

LifeBuilders

Step Two

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Freedom

1. Freedom is a interesting word. Most believe that freedom means to be able to do whatever one wants to do. The biblical concept of freedom is the ability to do what **God wants**. Consider Paul's description of himself in Philippians 1:1, *Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ*. Paul saw himself as a servant of Christ—and was willing to do whatever the Lord commanded him. Peter says it this way in 2 Peter 2:19, *They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him*. Has Christ mastered you? If so, you have become his slave!
2. As freedom relates to sin, every believer is free from sin in three different ways. Remember Romans 6:6-7, *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

Freedom from the Penalty of Sin

1. What has every sinner done? (*Psalm 14:3*) _____
2. What is the penalty of sin? (*Romans 6:23*) _____
3. Where will the sinner spend eternity? (*Revelation 20:15*)

4. What has God freely given to the believer? (*Romans 6:23*)

5. Theologians call this act of God on our behalf *justification*. You are no longer under any condemnation for sin. The penalty has been taken for you by Jesus! Read *Romans 8:1-2* and fill in the verse with **your name**:

There is therefore now no condemnation to

*who is in Christ Jesus, who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath **made me free** from the law of sin and death.*

Freedom from the Power of Sin

1. The process that you are presently in we call *sanctification*. Note it is called a **process**. As you have already noted in your own life, sin is present! The battle with sin will continue until the day you die or Christ returns. Two verses to keep in mind are: Romans 6:14, *For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace*, and Romans 8:37, *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us*.

2. Read Romans 6 and answer the following questions:

What do you think Paul means by *dead to sin* in verse 2?

What two things are we to reckon (consider) ourselves to be? (*Romans 6:11*)

To what are we to yield ourselves? (*Romans 6:13*)

Of what are you a servant now? (*Romans 6:18*)

3. To be dead to sin means that we no longer have to be controlled by sin as a power in us. We are free of its power because of what Christ has done on the cross. By faith we are to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. We are able to follow God as a choice. This entire concept might seem a little difficult, but it is the core of what it means to be a believer. Simply put, the sinful you was crucified with Christ and now you are free to obey Him in the spirit. Galatians 2:20 states, *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me*. The Christ life, as some call it, is an exchange of your old life of sin for His new life of righteousness.

4. Faith activates this truth and brings the theory into reality. Consider this example. You are at work and the Lord speaks to you to witness to a co-worker during break. The old nature in you says, *NO!* It is controlled by fear. But the new man in you says, *Trust Christ, He will give you the words to say!* Immediately you have a crisis. Will you submit to the old man and not witness, or will you listen to the new man and obey? Life is a series of choices!

When you choose to obey the prompting of the Holy Spirit through the new man you are activating faith from within. Faith says, *I trust God. He will give me what I need to say. He will control me. I have nothing to fear. Lord Jesus, live in me now. I surrender to your will*. At that point you begin to witness.

Most people lose the battle over the power of sin in their lives by choosing to believe that the old man is still alive and more powerful than Jesus in them! ***Life goes according to our faith.***

5. Proverbs 28:13 says, *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.* All too often Christians find that the power of sin has not been broken in their lives because of lingering responsibilities of previous sins. Something seems to be dragging behind them. Let's consider the biblical principle of ***restitution.***

Explain the law of restitution found in Numbers 5:5-7.

In Luke 19:8 what does Zacchaeus declare that he will do?

6. Is there anything that you have done or said for which you need to make restitution? Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart. ***Caution:*** restitution is “restoring back” and should be made only to the extent of our sin. Confession and restitution should be as public as the sin. Restitution reverses the effects of sin in us and in others. It brings real freedom.
7. Write down any persons with whom you need to make restitution:

Freedom from the Presence of Sin

1. ***Justification*** is the freedom from the penalty of sin; ***sanctification*** is the freedom from the power of sin; and ***glorification*** is the freedom from the presence of sin. Romans 8:30 states, *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*
2. Read John 14:1-3. Why did Jesus need to go away? _____

With whom will we spend eternity? _____
3. According to Luke 23:43, what did Jesus promise the thief on the cross?

4. Read 1 Corinthians 15. *The entire chapter! It is an excellent summary.*

What kind of body will we have? (15:44) _____

5. Where does 1 Peter 3:22 say that Jesus is now? _____

6. According to Revelation 22:3, what will we be doing in Heaven for all eternity?

7. There will be ***no sin***, no ***sorrow***, no ***pain***, no ***suffering***, no ***battling***, just our God and those who put their trust in Him. The final act of salvation will be our *glorification*. John states in 1 John 3:2, *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* We will be like Him! The restrictions of our fallen nature will be gone and we will be free to worship Him forever!
8. Take time to thank the Lord for your freedom. Begin to believe the truth of God's Word. Don't believe the liar—the devil. His goal is to get you to live in bondage. Refuse to be bound by Him. Be free!!

The Lordship of Jesus

1. You must confess...

According to Romans 10:9 what are you to confess with your mouth?

a. You must proclaim Jesus to be on the **throne** of your life. Either you will rule your life or Jesus will. It is within your will to determine this. A Christian is one who has submitted his will to the Lord.

b. According to Joshua 24:15, what did God command them to do about who they would serve?

You still have a free will. He does not force you to do anything. You are not a robot.

2. You must seek God's wisdom...

a. According to Psalm 139:23-24, what should you be asking the Lord to do?

_____ me, oh God.

_____ me, and

_____ my thoughts

_____ if there is any wicked way in me, and

_____ me in the way everlasting.

When Jesus is your Lord, you give him permission to search your heart and reveal to you anything not consistent with His will and character.

b. According to Proverbs 3:5-7, what are we **not** to lean on?

You put God's ways before your own by referring all of your thoughts, feelings, actions, and decisions to God first. A Christian relies on the wisdom of God, not his own. Who knows best what you need, you or the Lord.

c. According to 2 Corinthians 10:5, what are we to bring captive to Christ?

When Jesus is Lord, our thoughts and actions must come be subjected to His wisdom. If a thought is inconsistent with what the Word of God says it must be rejected as untrue. This is the meaning of "bring captive to Christ". If someone says that you are unworthy, your first response needs to be, "What does God say?" Your worth is determined by Him.

3. You must live a life pleasing to God...
- a. According to 1 John 1:8, what is part of your makeup? _____

You must acknowledge that you have sinned and behaved in ways that are contrary to God's Word and His plans and purposes for my life.

Psalm 51:6 says, Behold, *You desire truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.*

When Jesus is Lord of your life, truth becomes very important to you. While you still sin, it should be your heart's desire that the truth of God rule you.

- b. According to Romans 14:17-19, if we serve Christ in this way, we are _____ to Him.

You have a sincere desire to respond to all that God has done for you and to lead a life that is pleasing to Him. There is a sense of gratitude and love. If there is no sense of gratitude, can there really be a relationship?

- c. According to Colossians 1:10, how are we to live our lives?
- _____

When Jesus is your Lord you live with a different goal in mind. You want to be pleasing to Him. Since you are His child, you want to live in a manner worthy of your relationship.

4. You must know God's will...
- a. According to John 10:27, what are you to listen to? _____

And what should you do? _____

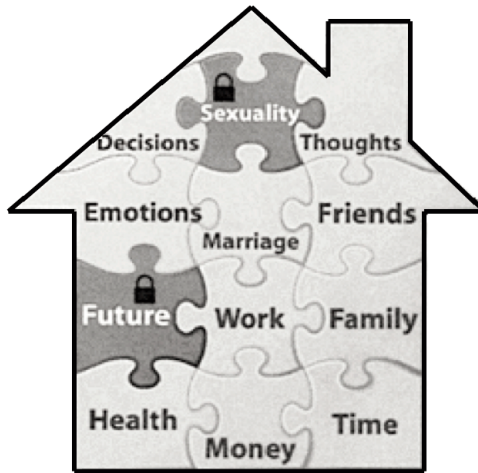
A successful Christian is one who does the will of the Father. It is important for you to listen and follow your Lord.

