

A Study for New People

Laying a Sure Foundation

13 Lessons

**Produced by:
Paul E. Cantrell**

2011

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"Laying a Sure Foundation"

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Lesson One

"Introductory Thoughts"

If you have just become a Christian (a child of God), the Lord has added you to His Church (Acts 2:47; Matt. 16:18). With this new relationship come **blessings, promises, and responsibilities**. We **WELCOME** you into the fellowship of God and His people. You have also affiliated yourself with the Church that meets in Camp Hill, PA. This congregation has been meeting at this location (3042 Cumberland Blvd.) since the early 1950's, and has been an assistance in helping to start two other congregations in the Harrisburg area. Our purpose as a group of God's people is to seek those who are lost, strengthen those who are saved, and strive to bring all into the "image of Christ." (Eph. 4:11-16; Matt. 28:18-20). If you would like to learn more about the background and history of this congregation, please go to our website at (WWW/CAMPHILLCOFC.ORG).

The church is blessed with spiritually qualified people who serve this congregation as **Elders, Deacons, Preachers, and Teachers**. We encourage you to become acquainted with these servants and offer your help, support, interest, and encouragement to all of these fellow-Christians. (See the Church Bulletin).

A **directory** has been published containing the names, addresses, phone numbers, and some general information about each member and their family. **Be sure you ask for a copy if you did not receive one**. We also have a "short form directory" that simplifies the directory for telephone use.

The men of the congregation have worked up a proposed Budget for the present year. This will give you some idea of the things we are involved in financially. Please look it over at your leisure and decide what you will do about your giving to God and His Work.

Things to be accomplished

The following things in this and the 12 more lessons will be to:

- ◇ **Stabilize and anchor your faith in Christ and His Word;**
- ◇ **Be sure of your foundation in Christ;**
- ◇ **Mature your understanding and your life in Christ;**
- ◇ **Encourage you in your Christian walk.**
- ◇ **Give you knowledge of the Church of which we are a part.**

We hope you look forward to the fellowship and the study together of those who visit with you at our request.

The ELDERS

Lesson Two

"A New Commitment"

People commit themselves to all kinds of activities, causes, and jobs. A commitment is usually a promise, a pledge, a vow, or expressing an allegiance to someone or some thing. When we get married, we commitment ourselves to our mates. Faithfulness, steadfastness, and loyalty are expected of us.

When we become a Christian, we are pledging or committing ourselves to follow Jesus as our Lord and Master. This is the greatest commitment that we will ever make in our lives; and a commitment to the greatest cause on earth. Jesus is not only our Savior and Redeemer, but He is also our Lord and Master! In other words—becoming a Christian is not all receiving on our end; but, it is also a lot of giving as well. How well we follow Jesus will determine and illustrate our commitment to Him.

The following Scriptures will help to illustrate the kind of commitment that Jesus can rightfully expect of us:

Rom. 6:1-2 _____

Rom. 6:16-17 _____

Gal. 2:20 _____

Matt. 16:24 _____

Luke 6:46 _____

Phil. 2:1-2 _____

Phil. 2:3 _____

Phil. 2:4 _____

When we commit our lives to Jesus, the Christ, we commit ourselves to be obedient to our new Master. However, everything that He calls on us to do is for our good here in this life and for all eternity, as well. So, when we give ourselves in service to Him, we are the one that is blessed!

We have begun our walk as a disciple of Jesus. He has called us to discipleship and we have answered that call. The purpose of this call is to bring us to completeness or perfection as a child of God (Matt. 5:48). He wants us to come to know Him fully; to grow to our fullest potential spiritually; to become a dedicated servant to others; and to be able to share the Gospel of Christ effectively with others about us.

Questions to Challenge!

- 1. What should be done with a Christian who is living in open and obvious sin?**

- 2. What does it mean that the Christian is to be a servant of righteousness?**

- 3. In what sense is Jesus the Lord of our lives?**

- 4. How can you tell the difference between a selfish person and an unselfish person?**

- 5. How does one become dead to sin?**

- 6. How can Christians be of one mind, same love, and of one accord?**

Lesson Three

"Saved by Grace"

Man cannot save himself upon the basis of his goodness! **"No one is good, but God."** (Lk. 18:19). Man would have to live a perfect life to be just before God (Gal. 3:10-11). This is the reason why we need Jesus, the Son of God, to save us by the grace of God (Eph. 2:8-9). God offers salvation to all men through the preaching of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16; 10:18o). If man wants to be saved, he can only be saved by God's grace through faith in Christ Jesus. But what kind of faith do we have to have? It must not be a dead faith, but an obedient faith (Jas. 2:24). This is the reason why you and I were told that we must do the following things to be saved:

1. _____ Jn. 3:16
2. _____ Acts 17:30; 3:19
3. _____ Rom. 10:9-10
4. _____ Rom. 6:3-4

Upon this obedient faith we were:

1. _____ Mk. 16:15-16
2. _____ Acts 2:38
3. _____ Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13
4. _____ Jn. 3:3-5

From what were we saved?

