

First Steps in Christ

Foundations of Faith

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Introduction

Years ago I created the First Steps in Christ series. I wanted young believers to have a strong foundation for their faith based upon the Bible. Today I realized I had never collected the steps into a single publication. People contact me from time to time seeking to use material from the First Steps for various purposes. I personally oppose charging any kind of payment to receive instruction from the Bible or gaining access through books, videos, articles, “scholarly” works or other things presenting the truth of God from the Bible. Therefore, I urge all publishers of Christian material, all Christian journals, all Christian societies, and all other groups to stop charging anyone to be taught from the Bible or gaining access to all their materials. Likewise, all instruction of believers in colleges, seminaries, and all of other places teaching the Bible and equipping students for ministries should not charge anything of value to the students. Jesus taught that all the things freely given to believers should be shared among believers without charge. Instead, offerings made without compulsion should provide the means of support for all those people involved in ministry.

Likewise, Jesus was not a respecter of persons. Many Christians seek to distinguish themselves and call themselves the greatest. They use titles like Dr., Reverend, Apostle, Pope, Bishop, etc. Jesus commanded His disciples not to use such titles. Furthermore, some Christian societies do not allow open membership to all believers. Likewise, many institutions of higher learning use titles and also discriminate among believers about who may enter their ranks. Jesus always taught His disciples to never discriminate against believers. In effect, charging fees to be taught Christianity only weakens the church and holds down the poor and uneducated. Such practices amount to buying and selling Christian knowledge, which was freely given by God for the edification of the church, not for promoting partiality or establishing a clergy. The New Testament knows no clergy, but only believers gifted to serve Christ and church officers who serve the congregation as converted, humble children of Christ. All believers comprise a royal priesthood and a holy priesthood. The gifts help the congregation to use their gifts to the glory of God, building up the church, defending against numerous attacks from inside and outside the church, until the body of Christ reaches full maturity and full stature in Christ.

Therefore, I happily and freely offer this book, and others, to encourage growth and development in the Body of Christ. You may use this material to build up believers, but do not charge others for doing so. Please do not seek to gain anything of value for yourself by using this information, except that you may grow in the grace, knowledge and love of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

HALLELUJAH !

Step One

Salvation

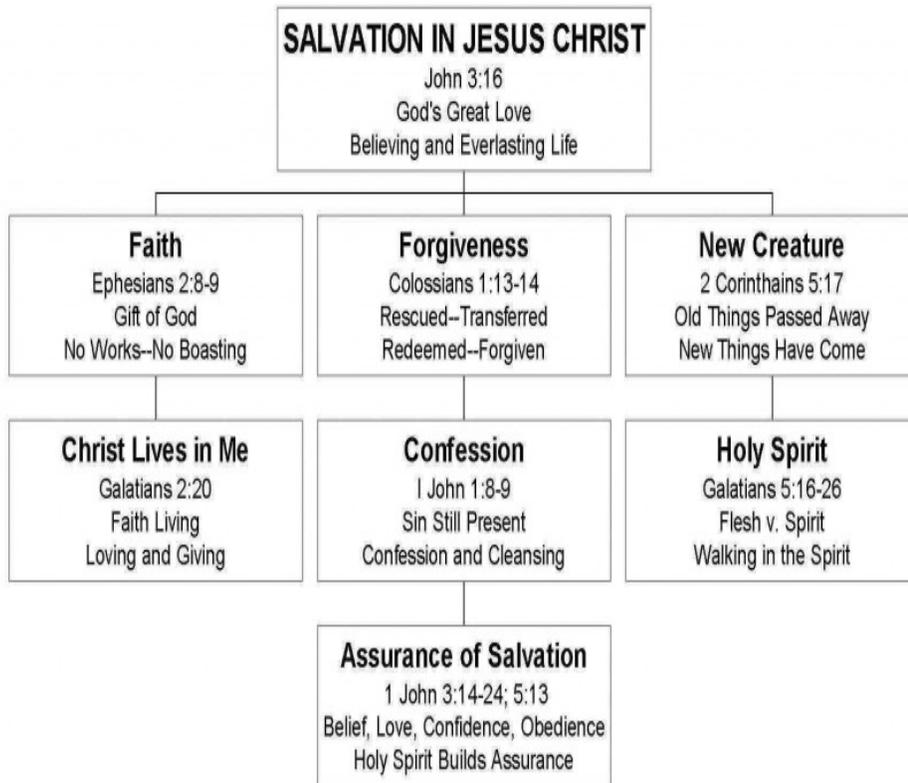


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First Steps in Christ

Step One

SALVATION



For printable PDF version, [STEP1--Salvation](#)

God Loves You

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." | John 3:16, Page 1658.

New life in Jesus Christ begins with faith and continues for eternity. In this initial step, we will explore key concepts that help you understand your salvation. Because God loves the world, He sent Jesus Christ, His Son, to die for your sins. We can always count upon the love of God and His great compassion for us. The Bible reveals the truth of God to us and we can completely rely upon everything it tells us.

Notice in this passage that God loves people and saves them from perishing. Listen to the clear message. God gave His Son, Jesus Christ, so that you would not perish. You must believe that God gave His Son for you, or you will perish. If you believe, then you will have eternal life. Let us go through these concepts one by one.

All Have Sinned

**"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
| Romans 3:23, Page 1762**

According to the Bible, everyone has sinned. Let this concept sink in for a minute. Not only you, but all of your family, friends, and everyone you know have sinned. All of the people you care most about, including yourself, suffer from sin. Sin means that you fall short of the glory of God. You have done things that shame you, or things that you know do not please God. Consider the ten commandments. Have you ever told a lie? Have you ever coveted anything? Have you ever dishonored your mother or father by the things you did or said? If you answer yes to any one of those questions, then you are a sinner. Now let us see what the Bible says about the impact of sin.

The Wages of Sin is Death

"for the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord | Romans 6:23, Page 1766

Sin has a tremendous consequence: death. Sin spiritually separates you from God's blessings forever, and condemns you to eternal suffering. When you die in your sins, you receive the punishment your sins deserve. People often make fun of hell, but God describes a lake of fire that burns forever as the place where unbelievers will be condemned for eternity.

Thankfully, God has a plan to take care of your sin. In order for God to remain just, He must do justice regarding your sin. Justice requires the death penalty for all sinners, just like the verse above said: "the wages of sin is death" Because we are sinners, our death would only be justice. We sin so we should die. But now God's love enters the picture. Because He loves me, God decided He would pay the penalty of death for me. You see, Jesus did not die for His own sins, because He never sinned, not even once. Jesus died for your sins, and God laid the penalty of your sins upon Him. In other words, Jesus took your place on that cross where He died. God accepted the death of Jesus as if you had died. Jesus died so that you might go free from the penalty of death. Jesus told His disciples to spread that good news all over the world so that everyone would hear that Jesus died in the place of sinners. He paid the price for all of our sins.

God Loves Sinners

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him." | Romans 5:8-9, Page 1764

I once knew a man named "Ace." He liked to wear black leather, and sometime wore even a black leather hat. He was not very big, and often wore his gray beard for a few days at a time. He lived outside most of the time. One day I told him about Jesus dying for him. He thought about it for a few minutes, and then said: "Well, I have never done anything so bad that someone would have to die for anything I have done." You see, Ace did not understand that the verse above means that just one sin requires the penalty of death. And all of us have done more than just one sin. We are sinners by nature and practice.

God demonstrated His love even though we are sinners. Many people think they have to make themselves good before God will accept them. But this verse teaches us the truth that God loves us while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. His blood has justified us. Justification means that God takes away our sin by faith and calls us perfect before Him. We no longer rely upon self-improvement, but rather we trust that Christ paid the debt for our sins. God accepts the death payment of Christ as if you had made that payment yourself. Our faith brings God's justification through the blood of Jesus. Up until now, you have only heard about the plan of salvation.

I often use the illustration of the keys in my pocket. Perhaps you have some keys handy and can look at them. I then tell my friend that I want to make a gift of my car to him (I let them know it is just an illustration--o.k.). I hold up the keys, and ask him when he would get the gift. He knows that until he reaches out and takes the keys, he will not be driving that car

anywhere. I liken the keys to receiving the gift of salvation from God. You may already know all the facts mentioned above. Until you reach out by faith and take the keys, you are just looking at the keys. You have never received the gift of eternal life, just like others have never reached out and taken the keys.

One day I explained the Gospel to my friend "Mike." He gladly reached out for the keys and prayed to receive Christ. A few days later, I asked "Ace" a question about why Jesus should let Ace into His heaven. Mike was sitting next to me and interrupted: "Don't ask him that question. I know the answer. I believe Jesus died for my sins." Mike was so happy about his new faith that he could not wait to let others know. But in this case, each of us must make a decision about those keys. Will you reach out in faith and accept the gift from Jesus? Will you believe that He died for you, and He will forgive you because He died for you? Right now, you are either holding the gift by faith or still staring at the keys. You must make that decision right now. Merely postponing it will be a decision to reject. Right now, accept the forgiveness Jesus offers you and receive Him as Lord of your life because He died for you, and loves you completely, just as you are right now. Grab the keys by faith right now. Here is how you too can receive the keys to eternal life.

Receive Eternal Life by Faith

**"that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."
| Romans 10:9-10, Page 1772**

God offers you the gift of eternal life, but you must receive that gift by faith. We accept the gift by reaching out, just like taking the keys out of my hand. Reach out to God by faith and believe in your heart that Jesus Christ died for you, and rose from the dead, to live forever as your Lord. With your heart you believe, and with your mouth you confess Christ as your Lord, resulting in righteousness. If you believe in your heart, then you can pray the following prayer.

The Prayer of Peace

The Prayer of Peace with God | Lord Jesus, I confess that I am a sinner. I believe you died for me and rose from the dead. I accept your free gift of forgiveness and eternal life. Please come into my life and be my Lord forever. Thank you for loving me. Amen.

Jesus promised that He would bring peace to every one of His children. He offers His own peace which removes fear from our lives and comforts troubled hearts.

The Truth of Peace

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." | John 14:27, Page 1685.

If you have received the gift, please let me know. You can send me an e-mail at friend@christassembly.org. We will rejoice together in your new faith in Christ Jesus our Lord.

HALLELUJAH !

Step Two

Daily Quiet Time

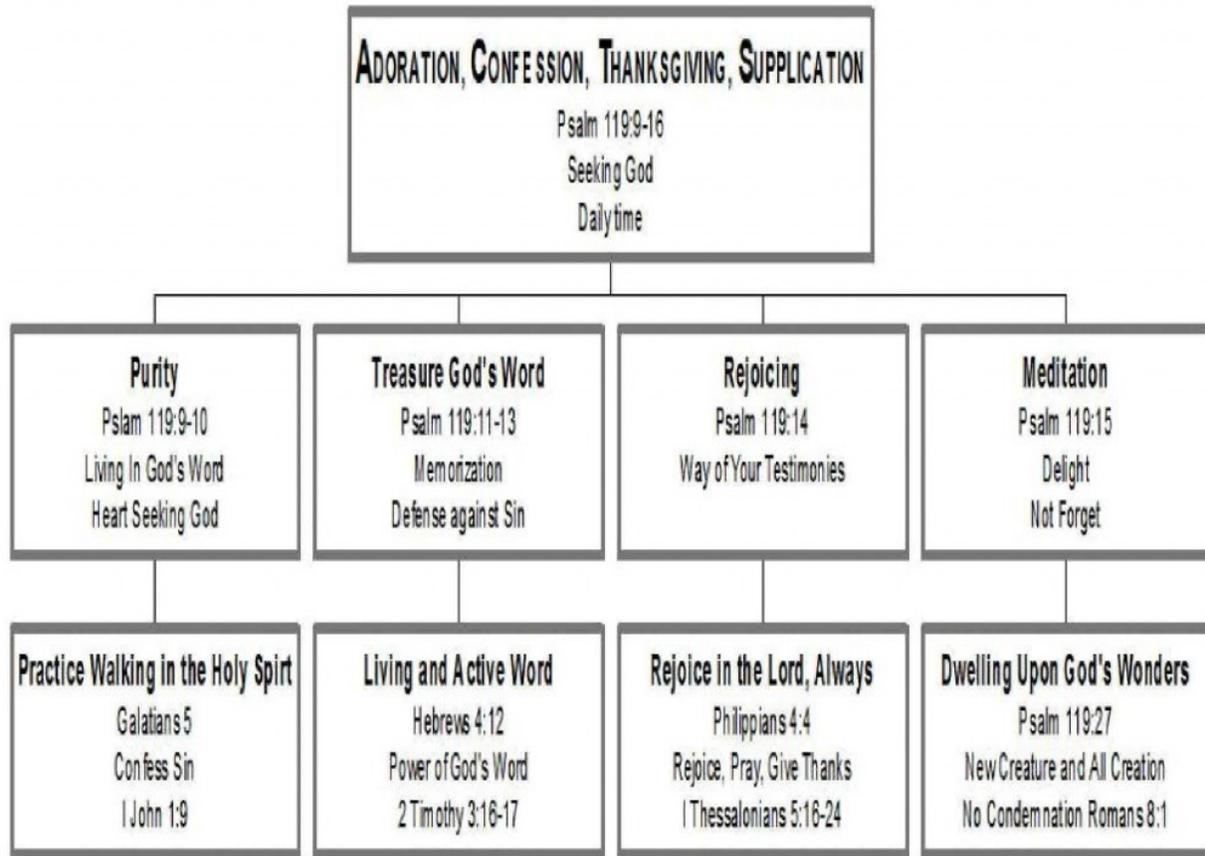


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First Steps in Christ

Step Two

DAILY QUIET TIME



For Printable PDF version, [STEP2--DailyQuietTime](#)

Every new relationship takes time. A quiet time every day will allow you to deepen your relationship with God. He loves to communicate with you through His Word, the Bible, and He will encourage you every day with His presence in your life. You have to make time to spend time. Look for a quiet place where you will not be interrupted, a place where you can settle down, read, meditate and listen. We will now look into God's Word for directions.

Seeking God

"With all my heart I have sought You; do not let me wander from Your commandments." | Psalm 119: 10, Page 975)

God understands that we wander away from Him and His commandments. To avoid wandering away, we must continue to seek God with all of hearts. Individually, daily, and spiritually, we must seek God. Seeking God means that spend time adoring God, confessing our sins, thanking God, and supplicating God for our needs ("ACTS"). So, in our daily quiet time, we can spend time with God adoring Him, confessing our sins and experiencing the joy of cleansing and forgiveness each time we confess, thanking God for all of the great things and people He has put into our lives, and supplicating God by letting Him know the things we request of Him, according to His will. We will look at Psalm 119:9-16, Page 975, to gain further insight into our daily quiet times.

Purity

" How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word." | Psalm 119: 9, Page 975)

God seeks people to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24, Page 1660). As believers, we adore God for all the great and loving things He has done for us, and continues to do for us through all eternity. God seeks purity in our relationship with Him. We tend to wander away from God, like sheep that turn to their own way and fall into trouble (Isaiah 53:6, Page 1155). When we wander away, Jesus seeks us out like a Good Shepherd, puts us on His shoulders, and rejoices over us (Luke 15:5, Pages 1630-1631).

Confession of Sins

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." | 1 John 1:9, Page 1904

God seeks our holiness in every aspect of our lives. After the moment of salvation, we still find ourselves sinning and still falling short of the glory of God. God intends that we confess our sins.

Conviction of Sin. Confession starts with conviction. Both the verse before and after 1 John 1:9 indicated that we are sinners. God tells us spiritually in several different ways that we are sinners and make mistakes. He communicates conviction of sin: (a) through our friends who tell us the truth, (b) from an honest review of our own behavior, (c) from a conscience that hurts, and also (d) from God's Word. So often when we read the Bible, it speaks to our weaknesses.

Confession of Sins. Taking time every day to hear the Holy Spirit talking to you regarding your sin will prompt you to keep your spiritual accounts short with God. This verse also calls upon us to count upon God's faithfulness and righteousness. No matter how many times you confess, even the same sin, God will faithfully forgive you. Confession means that you say the same words about your sin that God would say. By the power of Jesus Christ, you consider yourself dead to sin and alive to Christ. You rely upon the strength of Jesus Christ to leave your sinful practices behind and live in the Holy Spirit. You look at your sin the same way God looks at your sin. As believers, we do not hide our sin, and we can never hide our sin from God who knows everything. Confession allows you to experience the forgiveness of God personally and continually. You will still go to heaven if you die with unconfessed sin, providing of course you have trusted Jesus Christ as your Savior, but you will not feel all of God's forgiveness and cleansing during your life until you confess your sin as you become aware of it.

Cleansing from Sin. Count upon God to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. When you confess, you believe that God will clean up your life. Confessing is like taking a spiritual bath. Most people like to bathe regularly. Well, spiritually take a little time to let God forgive you and cleanse you every day. You will begin to notice you feel closer and closer to God and see more and more of your life changing to please Him. Never imagine that God wants to condemn you, because all condemnation for sin has been placed upon Jesus Christ at the cross. We now live in peace with God, and without a drop of condemnation. Keep in mind that confession only changes the way we feel towards God, because He always loves us and desires our close fellowship with Him. You can never do anything to change the fact that you are the child of God, adopted into His family by new birth in Christ. God's Word assures our hearts before God, and it also leads us to analyze our lives as God does. God promised to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. As we believe the Word of God, we learn that God keeps His promises and He seeks to remove all unrighteousness from our lives, even the things that cause us the most persistent problems. See the [video on confession of sin](#).

Treasure the Word of God

"Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You." | Psalm 119:11, Page 975

As we sit quietly before God, we need time to treasure the Word of God in our hearts. I like having my Bible handy when I spend time quietly with God. I read the Bible and think about what God is telling me. I memorize verses to place them into my heart, so that God can use His word to help me live to His glory. We treasure the word of God. Many people today do not place much value upon the written word of God. They do not believe the Bible truly deserves their attention. God commands us to study His word and handle it accurately, so that we will be workmen who are not ashamed as we stand before God (2 Timothy 2:15, Page 1862). Our quiet times can be a perfect time to memorize a verse and then start thinking about it. As we think about it, we treasure it because the word of God helps us love God all the more.

Rejoicing

" I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, as much as in all riches." | Psalm 119:14, Page 975

Quiet times should include times of rejoicing. The Psalmist declared that He rejoiced in the testimonies of God. God wrote down so many things in the Bible, and all of them should serve to instruct us and draw us closer to God. As we read the Bible, we should love God more and more as we learn more about Him and how He deals with us. We need to learn individually why the Psalmist said that he rejoiced in the word of God as much as in all riches. As we examine the riches in our lives, we appreciate valuable things. Often as we grow older, our understanding of true riches changes considerably over time. As believers, we value the activity of God and His presence in our lives as the greatest of all riches. The word of God stands in high value with our other riches.

Meditate

"I will meditate upon Your precepts and regard Your ways." | Psalm 119:14, Page 975

Meditate. God expects you to meditate upon His precepts. Meditation means that you spend time thinking deeply about His word and the teachings of His word. During your spiritual quiet time, take time to meditate. Let a passage, a verse, or just a word from a verse flow through your mind. God often draws my attention to a particular thought in His word so that I can see how that thought applies to my life. I can see how God has been working with me on patience, or self-control, or diligence. I start to understand more about Jesus and His way of loving people, no matter what. I have learned that love does not mean you always do what makes your friends happy, but rather you do the right thing for them. Jesus never promised to do everything I wanted, but He did promise me that I can live a life pleasing to Him. I love to meditate upon His precepts. It lifts me up and refocuses my thinking upon Him and His ways. I need that blessing every day.

