Prayer

Philippians 4:6-7; John 15:7

5. Fellowship

Romans 12:4-5; John 13:34-35

6. Witnessing

Romans 1:16; 1 Peter 3:15

7. Spirit-filled Life

Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:22-23

8. Overcoming Temptations

James 1:14-15; 1 Corinthians 10:13

9. Obedience in the Christian Walk

Romans 12:1; Luke 9:23

10. Ministry

1 Corinthians 3:9; 1 Peter 2:9-10



SESSION 1

The Assurance of Salvation

Grasping the Theme:

- ✚ We gain the assurance of salvation when we commit our intellect, emotions, and will to our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Main Points:

1. Intellectual Faith
2. Emotional Faith
3. Volitional Faith
4. My salvation in Christ

Now that you believe in Jesus Christ and have become a member of Christ's body, here is a question you need to answer with an unwavering assurance, "Do you believe in Jesus Christ?"

If your answer is a "yes," congratulations! As far as we can tell, you have the assurance of salvation in Christ Jesus. However, to make sure that you have an unwavering assurance of salvation, we will ask nine more questions. Please, answer these questions as honestly as you can:

1. **Do you believe in Jesus Christ?**
Yes No Not Sure
2. **Is Jesus Christ in your heart?**
Yes No Not Sure
3. **Are you sure that your sins are forgiven?**
Yes No Not Sure
4. **Are you a child of God?**
Yes No Not Sure
5. **Do you have eternal life?**
Yes No Not Sure

Notes:

Our faith in Christ

A genuine faith and commitment to Christ involves the surrendering of all of our intellect, emotions, and volitional will.

- 6. **Are you saved?**
Yes No Not Sure
- 7. **Are you sure you'll be in heaven if you die tonight?**
Yes No Not Sure
- 8. **Have you received the Holy Spirit?**
Yes No Not Sure
- 9. **Are you born again?**
Yes No Not Sure
- 10. **Are you sure that you will not be condemned to eternal death?**
Yes No Not Sure

By positively answering these questions, you have confirmed your assurance of salvation in Christ. But remember, as you continue on your Christian journey, it is important that you experience God with all of your intellect, emotions, and will. When all of these three commitments (intellectual, emotional, and volitional commitments) are made and daily renewed, you can be assured that your faith in Jesus Christ will not be challenged or dissuaded.

Notes:

Opening Question:

✚ Do you have the assurance of salvation? Please, share the grounds for the confidence you have in Jesus Christ..

Intellectual Faith

Christianity is not “a blind leap of faith.” It is built upon historical facts, documented by centuries of scholarship and research.

Many leading scholars have dedicated their lives to investigating the life, teachings, death, resurrection, and influence of Jesus Christ.

For example, we have more historical evidence proving His resurrection than we have of the fact Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo. We have more artifacts validating the veracity of the Bible than any other ancient documents.

1. **Intellectual Faith:** To make an intellectual commitment to Christ, we need to have a clear understanding of the gospel recorded in the Bible.

a. Who is Jesus?

i. What claims did Jesus make about himself?

- John 10:30

- John 14:8-9

ii. What did others think of Jesus?

- Matthew 14:33

- Matthew 27:54

- John 20:28

Notes:

John 10:30 I and the Father are one

John 14:8-9 Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”⁹ Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

Matthew 14:33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Matthew 27:54 When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

John 20:28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

Personal Question (1a-d):

- ✦ What truths about Jesus do you hold unto to have the assurance of salvation?

“The fact that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day in full continuity of body and soul, and passed into a mode of new relationships with those who knew him on earth – the fact seems as secure as historical evidence can make it.”

Edwin Selwyn

- b. What did Jesus do?
 - i. What did Jesus do while residing on earth? (Matt. 4:23; Acts 10:38)
 - ii. What was the purpose of His death on the cross? (Mark 19:45; Romans 5:8)

- c. What is he doing now?
 - i. What did Christ say would happen after His death on the cross? (Matt. 16:21)
 - ii. What is Jesus doing now? Where is He presently? (Eph. 1:20-23)

- d. What does it mean to commit to Christ intellectually? (John 3:16)

Notes:

Matthew 4:23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Acts 10:38³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Matthew 16:21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

Ephesians 1:20-23 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,²¹ 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.²² And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Personal Question (2):

- ✚ Describe an experience you had with Jesus where you felt emotionally charged? How did this experience help you in your Christian walk?

Emotional Faith

An emotion is a feeling or reaction to a specific act, event, or experience. Having been created with emotions, we experience emotional reactions in the process of hearing the gospel of Jesus, coming to know him, and believing in him.

2. Emotional Faith

- a. People respond emotionally to the gospel call.
 - i. How did the people in Jerusalem respond to Peter's sermon? How about the Jews who heard Stephen's message? (Acts 2:37, 7:54)

- b. People respond emotionally, however, in a different manner.
 - i. How did Apostle Paul come to know Jesus Christ? (Acts 22:6-10) Compare and contrast Paul's experience with that of Timothy? (2 Tim. 1:5).

- c. Do not depend wholly on emotions.
 - i. While we need to experience God emotionally to grow and mature in Christ, we cannot base our faith solely on our emotional experiences.

Notes:

Acts 2:37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Acts 7:54 When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.

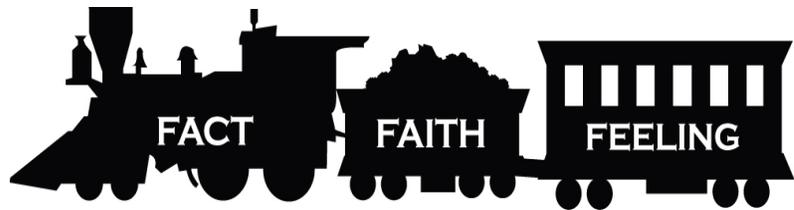
Acts 22:6-10 ⁶"About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. ⁷I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?' ⁸"Who are you, Lord?' I asked. "'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. ⁹My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. ¹⁰"What shall I do, Lord?' I asked." 'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.'

2 Tim. 1:5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

Suggestions for effective evangelism:

- ✚ *Form sincere friendships with people and show real interest in the way of their life. Accept and return their hospitalities; through friendship, your Christ-like life of peace and joy in the Lord will shine through.*
- ✚ *Concentrate on the Lord Jesus Christ rather than on “Christianity.” We are to present the truths of the gospel rather than defend the traditional church practices or denominations.*
- ✚ *Study Hinduism to see its wide range of beliefs and practices. The most popular Hindu scripture is called the Bhagavad-Gita. Listen to Hindus to understand where they stand in faith.. Knowing Hinduism will enable you to relate the truth to the Hindus from their tradition first and then from the Bible. This was the Apostle Paul’s approach in Acts 17.*

- d. Our feelings must be based on our faith in the Word of God. .
- i. Our emotions must be based on the Word of God.
 - ii. Our faith must also be based on the Word of God.
 - iii. The **picture below** illustrates the relationship among the three commitments aforementioned: intellectual commitment (the facts) hauls the other two commitments: the volitional commitment (faith) first and then the emotional commitment (feeling).



Notes:

Personal Question (3a, b):

- ✦ How is making a volitional commitment different from making intellectual or emotional commitment?
- ✦ Have you made a volitional commitment to Christ? (Luke 18:22; 39-41)

Closing Question:

- ✦ How did you come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ? Please, share in depth with your mentor.
- ✦ How would you respond to the following statement, “Salvation is not based on our works but on the grace of our loving God”?

Volitional Faith

In addition to the intellect and emotions, becoming a Christian and being sure of one’s salvation involves the **will**. Jesus emphasized the importance of one’s will in affirming his or her assurance of salvation. In order for a Christian to believe in and follow Jesus, one needs to have made a volitional (willful) commitment.

For next session:

- ✦ Read John 1-7
- ✦ Preview session #2 (*The Attributes of God*) by completing its study questions
- ✦ Memorize 1 Kings 29:11-12 and Psalm 36:5-6
- ✦ Summarize Sunday message
- ✦ Do your Quiet Times

3. Volitional Faith

- a. What kind of volitional commitment did Jesus ask of a young ruler? (Luke 18:22)
- b. How did the blind beggar who met Jesus on the road to Jericho express his commitment? (Luke 18:39-41)

4. My salvation in Christ is:

- a. Based on the Word of God (1 John 5:9-13)
- b. Testified by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16)
- c. Proven by my transformed lifestyle (the fruits of the Spirit – John 15:8)

Notes:

Luke 18:22 When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face. “Is this the way you answer the high priest?” he demanded.

Luke 18:39-41 ³⁹ But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release ‘the king of the Jews’?”
⁴⁰ They shouted back, “No, not him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

1 John 5:9-13 We accept human testimony, but God’s testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son.
¹⁰ Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. ¹¹ And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Romans 8:16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.

John 15:8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.



SESSION 2

The Attributes of God

Grasping the Theme:

✚ *To live a life pleasing to God, we need to know God more deeply.*

Main Points:

1. *The attributes that are unique to God*
2. *The attributes of God shared by humanity*

We have entered into a special relationship with God because of Christ's work on the cross, through which our debt of sin was paid in full and we have been reconciled with God. It is with certainty that we know we are God's children, and we believe that we will live with Him forever. The Holy Spirit counsels us to be possessors of such an unshakable faith (Romans 8:16).

As we begin our spiritual journey with this conviction in view, we need to learn objective facts about the God in whom we have placed our faith. Abstract and philosophical conceptions of God will no longer suffice and may even be self-defeating. We need to know our God more deeply. Only with informed knowledge from the Bible will our faith take root and become stronger, helping us to break new grounds toward empowered ministry.

As Christians, we already know God. But if God is to be the constant center of our lives, we need to know more about His attributes, or His characters. In order to live in a manner pleasing to God, we must know Him on a personal level. The Bible has very specific teachings about God and His attributes.

Many people live a life of doubt like a wave of the sea blown and tossed by the wind, a typical picture of a weaker believer once painted by the apostle James, because they do not know God's character. Thus, deepening our understanding of God is very important. If we do not know Him, it is easy to be misguided, since it is difficult to perceive clearly where we stand in the master plan of God.