- b. Since Jesus is your Lord, He wants to be in charge of every part of your life. You need His guidance, direction, knowledge, and wisdom.

5. You must be willing to surrender everything to Him...
- a. According to Romans 12:1, what does God want you to do with your body?
- _____

The Lord wants you to present all that you are to Him. He wants absolute control of your life. There must come a time in your life when you give your life over to His lordship.

The diagram on the following page gives a description of your life and many of its "rooms". Jesus wants access and control of each area.



b. Look at that diagram above and ask yourself, “Does God have access and control to every room of my heart?”

c. Pray Psalm 139:23-24,

Search me, O God, and know my heart!

Try me and know my thoughts!

And see if there be any grievous way in me,

and lead me in the way everlasting!

d. Ask the Lord to reveal any room that He is not in complete control of. Write down any that He shows you.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

e. According to 1 John 1:9, what are we to do with our sins?

What two things will God do?

When God is not in control of an area of your life, you must be in charge. This is sin and must be confessed.

6. You must pray and present yourself to God...

a. Ask the Lord to forgive you for not following Him in each of these rooms. Recognizing that He is not in charge is a very important step for you. This might not be as easy as you think. Your old nature does not want to give up control and will fight to rule. You will have to fight the drive to control and submit to the Lord.

Below you will find a detailed prayer of commitment. If it is your desire to make Jesus the Lord of your life, pray the prayer.

b. Prayer of commitment. Pray this out loud.

If the Lord reveals a specific room in which you have not relinquished control to Him you must include that in the following prayer at the designated spot.

Lord Jesus, thank you that you died for me and paid the penalty for my sins. I acknowledge my need of you and recognize you as my Lord and Savior. I invite you now to be Lord of my life – Lord of my body and all my behavior – Lord of my mind and all of my thoughts – Lord of my emotions and all my reactions – Lord of my will and all my decisions – Lord of my spirit and my relationship with you. I invite you to be Lord of my sexuality, my time, my home, my family, my possessions... (my marriage) ...and all my relationships.

I especially give you the part(s) of my life that You revealed to me earlier:

(List the 'rooms' the Lord pointed out to you).

Thank you for taking charge of my life. Amen.

c. Begin every day with the prayer,

Thank you Lord for another day to enjoy. You are my Master.

Lead me all day and I will follow. In the Name of Jesus, Amen.

d. Seek help by finding someone with whom you can be accountable. It is important that you understand this prayer is a **beginning place**. Now you must fight the fight of faith in keeping your commitment. You will need other believers to fight alongside of you.

e. Memorize Matthew 6:33

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Holiness

1. *A man was marooned on a small island. After many months he was then found. He had built three huts. When asked what the huts were for, he replied that the first was his home, the second his church. When asked about the third, he said it was the church he used to go to. Left to ourselves we even get sick of ourselves!*

How does Jeremiah 17:9 describe every man's heart?

How does Romans 3:10 describe every man?

- a. Even though our hearts are wicked, and left on our own we do not seek God, He has chosen to make us like Christ. The Lord is committed to work in us because we are unable to do it on our own.

Read 1 Peter 1:13-16.

What is God's **command** that Peter quotes from Leviticus 11:44?

- b. Holiness is the **essence** of who God is. According to 1 Samuel 2:2, who else is holy like God?
-

The Lord is absolute perfection. Whatever He does is good, righteous... holy. God is in no way like us. His character is pure, without any hint of wrong. His motives are righteous. His word is powerful, and His actions are without malice.

According to Hebrews 6:18, what is impossible for God to do? _____

God's holiness pervades His entire being and shapes his attributes. His love is a holy love, His mercy is holy mercy, and even His anger and wrath are holy anger and holy wrath. These concepts are difficult for humans to grasp, just as God is difficult for us to understand in His entirety.

Read Isaiah 6:1-8. These verses describe Isaiah's worship experience. How would you express his response to God's character in verse 5.

- c. We are called to live a life that **distinguishes** us as belonging to God. When God told Israel to be holy in Leviticus 11 and 19, He was instructing them to be **distinct** from the other nations by giving them specific regulations to govern their lives. Israel is God's **chosen** nation and God has set them apart from all other people groups. They are His **special** people, and consequently they were given **standards** that God wanted them to live by so the **world** would know they belonged to Him.

Does the world know you belong to God?

1 Peter 2:9-12

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

2. Living a life of holiness

- a. Holiness results from a **right relationship** with God.

According to John 1:12, who alone may claim to be God's children?

- b. You must **submit** to His Kingdom rule.

According to Joshua 24:15, you must _____ this day whom you will serve.

According to 1 John 5:2-4, how will people know that we love the children of God?

We are to _____ God and _____ his commandments.

Submission is such a difficult principle. Getting our way is a way of life for us. When you gave Christ your life, you submitted to Him as Lord and Master. The working out of that is a matter of faith and obedience. Jesus gave His blood for you and expects your love, allegiance, and obedience in return.

Submitting to His Kingdom means we refuse to our own kingdom. John 5:24 says that we have passed from death to life, from our kingdom to His! In our kingdom, we rule. In His, Jesus does. Submission is at the core of what it means to be in the Kingdom of God.

Write Jesus' words down from Luke 22:42,

"... yet not My _____, but _____ be done.

Even Jesus submitted His will to the Father's!

"There is no motive for holiness so great as that which streams from the veins of Jesus." -Charles Spurgeon

- c. You must **focus** your attention on His Kingdom.

Read Luke 9:57-62.

What do you think Jesus was looking for in those who were to follow Him?

Read Colossians 3:1-4.

What should you seek _____

What should you set your minds on? _____

Why should you do this? _____

What you focus your attention on will determine the kind of person you will become. If your attention is on things of this world, you will become worldly. Being holy is not about escaping this world. It is about purpose and direction. Jesus said in John 17:14-19, that we are not "of" this world. He meant that we have been changed and given a new homeland, Heaven. In this world we are to be ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). We show the world the nature of God. What a privilege and responsibility.

- d. Set your **heart** on things above.

As in Colossians 3:1, Paul is referring to the totality of your being. When you set your heart on the Kingdom of God it includes your **passions**, your **goals**, and your **desires**.

Read Psalm 42:1-2.

How does the Psalmist describe the deer? "As the deer _____".

Read Jesus as He speaks in Matthew 5:6.

How does Jesus describe a believer?

Blessed are those who _____ and _____ for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

What keeps you up at night? What occupies your alone and quiet moments? What goals have you set for yourself? What upsets you?

Most people are so engrossed in this world, their passions, desires, and goals are of this world. The Lord wants us to set our hearts on Him and His Kingdom.

- e. Set your **minds** on things above.

Read Colossians 3:2.

By the mind Paul is referring to your **thoughts**, your **study**, your **reasoning**.

According to Romans 12:2, what part of you needs to be renewed?

Read 2 Timothy 2:15. How can you become approved, and unashamed?

Read Philippians 4:8. What should be the focus of your mind?

Have you ever wondered how a teenager can learn the words of songs that you might think are unintelligible? How many times do you have to listen to a song until you can lip-sync it without error? Or, what does it take to become proficient at a video game? Our minds are amazing! God has created us with exceptional abilities.

As a Mathematics major in college I refused to give up on a question. I was determined to get it right, no matter how long it took! I set my mind to finish the task. Let's set our minds on the Kingdom and find out how we change!

f. Set your **life** on things above.

Read Colossians 3:3-4. This refers to your **purpose** and your **death**. Holiness is about living a life in a way that Christ lives through us.

Hudson Taylor (missionary to China) has this to say..

I used to ask God to help me.

Then I asked if I might help Him.

I ended up asking Him to do His work through me.

