

Welcome to

Foundations IV

We hope you will enjoy this class.

Feel free to ask questions during the class if something is not clear to you.

Every student will be assigned to a tutor. Your tutor will be available to you for more individualized help.

Each week, at the beginning of class, you will write out the Scripture verse which was assigned to you on the previous week, and you will be tested on the previous week's lesson.

On the final class (week 30), you will not have any lecture, but you will take a final test covering all the material in lessons 21 through 29.

This course is available by correspondence. For further information, contact us at the address below.

A Coordinator's Handbook is available to Pastors interested in offering this course to the members of their congregations. The Handbook includes an explanation of the course philosophy, teachers' guides, tutors' guides, and tests. For more information on how to order the Handbook, contact us at the address below:

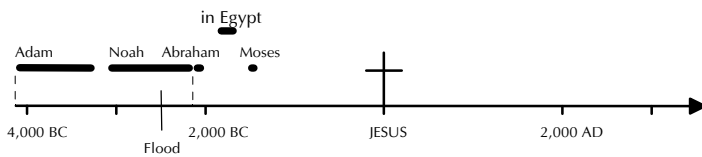
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The Old and New Covenants



1. ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB

After 2,000 years of human history, God called Abraham to leave his home and go to a land that God would show him.

a. God promised to make him a great nation (Genesis 12:2).

Abraham traveled to the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:5-8). God promised to give this land to his descendants who would be as numerous as the dust of the earth (Genesis 12:7; 13:14-17).

Abraham had a son named Isaac. Isaac had a son named Jacob (later changed to Israel). Jacob had twelve sons who

became known as *the twelve tribes of Israel*. In the Bible, God is often referred to as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

- b. God promised to make Abraham the father of many nations (Genesis 17:5).
- c. God promised that in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 22:17-18). This is a reference to Jesus Christ who was a descendant of Abraham and through whom all the nations are blessed (Galatians 3:16).

2. THE OLD COVENANT, SOMETIMES CALLED *THE LAW*

- a. God entered into a covenant relationship with the children of Israel and gave them His laws through a man named Moses.
- b. Approximately six hundred specific commands can be classified into two major divisions:
 - 1) The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-26)
 - 2) Other ordinances governing their everyday lives (Exodus 21:1—31:18)

Among the laws that God gave to Israel were laws pertaining to animal sacrifices. These ceremonial laws were for the purpose of instructing Israel about how sin could be forgiven. Sin is an offense against God and separates man from Him, resulting in death (Ezekiel 18:4). The life of an animal was given as a substitute for the life of the sinner so that the worshipper could find forgiveness from God. It was important that the blood of an animal be shed because its life is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11-14).

But this was only an imperfect model used for instructional purposes, because the life of an animal was not worth enough to make a valid exchange for a man's soul. However, the blood of Jesus was the perfect sacrifice which was able to purchase eternal forgiveness for all mankind.

- c. The Old Covenant was a conditional covenant. If Israel obeyed, they would be blessed; but if they disobeyed, they would be cursed (Deuteronomy 28). The history of God's

dealings with Israel is contained primarily in the Old Testament.

- d. It was God's desire to have a people to whom He could reveal Himself. God gave not only His laws to Israel but also many promises about the Savior who was to come.
- e. God wanted the Israelites to teach the other nations about Him, but they had trouble obeying Him themselves. This task of making God known among the nations has been carried on by the church.

3. THE NEW COVENANT

- a. In the fullness of time, God sent His Son into the world. Born of a virgin, He came first to the people of Israel.
- b. But most of Israel rejected Him; the religious leaders handed Him over to the Romans to be crucified.
- c. Jesus was the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36), the perfect sinless sacrifice.

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, but a body Thou hast prepared for Me; in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (In the roll of the book it is written of Me) To do Thy will, O God.'" After saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast not desired, nor hast Thou taken pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the Law), then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Thy will." He takes away the first in order to establish the second. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, (Hebrews 10:4-12)

- d. After Jesus died, paying the penalty for our sins, God highly exalted Him.

...when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, (Ephesians 1:20-22)

- e. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus broke the power of sin in our lives.

knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin (Romans 6:6)

- f. Now when we give our lives to Christ, we become partakers of this New Covenant that God has made available to man. In this New Covenant we become joint heirs with Jesus Christ of the grace of eternal life (Ephesians 2:4-6).

- g. Jesus inaugurated a new priesthood. The Old Covenant was administered by priests from the tribe of Levi. No one other than a Levite priest could serve at the tabernacle. However, Jesus was not descended from Levi. Therefore, He became the High Priest of a new order of worship (Jeremiah 31:31-32; Hebrews 3:1; 4:14—5:14; 7:1—10:25).

4. WHY WAS THE KINGDOM TAKEN AWAY FROM ISRAEL?

Israel was the expression and instrument of the Kingdom of God under the Old Covenant (Exodus 19:1-6; Deuteronomy 4:5-8); however, the kingdom was taken away from them for the following reasons:

- a. They were unwilling to receive the prophets and those sent to her (Matthew 23:37).
- b. They would not acknowledge their king, Jesus, whom God had sent (John 19:15).

- c. They would not bring forth the fruit of it (Matthew 21:43), which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17).
- d. They did not bring the knowledge of God to the other nations (2 Kings 17:25-26; Isaiah 56:7; Mark 11:17).

5. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE NATION OF ISRAEL?

The Jews who received Jesus Christ as their Messiah and King formed the beginning of the church that Jesus said He would build. Those who rejected Christ cut themselves off from God's eternal purpose (Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 1:10-12). In the beginning, the church consisted primarily of Jews; this church became the *Israel of God* (Galatians 6:16).

But as the gospel also went to the Gentiles and many became believers, they too became *Jews*, having a circumcision which is of the heart (Romans 2:28-29). Today those with a Hebrew background are a minority in the church.

However, God still has a covenant with the land and people of modern day Israel. Like a branch broken off, God has promised to graft them back into the olive tree again. God will defend the land of Israel against her enemies and pour out His Spirit upon the Jewish people. Many of them will believe that Jesus Christ is indeed the Messiah and be saved (Jeremiah 31:34; Zechariah 12:10; Matthew 23:39; Romans 11:11-32).

6. TO WHAT EXTENT ARE WORKS INVOLVED IN OUR SALVATION?

Although it is evidenced by our works, our justification is through faith alone (Romans 3:27-28; 4:4-5; 6:14, 23; 7:5-6; 9:31-32; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 15:56; Galatians 5:18; Ephesians 2:8-9, 14-15; Colossians 2:16-17; 1 Timothy 1:8-10; Titus 3:5).

7. WERE THE OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS SAVED BY KEEPING THE LAW?

No, those who trusted God were simply **demonstrating** their faith by their obedience to His commandments (Psalm 40:6). Their relationship with God was still based on faith.

When they died, God kept them in Sheol until the full provision was made for their salvation through the death of Jesus (Genesis 37:35; 1 Samuel 2:6; 28:15; Psalm 30:3; Luke 16:22; 23:43; Ephesians 4:7-10).

The *good news* is that Jesus brings salvation apart from *the Law* (which was imperfect and burdensome). If someone should reject the work of Christ and try to attain to a righteousness which is based solely on good works, then they demonstrate faith not in God but in their own righteousness.

Jesus brings to light the hidden motives of men's hearts. By each man's response to Him, it becomes apparent what kind of person he is (John 9:37). The proud and self-righteous reject Him, but the humble in heart welcome Him.

8. IF THE LAW DID NOT SAVE ANYONE, WHY THEN DID GOD GIVE THE LAW?

- a. to establish social order, that is, a legal system for the nations (1 Timothy 1:9-10)

God's commandments are designed to provide justice and equity for all. A nation will be blessed to the extent that it relies upon God's commandments as a basis for its rules of government.

- b. to show men their sinful condition (Romans 3:19-20; 7:7, 12-13; Ephesians 2:3-9)

1) The law shows us God's righteous standards and exposes our unrighteousness in that no one has upheld the standard of God's righteousness in his life.

2) Seeing that we have come short of God's standard, we realize that we are all dependent upon God's grace and mercy for our salvation.

- c. as a guide to the godly (Psalms 19:7-8; Galatians 3:23-24)

The law teaches us God's ways.

O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thy commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever mine. I have more insight than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, because I have observed Thy precepts. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Thy word. (Psalm 119:97-101)

- d. to foretell (through prophecy) and to foreshadow (through types and ceremonies) the Savior who was to come and through whom alone it would be possible for man to receive true salvation and righteousness (Exodus 12; Deuteronomy 18:18-19; John 1:29; Acts 3:22-26).

Note: Some people believe that God gave the law in order to show people that they could not keep it. But that is contrary to Scripture.

*For this commandment which I command you today is **not too difficult for you**, nor is it out of reach.* (Deuteronomy 30:11)

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3)

It would be cruel and unreasonable for God to give us a command that was too difficult for us to keep and then to punish us for not keeping it. God is not cruel, but is a loving Father who gave His commandments to Israel as a blessing to them.

9. HOW DID JESUS FULFILL THE LAW?

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. (Matthew 5:17-18)

- a. by His faultless, consistent observance of every ordinance (Galatians 4:4-5)

- b. by loving God and others more than Himself (Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8)
- c. by His atoning death on the cross, satisfying the Law's just demand upon all those who had not perfectly observed it (1 Peter 2:22, 24)
- d. by combining in Himself every feature prophetically set forth in the Law concerning the Messiah whom God had promised to send (Luke 24:44; John 1:45)

10. HOW IS THE REQUIREMENT OF THE LAW FULFILLED IN US?

*For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the **requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us**, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:3-4)*

If we walk in the Spirit, then we instinctively love one another, fulfilling what the law was intended to accomplish. We are then living according to the royal law, the law of love (Galatians 5:18; 1 Timothy 1:9-11; 1 John 3:14).

Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, "You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:8-10)

Not everyone walks in love and self-restraint; therefore, the law remains a necessary restraint for the lawless.

11. WHO ARE WE TO LOVE?

And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." On these two

commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."
(Matthew 22:37-40)

God's desire is first of all that we love Him and, secondly, that we love others. This includes even our enemies.