Opening Question:

- ✚ Why is it important to learn the attributes of God? What are the reasons found in Hosea 6:2 and 6:6?

Personal Question (1a,b,c):

- ✚ Our God is bigger and greater than all of the created beings and spirits put together. How does this fact help you to have a right perspective in life?

Six reasons to learn the attributes of God:

1. So that our thoughts may be focused on God
2. So that we may live a life pleasing to God
3. So that we may understand God' will towards us.
4. So that we may be sensitive to His leading
5. So that we may worship God truthfully
6. So that we may lead faithful lives as Christians

Hosea 6:2 and 6:6 asserts that the reasons for deepening our knowledge of God are (1) to be revived (restored) and (2) to become more like Him.

1. The Attributes that are unique to God

(Incommunicable Attributes): The following attributes are those that exclusive to God (1 Chronicles 29:10-13).

- a. **God is sovereign:** The word sovereign means chief, highest or supreme. When we say that God is sovereign, we are saying that He is the ultimate ruler of the universe.
 - i. How does Romans 11:36 describe God's sovereignty over all things?
- b. **God is eternal:** There has never been a time when God did not exist. He has no beginning and no end. God is not bound by time. He sees the past and the future in the present tense.
 - i. Read Isaiah 44:6 and 1 Timothy 1:17. How do these verses illustrate God's eternal nature?
- c. **God is omniscient:** God possesses all the knowledge there is to have. Nothing ever takes Him by surprise including the salvation of believers, world events, natural catastrophes, and even the thoughts of humankind - there is nothing that He does not know.
 - i. The Bible teaches that God is the source of all wisdom (Isaiah 40:12-14) and that He is the possessor of all knowledge (1John 3:20).
 - ii. Does this also mean that God knows every aspect of our personal life?

Notes:

Hosea 6:2 After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence.
Romans 11:36 For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.
Isaiah 44:6 "This is what the LORD says— Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.

Personal Question (1d):

✚ How does knowing that God is omnipresent help you find comfort and peace in life? (Psalms 139:7-10)

Personal Questions (1a,e):

✚ How does your attitude toward Satan and the world change as you realize God is sovereign over all things?

d. **God is omnipresent:** God is infinite and present everywhere, through time and space. Therefore, it is foolish to think that we can hide from Him. In faith, a believer can experience the presence of God at all times, and know the blessings of walking with Him.

i. What does it mean that God fills the heavens and the earth? (Jeremiah 23:24)

e. **God is omnipotent:** God is greater than all of His created beings put together. He is powerful, and by His power, God reigns over all things.

i. God is able to accomplish more than we ask, because He is a powerful God (Psalms 147:5, Ephesians 3:20).

ii. How can our faith in the omnipotent God help us in times of trouble? (Philippians 4:13, 2 Corinthians 12:9)

f. **God is immutable:** God always keeps His promises. He does not change nor fail. Hence, we can always confide in Him (Psalms 102:27, James 1:17).

i. Even when we do not understand His ways, we can still confide in Him.

ii. God does not change like shifting shadows (James 1:17).

Notes:

Jeremiah 23:24 Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.
Psalms 147:5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.
Ephesians 3:20 ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us
Philippians 4:13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.
2 Corinthians 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.
Psalm 102:27 But you remain the same, and your years will never end.
James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Personal Question (2a-d):

✚ When God created you in His image, He crafted in you the ability to emulate Him. From the list we have considered in this session, which attribute(s) of God do you reflect the most in your life? Please share.

To know God deeply

The greatest and the highest thoughts a mind can contemplate upon are the thoughts of God. Only when we know God for who He is can we truly worship Him and lead a life of genuine faith.

2. The attributes of God shared by humanity

(communicable attributes): The following attributes of God are in part, emulated by humanity:

- a. **God is benevolent:** God is love. He has lavished His love on us unconditionally despite our shortcomings. He has also demonstrated His love by sending His son, Jesus, to die for us (Romans 5:8).
 - i. How did God demonstrate His love? (John 3:16)
 - ii. What is our responsibility as recipients of His love? (1John 3:16)

- b. **God is truthful:** God cannot lie. He is always truthful. The only place where people will discover untainted truth is in the presence of God.
 - i. God does not lie (Titus 1:2).
 - ii. What kind of life does God expect His children to lead in this world? (Philippians 2:15)

Notes:

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 3:16 ¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

Titus 1:2 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time,

Philippians 2:15 ¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”^[a] Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky

Closing Question:

- ✚ What are some attributes of God that you feel are least evident in your Christian life?
- ✚ What are some ways you can foster greater likeness to God?

- c. **God is righteous:** It is impossible for God to engage in sin. He is perfect and expects those who dwell with Him to be perfect as well. Unfortunately, we can never be as perfect as God, and as such, are in a constant need of His mercy and saving grace.
 - i. God is righteous in all His ways (Deuteronomy 32:4).
 - ii. God's people must also be righteous as God is righteous (Matthew 5:48).
 - iii. What can we do to become more righteous?

- d. **God is just:** His justice will be made known on the Judgment Day. On this day, He will judge people with equity. For some, this may sound comforting, but for others, alarming.
 - i. What kind of life do we need to lead to avoid God's wrath against all the godlessness and wickedness? (Romans 1:18-19)

Notes:

Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just.

A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

Matthew 5:48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Romans 1:18-19 ¹⁸The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

For next session:

- ✚ Read John 8-14
- ✚ Preview session #3 (*The Word of God: Bible*) by completing its study questions
- ✚ Memorize Timothy 3:16 and 1 Peter 2:2.
- ✚ Summarize Sunday message
- ✚ Do your Quiet Times



SESSION 3

The Word of God (Bible)

Grasping the Theme

- ✦ *God's Word teaches us about His saving grace and how to daily connect with Him.*

Main points:

1. *The purpose of God's Word*
2. *Five ways to connect with God's Word*

The Bible is a compilation of books written by approximately 40 authors inspired by the Holy Spirit during a period spanning 1,500 years. The Old Testament of the Bible is what Moses and the prophets received from God and handed down through oral tradition and written form. Comprised of 39 books, the Old Testament includes the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Writings written mostly in Hebrew.

בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

The New Testament of the Bible is a compilation of books and letters written by Jesus' disciples who were inspired by God. Although it was originally passed down orally, the various books and letters of the New Testament were written down and passed on during the latter half of the first century A.D. This was when most of Jesus' disciples and His original followers were still alive. The books of the NT were canonized around the fourth century A.D. This choice was not based on the authority of the church but was an official acknowledgement by the Holy Spirit that the Bible was the Word of God. The New Testament is comprised of 27 books and was, in the original manuscripts, written entirely in Greek.

πα̅σα̅ γρα̅φη; θε̅ο̅π̅ν̅ε̅υ̅σ̅τ̅ο̅ς̅ και; ω̅φ̅ε̅π̅λ̅ι̅μ̅ο̅ς̅
π̅ρ̅ο̅;̅ δι̅δα̅σ̅κα̅λ̅ι̅π̅α̅ν, π̅ρ̅ο̅;̅ ε̅φ̅λ̅ε̅γ̅μ̅ο̅σ̅ν, π̅ρ̅ο̅;̅ ε̅
φ̅π̅α̅ν̅ο̅ρ̅θ̅ω̅σ̅ι̅ν, π̅ρ̅ο̅;̅ παι̅δει̅π̅α̅ν̅ τη̅;̅ν̅ ε̅φ̅ν̅ δ̅ικ̅αι̅
ο̅σ̅υ̅π̅ν̅η̅/, ¹⁷ι̅να̅ α̅[ρ̅τι̅ο̅ς̅ η̅.;̅/ ο̅θ̅ του̅ θε̅ου̅ ᾧ̅[ν̅θ̅
ρω̅πο̅ς̅, π̅ρ̅ο̅;̅ πα̅ ν̅ ε̅[ρ̅γ̅ον̅ α̅φ̅γα̅θο̅;̅ν̅ ε̅φ̅ξ̅η̅ρ̅τι̅σ̅μ̅ε̅
π̅ν̅ο̅ς̅. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Studying and applying the Scripture: Using the five finger approach

“The Scriptures were not given to increase our knowledge but to change our lives.”

Dwight L. Moody

“Ignorance of the Bible means ignorance of Christ.”

Jerome

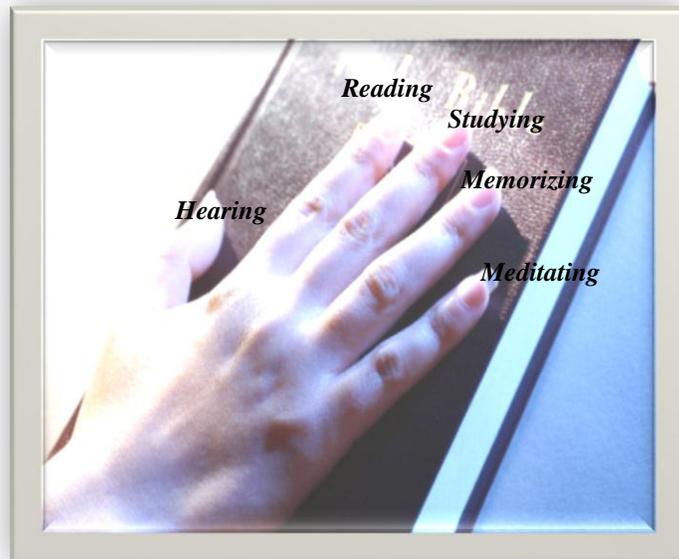
“I thoroughly believe in a university education for both men and women; but...a knowledge of the Bible without a college education is more valuable than a college education without the Bible. Everyone who has a thorough knowledge of the Bible may truly be called educated, and no other learning... no matter how extensive...can form a proper substitute.”

William Lyon Phelps

It is essential for all Christians to know how to study and apply the Scriptures to everyday Christian living.