Walk in the Spirit

""But I say to you, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." | Galatians 5:16, Page 1825

Quiet times provide interludes for believers to practice walking in the Holy Spirit. At the moment of salvation, you were born again and Jesus baptized you in the Holy Spirit. At that moment, you became a new creature in Christ; all the old things passed away; behold, new things came into your life (2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Page 1809). Walking in the Holy Spirit means that just as I walk around in life, so I walk in the Holy Spirit. I walk all the time, daily. I walk without giving it conscious thought. I am so used to walking, I walk all the time. During my quiet time, I count upon the Holy Spirit to walk me through my quiet time. What will I read? What will I meditate upon? What will I pray about? You get the idea. I want the Holy Spirit to answer those questions and use the time to the glory of God. He will do the leading and I will do the following.

Living and Active Word

"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." | Hebrews 4:12, Page 1873

The word of God is living, active and sharper than any two-edged sword. The word of God pierces our lives and divides our soul and spirit. It also judges the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. So, when you sit down to have your quiet time, take your Bible along and plan on reading it. Let it come to life as you read it, and feel it piercing into you spiritually. Let the word of God judge your behavior, and the thoughts and intentions of your heart. Have you wondered if you are doing God's will? Read the Bible and see if you are following what God says to do there. Compare what you are doing with what Jesus taught the people. Compare what Paul wrote to the churches in his letters to them. As you read the Bible, you will learn how to act as a Christian, because God will use the Bible to instruct you and bless you.

Rejoice in the Lord, Always

**"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"
| Philippians 4:4, Page 1839**

Not every day will be a perfect day, from a human standpoint. Some days believers will know loss, sickness, death, with all kinds of challenges confronting us. Especially in those times, we need to focus upon the words of Jesus Christ. He commanded us to rejoice in the Lord, always. Notice the command to rejoice. God commands us to give our emotions to Him, so that He may produce in us all the commands He intends for us to feel. We are not so good at controlling our emotions, but God commanded us to deny ourselves, follow Jesus and take up our cross. Part of denying ourselves means that we lay aside our entire emotional life in favor of God controlling all our emotions. We set our hearts upon Him, allow the Holy Spirit to fill us, and then follow Jesus. Our lives will be filled with joy, even on the days when we shed tears. We know that in the Lord, we can rejoice always. We will never grieve as the gentiles who have no hope, because we hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, and He never disappoints us and never will. Because of Jesus, all is well and will be well eternally. In Him, we rejoice always.

Dwelling upon God's Wonders

"Make me understand the way of Your precepts, so I will meditate on you wonders." | Psalm 119:27, Page 975

The believer wants to understand the ways of God and His commands. The believer wants to love God more day by day. The Psalmist requests that God make him understand the way of the precepts of God. In our quiet times, we can greatly benefit from God causing us to understand passages in the Bible. We must rely upon God, and ask God, to help us understand the Bible. God wrote it and we must depend upon Him to explain it to us and help us apply His truth to our lives. As we meditate upon the word of God, we see the wonders of God. We see the sky displaying the moving glory of God and revealing some of His great power and artistic style. We see even greater wonders in the ways that God works in human lives to change them into living trophies of His grace and glory. He works wonders in your life and my life each day so that we love Him more for all He does. God loves sinners and saves sinners, according the wonders and glories of His grace. In our quiet times, we live in the wonder of God and meditate upon the wonders of God all around us and within all of us.

Step Three

Baptism

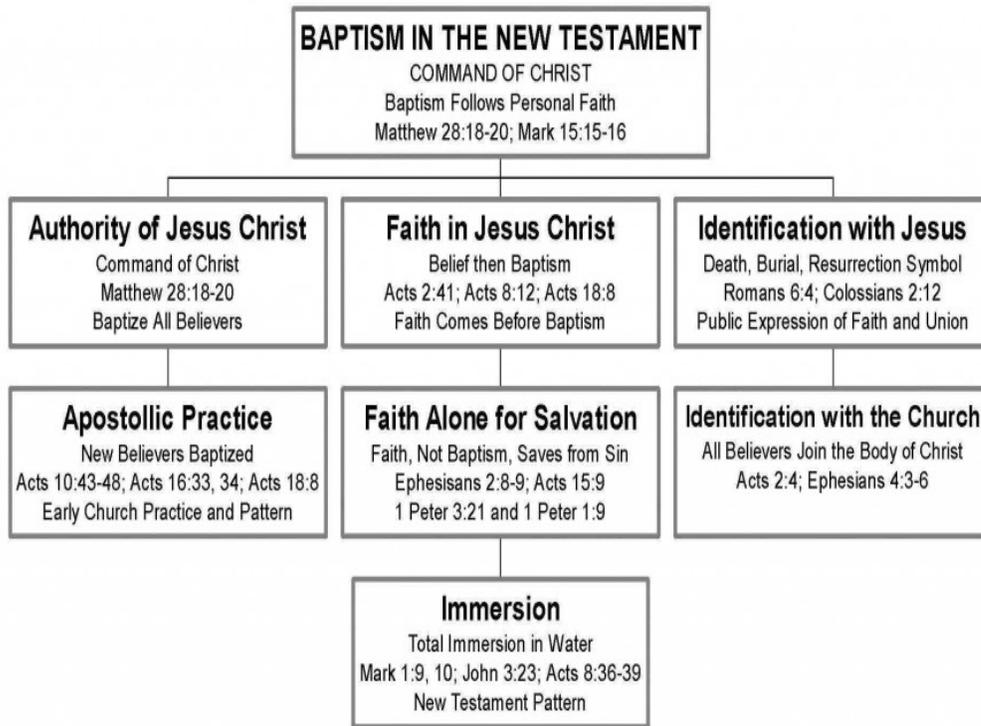


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First Steps in Christ

Step Three

BAPTISM



Baptism in the New Testament

Jesus commanded His disciples to make disciples in all the world. As they made disciples, they were to baptize the converts and teach the converts all that Jesus had commanded them. Only believers in Christ should be baptized, because baptism expresses the saving faith of the person being baptized. As people forgiven by Jesus Christ, we should be careful to follow His example and commandments. Jesus ordained baptism, which identifies you as a Christian and proclaims your decision to follow Jesus Christ.

Authority of Jesus Christ

“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” | Matthew 28:18-20, Page 1557

In Matthew 28: 18-20, we observe that Jesus had been crucified and resurrected. As He was about to ascend into heaven, He left final commands for His disciples. He started by saying that all authority in heaven and on earth had been give to Him. Then, Jesus commanded His disciples to go into all the world making disciples of the nations: Jesus commanded: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" Matthew 28:19, Page 1557. Notice that all believers must be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Apostolic Practice

"So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls." | Acts 2:41, Page 1703

After Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples, then known also as the apostles, were gathered together in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and the church was born. These apostles then preached Jesus Christ to the crowds gathered in Jerusalem and thousands of people believed in Jesus Christ. The early church invited all believers to be baptized (Acts 2:38, 41, Page 1702-1703) as a public proclamation of their faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior (Romans 5:8-9, Page 1764).

Faith in Jesus Christ

"And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized;" | Acts 9:18, Page 1717

The New Testament writers taught that only believers in Christ underwent baptism (e.g., Acts 2:38,41, Page 1702-1703; 8:12,Page 1714; 8:36-38, Page 1715; 9:18, Page 1717; 10:47, Page 1721; 16:14-15, Page 1732; 16:33, Page 1733; 18:8, Page 1736; 19:5, Page 1737). Baptism in the church occurred after personal salvation and only because of salvation. In other words, infants were not baptized (because they did not have saving faith), but rather new believers of all ages were baptized after they had been born again by faith (Acts 2:41, Page 1702-1703; Ephesians 2:8-9, Page 1828; John 3:3, Page 1657). Believers are baptized because they have been saved from their sins and desire to identify themselves with Christ. The Ethiopian Eunuch listened to Philip preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to him, and then proclaimed his need for baptism (Acts 8:34-39, Pages 1715-1716). Immediately after believing, he received baptism. This pattern characterizes the practice of baptism immediately after salvation in the New Testament.

Baptism Proclaims Your Personal Faith in Christ

" As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?'" | Acts 8:36, Page 1717

Believers often received baptism immediately after conversion. The Ethiopian Eunuch sought to be baptized immediately after hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ and believing (Acts 8:25-40, Pages 1715-1716). Consider also the Lord Jesus Christ Himself Who received baptism in the Jordan River and "fulfilled all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15, Page 1504). Immediately after Jesus rose from the water, the heavens opened and the Spirit of God descended upon Jesus as a dove and rested upon Him. Furthermore, a voice out of heaven said: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Matthew 3:17, Page 1504). Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He commanded His disciples to baptize believers. In Matthew 28:19, Page 1557 Jesus commanded: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." Following the example and command of the Lord Jesus Christ, New Testament believers expressed their faith in Jesus Christ and proclaimed their salvation by receiving baptism. Jesus expected that every believer would be baptized. In the early church, we see the close relationship between salvation and baptism: "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41, Page 1703).

Identification with Christ

“Therefore, we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life” | Romans 6:4, page 1765

Baptism symbolizes the believer being submerged into the death of Christ and raised with Christ to walk in newness of life to the glory of God (Romans 6:4, Page 1765). Colossians 2:12, Page 1843 provides a similar view of baptism: "having been buried with Him in baptism in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." In both of these passages, baptism identifies the believer with Christ in two ways. First, each believer submerges in the water which pictures identification with the death and burial of Christ. Each believer has been crucified with Christ so that the old self with its passions and desires has died (Galatians 2:20, Page 1821; 5:24, Page 1825). Second, every believer rises from baptism into the same standing that Christ had before God the Father (who said, "my Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased,") because we have become the sons of God, and joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:14, Page 1769). Believers also called upon the name of Jesus Christ in baptism (Acts 22:16, Page 1745). Hebrews 10:22 (Page 1881) provides: "let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." While the New Testament never teaches that baptism saves anyone, because only faith in Christ brings salvation (Romans 5:8-9, Page 1764; Ephesians 2:8-9, Page 1828), baptism does symbolize cleansing from sin. In Hebrews 10:22 (Page 1881), the believers draw near to God, "having hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." Likewise, in 1 Corinthians 6:11 (Page 1788), Paul described believers as "washed," "sanctified," and "justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ

and in the Spirit of our God." In Ephesians 1:3 (Page 1827), Paul wrote: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

Baptism: Ordinance, Not Sacrament

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,” | Ephesians 1:3, page 1827

When a person receives Christ and His forgiveness by faith, Christ enters his life as Lord and Savior. At that moment, the believer has been made complete in Christ and blessed with every blessing in Christ in the heavenly places, even while living on earth (Ephesians 1:3, Page 1827). The believer does not depend upon anything except direct union with God to bring grace into his life. In contrast, some churches wrongly teach that "sacraments" are a means of God's grace. Indeed, some churches mislead believers by holding that in the sacraments, the benefits of the new covenant are sealed and applied to believers (Reformed Church, Roman Catholic Church). Therefore, because the Bible informs us that God's grace comes by faith alone, we do not recognize "sacraments," but understand that many people still use the term. In contrast, the term "ordinance" conveys the truth that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are symbols of great events in the life of the church, but never communicate God's grace in themselves. For example, the Lord Jesus said that the cup of the Lord's Supper "is the new covenant in My blood." He meant that we drink the cup in remembrance of Him, not as an infusion of grace or the application of the New Covenant. As believers, we receive the blessings of the New Covenant by faith in Christ alone, so that we are a "letter of Christ," written with the Spirit of the living God (2 Corinthians 3:2-3, Page 1807). Therefore, we serve as ministers of the New Covenant (2 Corinthians 3:6, Page 1806-1807), not because of the Lord's Supper, but because of our faith in Christ. The New Testament knows nothing of "sacraments," and never teaches that "sacraments" are a means of grace, or in any way seal or apply the New Covenant to believers. Furthermore, the New Testament teaches that the Holy Spirit communicates all truth directly to believers (John 16:13, Page 1688; 1 John 2:27, Page 1906). Paul

wrote: "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" (1 Corinthians 12:13, Page 1797).

Union with the Body of Christ

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all made to drink of one Spirit.” | 1 Corinthians 12:13, Page 1797

In baptism, the new believer identifies himself with Christ and with the body of Christ, the church. As individuals become believers in Christ, at the moment of spiritual rebirth, each believer joins the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-14, Page 1796-1797; the body of Christ has many members, but forms one body). Jesus Himself baptizes each believer in the Holy Spirit, and so we are all baptized into one body, the body of Jesus Christ, called the Church. Likewise, believers also become united together as one holy temple of the Lord, and "are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22, Page 1829).

Baptism Never Saves

“And He said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise.’” | Luke 23:43, Page 1650

Some people wrongly teach that baptism is essential to salvation and without baptism, you will not go to heaven. Those people even quote verses from the Bible that they claim teach this false doctrine of baptismal regeneration. One example shows the error of baptismal regeneration. Consider the thief on the cross next to Jesus Christ. After that thief made a profession of faith while hanging on the cross, Jesus promised him that he would be with Jesus in paradise the same day. Of course, the thief never received baptism, but went to paradise with Jesus (Luke 23:43, Page 1650). Also, consider Acts 10:44-48, Pages 1720-1721. In this passage, Gentiles believed in the name of Jesus Christ, and they received forgiveness of sins (Acts 10:43, Page 1720). The Holy Spirit then fell upon those believers, and the new believers began speaking in known tongues, exalting God (Acts 10:46, Pages 1720-1721). Notice that these believers received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues before they were baptized. Therefore, because the people had received the Holy Spirit and were already speaking in tongues, we know from the text that they were already saved. Only believers have the Holy Spirit poured out upon them. Only believers speak in known tongues, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, exalting God. Notice, they were saved before they were baptized in this passage. Therefore, salvation came before baptism. The people were not baptized until Acts 10:48, Page 1721. So, no one can argue that you must be baptized to be saved, because the thief on the cross was saved, but never baptized, and the believers in Acts 10:44-48 were saved and then baptized. In Acts 8:36 (Page 1715), Luke wrote: "As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?'" Philip met an Ethiopian eunuch on a desert road, and shared the Gospel of Jesus Christ with that eunuch. Immediately the eunuch believed and exclaimed that they had come upon water and he wanted to be baptized.

Baptism: Believers Only

“But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.” | Acts 8:12, Page 1714

Infants lack the capacity to believe the Gospel, and so infant baptism does nothing for the infant. Because baptism symbolizes and proclaims your personal faith in Jesus Christ, infants can never have such faith because they lack the capacity to understand. Therefore, baptism applies only to believers of all ages. Some children can truly understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ and believe for salvation. They are valid candidates for baptism. If you have not been baptized after you have been born again in Jesus, then let us know and you can be baptized immediately (Acts 8:35-39, Page 1715).

Immersion

“Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him;” | Mark 1:10, Page 1558

Baptism means to be immersed. Jesus was baptized by being immersed in the Jordan river. He went into the river to be baptized. John baptized where there was much water. The Ethiopian eunuch went down into the water to be baptized. In the New Testament, the physical pattern of baptism symbolizes the spiritual reality of being baptized. God says that we have been baptized with Christ into His death, and resurrected from death to eternal life, so that we are free from sin (Romans 6:5-7, Page 1765; Colossians 2:12, Page 1843).

Step Four

Life in the Holy Spirit



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First Steps in Christ

Step Four

LIFE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT



For PDF, [STEP4--LIFE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT](#)

God the Holy Spirit

“But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain you own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.’” | Acts 5:3-4, Page 1707

God exists in three Divine Persons: the Holy Spirit, Father and Son. United as One God, they comprise the Divine Trinity. The New Testament contains very specific directions on how we must interact with the Holy Spirit.

In this passage, we see that Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit, and then we see that lying to the Holy Spirit is the same as lying to God. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3, 4, Page 1707). The human writers of the Bible, writing under the inspiration of God, consistently described the Holy Spirit as God. Paul quoted the prophet Isaiah and said that the Holy Spirit, as God the Lord, spoke through Isaiah (Acts 28:25, Page 1757; Isaiah 6:8-13, Page 1079). This same pattern of equating the Lord God to the Holy Spirit can be seen in other passages (2 Corinthians 3:17-18, Page 1807; Romans 8:9, Page 1768; 1 Corinthians 2:11, Page 1784; 12:3, Page 1796). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit also displays divine qualities: self-existence (Romans 8:2, Page 1768), eternal (Hebrews 9:14, Pages 1878-1879), and omnipresence (Psalm 139:7ff., Page 992). The Holy Spirit performs the works of God in creation (Genesis 1:2, Page 1), resurrection (Romans 8:11, Page 1768), and conviction of sin (John 14:8ff., Page 1684). The Holy Spirit also plays a divine role in the production of Scripture: the Holy Spirit moves the disciples to remember the very words of Christ (John 14:26, Page 1685); the Holy Spirit moved men to

speak prophecy, recorded in Scripture (2 Peter 1:20-21, Pages 1901). In summary, the uniform testimony of Scripture indicates that God exists in three divine Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20, Page 1557; Matthew 22:41-45, Page 1542).

The Baptism with the Holy Spirit

“As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He Who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” | Matthew 3:11, Page 1504

At the moment of salvation, Jesus baptizes each believer with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11, Page 1504). The Holy Spirit comes into your life and makes your body His temple (1 Corinthians 6:19, Page 1788). At that same moment of salvation, Jesus baptizes you into the Body of Christ, the church (1 Corinthians 12:13, Page 1797).

Some people wrongly teach that the baptism of the Holy Spirit comes at some time after salvation, perhaps weeks, months or years later. They sometimes point to three passages in the Book of Acts (Acts 1:5, Page 1699; Acts 8:14-17, Page 1714; Acts 19:1-7). Those passages present the fulfillment of Acts 1:8, Page 1699. There, Jesus prophesied and commanded that the apostles must wait for the Holy Spirit to come upon them, and then they would be the witnesses of Jesus in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fulfilled the promise of Jesus that the Father would send the Holy Spirit so that the disciples of Jesus would perform greater works after the ascension of Jesus than Jesus performed during His ministry in the flesh (John 14:16, Page 1685; John 14:12, Page 1685). The apostles began their ministry in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon them and filled them (Acts 2:1-4, Page 1700). From Jerusalem and Judea, the word of God spread salvation to Samaria, just as Jesus prophesied (Acts 1:8, Page 1699). As part of the testimony to the believing Jews that even Samaritans could be saved by faith in Christ just like Jews, Peter and John laid their hands upon the new Samaritan believers and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17, Page 1714). Likewise, the Ephesian disciples (apparently including some Gentiles) living far away from Jerusalem, received the Holy Spirit when Paul

laid his hands upon them. In both the Samaritan and Ephesian accounts, the believers had not yet heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but had only heard about baptism in the name of Jesus taught by John the Baptist. Both the Samaritan and the Ephesian accounts of the Holy Spirit filling believers have something else in common: only when the people heard and believed the Gospel of Jesus Christ did they receive the Holy Spirit. Notice that the baptism of the Holy Spirit happened immediately upon salvation for the Samaritans and the Ephesians. Furthermore, the Bible contains no record that the Holy Spirit only comes into the life of a believer by the laying on of hands. None of the New Testament letters indicate that only through the laying on of hands does a believer receive the Holy Spirit or get baptized by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, let no one deceive you into believing that some believers receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit at a time later than salvation. Nowhere in the Bible does God reveal such a teaching, but God demonstrates how salvation spread and how Jesus baptized all new believers in the Holy Spirit at the moment they heard and believed the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In contrast to this false teaching of men, God taught us that at the moment of salvation Jesus baptized us into the Body of Christ, His Church (1 Corinthians 12:13, Page 1797). Notice that every believer at Corinth has been baptized into the Body of Christ, His Church. So, just as John the Baptist prophesied that Jesus would baptize all believers, so also Jesus baptizes each believer at salvation into the Body of Christ (Matthew 3:11, Page 1504; 1 Corinthians 12:13, Page 1797).