But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:44)

Homework

1. Read chapters 1 through 8 of the Gospel of Luke.
2. Be prepared to write from memory the following Scripture:
And every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, (Hebrews 10:11-12)
3. Be prepared to write answers to questions in class next week based on the material in this lesson.

22

Christianity and Cults

But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:3)

1. WHAT IS A CULT?

The dictionary defines a cult as follows:

cult — A religion or religious sect generally considered to be extremist or false, with its followers often living in an unconventional manner under the guidance of an authoritarian, charismatic leader.¹

Walter Martin, in The Rise of the Cults, p. 12, defines a cult, from a Christian perspective, as

*... a group of people polarized around someone's interpretation of the Bible and is characterized by major deviations from **orthodox Christianity** relative to the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, particularly the fact that God became man in Jesus Christ.*

¹ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992)

2. WHAT IS ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY?

Orthodox Christianity refers to the essential beliefs held by the majority of Christians since the church began in the first century. In determining whether a group is orthodox, it is not necessary to find that they have a biblical basis for every aspect of their belief or practice. There are many variations within orthodox Christianity. It is possible for a group to be considerably misled in a particular area of teaching or practice but still retain the essential elements of the Christian faith.

The basic truths of Christianity are summarized by the apostle Paul:

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

Cults will depart from one or more of the following essential beliefs:

a. Man's need for a Savior

- 1) We will die once and then face judgment (Psalm 119:160; John 12:47-48; Romans 2:6, 16; 1 Corinthians 4:5; Hebrews 9:27; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 20:12).
- 2) Christ died to make atonement for our sins and is the only mediator between God and man (Isaiah 53:4-12; Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; John 1:29; 14:6; Romans 3:26; 5:9-11; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Galatians 3:13; Colossians 1:19-22; 2:13-15; Hebrews 9:26; 10:4-18; 1 John 2:12; Revelation 5:9).
- 3) Salvation is an act of God's grace through faith in Christ, not the result of keeping the law (Romans 3:24; 4:2; Galatians 2:16; 5:4-5; Ephesians 1:7; 2:9).

b. The person of Jesus Christ

- 1) Jesus is the preexistent Son of God, born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 3:17; 17:5; John 1:1; 2:16; 5:17-47; 6:32-40; 8:42; 9:35-38; 20:28; Philippians 2:6-7; Hebrews 1:8).

2) Jesus rose from the dead and is alive (John 5:25-26; Acts 3:14-15; Romans 1:4; 5:10; 1 Corinthians 15:14, 17, 45).

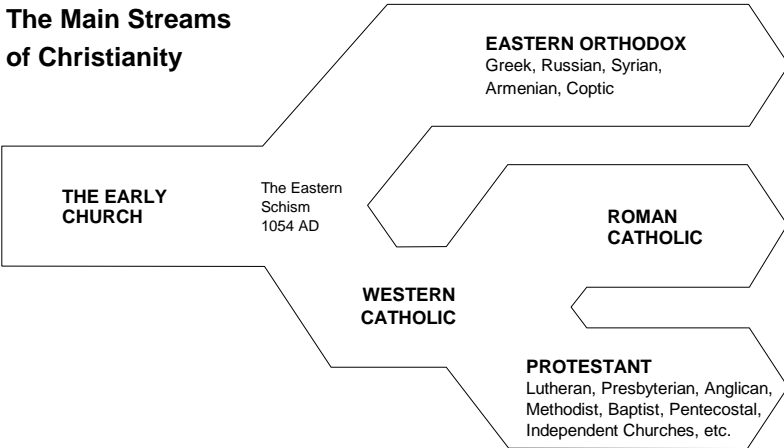
c. The authority of the Scriptures

The Bible is the inspired and authoritative Word of God (Mark 13:31; 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 1:11; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 3:15-16).

The Eastern Orthodox and Protestant churches recognize the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments as authorized Scripture. The Roman Catholic Church recognizes the same 66 books, but also accepts the Apocrypha as being inspired by God. The Apocrypha includes writings which cover, among other things, the 400 years of Jewish history between the Old and New Testament periods.

3. CHRISTIAN GROUPS

There are many different Christian denominations as well as various independent Christian churches. Although these groups differ greatly in belief and practice, they normally hold to the essential truths listed above.



Certain practices, such as in the worship of Mary, the toleration of homosexuality, or even the persecution of other Christians, are serious departures from biblical truth and certainly not acceptable behavior for a Christian. But the belief and practice of one church or even a group of churches does not necessarily reflect the official position of the denomination as a whole.

The quality of teaching and Christian example in any church depends largely on the level of commitment to Christ on the part of the local church leadership. It would be unfair to judge an entire denomination by what may or may not be happening in some of its member churches.

The true church consists of all those who have repented of their sins, acknowledged Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and now have the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit within them. It is not merely having one's name on the membership list that makes someone a true member of the Body of Christ.

The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away.... Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn." (Matthew 13:24-25, 30)

4. PSEUDO-CHRISTIAN GROUPS

There are some groups that hold themselves out as Christian churches, but they reject one or more of the essential beliefs concerning Jesus, salvation, and the Bible. Two of the largest of these groups are the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses.

a. Mormonism — Church of the Latter Day Saints²

The *prophet* Joseph Smith reportedly had a visit from God the Father and Jesus Christ in which God said that all Christian sects were "all wrong" and their creeds were "abominations". In 1827 Smith claimed to have unearthed golden plates

² Information source: *Kingdom of the Cults*, Walter Martin (Bethany Fellowship, Inc., Publishers, 1977), pp. 147-198.

written in Egyptian hieroglyphics. Smith claims that he was able to translate the plates into English with the aid of supernatural spectacles which had been left by an angelic visitor. Published as the *Book of Mormon*, this and other writings by Smith have been added to what the Mormons consider *authorized Scripture*.

Mormons believe that Jesus and the Father are two of many gods, that Jesus is the result of a physical sexual union between Mary and the Father, that all men will be saved, and that some men (excluding those with dark skin) can achieve godhood and a polygamous paradise (if properly *sealed* in the Mormon temple).

b. Jehovah's Witnesses and the Watch Tower³

Charles Russell, founder of what is now called the Jehovah's Witnesses, also founded *The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society* in 1896.

Jehovah's Witnesses deny the deity of Christ, His physical return to the earth, and the existence of hell. They believe that only 144,000 will reign with Him and that everyone else will become extinct. There is no assurance of salvation for anyone.

5. DECIDEDLY NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

a. Hinduism

Hinduism refers to the religion and cultural practices native to and predominant in **India**.

Having developed over thousands of years, Hinduism is characterized by a belief in reincarnation, the caste system, and the acceptance of the *Veda* as sacred scripture. Claiming not to be polytheistic, Hindus see their many thousands of lesser gods as different representations and means to their supreme god. Hindus believe that by following spiritual disciplines known as *yoga*, they will be liberated from the cycle of rebirth and achieve union with their supreme god.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 34-110.

b. Buddhism

Buddhism was founded in India by Siddhartha Gautama (c.563-c.483 BC), now known as *Buddha* (the enlightened one). He rejected the Hindu *Veda*, the caste system, and the concept of god in the sense of a higher being. Buddhism teaches reincarnation, but that *nirvana*, a state of supreme bliss, can be achieved in this life through the practice of meditation and the observance of moral precepts. It is a religion of self-redemption.

Although Buddhism now plays a minor role in India, it has since spread throughout much of **Asia**.

c. Judaism

Judaism is the religious beliefs and practices of the Jews, who trace their beginnings back to Abraham (2165-1990 BC), Isaac, and Jacob. They believe there is one God who created heaven and earth and who revealed his Law (*Torah*) to the Jewish people.

The Jews believe that Jesus was a great man, but deny that He is the Christ (Messiah, or Anointed One). However, Jews can be saved only through Christ.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." (John 14:6)

... and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. (Hebrews 9:22)

d. Islam

The *Quran*, originally written in Arabic, is believed to be the revelation of God (called *Allah*) to Mohammed (c.570-632), the last and greatest of God's prophets (who also include Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus). Although it acknowledges His virgin birth, the *Quran* denies that Jesus is the Son of God or that He died on a cross. Salvation for the Muslim is by works.

An adherent of Islam (meaning *submission*) is a Muslim (*one who submits*). The mission of all Muslims is to bring the entire world under Allah's dominion. Islam is the dominant

religion in large portions of the **Middle East, North Africa, and Indonesia.**

e. Tribal religions

Basic to all tribal religions is a belief in a powerful spirit world. These spirits may wander about but are often associated with places or natural forces. Friendly spirits are welcomed and evil spirits are appeased or controlled by sacrifice or ritual. Sometimes there are gods, as well as the spirits of the dead, that also interact with humans. Sometimes sorcery is also involved.

Often there are specialists to help with the religious practices:

- Mediums become possessed by a spirit power.
- Diviners interpret omens which show the will of the gods.
- Shamans travel in trances to the world of the spirits.
- Sorcerers use supernatural powers over others through the assistance of spirits.

There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12)

Various forms of tribal religions are found among the tribal peoples of **Africa, the Americas, Australia, Asia and Oceania.**

6. DANGEROUS TEACHINGS AND PRACTICES THAT CAN BE MARKS OF A CULT

a. blind allegiance to a man

I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, that no man should say you were baptized in my name. (1 Corinthians 1:14-15)

For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not mere men? (1 Corinthians 3:4)

- b. exclusiveness, air of superiority

I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say... neither does he himself receive the brethren, and he forbids those who desire to do so, and puts them out of the church. (3 John 1:9-10)

- c. control or manipulation by intimidation, condemnation, or threatenings

shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. (1 Peter 5:2-3)

- d. basing of doctrines on extra-biblical revelation

But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8-9)

- e. unwillingness to reason from the Scripture

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (2 Timothy 3:16)

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. (James 3:17)

- f. reinterpreting Scripture to accommodate new revelation

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, (2 Peter 1:20)

- g. legalism

'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.' (Matthew 15:9)

For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." (Galatians 3:10-11)

h. rationalizing of immorality or violence

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

7. RELATING TO CULT MEMBERS

- a. Remember that you are dealing with lost, confused, frightened and deceived human beings whom God loves and wants to be saved. Demonstrate genuine love and compassion for them.