This session suggests five ways in which people can connect with God’s Word. We can compare the five ways to the five fingers we possess. All of us will have difficult time holding a Bible with just one finger. It makes sense to use all five fingers to get a firm grip over the Bible.

To effectively connect with God’s Word, we need to apply the same principle. We cannot simply resort to one or two ways of looking at God’s Word. We need to consider others approaches such as hearing, reading, studying, meditating, and memorizing God’s Word to deepen our understanding of the Scripture. Just as we can get a firmer grip of the Bible by using all five fingers, we can also increase our grasp of the Word by implementing multiple approaches to studying the Scriptures.



Opening Question:

- + How many books are there in the Bible? How many people have authored it?
- + How often and regularly do you read and meditate on God's Word?

The Purpose of the Bible

The purpose of the Bible is not to solely educate or give us knowledge.

Rather, its primary purpose is to teach us about the saving grace of God and how to walk with God in our lives.

1. The Purpose of God's Word

- a. What is the purpose of the Scripture? (2 Timothy 3:15-16)
- b. Who is the main character in the Bible? (John 5:39)
- c. What kind of attitude should we have when we study and apply God's Word in our lives? (1 Peter 2:2)

Notes:

2 Timothy 3:15-16 and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

John 5:39 You study^[a] the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me

1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

Personal Question (2a, 2e):

✚ When was the last time you were richly and deeply blessed by reading and meditating on God's Word?

2. Five ways to connect with God's Word

- a. **Hearing the Word:** "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).
 - i. What kind of *heart* do we need to have to best receive and apply God's Word? (Luke 8:15)
 - An honest and good heart.
 - An alert and cautious heart.
 - An open yet discerning heart.
 - A well-trained, scholarly heart.
 - ii. What kind of *spirit* do we need to foster to receive blessings from the Sunday sermons given by our pastors? (1 Thessalonians 2:13 and Acts 17:11)
- b. **Reading the Word:** "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it" (Revelation 1:3).
 - i. Why do we need to daily read God's Word? (Deuteronomy 17:19).
 - ii. Paraphrase Revelation 1:3.

Notes:

Romans 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

Luke 8:15 But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

Acts 17:11 Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Revelations 1:3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

Deuteronomy 17:19

It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law

Personal Question (2c):

- + What resources do you resort to when studying God's Word? (i.e. a Study Bible, a Bible Dictionary, and etc)

"I know of no form of intake of the Word which pays greater dividends for the time invested than Scripture memory."

Dawson Trotman

- c. **Studying the Word:** "Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17:11).
 - i. How should we study God's Word? (Proverbs 2:4)
 - ii. What should be our goal in studying the Bible? (2 Timothy 2:15)
- d. **Memorizing the Word:** "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to your word. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalms 119:9, 11).
 - i. What does God want us to do with His Word?
 - Deuteronomy 11:18a.
 - Proverbs 7:3b
 - ii. What does Paul mean when he says, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Colossians 3:16)?
 - iii. How did Jesus overcome Satan's temptations? (Matthew 4:4, 7, & 10)

Notes:

Acts 17:11 Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Proverbs 2:4 and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure

2 Timothy 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

Personal Question (2a-e):

- ✦ Can you think of some ways you can rearrange your schedule so to connect with God's Word more richly and deeply in your life?

Closing Question:

- ✦ What is your life verse? How does this verse help you to overcome life's struggles and to remain faithful to Him?

What is meditation?

Meditation is a prayerful reflection; a desire to understand and apply God's Word. It helps us to conform our thoughts and actions to God's perfect will.

For next session:

- ✦ Read daily Psalm 1, 5, and 119.
- ✦ Preview session #4 (Prayer) by completing its study questions
- ✦ Memorize John 15:7 and Philippians 4:6-7
- ✦ Summarize Sunday message
- ✦ Do your Quiet Times

- e. **Meditating on the Word:** "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and on His Law he meditates day and night" (Psalms 1:1-2).
 - i. When you meditate on God's Word, ask the following questions:
 - What is the background of this passage?
 - How should I apply this passage (or verse) in my life?
 - ii. What promises are given to those who meditate on God's Word day and night? (Psalm 1:2-3; Joshua 1:8)
 - iii. Consider Luke 6:45. Does meditating on the Word of God affect the way in which we speak and behave? (Luke 6:45)

Notes:

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

Joshua 1:8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Luke 6:45 A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.



SESSION 4

Prayer

Grasping the Theme

-  *Prayer unleashes God's power in our life so that we may lead a victorious life in Christ Jesus.*

Main points:

- 1. What is prayer?*
- 2. To whom do we pray?*
- 3. Who can pray?*
- 4. Why do we pray?*
- 5. When do we pray?*
- 6. What should be included in prayer?*
- 7. How can we pray with confidence?*

Prayer inspires us to engage in an intimate conversation with God. God speaks to us through His Word, and we respond faithfully to Him in prayer. In this sense, prayer is a channel through which God and His people relate and communicate their inmost thoughts.

God listens to our prayers and then answers them by unleashing His power in our lives. Many spiritual battles, including the personal ones have been overcome through earnest prayers in the Lord.

Unfortunately, the power of prayer is often suspended, because we stop praying or pray without faith. The disciples of the first century knew how to pray and claim in faith the power of our omnipotent God to alter the course of history. We serve the same God today, and the same power is at work in us when we pray.

Notes:

Opening Question:

- + Where do you usually pray?
- + How often do you pray?
- + Why do people pray?

Personal Question (1,2):

- + How is praying to the God of the Bible in the name of Jesus through the ministry of the Holy Spirit different from praying to Hindu gods?

Prayer is simply communicating with God of the Bible. It's a dialogue between two persons who love each other - God and you. As children of God, we are invited to approach the throne of God's grace in prayer. (Hebrews 11:6)

1. What is prayer?

- a. To understand what prayer entails, we need to explore and resolve the widely held misunderstandings about prayer:
 - i. Prayer is not self-meditation, but rather an offering of oneself to the living God.
 - ii. Prayer is not making requests to false gods but rather the true and living God (John 16:24).
 - iii. Prayer is not just asking God to meet our needs but rather deepening our relationship with Him.
 - iv. Prayer is offered up publicly and privately (Matthew 6:6).
 - v. Prayer is not uttering frivolous words but rather meaningful words to God.

2. To whom do we pray?

- a. We pray to the Father God in Jesus' name by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- b. What should we believe in when we pray? (Hebrews 11:6)
- c. Who intercedes for us when we pray? (Romans 8:26-27, 34)

Notes:

John 16:24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

Matthew 6:6 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.

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

Romans 8:26-27 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

Personal Question:

- ✚ What are your prayer topics?
- ✚ When you pray, do you consider the following reasons: 4b, 4c, and 4d?

Why do we pray?

We pray to maintain a loving relationship with God. God waits for us to come to Him in prayer. The fact that God wants to have fellowship with us is an incredible notion we often, but should not, take for granted.

We also pray to grow spiritually. Just as a child needs food to grow physically, so we need food to grow spiritually. Prayer, which involves our talking to God and God talking to us through His Word, is our major source of spiritual food. We can miss a day without apparent ill effects, but if we continue this practice, we will become undernourished, losing the strength to live a victorious life and to maintain boldness for a vital witness for Jesus.

We pray to receive the power to accomplish His work here on earth. The Bible records that weather was changed and people were released from prisons as a result of prayer. God is still in the business of answering prayer. Prayer is the primary means of becoming a fruitful witness for Jesus Christ.

3. Who can pray?

- a. Those who are in Christ Jesus
 - i. Those who remain in Christ and in His Word (John 15:7)
 - ii. Those who are considered the children of God (Romans 8:15)
- b. Those who come to God in Jesus' name
 - i. Jesus is the only way to the Father God (John 14:6).
 - ii. Jesus mediates between God and us (1 Timothy 2:5).
 - iii. There is power and merit in Jesus' name (John 14:14).

4. Why do we pray?

- a. To communicate with God
- b. To glorify God (John 14:13)
- c. To grow spiritually
- d. To fulfill God's perfect plan
- e. To petition our needs (Phil. 4:6-7)

Notes:

John 15:7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.
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 sonship.^[a] And by him we cry, "Abba,^[b] Father."
John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus
John 14:14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.
John 14:13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.
Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Personal Question (6a-b):

- ✚ Why do you think it's important to acknowledge God's power and majesty, and confess your sins as you begin your prayer?

Personal Question (6d):

- ✚ Do you have any friends or family members who are going through difficult times in life? How do you pray for them?

Do Hindus pray?

Hindus do not pray to an Absolute God but instead meditate on nothingness to perfect their union with the divine force (cosmic power) around them. They meditate to empty their desires and to put their minds in accord with the universal energy.

5. When should we pray?

- a. We should pray unceasingly.
- b. We should set aside a specific hour to focus on prayer (Quiet Time).
- c. We should pray in groups and with prayer partners (Acts 1:14).

6. What should be included in prayer? Five essentials in prayer (A.C.T.I.S.)

- a. **Adoration:** Acknowledge God. Praise Him for His care and protection over your life. Lift Him up and recognize His power and majesty. How should we give adoration? (1 Chron. 29:11; Isa. 59:1-2)
- b. **Confession:** Admit to God where you have gone wrong. Be honest and humble. Remember that God remains faithful to you even after your confession. Why is confessing important? (1 John 1:9; Psalm 32:5)
- c. **Thanksgiving:** Tell God how grateful you are for everything He has provided in your life - even for the unpleasant things. Why is thanksgiving important? (Eph. 5:20; Psalm 100:4)
- d. **Intercessory Prayer:** Pray for people who are facing difficulties and challenges in their lives. Who can be included in your prayer? (Col. 1:9-12; Col. 4:2-4; James 5:16; 1 Timothy 2:2)
- e. **Supplication:** Make your requests known to God. (Matt. 7:7-8; James 4:2-3)

Notes:

Acts 1:14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.
1 Chronicles 29:11 Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours.
Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.
Isaiah 59:1-2 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.
1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Personal Question (7):

- ✚ Do you pray in Jesus' name?
- ✚ Why is it crucial to pray in the name of Jesus Christ?