The Five Imperatives Concerning the Holy Spirit

In the New Testament, God revealed four commands concerning the Holy Spirit. Each of those commands guides us in living with the Holy Spirit in our lives. God lives within us each day, and He seeks to fill our lives.

The Filling of the Holy Spirit

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” | Ephesians 5:18, Page 1832

Although at the moment of salvation Jesus baptizes each believer in the Holy Spirit, God also commands believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Because God commanded believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we know that being filled with the Holy Spirit requires obedience. Therefore, we also recognize that being filled with the Holy Spirit can never be considered automatic and permanent for each believer. Filling with the Holy Spirit requires obedience to the command of God. Furthermore, being filled with the Holy Spirit remains separate from being baptized in the Holy Spirit, which happened once and for all time at salvation. God commanded believers to avoid being drunk with wine, but commanded believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18, Page 1832). Because all believers must be filled with the Holy Spirit, we must be "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord, always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father" (Ephesians 5:19-20, page 1832).

Walk in the Holy Spirit

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." | Galatians 5:16, Page 1825

God used the most common Greek word for "walk" to describe how we relate to the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16, Page 1825). Just as we walk normally around, so also we walk in the Holy Spirit. In other words, we carry out all of life's activities by the power of the Holy Spirit. We live every aspect of our lives, all day, by the power of the Holy Spirit. He becomes an absolutely essential part of everything we do every day. In this same passage, the Holy Spirit leads us to overcome the desire of the flesh, which opposes the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. When we walk in the Holy Spirit, we see Him produce spiritual fruit in our lives. That fruit includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23, Page 1825). He removes from your life immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness and carousing (Galatians 5:19-20, Page 1825).

Walk in Order by the Holy Spirit

**“If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”
| Galatians 5:25, Page 1826”**

God used a different Greek word for "walk" to describe how the Holy Spirit helps us interact with other people, and particularly with other believers (Galatians 5:25, Page 1826). God draws attention to walking in rank or formation with others. Consider a marching band. Every band member must turn at the right time or else the band falls into disarray. Walking in rank with others allows you to stay in place with all of them and walk as a cohesive whole. The Holy Spirit allows you to walk in rank with the whole body of Jesus Christ. God has a place for you and the Holy Spirit helps you to stay in just the right place and make all the right moves. In the passage, the Holy Spirit keeps you from being boastful, challenging one another, and envying one another. Notice all three of those problems arise in the context of relationships. Count upon the Holy Spirit in your life to keep you in line with other believers and be a blessing to the whole body of Christ.

Do Not Grieve the Holy Spirit

“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” | Ephesians 4:30, Page 1831

As believers, the Holy Spirit abides with us continually. At the moment of salvation, God seals you with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30, Page 1831) and Jesus baptizes you in the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11, Page 1504; 1 Corinthians 12:13, Page 1797). Having sealed you with the Holy Spirit, God will never leave you or forsake you. He will always live within your body, forever. When we sin, however, God takes it very personally, because He loves us so much. God the Holy Spirit grieves over our sin. Consider the God of this entire universe shedding tears over our sins. The Holy Spirit personally feels and reacts to every choice we make with our lives. As a Person, the Holy Spirit has emotions, which God gave to mankind at creation. When we do well, the Holy Spirit rejoices in us, and when we sin, He grieves. God commands us to avoid grieving the Holy Spirit, because He lives within us, feels our sin, and guides us to repentance; because we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, we never lose our salvation, no matter how much He grieves in our lives. He seeks, however, to produce all the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives, including love, peace, and patience.

Because the Holy Spirit can be grieved, we must understand that the Holy Spirit is a Person, like God the Son is a Person, and God the Father is a Person. The Trinity means one God, eternally existing in three Divine Persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit). So, when God says the Holy Spirit grieves, the Bible reveals the emotions of a Person: the Holy Spirit. As a Person, the Holy Spirit has intelligence (1 Corinthians 2:10-11, Page 1784) and a will (1 Corinthians 2:11, Page 1784). He can also be lied to, just as anyone may lie to a person (Acts 5:3,5, Page 1707). Because He is a Person, and not some ephemeral spirit, the Gospel of John uses masculine personal pronouns ("He," "Him") to describe the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-14, Page 1688; 15:26, Page 1687; 16:7-8, Page 1687). Furthermore, He acts like a Person in our

lives: He commands us (Acts 8:29, Page 1715), He teaches us (John 14:26, Page 1685; 1 Corinthians 2:13, Page 1784), He leads us (Romans 8:14, Page 1769), He testifies to us (Romans 8:16, Page 1769), He helps us with our weaknesses (Romans 8:26, Page 1769), He intercedes for us (Romans 8:26, Page 1769), and He reveals the deep things of God to us (1 Corinthians 2:11-13, Page 1784). He now lives within you.

Do Not Quench the Holy Spirit

**Do not quench the Spirit." | 1 Thessalonians 5:19,
Page 1851**

The Holy Spirit seeks to burn like a fire in our lives. He indwells every Christian (Romans 5:5, Page 1764; 8:9, Page 1768; 1 Corinthians 3:16, Page 1785; 6:19, Page 1788) and performs a variety of ministries in our lives. God cautions us against quenching His activity. To quench means to stop. When applied to fires, quench means you take away the fuel from the fire. Spiritually, God encourages us to do nothing to stop the activity of the Holy Spirit. It also means that you must make a conscious decision to submit yourself to the leading of the Holy Spirit. He provides unlimited power for living, and burns in our lives. When we realize that we have quenched the Holy Spirit, all is not lost. We repent, and confess our sins, so that we resume walking in the Holy Spirit, cleansed from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9, Page 1904). Remember, because God sealed us with the Holy Spirit, He will never leave us (Ephesians 4:30, Page 1831).

We must also be careful to confess our sins as we become aware of them. When we worry, speak evil words, indulge impure thoughts, and do things displeasing to God, we must be quick to confess our sins. God immediately forgives our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. See [Confession of Sin Video](#).

Variety of Gifts, But the Same Spirit

**“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the Same Spirit.”
| 1 Corinthians 12:4, Page 1796**

At the instant you were born again by faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit blessed you with at least one spiritual gift for building up the church. He intends to use that gift within you for His purposes, and everyone you touch with your gift will benefit from God's ministry through you. The Holy Spirit gives the gifts just as He wishes, and then He empowers us to use those gifts. Please look at the total picture here.

Every believer, including you, has been given a spiritual gift and no two believers are identical. In fact, the same spiritual gift, like teaching, will produce different effects and yield different ministries in different believers. Yet, although each of us differs from other believers, making each of us unique, the Holy Spirit of God unifies us into one total body. Therefore, just as the human body has different members that produce sight, touch, smell, and all the other functions, so also the Holy Spirit produces essential spiritual functions through different people using different gifts to benefit the entire body. Ever notice that your whole body benefits from sight? If not, try walking into a wall and see which part of you hurts first.

The Holy Spirit produces unity in diversity among believers in the church. Through His ministry of gifts, and His essential unity, we rejoice and suffer with other members of the Body of Christ. You can check out several lists of gifts in Romans 12:3-8, Page 1775; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, Page 1796; 1 Peter 4:10,11, Page 1898; Ephesians 4:7-16, Page 1830. Although you may have natural talents, do not jump to the conclusion that your talents equal your spiritual gifts. Only time, prayer, ministry, and effort will illumine the spiritual gifts in you. Seek your gift and God will bless others through you. You see, the Holy Spirit performs the work of ministry through the saints

using their gifts. People, not just pastors and missionaries, minister to the church, and you must perform an essential ministry. You already have your gift, so seek to use it.

Step Five

Body Life

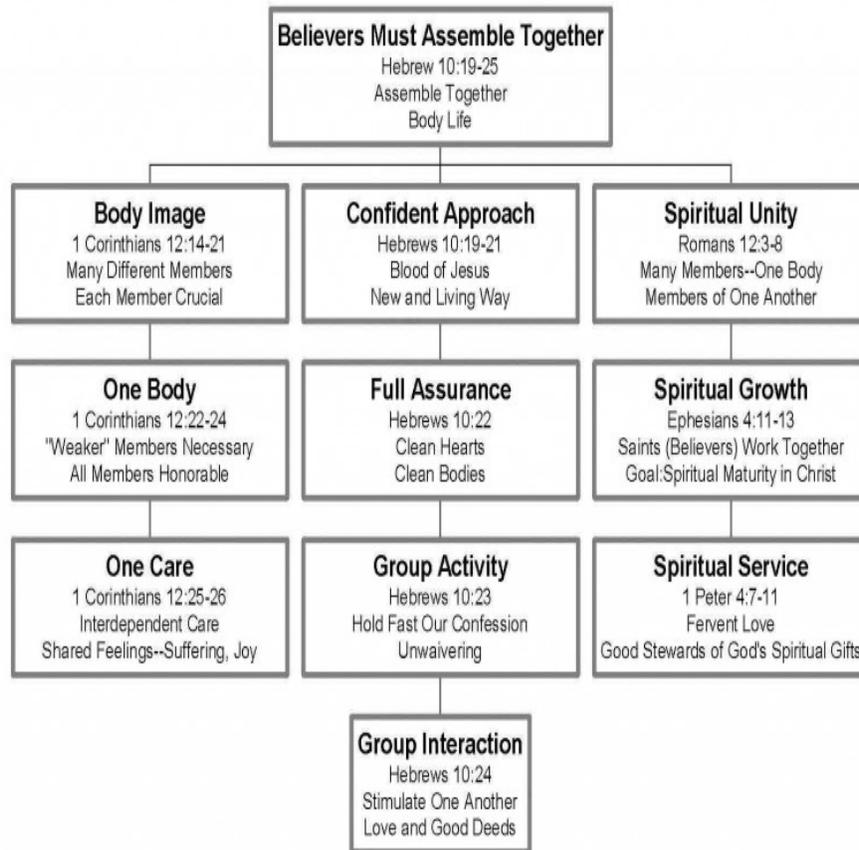


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First Steps in Christ

Step Five

BODY LIFE



For PDF, [STEP5--BodyLife](#)

As a group of believers in Jesus Christ, we collectively form the Body of Christ, also called the Church. The Body of Christ functions like a human body, with each member of the body playing a unique and significant role. In fact, God never designed a believer to live apart from the Body of Christ. At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit blesses you with at least one spiritual gift. God distributes those spiritual gifts to each believer just as He wishes.

Believers Assemble Together

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; 24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 25 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 10:23-25, Page 1881

God emphasizes the need for believers to assemble together. Because Jesus has cleansed the heavenly tabernacle of all sin, by His blood atonement on the cross, we now have confident access to the immediate presence of God Himself. Only because of Jesus cleansing believers from all sin can they now boldly approach God.

Confident Approach

“Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,” | Hebrews 10:19, Page 1880

Believers approach God with confidence. Just as the disciples fell down face first into the dirt upon hearing the voice of God on the mount of transfiguration, so also Jesus walked over to them, touched them, and commanded them to get up and get going. God scares people when they see His presence up close, or hear His voice, or see His power at work among them. Yet, because of God the Son, Jesus Christ, we have confidence to enter the holy place of God.

Full Assurance

“let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” | Hebrews 10:22, Page 1881

Because you have faith in the cleansing power of the blood of Christ to remove the guilt of all sins once and for all, you have full assurance. You rely upon the promises of God in the word of God to approach God with full assurance. God has cleansed your life with the blood of Jesus. Our hearts have been sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Group Activity

“let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering; for He who promised is faithful;” | Hebrews 10:23, Page 1881

God intends for all believers to be unified in their confession of hope without wavering. Not only do we have hope because the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us and inaugurated a new and living way of access directly to God, but we also confess our hope to each other and to the world. We love to proclaim our hope in Jesus Christ. Christ is our hope. We trust the faithfulness of God so that we never waiver in our confession of hope.

Group Interaction

“and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,” | Hebrews 10:24, Page 1881

Because we assemble together as believers with common hope, and we all approach one God with confidence, we should also take time to consider how to encourage fellow believers. As believers, we must be careful as we assemble together to consider how to stimulate other believers to love and good deeds. So often, believers tend to criticize each other and attack one another. In contrast, God commands us to take time to ponder how to stimulate other believers to love and good works.

The Body of Christ

“But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.” | 1 Corinthians 12:18, Page 1797

The Holy Spirit bestows spiritual gifts upon believers so that all the believers may benefit from the ministry of each individual spiritual gift. In fact, unless each believer uses his own spiritual gift(s), then all the body will suffer from the lack of that spiritual gift. God likened the use of the spiritual gifts to the parts of the human body: eyes, ears, etc.

God put each believer into just the right place in the Body of Christ. Therefore, no member of the Body of Christ can say to another member that he has no need of that member. In fact, the members of the Body which we deem weaker are necessary. Likewise, upon the members we deem less honorable we actually bestow more honor. God deliberately has composed the Body of Christ, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked honor, so that there may be no division in the body. That unity means that when one member suffers, all the members suffer. When one member is honored, then all the members are honored.

Purpose

“until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” | Ephesians 4:13, Page 1831

The Holy Spirit places gifts into the Body of Christ, one member at a time. God means that He places those gifts within believers for specific purposes. God intends for every believer to carry on the ministry of Jesus Christ, but each member must minister according to the gift bestowed upon that member. God never intended any divisions in the body of Christ, and all titles such as "Reverend," "Father," "Rabbi," "Clergy," "Laity," "Leader" not only divide the church, but also break the command of Jesus Christ to avoid titles and divisions (Matthew 23:6-11, Page 1542). Jesus calls you to use the gift that the Holy Spirit has placed within you to His honor and glory. In fact, the gift within you should be used to build up the Body of Christ, that is, the other believers around you. Your pastor and teachers function to equip the members to use their spiritual gifts for the glory of God. They do not do the ministry alone, and they alone are not in full-time ministry. God has called you into "full-time ministry" because you possess your spiritual gifts every day, all day. You carry the power of ministry within you, and the spiritual gift you possess makes you essential to the Body of Christ, even an honored member.

I often separate a verse into parts so that I can understand it better. I always want to be sure in the end, however, that I understand also how the entire verse fits together, and how that verse fits into the paragraph, and the paragraph fits into the entire chapter, and the chapter fits into the entire book. In Ephesians 4:13, Page 1831, God tells me that He wants all believers: (1) to strive together for the unity of the faith; (2) to grow in the knowledge of the Son of God; and (3) to become mature members, measuring up to the

full stature of Christ. The spiritual gifts of the entire body will produce those results. Well, what gift do you possess and how can you find out?

Many Christians do not care about their spiritual gifts and the ministry that Christ has for them. They think that ministry means you become a pastor, missionary, or have some other church-related employment. Think again, but use the Bible as your guide here. As we have seen above, every member has a spiritual gift, maybe even more than one. But each gift, delivered directly from God, must be used. Be sure not to neglect the gift God has given to you. You will never achieve much out of life, spiritually, unless you yield yourself to using your spiritual gift.

One Body

**“On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary;”
| 1 Corinthians 12:22, Page 1797**

Within the Body of Christ, we see that some members are weaker than others. This weakness does not mean spiritual weakness or spiritual immaturity. God means that the eye cannot look at the foot and say you are weaker than I am, and so I do not need you. God means that every part of the Body of Christ plays a vitally important role. No member can say to another member that you are useless, worthless, or without any function. God places the members in the Body of Christ just as He wills, and each member has crucial functions to fulfill in the Body of Christ. We bestow more honor on those members we deem less honorable, and our less presentable members become much more presentable. God has honor for each member of the Body of Christ and commands the Body of Christ to bestow honor on every member.

One Care

“so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another;” | 1 Corinthians 12:25, Page 1797

Within the Body of Christ, the members of the Body of Christ must care for one another with great love from God. Because members care for one another, no divisions should arise in the Body of Christ. If one member of the Body of Christ suffers, then all the members suffer in the Body of Christ. If one member of the Body of Christ receives honor, then the entire Body of Christ receives honor. Notice that individuals share both suffering and honor. In Christ, all the members have deep spiritual connections as living members of the Body of Christ.

The Spiritual Gifts

“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,” | Ephesians 4:11, Page 1830

Notice that God gives different gifts. Now let us look at the gifts mentioned in the New Testament.

The Spiritual Gift of The Apostles

"and He gave some as the apostles" | Ephesians 4:11, Page 1830

The twelve apostles described themselves as people who were with Jesus from the baptism of John until they watched Jesus ascend into heaven (Acts 1:21-22, Page 1700). We must be careful to distinguish the office of apostle (no longer existent) from the spiritual gift of the apostles. No one alive on earth today can really claim to hold the office of apostle like the twelve apostles described in Acts, because they cannot meet the qualification that he was with the Lord Jesus from His baptism to His ascension. Some other men were called apostles in the New Testament, who had the spiritual gift of the apostles, but at least some aspects of the gift seem to have passed away with the completion of the New Testament. The men with the spiritual gift of the apostles had a variety of ministries, such as church planting, church messengers, and stewards of the mysteries of God. See also the article on the gift: [The Spiritual Gift of the Apostles](#).

The Spiritual Gift of the Prophets

**"and He gave some as the prophets" | Ephesians 4:11,
Page 1830**

The spiritual gift of the prophets allowed the New Testament to be written by men moved by the Holy Spirit of God to produce His entire, complete, and inerrant revelation of God for this age. Nothing more needs to be added to the Bible, but many believers disagree about the gift of prophecy today. The Biblical evidence indicates that the gift of prophecy involved the revelation of new material, and the true prophet spoke without error. This gift shall cease (1 Corinthians 13:8, Page 1798). See also the article on [The Spiritual Gift of the Prophets](#).

The Spiritual Gift of the Evangelists

"and He gave some as the evangelists" | Ephesians 4:11, Page 1830

The spiritual gift of the evangelists enables a person to lead people to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. When they exercise the gift, then people come to salvation in Christ. If you see a person consistently leading people to salvation, then you may well be watching an evangelist. They love to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and see positive results often. Study the ministry of Phillip in Acts 8, Page 1713 for an example.