*Let your speech always be with **grace**, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.* (Colossians 4:6)

*And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be **patient** with all men.* (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

*Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God **not to wrangle** about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers.* (2 Timothy 2:14)

*But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels. And the Lord's bond-servant must **not be quarrelsome**, but be **kind** to all, able to teach, **patient** when wronged, with **gentleness** correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.* (2 Timothy 2:23-26)

But **shun foolish controversies** and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law; for they are unprofitable and worthless. (Titus 3:9)

But the wisdom from above is first **pure**, then **peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.** (James 3:17)

but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with **gentleness and reverence;** (1 Peter 3:15)

And have **mercy** on some, who are doubting; (Jude 1:22)

- b. Pray that God will give them a revelation of who Jesus really is (Ephesians 1:17) and that God will be gracious and open their eyes to the truth.

No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him.... (John 6:44)

Homework

1. Read chapters 9 through 16 of the Gospel of Luke.
2. Be prepared to write from memory the following Scripture:
but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; (1 Peter 3:15)
3. Be prepared to write answers to questions in class next week based on the material in this lesson.

23

Sexual Relationships

1. GOD'S DESIGN FOR SEXUAL INTIMACY

For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

God designed sexual intimacy to be a normal part of married life. Sex is not just for the purpose of procreation, but also for the purpose of enhancing the relationship between husband and wife. It is meant to be a pleasurable experience for both parties.

Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving hind and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; be exhilarated always with her love. For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress, and embrace the bosom of a foreigner? (Proverbs 5:18-20)

The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (1 Colossians 7:4-5)

2. DOES GOD WANT YOU TO MARRY?

- a. Marriage is a blessing from the Lord.

He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord. (Proverbs 18:22)

- b. Jesus said some are given the grace to remain single.

But He said to them, "Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given. For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it." (Matthew 19:11-12)

Notice that Jesus is saying that not all men have been given the grace to remain single. But for those who are able to remain single, they should do so for the sake of the kingdom.

- c. The apostle Paul recommended that the unmarried remain single; but he also recognized that not everyone is given the same grace.

Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that. But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. (1 Corinthians 7:7-8)

- d. The apostle Paul recommends that you remain in the condition you were in when you became a Christian.

Brethren, let each man remain with God in that condition in which he was called. Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy. I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is. Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. But if you should marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin should marry, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you. (1 Corinthians 7:24-28)

- e. Reasons why it is better not to marry
 - 1) to avoid needless troubles (1 Corinthians 7:28)
 - 2) to make better use of your time (1 Corinthians 7:29-31)
 - 3) to be free from concern about the things of this world (1 Corinthians 7:32-34, 40)
 - 4) to be able to give undistracted devotion to the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:35)

- f. Reasons to marry

- 1) if you feel you can more effectively further the kingdom by being married

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." (Genesis 2:18)

- 2) if you cannot control your sexual desires

But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn. (1 Corinthians 7:9)

Some new believers in Corinth thought that all sex was wrong and that Christians should not to get married. In this passage, Paul was telling couples who wanted to marry that they should not frustrate their normal sexual drives by avoiding marriage. He was not saying that sexual passion should be used to justify an unwise marriage.

- g. If a believer marries, it must be only to another believer (Ezra 10:10; John 8:44; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 2:2).

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? (2 Corinthians 6:14-15)

However, if already married to an unbeliever, the believing spouse should not leave, but remain faithful to the relationship with the hope that the unbelieving spouse will also become a Christian (1 Corinthians 7:12-16).

3. GOD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD DIVORCE

"For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel.... "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously." (Malachi 2:16)

Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate. (Matthew 19:6)

- a. Marriage is a lifelong commitment. Divorce was not part of God's original plan.

And some Pharisees came to Him, testing Him, and saying, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?" And He answered and said, "Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, and said, 'FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'? Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY?" He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way." (Matthew 19:3-8)

- b. Do Christians ever have a biblical basis for divorce?

In a case where one party is committing adultery, the other party may initiate a divorce. A divorce on non-biblical grounds is not recognized by God as a true divorce, in which case, the first spouse to enter into sexual union with a third party commits adultery (Luke 16:18).

*but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, **except for the cause of unchastity**, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. (Matthew 5:32)*

*And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, **except for immorality**, and marries another woman commits adultery. (Matthew 19:9)*

c. Is a divorced person eligible for remarriage?

According to biblical law, a person committing adultery would be killed (Leviticus 20:10), in which case, the question of remarriage for the surviving spouse would never be raised. It becomes an issue only in cultures which do not administer justice according to the biblical standard.

This lack of biblical justice often becomes an opportunity for the Christian spouse to extend grace and mercy to the unfaithful partner and pursue reconciliation of the relationship in spite of the offense (Luke 17:3-4; Ephesians 4:32). This is usually a far better alternative to divorce, especially when children are involved.

An important issue for the Christian is to examine to what extent he or she must share responsibility for the breakdown in the relationship. The *innocent* party may not have actually committed adultery but may be guilty of contention, strife, pride, selfishness, disrespect, or other unloving actions or attitudes. In this case, the *innocent* party should humbly ask forgiveness for also having violated the terms of the marriage covenant which included a commitment to love.

No one should consider remarriage while there remains unresolved anger or bitterness towards the previous spouse (Matthew 5:23-24; Romans 12:18; Hebrews 12:14).

A person who is divorced without biblical grounds must remain single or be reconciled (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).

d. A woman who is divorced and marries another may never return to her previous husband (Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Jeremiah 3:1).

4. UNLAWFUL SEXUAL ACTIVITY

- a. The Greek word *porneia*, usually translated **immorality** (or *porno*, usually translated **immoral person**), refers to all types of unlawful sexual activity including fornication, homosexuality, bestiality, incest, and adultery (1 Thessalonians 4:3; Revelation 22:15).

*But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and **immoral persons** and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* (Revelation 21:8)

fornication — sexual intercourse outside of marriage (Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25; 1 Colossians 6:9; Hebrews 13:4)

homosexuality — sexual activity with another of the same sex (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Colossians 6:9; 1 Timothy 1:10)

bestiality — sexual activity with an animal (Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 20:15)

incest — sexual relations between persons who are closely related (Leviticus 20:10-21; 1 Corinthians 5:1)

adultery — sexual intercourse between a married person and a partner other than the lawful spouse (Deuteronomy 22:22-26)

So then if, while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man. (Romans 7:3)

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge. (Hebrews 13:4)

- b. In general, our behavior is to be pure and modest, avoiding all forms of sensuality and lust (2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19). We are not to act in such a way as to stir up sensual desires in others.

But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (Ephesians 5:3-5)

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7)

Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, (Colossians 3:5-6)

[Men are to treat] ... the younger women as sisters, in all purity. (1 Timothy 5:2)

Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and discreetly.... (1 Timothy 2:9)

5. WHY IS SEXUAL SIN SO DANGEROUS?

Some people argue that sexual sin is all right as long as no one gets hurt. But the truth is that someone always gets hurt. God loves us and wants what is best for us. That is why He puts restrictions on our sexual activity.

- a. Adultery is the breaking of one's marriage vow and obviously hurts the marriage relationship by violating the mutual trust that needs to be in the relationship in order to enjoy real intimacy and provide security for the family members.

It also harms one's reputation and brings financial ruin.

The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; he who would destroy himself does it. Wounds and disgrace he will find, and his reproach will not be blotted out. (Proverbs 6:32-33)

For on account of a harlot one is reduced to a loaf of bread, and an adulteress hunts for the precious life. (Proverbs 6:26)

- b. Premarital sex is an attempt to enjoy the privileges of marriage without the responsibility of commitment. It is an

attempt at self-gratification by choosing to satisfy one's own desires at the expense of the well-being of another. The consequence is

- 1) a difficulty in establishing trust between the marriage partners after marriage, hindering the development of real intimacy.
- 2) the risk of unwanted pregnancy and disease (1 Corinthians 6:18).
- 3) the distortion of one's personality and ability to relate lovingly to others (Philippians 2:3).
- 4) a barrier of guilt in one's relationship to God (Genesis 34:27-29).
- 5) enslavement to sin (2 Peter 2:19).
- 6) a cause of stumbling for the other person (Luke 17:2; 1 Corinthians 8:13).
- 7) eternal punishment (1 Corinthians 6:9).

6. WHY PEOPLE YIELD TO TEMPTATION

a. sensual lust

For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. (1 Peter 4:3)

b. pride

For some, the temptation is to prove to themselves or others that they are able to conquer another sexually (Proverbs 2:16; Jude 1:16).

For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, (2 Peter 2:18)

c. desire for intimacy

Some are ensnared because they feel that a sexual relationship is a quick way to satisfy their desire for intimacy without investing in the development of a loving relationship.

7. HOW TO CONQUER SEXUAL TEMPTATION

- a. Flee from the temptation. Do not try to see how strong you are by sticking around (Genesis 39:12-18; Proverbs 2:16-19; 5:3-15; 6:24-32; 7:24-27; 9:16-18; Romans 6:12-13; 1 Peter 2:11).

Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (2 Timothy 2:22)

- b. Guard your mind. Do not read books, look at pictures or encourage fantasies that stimulate wrong desires (Job 31:1; Matthew 15:19-20; Mark 7:21; 2 Corinthians 10:5). Jesus said that if you fantasize about sexual acts you have sinned in your heart (Matthew 5:27-28).
- c. Fill your mind with good thoughts (Romans 8:6; 13:14; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:2).
- d. Think about others as people to be served, not objects to be used (Romans 13:14; Philippians 2:3-8).
- e. Set guidelines for your own behavior that will keep you from the occasion to sin. Consciously avoid places or activities that you know will kindle temptation of this kind.

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Homework

1. Read chapters 17 through 24 of the Gospel of Luke.
2. Be prepared to write from memory the following Scripture:
For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.
(Genesis 2:24)
3. Be prepared to write answers to questions in class next week based on the material in this lesson.

24

Family Relationships

"And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse." (Malachi 4:6)

Family relationships are important to God and He defines these relationships for us in His word.

1. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE HUSBAND?