1. _____ Rom. 8:1-2
2. _____ Rom. 6:23; Rev. 22:15
3. _____ Rom. 6:1-2, 6
4. _____ Rom. 6:14, 18

Can I be sure of my salvation? The answer is "Yes!" But it is not from a self-righteous assurance (Lk. 18:9), nor from a self-deluded assurance (2 Cor. 13:5). This assurance is based on two things:

1. What God has taught me to do in His word to be saved. Lk. 6:46
2. What I can honestly say I have done and am doing in order to be saved. Matt. 7:21; Rom. 8:16; 1 Jn. 1:7

Men can depart from God just as they had a free will to come to God. Heb. 2:1-4; 3:12-14; 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 12:1-2. God keeps us through our faith in Him. Jn. 10:28-29; 1 Pet. 1:3-5. But we must remember, it is through our obedient faith!

1. Walking in the light (continuous action). 1 Jn. 1:7
2. By constant repenting, confession of sin, and praying. 1 Jn. 1:9

3. By working out my salvation. Phil. 2:12-13

Salvation is more than something we receive in this life, it is life everlasting or eternal life with God. 1 Jn. 5:11-13; Jn. 3:16; 3:36

Questions to Challenge!

1. Of what value is faith only?

2. What is the connection with Jesus and Baptism?

3. Why is it important to confess our faith in Christ before men?

4. What is the basis of my assurance of my salvation?

5. Why should I want to be a Christian?

Lesson Four

"Added to the Lord's Church"

Upon our obedience to the Gospel, we became "members" of the "body of Christ" or the "church of Christ!" (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13). We are no longer in the world, but now we are in Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). We have become recipients of "all spiritual blessings" in Christ (Eph. 1:3). We have been added to a "divine" institution made up of redeemed people.

- 1. It was planned before the foundation of the world. Eph. 3:10-12
- 2. It was built by the Son of God. Matt. 16:18
- 3. It was purchased by the blood of Jesus. Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25
- 4. It has been sanctified and cleansed by Jesus. Eph. 5:26-27
- 5. We are honored to have Jesus as the head of the church. Eph. 1:22-23
- 6. Someday Jesus will return for his Church. Eph. 5:27

In order to be among that number that Jesus will return for, we must continue to be:

- 1. _____ Acts 4:32
- 2. _____ Eph. 4:3-6
- 3. _____ Eph. 2:10
- 4. _____ Eph. 4:4

The Church has not been set up and left to do as it pleases. It has been given a "head" (Eph. 1:22-23); a "law-giver" (Jas. 4:11-12; 1:25); and a "judge" (Jas. 4:11-12). Each person is directly responsible to Him (Lk. 6:46). No man, nor group of men, may usurp His place and be right with God (2 Thess. 2:1-12). Each congregation of God's people need to have:

- 1. _____ Acts 20:28-32; 1 Tim. 3:1-7
- 2. _____ 1 Tim. 3:8-13
- 3. _____ 2 Tim. 4:1-5
- 4. _____ 2 Tim. 2:2; Jas. 3:1

All are to work together to help build up and edify the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-16).

Don't take the Church "light" for it has been given of God for the good of those who make it up. God is glorified through the Church when it is accomplishing the "mission" for which it was brought into existence.

What a great privilege it is to be a member of this body of saved people who are being lovingly led by the Son of God unto eternal life.

Lesson Five

"Developing a Devotional Life"

An important aspect of Christianity is the developing of a close relationship with God. Since God is not visible to the eye, we have to develop this closeness in a spiritual sense with spiritual things. Some people accomplish this by having a special time each day to:

- 1—Read the Scriptures (1 Pet. 2:2);
- 2—Meditate on what was read (Ps. 1:2);
- 3—End it with prayer to God (1 Thess. 5:17).

While this approach is not specifically commanded in Scripture, it has proven to be effective in the lives of those who do this (Ps. 119:146-147). The one person that is mentioned in Scripture who specifically set aside such a time was Daniel (Dan. 6:10). It was said of him:

- 1-- _____ Dan. 6:3;
- 2-- _____ Dan. 6:4;
- 3-- _____ Dan. 6:10;
- 4-- _____ Dan. 9:23.

However, we are commanded to draw near to God and He will draw near to us (Jas. 4:8). To do this effectively, one must:

- 1-- _____ Jas. 4:8;
- 2-- _____ Jas. 4:8;
- 3-- _____ Jas. 4:9;
- 4-- _____ Jas. 4:9;
- 5-- _____ Jas. 4:10

The above we are commanded to do for our own good!

In our reading of Scripture, we might profit by asking the following questions:

- 1. Does this teach me about a sin I should forsake?**
- 2. Are there promises I need to claim?**
- 3. Are there examples that I should follow?**
- 4. Are there warnings that I need to consider?**
- 5. What does this teach about God?**
- 6. What should I do about these things?**

The following are some good Scriptures that I can meditate on and profit by:

Col. 3:5-17 _____

Rom. 12:9-21 _____

Phil. 4:4-13 _____

Jas. 1:2-4 _____

An additional reason for having a devotional time is to fortify myself against the temptations of life. These come from three sources:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

(Gen. 3:6; 1 Jn. 2:16)

However you choose to build your devotional life with God, it should be started early and kept uppermost in the midst of the activities of life. **Be a Daniel!**

Questions to Challenge!