The Spiritual Gift of the Pastors

**"and He gave some as the Pastors" | Ephesians 4:11,
Page 1830**

Some people misuse a Greek language rule (the Granville Sharp rule) to suggest that The Spiritual Gift of the Pastors is always accompanied by the Spiritual Gift of the Teachers. Yet, that rule does not include plural nouns as here. So, we must understand that The Spiritual Gift of the Pastors is separate from The Spiritual Gift of the Teachers. The Holy Spirit may bestow both gifts upon the same person, but not necessarily. The work of the pastor concerns being an under-shepherd of Christ, so that he cares for the flock. Study 1 and 2 Timothy (beginning on page 1854) to see the life of a pastor.

The Spiritual Gift of the Teachers

“and He gave some as the teachers” | Ephesians 4:11, Page 1830

Many pastors have the spiritual gift of the teachers, but not all of them. Yet, not all teachers are pastors. Pastors tend the sheep of Christ because they love Christ. The pastor equips the saints for the work of service. Teachers have the special, divine ability to understand, explain, and communicate the word of God. They are not instruments of new revelation, but rather they use the existing revelation to benefit believers through their teaching. Pastors use their gifts to comfort the saved, confront the sinful, and shepherd the sheep with the love of Jesus Christ.

The Spiritual Gift of Service

“If service, in his serving” | Romans 12:7, Page 1775

The spiritual gift of service is like other gifts. We all have the obligation to serve God, but God gifts some people to be special servants. They have a spiritual talent for serving. Consider the men of Acts 6 (Page 1709) selected to be put in charge of feeding the widows of the church. These men had special abilities as servants to be sure that everyone's physical needs were met.

Exhortation

**“he who exhorts, in his exhortation” | Romans 12:8,
Page 1775**

The spiritual gift of exhortation involves the ability to confront and encourage other believers to walk with Christ under the power of the Holy Spirit. Counselors often have The Spiritual Gift of Exhortation to confront people with the Word of God and then encourage them to walk in loving relationship with Jesus Christ. Think of the gift as calling people to Godly living. See the article on [The Spiritual Gift of Exhortation](#).

The Spiritual Gift of Giving

“he who gives, with liberality” | Romans 12:8, Page 1775

The spiritual gift of giving means the ability to give with liberality, and you do it consistently as a ministry to Jesus Christ. Everyone has a duty and privilege to use God's money for God's purposes, but not everyone has the gift of giving. The spiritual gift of giving means that you have been gifted by God with the desire, insight, and ability to give to those who really need it. The gifted giver delights in providing for widows, orphans, and people in special need. Consider Barnabas who owned a large tract of land, sold it, and laid the money at the apostle's feet (Acts 4:37, Page 1706). See the article on [The Spiritual Gift of Giving](#).

The Spiritual Gift of Leading

“he who leads, with diligence” | Romans 12:7, Page 1775

The Spiritual Gift of Leading starts at home. After a man demonstrates his ability to lead people at home to Godliness, then he may branch out to other people. Leading often includes the ability to organize, to plan, and concentrate resources to achieve a goal. For example, a deacon (a church office and not a spiritual gift) must be a good administrator of his family and household. Diligent leadership characterizes the proper use of this gift. See the article on [The Spiritual Gift of Leading](#).

The Spiritual Gift of Mercy

“he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness” | Romans 12:8, Page 1775

The spiritual gift of mercy means that you extend the loving-kindness of God as a ministry of Jesus Christ. Mercy means that you withhold punishment. Every believer must love mercy and do justice, but the believer gifted with mercy finds special opportunities to practice mercy over and over. They seek people needing God's mercy and God delivers those opportunities to them. In this passage, the gift of mercy should abound with cheerfulness. See the article on [The Spiritual Gift of Mercy](#).

The Spiritual Gifts of 1 Corinthians 12

“For to one is given the word of wisdom through the spirit; and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healings by the one Spirit, and to another works of powers, and to another the judgment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He wills.” | 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, Page 1796

God often addresses particular problems in the Bible. At the church of Corinth, Greece, the believers there had factions and disorder splitting the church apart. The church services had displays of wonderful spiritual gifts, but division and discord marred the gatherings. Please recall that before the last writer completed the New Testament, God used direct revelation through people to communicate His truths to His people. Apostles, prophets, and others received direct instruction from God. God also gave gifts for revelation to His people. The revelatory gifts have become the subject of great debate today. Not everyone understands spiritual gifts in the same way. After careful study, the best definitions of these gifts are presented below, but be careful to keep looking to the word of God for instruction and confirmation.

The arrangement of the list of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, Page 1796, should influence our understanding of the gifts themselves. In 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, Page 1796, the Greek text divides into three units of gifts separated by two different words for "another" (which our English Bibles translate as if

they were the same): (1) "hetero" ("ἕτερο"), meaning different kinds; and (2) "allo" ("ἄλλο") meaning different, but the same kind. Think of dogs and people. People are of a different kind ("hetero") from dogs, but citizens of America and citizens of China are different of the same kind ("allo") because both groups are humans. Likewise hounds are different from humans, but the same kind as spaniels. Recognizing that division, verse 8 groups together two gifts based upon revelation: the Word of Wisdom and the Word of Knowledge. Verses 9 and 10a then present the next unit of gifts based upon faith: Faith, Gifts of Healing, Effecting of Miracles, Prophecy and Distinguishing of Spirits. Finally, the last group concerns the use of tongues: Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues. The grouping helps understand the nature of the gifts.

Group One (verse 8)**Word of Wisdom, ("allo") Word of Knowledge****Group Two ("hetero") (verses 9-10a)****Faith, ("allo") Gifts of Healing, ("allo") Effecting of Miracles, ("allo") Prophecy and ("allo") Distinguishing of Spirits****Group Three ("hetero") (verse 10b)****Various Tongues, ("allo") Interpretation of Tongues**

The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom

“For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit” | 1 Corinthians 12:8, Page 1796

Every believer should seek wisdom from God, who promised to give wisdom generously, without criticism for asking, to everyone who asks without doubting (James 1:5, page 1887). We may glean from this passage in James that God has promised generous wisdom to every believer who asks for it. Therefore, The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom mentioned in 1 Corinthians must be different from the generous wisdom available to every believer. Only some believers had The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom, bestowed upon them as the Holy Spirit desired (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11, page 1796). As we begin our brief study of The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom, remember the chart above. To understand The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom, you need to see how it functioned in the New Testament church. Paul explained his message and preaching were not in persuasive "words of wisdom," and the faith he preached did not rest on the wisdom of men (1 Corinthians 2:1-5, page 1783). In contrast, Paul spoke God's wisdom, not of this world. He spoke God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:6-10, page 1784). God predestined to our glory the revelation of that hidden wisdom, which He called a mystery. As we shall see below, that term "mystery" always has a special meaning in the New Testament. The rulers of that age did not understand God's wisdom, because they would not have crucified the Lord of glory if they had (1 Corinthians 2:8, page 1784). In the city of Corinth, Paul revealed God's wisdom for the church, and called it a "mystery, the hidden wisdom." The apostle Paul put into words the revelation of the hidden wisdom which God gave to them. Based upon this use of the term "wisdom" by the same author (Paul) in the same book (1 Corinthians), we see that The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom concerns divine revelation of something new and previously hidden, which God calls a mystery. Regarding the term "mystery," Paul described himself as a servant of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God

(1 Corinthians 4:1, page 1785). Paul described the term mystery in Romans 16:25-26, page 1781: "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;" We see here that a mystery is: (1) a revelation from God; (2) of a secret from long ages past; (3) now manifested; (4) by the Scriptures of the prophets; (5) according to the commandment of God; (6) and now has been made known to all nations; (7) leading to the obedience of faith. Likewise, in Ephesians 3:4-6, page 1829, Paul described the mystery of Christ: "By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel," Here also, we see that a mystery refers to: (1) something not known to prior generations, (2) as it has now been revealed; (3) to his holy apostles and prophets, (4) in the Spirit. We may summarize a mystery, then, as something that God has now revealed through the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, but was not known to prior generations before the New Testament as it has been made known in the New Testament. So, a mystery means something now known, which was not fully known in the past, and mystery always means revelation directly from God, by the Holy Spirit revealing that new information to the apostles and prophets of the New Testament. The term "mystery" also involves communicating that previously hidden wisdom to the other people. In Acts 11:5, Page 1721, Peter received the vision that all of the animals were clean to eat. He interpreted this vision to mean the Gentiles were welcome in the kingdom of God. With Peter, we see the "wisdom of God" revealing the inclusion of the Gentiles in the church, as cleansed by faith in God, just like Jews. In 2 Peter 3:15, page 1903, Peter said that Paul wrote according to the wisdom given to him. Again, the Word of Wisdom there involves communicating a revelation from God. In Romans 9:1ff., page 1770, Paul explained that the mystery of the relationship of the Gentiles to Israel had been revealed to him and he communicated that wisdom to dispel ignorance of God's plans. In Corinthians 15, page 1800, Paul also expounded the mystery of the resurrection of all believers and communicated that doctrine to the Corinthians. In Ephesians 2, Page 1828, Paul described the

mystery of Christ and the church. In passing, keep in mind that Paul told the Galatians that he received the Gospel by direct revelation from God (Galatians 1:12, Page 1819). To the Colossians, Paul preached the mystery of Christ in the believers, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27, Page 1842). To the Thessalonians, Paul warned of the mystery of lawlessness (2 Thessalonians 2:7, Page 1852). To Timothy, Paul wrote about the mystery of Godliness in the life, death, resurrection and glorification of Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 3:16, Page 1856). To John, God unveiled the finish of the mystery of God declared to His servants the prophets (Revelation 10:7, Page 1925). In all of these cases, The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom involved God revealing a mystery, previously hidden, to an apostle or prophet who communicated it to other believers. The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom constituted God's chosen gift for revealing mysteries to the Church and recorded His revelation through The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom in the New Testament. See the article on [The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom](#).

The Spiritual Gift of The Word of Knowledge

“and to another the word of knowledge according to the Spirit” | 1 Corinthians 12:8, Page 1796

The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Knowledge means a new revelation of the authoritative application of word of God. Please remember that, as shown in the chart above, The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Knowledge must be the same kind of gift as The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom ("allo" gift). Because The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom is a revelatory gift, we may also expect that The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Knowledge will be a revelatory gift. In 1 Corinthians 12:8, page 1796, we see that The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom operated "through" ("διὰ") the Holy Spirit, while the The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Knowledge works "according to" ("κατὰ") the Holy Spirit. The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Knowledge means the divine application of previously revealed truth. Instead of unfolding mysteries, as the Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom provides, The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Knowledge applies revelation at the right time and in the right way. In 1 Corinthians 13:2, Page 1797, Paul linked The Spiritual Gift of Prophecy with the ability to know all mysteries and all knowledge. Therefore, we see that knowing mysteries will be related to knowing knowledge, but they will not be the same. In Colossians 2:2-3, Page 1842, Paul prayed that the Colossians would gain true knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Knowledge in this context has been hidden in Christ, along with wisdom, but now has been revealed to believers. The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Knowledge builds upon The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom. In 2 Peter 3:1-2, Page 1902, Peter illustrates the Spiritual Gift of the Word of Knowledge. The prophets and apostles had provided teachings. Peter specifically applied those teachings (revelations in themselves), under the influence of The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Knowledge, to the problem of mockers appearing many years after Christ ascended into heaven. The result of Peter's application of prior teachings

amounted to new revelation for confronting mockers. In Jude 1:17-18, page 1913, we read that Jude demonstrated The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Knowledge. He applied the words spoken by the apostles to problems with mockers and revealed God's means of overcoming them. Consider also 1 Corinthians 10:6-11, Page 1793 (example of Israel applied to avoiding idolatry and immorality) and 2 Corinthians 3:12-18, Page 1807 (the hardened mind and veil of unbelief removed by Christ). Like The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Wisdom, God used The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Knowledge to produce the New Testament, which is now complete (1 Corinthians 13:8, page 1798). See also the article on [The Spiritual Gift of the Word of Knowledge](#).

The Spiritual Gift of Faith

“to another faith by the same Spirit” | 1 Corinthians 12:9

Every believer should "walk by faith," but not every believer possesses The Spiritual Gift of Faith. The Spiritual Gift of Faith refers to a special ability to believe that God will do powerful things. Consider Paul's statement that by faith he could move mountains, just as the Lord Jesus Himself taught. At another time, Paul prophesied that no life would be lost during a shipwreck. He then reaffirmed the prophesy by noting that he believed God that it would turn out just as he had already told them. This ability to believe God for miraculous events confirms God's words in very tangible ways. See also the article on [The Spiritual Gift of Faith](#).

The Spiritual Gifts of Healings

**“and to another gifts of healings by the one Spirit” |
1 Corinthians 12:9, Page 1796**

In the list of gifts in 1 Corinthians, Paul grouped different healing gifts together under the term "Gifts of Healings." Notice both terms are plural. As you read through the Acts of the Apostles, you see all kinds of physical problems healed: crippled, blind, paralyzed, diseased and lame. God miraculously healed those problems and often opened the door to proclaiming the power of God for salvation. The physical healing had a spiritual purpose. It also confirmed the message and revelation of the apostles. God used the "Gifts of Healings" as part of the miracles, wonders and signs performed by the apostles to spread and confirm the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Spiritual Gift of Works of Powers

“and to another works of powers” | 1 Corinthians 12:10, Page 1796

Just as God used healing to confirm the message of the apostles concerning salvation and new life in Christ, He also bestowed the broad gift to perform miracles upon His messengers. The Spiritual Gift of Works of Powers allowed Peter at Joppa to raise Tabitha from the dead (Acts 9:36ff., Page 1718). As a result of the miracle, many believed in the Lord. Another miracle concerned putting down opposition. Elymas, a magician, sought to turn a convert away from Christ by using fraud and deceit (Acts 13:8ff., Page 1724). Paul declared that Elymas would be blind because the hand of the Lord would be upon him for his crooked actions. So, therefore, you see that The Spiritual Gift of Works of Powers both opened the door for the Gospel and also confirmed the words of the messengers of the Gospel.

The Spiritual Gift of The Judgment of Spirits

“and to another judgment of spirits” | 1 Corinthians 12:10, Page 1796

Paul expected every believer to test the spirits to judge between good and evil (1 Corinthians 12:1-3, Page 1796; compare 1 John 4:1-3, Page 1907). At Corinth, spiritual utterances were common and, therefore, the congregation needed to have immediate discernment regarding the spirit behind the utterance. The believer gifted with The Spiritual Gift of Judgment of Spirits had a special ability to pass judgment upon the utterance of anyone claiming to speak for God (1 Corinthians 14:29, Page 1800). Notice that this gift comes right after the gift of prophecy in the list. If you look closely at 1 Corinthians 14:29, Page 1800, another prophet, possessing The Spiritual Gift of the Judgment of Spirits, would pass judgment immediately upon what another prophet had just said. The use of prophecy in the congregation was always subject to immediate review by another, gifted prophet. Acts 16:17, Page 1732, portrays a striking example of Paul's use of The Spiritual Gift of the Judgment of Spirits. A woman there correctly identified Paul and his companions as "bond servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation." She continued following Paul until he commanded the spirit to come out of her, and it came out. Paul could see beyond the words to the spirit of divination inside the woman.

The Spiritual Gift of Kinds of Tongues

“and to kinds of tongues” | 1 Corinthians 12:10, Page 1796

In the 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, Page 1796 passage above, Paul grouped the last two gifts into a third and final category: kinds of tongues. The first gift in that category concerned The Spiritual Gift of Kinds of Tongues. At Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles shortly after Christ ascended to heaven. He came upon the apostles, so that they spoke in foreign tongues and the crowd heard them speaking their own native languages (Acts 2:1-13, Page 1700). At Corinth, the believers there had been enthralled with The Spiritual Gift of Kinds of Tongues, but The Spiritual Gift of Kinds of Tongues did not provide edification for the church, unless it was interpreted (1 Corinthians 14, Page 1798). Absent interpretation, the use of The Spiritual Gift of Kinds of Tongues was directed to God and edified only the speaker (1 Corinthians 14:2-6, Page 1798). While using The Spiritual Gift of Kinds of Tongues, the mind was unfruitful (1 Corinthians 14:14, Page 1799). Paul sought for the Corinthians to edify one another, and so encouraged them to seek The Spiritual Gift of Prophecy. Paul restricted The Spiritual Gift of Kinds of Tongues in congregational use to the occasions when an interpreter was present (1 Corinthians 14:27-28, Page 1799), and even then only two or at the most three utterances should be permitted. Although believers should not be forbidden from speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:39, Page 1800), The Spiritual Gift of Kinds of Tongues shall cease (1 Corinthians 13:8, Page 1798). See also the article on [The Spiritual Gift of Tongues](#).

The Spiritual Gift of **Interpretation of Tongues**

**“and to another the interpretation of tongues” | 1
Corinthians 12:10, Page 1796**

As mentioned above, The Spiritual Gift of the Interpretation of Tongues relates directly to the use of The Spiritual Gift of Kinds of Tongues. The Spiritual Gift of Interpretation of Kinds of Tongues described the ability to translate a spiritual utterance by one person into a language understood by the listeners. The Spiritual Gift of Tongues was a sign for unbelievers, and without interpretation, yielded no benefit for listeners (1 Corinthians 14:22, Page 1799). Therefore, The Spiritual Gift of Interpretation of Tongues supernaturally translated the use of The Spiritual Gift of Kinds of Tongues into another language that blessed the entire congregation of people listening to The Spiritual Gift of Interpretation of Tongues. See also the article on [The Spiritual Gift of the Interpretation of Tongues](#).

The Speaking and Service Gifts

“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” | 1 Peter 4:10-11, Page 1898

1 Peter 4:10-11, Page 1898, provides excellent guidance regarding the use of spiritual gifts. The purpose of spiritual gifts is to serve one another. The duty of spiritual gifts requires you to act like a diligent steward. The diversity of spiritual gifts lies in the manifold grace of God. God recognizes two basic categories of gifts here: speaking and serving. Therefore, we will use that division as the point of departure for investigating what spiritual gift(s) you possess.

Without faith, you cannot please God. This general principle must control your entire spiritual life. Remember you possess a spiritual gift, and God intends for you to use it to His glory. Therefore, claim the promise of God by faith. What promise? The promise that you have a gift and He wants you to use it. He will show it to you when you trust Him to show you.

If you know of sin in your life, that you have never confessed to God, then the use of your spiritual gift will be a problem. If you have a current problem with immorality, coveting, idolatry, drinking, or swindling, then you cannot be in fellowship with other believers until you deal with your sin. Without that fellowship, you cannot be a direct blessing to others. Consider 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, Page 1788. Do not get discouraged here. God does not want to punish you for your sin, because He has already punished His Son, Jesus Christ, for all of your sins. But God does want you to confess and forsake your sin (1 John 1:9, Page 1904), and then you can believe that God will reveal and use your gifts.

Many believers start down the road of finding their spiritual gift, but then get discouraged and turn back or just sit down. If you are counting upon other believers to support your ministry, stop and count only upon God. When other believers support God's use of your gifts, thank them and glorify God. Ultimately, however, you must look only to God for the use of your gifts because satan will oppose the use of your gifts. Satan wants division and discord in the Body of Christ. Do not allow discouragement or a lack of gratitude for your ministry to slow you down. Trust always and only God to use your gifts because the Body of Christ needs your ministry. You can also be an encouragement to others to use their gifts.