*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but **nourishes** and **cherishes** it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. FOR THIS CAUSE A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE TO HIS WIFE; AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. (Ephesians 5:25-31)*

nourish— (1) to provide food or other substances necessary for growth, (2) to foster the development of; promote and sustain.

cherish— (1) to hold dear; treat with affection and tenderness, (2) to keep fondly in mind.

- a. He is to love his wife and give of himself for her. Love is defined as follows:

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

- b. He is to assume the responsibility for developing open lines of communication through patient listening. By demonstrating an openness to receive correction or counsel from his wife he creates an atmosphere in which his wife will feel free to honestly express her true feelings. In this way he will develop a good understanding of his wife's desires and needs.

You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)

- c. He is to become a source of inspiration for his wife.

This means that he must pursue a relationship with God, not only for his own sake; but he should also take an active interest in helping his wife to reach her full potential in the ministry for which God has gifted her (See the definition of *nourish* above.).

But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:3)

The word translated *head* in this verse has the meaning of *source of life*, just as the head of a river is its point of origin or source of life. With this in mind, the husband should work at being a constant encouragement to his wife.

2. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE WIFE?

The husband and wife are equal in importance, but do not have the same function here on earth. They each have the same potential for inheriting the rewards of eternal life according to the measure of their faithfulness to the Lord.

In this life, the relationship between the husband and wife illustrates the relationship between Christ and His bride, the church.

- a. She is to be an added strength to her husband.

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." (Genesis 2:18)

- b. She is to have a submissive attitude toward her husband, willing to obey (unless asked to violate God's commandments (Acts 5:29).)

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. (Ephesians 5:22-24)

- c. She is to keep house.

Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; (1 Timothy 5:14)

- d. She is to honor her husband.

In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. And let not your adornment be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn

themselves, being submissive to their own husbands. Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. (1 Peter 3:1-6)

3. WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS TOWARD THEIR CHILDREN?

- a. Parents should provide a great amount of love and affection (Psalm 103:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11). Jesus took the children in His hands and blessed them (Matthew 19:13-14; Mark 10:13-14).

Parents should have fun with their children, giving them the opportunity to enjoy life (Job 21:11; Psalm 113:9; Zechariah 8:5; Matthew 11:16-17; Luke 7:31-32; 11:13; 1 Timothy 6:17). When children have the memory of a stable and happy home environment, they are much more apt to handle their own personal crises as they grow older.

- b. Teach them God's ways (Galatians 4:2).

And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

Children who are taught knowledge without God will develop depraved minds, doing those things which are not proper (Romans 1:28); their minds will be taken captive through empty deception (Colossians 2:8).

God promises to parents who train their children properly that when their children are old, they will not depart from the truth (Jeremiah 10:2; Proverbs 22:6).

- c. Discipline rebellion (Proverbs 23:13-14; Hebrews 12:8).

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him. (Proverbs 22:15)

Correct your son, and he will give you comfort; he will also delight your soul. (Proverbs 29:17)

Left alone, rebellion will produce pride (Proverbs 14:3). It will eventually destroy the child, bringing him contention, strife (Proverbs 13:10; 28:25), and shame (Proverbs 11:2; 29:15, 23).

- d. Provide for the physical needs of their children (Proverbs 13:22).

... I will not be a burden to you; for I do not seek what is yours, but you; for children are not responsible to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. (2 Corinthians 12:14)

- e. Understand the uniqueness of each child.

Children with different personalities respond differently to various types of instruction and discipline. What works with one may not work with another.

What works at one age may not work as the child becomes older. Young children are taught to obey whereas older children are taught to assume greater responsibility and sharpen their decision-making abilities. It is sometimes challenging for parents to adjust the way they relate as their children mature.

4. WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILDREN TOWARD THEIR PARENTS?

- a. Children are to obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1).

Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. (Colossians 3:20)

- b. As children become adults and marry or leave home, they are no longer required to obey their parents, but they still must honor them (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16; Matthew 15:4-6; 19:19; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Ephesians 6:2).

- c. Children should care for their parents when they are old and unable to care for themselves .

For Moses said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER'; and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, LET HIM BE PUT TO DEATH'; but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, anything of mine you might have been helped by is Corban (that is to say, given to God),' you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down.... (Mark 7:10-13)

But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.... If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:4-8 NIV)

5. WHAT ARE SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHRISTIAN HOME?

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17)

a. righteousness

There should be a standard of godliness maintained in the home.

I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not fasten its grip on me. (Psalm 101:3)

But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. (Ephesians 5:3-4)

b. peace

Sometimes we tend to take advantage of the people who are closest to us. A key to maintaining a peaceful atmosphere in the home is for the members to walk in love and humility,

being quick to ask forgiveness whenever they might offend another.

God is so serious about reconciliation that He tells us not to come before Him to offer gifts until we are at peace with one another.

Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-25)

Jesus goes on to say in verse 26, *Agree with your adversary quickly while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown in prison.*

How to ask forgiveness:

- 1) Identify the underlying motive behind your actions. In other words, instead of asking forgiveness for getting angry, identify the selfish attitude in you that caused you to get angry in the first place. For example, "I recognize that I got angry at you because I was jealous (or lazy, or selfish, etc.). Would you please forgive me for having been jealous?"
- 2) Humble yourself. Do not shift blame on someone or something else. Do not bring up past actions by the other person. Accept the full responsibility for your actions.
- 3) Do not say, "**If** I have offended you...." This makes it sound like the matter was so minor that you or someone else would not have been offended, but the person you are talking to may have been. It can cause the person to become defensive, thinking that you are judging him to be weak because he was hurt. In any case, it does not communicate deep remorse on your part, but a casual attitude toward the offense.

c. joy

Where there is love, there will also be joy. If people feel like they are "walking on eggshells" it is likely that there are

unresolved offenses. There should be an atmosphere of honesty and tolerance in which the members of the household feel the liberty to express their feelings without fear of retaliation.

6. THE FAMILY OF GOD

And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold, My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." (Matthew 12:49-50)

Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life." (Mark 10:29-30)

Many Christians do not have loving family relationships. But God has promised to provide fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters within the context of the church (Matthew 19:29; 1 Peter 1:22). The Bible often refers to the Church as the family of God or the household of faith (Ephesians 2:19; 3:14-15; Galatians 6:10).

Mary, Martha, and Lazarus provided such a home for Jesus (John 11:1f.; 12:1-2).

7. HOSPITALITY

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13:1-2)

Be hospitable to one another without complaint. (1 Peter 4:9)

Being hospitable is a requirement for leadership in the church (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8).

Sometimes, Christians will decide to let someone actually move into their home for a period of time. When taking others to live in your home it is important to have a clear understanding with

them before they move in. It is usually helpful to **write down** the answers to the following questions:

- ❖ What is the purpose for moving in?
- ❖ What is the length of stay?
- ❖ What type of relationship do they expect with you?
- ❖ What is the financial arrangement?
- ❖ What right of access will they have to the food?
- ❖ What right of access will they have to the TV?
- ❖ Will smoking be allowed in the house?
- ❖ Will there be a curfew?
- ❖ Are there rules for the children?
- ❖ Who corrects the children?

Homework

1. Read the books of Philippians through 2 Thessalonians.
2. Be prepared to write from memory the following Scripture:
And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse. (Malachi 4:6)
3. Be prepared to write answers to questions in class next week based on the material in this lesson.

25

Church Membership

1. WHAT WAS THE MEANING OF THE WORD *CHURCH* IN BIBLE DAYS?

The Greek word translated *church* in the Bible is *ekklesia*: the assembly of the competent full citizens of a Greek city.

Every true believer has become a citizen in the Kingdom of God and is a member of Christ's *ekklesia* (Matthew 16:18; Acts 9:31; Ephesians 1:22; 3:10; 4:3-6; 5:27; Philippians 3:6; Colossians 1:18, 24).

The word *ekklesia* is sometimes used to refer to the entire Body of Christ or the Universal Church, but is most often used with reference to a **local assembly** or congregation (Acts 5:11; 8:3; 14:23; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 4:17; 11:16; Revelation 2:1, 8, 12, 18).

2. WHAT IS A LOCAL CHURCH?

A local church is a community or fellowship of Christians having the following characteristics:

- a. It is identified with a **geographic area**, that is, the members live in proximity to one another to make their assembling together possible.

Their unique place in the purposes of God will be affected by the community in which God has placed them (Acts 8:1;

Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Philippians 4:15; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; Revelation 1:11).

- b. It is under the **oversight of gifted ministries** (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:9-13; Titus 1:5; Hebrews 13:17).

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you... shepherd the flock of God... those allotted to your charge... (1 Peter 5:1-3)

- c. It is united in spirit, having a **common vision** and **sense of purpose** (Acts 15:25; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 1:27).

Now I exhort you, brethren... that you all agree [literally, speak the same thing], and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. (1 Corinthians 1:10)

3. IS CHURCH MEMBERSHIP BIBLICAL?

Yes, the Bible gives us different illustrations of the nature and function of God's redeemed community.

- a. We are a body.

so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (Romans 12:5)

*For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.... But now **God has placed** the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.... Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it. (1 Corinthians 12:12, 18, 27)*

To identify oneself as a member of a particular local church is merely to acknowledge where God has placed one in His body.

- b. We are a building.

Jesus said He would build His church (Matthew 16:18). The Church that He is building is made up of "living stones," that is, people.

you also, as living stones, are **being built** up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices... (1 Peter 2:5)

in whom the whole building, **being fitted** together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are **being built** together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:21-22)

Notice the process that is taking place. A load of bricks dumped on a site does not make a house, but each brick must be positioned in exactly the right place according to design in order for the building to take shape and become a dwelling.

In a similar manner, each individual in the church must find his place in the building that God is making with us.

