

WHAT WE BELIEVE

TRUTH THAT CHANGES LIVES





LIVING HOPE
baptist church

*Blessed be the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who according to
His abundant mercy
has begotten us again to a
Living Hope
through the resurrection of
Jesus Christ from the dead.*

1 Peter 1:3

Community Group Purpose Statement

We, as smaller gatherings of one family, will practice with our lives the gospel truths that we confess with our mouths. Together, we will allow our lives to be challenged by the gospel and one another; we will live lives of boldness and purpose. As we walk in the light of the gospel, we will point to the grace of God and its power to set lives free from sin and death. We will continue praying, teaching, making disciples, and bearing one another's burdens. Following the pattern set before us by Jesus, we will bring joy to our family (the church) and glory to his name.

What is a Community Group?

Community groups are small gatherings of people that meet regularly for friendship, accountability, study and prayer, laughter, and occasionally tears. Community groups are an essential expression of the mission of Living Hope Baptist Church. They're a place where we learn more about Jesus and life together. They're the place where we wrestle with the truths of the Bible and encourage one another toward the life that God intends for us.

Each community group is unique, shaped by its neighborhood and the people who attend. However, you can expect a weekly gathering in a residence that involves food, conversation, prayer, discussion for applying the Bible to practical living, and service in the neighborhood. At the heart of each community group is the desire to see an authentic community marked by love for Jesus, one another, and the neighborhood.

Why Should I Join a Community Group?

The God of the Bible is a Trinitarian God who is one and three persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. God has made us in his image, which means we are made for community and friendship. And when we are not living in community we suffer because life in a sinful world is too complex and tempting to journey alone. Therefore, community groups are a place where we can live in relationship with one another through the ups and downs of life.

Community Group Study Guide

- S – SUMMARY:** A summary of the lesson's passage.
- O – OBSERVATION:** A list of questions related to the biblical context of that lesson's passage.
- A – APPLICATION:** A list of questions for applying that lesson's passage to one's personal life and experiences.
- P – PRAYER:** A time to spend in communication with God in response to His word and it's application to your life.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

TRUTH THAT CHANGES LIVES

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Topic 1:

THE WORD OF GOD

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groups***

The Word of God

The Word of God in written form is the only book God ever wrote for faith and practice. This supernatural book, written and preserved by God, is the only authority for every aspect of our lives. The words contained in the 66 books of the Bible are God's message of redemption and sanctification to a people in great need of rescuing and remaking. Apart from God's revelation we are a hopeless people in a hopeless world. "The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, depends not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God." - Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646

Week 1 Lesson 1 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

God is a God of revelation. His very essence longs to share Himself with His creation. God has revealed Himself in several ways over time but the greatest benefit for us today is His written Word.

Observation

1. In Revelation 19:13 and John 1:1, who is referred to as the Word of God?
2. In Genesis 1:3, how is God's Word expressed?
3. According to Psalm 33:6, what from God created the world?
4. How did God speak in the following verses? Gen. 2:16,17; 3:16-19)
5. In Deuteronomy 18:18-20, who did God use to speak His words?
6. What was the penalty for claiming to speak for God but had not really received God's message? Ezek. 13:1-8 & Deuteronomy 18:20-22)
7. Were God's words spoken through human lips considered to be just as authoritative and true as God's words spoken personally to individuals?
8. What does Exodus 31:18 tells us about another form of how God's words were conveyed to His people?
9. God wrote His words in the Ten Commandments but according to Deut. 31:9-13, who else wrote God's words?
10. According to Joshua 24:26, who else added to God's written words?
11. Examine Psalm 1:1,2 & Joshua 1:8 and see if studying the written Word of God is profitable for us.

Application

1. If God spoke to you in an audible voice, do you think you would give greater consideration to those words more than you do the written word? Explain your answer.
2. What is the benefit of having God's words in written form as opposed to being passed down by word of mouth?
3. What does it tell you about the nature of God that He used so many ways to communicate to His creation?
4. Do you believe your present attitude and level of response to the written word is where God would have them to be?
5. Take an honest evaluation of your life with God's Word. Would you say the time and effort you give is Exceptional / Strong / Hit & Miss / Weak / Dead?

Prayer

Stop now and open your heart to God as related to His Word. This may include confession of sin, thanksgiving, and asking for help and strength to grow and change.

Notes:

Week 1 Lesson 2 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

This section will examine which books belong in the Bible and which do not and how this was determined. The number of books included in the Bible is often referred to as the canon of Scripture. (For further reading please see the articles included at the end of this lesson) (Some of these are not questions, but verses to review)

Observation

1. What two commands are found in Deuteronomy 4:2 related to God's words?
2. What would be the result if we did not believe that the Bible actually is the word of God to us?
3. Exodus 32:16 tells us that the earliest collection of the written words of God was the what?
4. Observing the following verses will show Moses wrote the first four books as well as Deuteronomy (Ex. 17:14; 24:4; 34:27; Num. 33:2; Deut. 31:22)
5. What does Joshua 24:26 inform us about other writings of Scripture?
6. For Joshua to add to God's words, what must he have been convinced?
7. (The following verses contain more information concerning other portions of Scripture being written. 1 Sam. 10:25; 1 Chronicles 29:29; 2 Chronicles 20:34; 2 Chronicles 26:22; 2 Chronicles 32:32; Jeremiah 30:2)
8. In Luke 24:44,45, how did Christ classify the Old Testament and what did He call them?
9. What did Peter call some of Paul's writings in 2 Peter 3:15,16?

Application

1. Why is it important for you to know which writings are God's words and which are not?
2. How is it beneficial to you to have God's words so readily available in the generation in which you live?
3. Do you ever take it for granted or fail to recognize what a gift it is to have in your possession the very words of God?
4. What would happen if God wasn't powerful enough to sovereignly guide His church to compile the books God wanted to be compiled in His Word?
5. Is there anything in your life that you place on the same level of authority

The Word of God

as the Scriptures? Have you observed this from other people?

Prayer

A prayer of thanksgiving for God's gracious gift in writing, preserving, and empowering His Word in our lives is appropriate. A cry to God for a greater passion for His Word is a prayer that pleases God.

Notes:



Dig a Little Deeper

(ARTICLES FROM gotquestions.org)

Question: “*What is the canon of Scripture?*”

Answer: The word “canon” comes from the rule of law that was used to determine if a book measured up to a standard. It is important to note that the writings of Scripture were canonical at the moment they were written. Scripture was Scripture when the pen touched the parchment. This is very important because Christianity does not start by defining God, or Jesus Christ, or salvation. The basis of Christianity is found in the authority of Scripture. If we cannot identify what Scripture is, then we cannot properly distinguish any theological truth from error.

What measure or standard was used to determine which books should be classified as Scripture? A key verse to understanding the process and purpose, and perhaps the timing of the giving of Scripture, is Jude 3 which states that a Christian’s faith “was once for all entrusted to the saints.” Since our faith is defined by Scripture, Jude is essentially saying that Scripture was given once for the benefit of all Christians. Isn’t it wonderful to know that there are no hidden or lost manuscripts yet

to be found, there are no secret books only familiar to a select few, and there are no people alive who have special revelation requiring us to trek up a Himalayan mountain in order to be enlightened? We can be confident that God has not left us without a witness. The same supernatural power God used to produce His Word has also been used to preserve it.

Psalm 119:160 states that the entirety of God’s Word is truth. Starting with that premise, we can compare writings outside the accepted canon of Scripture to see if they meet the test. As an example, the Bible claims that Jesus Christ is God (Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 1:22-23; John 1:1, 2, 14, 20:28; Acts 16:31, 34; Philippians 2:5-6; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8; 2 Peter 1:1). Yet many extra-biblical texts, claiming to be Scripture, argue that Jesus is not God. When clear contradictions exist, the established Bible is to be trusted, leaving the others outside the sphere of Scripture.

In the early centuries of the church, Christians were sometimes put to death for possessing copies of Scripture. Because of this persecution, the question soon came up, “What books are worth dying for?” Some books may have contained sayings of Jesus, but were they inspired as stated in 2 Timothy 3:16? Church councils played a role in

publicly recognizing the canon of Scripture, but often an individual church or groups of churches recognized a book as inspired from its writing (e.g., Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27). Throughout the early centuries of the church, few books were ever disputed and the list was basically settled by A.D. 303.

When it came to the Old Testament, three important facts were considered: 1) The New Testament quotes from or alludes to every Old Testament book but two. 2) Jesus effectively endorsed the Hebrew canon in Matthew 23:35 when He cited one of the first narratives and one of the last in the Scriptures of His day. 3) The Jews were meticulous in preserving the Old Testament Scriptures, and they had few controversies over what parts belong or do not belong. The Roman Catholic Apocrypha did not measure up and fell outside the definition of Scripture and has never been accepted by the Jews.

Most questions about which books belong in the Bible dealt with writings from the time of Christ and forward. The early church had some very specific criteria in order for books to be considered as part of the New Testament. These included: Was the book written by someone who was an eyewitness of Jesus Christ? Did the book pass the “truth test”? (i.e., did it concur with other,

already agreed-upon Scripture?). The New Testament books they accepted back then have endured the test of time and Christian orthodoxy has embraced these, with little challenge, for centuries.

Confidence in the acceptance of specific books dates back to the first century recipients who offered firsthand testimony as to their authenticity. Furthermore, the end-time subject matter of the book of Revelation, and the prohibition of adding to the words of the book in Revelation 22:18, argue strongly that the canon was closed at the time of its writing (c. A.D. 95).

There is an important theological point that should not be missed. God has used His word for millennia for one primary purpose—to reveal Himself and communicate to mankind. Ultimately, the church councils did not decide if a book was Scripture; that was decided when the human author was chosen by God to write. In order to accomplish the end result, including the preservation of His Word through the centuries, God guided the early church councils in their recognition of the canon.

The acquisition of knowledge regarding such things as the true nature of God, the origin of the universe and life, the purpose and meaning of life, the wonders of

salvation, and future events (including the destiny of mankind) are beyond the natural observational and scientific capacity of mankind. The already-delivered Word of God, valued and personally applied by Christians for centuries, is sufficient to explain to us everything we need to know of Christ (John 5:18; Acts 18:28; Galatians 3:22; 2 Timothy 3:15) and to teach us, correct us, and instruct us into all righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).