I urge you to look back before you look forward. If you have been a believer for any length of time, look back and see if God has used you in any particular way to be a blessing to other believers. We will generally look in two directions here. Have you ever done any speaking to individuals or groups that proved a blessing to believers? If so, then consider teaching, exhortation, leadership, and faith. Have you ever done any serving that blessed believers? If so, then consider mercy, giving, and service. Go back through the passages associated with the gifts above and see if you have acted before with that gift.

Be extremely careful who you ask about your spiritual gifts. Select only spiritual people you trust to know the Bible and love Jesus Christ to interview concerning your spiritual gifts. If you have been a believer for a while, then ask the elders in your church about your gifts, if they know you well enough to offer insight. If not the elders, then ask your most spiritual friends to share their knowledge and observations with you. If you have been a believer for only a short period of time, then you can expect to find your gift by letting God open up opportunities for speaking and service. He will guide you into

the paths for exercising your gifts. Invite your spiritual friends to pray for you and see what doors for speaking and service open before you.

Someone led you to Jesus Christ. Someone should be discipling you all the time. Make it a matter of prayer in your discipleship to seek out your spiritual gift and then use it. Keep on praying and reading about the use of your gifts. As you read the word of God, the Holy Spirit will open the eyes of your heart from examples in the word. The Holy Spirit will show you how others have used His gifts to His glory. Count upon it. Do not be discouraged. Pray together for specific ways to learn about your gift and see how God wants to use you to His glory.

Body Image

“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.” | 1 Corinthians 12:12, Page 1796

We know from the Bible passages above that the Body of Christ has many believers using many spiritual gifts to the glory of God. God designed both those spiritual gifts and the Body of Christ to operate in spiritual unity. Paul described individual believers, each with one or more spiritual gifts, as composing the Body of Christ. That body has many individual members, which represent individual believers. So God joins many believers together to function as one body, with each individual member controlled by God. Each member of the Body of Christ plays an essential role, just as your hand allows you to grasp things, while your liver plays an internal role, removing impurities from your body. Some members of the body we see easily, while others work quietly behind the scenes. Each individual member has a vital and crucial role to play in the proper working of the Body of Christ.

Spiritual Unity

“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 of one another.” | Romans 12:4-5, Page 1775

God commands, builds and encourages spiritual unity with the Body of Christ. God used diversity of members to promote unity. Different functions promote unity because the Body of Christ needs each of those different functions, so that the entire Body of Christ can function properly. Consider your heart for a moment. No one looks directly at your heart and sees its pumping action. Yet, if your body suddenly told the heart that we no longer need you, what would happen to the rest of the body? It would die quickly. Likewise, if you look at your kidneys and say we no longer need you, you would die quickly. Yet, we depend upon those kidneys every day, even though we do not see them when we look at other people. Spiritual unity rests upon each believer functioning properly in the Body of Christ, and each believer appreciating the different functions the other believers provide to the Body of Christ. As we appreciate God's plan for the Body of Christ, we grow in spiritual unity because we love the functional diversity among the members of the Body of Christ.

Spiritual Growth

"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;" | Romans 12:10, Page 1775

Spiritual growth occurs in the Body of Christ on both an individual level and on the community level. Individually, we use our spiritual gifts as God has bestowed them upon us. On a personal level, we grow as our love for one another expands without hypocrisy. We become more devoted to one another, giving preference to one another in honor. We grow in (a) diligence, (b) fervor in spirit, (c) serving the Lord, (d) rejoicing in hope, (e) persevering in tribulation, (f) devoting ourselves to prayer, (g) contributing to the needs of the saints, and (h) practicing hospitality.

Spiritual Service

"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, Page 1898

At the moment of salvation, each believer received a spiritual gift from God. God chose the gift, and distributed each gift to each believer just as God willed. We now must use our spiritual gifts to serve other believers. So often, believers do not know what spiritual gifts they possess, and have no idea how to use them. Study the Spiritual Gifts section above, and especially the Bible passages concerning spiritual gifts. God called us all stewards of the spiritual gifts He gave to us. We should not neglect or hide our spiritual gifts. Those gifts He gave us to bless, encourage, and build up the Body of Christ. Without each member using the spiritual gift within him, then the Body of Christ will not experience the full growth and development God intended. Finally, we must be creatures of God who know the full love of God and display the grace of God given to us as we use our spiritual gifts to the glory of God. For further study, please see my manual on [identifying and using your spiritual gifts](#). Click here for a free download of [the Spiritual Gifts Manual](#).

STEP SIX

PRAYER

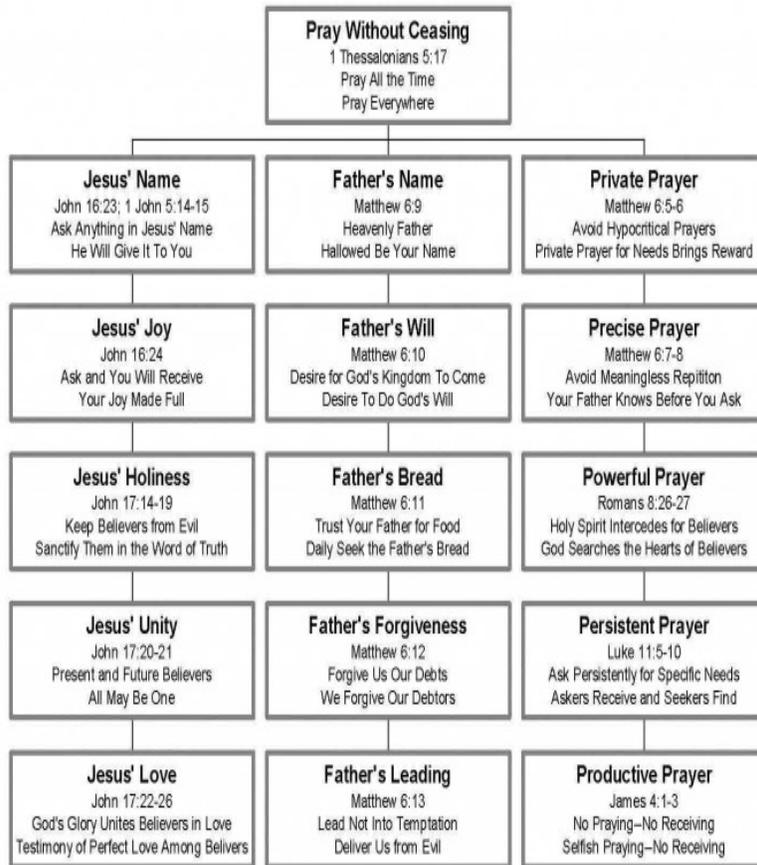


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First Steps in Christ

Step Six

PRAYER



For PDF, [STEP6--Prayer](#)

Learning To Pray

Now that you have started a spiritual relationship with God, you should talk with Him often. In fact, the Word of God commands believers to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17, Page 1850). In this study, we will focus upon the activity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in prayer. Jesus diligently taught His disciples as they ate together, walked together, and lived together. He taught them with illustrations, symbols, parables, sermons, demonstrations, and object lessons. He also taught them how to pray through His prayers and the prayers He gave to them. In Matthew chapter 6, Jesus told His disciples how to pray as part of His longer teaching called the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1, Page 1506 to Matthew 7:29, Page 1512). Now let us look at this important prayer given to the disciples of Jesus.

The Model Prayer

“Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” | Matthew 6:9, Page 1509

At the request of the disciples, Jesus taught His disciples how to pray. Disciples long to pray and the Holy Spirit moves believers to pray. The twelve disciples watched Jesus praying, and then they wanted to learn how to pray. So, after Jesus had finished praying, they asked the Lord Jesus to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1, Page 1620).

Unity

**“Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven”
| Matthew 6:9, Page 1509**

Jesus started the prayer with unity: "Our." He includes Himself in "Our" and links every believer to one Father. We know that God eternally exists in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In this passage, God the Son instructs us to pray to God the Father. Jesus implied that His Father, through Jesus Himself, will be the Father of every believer and every believer is His child. We pray together as one family.

Hallowed

“Hallowed be Your name.” | Matthew 6:9, Page 1509

As we pray, we should always keep in mind that we must reverence (respect deeply) the name of God. It means we should never pray flippantly, or without giving it serious attention. It also means we should pray with an attitude of worship.

Your Kingdom

“Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” | Matthew 6:10, Page 1509

Jesus taught us to pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. He instructed us to pray for the kingdom of God to come. When we pray, we should always focus our minds upon God's will enveloping our will so that we seek God's kingdom. Until Jesus returns and sets His feet upon the Mount of Olives, we will not see the final fulfillment of this prayer. Until then, we remember that Jesus said His kingdom was not of this world. We understand that as believers, we live in the spiritual kingdom of God with Christ as our King, seated at the right hand of the Father until we see all of His enemies subjected to Him. Then He will reign physically upon the earth and we shall reign with Him. Until then, we pray for the Kingdom of God to come to earth, just as we pray, even so come, quickly, Lord Jesus. Maranatha.

Daily Bread

**“Give us this day our daily bread.” | Matthew 6:11,
Page 1509**

Only God can provide your daily bread. He expects us to pray every day for the food we need that day. This verse illustrates how God provides everything we need, every day. Even before you pray, He knows your needs and never wants you to worry about having enough to eat. He always provides, every day. We give thanks at meals to remember His provision of the food before us. In public, we do not pray too long or too loud so that we avoid drawing unnecessary attention to ourselves. We pray to say we love God for feeding us and thank you. Now a related subject of using your money arises that we should review carefully.

Forgiveness

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” | Matthew 6:12, Page 1509

Jesus taught that forgiveness is a two-way highway with different lanes. He meant that: (1) God forgave us on the day we were born again of all of our sins; and (2) God forgives us for having dirty hands after we sin, so we need to confess our sins as believers, and experience the forgiveness of sins and the cleansing from all unrighteousness; and (3) we need to forgive everyone who owes us anything, not just money. When I was a young man working on my car, my father walked by me and told me to come in for supper. He also told me to wash my hands. He never once told me I was no longer a part of the family because I had dirty hands. Jesus wants you to feel forgiven every day and every time you pray. God has forgiven every sin in your life--past, present, and future at the moment of your salvation. He forgave you because you have faith that Christ died for your sins. So, why do we pray here for God to forgive our sins? Jesus draws our attention to the need to remember God's forgiveness and to confess our sins to Him. He then teaches us to pass that forgiveness to others. Just as God has forgiven you, so you should forgive others.

Temptation

“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” | Matthew 6:13, Page 1509

Jesus prayed that we would not be led into temptation. We should always pray for God's leading in our lives. God promised never to lead us into temptation. In this verse, Jesus directs us to count upon God to deliver us from evil. While He tempts no man, God always controls the strength and severity of every temptation for the believer. He will never allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able to endure, and will provide a way of escape from every temptation so that you do not have to sin. In this world, evil will always surround us. Only God has the spiritual power to deliver us from evil.

Power and Glory

"For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." | Matthew 6:13, Page 1509

Jesus also attributed power and glory to His heavenly Father. Part of our prayer lives should be focused upon victory and positive living. As we live in the power of God, who has all power and demonstrates it in love to the world, we give glory to God. He alone remains worthy of all worship, and He empowers us to live Godly lives for Him. Our prayers reflect His power and recognize His glory forever.

Amen

“Amen.” | Matthew 6:13, Page 1509

As we close our prayers, we say "amen." "Amen" means truly, or so be it, and we use it to agree with others in prayer, and as a personal seal upon our prayer that we have finished praying and mean the prayer. When we pray together out loud, saying "amen" lets others know you have finished and everyone can join with your prayer by saying "amen."

Principles of Prayer

God also provides important principles for disciples to follow in learning how to pray. We should pray for everything. We should pray all the time. We should pray for ourselves and others. We have so much to pray that we should devote serious time to praying.

The night before Jesus went to the cross, He spent time teaching His disciples many important truths. He explained to them that He was going to His Father, and His disciples would rejoice. He also taught them new things about prayer.

The Name of Jesus Principle

“In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. Until now, you have asked for nothing in My name;” | John 16:23-24, Page 1688

Jesus changed the prayer life of every disciple. As He prepared to die on the cross for our sins, He taught His disciples to pray in His name. Before this teaching, the disciples had never prayed in the name of Jesus. When Jesus had previously taught His disciples to pray, He did not close the "Lord's Prayer" with any reference to Himself. On the night before Jesus died, He changed things and taught His disciples to pray in His name. He told the disciples that they could ask Him anything in His name, and He would do it (John 14:14, Page 1685). Jesus promised that God takes your prayers seriously. So should you. We do not go to God in prayer, for we are always in the presence of God. Every word we utter God hears. God has a special design for our prayer life. Why do we pray "in the name of Jesus?" The short answer is because Jesus told us to pray that way. The reason behind that phrase "in the name of Jesus" comes from this passage. We pray in the name of Jesus to identify our requests to God as if they came from Jesus. It helps us to think of our prayers as if Jesus is praying them. When we focus upon what Jesus wants, it makes us pause and think that we should not be seeking our will in prayer, but rather that we would do the will of Jesus and the Father. We can certainly express what we want to God, but then we submit what we want to conform to what God wants from us. Prayer helps us commit our wants and desires to God's plan for us. Remember, He loves us and will not withhold any good thing from us.

The Joy Principle

“ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.” | John 16:24, Page 1688

Jesus instructed us to ask in prayer so that our joy may be made full. This verse means that we pray in the name of Jesus so that we may be made happy. Jesus did not promise that you would live in happy circumstances. He never promised you that people you love would not grow sick, or be paralyzed, or get divorced, or fall into terrible sin. He did promise you, however, that prayer would be a constant source of joy for you. When we bow in prayer, Jesus lifts our spirits to Himself and gives us a hug and a blessing. Joy only comes from one source: God. Never get confused and imagine that any created thing can be the source of ultimate joy. I know that many good things from God make us happy. He intended His gifts to cause us to praise and worship Him in gratitude. Yet, we should always keep in mind more than the gift, or more than the blessing itself. God should be the ultimate source of our joy, for He deserves all the emotional credit in our lives. His presence in our lives and our ability to communicate freely with Him should be the ultimate source of joy. That joy from God should also be growing in our lives. Prayer helps us develop that joy by developing our relationship with God.

The Keep Principle

“I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.” | John 17:15, Page 1690

Jesus prayed to His Father just before His arrest. He asked that His Father would leave us in the world, but He also petitioned the Father to keep believers from the evil one (John 17:15, Page 1690). We learn from this passage that Jesus deliberately left us on earth, and that satan, the evil one, would oppose all that we do for Christ. Through prayer, we ask God to keep us from evil and the evil one. Do you have a sin habit you find hard to break? Start with prayer. Let God work on your thinking, your emotions, your desires, and your attitudes. In prayer, in the Name of Jesus, God will transform your thinking and your emotions and your behavior will follow your thinking. Jesus prayed that the Father would keep us from the evil one.

The Holiness Principle

**“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.” |
John 17:17, Page 1690**

Jesus not only prayed for us to be kept from the evil one, but that we would be made holy. Sanctify means to make holy--to separate you for God's use. He revealed that God's word is truth, and so God's word produces holiness in us. We learn how to be holy from the word of God, and it also produces holiness in us. God uses the term "sanctify" in this passage to describe the ongoing process of becoming completely holy. Of course, all of our sins were forgiven the moment we received Christ as Lord and Savior. God calls us sanctified because of Christ's holiness in us. But we still struggle with sin in our lives. Jesus prayed about sanctification in our daily lives. If we say we have no sin, then we deceive ourselves and the truth of God is not in us. Jesus, who never sinned, prayed for holiness and so should we. We should pray that God would produce more holiness in us, and set us apart for His use. You should pray for my holiness, so that God can use me to His glory. Likewise, I should pray for your holiness so that God can use you for His glory. Holiness comes from God through the word of God. Prayer produces interludes of quietness for the word of God to permeate very busy lives.

The Unity Principle

“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.” | John 17:20-21, page 1690

Jesus prayed for our unity as believers. Jesus wants us to be one just as the Father and Son exist as One. Jesus prayed for unity so that the world would believe that the Father sent the Son to save the world from sin and for the world to find eternal life in God. Through spiritual unity, centered upon Jesus Christ and His teachings, the Church of Jesus Christ proclaims one God in Three Persons and turns the world upside down with the love of God. Father, Son and Holy Spirit have never been divided in purpose and never separated in love. Nothing will send a stronger message to a lost world than the unity of believers sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The unbelieving world will hear the message of faith in Christ more clearly when proclaimed with one voice witnessed by one church. Through prayer we unite together to ask for God's unifying blessing to be poured out upon the Church of Jesus Christ.

The Love Principle

“and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” | John 17:26, Page 1690

As Jesus prayed on the night before He died, Jesus concluded His prayer with love. He wanted the love He receives from the Father to be in believers. He implied that to know the Father is to know the Father's love. Jesus also prayed that each believer would know that Jesus indwells them. Through the indwelling presence of God, we know the love of God. Jesus made it an extreme priority in His prayer to set the example of praying for love. God wants you to appreciate His love, and to be nurtured in that love all the time. Even as Jesus prepared Himself to offer the supreme sacrifice of love, by dying on the cross, He prayed for love. Jesus wanted us to know about the love of God the Father and God the Son. He linked that love to God's presence in our lives. Through the Name of the Father, and in the Name of Jesus Christ, we know love and pray for love. In prayer we receive blessings in Christ. So, pray without ceasing.

The Supply and Multiply Principle

“Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness;” | 2 Corinthians 9:10, Page 1813.

Paul visited the city of Corinth in Greece and wrote them some letters after his visits. He boasted about their ability and practice of giving money to others for help. In the context of giving money to God for His use, Paul wrote about the "supply and multiply" principle. He explained that God supplies seed to everyone. All the money you have came from God, because He supplied it. He also gave you your food, every bit of it. We pray for a daily supply of food. The key to giving is to have faith that God will both "supply" your needs, and He will "multiply" your money. As you allow God to multiply your money, He will direct you to sow it into God's harvest for your righteousness. He does not mean that your money will send you to heaven. The key word is harvest here. God will use your money for His harvest and it will increase your righteousness showing that you are living in right relationship with God. Well, the question comes, how much should I give to God? Ten per cent as a tithe? No, we no longer live under the Old Testament law, because Jesus fulfilled the Law (Galatians 3:23-24, Page 1823). Paul provided excellent guidance about giving (1 Corinthians 16:2, Page 1803). On the first day of the week, set aside money as God has prospered you so that you can be ready to give. You must always give your money to elders who will use your money for God's purposes. The amount you give relates to how much God has blessed you. Make your giving a matter of continual prayer, applying the "supply and multiply" principle described above. Just as Jesus taught His disciples to pray, so also Paul described how the Holy Spirit works through prayer.

The Private Principle

“When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.” | Matthew 6:5-6, Page 1509

Jesus taught His disciples to avoid hypocrisy in prayer. Hypocrisy means we say one thing, but do another. We are two faced. In this case, Jesus meant that we should pray in private. We should never seek to draw attention to ourselves as we pray. I pray in public every day at the beach. Yet, I try not to draw attention to myself or the other people praying. I also pray in private every day. God said if we pray to be noticed by men, then we have our reward already. If we pray in private, then our Father will see what we have prayed in secret and reward us.