Closing Question:

- ✚ Have you received answers to your prayer? Please, share one or two answers you have received.

In faith, we pray

By faith we receive answers to our request. If you know you are abiding in Christ, that you are controlled by the Holy Spirit and are praying according to the Word and will of God, you can expect God to answer your prayers – so, be prepared to receive answers.

For next session:

- ✚ Read daily Psalm 1, 5, and 119.
- ✚ Preview session #4 (Prayer) by completing its study questions
- ✚ Memorize John 15:7 and Philippians 4:6-7
- ✚ Summarize Sunday message
- ✚ Do your Quiet Times

7. How can we pray with confidence?

- a. **We need to abide** (John 15:7): Abiding is walking in the spirit, confessing our sin and making ourselves available to God.
- b. **We need to ask in faith** (James 4:2-3; John 4:14:14; 16:24)
- c. **We need to believe** (Matt. 21:22): God does not require us to have a great faith, but rather a faith in a great God. You will never meet a person who has faith in a great God and yet, refuses to obey His Spirit.

Notes:

John 15:7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

James 4:2-3 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. ³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

John 4:14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 16:24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

Matthew 21:22 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.



SESSION 5

Fellowship

Grasping the Theme

- ✦ *God is pleased when a community of believers comes to Him in worship, as one in Christ.*

Main points:

1. *The fellowship through worship*
2. *The fellowship of Christians:*
 - a. *Be committed to one another*
 - b. *Be united in Christ*
 - c. *Accept the differences of one another*
 - d. *Love one another*
 - e. *Edify the Church*

Fellowship involves meeting people and developing a relationship with them. Christians not only require such a relationship but are commanded to cultivate it. But the fellowship of Christians has characteristics that are peculiarly absent from the relationships of the world. Secular relationship normally begins when individuals start associating with one another from a comfortably maintained distance, but the fellowship between Christians begins at the cross, where Christ has already accomplished the work of breaking down relational barriers (Ephesians 2:13-14).

Therefore, the fellowship of Christians can only begin within the clearly demarcated boundaries of the church of Christ, precisely because it is founded on the reconciling work of Jesus on the cross. The church of Christ is not a building or an organization, but a community of believers who make up the body of Christ. True fellowship begins when Christians come together in worship, and is brought to its mature fruition as they worship in spirit and truth in unity.

Opening Question:

✚ What is the difference between the fellowship of Christians and that of non-Christians?

Personal Question:

✚ How often do you worship God in the course of a week? Is praise an important element of your worship? Please, share.

We worship the living God

We do not worship for ourselves, but for God. It is in and through worship that we can fellowship with the living God and other members of the body of Christ.

Five reasons to praise God:

1. By praising God, we proclaim the absolute trust we have in the God of our salvation.
2. By praising God, we can also put on the shield of faith against the attacks of the devil, and allow God to display His power.
3. Praise frees up our lives for the work of the Holy Spirit.
4. Praise contributes to the unity of the saints.
5. Praise prepares us to focus our hearts on God and to turn an attentive ear to Him. It also paves a way for God to pour out His love on us.

1. The Fellowship through worship

- a. What does God desire from us when we worship Him? (Leviticus 10:3)
- b. Our attitude in worship is important if we are to worship God in truth.
 - i. How are we to worship God? (John 4:24)
 - ii. Psalm 95:6 and Ecclesiastes 5:1-2 teach us about the outward attitudes of a worshipper.
- c. Worship does not need to be complicated. However, during worship, we must give to God our hearts and our lives; we must desire to enter into God’s presence.
 - i. Acts 2:42 teaches about the four elements needed in worship. What are they?
 - ii. What other elements are needed for true worship? (1 Chronicles 16:29, Psalms 47:1-2, 5)
 - iii. Praise is the most important element of worship (Colossians 3:16).

Notes:

Leviticus 10:3 Moses then said to Aaron, “This is what the LORD spoke of when he said: “‘Among those who approach me. I will be proved holy; in the sight of all the people will be honored.’ Aaron remained silent.
 John 4:24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”
 Psalms 95:6 Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.
 Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
 1 Chronicles 16:29 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him.

Personal Question (2a):

- ✦ *Are you a member of a local church? Why is it important to be a member of a local church?*

We are equal under the cross

Every Christian is equal under the cross and has the privilege of becoming an integral member of the family of God.

In the family of God, we must be willing to learn from one another and encourage each other.

The fellowship of the saints can fully develop only when Christians are diligent in building up one another. We cannot participate in this fellowship while isolating ourselves from the community of saints.

2. The fellowship of Christians: God desires for all Christians to become active members of a local church.

- a. ***Be committed to one another:*** "...so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others" (Romans 12:5).
 - i. Paul used an illustration of human body to get a point across – that all Christians are connected to each other. How does Paul describe this relationship? (1 Corinthians 12:14-26)
 - ii. All Christians around the world are also members of the body of Christ (universal church).
 - iii. The Bible also mentions that Christians need to be members of a local church.

Notes:

Romans 12:5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

1 Corinthians 12:14-26 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Personal Question:

- ✦ Have you come across a church in disunity? What would Jesus say to a church in dispute? (John 17:21)

Unity speaks louder than words

This unity among Christians reveals the essence of the Gospel - "that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:19). Christ was indeed God in the flesh. He was, and is, one with the Father. If unity is destroyed in Christ's body, then the most powerful means of communicating the gospel to lost souls that Jesus was God, are destroyed.

- b. **Be united in Christ:** "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling" (Ephesians 4:4).
 - i. Satan's strategy entails destroying unity among Christians. He is the author of confusion and false doctrine.
 - ii. The Bible says we can defeat Satan's schemes by becoming one in Christ.
 - iii. What does Jesus pray for in John 17:11?
 - iv. Why does Jesus want all believers to be one just and He and the Father are one? (John 17:21)

Notes:

Ephesians 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called;

John 17:11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of^[a] your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.

John 17:21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

Personal Question (2c):

- ✚ *Have you seen the Hindu caste system played out within the walls of a church in India? What would Jesus say to people who favor the display of caste system within the body of Christ?*

Gifts used in unity

Although salvation is from the Holy Spirit, the gifts that He gives are different. To some are given the gift of teaching, to some the gift of tongues, and to others the gift of discernment. The Holy Spirit desires these different gifts to be used in unity, for the single purpose of building and edifying the body of Christ, and not for comparing and criticizing.

Prejudice violates the laws of God

Prejudice, favoritism, and discrimination in the body of Christ violate the laws of God. Furthermore, they violate the nature of the functioning body of Christ. We are all one. Every member is important--rich or poor, young or old, black or white, weak or strong. If we show favoritism or judge people by outward appearances, we also destroy the unity, harmony, and oneness in the body of Christ – oneness, which Christ and Paul both prayed for and commanded.

- c. **Accept the differences in each other:** All believers are one in Christ, however, share differences (Ephesians 4:7):
 - i. We have received different gifts.
 - ii. We have varying levels of faith.
 - “Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. The man who eats everything must not look down upon him who does not and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him” (Romans 14:1).
 - Mature Christians do not cause other brothers or sisters to stumble and fall.
 - iii. We have different backgrounds.
 - The walls built around cultural, racial, national, and religious prejudices are broken down in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-12).
 - Even though we have different backgrounds, we have the same Holy Spirit, Father God, and Jesus Christ.

Notes:

Ephesians 4:7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

Ephesians 2:11-12 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—¹² remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

Personal Question (2e):

- ✦ What have you done to build up the brothers and sisters in your church?

Closing Question:

- ✦ What obstacles have held you back from fellowshiping with other brothers and sisters in your church? Were you able to overcome these obstacles? Please, share.

In the body of Christ

In the “body of Christ,” the church, every member must contribute to its continual growth. The church should be a group of people who believe in the Word, who believe in the God of the Bible, who love and care for one another, and who want all people to be saved and to experience fellowship with God and with other believers (John 17:20-21).

For next session:

- ✦ Read 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude
- ✦ Preview session #6 (Witnessing) by completing its study questions
- ✦ Memorize Romans 1:16 and 1 Peter 3:15
- ✦ Summarize Sunday message
- ✦ Do your Quiet Times

- d. **Love One Another:** As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are to love one another. We are the Lord’s own family (John 13:34).
 - i. How can we express our love for the brothers and sisters in Christ? (1 John 3:18)
 - ii. How did the first century believers express their love for one another? (Acts 4:32)
- e. **Edify the Church:** Paul commended the Thessalonian Christians for their concerns and love for one another. They had learned the importance of mutual encouragement, exhortation, and comfort.
 - i. How are we to encourage other brothers and sisters in Christ? (1 Thessalonians 5:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:13)
 - ii. We can also encourage the fellow Christians by sharing God’s Word with them.

Notes:

John 13:34 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

Acts 4:32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.



SESSION 6

Witnessing

Grasping the Theme

✚ Every Christian is called to witness and to share his or her personal testimonies about the person, Jesus Christ, not some theories or philosophies about Him.

Main points:

1. Our attitude towards the world
2. Our attitude towards work
3. Witnessing the gospel

After creating the universe, God gave an important commission to us:

“God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground’” (Genesis 1:28).

This ultimate command was given to everyone - believer, unbeliever, man, woman, and child. Christians who believe in God as the Creator should wholeheartedly obey this command.

After His work on the cross and then, His resurrection, Jesus also gave an important commission to His disciples:

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

“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” (Acts 1:8).

To serve as His witness to the ends of the earth is a divine mandate given to the followers of Christ. People who believe in Jesus must give pride of place to this supreme mandate.

Opening Question:

- ✦ Have you tried sharing the gospel with others? How did your witnessing go?

Personal Question (1, 2):

- ✦ Are you witnessing Christ to your family members, friends, relatives, and neighbors? If so, does your attitude toward them reflect “one of conquering in love”?

“God dwells among the people who have been sent into the world and not in buildings which are separated from the world.”