4. IS IT SCRIPTURAL TO MAINTAIN A LIST OF CHURCH MEMBERS?

Yes. Both the Old and New Testaments refer to books where the names of God's people were kept for records:

- a. All the tribes of Israel were numbered in the wilderness of Sinai (Numbers 1-2) and again after their return from Babylonian captivity (Ezra 2:62-64; Nehemiah 7).
- b. The Levites were numbered (Numbers 3).
- c. The Redeemed of all ages have their names written in the Book of Life (Philippians 4:3; Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 13:8; 17:8; 20:12-15; 21:27). If God keeps records, finite man should do the same
- d. The shepherds of God's flock will *give an account* for those *allotted to their charge*. If they are going to be held accountable, they must know of what their allotment consists (Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:3).
- e. The Apostle Paul gave instruction that a certain man should be put out of the Church and later that he should be readmitted. Apparently, the early Church knew who was in and who was out (1 Corinthians 5:2; 2 Corinthians 2:8).

5. WHY DO SOME PEOPLE REJECT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP?

- a. They do not believe it is scriptural.

This is answered above.

- b. They have been hurt in previous relationships.

Answer: Part of the function of the church is to provide a healing environment of love and acceptance.

- c. They may not want to become *locked in* to the kind of commitment implied by membership.

Answer: Although loyalty and commitment to relationships are desirable qualities, local church membership is completely voluntary and people are free to withdraw as they feel the Lord may lead them.

- d. They may be afraid of what expectations will be placed upon them to serve.

Answer: Anyone who is genuinely born of God will want to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in some capacity. A person who has no desire to do anything in service to God should reevaluate his conversion experience.

The responsibility of the pastoral staff is to provide the training and direction for each person to mature in his gifts and calling. However, each person's response to the call of God upon his life is completely voluntary and is not coerced.

- e. They may not want to feel obligated to give financially.

Answer: Those who are taught the word of God have a responsibility to share with those who teach. The tithe was and is God's plan for supporting the work of the church. It is also a weapon of defense against the enemy and, when practiced in faith, becomes a vehicle for receiving the blessings of God (Malachi 3:8-12). Because people often need time to grow in faith, they should not be required to practice tithing to be recognized as a member. Generous giving is a normal part of the Christian life, and many people will want to give much more than 10% of their income for the Lord's work.

- f. They may not want to participate in church gatherings on a regular basis.

Answer: Membership is more than having one's name on a role, but it is recognition of the fact that God has called us to be part of His family, a community of men and women who have given themselves to God for a common purpose. The New Testament picture of church life includes teaching, corporate worship, fellowship, corporate prayer, serving, encouraging one another, communion, a cooperative effort of good works, giving, etc. (Acts 2:42-48; Philippians 1:27; 2:1-4; Ephesians 4:15-16; Hebrews 10:24-25). It is impossible to imagine such a community life without regular participation at least weekly by the members.

- g. They may be involved in sinful activity and are therefore afraid they may be exposed or that expectations will be placed upon them to change certain behaviors that they are unwilling or feel unable to change.

Answer: The local church is a place of learning. It is through interaction with other members of the body that we learn and mature. We are to encourage, pray for, and strengthen one another in the growth process (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12). God is simply looking for those with willing hearts.

6. WHY IS COMMITMENT TO THE LOCAL CHURCH SO IMPORTANT?

- a. The church is where we learn and practice community life. The New Testament instructs us to love, serve, honor and forgive one another, considering others as more important than ourselves (Philippians 2:3). The local church provides a context for these admonitions to be fulfilled.
- b. The church is the visible embodiment of Jesus Christ on earth (Ephesians 1:23; 5:30-32; Colossians 1:27). It is impossible to separate Christ from His church (Matthew 10:40; Acts 9:1-5; Ephesians 5:29). A commitment to Christ will be evidenced in a commitment to the physical expression of His body on earth (1 John 2:19).

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren.... (1 John 3:14)

- c. Jesus died for the church. We are His inheritance (Ephesians 1:18). His desire is that we become one body so He can return for us, His bride (John 17:22-23; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-25; Philippians 2:2; Revelations 21:2).
- d. The church is God's instrument through which He will manifest His kingdom power and authority in the world (Ephesians 1:9-10; 3:9-10) and is therefore central to God's eternal purposes.

The church is the vehicle through which God will bring about His end-time plan.

- e. The Church is God's provision for our spiritual growth (Ephesians 4:11-16) and protection.

then the LORD will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy. (Isaiah 4:5)

Some people assume that spiritual growth can take place independent of the Body of Christ. Although this may be true in a measure, as one matures he begins to understand the place that the Church holds in God's overall scheme of things. With this revelation comes an appreciation of the importance of the local church.

7. WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERSHIP TOWARD THE MEMBERS?

The Bible says that God will gather His flock and raise up shepherds who will **tend** them. This includes the following:

- a. training or bringing to maturity

And He (Christ) gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to... a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13)

- b. training by example
shepherd the flock of God... proving to be examples to the flock. (1 Peter 5:2-3)
Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1)
- c. correcting
... reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. (2 Timothy 4:2)
- d. protecting
Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.... I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; (Acts 20:28-29)
Obey your leaders... for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account...(Hebrews 13:17)
- e. maintaining order
... I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains... (Titus 1:5)
But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner. (1 Corinthians 14:40)
- f. giving vision and direction to body
Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained... (Proverbs 29:18)

8. WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS TO THE BODY?

One cannot expect to receive all the blessings and benefits of Christ's Church without also being committed to the responsibilities of membership. Some of those responsibilities are listed below:

- a. attending church gatherings
and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is

the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

b. being committed to church unity

being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3)

... standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; (Philippians 1:27)

Obey your leaders, and submit to them... (Hebrews 13:17)

c. being committed to the well-being of others in the church

Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love... (Romans 12:10)

... confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another... (James 5:16)

d. contributing to the church financially

And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches. (Galatians 6:6)

... be generous and ready to share (1 Timothy 6:18)

e. fulfilling one's ministry of service to the body

But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:7)

... fulfill your ministry. (2 Timothy 4:5)

... all the members do not have the same function... and since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly.... (Romans 12:4-6)

9. HOW DOES ONE BECOME PART OF A LOCAL CHURCH?

But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. (1 Corinthians 12:18)

Since God is the one who joins each member to the body and positions him according to His plan and purpose for the church, the believer simply needs to **acknowledge his commitment** to the local assembly in which he believes God has placed him

There should be a **verbal** commitment or **public affirmation**, whereby the believer agrees to assume the responsibilities of membership.

The Elders should also express agreement and acceptance of the believer into the body on behalf of the entire congregation.

Homework

1. Read the books of 1 Timothy through Philemon.
2. Be prepared to write from memory the following Scripture:
But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. (1 Corinthians 12:18)
3. Be prepared to write answers to questions in class next week based on the material in this lesson.

26

Church Government

The Bible identifies clearly three main areas of government in society:

- ❖ the home (1 Corinthians 11:1-3)
- ❖ civil government (Romans 13)
- ❖ the Church (1 Corinthians 12:2; Hebrews 13:17)

All three types of government are subject to God and His word.

1. WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR GOVERNMENT?

Without government there would be lawlessness, anarchy, and disorder (2 Peter 2:10).

In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes. (Judges 17:6)

...the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

2. POPULAR FORMS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Various forms of government may be appropriate at different times. There are three main types of church government:

- a. The presbyterian form, in which a plurality of elders govern the local church body, most closely represents what we find in the New Testament (Acts 14:23; 16:4; 20:17; Titus 1:5-11; Hebrews 13:17; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1).
- b. In a congregational or democratic form of government all the members vote concerning the affairs of the church. However, as can be seen from the above, the democratic form is not biblical.
- c. In the episcopal form of government, the local church is subject to the authority of a single individual, often called a Bishop. Authority flows from a top-down pyramiding structure giving too much control to a man outside the local church.

3. THE LOCAL CHURCH IS GOVERNED BY ELDERS.

- a. Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and He has delegated authority to certain individuals as His representatives (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11) for the purpose of providing leadership in the local church.
- b. These individuals are usually called elders or pastors. These words are translations of three Greek words used in the New Testament. They are all used to refer to the same person.
 - 1) *presbytuos*, translated elder (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5)
 - 2) *episcopos*, translated overseer, bishop in KJV (1 Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:7)
 - 3) *poiman*, translated shepherd or pastor (Jeremiah 3:15; 23:4; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:1-2)
- c. A church will normally have a plurality of ruling elders. Under unusual circumstances, such as in its early formation, a local church may have a more centralized form of government.
- d. Although there should be a plurality of elders, not all elders are equal in responsibility. In the New Testament, James provided leadership among the elders of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:4-23; 21:17-18).

4. WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATIONS OF AN ELDER?

An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife [i.e., not a polygamist and not immoral], temperate [i.e., exercising moderation and self-restraint], prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious [i.e., belligerent, a bully], but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity... and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church.... (1 Timothy 3:2-7)

... above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. (Titus 1:6-9)

5. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ELDERSHIP?

"As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land. I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down in good grazing ground, and they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest," declares the Lord God. "I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken, and strengthen the sick; but the

fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment."
(Ezekiel 34:12-16)

- a. They provide an example of godliness, commitment, and service (1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Peter 5:2-3). More than anyone else, they should be present when the church comes together. They should pray and fast for the church.
- b. They teach and train the members of the Body (Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 3:2), helping to develop others in their gifts and callings (2 Timothy 2:2).

Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding. (Jeremiah 3:15)

- c. They help the members to identify areas of stumbling in their lives, leading them to confess their sins and find healing (James 5:14).

Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? (2 Corinthians 11:29)

- d. They govern, that is, direct the affairs of the local church. This includes planning and organizing (1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17).
- e. They carry out church discipline (Matthew 18:17-18; 2 Timothy 4:2).
- f. They discern false ministries (Acts 20:28).

I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; (Revelation 2:2)

- g. False shepherds, i.e., those who do not faithfully carry out their responsibilities, come under the judgment of God (Jeremiah 23:1f.; Ezekiel 34:1f.).

6. HOW ARE ELDERS SELECTED?

- a. They are first tested (1 Timothy 3:1-7, 10). They should be formally recognized only after they have proven themselves in having the ability to carry out the task.

- b. They are tested by being assigned tasks of limited responsibility. When they demonstrate faithfulness in carrying out small tasks, they are given greater responsibilities.
- c. After having proven themselves, they are appointed (Exodus 18:25; Numbers 11:16-17).

And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. (Acts 14:23)

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, (Titus 1:5)

- d. Although the church body does not hold an election to decide who the elders should be, the church members should be given the opportunity to voice any objections to a specific individual being given the responsibility of leadership.