The Precise Principle

"And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him." | Matthew 6:7-8, Page 1509

Jesus taught His disciples to pray precisely, and avoid meaningless repetition. You may like to copy the prayers of others, but be sure that you pray your own prayers, meaning every word from your heart. You do not need to offer long prayers, or many words. God does not need your many words to help you. Be precise in your prayers and get to the point. God knows what you need even before you ask in prayer.

The Powerful Principle

“In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” | Romans 8:26-27, Page 1769

God understands that we do not know how to pray as we should. So, do not worry about how you are going to pray or what others will think about you when you pray. Instead, count upon the Holy Spirit to help you pray, each time you pray. Not only does Jesus stand with you in prayer, but the Holy Spirit helps you to pray. The Holy Spirit intercedes with you in prayer. Intercedes means that the Holy Spirit stands between you and the Father. As He stands there, He groans too deep for words as He searches your heart, and acts according to the will of God. The Holy Spirit searches the hearts and knows what the mind of God is. The Holy Spirit, as we pray, matches our hearts and prayers with the mind and will of God. When you do not know how to pray or what to say, count upon the Holy Spirit to help you pray. Remember that God loves you and you never pray alone. You see, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all actively participate in every prayer you offer.

The Persistence Principle

“I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.” | Luke 11:8, Page 1621

Jesus told the story of a friend who needed some bread to feed a traveler staying at his home. He went to his neighbor at night and asked for three loaves of bread. The neighbor told him not to bother him and to leave him alone. The man continued to ask for food and his persistence paid off with the loaves. Jesus used this story to show us that we must pray with persistence. We must not give up praying, but keep on praying until God gives us an answer. Persistence in prayer counts.

The Productive Principle

“You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.”
| **James 4:1-3, Page 1891**

Jesus wants our prayers to be productive, to produce holy results in our lives. In order to pray productive prayers, we must understand problems with some prayers and how our motives hinder our prayers. We can also overcome quarrels and conflicts through prayer.

James understood that believers have quarrels and conflicts among themselves. Their own pleasures cause conflicts and wage war among the members of the Body of Christ. Believers fight among themselves, brother against brother, and sister against sister, and so on. Prayer can help solve problems and wars in the church. Prayer can help you get over your own problems with yourself and other people. You must be very careful about what you pray for. James points out that lust and envy lead to all kinds of sin. When your own desires control you, then they lead to evil deeds. In contrast, prayer to God will produce right relationships with other believers and avoid evil behavior in you. But, you must ask, in the name of Jesus, with the intercession of the Holy Spirit, and according to the will of God, for the things God wants to give you. If you do not ask, then you will not have. When we focus upon our own wants and pleasures, we tend not to pray. When we do not pray, our lives get worse. So ask today.

James also explained that you must ask with pure motives. God knows your motives when you pray, and if your lust for things drives your prayers, then count upon God to do His will (and not your lustful will) in your life.

God never promised you He would fulfill all of your lusts and satisfy all of your pleasures. Instead, God asks you to consider your motives when you pray. Pray seeking His will, and not your lusts and your pleasures. The joy of Christ, born of doing the Father's will, lets us know real happiness when we pray. Jesus lives within us and we make requests in His name. The Holy Spirit intercedes for us and conforms our prayers to the will of God.

What a privilege to talk with God at all times. Hallelujah !

Step Seven

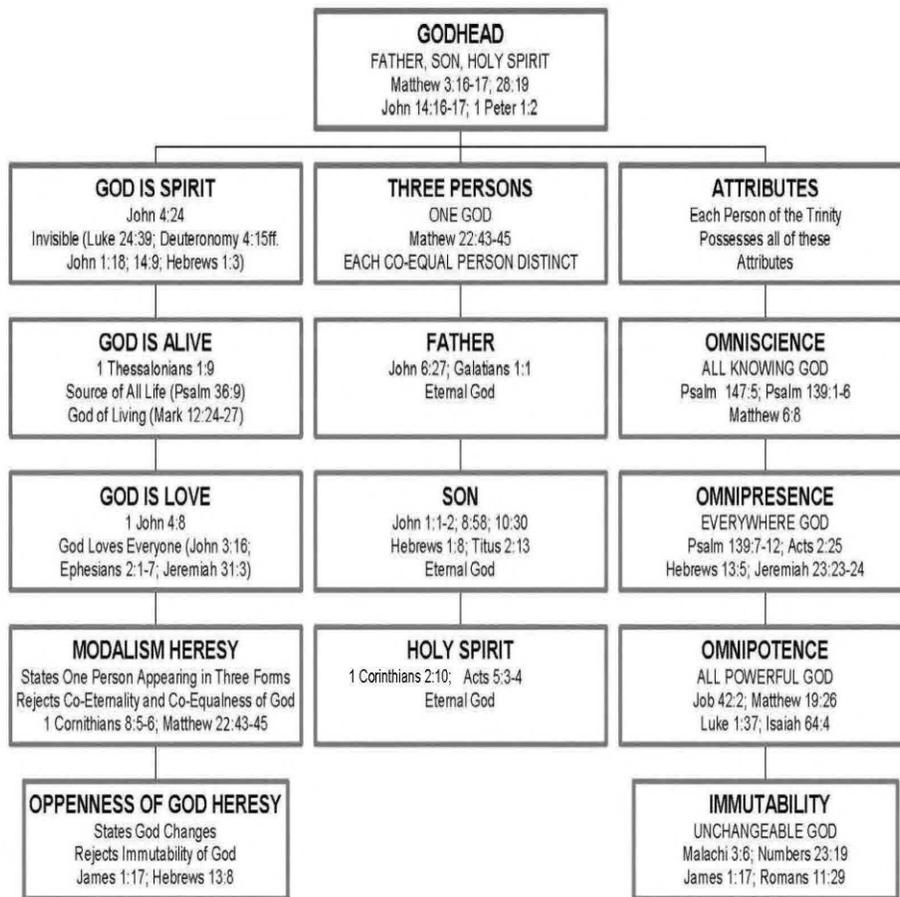
Father, Son, Holy Spirit



First Steps in Christ

Step Seven

FATHER, SON, HOLY SPIRIT



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For PDF, [TRINITY](#)

Throughout the Bible, God revealed Himself as one God. Yet, God eternally exists in three distinct, divine persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We use the term "Trinity" to refer to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. From the earliest pages of Scripture, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit worked together. Together they were involved in creation, salvation, sanctification, and glorification. None of them works outside the single will of God, which always works to the glory of God. They do not fight among themselves, and never act in conflict with each other. They are totally united, always.

The Baptism of Jesus

“After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'” | Matthew 3:16-17, Page 1504

As Jesus stood in the Jordan river on earth, clothed with human flesh, truly God and truly man, a voice came from heaven and said: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." In this passage, the three divine Persons appear at the same time. God the Son stood in the Jordan River on earth being baptized. God the Holy Spirit descended as a dove from heaven and landed on Jesus. God the Father then spoke from heaven. The Father and Son are not the same Person, for God the Father was speaking from heaven and God the Son was standing in the river. They exist simultaneously, and God the Son pleased God the Father. The passage also records the activity of the Holy Spirit. As a dove, the Holy Spirit alighted upon the Son of God as Jesus came up from the water. God the Holy Spirit is not God the Father and God the Holy Spirit is not God the Son. This passage helps to explain the three Persons of the Godhead. Even though we see God in three divine Persons, Jesus also described Himself as One with the Father (John 10:30, Page 1676). Likewise, in the Old Testament, God described Himself as one God (Deuteronomy 6:4, Page 297).

God Is Spirit

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” | John 4:24, Page 1660

Jesus taught that God is spirit. That means you cannot see God with human eyes because He is invisible (Colossians 1:15, Page 1841; 1 Timothy 1:17, Page 1855; John 6:46, Page 1666). The Father, Son and Holy Spirit were not created, but always existed together. Jesus took human flesh through the miracle of the Holy Spirit coming upon the virgin Mary and dwelt among men. He remained fully God, and also became fully man. While on earth, the Holy Spirit and the Father lived in Him and all the fullness of deity dwelt in Christ (John 3:34, Page 1658; 17:21, Page 1690; Colossians 2:9, Page 1843). Our human spirits bear the image of the invisible God (Genesis 1:26-27, Page 2), just as Christ is the image of God (2 Corinthians 4:4, Page 1807).

God Is Alive

"For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;" | John 5:26, Page 1663

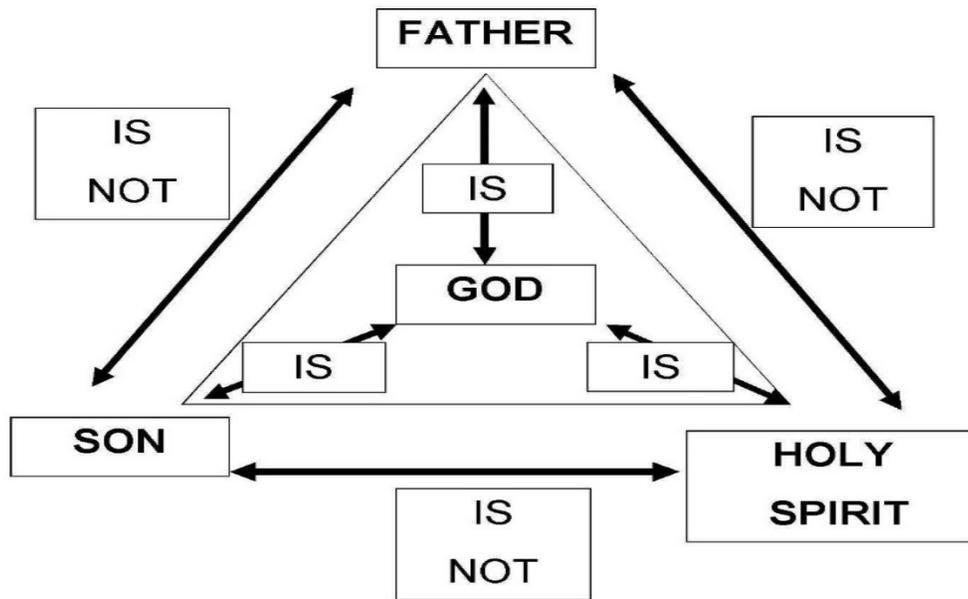
God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit have eternal life in themselves. They have eternal existence from eternity past and continue through eternity future. God created the heavens and the earth, and every member of the Trinity participated in creation (Father, Genesis 1:1, Page 1; Son, John 1:3, Page 1653; Holy Spirit, Genesis 1:2, Page 1). Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last (Revelation 1:17-18, Page 1915; Revelation 22:12-13, Page 1941). When we consider our mortality, we must turn to God's eternity. We rest in God because He has promised to love us forever. Because God controls eternity, without beginning or end, we place our full confidence in His power to sustain us forever. When He says He will never leave us or forsake us, He means for eternity. Death could not hold Jesus Christ, for it was impossible for Him to be held in the power of death (Acts 2:24, Page 1702).

When believers come to saving faith in Jesus Christ, they must turn away from all idols and serve the living and true God (1 Thessalonians 1:9, Page 1847). God created and sustains all life on earth, and men must never worship creation instead of the Creator God (Psalm 36:9, Page 889). We depend upon God daily for all our food (Psalm 145:15-16, Page 998). Spiritually, Jesus promised believers that He would give them a well of water springing up to eternal life (John 4:14, Page 1659). Jesus defined eternal life as knowing God the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom God the Father sent to earth (John 17:3, Page 1689). God is the God of the living, for they have eternal life in Him (Mark 12:24-27, Pages 1582-1583).

Three Divine Persons: One God

“He said to them, 'Then how does David in the Spirit call Him "Lord," saying "The LORD SAID TO MY LORD, 'SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET.'” | Matthew 22:43-44, Page 1542

God exists eternally as three divine Persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit ("the Trinity"). All three persons share all attributes and have a common purpose and common will. They share the same substance. Together they are one compound unity, one God. Consider the illustration on the Trinitarian Triangle on next page.

TRINITARIAN TRIANGLE

Notice that God the Father is not God the Son. Jesus could be standing at the Jordan River on earth, and His Father remains in heaven, speaking from above. Likewise, the God the Holy Spirit descended from heaven to earth. God the Holy Spirit is not God the Son or God the Father. Also, please keep in mind that God the Father never died on the cross; only God the Son (Jesus Christ) died on the cross. So, do not thank God the Father in your prayers that God the Father died on the cross. Notice the arrows outside the triangle indicate the distinct Persons of the Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

Notice the lines inside the triangle indicate that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all God. One God eternally exists in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God the Father

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name” | Ephesians 3:14-15, Page 1830

Jesus repeatedly testified that God the Father had sent Him to earth, to do His works. Because God the Father loved God the Son, God the Father showed God the Son all that God the Father was doing (John 5:19-20, Page 1686). God the Father loved the world, and sent Jesus, the unique Son of God, to die on the cross, so that every person who believes will not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16, Page 1658). From God the Father, every family on earth derives its name (Ephesians 3:14, Page 1830).

God The Son

**“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, Page 1684**

Jesus referred to Himself using many titles, but in the New Testament, He often described Himself as the Son of God and the Son of Man. The title Son of God emphasized His unity with God, and the title Son of Man emphasized His unity with man. God the Son always existed, and He was never created. He was before all things, and all things were made through Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16, Page 1841). God the Son died on the cross, and shed His blood to take away the wrath of God and provide salvation for people. Without faith in God the Son as Savior, no one comes to the Father, for Jesus Christ is the only way, truth and life (John 14:6, Page 1684). One day, every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:11, Page 1837).

God the Holy Spirit

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.*” | John 14:16-17, Page 1685

God the Holy Spirit participated in creation, just like God the Father and God the Son participated in creation (Genesis 1:2, Page 1; 1 Corinthians 8:6, Page 1791; Colossians 1:16, Page 1841). God the Holy Spirit possesses all the attributes of God. God the Holy Spirit can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30, Page 1831) and can be quenched (1 Thessalonians 5:19, Page 1851). God the Holy Spirit fills the believer (Ephesians 5:18, Page 1832) and Jesus baptizes each believer with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11, Page 1504). God the Holy Spirit moves men to speak for God (2 Peter 1:21, Page 1901) and God the Holy Spirit knows all things, for He searches the depths of God (1 Corinthians 2:9-13, Page 1784). God the Holy Spirit abides everywhere (Psalm 139:7-8, Pages 992-993). God the Holy Spirit acts as a Helper for believers (John 14:16, Page 1685) and a Teacher (John 14:26, Page 1685) Who guides us into all truth (John 16:13, Page 1688). By the Holy Spirit believers have been sealed for the day of redemption, for He functions as a pledge of our salvation (Ephesians 4:30, Page 1831; Ephesians 1:13-14, Page 1827). The Holy Spirit lives within each believer (1 Corinthians 12:13, Page 1797) and we walk in the Holy Spirit so that Holy Spirit produces His fruit in our lives (Galatians 5:16-26, Pages 1825-1826).

God Is Love

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” | 1 John 4:7-8, Page 1908

God is Love. The Bible used a special word for love here: *agape*. Agape describes love that only a perfect, holy God can give to you. Agape means that God does the best thing for you, not necessarily what will make you feel good. In order to share God’s love with anyone, you must first be born of God. If you have not been born again, then you cannot know God’s love or share His love. When you believe that Christ died in your place on that cross to pay for your sins, and believe in your heart that God raised Christ from the dead, then God has forgiven your sins. Neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit suffered crucifixion in the flesh, but Jesus did. We believe that Jesus died for us. God says the just shall live by faith. As we live in faith, God pours His love upon us and through us. Nothing characterizes God better than love. Jesus died for us because the Father loved us and gave His Son for us. Jesus loved us and endured the shame of the cross. The Holy Spirit loves us and empowers us to live for Christ.

Modalism Heresy

“He said to them 'Then how does David in the Spirit call Him "Lord," saying, "THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES BENEATH YOUR FEET"?' If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" | Matthew 22:43-45, Page 1542

Some people falsely teach that God is only one person. They deny the doctrine of the Trinity. Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Christian Scientists, Oneness Pentecostals, and other groups deny that God eternally exists in three divine Persons as one God. This heresy denies that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are both God just like the God the Father. The Bible clearly affirms the deity of Jesus Christ, meaning that He is really God (John 1:1, 14; Pages 1653-1654). The Bible clearly affirms the deity of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-6, Page 1707). Modalists teach that the one God appears as Jesus, as the Father, and the Spirit, but He always takes just one form or another and that God never appears simultaneously as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. According to Modalists, God appears in one mode or another. Modalists fail to understand the baptism of Jesus. On earth Jesus stood in the Jordan river as God in the flesh. At the same time, the Holy Spirit descended from heaven and landed upon Jesus at the river. At the same time, God the Father spoke from heaven about His beloved Son, Jesus at the river. So, all three Divine Persons were present at the same time. Therefore, Modalism contradicts the Bible. Antichrists teach Modalism. Be careful to avoid antichrists and Modalism.

Openness of God Heresy

“Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.” | Psalm 147:5, Page 999

The Openness of God Heresy holds that God does not know all the future, and He does not control all the future, because humans make choices that affect how the future will unfold. In that sense, the future remains open to change, depending upon what humans decide. In essence, The Openness of God Heresy denies the omniscience of God (He knows everything--past, present and future). God actually proclaims that He alone knows all things, including all future things (Isaiah 41:21-24, Pages 1133-1134). The Openness of God Heresy also denies the immutability of God. God never changes (James 1:17, Page 1888; Hebrews 13:8, Page 1886). The Openness of God Heresy denies the omnipotence of God (Matthew 19:26, page 1535; Jeremiah 32:37, Page 1241). Antichrists teach the openness of God when they suggest that God does not know all things in advance. In fact, God controls all things according to divine will (Ephesians 1:11, Page 1827).

The Attributes of God

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.” | Romans 1:20, Page 1759

God’s creation displays His glory and reveals God's divine attributes. God renders man without excuse by displaying His attributes, eternal power and divine nature for the whole world to see and reverence. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit all have these attributes. God has three "omni" attributes, plus immutability. We can examine them briefly and see that they relate to one another.

Omniscience

“We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our hearts before Him in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.” | 1 John 3:19-20, Page 1907

Omniscience means God knows everything (1 John 3:20, Page 1907). God remembers the end from the beginning. God declared that from ancient times He will accomplish all His good pleasure. (Isaiah 46:9-10, Page 1144). God knows all things, including all the things that you need, even before you pray (Matthew 6:8, Page 1509). Even before I speak, God knows all things (Psalm 139:1-6, Page 992).

Omnipresence

“Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” Declares the LORD.” | Jeremiah 23:24, Page 1222

Omnipresence means God is present everywhere (Psalm 139:7-12, Pages 992-3). King David always knew that God was with Him (Acts 2:25, Page 1702). Jesus promised that He would always be with us, and that He would never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5, Page 1886). God Himself is never far off, and man cannot hide himself from the presence of God. God fills the heavens and the earth (Jeremiah 23:23-24, Page 1222).

Omnipotence

“And looking at them Jesus said to them, 'With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” | Matthew 19:26, Page 1535

Omnipotence means God has all power (Matthew 19:26, Page 1535). God can do all things, and nothing can stop His power (Job 42:2, Page 855). Nothing is impossible for God (Luke 1:37, Page 1595). God's power acts in righteousness and no one has ever seen such power as God displays (Isaiah 64:4, Page 1171).