Thomas Gillespie

We are called to witness

God does not distinguish between what is secular and sacred, because all things are under His governance. As God calls us into a relationship with Him, we come to realize that we should utilize all of our activities to praise Him and to serve our neighbors.

For this reason, instead of uttering, “I am not a pastor but a carpenter,” we should say “I am engaged in God’s work through the venue of carpentry.”

- 1. Our attitude towards the world:** We need to have a biblical attitude towards the world to be an effective witness.
 - There are three ways to view our relationship with the world.
 - Antagonistic view (confrontational):
 - Mediating view (compromising):
 - Changing view (conquering in love)
 - Among the three views, the *changing view* (conquering in love) is the soundest one to embrace.
 - Christians are in the world and are not of the world.

- 2. Our attitude towards work:** God does not limit His interest only to *church* activities. As much as He is interested in how we pray, read the Scripture, and praise Him within the bounds of a church, He is equally interested in the activities outside of the church, such as our work.

- What was the consequence of Adam’s disobedience? (Genesis 3:17-18)
 - Work did not result from sin.
 - After Adam sinned, the element of suffering was added to work.
- How should Christians view work? (Colossians 3:23)
 - As Christians, we need to wholly participate in work.
 - As we wholly participate in work, we can bear witness to our co-workers as salt and light of the world.

Notes:

Genesis 3:17 To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it.’”

Personal Question (3a):

- ✦ What challenges have you encountered while witnessing Christ in your immediate circles?

A Christian witness

A witness in a courtroom is expected to tell what he knows about a particular case. The Christian witness is to tell others what he or she knows about Jesus Christ and what it means to personally trust Him, both in words and deeds.

Successful witnessing

Successful witnessing may be defined as simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God. (2 Timothy 4:2, Colossians 1:28-29)

3. Witnessing Christ: We are called to witness Christ by living an exemplary life. When our family members, friends, and co-workers see how diligently we engage in work, care for others, and love Jesus Christ, they will begin to show interest in what we have to share.

a. *Our attitude towards witness*

- i. What did Andrew do immediately after he encountered Christ? (John 1:40-42)
- ii. What did Paul say to those who positively responded to the gospel? (Acts 22:15)
- iii. Why was Paul not ashamed of the gospel? (Romans 1:16)

b. *Our witness through exemplary life*

- i. As children of God living among sinful people, how are we to live out our Christian life? (Philippians 2:15)
- ii. What happens when we shine Christ's love in this world? (Matthew 5:16)

Notes:

John 1:40-42 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ).⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter^[a]).

Acts 22:15 You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard.
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: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

Philippians 2:15 so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation."^[a] Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky

Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Personal Question (3):

✦ Using the following questions as a guideline, please write (or share) a testimony of how Jesus transformed your life (Acts 26:1-29):

1. What was your life like before you met Christ?
2. How did you meet Him?
3. How has Christ transformed your life?
4. How are you presently growing in Christ?

Divine appointment

Whenever you are alone with a person for a few minutes you can assume that you are there by divine appointment to share the good news of God's love and forgiveness.

Though you should always seek to bring those who are interested to a definite commitment to Christ, you should not feel discouraged when someone refuses to receive Him as his or her Savior and Lord.

That is God's responsibility. Your responsibility is to tell them the good news with love and genuine concern.

c. Our witnessing through spoken word

- i. The blind man, depicted in John 9, had little to no theological training but gave a simple yet powerful testimony. What was his testimony? (John 9:5)
- ii. How can we become an effective witness of Christ? (1 Peter 3:15)

d. Strategies for effective witness: Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Since He dwells in us, we can simply ask Him to empower us to boldly share the gospel:

- i. We can resort to the following strategies:
 - When there's little time to share the gospel: use evangelical tracks or other resources that you can readily pass around.
 - When you have between 20 to 30 minutes of time to share the gospel: utilize evangelical tools such as Four Spiritual Laws, Bridge Analogy, Evangelization Explosion, and more.
 - When you see the individuals on a regular basis (workplace, home, church, and etc.): have personal Bible studies and conversations with them (i.e. testimonies-Read Acts 26:1-29).
- ii. Even though our strategies may vary, the gospel message remains the same. **What was the gospel message Apostle Paul communicated in 1 Corinthians 1:23-24?**
- iii. Why is it important that we cease every opportunity to make Christ known? (John 14:6, Acts 4:12)

Notes:

John 9:5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

Personal Question (3e):

- + Do you think you need to become an *expert* in witnessing before presenting Jesus Christ? Why or why not?
- + How does 3e (witnessing as a way of life) help you to become a better witness of the gospel?

Closing Question:

- + Think of one person (family member, friend, or a co-worker) to whom you would like to share the gospel of Jesus. What would you say to the person? What strategies would you implement? How would you go about presenting Jesus Christ?

Expect results

When you witness, expect people to respond. We should not base our expectation on our technique or beliefs but place our confidence in God's love, His power, and His promise.

For next session:

- + Read Ephesians 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6
- + Preview session #7(*The Spirit-filled Life*) by completing its study questions
- + Memorize Ephesians 5:18 and Galatians 5:22-23
- + Summarize Sunday message
- + Do your Quiet Times

e. Witnessing as a way of life

i. Taking the initiatives:

- Do not wait for people to come to you. Go to them with the good news of Christ. You don't need to wait for the Holy Spirit to lead you to witness to an individual; He has already commanded us to go and tell the good news to all.
- We witness because it is a command of Christ, but we should go further and make witnessing a regular part of our daily lives. We should meet people and witness to those whom God leads us to.
- The words Christ spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:7) and what Philip shared with the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:30) are a couple of solid examples to peruse through.

ii. Three effective habits to form:

- Be prepared to present the gospel in and out of season.
- Regard the opportunities that come your way as divine appointments.
- Be excited to talk about Jesus.

iii. Pray in the Spirit:

- We need to pray for people to respond to the gospel. God is the One who instills faith in the hearts of men and women.
- Be very specific with your prayers. If and when possible, offer up the names of the individuals who need Christ.

iv. In faith, expect people to respond to your gospel presentation

Notes:

John 4:7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?"

Acts 8:30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.



SESSION 7

The Spirit-Filled Life

Grasping the Theme

- ✦ *The Spirit-filled life is a life dependent on the Holy Spirit, while enjoying His power and guidance in one's Christian journey.*

Main points:

1. *What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?*
2. *Who gives the fullness of the Holy Spirit?*
3. *Why do you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit?*
4. *How can one be filled with the Holy Spirit?*
5. *What is the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit?*
6. *When can we be filled with the Holy Spirit?*

The Holy Spirit dwells in every believer. He empowers us to live a Christ-centered life. We cannot, through our own efforts, lead a Christ-centered life. We must ask, trust, and depend on the Holy Spirit to guide us through our journey as pilgrims on earth - this is called the Spirit-filled life. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to grow in the four areas of Christ-ruled life: Word of God, prayer, fellowship, and witnessing.

Notes

Opening Question:

- ✦ Do you know anyone who is filled with the Holy Spirit? How is this person different from others?

Personal Question (3a):

- ✦ Are you filled with the Holy Spirit? Please, share.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit means to be filled with Christ

To abide in Christ is to live in dependence upon Him, recognizing that it is His life, His wisdom, His resources, His strength and His ability operating through us, which enable us to live according to His will.

1. What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

- The word “filled” means to be directed and empowered by the Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit came to glorify Christ (John 16:14) and is the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9), to be filled with the Spirit means to be filled with or to abide in Christ.
- Why do we need to abide in Christ to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit?
- Ephesians 5:18 makes a contrast between being filled with the Spirit and getting drunk on wine. What kind of state are we in when we are filled with the Holy Spirit?
- To be filled with Spirit does not mean to be in a mystical state. Nor does it mean to be in an emotionally or intellectually high state. The outward manifestation differs according to each person. Regardless, each person who claims to walk with Christ must be filled with the Holy Spirit – which leads to him/her a victorious Christian life.

Notes

John 16:14 He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.

Romans 8:9 You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.

Ephesians 5:18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit,

Personal Question (2a-d):

- ✦ Do you have the desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Personal Question (3a-c)

- ✦ Why do you want to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

Overcoming our fleshly desires

The natural human can sometimes overcome the power of sin with conscientious thoughts or ethical values.

However, in our own power alone, we will fail miserably.

Our old selves cannot win this battle because of our fleshly desires. We need to draw our strategies and strength from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit alone has the means to equip us with wisdom and power.

2. Who gives the fullness of the Spirit?

- The fullness of the Spirit comes only through the triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- How did the disciples receive the Holy Spirit? (John 20:22)
- How did the Samaritans receive the Holy Spirit? (Acts 8:17)
- How did the Christians receive the Holy Spirit? (Acts 10:44)
- We should never underestimate God's work nor overemphasize people's role in the Spirit-filled life.

3. Why do you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

- We cannot help sinning as long as we are in this world even if we believe in Jesus Christ and have begun a new life (1 John 1:8).
- How does Apostle Paul describe the conflict taking place in our body because of our sinful nature? (Galatians 5:16-18)
- How do we overcome the conflicts described in Romans 7:23-24 and Galatians 5:16? (Romans 8:9-10, 13-14)

the Holy Spirit = the Spirit of God = the Spirit of Christ

Notes:

John 20:22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.
Acts 8:17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.
Acts 10:44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

Personal Question (4a-c):

- ✦ How do you prepare your heart to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit?

Continually empowered by the Holy Spirit

From the moment of spiritual birth, the Christian is indwelt by the Spirit at all times (Romans 8:16, 1 Corinthians 12:3). Then our faith grows in proportion to how much we submit to the Holy Spirit in our heart and everyday life.

Though all Christians are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, not all Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit. We “receive” the Holy Spirit when we are saved, but allowing ourselves to be controlled and empowered by the Holy Spirit is not a once-and-for-all experience. It is a continual endeavor in the life of the Christian.