7. DEACONS

- a. Deacons are appointed to assist the elders by assuming the responsibility for many of the practical needs in the church.

The word **deacon** comes from the Greek word *diakonos*, meaning servant.

And the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. But select from among you, brethren, seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task." (Acts 6:2-3)

- b. Deacons are specifically addressed by Paul when writing to the church at Philippi.

*Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the **overseers and deacons:** (Philippians 1:1)*

- c. What are the qualifications of a deacon?

Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. (1 Timothy 3:8-11)

The qualifications are much the same as those required of elders except that a deacon is not expected to be able to teach.

8. WHAT ARE SOME OTHER LEADING MINISTRIES?

We have already discussed the role of the pastor (also called elder, shepherd, overseer). Although the pastoral team provides the primary leadership in a local church, there are other ministries, called to work with the elders, through which the Lord Jesus Christ provides leadership for His Body. These gifts, listed in Ephesians 4:11 are sometimes called the *Ascension Gift Ministries* or the *Fivefold Ministry Gifts*.

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; (Ephesians 4:11-12)

And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers... (1 Corinthians 12:28)

9. WHAT IS AN APOSTLE?

- a. The Greek word *apostolos* means "a messenger, one sent on a mission." The original 12 apostles were sent out by the Lord Himself. Additional apostles, such as Paul, Timothy, Titus and others, were subsequently sent by the Holy Spirit as special *ambassadors*, representing Christ to those to whom they were sent. Many of whom we call *missionaries* are actually functioning in an apostolic capacity.

b. He is a *father* in the Church.

*For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many **fathers**; for in Christ Jesus I became your **father** through the gospel.* (1 Corinthians 4:15)

*For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his **father**.* (Philippians 2:20-22)

- 1) He is an example of love, godliness, and humility, faithfully representing Christ (Philippians 3:17; 4:9; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7).

Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1)

- 2) He is able to teach and correct (Isaiah 4:5-6; Acts 5:42; 15:36; 1 Corinthians 5). Paul wrote to Timothy:

preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. (2 Timothy 4:2)

- 3) He is vested with authority (1 Corinthians 4:21; 2 Peter 3:2).

c. He is a master builder.

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. (1 Corinthians. 3:10)

- 1) He is a foundation layer.

... preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation; (Romans 15:20)

... God's household, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:19-20)

- 2) He provides structure where necessary (Acts 6:6; 14:21-23).

... set in order what remains, and appoint...(Titus 1:5)

- d. His ministry is confirmed by miraculous signs and convincing proofs (Acts 8:14, 18; 14:27; 2 Corinthians 12:11-12).
- e. His ministry is marked by much suffering (1 Corinthians 4:9-17; 2 Corinthians 11-12; Revelation 18:20)

10. WHAT IS A PROPHET?

- a. A prophet receives and relates revelation from God (Acts 2:30-31; 1 Corinthians 14:37).

Surely the Lord GOD does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7)

- b. Besides prophecy, a prophet frequently exercises other spiritual gifts, especially the word of knowledge, word of wisdom, discerning of spirits, healing, and miracles (1 Corinthians 12).

- c. A prophet often receives revelation about people's lives and their sins (Acts 8:23; 1 Corinthians 14:24; Titus 1:12).

- d. A prophet oftentimes receives revelation about future events.

Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius. (Acts 11:27-28)

And as we were staying there for some days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" (Acts 21:10-11)

- e. His ministry is marked by a willingness to endure persecution from the religious (Matthew 21:26; 23:29-35).

... A prophet is not without honor except in his home town, and in his own household. (Matthew 13:57)

As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets.... (James 5:10)

11. WHAT IS AN EVANGELIST?

- a. An evangelist is a preacher or a messenger of the gospel, i.e., the good news concerning Jesus and the Kingdom of God. His ministry very often includes signs and wonders, including healing and deliverance.

And Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was much rejoicing in that city. (Acts 8:5-8)

- b. An evangelist is particularly gifted at winning the lost to Christ. He knows well how to relate personally with people (e.g., Stephen in Acts 7; 8:26-40).
- c. He should be diligent in the Scriptures (Acts 7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 4:1-5).

12. WHAT IS A TEACHER?

- a. The teacher is one who gives himself to the exposition of God's Word. He is able to bring clarity to the Scriptures, leading to the maturity of the members of the Body of Christ.

Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. (Acts 18:24)

- b. Whereas the evangelist is concerned primarily with preaching the gospel and gathering people into the Church, the teacher is more concerned with helping to mature the saints who are in the church. Of course, this is a broad generalization; Paul used his teaching skills in attempting to win the Jews to Christ.

And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, (Acts 17:2)

- c. The prophet is concerned primarily with comforting, edifying, exhorting, occasionally with correcting and directing. His goal is to inspire, and his approach is often more emotional than that of the teacher. The teacher tends to be more logical and intellectual, appealing less to one's emotions and more to his reasoning faculties. He is very much dependent upon the Holy Spirit to give illumination to the Scriptures so that they will have genuine life application.
- d. We are cautioned not to be presumptuous in presenting ourselves as teachers to the Body of Christ, since teachers will be held accountable for the effect their teachings had in the lives of others.
Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment. (James 3:1)
- e. It is appropriate for teachers to be supported by their ministry (Galatians 6:6).
- f. The teaching ministry is often combined with that of the pastor or apostle. Paul was a teacher and an apostle (Acts 13:1-4; 15:35; 18:1; Colossians 1:28; 1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11).

Homework

1. Read the book of Hebrews.
2. Be prepared to write from memory the following Scripture:
And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; (Ephesians 4:11-12)
3. Be prepared to write answers to questions in class next week based on the material in this lesson.

27

The Work of the Ministry

*And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of **ministry**, for the edifying of the body of Christ, (Ephesians 4:11-12 NKJV)*

The word translated ministry is *diakonia*, also translated *service* in other places. Actually, we could call this the *work of service*. Notice that it is not the pastor's job to do the ministry, but to train the **saints** to do the work of the ministry.

And let our people also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, that they may not be unfruitful. (Titus 3:14)

and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, (Hebrews 10:24)

who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. (Titus 2:14)

1. JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE

A servant heart is the first requirement for ministry in the Kingdom of God.

... whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:26-28; also Mark 10:45)

You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master; neither is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. (John 13:13-16)

*Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a **bond-servant**, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, (Philippians 2:5-9)*

The word translated bond-servant is *doulos* which frequently indicates subjection without the idea of bondage.

2. JESUS TEACHES THE DISCIPLES

On three different occasions Jesus explains to His disciples that He will be killed. Immediately following, the disciples begin to discuss their relative positions in the kingdom. Each time, Jesus then talks with them about servanthood:

a. on the way to Capernaum

... on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest. And sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all."(Mark 9:34-35)

b. on the way to Jerusalem

And calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it

over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all."(Mark 10:42-44)

c. in the upper room

And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' But not so with you, but let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves."(Luke 22:24-27)

3. WHO ARE WE EXPECTED TO SERVE?

a. the Lord

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.(Matthew 6:24)

(Ezekiel 20:40; Daniel 6:16; 7:14, 27; Zephaniah 3:9; Malachi 3:18; Matthew 4:10; Colossians 3:24; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Hebrews 9:14; Revelation 22:3)

b. the household of faith, i.e., the family of God

*Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these **brothers of Mine**, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'*(Matthew 25:37-40)

*For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve **one another**.* (Galatians 5:13)

*So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the **household of the faith**.* (Galatians 6:10)

*And let those who have **believers** as their masters not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.* (1 Timothy 6:2)

*As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving **one another**, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.* (1 Peter 4:10)

c. all men

Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation. (1 Peter 2:12)

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. (1 Peter 2:18)

This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men. (Titus 3:8)

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF A SERVANT

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4)

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:8)

Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse

generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, (Philippians 2:14-15)

But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. And you too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me. (Philippians 2:17-18)

- a. unselfish
- b. humble
- c. submissive to God and earthly authorities
- d. joyful

5. EACH MEMBER OF THE BODY HAS A DIFFERENT FUNCTION.

For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. (Romans 12:4-5)

For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. (1 Corinthians 12:12-18)

And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? All

do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? (1 Corinthians 12:28-30)

6. THE SEVEN GIFTINGS OF ROMANS 12

And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. (Romans 12:6-8)

- a. Prophecy
the ability to perceive supernatural revelation concerning persons and events.
- b. Service
the ability to focus on a task needed to accomplish a greater objective.
- c. Teaching
the ability to clarify truth in such a way that it becomes understandable.
- d. Exhortation
the ability to motivate others to fruitful service.
- e. Giving
the ability to make wealth and freely distribute it where needed.
- f. Leading
the ability to envision and effectively communicate a desired objective in such a way that inspires the participation of others.
- g. Showing mercy
the ability to feel the pain of others and to respond in such a way that provides the necessary comfort.

7. HOW DO YOU FIND OUT WHAT GIFTS YOU HAVE?

Experiment. Try to operate in the different giftings. If you become good at something, then it will be evident that you are gifted in that particular area. A mature servant of God has learned to operate to some degree in all seven of the gifts mentioned in Romans 12.

8. HOW DOES THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBER DISCOVER HIS FUNCTION IN THE BODY?

- a. He should pray and ask God to show him in what areas he should serve.

But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. (1 Corinthians 12:18)

- b. Then he should go to the person responsible for that area and make himself available.
- c. He should expect to demonstrate responsibility in small tasks before being given greater ones.

He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. (Luke 16:10)

9. WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBLE AREAS OF MINISTRY?

Possible areas of ministry include office administration, children's ministry, prayer, evangelism, facility maintenance, caring for the poor and needy, etc.

Possible areas of ministry are not limited to the local church. God can give you a plan for reaching out to others in your community as well.