Immutability

"For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed." | Malachi 3:6, Page 1497

Immutability means that God does not change (Malachi 3:6, Page 1497). God never lies, never does or thinks evil, never fails to do what He promised to do (Numbers 23:19, Page 260). God never changes, never varies, never has a shifting shadow, but always gives perfect gifts (James 1:17, Page 1888). When God called you to salvation, He never withdraws His gifts or revokes your calling (Romans 11:29, Page 1775).

Step Eight

Lord's Supper



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First Steps in Christ

Step Eight

LORD'S SUPPER



For PDF, [STEP8--LordsSupper](#)

Breaking of Bread Service

Breaking of Bread, also called the Lord's Supper, refers to a special worship service instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ. This ordinance of Christ does not impart a special form of grace, but it does unite every believer in worship and remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ until He returns.

JESUS: THE LAMB OF GOD

“The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.’” | John 1:29, Page 1654

Jesus consciously fulfilled all righteousness. John the Baptist called Jesus the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29, Page 1654). Jesus intentionally sacrificed Himself, to atone for the sins of the world and propitiate the wrath of God against sinners. Through faith by grace in the once-and-for-all sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God imparts His righteousness to us. Jesus became our Passover lamb who was sacrificed for our sins, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness (1 Corinthians 5:7, Page 1787; 1 Peter 2:24, Page 1896).

Jesus was betrayed during Passover, the Jewish feast commemorating the deliverance of Israel from the slavery of Egypt. Yahweh (an Old Testament name for God) instructed Israel to sprinkle blood from a sacrificed lamb upon their lintels and doorposts and Yahweh would spare them (Exodus 12:1-12, Pages 105-106; Hebrews 11:28, Page 1883). Otherwise, the angel of death would kill the firstborn in that house. In this picture from the Old Testament, God symbolized the blood of Christ sparing the life of God's people. Just as the blood of the sacrificed lamb provided escape from death for Israel enslaved in Egypt, so the blood of Jesus Christ provides salvation from sin and eternal life to everyone who believes. Christ became the Passover lamb for every believer (1 Corinthians 5:7, Page 1787). The night of His arrest, Jesus was eating the Passover with His disciples (Luke 22:8ff., Page 1644).

THE FIRST BREAKING OF BREAD

“The disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. Now when evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the twelve disciples.” | Matthew 26:19-20, Page 1550

In the evening, before Jesus was arrested later that same night, Jesus brought His disciples together in the upper room for a last meal with them before He went to the cross. Just before Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus, the Lord was instituting a memorial of His life, death, resurrection and eternal work. He was eager to eat the Passover with these men and had made special preparations (Luke 22:15, Page 1645).

THE BREAD

“and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’” | 1 Corinthians 11:24, Page 1795

While the twelve disciples were eating with Him, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, "Take it; this is My body" (Mark 14:22, Page 1587). The bread symbolizes the body of Christ. In the divine plan, God prepared a body of real flesh for Jesus (1 John 4:2, Page 1907). Before the foundation of the world, Jesus eternally existed as a Person dwelling with the Father and Holy Spirit, united as one God (John 1:1, Page 1653; Colossians 1:19, Page 1842; John 10:30, Page 1676). In the fullness of time, God prepared a perfect, sinless body for Christ, being conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary (Galatians 4:4, Page 1823; Mathew 1:20, Page 1502). Therefore, Jesus offered His body as a holy, living sacrifice to bear the sins of the world and sanctify a people for God (Hebrews 10:5, Page 1880). He did not die for His own sins, because He had no sin, but for my sins and your sins, the Just for the unjust (Hebrews 4:15, Page 1873; 1 Peter 3:18, Page 1897). Jesus offered the sacrifice just once, and for all people and times. Jesus also took the cup and used it as the symbol of several truths.

THE CUP

**“In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’”
| 1 Corinthians 11:25, Page 1795-1796**

The cup at the Breaking of Bread pictures the past, present and future. So, when we break bread, please keep in mind that this service focuses upon the worship of Jesus Christ, and to do so we look back at Jesus, we see Jesus today, and we look forward to Jesus in the future.

Breaking of Bread—The Past

“do this in remembrance of Me” | Luke 22:19, Page 1645

The cup pictures the past because Jesus wants us to remember Him. It focuses our attention exclusively upon Him as the object of worship during the Breaking of Bread service: “. . . do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19, Page 1645). As we look back, we see our Savior. We remember the work of Christ, in paying the wages of sin (Romans 6:23, Page 1766), propitiating the anger of God at the sin of the world (1 John 2:2, Page 1904), opening a new and living way to draw near to God (Hebrews 10:20, Page 1880-1881), and demonstrating the love of God for us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8, 1764). For the joy set before Him, Christ endured the cross and despised the shame (Hebrews 12:2, Page 1884). He stands now as the Author and Perfecter of our faith as we fix our eyes upon Him, particularly in the elements of the Lord's Supper.

Breaking of Bread—The Present

“as often as you eat and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death” | 1 Corinthians 11:26, Page 1796

Jesus also linked the cup to our present proclamation of His death. So, on the one hand, we look back at His death in the past. On the other hand, we presently proclaim that death by drinking the cup. We also enjoy present blessings in Him. In the cup, we have the "blood of the covenant." He explained that the covenant included pouring out His blood for many so that their sins would be forgiven (Matthew 26:28, Page 1550). Without the shedding of blood, God cannot forgive sin (Hebrews 9:22, Page 1879).

Breaking of Bread—The Future

“as often as you eat and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes” | 1 Corinthians 11:25, Page 1796

Jesus intended that we look forward to His return every time we have a Breaking of Bread service. The words “until He comes” means that we live each day expecting Jesus to return to the Clouds and resurrect all believers (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Pages 1849-1850). Seven years after the Clouds Resurrection, Jesus will certainly return to earth and set His feet upon the Mount of Olives, at the same place He ascended to heaven (Zechariah 14:4, page 1492; Acts 1:11, 1699).

The New Covenant

**“In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.'”
| 1 Corinthians 11:25, Pages 1795-1796**

Jesus also described a "new covenant" in His blood (1 Corinthians 11:25, Page 1795). The word "covenant" means an agreement between two people, and only comes into effect when the maker of the covenant dies. Therefore, Jesus died to bring about the redemption of sin, a crucial feature of this new covenant we have with God (Hebrews 9:15-18, Page 1879). When Jesus lifted that cup, and called it the new covenant in His blood, He intended for each of us to remember, as often as we drink it, that He alone is the author of that new covenant, and He alone offers redemption from sin. In Him we live victoriously, and drink together as people joined to Him under the "new covenant" of eternal blessings and forgiveness. God writes upon the tablets of our hearts with the Spirit of the living God, so that we have become ministers of the new covenant who have received life from the Spirit of God (2 Corinthians 3:1-6, Pages 1806-1807). At the Lord's table, we see the Maker of that covenant in the wine we drink together.

THE FREQUENCY OF **BREAKING OF BREAD**

Jesus also intended to create a blessed tradition for His followers. He wanted for them to gather, to remember Him in His death, to celebrate His victory over death, and to proclaim His Name until He returns. How often should believers Break Bread together?

Breaking of Bread--Daily

“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” | Acts 2:42, Page 1703

Shortly after Jesus ascended, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles at Pentecost. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, preached to Jerusalem and three thousand souls were added to the church in one day. Those Jerusalem believers began to meet "day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house" (Acts 2:46, Page 1703). The number of men came to be about five thousand (Acts 4:4, Page 1705) and the Lord added to that number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:47, Page 1703). They were baptized and devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer (Acts 2:42, Page 1703). They were feeling a sense of awe. (Acts 2:43, Page 1703). There, the early Christians were breaking bread daily, moving from house to house and also eating together with gladness and sincerity of heart (Acts 2:46, Page 1703). Notice the distinction between Breaking Bread and eating meals together. In some cases, the phrase Breaking of Bread may mean only eating a meal, but often it refers to the Lord's Supper.

Breaking of Bread--Weekly

“On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.” | Acts 20:7, Page 1740

Paul met believers at Troas on the first day of the week to break bread and for the preaching of God’s word (Acts 20:7, Page 1740). We may glean from these passages that breaking of bread occurred as often as every day and also on the first day of the week. Therefore, the New Testament church had a variety of times it observed the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. At Christ Assembly, we celebrate the Lord's Supper every Sunday based upon the verses above, but recognize that Scripture does not set a mandatory frequency for the ordinance. It does, however, provide very specific guidelines for observing the ordinance.

EXAMINE YOURSELF, THEN EAT

“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 a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.” | 1 Corinthians 11:27-28, Page 1796.

In Corinth, the believers had problems with the Breaking of Bread. Paul said they were divided and factions existed among them. Some of them were drunk and others were hungry (1 Corinthians 11:17-20, Page 1795). He instructed them to return to the original practice for the Breaking of Bread which he received from the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul warned that some of the believers were sick and others slept because they had partaken of the Lord's Supper while they were divided, drunk and shaming other believers (1 Corinthians 11:27-11:30, Page 1796). He urged each believer to examine his own heart and so avoid partaking of the elements of the Lord's Supper unworthily. (1 Corinthians 11:28, Page 1796). This self-examination should include looking into your own heart to be sure that you are in fellowship with the other believers (1 Corinthians 11:29, Page 1796). Furthermore, if you know that someone else has a problem with you, then you would do well to seek reconciliation with that other person before you partake of the Lord's Supper (Matthew 5:23-24, Page 1507). The Bible emphasizes that you must seek out the brother or sister who has something against you. Do not disrupt the service by doing it during the service, but rather go to them before you worship, in private, and seek reconciliation. The way to cure divisions in the Body of Christ is for members to reconcile with each other. Finally, be sure to confess your sin to God and know that He will forgive you, and cleanse you from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9, Page 1904). To partake unworthily means that you "will be disciplined by the Lord so that you will not be condemned along with the world" (1 Corinthians 11:31-32, Page 1796; Romans 8:1, Page 1768).

Elder Oversight

"Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 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;" | 1 Peter 5:1-2, Page 1899

God created the office of elder in the church for the purpose of overseeing the flock of God. The Elders serve as under-shepherds of Christ. They do not lord their authority over believers. As the Elders exercise their oversight function, believers should submit to them, for they keep watch over the souls of believers as men who will give an account (Hebrews 13:17, Page 1886). The Elders should be careful to allow only believers to partake of the elements at the Lord's Supper. The Elders must also know the spiritual condition of the flock. If the Elders know that a person will be eating and drinking the elements of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, they must be careful to stop that practice. In some instances, the person under discipline for unrepentant sin will be excluded from partaking of the Lord's Supper (Matthew 18:15-20, Page 1533; 1 Corinthians 5:11, page 1787). The Elders must take action to guard the sheep from wolves outside the flock and from perverted people who arise within the flock seeking to draw people out of the flock to follow perversion (Acts 20:28-29, Page 1741). The Elders must silence rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers who corrupt the flock and upset entire families (Titus 1:10-11, Page 1866). They must also take steps to remove the immoral, covetous, idolators, and revilers, drunkards, and swindlers who claim to be believers, but persist without repentance in

such behaviors (1 Corinthians 6:9-13, Page 1788). They must also be sure that if people are unwilling to work, and have the ability to work, that they do not eat the food of others (2 Thessalonians 3:10, Page 1853). Likewise, everyone who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition received from the apostles must be kept away from other believers (2 Thessalonians 3:6, Page 1853). In a similar way, people who promote foolish controversies and disputes must be warned twice, and then rejected from the fellowship as a factious person (Titus 3:9-11, Page 1867). Also, all antichrists who promote false doctrine should be identified and exposed, so that no one would invite them into their homes or even greet them. For those who do greet them or invite them into their homes, by doing so receive their false teaching, they participate in the deeds of antichrist and so must be excluded from the fellowship of believers (2 John 1:6-11, Page 1910). In all cases, the Elders must promote repentance from sin and seek forgiveness for believers, or salvation for unbelievers. Absent such repentance and salvation, only believers in fellowship with God and the assembly should be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper. The Elders should be careful to love the flock and know from direct fellowship the spiritual condition of the flock and follow the Scriptures regarding who may be offered the Lord's Supper. The Elders, along with the entire assembly, must always seek restoration of the fallen believer, and never impose punitive measures aimed at a believer, for every believer stands holy and blameless before the Lord Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:22, Page 1842). Some believers have dirty hands, and need to experience the faithfulness and righteousness of God by confessing their sins and having God forgive their sins and cleanse them from all unrighteousness, so that they may return to fellowship with the local assembly (1 John 1:8-9, Page 1904) (See [Step Two--Quiet Time--Confession](#)).

SPIRITUAL UNITY

“For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and in part I believe it.” | 1 Corinthians 11:18, Page 1795

Paul developed the concept of spiritual unity by explaining the ministry of the Holy Spirit within the Body of Christ (the Church). The Holy Spirit distributes the spiritual gifts to each member (believer) of the Body of Christ, so that each member performs essential functions in the church. All the members must honor and respect all the other members as essential members. Within the Body of Christ, divisions tend to arise among believers. They quarrel and fight, spreading disunity. When the assembly gathers for the Lord's Supper, some people are drunk and others are going hungry. Paul emphasized that factions show who are approved by God in the congregation. Jesus said that if you know that another believer has a problem with you, lay your offering aside at the altar, and go and be reconciled to your brother before you worship (Matthew 5:23-24, Page 1507). We should be sure to seek reconciliation with other believers before we gather to partake together the Lord's Supper.

PROPERLY AND ORDERLY

"But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner." | 1 Corinthians 14:40, Page 1800

The Holy Spirit alone should lead the Breaking of Bread service and only believers may partake of the elements. We unite to remember the Lord Jesus Christ, and to praise and worship Him. This service uniquely focuses upon Jesus Christ alone. The males (1 Timothy 2:12-14, Page 1856; 1 Corinthians 14:34, Page 1800; see [Assembly Practice—Silent Submission](#)) choose hymns and read Scripture that focus upon Jesus, because we are to remember Him. The women must cover their heads (1 Corinthians 11:3-16, Page 1794-1795; Genesis 3:16, Page 5; Genesis 2:18, Page 3; see [Assembly Practice—Head Covering](#)) and participate silently. Never let silence by males or females be mistaken for inactivity—we should pray and worship even as we wait for the Holy Spirit to lead us. As the Holy Spirit fills everyone, the men lead with Scripture passages, psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Everyone sings, making melody with our hearts to the Lord, always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God our Father (Ephesians 5:18-20, Page 1832). Everything must be done properly and in order during this time structured only by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:40, Page 1800). Every speaker should be careful to limit his remarks so that others will have ample opportunity to participate. We generally avoid petitions and prayer requests during this time (be sure to make time before or after the Breaking of Bread to share them), because we do not want to focus upon ourselves, but rather devote this time to the praise and worship of Jesus Christ alone. We also partake of the elements together. When a brother feels led, he will pray for the bread and give thanks to God. Then each of us will partake together. Likewise, another brother will pray for the cup and we will drink it together. Usually, we conclude with a song (Matthew 26:30, Page 1550).

The Activities

“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” | Colossians 3:16, Page 1844

At the Lord's Supper, believers have a time of fellowship and worship where the word of Christ richly dwells among them. They speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in their hearts. Jesus sang with His disciples, even on the night before He died (Matthew 26:30, Page 1550). The Lord's Supper also allows male believers to speak, and to use their spiritual gifts to the glory of God, while the women remain silent (1 Corinthians 14:34, Page 1800). Men may give extended messages (Acts 20:7, Page 1740). The Lord's Supper should be a time of joy, worship, and remembrance of Jesus. The believers edify one another through the ministry of the spiritual gifts, and worship God in spirit and in truth, for God seeks such worshipers (John 4:23-24, Page 1660).

Focus upon the Lord Jesus until He Returns

“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, Page 1796

The bread and the cup also allow us to proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again (1 Corinthians 11:26, Page 1796). Only Jesus can so beautifully tie together the concept of death taking away sin to the eternal life He provides as a gift to every believer. Jesus said He would not "drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of heaven comes" (Luke 22:17-18, Page 1645). Jesus never leaves the bitter taste of death lingering in the elements, but always adds the aroma of glory to come. Jesus lives and we proclaim His life every week as we partake of the Lord's Supper. When His kingdom comes, then the living Christ will drink the cup with His disciples (Matthew 26:29, Page 1550). From that first Lord's Supper, the church of Jesus Christ has followed His command to partake together and so proclaim His death until He returns in power with great glory.

Step Nine

Good News



First Steps in Christ--Step Nine--Good News

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First Steps in Christ

Step Nine

GOOD NEWS



For PDF, [STEP9--Good News](#)

The Good News of Jesus Christ

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." | Romans 10:17, Page 1773

Jesus said that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ (Romans 10:17, Page 1773). Someone somewhere shared God's good news with you. You heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ and received it. You became a born-again Christian. If you have no idea what I am talking about, then click on this [Peace with God](#) link. In this study, we will see that Jesus Christ not only bestowed the gift of salvation upon you, but He also commissioned you to spread the Good News into all the world. Paul summarized the Gospel of Jesus Christ, preached to the world: "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared . . ." (1 Corinthians 15:3-5).

Only Jesus

“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, Page 1684

Jesus absolutely proclaimed that He alone provided access to the Father. You may have heard the claim that all religious roads lead to the top of the mountain. Others say that it does not matter what you believe, so long as you believe it devoutly. Jesus flatly refuted all such claims. He said no one comes to the Father except through Him. Muslims, Jews, Mormons, Buddhists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and every religion that does not follow the teachings of Jesus Christ or adds to the revelation of Jesus Christ found in the Bible will never come to the Father, no matter how faithfully they practice their own religion. Jesus said only He leads people in the way, the truth and life. He is the only way, the only truth, and the only life. See how Jesus excludes everyone else from leading people to the Father. People must hear the message of Jesus Christ to come to the Father. Well, then, is it enough for someone to believe that God exists?

False Faith

“You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.” | James 2:19, Page 1889

Just because someone says they have faith does not mean they have saving faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. Demons believe that God is one. The demons knew immediately that Jesus Christ was "the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24, Page 1558). Yet, no demon ever intended to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. Instead, they work with satan to deceive mankind and lead everyone away from salvation. When confronted with Christ, demons recognized Him as the Son of God, and cried out because they know His power to torment at His appointed time (Matthew 8:29, Page 1513). So, even if people call Jesus the Son of God, or refer to Him as the Holy One of God, it does mean they have trusted Him to forgive their sins based on His Gospel. Only faith in Christ dying for you will save you from your sins.

Real Faith

“In Him you have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.” | Ephesians 1:7, Page 1827

Real faith means you that have the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1, Page 1882). While the demons may believe that God is one, they never have redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ, or find spiritual help through the death of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:16, Page 1871). As believers, Christ purchased us with His blood, and paid the price for our redemption. Redemption means to pay the amount necessary to release a bond, or grant a ransom. Jesus paid the price to satisfy the justice of God requiring the death penalty. Jesus paid the death penalty for you, and so redeemed you from your trespasses. He acted according to the riches of His grace. He died for you because He loved you, not because you had done anything to deserve redemption. He gave you a free gift of eternal life. You must be sure that your friends, relatives, and everyone you know has eternal life, and not just false faith that will never save anyone. You must be careful and loving to share your faith and discern whether people are truly saved. You will know them by their confession and their works.