Christ is our life. Only as we set our lives on the Kingdom can He live his life through us. A life focused on things above will have significant adjustments. Be careful not to turn holiness into a new law. Submission is a joy, not a burden.

Legalism is you living your life to prove yourself to God.

Holiness is God living His life in and through you.

g. Put to **death** whatever belongs to your old, earthly nature.

Death never comes easily! Your old nature will fight to remain in control at every level. Over your life you have developed habits, made choices, coped with pain, pursued pleasure, sought peace, and developed techniques to get by. Now the Lord wants to change all of that. He wants you to reflect His character, His goals, His grace, His purpose, and you find yourself at odds with Him.

Holiness will require real honesty on your part. If you are going to live a holy life you must allow the Lord to lay your life open and transform you.

Pray Psalm 139:23-24,

Search me, O God, and know my heart!

Try me and know my thoughts!

And see if there be any grievous way in me,

and lead me in the way everlasting!

Read Colossians 3:5-9

Paul's list is *not exhaustive*. There are many more and you know them in your own life! Ask the Lord to show you things in your life that are part of your old nature. Check off those things in your life that are inconsistent with a holy life:

sexual immorality	gossiping
impurity	controlling substance (drugs, alcohol, etc.)
lust	meanness
evil desire	selfishness
covetousness	laziness
anger	stealing
wrath	harmful habits
malice	immodest clothing
slander	unforgiveness
obscene talk	lying
cheating	
licentiousness: lacking moral restraints (<i>appearance, clothing, activities</i>)	

- h. Take time to talk to the Lord about the issues He showed you above. Ask the Lord where He wants to start. What did He say?

Now, give it to Him. *"Lord you now have this area of my life. Set me free from its control over me. Replace it with your character."*

Spend some time researching biblical references and Christian books related to the issue. Seek out someone to help you.

Now as a positive part of holiness...

- i. Put on the *new man*.

Read Colossians 3:10-17.

Look at this list from Colossians. This is your goal! To be like Christ.

compassionate hearts
kindness
humility
meekness
patience
bearing with one another
forgiving each other
love
let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts
be thankful
let the word of Christ dwell in you richly
teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom
singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs
Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

This list is in no way exhaustive. But what a start! The Bible is full of character qualities that should be ours. It is a journey worth traveling!

Here is a quote from an article by Kevin DeYoung: The Hole in Holiness

When is the last time we took a verse like Ephesians 5:4—“Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving”—when is the last time we took a verse like this and even began to try to apply this to our conversation, our joking, our movies, our YouTube clips, our TV and commercial intake? The fact of the matter is if you read through the New Testament epistles, you will find very few explicit commands that tell us to evangelize and very few explicit commands that tell us to take care of the poor in our communities, but there are dozens and dozens of verses in the New Testament that enjoin us, in one way or another, to be holy as God is holy (e.g., 1 Peter 1:13-16).

- j. We focused on your inner life first because holiness of heart leads to holiness of actions. If you begin on the outer life you run the risk of becoming a pharisee who judges others and a legalist who is more self-righteousness than holy. A change of heart leads to a change in actions.

Remember, the goal is to be like Christ.

Of David, God said in 1 Samuel 13:14, “*The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart.*”

Paul repeats this in Acts 13:22, “*God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'*”

Oh that God would say that of you, a man (woman) after God’s own heart!!

Now that’s an epitaph!

The Disciple and His Words

1. Are words really very important? Can speaking the right words make a significant difference in a disciple's life? **Yes!!** Your words make all the difference in the world.

Psalm 19:14

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

2. Words are important to God.

- **God used words in the creation of the world.**

Read Genesis 1:1-31.

How many times does Moses say the words, "God said," or "God called"?

- **God uses words to communicate His will to us.**

Read Ezekiel 6.

How many times does Ezekiel say, "Thus saith the Lord"? _____

According to Hebrews 1:1, through whom did God speak in the past?

According to Hebrews 11:2, through whom has He spoken? _____

According to 2 Timothy 3:16, *All Scripture is _____ by God.*

As God-breathed, the Bible is the Word of God. And it is sufficient for the disciple to know and follow God in **everything** he does. Without the written Word of God we would not know what God is like and His desires for us.

- **God demands that we use words from our mouths in the process of salvation.**

Read Romans 10:9-10.

With what are we to confess? _____

- **The special name given to Christ Jesus is "The Word".**

Read John 1:1-5. According to:

Verse 1, when was He the Word? _____

Verse 1, who was He? _____

Verse 3, what did He do? _____

Verse 4, in Him was _____

- **God places power in the spoken word.**

According to Matthew 4:4, on what should we live? _____

According to Matthew 7:7, what must we do to receive? _____

According to Matthew 8:8, what would happen if Jesus just spoke the right words?

3. Words are powerful.

- ***Words are a necessary part of biblical faith.***

Read Mark 11:15-26.

Faith is the primary focus of these verses. Jesus had cursed the fig tree for being unfruitful (see Mark 11:12-14) and responded to Peter's question with a discussion of faith. He had spoken to the fig tree and it had withered by the next day. *Jesus linked speaking with faith!*

What two things have to be done to get a mountain to move?

1. _____
2. _____

Do you have any *mountains* that need to be moved? Why not speak to them! Does that sound strange? Read Mark 11:23 again. Jesus said to speak to the mountain. Have you ever considered being obedient to the Word and just command your mountain to move??

There will be no action by God until there are words spoken. Believing and speaking are linked in God's mind.

We speak what we believe. Our words are a reflection of our heart. Is it any wonder that God does so little on our behalf!!!? Our hearts are not completely His and our words are proof of it.

- ***Words can hinder or encourage biblical faith.***

Read 1 Kings 19:9-18.

This is the story of Elijah just after he brought fire down from heaven and defeated the prophets of Baal. But Jezebel had spoken words against him and he was afraid. He began to speak words of defeat that resulted in depression, discouragement, and fear.

According to verse 10 & 14, how did he feel? _____

According to verse 18, how many others were there? _____

Elijah spoke error to himself, and all faith was gone! What two things did God do for Elijah to encourage him?

1. _____
2. _____

- **Words determine what we will receive from God.**

Read James 4:2.

Why do we *not* have? _____

- **Words can destroy.**

Read Ephesians 4:29 & Colossians 4:6.

Our speech should be **wholesome** and **full of grace**. There is no place for vulgarity, crude talk & jokes, unkind words, or even negative talking. These are from the devil and do nothing but harm to the disciple and others.

- **Words can heal.**

Read Proverbs 16:24.

What is healing to the bones? _____

Read Mark 10:52.

Jesus spoke to the blind man and he was healed. In most cases Jesus spoke and healing followed. (*Once a woman just touched His garment and was healed without a word spoken by Jesus. See Matthew 9:20. However, Jesus did confront her afterwards and commended her faith.*)

- **Words can set people free from the evil one.**

Read Matthew 8:16.

By what did Jesus cast out demons? _____

Read James 4:7

What are we to do with the devil? _____

In order to resist him we must speak to him and his demon forces, commanding them, in the name of Jesus to depart. That was the practice of Jesus and the Disciples.

- **Words can bless or curse.**

Read Luke 6:28

What are we to do for our enemies? _____

If we are to bless our enemies, what do you think we should do for our friends?
When was the last time you blessed someone?

4. Evaluate your speaking by answering the following questions?

- *What words do I speak that are **not** wholesome & not pleasing to God?*

- *What words do I speak that hinder my faith?*

- *What words do I speak that are a blessing on others?*

- *What words do I speak that are a curse on others?*

- *What am I asking God for, and believing Him to give to me?*

- *What words do I speak that I should stop immediately?*

- *What words should I begin speaking immediately?*

The Disciple and His Thoughts

Ephesians 4:8

*Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think on these things.***

1. There is no greater place of battle for your life between the devil and the Lord than your mind! Everything the devil does or says is contrary to what God says or does. That is why your mind is a fertile battlefield—you don't always know what God is doing and saying!