10. SOME MINISTRY TIPS

- a. Be actively seeking God to give you creative ideas of ministry in different areas.
- b. Take the initiative. Do not wait to be asked to serve. Do not wait for others to do it first; it might not get done (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

- c. Do not criticize others for not doing the things that God has shown you need to be done. Since God has shown you the need, it is likely that He wants to use you to meet it. Others will not always appreciate the importance of meeting the need that God has put on your heart. However, your faithful service and enthusiastic leadership will inspire others to get involved.
- d. Be willing to take risk; do not be afraid of failure. To never try is the greatest failure of all (Philippians 4:13).
- e. Be willing to do whatever you are asked to do as often as possible (Colossians 3:23).
- f. Be open to counsel so that you will have success (Proverbs 15:22).
- g. Work together with the overall vision of the local church (Philippians 1:27).
- h. Ask God for courage (Acts 4:29-31).

Homework

1. Read the books of James through 2 Peter.
2. Be prepared to write from memory the following Scripture:
Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others (Philippians 2:3-4)
3. Be prepared to write answers to questions in class next week based on the material in this lesson.

28

Dealing with Sin in the Church

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (2 Timothy 3:16)

preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. (2 Timothy 4:2)

In this lesson we will study the importance and method of bringing correction to a person in the church who is involved in sinful activity.

1. WHY IS CORRECTION IMPORTANT?

- a. We have a responsibility to love and care for one another. It is for the good of the one in sin that we attempt to restore him (2 Corinthians 2:4).

Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one.... Bear one another's burdens... (Galatians 6:1-2)

But encourage one another day after day... lest any one of you be hardened... (Hebrews 3:13)

- b. It helps bring the church to maturity.

Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. (Proverbs 27:17)

but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, (Ephesians 4:15)

- c. It is for the good of the whole body. We are members of one another (Ephesians 4:25). If one person sins, it affects the whole body.

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body... (1 Corinthians 12:13)

And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it... (1 Corinthians 12:26)

The sin of one man, Achan, brought calamity on all of Israel (Joshua 7:11).

When Miriam spoke against Moses, God put her outside the camp. All of Israel waited until her time of discipline was completed before they could move on (Numbers 12:1-15).

2. DO WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO JUDGE ANOTHER?

The question sometimes arises as to whether we have the right to judge the actions of another.

- a. Righteous judgments

We are to reprove, rebuke, correct, and admonish. These activities presuppose the formation of an opinion, evaluation, or conclusion (i.e., judgment).

(Proverbs 9:8; 17:10; 19:25; 27:5-6, 17; Matthew 23:1-33; Luke 11:39-52; 12:1; 1 Corinthians 5:9-6:3; Ephesians 4:15; 5:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:15; 2 Timothy 2:24; Titus 1:12-13; 2:15)

The issue is more a matter of **how** we judge than whether we ought to judge. It is important that we learn to judge rightly (1 Corinthians 11:29).

Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment. (John 7:24)

b. Unrighteous judgments

- 1) We are not to pass judgment on the opinions of other believers with regard to their personal liberty in Christ. In other words, we are not to exclude them from fellowship simply because they have convictions different from our own. Particularly, we should not regard with contempt one who lacks the faith to fully appreciate the liberty we have in Christ (Romans 14:1-23; 1 Corinthians 10:23-33; Colossians 2:16).
- 2) We are to avoid evil suspicions, that is, opinions which have no basis in fact but arise out of one's own prejudices and biases.

For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.
(1 Samuel 16:7)

let him who speaks, speak, as it were, the utterances of God (1 Peter 4:11)

When we draw conclusions on the motives of the heart based on circumstantial evidence, we are in danger of making an unrighteous judgment. For example:

- a) He is greedy because he has an expensive car.
 - b) He uses drugs or is immoral because of the clothes he wears.
 - c) He is disobeying God because he is doing something I do not have the liberty to do in good conscience.
- 3) If we are merciless in our judgment, we will be judged without mercy (Matthew 7:1-5; Luke 6:36-37; James 2:13).

For in the way you judge, you will be judged (Matthew 7:2)

3. WHAT TYPE OF ACTIVITIES NEED TO BE CONFRONTED?

Some types of sinful behavior named in the Bible are listed below (Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:10-11; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; Titus 3:9-11; 2 John 1:10-11):

- a. covetousness — illicit desire; greed
- b. idolatry — inordinate fondness of a person or thing
- c. reviling (railing) — use of abusive language; scorning
- d. drunkenness — drinking to excess
- e. extortion — an attempt to obtain from a person by oppression or abuse of authority
- f. fornication — illicit sexual involvement (including homosexuality, incest, bestiality, lesbianism, adultery)
- g. faction (heresy) — division caused by false teaching
- h. strife — bitter conflict or dissension; exertion or contention for superiority
- i. things like these (Galatians 5:21) and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching (1 Timothy 1:10)

4. SPREADING AN EVIL REPORT

One of the most damaging sins in a Church is the spreading of an evil report. What does the Bible call a person who does this?

gossip — one who magnifies and sensationalizes rumors and partial information (1 Timothy 5:13; Titus 2:3)

busybody — one who digs up evil reports (2 Thessalonians 3:11; 1 Peter 4:15)

slanderer — one who seeks to destroy another's credibility or reputation with damaging facts, distortion of facts, or evil suspicions (Numbers 14:36; 1 Timothy 3:11; 2 Timothy 3:3; Titus 2:3)

5. WHAT MOTIVATES AN EVIL REPORT?

- a. bitterness (hatred) — reacting because of personal hurt
- b. rebellion — justifying an independent spirit
- c. deception — believing that it is right to give an evil report
- d. pride — wanting to exalt self
- e. guilt — justifying past actions and attitudes
- f. envy (jealousy) — desiring what another has

6. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF SOMEONE TRIES TO GIVE YOU AN EVIL REPORT?

... Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure it shall be measured to you; and more shall be given you besides.
(Mark 4:24)

Remember, if you are not a part of the problem and not a part of the solution to the problem, you probably should not be involved. There are five questions you should ask before listening to an evil report:

- a. Why are you telling **me**?
- b. Where did you get your information?
- c. Have you gone directly to those involved?
- d. Have you checked out all the facts?
- e. Can I quote you on this?

7. WHAT IS THE SCRIPTURAL PROCEDURE FOR CONFRONTING SIN?

See Matthew 18:15-20.

- a. Go to the brother alone.
- b. If he does not hear you, take one or two with you. It is usually best to find someone with the following characteristics:
 - 1) someone mature enough to help you
 - 2) someone he respects
 - 3) someone who has conquered the problem himself
- c. If he does not hear the two or three, tell it to the church leadership.

If he does not listen to them, he will be excommunicated (i.e., separated from fellowship) until he comes to repentance. This is sometimes called *church discipline* (Numbers 15:30-31; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:9-6:3; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14; 1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 2:17-18).

8. IN WHAT MANNER SHOULD WE APPROACH SOMEONE IN SIN?

- a. Go prepared. Know what you are going to say. Be ready to back up your claims with data. Be direct; do not back off.

Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. (Luke 17:3)

Be quick to admit your own failings but do not allow the person to use accusations against you to get the attention off his own sin.

- b. Be gentle and humble (Leviticus 19:17-18).

Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. (Galatians 6:1)

And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men. (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

If I can hurt another by speaking faithfully without much preparation of spirit, and without hurting myself far more than I hurt that other, then I know nothing of Calvary love⁴

- c. Go at the Holy Spirit's leading.

Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. (Proverbs 8:9 NKJV)

9. WHEN DOES CHURCH DISCIPLINE NEED TO BE MADE PUBLIC?

It should not be our desire to expose another person's sin.

Love... bears (covers) all things... (1 Corinthians 13:7)

... love covers a multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:8)

Usually, confrontation, correction, repentance, confession and forgiveness can all take place privately. However, there are times when the church needs to be informed:

⁴ *If*, Amy Carmichael (CLC Publications, Fort Washington, PA, Printing 2007) p. 25

- a. when the person refuses to repent and is excommunicated (Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13)
- b. when the sin is of a nature that may endanger other innocent parties if they are not informed

Under the Old Testament law, there were certain types of offenses which required the death penalty in order to protect the rest of the community. Although the Church does not have the authority to execute offenders, it may still need to inform the others of certain offenses for their own safety.

- c. when false accusations are made which threaten the unity of the Body

Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. (Romans 16:17)

Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. (2 Timothy 4:14)

- d. when false teachers threaten the work of God (3 John 1:9-10)

Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme. (1 Timothy 1:20)

and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, (2 Timothy 2:17)

- e. when an elder continues in sin. He is rebuked openly as an example to others (1 Timothy 5:20).

10. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE?

- a. Discipline is restorative (1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 2:7-8; Galatians 6:1).

and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprovved by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives." It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without

discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. (Hebrews 12:5-11)

Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. (Revelation 3:19)

- b. It protects the weaker members of the body. Sin is contagious (1 Corinthians 5:6, 11; Titus 1:10-11). Discipline quarantines contagious sin in order to keep others from *catching it*, until it is purged from the sinner's life.

Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. (Romans 16:17-18)

- c. It demonstrates the concept of church membership that existed in the New Testament. The fact that Christians could be put **out** of the church shows that they had to first be considered **in** the church (Matthew 18:17). People who are merely *members-at-large* of the mystical, invisible, universal church do not fit the pattern of church membership found in the New Testament.
- d. It tests the leaders' courage and willingness to maintain a standard of righteousness in the church (2 Corinthians 2:9; 7:11).
- e. It causes others to fear the Lord, seeing that sin is taken seriously and carries with it grave consequences (2 Corinthians 7:11).

Homework

1. Read the chapters of 1 John through Revelation 8.
2. Be prepared to write from memory the following Scripture:
And He was saying to them, "Take care what you listen to. By your standard of measure it shall be measured to you; and more shall be given you besides." (Mark 4:24)
3. Be prepared to write answers to questions in class next week based on the material in this lesson.

29

The Lord's Supper

1. HOW DID THE LORD'S SUPPER ORIGINATE?

- a. The original Passover was instituted by God the night before He delivered the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses instructed each family to slay a lamb, sprinkle its blood on the lintel and doorposts of their homes, and then eat the lamb inside the house. This would insure that the angel of death, sent to kill all the firstborn of Egypt, would not enter the homes of the Israelites (Exodus 12).
- b. Jesus, on the night on which He was betrayed, celebrated the Passover with His disciples (Matthew 26:17-27; Mark 14:22-26; 1 Corinthians 11:25). This meal is commonly known as the Last Supper.