Faith and Hearing

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” | Romans 10:17, Page 1773

Jesus wants preachers. Now, do not panic about being a "preacher." While God intends for males to preach the Gospel to male and female audiences, He certainly included women in His plan for evangelizing the world. He wants people like the woman at the well, and just like the man once possessed by demons, to become Christians who will share the love of God with people around them. Yes, God does send some people to "preach" the Gospel as their only occupation, but the vast majority of His plan to reach the world involves people from all walks of life going about their daily lives and sharing His love with people around them. Invite people to come and see Jesus. Jesus explained that faith only comes by hearing. Think about this doctrine. Jesus said only faith saves people from eternal punishment, and that faith only comes by hearing the word of Christ. People will not hear unless God's messengers, you included, tell them. Your loved ones may not hear unless you tell them. God planned for you to spread His message of love. He also promised that many people will come to faith in Christ.

Come and See

“Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?” | John 4:29, Page 1660

Jesus met a Samaritan woman while resting near a well. He asked her for a drink from the well, and in the process explained to her that she could have a well of water springing up to eternal life in her. Jesus stepped across all kinds of cultural and religious boundaries by talking with this woman. The Jews hated the Samaritans, and men did not speak with women in public, and this woman was living with a man who was not her husband, after having five husbands. Even so, Jesus wanted to talk with her. The Gospel of Jesus Christ moved this woman to faith in Jesus Christ, and she immediately left her waterpot and went to tell her city about the Messiah. She had met Him personally and she could not wait to tell others. She invited everyone to come and see the Christ. The Samaritans from Sychar came out to see Christ because of one woman's testimony about Christ. You may be the person that Jesus will use to reach an entire city with His message.

Go and Report

“And He did not let him, but He said to him, 'Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you.'” | Mark 5:19, Page 1566

Jesus went to the country of the Gerasenes and met a man wandering in the tombs, possessed by demons, and screaming as he gashed himself with stones. I cannot imagine a more pitiful creature and yet Jesus chose him to be a messenger of the Gospel. After Jesus cast the demons out of the man, he wanted to get into the boat and follow Jesus. But Jesus had other plans. He told the man, now clothed and in his right mind, to go home and report to his community what great things God has done for him. He also focused the message upon the mercy that God had bestowed upon this man. In our own way, each believer has a personal story of the mercy of God coming into our lives. Jesus did not take us straight to heaven after we received Him, but He commissioned us to spread His Gospel to the community around us. He wanted us to tell about how God works in our lives, and of God's mercy poured upon us. We can share the change that God brought to us. You may not know the Bible very well yet, but you do know about the mercy of God and what Jesus did for you. Remember the woman at the well immediately went back to town to invite everyone to come and see Jesus. They came out as a crowd. Likewise, Jesus here chose a Gerasene demoniac to be an evangelist to the region of Decapolis (ten cities). Notice the pattern. Jesus chose people from that area to speak to their friends, family, and people who lived in the same area. He chose all kinds of people, and not all of them were "normal." Of course, Jesus also sent people into all the world, but He often chose people to speak to their own home areas.

Harvest Time

“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the His harvest.’” | Matthew 9:37-38, Page 1515

The Lord Jesus asked His disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers. He owns the harvest, but wants His disciples to be workers in the harvest. Every Christian must follow the command of the Lord to pray for workers and to be a worker. We use our lives in a process of multiplication. I share the Gospel with you, and you share it with one more person. That person now shares it with one more person. As we each continue to share the Gospel, we will see God spread His Word throughout the earth. In fact, Jesus commissioned His disciples to make new disciples all over the world, teaching them and baptizing them.

Make Disciples

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” | Matthew 28:19-20, Page 1557

Jesus commanded a process of multiplication. Because Jesus had received all authority from His Father, He told His disciples to go into all the world. He commissioned twelve men to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ by making disciples. People all over the world would be converted, baptized and taught. They would observe all that Jesus commanded. Jesus planned for a world-wide ministry, growing stronger after He left. Even so, He promised to be with His men to the end of the age. These men would spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the same way, thousands of years later, all of us have been commissioned to go and to make disciples, teaching them and baptizing them to follow the commands of Christ. If you love people, and believe Jesus when He proclaimed that He alone was the way, the truth and the life, then you truly believe no one will go to the Father except through Him. Without someone sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with your loved ones, they will perish. If you really love them, share the Gospel. If you want to obey Jesus, then go and make disciples. The fields are white unto harvest. Pray that the Lord of the Harvest would send forth workers into His harvest, and that you would be one of them.

Work of Evangelism

“But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.” | 2 Timothy 4:5, Page 1864

As Paul neared the end of his life on earth, he encouraged his spiritual son, Timothy, to do the work of an evangelist. Whether you the have the Spiritual Gift of Evangelism or not, all believers must do the work of an evangelist. That means that you share your faith so that people may receive the free gift of eternal life. We must each fulfill the ministry given to us, and part of our ministry for Christ is doing the work of an evangelist. So, no one can say they lack The Spiritual Gift of Evangelism, and therefore, they have no obligation to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Like Timothy, we must all do the work of an evangelist, and so fulfill the individual ministry that Jesus has given to us. Jesus promised that He would make all of His disciples "fishers of men" (Mark 1:17-18, Page 1558).

Ministry of Reconciliation

“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,” | 2 Corinthians 5:18, Page 1809

The moment you were born again, many things happened and everything changed. You became a new creature in Christ, all the old things passed away, and new things have come (2 Corinthians 5:17, Page 1809). As a new creation, God also gave you the ministry of reconciliation. He gave all new believers the ministry of reconciliation at the moment of spiritual birth. What does reconciliation mean? It means that God reconciled us to Himself. Notice that God took action to bring us back to Him, because we had sinned against Him and separated ourselves from God. God wants us back. So, He did not count our trespasses against us, but sent Jesus to die on the cross, pay for our sins, and redeem us so that we would be holy and clean. As holy and clean, God has now reconciled us to Himself through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Reconciliation means that the relationship has been restored and the offended party now has a good relationship with the offender. The two parties have laid aside the offense and now move forward in love for each other. Therefore, God used the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to reconcile you to Himself. Now, you can go out immediately after you were saved and begin the ministry of reconciliation. Jesus meant that you can share with others what you did to receive the free gift of eternal life. You can share the Good News, because you personally received the Good News and know the Good News. The new believer may not know much about the Bible, but every new believer truly saved knows the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They had to hear it and believe it. Therefore, they know enough to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and so enjoy the ministry of reconciliation. Each believer has been gifted with the ministry of reconciliation and each of us should fulfill that ministry. We each have been entrusted with the word of reconciliation and so we must share it with other people.

Step Ten

Discipleship

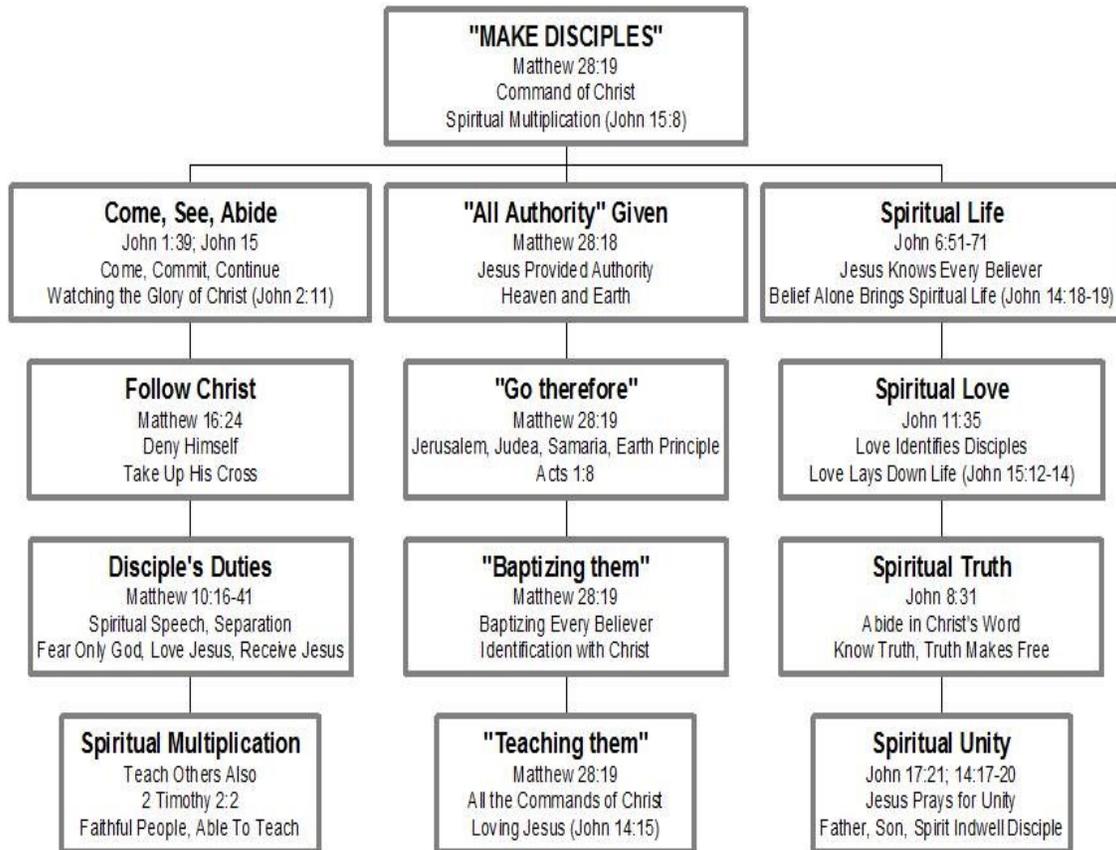


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First Steps in Christ

Step Ten

DISCIPLESHIP



For Step10, PDF, [Click Here](#)

Discipleship

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.’” | Mark 1:17, Page 1558

Jesus promised His disciples that He would make them fishers of men. He also taught them how to make fishermen. You see, not only are you a fish, but also a fisherman. When you came to Christ for salvation, you were a fish. The person who shared the Gospel with you was the fisherman. Because of the vast schools of fish in the world, and God's great love for all fish, He wants every believer to fish. Not only does He want you to fish, God also wants you to help fish grow up to become fishermen themselves. Jesus also used other analogies. He likened the kingdom of God to a small seed planted in the earth that grows up to be a huge tree. As a child of King Jesus, every believer has to learn to live in majesty. He wants us to live regal lives, full of abundance and blessing from God. To live as a slave of Christ means we still live as a child of the King, forgiven by His perfect, royal blood. But just as Jesus, the King, learned obedience through suffering, so also God allows believers to suffer in Christ. God always helps us grow to maturity through all the events He brings into our lives. Although God never tempts anyone, He does control every temptation, and never allows you to be tempted beyond what you may endure. He faithfully provides a way of escape from every temptation, so that you never have to sin. As you can see, we all depend upon God for help in living royal lives, because He alone is our King. Blessedly, God has many children, and everyone needs discipleship. As a disciple of Christ, we learn from Him and He expects us to teach others also.

All Authority

“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’” | Matthew 28:18, Page 1557

Jesus proclaimed that all authority had been given to Him as the risen Lord. Because He had received all authority, He delegated authority to His disciples. As we hear the voice of Jesus Christ today, we must realize the power and authority in that call to action. Jesus explained precisely how He intended to use all authority. Notice also that the authority He received operated both in heaven and on earth. The spiritual forces opposing His disciples, causing a spiritual struggle, were not and are not “flesh and blood.” Those spiritual forces are rulers, powers, the world forces of this darkness, and the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12, Page 1834). The spiritual authority of Jesus empowers us to be more than conquerors against every evil force arrayed against us.

Make Disciples

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” | Matthew 28:19-20, Page 1557

As we have seen above, in this foundational verse, Jesus commands all saints (born-again believers) to go and make disciples. Jesus received all authority in heaven and on earth. As believers go and make disciples, they share The Good News of Jesus Christ, and then baptize every person who receives the free gift of eternal life from Jesus Christ our Lord. They also teach the new believers to observe all that Jesus commanded them. Finally, Jesus promised that He would be with them to the end of the age.

Go Therefore

“So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’” | John 20:21, Page 1696

God draws believers to learn from Him. A "disciple" means that you learn from a master. You will never be greater than your master, so be sure that your only Master is Jesus Christ. Jesus commanded all of His disciples to make more disciples. In the same way that the Father sent Jesus into the world to proclaim The Gospel of Jesus Christ, so that people may receive the free gift of eternal life, so today God sends every believer into the world. As believers, we must go into all the world to make disciples. We go out because Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. He has sent us using His authority, and empowered us with His love.

Make Disciples

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” | John 3:3, Page 1657

Jesus intends that we make disciples. We make disciples by sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with unbelievers, explaining to them how to be born again. Unless a person is born again, they cannot see the kingdom of God and cannot get to heaven. The discipleship process follows salvation. Unbelievers are candidates for discipleship, but only in the sense that you share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them. The discipleship process starts immediately upon salvation. Making disciples means spending time with the new believer, reading the Bible with the new believer, praying with the new believer, and letting them know that Jesus expects them to share their faith also and make disciples in the name of Jesus. Be sure to show them and tell them that you love them in the Name of Jesus.

Baptizing Them

“So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.” | Acts 2:41, Page 1703

Believers should be baptized soon after salvation. Every believer should be baptized by immersion in water. Notice that only believers may be baptized, because baptism requires saving faith first. Baptism identifies believers with Jesus Christ, and proclaims to the world faith in Jesus Christ. [See Step Three on Baptism.](#)

Teaching Them

**“Prescribe and teach these things” | 1 Timothy 4:11,
Page 1857**

Like Jesus taught His disciples, Paul taught Timothy to teach the words of faith and sound doctrine. Like Jesus commanded His disciples to teach the new disciples all that Jesus had commanded, so also Paul followed that same commandment. Jesus taught many things, and issued many commands. Each command provides an expression of God's will for our lives. The command also comes with a promise of God's power to fulfill the command. As we believe that God will provide the power by faith for us to obey each command of Christ, our lives change and we love God and people more and more. We become more stable in our faith and happier in our lives, no matter what comes.

Come, See

“He said to them, ‘Come, and you will see.’ So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour.” | John 1:39, Page 1655

Jesus extends a personal invitation to everyone to come and see. If we will accept His invitation, we can spend time with Him and learn from Him. We will abide with Christ as believers, and He will live within us. For all eternity, we will stay with Jesus. He will never leave us or forsake us. We remain eternally secure in Jesus Christ.

Follow Christ

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.’” | Matthew 16:24, Page 1530

Jesus also demands our entire lives. He means that we must deny ourselves and follow only Him. Many distractions will arise in our lives, so that we will be tempted to stop following Jesus. Being a disciple means that we follow Jesus all the time. If we catch ourselves wandering away from Jesus, then we will confess our sin, receive the joy of His forgiveness, be cleansed from all unrighteousness, and continue our walk with Jesus. Being a disciple means that we follow only Jesus and we count upon Him every day to lead our way to His glory, both today and forever.

Disciple's Duties

“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.” | Matthew 10:16, Page 1516

Jesus sent out His disciples as sheep into the midst of wolves. In the same way, Jesus sends out disciples today into the midst of wolves. Make no mistake. You live among wolves every day. The only question will be whether you will live as a disciple, trusting Jesus and following Him, among all those wolves around you. As disciples, we must be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. I see two birds frequently who eat out of my lap. They are very cautious about people, because they live in the wild. Yet, we have become friends. I feed them and they come to see me. Jesus combined the innocence of doves with the shrewdness of serpents. Serpents can be very careful in approaching prey and be quiet and cautious. Shrewd means aware, perceptive, wise, alert and intelligent. We must be careful to be all of those things as disciples, so that we can be careful of the wolves, and yet minister to both wolves and sheep.

Spiritual Multiplication

“The things you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” | 2 Timothy 2:2, Page 1862

Discipleship always involves multiplication. Jesus directed His disciples to select faithful men. Following this divine pattern, the disciple then entrusted faithful men with things he had received from the word of God. Notice that one of the qualities of faithful men is that they will be able to teach others also. This process of multiplying disciples allows Jesus to spread His word throughout the entire world. Jesus did not envision only seminary-trained men spreading His word. Instead, He trained a group of very diverse men to teach other men. In fact, male and female believers have a duty to be disciples spreading the Word of God. Just because someone prays with you to receive forgiveness from Jesus does not mean your duty has ended. In fact, it represents a new beginning. You now have to disciple that person to follow Christ. If the new believer proves faithful, then you will entrust to him more truths and help him become a discipler who will share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and see new believers carry on the ministry of Christ on earth. Instead of just one disciple spreading God's love, now there will be two, then four, then eight, and so on in geometric progression. Jesus loves the world and to His glory we labor for Him, remaining firm and always knowing that God will reward our labor.

Spiritual Life

“So Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.’” | John 6:53, Page 1666

Jesus focused upon the spiritual life of His disciples. He spoke to them frequently in spiritual terms. When Jesus said people must eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, He spoke in spiritual terms. He meant that the disciples must be born again by believing His words as if they were eating His flesh and drinking His blood. Notice too the symbolism of the flesh and the blood. Jesus used this same symbolism at the breaking of bread with His disciples. He explained that His body bore our sins on the cross. His blood cleansed us from all sins. In order to gain spiritual life, people must receive Jesus spiritually, in their hearts, minds and spirits.

Spiritual Love

"Jesus Wept." | John 11:35, page 1678

Jesus also had great love for people. At the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus wept. He was moved with compassion for the suffering of His friends, and concerned about the unbelief of all the people. Even so, Jesus displayed true tears, expressing true human emotions. God also weeps over our sins (Ephesians 4:30, page 1831).

Spiritual Truth

“So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you continue in my word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.’” | John 8:31-32, Page 1671

Jesus taught the truth, because He was the truth. Jesus also declared that His word was truth. Through His words, people may hear those words and believe them, gaining eternal life by faith alone. Jesus also explained that only people who continue in His word prove to be true disciples of Jesus. If they continue in His word, they will know the truth and the truth will make them free. Jesus means especially freedom from the bondage of sin.

Spiritual Unity

"that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me." | John 17:21, page 1690

Jesus prayed that the world would believe in Him because of the unity of all disciples. Jesus wanted all of His disciples to be one with Him, and to abide in Him, just as He is one with the Father. This standard of absolute unity must be a goal of every disciple. We unite around the Person of Christ and His doctrine. Doctrinal error often divides believers, but accurately handling the Word of God will bring unity among disciples. Remember, this passage reminds us that Jesus prayed for the unity of disciples as a testimony to the world. He valued that unity highly and intended for disciples to multiply in number.

Conclusion

Jesus loves us every day, day by day, for all eternity. He also has given each of a ministry to use our spiritual gifts for His glory each day, all day. The Holy Spirit empowers our lives to use our spiritual gifts to edify the church and see the church grow and expand into all the world. As believers, we must learn from the Bible how to live in the love of Jesus Christ. As we love Jesus, we keep His commandments. Just as God the Father sent Jesus in to the world, so also Jesus sends each of us, the children of God, to make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them as we go. May God bless the reading of His word. I always appreciate Godly comments directed to friend@ChristAssembly.org.

HALLELUJAH !