2. Read Genesis 3:1-7.

According to 3:1, what did the devil question first?

He questioned what God had said! The battle was on for all of humanity, and it began in the **mind** of Eve!

According to Gen. 1:4, what did the devil then question?

*Once he had Eve questioning God's **words**, he then had her question God's **actions**.* He proceeded to tell her that God was a liar! Read Titus 1:2. Can God lie? _____. Have there been times in your life when you have questioned the truthfulness of God? Does it seem, at times, that God is not being truthful? The Bible says He never lies. Why then do we have trouble believing Him?

3. Thoughts are the **seedbed** of our actions. We never act without thinking (*our thoughts may be conscious or subconscious, but they are there all the same!!*). Read Proverbs 4:23. (In the NIV version it uses the words *wellspring of life* for *issues of life*.) Note that you are to **guard your heart**, because everything comes from there. Your heart is the essence of who you are; and who you are is determined by what you think!!
4. Read Matthew 16:13-23
These verses are divided into three sections: what people think, what Peter thinks, and what the devil thinks.

- ***Soul Thoughts***

In the first section Jesus asks Peter what **people think** about who He (Jesus) is.

According to Matt. 16, people think Jesus is _____

For this study we are going to call what the natural man thinks, *soul thoughts*. These are thoughts that are earthly, not spiritual in nature. Non-Christians have this kind of thinking. Read Ephesians 4:17-19.

How does Paul describe their thinking? _____

How does he describe their understanding? _____

Soul thoughts are our thoughts without the enlightenment of God or His Word. They can be good: when you need your car fixed you don't turn to Ephesians, you go to the repair manual!! However, for understanding life, knowing who you are, and discerning God's will, soul thoughts are of no value.

• ***Spirit Thoughts***

Go back to Matthew 16 and read verses 15-18.

Who did Peter say Jesus was? _____

How did he know it? _____

What verb does Jesus use to describe how he got this information from God?

Revelation is God's self-disclosure. Without revelation no one would know God, or even about Him. This revelation we will call ***Spirit thoughts***. Spirit thoughts are spiritual insights and wisdom.

Read James 1:1-8. When a person is being tested and does not understand, what is he to ask God to give him? _____

Wisdom is God's insight into suffering or testing.

Since the things we think control the actions we do, it is important to think properly about ourselves. On the following two pages is a list of truthful things God has said about you, personally.

If you would read the list daily, and believe what God says, because He cannot lie, ***you would be a different person—for the better!***

WHO AM I?

- I am the salt of the earth (Matt 5:13)
- I am the light of the world (Matt. 5:14)
- I am a child of God (John 1:12)
- I am part of the true vine, a channel of Christ's life (John 15:1,5)
- I am Christ's friend (John 15:15)
- I am chosen and appointed by Christ to bear His fruit (John 15:16)
- I am a slave of righteousness (Rom. 6:18)
- I am enslaved to God (Rom. 6:22)
- I am a son of God; God is spiritually my Father (Rom. 8:14,15; Gal. 3:26; 4:6)
- I am a joint heir with Christ, sharing His inheritance with Him (Rom. 8:17)
- I am a dwelling place—of God. His Spirit and His life dwells in me (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19)
- I am united to the Lord and am one spirit with Him (I Cor. 6:17)
- I am a member of Christ's body (I Cor. 12:27; Eph. 5:30)
- I am a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17)
- I am reconciled to God and am a minister of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18,19)

- I am a son of God and one in Christ (Gal. 3:26,28)
- I am a heir of God since I am a son of God (Gal. 4:6,7)
- I am a saint (Eph. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2)
- I am God's workmanship—His handiwork (Eph. 2:10)
- I am a fellow citizen with the rest of God's family (Eph. 2:19)
- I am a prisoner of Christ (Eph. 3:1; 4:1)
- I am righteous and holy (Eph. 4:24)
- I am a citizen of heaven, seated in heaven right now (Phil. 3:20; Eph. 2:6)
- I am hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3)
- I am an expression of the life of Christ because He is my life (Col. 3:4)
- I am chosen of God, holy and dearly loved (Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4)
- I am a son of light and not of darkness (1 Thess. 5:5)
- I am a holy partaker of a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1)
- I am a partaker of Christ; I share in His life (Heb. 3:14)
- I am one of God's living stones, being built up in Christ as a spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5)
- I am a member of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession (1 Pet. 2:9,10)
- I am an alien and stranger to this world in which I temporarily live (1 Pet. 2:11)
- I am an enemy of the devil (1 Pet. 5:8)
- I am a child of God and I will resemble Christ when He returns (1 John 3:1,2)
- I am born of God, and the evil one—the devil—cannot touch me (1 John 5:18)
- I am *not* the great "I Am" (Exod. 3:14; John 8:24,28,58), but by the grace of God, I am what I am (1 Cor. 15:10)

SINCE I AM IN CHRIST, BY THE GRACE OF GOD ...

- I have been justified—completely forgiven and made righteous (Rom 5:1)
- I died with Christ and died to the power of sin's rule over my life (Rom. 6:1-6)
- I am free forever from condemnation (Rom. 8:1)
- I have been placed into Christ by God's doing (1 Cor. 1:30)
- I have received the Spirit of God into my life that I might know the things freely given to me by God (1 Cor. 2:12)
- I have been given the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16)
- I have been bought with a price; I am not my own; I belong to God (1 Cor. 6:19,20)
- I have been established, anointed and sealed by God in Christ, and I have been given the Holy Spirit as a pledge guaranteeing my inheritance to come (2 Cor. 1:21; Eph. 1:13,14)
- Since I have died, I no longer live for myself, but for Christ (2 Cor. 5:14,15)
- I have been made righteous (2 Cor. 5:21)
- I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. The life I am now living is Christ's life (Gal. 2:20)
- I have been blessed with every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3)
- I was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and am without blame before Him (Eph. 1:4)
- I was predestined—determined by God—to be adopted as God's son (Eph. 1:5)
- I have been redeemed and forgiven, and I am a recipient of His lavish grace.
- I have been made alive together with Christ (Eph. 2:5)
- I have been raised up and seated with Christ in heaven (Eph. 2:6)
- I have direct access to God through the Spirit (Eph. 2:18)
- I may approach God with boldness, freedom and confidence (Eph. 3:12)
- I have been rescued from the domain of Satan's rule and transferred to the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13)

- I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins. The debt against me has been cancelled (Col. 1:14)
- Christ Himself is in me (Col. 1:27)
- I am firmly rooted in Christ and am now being built in Him (Col. 2:7)
- I have been spiritually circumcised. My old unregenerate nature has been removed (Col.2:11)
- I have been made complete in Christ (Col. 2:10)
- I have been buried, raised and made alive with Christ (Col. 2:12,13)
- I died with Christ and I have been raised up with Christ. My life is now hidden with Christ in God. Christ is now my life (Col. 3:1-4)
- I have been given a spirit of power, love and self-discipline (2 Tim. 1:7)
- I have been saved and set apart according to God's doing (2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5)
- Because I am sanctified and am one with the Sanctifier, He is not ashamed to call me brother (Heb. 2:11)
- I have the right to come boldly before the throne of God to find mercy and grace in time of need (Heb. 4:16)
- I have been given exceedingly great and precious promises by God by which I am a partaker of God's divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4)

• ***Snake Thoughts***

Read Matthew 16:21-23.

What did Jesus say was going to happen to Him? (verse 21) _____

What did Peter say? _____

What did Jesus then say, and to whom? _____

Just moments after Peter had revelational thoughts about Jesus he spewed out devilish snake thoughts. He was unaware that he was speaking thoughts the devil had put into his head. That's why Jesus rebuked the devil and not Peter.