4. How can one be filled with the Holy Spirit?

a. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit

b. Confess your sins and be cleansed

Confession entails acknowledging our sins, asking for His forgiveness, turning away from our sins, and believing our sins are forgiven in Christ Jesus.

c. Live by faith

Placing our faith in God means to trust Him with all of our life. It is easy to trust and have faith in Him when everything is going well in our life. However, it is important to express the same trust and faith during our struggling moments as well. Giving thanks under all circumstances demonstrates our faith in Him. In essence, we are saying, “God, I trust You!”

Notes:

1 John 1:8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Galatians 5:16-18 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever^[a] you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Romans 7:23-24 but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death?

Romans 8:9-10 You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life^[a] because of righteousness.

Romans 8:13-14 For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.

Personal Question (3a):

- ✦ What fruit(s) are you effectively bearing in your life for Jesus Christ? (Galatians 5:22-23)
- ✦ What fruit (s) of the Holy Spirit do you need to grow more?

Closing Question

- ✦ From this day forward, how will you live your life to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to bear His fruits?

Fill me with Your Spirit

“Dear Father, I need you. I acknowledge that I have been controlling my life apart from You, and that as a result, sinning against you. I thank You that You have forgiven my sins through Christ’s death on the cross. I now invite Christ to take control of my life. Cleanse my heart and fill me with the Holy Spirit. You promise me these things in Your Word if I were to ask in faith. As an expression of my faith, I now thank You for taking control of my life and filling me with the Holy Spirit. In the name of Jesus I pray. Amen.”

For next session:

- ✦ Read James 1-5
- ✦ Preview session #8 (Overcoming Temptations) by completing its study questions
- ✦ Memorize 1 Corinthians 10:13 and James 1:14-15
- ✦ Summarize Sunday message
- ✦ Do your Quiet Times

5. What is the result of being filled with the Spirit?

- a. **The characters of Christ are revealed in our life.** What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit described in Galatians 5:22-23?
- b. **We can share the gospel with boldness.** What happened to the early church when its members were filled with the Holy Spirit? (Acts 4:31)
- c. **Various gifts are exposed.** What happened when the early church members were filled with the Holy Spirit? (Acts 2:4)

6. When can we be filled with the Holy Spirit?

- a. God is eager to fill us with the Holy Spirit when we are ready to receive Him. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a one-time event, but the work and filling of the Holy Spirit is a continual endeavor.
- b. How are we baptized by the Holy Spirit the first time? (Acts 1:5)
- c. How are we continuously baptized by the Holy Spirit in our Christian journey? (Ephesians 5:18)

Notes:

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

Act 4:31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

Acts 2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^[a] as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 1:5 For John baptized with^[a] water, but in a few days you will be baptized with^[b] the Holy Spirit.”

Ephesians 5:18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit,



SESSION 8

Overcoming Temptations

Grasping the Theme

✦ *Temptations come from the devil to cause us to be powerless and to lose inner peace. We can overcome these temptations by passionately loving and devoting ourselves to the Lord*

Main points:

- 1. Three types of spiritual battles depicted in the Bible*
- 2. Channels through which Satan attacks us*

Even though a Christian may live a spirit-filled life, one cannot completely eschew sin because of the flesh and because one lives in a sin-devastated world (1 Corinthians 10:12). This is also because the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8).

We cannot live a victorious life through our own power. However, God can build a wall of protection around us to keep sin and the devil at bay. We need to grasp that it is God who gives us the victory in Christ Jesus.

Notes:

Opening Question:

- ✚ We know Satan attacks non-Christians, but does he attack Christians as well?
- ✚ How does Satan attack us physically, emotionally, and spiritually?

Personal Question (1a-b):

- ✚ What temptations frequently overcome you?
- ✚ How does 1 Corinthians 10:13 comfort and encourage you?

1. Three types of spiritual battles depicted in the Bible

- a. What is a trial? (James 1:2-4):
- b. What is a temptation? (James 1:13-14):
- c. What is a test? (Genesis 22:1):

Type	Contributor	Purpose	Ways to Overcome	Examples
<i>Trial</i> James 1:2-4	Satan with God's permission	Denial of God	Patience	Job
<i>Temptation</i> James 1:13-14	Satan	Spiritual oppression	Escape	Joseph David
<i>Test</i> Gen. 22:1	God	Spiritual blessing	Obedience	Abraham

- d. What promise does **1 Corinthians 10:13** give us in regards to trials and temptations?
 - i. Who enables us to overcome trials and temptations?
 - ii. How does God help us when we are faced with temptations? Does he block off temptations for us?
 - iii. What does it mean **to stand up under temptations**?
 - iv. How can we guard ourselves from falling into temptations? (Psalm 119: 9,11; 1 John 5:4-5; James 4:7)

Notes:

James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, ^[a] whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 1:13-14 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.

Personal Question (2aii):

✚ What actions have you taken to resist the devil?

Satan likes to break down our relationship with God

Satan attacks us by breaking down our relationship with God. Human beings were created not only to be aware of ourselves, but also to be aware of God (God-awareness). When we are tempted to deny God's goodness, His Word, or His faithfulness, these are attacks directed at our God-awareness.

Resisting the devil

There is no better way to resist the devil than the way Christ handled the temptation in Matthew 4:4,7,10. Jesus used the same tactical maneuver of referring to the Word of God; he responded with the sword of the Spirit. This is the best way to resist the devil. If the devil tempts you to doubt your salvation, you may rebuke his lies with the Truth, the Truth that leads to eternal life. (John 5:24; 1 John 5:13). For this reason, memorizing the scriptures is vitally important. David said, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11). The more you study and master the Word, the more you will be prepared to effectively deal with various temptations.

2. Channels through which Satan attacks us

The ultimate source of all evil is Satan. But that doesn't mean Satan always attacks us personally. He likes to attack us utilizing various channels including the following three: fallen angels, the world, and the flesh. When tempted, it is critical for us to determine what kind of spiritual battle is facing us, since each battle needs to be handled differently.

- a. Satan attacks us personally
 - i. How did Satan attack Judas Iscariot? (Luke 22:3; John 13:2)
 - ii. How do we defend Satan's attack upon our God-awareness?
 - We need to recognize Satan's grip over us.
 - We need to resist Him (James 4:7).

Notes:

Luke 22:3 Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.

John 13:2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.

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

Personal Question (2bi):

- ✦ *To which sinful nature(s) described in 2bi (the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boastings of what he has and does) are you most vulnerable?*

Personal Question (2bi-iii):

- ✦ *What material things of this world grapple you from time to time?*

What is occupying your heart?

Concerns over the affairs of this world often occupy much of our thoughts and passions in life. Temptations, if and when our love for God grows cold, can easily penetrate the empty recesses of our heart.

For this reason, when we are tempted, rather than trying to dodge the temptations (John 17:15), we need to question where our passions lie. If and when our passion for God is restored, then we will love this world less. Then, the temptations will lose their grip over us.

- b. Satan attacks us through the cultures and the value systems of this world.

Not only does Satan attack us personally, he also attacks us indirectly through the cultures and value systems of this world (1 John 2:15-16 and Romans 12:2). The *world* here refers to the world of unsaved people.

- i. What three sinful natures are described in 1 John 2:16?
 - The _____ of sinful man
 - The _____ of his eyes
 - The _____ of what he has and does
- ii. We are vulnerable to the material things of this world. How came we overcome this temptation? (Matthew 6:19-34)
- iii. When we are tempted by the material things of this world, we need to examine our devotional life.

Notes:

1 John 2:15-16 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father^[a] is not in them. ¹⁶For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.

Romans 12:2 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.

Matthew 6:19-34 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²²“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy,^[a] your whole body will be full of light. ²³But if your eyes are unhealthy,^[b] your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

Closing Question:

✚ What temptations prevent you from passionately loving the Lord? How can you overcome these temptations?

Our fleshly desires

Satan attacks us through the basic desires of the flesh. If a temptation through the world is an attack from outside, the temptation of the desire of the flesh is an attack from within.

The body or flesh, which is created by God, is not evil in itself. Therefore, physical drives are not evil, either. However, some temptations target the physical drives of the body such as sex or eating. A Christian is constantly tempted to misuse and misdirect these physical drives that God has given us.

Sexual desires

Sexual desires are a powerful source of temptation. Many people, especially young people, are constantly bombarded with sexual images and tempted with sexual thoughts. It's important that we strive to avoid such temptations. (2 Timothy 2:22)

For next session:

- ✚ Read Colossians 1-4
- ✚ Preview session #9 (Obedience in the Christian Walk) by completing its study questions
- ✚ Memorize Romans 12:1 10:13 and Luke 9:23
- ✚ Summarize Sunday message
- ✚ Do your Quiet Times

c. Satan attacks us through our fleshly desires.

- i. King David was under a spiritual attack as described in 2 Samuel 11:1-4. Where David failed, Joseph overcame in Genesis 39. How was Joseph's response to a temptation different from that of King David?
- ii. How does Paul encourage Timothy to handle youthful desires? (2 Timothy 2:22)
- iii. Here is a summary of how Christians can handle various temptations from Satan:

Temptation from	Characteristic of the temptation	Strategy to defeat sin
Devil	Attack on God-awareness	Resist with the Word
World	Attack from outside	Examine your devotional life
Flesh	Attack from within (desire)	Flee

Notes:

2 Samuel 11:1-4 In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. ² One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, ³ and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." ⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home.

2 Timothy 2:22 Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.



SESSION 9

Obedience in the Christian Walk

Grasping the Theme

-  *Obedience to Christ necessitates that we follow His commands and perfect plans, even at the expense of what is valuable and precious to us*

Main points:

- 1. Our attitude towards obedience*
- 2. The cost of obedience*
- 3. Our obedience to Jesus Christ*
- 4. Examples of obedience and disobedience*
- 5. Blessings promised to those who are obedient*

The tragedy of the modern church is that there are many who are called to a life of faith but only a few who are willing to take the next natural step of obedience. Faith that perseveres against the temptations of Satan through a Spirit-filled life is very precious and rare. However, for Christians, to keep their faith, to grow, and to be used by God, a willing attitude to relegate their plans and dreams to a place of secondary importance becomes indispensable. In other words, to participate in Kingdom work, it is important first to follow and obey Him.

“Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.”

(Matthew 4:19)

Notes:

Opening Question:

✚ What does it mean to follow Jesus Christ as His disciple?

1. Our attitude towards obedience

Following Jesus means that I accept His plans and perfect will. It also means that I surrender my life completely and unconditionally to Him in obedience.

- a. How did Peter show his obedience to Jesus Christ? (Luke 5:5)
A decision to obey Christ can greatly impact our future. By obeying, Peter came to know Jesus and later became a leader among the disciples.

- b. What basic attitudes do we need to possess to obey Christ wholly?
 - i. Towards Jesus (Matthew 28:18)
 - ii. Towards ourselves (Romans 12:1)
 - iii. Towards our relationship with Jesus (Luke 9:23)

Notes:

Luke 5:5 Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Romans 12:1 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.

Luke 9:23 Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

Personal Question:

- ✚ What happens to a Hindu when he or she decides to follow Jesus?
- ✚ What happens to a Moslem when he or she decides to follow Jesus?

Personal Question (2a):

- ✚ What have you given up to follow Jesus Christ?

Obedience to Christ in the area of physical possession

Obeying Christ in the area of physical possessions is a very important area of obedience in a Christian's life.

When Jesus commanded the rich young man to sell all his possessions and give them to the poor, Jesus did not want him to become poor but instead, wanted complete obedience (Mark 10:17-22). Especially in a world obsessed with materialism, there is no better scale for measuring our degree of obedience other than our attitude towards material things.

As Christians, our obedience in this area is not only shown in giving of offering and helping the poor but is more deeply related to what attitude we have towards material possessions. We cannot be regarded as being totally obedient in this area if we spend our money excessively while not helping the less fortunate.

2. The cost of obedience

- a. What areas of life should a disciple of Christ deny when following Jesus? (Luke 14:25-27, 33) Consider the following areas: **family, oneself, possessions**, and so on:
 - i. What attitude should we have about our good and bad times in life? (Ecclesiastes 7:14)
 - ii. What attitude should we have when sufferings come our way? (Philippians 1:29, Romans 8:17-18)
- b. Obedience is not only keeping His Word but also denying ourselves. We must obey Him in all areas of life, even if it means accepting the sufferings that may result from obeying Jesus.
 - i. What attitude should we have about our good and bad times in life? (Ecclesiastes 7:14)
 - ii. What attitude should we have when sufferings come our way? (Philippians 1:29, Romans 8:17-18)

Notes:

Luke 14:25-27 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ²⁶“If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. ²⁷And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

Ecclesiastes 7:14 When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider this: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, no one can discover anything about their future.

Philippians 1:29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him,

Romans 8:17-18 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. ¹⁸I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Personal Question:

✚ *Is there an authority figure in your family you have trouble respecting or obeying? How about in your church? In your workplace? Among your relatives? In your community? Please, share how you can obey Jesus even among these seemingly unpleasant authority figures.*

Is obedience necessary?

Jesus provided the following analogy about obedience, “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” (John 12:24) Likewise, obedient death is necessary for Christians to bear fruit. This death means the death of our self-esteem, privilege, prejudice, ambitions, and our comfort.

3. Our obedience to Jesus Christ

The One who has lordship over us is of course our Lord, Jesus Christ. However, as people living in this society, there are other bodies of authorities we need to submit to:

- a. Our obedience to Jesus in our **family**:
(Ephesians 5:22, 25, 6:1)
- b. Our obedience to Jesus in our **church**:
(1 Peter 5:5)
- c. Our obedience to Jesus in our **workplace** :
(Colossians 3:22)
- d. Our obedience to Jesus in our **community**:
(Romans 13:1)
- e. Our respect for and obedience to the aforementioned **authorities** should not be an absolute one. There are some instances when we have to disobey them in order to obey Christ (Acts 4:19).

Notes:

Ephesians 5:22, 25; 6:1 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

1 Peter 5:5 In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

Colossians 3:22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

Romans 13:1 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

Acts 4:19 But Peter and John replied, “Which is right in God’s eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges!

Personal Question:

- ✚ Can you recall an instance where you took a leap of faith and made a huge commitment to obey Jesus Christ? What happened? Please, share

An obedient Christian has:

- A mind through which Christ thinks
- A life through which Christ is displayed
- A voice through which Christ speaks
- A hand through which Christ helps.

4. Examples of obedience and disobedience

- a. An example of obedient life found in the Scripture is that of **Abraham**.
 - i. How did Abraham obey God? (Genesis 12:1-4; Genesis 22:1-3, 9-12; Hebrew 11:8)
 - ii. What did God promise Abraham when Abraham was willing to give up his son in obedience?
- b. The story of **King Saul** provides a case in point on disobedient life.
 - i. What was wrong with King Saul's offering in 1Samuel 15:18-23?
 - ii. How did Prophet Samuel react to King Saul's disobedience?
 - iii. To what did Samuel compare Saul's rebellion and arrogance?
 - iv. What happened as a result of King Saul's disobedience?

Notes:

Genesis 12:1-4 The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. ²"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."^{b1} ⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran.

Genesis 22:1-3 Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. ² Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

Personal Question (5a-d):

- ✦ Why does God want you to obey?

Closing Question:

- ✦ **Breaking point** is a peak point at which you are unable to endure much more anguish and cannot help but halt. What is your **breaking point**? What area(s) of life do you find it difficult to surrender to Christ?

- ✦ Are you willing to surrender even your “**breaking point(s)**” for the service of Jesus Christ and His church?

- ✦ Please, do remember that our Lord, Jesus surrendered His **breaking point** 2000 years ago by relinquishing himself on the cross to give us everlasting life.

“Delayed obedience is disobedience.”

For next session:

- ✦ Read 1 Peter and 2 Peter
- ✦ Preview session #10 (Ministry) by completing its study questions
- ✦ Memorize 1 Peter 2:9 and 1 Corinthians 3:9
- ✦ Summarize Sunday message
- ✦ Do your Quiet Times

- c. We also have examples of both disobedience and obedience to God that changed the course of history for the mankind:
 - i. **Disobedience to God:** What was the result of **Adam’s** disobedience? (Romans 5:19)
 - ii. **Obedience to God:** What was the result of **Christ’s** obedience on the cross? (Hebrew 5:8-9)

5. Blessing promised to those who are obedient

- a. What were the two results of obeying God’s Word? (1 Peter 1:22)
- b. What should we do to receive answers to our prayer? (1 John 3:22)
- c. Who can receive the Holy Spirit? (Acts 5:32)
- d. What blessings are reserved for obedient Christians?
 - i. John 15:10:
 - ii. John 15:14:
 - iii. John 14:23:
 - iv. 1 John 2:5:

Notes:

Romans 5:19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.
1 John 3:22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him.
Acts 5:32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”
John 15:10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love.
John 15:14 You are my friends if you do what I command.



SESSION 10

Ministry

Grasping the Theme

✚ *All Christians are called to participate in the Kingdom ministries. To serve effectively and develop our spiritual gifts, we need to be thoroughly trained and equipped.*

Main points:

1. *The biblical view of church*
2. *The biblical view of discipleship*
3. *The biblical view of lay members*
4. *The biblical view of spiritual gifts*
5. *The biblical view of equipping*
6. *The biblical view of the world*

To participate in the work and ministry of Jesus Christ, we must maintain fellowship with Him. Intimate bonding with Christ is *sine qua non* of successful discipleship. Those who follow Jesus Christ and obey Him as disciples can work as His hands and feet to minister to others on His behalf. The multifaceted effort of our discipleship training culminates in this – our participation in his continued ministry on this earth.

It is quite common for us to mistakenly think that living a Christian life simply entails attending church on Sundays and listening to sermons. This passive attitude is quite frankly a function of deliberate ignorance of the scriptural teaching on a disciple. We hope that this discipleship training will open our eyes to the fact that our faith is to be a living faith that participates in Kingdom work *actively*. Proper training should result in the bearing of much fruit – in other words, our ministry is the fruit that is borne from proper nurturing of our faith.

If the Reformation of the 16th century gave back the Bible to lay members of the church, the spiritual reformation that is to come will return ministry also to the lay members. This will usher in a new chapter in the story of Kingdom expansion. Francis Aerie said the following:

“If we have been baptized, we are ministers whether or not we have been ordained as priests.”

Opening Question

- ✚ Who is called to minister in Christ's church?
- ✚ How do you serve the body of Christ?

Personal Question (1a-c):

- ✚ Who is expected to serve in your church?
- ✚ What percentage of the lay members serve the body of Christ in your church?

"The most challenging fact for Christians is not that we are to do something for the church but that we are the church."

F. C. Mather

An understanding of the following five elements is essential to realize the importance of the lay members' involvement in the church ministry:

1. The biblical view of church

- a. In describing the relationship between the lay members and the church, it is erroneous to say that the members are *in* the church. It is equally wrong to say that the members *work for* the church or *work in* the church. Then, how does the Bible describe the relationship between the lay members and the church? (Ephesians 2:20-22)

The lay members are the church.

- b. How is each ministry described in Matthew 4:23 related to the commission given to the church?
 - i. _____
(Teaching, training, and spiritual equipping)
 - ii. _____
(Preaching the gospel, foreign missions)
 - iii. _____
(Social service, transform the world)

Notes:

Ephesians 2:20-22 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Matthew 4:23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Personal Questions (2):

- + Is serving Christ's church an option to you?
- + Why do you serve the body of Christ?

We are Christ's hands and feet

*The two things that make church what it is are fellowship and service. We share a fellowship with Christ and with one another, and together as **church**, we serve as His hands and feet and minister to God, one another, and those outside of the church. For the church to truly function as the body of Christ, we must carry forth the three ministries that Jesus provided: teaching, preaching, and healing.*

2. The biblical view of discipleship

- a. Church is not a social club that avails varying levels of involvement and commitment for us to choose from depending on our interest level.
- b. When Jesus asks His disciples to “follow Me,” it is a call to radically change the compass of our lives and walk accordingly, rather than adding church on as an extra-curricular activity to our already bombarded schedules.
- c. If we do not grasp the gravity of the decision we have made to follow Christ, we may fail to properly understand the commission of Jesus on our lives, thereby failing to bring God glory through our lives.

