

My Life With Jesus

Faith Lutheran Church
820 Plummer School Road
West Newton, PA 15089
(724) 872-9710

2007

Contents

I Know Jesus	3
1 Know Jesus As the Resurrected Lord	5
1.1 Introduction	5
1.2 The Bible cites Jesus' resurrection as the FOUNDATIONAL FACT of the Christian faith.	5
1.2.1 It served as the centerpiece of the early church's preaching.	5
1.2.2 It is the climax of all four gospels.	5
1.2.3 It was the reason why the early church suddenly switched their worship from Saturday to _____.	5
1.2.4 For further study.	6
1.3 The Bible also states that Jesus' resurrection also serves as a great proof to all people about Jesus' validity.	6
1.3.1 The Resurrection is something Jesus also taught.	6
1.3.2 Jesus' resurrection is what separates Christianity from all other religions.	6
1.3.3 Therefore it is vitally important for us to see both the genuineness and truthfulness of Jesus' resurrection.	6
1.4 Facts that help demonstrate the truthfulness of Christ's resurrection to all mankind.	6
1.4.1 The rapid spread of the early church in a hostile environment.	6
1.4.2 The drastic change in the disciples.	8
1.4.3 The great number of eyewitnesses.	8
1.5 The Risen Lord knew that people still needed instruction. Significantly he pointed them to the Bible.	8
1.6 Conclusion	9
2 KNOW JESUS - AS YOUR SAVIOR	11
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 A closer look at sin.	11
2.2.1 The Bible uses various words to describe sin . Some of those words are:	11
2.2.2 The Bible describes various ways we sin .	11
2.2.3 The Bible describes sin's effect on us in various ways.	12
2.2.4 The Bible describes the seriousness of each and every sin .	12
2.2.5 Sin places people under God's awesome curse.	12
2.3 Thankfully the Bible has two main messages: law and gospel.	13
2.3.1 The law.	13
2.3.2 The gospel.	13
2.4 The gospel is a truly unique message. Our salvation does not depend on what we do, but on what Christ did for us. Salvation is God's gift to us.	13
2.4.1 The PLAN of salvation.	13
2.4.2 The PRICE of salvation.	14

2.4.3	The PROOF of salvation.	15
2.5	Three important conclusions.	15
2.5.1	When it comes to salvation, there are no options, besides Jesus.	15
2.5.2	Trusting in our own goodness, in addition to trusting in Jesus, discredits Jesus and ruins our salvation.	15
2.5.3	Because Jesus has done everything we can be sure of our salvation.	15
3	KNOW JESUS—AS YOUR GOD	17
3.1	Introduction	17
3.1.1	“Who is Jesus” was a controversial question in Jesus’ day.	17
3.1.2	This remains a controversial question in our day.	17
3.2	The importance of seeing his divinity.	17
3.2.1	If Jesus was not fully divine he could not have paid for our sin. We would not be saved.	17
3.2.2	A person cannot worship the true God without honoring Jesus as fully divine.	17
3.3	Jesus is unique. He was and remains true God and true man in one person.	17
3.3.1	Jesus was and is fully human.	17
3.3.2	Jesus always was fully divine.	18
3.3.3	This union took place at his incarnation.	18
3.3.4	This made his death unique.	18
3.4	The proofs of his divinity.	18
3.4.1	His resurrection.	18
3.4.2	His miracles.	19
3.5	The problems people have with his divinity.	19
3.5.1	Many people and religions don’t think Jesus was fully divine because, at times, he didn’t talk and act like God.	19
3.5.2	Many people and religions don’t think Jesus was fully divine because they can’t accept the teaching of the Trinity.	19
3.6	Conclusion	20
4	KNOW JESUS AS YOUR KING	23
4.1	After his resurrection, Jesus continues to work for believers.	23
4.1.1	He ascended into heaven.	23
4.1.2	He is seated at the right hand of God.	23
4.2	There are many benefits already in this life to acknowledging Jesus as our King.	23
4.2.1	Only believers have eternal life.	23
4.2.2	Only believers are at peace with God.	23
4.2.3	Only believers are God’s children.	24
4.2.4	Only the prayers of believers please God.	24
4.2.5	Only believers can be confident that all things will work out for their good.	24
4.2.6	Only believers are the recipients of Jesus’ and the Holy Spirit’s intercession.	24
4.2.7	Only believers have the powerful Holy Spirit dwelling in them.	24
4.2.8	Only believers have the power to resist sin.	24
4.2.9	Only believers can demonstrate unselfish love.	24
4.2.10	Only believers receive the ministrations of angels.	24
4.3	Looking to Jesus as our Savior and King makes all the difference in the next life.	24
4.3.1	Whether we go to heaven or hell rests entirely on our relationship with Jesus.	24

4.3.2	People enter eternity either when they die.	25
4.3.3	Or they will enter eternity when Christ returns on Judgment Day.	25
4.3.4	On Judgment Day the universe as we know it will be destroyed.	26
4.3.5	There is much speculation and many non-biblical ideas about the last times.	26
5	KNOW JESUS AS YOUR CREATOR	27
5.1	Introduction	27
5.2	The First Day of Creation - Read Genesis 1:1-5	27
5.2.1	God existed before creation. He is eternal.	27
5.2.2	Creation was the act of the Triune God.	27
5.2.3	God created "the heavens and the earth" (i.e., the universe) out of nothing	28
5.2.4	Throughout Genesis chapter one we see God creating by simply speaking. This emphasizes God's omnipotence (almighty power).	28
5.2.5	Throughout Genesis one we also see God's great wisdom in creation. How does his creation of light on the first day reveal that he is all-wise (omniscient)?	28
5.2.6	Each day of creation is described in the same way. "And there was evening, and there was morning - the first (second, etc.) day." This is a description of a normal 24-hour day.	28
5.2.7	How long ago was "the beginning"?	28
5.3	The Second Day - Read Genesis 1:6-8	28
5.4	The Third Day - Read Genesis 1:9-13	29
5.4.1	Seven times in this chapter we meet some variation of the phrase "according to their kinds".	29
5.5	The Fourth Day - Read Genesis 1:14-19	29
5.6	The Fifth Day - Read Genesis 1:20-23	29
5.7	The Sixth Day - Read Genesis 1:24-31	29
5.7.1	The human race is the crown of God's creation.	29
5.7.2	What does "the very good" tell you about creation. . .and about the Creator?	29
II	CONNECTING WITH JESUS	31
6	CONNECTING WITH JESUS - THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH	33
6.1	Faith, not goodness, is the dividing line between heaven and hell.	33
6.2	Characteristics of Saving Faith.	33
6.2.1	Saving faith is more than knowledge. The source of faith is trust.	33
6.2.2	Saving faith is specific. It is faith "in Jesus".	33
6.2.3	Saving faith is not mixed with works.	34
6.2.4	Saving faith produces good works	34
6.2.5	Saving faith is invisible to humans.	34
6.3	Beware of Unbelief.	34
6.3.1	It is so common.	34
6.3.2	It is something believers can fall back into.	35
6.3.3	Concentrate on keeping your faith strong.	35

7	CONNECTING WITH JESUS - THE GIFT OF FAITH	37
7.1	Introduction - Acts 9:1-19	37
7.2	Faith is something the Holy Spirit works in us.	37
7.2.1	The Bible clearly says this.	37
7.2.2	The way the Bible describes conversion emphasizes this. Although it uses different pictures for conversion, each picture portrays God as the active party.	37
7.2.3	Reinforcing the fact that God works faith in us is the Bible's description of the far-reaching effects of sin . Sin has so deadened people to the love of God that no persons have the capability, in and of themselves, to believe or accept Jesus as their Savior.	38
7.3	Why are some people saved and others aren't?	38
7.3.1	Any answer to this question has to do justice to all five of the following biblical facts.	38
7.3.2	The only conclusion that we can reach and still be faithful to these biblical facts is that we can't answer this question in any way that satisfies human reason. The following two statements are both true.	39
7.4	The Holy Spirit uses only one thing to initially create faith in a person and also to strengthen believers in their faith.	39
7.4.1	That one thing is the gospel.	39
7.4.2	God gives us the gospel in three different ways: the word, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. We call these the "means of grace". In the next three lessons we will be taking a close look at each one of these.	39
8	CONNECTING WITH JESUS - THROUGH HIS WORD	41
8.1	The Bible is all sufficient for our spiritual needs.	41
8.2	The Bible is inspired.	41
8.2.1	Although men wrote the Bible, God, in a miraculous way, inspired every word so that we can rightly call it God's Word.	41
8.2.2	Therefore the Bible is inerrant.	41
8.3	Translations of the Bible	42
8.3.1	The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew. The New Testament was originally written in Greek. Therefore we need Bible translations. There are dozens of English translations. These vary considerably in quality and reliability. The two marks of a good translation are:	42
8.4	The interpretation of the Bible.	42
8.5	Bible Study Aids	42
8.6	Conclusion: The Bible is to be our sole authority in spiritual matters.	42
9	CONNECTING WITH JESUS - THROUGH BAPTISM	45
9.1	Introduction	45
9.2	Baptism is a gracious gift from God, not a good work done by humans.	46
9.2.1	Through it God connects us with Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection	46
9.2.2	Through it we receive the gift of salvation, the forgiveness of sins	46
9.3	The risen Lord's command to baptize dictates our use.	47
9.3.1	From this command, we see that baptism has two essential components.	47
9.3.2	This command was given to the Christian church.	47
9.3.3	From this command, we see who is to be baptized, namely, "all nations".	47
9.4	A closer look at infant baptism.	47

9.4.1	Infants, like adults, are not part of God’s spiritual family until God adopts them (brings them to faith).	48
9.4.2	They too can believe in Jesus.	48
9.4.3	An infant’s faith needs to be nourished.	49
9.5	Baptism is to be highly regarded.	49
9.5.1	It is important but not essential for salvation.	49
9.5.2	Rejection of baptism, however, reveals a rejection of God himself.	49
10	CONNECTING WITH JESUS— THROUGH THE LORD’S SUPPER	51
10.1	Introduction	51
10.2	THE LORD’S SUPPER CONSISTS OF A THREE-FOLD UNION.	51
10.2.1	The sacramental union	51
10.2.2	The union between Christ and the communicant (the person receiving the Lord’s Supper).	52
10.2.3	The union between the communicants.	53
10.3	Conclusion: Handle with Care!	54
11	CONNECTING WITH JESUS - VERY CAREFULLY	55
11.1	Introduction	55
11.2	False Teaching, in any shape, size, or form, is extremely dangerous.	55
11.2.1	Jesus wants us to know all his teachings.	55
11.2.2	Jesus takes seriously all deviation from his teaching.	55
11.2.3	All false teaching is damaging to faith. In addition, although not every false teaching will destroy faith, every single false teaching has the potential to do so.	55
11.3	We are to be careful that we are not influenced by false teachers.	56
11.3.1	We are to carefully examine all spiritual teachers.	56
11.3.2	We are to beware of being influenced by the “piety” of false teachers.	56
11.3.3	We are to avoid the influence of all false teachers.	56
11.3.4	List some common ways that people allow themselves to be influenced by false teachers.	56
11.4	We are to be careful that we don’t tolerate or support false teachers.	56
11.4.1	The toleration or support of false teachers is a sin	56
11.4.2	In a public setting, we also need to be concerned about how our actions influence others.	57
11.4.3	List some common ways that people either with their words or actions tolerate false teachers.	57
11.4.4	This principle of non-toleration of false teachers also applies in a private setting. In that setting, however, we need to try to determine why our fellow Christians are holding to a false teaching.	57
11.5	Conclusion	57
III	LIVING FOR JESUS	59
12	LIVING FOR JESUS - IN THANKFULNESS TO JESUS	61
12.1	Introduction	61
12.2	It’s vitally important to have the proper motivation for godly living.	61
12.2.1	The wrong motivation: in order to be saved	61
12.2.2	The right motivation: out of thankfulness for being saved	62

12.3	God equips us for godly living.	62
12.3.1	The gospel (the message of salvation in Jesus) motivates and empowers us to lead this new life.	62
12.3.2	The law (God's commands) guides us in this new life.	62
12.4	Leading a godly life will always be a battle.	63
12.4.1	Through faith in Jesus, believers have a new status before God.	63
12.4.2	Although believers have only one status before God, they have two natures. It is important not to confuse our status with our dual nature. The Bible refers to these two natures as flesh (sinful nature) and spirit. Because we still have our sinful nature we will still sin	63
12.4.3	But these two natures are not equal. The spirit reigns, the flesh remains.	63
12.4.4	Therefore we can win many battles.	63
12.4.5	We dare never forget that Christ has already won the war!	63
12.5	Conclusion: This life dedicated to God is often called a life of "sanctification". Leading a life of sanctification is not equal to being moral.	64
12.6	WORKING WITH GOD'S WORD - Genesis 22: 1-19	64
13	LIVING FOR JESUS - IN LOVE FOR OTHERS	65
13.1	We are to act in love	65
13.1.1	We are to love all people	65
13.1.2	We are to especially love our fellow believers	65
13.2	The Bible's description of love	65
13.3	Adiaphora and the proper use of Christian freedom	66
13.3.1	There are many aspects of life which God has not regulated with specific laws. The church has labeled these areas "adiaphora". The word "adiaphora" literally means "not spoken to". They are aspects of life which God has not directly spoken about in his word with the result that, in these areas of life, he has given us much freedom.	66
13.3.2	God wants us to use our freedom wisely and lovingly. There are a number of factors that need to be considered.	66
13.3.3	Complicating matters even further is the reality that because situations change, how we use our freedom sometimes will also have to change.	66
13.4	Conclusion	67
14	LIVING FOR JESUS - IN MARRIAGE	69
14.1	The Lord instituted marriage in the Garden of Eden.	69
14.2	The Lord has attributed three purposes to marriage.	69
14.2.1	Companionship	69
14.2.2	Children	69
14.2.3	Chastity	70
14.3	The Lord has assigned specific roles for husbands and wives.	71
14.4	The Lord is the one who is to control the duration of a marriage.	71
14.4.1	He designed marriage to be a lifelong union but one that ends at death.	71
14.4.2	In every divorce sin is present. In two situations, however, there exists the possibility that one party is innocent.	72
14.5	Conclusion	72
15	LIVING FOR JESUS - IN SOCIETY	73
15.1	Introduction	73
15.2	Our relationship with the government.	73

15.2.1	Romans 13:1-7 is the most definitive passage dealing with the government.	73
15.2.2	The only time we are to disobey the government is when it tells us to do something against God's revealed will.	74
15.2.3	Should we take oaths when the government asks us?	74
15.3	Issues dealing with the government's taking of life.	74
15.3.1	God has given his representative, the government, the right to take a person's life in order to control society. When governmental officials do this, they are not breaking the fifth commandment, "You shall not murder".	74
15.3.2	Some instances where representatives of the government can legitimately take life are:	75
15.4	Life Issues	75
15.4.1	Ending a person's life is God's prerogative. Only in the limited cases cited above has he delegated any of this responsibility to any of his representatives.	75
15.4.2	This includes actions which society might not consider as murder.	75
16	LIVING FOR JESUS - WITH THE RIGHT VIEW OF MONEY	77
16.1	Introduction	77
16.2	Money can be source of tremendous temptation.	77
16.2.1	Jesus specifically cited money as something that can master us.	77
16.2.2	Two of the Ten Commandments refer to sins involving money or possessions.	77
16.2.3	The Bible says many other sins can spring from a love of money.	77
16.3	Money can serve as a tremendous tool.	78
16.3.1	We need to remember our role as God's "business managers" (stewards).	78
16.3.2	We need to remember our <i>responsibility</i> as God's business managers.	78
16.4	A closer look at how God wants us to use his money.	78
16.4.1	We are to use it to honor him.	78
16.4.2	We are to use our money to support the government.	79
16.4.3	We are to use our money to support our families.	79
16.4.4	We are to use our money to help the poor.	79
16.4.5	The above four areas are the ones where God has given us specific instructions. As faithful managers he wants us to use all his money wisely. Following are a sampling of some passages from the book of Proverbs which contain much wisdom in regard to money.	79
16.5	Conclusion	80
16.5.1	Cultivate this wonderful attitude	80
16.5.2	Pray this wonderful prayer	80
17	LIVING FOR JESUS - BY SHARING HIS WORD	81
17.1	Introduction	81
17.2	Make a bridge: Pre-evangelism	81
17.2.1	<u>Definition</u> : What preparing the soil is to planting the seed that pre-evangelism is to evangelism. It comes before one begins to evangelize, that is, tell the Good News about Jesus	81
17.2.2	Why do we spend time getting to know those with whom we are going to share Jesus?	81
17.3	Cross the bridge: Making the transition	82

17.3.1	How do we transition from talking about the everyday things of life to talking about the ‘one thing needful’, Jesus?	82
17.3.2	What do we say?	82
17.3.3	What will they say?	82
17.4	Removing obstacles on the bridge: Dealing with objections	84
17.4.1	Some objections:	84
17.5	What’s on the other side of the bridge?—God’s Great Exchange	84
17.5.1	God’s Great Exchange Outline:	84
18	LIVING FOR JESUS - WITH YOUR FELLOW CHRISTIANS	89
18.1	Introduction	89
18.2	God gives us support through public worship.	89
18.2.1	God wants us to gather for joint worship.	89
18.2.2	God no longer tells us when to worship.	89
18.2.3	The New Testament says little about the outward form worship is to take. It cites the general principle of orderliness.	89
18.3	God gives us support through ministers of the Word.	91
18.3.1	God has given public ministers to the church in order to help believers grow spiritually. (“Public ministers” are people who serve on behalf of and in the name of a group of Christians.)	91
18.3.2	This public ministry can take many forms.	91
18.3.3	In various places the Bible gives guidelines concerning people serving in the public ministry. Paul’s words about deacons are representative of these guidelines.	92
18.3.4	God has placed some restrictions on women serving in the public ministry.	92
18.4	God gives us support through our fellow believers.	92
18.4.1	Believers are to encourage each other with the Word.	92
18.4.2	Believers are to support and serve each other.	92
18.4.3	Believers are to pray for each other.	92
18.5	Conclusion	93
IV	Appendices	95
A	What does the Bible have to say about keeping the Sabbath?	97
A.1	What do we know about the Sabbath from the Old Testament?	97
A.1.1	The Old Testament Believers did not “keep the Sabbath” (i.e. worship the Lord on the sixth day) until the time of Moses	97
A.1.2	What does it mean to “keep the Sabbath”; or: What is the purpose of the Sabbath?	97
A.1.3	What would happen if you didn’t keep the Sabbath?	97
A.2	What does the New Testament say about the Sabbath?	98
A.2.1	Christ and the apostles restate all Commandments of the Decalog except the Sabbath Law.	98
A.2.2	There is nowhere in scripture that Jesus commands us to rest or worship exclusively on the sixth day	98
A.2.3	The New Testament Church Gathered together on the “Lord’s Day” to worship (i.e. Sunday)	98
A.2.4	In addition, there were even times they gathered <i>every</i> day to worship	98

A.2.5	Jesus does not command us to worship solely on the sixth day because he fulfilled the Sabbath regulations in our place (along with all the other regulations)	98
B	What is Macro-Evolution? And why is it a false religion?	101
B.1	Evolution: A definition	101
B.2	Theistic Evolution—an untenable compromise	101
B.2.1	This view is widely criticized by both the scientific community and other Christian churches.	102
B.3	Macro-evolution: A False Science	103
B.3.1	Macro-Evolution is not a scientific fact - it is a theory. In addition, proponents of evolution can't agree on one theory. Rather there are many different theories of evolution.	103
B.4	Macro-Evolution: A Fanatical Faith	105
C	Knowing your Bible	107
C.1	Introduction	107
C.2	The Major Witnesses to the NT Text	107
C.2.1	Greek Witnesses	107
C.2.2	Non-Greek Versions	108
C.3	Copying of the NT Text by Hand	110
C.3.1	The Dating of the Witnesses	110
C.3.2	The Method of Transmission	111
C.4	The Development of the New Testament	111
C.4.1	Textus Receptus	111
C.4.2	Families of Texts	112
C.4.3	Recensions	112
C.4.4	Modern Day Perspectives	113
C.4.5	How does a Christian make use of the New Testament Variants?	114
D	Why do we baptize infants?	119
D.1	Everyone, due to original sin , is corrupt by nature and held accountable to sin	119
D.1.1	Scripture teaches original sin	119
D.1.2	Scripture teaches the fact that human nature is corrupt (sinful).	120
D.1.3	Such corruption is universal.	120
D.1.4	Such corruption is being transmitted in propagation.	120
D.2	As a result of original sin man has no free will in spiritual matters.	121
D.2.1	In a general way	121
D.2.2	Particularly, natural man has no free will to meet and to cooperate with God's converting grace.	122
D.3	The entire work of conversion is ascribed to the Spirit. (or to the Trinity since it's an opera ad extra)	123
D.3.1	Repentance of a sinner is the work of God. (specifically talking about conversion)	124
D.4	God brings us to faith through the means of Grace, the gospel in word in sacrament	125
D.4.1	The means of grace serve a double purpose.	125
D.5	What is Baptism?	126
D.5.1	Baptism conveys and seals to the recipient his adoption as God's child.	126
D.5.2	The blessing of Baptism is variously designated in Scripture.	127

D.5.3	The manner of baptism is immaterial	129
D.6	So why do we baptize infants?	130
D.6.1	Infants, like all humans have original/inherited sin . And thus are held accountable to sin:	130
D.6.2	Since faith and repentance are amazing gifts which God gives us through his word, we rejoice that infants can believe.	130
D.6.3	If infants can believe, why should we object to preaching God’s word to infants or to baptizing them?	131
E	Protestant views of Conversion	133
E.1	Views on Conversion	133
E.1.1	The Arminian View	133
E.1.2	The Calvinist View	134
E.1.3	What does the bible say?	134
E.2	Famous Quotations:	135
F	How The Bible uses the word “Church”	137
F.1	Bible Passages:	137
F.1.1	The Holy Christian Church	137
F.1.2	The Visible Church	138
F.1.3	The True Christian Church	138
G	The Means Of Grace	139
G.1	God brings us to faith through the means of Grace, the gospel in word in sacra- ment	139
G.1.1	The means of grace serve a double purpose.	139

Part I

Know Jesus

Chapter 1

Know Jesus As the Resurrected Lord

1.1 Introduction

Matthew 28:1-8 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. 2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. 5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." 8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

1.2 The Bible cites Jesus' resurrection as the FOUNDATIONAL FACT of the Christian faith.

1 Corinthians 15:14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

1.2.1 It served as the centerpiece of the early church's preaching.

Acts 4:2 and 33 - 2 They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. 33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.

1.2.2 It is the climax of all four gospels.

- Mark 16:1-8
- Luke 24:1-49
- John 20:1-21:14

1.2.3 It was the reason why the early church suddenly switched their worship from Saturday to _____.

(For more information on why we now worship on Sunday, or any other day of the week, see *Appendix A: What does the Bible have to say about keeping the Sabbath?*)

1.2.4 For further study.

- Acts 2:22-36 is a portion of a sermon preached by Peter. It is a good example of the early church's emphasis on the resurrection.
- The entire 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians deals with the resurrection. It is often referred to as the great resurrection chapter of the Bible.

1.3 The Bible also states that Jesus' resurrection also serves as a great proof to all people about Jesus' validity.

Acts 17:31 - For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all by raising him from the dead.

1.3.1 The Resurrection is something Jesus also taught.

Matthew 12:38-40 - 38 Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you." 39 He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

(See also John 2:18-22)

1.3.2 Jesus' resurrection is what separates Christianity from all other religions.

- The differences between religions are real and not superficial.
- Therefore they all can't be true.
- Jesus' resurrection is the fact God has given to help us cut through the confusion and see that Christianity is the one true religion. Christ is the only way!

1.3.3 Therefore it is vitally important for us to see both the genuineness and truthfulness of Jesus' resurrection.

1.4 Facts that help demonstrate the truthfulness of Christ's resurrection to all mankind.

1.4.1 The rapid spread of the early church in a hostile environment.

1. The Jewish authorities were vehemently opposed to Christianity.

Acts 8:1-3 - On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. 2 Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. 3 But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

2. The Roman government also opposed Christianity.

1.4. FACTS THAT HELP DEMONSTRATE THE TRUTHFULNESS OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION TO ALL MA

Cornelius Tacitus (110AD), a Roman bitterly opposed to Christianity, wrote concerning the great fire in Rome in 64 AD. (31 years after Jesus' crucifixion.) *"Therefore to scotch the rumor (that he had set fire to Rome), Nero substituted culprits and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled Christians. Christ, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate, and the pernicious superstition was checked for a moment, only to break out once more, not merely in Judea, the home of the disease, but in the capital itself, where all things horrible or shameful collect and find a vogue. First then, the confessed members were arrested; next, on their disclosures, vast numbers were convicted, not so much on the count of arson as for hatred of the human race" Annals, xv. 44.*

Do you think people became Christians because it was the "in thing" to do?

3. In spite of that opposition, the church spread rapidly throughout the Roman empire as evidenced from the above quote.
4. As the Bible emphasizes, and as Josephus, a Jewish historian, reports, the focal teaching of Christianity was Christ's resurrection.

"At this time there was a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. Many people among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have reported wonders. And the tribe of Christians named after him, has not disappeared to this day." (Jewish Antiquities xviii,65)

5. Putting these facts together, what conclusion must we reach about Jesus' tomb?
6. No alternative explanation can adequately explain how the tomb became empty.

(a) The THEFT Theory:

The disciples stole the body and made up the story. This was first used by the Jewish leaders (see Matthew 28:11-15). It is still popular today. But

- What are the motivations for people to lie?
- What happened to the disciples for preaching a resurrection?
- What happens when a group is trying to keep a secret and they start experiencing problems?
- Where else do we ever see a whole group of people die for a lie that they themselves perpetuated?

(b) The SWOON Theory

Christ didn't die but fell into a coma. The cool of the tomb revived him and he left the tomb. Hugh Schonfield, in his 1965 book, *The Passover Plot*, used a variation of this theory.

But . . .

- (c) SPIRITUAL resurrection theory:

Jesus' body remained in the grave. His spirit rose. This is taught in some historically Christian churches.

But

- (d) HALLUCINATION theory:

Jesus' followers had a hallucination that he rose.

But

- (e) Muslim explanation:

Jesus was never crucified. It was just somebody who looked like him. For example, see the book by Muslim author, Ahmed Deedat, entitled: Crucifixion or Cruci-fiction.

But . . .

1.4.2 The drastic change in the disciples.

(For an example compare Matthew 26:69-75 with Acts 4:1-22)

1.4.3 The great number of eyewitnesses.

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

1.5 The Risen Lord knew that people still needed instruction. Significantly he pointed them to the Bible.

Luke 24:25-27 - 25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Luke 24:44 - He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms".

1.6 Conclusion

“A British journalist and lawyer named Frank Morison set out to write the authoritative book exposing the resurrection as a myth. However, after painstakingly studying the evidence, he became a Christian, saying there was no question that the resurrection has ‘a deep and profoundly historical basis.’” (Lee Stobel)

A few years ago, a rather prominent Jewish scholar, Pinchas Lapide, scoffed at easy dismissals of an event of such worldwide significance. In his book, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, Lapide argued that one must concede the emptiness of Jesus’ tomb and the subsequent radical transformation of his disciples.

In Jesus’ resurrection, God has given us a foundation on which to found our faith. In addition, our risen Lord did not keep us guessing where the truth is, but pointed us directly to the Bible. That is why we study the Bible and not other “scriptures.” By studying the Bible we are only following the directions of Jesus, the resurrected Lord!

DID YOU KNOW . . . It’s a little known fact even among Christians that in the early history of the Christian Church, Easter was considered to be a much more important festival than Christmas. In fact, Christmas wasn’t even celebrated as a holiday in the Christian Church until 376 A.D. For centuries, Easter was THE festival of the Christian Church.

WORKING WITH GOD’S WORD - Luke 24:1-12

1. Why had these women waited until Sunday morning to work on Jesus’ body? (Read the previous two verses in Luke 23:55-56.)
2. How does their going to the tomb to work on Jesus’ body illustrate their great devotion for him?
3. Who were the two men mentioned in verse 4?
4. Note that Jesus had prophesied that he would rise from the dead but neither these women nor the other disciples remembered this. How does this emphasize the point made at the end of lesson one?

Chapter 2

KNOW JESUS - AS YOUR SAVIOR

2.1 Introduction

1. What is sin?
2. What are the consequences of sin ?
3. Why is sin serious?

2.2 A closer look at sin.

2.2.1 The Bible uses various words to describe sin . Some of those words are:

Transgression

Psalm 51:3 – For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

Lawlessness

1 John 3:4 – Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

Wickedness and evil

Genesis 6:5 - The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

2.2.2 The Bible describes various ways we sin .

Sins of commission

Romans 13:9 - The commandments, “Do not commit adultery”, “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandments there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Sins of omission

James 4:17 - Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.

Sins of thought

Mark 7:21-23 - 21 For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. 23 All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"

Sins of ignorance

Psalm 19:12-13a. - 12 Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults. 13 Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me.

2.2.3 The Bible describes sin's effect on us in various ways.**It totally corrupts us.**

Genesis 8:21- The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done."

It makes us worthless.

Romans 3:10-12 - 10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

It enslaves us.

John 8:34 - Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."

It makes us spiritually dead.

Ephesians 2:1 - As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins .

It makes us hostile to God.

Romans 8:7 - The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

2.2.4 The Bible describes the seriousness of each and every sin .

James 2:10 - For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

2.2.5 Sin places people under God's awesome curse.**God demands perfection.**

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

God curses all those who are not perfect.

Galatians 3:10 - All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

God's curse is the eternal punishment of hell.

Matthew 25: 41, 46 - 41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

(For a biblical description of hell, read Luke 16: 19-31)

2.3 Thankfully the Bible has two main messages: law and gospel.**2.3.1 The law.**

Romans 3:20 - Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

The law is. . .

The purpose of the law. . .

(The Ten Commandments are recorded in two different places in the Bible: Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5)

2.3.2 The gospel.

Romans 1:16 - I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

The word gospel means . . .

The gospel is . . .

2.4 The gospel is a truly unique message. Our salvation does not depend on what we do, but on what Christ did for us. Salvation is God's gift to us.

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

2.4.1 The PLAN of salvation.**God's wonderful motivation: grace.**

Ephesians 2:4-5 - 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Grace is. . . .

G
R
A

C
E

God's wonderful means: He sent his Son to save us, not by being our example and showing us how to save ourselves, but by taking our place and becoming our SUBSTITUTE.

Galatians 3:13 - Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written; "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

Isaiah 53:4-6 - 4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all

2.4.2 The PRICE of salvation.

Jesus' substitutionary death.

1. Jesus suffered the full punishment for sin .

Matthew 27:46 - About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" - which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

John 19:30 - When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

2. Jesus paid for all sin , for all people.

1 John 1:7 - But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

1 John 2:2 - He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Jesus' suffering and death are recorded in:

- Matthew 26:36- 27:56
- Mark 14:32 - 15:41
- Luke 22:39-23:49
- John 18:1 - 19:37

Jesus' substitutionary life.

- Jesus lived a perfect life.

Hebrews 4:15 - For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin.

- He lived that perfect life for us.

1 Corinthians 1:30 - It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God - that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

Righteousness is. . . .

2.4.3 The PROOF of salvation.

1 Corinthians 15:17 - And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

Romans 4:25 - He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Justification means

2.5 Three important conclusions.

2.5.1 When it comes to salvation, there are no options, besides Jesus.

John 14:6 - Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

2.5.2 Trusting in our own goodness, in addition to trusting in Jesus, discredits Jesus and ruins our salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9 – 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Faith is

2.5.3 Because Jesus has done everything we can be sure of our salvation.

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Over the years the Lutheran church has summarized the truth of these first two lessons by talking about the three "solas." (Sola is Latin for alone.)

Sola Fide - by faith alone

Sola Gratia - by grace alone

Sola Scriptura - by Scripture alone

WORKING WITH GOD'S WORD - MARK CHAPTER 15

Verse 1: Jesus was arrested on Thursday evening, this then is Friday morning. Pilate was the Roman governor. Why did they take Jesus to him? See John 18:31-32.

Verse 5: For the reason why Jesus remained silent, read I Peter 2:23-25.

Verse 19: 700 years before Jesus was born, these things were prophesied very dramatically. The Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, writes as if Jesus himself is speaking. Look up Isaiah 50: 6-7.

Verse 24: Again this was prophesied in the Old Testament. Look up Psalm 22: 18. In fact, all of Psalm 22 refers to Jesus' crucifixion.

Verse 25: They started their days at our 6:00 A.M. Therefore the "third hour" would be equivalent to 9:00 A.M.

Verse 37: For other supernatural occurrences at Christ's death read Matthew 27:51-53.

Chapter 3

KNOW JESUS—AS YOUR GOD

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 “Who is Jesus” was a controversial question in Jesus’ day.

Matthew 16:13-17 13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” 14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.

3.1.2 This remains a controversial question in our day.

3.2 The importance of seeing his divinity.

3.2.1 If Jesus was not fully divine he could not have paid for our sin. We would not be saved.

Psalms 49:7-8 7 No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him—8 the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough

3.2.2 A person cannot worship the true God without honoring Jesus as fully divine.

John 5:22-23 22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

3.3 Jesus is unique. He was and remains true God and true man in one person.

3.3.1 Jesus was and is fully human.

Hebrews 2:14-17 14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—15 and free those who

all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. 16 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. 17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way. . .

3.3.2 Jesus always was fully divine.

John 1:1,14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

3.3.3 This union took place at his incarnation.

Luke 1:34-35 34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

3.3.4 This made his death unique.

1 Corinthians 2:8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Acts 3:15 You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

3.4 The proofs of his divinity.

3.4.1 His resurrection.

Romans 1:4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

He rose by means of his own power.

John 10:17-18 17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again."

He rose never to die again.

Romans 6:9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

He rose in a glorified state.

Philippians 3:21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body,

He prophesied his resurrection.

Mark 8:31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

3.4.2 His miracles.

John 20: 30-31 30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Some of the miracles Jesus did. . .

3.5 The problems people have with his divinity.

3.5.1 Many people and religions don't think Jesus was fully divine because, at times, he didn't talk and act like God.

At times, Jesus neither acts nor speaks as his Father's equal.

John 5:19 Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."

John 14:28 "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I."

The reason he did this was that he humbled himself in order to accomplish his mission.

Philippians 2:6-8 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

3.5.2 Many people and religions don't think Jesus was fully divine because they can't accept the teaching of the Trinity.

The Bible teaches that there is only one God.

Isaiah 45:5 I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me.

1 Corinthians 8:4 So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and there is no God but one.

The "problem" we have is that the Bible further reveals that this one God consists of three distinct persons.

1. The Father is referred to as God.

John 17:3 Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

2. The Son is referred to as God.

Colossians 2:9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,

3. The Holy Spirit is referred to as God.

2 Corinthians 3:17 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

The Bible further shows that they are distinct from each other.

Matthew 3:16-17 16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

The word the church has coined to express this truth is the Trinity or the Triune God. Since this is an important concept let's make sure we define it carefully.

The Trinity is.

The doctrine of the Trinity can give us much comfort; it need not frustrate us.

Psalm 145:3 Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.

3.6 Conclusion

Although it is popular to call Jesus a good man or even "a son of God", these are not legitimate options. A good man or a "son of God" doesn't lie about himself or his work. The only options available are that Jesus was a:

Legend

Liar

Lunatic

Lord

His resurrection, however, rules out the first three options. Jesus is the Lord, our Savior and our God.

John 20:26-28 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

The Bible ascribes many names and titles to Jesus. The following are a few of the more familiar ones.

Jesus	This is his personal name. Means “he saves”.
Christ	Greek word for the “anointed one”.
Messiah	Hebrew word for the “anointed one”.
Immanuel	Means “God with us”.
Son of Man	This was Jesus’ favorite term for himself.

WORKING WITH GOD’S WORD - PSALM 145

Psalm 145 celebrates different aspects of God’s greatness. A closer look at it can deepen our appreciation for our great God.

Verses 1-7: List the emotions and actions that God’s greatness produces in people.

Verses 8-13: What aspects of God’s greatness are highlighted in these verses?

Keeping the context in mind, what might be the “mighty acts” referred to in verse 12?

Verses 14 - 16: What aspect of God’s greatness is highlighted in these verses?

Verses 17-21: What important distinction is made in these verses?

Who are the wicked in verse 20? (Think back to the previous lesson.)

As you consider the whole psalm, what applications can you make for yourself?

Chapter 4

KNOW JESUS AS YOUR KING

4.1 After his resurrection, Jesus continues to work for believers.

4.1.1 He ascended into heaven.

Luke 24:50-51 50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.

(Also see Acts 1:1-11)

4.1.2 He is seated at the right hand of God.

Ephesians 1:19b- 22 That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church,

4.2 There are many benefits already in this life to acknowledging Jesus as our King.

Note how the above passage talks about Jesus acting especially on behalf of believers. Although God loves the whole world, there are many blessings only believers receive. The following are just a sampling of such blessings.

4.2.1 Only believers have eternal life.

John 5:24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."

4.2.2 Only believers are at peace with God.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

4.2.3 Only believers are God's children.

John 1:11-12 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

4.2.4 Only the prayers of believers please God.

Proverbs 28:9 If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable.

John 14:14 You may ask for anything in my name, and I will do it.

4.2.5 Only believers can be confident that all things will work out for their good.

Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

4.2.6 Only believers are the recipients of Jesus' and the Holy Spirit's intercession.

Romans 8:26 and 34 26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. .. 34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

4.2.7 Only believers have the powerful Holy Spirit dwelling in them.

1 Corinthians 3:16 16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

4.2.8 Only believers have the power to resist sin .

Titus 2:11-12 11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

4.2.9 Only believers can demonstrate unselfish love.

1 John 4:7b Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

4.2.10 Only believers receive the ministrations of angels.

Hebrews 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

4.3 Looking to Jesus as our Savior and King makes all the difference in the next life.

4.3.1 Whether we go to heaven or hell rests entirely on our relationship with Jesus.

John 3:18 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

4.3.2 People enter eternity either when they die. . .

God has given us this lifetime to come to faith. Once we die, it will be too late.

Hebrews 9:27 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,

Proverbs 11:7 When a wicked man dies, his hope perishes; all he expected from his power comes to nothing.

At death, the soul separates from the body and immediately goes to its eternal destiny.

Luke 23:43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

2 Corinthians 5:8 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

Through his resurrection, Jesus has removed the sting of death for believers.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57 55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:42-43 42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

4.3.3 Or they will enter eternity when Christ returns on Judgment Day.

No one knows when Christ will return.

Mark 13:32 "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

On Judgment Day the bodies of all people will be raised from the dead.

John 5:28-29 28 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.

On Judgment Day the final separation of believers and unbelievers will occur.

Matthew 25:46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

1. Unbelievers will go to hell.

Mark 9:47-48 47 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."

2. Believers will go to heaven.

Revelation 7:15-5 Therefore, "they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. 16 Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. 17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

4.3.4 On Judgment Day the universe as we know it will be destroyed.

2 Peter 3:10-13 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. . . That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

4.3.5 There is much speculation and many non-biblical ideas about the last times.

Many of these wrong ideas come from an incorrect reading of the book of Revelation. Among other things, the Bible does not teach the rapture (the idea that believers will be taken to heaven before Judgment Day). Neither does it teach that Christ will rule on earth for a thousand years (the Millennium).

WORKING WITH GOD'S WORD - Romans 8:28-39

The book of Romans is a letter Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome. In this section, he encourages them with some wonderful truths about the blessings believers enjoy in this life.

Verse 29: Do you remember what justified means? (We defined it in lesson two.)

Verse 32: What else, besides heaven, does Jesus' substitutionary death guarantee us?

Verses 33-34: This is another beautiful thought. Think of a courtroom. Who will condemn us? Not God - he is the judge who justifies (acquits) us. Not Jesus - he is our defense attorney pleading for us. See also 1 John 2:1.

Verses 35-38: Many Christians have committed these verses to memory because they have given them so much comfort.

Chapter 5

KNOW JESUS AS YOUR CREATOR

5.1 Introduction

There is much confusion surrounding the origin of the universe. Many believe one of the numerous theories of evolution. Others try to give God a part in these theories by teaching a theory called theistic evolution. Still others believe that God created the world.

The Bible clearly states that God created the world. It says this, not just in the first two chapters of Genesis, but over seventy times throughout the Old and New Testaments. Jesus, during his ministry, also put his stamp of approval on the biblical account of creation.

Matthew 19:4 4 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female,"

Mark 13:18-19 18 Pray that this will not take place in winter, 19 because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again.

Rejecting the biblical account of creation carries serious consequences far beyond the question of how the universe began. It destroys both the Bible and Jesus' credibility.

(For more information about Evolution and how it relates to God's word see Appendix B: *What is Macro-Evolution? And why is it a false religion?*)

5.2 The First Day of Creation - Read Genesis 1:1-5

5.2.1 God existed before creation. He is eternal.

Psalm 90:2 2Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

5.2.2 Creation was the act of the Triune God.

On the Father's participation

1 Corinthians 8:6 6yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

On the Son's participation

Colossians 1:16 16For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

On the Holy Spirit's participation

Psalm 104:30 30When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.

5.2.3 God created "the heavens and the earth" (i.e., the universe) out of nothing

Hebrews 11:3 3By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

5.2.4 Throughout Genesis chapter one we see God creating by simply speaking. This emphasizes God's omnipotence (almighty power).

Jeremiah 32:17 17 "Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you."

5.2.5 Throughout Genesis one we also see God's great wisdom in creation. How does his creation of light on the first day reveal that he is all-wise (omniscient)?

Psalm 104:24 24How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

5.2.6 Each day of creation is described in the same way. "And there was evening, and there was morning - the first (second, etc.) day." This is a description of a normal 24-hour day.

Ex. 20:10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. *11* For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

5.2.7 How long ago was "the beginning"?

5.3 The Second Day - Read Genesis 1:6-8

What is the water above the sky?

5.4 The Third Day - Read Genesis 1:9-13

5.4.1 Seven times in this chapter we meet some variation of the phrase “according to their kinds”.

5.5 The Fourth Day - Read Genesis 1:14-19

Psalm 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Jeremiah 23:24 24 “Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declares the Lord. “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” declares the Lord.

5.6 The Fifth Day - Read Genesis 1:20-23

5.7 The Sixth Day - Read Genesis 1:24-31

5.7.1 The human race is the crown of God’s creation.

Adam and Eve were created differently from the rest of creation.

Genesis 2:7 7the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a human being.

Genesis 2:21 21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

Adam and Eve were created in the “image of God”. This was not a physical image because, as Jesus himself said, God is spirit. (John 4:24) The New Testament tells us what this image is.

Colossians 3:9-10 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Ephesians 4:22-24 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

The human race was told to rule over the rest of creation.

5.7.2 What does “the very good” tell you about creation. . .and about the Creator?

WORKING WITH GOD’S WORD - PSALM 104

“This psalm is arranged according to the days of creation in Genesis 1. However it directs our attention not so much to the creation as to the creator. Genesis 1 and 2 are an account of creation: Psalm 104 is a celebration of the wisdom and love of the creator.” (John Brug)

Verse 1 - introduction

The first half of verse two - day one

The second half of verse two through verse four - day two

Verses 5 - 18 - day three

Verses 19 - 23 - day four

Verses 24 - 30 - days five and six

Verses 31 - 36 - closing praise

Part II

CONNECTING WITH JESUS

Chapter 6

CONNECTING WITH JESUS - THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH

6.1 Faith, not goodness, is the dividing line between heaven and hell.

John 3:16-18 16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.

6.2 Characteristics of Saving Faith.

6.2.1 Saving faith is more than knowledge. The source of faith is trust.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

6.2.2 Saving faith is specific. It is faith “in Jesus”.

It is more than believing in “God”.

James 2:19 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

It is trusting that Jesus has already done everything for us.

Romans 3:20-25a 20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. 21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.

1. No one can be acceptable to God by keeping the commandments.
2. Jesus died as a sacrifice of atonement for all people.
3. Jesus lived a perfect life to accumulate righteousness for all people

4. Faith is the only way we receive the merits of Jesus' life and death.

6.2.3 Saving faith is not mixed with works.

Romans 4:4-5 4 Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. 5 However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Romans 11:6 6 And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

6.2.4 Saving faith produces good works

What people consider a good work and what God considers a good work often differ. For a work to be good in God's sight it needs not only to be in line with God's law but also done in faith.

Romans 14:23b 23 ..everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Therefore good works are always a result of faith and not a cause of salvation. They are fruits of faith, not the root from which faith grows.

Ephesians 2:8-10 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

James 2:26 26 As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

6.2.5 Saving faith is invisible to humans.

Only God can see what lies in a person's heart.

1 Samuel 16:7 "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

God will separate the hypocrites from the believers.

Matthew 13:47-50 47 "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. 48 When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. 49 This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous 50 and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

6.3 Beware of Unbelief.

6.3.1 It is so common.

Matthew 7:13-14 13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

6.3.2 It is something believers can fall back into.

On the one hand, God reassures us that nothing will be strong enough to come between him and us.

John 10:28 28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

On the other hand. . .

1. Jesus says people will fall away.

Luke 8:13 13 Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for awhile, but in the time of testing they fall away.

2. The Bible mentions people who have fallen away.

2 Timothy 2:17-18 17 Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some

3. The Bible warns us about falling away.

1 Corinthians 10:12 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

4. Even a man like St. Paul was concerned about falling away.

1 Corinthians 9:27 27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

We conclude that nothing will be strong enough to tempt us away from Christ against our will, but that we can willingly leave Christ. A common way this happens is when people treat the gospel carelessly.

James 5:19-20 19 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

6.3.3 Concentrate on keeping your faith strong.

God will not condemn those who are weak in their faith.

Mathew 12:20 20 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory.

But God wants us to grow stronger in our faith.

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Chapter 7

CONNECTING WITH JESUS - THE GIFT OF FAITH

7.1 Introduction - Acts 9:1-19

What was Saul's attitude towards the Lord as he was going to Damascus?

Who was responsible for Saul believing in Jesus?

Saul became well known as St. Paul. Listen to what he says about his conversion in:

1 Timothy 1:16 "But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life."

What is the important point Paul is making when he calls himself "an example"?

7.2 Faith is something the Holy Spirit works in us.

7.2.1 The Bible clearly says this.

1 Corinthians 12:3 -and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

7.2.2 The way the Bible describes conversion emphasizes this. Although it uses different pictures for conversion, each picture portrays God as the active party.

Matthew 22:14 "For many are invited, but few are chosen."

Ephesians 2:4-5 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

John 1:12-13 12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's

will, but born of God.

Acts 15:9 He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.

7.2.3 Reinforcing the fact that God works faith in us is the Bible's description of the far-reaching effects of sin . Sin has so deadened people to the love of God that no persons have the capability, in and of themselves, to believe or accept Jesus as their Savior.

Romans 3:10-12 10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

1 Corinthians 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

John 14:17 - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

7.3 Why are some people saved and others aren't?

7.3.1 Any answer to this question has to do justice to all five of the following biblical facts.

By nature, everybody is totally depraved. No one, by nature, is better than anybody else.

Genesis 8:21 The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart; "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done."

Because of this total depravity, no persons, by themselves, can accept Jesus as their Savior.

Faith is something God gives us.

God wants all people to be saved.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

God is just.

Deuteronomy 32:4 He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

7.3.2 The only conclusion that we can reach and still be faithful to these biblical facts is that we can't answer this question in any way that satisfies human reason. The following two statements are both true.

Those who are saved are saved only by God's grace.

Romans 9:14-16 14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." 16 It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

Those who are lost are lost because of their rejection of God's grace. But we need to always remember that all people, by nature, are in a state of rejection.

Matthew 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often have I longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing."

Instead of being disturbed by this, we are to praise God for this.

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out.

(Also see Ephesians 1:3-14. Note how many times in those verses the thought that this brings God praise is mentioned.)

(For a look at how evangelical churches answer the question "Why are some saved and others not", please refer to *Appendix E: Protestant views of Conversion*)

7.4 The Holy Spirit uses only one thing to initially create faith in a person and also to strengthen believers in their faith.

7.4.1 That one thing is the gospel.

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Romans 10:13-14, 17 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

7.4.2 God gives us the gospel in three different ways: the word, baptism, and the Lord's Supper. We call these the "means of grace". In the next three lessons we will be taking a close look at each one of these.

(As you learn about the Means of Grace in these next several lessons, it might be helpful to consult *Appendix G: The Means of Grace* to get a visual picture of how God speaks to us and how we speak to him.)

Chapter 8

CONNECTING WITH JESUS - THROUGH HIS WORD

8.1 The Bible is all sufficient for our spiritual needs.

2 Timothy 3:14-17 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

According to verse 15, what does the Bible do?

According to verse 16, what are some other ways we can use the Bible?

According to verse 17, what results when the Bible is faithfully used?

8.2 The Bible is inspired.

8.2.1 Although men wrote the Bible, God, in a miraculous way, inspired every word so that we can rightly call it God's Word.

2 Peter 1:21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

(See also 2 Timothy 3:16 above)

8.2.2 Therefore the Bible is inerrant.

Proverbs 30:5 "For every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him."

(For a more in-depth discussion on how the bible was handed down to us and why we know that it is inerrant, please consult *Appendix C: "Knowing your Bible"*)

8.3 Translations of the Bible

8.3.1 The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew. The New Testament was originally written in Greek. Therefore we need Bible translations. There are dozens of English translations. These vary considerably in quality and reliability. The two marks of a good translation are:

1. faithfulness to the original language;
2. clarity of the translated language.

The translation we use is the New International Version (NIV).

8.4 The interpretation of the Bible.

Most of the differences among Christians arise because they interpret the Bible differently. There are four common mistakes made when interpreting the Bible:

1. Sloppiness: Not reading carefully either the words themselves or their immediate context.
2. Not letting Scripture interpret Scripture! Almost always, other parts of the Bible will offer the correct interpretation of a word, verse, or phrase.
3. Putting human reason and emotion above God's revelation.
4. Assuming the Bible contains errors. This is the trademark of the historical-critical method of biblical interpretation.

8.5 Bible Study Aids

1. Study Bibles
2. Concordances
3. Bible Dictionaries
4. Computer Programs
5. Commentaries

8.6 Conclusion: The Bible is to be our sole authority in spiritual matters.

Isaiah 8:19-20 19 When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? 20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.

The Bible is really a library of 66 individual books. The Old Testament, which was written from about 1450 BC to 400 BC consists of 39 books. The New Testament, which was written in the decades following Christ's resurrection consists of 27 books. 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament were letters written by St. Paul.

WORKING WITH GOD'S WORD - Luke 8: 4-15

This is one of Jesus' more familiar parables. His parables were illustrations, often employing pictures from daily life to illustrate spiritual truths. As is true with any illustration, it is important to keep focused on the main point Jesus is making without pressing home all the details.

What is the main point YOU need to remember from this parable?

List the various dangers that can cause people to quit growing in their faith and finally cause that faith to die.

Try to write down specific examples of each of those dangers in your life. For example, what worldly pleasure might be in danger of "choking" off your time with God's Word?

Chapter 9

CONNECTING WITH JESUS - THROUGH BAPTISM

9.1 Introduction

Circle the answer that is **most** correct.

1. Jesus commanded us to baptize
 - anyone who has reached the age of accountability.
 - anyone, regardless of age.
 - anyone who has confessed faith in Jesus.

2. A baptism may be performed
 - only by a pastor or priest and only in a Christian church.
 - only by a pastor or priest, preferably in a church, but any place.
 - by any Christian.

3. The proper way to baptize is to apply water by
 - sprinkling.
 - pouring.
 - immersing.
 - any of the above.

4. Infant baptism is
 - improper because babies aren't sinful and they can't believe.
 - proper because babies are sinful and they can believe.
 - a symbolic way of dedicating a child to the Lord.

9.2 Baptism is a gracious gift from God, not a good work done by humans.

9.2.1 Through it God connects us with Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection .

Romans 6:3-5 3 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. 5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection .

9.2.2 Through it we receive the gift of salvation, the forgiveness of sins .

1Peter 3:18-21 18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, 19 through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison 20 who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, 21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Acts 2:38 38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Through it we were born again.

John 3: 3-6 3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." 4 "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" 5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

Titus 3: 5 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

Through it we are connected

- *to Christ.*

Galatians 3: 26-27 26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

- *and to the Christian Church.*

1 Corinthians 12: 12-13a 12 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free.

9.3 The risen Lord's command to baptize dictates our use.

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

9.3.1 From this command, we see that baptism has two essential components.

The application of water.

This thought is contained in the word "baptize". How to apply the water (i.e. sprinkling, pouring, immersing) does not matter. Contrary to what some teach, the Greek word for baptize does not mean to immerse. For example, in the following passage the word translated "wash" is the Greek word for baptize.

Mark 7: 3-4 3 The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles, and dining couches." (variant reading)

Baptizing in the name of the Triune God.

This involves not only using the correct words, but also possessing the true word. Some examples of invalid baptisms: children playing church; baptisms performed by churches that reject the Trinity.

When these two components are present, the baptism is valid.

When people have received a valid baptism, there is no reason for them to be rebaptized. But if they are uncertain if they were baptized or if they question if it was done properly, they may be rebaptized. Each situation needs to be decided upon separately.

9.3.2 This command was given to the Christian church.

Therefore all Christians can baptize. Normally, to insure that things are done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40) the called pastor will perform baptisms. But all Christians have the right, and in the case of emergencies, should be ready to perform baptisms.

9.3.3 From this command, we see who is to be baptized, namely, "all nations".

This is all-inclusive. It includes all genders in a nation - males and females. It includes all generations in a nation babies, elderly, and everyone in between. The addition of the word "all" shows that this is a gift for all races and nationalities. In short, all people are to be baptized.

9.4 A closer look at infant baptism.

(For a more in-depth discussion about infant baptism, please refer to Appendix D, *Why do we baptize infants?*)

9.4.1 Infants, like adults, are not part of God's spiritual family until God adopts them (brings them to faith).

They are born sinners.

1. People become sinners at their conception.

Psalm 51:5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Psalm 58:3 Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies.

2. This is a result of Adam's sin . This is often called original or inherited sin.

Romans 5: 12-14 12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—13 for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

This sin is "accountable" sin.

1. This is something the Bible clearly states.

Romans 5: 18a 18 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men,

Psalm 143:2 2 Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you.

2. The fact that infants die proves that this is not "harmless" sin .

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

9.4.2 They too can believe in Jesus.

The Bible specifically talks about the faith of little children.

Matthew 18:6 6 But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Matthew 21:16 16 "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, "'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise?'"

The Bible compares baptism to circumcision. For centuries previous to the time of Christ and still today, Jews circumcised their boys as infants, on the eighth day.

Colossians 2:11-12 11 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

This becomes easier to see when we remember that faith is something the Holy Spirit works in us. In His almighty power, He can easily work faith in an infant's heart.

9.4.3 An infant's faith needs to be nourished.

The role of parents.

Ephesians 6:4 4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

The role of godparents.

The Bible never mentions godparents or baptismal sponsors. This custom arose quickly in the early church. If all involved take the role of godparents seriously, they can offer much needed encouragement to both parents and children.

9.5 Baptism is to be highly regarded.

9.5.1 It is important but not essential for salvation.

Mark 16:16 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Luke 23:43 43 Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

9.5.2 Rejection of baptism, however, reveals a rejection of God himself.

Luke 7:30 30 But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.

WORKING WITH GOD'S WORD GENESIS CHAPTERS 3 & 4

These two chapters relate not only how sin first entered the world, but also how rapidly and thoroughly it spread.

3:1 —According to Revelation 12:9, who was working through the serpent?

Note how the devil first just questions what God said. This is very subtle, but also very dangerous. As you read this chapter, we will see how the devil will progress from questioning what God says to rejecting what God says. That is often how false teaching works. It first questions a specific word of God - then rejects it. Can you think of current examples of that process?

3:4-5 —Note another tactic on the part of the devil. The way he often rejects God's Word is by not totally rejecting it, but twisting it to make it mean something different. Again, can you cite current examples?

3:11-13 —Here we see a prominent trait of sinful mankind, namely, passing the blame. Trace how the blame is passed in these verses. Besides Eve, who does Adam imply was at fault?

3:15 —This is the first promise of the Savior. Note the singular “he”. The “seed of the woman” refers to one specific descendant of Eve, namely, Jesus.

3:16-19 —List the consequences of sin according to these verses.

4:4 —Read Hebrews 11:4 to see why Abel’s offering was accepted.

4:8 —With whom was Cain actually angry?

Chapter 10

CONNECTING WITH JESUS— THROUGH THE LORD'S SUPPER

10.1 Introduction

Mark the following statements either true or false.

1. When people receive the Lord's Supper they receive only bread and wine.
2. If a person has sinned a lot the previous week, he or she should not take the Lord's supper.
3. The Lord's Supper should be given to all believers, regardless of their age or beliefs.
4. Through the Lord's Supper, God conveys the forgiveness of sins.
5. Grape juice, not wine, should be used in the Lord's Supper.
6. When we partake of the Lord's Supper we are not only being united with Christ but also with those with whom we are taking it.
7. God has given a serious warning about the unworthy taking of the Lord's Supper.
8. In the Lord's Supper a miraculous union takes place between the bread and wine and body and blood of Jesus.
9. If a believer has no desire to receive the Lord's Supper and hasn't received it for a long time, there is reason to be concerned about his or her faith.
10. The Lord's Supper is a blessing to all who receive it.

10.2 THE LORD'S SUPPER CONSISTS OF A THREE-FOLD UNION.

10.2.1 The sacramental union

This term describes the fact that a miraculous union takes place between the bread and wine and Christ's body and blood. In a union that is beyond our comprehension, all four items are actually present. This is called "Real Presence".

Matthew 26:26-28 26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." 27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered

it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

1 Corinthians 10:16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

The institution of the Lord's Supper is recorded in three other places in Scripture (Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; and 1 Corinthians 11:23-25). In none of these places, or in any other verse of Scripture, do we see even a hint that:

- the bread and wine changes into the body and blood (transubstantiation); or that
- the bread and wine symbolizes the body and blood.

This is a very important point because of the warning the Lord has attached to the Lord's Supper.

1 Corinthians 11:27-30 27 Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

List the consequences this passage cites for taking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner.

What constitutes taking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner?

According to this passage, what should a person do before they commune?

Since Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper during the Passover meal, we know that the bread he used was unleavened (without yeast) bread and the drink was grape wine. Since Jesus used unleavened bread and wine, that is what we use. The use of any grape product or any type of bread is permissible. But condemning something God has not condemned (i.e. wine) is wrong.

We also have the freedom to use one or more cups in the distribution of the Lord's Supper. Although we know Jesus used only one cup, he never commands us to use one cup. Therefore it is permissible to use either the common cup or individual cups.

10.2.2 The union between Christ and the communicant (the person receiving the Lord's Supper).

This is a wonderful union because, through it, the worthy recipient receives the forgiveness of sins .

1. Jesus describes the Lord's Supper as "my blood of the covenant".

Mark 14:24 "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.

- (a) "The blood of the covenant" was an important Old Testament expression.

Exodus 24:8 Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words."

- (b) This emphasizes that the Lord's Supper conveys the forgiveness of sins .

Hebrews 9:18-22 18 This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. 19 When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. 20 He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep." 21 In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. 22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Matthew 26:28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

2. Jesus also described the Lord's Supper as the "new covenant in my blood".

Luke 22:20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

- (a) "The new covenant" was also an important Old Testament expression.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 31 "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. 33 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

- (b) This too emphasizes that the Lord's Supper conveys the forgiveness of sins .

Romans 11:27 "And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

10.2.3 The union between the communicants.

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper in a group setting. Although it was a group setting, it was also an intimate and private setting. There was not a large crowd of people present, only his beloved apostles. This reflects the biblical principle that partaking of the Lord's Supper is not just something "between Jesus and the individual taking it", but it also involves the other people communing.

1 Corinthians 10:17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

The Bible further states that Christian unity should not be expressed when there are divisions over what the Bible teaches. This principle will be one that we will be studying in depth in the

next lesson.

Romans 16:17 I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

We reflect these biblical principles by practicing what is often referred to as “close communion”. Close communion refers to our practice of only communing those with whom we have established a unity of belief.

10.3 Conclusion: Handle with Care!

The Lord's Supper is a wonderful blessing, but one that needs to be handled with care. Persons who should not commune are:

1. Professed unbelievers or people living in a state of impenitence.
2. People who can't examine themselves either because:
 - (a) they don't have the mental capacity;
 - (b) they haven't been instructed in the teachings of the Lord's Supper.
3. Persons who do not agree in what they believe should not commune together.

Even though the Lord's Supper needs to be handled with care, it needs to be used. God gave it as the most intimate way of receiving the forgiveness of sins. Although Jesus never told us how often we are to commune, the more we see our sinfulness and our need for forgiveness, the more we will want to commune.

WORKING WITH GOD'S WORD - Mark 14:12-26

In this lesson we have looked quite closely at various passages that deal with the Lord's Supper. This study is designed to allow you to see the context in which Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper.

Verse 12 For the historical setting and significance of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, see Exodus 12:1:30.

Verses 13-16 These verses highlight both Jesus' majesty and also his humility. On the one hand, he predicted what would happen. On the other hand, he didn't have a place he called his own, he had to borrow a room in which to celebrate the Passover. Also see Matthew 8:20.

Verses 18-22 Here we see the greatness of Jesus' love. This shows that Jesus wasn't tricked or forced into dying for us - he knew what was going to happen. This also reveals his love for Judas, as he tries to warn him about betraying him.

Chapter 11

CONNECTING WITH JESUS - VERY CAREFULLY

11.1 Introduction

During his ministry, Jesus reserved his harshest words for the Pharisees. What lessons can we learn from this?

11.2 False Teaching, in any shape, size, or form, is extremely dangerous.

11.2.1 Jesus wants us to know all his teachings.

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

(Holding to *all* of God's word is what separates faithful churches from erring churches. For a more comprehensive look at how the bible uses the word "church", please refer to *Appendix F: How The Bible uses the word "Church"* .)

11.2.2 Jesus takes seriously all deviation from his teaching.

Matthew 5:19 Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

11.2.3 All false teaching is damaging to faith. In addition, although not every false teaching will destroy faith, every single false teaching has the potential to do so.

Galatians 5:7-9 7 You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? 8 That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. 9 "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough."

11.3 We are to be careful that we are not influenced by false teachers.

11.3.1 We are to carefully examine all spiritual teachers.

1 John 4:1 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

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

11.3.2 We are to beware of being influenced by the “piety” of false teachers.

Matthew 7:15, 20-23 15 “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. 21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ 23 Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. 15 It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

11.3.3 We are to avoid the influence of all false teachers.

Romans 16:17 I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teachings you have learned. Keep away from them.

11.3.4 List some common ways that people allow themselves to be influenced by false teachers.

11.4 We are to be careful that we don’t tolerate or support false teachers.

11.4.1 The toleration or support of false teachers is a sin .

2 John 10-11 10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. 11 Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.

Revelation 2:12-16 12 “To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. 13 I know where you live—where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives. 14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. 15 Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. 16 Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

11.4.2 In a public setting, we also need to be concerned about how our actions influence others.

Galatians 2:12-14 12 Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. 13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. 14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

11.4.3 List some common ways that people either with their words or actions tolerate false teachers.

11.4.4 This principle of non-toleration of false teachers also applies in a private setting. In that setting, however, we need to try to determine why our fellow Christians are holding to a false teaching.

If they are willing to be instructed, we dare not avoid them. Many of Paul's inspired letters were written to correct congregations who had strayed in respect to one or more teaching. Even Jesus' disciples held false ideas concerning his kingdom right up to the time of his ascension (see Acts 1:6), but Jesus did not avoid them. It is our loving duty to patiently instruct people who are willing to be instructed.

Ephesians 4:2-3 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

If they are not willing to be instructed, but instead they defend and teach their error, we dare do nothing that would indicate we are tolerating or minimizing their error.

Titus 3:10 Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him.

Matthew 18:15-18 15 "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. 16 But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. 18 "I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

1. But it is unloving to refrain from any activity with people without first giving them an adequate explanation for our actions.
2. When we talk about our Lord and the great things he has done for us, this "division" often happens naturally.

11.5 Conclusion

Living these principles often leads to being misunderstood. Other people often view our following of these principles as an act of snobbery. But upholding these principles is an act of love - in three different ways.

1. God commands us to do this. Therefore when we obey him, we are demonstrating our love for him.

1 John 5:3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,

2. Keeping in mind the deadliness of false teaching, this is an act of self-love.
3. Keeping in mind the deadliness of false teaching, this is an act of love towards the people we are avoiding.

WORKING IN GOD'S WORD - 2 PETER CHAPTER TWO

As you read this chapter you will see just how greatly false teachers anger God. It is clear that false teaching is not a minor offense in God's sight.

Verse 1 : Note that they will "secretly" introduce their false teaching. We often have to be on our toes in order to discern false teaching.

Verse 2: What added element described in this verse makes it difficult to resist false teachers?

Verse 5 : The story of the flood is recorded in Genesis 6-8.

Verses 6-8: The story of Sodom and Gomorrah is recorded in Genesis 18-19.

Verses 4-9: What comfort does God give us in these verses?

Verse 14 : This could refer to actual adultery or this could be a figurative reference to idolatry. God, in the Bible, often describes idolatry as adultery. Why is that a good description?

Verses 15-16 : For the historical account of this see Numbers 22:21-34.

To impress yourself about the seriousness of false teaching, go through this chapter and make a list of the various descriptions Peter gives these men.

Part III

LIVING FOR JESUS

Chapter 12

LIVING FOR JESUS - IN THANKFULNESS TO JESUS

12.1 Introduction

Most would agree that it is important to strive for godly living. But after that there is a lot of disagreement on:

1. why people should strive for godly living
2. how people can live godly lives
3. what is the standard for godly living.

12.2 It's vitally important to have the proper motivation for godly living.

12.2.1 The wrong motivation: in order to be saved

This is what we naturally think

Proverbs 14:12 12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

This thinking leads to eternal death because:

1. God demands perfection

James 2:10 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

2. No one is perfect

Romans 3:12 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

12.2.2 The right motivation: out of thankfulness for being saved

Jesus has already done everything to save us.

Isaiah 53:4-6 4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

2 Corinthians 5:21 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Thinking we still have to do something to be saved alienates us from Christ.

Galatians 5:3-4 3 Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. 4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace.

Godly living is to be a thankful response to God's grace.

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship.

Godly living naturally follows faith in Jesus.

Ephesians 2:8-10 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

James 2:26 26 As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

12.3 God equips us for godly living.

12.3.1 The gospel (the message of salvation in Jesus) motivates and empowers us to lead this new life.

It enables us to flee temptation.

Titus 2:11-12 11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

It enables us to pursue righteousness.

Psalms 119:32 I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free.

12.3.2 The law (God's commands) guides us in this new life.

Sin has warped our consciences with the result that they aren't the best guides.

1. Sometimes sin makes consciences callous.

1 Timothy 4:2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

2. Sometimes sin makes consciences over-sensitive.

1 Corinthians 8:7 But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled.

The only reliable guide we have for this new life is God's law as it is revealed in his word. If God does not condemn something as sinful, we dare not condemn it as such. But if God does condemn something as sinful, we dare not condone it.

In regard to the many Old Testament laws, the basic rule of thumb is: if it is not repeated in the New Testament, it is not binding on believers.

12.4 Leading a godly life will always be a battle.

12.4.1 Through faith in Jesus, believers have a new status before God.

Romans 8:15-16 15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

12.4.2 Although believers have only one status before God, they have two natures. It is important not to confuse our status with our dual nature. The Bible refers to these two natures as flesh (sinful nature) and spirit. Because we still have our sinful nature we will still sin .

Galatians 5:17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

Romans 7:18-19 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

12.4.3 But these two natures are not equal. The spirit reigns, the flesh remains.

Romans 8:9 9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

12.4.4 Therefore we can win many battles.

John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

12.4.5 We dare never forget that Christ has already won the war!

Romans 7:24-25a 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

12.5 Conclusion: This life dedicated to God is often called a life of “sanctification”. Leading a life of sanctification is not equal to being moral.

1. A life of sanctification includes being moral, but not all moral people are living a life of sanctification.
2. A life of sanctification includes much more than being moral.

12.6 WORKING WITH GOD’S WORD - Genesis 22: 1-19

Abraham was a man in whom dedication for God often shone brightly. In this story, we see him giving us a wonderful example of a God-centered life.

Verse 2: Abraham had waited a very long time for the birth of Isaac. Read Genesis 21: 1-7 to discover how old Abraham was when Isaac was born. In light of that, imagine how much more difficult that made it for Abraham to obey God.

Verses 3-4: Marvel at Abraham’s obedience. We hear no questioning. He gets up early in the morning. He doesn’t have second thoughts and turn back even though the trip took three days. Verse 5: Look at Abraham’s faith: “we will come back to you”. Read Hebrews 11:17-20 to discover what Abraham thought would happen.

Verse 12: Nothing is to be more important than God in our lives.

Verse 18: “Your offspring” or “your seed” refers to Jesus, Abraham’s great descendant. To see this, read Galatians 3:16.

Chapter 13

LIVING FOR JESUS - IN LOVE FOR OTHERS

13.1 We are to act in love

13.1.1 We are to love all people

Luke 10:27 27 He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

13.1.2 We are to especially love our fellow believers

Galatians 6:10 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

13.2 The Bible's description of love

1 Corinthians 13:1-7 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. 4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

13.3 Adiaphora and the proper use of Christian freedom

13.3.1 There are many aspects of life which God has not regulated with specific laws. The church has labeled these areas “adiaphora”. The word “adiaphora” literally means “not spoken to”. They are aspects of life which God has not directly spoken about in his word with the result that, in these areas of life, he has given us much freedom.

13.3.2 God wants us to use our freedom wisely and lovingly. There are a number of factors that need to be considered.

When this freedom is threatened, we need to defend it.

Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

We need to be careful that nothing takes control of our lives.

1 Corinthians 6:12 “Everything is permissible for me” - but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me” - but I will not be mastered by anything.

We need to be careful that we don’t cause weak Christians to sin .

1 Corinthians 8:9 Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak.

We need to be careful that we don’t put an obstacle in the way of spreading the gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:19-22 19 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

13.3.3 Complicating matters even further is the reality that because situations change, how we use our freedom sometimes will also have to change.

Acts 16:1-3 He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. 2 The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. 3 Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

Galatians 2:3-5 3 Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. 4 This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. 5 We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

13.4 Conclusion

Acting in love is not easy. It means being “other centered”. It is often more a matter of the will than an emotion. The only way that we can keep our reservoir of love full is by regularly replenishing it with God’s love for us.

1 John 4:19 19 We love because he first loved us.

1 John 4:7-8 7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Chapter 14

LIVING FOR JESUS - IN MARRIAGE

14.1 The Lord instituted marriage in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 2:22-24 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. 23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." 24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

Matthew 19:3-6 3 Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" 4 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' 5 and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

1. The elements of a God-pleasing marriage are:
2. Why do we say it's sinful for committed couples to live together instead of getting married?

14.2 The Lord has attributed three purposes to marriage.

14.2.1 Companionship

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

14.2.2 Children

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

Christians are to reflect God's attitude that children are a blessing.

Psalms 127: 3-5 3 Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him. 4 Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. 5 Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.

God has not given us rules concerning birth control. Therefore the discussion of birth control lies in the area of adiaphora. Although God has not set down rules, he wants couples to keep in mind the following points.

1. Their decision is to reflect his attitude towards children.
2. Their decision is to reflect trust in him.

Matthew 6:31-33 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

3. If they decide to practice birth control, they need to do that intelligently. Some forms of birth control are inherently sinful because they destroy a fertilized egg.

14.2.3 Chastity

1 Corinthians 7:2-5, 8-9 2 But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. 3 The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4 The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. 5 Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. . 8 Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. 9 But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Sex is one of the blessings God bestows on marriage.

Hebrews 13:4 Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

God has condemned all other sexual activity as sinful.

1. Unfaithfulness between spouses.

Exodus 20:14 "You shall not commit adultery."

2. Sex between people not married including homosexuality.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

3. All lustful thoughts.

Matthew 5:28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Romans 1:26-27 26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion..

4. All coarse joking.

Ephesians 5:3-4 3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

14.3 The Lord has assigned specific roles for husbands and wives.

Ephesians 5:23-28, 33 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

1. What does the Lord command wives to do?
2. Who is the wives' role model?
3. What does the Lord command husbands to do?
4. Who is the husbands' role model?
5. Why, do you think, the Lord gives different commands and thus different roles to husbands and wives?

14.4 The Lord is the one who is to control the duration of a marriage.

14.4.1 He designed marriage to be a lifelong union but one that ends at death.

Matthew 19:6 So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.

Mark 12:25 When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

14.4.2 In every divorce sin is present. In two situations, however, there exists the possibility that one party is innocent.

Adultery

Matthew 19:9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.

Malicious desertion

1 Corinthians 7:15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.

1. The desertion does not have to be a physical leaving. It is a desertion of the marriage.
2. The desertion is of such a nature that it marks the person an unbeliever.

14.5 Conclusion

Although sin has introduced many problems into marriage, it remains a blessing from the Lord. Because of sin's influence, couples need to work on their marriages. They especially need to make and keep God an integral part of their marriage.

Ecclesiastes 4:12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

WORKING WITH GOD'S WORD - Proverbs

Good communication is essential to the well-being of a marriage. The book of Proverbs has much to say on communication. Look at the various verses listed from Proverbs, writing down the key point of each verse.

10:19

12:16

13:3

15:1

16:24

16:32

17:14

18:13

24:26

29:11

Chapter 15

LIVING FOR JESUS - IN SOCIETY

15.1 Introduction

Mark the following statements true or false.

1. If the government makes unjust laws, we have the right to participate in civil disobedience.
2. It is better to abort a baby then having it raised by parents who don't want it.
3. All forms of euthanasia (mercy-killing) are wrong.
4. People who commit suicide can be forgiven.
5. Capital punishment is wrong.
6. There is nothing wrong with organ transplants.
7. The Lord does not want us to swear, therefore, we should not take oaths in court.
8. The Bible does not condemn cremation.

15.2 Our relationship with the government.

15.2.1 Romans 13:1-7 is the most definitive passage dealing with the government.

Romans 13:1-7 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. 4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. 6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Whose servant is the government?

What governments did God establish?

What are the government's main areas of responsibility?

Why are Christians to submit to the government?

List the various ways we are to support the government.

15.2.2 The only time we are to disobey the government is when it tells us to do something against God's revealed will.

Acts 5:28-29 28 "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood." 29 Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!"

15.2.3 Should we take oaths when the government asks us?

At first, it looks as if Jesus forbids all swearing.

Matthew 5:34 But I tell you, Do not swear at all:

But the rest of Scripture conditions this statement by stating that some swearing is proper.

1. The Old Testament law, which was revealed directly by God, contains various regulations concerning religious oaths.

Deuteronomy 6:13 Fear the Lord your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name.

2. Jesus himself spoke under oath

Matthew 26:63-64 63 But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." 64 "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

15.3 Issues dealing with the government's taking of life.

15.3.1 God has given his representative, the government, the right to take a person's life in order to control society. When governmental officials do this, they are not breaking the fifth commandment, "You shall not murder".

Romans 13:4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing.

15.3.2 Some instances where representatives of the government can legitimately take life are:

Capital punishment

Fighting just wars

Police officers protecting citizens

15.4 Life Issues

15.4.1 Ending a person's life is God's prerogative. Only in the limited cases cited above has he delegated any of this responsibility to any of his representatives.

Exodus 20:13 "You shall not murder."

15.4.2 This includes actions which society might not consider as murder.

1. Suicide
2. Abortion
3. Active euthanasia
4. Miscellaneous Issues

Miscellaneous Issues

1. Cremation
2. Gambling
3. Organ donations and transplants
4. The care of the environment

WORKING WITH GOD'S WORD - 1 Samuel 24

This chapter relates an incident from David's life before he became a king. The prophet Samuel had already anointed him as the future king of Israel but the current king, Saul, was still reigning. During this time David had faithfully served Saul. But Saul was filled with jealousy and numerous times had tried to kill David. David is now running for his life from Saul. David's actions in this chapter show how far we are to go in obeying the government. As you read this chapter, list the various points that were discussed in this lesson.

Chapter 16

LIVING FOR JESUS - WITH THE RIGHT VIEW OF MONEY

16.1 Introduction

Can you think of any society - in any part of the world - at any time in the history of the world - where a greater percentage of citizens have more things than we do today in America?

16.2 Money can be source of tremendous temptation.

16.2.1 Jesus specifically cited money as something that can master us.

Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

16.2.2 Two of the Ten Commandments refer to sins involving money or possessions.

Exodus 20:15 You shall not steal.

List some forms of stealing that many consider socially acceptable.

Exodus 20:17 You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

16.2.3 The Bible says many other sins can spring from a love of money.

1 Timothy 6:6-10 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

16.3 Money can serve as a tremendous tool.

16.3.1 We need to remember our role as God's "business managers" (stewards).

Everything, including money, belongs to God.

Psalm 50:9-12 9 I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, 10 for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. 11 I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. 12 If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.

God has made us managers of many things including money.

Matthew 25:14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them."

16.3.2 We need to remember our *responsibility* as God's business managers.

Faithfulness is what God requires.

1 Corinthians 4:2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

Luke 12:48b "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

Faithfulness comes from following God's instructions.

16.4 A closer look at how God wants us to use his money.

16.4.1 We are to use it to honor him.

Proverbs 3:9 Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.

1 Corinthians 16:2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collection will have to be made.

Both of these passages stress that our top priority when it comes to using money is to honor him. What makes an offering one that honors him?

The Lord does not give us specific guidelines on how much we are to offer. The tithe (10%) was commanded in the Old Testament but not in the New Testament. What guidance do the above passages give us?

Throughout the Bible we see that the Lord considers our gifts to him as very important.

Malachi 3:8-10 8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

2 Corinthians 8:7 But just as you excel in everything - in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us - see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

Our attitude in giving is also important.

2 Corinthians 9:7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

The way we can grow in this area of Christian living is by seeing more clearly God's love for us.

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our LORD Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

16.4.2 We are to use our money to support the government.

Romans 13:6-7 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

16.4.3 We are to use our money to support our families.

1 Timothy 5:8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

16.4.4 We are to use our money to help the poor.

Proverbs 19:17 He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done.

1 John 3:17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

But giving money to the lazy is not God-pleasing.

2 Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule; "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

Being faithful managers also means that we give intelligently to charities.

16.4.5 The above four areas are the ones where God has given us specific instructions. As faithful managers he wants us to use all his money wisely. Following are a sampling of some passages from the book of Proverbs which contain much wisdom in regard to money.

Proverbs 6:6-8 6 Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! 7 It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, 8 yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.

Proverbs 11:24 One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.

Proverbs 15:16 Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great wealth with turmoil.

Proverbs 23:4-5 4 Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint. 5 Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.

16.5 Conclusion

16.5.1 Cultivate this wonderful attitude

Philippians 4:12-13 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

16.5.2 Pray this wonderful prayer

Proverbs 30:7-9 7 "Two things I ask of you, O LORD; do not refuse me before I die: 8 Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. 9 Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

WORKING WITH GOD'S WORD - MATTHEW 6:25-34

In these verses Jesus cites a number of reasons why we are not to worry about "things". Read this section carefully and list those reasons.

What is to be our top priority?

What will happen if we follow the priority Jesus sets?

What can you personally do to better follow that priority?

Chapter 17

LIVING FOR JESUS - BY SHARING HIS WORD

17.1 Introduction

There are many important questions which we need to have the answer to. What college am I going to? How much money do I owe to the IRS this year? Will I find the right spouse? All of these questions are important. But the most important question we will ever ask is: If I died tonight would I have eternal life? In this lesson we look at a way in which we can ask people that question so that we can share Jesus with them.

17.2 Make a bridge: Pre-evangelism

17.2.1 Definition: What preparing the soil is to planting the seed, pre-evangelism is to evangelism. It comes before one begins to evangelize, that is, tell the Good News about Jesus

17.2.2 Why do we spend time getting to know those with whom we are going to share Jesus?

1. People respect their friends and cherish what they tell them:

John 1:43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." 44 Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. 45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46 "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.

2. The more we know about people, the better we can witness to them:

1Cor. 9:19 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

17.3 Cross the bridge: Making the transition

17.3.1 How do we transition from talking about the everyday things of life to talking about the 'one thing needful', Jesus?

As we start new friendships or build on friendships we already have, the easiest way to pave the way for talking about Jesus is to let the people around us know that we are Christians. When people ask us questions like: what we are doing over the weekend, or what we like to do in our spare time, or how do you deal with stress, our answer is pretty much the same: Jesus. This shows people that we are Christians.

But, we do actually have to cross the bridge and speak about Jesus

Rom. 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

17.3.2 What do we say?

Ask these two questions, one right after the other:

1. "If you were to die tonight, are you sure you would have eternal life?"
2. "What would you say when God asks you 'Why should I let you into my Heaven?'"

17.3.3 What will they say?

The responses to this question will usually fall into four categories:

- **Uncertain—relying on works:**

you: "If you were to die tonight, are you sure you would have eternal life?"

friend: "I'm not sure" (or a variation of that same thought)

you: "What is it that makes you uncertain?"

friend: "I'd tell Him that I tried my best to live a good life" (or better than some, most, wasn't perfect, but did more good than bad)

you: "But you aren't sure what will happen, are you? The bible tells us that we can be sure. It says, 'These things are written so that you may know that you have eternal life'. Let's talk about what the bible says about how you can be so sure of your relationship with God that you can be certain of eternal life after you die.

- **Uncertain—trusting in Jesus**

you: "If you were to die tonight, are you sure you would have eternal life?"

friend: "I'm not sure" (or a variation of that same thought)

you: "What is it that makes you uncertain?"

friend: "I'd tell him that I believe in Jesus as my Savior."

you: "That's exactly what the Bible says! Whoever believes in Jesus won't perish but have everlasting life. But yet you feel uncertain of eternal life. What makes you so uncertain? The Bible says: 'These things are written so that you may know that you have eternal life'. Let's look at what the bible says so that we can be sure that we have eternal life."

- **Certain—relying on works**

you: "If you were to die tonight, are you sure you would have eternal life?"

friend: "Yes"

you: "What is it that makes you certain?"

friend: "I'd tell Him that I tried my best to live a good life" (or better than some, most, wasn't perfect, but did more good than bad)

you: "How could you know if you had done enough? Since it's God's heaven we're talking about, maybe we ought to ask God what His requirements are."

- **Certain—trusting in Jesus**

you: "If you were to die tonight, are you sure you would have eternal life?"

friend: "Yes"

you: "What is it that makes you certain?"

friend: "I'd tell him that I believe in Jesus as my Savior."

you: "I'm so happy to know that you're trusting in Jesus for your salvation. Without Jesus we'd have no hope; but with Him we have eternal life, for who of us could possibly meet God's requirements for eternal life apart from Jesus?"

17.4 Removing obstacles on the bridge: Dealing with objections

17.4.1 Some objections:

“I don’t believe there is a life after this one. When you’re dead, you’re dead.”

Response:

“how do you know for sure? Aren’t you taking a very big gamble? You might think that I’m taking a gamble by believing that there is a life to come. But if I win my ‘gamble’ I have eternal life. If I lose it I only die. But if you lose your gamble you have eternal death in hell. Don’t you think it would be wise to find out what the bible says about eternal life and how to get there?”

“I don’t care about heaven. I have enough to do in this life.”

Response:

“You may not care about it now because everything is going well for you. But you are going to care about it as your life draws closer to its end. Don’t you think that it makes sense to do some thinking now about the future? Who knows if you will have time to prepare later on. Sudden death has come upon many a person

“I don’t believe what the Bible says.”

Response:

“Do you know what the bible says about the way to get into a right relationship with God and be sure of eternal life? Let me share with you what the Bible says. Then you can accept or reject it; but at least it will be from knowledge that you do so.”

“What I believe is a private, personal matter.”

Response:

“I respect that. One’s religious faith must be deeply personal, and I’m not trying to pry into your life. But one day each of us will have to give a public account of where we stood with God. What will you say to the Lord on that day? Could I share with you what the Bible says about how to get into a right relationship with God and be sure of eternal life?”

17.5 What’s on the other side of the bridge?—God’s Great Exchange

17.5.1 God’s Great Exchange Outline:

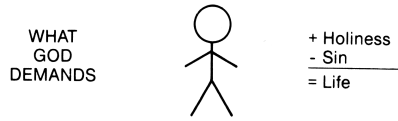
What God Demands:

For a person to be in a right relationship with God he must be holy and have no sin.

Lev. 19:2 ‘Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy’.

Luke 10:25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” 27 He answered: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your

strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" 28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."



What God sees:

God demands that he see no sin, that he see only holiness. But what does he see?

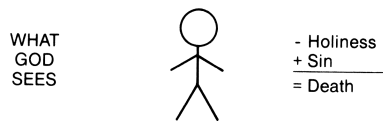
1. Looking at us He sees people who lack holiness, people who are sinners

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

2. He sees people who deserve death, not life

Is. 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God;

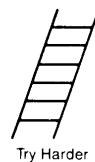
Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death



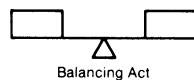
Man-Made remedies

What can we do about this?

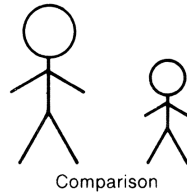
1. You might think, "Guess I'll have to try harder". But that won't remove sin or make you perfectly holy, will it?



2. Or you might determine to make up for every sin with a good deed. But that doesn't remove sin



3. Or, you might think, “I’m not perfect; but at least I’m better than many others”. But God expects you to compare yourself to Him and His perfect holiness



James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

God’s Remedy

Only God has the remedy. His remedy might be called GOD’S GREAT EXCHANGE

1. He sent His only Son into the world to become one of us
2. His Son lived a perfectly holy life—in our place
3. His Son died on a cross, paying the wages of sin in our place,

for LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all (Is. 53:6).

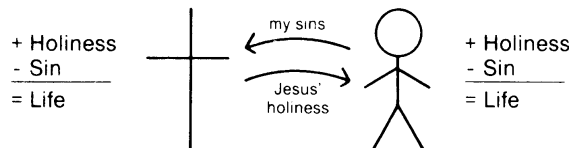
4. His Son rose from the grave, guaranteeing our redemption:

Rom. 4:25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

5. God has credited the perfect life of Jesus and His death for sin to our account:

2Cor. 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6. The result: we have the holiness (Jesus’ holiness) and the removal of sin we need for life. What God requires of us—holiness and sinlessness—God gives to us



God’s Promise

This new life is yours as a gift

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

Blessings that follow

Once you are in a proper relationship with God through Jesus Christ, then many spiritual blessings from God are yours such as:

1. Eternal life in heaven

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

2. New life right now

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

3. Freedom from guilt

Psa. 103:12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

4. The "fruits of the Spirit"

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

5. Power for godly living

Gal. 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

6. Answers to prayer

Psa. 50:15 and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me."

7. Guidance for your daily life

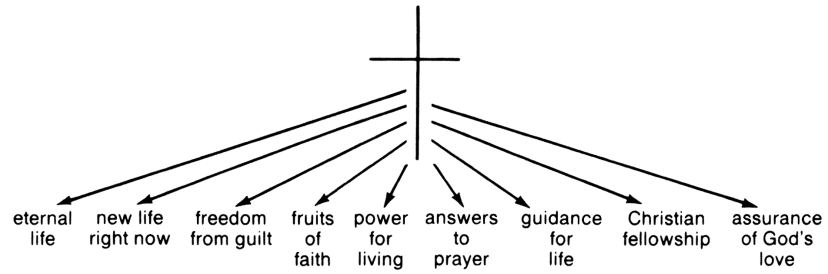
Psa. 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

8. Strengthening fellowship of other believers

Eph. 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household

9. Assurance of God's love in every situation

Rom. 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him



Follow up

Since faith and new life in Jesus Christ comes and grows through the Word of God, you need to stay close to God's Word

1Pet. 1:23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

Chapter 18

LIVING FOR JESUS - WITH YOUR FELLOW CHRISTIANS

18.1 Introduction

Mark the following true or false.

1. People can worship God in the privacy of their homes. Therefore they don't have to go to church.
2. Watching televised worship services is just as good as going to church.
3. It's more important for people to quit a job that keeps them away from church than it is for them to work and not be able to go to church.
4. It's not important being a member of a church. A person can just attend services.
5. A person can remain strong in the faith without going to church.

18.2 God gives us support through public worship.

18.2.1 God wants us to gather for joint worship.

Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

18.2.2 God no longer tells us when to worship.

(For more information, please see Appendix A: *What does the Bible have to say about keeping the Sabbath?*)

18.2.3 The New Testament says little about the outward form worship is to take. It cites the general principle of orderliness.

1 Corinthians 14:40 But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

Let the Experience of the Church be honored

1. We believe in one Holy Christian Apostolic Church
2. Since our faith was born and continues to grow as the Church brings us the Word and Sacraments, we owe the Church our love and respect.

Heb. 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Heb. 13:7 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

3. Sharing the Church's long-standing patterns of prayer and praise testifies to the unity of the one, holy Christian and apostolic Church.
4. We should not, however, retain traditional worship forms simply because they are old
 - (a) A Tradition of the Church is not necessarily what "we in this parish did last year."
 - (b) We have an obligation of love to help some brothers and sisters understand that old is not always good and new is not always bad.
 - (c) We recognize that people change and that what is traditional may not always be able to communicate the gospel.

Let the People Participate

All Christians have the right and responsibility to proclaim the gospel in public worship.

1Pet. 2:9 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. 10 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.

Public Worship gives us an amazing opportunity for *acclamation*.

Psa. 118:1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Public Worship is also an amazing opportunity for *Proclamation*.

Psa. 78:3 what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. 4 We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. 5 He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, 6 so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. 7 Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.

Let the Gospel predominate

1. Of all the needs that God's people have, none is as deep as their need of the gospel.

Rom. 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. 17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

2. Wherever believers gather to proclaim the gospel, there Satan will try to empty public worship of the gospel.
3. Because of Satan's influence, what some people want at worship is not what they need at worship

Let God's best gifts be used in worship

Over the span of creation, believers have offered their best for the proclamation of the gospel...

1. So that the gospel might be proclaimed in a variety of ways to all God's people.
2. Because God and his people are worth the best gifts.

A positive example:

Then King David said to the whole assembly: "With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God... I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God" ...The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly... "Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. 15 We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. 16 O LORD our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you" (1 Chron. 29)

A negative example:

Mal. 1:13 "When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?" says the LORD. 14 "Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations."

18.3 God gives us support through ministers of the Word.

18.3.1 God has given public ministers to the church in order to help believers grow spiritually. ("Public ministers" are people who serve on behalf of and in the name of a group of Christians.)

Ephesians 4:11-13 11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

18.3.2 This public ministry can take many forms.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

18.3.3 In various places the Bible gives guidelines concerning people serving in the public ministry. Paul's words about deacons are representative of these guidelines.

1 Timothy 3:8-9 8 Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. 9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

18.3.4 God has placed some restrictions on women serving in the public ministry.

1 Timothy 2:12-14 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.

1 Corinthians 14:33-34 33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, 34 women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says.

The main principle is that a woman is not to exercise authority over a man in the church. In keeping with this principle, women pastors, women teaching an adult mixed Bible Class, women church officers, and women voting in the church are not God-pleasing.

Since much of the work in a church is service-oriented, this restriction leaves open many meaningful areas where women can serve in the public ministry.

18.4 God gives us support through our fellow believers.

18.4.1 Believers are to encourage each other with the Word.

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

18.4.2 Believers are to support and serve each other.

1 Peter 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

1 Corinthians 12:24b-27 But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

18.4.3 Believers are to pray for each other.

Ephesians 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

18.5 Conclusion

God blesses a person's active involvement in church in many ways. But God also wants us to be very careful with whom we unite. We are not to be influenced by or support false teaching. This three-part course has given you an overview of our basic beliefs. If you agree with them, we not only invite you, but we strongly urge you, to join our church family and become actively involved in our ministry.

Some of the benefits that you would experience are:

1. Worshipping with people of the same belief;
2. Being able to receive the Lord's Supper on a regular basis;
3. Opportunities to attend Bible classes where the Bible is taught thoroughly and clearly;
4. Opportunities to serve your Lord with fellow believers and also be served by them.
5. The blessing of being part of a loving church family.

Part IV
Appendices

Appendix A

What does the Bible have to say about keeping the Sabbath?

A.1 What do we know about the Sabbath from the Old Testament?

A.1.1 The Old Testament Believers did not “keep the Sabbath” (i.e. worship the Lord on the sixth day) until the time of Moses

Gen. 4:26 ... At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD.

A.1.2 What does it mean to “keep the Sabbath”; or: What is the purpose of the Sabbath?

Ex. 31:14 “Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people. 15 For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death.

A.1.3 What would happen if you didn’t keep the Sabbath?

- *Ex. 31:14 “Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people. 15 For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death.*
- *Ex. 35:2 For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it must be put to death.*

A.2 What does the New Testament say about the Sabbath?

A.2.1 Christ and the apostles restate all Commandments of the Decalog except the Sabbath Law.

A.2.2 There is nowhere in scripture that Jesus commands us to rest or worship exclusively on the sixth day

A.2.3 The New Testament Church Gathered together on the “Lord’s Day” to worship (i.e. Sunday)

- *Acts 20:7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.*
- *1Cor. 16:2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.*
- *Rev. 1:10 On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,*

A.2.4 In addition, there were even times they gathered every day to worship

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ... 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts.

A.2.5 Jesus does not command us to worship solely on the sixth day because he fulfilled the Sabbath regulations in our place (along with all the other regulations)

- *Mark 2:23 One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. 24 The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?”*
- *Mark 2:25 He answered, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? 26 In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.”*
- *Mark 2:27 Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”*

Jesus is the one who gives us real rest

- *John 4:19 “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”*
John 4:21 Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

- *Heb. 4:1 Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. 2 For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. 3 Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" And yet his work has been finished since the creation of the world. 4 For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work." 5 And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest."*

Heb. 4:6 It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience. 7 Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." 8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. 9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10 for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. 11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

- *Jer. 6:16 This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'*
- *Matt. 11:29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

How does the Old Testament Sabbath relate to the New Testament believer then?

- *Col. 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*
Col. 2:16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. 17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.
- *Rom. 14:5 One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. 7 For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. 8 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.*
- *Gal. 4:8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. 9 But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? 10 You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! 11 I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.*

If Jesus is our rest, does this mean that we don't need to go to church?

- *Heb. 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

- *Psa. 122:1 I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."*

Appendix B

What is Macro-Evolution? And why is it a false religion?

B.1 Evolution: A definition

Strictly speaking, Evolution means to “turn outside.” The scientific community has embraced the term to describe the various theories that simple organisms slowly changed to more complex organisms through random mutations over millions of years. The *Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* defines evolution in this way: “the way in which living things change and develop over millions of years, or a gradual process of change and development.”¹

In describing Evolution, we must distinguish between *micro*-evolution and *macro*-evolution. Micro-evolution is the observation that within a kind, sort or class of animals there is variation or change over time. Macro-evolution is the theory that over millions of years, through random mutations, organisms can cross the border of one family of organisms to another.

Micro-evolution is well within observable science and is supported by the bible. Macro-evolution is un-testable and violates basic laws of nature. It directly contradicts key portions of the bible.

B.2 Theistic Evolution—an untenable compromise

In reaction to what the scientific community’s embracing of Macro-evolution Christian churches have basically taken two separate approaches.

Some see the fallacies and contradictions in macro-evolution. They also see how it systematically destroys the essence of the Christian faith. So, they study their bibles and build their faith on Jesus. And they learn about macro-evolution and its shortcomings.

Others, whether through a deliberate or naive lack of trust in the bible have sought to mesh together macro-evolution and the Christian faith. Their basic view is that God used the evolutionary process to cause organisms to change over millions of years into more complex organisms (humans).

¹<http://dictionary.cambridge.org>

B.2.1 This view is widely criticized by both the scientific community and other Christian churches.

Scientists decry Theistic Evolution in scathing, vitriolic language because it asserts that the universe came about and progressed *not* through random mutations, but rather through the design and plan of someone.

Christians disagree with Theistic Evolution because it contradicts key portions of God's word.

It overlooks the grammatical structure of the Hebrew language

In our language we can use the word "day" in basically two senses:

1. We can use it in a more abstract way:

"I am looking forward to the *day* I finish this project."

In this example I am not looking forward to the 24 hour span of time, subdivided by minutes and seconds, when I will have the project done. I am looking forward to enjoying what it will be like having the project done.

There are many biblical examples in which the same thought is true. When you read the phrase "The day of the Lord" in the Old Testament, we aren't emphasizing the counting down of hours, minutes and seconds on that day. We are focusing on what is *happening* on that day.

2. However there are times when we use the word 'day' in a more literal way:

"In six days I will have finished my project."

In this example I am referring to the time—the actual counting down of days, minutes and seconds.

The bible does the same. In the Hebrew, the word for 'day' in Hebrew (יָמִים) occurs in the plural 559 times². All of those references refer to a literal 24 hour day. If those who endorse Theistic Evolution were correct, then these few verses in Genesis would be the only exception to this rule.

And of course, in context, The bible clearly states that the world was created in six days by God's almighty word:

Ex. 20:10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD

²The data for this was found through a lexical search for the plural form of יָמִים in the Exegetical application *Accordance*

blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Note how, in context, the idea of changing the phrase “six days” into a more abstract reference to time is absurd. The flow of thought is clear. You shall work for six days. Then you shall rest. Why is this statement true and so important? Because (the “For” in verse 11) the Lord made everything in six days. And then he rested. If you changed this into a more abstract way of using the word ‘day’, the flow of thought would be: ‘work for six very long stretches of time and then rest, just as the Lord created everything in six absurdly long stretches of time; and then he rested.’

When we look at the Bible in context, Moses, the same man whom God moved to write both Genesis and Exodus, means six, literal days.

Theistic Evolution also overlooks the essence of who we are in God’s sight.

Human beings are not highly complex animals. They are the crown of God’s creation:

Gen. 1:26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

B.3 Macro-evolution: A False Science

B.3.1 Macro-Evolution is not a scientific fact - it is a theory. In addition, proponents of evolution can’t agree on one theory. Rather there are many different theories of evolution.

All the theories of evolution contradict the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

This scientific law deals with “entropy”, the law of “decreasing complexity”. In other words, if you don’t do anything to your lawn, it won’t improve, it will deteriorate. The Harvard scientist, John Ross, has said: “There are no known violations of the second law of thermodynamics.”

Macro-Evolution contradicts the Law of Biogenesis

Definition: The principle that living organisms develop only from other living organisms and not from nonliving matter. ³

A fundamental tenet of Macro-evolution is that living organisms come from non-living matter (Spontaneous generation). Notice how this directly contradicts the Law of Biogenesis.

The Nobel Laureate, Dr. George Wald comments:

As for spontaneous generation, it continued to find acceptance until finally disposed of by the work of Louis Pasteur—it is a curious thing that until quite recently professors of biology habitually told this story as part of their introductions of students to biology. They would finish this account glowing with the conviction that they had given a telling demonstration of the overthrow of mystical notion by clean,

³<http://www.answers.com/topic/biogenesis>

scientific experimentation. Their students were usually so bemused as to forget to ask the professor how he accounted for the origin of life. This would have been an embarrassing question, because there are only two possibilities: either life arose by spontaneous generation, which the professor had just refuted; or it arose by supernatural creation, which he probably regarded as anti-scientific.⁴

Evidence for Macro-Evolution is not compelling

Galapagos Islands and Finches:

“One of the most widely cited pieces of evidence for evolution is the variation among finches on the Galapagos Islands off the coast of South America. The finches are small, rather dull-looking birds, whose main claim on our interest is that their beak size differs according to the habitats where they live—suggesting that they have adapted to differing conditions. Virtually every biology textbook repeats the story of Darwin’s voyage to the Galapagos as a young naturalist, and contemporary biologists have gone back there to confirm his theory.”

“Sure enough, one study found that during a period of drought, the average beak size among the finches actually increased slightly... But that’s not the end of the story. Eventually the rains returned, restoring the original range of seeds...The average beak size returned to normal.”⁵

Fruit Flies:

For the past fifty years scientists have tried to speed up the evolutionary process. Their premise was that simpler organisms change into more complex organisms over time. So they picked a “simple” organism, the fruit fly and started their experiments. They bombarded fruit flies with radiation. And indeed, they did mutate. But none of the mutations helped the fly survive.

Nancy Pearcey concluded: “There’s only one mutation that could even appear to be an improvement: The PBS “Evolution” series featured a mutation that produces four wings instead of two...Now *that* might seem to be an evolutionary advance. But if you’re watching the program, and looked closely at the television screen, you would have seen that the extra wings don’t actually move. That’s because they don’t have any muscles; They just hang motionless, weighing down the fly like a suit of armor.”⁶

Many scientists, including numerous non-Christians, do not believe in evolution. Just a few of many examples:

1. Sir Fred Hoyle, one of Britain’s foremost scientists, a non-Christian, has declared that the probability of an evolutionary origin of life is equal to the probability that a tornado, sweeping through a junkyard, would assemble a Boeing 747. He said that the probability of life evolving on earth in five billion years is one chance out of 10 to the 40,000 power.
2. Dr. Colin Patterson, the one-time head of the British Museum of Natural History, said: “That’s quite a shock to learn that one can be misled so long. Either there was something wrong with me, or there was something wrong with evolution theory.”

⁴Wald, George (1972), *Frontiers of Modern Biology in Theories of Origin of Life* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin), p. 187

⁵*Total Truth*, Nancy Pearcey, p. 158;

⁶*Total Truth*, Nancy Pearcey, p. 160

3. Paleontologists are telling Biologists what they do not want to hear: "That the fossil record does not, and never will, support the Darwinian scenario of a smooth, continuous progress of life forms, nicely graded from simple to complex. Instead the rocks show a pervasive pattern of gaps: New life forms appear suddenly, with no transitional forms leading to them, followed by long periods of stability during which they show little or no change at all."⁷ They expressed their views in a conference titled "Macroevolution" in 1980.⁸

B.4 Macro-Evolution: A Fanatical Faith

Harvard Biologist Richard Lewontin states it very well: "It's not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation...On the contrary, we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations."⁹

In other words, Lewontin explains to us that they embrace Darwinism *first (a priori)* and then cram the scientific facts through that naturalistic funnel.

Not only is Macroevolution a misapplication of cause and effect, but it is a full-fledged religion. Evolutionist Michael Ruse admits: "Evolution came into being as a kind of secular ideology, an explicit substitute for Christianity...[it] is promulgated as an ideology, a secular religion—a full-fledged alternative to Christianity, with meaning and morality."¹⁰

⁷*Total Truth*, Nancy Pearcey, p. 166

⁸Jerry Alder and John Carey, "Is Man a Subtle Accident?" *Newsweek*, November 3, 1980, 95-96

⁹Richard Lewontin, "Billions and Billions of Demons," *The New York Review of Books*, January 9, 1997, 28

¹⁰Michael Ruse, "Saving Darwinism from the Darwinists," *National Post*, May 13, 2000, B-3

Appendix C

Knowing your Bible

C.1 Introduction

The bibles we use today are written in english. The New Testament, however, was written in Greek. This becomes a challenge for us. It is important for us to know the original languages of the bible for two reasons:

1. We learn the original languages so that we can bring out the full meaning in those languages to the members of our church.
2. We learn the original languages so that when false teachers twist and distort the bible we can defend ourselves against their claims with authority not just on the basis of the english, but also on the basis of the original language.

But even when we know the original language there are complications in translating the New Testament from Greek to english. The difficulty is we don't have the *autograph*. We don't have the letters that the apostles wrote. We only have copies of those documents. And these copies often contain different letters and or words when compared to each other.

How then do we know which manuscripts contain the wording of the real bible? At first, it might seem as if this is a huge problem. but upon closer inspection, the problem is quickly addressed. In less than one percent of the manuscripts is there a question as to which reading is the original. That one percent then becomes the important topic we will discuss later on. Before we do that we need to acquaint ourselves with the Major Witnesses of the New Testament text. We will also discuss how the Greek was handed down to the Christian church over the centuries.

C.2 The Major Witnesses to the NT Text

There are two major categories of New Testament manuscripts which the Christian Church has handed down to us. There are Greek Witnesses and there are the non-Greek witnesses

C.2.1 Greek Witnesses

There are four types of Greek witnesses of the New Testament:

Papyri

These are the earliest documents we have of the New Testament. They were written from 100 to 300 AD. Men copied the New Testament letters on Papyrus. They contain only fragments of the New Testament. When kept in a dry location these manuscripts lasted for a long time.

Uncials

Next to the Papyri, these are the next oldest documents. Uncials (pronounced UN-SHULLS) are written in all capital letters. Like the Papyri, they are mostly fragments. However, there are a few Uncials which contain the entire New Testament. They were copied from about 300 to 600 AD.

Minuscules

After the Uncials, the Minuscules are the next oldest. They were written from around 600 to 1500 AD. Minuscules are written in lower-case letters instead of capital letters.

Lectionaries

Lectionaries are different than the other three categories listed above. Lectionaries are manuscripts which were read during public worship. The lectionaries are distinguished by their content. They only contain the Gospel and Epistle lessons which were read in the public worship services in the early church. As a result, the copiers wrote them down carefully, since they were read Sunday after Sunday during the worship services.

C.2.2 Non-Greek Versions

Picture yourself as a Christian in more remote regions of Egypt in the 2nd century AD. You know Greek. But the people with whom you are sharing God's word do not. You then take it upon yourself to translate the New Testament into the native language of those living in the land. There are many examples of just these sorts of translations throughout the Mediterranean world

The *Versions* then are a great tool when we understand their limitations. They have some unique strengths:

1. They were written quite early. Many of them were written as early as the Greek Papyri and Uncials.
2. Since the translations were found all over the Mediterranean area, they also tell us how the New Testament was read everywhere in the early church

They also have some drawbacks:

1. The translations were only of use if they were a very literal translation. Those that weren't didn't help establish the original Greek word being used.
2. Not all translations into non-Greek languages were translated faithfully. Augustine complained that "Almost everyone who got his hands on a Greek text also made a translation of it into Latin."¹

¹Kuske, David. *The History and Practice of New Testament Textual Criticism*

3. Some translations were made from another translation instead of from the Greek.

With these considerations in mind let's take a brief look at these Versions:

Old Latin

When educated people in Rome fled to Africa during the reign of Nero (among others), Carthage became the center of Latin culture. In Northern Africa then (Carthage) many people translated the Greek New Testament into Latin. The translations that exist now were done in the 4th and 5th centuries. But they are carefully made copies of Greek texts which date back to the 2nd century. So, the Old Latin is based on a Greek text that is as early as the papyri and uncials.

Coptic, Syriac, Gothic, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopic

The **Coptic** language was the native language of Egypt. Already in the 200's portions of the New Testament were translated into Sahidic (a dialect of Coptic).

Syriac is an Aramaic dialect centered around Antioch. The Greek New Testament was translated into this language quite early as well.

A man named Ulfilas translated the New Testament into **Gothic** in the 300's. We have a few of his translations, which date to the 400's or 500's.

The **Armenian** version has many manuscripts. It is also one of the most accurate of the early translations. It is dated to the 400's.

The **Caucasian** version (located between the Black and Caspian seas) came about in the 400's. So it is somewhat farther removed from the earlier texts.

The **Ethiopic** version is dated between 300 and 600 AD. The earliest manuscript we have was made in the 1200's. It is not as useful to us as other versions for the purpose of trying to find out what the original wording of the New Testament was.

There are, of course, other versions. But they were translated much later.

Note:

Almost all of the manuscripts which are important for our purposes come from the four centuries from 200 to 600. There are several reasons for this:

1. Christianity was an illegal religion in the Roman Empire. As a result there were times when the Roman Government persecuted Christians. This also included the destruction of their most prized treasure, the Bible. So, there are very few manuscripts before the 300's, when Christianity became a legal religion.
2. In the 300's Christianity not only became a legal religion, it also became the state religion. So copying of God's word dramatically increased during this time

3. With the rise of Islam, many manuscripts were destroyed as Muslims conquered one Christian area after another. By the end of the 8th century, The Mohommadans had conquered Alexandria, Caezarea, Antioch, Carthage. The end result was that there were only two major cities where the New Testament was copied (Rome and Byzantium).
4. Of the two remaining churches, Byzantium was the only church to actively preserve and copy the Greek text. The western church adopted the Latin Vulgate as its official translation.

C.3 Copying of the NT Text by Hand

C.3.1 The Dating of the Witnesses

There are two main ways we know what century to put the New Testament texts in.

The Early Method

The Writing Material:

Before the arrival of Paleography in the 1900's we relied on some distinct features of the New Testament manuscripts to determine when a document was written.

Copiers used **Papyrus** at a very early age across the Mediterranean world. Its use slowly tapered off until around 600 when it was not used any more for the copying of manuscripts.

Parchment (or Vellum, a high quality parchment) replaced the use of Papyrus. Parchment is made from animal skins. Copiers used parchment because it lasted longer than papyrus.

The Writing Instrument:

After the 5th century copiers used a quill pen. Before that they used a reed pen.

Scroll or Codex:

The Codex (or book) began to be used widely in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

Uncial vs. Miniscule:

As we mentioned earlier, the Uncials were written earlier than the Miniscules.

Paleography

Paleography is the comparison of the types of scripts and letters that the copier used. It can more accurately help us pin down in which century a manuscript was written. Over time the letters changed. They started out as all Capitals. Then they used under-case letters. We know about this change in script because the translators left us notes which describe in detail what these changes were.

C.3.2 The Method of Transmission

At first, the Scribes who copied the New Testament would copy three or four words at a time. Some only copied one word at a time. Still others only copied a certain amount of letters at a time. The scribes cared very deeply about what they were doing. So they made sure that they did not make mistakes. But, of course, if one worked long hours and under the right conditions, anyone could omit a small word here or there, or repeat a word or phrase. And that's exactly what happened. The good news is that where one scribe made an error copying the text, there were many other scribes who didn't; or at least didn't make the same mistake in the same place. So one can easily go back and find what the original is.

When the Christian faith changed from an illegal religion to the state religion of the Roman Empire in the 300's there was a great demand for copies of the bible. To meet this need *Scriptorium*s came into being. In a Scriptorium you would find a man reading the bible phrase by phrase (the Lector). And there would be a number of scribes in that room meticulously writing down what he said. The last step in this process was a quality control person who would check the accuracy of the scribe's work. But here again we find scribal errors coming into the texts. But, like the previous method of copying, if we examine all the texts together we are able to find what the original was.

It is important to note that scribes who worked in a Scriptorium could not afford to become careless with their work. If they made errors, the public simply wouldn't have bought their bibles.

Later on, as the Church moved from the Roman age into the middle ages, Monks were the ones who copied the New Testament texts. Individual monks would copy the New Testament by hand. They did not have a corrector to check their work. But their inner devotion to God's word led them to be careful and diligent with how they copied it. Often, the Abbots would set up strict guidelines describing how a monk was supposed to copy the text. If the monk didn't comply, he would be punished severely. As with the others, human error came into play. But by comparing the exceptions with the main body of the work, we are able to find the original.

C.4 The Development of the New Testament

C.4.1 Textus Receptus

For about a thousand year span of time the only bible the western church knew of (with a few exceptions) was the Latin bible, called the *Vulgate*. The Vulgate was the official bible of the Roman Catholic church. With the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the beginning of the Renaissance, Greek texts of the New Testament filtered into the Roman world. The advent of the printing press in about 1450 made these texts more available. As these texts became more available people in the various nations of Europe started translating the Greek texts into their own languages.

Although there are a number of bibles we could speak about, the *Textus Receptus* deserves particular attention. The Textus Receptus comes from the Latin phrase: "textum ab omnibus receptum" (the text that has been received by all). The Textus Receptus was gathered together from two dozen manuscripts which date from the 12th to 14th century.

Today there are many, many more manuscripts available which are older and more

authoritative. So we are able to come to a much more reliable conclusion as to what the original wording was. But, in saying this, we shouldn't conclude that those who used the Textus Receptus didn't have God's word. As we mentioned before, while there are many textual variants, there are only a few which cause us to go into a deeper study of the variants to see which one is the more accurate reading. They had God's word. And it served them faithfully.

C.4.2 Families of Texts

As people found more and more New Testament manuscripts, they tried started to notice that some manuscripts were more like some manuscripts than others. And so they started to divide these manuscripts into two main families of texts. The challenge in doing this was that in many instances it was very difficult to figure out to which family these texts belonged. Quite often, if a text contained just barely over 50 percent in common with one family, they would lump it into that family, even though it was clear that there was not overwhelming evidence that it belonged there.

This is an important fact that we need to stress. At first scholars thought there were two families of texts. And then as more manuscripts were discovered they changed the number to three. And then finally, there were four families of texts. In each of these families there were huge numbers of texts which had a style of writing or wording that was found in other areas of the Mediterranean world. Today, the scholarly world has admitted that lumping the texts into families is a fruitless venture. There is too much overlap.

This is important because it reminds us that the New Testament was not something that developed and changed slowly over time. The New Testament Christians had a unified text, whether they were living in Gaul or Alexandria. They were looking at the same page, the same scripture (excepting the variants from one document to another, of course).

C.4.3 Recensions

Professor David Kuske tells us "One of the basic presuppositions of German rationalists was that the oral and written traditions of a religion develop in stages. The development of religion was studied by setting up a pattern of how things might have developed (a thesis) and then searching for facts to support or modify this thesis. In this approach the formation of the NT text was considered nothing more than a purely human process. Anything supernatural in connection with the NT, such as its inspiration and preservation, were summarily dismissed."²

Under this philosophy, they concluded that the variants which existed were due to sloppy copying of the text and the evolutionary nature of religion. And so, several times throughout the history of the New Testament, there were editors called *Recensors* who corrected the text. These were the supposed correctors:

1. Origen in Palestine
2. Hesychius in Egypt
3. Lucian in Palestine.

²Kuske, David. *The History and Practice of New Testament Textual Criticism*. p. 23

What evidence do these men bring forward to suggest to us that there were Recensors? They rely on a quotation from Jerome that copies of the Septuagint were corrected by Hesychius and Lucian. We take note of two details in Jerome's quotation:

1. Jerome did not speak favorably about the work of Hesychius or Lucian
2. Jerome only mentions that Lucian and Hesychius worked on the Septuagint, not the NT.

Despite the lack of evidence for these editors, many Seminaries across the world follow this basic premise when approaching the New Testament Manuscripts despite the lack of evidence that there were Recensors as well as the lack of evidence as to what the "corrected" text was. The evidence that is brought forward is subjective and does not mesh with the evidence in existence today. If there were a major revision of the New Testament several times throughout the church's history, wouldn't there be some record? Wouldn't have at least one Church Father spoken about such a huge, momentous event? The argument for a recension is a subjective argument from silence. Not only is it an argument from silence, but it is also a direct denial of the evidence we have before us today. Professor Kuske tells us: "Gordon Fee in an article about Papyrus 75 and papyrus 66 says that papyrus 75 is so closely related to the uncial B that there is no possibility that B is a late 3rd century revision or recension."³

C.4.4 Modern Day Perspectives

People approach complications and difficulties with their own personal bias. This is not necessarily a bad thing. It's simply the way God made us. We filter reality through the experience in our lives. The people who have studied, catalogued and made use of the textual variants fall into three basic worldviews. At the risk of over-generalizing, these are the general categories:

Christians

Christians throughout the ages have approached the pages of the New Testament Manuscripts with an amount of awe and wonder. Because in these pages God chose to share his divine truth with us sinful creatures. We believe in the verbal inspiration of God's word—that he used men to write down his word, but the Holy Spirit guided them so that they wrote down what was God's word and not their own. As Peter tells us: *"For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."*

We approach scripture with this presupposition and bias. How wonderful it is to find that, with the abundance of Greek and Non-Greek manuscripts extant today we can be all that much more assured that every word and breath in God's word is infallible.

Christians in Doubt

As Rationalism spread across Europe and into the United States the scriptures were under attack because they rested on the irrational foundation of miracles. When confronted with the apparent evidence against verbal inspiration and miracles in the bible Christians tried to take a middle road. They agreed that the words Jesus spoke to his disciples were God's truth. But as that word was handed down from one sinful generation to another the word became more and more corrupted. It is up to modern day scholars then to put together what Jesus actually said as we examine the evidence. The tragedy of this worldview is that we will never be able

³Kuske, David. *The History and Practice of New Testament Textual Criticism*. p. 96

to put ourselves above God's word to find out what is true and what is not. Modern day scholars end up throwing out vast portions of the bible not due to the mass of external, objective evidence, but rather due to their own agendas and feelings. Many mainline denominations follow this method of biblical interpretation.

Not Christians at all

We should also not forget that many men in the last several centuries have approached the New Testament manuscripts out of scholarly and intellectual interest, not out of a faith in Jesus. They presuppose that God's word is not inspired. And they further conclude that the men who copied the New Testament were careless in their efforts. This bias colors, or rather *discolors* their view of the bible.

C.4.5 How does a Christian make use of the New Testament Variants?

Important Considerations

Before we discuss what we are to do with the less than one percent of New Testament manuscripts that really present us with some difficulties we need to impress on ourselves the following considerations⁴ :

1. All of the books of the NT were written before 100 AD.
2. Each book was the work of an author who wrote as he was verbally inspired by the Holy Ghost.
3. The letters of Paul were widely known in Asia Minor by 70 AD.

1 Peter 1:1 and 2 Peter 3:15 indicate that the inspired writings were known widely soon after they were written. This in turn indicates that copies of these writings were made very early—within a decade or two after they were written.

4. The Gospels were known widely as a single group shortly after 100 AD.
5. The scribes who made copies did their work very carefully.
6. Nevertheless—because of the failures of the human mind, eye, ear or hand—copyists did make mistakes
7. Spurious books or letters (cf. 2 Thess. 2:1-2) and deliberate changes in the text (cf. Paul's and Peter's warnings about false teachers) came about already before 100 AD and continued thereafter.
8. The establishment of the NT canon apparently took place already in 90 AD under the authority of the Apostle John.
9. The history of the church in the first several centuries indicates that the NT text was handled loosely by some but also carefully and reverently by many others.
10. There was a movement in Alexandria to polish the text linguistically and rhetorically.

⁴These considerations are reproduced verbatim from Professor Kuske's aforementioned book

11. The papyri, early versions, and the church fathers show that the variants in the Byzantine minuscules that were supposed to have been the result of a recension in the late 300's were part of the text already in the second century.
12. None of the types of witnesses (papyri, uncials, minuscules, church father, versions, lectionaries) is a more valuable witness than the others—each has certain strengths and weaknesses.
13. Since each type of witness helps to establish the integrity of the NT text, the person who examines variants will use all the witnesses that God has preserved for us.
14. In making decisions about NT variants, there are two major items which require careful consideration: The manuscript evidence and the possibility of scribal error.

Ancient and Widespread!

As we mentioned above *none* of the variants in the bible affect even one of the doctrines of the Christian faith. But where there are some difficulties in determining the original text we apply two objective principles.

First of all, we rely on the most ancient of witnesses. It does us no good to rely on the thousands of manuscripts copied in the late medieval ages since they are copies of copies. We go back as far and as close as we can to the original time the autographs (the first documents) were written.

Next, we rely on the manuscripts that are the most widespread across the Mediterranean world.

After these objective steps have been taken, if there is any question left as to what the original was, we try to ascertain what scribal errors might have come into the text.

A Practical Example

These principles might seem somewhat abstract. So let's use an example from God's Word to put these principles into practice.

In the New International Version there is a break between verses 8 and 9 of Mark, chapter 16. The inline note reads: "The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20."

Let's look at the manuscript evidence and see where it takes us.

The Longer Reading

Under the column of manuscript evidence which would include the longer ending we find the following manuscripts (we will only include the oldest manuscripts for the above mentioned reasons):

Uncials:

- A — Codex Alexandrinus is dated from 400-500

- C — Codex Ephraemi is dated from 400-500
- D — Codex Bezae is dated from 400-500
- W — Codex Washingtonius is dated from 400-500

Other Greek witnesses

The Byzantine tradition and the Lectionaries include the longer reading. The Byzantine manuscripts and lectionaires date from AD 100-500.

Versions

As far as non-Greek manuscripts go, some versions of the Syriac dated at 200-300 AD include the longer reading.

The Shorter Reading

These manuscripts include the shorter reading:

Uncials

- Ⲁ — Codex Sinaiticus is dated to 300-400 AD
- B — Codex Vaticanus is dated to 300-400 AD

At this point it might be tempting to conclude that the longer ending is the true reading. But it's not that simple. Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus are old, reliable manuscripts, even older than the four uncials listed above. So we need to go onto step two. We need to determine how widespread the manuscripts are found.

How widespread is the shorter reading?

Date	N. Africa	Gaul/Italy	Asia Minor	Syria	Palestine	Egypt
50 - 100						
100 - 200						
200- 300						
300 - 400						Ⲁ, B
400 - 500						
500 - 600						

How widespread is the longer reading?

Date	N. Africa	Gaul/Italy	Asia Minor	Syria	Palestine	Egypt
50 - 100						
100 - 200			Byz	Byz		
200- 300			Byz	Byz, Syriac c,p		
300 - 400			Byz	Byz		
400 - 500		D	Byz, A	Byz, A	W	C
500 - 600						

So, as one can see, the most ancient and widespread reading is the longer ending of Mark. Now we bear in mind that even if the evidence had not been as good as it is in this instance, either variant would not have changed even one doctrine which we cling to in the bible.

Rest assured that the bible you have and read often is God's inerrant word. He saw fit to preserve his word carefully throughout the generations so that his word was clear, sure and certain in this age of doubt. May Jesus fill you with his Spirit as you read and meditate on his word.

Appendix D

Why do we baptize infants?

D.1 Everyone, due to original sin , is corrupt by nature and held accountable to sin

D.1.1 Scripture teaches original sin .

It speaks of sin in a twofold manner.

As an innate condition.

cf Ro 7:8,13,17,18,21,23;–Ro 6:6; Col 3:9.

Rom. 7:8 But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.

Rom. 7:13 Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

Rom. 7:17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

Rom. 7:21 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.

Rom. 7:23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

Rom. 6:6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin

Col. 3:9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices

As consisting of sinful acts.–This is called actual sin.

D.1.2 Scripture teaches the fact that human nature is corrupt (sinful).

cf Gn 6:5; Gn 8:21; Jn 3:5,6; Eph 2:3.

Gen. 6:5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

Gen. 8:21 The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

Eph. 2:3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

D.1.3 Such corruption is universal.

cf 1 Kings 8:46; Ps 14:2,3; 143:2; Pr 20:9; Ro 3:9-12,22,23; Ga 3:22.

1Kings 8:46 "When they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you become angry with them and give them over to the enemy, who takes them captive to his own land, far away or near;

Psa. 14:2 The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. 3 All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Psa. 143:2 Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you.

Prov. 20:9 Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin"?

Rom. 3:9 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. 10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

Rom. 3:22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Gal. 3:22 But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

D.1.4 Such corruption is being transmitted in propagation.

cf Gn 5:3; Job 14:4; Ps 51:5; 58:3; Ro 5:12, 19.

Gen. 5:3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.

Job 14:4 Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one!

Psa. 51:5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Psa. 58:3 Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies.

Rom. 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned

Rom. 5:19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

D.2 As a result of original sin man has no free will in spiritual matters.

Cf. Rom 8:7; Eph 2; 1 Cor 2:14; heb 11:6

Rom. 8:7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

Eph. 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

1Cor. 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Heb. 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

D.2.1 In a general way

Original sin has given to man's will a definite direction opposed to God's will.

cf Gn 6:5; Eze 11:19; 36:26; Ro 3:11; 8:7.

Gen. 6:5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

Ezek. 11:19 I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.

Ezek. 36:26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Rom. 3:11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

Rom. 8:7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

It has destroyed man's ability to do good.

cf Ro 7:18,23; 8:7; 1 Cor 2:14.

Rom. 7:18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

Rom. 7:23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

Rom. 8:7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

1Cor. 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

D.2.2 Particularly, natural man has no free will to meet and to cooperate with God's converting grace.

On the fact

cf Is 65:1; Mt 7:18; Lk 6:43,44; Jn 3:6; 6:44; Ro 3:11; 8:7; 10:20; 1 Cor 2:14; 12:3; Eph 2:1; Col 1:21; 2:13.

Is. 65:1 "I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, 'Here am I, here am I.'

Matt. 7:18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

Luke 6:43 "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. 44 Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars.

John 3:6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

John 6:44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Rom. 3:11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

D.3. THE ENTIRE WORK OF CONVERSION IS ASCRIBED TO THE SPIRIT. (OR TO THE TRINITY SINCE IT'S

Rom. 8:7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

Rom. 10:20 And Isaiah boldly says, "I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me."

1Cor. 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1Cor. 12:3 Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

Eph. 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

Col. 1:21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

Col. 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,

D.3 The entire work of conversion is ascribed to the Spirit. (or to the Trinity since it's an opera ad extra)

cf Dt 29:4; Jr 32:39; Eze 36:26; Ac 26:16-18; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 1:17; 2:5; Philip 1:6; 2:13; Heb. 12:2

Deut. 29:4 But to this day the LORD has not given you a mind that understands or eyes that see or ears that hear.

Jer. 32:39 I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me for their own good and the good of their children after them.

Ezek. 36:26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Acts 26:16 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you. 17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

2Cor. 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Eph. 1:17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

Eph. 2:5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Phil. 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Phil. 2:13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Heb. 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

D.3.1 Repentance of a sinner is the work of God. (specifically talking about conversion)

It is the aim of God's calling.

cf Mt 3:11; 4:17; Mk 6:12; Lk 5:32; 24:47; Ac 17:30; 20:21; 26:20.

Matt. 3:11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Matt. 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

Mark 6:12 They went out and preached that people should repent.

Luke 5:32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Luke 24:47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Acts 17:30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.

Acts 20:21 I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

Acts 26:20 First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.

It is directly called a work of God.

cf Ac 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tim 2:25.

Acts 5:31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

Acts 11:18 When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life."

2Tim. 2:25 Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,

D.4 God brings us to faith through the means of Grace, the gospel in word in sacrament

D.4.1 The means of grace serve a double purpose.

Their first function is to exhibit, offer, give, convey and seal to a sinner pardon for Christ's sake.

- God's Word:

- *Mark 16:15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*
- *Luke 24:47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*
- *2Cor. 3:9 If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!*

- Baptism:

- *Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*
- *Acts 22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'*
- *Eph. 5:26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,*
- *1Cor. 6:11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

- Lord's Supper:

- *Luke 22:19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."*
- *Luke 22:20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.*
- *Matt. 26:26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."*
- *Matt. 26:27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*
- *1Cor. 10:16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.*

Their second function is to effect faith.

Cf Ro 10:17; Jn 20:31; 1 Pe 1:23-25; Tit 3:5; Lk 22:19. James 1:21.

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

John 20:31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

1Pet. 1:23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, 25 but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.

Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

Luke 22:19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

James 1:21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

D.5 What is Baptism?

D.5.1 Baptism conveys and seals to the recipient his adoption as God's child.

Baptism brings the recipient into union with the Triune God.

This union is that of a major son with his father.

Cf Jn 1:12; Ga 4:1-7; Eph 1:5.

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

Gal. 4:1 What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. 2 He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. 3 So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. 4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. 6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Eph. 1:5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

Baptism lays upon the recipient the name of the Triune God.

Cf. Mt 28:19; Nu 6:22-27; Ro 8:14-17; 1 Jn 3:1; Re 3:12; 14:1.

Matt. 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Num. 6:22 The LORD said to Moses, 23 “Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them: 24 ““The LORD bless you and keep you; 25 the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; 26 the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.””

Num. 6:27 “So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

Rom. 8:14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

1John 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Rev. 3:12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on him my new name.

Rev. 14:1 Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads.

D.5.2 The blessing of Baptism is variously designated in Scripture.

Salvation (salus, application of redemption).

cf Mk 16:16; Ac 16:30-33.

Mark 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Acts 16:30 He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

Acts 16:31 They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.

Repentance (change of heart).

cf Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3; Ac 13:24; 19:4.

Mark 1:4 And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Luke 3:3 He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Acts 13:24 Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel.

Acts 19:4 Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus."

Regeneration

cf Jn 3:5; Tit 3:5.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.

Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

Remission of sins.

cf Ac 2:38; 22:16; Eph 5:26.

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

Eph. 5:26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

Good conscience.

cf 1 Pe 3:21. Heb. 10:19-22.

1Pet. 3:21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Heb. 10:19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Communion of saints.

cf 1 Cor 12:13.

1Cor. 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

The putting on of Christ.

cf Ga 3:27

*Gal. 3:27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.***Gift of the Holy Ghost.**

cf Tit 3:5,6

*Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,***D.5.3 The manner of baptism is immaterial****Immersion**

Immersion is beautifully significant. (Rom. 6) but it is not the only permissible form.

cf. Mk 7:3-4

*Mark 7:3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)**οἱ γὰρ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ πάντες οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐὰν μὴ πύγμα ἰψῶνται τὰς χεῖρας οὐκ ἐσθίουσιν, κρατοῦντες τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, καὶ ἀπ' ἀγορᾶς ἐὰν μὴ βαπτίσωνται οὐκ ἐσθίουσιν, καὶ ἄλλα πολλά ἐστὶν ἃ παρέλαβον κρατεῖν, βαπτισμοὺς ποτηρίων καὶ ζεστῶν καὶ χαλκίων καὶ κλινῶν**Matt. 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,**πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος,***Aspersion (sprinkling, pouring).****This also has a deep meaning:**

cf. Eze 36:25-26; He 12:24; Ex 24: 8; Nu 8:7.

Ezek. 36:25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Heb. 12:24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Ex. 24:8 Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Num. 8:7 To purify them, do this: Sprinkle the water of cleansing on them; then have them shave their whole bodies and wash their clothes, and so purify themselves.

D.6 So why do we baptize infants?

D.6.1 Infants, like all humans have original/inherited sin . And thus are held accountable to sin:

Gen. 8:21 The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.

Psa. 51:5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Rom. 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—

D.6.2 Since faith and repentance are amazing gifts which God gives us through his word, we rejoice that infants can believe.

Matt. 18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Matt. 18:2 He called a little child and had him stand among them. 3 And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Matt. 18:5 "And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. 6 But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Mark 9:42 "And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck.

Matt. 21:16 "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him.

"Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, "'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise'?"

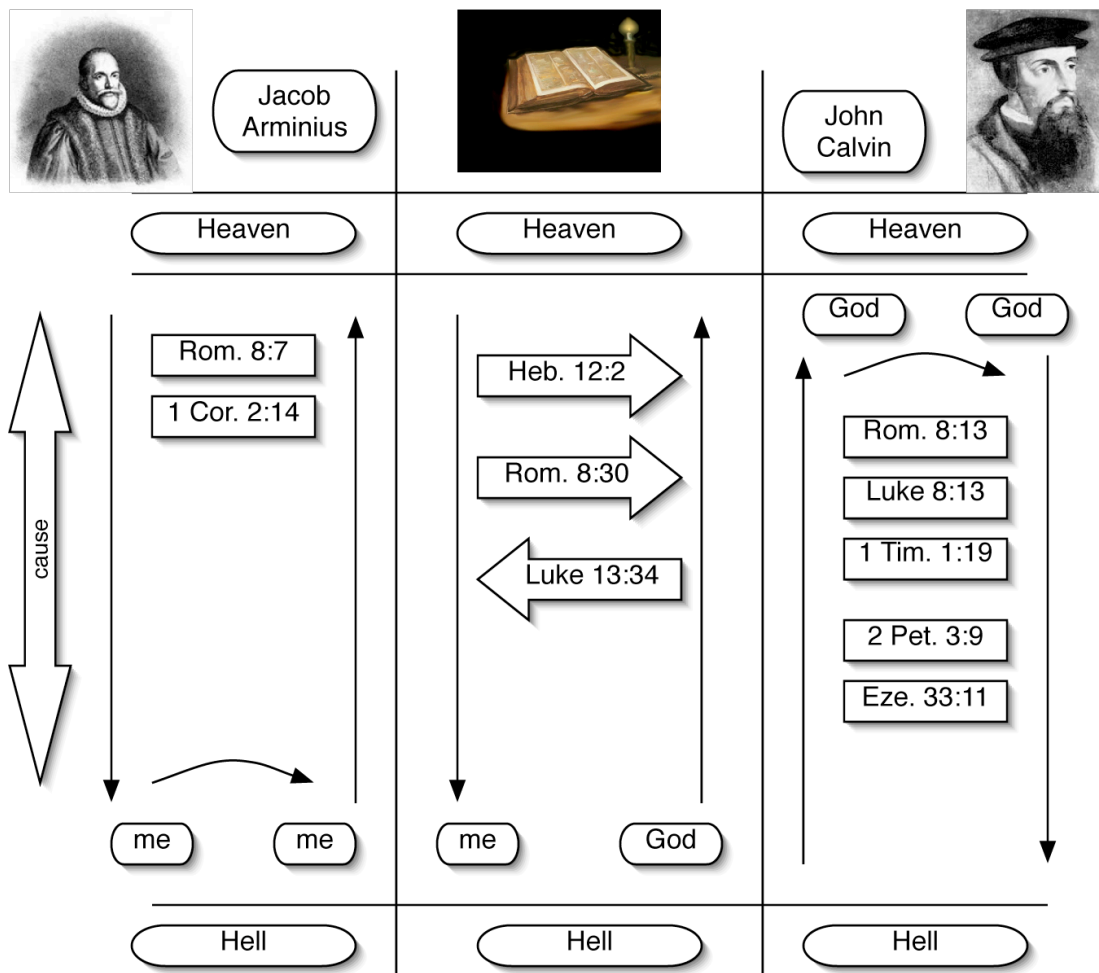
2Tim. 3:15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

D.6.3 If infants can believe, why should we object to preaching God's word to infants or to baptizing them?

1. Infants are sinful
2. Infants can believe
3. Faith is a gift given to us through the means of grace, Baptism and God's word, not through our own effort of decision
4. Infants are part of "All Nations" (matt. 28, Mark 16)

Appendix E

Protestant views of Conversion



E.1 Views on Conversion

E.1.1 The Arminian View

Many Evangelical Christians look at the passages which speak about people choosing to reject God. From this valid theological fact, they make the conclusion that since people are able to reject God, then they are also able to accept (i.e. choose) him. This view is quite logical. But it is biblically inconsistent. This view gives humanity something they simply do not have; the

ability to know who God is and/or choose him. The bible clearly states that because of original sin we are unable to choose God or earn salvation. consider the following passages:

- *Rom. 8:7 the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.*
- *1Cor. 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.*
- *Eph. 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins*
- *Eph. 5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.*

E.1.2 The Calvinist View

John Calvin saw all those passages in the bible which speak about God choosing people to be his people. And he logically concluded that if God chooses people to go to heaven, then he must of logical necessity also choose people to go to hell. Again, this is just as logical as the Arminian view. But, just like the Arminian view, it ends up throwing out other key portions of the bible. Nowhere in the bible do we find evidence that God chooses people to go to hell. Consider the following passages:

- It is possible for people to have faith and then abandon that faith:
 - *Luke 8:13 Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.*
 - *1Tim. 1:19 holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.*
- The Lord does not want or cause people to go to hell:
 - *2Pet. 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*
 - *Ezek. 33:11 Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?'*

E.1.3 What does the bible say?

The bible presents us with a mystery. On the one hand, those who become Christians are Christians because God chose them, declared them 'not guilty', redeemed them, and brought them to faith. God is the one who gets the credit. We have no part in our conversion or salvation. On the other hand, those who end up in hell are in hell because they rejected God. They get all the blame. They endure all the consequences of their decision.

- Jesus is the one who began our faith and will bring it to its goal:

- Heb. 12:2 *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*
- Rom. 8:30 *And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*
- Those who reject God's word receive what they desperately want, separation from God (Hell):
 - Luke 13:34 *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!*

E.2 Famous Quotations:

John Calvin

How it is that the fall of Adam involves so many nations with their infant children in eternal death without remedy unless that is so seemed meet to God?

The decree, I admit, is, dreadful; and yet it is impossible to deny that God foreknew what the end of man was to be before he made him, and foreknew, because He had so ordained by his decree...God not only foresaw the fall of the first man, and in him the ruin of his posterity; but also at his own pleasure arranged it. ¹.

Jacob Arminius

16. Those who are obedient to the vocation or call of God, freely yield their assent to grace; yet they are previously excited, impelled, drawn and assisted by grace; and in the very moment in which they actually assent, they possess the capability of not assenting. ².

¹John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol 2. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993 reprint), 232

²Jacob Arminius *The Works of James Arminius*, vol 2. (Christian Classics Ethereal Library, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002-07-1), p. 257

Appendix F

How The Bible uses the word “Church”

The Type of Church:	The Holy Christian Church <i>(Invisible)</i>	The Visible Church	The True Christian Church
Scriptural examples:	<div data-bbox="521 890 743 926">John 18:36</div> <div data-bbox="521 953 743 989">John 4:23-24</div>	<div data-bbox="786 890 998 953">Acts 11:22; 13:1</div> <div data-bbox="786 974 998 1010">Rom. 10:9-10</div>	<div data-bbox="1045 890 1258 926">Matt. 28:19-20</div> <div data-bbox="1045 953 1258 989">John 16:13</div> <div data-bbox="1045 1016 1258 1052">1 John 4:1</div> <div data-bbox="1045 1079 1258 1115">Isaiah 8:20</div> <div data-bbox="1045 1142 1258 1205">Matt. 7:15,20-23</div>
Membership	<div data-bbox="548 1331 716 1451">Faith</div>	<div data-bbox="786 1331 998 1451">Confession</div>	<div data-bbox="1045 1331 1258 1430">Following all of God's word:</div> <div data-bbox="1084 1457 1219 1493">words</div> <div data-bbox="1084 1520 1219 1556">Actions</div>

F.1 Bible Passages:

F.1.1 The Holy Christian Church

- *John 18:36 Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.”*

- *John 4:23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."*
- *Luke 17:20 Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, 21 nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."*

F.1.2 The Visible Church

- *Acts 11:22 News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.*
- *Rom. 10:9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

F.1.3 The True Christian Church

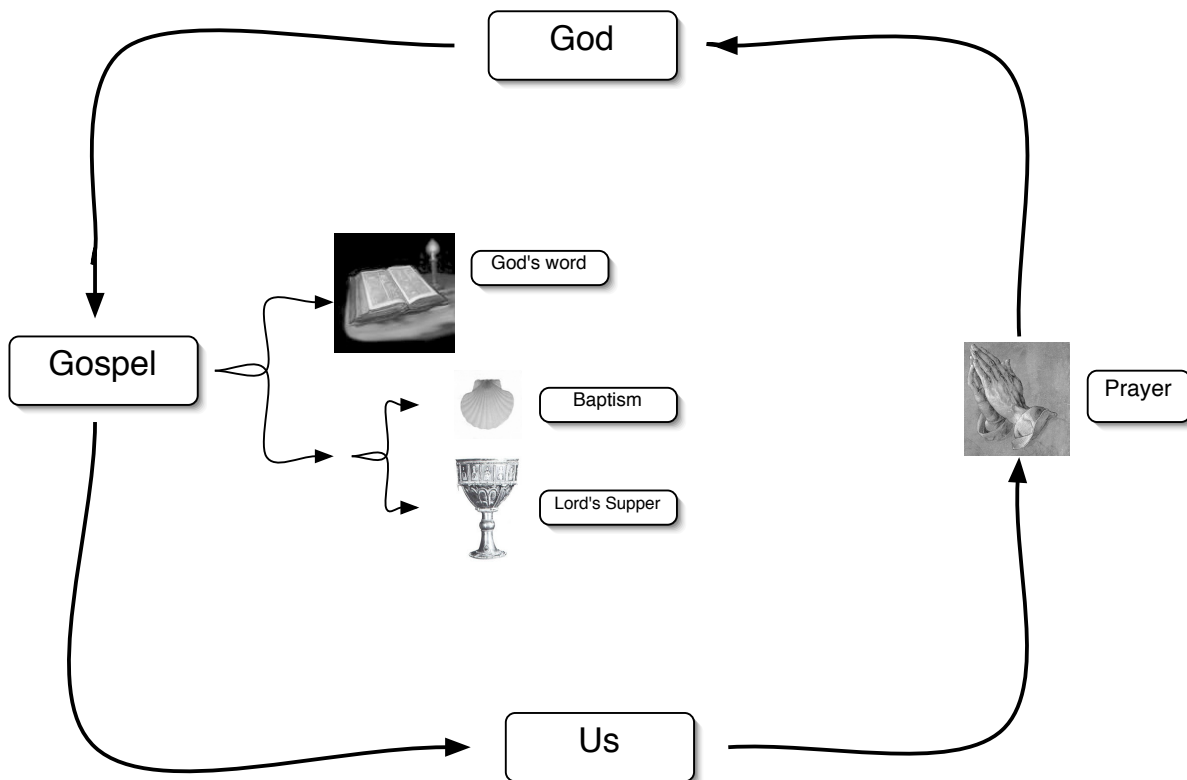
- *Matt. 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*
- *John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*
- *1John 4:1 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*
- *Is. 8:20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.*
- *Matt. 7:15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.
Matt. 7:20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.
Matt. 7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'*

Appendix G

The Means Of Grace

The Means Of Grace

(How does God communicate his love to us?)



G.1 God brings us to faith through the means of Grace, the gospel in word in sacrament

G.1.1 The means of grace serve a double purpose.

Their first function is to exhibit, offer, give, convey and seal to a sinner pardon for Christ's sake.

- God's Word:

- *Mark 16:15 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*
- *Luke 24:47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*
- *2Cor. 3:9 If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!*
- **Baptism:**
 - *Acts 2:38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*
 - *Acts 22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’*
 - *Eph. 5:26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,*
 - *1Cor. 6:11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*
- **Lord’s Supper:**
 - *Luke 22:19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”*
 - *Luke 22:20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.*
 - *Matt. 26:26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.”*
 - *Matt. 26:27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*
 - *1Cor. 10:16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.*

Their second function is to effect faith.

Cf Ro 10:17; Jn 20:31; 1 Pe 1:23-25; Tit 3:5; Lk 22:19. James 1:21.

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

John 20:31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

1Pet. 1:23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For, “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, 25 but the word of the Lord stands forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.

G.1. GOD BRINGS US TO FAITH THROUGH THE MEANS OF GRACE, THE GOSPEL IN WORD IN SACRAM

Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

Luke 22:19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

James 1:21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