And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes." And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood."(Luke 22:17-20)

When Jesus first spoke these words to His disciples, He was expanding their understanding of the Passover Feast. They, like all of Israel, had understood the Passover to be a memorial of when God delivered the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt.

Now they were made to understand that the Passover was a mere foreshadowing of a greater deliverance to come. For just as the blood of the Passover lamb was shed and its flesh eaten so that the Israelites could be preserved from the angel of death, so Jesus would shed His blood and give His body so that God's saints would be preserved from eternal death that is the result of sin.

Jesus is the true Passover lamb. The bread they were eating was His body which was about to be crucified for them. The wine they were drinking was His blood, which was about to be poured out for them (Matthew 20:28; Mark 14:24; Hebrews 13:20).

Thus Jesus enlarged the typology of the Passover Feast, saying, "*As often as you do this, do it in remembrance of Me.*" This remembrance became known as The Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20-26).

2. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER?

- a. The Lord's Supper signifies the the body and blood of Christ, given so that we can be saved (Matthew 20:28; Mark 14:24; Hebrews 13:20).

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

- b. The Lord's Supper demonstrates the covenantal nature of what Christ accomplished in giving His life for us. Biblically, when two parties enter into covenant, there is a sharing of a common life, i.e., the two lives become one.
 - 1) This often included the killing of an animal (Genesis 15:9-18). The parties would then eat the animal or pass between its parts after they had been cut. Sharing in the

life of a single animal in this manner was to represent the new shared life of the parties of the covenant.

- 2) This concept of covenant has been carried over into many cultures, including wedding ceremonies. When covenants are made, there is sometimes the mixing of the blood of the participants or even the drinking of blood. Frequently, wine is substituted for blood.

And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood." (Luke 22:20)

- 3) It shows the believer's faith and commitment toward Christ. When they show forth their union with Him in covenantal relationship, they are pledging themselves to a life of faithful service to Him (1 Samuel 18:1-4; 20:15-17).
- 4) Ingesting the bread and wine, the believer demonstrates the intimate union he shares with Christ who now dwells in him (John 17: 26).

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. (Galatians 2:20)

- c. The Lord's Supper symbolizes the union believers have with one another. In sharing the same bread and drinking of the same wine, the believers demonstrate that they share a common life as the mystical body of Christ (John 17:23; Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:3-4; 1 John 1:3, 6-7).

Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread. (1 Corinthians 10:17)

- d. The Lord's Supper symbolizes the coming joy and perfection of the Kingdom of God.

- 1) Participation in the coming Kingdom was commonly associated with eating and drinking (Luke 22:16, 18, 28-30 quoted above).

*And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the **kingdom of heaven** (Matthew 8:11)*

*And when one of those who were reclining at the table with Him heard this, he said to Him, "Blessed is everyone who shall **eat** bread in the **kingdom of God!**" (Luke 14:15)*

- 2) It is apparent that as He celebrated the Lord's Supper, Jesus anticipated feasting with His disciples in the Kingdom Age, mentioning the Kingdom three times during the meal.

*for I say to you, I shall never again **eat** it until it is fulfilled in the **kingdom of God.** (Luke 22:16)*

*for I say to you, I will not **drink** of the fruit of the vine from now on until the **kingdom of God** comes. (Luke 22:18)*

*And you are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may **eat and drink** at My table in **My kingdom**, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Luke 22:28-30)*

- 3) The Lord's Supper is a reminder of the climatic fulfillment of our union with Him at the great feast of the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God." (Revelation 19:6-9)

3. WHAT CAN WE EXPECT TO RECEIVE FROM CELEBRATING THE LORD'S SUPPER?

- a. Those who partake in a worthy manner receive life and healing.

Through Jesus' death and resurrection, He manifested the power of an indestructible life (Hebrews 7:16). When the believer partakes of the Lord's Supper, he feeds upon this life that is in Christ Jesus. This results in certain benefits to both his physical body and his inner man.

I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh. (John 6:51)

He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me. (John 6:54-57)

- b. Those who partake in an unworthy manner bring judgment upon themselves.

When Judas, having already determined to betray Jesus, ate the bread, Satan entered him (John 13:26).

When we harbor hostile thoughts against another member of the body of Christ, we become guilty of the body and the blood of Christ.

Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. (1 Corinthians 11:27-30)

4. HOW DO WE PARTAKE IN A WORTHY MANNER?

- a. The necessity of self-examination before partaking of the Lord's Supper is stressed (1 Corinthians 11:28-29).
- b. We partake in a worthy manner by judging (i.e., discerning) the body rightly (1 Corinthians 11:29). To judge the body of Christ rightly means that
 - 1) we recognize that we are the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:17).
 - 2) there be no divisions among us (1 Corinthians 11:17-22).
 - 3) we share the bread and wine together, as a body (Exodus 12:43-46; Acts 2:46-47; 1 Corinthians 11:18-22, 33-34).

And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread.... (Acts 20:7)
- c. The Lord's Supper is thus a sacrament of and for the church. Jesus administered it to His disciples only. It was *those who believed* who continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42, 46). Only believers can adequately follow the scriptural admonition of examining themselves before partaking (1 Corinthians 11:28-29).

Participants should also have a proper understanding of the Lord's Supper. That is, they understand and appreciate the difference between the Lord's Supper and a common meal.

5. SHOULD A BELIEVER EVER VOLUNTARILY DECLINE THE LORD'S SUPPER?

- a. When a person is aware of being estranged from the Lord or other members of the body of Christ, he is not in a condition to partake of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner. Some might feel at this point that it would be better to simply decline from participation in the Lord's Supper; however, a Christian should not knowingly allow himself to remain in such a spiritual condition. He should immediately resolve whatever relational problem exists with the Lord or other believers and then participate joyfully in the Lord's Supper.

- b. If a believer is having doubts about his salvation, he should not be hindered from participating in the Lord's Supper. Participation in the sacrament is a means of grace by which his faith can be strengthened.

6. WHAT IS THE PROPER FORM FOR CELEBRATING THE LORD'S SUPPER?

- a. Should it be celebrated as a full meal or is bread and wine sufficient?
 - 1) The original Lord's Supper was celebrated in the context of a whole meal, the Passover Feast. Notice that one cup of wine is shared before the meal (Luke 22:17) and a second cup after the meal (Luke 22:20).
 - 2) The custom of celebrating the Lord's Supper in the context of a whole meal continued to be practiced by the early church (1 Corinthians 11:20-22) and was at times the primary purpose for meeting (1 Corinthians 11:33). It was commonly called a *love feast* (Jude 1:12).
 - 3) Sharing a meal speaks of fellowship and intimacy and is often, particularly in the Middle East, interpreted as a sign of acceptance by the parties involved (1 Corinthians 5:1).
 - a) Moses and seventy elders dined in the presence of God on Mount Sinai, signaling His acceptance of them through the covenant He had just established (Exodus 24:7-11).
 - b) Jesus' promise to dine with those who open to Him illustrates His eagerness for full and unhindered fellowship with His people (Revelation 3:20).
 - 4) Although the Lord's Supper can be celebrated with bread and wine alone, it's symbolic association with the coming marriage supper of the Lamb in the Kingdom Age (Revelation 19:7-9) is weakened considerably when it is celebrated apart from a feast.
- b. At the Lord's Supper, is it appropriate to serve real wine or is grape juice to be preferred?

Clearly, the early church served alcoholic wine at the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:21).⁵ However, there might be some believers whose faith does not allow them to drink alcoholic wine in any form. In order to not offend them, others should be willing to limit their own freedom by serving nonalcoholic juice instead (Romans 14:21).

c. At the Lord's Supper, must the bread be unleavened?

Since it was required for the Passover Feast (Exodus 12:14-15), Jesus undoubtedly used unleavened bread for the Last Supper.

Although Scripture does not require that the bread used in the Lord's Supper be unleavened, unleavened bread best typifies a number of spiritual truths:

- 1) The Israelites left Egypt in haste, not giving time for bread to rise. This illustrates the haste with which we must leave our life of sin (2 Corinthians 6:2; 2 Timothy 2:22).
- 2) The unleavened bread, because of its insipid taste, is called the *bread of affliction* (Deuteronomy 16:3). This is to remind us of the bitterness of our past life of sin, resulting in many thanksgivings to God for such a great salvation.
- 3) Jesus, the true Passover lamb, is represented by the bread, referring to it as His *body* (Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24). Jesus' body is best typified by that which is pure and clean.
- 4) The church, the body of Christ, is to celebrate the feast *not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth* (1 Corinthians 5:8). Thus, unleavened bread speaks of the holiness of believers' lives.
- 5) The Lord's Supper derives much of its meaning from the Passover, a feast that will be celebrated in the kingdom age with unleavened bread (Exodus 12:17).

⁵ However, it should also be noted that it was common practice for Jews, Greeks and Romans at that time to dilute their wine with water. This practice might help assuage the concerns of those who oppose the use of wine at the Lord's Supper.

- d. At the Lord's Supper, must the bread be of one loaf?

The apostle Paul describes the use of a single loaf to illustrate the church's unity in Christ (1 Corinthians 10:17). However, it appears to have been simply for illustration purposes. There is no indication that Paul was intending to establish a form required for the Lord's Supper.

- e. At the Lord's Supper, must all drink from one cup?

This is the manner in which Jesus served His disciples. However, health concerns make it undesirable for some today. Whether we use one cup does not seem to be a critical point. However, if one wants to maintain the idea of one cup, he may pour from a single container into smaller glasses, or he may invite participants to dip their bread into one bowl of wine.

- f. Is it necessary that church leaders officiate at the Lord's Supper?

There is no biblical requirement for this custom.

Homework

1. Read chapters 9 through 22 of the book of Revelation.
2. Be prepared to write from memory the following Scripture:
I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh. (John 6:51)
3. Be prepared to write answers to questions in class next week based on the material in this lesson.

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Final

Congratulations! After completing the final exam, you will have finished the Foundations series. Let it be just that — a foundation, upon which you will continue to build.

You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them; and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

May God bless you in your future endeavors. And may God be glorified in all that you do.