Notes:

Matthew 4:19 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”

Matthew 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

Matthew 5:14 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

Matthew 9:38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Personal Question:

- ✚ From the list of spiritual gifts provided in Romans 12:6-8, select at least two gifts that best reflect you.
- ✚ Please, share how you are using these gifts to serve other brothers and sisters in your church.

All Christians are called to ministry

We often hear people saying, "But I'm not a pastor. What can I do?" This might sound very humble but in fact, shows we have not properly understood that the Bible invites every Christian to minister as Christ did. Furthermore, it is mistaken to think that lay members are the objects of ministry, or ones being ministered to; rather, we as church members are to be the ones doing church ministry, in His name and for His glory.

3. The biblical view of lay members

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9).

- a. Jesus calls all Christians to:
 - i. Be fishers of _____ (Matthew 4:19).
 - ii. Be _____ of the earth (Matthew 5:13).
 - iii. Be _____ of the world (Matthew 5:14).
 - iv. _____ his field (Matthew 9:38).

4. The biblical view of spiritual gifts

- a. God gives us gifts which we need to minister. Spiritual gifts are given freely by God for His ministry. Gifts are to be used to serve the church, to the glory of God.
- b. Why did God furnish each of us with a set of spiritual gifts? (Ephesians 4:16)
- c. Seven spiritual gifts are mentioned in Romans 12:6-8. What are they? Briefly explain how we are to use them to build up Christ's church.

Notes:

Ephesians 4:16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Romans 12:6-8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your^[a] faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, ^[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Personal Question:

- ✚ What kind of training have you received at your church?
- ✚ Have you provided any training for others? Please, share.

The inherent problems in the church are...

1. That there are not many pastors who want to train lay members
2. That there are few lay members who desire to receive training.

Some think the training is too difficult and others think that it is unnecessary. In order for the church to function effectively as the body of Christ, the lay-member training is imperative.

5. The biblical view of equipping

Spiritual gifts must be used to build up Christ's church. However, in order to bear much fruit, the gifts need to be developed through various trainings.

- a. How did Jesus equip his disciples? (Mark 3:13-15) How can this be applied to our church?
 - i. He appointed them.
 - ii. He had His disciples stay with Him so to mentor them
 - iii. He sent them off to preach the gospel
- b. The lay members need to receive training in the following areas:
 - i. *Devotional training:* Time of devotion, memorizing verses, and so on.
 - ii. *Evangelism training:* Personal evangelism, evangelical bible study, and so on.
 - iii. *Nurture training:* Encouraging, building up, and edification
 - iv. *Counsel training:* Family, marriage, adolescent counseling, and so on.

Notes:

Mark 3:13-15 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. ¹⁴ He appointed twelve^[a] that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and to have authority to drive out demons.

Closing Question:

- ✚ How are you utilizing your spiritual gifts to serve your church and the world?
- ✚ Please, share the hope and visions you have for your church. .

Claiming the world for Christ

Many Christians limit the scope of church ministry to the bounds of their church community, when their ministry zone really needs to encompass this world.

Jesus commands his disciples to go to the ends of the earth in Acts 1:8.

6. The biblical view of the world

- a. What did Jesus say that He would do with His disciples? (John 17:18, 20:21)
- b. How were the scattered Christians involved in ministry in Acts 8:4?
- c. What did Jesus promise His disciples in Acts 1:8?
- d. Where did Paul preach the gospel in Acts 17:17?
- e. Who commissioned Paul and Barnabas for *missional work*? (Acts 13:2-3)
- f. The gospel of Jesus Christ must be preached to the ends of the world through the ministry of Christ's disciples.

Notes:

John 17:18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

John 20:21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

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."

Acts 17:17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.

Acts 13:2-3 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."³ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.



SESSION 11

How can I discipleship train others?

Grasping the Theme

- ✚ *Now that your training is complete, your focus needs to be placed on how you can in turn discipleship train others for Christ*

Main points:

1. *Why the personal discipleship training*
2. *Understanding the personal discipleship training*
3. *Factors affecting the success of personal discipleship training*

For the past few months, you have undergone a personal training to become a solid disciple of Christ. You have confirmed your faith in Jesus Christ and learned the attributes of God to deepen your relationship with Him. You have also learned the importance of studying God's Word and conversing with God in prayer to receive His power and to understand His perfect will for your life.

Moreover, you have felt the value of fellowshiping with other brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as the need to witness Christ to those who do not know Him yet. Additionally, you have learned the ways of receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit and overcoming Satan's temptations. Furthermore, you have decided to obey Jesus Christ to become His disciple and to engage in various ministries to build up His church. You have also successfully completed the foundational training course to become a committed disciple of Christ.

Now is time not only to put into exercise what you have learned during the discipleship training but also to prepare yourself to train others for Christ. It is time for you to return the same favor, love, and grace you have received from your mentor and help another brother or sister grow and mature in the Lord (2 Timothy 2:2).

Of course, this may seem like a daunting task, but with the help of the Holy Spirit, you will become an awesome trainer.

Thoroughly study and review the personal discipleship training manual, and then train the person the Lord has entrusted you, for his glory and kingdom expansion.

Personal Question (1a):

- ✚ Why do you need to undergo a training to become a disciple of Christ?

Personal Question (2b,d):

- ✚ What is the role of a spiritual parent?

1. Why the personal discipleship training

- Various trainings are available to help Christians grow in Christ:
 - Congregational training:
 - Small group training
 - Personal training:
- The personal discipleship training is geared towards helping Christians grow in the likeness of Jesus Christ under one-on-one or one-on-two setting (Ephesians 4:15),

2. Understanding the personal discipleship training

- The trainer is not a teacher or a lecturer, but more, a spiritual parent (1 Corinthians 4:15; Galatians 4:19).
- A spiritual parent (trainer) can continue to nurture a spiritual child (disciple), or ask another spiritual parent to take on the rearing responsibilities. In this case, the latter parent is called a *spiritual step-parent*.
- The personal discipleship training is more than simply passing on biblical truths to a spiritual child, but is a process similar to raising a child (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8, 11; 1 Peter 2:2).

Notes:

Ephesians 4:15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.
1 Corinthians 4:15 Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.
Galatians 4:19 My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you,
1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 Instead, we were like young children^[a] among you. Just as a nursing mother cares for her children,⁸ so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.
1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

Personal Question (2e):

- ✦ Who is the ultimate **discipler** of all Christians?
- ✦ Why is this concept a critical one to reflect upon when we disciple other Christians?

Personal Question (2f):

- ✦ How does the personal discipleship training help both the mentor (disciple) and the mentee (disciple) to grow in Christ?

- d. The spiritual parent is responsible for providing the following care to help a spiritual child to mature in Christ:
 - i. Spiritual provision and nurture (Matthew 4:4)
 - ii. Equipping (Ephesians 6:10-12)
 - iii. Love and care (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)
 - iv. Training (Matthew 28:20; Galatians 6:7)
- e. The goal of any discipleship training should be to reproduce the disciples of Jesus Christ, not a disciple of a trainer.
- f. The spiritual parent needs to help a spiritual child mature in Christ (Colossians 1:28) by living himself or herself a life worthy of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).
- g. The effectiveness of the training does not dependent on the abilities or talent of a spiritual parent but on the Holy Spirit working through the spiritual parent (Colossians 1:29).

Notes:

Matthew 4:4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

Ephesians 6:10-12 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Matthew 28:20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

- h. The personal discipleship training is designed to:
 - i. Help Christians grow in Christ (Job 39:13-16).
 - ii. Equip the disciples to train other brothers and sisters to grow in Christ (spiritual reproduction). 2 Timothy 2:2
 - iii. Assist even those with limited teaching abilities to effectively train others. (Acts 1, 26)

Personal Question (3a):

✦ Many trainers have shared in the past that the most critical factor affecting the success of personal discipleship training is that of relationship with his or her trainee. Do you agree with this assessment? **Why or why not?**

Personal Question (3b):

✦ How valuable was the personal discipleship training to you?
 ✦ Did you enjoy building relationship with your mentor?

3. Factors affecting the success of personal discipleship training

- a. **Relationship:** The relationship between yourself and Christ, as well as the relationship between yourself and the trainee are more important than the methodology of the personal discipleship training itself.
- b. **Commitment:** The training should not be rendered out of obligation but with a heartfelt dedication to mold someone into the likeness of Christ. We can ask the following questions to ourselves to see whether or not we are committed to the training:
 - i. Do I value the personal discipleship training?
 - ii. Do I enjoy spending time with my mentee?

Notes:

Job 39:13-16 “The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully, though they cannot compare with the wings and feathers of the stork. ¹⁴ She lays her eggs on the ground and lets them warm in the sand, ¹⁵ unmindful that a foot may crush them, that some wild animal may trample them. ¹⁶ She treats her young harshly, as if they were not hers; she cares not that her labor was in vain,
 2 Timothy 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.
 Acts 1:26 Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

Personal Question (3c)

- ✚ How is the personal discipleship training approach different from that of congregational and small group trainings?
- ✚ What types of training does your church provide for its members?

- c. **Focus:** Unlike the congregational or small group training, the personal discipleship training needs to focus on *one or two faithful mentees* at a time as described in 2 Timothy 2:2.
- d. **Time:** There is no short cut to personal discipleship training. As Jesus spent three years training His disciples and Paul two years in the lecture hall of Tyrannus, we need to commit as much time as needed to mentor our spiritual children (no less than 6 months).
- e. **Environment:** Personal discipleship training cannot replace a Sunday worship service. For the training to be carried out effectively, it is essential for both the **discipler** and **disciple** to grow and mature within the bounds of the church.

Notes:

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.