Question: “*How and when was the canon of the Bible put together?*”

Answer: The term “canon” is used to describe the books that are divinely inspired and therefore belong in the Bible. The difficulty in determining the biblical canon is that the Bible does not give us a list of the books that belong in the Bible. Determining the canon was a process conducted first by Jewish rabbis and scholars and later by early Christians. Ultimately, it was God who decided what books belonged in the biblical canon. A book of Scripture belonged in the canon from the moment God inspired its writing. It was simply a matter of God’s convincing His human followers which books should be included in the Bible.

Compared to the New Testament, there was very little con-

troversy over the canon of the Old Testament. Hebrew believers recognized God’s messengers and accepted their writings as inspired of God. While there was undeniably some debate in regards to the Old Testament canon, by A.D. 250 there was nearly universal agreement on the canon of Hebrew Scripture. The only issue that remained was the Apocrypha, with some debate and discussion continuing today. The vast majority of Hebrew scholars considered the Apocrypha to be good historical and religious documents, but not on the same level as the Hebrew Scriptures.

For the New Testament, the process of the recognition and collection began in the first centuries of the Christian church. Very early on, some of the New Testament books were being recognized. Paul considered Luke’s writings to be as authoritative as the Old Testament (1 Timothy 5:18; see also Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7). Peter recognized Paul’s writings as Scripture (2 Peter 3:15-16). Some of the books of the New Testament were being circulated among the churches (Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27). Clement of Rome mentioned at least eight New Testament books (A.D. 95). Ignatius of Antioch acknowledged about seven books (A.D. 115). Polycarp, a disciple of John the apostle, acknowledged 15 books (A.D. 108). Later, Irenaeus mentioned 21 books

(A.D. 185). Hippolytus recognized 22 books (A.D. 170-235). The New Testament books receiving the most controversy were Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 John, and 3 John.

The first “canon” was the Muratorian Canon, which was compiled in A.D. 170. The Muratorian Canon included all of the New Testament books except Hebrews, James, and 3 John. In A.D. 363, the Council of Laodicea stated that only the Old Testament (along with the Apocrypha) and the 27 books of the New Testament were to be read in the churches. The Council of Hippo (A.D. 393) and the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) also affirmed the same 27 books as authoritative.

The councils followed something similar to the following principles to determine whether a New Testament book was truly inspired by the Holy Spirit: 1) Was the author an apostle or have a close connection with an apostle? 2) Is the book being accepted by the body of Christ at large? 3) Did the book contain consistency of doctrine and orthodox teaching? 4) Did the book bear evidence of high moral and spiritual values that would reflect a work of the Holy Spirit? Again, it is crucial to remember that the church did not determine the canon. No early church council decided on the canon. It was God, and God alone, who determined which books be-

longed in the Bible. It was simply a matter of God’s imparting to His followers what He had already decided. The human process of collecting the books of the Bible was flawed, but God, in His sovereignty, and despite our ignorance and stubbornness, brought the early church to the recognition of the books He had inspired.

Question: “*How do we decide which books belong in the Bible since the Bible does not say which books belong in the Bible?*”

Answer: If Scripture is to be our sole authority, on what authority do we know which books belong in the Bible - since the Bible does not state which books should be in the Bible? This is a very important question, because a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. In the chain of communication from God to humanity, is there a weak link? If so, then the whole chain fails, and the communication ultimately cannot be trusted.

Consider the various “links” comprising God’s communication to us: first came God’s desire to communicate. This was rooted in His love, for the most loving thing a good God can do is reveal Himself to His creation. Next came the actual transmission of God’s Word through human writers. This involved a process the Bible calls “inspiration,” in which God breathed the words that

the human agents recorded (2 Timothy 3:16). After that came dissemination, as the Word was delivered to its audience through preaching or other means. Then came recognition, as God's people distinguished Holy Scripture from other religious writings. And then, preservation, through which God's Word has survived to the present day, despite many attempts to destroy it. And finally, illumination, as the Holy Spirit opens the believer's understanding to receive the Word.

And that's the "chain"—the demonstration of God's love in the inspiration, dissemination, recognition, preservation, and illumination of His Word. We believe that God was involved in each step of the process, for why would God go to such lengths to inspire His Word and then not preserve it? Why would He speak to us and then fail to guide us in recognizing His speech?

This recognition of God's Word is usually called "canonization." We are careful to say that God determined the canon, and the church discovered the canon. The canon of Scripture was not created by the church; rather, the church discovered or recognized it. In other words, God's Word was inspired and authoritative from its inception—it "stands firm in the heavens" (Psalm 119:89)—and the church simply recognized that fact and accepted it.

The criteria the church used for recognizing and collecting the Word of God are as follows:

- 1) Was the book written by a prophet of God?
- 2) Was the writer authenticated by miracles to confirm his message?
- 3) Does the book tell the truth about God, with no falsehood or contradiction?
- 4) Does the book evince a divine capacity to transform lives?
- 5) Was the book accepted as God's Word by the people to whom it was first delivered?

Of these criteria, the one of most importance was the first one—was the book written by a prophet? Its corollary, did the book receive apostolic approval?, was the chief test of canonicity in the early church. This criterion is a logical result of knowing what an "apostle" was. The apostles were gifted by God to be the founders and leaders of the church, so it is reasonable to accept that through them came the Word governing the church.

The apostles were promised the Spirit of truth who would bring to their remembrance what Christ had said (John 14:26) and guide them into "all truth" (John 16:13). After the ascension of Christ, the apostles received supernatural gifts to enable

their work and confirm their message (Acts 2:4). God's household is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Ephesians 2:20). Given the apostles' special commission, it only makes sense that the church made apostolicity the number-one test of canonicity. Thus, the Gospel of Matthew was considered canonical (it was written by an apostle); and the Gospel of Mark, with its close association with the Apostle Peter, was also accepted.

When the New Testament was being written, the individual books and letters were immediately accepted as God's Word and circulated for the benefits of others. The church of Thessalonica received Paul's word as the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Paul's epistles were circulating among the churches even during apostolic times (Colossians 4:16). Peter recognized Paul's writings as inspired by God and

equated them with "the rest of the Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:15-16). Paul quoted the Gospel of Luke and called it "Scripture" (1 Timothy 5:18). This widespread acceptance stands in stark contrast to the few debated books, eventually rejected as non-canonical, that enjoyed a limited favor for a time.

Later, as heresy increased and some within the church began clamoring for the acceptance of spurious religious writings, the church wisely held a council to officially confirm their acceptance of the 27 New Testament books. The criteria they used allowed them to objectively distinguish what God had given them from that of human origin. They concluded that they would stay with the books that were universally accepted. In so doing, they determined to continue in "the apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42).

Week 2 Lesson 1 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

It is important to know what the Bible teaches about itself. These characteristics are essential in understanding the divine nature of God's book. These characteristics assure us that God's words are true, authoritative, complete, necessary, and life changing.

Observation

1. According to 2 Timothy 3:16, how much of Scripture is considered to be God's word?
2. According to 2 Timothy 3:16, all the Scriptures are said to be breathed out by God. Why would that give all the Scriptures authority?
3. What does 2 Peter 1:21 tell about where Scripture did not originate from?
4. Though man was the human agent for writing the Scriptures, who was the ultimate source of the scriptures?
5. In Matthew 4:4 Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy. What does his statement in this verse tell you about the source of what Moses wrote?
6. According to 1 Cor. 2:14 what is an absolute necessity in order to know God's words are authoritative? (see also John 10:27)
7. What does Titus 1:2 say about what God cannot do?
8. John 17:17 tells us that God's words are not just true, but _____ itself.
9. Deut. 6:6-7 indicates that the Scriptures are written in such a way that who can understand it?
10. According to Rom. 10:13-17, the Bible is necessary for what?
11. Can a person maintain their spiritual life in a way that is pleasing to God apart from God's words? See Matthew 4:4 quoting Deut. 8:3
12. In 2 Timothy 3:15-17, what two things are the Scriptures sufficient to accomplish? (Hint: verse 15 and 17)
13. Can we be sure we have God's words today in our copy of the Scriptures according to Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 24:35; 1 Peter 1:23-25?

Application

1. Is there anything in the Bible you do not believe? If yes, what is that?
2. Do you have difficulty understanding the Bible? If yes, why do you think that is?
3. Do you ever find yourself picking and choosing what you believe in the Bible and what you do not? If so, which ones?

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4. If you thought there were errors in the Bible, how would that affect the way you approach it and read it?
5. Can you think of any recent action or attitude on your part that demonstrated you did not view the Bible as authoritative?
6. What practical step(s) do you need to take that will show your view of God's Words are more than just a man made book?

Prayer

As you pray, examine your heart and your devotion to God's Word. Confession may be in order as well as a prayer of dedication and desire that you might love God's word more and seek to live it out in your life. Thank God that He gave and persevered His words for you and ask Him to continually open your heart to grasp and live the words of your God.

Notes:

Topic 2:

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God

It is quite impossible to summarize this section in a small paragraph. The following statement about God, taken from the Westminster Confession of Faith in the year 1646, is an excellent description of what God's book reveals about Himself.

I. There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

II. God has all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He has made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and has most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleases. In His sight all things are open and manifest, His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to Him contingent, or uncertain. He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands. To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience He is pleased to require of them.

III. In the unity of the Godhead there be three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. - Westminster Confession of Faith - 1646

Week 3 Lesson 1 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

The existence of God is assumed in Scripture. The very first sentence does not set out to prove there is a God; it simply assumes this to be true. "In the beginning, God created.." The Scriptures contain much revelation about the existence, and person of God. We will examine His existence in this lesson.

Observation

1. According to Romans 1:21, all persons have a deep inner sense of what?
2. What mistake do unbelievers make in Romans 1:25?
3. The Scripture calls people _____ who deny the existence of God. Psalm 14:1
4. What does wickedness cause people to do with the truth about the existence of God? Rom. 1:18
5. According to Romans 1:20, is there any creature who is not responsible to God?
6. Romans 8:15 tells us that the Holy Spirit makes believers aware that God is their what?
7. Even though a believer has never seen Christ, the fact that the Holy Spirit makes this knowledge intense in his spirit, causes the believer to respond in what way according to 1 Peter 1:8?
8. What do we find in Romans 1:20 that also gives evidence of God?
9. What in God's creation is the greatest evidence of the existence of God? (See Genesis 1:26)
10. According to Acts 14:17, what happens that shows the existence of God?
11. Psalm 19:1,2 informs us that the creation shows what about God?
12. All these things point to the existence of God, but according to 2 Cor. 4:4, who fights against this knowledge and what is the purpose for this fight?
13. 1 Cor. 2:5 tells us that mere human knowledge is not enough. Who must reveal Himself to man?

Application

1. What are some reasons that people deny the existence of God?
2. What is the result(s) if man rejects the existence of a Being greater than himself?
3. Have you ever found yourself living in such a way that was really denying

God

the existence of God in your life and situation? If you are able, share this with your group.

4. What times in your life does the inner sense of God's presence and existence seem strongest? Seem weakest?
5. What are some things you can do to strengthen your inner man to have a deep abiding sense of God's existence and activity in your life.

Prayer

Thank God for being God. Confess any sin(s) that are drawing you away from Him and causing you be distant in your relationship with Him. Ask Him for wisdom and strength to change your life and order your life in such a way that your actions and heart strengthen your relationship rather than weaken it.

Notes:

Week 3 Lesson 2

(selected scriptures)

Summary

This Lesson will seek to answer the following question: Can you and I really know God and how much of God can we really know?

Observation

1. What does Romans 1:19 tell us about whether or not we can know God?
2. In regards to salvation, who allows people to know God? See Matt. 11:27.
3. What does 1 Cor. 1:21 tell us about man's wisdom and God's salvation?
4. Looking at Romans 1:18,21,25, why does man need more revelation than what can be seen about God in nature?
5. Where do we find the needed information about God to protect us from serious error?
6. How would you answer someone who said they could know everything there is to know about God and they fully understand God by what Psalm 145:3 states? (Also see Psalm 147:5; Psalm 139:6,17)
7. What does 1 Cor. 2:10-12 say about our ability to grasp the fullness of God? (Especially v.11)
8. What thrilled Paul's soul about God in Rom. 11:33?
9. Is the following statement true? "Thus, we may know something about God's love, power, wisdom, and so forth. But we can never know his love, power, wisdom, and so forth, completely or exhaustively?"
10. What does Col. 1:10 say is a part of living a life worthy of God that should always be increasing?
11. Can we know truth about God, even though we can never know God exhaustively?
12. What truth can be known about God according to the following verses?
 - a. 1 John 4:8 _____
 - b. 1 John 1:5 _____
 - c. John 4:24 _____
 - d. Rom. 3:26 _____
13. According to Jeremiah 9:23-24, what are we to glory in and rejoice in?
14. In John 17:3 eternal life is defined as what?
15. In 1 John 2:13, why did John write to these people...because they knew who?

Application

1. As you look at God's creation all around you, what things do you learn about God from your observations?
2. How do these truths encourage you when you are struggling?
3. Do you view the fact that you cannot know God exhaustively as a comfort and blessing or as troubling and a disadvantage? Explain your answer
4. What would make your relationship with God better?
5. How can you read your Bible in such a way that you may know Him better?
6. Complete the following checklist in response to this question: I often find myself reading the Bible: (check all those that apply – be honest)
 - _____ “Because I feel guilty if I don't”
 - _____ “Because I'm expected to”
 - _____ “Because I think my day will go bad if I don't”
 - _____ “Because God will punish me if I don't”
 - _____ “Because I Love God and want to know Him more”
 - _____ “Because I have to complete my lesson”
7. What did you discover about yourself from your answers on question 6?

Prayer

A deep and humble response of thanksgiving is appropriate to God as we realized again that the only way we could truly know Him is because He allowed us to know Him. Confess your failures in approaching His creation and His Scriptures for the wrong reasons. Ask God for help that you may know Him more and more daily.

Notes:

Week 4 Lesson 1

(selected scriptures)

Please note: The two lessons in week 4 have more questions due to the nature of this aspect of the study about God's attributes. Don't let the length discourage you, but be sure to plan ahead and give yourself plenty of time to work on it. Many of the answers are one word answers and should not be difficult. You will be blessed for your time spent reviewing the character of your God and going over the application questions.

Summary

This lesson will examine the character of God, sometimes called His attributes. These attributes are also categorized by characteristics that are unique to God (Incommunicable) and characteristics which are found also, in a limited degree, in His creatures (Communicable).

Observation

The definitions given after each attribute are taken from Wayne Grudem's book on Systematic Theology)

A. Incommunicable Attributes (Unique to God)

1. Independent or Self Existent ("God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything, yet we and the rest of creation can glorify him and bring him joy")

What does Acts 17:24,25 tell us about God?

According to Job 41:11, what belongs to God?

According to Psalm 50:10-12, why would God not tell anyone if He could get hungry?

What did the Father and Son have together before the creation of the world? See John 17:5 and 17:24

Is this a true statement? God created man because He was lonely and needed fellowship. Why or why not?

What did Moses say about the existence of God in Psalm 90:2?

In Exodus 3:14, God described Himself as what? (The implication of this name means that God existence and character are determined by himself alone and are not dependent on anyone or anything else.

Even though God does not need us, what does Zephaniah 3:17,18 say that God does for His people?

2. Unchangeableness or Immutability ("God is unchanging in His being,

perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and He acts and feels differently in response to different situations.”)

What does Psalm 102:25-27 say about God?

What does the statement in Malachi 3:6 say God says about Himself?

We can trust God that He gives good gifts to His children because of what attribute? See James 1:17

Read Isaiah 46:9-11. Can anyone ever change the purpose of God and how does this give us assurance as we live in these last days?

3. Eternity (“God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in his own being.”)

How does Psalm 90:2 affirm the truth that God had no beginning and has no end?

Look at Rev. 1:8 and 4:8. What does God suggest about His existence?

What does Jesus say about His existence before He came to earth as a man in John 8:58?

Does the fact that God created all things prove His eternal existence?

What does Isaiah 40:28 say about the eternity of God?

4. Omnipresence (“God does not have size or spatial dimensions and is present at every point of space with his whole being, yet God acts differently in places.”)

What did Jeremiah say that God fills? Jeremiah 23:23,24

According to Psalm 139:7-10, can a person go anywhere to escape from God’s presence

How is your answer to letter “b” above a good thing for some people and a bad thing for others?

Can God be contained in any space according to 1 Kings 18:27?

5. Unity (“God is not divided into parts, yet we see different attributes of God emphasized at different times.”)

What does 1 John 1:5 and 1 John 4:8 say about God?

Does this mean that part of God is light and part of God is love or does it mean that each attribute is completely true of God?

Application

1. What comfort does it bring you to know that you serve a God that needs nothing and never has a need?
2. How does knowing that God owns everything change your outlook on life in the following areas?
 - Your Finances
 - Your Children
 - Your Health
 - Your Talents & Abilities
 - Your Possessions
3. If God could change His purpose and promises, what would that make your life look like on a day to day basis?
4. God cannot be contained in any space but is everywhere present with His entire Being. Do you ever put God in a box and think that He is not involved or aware of a certain part of your life and concerns? If so, describe some of these struggles.
5. Would you be willing to share with your group a time in your life?
6. When you really felt that God was very far away?
7. When God showed you that He was very near all the time?
8. How is it encouraging knowing that God cannot change by getting better or by getting worse?
9. Why is the following a true statement? A person may feel lonely, but a person is never alone.
10. In what area of your life do you tend to deny God's presence?

Prayer

A prayer of praise and thanksgiving is a proper biblical response as we ponder and meditate on these attributes of God that are solely unique to Him. If you are currently struggling with God's presence and activity in your life, pour out your heart to Him in confession and praise and a cry for help.

Notes:

God

Week 4 Lesson 2 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

We are continuing our study of the attributes of God. We will now examine the communicable attributes of God; those attributes that are also a part of our lives and are to be imitated in our lives.

Observation

B. Communicable Attributes

1. Spirituality (“God exists as a being that is not made of any matter, has no parts or dimensions, is unable to be perceived by our bodily senses, and is more excellent than any other kind of existence”)

What does John 4:24 tell us about God?

What does Exodus 20:4-6 inform us about trying to make God into an image or into anything similar to the creation?

According to Philippians 3:3, why would this be an attribute that we also have in our own lives. (See also 1 Cor. 6:17)

2. Invisibility (“God’s invisibility means that God’s total essence, all of his spiritual being, will never be able to be seen by us, yet God still shows himself to us through visible, created things.”)

What does John 1:18 tell us about who has seen God?

What did Jesus say in John 6:46

Paul tells us that God is what according to 1 Timothy 1:17?

See 1 Timothy 6:16 to confirm this attribute of God

If God is invisible, then how do we explain Exodus 33:11, 20, 21-23?

According to John 14:9, what is the greatest visible manifestation of God?

3. Omniscience (Knowledge) (“God fully knows himself and all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal act.”)

What does 1 John 3:20 tell us about God’s knowledge?

What does Psalm 139:1,2 inform us about God’s knowledge?

4. Wisdom (“God’s wisdom means that God always chooses the best

God

goals and the best means to those goals.”)

Romans 16:27 tells us what about God?

What does Psalm 104 tell us about God's creation?

How is God's wisdom seen in His plan of redemption according to 1 Cor. 1:24,30

What does Romans 11:33 tells us about God's wisdom?

5. Truthfulness & Faithfulness (“God's truthfulness means that he is the true God, and that all his knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth.”)

What did Jeremiah say about God in Jeremiah 10:10,11?

What did Jesus call God in John 17:3?

What did John call God in 1 John 5:20?

How does this attribute relate to the words of God given to us in Scripture?

6. Goodness (“The Goodness of God means that God is the final standard of good, and that all that God is and does is worthy of approval.”)

How does God's goodness encourage us according to Psalm 84:11?

What does Romans 8:28 confirm about God's goodness related to all of life including difficult things and things we would call good?

7. Love (“God's love means that God eternally gives of Himself to others. God always desires and does what is best to man.”)

1 John 4:8 tells us that God is _____?

Who does Jesus love according to John 14:31?

Who does Jesus say loves him according to John 17:24?

How did God show His love for sinners? Romans 5:8

8. Mercy, Grace, Patience (“God's mercy is His goodness toward those in misery and distress. God's grace is His goodness toward those who deserve only punishment. God's patience is His goodness in withholding of punishment toward those who sin over a period of time.”)

What does Psalm 103:8 tell us about God?

See 2 Cor. 1:3. What is the title of God in this verse?

In 1 Peter 5:10, God is the God of all what?

What does Rom. 2:4 tell us about God's patience?

9. Holiness ("God's holiness means that he is separated from sin and devoted to seeking His own honor.")

According to Psalm 99:9, God's holiness should bring what kind of a response from His children?

What were the angels in Isaiah 6 consumed with as they flew around the throne of God? Isaiah 6:3

10. Peace or Order ("God's peace means that in God's being and in His actions He is separate from all confusion and disorder, yet He is continually active in innumerable well-ordered, fully controlled, simultaneous actions.")

What does 1 Cor. 14:33 tell us that God is the author of what?

Philippians 4:9 tells us that God is the God of what?

11. Righteousness & Justice ("God's righteousness means that He always acts in accordance with what is right and is himself the final standard of what is right.")

How many ways of God are right and just according to Deuteronomy 32:4?

Psalm 19:8 tells us that God's words are always what?

Since God is righteous, can he just ignore sin? See Rom. 3:25,26. What did His righteousness demand because of sin?

What is God's right response to sin and evil according to Romans 1:18

12. Jealousy ("God's jealousy means that God continually seeks to protect His own honor.")

According to Ex. 34:14, what is one name of God?

What does God refuse to give to any other being? Isaiah 48:11

Why is this jealousy not wrong for God who is holy?

13. Freedom ("God's freedom is that attribute of God whereby he does whatever he pleases.")

According to Psalm 115:3 can anything or anyone stop God from doing what He chooses to do?

Does Daniel 4:35 confirm the truth that God does as he pleases in all of his creation including the inhabitants?

14. Omnipotence (Power, Sovereignty) (“God’s omnipotence means that God is able to do all his holy will.”)

What does Jeremiah 32:17 say about God’s power?

What is God’s title in Revelation 1:8

Is there anything that God cannot do? (Think before you answer)

15. Perfection (“God’s perfection means that God completely possess all excellent qualities and lacks no part of any qualities that would be desirable for him”)

Matthew 5:48 tells us that God the Father is what?

When David thought about God and all that He has done and will do, he said that God’s way was what? Psalm 18:30

16. Blessedness (“God’s blessedness means that God delights fully in himself and in all that reflects his character.”)

See this attribute in 1 Timothy 1:11 and 6:15

Based on these verses is it true to say that God is perfectly happy and He has fullness of joy in Himself?

17. Beauty (“God’s beauty is that attribute of God whereby he is the sum of all desirable qualities.”)

See Psalm 27:4

Application

1. Have you ever had a time in your life where you felt like God made a mistake or do you know others who believed that God made a mistake in their life? Would you be willing to share this with your group?
2. What are some events or circumstances in life that cause people to think God is not in control?
3. When did God learn that you would be in the circumstance you are in

right now? How is your answer a blessing to you or a disturbing thing to you?

4. In what ways is it a blessing in your life to know that God is truth and He always tells you the truth?
5. How can the truthfulness of God be imitated in your life?
6. Take a few minutes to think about how good God has been in your life. How many good gifts from God can you list? Share these with your group.
7. Do you find it difficult to imitate the love of God when you think about those who have hurt you or have done you some kind of harm? If so, why do you think it is hard?
8. What assurance does it give you to know that God's love is not based on emotions and current whims?
9. In what ways can you show love to someone this week?
10. How can you show mercy to those who are hurting or suffering? (Think of some practical ways) Can you think of someone right now who needs mercy?
11. Is there anything in your life right now that does not reflect the holiness of God? Why doesn't it reflect His holiness? What should you do about it?
12. How can knowing God as the God of peace help you to have a life of peace and order separate from confusion and chaos?
13. How can you display a similar type of jealousy as God without crossing the line into a humanistic sinful act? What do you think the line is that we cross that turns a holy jealousy into a sinful jealousy?
14. If God is all powerful (and He is) have you ever struggled with why God did not do something you desired Him to do? How did you respond when God did not do what you asked?
15. Have you ever struggled with the way God made you? How does knowing God's goodness help you if you struggle with this?

Prayer

A prayer of praise and thanksgiving is a proper biblical response as we ponder and meditate on these attributes of God that are solely unique to Him. If you are currently struggling with God's presence and activity in your life, pour out your heart to Him in confession and praise and a cry for help.

God

Notes:

Week 5 Lesson 1 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

This lesson will examine the Trinity and seek to answer the question: How can God be three persons, yet one God? The Trinity can be defined as following: “God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God.” The word trinity is not found in the Bible but it is certainly taught and represented throughout the Scriptures.

Observation

1. According to Deut. 6:4 and 1 Cor. 8:4-6, how many Gods are there?
2. Look at Gen. 1:26, 11:7 and Isaiah 6:8. Do you see anything interesting in those verses about the plural pronouns as related to God? What do you see?
3. According to Hebrews 1:8, what does God the Father call His Son?
4. Who is recognized as God in 1 Peter 1:2?
5. Who is recognized as God in John 1:1-4,14?
6. Who is recognized as God in Acts 5:3,4?
7. Do you see the Trinity in Matthew 3:16,17 and Matthew 28:19?

Application

1. Each person of the Trinity is fully God, yet within the Godhead, the Son submits to the Father, and the Holy Spirit submits to the Father and the Son. How does this pattern help us today you submit to others?
2. Each person in the Trinity is fully God, yet within the Godhead, each has different roles appropriate to their person. For example: In salvation the Father chooses, the Son redeems, and the Spirit regenerates to life. How does this pattern encourage you in the use of your particular gift and personality?

Prayer

A prayer of thanksgiving at the amazing and marvelous God who is One yet is also three persons is appropriate. Praise Him for who He is and for what He did in saving you by His grace: chosen by the Father; Purchased by the Son; Regenerated and sealed until the day of redemption by the Spirit.

God

Notes:

Week 6 Lesson 1 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

So many people believe in “luck” or “chance” as they see the various events that occur in their lives. This lesson will examine the providence of God to see that God is in control of all things in his creation working all things out for his purposes and nothing occurs in God’s creation that is outside of his providence.

Observation

1. What does Hebrews 1:2b,3 tell us that Christ is doing in His universe?
2. Colossians 1:16b,17 informs us that Christ is holding what together? (“consist” means to hold together)
3. In Acts 17:28, who is responsible for the very life of each person?
4. Is the creation on a random course deriving its own power or is there another reason it is as it is? Nehemiah 9:6
5. Who is keeping the world until the Day of Judgment? 2 Peter 3:7
6. How many things work out to the counsel of God’s will according to Ephesians 1:11?
7. Is there any place where God cannot carry out his plan and will? See Psalm 135:6
8. Who actually rules over the nations? Psalm 22:28 (Dan. 4:34,35)
9. Who actually orders the steps of man? Proverbs 20:24
10. What is the significance of God showing he directs the heart of a King in Prov. 21:1?
11. When seemingly bad things happen to us, does that mean God is not a part of that? See Genesis 45:5 and Genesis 50:20
12. What seems puzzling about Judges 14:4? Was Samson held responsible for this action even though it was a part of God’s providence?
13. What do you see in Acts 4:27 related to God’s providence and the responsibility of people?
14. Does 2 Samuel 10:12 encourage us to sit back and do nothing or be actively serving and trusting God to do what is right? In other words, since God has purposed everything, is there any need for us to still pray and serve?

Application

1. Does that fact that you cannot fully grasp this amazing doctrine of God’s providence and man’s decisions both being true make this doctrine false?

2. How does knowledge of God's providence help you trust God for the future?
3. How should you view someone in your life that is causing you difficulty in light of the truth that God is in control of all things? How will you now view this?
4. How does this truth change your thinking about superstitious things such as wearing certain clothes, or carrying around an object, or etc.. Do you have any of these or have you ever struggled with this?
5. Some may say that there is no need to pray because of God's providence. How does a proper view of God's providence encourage you to pray more?
6. Some may say that there is no need to witness and share Christ because of God's providence. How does a proper view of God's providence encourage you to witness more?
7. Can you pinpoint anything in your life right now that causes you worry and concern because you have forgotten and not trusted in the providence of God? Would you be willing to share that with your group?

Prayer

This study should bring forth a desire to worship. Humbly bow your heart in God's presence and praise Him for His providence and control of all things. Thank Him that you cannot fully understand it which shows He is much bigger than you and thank Him that He is not like you. Ask Him to allow these truths to truly change the way you view life.

Notes:

Topic 3:

MAN

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Man

The creation of human beings is the highlight of God's creative acts. Man was created in the image of God, placed in a perfect world in a perfect situation with a perfect God and enjoyed fellowship with his Creator. Man chose to sin and disobey God causing the entire human race to sin which resulted in death.

Week 7 Lesson 1 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

This lesson will review the fact that man is a created being by God Himself and is created in God's image. We will see why man is created and make practical application to our daily lives.

Observation

1. As you look at John 17:5,24, did God create man because He was lonely and needed that fellowship? (See also Acts 17:25)
2. According to Genesis 1:27, how did man get here on earth?
3. For what purpose did God create man? Isaiah 43:7
4. Whose image is man created according to Genesis 1:26?
5. What do you think it means to be created in God's image, a statement that is not made of any of the other creatures God created?
6. Is man still in God's image today, even after sin entered the world? See Genesis 9:6 and James 3:8,9 to answer this.
7. Does a Christian become more like the image of God as he or she grows in their faith? See Col. 3:10
8. Look at Genesis 1:27. Are both male and female in the image of God?
9. Based on your answer in question 8, are men and women equally valuable to God?
10. As you read Genesis 1:27, the word "man" being used for all humans including male and female, is there any people group that is superior to others?

Application

1. Since God didn't need to create you and didn't need you for anything, how does that move your heart to know He created you for Himself?
2. As you look at the major purpose of why you are here (to glorify God), are you acting in such a way in the following areas to reflect this purpose?

Check One for each area listed.

Friendships:	Poor _____	Struggling _____	Growing Daily _____
Marriage:	Poor _____	Struggling _____	Growing Daily _____
Education:	Poor _____	Struggling _____	Growing Daily _____
Job:	Poor _____	Struggling _____	Growing Daily _____
Use of Money:	Poor _____	Struggling _____	Growing Daily _____
Church			
Relationships:	Poor _____	Struggling _____	Growing Daily _____

Parenting: Poor _____ Struggling _____ Growing Daily _____

Serving Others: Poor _____ Struggling _____ Growing Daily _____

(If there is a particular area that is a real burden for you right now, would you be willing to share that with your group?)

3. When we grow more like God's image, how does that make you more happy and joyful in this world?
4. Are there any "image bearers" that you tend to look down on? Example: Men or women or a person who has a different skin "color" or a different nationality?
5. How does knowing an unbeliever is a person made in God's image help you to love and desire their salvation?

Prayer

A prayer of confession may be necessary after a careful examination of the areas of your life where you are struggling in bringing glory to God. Ask God also for His help in loving others because you know they are image bearers of your God.

Notes:

Week 7 Lesson 2 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

This lesson will examine the fall of man and how that fall affected all of mankind. (We will discuss more on sin in a future lesson)

Observation

1. According to Ephesians 1:11 was God caught off guard when man fell into sin?
2. According to Ephesians 1:3-7, did God choose His elect before the fall or after the fall took place?
3. What was Satan's tactic in Genesis 3:1?
4. How did Satan intensify his attack on God's Word in Genesis 3:4?
5. What would you label their sin in Genesis 3:6? (What one word would describe it?)
6. What were the results of this act?
Genesis 3:7 _____
Genesis 3:9,10 _____
Genesis 3:16 _____
Genesis 3:17-19a _____
Genesis 3:19b Physical _____
Genesis 2:17 Spiritual _____
7. According to Romans 5:12, what passed on to all men because of Adam's sin?
8. Romans 1:18 tells us that all mankind is under God's _____?

Application

1. Since Adam sinned without having a depraved nature, how much more should that cause you to always be on your guard since you inherited a depraved nature from Adam? Explain your answer.
2. Can you think of a time in your life when Satan used the same tactics as he used in the garden to tempt you to sin? You may have to think a while on this one. This may be very personal, but would you consider sharing this with your group?
3. What thoughts about Satan come to your mind when you consider his attack on God's creation in the garden?
4. What thoughts about God come to your mind when you consider that he allowed sin to come into His world?

5. In what ways can you look at our world around us and see that the results of the fall so many years ago are exactly what God said they would be?

Prayer

While it is not common for a believer to live in and practice sin, it is a common practice in a believer's life to confess sin. Confess any sin to God and thank Him for the provision of the cross which brings continued forgiveness. Express to God your desire to walk with him through His power that disobedience is not a part of your life.

Notes:

Topic 4:

SIN

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Sin

One of Satan's greatest and most diabolical plans is to remove "sin" from the vocabulary of mankind, to redefine "sin", and to eventually eradicate it completely so that instead of seeking redemption, man seeks other solutions which at their best are only temporary and lead to death. What God calls sin has been redefined as an illusion, an accident, a weakness, or a disease. This lesson will examine what the nature of sin is, where it came from, how man inherited it, and its consequences as related to the One and only true God. We may define sin as "any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature"

Week 8 Lesson 1 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

We will see in this lesson the origin of sin and that sin is real and has affected all people.

Observation

1. What does John call sin in 1 John 3:4?
2. According to Mark 12:30, do you think that sin is not only your actions, but also your attitudes?
3. What does 1 John 3:8 tell us about why Jesus died?
4. It is a fact that sin is real and in our world. According to Deuteronomy 32:4, did God sin and can He be blamed for sin? (see also James 1:13)
5. Did sin begin before the Garden of Eden? See John 8:44
6. In 2 Corinthians 11:3 and Revelation 12:9 & 20:3, who is the serpent?
7. What does Romans 5:12 tell us about how sin entered the human race and what it caused?
8. How many people are sinners? See Genesis 6:12; Psalm 14:3; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23
9. 1 John 5:19 states that _____ is under the sway of the Devil.

Application

1. Sometimes attitudes are harder to see than actions when examining sin. Are there any attitudes that you are struggling with that are breaking God's words and His desires for your life?

Here are some examples to get your mind thinking in the right direction:

Unthankful _____

Discontentment _____

Bitterness _____

Jealous _____

Envious _____

Selfishness _____

Entitlement (People owe you) _____

Would you be willing to share your struggle with your group?

2. Why do you think that a sinful action will proceed from a sinful attitude?
3. What is the danger of calling sin something other than what God has called it?

4. If death is not a result of sin, then what is the only conclusion man can come up with as to the reality of death? Should this influence the way you witness; and if so, in what way?

Prayer

As you examine your attitudes and actions related to sin, confess these to God and repent of them. Thank God for His forgiveness and His grace through Jesus who came to destroy those things that creep back into your life as a redeemed person.

Notes:

Week 8 Lesson 2 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

There were many consequences when sin took place in the garden. These consequences are still in effect today and the only way for ultimate victory is through the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus. This lesson will examine the results of sin.

Observation

1. What does Ephesians 2:1-3 say is the reason we lived in the sins listed in these verses. (hint....it's in verse 3). You could say that sin is in our _____.
2. What does Romans 5:12 & 18 say about all of Adam's descendants?
3. Is it right then to say that Adam was our representative in sin?
4. What in Psalm 51: 5 would indicate that you were a sinner even before you were born? (See also Psalm 58:3)
5. According to Ephesians 2:1, the Bible calls people _____ before they were made alive? What do you think that means and what are the implications of this powerful statement about the condition of the lost?
6. You received sin going all the way back straight to Adam (Romans 5:12,18,19). God charged his sin to your account. How is this same principle used in 2 Corinthians 5:21 & Isaiah 53:6 in a glorious way for believers?
7. According to James 4:17, can it be a sin to not do something we know we should be doing? What might those things be?
8. What is the consequence of sin for a non believer as seen in Revelation 20:11-12?
9. If sin is in your life as a believer, what is hindered according to Psalm 66:18 and 1 Peter 3:7?
10. How does God show His love to one of His children who is living in sin? See Hebrews 12:5,6
11. What principle has God designed related to our actions as seen in Galatians 6:7,8?

Application

1. Do you have any actions in your life, that after examining this lesson, you have seen that you have been using excuses or man made definitions rather than calling it sin and repenting? (Give it some deep thought...you may be surprised)

2. How was Satan's temptation of Eve similar to what you face on a daily basis when it comes to temptations?
3. Is there anything in your life that is a constant burden and weight to you because you are not doing what you know you should be doing? What would that be? Would you be willing to share with your group?
4. Do you think it is possible as a believer to become content in the fact that you don't do any of the "big" sins but completely ignore other sins that grieve God? What might some of these "other" sins be?
5. Why do you think Christians today have lost sight of the hatefulness of sin? In other words, why don't we see sin as we should?
6. Since you know that one of the results of sin is death and eternal punishment, what would be an appropriate response on your part?

Prayer

"Father forgive me for who I am. Father, teach me your holiness and grant to me a hatefulness toward sin. Expose sin in my life that I may repent. Burden my heart for others who are dead in their sin and don't even know it. Thank you for your grace and may you use me to pass that truth on to others"

Notes:

Topic 5:

SALVATION

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Salvation

The great theme of the Bible is Jesus Christ coming to rescue sinners as their only hope of deliverance from death and the wrath of God. From Genesis to revelation we see God the Father's plan, through His Son, to redeem sinful man. We will examine all the different aspects of this great rescue for our redemption. This study should humble us to worship, motivate us to serve, and burden us for those who are still in need of rescue.

Week 9 Lesson 1
(selected scriptures)

Summary

Today's lesson will examine a much misunderstood and often rejected teaching of the Bible known as God's election or God's choosing for salvation. We will examine what the Bible teaches and accept it by faith as proceeding from the grace and goodness of our Holy God. There are elements of this study that brings tension to man in trying to understand it and explain it, but we must understand that this tension is only with man and not with God. A true grasp of this study will humble you, draw you to worship, and give you a burden for the lost. Pray that God will open your heart of understanding to this great doctrine. Election: "An act of God before creation in which He chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them. But only because of His sovereign purpose" - Grudem

Observation

1. What does Acts 13:48 say about those who believed?
2. In Romans 8:28-30, what people are said to be conformed to the image of God's Son?
3. In Romans 9:11-13, Does God choose based on good or evil or works? Where were Jacob and Esau when God made His sovereign choice?
4. In Romans 11:7, what two groups do you see?
5. Ephesians 1:4-6 gives us great insight into God's choosing. Answer the following from these verses:
When did He choose? _____
What is the purpose and result of this choosing? _____

6. Did He choose to adopt us as His son? (5) _____
7. Why did He choose? (5b,6) _____
8. In 1 Thessalonians 1:4,5, who received the gospel in the power of God?
9. Why was Paul so thankful for these believers in 2 Thessalonians 2:13?
10. How does 2 Timothy 1:9 prove that God did not choose based on how good people would be here on earth?
11. When Peter wrote his epistle to hundreds of Christians, according to 1 Peter 1:1,2, what did he call them?
12. In Revelation 13:7,8 we are told of the activity of Satan over those who were not God's children. According to verse 8, when are names written in the Book of life of the Lamb slain? And when are names not written in

this Book of Life?

11. According to John 5:40, who bears the blame for not believing Jesus?
12. God chooses some to salvation and passes over others which is His sovereign desire for His glory. What is God's heart towards those who reject Him as seen in Ezekiel 33:11?

Application

1. Does not being able to fully grasp every aspect of this doctrine mean that you cannot believe it and thank God for it?
Can you fully grasp that God had no beginning?
Can you fully grasp The Trinity?
Does the fact that you cannot fully grasp the above cause you to reject it?
2. Realizing that on your own you would have never known Jesus, loved Jesus, or served Jesus, what heart response is appropriate?
3. When you think of God the Father calling your name in eternity past and choosing you to be His very own among all the people who have ever lived, what thoughts fill your heart?
4. Does it bother you at all or cause you to be unsettled when you think of all those God passed over? How does God's answer in Romans 9:20-24 help you?
5. Should you have feelings of sorrow and hurt for those who reject the gospel by their own choice, who have been passed over by God?
6. Does the fact that only the elect will be saved mean that you do not have to witness or share the gospel or have a burden for the lost? See Romans 10:1 for Paul's answer to this question.

Prayer

"Dear Lord, I am humbled and grateful beyond words that in eternity past you chose me to be your child. The thought of you passing over me terrifies me. Thank you that it was all of your sovereign choice and pleasure and not based on my works for I would surely be lost today. Thank you for changing my heart. I am speechless in your presence at the thought of these great truths, and I simply bow in worship."

Notes:

Week 10 Lesson 1 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

This lesson will examine the work of Jesus Christ to secure our salvation. The election of God would demand a provision by God. Without both, we could not be saved. The love of God and the justice of God are both reasons for our atonement and salvation.

Observation

1. In John 3:16, what is the cause of God's sending His Son to die?
2. In Romans 3:25 & 26, what is the cause of God's sending His Son to die? (The word "propitiation" in verse 25 means "a sacrifice that bears God's wrath so that God becomes favorably disposed toward us" or "God's wrath on our sin is completely and forever satisfied in the death of His Son")
3. In Luke 24:25-26, did Christ say that it was necessary for Him to die or did He have a choice to satisfy God's wrath on sin in another way?
4. As seen in Hebrews 9:25-26, what did Christ's sacrifice put away?
5. According to Romans 5:19, did Christ have to obey perfectly in order to give us His righteousness?
6. What did Christ bear as recorded in Isaiah 53:6,12
7. What did John say Jesus as the Lamb would take away? See John 1:29
8. What does Paul say that God made His Son? See 2 Corinthians 5:21
9. According to Isaiah 53:10, who inflicted the pain and penalty of sin on Jesus?
10. When God saw the sacrifice of His Son, what does Isaiah 53:11 tell us about God's response?
11. According to Hebrews 9:25-28, how many times does Christ have to pay the sacrifice for sin?
12. Who alone, in 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 brings us back to God (reconciliation)?
13. According to Colossians 1:13-14, what kingdom did Christ redeem (purchase) us from?

Application

1. Has this lesson deepened your understanding to appreciate what God has done for you in and through His Son? Share this with your group.
2. Are there any sins in your past that you have difficulty believing the wrath of God has been satisfied in Jesus? If so, how does the truth in this lesson

give you counsel?

3. Since your sins have been paid for in full for all time, should you punish yourself for sins of the past or for present sins and struggles in your life? (Example: some people cut themselves, or deny themselves joy, or refuse to believe God can ever use them)
4. Since Jesus paid for your sin and the Father is eternally satisfied in that payment, will you ever lose that? Do you have to fear God taking that away from you? (See Romans 8:31-39)
5. As you think about Jesus being your substitute who took God's wrath for you, what attitudes and emotions do you sense from your heart?

Prayer

As you pray, thank the Father for Jesus Christ and His taking your place on the Cross. Meditate upon His sacrifice that the wrath of the Father was poured out upon Jesus on your behalf. Praise God and humble yourself before Him because He is forever and eternally satisfied in Jesus for your salvation.

Notes:

Week 11 Lesson 1

(selected scriptures)

Summary

These lessons will examine the definite act of God the Father in an effective calling of those to be saved, the fact that sinners are imparted new spiritual life, called regeneration or being born again, and the sinner's willing response to the gospel call (conversion) where sinners sincerely repent of their sins and place their trust in Jesus Christ for salvation. This first lesson will concentrate on the calling of the Father.

Observation

1. What does Romans 8:30 say is the second thing that God the Father did after He chose those to be saved?
2. What does 1 Peter 1:29 say that God's calling takes people out of and in to?
3. According to 1 Cor. 1:9, what fellowship is a person called into?
4. According to 1 Thessalonians 2:12, what does God call you into?
5. According to Romans 1:6 who do the called belong to?
6. According to Romans 1:7 what are we called to be?
7. According to Ephesians 1:18 what does this calling include?
8. According to 1 Thessalonians 4:7, what are we called to?
9. According to 1 Peter 2:20,21 what difficult thing are we called to?
10. What promise are we called to in 1 Timothy 6:12?
11. What beautiful words of invitation to lost sinners are used in Matthew 11:28-30?
12. Is this statement true or false based on Romans 10:14? "Since God has called people to be saved, there is no need for us to share the gospel message."

Application

1. Can you remember when you heard the gospel but rejected it and resisted it? Would you share your experience with your group?
2. Would you be willing to share with your group your response to God's calling for salvation in your life. In other words, what did God use to bring to you the knowledge of Jesus, your sin, and your hopelessness?
3. What things should be included when you witness to others?
4. What does the fact that God called you in eternity cause your heart to feel?
5. How does an understanding of God's call burden you to live for Him now?

Prayer

“Father, once again I am humbled that in eternity past you called my name. I thank you for what you have called me to be and to do. I love you and desire to walk in accordance to your divine calling in my life.”

Notes:

Week 11 Lesson 2

(selected scriptures)

Summary

This lesson will cover the doctrine of regeneration which is the act of God in which He imparts spiritual life to those who are called.

Observation

1. As you look at John 1:13, do we play an active role in regeneration or is it a total work of God alone?
2. As Ezekiel prophesied of a future time of regeneration, does his words reflect it is an act of God or an act of man? See Ezekiel 36:26-27
3. Which person of the Trinity brings about regeneration according to the following verses?
 - a. John 3:8 _____
 - b. Ephesians 2:4,5 _____
4. In James 1:18, what does the Father use to speak to us and bring new life?
5. What two things happened at the same time in Acts 10:44?
6. Does Ephesians 2:1,4,5 indicate that this regeneration is an instantaneous change from death to life?
7. According to Acts 16:14, does a person ask God to save them before or after God opens their heart? (See also John 6:44 & 6:65, Romans 3:11)
8. Think on this one: Which is a true statement?

“If you believe in Christ as your Savior, then (after you believe) you will be born again”

“The new birth is viewed by Scripture as something that God does within us in order to enable us to believe”
9. What is a standard of behavior or lifestyle that will not be a practicing or ongoing part of a person who has been born again? See 1 John 3:9 (*Note: the Greek tense here indicates a person who keeps on sinning as a lifestyle)
10. What does John say in 1 John 4:7 will be a characteristic of one born again?
11. In 1 John 5:3-4, what does a born again person overcome as a result of his or her new birth?

Application

1. Have you been born again? Is there evidence of the new birth in your life?
2. How does understanding the order of regeneration (new birth) coming before the person responds give God glory? (To the human mind the regeneration and asking for salvation may be so close in time that we do not

notice the distinction, but the Scriptures do teach this order)

3. Has there been a time in your life, even when you knew you were born again, that you grew cold and your life did not reflect your new birth? What contributed to that and what did God use to draw you back? Would you share this with your group?
4. Why is it so easy for so many to think they are born again but they are not?
5. Where should people look to see the true characteristics of born again people?

Prayer

“Father, thank you for doing your supernatural work of giving me spiritual life and changing me from death to life. If you had not intervened with the course I was on and changed me before I ever knew you I would be lost and condemned to this very day. My only hope was you. Thank you for giving me a new birth that was and is supernatural. I want my life to reflect more and more the new birth you so graciously gave me.”

Notes:

Week 11 Lesson 3

(selected scriptures)

Summary

We will now examine our response to the gospel call and message. This is often called conversion: “Conversion is our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation.” Grudem

Observation

1. As you read Romans 1:32, is knowing the facts about God and His word all a person needs to be saved? See also James 2:19
2. As you read John 3:2, can a person even approve of some of the facts of the gospel and Jesus and not be born again?
3. How does John 1:12 differ from just believing some facts about a person?
4. How does the phrase in John 3:16, “believes in Him” indicate a trusting faith rather than a mere believing in facts?
5. Several times Jesus uses the phrase “come to me” when talking about saving faith. See John 6:37, 7:37, and Matthew 11:28-30. How does the idea of coming to Jesus differ from an impersonal religious acknowledgment of the facts of Jesus life?
6. What information must people have in order to put their faith in Christ? See Romans 10:17
7. According to Acts 20:21, true repentance always has what element with it?
8. As you look at 2 Corinthians 7:9-10, can a person feel sorry for something they did wrong but not have a godly repentance and renouncing of sin against God?
9. How does genuine godly repentance over sin differ from just making an intellectual decision about the facts of the gospel?
10. What elements of conversion and salvation do you see in Isaiah 55:6,7?
11. Just before Jesus ascended into Heaven, what did Jesus say should be preached for salvation? See Luke 24:46,47
12. What did Peter preach that was a part of conversion and saving faith in Acts 3:19?
13. What is God’s command for every man as seen in Acts 17:30?

Application

1. Have you trusted in Christ personally or do you think you are just intellectually agreeing with the facts you have heard? Have you seen a desire to

turn from sin and follow Christ?

2. What do you think keeps people from repenting and being converted to salvation? In other words, why is it easier just to agree with some facts of the gospel?
3. Why is not preaching repentance of sin a sort of “watered down” gospel?
4. Why do you think many churches do not preach repentance of sin but only emphasize faith in Jesus?

Prayer

If you have trusted Jesus as your savior and repented of sin and turned to Jesus as your Lord, a prayer of humble thanksgiving is appropriate as God sovereignly enabled you to see your sin and enabled you to willingly choose to follow Jesus.

If you have been convinced by the Holy Spirit that you have only had an intellectual or emotional acknowledgement of the fact of Jesus, and have not repented of sin, your needed response is to repent of sin and come to Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Cry out to Him for mercy and grace. If you have further questions, please seek help from someone in your group who may point you to God’s Word and work through this with you.

Notes:

Week 12 Lesson 1

(selected scriptures)

Summary

This lesson will examine how we gain a right and legal standing before God as sinners who deserve the exact opposite. We will discover what happens to the guilt of our sin and how God views the guilty who have placed their trust in His Son's work. The theological word for this great act of God whereby He declares us righteous in His sight is called justification.

Observation

1. In Romans 8:30, what did God do to those he predestined and called? (What is next in this verse?)
2. In Romans 3:26, what does God do to those who have placed their faith in Him? Does this justification come after faith or before faith?
3. Does a person get this right standing with God because of his own good works? See Romans 3:28 (Gal. 2:16)
4. What do we have with God because we have been justified by faith? Rom. 5:1
5. In Romans 4:5 what does God declare the ungodly to be?
6. In Romans 8:33,34, what is the opposite of being declared righteous?
7. Look at Romans 8:1. What will a believer in Christ never pay?
8. Look at Romans 5:19. What is a believer in Christ given or what is he made?
9. Look at Romans 4:3. How did God view Abraham and what did He give to Abraham when he believed?
10. What did Paul have as a result of His faith in Christ in Philippians 3:9? Did it come from his own doing?

Application

1. Is there anything in your life, maybe in the past, that you have struggled with or still struggle with that causes you to doubt that God has declared you righteous in His sight? Would you be willing to share that with your group?
2. Why is it so important that this is an act of God and not an act or work that you have done?
3. What would be the result if God forgave your sin but did not declare you righteous and give you the righteousness of His Son?
4. How does knowing that God has declared you legally righteous and per-

fect in His holy sight move your heart to worship and service?

Prayer

“Father, I stand in your presence not only forgiven but also righteous in your holy presence. Thank you for giving me the righteousness of your Son – an act I didn’t even know when you opened my heart to turn from my sin and trust you. I praise You and worship You and long to serve You with all my heart.”

Notes:

Week 12 Lesson 2 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

This lesson will examine how God makes us members of His family. This is often called adoption. We will see the joys and privileges we have of being a part of the family of God.

Observation

1. John 1:12 tells us that God's power makes us what?
2. According to Ephesians 2:3, those who reject Christ are children of what?
3. Jesus states that those who reject Christ have who as their father?
4. Galatians 3:26 tells us that through faith in Christ we become what?
5. See Galatians 4:4-7. Do these verses teach that God adopted us into His family? What kind of relationship do we have with our Father in these verses?
6. What was John so thrilled about as he wrote 1 John 3:1,2a related to us becoming God's children?
7. As adopted children, do we have everything right now or is there still more to come in the future? See Romans 8:23
8. As God's adopted children, who should we imitate? See Ephesians 5:1 & 1 Peter 1:14-16
9. According to 1 John 3:10, what is the distinguishing mark that shows whose children you belong to?

Application

1. What contrasts and comparisons do you see between God's adopting us and parents adopting children?
2. How does understanding that God has placed you into His family help you to have a vibrant and fresh walk with God as opposed to just following rules and regulations?
3. Have you had any difficult family repercussions as a result of you becoming a part of God's family? Would you share with your group?
4. How does knowing that other believers have been adopted into God's family help you to relate to them and view them within your local church?
5. Have you ever been a part of a church that pressured you into outward conforming to standards that the family relationship with God and others was lost? Why do you think some churches may lean toward this type of "ministry"? What is the danger in this type of "ministry"?

Prayer

Examine your heart to see if you have lost the sense of family and being a child of God that can speak to your Father in a most intimate and personal way through Jesus. Have you been living by rules and regulations with no intimacy with your Father? Thank God for His love for you and thank God for giving you a family of redeemed to be a part of. Thank Him for reminding you of this relationship which you have now and also will have throughout all eternity.

Notes:

Week 12 Lesson 3

(selected scriptures)

Summary

This lesson will look at sanctification in all its aspects from salvation, to a progressive work in daily life, and to the future eternal state. Sanctification is a word which means “set apart”.

Observation

1. At the time of our salvation, does 1 Corinthians 6:11 indicate that we were positionally set apart to God?
2. In Acts 20:32, does Paul speak of all believers as being sanctified?
3. Though we have been set apart positionally and set free from the power of sin (Rom. 6:18), does Romans 6:12,13 indicate that sin still hangs around and troubles us?
4. What does Romans 6:19 indicate that believers must do in their sanctification?
5. 2 Peter 3:18 tells us that our sanctification (setting apart our lives for God) should always be what?
6. When will our sanctification be complete? See Philippians 3:21 & 1 Corinthians 15:23,49
7. According to Philippians 2:12 & 13, do we sit back and do nothing and expect God to just “zap” spiritual growth into us?
8. Staying with the same verses, what does God do to the believer in this growing process?
9. What do you think it means to present our bodies a living sacrifice as found in Romans 12:1?
10. As we grow in Christ and look for His coming, what does 1 John 3:3 say we will become? What does that mean?

Application

1. Can you remember a time when you truly made a break from practicing sin in your life? Do you have a particular example you might share with the group?
2. Is it hard to believe that you are dead to the ruling power of sin in your life? If so, why is it hard?
3. Can you see a definite pattern of growth in your life of being more and more set apart for God?
4. Can you name a struggle in your life that just won't seem to go away?

Would you share that with your group?

5. Why is it a blessing to know that God allows us to grow spiritually?
6. Is there anything in your life that is keeping you from growing as you should? What should you do about it?

Prayer

As you examine your life, ask God to work in your mind and your heart that you might be more set apart for Him. Confess any sin that has kept you from growing and make some definite decisions to remove these things from your life. Thank Him for setting you apart for Him at salvation and for the eternal setting apart that is your guarantee in Christ.

Notes:

Week 13 Lesson 1 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

This lesson will examine what the Bible says about the perseverance of our salvation. It will seek to answer the question; How do we know we shall remain Christians all our life? We may define this topic in this way: “The perseverance of the saints means that all those who are truly born again will be kept by God’s power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives, and that only those who persevere until the end have been truly born again.” - Grudem

Observation

1. What guarantee is given by Jesus in John 6:38-40 to all those the Father gave Jesus?
2. What did Jesus say in John 10:27-29 about all those the Father gave to Him?
3. What does John 3:36 say that believers have?
4. How does Romans 8:1 intensify the truth that believers will never face eternal punishment?
5. How long does the seal spoken about in Ephesians 1:13,14 last?
6. How long does Philippians 1:6 say God will do a good work in us?
7. 1 Peter 1:5 tells us that what power keeps us saved?
8. In Colossians 1:21-23, Paul says that those who are reconciled to God are those who continue in the faith. How would you explain this in light of the previous you have seen in this lesson? What if the person did not continue?
9. Look at Matthew 7:21-23. Can some show actual outward signs of being saved, but not be saved at all?

Application

1. What do you think is the greatest assurance that you are indeed a child of God?
2. Do you have an assurance that you are truly born again? If you have doubts, what are those, and what do you think is causing those?
3. If your eternal salvation was dependent upon you, what would be the sure result of that?
4. What would be the implications if a genuine believer could lose his or her salvation? What would that say about God the Father, God the Son, and

God the Holy Spirit?

5. Why is it a tremendous blessing and comfort to know that God's power keeps you saved?
6. If you are living in constant sin with no fruit and no spiritual growth, should you be comforted in the power of God to keep you saved, based on a decision you made at an earlier time? What should you do?

Prayer

A prayer of thanksgiving is in order as you praise and worship God for His power to keep you His child for all of eternity. If sin is a constant struggle with you and you see no spiritual growth in your life, your response should be one of repentance and faith in Jesus as your savior.

Notes:

Week 13 Lesson 2

(selected scriptures)

Summary

This lesson will examine death and see what the Scriptures teach about our bodies and spirits when death takes us from this world.

Observation

1. What does 1 Corinthians 15:26 say the last enemy is to be destroyed?
2. What will be gone when Christ returns? See 1 Corinthians 15:54-55
3. Since the Garden of Eden, what is the reason for death? How would you complete this statement? "Death is a reality for all because we all live in a _____ world."
4. What does experiencing suffering and death enable us to do as seen in 1 Peter 2:21?
5. According to 2 Corinthians 5:8, how should a believer view his death?
6. What is death for a believer according to Philippians 1:21-23?
7. In Romans 8:38-39, what does it say death cannot do for a believer?
8. Believers do sorrow when death enters their lives, but what accompanies their sorrow? See 1 Thessalonians 4:13
9. In Luke 23:43, what did Jesus promise the thief who repented?
10. In Luke 16:23, where did the rich man go immediately upon his death?
11. According to Matthew 25:41 & 46a, what immediate punishment awaits those who are unredeemed?
12. What is the only victory over death? See 1 Corinthians 15:56,57.

Application

1. Is there anything you fear about death?
2. How do the teachings of Scripture encourage you to view your own death?
3. Have you ever experienced a death in your family or with a close friend, where you have experienced that sorrow mixed with joy? Would you be willing to share that with your group?
4. As a believer, how can you best prepare to accept death and not live in fear of it. In other words, what does that kind of life look like?

Prayer

This lesson should cause us to thank God for Jesus who alone gives victory over the great enemy death. It should motivate us to order our lives to walk with Jesus and live for eternal things rather than earthly things. Ask God

Salvation

for His help and strength and also to reveal anything in your life that does not please Him. Confess any sin of loving this temporal world more than Jesus. Worship Him for giving you the greatest gift over the greatest enemy!

Notes:

Week 13 Lesson 3 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

Today's lesson will examine the resurrection of our body, the time of this resurrection, and the type of body we will have at the resurrection.

Observation

1. What does Paul say he is waiting for in Romans 8:23,24?
2. In 1 Corinthians 15:51,52, what will happen to the body we now have?
3. What will the bodies of those believers who have died do as seen in 1 Thessalonians 4:16?
4. In 1 Thessalonians 4:14, who is with Jesus when he returns?
5. In question 3 & 4, are these the same people?
6. Does John 5:28,29 teach a resurrection of the body of believers or of believers and unbelievers?
7. According to Philippians 3:20 & 21, what will our resurrected be like?
8. Look at Hebrews 11:10. Did the Old Testament saints believe in the resurrection?
9. How is the resurrected body "raised in", in the following verses?
1 Corinthians 15:42 _____
1 Corinthians 15: 43a _____
1 Corinthians 15:43b _____
1 Corinthians 15:44 _____
10. If there was no hope for our bodies to be resurrected, what kind of people would we be according to 1 Corinthians 15:19?

Application

1. Do you ever fear of what might happen to you in this life? How does the truth of the resurrection of your body help you to remove those fears?
2. Is the hope of the resurrection of your body (Romans 8:23,24) something you are eagerly waiting? Or, do you mostly think of eternal life as your spirit being in heaven with Jesus?
3. In 1 Corinthians 6:14 & 15, Paul ties in the resurrection with his teaching on sexual sins and the body. Since your body will be raised up to house your spirit for all eternity, how should that affect what we do with our body in this life?
4. When you witness or share the gospel with others, do you think you should emphasize the resurrection more than what you do? If yes, why?

Prayer

“Father, thank you that you have power over death, that I do not have to fear death because you will raise me back up again for all eternity. I am amazed to know that this very body I am carrying around with me today will be with me throughout all eternity – changed and made fit for eternity. My desire is to be holy and set apart in this body today. Increase my hope in the resurrection and glorification of my body and increase my burden for those who do not have this hope.”

Notes:

Topic 6:

THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST



The Person of Jesus Christ

A summarization of Jesus as taught by the Bible is as follows: “Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man in one person, and will be so forever.”

- Grudem



Dig a Little Deeper

(Content from the

Westminster Confession of Faith)

I. It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man, the Prophet, Priest, and King, the Head and Savior of His Church, the Heir of all things, and Judge of the world: unto whom He did from all eternity give a people, to be His seed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.

II. The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.

III. The Lord Jesus, in His hu-

man nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified, and anointed with the Holy Spirit, above measure, having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell; to the end that, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, He might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a Mediator and Surety. Which office He took not unto Himself, but was thereunto called by His Father, who put all power and judgment into His hand, and gave Him commandment to execute the same.

IV. This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake; which that He might discharge, He was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it; endured most grievous torments immediately in His soul, and most painful sufferings in His body; was crucified, and died, was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day He arose from the dead, with the same body in which He suffered, with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sits at the right hand of His Father, making intercession, and shall return, to judge men and angels, at the end of the world.

V. The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience, and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto

God, has fully satisfied the justice of His Father; and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for those whom the Father has given unto Him.

VI. Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after His incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits thereof were communicated unto the elect, in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices, wherein He was revealed, and signified to be the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head; and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world; being yesterday and today the same, and forever.

VII. Christ, in the work of mediation, acts according to both

natures, by each nature doing that which is proper to itself; yet, by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature is sometimes in Scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.

VIII. To all those for whom Christ has purchased redemption, He does certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them, and revealing unto them, in and by the word, the mysteries of salvation; effectually persuading them by His Spirit to believe and obey, and governing their hearts by His word and Spirit; overcoming all their enemies by His almighty power and wisdom, in such manner, and ways, as are most consonant to His wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.

Week 14 Lesson 1 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

This lesson will examine the fact the Jesus fully God, and possessed all the essence and attributes of deity at all times.

Observation

1. According to Micah 5:2 & Isaiah 9:6, did Jesus exist before his birth in Bethlehem? (See also Jesus claim in John 8:58)
2. Colossians 1:16,17 tells us that Christ did what work?
3. Luke 5:20-25 tells us that Jesus does what?
4. What attribute of God did Jesus display in Luke 8:24-25?
5. What attribute is said of Jesus in Hebrews 4:15?
6. What work that only God can do, did Jesus do in John 11:25 & 43?
7. The Scriptures teach that God alone is to be worshipped (Deut. 6:13 & Luke 4:8). What do you see Jesus accepting in Matthew 14:33?
8. In John 5:17-18, who did Jesus claim to be equal to?
9. Why did the Jews want to stone Jesus in John 10:30-33?
10. How does Jesus name in Matthew 1:23 show He is God?
11. In Revelation 17:14 Jesus the Lamb is referred to as the “Lord of lords”
What is Jehovah God called in Deuteronomy 10:17?
12. What does John 1:1 about Jesus (The Word v.14)?

Application

1. Read Revelation 5: 8-14. In what ways do you need to adjust your life to reflect this sole devotion and worship to the Lamb that is recorded for us in this passage?
2. Jesus is God and is worthy of our devotion and worship. Can you name anything in your life that is trying and making succeeding in taking that rightful place that belongs to Jesus? Maybe you can share this with your group that they may pray and encourage you.

Prayer

Is there anything in your life right now that is competing with Jesus for sole devotion and worship? Confess this to God and repent asking Him for help and strength to change this in your life.

The Person of Jesus Christ

Notes:

Week 14 Lesson 2 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

In this lesson we will examine what the Scriptures say about the humanity of Jesus. This is often called the incarnation which is the process of taking on human flesh.

Observation

1. Why was Mary so shocked or puzzled when she was told she would have a baby? See Luke 1:34
2. In the genealogies of Matthew 1, why is the pattern of fathers begetting sons broken when it gets to Joseph and Mary in verse 16? In other words, what is emphasized with Mary and Joseph?
3. What does Galatians 4:4 tell us about who Jesus was made from?
4. What do the following verses teach about Jesus humanity?
Luke 2:52 _____
John 20:17 _____
Matthew 4:2 _____
John 19:28 _____
John 4:6 _____
John 19:34 _____
5. What human emotion did Jesus experience in John 11:35?
6. What did Jesus experience in Hebrews 4:15?
7. Could Jesus body suffer and die? See Romans 5:8
8. What was Jesus purpose in John 1:18?
9. In 1 Peter 2:21, how does Jesus earthly life encourage us?
10. According to Hebrews 2:14, what was necessary for Jesus to make eternal redemption for us?

Application

1. How does knowing Jesus was fully man yet without sin help you when you pray to Him as your intercessor?
2. If you are going through a difficult time in your life right now, can you think of a similar situation that Jesus went through that you may apply His example to your situation?
3. How does knowing the way Jesus faced temptations help you when you face the same kinds of situations He did?

Prayer

Thank God that you have a faithful High Priest in Jesus who was tempted in every way as you are yet He never sinned. Pour out your heart to Him as One who knows exactly everything you are going through. Be comforted and encouraged by His example while on earth and ask Him for strength and wisdom to order your life like Him in whatever you are dealing with right now in your life.

Notes:

Week 14 Lesson 3 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

This lesson will examine the fact that the incarnate Christ was one Person with two natures in an indivisible unity.

Observation

1. Do you see the humanity of Christ and the deity of Christ in *Philippians 2:5-7?
2. In John 17:5, what does Jesus prayer to His Father tell us about one thing He once had before coming to earth, that He longed to have again?
3. What does Romans 8:3 say that Jesus humbled Himself and became as God's Son?
4. Jesus was on earth as the God – Man; is there a difference between giving up the attributes of His deity and the voluntary non use of some of His attributes? What is that difference? (*Note: Jesus never gave up any portion of His deity at any time while on earth)
5. According to Romans 5:12 and Hebrews 4:15, could Jesus sin? (The virgin birth is important in answering this question)
6. What is said of Jesus in Colossians 1:19?
7. What dwells in Jesus body as seen in Colossians 2:9?

*The humbling himself in Philippians 2:7 (NKJV = made Himself of no reputation) has to do with Jesus giving up His “status and privilege that was His in heaven.” In the context of Philippians 2, Jesus put others first and was willing to give up some of that status and privilege He had when He was with His Father. At no time did Jesus ever cease to be God!!

Application

1. How does Jesus' act of humbling Himself from the position He was in challenge you to do the same.
2. Where do you find it the most difficult to put others first before your desires and wishes? (Try to be specific and share these with your group)
3. Why do you think you have difficulty in these areas?
4. What are some real tangible ways that you can put others first for the glory of God.

Prayer

Grasping the truth of the humility of Jesus in His leaving His Father to come in the likeness of sinful man should leave us speechless in amazement. Praise God and worship Him as you pray in thanksgiving for His coming to save you. Ask Him for strength to put others first to His glory.

Notes:

Week 15 Lesson 1 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

This lesson will examine the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ to see the spiritual and eternal implications of this necessary and glorious event. John MacArthur wrote these words, “Just as the heart pumps life-giving blood to every part of the body, so the truth of the resurrection gives life to every other area of gospel truth. Then resurrection is the pivot on which all of Christianity turns and without which none of the other truths would much matter. Without the resurrection, Christianity would be so much wishful thinking, taking its place alongside all other human philosophy and religious speculation.” John MacArthur Commentary on 1 Corinthians, Moody Press, page 398

Observation

1. According to the following verses, did Jesus have a body after his resurrection or was he a spirit? Write a description after each verse:
Matthew 28:9 _____
John 20:15 _____
John 20:20 _____
Luke 24:39 _____
Acts 10:41 _____
2. What significance do you see when you compare the resurrected physical body of Jesus with the original creation of man in the Garden of Eden? (You may have to think on this one a bit – but give it a try)
3. According to the following verses, who participated in the resurrection?
Acts 2:24 _____
John 10:17, 18 (John. 2:19-21) _____
4. In 1 Peter 1:3, what does Peter connect the resurrection with? In other words, without the resurrection of Jesus, we could not be what?
5. Because of the resurrection of Jesus, how does God view believers? See Ephesians 2:5-6
6. Does the resurrection of Jesus promise us power in ministry in this life? See Philippians 3:10 & Ephesians 1:19-20
7. According to Romans 6:4 & 11, does the resurrection of Christ include power to have victory over sin in our lives and to grow continually in this victory?
8. Look at Romans 4:25. If Christ remained dead and was not raised, what would that have said about the Father’s view of Christ’s work on the cross

and what would that have meant for us?

9. According to 1 Corinthians 6:14, what will God do for believers that He did to His Son?
10. How does the resurrection encourage us to continue working for God in service and ministry? See 1 Corinthians 15:58
11. What implication does the resurrection have on our goals and outlook and purpose in this life? See Colossians 3:1-4
12. When Christ, in His physical glorified resurrected body, ascended into heaven, what does Hebrews 1:3 say He did? What significance did this carry?
13. What does Ephesians 1:20-21 and 1 Peter 3:22 say about the resurrected Christ's authority and power and place?
14. See John 14:2, 3. Because Jesus is alive, where will He take us one day?
15. See Acts 17:31 – Jesus resurrection is a guarantee of what event for the lost?

Application

1. What things about your physical body cause you to suffer or have hardship in this life? Do those things cause you to focus on the pain in the here and now and forget that this is not an eternal situation? Does the truth of a bodily resurrection help you in dealing with your physical sufferings today?
2. What things about your spiritual life do you see that need to be adjusted as Colossians 3:1-4 tells us? If you had to compare your seeking for earthly things and things above, which side of the scale would go down? (Maybe your scale goes up and down inconsistently) Would you share with your group some of your struggles in this area?
3. Since God places such an importance on the body in restoring it to His original design in the Garden of Eden before sin, how should that change the way we view our body's while we await the resurrection?
4. Is there any sin or habit in your life that you have given excuses for and in reality are rejecting the resurrection power given to you by Christ? Why is it so easy to make excuses for sin?

Prayer

Thank God for His approval of His Son for your redemption – proved in the resurrection of Jesus. Thank God that Jesus is alive and is sitting today at the right hand of the Father in authority and power. Confess sin where you have used excuses in ignoring the power given to you. Confess when your seeking of things on this earth are given more attention and power and effort than seeking Jesus. Thank God for the eternal salvation He has secured for you

What We Believe: Truth That Changes Lives

in Jesus and His resurrection!A living hope!

Notes:

The Person of Jesus Christ

Week 16 Lesson 1

(selected scriptures)

Summary

The offices of prophet, priest, and king in Israel were offices that foreshadowed the offices of Jesus Christ. “The prophet spoke God’s words to the people; the priests offered sacrifices, prayers, and praises to God on behalf of the people; and the king ruled over the people as God’s representative.” (Grudem) This lesson will examine the three offices of Christ which are Prophet, Priest, and King, and seek to apply these to our lives today.

Observation

1. In Deuteronomy 18:15-18, Moses predicted a future prophet like himself would come. In Acts 3:20, 22-24, quoting the Deuteronomy passage, