

ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

VOL. 1

**A compilation of weekly articles published at the
Western Heights church of Christ in Dallas, TX.
This material may be utilized for the purpose of
Bible classes, sermons or home devotionals.**

Dedication

It is a privilege for me to dedicate this book to the elders, deacons and members of the Western Heights church of Christ located in Dallas, TX. I am thankful to the elders for the opportunity to preach the Word of God to the congregation on a weekly basis. I, also, thank each member of the congregation who takes the time to read these articles.

Elders:

Ángel Flores
Gilberto González
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Deacons:

Humberto Alejo
Mario Rivas
Gustavo Tello
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Willie A. Alvarenga

If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

(1 Peter 4:11)

Purpose of this book

The purpose of this book is to provide sound material that can help each member of the Body of Christ to grow in the grace and knowledge of God's Word. These articles may be used in church bulletins, Bible classes, sermons or home devotionals.

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Willie A. Alvarenga

The Benefits of Bible Study

WHAT A GREAT blessing it is to study the Word of God! If we would only meditate upon the great blessings of Bible study, I think this would keep us encouraged in the study of God's Holy Word. But, what are the great blessings we can enjoy when we take time to examine the Scriptures? Let me share with you a few of these great blessings we can enjoy, if we dedicate time to the study of the Scriptures: (1) We will grow in the knowledge of God's Word (2 Peter 3:18), (2) We will be ready to always give a biblical answer (1 Peter 3:15), (3) We will be able to handle aright the Word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15), (4) We will avoid being destroyed by the lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6), (5) We will avoid being taken into captivity (Isaiah 5:13), (6) We will sin less against God (Psalm 119:11), (7) Our souls will be saved (James 1:21), (8) We will be able to achieve spiritual maturity (2 Timothy 3:16-17), (9) We will be able to be a happy people (Jeremiah 15:16), (10) We will be spiritually fed (1 Peter 2:1-2), (11) We will be of great benefit to the Church (Acts 18:27).

I hope and pray that we will take Bible study seriously. Therefore, let me encourage you to be

present for every opportunity we have to study the inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Let me remind you that on Wednesdays we are studying a series of lessons on, "How to Study the Bible Effectively" and on Sunday mornings, we are studying the series, "Towards Spiritual Maturity." I am more than confident that such lessons will be of great benefit to each member of the Body of Christ.

Please try your best to fall in love with the Scriptures, just like David did when he wrote, "Oh, how I love your Law, it is my meditation all day long" (Psalm 119:97). Let this be our attitude as we dedicate time to the study of God's Word. To God be the glory now and forever!

Back to the Bible

ONE OF MY favorite phrases is, “Back to the Bible.” It is my favorite one because I strongly believe that we must always go back to the Bible in order to practice God’s will in our lives. The world in which we live has rejected the Scriptures by refusing to live according to God’s commandments. We may sadly say that this is the case not only in the world, but also in the lives of many who profess to be followers of Christ, but are not doing so. In order for us not to be guilty of rejecting the Word of God, we must always have the right attitude towards the Scriptures. We must always go back to the Bible to see what God expects of all of us.

It is my strong conviction that we must go back to the Bible regarding our attitude towards the Word of God (Psalm 119:97; 119:12); we must go back to the Bible regarding our attitude towards God (Mark 12:30; Psalm 119:137); we must go back to the Bible regarding the God-given responsibilities of marriage (Ephesians 5:21-33; Matthew 19:1-9); we must go back to the Bible regarding the need to share the Good News of salvation with those who are lost (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:18-20); we must go back to the Bible regarding the need to live a holy life in the sight of God and all men (1 Peter 1:14-16; Hebrews 12:14); we must go back to the Bible regarding the importance of displaying a good example before all men (Matthew 5:16; 1 Timothy 4:12); we must go back to the Bible regarding the proper attitude children should have towards their parents, and parents toward their children (Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20-21; Proverbs 23:6); we must go back to the Bible

regarding our spiritual preparation for the Second Coming of Christ (Matthew 24:44; 2 Peter 3:10-13); we must go back to the Bible regarding the need to imitate godly examples (1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Peter 2:21-22).

If you notice, most people in the world and in the church are not practicing these things. This is the reason why I believe we must prayerfully consider the need to always keep going back to the Bible to learn, "What Says the Lord". May God help us to always have a profound respect for His Word! May He be with us as together we strive to keep going back to the Bible.

Insufficient Standards of Authority

(1)

THE APOSTLE Paul instructed the saints at Colosse to always consider the authority of Christ for everything they do in life. This instruction is found in Colossians 3:17, which reads, *“and whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”* Sadly, many today are ignoring such instruction when they go about doing their own will, and not the will of God. As Christians we must always strive to do everything according to the authority of Christ (cf. 1 Peter 4:11). Following is a list of factors which constitute an insufficient standard of authority that many use in order to justify practices that are not in harmony with the Word of God. May God help us to avoid such!

“I Don’t Think God Will Not Be Pleased With the Things We Do For Him”— This erroneous mentality is refuted by the narrative of Nadab and Abihu, and Uzza (Leviticus 10:1-2; 1 Chronicles 13:9; cf. Genesis 4:1-5). These men practiced things that were not pleasing in the sight of God and for such action, He punished them. By their actions, they did not acknowledge the fact that God does care for the way we do things.

“Whatever I Do, God Will Always Be With Me”— This mentality is refuted by the narrative of Samson, who after practicing things that did not please God, the Bible says God departed from him (Judges 16:20). At that particular moment, Samson thought God was with him, but in reality, He was not. Let us be very careful to not be guilty of the same mistake in which we think that God is pleased with what we do.

“Many Are Doing It” – This kind of thinking is refuted by the Word of Jesus in Matthew 7:13-14 where He taught that the majority is not right. God also says in Exodus 20:3 that we are not to follow the multitudes to do evil. Just because many do it does not mean it is ok to do it!

“I Like to Do It This Way” – This mentality is refuted by the words found in Jeremiah 10:23 and Proverbs 14:12. These two verses teach that whatever seems right to men does not mean that it is to God. We must always examine carefully what God says through His Word, and not what we desire or think. As Christians, we must always have Biblical authority for everything we do or say (Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11).

Insufficient Standards of Authority

(2)

LAST week we discussed the first part of *insufficient standards of authority*. It is my prayer that we were able to study the ones I presented, and that we were able to reason correctly about them. To follow insufficient standards of authority is to invite destruction upon our souls. This is the case because each standard of authority which does not comply with the Word of God, constitutes a perversion of the Scriptures (2 Peter 3:16-17). This, my brethren, is condemned by God. And so, with this in mind, let us examine the second part of this brief study. Notice the following insufficient standards of authority:

"Most preachers, and specially the one in my congregation, says I can do it"— Sad to say, most Christians have believed this erroneous standard of authority. The apostle Paul refutes this by the teaching of Galatians 1:6-9, where he tells us that no man or an angel has the authority to change what God has established through His Word. The preacher must do everything by the authority of Christ (Colossians 3:17).

"The most important thing is for me to feel good about what I do"— We as Christians must remember that our sole priority is to please God and not ourselves. Paul said in Galatians 1:10 that he was not seeking to please man, but Christ. When I do not make every effort to obey God's Word, then I am seeking to please myself and not God. Remember, it is not about you!

"I don't need to have book, chapter and verse for everything I do — This is not what Colossians 3:17

and 1 Peter 4:11 teach. If we do or say anything, it must be done by the authority of God. Most people do not like the Bible because the Word of God does not provide authority for the things they want to practice.

“God does not care how we do it, so long as we do it in love and for Him” – This is one big mistake that people make today. Most people in the world do things their own way and profess to do it in love for God, but this does not mean that they are right in what they do. God does care how we do things! Remember that “not everyone who says Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but only he who do it the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). We must be very careful to always do things according to God’s Word, and not our own will.

May God help us to always seek to please Him in everything we do or say!

Knowing Our Bibles (1)

HOW much do you know your Bible? How often do you study your Bible? These are questions that we as Christians need to answer in a positive way. In this brief article I would like to present to you basic information about the book we call, "The Bible." As we examine this information, let me encourage you to please memorize as much as you can.

The word "**Bible**" comes from the Greek word **βιβλία**, which is the plural form for books. This word has as its meaning a document consisting of a scroll or a book. It also means a collection of books (e.g., all 66 books of the entire Bible). This Book is divine because it comes from God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). It took approximately 1,500 years for the entire Bible to be written. It also took about 40 human instruments to write the entire Bible. These men were fishermen, kings, tax collectors, doctors, shepherds, etc. The Bible possesses a perfect unity throughout all 66 books. The Old Testament contains 39 books, while the New Testament has 27 books. The books of the Old Testament may be divided in the following sections: Law, history, poetry and major and minor prophets. Jesus divided the Old Testament books as follow: The Law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:44). The New Testament has been divided into the following sections: The Gospels (Matthew-John), History (Acts), The Pauline Letters (Romans-Philemon), The General Epistles (James-Jude), and Prophecy (Revelation). Matthew through John: The life of Christ; Acts: How to become a New Testament Christian; Romans through Jude: How to live as a Christian; Revelation: How to die as a

Christian—victory in Christ. The Old Testament contains 929 chapters, while the New Testament contains 260. The entire Old Testament can be read in one year if you read 3 chapters a day. The New Testament can be read in one month if you read 8 or 9 chapters a day. The New Testament can be read completely in 11 hours and 38 minutes. There are twelve key words to understanding the story of the Old Testament Scriptures: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Judges, Kings, Divided, Captivity and Return. The Old Testament Scriptures were written in the Hebrew and Aramaic language, while the New Testament was written in Koine Greek. Passages of the Old Testament that were written in the Aramaic language were: Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Daniel 2:4b-7:21 and Jeremiah 10:11. If possible, try to memorize this information as much as you can. You may also write this down in your Bible so you can have access to it any time. May God help us love our Bibles more and more!

Knowing Our Bibles (2)

LAST week we read about some great things we need to know about our Bibles. This will be the second part to that study. Again, let me encourage you to write down this information in your Bibles. Trust me, you will need it someday. With this in mind, let us learn more about our Bibles:

The Old Testament contains 929 chapters, 23, 145 verses; the New Testament contains 260 chapters, 7,957 verses; There are 1,189 chapters in the entire Bible; the longest verse in the Bible is Esther 8:9; longest chapter in the entire Bible is Psalm 119; The shortest chapter is Psalm 117; The Book of Isaiah is known as the entire Bible because the first 39 chapters deal with information about the Old Testament and the last 27 chapters deal with information about the New Testament; There are more than 300 Messianic prophecies in the Bible; The Septuagint (LXX) is the Old Testament in the Greek language, translated by approximately 72 Jewish priests; There are approximately 400 years between the last book of the Old Testament, and the first book of the New Testament; this period is called, “The Intertestamental Period”; The central message of the Bible can be summarized in two words: Grace and Obedience—Grace, what God has done for us, and Obedience, what men must do in view of God’s grace; Jesus can be seen in every book of the Old and New Testament;

The book of Esther does not mention the name of God; The Bible has been translated in more than 2,000 languages; All the books of the New Testament end with the word “Amen,” except Acts, James and Hebrews; A man called, Stephen Langton divided the Bible into chapters between the years 1234 and 1242 A.D.; A man called, Robert d’Etiénne divided the New Testament into verses in the year 1551; The only two men in the entire Bible who did not die were Enoch and Elijah; The plan of salvation found in the last pages of the Bible do not constitute the true plan of salvation as found in the book of Acts, which is known as the “Book of conversions”; In Genesis through Deuteronomy we find 5, 852 verses; The Bible informs men about where they came from and where they are going; The Bible warns about the principle of not adding or taking away from it at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the Bible (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19). This information will help us to learn a few things about the book we call the Bible. It is my prayer that we will dedicate time to read the message of the Bible, but most importantly, that we obey the commandments of God so we may spend eternity in Heaven. May God help us all to that very end!

The Importance of Bible Dates In The New Testament (1)

WHAT is the importance of knowing Bible dates in the New Testament? Some people don't care about when a particular book or letter was written, or when a particular event took place in the New Testament. A careful study of the dates for certain events can help us to appreciate more our study of God's Word. With this in mind, let me share with you a few reasons why knowing certain dates can help us to better understand God's Word.

Dates in the New Testament are important because they help us to learn when a particular congregation of the Lord's Church was established. For example, when was the Church of Christ at Philippi established? A careful study will reveal that this Church was established at about 50-53 A.D. The apostle Paul wrote a letter to them at about 62-63 A.D. Why is this so significant? Well, think about it. This particular congregation enjoyed a tremendous spiritual growth in less than 13 years. Such growth was evident in the fact that this Church had elders and deacons (Philippians 1:1). Most congregations of the Lord's Church have been around for more than 20 years, and still don't have elders and deacons in the congregation. The Church at Philippi also participated in helping gospel preachers spread the Word. The apostle Paul was blessed by this

congregation in the fact that they had assisted him financially (Philippians 4:14-17). Most congregations today do not even think about the possibility of financially assisting those who preach the gospel in other parts of the world. Between 50-53 and 62-63 A.D. the Church at Philippi had become an excellent example to other congregations. The Churches of today would do well to imitate their godly example!

The second reason why dates in the New Testament are important is because they help us to see how faithful brethren turn unfaithful in so little time. For example, in the letters the apostle Paul penned, we read about a particular Christian named Demas. In Colossians 4:14 Demas is mentioned by Paul. In Philemon 24, Demas is mentioned as Paul's fellow laborer. As we can see, in these verses, which were written at about 62-63 A.D. Demas is mentioned as a faithful worker in God's Kingdom; nevertheless, in 2 Timothy 4:10, he is mentioned as the one who forsook Paul and loved this present world. 2 Timothy was written at about 67-68 A.D. This means that in a period of about 5 to 6 years, Demas became unfaithful. When you compare the dates for Colossians and Philemon, and the date in 2 Timothy, you learn that this was the case. The Lord willing, next week we will study more information about the dates in the N.T. God bless you!

The Importance of Bible Dates In The New Testament (2)

WE CONTINUE to examine the reasons why dates in the New Testament are important to know. I would argue that we should know, not only the dates for the New Testament, but also the Old Testament. Knowing dates helps us to appreciate more the Word of God. So, with this in mind, let me provide two more reasons why knowing dates in the Bible is important.

Knowing the dates in the Bible helps us to appreciate the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The Book of Isaiah contains several Messianic prophecies that find their fulfillment in the New Testament. This book was written at about 750 B.C. This means that all of the prophecies which we read about in this book had their fulfillment 750 years later. This truth speaks volumes regarding the inspiration of the Scriptures. We may consider, not only the book of Isaiah, but also Psalms. In this book we find several prophecies regarding the death of Christ. These prophecies were uttered about 1,000 years before their actual fulfilment. This, also, speaks in favor of Bible inspiration.

Knowing the dates in the Bible helps us to appreciate the great truth that Christians can remain faithful throughout their Christian life. We may speculate

that Paul is mentioned for the first time in Acts 6:9, as the one who came from Cilicia and who debated Stephen (cf. Acts 22:3). In Acts 7:58 Paul is referenced as a young man. The events in Acts 7 took place at about 35 A.D. It is believed that this young man obeyed the gospel that same year (Acts 9:1-18). In the book of Philemon, v. 9, Paul is mentioned as the aged one. Then, in Acts 28, we read about the last events in the life of Paul. The events in Acts 28 took place at about 61-63 A.D. It is believed that the last letter of Paul was 2 Timothy, which was written at about 67-68 A.D. Keeping these dates in mind helps us to see how the apostle Paul continued to live a faithful life of service in Jesus Christ throughout his entire Christian life. From the beginning of his conversion at about 35 A.D. (being a young person) to the end of his life at about 68 A.D. Paul gave us an example of what it means to live for Christ (Philippians 1:21). Living a faithful life in Christ is possible with God's help.

In the next article, I will provide the dates for each book of the Old and the New Testament. My suggestion to you is to write these dates down in your Bibles, since this will help you as you diligently study God's Word. May He continue to bless us always!

The Approximate Dates for the Books of the Bible

WHAT are the approximate dates for the books of the Bible? Let me encourage you to consider the following dates when such books were written:

THE OLD TESTAMENT DATES:

Genesis (1447-1407 B.C.), Exodus (1400 B.C.), Leviticus (1400 B.C.), Numbers (1400 B.C.), Deuteronomy (1400 B.C.), Joshua (1375 B.C.), Judges (1043 B.C.), Ruth (1030-1010 B.C.), 1 & 2 Samuel (931-722 B.C.), 1 & 2 Kings (561-538 B.C.), 1 & 2 Chronicles (450-430 B.C.), Ezra (457-444 B.C.), Nehemiah (424-400 B.C.), Esther (450-331 B.C.), Job (unknown date), Psalms (1410-450 B.C.), Proverbs (971-686 B.C.), Ecclesiastes (940-931 B.C.), Song of Solomon (971-965 B.C.), Isaiah (700-681 B.C.), Jeremiah (586-570 B.C.), Lamentations (586 B.C.), Ezekiel (590-570 B.C.), Daniel (536-530 B.C.), Hosea (750-710 B.C.), Joel (835-796 B.C.), Amos (750 B.C.), Obadiah (850-840 B.C.), Jonah (775 B.C.), Micah (735-710 B.C.), Nahum (650 B.C.), Habakkuk (615-605 B.C.), Zephaniah (635-625 B.C.), Haggai (520 B.C.), Zechariah (480-470 B.C.), Malachi (433-424 B.C.).

THE NEW TESTAMENT DATES:

Matthew (50-60 A.D.), Mark (50-60 A.D.), Luke (60-61 A.D.), John (90 A.D.), Acts (62 A.D.), 1 Corinthians (55

A.D.), 2 Corinthians (51-52 A.D.), Galatians (49-50 A.D.), Ephesians (62-63 A.D.), Philippians (62-63 A.D.), Colossians (62-63 A.D.), 1 Thessalonians (51 A.D.), 2 Thessalonians (51-52 A.D.), 1 Timothy (62-64 A.D.), 2 Timothy (66-67 A.D.), Titus (62-64 A.D.), Philemon (62-63 A.D.), Hebrews (67-69 A.D.), James (44-49 A.D.), 1 Peter (64-65 A.D.), 2 Peter (67-68 A.D.), 1 John (90-95 A.D.), 2 John (9—95 A.D.), 3 John (90-95 A.D.), Jude (60-68 A.D.), Revelation 94-96 (A.D.).

Please take the time to write these dates down right below the title of each book of your Bible. It will help you to identify when such books were written. God bless you!

The Terrible Consequences of Not Loving Our Brethren

WHAT are the terrible consequences of not loving our brothers and sisters in Christ? Let me invite you to take a look at what John the Apostle wrote concerning the answer to this question:

1. He who hates his brother lives in darkness (1 John 2:9-10).
2. He who hates his brother lives in darkness and is blind (1 John 2:11).
3. He who hates his brother is a child of the devil (1 John 3:10).
4. He who hates his brother abides in death (1 John 3:14).
5. He who hates his brother is a murderer (1 John 3:15).
6. He who hates his brother does not have eternal life abiding in him (1 John 3:15).
7. He who hates his brother does not have the love of God abiding in him (1 John 3:17).
8. He who hates his brother does not know God (1 John 4:7-8).
9. He who hates his brother does not have God

abiding in him and the love of God has not been perfected in him (1 John 4:11-12).

10. He who hates his brother is a liar (1 John 4:20).
11. He who hates his brother is a disobedient person (1 John 4:21).
12. He who does not love his brother is not a disciple of Jesus Christ (John 13:34-35).

Anyone who does not love his or her brother and sister in Christ will not be able to spend eternity in heaven. Therefore, the question is: Do you love your brethren?

Do You Really Love Your Brother and Sister in Christ?

BROTHERLY LOVE is something God commands us through His Word (John 13:34-35). As faithful Christians we should pay close attention to what God has said concerning the importance of love. In this brief article I want to discuss how you and I can really show love to our brethren.

You and I show love to our brothers and sisters in Christ when we obey the command of God to love one another (John 13:34-35). Loving our brethren is not an option or a suggestion, but a command from God. Since God is love, then we must also love one another (1 John 4:7-8). If we do not love our brothers and sisters in Christ, then we are guilty of disobeying the commands of God (James 4:17).

You and I show love to our brothers and sisters in Christ when we constantly pray for them (Ephesians 6:18). We are commanded to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). As Christians we must always keep our brethren in our prayers. If we do not pray for them, then this is a sign that we do not love them. The apostle Paul would always pray for his brothers and sisters in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:4; Philippians 1:3-4; Colossians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:3). We must follow this noble example!

You and I show love to our brothers and sisters in Christ when we love them without hypocrisy (Romans 12:9-10). The word “hypocrisy” comes from a Greek word which means that which is not sincere

and genuine. We have the responsibility to reject hypocrisy from our lives! Our love must be genuine and true, just like the kind of love God has for us (John 3:16).

You and I show love to our brothers and sisters in Christ when we abstain from doing evil to them (Romans 12:17). Notice the symptoms of doing evil to our brethren: 1. We speak evil against them (James 4:11; Proverbs 6:19), 2. We devise evil in our hearts against them (Proverbs 6:18), 3. We fail to pray for them (Ephesians 6:17), 4. We think we are better than them (Luke 18:9-14; Philippians 2:3-4), 5. We fail to do good to them (1 John 3:17).

It is my fervent prayer that God will help us to have genuine love for one another. Remember, heaven awaits those who do God's will, and have brotherly for one another (Matthew 7:21).

How to Say “I Love You” to Your Brothers and Sisters in Christ

WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD for giving us all the things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). Through the Scriptures we can learn a lot on how to live the Christian life that God would have us to live. In this brief article I would like to present to you certain practical principles on how you and I can actually say “I love you” to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Let me encourage us to put these to practice.

You and I can say “I love you” to our brothers and sisters in Christ when we obey the command to do so. Jesus gave us a command to obey, and this command has to do with loving our spiritual family in Christ (John 13:34-35). If we do not obey God’s command, then we will not please Him! If you want to please God, then you will say “I love you” to your brothers and sisters in Christ.