Any thought from the devil we call a ***snake thought***. These thoughts are always contrary to the mind and will of God. They never lead to life and happiness. Their end is inevitably destruction! That is the goal of the devil in your life: absolute worthlessness! Remember, thoughts are the seedbed of actions. If he can get us to think wrongly, wrong actions will follow!

Here are some snake thoughts:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| • I can't | • Life is terrible. |
| • I'm afraid. | • I'm no good. |
| • I'll never be happy. | • No one loves me. |
| • I'm all messed up. | • God doesn't care about <i>me</i> . |
| • God won't do anything for me. | |
| • God helps those who help themselves. | |
| • I got myself into this mess—I have to get myself out. | |

Can you think of more??

5. How to distinguish between snake thoughts and Spirit thoughts.

• **How do your thoughts square with the Scripture?**

This is the most obvious, yet the most neglected way of checking our thoughts. Many just don't know the Word well enough to know if their thoughts are biblical. You must read, memorize, and meditate on God's Word to be able to judge your thoughts.

Ask your godly counselors to help you. Many times they have thought the same thoughts and have wisdom ready for you.

• **How do your thoughts affect your emotions?**

Emotions cannot always be trusted but God has given them to us as a barometer to help measure the atmosphere around us. Consider that while standing on the edge of high building, you will sense the emotion of fear. You respond wisely by backing away from the danger.

Read Numbers 13:33.

How did they feel about themselves? _____

Was their view of themselves correct? _____

God had told them to go in and conquer the land. When they believed they were grasshoppers, their thoughts produced weakness. If they had thought as God did, they would have believed themselves able to defeat any giant—and they would have! The emotion of fear should have triggered a question in their minds about what was truth in their situation.

Snake thoughts lead to the emotions of: worry, loneliness, depression, discouragement, fear, hopelessness, rejection, etc.

Spirit thoughts cause us to have: hope, peace, vitality, excitement, enthusiasm, encouragement, etc.

• **Are the thoughts you are having causing you to reach your goal?**

The goal of every Christian should be to be like Jesus. Are your thoughts carrying you to that end? Do they lead you to obedience?

6. Steps to bringing your thoughts under control.

Remember: you should control your thoughts—your thoughts should not control you!

Read 2 Corinthians 10:5.

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

“Bringing into captivity every thought” is about making certain that what you are thinking is consistent with the Word of God and the Character of God. The idea of capturing every thought mind sound tedious, but if done consistently, you will sense the power of God in transforming you into His image.

Fill your mind with spirit thoughts and get rid of snake thoughts.

On the following page there are five important components to bring your thoughts under control.

- ***Ask God to show you which thoughts are His.***

Acknowledge snake thoughts and claim 2 Corinthians 5:17, *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Search the Word of God, ask other believers, ask the Holy Spirit to give an assurance about what you are thinking.

Claim by faith that you are a new person in Christ and you do not have to be ruled by snake thoughts.

- ***Ask God to forgive you for believing a lie.***

Be specific as possible. Name your wrong thoughts.

- ***Resist the devil by challenging every thought.***

According to James 4:7 we are to: ***submit to God, resist*** the devil, and he will flee. We resist the devil by judging every thought that he tries to put in our head. Judge them by seeing if they square with Scripture, how they affect your emotions, and whether or not they will lead you to be more like Jesus.

- ***Refuse to focus an old snake thoughts.*** Focus your thoughts on what The Lord says, not on what the enemy, or your old nature says. Memorize related Scripture and repeat it to yourself. Do it out loud as much as possible. Your ears need to hear your voice saying it!

- ***Build a tower or stronghold of truth.***

Read Psalm 18:1-3. David ran to his stronghold of truth. You can create that same stronghold in your own mind through Scripture memory and reading. Immerse yourself in the Word!

Strongholds

Memorize 2 Corinthians 10:4,

*For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal,
but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.*

1. Note that in 2 Corinthians 10:4 Paul says that our warfare is not carnal. Look up the word **carnal** in a dictionary and write a definition.

What would be the the opposite of carnal? _____

There are two realities here: flesh and spirit. The one you choose to be in control will in fact be in control and you will live accordingly.

The author Ray Stedman says, *The 'flesh' is inherited selfishness, that self-centeredness of life which all of us have without exception, impelling us to pursue our own interests at the expense of everybody else's.*

When you choose to follow the flesh death results. Whereas, when you choose to obey the Spirit, life comes. Read Galatians 6:7-8.

What are we commanded? *Do not be* _____

Who is not to be mocked? _____

What is the result of sowing to the flesh? _____

How do we reap eternal life? _____

2. This battle goes on constantly in your mind. **The two combatants** in this war are the devil and the Lord.

Let's consider the character of each.

3. **The devil.**

Read 1 Peter 5:8.

What is his goal for you? _____

- He is a fallen angel who wants to be God
- His desire is to devour us - keep us from victory
- His sole purpose is to undermine anything and everything that God does or intends to do in us and through us.
- **The devil's character.** Read the following verses and write down a descriptive word for the devil's character.

• **John 8:42-47. He is a** _____ **and a** _____

He is the motivating force behind all deceit. When we slander someone we play his game.

- **John 10:1-18. He is a** (see verse 8) _____

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, while the devil is a robber. He robs us of our joy, peace, love. There will be times when you will experience great victory and the devil will be right there to steal it away. Be on the lookout!

- **John 8:44. He is a** _____

The devil assassinates people's character through accusations, innuendos, and rumors. He also leads people to physically kill someone else, or even themselves!

- **Revelation 12:10. He is an** _____

The devil is an accuser. Many times self-accusations are from the devil. Too often we convince ourselves that we are just being honest, when in fact we have succumbed to the devil's lies and accusations.

- **2 Corinthians 11:3. He is a** _____

He is a deceiver. The devil leads us away from purity of devotion to Christ. To be deceived is to have our focus diverted to something false. Our energies and strength is redirected to secondary things such as:

- church rather than God
- religious activities rather than God
- sacrifice rather than obedience
- programs rather than people
- activities rather than spirit-filled living
- strange doctrines rather than biblical truth
- self pity rather than who we really are in Christ
- failure rather than victory

Mark it down, if you believe anything contrary to the Word of God, you are in deception pure and simple. For instance, suppose someone says that God has told them that the leadership of the church is in error, but no sin is identified—there is simply a difference of opinion. The Scripture is clear in Hebrews 13:17 that the members are to obey and submit to the leaders. Anything else would be sin. It is the trick of the devil to get us to focus on ourselves and off of the Lord and His revealed will found in the Bible. Deception is a powerful tool of the devil.

The devil is a liar, a thief, a murderer, and accuser of the brethren, and a deceiver.

4. The Lord

Read 2 Chronicles 16:9

What does God want to do for you? _____

Consider the character of God in contrast to the devil:

- **John 3:16. God is L** _____

God's love is an **unmerited** love (*not when we act a certain way*).

God's love is an **unconditional** love (*not love because we are...*)

God's love is an **unending** love (*Romans 8:35 says nothing can separate us from His love*)

God's love is an **unfathomable** love (*can never be tapped completely*)

7. The symptomatic evidence of a stronghold is compulsive behavior. *Note that by compulsive I mean behavior in which you just cannot get victory. It seems that you do it without even choosing. Even your will has been bypassed in the matter. When a stronghold is broken the first thing you will notice is the ability to choose not to follow the old habitual line. It is the freedom to choose not to sin that God has given every believer. That is the definition of freedom!*

Read the following Scriptures write down the stronghold:

2 Peter 2:14a ('a' means first part of verse) _____

James 1:6b ('b' means last part of verse) _____

James 3:16 _____

Titus 3:3 _____

Romans 8:15a _____

Acts 8:23 _____

Galatians 5:19-21 _____

Luke 13:12, 16 _____

Proverbs 25:28 _____

This is not an exhaustive list, just exemplary. Anything that is a **habit** that is not consistent with the nature of God is the result of a stronghold. You have believed a lie, given a place to the devil, and **he, rather than the Holy Spirit, is controlling you.**

8. Ask the Lord to show you any strongholds that might be in your life and write them down:

9. Results of strongholds: *(read the Scriptures)*

• **Strongholds destroy spirituality.**

1 Peter 2:11b. You will be unable to grow as the Lord wants. Something will always be holding you back. The stronghold wages war against the Spirit in you.

• **Strongholds create social dysfunction.**

Luke 8:27. It is difficult to establish healthy relationships when we have strongholds. A stronghold will consume our attention resulting in its control over even our relationships. We will damage others for the sake of our stronghold.

• **Strongholds produce mental aberrations.**

Matthew 17:15. Some people just don't think right. Their stronghold has distorted their thinking in certain areas. They seem completely deceived and cannot even be reasoned with. They are unable to think correctly about their own lives.

- **Strongholds handicap the body.**

Matthew 9:23-33. Sickness is very often the result of a stronghold. People consumed by fear have ulcers, headaches, etc. A person overwhelmed by anger and bitterness can even be attacked by arthritis or stomach problems.

10. **Tearing down a stronghold**

Step 1: There must be thorough repentance. Romans 2:4

Process of repentance:

Repentance is an attitude of the heart. It is a desire to change and follow God. The following five prayers make up a prayer of repentance.

- **God, I am wrong...**

Isaiah 53:6

All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.

When you are repentant you recognize that what you have done is sin. You must admit that the action is sin.

- **God, I am sorry...**

2 Corinthians 7:11

For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.

Godly sorrow is not about feeling 'caught'. You must communicate to God that you are sorry for the sin. You hate what you did and want to be free of it.

- **God, forgive me...**

Psalm 85:2

You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin.

Ask the Lord to forgive you. In asking this you are submitting the sin and your heart to Him. You are throwing yourself onto His grace.

- **God, cleanse me...**

Psalm 51:1-2

Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness;

According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin.

You cannot make up for sin. God does not balance your good and your evil. He forgives and then cleanses. He removes it from your record.

- **God, change me...**

Romans 12:2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

John 8:11 *Go now and leave your life of sin.*

This is your heart's cry: change me, oh God!

Step 2: There must be a clear request for freedom.

It is important that you **speak** the words of freedom.

- ***Claim Jesus*** as your Lord and Savior and thereby identify to the devil to whom you belong.
- ***Renounce the habit*** and the belief system that produced it.
- ***Ask the Lord*** to tear down the stronghold and replace it with His power.
- ***Command the devil to leave you.***

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

- ***Thank the Lord for your freedom.***

Step 3: Reinforce your life with scriptural disciplines.

Read 2 Peter 1:3-8.

You have everything you need to remain free.

Study the Bible.

Pray every day.

Listen to Christian music.

Spend time with other believers.

Spend time alone with God.

Serve others.

Memorize Scripture.

Be in a LifeGroup to become accountable.

Practise loving others.

Step 4: Transform your thinking by filling your mind with the truth.

Build a tower of truth by daily reading the Word and making it a part of your every day life.

Step 5: Repeat steps 1 through 3 daily until victory is consistent.

TEAR DOWN YOUR STRONGHOLDS NOW!!

The Great Commission: Go!

1. Read Matthew 28:16-20.

Matthew 28:19-20. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

What had been given to Jesus? (v. 18) _____

In what two places did Jesus have authority? (v. 18) _____

Who do you think gave it to Him? _____

Why do you think Jesus needed to tell them he had authority?

In verses 19-20 Jesus commands the disciples to do four things. What are they?

1. (v. 19) *G* _____

2. (v. 19) *Make* _____

3. (v. 19) *B* _____

4. (v. 20) *T* _____

What promise is included in the last part of verse 20? _____

2. Let us now consider these four commands in verses 19-20.

1. Go. Here Jesus is *not* saying become a fulltime missionary. Too often Christians assume that this verse does not apply to them, just to evangelists, pastors, and missionaries. But Jesus was commanding His whole Church! The verb ought to read, *having gone*, or, *as you go*. In this sense it is to everyone, that in your going, do the following. Whether your going is working in a factory, at the hospital, or at school, you are to obey the next three commands.

2. Make disciples. This should be our goal: to make disciples, followers of Jesus—not just hearers of the Word, but doers of the Word. Read James 1:22. Making disciples is real evangelism. Many have made converts but not disciples. Jesus commands us to make disciples. A disciple is one who follows another. We are to reach people with the Gospel so that they will become followers of Jesus, not just people who have prayed a prayer to get out of Hell!

Definition of Evangelism

Evangelism is the mission of the Church. Evangelism is sharing the good news of Christ's love with those in whom we come in contact, leading them into a personal relationship with Jesus, baptizing them, and teaching them to obey the Lord in everything, so that they in turn will be able to evangelize others.

There is a **process** to leading someone into discipleship. It begins with a personal decision to claim Jesus as Lord and Savior. The following verses will help you in leading someone to Christ.

Memorize their addresses (*where they are found in the Bible!*), **and what they refer to** (*the topic statement in bold*). If you would memorize the verses themselves, you would be blessed and ready to be used by the Lord at any time.

1. God loves everyone.

John 3:16, For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

- It is good to begin with God's love and care for people. Jesus always approached those in need with compassion. We must do the same.
- Emphasize that God's love is unmerited. That He loves everyone the same, and that He cares particularly about the person to whom you are witnessing.
- Have the person reread the verse with you replacing the words *world* with their own name.

2. All have sinned.

Romans 3:23, For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

- The emphasis here should be on **all**. No one is perfect. No one can claim to never have sinned. Have the person reword the sentence using his or her own name for all.
- You might want to spend some time talking about sin as *missing the mark*. Here Paul is referring to sin as being less than what God is. It is like shooting an arrow at a target. The arrow keeps landing short of the mark. No amount of effort will ever make the arrow hit the target which is the glory of God, or His holy character.
- God is holy. We are sinful. There is a great gulf between us.

3. The wages of sin and the gift of God.

Romans 6:23, For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Wages are what a person gets for what he or she has done. What each of us has done is sin. What we deserve to receive as payment is death. This death is more than physical—it is spiritual. The judgment for sin is being separated from God forever! Read Ephesians 2:1-3 for a description of the dead person.
- Paul also talks about a gift. Every gift is free or it would not be a gift. It cannot be earned! To many this is a stumbling block. They want to say they had a part in their salvation. But the only part we actually have is in receiving the free gift of eternal life.

- Note that the offer is eternal life. Not the hope of eternal life, nor the possibility of eternal life! To say that you had eternal life and then lost it, would be to say that you never had *eternal* life, just the hope of it.

4. Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8, But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Peter 3:18, For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

- God demonstrates His love to everyone by sending Jesus to die for us. He has taken our penalty of sin. Remember, the payment for sin is death, separation from God. Jesus experienced physical and spiritual death as He died on the cross for us.
- Note in Romans 5:8 that we were not His friends, but His enemies!
- In 1 Peter 3:18 there are two people referred to. One is *just (righteous)*, that is Jesus. The other is the *unjust (unrighteous)*, that is everyone else in the world. The one who took our payment had no sin of His own. If He would have had sin, He would only have died for His own, not ours. Praise the Lord He died for us. ***He did for us what we could not do for ourselves.***

5. You must repent.

Luke 13:3, I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

- Repentance is a matter of changing the direction you are going. It is not only saying you are sorry, or that you have sinned but that you also are choosing to obey Jesus rather than sinning and disobeying Him.
- If a person does not want to change their way of living and obey Jesus, no matter how much they pray, they will not be saved!

6. You must believe by faith.

Romans 10:9-10, That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9, For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

- To become a disciple of Jesus a person must put his or her faith in Jesus completely. Note in Romans 10 that it is necessary to confess with the mouth. There are no secret Christians. A person **must** proclaim in words that can be heard, that **Jesus is their Lord, Master.**
- But words must be supported by belief in the resurrection of Jesus.
- Faith is the certainty that when we ask God to do something, He will do it. The person must pray knowing that God will forgive them and save them, without any doubt.