1. In what way can I build a close relationship with God?
2. Are we commanded to draw near to God?
3. What must we do to draw near to God?
4. What questions could you ask that would help you profit from your reading of the Scriptures?
5. Could Daniel have had a godly life without his devotional life?
6. How can a devotional life help me overcome the temptations of life?

Lesson Six

"Relationship Building"

Upon our obedience to the Gospel, we come into a new relationship with Deity and with people. We become the children of God (1 Jn. 1:3; 3:1) and brothers and sisters in His family (1 Jn. 4:31). But at the same time, this relationship has to be worked at and developed over a period of time. This generally has to be done by:

1. becoming more acquainted with one another;
2. doing things together—spending time together;
3. and developing friendship with one another.

What are some things that we should do to help build relationships?

1. Read the Word of God and putting it into practice (1 Jn. 1:7);
2. Spend time in Prayer with God (1 Thess. 5:17);
3. Worship together often (Heb. 10:24-25);
4. Strive to be helpful to one another (Gal. 6:2, 6, 10; Phil. 2:4);
5. Learn to show love to God and to one another (1 Jn. 2:3-5; 2:9-10; 3:14).

One of our greatest challenges in building relationships with one another is learning to live with imperfect people. We belong to a family—now learn to live with and love one another! We all have our share of faults and shortcomings. Sometimes, we are not so loveable! How do we learn to live with imperfect people?

1. We do so by becoming humble!

1 Pet. 5:5-6 _____

Rom. 12:3 _____

Matt. 18:3-4 _____

Phil. 2:3-5 _____

2. We do so by learning to love as God loves!

1 Jn. 3:12 _____

Matt. 22:37-39 _____

Humility is having the right view of God and myself which helps me to also have the right view of myself and others. A proper love of one's self will help us not to become haughty, conceited, or have too much pride. Our opinion of ourselves must not be too high, nor too low. It must be based on a sober estimate (Rom. 12:3)—that is, a true understanding of our abilities and our limitations (Rom. 12:16). Remember, it was the publican who cried out to God—**"be merciful to me a sinner!"** He went down to his house justified because he humbled himself before God. Neither should we feel too good to help others who are in

need! (Prov. 26:12). Eventually, everyone will be humbled! We either humble ourselves or we will be humbled! (Jas. 4:10). There is no way for us to build right and proper relationships with God or our fellow-Christians unless we have a proper view of ourselves. When we have such, then we will be able to love our neighbor as ourselves; or love our brothers and sisters in Christ as we ought to—by showing the proper attitude and actions towards them.

Questions to Challenge!

- 1. What is necessary before we can come into this special relationship with God and our fellow-Christian?**
- 2. Why does this relationship have to be worked at over a period of time?**
- 3. Can you think of other things that will help to build this relationship in addition to what was listed in the above thoughts?**
- 4. Why is it such a challenge to build relationships with others?**
- 5. What is a proper definition for "humility?"**
- 6. What makes it hard to build a close relationship with God**

Lesson Seven

"Finding My Place in the Fellowship"

When we become Christians, we automatically become members of the Lord's Church or the "body" of Christ. We also come into a new relationship with a lot of new people—locally and internationally. How well we will adapt to this new situation will greatly depend upon our commitment to Jesus as the Christ and Savior of mankind. If we hold on to Him, we will also hold on to the members of His "body," the Church! But we have already seen in the previous lesson that this may not be an easy thing and that it may take some time to feel fully comfortable with this new arrangement. We not only have to learn to live with imperfect people, but we also need to find my place in the work, worship, and activities of the church—to feel a part of the body of Christ.

Concepts to be recognized

We need to overcome this fact of "newness" in the body of Christ. We belong and need to feel a part of the fellowship. Everything that is done should be geared toward helping the new Christian to be assimilated into the work and worship of the Church. The following are some concepts that we hope may help with this assimilation.

1. Recognize that we are members of "one" body! (Eph. 4:4; 1 Cor. 12:12)

- a) We are added to the one body by God, Himself when we are baptized (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:12).
- b) There are many "members," but "one body!" (1 Cor. 12:12)
- c) Members should be concerned for one another. (1 Cor. 12:25-26).
- d) Each has his place and work in the "one body!" (1 Cor. 12:14-24).
- e) Christ is the head of this one body! (Eph. 1:22-23). What He says, we need to do.

2. Recognize that I am a part of the body of Christ and have my place, my work, and my responsibilities to shoulder.

- a) All of us are important and essential to the fulfilling of the work God has given us (Phil. 2:12-13)
- b) Jesus set the example of doing the work that God gives to us (Jn. 4:34; 9:4; 17:4).
- c) Our lives are to become filled with good works (Col. 1:10; Tit. 3:14).
- d) I need to find where I fit (or where I can be the most effective as a worker together with God's people to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31).

3. Ask and read and learn of the areas of service that God wants us to be involved in.

- a) One of the most obvious is worship faithfully (Heb. 10:24-25).
- b) Benevolence—helping those in need (Gal. 6:10).
- c) Maintenance of the buildings and grounds as a place for worship and study (1 Cor. 11:17).

- d) Teaching or assist teaching in Bible Classes (2 Tim. 2:2).
- e) Personal teaching of the lost (1 Pet. 3:15-16).
- f) Be an encourager to all (1 Thess. 5:14).
 - ◇ To keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3).
 - ◇ To remain steadfast in the faith (Acts 11:23).
 - ◇ Be faithful to God to the end (Heb. 3:13; 10:23-24; Rev. 2:10).

4. Be willing to give:

- a) Of your time (Eph. 5:16; Heb. 5:12).
- b) Of your talents (Matt. 25:14-30).
- c) Of your money and possessions (Matt. 6:19-21; 1 Cor. 16:1-2).
- D) Of yourself (Matt. 16:24-26).

Questions to Challenge!

- 1. What is the significance of calling the Church, the body of Christ?**

- 2. What is it about newness that concerns some people?**

- 3. Why do you think it is hard to assimilate new Christians into the body of Christ?**

- 4. What are some things that will help this assimilation?**

- 5. Why is giving to important to one's assimilation into the Church?**

Lesson Eight

"Stewardship Obligations"

What is stewardship? What does it mean? A Steward is one who has been given responsibilities over another man's possessions in order to accomplish certain stated goals. If he is faithful in his work (did his job well), then he is blessed or rewarded (Lk. 12:42). But if he is unfaithful, he is put out of his position and punished (Lk. 16:2-4). Jesus indicates that we too are stewards in God's house and we are expected to be good and faithful stewards (1 Cor. 4:1-2; 1 Pet. 4:10; Matt. 25:23). Stewards of God must be trained so they can do their work successfully and faithfully. Those unwilling to be trained will find it hard to be a proper steward of God. Growth is what is needed, but it is "spiritual" growth that we need in order to be proper stewards of God (2 Pet. 3:18).

Things to Help us Grow as Stewards!

1. We must be committed to Growth!

- a) We need to become the "company of the committed!"
- b) We must see the need and the value of growth as a Steward of God.
- c) We must desire the food from God (the Word of God). (1 Pet. 2:2; Col. 3:16)

2. We must put away ungodliness in our lives so we can grow.

- a) 1 Pet. 2:1 _____
- b) Eph. 4:22 _____
- c) We must live up to our profession!

3. We must develop proper habits of growth.

- a) Growth is not automatic without proper habits—discipline is required!
- b) We must spend time in God's word. (Jn. 8:31-32).
- c) Regular attendance at Bible Class and Worship assemblies. (Heb. 10:25).
- d) Be with the right people that promotes proper growth (2 Cor. 6:14-17; 1 Cor. 15:33).

4. We must develop Biblical Convictions.

- a) Knowing, understanding, and skills are worthless if you don't have conviction to motivate you to do right.
- b) They must something we are willing to die for! (Rev. 2:10).
- c) The greatest effect on the world is by people of deep convictions.

5. We must develop a proper perspective with our knowledge.

- a) Knowledge is to know what God says.
- b) Perspective is to understand why God said it and how to apply it (Heb. 5:14).
- c) Such will help us:
 1. Resist temptation (Jas. 1:1-4; Prov. 14:12).
 2. Handle trials (Rom. 8:28; Jas. 1:3; Heb. 12:2).
 3. Protect from error (Jn. 8:32).

6. We must develop skills.

- a) Skills is to be able to do something with ease and accuracy.
- b) Skills need to be developed in:
 - 1. Our Bible Study
 - 2. In the areas that we serve in
 - 3. Our time
- c) Skill is to know what to do and how to do (Jas. 1:22).
- d) Skill is usually the secret of effectiveness.

There are many things in which we are to grow:

- 1. Grow in the Christian Virtues ((2 Pet. 1:5-11)
- 2. Grow in control of our lives (Jas. 1:26)
- 3. Grow in making wise decisions (Heb. 5:12)
- 4. God in Faith, Hope, and Love (1 Cor. 13:13)

The challenge is there—but the decision is ours!

Question to Challenge!

1. Why is Spiritual Growth and Stewardship connected together?

2. Why must a Christian be committed to growth?

3. Why must we put away ungodliness before we can grow?

4. What part do good habits play in our Spiritual Growth?

5. Why are Bible convictions important to growth?

6. Why is it important to develop skills in our work for God?

Lesson Nine

"Abiding in the Doctrine of Christ" (#1)

The Church is referred to in Scripture as the "body of Christ" which is made up of many members (1 Cor. 12:1-27). All Christians (obedient believers) are a part of the universal body and should be a part of a smaller group called a congregation. What are some good reasons for my belonging to a body of believers to which God has added me?

- 1. The Church is needed for the organization of believers to work together** (1 Cor. 14:33; Acts 6:1-7).
- 2. The Church can provide fellowship for believers.** This can provide mutual encouragement (Rom. 1:12); mutual edification (Heb. 10:23-27); and sharing of joys and burdens (Gal. 6:2).
- 3. The Church gives opportunity for group worship** (Jn. 4:23-24). Our worship should be both personal and group worship (Heb. 10:25).
- 4. The Church provides motivation and opportunities for service** (Matt. 20:27-28). It helps us to make use of our talents and abilities that God has given (Rom. 12:4-8).
- 5. The Church provides for opportunities to teach and ground us in the Faith!** (Eph. 4:11-16).

In these two lessons we will be spending time on #5 in particular to emphasize the need to be thoroughly taught and grounded in God's truth! The Scriptures emphasize the need for all of God's people to be of one accord and one mind (Phil. 2:1-2). This is accomplished by two things:

1. There must be a desire to learn—to be taught the full doctrine of Christ (Matt. 13:16-17).
2. All must be taught the same thing—the doctrine of Christ (2 Jn. 9-11).

In Eph. 4:4-6 is a list of things that must be taught and believed. We call these things "the basics!" Christianity rests on these basic doctrines of Christ. We will cover three in this lesson and the other four in the next lesson.

One God versus many gods!

The inspired Apostle Paul stated that man is without excuse for changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like corruptible man, birds, and animals (Rom. 1:18-23). In the preaching that was done among the Gentile Nations, they were called upon to turn from "dumb idols to the living God" (1 Thess. 1:8-9). Our danger today is the same "in principle"—we may not make images and worship them, but we can still dethrone God and make Him into something different from what He is (Mal. 1:6-8; 1 Tim. 2:5). Also, we can put things or people before Him rather than allowing Him first place in our hearts and lives (Matt. 22:37-38; Luke 14:26; Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:5).

One Lord versus many lords!

Jesus is to be confessed as "Lord" to our salvation (Rom. 10:9). To confess Him as Lord is to confess Him as "Deity!" But, it is also giving recognition to his authority over us. In Jesus' time on earth the word was used with reference to idolatrous gods, Roman Emperors, and high ranking officials in the empire (1 Cor. 8:5). Among the Jews, it was used with reference to God—denoting His Sovereign authority over mankind (or over heaven and earth) (Matt. 11:25; 9:38; Acts 17:24; Rev. 4:11). Two of the words in the Old Testament that were used of Deity were (**Adonai** and **Yahveh**). When the New Testament quotes passages with these two names, they are used to identify Jesus (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1—Mark 1:3), etc. The 12 disciples used the term to refer to Jesus. He stated: **"You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."** (Jn. 13:13-14). Jesus taught the people as **"One having authority!"** and He did! (Matt. 7:29). While on earth Jesus was Lord, but it was after his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension that He was so highly exalted by God, the Father (Phil. 2:9-11). He has been seated at the right hand of the Father, been given a name that is above every name, and at the name of Jesus every knee should bow (in heaven, on earth, and under the earth), and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father!

But, it is one thing to recognize and confess that Jesus is Lord and quite another to truly let Him be the Lord of my life! Confessing Jesus as Lord is required, but so is obedience as well. Confessing without obedience is hypocrisy (James 2:22-27). Jesus openly rebuked the people in one of His audiences with these words: **"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"** (Luke 6:46). He went on to point out the blessings that come to the person that not only hears Jesus' words, but does them! (Luke 6:47-49).

One Spirit versus man spirits!

We believe that the "composite oneness" of Deity is identified as "Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit." My ability to fully explain this concept in order to answer all questions is thankfully not a pre-requisite to my believing such. Faith is not "sight," but faith is based on sufficient evidence that I can believe something to be true or real. There is no question in my mind that Deity is presented to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18-20). The passage in Eph. 4:4-6 stresses that there is only "one Father," "one Son" (or one Lord Jesus the Christ), and "one (Holy) Spirit." It is important that we believe that there is "one Holy Spirit." God is a Spirit (Jn. 4:24), but there is only "one Spirit." Man is made up of both physical and "spirit" (Gen. 2:7; 1 Thess. 5:23), but there is only "one Spirit!" Demons and the Devil are evidently spirit beings (along with all the Holy Angels)(Heb. 1:14), but there is only "one Spirit!" We must be taught and believe that there is only "one Spirit" (Holy Spirit—the 3rd person of the God's head!).

We will continue the study on "the Doctrine of Christ" into the next lesson!

Questions that Challenge!

- 1. Why should all Christians be a member of not only the universal body of Christ, but the local congregation as well?**

- 2. What two things are necessary in order for God's people to be of one mind and one accord?**

- 3. How can we dethrone God and make Him into something that He is not?**

- 4. How do we show that Jesus is Lord of my life?**

- 5. How is the "one Spirit" identified in contrast to other spirits?**

Lesson Ten

"Abiding in the Doctrine of Christ" (#2)

In this lesson we will continue to look at the seven basic doctrines of Christ. God's people need to be thoroughly taught and grounded in these doctrines. If we do not abide in the doctrine of Christ, we do have neither the Father nor the Son! Thus, we can see how critical these teachings are in our lives.

One Faith versus many faiths!

We would suggest that the "one faith" is "the faith" or the "common faith" (Titus 1:4) which was once delivered to God's people (Jude 3). It is that body of beliefs and practices that: (1) Has to be preached (Galatians 1:23) for people to hear, believe, and obey to be right with God; (2) Must be held to (2 Timothy 4:7), contended for (Philippians 1:27), be steadfast in (Acts 14:22; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Peter 5:9), be grounded and established in (Colossians 1:23; 2:7), and to be sound in (Titus 1:13). Those who are weak in "the faith" are to be encouraged and helped (Romans 14:1). The whole church is to be established in "the faith" (Acts 16:5) and be unified in "the faith" (Ephesians 4:13). We are exhorted to examine ourselves to be sure we are in "the faith" (2 Corinthians 13:5). Those who are in "the faith" are also "in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 3:13). There is not to be many different and conflicting beliefs to which God's people hold!

On Body versus many bodies!

If a person were to go to the "World Christian Encyclopedia" with the intent to look up information on the church, he would be amazed at the great divisiveness and fragmentation of what is called by men "the church." At the time this Encyclopedia was completed there were 20,800 different (distinct) churches listed. This is in stark contrast to our lesson today—The One Body or Church of Christ! (Eph. 4:4). It is an obvious fact beyond dispute that in the beginning of Christianity there was but one body or church. All who obeyed the Gospel were added to this group of redeemed people (Acts 2:47). If someone were to ask: "*What has happened,*" the answer should be obvious—man has made a lot of changes! (2 John 9-11).

The "One body" is the spiritual body of Christ. Thus, the "One body" of Christ is the "One church of Christ." (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23). Jesus is the head of this body, the church. There is but one head over one body! The church and Christ are not a "freak," but that which is natural all around us—one head over one body. Headship carries with it the concept of authority over the body (the church). The body is either in subjection to the head or in rebellion against the head. When the Scriptures use the phrase "***the churches of Christ salute you,***" it is not referring to different churches, but the same church (congregation) in different localities. (Rom. 16:16). It is also obvious that a body is made up of many members; and, in the same way, the church is made up of many members—but they make up that "One Body of Christ (the church)." (1 Cor. 12:12).

One Baptism verses many baptisms!

There has been for many years a question about the meaning of the word "baptism." People want to know how it is to be administered—is the person to be "**sprinkled with water,**" "**have water poured over him,**" or is the person to be "**immersed in water?**" There is another vital question about baptism—"**is it essential or necessary in order to be saved or made right with God?**" Both of these questions deal with the issue of the "one baptism!"

The definition of the word makes it very clear how the act is to be administered:

1. **"to dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge"**
2. **"To cleanse by dipping or submerging"**
3. **Metaphorically, "To overwhelm"**

---Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

Thus, not only does the Bible tell us the "how" to administer "baptism" but the meaning of the Greek word supports it clearly. In addition to the above, it is interesting to notice that **sprinkling, pouring, and immersion** are three different actions and cannot be the same. The Greek language also has three **different** words for these **different** actions.

Rantizo is translated "sprinkling" in such passages as Hebrews 9:13.

Cheo is translated "pouring" in such passages as Acts 2:17.

Baptizo is described as a burial in such passages as Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12.

These are three different words and three different actions. God chose the Greek word that He commanded of men—**Baptizo—to dip, to submerge, to immerse**. If Jesus is Lord, then we will do what He commands (Lk. 6:46).

We now need to look into the necessity of water baptism. It is a command that we can obey and must obey (Lk. 6:46) in order to be acceptable to God. It is interesting to notice that in every case where "water baptism" is mentioned and "salvation" or its equivalent is mentioned in the same passage—that "salvation" or its equivalent always came to a person after being "immersed in water" in obedience to God's will. Notice these Scriptures:

Mark 16:1; John 3:5; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:4; Rom. 6:17-18; Col. 2:12-13; 1 Pet.1:22-23; 1 Pet. 3:20-21

One Hope versus many hopes!

Human beings are creatures of motivation—"What's in it for me?" We have to see some value or purpose for doing things. Why should I want to live a righteous life? Why should I deny myself the indulgence in all the tempting activities of this world? The question of why continually comes up and demands some kind of an answer because we are creatures of motivation. Our children continually remind us of this fact by their wanting to know why, why, why?

The Bible talks about the “one hope” (not many) of the Gospel—that is, the hope of Heaven. There are various Bible terms that express this idea of the “one Hope”—“**everlasting life**” (Matthew 25:46), “**many mansions**” (John 14:1), “**new Heaven and Earth**” (2 Peter 3:13), etc.

We can be motivated by various things: money, desire for education, thrill or excitement, profit, fear, love, etc. We can also be motivated to do various things: to go to work, to go to school, to dress neat, to make plans and carry them out, to buy, to sell, etc. When you see a sloppy, lazy, spineless, dirty quitter—you see someone not motivated. Give him the right motivation and his life will be changed.

God uses many things to motivate us: fear of punishment, gratitude and thankfulness, sense of duty, rewards, blessings, etc. Possibly, our greatest motivation is Heaven. Heaven is God’s “carrot stick” to lure us unto Himself. It is God’s answer to man’s question: “*What’s in it for me?*” “*Why should I serve God?*” “*Why should I want to be a Christian?*”

Questions to Challenge!

- 1. Does the expression "one faith" identify all that Christians are to be taught and accept?**
- 2. What five things are stated about the "one faith?"**
- 3. If there is only one body, then is there only one Church that is acceptable to God?**
- 4. What two things are critical to be understood about the "one baptism?"**
- 5. How do you know what is the "one Hope?"**

Lesson Eleven

"My Part in the Unity of the Church"

God's people are urged **"to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."** This unity is made possible by our listening to the teachings of the Holy Spirit—He holds us together if we will open our minds, hearts, and ears to His Word. The desire for "peace" should motivate us to be bound together with what we hold in common. This is not "peace at any price, but peace because we want to and desire to be at peace with one another. Thus, we believe there are two major factors in fulfilling this command:

1. Beliefs that we hold to in common;
2. A spirit of oneness, unity, and harmony among God's people.

God furnishes us with what to believe so we can hold things in common. He did not save us to let us go our own way, but to go together and help one another to make it to Heaven (Jer. 10:23). Christianity is a wonderful fellowship with God and fellow-Christians. Jesus earnestly prayed for the unity of His redeemed people (Jn. 17:20-21). A divisive spirit among such is severely condemned throughout Scripture!

1 Cor. 1:10-13 _____
 1 Cor. 3:3 _____
 Phil. 2:3 _____
 Phil. 4:2 _____
 Rom. 14:19 _____
 Gal. 5:20 _____
 Gal. 1:6-9 _____
 2 Tim. 4:1-4 _____
 Etc.

The ideal is: **"that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another."** (1 Cor. 12:25).

We believe Christian unity is based on two great principles:

1. **Agreement** (Eph. 4:4-6). It is to be taught and hold to the same beliefs or teachings—especially to the seven **"ones."** These things we must hold in common in order to even become a Christian. Without these common beliefs, we have no real basis for Christianity. Without agreement on these things, we have no common platform to hold us together; nor do we have a real basis for fellowship. We cannot share in what we do not hold in common.

2. **Agreeableness** (Eph. 4:2-3). We must also be agreeable--showing lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, and a forbearing spirit. **We must learn how to get along with one another.** We can often agree on matters of faith, but not have a Christ-like spirit in our attitude and actions towards one another. But, we can also exhibit a wonderful spirit, but not hold common beliefs. It takes both to have the unity God desires! Without either one, division is inevitable!

There is another factor that needs to be considered along with the above. **Time** is a necessity—**Growth** has to be figured into the equation! For an example—here is a new Christian standing beside a person who has been a Christian for many years. You would not expect the new (young) Christian to be that grounded in the Basic Truths of the Gospel. This is the reason for forbearance and longsuffering. They need time to grow in their convictions, strength, and understanding. It should also be obvious that a young or older Christian who will not **"abide in the doctrine of Christ,"** will find it hard to have unity and harmony with those in the Church who do not hold to his teaching. This would seem to be the reason for the admonition **"endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."** (Eph. 4:3). The Apostle would seem to be saying, *"you have to work at the job of unity!"*"You have to make allowance for people."

The *"principle"* that will help us to live in harmony and peace is that of **"Love."** **"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."** (Matt. 22:39). **"Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."** (Rom. 13:9-10).

Questions that Challenge!

1. What helps to hold Christians together in unity?
2. Why is "peace" called a bond?
3. Can we force people to be unified?
4. How does God feel about a divisive person?
5. Why is "agreement" and "agreeableness" so important to the Christian religion?
6. What place does "time" play in our being unified?
7. Why must we abide in the doctrine of Christ?
8. How does "love" play a role in unity?

Lesson Twelve

"Attending Church Assemblies and Classes"

A new creature (Rom. 6:1-2) means that we must live a new life in Christ! (Rom. 6:4). A conversion is taking place in our lives that can and must bring about changes for the better. The Apostle continues in Romans 6:6 stating—"**knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.**" The same Apostle stated in Ephesians 4:22-24 that the old man of sin must be put off and we must be renewed in the spirit of our minds to live in true righteousness and holiness. He even gives a short list of things to be put off: **lying, anger, corrupt words, bitterness, wrath, clamor, evil speaking, and malice** (vs. 25-31). In chapter 5 he gives another listing of things to be put off: **fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, and coarse jesting** (5:3-4). He tells us that we once walked in darkness, but now we are in the light in the Lord. He also adds—do not have any fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (v. 11).

This change will take time---plus help from God and others--to make it complete or mature. God knows this and has made provisions for the help that we need. He wants His people to attend the assemblies and Bible classes so that we can be encouraged and built up to live a godly life.

Heb. 10:25 _____
1 Cor. 16:1-2 _____
Acts 20:7 _____
1 Cor. 14:15 _____
Col. 3:16 _____

He did not tell us how long or how many of these assemblies and classes we should attend, but He did prescribe what was to be done when we come together for worship and study.

Because of the automobile, it is convenient for us to meet together for study and encouragement more than once a week. Following are the assemblies and classes that we offer for the good of one and all:

Sunday—Bible Classes for all (9:30 AM)

AM Worship for all (10:30 AM)

PM Worship for all (5:30 PM)

Wednesday—Devotional & Classes for all (7:00 PM)

Home Bible Studies about every night in the week to choose from. (Some also during the day-time).

Why should you want to attend these assemblies and classes?

- 1. Because we are admonished not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Hebrew 10:24-25; Jn. 4:23-24).**
- 2. Because we need to grow spiritually. Our goal is "perfection!" (Matt. 28:18-20; Heb. 5:11-15; Matt. 5:48; 2 Cor. 13:11).**
- 3. So that we can be challenged to go on to perfection (Eph. 4:12-13; 1 Jn. 2:5; 4:12).**
- 4. So we can be rooted, built up, and established in the faith (Col. 2:7).**
- 5. So we can study the Word of God together to get a better understanding of God's Truth. Group involvement keeps us from going to extremes.(2 Tim. 3:17; Jas. 1:4; 2 Cor. 7:1; 1 Thess. 3:10).**
- 6. So we can have the benefit of the more mature in the church (Heb. 13:7).**
- 7. So we can be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks us concerning our faith (1 Pet. 3:15).**
- 8. So we can be prepared for the work of service to others (Tit. 2:14; 3:14).**
- 9. It provides us with fellowship with good and godly people (Heb. 10:24).**
- 10. So that we can maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3).**

Attendance to these assemblies and classes can be very profitable for all; but, we must not make the mistake of trying to force, coerce, or shame people into attending them if they have no desire to do so. God wants willing subjects who are desirous to serve Him with all of being (Matt. 22:37).

Questions to Challenge!

- 1. Who makes us new and how does He do it?**
- 2. What does it mean to be crucified with Christ?**
- 3. Why is it necessary to put away the works of the flesh?**
- 4. What part has the automobile played in our attendance?**
- 5. Out of the ten reasons given above for attending the assemblies and classes, which one stands out in your mind as the most important?**

Lesson Thirteen

"Faithful to the End"

Two things come to mind when we talk about faithfulness: (1) Being true to our word; and (2) Being strong in our faith and trust in God. When two people get married they make a promise to one another that we call the "marriage vows." A vow is the giving of one's word that he will do what he promises! This is what Paul was emphasizing to these Christians in the Galatian churches. God had made a promise to Abraham that in his seed all nations would be blessed. God did not go back on His promise, but carried it out in Christ! The obvious lesson to us is that we need to also keep our promises to be faithful to God. All people should be honest & true to their word—their promises. But, of all people, the Christian certainly should keep his vows or promises! His word should be his bond. His word ought to be able to be depended upon. He should fulfill his obligations. **"Owe no one anything except to love one another..."** (Rom. 13:8). The same admonition was given to Israel! **"When you vow a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he has no pleasure in fools: pay that which you have vowed. Better is it that you should not vow, than that you should vow and not pay."** (Eccl. 5:4-5). To make a promise with no intent to carry it out makes one a fool! Vows or Promises should be made only after serious deliberation.

We become married to Christ when we obey the Gospel. We become a part of the Bride of Christ, the church. We make our vows to Christ at that time. **"Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God."** (Rom. 7:4). **"For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as chaste virgin to Christ."** (2 Cor. 11:2). This marriage was consummated when we were baptized into Christ! (Gal. 3:26-27).

The promises we made to Christ at that time were two-fold: (1) We made a promise to turn away from sin & disobedience to God; and (2) A promise to begin following Christ and do His bidding. No promise.....no salvation! (Rom. 6:1-4).

Jesus said that they were **"in the world....but not of the world"** (Jn. 17:11, 16). We live in a world that does not have the same values as God demands of His people! Christians, therefore, have a choice to make:

- a) Whether to change & conform to holy & godly living;
- b) Or, to conform to the world around us.

If we choose the latter:

- a) We will dress like they dress, and not like God says!
- b) We will talk like they talk, and not like God says!
- c) We will indulge in all kinds of wrong activities, and not the kind God says that He wants!

We will then be identified with the world around us.....And they will not hate us! (John 17:14-18). The world usually hates those who are different from them. But if we want to be

pleasing to God & acceptable to Him, we must live as God directs—even when it goes contrary to the world. (1 Jn .2:15-17). Righteous living is a necessity—no excuses accepted! (1 John 3:7-10). Holy living is a direct command of God! (1 Peter 1:13-16). When God commands, we need to obey! He rightly expects us to make righteousness a guide for our lives. He does not require what we cannot do. And He makes allowances for our weaknesses—but not our rebellion! We are to pursue righteousness and not to pursue the world & be identified with them. Listen to God's admonitions to His people: ***"For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness."*** (Rom. 6:19)

God's admonition to His people is: ***"Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."*** (Rev. 2:10). Hope is something in the future to be obtained. If we want the prize, we must remain faithful all the way to the end of life.(Heb. 6:11;1 Jn. 1:7-9).

Questions to Challenge!

1. What does it mean to be true to your word?
2. Can we depend upon the promises of God?
3. When do we become married to Christ?
4. What two basic promises did we make to Christ when we became a Christian?
5. What does the expression mean: (in the world, but not of the world)?
6. What if a person is only faithful until he retires from his work—will he receive a crown of life?
7. Why do Christians dress and act like the world?