You and I can say “I love you” to our brothers and sisters in Christ when we acknowledge the fact that we are not better or superior to them. We must remember that in the presence of God you and I are of equal importance to Him. The Bible teaches that God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). If I believe that I am better than my brother and sister in Christ, then this kind of attitude will keep me away from expressing my brotherly love to my spiritual family.

You and I can say “I love you” to our brothers and sisters in Christ when we put away resentment from

our lives. According to the dictionary, “resentment” means a bitter indignation at having been treated unfairly. We must acknowledge the fact that perhaps we, also, have treated others unfairly, and perhaps we have been forgiven of this kind of action. We must learn to put the past behind and forget so that we can learn to love others. We are not perfect, we all make mistakes. Let us help each other to be better! If you have problems with resentment, then try to seek spiritual counsel from those who can help you. You will feel so much better once you put the past in the past!

You and I can say “I love you” to our brothers and sisters in Christ when we acknowledge the fact that if we don’t, then we will not be able to enter heaven. If we do not love your spiritual family in Christ, then we will not be able to make it to heaven. Please take a few moments to read the following verses which tells us that those who do not love their brethren will not make it to heaven (1 John 3:10, 14, 15, 18; 4:8, 20).

Let me encourage you to imitate the first century church and be a loving Christian just like they were. God expects for His children to get along. Brothers and sisters, WE CAN DO THIS! To God be the glory.

The Importance of Church Attendance (1)

WHY should Church attendance be important to every Christian? Please take the time to prayerfully consider the following reasons:

Church attendance is important because it is a command from God. Yes, Church, He expects us to be present to worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24; Hebrews 10:24-25). If it is a command from God, and you are not present, then you are violating His command (1 John 3:4).

Church attendance is important because it is a great way to stimulate one another unto love and good works (Hebrews 10:24). There is no way for you to encourage your brethren by not attending services. They need your encouragement; you need theirs!

Church attendance is important because it is a great way to grow in the knowledge of God's Word. Every faithful Christian who attends services will benefit from the knowledge that is imparted through Bible classes and sermons. Such a We will be better prepared to face the spiritual battle we fight every single day.

Church attendance is important because it is a great way to show God that we love Him. If God expects us to be here, and we are not, then how can we really

show God that we love Him? Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

Church attendance is important because it is a great way to show visitors that we really care for God. We are expected to be a light to the world (Matthew 5:16). We cannot be such a light if we are not a good example in attendance. Visitors need to know that we really love God by being here all the time, and on time!

I pray that we will always take Church attendance seriously. God deserves our best, and we can give Him our best! ~

The Importance of Church Attendance (2)

WHY should Church attendance be important to every Christian? Please take the time to prayerfully consider the second part of this article:

Church attendance is important because it provides a great way for us to stay active in the work of the Lord. There is no way to stay active in the work of the Lord when we stay home doing nothing, but pleasing ourselves. By being present at every service, you provide a great way to stay busy in the work of the Lord. You stay busy by helping out as much as you can (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Church attendance is important because it is a great way to make preparations for our journey into heaven. Every time we come together at the Church building we are making preparations for our journey into heaven. This preparation comes by studying God's Word, fellowshipping the saints, praying to God for strength, and by obeying His commandments. When you can be here, and you are not, then you are not making preparations for your journey into the eternal rest.

Church attendance is important because it is a great way to avoid going into Hell. Not attending services constitutes a clear violation of God's Word (Hebrews 10:24-25). Remember that the wages of sin is death

(Romans 6:23; 1 John 3:4). Those who ignore God's command to assemble for worship cannot expect to be in heaven someday. You cannot enter heaven by disobeying God's will.

Church attendance is important because it is a great way to show respect for our elders. One of the great responsibilities of the elders is to look out for your best spiritual interest. This is why they provide ways for members to grow in the knowledge of God's Word. If the elders expect us to be present for worship, then we must respect such decision and be here when we can. Otherwise, we will be guilty of not submitting to their rule (Hebrews 13:17).

We are living in difficult times! Today, more than ever, we must take Church attendance seriously; otherwise, the congregation will die and will cease to grow spiritually.

The Word “Teacher” According to God’s Word

LET’S take a look at the word “teacher” and see what we can learn from it. If you are an active teacher in the Lord’s Church, then I want you to know that you are a blessed Christian! *A teacher is one who...*

Teaches only the Word of God (1 Peter 4:11; Titus 2:1; 2 Timothy 1:13; Jonah 3:2; 1 Kings 22:14).

Encourages his or her students to grow in the knowledge of God’s Holy Word (2 Peter 3:18; 1 Timothy 4:13-16; 2 Timothy 3:14-17).

Applies to his or her own life the Word of God (James 1:22-25; Luke 11:28; Acts 1:1; Ezra 7:10).

Cares for the spiritual progress of his or her students (2 Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 2:1-2; Hebrews 5:11-14; Jude 22-23; 2 Peter 1:15; Philippians 3:1; Colossians 3:15-16).

Handles aright the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

Exemplifies Christ in his or her life (1 Peter 2:21-22; 1 Corinthians 11:1).

Respects the authority of the Scriptures (Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 4:11; 1 Kings 22:14).

The Importance of Bible Teachers

THANK GOD for Bible teachers! I, personally, have benefited so much from all those who took the time to teach me God's Word from my early age. Every Bible teacher I had taught me to always appreciate and respect the Word of God. The knowledge from the Scriptures that I have gained throughout the years has been accomplished due to the hard work of Bible teachers who took the time to study and to share the great things they have learned. With this in mind, I ask the question: Why are Bible school teachers important?

Bible school teachers are important because they truly care for the spiritual well-being of those to whom they impart the knowledge of God's Word. Every faithful Bible teacher that accepts the responsibility of teaching children, youth and adults do so because they truly care for the spiritual growth of their students. Bible teachers know that God expects His people to grow in the knowledge of His Word (2 Peter 3:18). Their assistance and teachings help God's people to know God even better.

Bible school teachers are important because they set a good example to others in the way they serve the Church. Not many brethren are interested in taking the responsibility and challenge of teaching Bible classes. Nevertheless, those who do accept the challenge set a good example to others. Jesus once said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Matthew 9:37). The work in God's Kingdom is plenty, but only a few are willing to take on the responsibility of doing the work of the Lord. Bible

teachers are a great example of hard working.

Bible school teachers are important because they help their students go to heaven. Bible teachers have acknowledged the fact that only God's Word can save our souls (James 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:15). I am what I am thanks to the hard work of Bible teachers who taught me well the Word of God. This knowledge has helped me tremendously in living a life that will help me to make it to heaven. I am a child of God thanks to a Bible teacher who took the time to teach me the powerful Gospel of Jesus Christ. I know how to live a faithful life in Christ thanks to several Bible teachers who taught me how to interpret the Scriptures correctly. Again I say, thank God for Bible teachers! May the Lord grant us more faithful brethren who will prepare themselves for the great and noble task of teaching others the Word of our heavenly Father!

The Kind of Young People Needed Today

WHAT is the kind of young people the Church needs today? Let us allow the Bible to answer this question. At the same time, let us encourage our young people to be the kind of people God would have them to be.

The Church of today needs young people like Jesus. He is our Supreme example to follow (1 Peter 2:21-22). From the life of Jesus we learn that young people can dedicate their time to God's work (Luke 2:49). We also learn how to be obedient to the will of God (John 12:49-50; Philippians 2:5-11). He gives us a great example in every aspect of life!

The Church today needs young people like Timothy. This faithful Christian was (1) knowledgeable in the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:14-15), (2) enjoyed a great reputation in many places (Acts 16:1-2), (3) was well-prepared to face false teachers and their error (1 Timothy 1:3), and (4) a person who loved and served the Church (Philippians 2:19-23).

The Church of today needs young people like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. These faithful servants of God were (1) men of conviction and determination to say no to sin (Daniel 1:8), men of courage to not bow to idolatry (Daniel 3:8-18), men of good reputation (Daniel 6:1-23), and men of prayer (Daniel 6:10).

The Church of today needs young people like

Joseph. This faithful man of God is a great example of courage to stand for what is right (Genesis 39:9). He is also an example of moral faithfulness to God (Genesis 39:9). He teaches every young person and adult that temptation can be overcome.

I, personally, would like to encourage our young people to imitate these great examples we find in the Bible. These are there for our example! The world will be able to see Christ in our lives when we strive each day to be more like these faithful young persons. I am confident that with God's help, we can make a difference.

The Importance of Sound Doctrine

(1)

WHAT is sound doctrine? This phrase comes from the Greek words, ὑγιαινούση διδασκαλία, HUGIAINOUSE DIDASKALIA. The basic meaning is doctrine which is right, correct, sound, and without any error or perversions. This is the kind of doctrine that Paul wants Titus to speak continually, since the verb “speak” is found in the present tense and imperative mood. This means a continuous action and a command to obey. Now we ask the question: Why is sound doctrine so important? Let us examine the following reasons why:

Sound doctrine is important because it comes from God. Yes, my brethren, sound doctrine only comes from God, since it is inspired of Him. The Apostle Paul wrote the following concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures, *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”* (2 Timothy 3:16). Sound doctrine is important because it is inspired of God, since holy men of God spoke, being moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21). Therefore, we, as faithful Christians, must respect the doctrine of Christ at all times.

Sound doctrine is important because God expects us to proclaim it. The Apostle Paul commanded Titus to speak those things which were proper to sound doctrine (Titus 2:1). Even the young evangelist Timothy was commanded to uphold the patter of sound words (2 Timothy 1:13). Sadly, there are many

who are showing no respect for the authority of sound doctrine, and refuse to proclaim it just the way we find it in the Scriptures. As faithful children of God, we must take heed to the command to emphasize sound doctrine in our lives and in our teaching and preaching of God's Word.

Sound doctrine is important because it can help us grow spiritually. False doctrine cannot help us in any way to grow spiritually. The only word that can help us grow the way God wants us to grow is His Word. God's Holy Word is able to make us wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:15), and is able to build us up (Acts 20:32). This is why the Apostle Peter exhorts us to grow in the knowledge of God's Word (2 Peter 3:18). May the Lord give us the wisdom to always uphold sound doctrine in our lives!

The Importance of Sound Doctrine

(2)

WE have examined three reasons why sound doctrine is important. It is my prayer that we, as the Church of the New Testament, take heed to such reasons and apply them to our daily lives. Let us consider other reasons why sound doctrine must be emphasize in the Church of the 21st century.

Sound doctrine is important because it can help us to refute error. Yes, my brethren, sound doctrine can help us to refute the error of false doctrines that is being promoted in our days. Sound doctrine can help us to know that baptism is essential to salvation (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21; Acts 2:38). It can help us to know that there is only one true Church of Christ (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 4:4). It can help us to know that salvation can be lost (Philippians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 9:27; Revelation 2:10). The more we study sound doctrine, the better off we will be regarding defending the doctrine of Christ.

Sound doctrine is important because not to obey it will bring terrible consequences. A careful study of the Bible reveals that not to obey the doctrine of Christ will result in divine punishment from God. The Apostle John wrote in 2 John 9-11 that those who do not keep the doctrine of Christ will not have God nor Jesus on their side. If you do not have the Father nor the Son in your side, then you cannot be saved. Those false teachers in the context of 2 John were denying the incarnation of Jesus Christ (v. 7). Anyone who perverts the doctrine of Christ will not spend eternity in heaven. Therefore, sound doctrine is important!

Sound doctrine is important because it can help people know the right way to make it to heaven. False doctrine cannot teach a person the right way to make it to heaven. Only sound doctrine can accomplish such a task. Any honest person who studies the New Testament will learn what he or she must do in order to be in a saved condition in the sight of God. The plan of salvation according to the NT is for a person to hear the gospel (Rom. 10:17), believe in the gospel (Mark 16:16), repent of his or her sins (Acts 2:38), confess Christ as the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10), be immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 22:16), and live a faithful life in Christ (Rev. 2:10). False doctrine only teaches error regarding salvation. We must uphold sound doctrine because this doctrine is the only one that can show people the right way into heaven. God bless you!

The Book of Acts: A Perfect Manual for Evangelism (1)

THANK God for the book of Acts! Within its pages we find the greatest handbook on personal evangelism ever. The book of Acts is the perfect handbook on local as well as global evangelism. Sometimes people spend money buying books on evangelism written by non-members of the Body of Christ, when in reality, we have the best book ever written on evangelism. The main author of this book is the Holy Spirit, who led Luke to write a perfect book on how to share the greatest message of salvation ever. This book contains 28 chapters, 1007 verses in which you will find approximately 11 cases of conversion, and the history of the first 30 years of the early church. With this in mind, let me share with you a few reasons why I believe this great book is a perfect tool for evangelism.

Reason # 1: The book of Acts is a perfect handbook on evangelism because it tells us **WHAT** to preach. As we examine each case of conversion in the book of Acts, we realize that the Gospel of Jesus Christ was preached. From Acts 2:22-36, we learn that Peter, at Pentecost, preached the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As a result of this powerful preaching, about 3,000 souls obeyed the Gospel (Acts 2:41), and were added to the Church of Christ (Acts 2:47). In the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8), Cornelius (Acts 10), and the Philippian jailor (Acts 16), just to mention a few, we see how the Gospel was preached to each of these persons. This is exactly

what you and I must preach every time we speak to others about salvation. Therefore, as we can see, the book of Acts tells us **WHAT** to preach—the Gospel.

Reason # 2: The book of Acts is a perfect handbook on evangelism because it tells us **WHERE** to preach the Gospel. In Acts 1:8 we see the command given to the apostles to go and preach beginning in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth. This means we are to preach the powerful message of salvation to the whole world (Mark 16:15). We are commanded to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). This is exactly what we see being done in the book of Acts. People went everywhere preaching the Gospel (Acts 8:4). Are we making every effort to preach the Gospel to as many people as possible? I pray that we are! We will continue the second part of this article next week. May the Lord continue to bless you!

The Book of Acts: A Perfect Manual for Evangelism (2)

LAST week we examined two reasons why the book of Acts is a perfect manual for evangelism. It is my prayer that you and I will prayerfully consider these reasons and apply them to our Christian life. Allow me to share with you more reasons why you and I should go to the book of Acts for the perfect manual on Church growth.

Reason # 3: The book of Acts is a perfect handbook on evangelism because it tells us **WHY** we must preach the gospel. One great reason why we must preach the gospel is because people are lost without it. Sin has separated men from God according to the words of the prophet Isaiah (59:1-2). One text in the book of Acts that helps us to understand that people are lost without the gospel is Acts 11:14. The text says, “Who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.” This passage has a direct reference to the conversion of Cornelius and his spiritual condition before God. Even though Cornelius was a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the poor and prayed to God always, he was still in a lost condition and needed to hear the gospel of Christ to be saved. Peter came to his home and preach the powerful message of salvation (Acts 10:1-48). Let us preach the gospel of Christ because people are lost without such a message.

Reason # 4: The book of Acts is a perfect handbook

on evangelism because it tells us **WHEN** to preach the gospel. We are to preach the gospel of Christ every day of our lives. In Acts 2:46 we are told that the Church continued with one accord in the temple. When we connect this verse with Acts 5:42, we learn that the purpose of the Church being at the temple everyday was for the preaching of Christ. The time to preach the gospel of Christ is always, because you will always find people who are lost without the gospel. The gospel must be preach by the rivers (Acts 16:13), in prison (Philippians 1:12-16; Acts 16:25-34), in the presence of governors (Acts 24), when we travel (Acts 8), etc. Therefore, we must always take advantage of every opportunity to share the good news of salvation. Thank God for the book of Acts. May we always appreciate this great book and the encouragement we find therein to preach the gospel of Christ. To God be the glory.

The Book of Acts: A Perfect Manual for Evangelism (3)

WHAT A GREAT responsibility we have to spread the Good News of salvation to as many people as possible (Mk 16:15; Matt 28:18-19). For this reason, we thank God for giving us the book of Acts! The book of Acts serves us as a perfect manual for evangelism because it tells us **WHAT, WHERE, WHY and WHEN** to preach the powerful message of salvation. Today, we will examine two more reasons why you and I should read the book of Acts to learn how to reach out to people with the gospel.

Reason # 5: The book of Acts is a perfect handbook on evangelism because it tells us **HOW** we must preach the gospel. As Christians we are to preach the gospel with a sense of urgency. In Acts 8:26-39 we read about the conversion of a man from Ethiopia, who was an eunuch. We are told that an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip and gave him a command to go and preach the gospel to this man. In Acts 8:27 and 30, we learn how Philip the evangelist arose and ran to this man to share the gospel. By the fact that he arose and ran, we see the sense of urgency from his part. Brethren, we are to do the same thing. Also, the fact that the early Christians preached the gospel even in the midst of persecution helps us to understand that they acknowledge a sense of urgency to preach the gospel (Acts 8:4). How are we to preach the gospel? The answer is simple: with a sense of urgency, and with much love and care for the lost souls of this world.

Reason # 6: The book of Acts is a perfect handbook on evangelism because it tells us **WHO** is to preach the gospel. The command to preach the gospel was not given to the world, Satan, non-Christians, but to faithful followers of Christ (Mk 16:15; Matt 28:18-20). The gospel is to be preached by those who have taken the Great Commission seriously. The book of Acts shows that the responsibility to preach the gospel is not only for the Apostles, but for every member of the Body of Christ. In Acts 8:1-4, we see the Church going forth and preaching the gospel. In this context, the Apostles stayed in Jerusalem, as the faithful Church went everywhere preaching the Word. This is one more reason why the book of Acts is a perfect handbook on evangelism—It reminds us of our responsibility to preach. May God help us to be obedient to the command to take the gospel to the whole world!

The Benefits of Personal Evangelism (1)

FOR SEVERAL weeks we have examined why the book of Acts is the perfect handbook on evangelism. It is my prayer that we have taken the time to read each article carefully, and then meditate upon the need to apply such reasons to our lives. In this first article, I would like to present to you the benefits we receive when we take the time to share the powerful Gospel of Jesus Christ with others. Each of these reasons will be taken from a Bible Scripture. As we contemplate these reasons, let me encourage us to be doers of God's Word and not hearers only (James 1:22-25). In order for a Christian to experience the power of God's Word, he or she must apply to his or her life the wonderful principles we find within the passages of God's inspired Word.

There is spiritual benefit in evangelism because as we do it, we are showing God that we love Him. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Sharing the Gospel of Christ is a command that needs to be obeyed. When we do what God says, then we are showing Him by our actions that we love Him. If you, as a Christian, are not taking the time to preach the Gospel to others, then you are not showing God that you love Him. Remember, God does not want you to tell Him that you love Him, but He wants you to show him with actions that you really care for His commandments (Matthew 7:21-29).

There is spiritual benefit in evangelism because when we do it, we are showing people that we care for their eternal destiny. Yes, by sharing the Gospel of Christ with family and friends, we are showing them that we care for their souls. Jesus commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:31). We love them by taking the time to preach to them the great news of salvation in Christ. When you approach people with the message of salvation, make sure you let them know how much you love and care for their souls. Someone once said, “People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.” The benefit of letting people know we care for them is without comparison.

We will continue next week with other reasons why there is benefit in getting heavily involved in the efforts of sharing the great news of salvation. To God be the glory!

The Benefits of Personal Evangelism (2)

PERSONAL EVANGELISM is not an option, but a command from God. God desires the salvation of mankind (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9), and for this reason, the powerful Gospel of Jesus Christ is still being proclaimed around the world. Jesus' desire is for us to make disciples and to baptize them for the forgiveness of their sins (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38). Therefore, if God desires the salvation of every man, then you and I must take the Great Commission seriously. And, as we evangelize, let us keep in mind the great benefits we receive by doing what God expects us to do.

There is spiritual benefit in evangelism because as we do it we gain experience and knowledge in soul-winning. Every Christian who involves himself in evangelism will gain a lot of Bible knowledge, since this knowledge is required in order to help people learn about the salvation of their souls. Those who are always involved in evangelism can tell you that being involved in this task has helped them tremendously in increasing their knowledge of God's Word. Therefore, if you want to know more about the Bible, involve yourself in reaching out to the lost souls of this world.

There is spiritual benefit in evangelism because when we do it we become a positive influence to others. The early Church became a great example to many by preaching the Gospel in many places. Even

in the midst of persecution, the early Church went everywhere preaching the Gospel (Acts 8:1-4). Weather you admit it or not, you and I are examples to others (negative or positive). Let us fulfill the Great Commission of reaching out to the lost with the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. I can assure you that by doing so, we will become a great example to others, and perhaps someone will be encouraged to do the same. One Church that became a great example to others in evangelism was the Church at Thessalonica. Paul says, "For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything" (1 Thessalonians 1:8). Brethren, the world needs more congregations like the Church in Thessalonica!

May God help us to see the spiritual benefits we can gain by preaching the Gospel of Christ to a lost and dying world!

How to Be Successful at Evangelizing (1)

WHAT A GREAT BLESSING it is to preach the powerful gospel of Jesus Christ to someone. It is a great blessing because we provide for them a great opportunity to be saved from their sins. Nevertheless, evangelizing is a task that requires preparation from our part. And, in order for the evangelist to be successful, he must keep in mind the following information:

To be successful at evangelizing we must have Bible knowledge in our hearts. We are commanded to grow in the knowledge of God's Word (2 Peter 3:18; Colossians 3:16). Bible knowledge will be a great tool to help us answer all of the questions people will ask us when we study the gospel with them. If you do not have Bible knowledge, then you will not be able to answer questions that may help people come out of sin. Therefore, let me encourage you to study your Bible more often and try to retain as much as possible of what you learn.

To be successful at evangelizing we must know the plan of salvation very well. We cannot tell people what they must do to be saved unless we know it ourselves. As Christians we must be very familiar with all the steps necessary to obey the gospel of Christ. It is imperative that you memorize the plan of salvation as well as all of the verses that go with it. People will be able to detect if you do not know the gospel plan of salvation. Let me encourage you to

take a few moments to look at the plan of salvation and try your best to memorize each step, along with its verse.

To be successful at evangelizing we must be familiar with the doctrines of men. Knowing the doctrines of men will help us to know what to study and how to refute such doctrines. We must know these doctrines in order to help people come out of error. Be familiar with the doctrine of "faith only," "infant baptism," "baptism not essential to salvation," "the sinners' prayer," etc. We must be prepared to show people from the Scriptures that these doctrines are not in harmony with the Bible.

To be successful at evangelizing we must pray continually for the lost souls of this world. When was the last time we prayed for the lost souls of this world? We must give ourselves to prayer that God may continue to provide a way and opportunities to reach out to the lost. Pray for that family member who has not obeyed the gospel. Pray for that coworker who needs the gospel. Pray for those in your own house who have not obeyed the gospel. Let us pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Next week we will consider the second part of this article. To God be the glory!

How to Be Successful at Evangelizing (2)

EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD desire the noble task of evangelism! We must not only desire such a task, but also look for ways to be successful at it. In the Bible God has given us all the things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). If we follow the Bible, then we will know how to reach out to the lost. With this in mind, let us consider more ways on how you and I can be successful at evangelism.

To be successful at evangelism we must have compassion for the lost. Our Lord Jesus Christ felt compassion for those who were lost. This is what we see in Matthew 9:36-38. Brethren, this is the kind of attitude we need to have in order to be able to reach out to the lost. Unless we feel compassion for their spiritual condition, then we will not do anything about it. I encourage you to feel compassion for your family, friends, and everyone who is lost and stands in need of the gospel of Christ.

To be successful at evangelism we must be patient with those with whom we study the gospel. Teaching the gospel of Christ is not an easy task. There are times when people will get upset and will close their reasoning to the Scriptures. We must be patient with everyone knowing that such people are blind and need someone to help them see the truth of the saving gospel of Christ. Perhaps you were reluctant at the preaching of the gospel and perhaps it took a long time for you to obey. Be patient with

people and do not ever give up on them. Patience is a key ingredient in teaching the gospel to the lost.

To be successful at evangelism we must acknowledge the fact that people are lost without the gospel. If we do not acknowledge the fact that people are lost, then we will never preach the gospel to them. I am afraid that many members of the body of Christ have come to the erroneous understanding that people are not lost without the gospel. This is a lie that Satan wants us to believe. Romans 1:16 teaches that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. This is the only power of God to save men from their sins. We must truly believe that men are lost without this message of salvation. This will help us to reach out to them.

To be successful at evangelism we must always look out for opportunities to share the gospel with others. Remember that our responsibility is to present the gospel to as many people as possible. Therefore, every opportunity you have to talk about Christ and what He did for the world, please take advantage of such opportunity. The early church went everywhere preaching the gospel (Acts 8:4). This means that they made the most of the opportunity to share Christ with as many people as possible. We must do the same thing!

May God help us to see the need to teach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15-16).

Helpful Tips for Bible Memorization (1)

THANK GOD for the ability He has given us to remember certain things! We oftentimes remember dates, telephone numbers, stories, addresses, etc. Nevertheless, when it comes to remembering Bible verses, most people have a hard time accomplishing this task. In this first article, I want us to examine a few reasons why we must take the time to memorize Bible verses. Our second part of this article will deal with helpful tips on how to be able to memorize several Bible verses.

WHY MEMORIZE BIBLE VERSES?

We should memorize Bible verses because God expects us to grow in the knowledge of His Word (2 Peter 3:18). One aspect of growing in the knowledge of the Scriptures is the part where we commit Bible verses to memory. There is no way that we can grow in the knowledge of the Scriptures when we cannot remember what the Bible teaches, and where it teaches it. We grow in knowledge of God's Word when we retain and comprehend His Word.

We should memorize Bible verses because there are verses in the Bible that encourage us to do so (Proverbs 7:1-3). In this passage we are encouraged to write God's Word in the tablet of our hearts. We do so by committing Bible teachings and Bible verses to

memory. There is a lot of encouragement in the Old and New Testament regarding the memorization of God's Holy Word. Let us read these passages and apply them to our daily lives.

We should memorize Bible verses because this practice will help us to not sin against God (Psalm 119:9, 11). The psalmist tells us that by treasuring/hiding God's Word in our hearts we will not sin against God. Why? The answer is simple: God's Word will always direct us in the right path (Psalm 119:105), that is, so long as we meditate upon her and do what she says to do.

I ask you to please prayerfully consider each of these reasons. God bless you!

Helpful Tips for Bible Memorization (2)

WE CONTINUE studying additional reasons why you and I must take the time to memorize God's Word. These reasons help us to understand the great blessing there is in committing to memory the Scriptures. Let me encourage each and every one of us to dedicate more time to the study, and retention of the holy Scriptures.

WHY MEMORIZE BIBLE VERSES?

We should memorize Bible verses because doing so will help us to always be ready to give an answer (1 Peter 3:15). As Christians, there will be some who will come to us and will ask us Bible questions. Committing to memory several Bible verses will help us to always be ready to answer every question with book, chapter and verse. We will know what God says regarding many questions that people may have. Your children may also ask you Bible questions. Having verses memorized will help you to answer them according to the Scriptures.

We should memorize Bible verses because doing so will help us to be better prepare for the task of evangelizing the world (Acts 8:35). Philip the evangelist was knowledgeable in the Scriptures and knew where to go in order to teach the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch. As we try to share the good news

of salvation with many, there will be times when they will ask us questions about salvation. Those verses we commit to memory will help us to provide a biblical answer.

We should memorize Bible verses because doing so will help us to take less time in preparing Bible lessons. If you are a Bible teacher, you know that it takes several minutes to search for those verses that you want to use in your class. When you have many verses memorized, the time to find those verses will be less. You will also be greatly encouraged to prepare more lessons!

Next week we will consider those helpful tips that will help us to retain as many verses as possible. Please make sure you remember these reasons discussed in this article!

Helpful Tips for Bible Memorization (3)

WHAT ARE some helpful tips that can help you to memorize Bible verses? Let me encourage you to please prayerfully consider each of the following tips:

Tip # 1: *Pray to God and ask Him to keep you encouraged as you memorize His Word (James 1:5; Psalm 119:12, 18, 27, 33).* Before you begin the process of memorization, go to God in prayer and ask him to give you the time, dedication, discipline and desire to commit to memory the Scriptures.

Tip # 2: *Begin to memorize those passages that you already know, but memorize them word for word.* There are several passages that we already know in part. Begin with these passages and try to know all the parts of the text. Then, make every effort to remember the “zip code,” that is, the book, chapter and verse. If you know this, you will be able to tell people where those passages are found.

Tip # 3: *Create a list of verses that you would like to memorize.* I personally recommend that you purchase a notebook where you can make such a list. In my personal opinion, I would recommend that you memorize verses that are doctrinal in nature, as well as practical. Do not memorize verses that you will never use, but only those that you can use on a daily basis.

Tip # 4: Memorize several verses on a specific subject of the Bible. I would suggest that you memorize several verses on the following subjects: baptism, faith, repentance, confession, Jesus, church, gospel, sin, singing, praying, reading, honesty, the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, etc. Having several verses memorized on various subjects will help you tremendously as you preach the gospel to people.

Next week I will share with you other helpful tips that can assist us in the process of committing to memory God's inspired Word.

Helpful Tips for Bible Memorization (4)

TODAY more than ever, the Lord's people need to emphasize Bible knowledge in their lives. One of the ways to be knowledgeable in the Scriptures is by committing to memory several verses. This can be accomplished by keeping in mind the following helpful tips:

Tip # 5: *Make every effort to remember "the zip code," that is, where the Scriptures you memorize are found.* Don't ever memorize a particular verse without remembering where that verse is found. If you study with people, they will want to know where the Scriptures you use are found!

Tip # 6: *Practice reciting your memory verses on a daily basis.* If you do not stay on top of your verses, you will soon forget them. Therefore, practice every day the verses you memorize.

Tip # 7: *Carry with you a pocket Bible you can use to find verses you want to memorize.* Carrying a pocket Bible will make it very practical to memorize verses on-the-go. Your cell phone may carry a Bible app that you can easily use.

Tip # 8: *Try to quote the verses you memorize on a day-to-day conversation or during a Bible class or sermon.* If you are talking to your friends and there is

a verse you can use on the conversation, use it! Try to use as many memory verses as possible during a Bible class or sermon.

Tip # 9: *Practice God's Word in your life.* Remember, there is no benefit whatsoever to have thousands of Scriptures memorized when you do not practice what God says in His Word (James 1:19-25).

Tip # 10: *Never think you are better than others just because you have several verses memorized.* We are always to be humble in every aspect of our lives. Let us learn from Jesus and Paul who had so many Scriptures memorized, but they never thought they were better than others.

Getting to Bible Class On Time

GETTING ON TIME to places is sometimes a challenge for some people! The reasons why could be many and may differ from person to person. In this brief article I want to discuss some helpful tips that will help us to get to Bible class on time. As we examine each tip, let us determine in our hearts to change the things we need to change so that we can give to God the best of us!

Tip # 1: We must acknowledge the fact that God deserves the best of us! (Mark 12:30). We can give God the best of us by getting to Bible class on time. By being on time we let God know that we care for Him and are deeply interested in learning from His Word. If you are late, then you will miss valuable information from the Scriptures.

Tip # 2: We must determine ahead of time that we will get to Bible class on time (Psalm 119:57). If we do not determine in our hearts getting to Bible class on time, then we will never do so. You must teach your heart to be on time to places, especially to the study of God's Word.

Tip # 3: We must acknowledge the fact that being on time to Bible class will help us to be a good example to others (Matthew 5:16). We do not become a good example to others when we are always late to Bible class. We must strive to be a positive influence to

others!

Tip # 4: We must prepare ahead of time so that we can be on time to Bible class (Hosea 10:12). If you leave preparation for the last minute, then you will always be late to Bible class. Prepare on time your clothes, Bible, family, and anything that may keep you away from arriving on time to Bible study.

Tip # 5: If we know there will be a lot of traffic on the road, then we need to start driving ahead of time than usual. Traffic is getting worse day by day! For this reason, we must make preparation to start driving a few minutes ahead of our usual time. If we are always late because of traffic, then it is time for us to consider how much time we will take to get to the building on time.

Let us prayerfully consider applying these principles to our daily lives!

5 Tips on How to Get the Best of Every Bible Sermon

EVERY WEEK OF EVERY MONTH OF EVERY YEAR Christians and visitors enjoy the opportunity to listen to two sermons per week. Each sermon has the purpose of providing edification and instruction to live a godly life in Jesus Christ. In this brief article I would like to show a few tips on how to get the best of every Bible sermon you hear. I hope and pray that you will prayerfully consider each tip:

To get the best of every Bible sermon you must...

Be present to hear those sermons being preached. You cannot get the benefit of edification and instruction unless you are present to hear and apply to your life the things you can learn through a sermon.

Make preparation to apply to your life those things you learn in a sermon. We are commanded to always be doers of God's Word, and not hearers only (James 1:22). Every time you hear a biblical sermon, make sure you apply those practical lessons to your life.

Take notes in order to search the Scriptures daily. Taking "good" notes during the preaching of a sermon will enable you to go back home and during the week search the Bible to make sure the things that

were preached were so. Don't get distracted taking other notes, but only the ones from the sermon.

Listen carefully to what is being said in a sermon. If you do this, then you will be able to hear and retain as much as you can. Make every effort not to let your mind wander to other places while you listen to the preaching of God's Word.

Not allow others to distract your attention from listening carefully to God's Word. There are times when the person next to you wants to talk to you or pass you a note. When this happens, let such person know that you want to get the best of the sermon, and that his or her request may wait until after services.

We must always have respect for the preaching of God's Word (Nehemiah 8:1-12).

How to Use Facebook to the Glory of God

I REALIZE that not everyone who will read this article has a Facebook account; nevertheless, for the ones who do, I pray this information will help you to use every tool available for the glory and honor of God. If you follow these tips, then you will stay away from using Facebook to advance sin. Therefore, with this in mind, let us examine a few ways on how you can use Facebook in a positive way.

Christians can use their Facebook to share the Gospel of Christ with friends and family. Yes, this is one positive way to reach out to your friends with the powerful Gospel of Christ. You may share videos that teach the gospel or pictures that show the Gospel plan of salvation. Your friends will have an opportunity to learn about the message that can help them get to heaven someday.

Christians can use their Facebook to promote the local congregation where they worship. Your friends and family can learn about the times of worship so that they can come and visit the congregation. They can also learn about special events your congregation may host such as gospel meetings, lectureships, etc. You can inform your friends about spiritual information that can be of great benefit to them.

Christians can use their Facebook to share digital books that may help other Christians grow spiritually. There are several PDF books that are available free of charge to share on Facebook. Such books contain information that may contribute to the spiritual growth of the New Testament Church. Use your Facebook account to inform others about spiritual things.

Christians can use their Facebook in order to promote websites that may be a great source of spiritual growth to Christians. There are several websites that can help Christians in their spiritual walk with God. In these websites they can find material for Bible classes, sermons, etc. Find out what websites you can recommend, and make sure that such are in accordance with God's Word.

May God help us to use our Facebook accounts to the glory and honor of Him!

How to Improve Our Prayers

PRAYER should be a vital part in the life of every Christian. In every letter the Apostle Paul penned, he encouraged Christians to dedicate time to prayer. In this brief article we will discuss some practical principles on how to improve our prayers to God. As we study each principle, let me encourage us to apply them to our lives.

Practical principle # 1: *Let us remember to direct every prayer to our heavenly Father.* In the Bible we are encouraged to direct our prayers to God (Matthew 6:9; John 13:13-14; 16:23). Christians do not direct their prayers to angels, the Holy Spirit, Jesus or men, but to God. This is what Jesus and every Apostle of his taught.

Practical principle # 2: *Let us remember to always glorify God through our prayers.* Jesus gave us an example on how to do this when He said, "Our Father in heaven, ***hallowed be Your name.***" (Matthew 6:9). We are to always give God the honor and glory He deserves. We can accomplish this through our prayers.

Practical principle # 3: *Let us remember not to make vain repetitions when we pray.* In Matthew 6:7, Jesus exhorted us not to make vain repetitions in our prayers. We must be specific and to the point when we pray. This way we can avoid repeating the same

thing over and over again. Also, we must examine our prayers to make sure we are not using the same prayers over and over again.

Practical principle # 4: *Let us remember to pray to God at every opportunity we have.* Sadly, some Christians only pray when they need something, or when they remember to pray. Faithful Christians should pray all the time (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We must avoid praying to God only three times a day, but more than that.

Practical principle # 5: *Let us remember to be humble every time we pray.* The narrative of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18:9-13 should encourage us to stay away from pride and self-ambition. We must be humble, especially when we approach God's throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16).

Some Thoughts on Singing to God

ACCORDING to the Bible, singing is one of the acts of our worship to God. As such, every faithful Christian should be aware of what the Bible teaches regarding singing. In this brief article, we will discuss some things the Bible teaches regarding our singing to God.

We must remember that God encourages us to sing to Him. This is what we learn in passages such as Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16). Singing to God should be something very important in our lives.

We must remember that when we sing to God, we are to do it with the understanding. In 1 Corinthians 14:15, Paul encouraged the Corinthians brethren to sing to God with their understanding. This means that we are to pay close attention to the words we sing and the message it contains.

We must remember to sing to God without the use of mechanical instruments, for such are not authorized in the New Testament. The passages of our first point (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16) do not authorize the use of mechanical instruments, but the use of our mouths and hearts in the process of singing to God. There is no command, example or implication for the use of instruments in the worship of the New Testament; therefore, such should not be utilized

when we sing to God.

We must remember to sing to God when we are happy. James, the Lord's brother, encouraged Christians to sing to God when they are happy (James 5:13). We have every reason in this world to be happy, since we are a people in Christ, where all the spiritual blessings are (Ephesians 1:3).

We must remember to teach and admonish one another through singing. This is what we learn in Colossians 3:16 where Paul included the following phrase, "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs..." This is one reason why you and I should sing with the understanding (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:15).

May the Lord help us to always sing according to what He has said in His Word!

Building a Good Study Library (1)

THE STUDY OF GOD'S WORD is a command for every Christian (2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Peter 3:18). As such, we all should seriously consider the importance of having a good Bible research library. These books will assist us in the process of growing in the knowledge of God's Word and any subject that can help us to grow spiritually. In this brief article I would like to suggest a few books that we need to have in our own personal library.

Different translations of the Bible. Having various translations of God's Word will help us to see how words are being used by the translations we have available. For example, one translation may use the word "pricked in their hearts," for Acts 2:37 (ASV, 1901), while other translations may use "cut to the heart" (NKJV). Using several options will help us to learn the meaning of some words we may not understand. Some Bible translations that I could recommend are: American Standard Bible 1901, King James Version 1611, New American Standard, English Standard Version, and New King James Bible.

Greek and Hebrew study tools. These may come in the form of a dictionary, which defines words that are used in the Hebrew or Greek language. Dictionaries give us the definition in the way it was used in their original context. Some of the dictionaries

recommended are: W.E. Vine, James Strong Concordance, Thayer's Lexicon, and Louw & Nida Lexicon, Wuest Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, and Word Pictures in the New Testament by Robert Archibald. Every personal library should have these kind of tools.

Bible dictionaries. These tools help us to define several words that are used in the Old and New Testament. Some dictionaries recommended are: Harper's Bible Dictionary, New Bible Dictionary, Theological Dictionary of the Old and New Testament, Easton's Bible Dictionary, Unger's Bible Dictionary, Illustrated Bible Dictionary, The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Holman Standard Bible Dictionary, and Tyndale Bible Dictionary.

Next week we will continue the second part of this article.

Building a Good Study Library (2)

AS WE CONTINUE OUR CONSIDERATION of the kind of study material we need in our personal library, let me suggest a few more books that should be in your bookshelf.

Sound Bible Commentaries. These books do help a lot in understanding some difficult verses we find in our Bibles. Nevertheless, it is imperative that we keep in mind that a Bible commentary is just a commentary of what the author believes the meaning of the text is. We must always keep difficult verses in their context as we try to find out the meaning of God's Word. These are some of the Bible commentaries I recommend: The Pulpit Commentary set, The Gospel Advocate Commentary set, The Truth for Today Bible Commentary set, Burton Coffman Commentary set, The Living Word Commentary set, Commentary set by brethren such as Roy Deaver, Wayne Jackson, Spiritual Sword, and Lectureship Commentary set by various preachers of the Lord's Church. These are some commentaries that will help us in our endeavor to study God's Word.

Reference Books on various subjects of the Bible. Many of our faithful brethren have written on numerous subjects of the Bible. We should have books on the inspiration of the Bible, the existence of God, the Church, Apologetics, the Life of Christ, the

Apostles, Eternal Life, the Holy Spirit, Worship, etc. All of these books will help us to have a better understanding of the Word of God.

Where can we purchase these resources? There are several places where you may get these books. You may buy them Online, Life Way Christian Bookstore, Christian Bookstore, Christian Family Bookstore, Half Price Bookstore, the Gospel Advocate Bookstore. I have been able to find good study books at Goodwill stores, Thrift stores, Garage Sales, and many other places. Always be in search of study material that can help you grown spiritually.

May the Lord continue to bless our study of His Word that we may always do those things He would have us to do!

What Do We Know About Satan?

(1)

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT SATAN? If we were to take the time to study the Scriptures, then we would learn some things about Satan. We may not learn everything there is to know about him, but some things, we can know. Let us see what the Bible says about the enemy of God and man.

THE NAMES OF SATAN:

The Old Serpent (Genesis 3:1, 4; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 12:9; 20:2).

El Great Dragon (Revelation 12:9).

Apollyon (Revelation 9:11).

The Accuser of the Brethren (Revelation 12:10).

Satan (1 Chronicles 21:1; Job 1:6).

The Devil (Matthew 4:1).

The Tempter (Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5).

The Enemy (Matthew 13:39).

The Wicked One (1 John 5:19).

The Deceiver (Revelation 20:10).

The Hinderer (1 Thessalonians 2:18).

The Prince of this world (John 12:31).

The Angel of Light (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

The Adversary (1 Peter 5:8).

The Roaring Lion (1 Peter 5:8).

The Murderer (John 8:44).

The Father of Lies (John 8:44).

The Prince of the Demons (Matthew 9:34).

Each of these names basically describes who Satan is,

and what he desires to do with us. He is our number one enemy. Knowing who he is will help us to overcome him. We will continue next week.

What Do We Know About Satan?

(2)

WE CONTINUE OUR SECOND PART of our study on Satan. As we examine the following information, let us try to remember as much as we can about our enemy. With this in mind, let us learn more things about him.

THE THINGS WE CAN KNOW ABOUT SATAN:

- He is a created being (Colossians 1:16; John 1:2-3).
- He is the ruler of this world (John 12:31; 16:11).
- He disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).
- He has angels that serve him (2 Corinthians 11:15; Matthew 25:41).
- He likes to tempt people (1 Thessalonians 3:5).
- He likes to hinder the work of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 2:18).
- He likes to ask God to hurt His people (Luke 22:31; Job 1, 2).
- He likes to walk around the earth looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8).
- He works hard to take the Word of God away from people (Luke 8:12).
- He is the spirit that operates in the lives of the disobedient (Ephesians 2:2-3).
- He can be destroyed (Genesis 3:15; Romans 16:20; James 4:7).
- He cannot keep people in his kingdom against their will (Colossians 1:13).
- He is crafty in deceiving people (Ephesians 6:11).

He is a prideful being (1 Timothy 3:6).

He likes to accuse the brethren before God (Revelation 12:9).

He will be cast into the lake of fire/eternal punishment (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

As Christians we need to be well-informed as to who Satan is and what he is trying to do with us. Bible ignorance with regards to this enemy will result in losing our battle against him. Remember that God is all-powerful and He has given us everything we need to overcome Satan. Let us be extremely careful not to fall into the hands of this powerful enemy. May God be with us as we fight against him.

How to Defeat Satan?

IN 1 CORINTHIANS 15:57 the Bible teaches that victory belongs to the child of God. In 2 Corinthians 2:14, Paul says that God always leads us in triumph in Christ. Therefore, there should be absolutely no doubt in our hearts that Satan can be overcome by faithful Christians. Let us study together how you and I can defeat Satan.

We defeat Satan by continually resisting him. James 4:7 says, “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you”. The first thing we must do is submit to God, that is, we must obey Him at all times. After we have done this, then we will be able to resist the devil, and the result will be—He will flee from us. Joseph, the faithful servant of God, resisted the devil (Genesis 39:1-9). We must do the same thing!

We defeat Satan by using God's powerful Word. We have a great example in the New Testament where Jesus himself defeated Satan by using the Scriptures. In Matthew 4:4, 7, 10, Jesus said, “It is written,” and by so doing, He defeated every temptation that came from Satan. If we allow the Word of God to abound in our hearts, then we will be ready to use the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17). Remember that the lack of knowledge can destroy us! (Hosea 4:6; Isaiah 5:13). Therefore, let us grow in the knowledge of God's Word (2 Peter 3:18; Psalm 119:9, 11).

We defeat Satan by NOT loving the world and the things that are in the world. This is what the apostle

John said in 1 John 2:15-17. When we as faithful Christians stay away from the world, then we will be able to avoid becoming friends with the world (James 4:4). We lose the battle when we become friends with the world. Therefore, let us not set our minds in the things of this earth, but on the things above (Colossians 3:1-4).

We defeat Satan by constantly practicing prayer in our lives. Jesus said, “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation...” (Matthew 26:41). The reason why most Christians cannot defeat Satan is because their life of prayer is not as God would have it to be. We are encouraged to pray all the time (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2; Ephesians 6:17). Let us examine our lives regarding prayer and let us make all the changes that need to be made so that we can defeat Satan.

May God help us to always defeat Satan. Remember that with His help, we can overcome him!

Notes on the Margin of my Bible

WRITING NOTES on the margin of my Bible is one of the things that I enjoy doing. For nearly 20 years I have seen the importance and the benefits of having great notes written on the margin of my Bibles. I say Bibles because I use more than one. Being a bilingual preacher requires that I have more than one Bible! In this brief article I want to discuss some practical tips on how to write good notes on the margin of our Bibles. It is my prayer that these notes will be very helpful to you, especially when you study with others, or simply teach a Bible class at the congregation where we attend.

Tip # 1: Find or purchase a Bible that has a wide margin. Having a Bible with a wide margin will provide you with the opportunity to write as many notes a possible.

Tip # 2: Try to take advantage of the blank spaces at the beginning of the book or letter. In the first page of a book or letter try to use the blank spaces on top of the book title to write the date of the book, the author of the book, the central theme of the book, the number of chapter and verses it contains, and any key words or phrases.

Tip # 3: Include word studies in the margin of your Bible. If possible, try to look up the meaning of certain words that appear in the text. For this you will need a Greek/English dictionary which provides the meaning of the words being used in the sacred text. Only write key words that will help you to remember

its meaning, since you will not have enough space to write out the whole definition. Also include the transliterated Greek word on the margin of your Bible. This will help you to pronounce the word.

Tip # 4: Write down cross-reference verses that teach the same thing in other places. Remember that one verse may explain another verse (e.g., Revelation 1:20 explains 2:1).

Tip # 5: Write down sermon outlines that apply to the text or passage you are studying. In my Bible I have several sermon outlines that I can use when I preach. These outlines can help you teach God's Word when you have the opportunity to present a lesson at a particular congregation.

Tip # 6: Highlight key verses in your Bible and then write down a key word that describes the verse. I recommend that you use gel highlighters, since these do not bleed through the page. The key words you can write next to 1 Peter 3:21 could be, "Baptism saves," which is one of the great lessons of this verse.

Tip # 7: Use a pen with a fine tip that will not bleed through the page. You can find these pens at Hobby Lobby, Michaels, Office Depot, Lifeway Christian Bookstore, etc.

6 Bible Reasons Why We Must Pray

A CAREFUL STUDY of the Bible helps us to understand that prayer is not an option in the Christian's life, but a command from God. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17, we read, "Pray without ceasing." The verb "pray" comes from the Greek word *proseuchomai*, which is found in the imperative mood. This means that God commands us to pray all the time. With this in mind, let me provide a few reasons why we as Christians must pray.

We must pray because prayer helps us to defeat temptations. In Matthew 26:41 we find the text which tells us that prayer can help us to overcome temptations in our lives. The more we pray, the better we will be able to say NO to temptation.

We must pray because Jesus is our example in prayer, and we must be imitators of Him. We are encouraged to follow the steps of Jesus (1 Peter 2:21-22). Jesus was a man of prayer (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12); therefore, if we want to be like Him, we must also practice prayer every day.

We must pray because our brethren need our prayers on their behalf. The Apostle Paul encouraged the saints at Ephesus to pray for one another (Ephesians 6:17). He also exhorted Timothy to pray for everyone (1 Timothy 2:1-3). Paul himself asked the brethren to pray for him (Colossians 4:2-4). The Lord's brother, James, also encouraged us to pray for

one another (James 5:16). We must pray for our brethren all the time!

We must pray because God wants us to approach His throne of grace. This is what the Hebrew's writer said in Hebrews 4:16. God has given faithful Christians the confidence to approach Him in prayer. Therefore, we must appreciate the great blessing He has given us!

We must pray because Jesus has told us that God will answer our prayers. Jesus told His disciples to pray to God in His name (John 14:13). If we do so, then God will hear our prayers and will grant the desires of our hearts (1 John 5:14-15).

We must pray because praying shows God that we want to obey His commandments. As stated early, prayer is a command from God. If we pray, then God will see that we want to do His will. Prayer not only shows God that we want to obey Him, but also shows God that we depend upon Him for everything.

May God help us to take prayer seriously! To God be the glory!

Why the Church of Christ Is a Great Divine Institution

EACH CHRISTIAN should give thanks to God for one of the greatest divine institutions in the world known as the church of Christ. In this brief article let us examine the biblical reasons why the church of our Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest institution in the world.

The church of Christ is a great divine institution because she was in the mind of God even before the foundation of the world. The biblical support for this statement is found in 1 Peter 1:18-20 where the Apostle Peter says that the blood of Christ that purchased the church was foreordained before the foundation of the world. God already had the establishment of the church in His mind. This is what makes the church a great institution.

The church of Christ is a great divine institution because it belongs to Jesus Christ. Jesus himself said that the church belongs to Him. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, “I will build my church...” Paul called it, “the churches of Christ” (Romans 16:16). Paul also taught that the church is the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23; Colossians 1:18). The church does not belong to any man, but to Christ.

The church of Christ is a great divine institution because it follows the Bible as her only guide in life. The Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). God’s Word is our final authority

in matters of religion and practical living (2 Peter 1:3; Colossians 3:17). The Lord's church does not follow human creeds, but only God's Word.

The church of Christ is a great divine institution because in this church eternal salvation is found. We know that eternal salvation is found in the church because the church is the Body of Christ, and He is the Savior of the Body (Ephesians 5:23). Jesus is the only way to salvation (John 14:6; 10:9). The Apostle John tells us that eternal life is in the Son of God (1 John 5:11). If you are in the church, then you are in the location where the hope of eternal life is found.

If anyone would like to be added to the Lord's church, then such person must obey the gospel of Christ. You must hear the gospel (Romans 10:17), believe the gospel (Mark 16:16), repent of your sins (Acts 2:38), confess Christ as the Son of God (Romans 10:9-10), be immersed in water for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38), and then live a faithful life in Christ (Revelation 2:10). Obeying the gospel will result in the eternal salvation of your soul. May each member of the Body of Christ give God the honor and glory He deserves! Praise God for the church of Christ! Thank God for the great price that was paid for the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 1:18-20)

The Christian's Victory

EVEN THOUGH SATAN is trying to destroy us (1 Peter 5:8), as Christians we need to acknowledge the fact that the final victory belongs to us. No matter what happens in life, we need to remember that God is always on our side, that is, so long as we remain faithful to His Word. In this brief article I would like to show you why the final victory belongs to us, and not to Satan.

Victory belongs to every faithful Christian because God has given it to us through Christ. The Apostle Paul reminded the saints at Corinth that God must be thanked because He gives us the victory through Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:57). God also reminds us of the fact that "greater is He who is in us, than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4). Therefore, there is no doubt that victory belongs to us!

Victory belongs to every faithful Christian because God has given us all the things we need to be victorious. Our heavenly Father has given us the blessing of prayer to approach His throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16; Matthew 26:41). He has also given us His Word whereby we can defeat Satan (Psalm 119:11; Matthew 4:1-12; Ephesians 6:17). He has given us the power to overcome (2 Timothy 1:7; Philippians 4:13).

Victory belongs to every faithful Christian because there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. These are the words Paul penned in Romans 8:36-39. In this passage, the

apostle ensures faithful Christians that there is nothing upon the face of the earth that can separate us from the love of God. If God said this, then we can rest assure that this will be the case.

Victory belongs to every faithful Christian because God is the one who takes care of us. In Philippians 1:6 we read about God's promise to be with us and to assist us in our spiritual journey to heaven. Jesus told His disciples that He would be with them even to the end of the world (Matthew 28:20). God will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). What a great blessing it is to know that God cares for us!

Victory belongs to every faithful Christian and this is why a crown of life has been promised to us. Yes, we have a crown of life that awaits us if we overcome (Revelation 2:10). If we fight the good fight, finish the race and keep the faith, then we will receive a crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:7-8). Every Christian who remains faithful and overcomes temptations and trials will receive a crown of life (James 1:12).

May God help us to always remember that our victory over Satan will always be a successful one. To God be the glory!

What Do You Know About Sin?

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT SIN? A careful study of the Bible reveals much about what we need to know about the practice of sin. You would be surprised but a lot of people do not even know what sin is. Let us then take a look at what the Bible teaches regarding sin.

Sin entered the world through Adam and Eve. The Apostle Paul taught about this in Romans 5:12. When we go back to Genesis 3, we then learn that Eve was deceived by Satan, and then Eve deceived her husband, Adam. Beginning from this couple, sin entered the world and now all are guilty of sin (Romans 3:23). This does not mean that humans are born sinful. This doctrine is not found in the Bible.

Sin separates man from God. This is what the prophet Isaiah said in Isaiah 59:1-2. Sin separates man from God because He cannot have fellowship with those who practice sin. If we go back again to Genesis 3, we learn that God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden (vs. 23-24). We will be separated from God if we allow sin to be in our lives.

Sin has a great scope in mankind. The Apostle Paul said to the saints at Rome that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Sin attacks everyone who is capable of reasoning between what is right and what is wrong. We need to acknowledge the fact that sin is universal and it affects everyone.

Sin can cause a person to die spiritually. In Romans 6:23 Paul said that “the wages of sin is death...” This means that sin can kill you spiritually. Only God can give you life through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:1-4). If you are guilty of sin, you may appear to be alive, but spiritually speaking, you are dead.

Sin is a failure to obey God’s commands. The Apostle John gives us a clear definition of what sin is: It is the transgression of God’s Law (1 John 3:5). Sin is also a failure to do what is right (James 4:17). It is the practice of unrighteousness (1 John 5:17). When you disobey God, this results in the practice of sin.

Sin can be overcome by Jesus Christ. Yes, this is what the Bible tells us. Jesus is who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). His powerful and precious blood can cleanse us from all sin (Ephesians 1:7; Acts 22:16). Jesus came to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). Thank God for Jesus Christ and the power He has to forgive us of our sins (Mark 2:10).

May the Lord give us the wisdom and courage to stay away from sin!

What the Bible Says About Child Discipline

THE BIBLE HAS A LOT TO SAY regarding child discipline. In this article I would like to encourage everyone to consider what God has said concerning the subject of discipline for our children. Taking heed to what God says will save our children from being lost eternally.

Ephesians 6:4, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

Proverbs 13:24, “He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly.”

Proverbs 19:18, “Chasten your son while there is hope, and do not set your heart on his destruction.”

Proverbs 22:15, “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him.”

Proverbs 23:13-14, “Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell.”

Proverbs 29:15, “The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.”

Proverbs 29:17, “Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul.”

Proverbs 6:23, “For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life.”

Proverbs 15:5, “A fool despises his father’s instruction, but he who receives correction is prudent.”

Hebrews 12:9, “Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?”

Anyone who follows these advices will reap the benefits of obeying God’s Will!

The Blessings of a Mission Trip

WHAT A GREAT BLESSING IT IS being able to travel to another country and preach God's Word. In the New Testament we see example, after example of those who traveled from one place to another in order that they may share the good news of salvation with as many people as possible (Acts 8). In this brief article I would like to present to you a few blessings involved in doing mission work.

There is a blessing in doing mission work because we get to preach the Gospel of Christ. The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). Preaching this powerful message in other countries helps us to provide a way to eternal salvation. Also, preaching the Gospel helps us to fulfill the Great Commission given by our Lord Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15).

There is a blessing in doing mission work because we get to edify the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our time spent with the church in other countries helps us to provide spiritual counsel, and instruction based on the Word of God. Many times you get to talk to marriages who may be going through difficult moments. Through the divine instruction found in the Bible we can help these marriages. The preaching of God's Word builds up the church in the work of the Lord. The churches in such places really appreciate the work you get to do with them.

There is a blessing in doing mission work because we learn to come out of our comfort zone. Most of the time the mission work we do takes place in the countries of the third world. Such countries do not enjoy the material blessings we enjoy in the United States. Spending time with them helps us to appreciate and not take for granted the material blessings we enjoy in this country. Our young people who are involved in mission work get to see first-hand how others struggle and this helps them to appreciate the blessings they have.

Personally, I am so thankful to God for the opportunities I have enjoyed in doing mission work in several countries. My prayer is that I may continue to preach the gospel as much as I can!

Young People are a Blessing to the Church!

MOST CONGREGATIONS OF THE LORD'S CHURCH have several young people who attend services on a regular basis. There is no doubt that they are a great blessing to the church. In this brief article I want to discuss some ways on how our young people are a tremendous blessing to the church.

Our young people are a blessing to the church because they are the present of the Lord's church. It is imperative that we understand that our young people are not only the future of the church, but the present as well. They have so much to offer to the church when it comes to church work. Their strength can be utilized for the benefit of the Lord's work. Also, their ability to study and learn from God's Word is also a plus for them. The knowledge they receive at an early age will assist them to remain faithful in the future.

Our young people are a blessing to the church because they are the future of the church. All of the adults, members of the church, will not live forever. Most of the young people in the congregations of the Lord's church will someday become the next deacons, elders and preachers of the church. As such, they need to be trained and equipped in the Lord's work. Our young people need to be involved in the work of the Lord so that they may become familiar with what will be expected of them.

Our young people are a blessing to the church because the Bible has great regards for **youthfulness**. Time and time again we see examples in the Bible of young people serving God at an early age. The Old as well as the New Testament provides us with examples of young people such as Daniel, Joshua, Caleb, Timothy, Titus, Mark, etc., who were faithful to God. Our Heavenly Father has provided several instructions directed to our young people. Such are of great importance to Him.

May our Heavenly Father continue to bless our young people! Let us love and appreciate their youthfulness, and help them to be the kind of young people God desires.

Elders Are a Blessing to the Church!

THANK GOD FOR CONGREGATIONS THAT HAVE GODLY ELDERS. Such elders are a great blessing to the church in many ways. Let us consider the blessings a congregation enjoys when such has elders that serve God and the congregation in this capacity.

Our elders are a blessing to the church because they fulfill God's desire for a church to have elders. In 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4 we read about the qualifications for elders. These passages are here not only to show the qualifications, but also to show us God's desire for His church. He desires for all churches to have elders and deacons serving. A congregation that has faithful men who can serve as elders, but refuse to do so, are in conflict with God's Will.

Our elders are a blessing to the church because they make sure that everything runs according to God's Will. There are three words in the New Testament that are used to refer to elders: Pastors, Elders and Bishops. The word "bishop" comes from the Greek word *episkopos* which denotes a superintendent, supervisor, that is, a person who makes sure that everything works in an organized way. The responsibility of elders is to make sure that everything we do in the context of the church be done according to God's requirements.

Our elders are a blessing to the church because they protect the members from false doctrines. This is what Titus 1:9-11 teaches. Elders need to be knowledgeable in the Scriptures in order to protect the church against false teachers. Through the knowledge of God's Word they have, they will be able to stop the mouths of those who try to hurt the church.

Our elders are a blessing to the church because they watch out for the souls of the congregation The Hebrew's writer said this in Hebrews 13:17. Elders pray for the congregation. Elders provide special counsel to those who are struggling spiritually. Elders are always looking out for members who may be hurting spiritually. God has placed them in such responsibility so that they can be a blessing to the church.

May the congregation be thankful for each of the elders that serve the church for which Jesus gave His life. Let us pray for them; let us encourage them as much as we can; and let us appreciate the efforts they put forth for the benefit of the congregation. To God be the glory!

Deacons Are a Blessing to the Church!

THANK GOD FOR CONGREGATIONS THAT HAVE FAITHFUL DEACONS. Such deacons are a great blessing to the church in many ways. Let us consider the blessings a congregation enjoys when such has deacons that serve God and the congregation in this capacity.

Our deacons are a blessing to the church because they fulfill God's desire for a church to have deacons. In 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Philippians 1:1 we read about the qualifications and the existence of deacons in the church. According to the New Testament organization, the church is composed of elders, deacons, preachers and faithful members. This is God's desire for His church.

Our deacons are a blessing to the church because they help elders and preachers a lot. This is what we see in the book of Acts chapter 6. Deacons served the church while the Apostles of Christ dedicated themselves to prayer and to the preaching ministry. This would be very difficult to accomplish if the church did not have deacons to serve.

Our deacons are a blessing to the church because they obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith. 1 Timothy 3:13 helps us to understand that the job deacons perform is of great importance to God, and is, also, greatly rewarded. For this reason the church must deeply appreciate the

work each of our deacons performs for the Lord and the church.

Our deacons are a blessing to the church because it takes a lot of courage and humility to accept this responsibility. Not many Christians want to serve others. In the other hand, faithful men who accept the responsibility of deacons are to be encouraged for their genuine willingness to serve the church. Deacons, do imitate our Savior who did not come to be served, but to served (Matthew 20:28).

It is my fervent prayer that we, as the church of Christ, may always value and appreciate the work of our deacons. Elders and deacons set out a great example to us! May we imitate their hard work in God's Kingdom. May we always encourage and pray for their faithful service to our Heavenly Father.

Therefore, take a few seconds and say thank you to our elders and deacons for their continued service in the Lord's church.

Church Members Are a Blessing in the Church!

WE THANK GOD for every member of the church, which is body of Christ (Ephesians 5:23). We, also, thank God for what He did in sending His only Son to die on the cross in order to purchase the church (Acts 20:28). With this in mind, let us consider why each member of the body is a great blessing in the church.

Church members are a blessing to the church because they compose the Body of Christ. According to the teachings of the New Testament, the church is the Body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). There would not be a Body, unless there were members to make up the body. And so, each member is important because all together, we make up the Body of Christ, His church.

Church members are a blessing to the church because each member is beneficial to the whole Body of Christ. This is what the Apostle Paul taught to the Corinthians. If you read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 you will understand that each member is important in the Body of Christ. Not one member is more important than the other. We are all of equal value to our Heavenly Father.

Church members are a blessing to the church because they work together in unity for the benefit of the church. This is what Paul taught in Ephesians 4:12-16. All members work together in the various

responsibilities that God has given us. We work together for the glory of God. The work of the church cannot be done by just one member. Everyone needs to work as a team in order to accomplish the work God has given us.

Church members are a blessing to the church because some of these members serve the church as elders, deacons and ministers of the gospel. Some members have carefully considered God's desire for His church and they have answered the call to become elders, deacons and preachers in the Lord's church. There would not be elders, deacons and preachers if the Body of Christ did not have members to fulfill these responsibilities. And do, each member is a blessing to the church because some are able to accomplish the work that needs to be done.

I thank God for each member that composes the Body of Christ. I thank God for the work each member does in God's Kingdom. I pray that God will bless us all in our endeavors to please God and to give Him the honor and glory He deserves. May the Lord continue to bless the church of Christ!

What Have You Done for the Lord in 2017?

AS 2017 COMES TO AN END we need to ask ourselves one important question: What have we done for the Lord this year? Let me examine briefly a few contexts where we need to ask this question.

What have we done for the Lord in the context our knowledge of His Word? Have we grown in the knowledge of God's Word as He would have us to do? What is your knowledge of the Scriptures this year in comparison to last year's? How many Bible verses did you commit to memory in 2017? You are doing something for the Lord when you grow in the knowledge of His Word!

What have we done for the Lord in the context of personal evangelism? Did we take the time to invite visitors to our worship services? Did you take time to share the gospel of Christ with those who need it? Were you involved in a door-knocking effort in our community? Did you share a Bible tract with a friend? What did we do for the Lord in the context of seeking the lost for Him?

What have we done for the Lord in the context of brotherly love? We already know that we are commanded to practice love with one another. Did we show much love for our brothers and sisters in Christ? Did we take the time to say, "I love you" to our spiritual family? Remember that if we show love toward one another, is like showing love to God as

well.

What have we done for the Lord in the context of church work involvement? How many times did we participate serving in the worship service? Did we look for opportunities to serve God and His church? Did we ask the elders which areas of service we can be involved in? Did you teach a Bible class to the children or young people? You are doing something for the Lord when we serve Him and His church!

What have we done for the Lord in the context of having a strong faith in Him? How strong is your faith in God? What have you done to have a strong, active faith in God? Remember that our faith in God is what pleases Him (Hebrews 11:6), and our faith is what helps us to overcome the world (1 John 5:4).

May God give us the wisdom necessary to improve our service to God and to the church as the years go by! We have all the potential necessary to give God our best! It is my prayer that God will grant us the opportunity to serve Him always! Happy New Year 2018!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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