7. You must call on the Lord and receive Him.

Romans 10:13, For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

John 1:12, But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

- To call on the Lord a person must simply pray in faith believing that God hears and will answer.

Sinner's prayer. Here is a prayer that you can use to lead someone to Christ. Have them repeat it after you, phrase by phrase, and out loud.

Lord Jesus, thank you for dying for me on the cross. I know that I should have died for my sins. I ask you now to forgive me for sinning and come into my life. I claim you as my Lord and Savior and I choose to follow you the rest of my life. I believe that you resurrected from the dead and are alive today in my life. Thank you for saving me today. In Jesus name, Amen.

3. Let us now consider the third command in Matthew 18:19-20. **Baptism**

According to Matthew 28:19-20 evangelism is much more than winning someone to Christ. After one confesses Jesus as Lord and Savior, according to Matthew 28:19, what should they do next?

4. **Scriptural Baptism**

Because there are several kinds of baptisms that are unscriptural we must have a proper understanding of what the Bible means by baptism. We will accomplish this by answering some important questions.

• **Who should be baptized?**

The answer might seem academic, but the Radical Reformers (*Anabaptists, Mennonites, and others*) in the 1500's focused on the issues of The Lord's Supper, the Priesthood of the Believer, Church Government, and on **Scriptural Baptism**. Since everyone in Europe at the time was Roman Catholic, they had all been baptized as babies which was the practice of the Catholic Church then, and remains so today. The radical reformers believed that infant baptism was **not** scriptural. Some denominations still practice infant baptism today! (*Lutheran, Episcopal, Anglican, and Presbyterian*)

Read Acts 2:38, 41

What must happen before water baptism? (v. 38) _____

According to verse 41, who were baptized? _____

Read Acts 18:8.

What came before their baptism? _____

There are two things to remember here: **the requirement for baptism is belief in the Lord Jesus as Lord and Savior**. The other is that water baptism always **follows believing**. These are the two issues central to the Reformers' thinking.

• **What is the meaning of baptism?** Some denominations believe that water baptism washes away sins (*Lutheran, Roman Catholic*); others believe that they receive the Holy Spirit in baptism and that baptism completes the salvational process (*Christian*)

Church & Disciples of Christ). We believe that the death of Christ was sufficient to deal with all our sins and formed an adequate basis for divine forgiveness and cleansing (see Col. 2:13; Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5). The grace of God responds to **faith**, not baptism. The moment a person puts his or her faith in Christ they receive the Holy Spirit and are considered a part of the family of God (see John 1:12; Gal. 4:6; 1 Cor. 12:13, 27). But what is the purpose or meaning of water baptism?

Water baptism bears witness to certain spiritual realities which God has accomplished in the believer's life. When a new believer is baptized he or she is proclaiming, publicly, the following:

1. **Salvational faith in Christ** (Acts 18:8). The believer identifies with Jesus and is telling the world his faith is in Him alone.
 2. **Union with Christ** (Rom. 6:1-4). Water baptism is a picture, outward portrayal, of what God has done already in uniting the believer with Christ. The believer participates in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. (*The actual event takes place when the believer puts his faith in Christ.*) For more on this read Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:10-13, 20; Col. 3:1.
 3. **Desire to obey Christ** (Matt. 28:19-20). The believer announces his decision to follow Jesus for the rest of his life. Certainly obedience to his Lord's commands is understood!
 4. **Cleansing from sin** (Acts 22:16). While baptism does not wash away sins, it does portray the believer's cleansing from sin's defilement and guilt. The believer claims his freedom from sin as being final, once-for-all, never to be repeated again. See Col. 2:13; Heb. 9:14; 10:10, 12; Rom. 8:31-34 for more insight.
- **How should one be baptized?** There are three modes or forms of baptism practiced in the Church today. The most common form is **pouring** (*known as affusion*). The second is **sprinkling** (*known as aspersion, not commonly practiced until the 13th century*). The third is **dipping** the new believer in water (*known as immersion*).

There are three reasons why dipping or immersion is the proper mode:

1. **The meaning of the Greek word "baptidzo"** is to immerse. All Greek lexicons translate this word immerse or dip, **never** is it translated sprinkle or pour, and remember *no lexicon was written by a Baptist!* The word has been transliterated into our language—to have translated it would have shown sprinkling and pouring to be unbiblical.
2. **Immersion was the practice of the New Testament Church.** The only description of baptism in the New Testament is the story about the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:38-39). They both went down **into** the water, and came **up out** of the water. This would not have been necessary if sprinkling or pouring were proper.
3. **Immersion properly portrays the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.** Only immersion is a picture of death (as the believer goes down into the water), burial (as he remains under the water), and resurrection (as he is raised up out of the water).

The early church departed from the practice of immersion when false teaching arose in the second century that a person had to be baptized to be saved since baptism washed away sins. This error led to infant baptism and the baptism of infirmed people.

Since they could not be immersed, they were sprinkled. There is no scriptural grounds for baptismal regeneration, or infant baptism, or any mode of baptism other than immersion.

5. Let us now consider the fourth command in Matthew 18:19-20. **Teaching.**

According to Matthew 28:20, we are to teach what God has commanded us. Has God shown you anything? You might not know as much as someone else, but you know what you know! Teach what you know.

6. **There are several teaching opportunities** at Grace Fellowship are:

• **Sunday Worship**

Read Hebrews 10:25. We are instructed to meet regularly with other believers. Most churches set aside **Sunday morning** as a time to worship the Lord. As part of that weekly service the Pastor presents truths from the Word of God. These messages are biblically based with applications to the believer's life. Don't miss this opportunity to learn.

• **LifeBuilders**

Much of LifeBuilders is about learning. The following focus on learning and applying the Word to your life: *(these are listed on the webpage)*

- Springs of Life Lessons
- Christian books
- Special Life Electives
- Bible reading and memorization

• **LifeGroups**

These groups meet twice monthly for encouragement and accountability. Usually limited to 8, these groups are designed to study, challenge, pray, and minister. Within these groups each disciple will be matched with another disciple for mutual discipling and encouraging. Once a disciple is on LifeBuilders Step 3 he or she will be responsible to take another disciple through Step 1.

• **Mentoring**

Read 2 Timothy 2:2. Here we have discipleship explained in one verse!

What are you to pass on? _____

To what kind of men are you to pass them on? _____

What are they to do in turn? _____

Lest you ladies feel this is only for men—read Titus 2:3-5. It is the responsibility of women to teach the younger women godliness. It is always best to have men discipling men and women discipling women!

Mentoring does not have to be formal. It can be as casual as meeting for coffee, or for jogging. The goal is the imparting of spiritual truth and mutual accountability. If you are not now discipling someone, find a *disciplee*. Ask the Lord to lead you to him or her.

Mentoring is usually done one-on-one or in couples. This is intensive work designed to help new disciples find freedom in Christ and prepare them to go into a LifeGroup.

• **Special Teaching Opportunities**

Throughout the year we challenge disciples to be involved in retreats, conferences, and special teaching weekends.

7. The *goal* of teaching disciples is recorded in Ephesians 4:12.

- **Equipping**

Here Paul says that the work of ministry is *not* done by the Pastor, evangelist, etc. Who is to do the work of service or ministry? _____

The goal of any pastoring, teaching, or discipling is to equip the **saints to serve**. This assumes that everyone serves some place in the Body. If you do not have a place of service you are derelict as a believer! It is your calling to serve Christ wherever He chooses.

Read Matthew 25:14-30. Note especially verses 21 and 23. Because these two slaves were faithful in _____ things the owner put them in charge of _____ things. Far too many believers want to be in charge of much when they have not been faithful in the little things.

Before you will be given the responsibility of much you **must prove yourself faithful in little!** This is a law in the Kingdom. Paul was faithful for almost 14 years before he left on his **first** missionary journey.

- **Unity**

Go back to Ephesians 4:13 and note that the next goal is the unity of the faith. Good teaching brings unity to the Body. Remember that unity does not mean unanimity. We might differ on some minor issues of interpretation, but we know how to love each other—that's unity of purpose! Our goal is the building up of the Body of Christ and oneness in Him. We can have fellowship with those with whom we differ because of the Holy Spirit in us. Love must rule in our relationships.

- **Maturity**

What a difficult word. Some believe they are mature because they've been around a long time. Others because they know a lot of information. Review the **Marks of a Disciple** in Introduction Lesson. These are the signs of maturity. How are you coming??

A mature believer has been through many testing of his or her faith (see James 1:1-4) and has come through the test purer. Like refined gold, the mature believer is precious and of great value. Why don't you make it your goal to be a mature believer and lead others to maturity?!

Remember the definition of evangelism? The final step in the Great Commission is to mature believers to the place where they in turn can make disciples, lead them to be baptized, and teach them, so they will also be able to do the same!

Self-Forgiveness

Revelation 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

1. Read Revelation 3:20 and replace the words “any man, him, and he with your name. Do you understand what Jesus is saying? ***He wants to have fellowship with you!***

2. Read Genesis 4:1-16.

Who were Cain and Abel? _____

Why did Cain kill Abel? _____

For what had God judged both Cain and Abel? _____

God had instituted the idea of an offering to demonstrate His willingness to have fellowship with man.

3. Read Romans 3:23 and 6:23. From these two verses it is evident that we all have a serious problem. Like Adam, Eve, and Cain, we have sinned. The penalty for sin still remains—death!

But God has provided a way for us to continue to have fellowship with Him.

Read Leviticus 6:6-7

What kind of offering is he talking about? _____

The priest will make _____ for him before the Lord.

The word “atonement” means “to cover”. It is the Hebrew word translated “coat” as in a “coat of paint”.

Read Hebrews 10:3-4.

What is the annual sacrifice a reminder of? _____

What is it unable to do? _____

Read Romans 5:12. How many are under the death penalty? _____

4. If death is the penalty for sin, why doesn't God just kill everyone? Is there something else He wants besides retribution? Yes! God wants fellowship with us. The entire sacrificial system was a means to hold off His system of justice while He made provision for sinful men and women to be rescued.

5. God's provision for sin's penalty is Jesus. Read Hebrews 9:11-22

According to v. 12, how many times did Jesus die? _____

According to v. 22, there is no forgiveness without _____

Read Colossians 2:13-14

What was cancelled (blotted out)? _____

To what was it nailed? _____

Read Ephesians 1:7

What two things does every believer receive in Jesus?

R _____

F _____

6. Our sins have been atoned for by the death of Jesus.

Read Colossians 2:13 again.

How many of our sins are forgiven? _____

The biblical term for God's decree that we are no longer guilty is justification. According to Romans 5:1-2, what three things do we have as a result of our justification?

Peace with _____

Access to His _____

Hope of the _____

7. Here's what we have seen so far:

- God wants to have fellowship with us.
- Sin is a serious problem and requires death.
- God instituted the sacrificial plan to hold back His justice.
- Jesus became our sacrifice for sin.
- We are...

redeemed

forgiven

at peace with God

able to access His grace

able to experience the hope of His glory

8. *Is God really all that anxious to forgive sin?*

Read Luke 15. These are three wonderful parables of Jesus. His goal is to illustrate the nature of God. Write down some of your insights about God from this chapter.

If you were the one sheep that was lost, would God go looking for you??

_____ (I hope you put "yes"!!)

Do you think there is rejoicing in heaven over you? _____

From the story of the prodigal son, how do you imagine the father's face when he sees his son coming home?

God is ready with open arms to forgive anyone who comes to Him.

9. Since forgiveness is such a great part of God's nature, should it be a great part of your new nature as well? _____

But to whom should you give forgiveness? Let me suggest **two groups** that you must forgive:

- those who have sinned against you
- yourself

The Forgiveness Lesson covered the first — this lesson will focus on forgiving ourselves.

10. The basis for self-forgiveness is our **forgiven-ness!** God has chosen out of His grace, to forgive us and to give us His nature. That nature lives in us and wants to get out and forgive others as well as forgive us.

Jesus has made atonement for our sins and given us the responsibility and privilege of forgiving ourselves.

11. **Consequences of not forgiving ourselves:**

The unforgiving spirit produces:

- **Self-punishment.** We replay our sins over and over. This self-inflicted incarceration heaps guilt upon guilt.

- **Uncertainty.** We are never really sure that God has forgiven us. We are not sure of where we stand with God and feel unworthy of His blessing.
- **Sense of unworthiness.** Because we are guilty we feel unworthy. We say, “*why should God answer my prayer?*” or “*Why should I receive anything from God.*”
- **Excessive behavior.** Overcoming guilt by excessive behavior is very prevalent. People try drugs, alcohol, sexual affairs, material possessions, eating, etc. to cover their guilt.
- **False humility.** Our humble face serves as a mask to keep us from seeing our true face. It is very difficult to receive a compliment.
- **Self-deprivation.** We deprive ourselves of things God wants us to enjoy.

12. *Why we can't forgive ourselves:*

- **Performance-based forgiveness.** Our difficulty is in *feeling* forgiven not in actually being forgiven. We believe we have to earn forgiveness. This is a lie from the pit of hell!
- **Disappointment in self.** We have difficulty accepting the truth about ourselves. We might disappoint ourselves, but we do not disappoint God!
- **Accept Guilt.** Freedom from guilt is too scary. We have learned to live with the guilt and can't imagine being without it.
- **Expectation of Sin.** This also is unbelief and a works-based attitude toward ourselves. Paul said he put *no confidence* in the flesh. Should we?

13. *How to forgive yourself:*

- **Recognize the lack of forgiveness.** Identify specific things that you are holding against yourself. Write them down.
- **Repent.** Tell the Lord that you have been holding yourself captive, and you want to change that now! Admit that what you did was sin and that your lack of self-forgiveness is sin.
- **Reaffirm trust.** Tell the Lord that you trust His Word. Tell Him you believe He has forgiven you for your sin.
- **Receive freedom.** Confess your freedom in Christ by claiming His forgiveness and forgive yourself for each offense. Use the Prayer Agenda on the next page., filling in your name for the one you are forgiving. Be specific. Be thorough. Speak the words out loud so you and the devil can hear them.
- **Renounce unbelief.** It is very important to break the chains of bondage by renouncing the devil's hold on you through unbelief.

14. *Keep your freedom by always forgiving yourself.*

The Prayer of Forgiveness.

*The following prayer agenda was developed over many years and includes every detail necessary to set you free. Do not leave any part out!
The italicized-bold words are important parts of the prayer.*

Dear Heavenly Father,

It is **my choice** today to forgive (*name the person who offended you*)

...for the offense which he/she brought against me (*describe the offense briefly*).

I forgive him/her **unconditionally** for the things done which brought hurt in my life.

I **drop every charge** which I have brought against him/her and **give up the right** to ever charge him/her again for this offense.

I **cancel every judgment** I have made against him/her.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ **I release** him/her **from all responsibility** for the hurt which he/she caused me regardless of how badly I was hurt.

Heavenly Father, I drop every charge I've had against you for permitting this to happen to me and please forgive me for any way that I have blamed you in this offense.

As I have forgiven _____ for the hurt I have experienced, please forgive me of my hurt, bitterness, anger, and unforgiveness.

Holy Spirit, **please come and heal my thoughts, my emotions and my memories** from all the damage and defilement caused by my offense.

Thank you, Father, for my healing.

(It may be necessary to repeat the prayer. Continue until you have peace.)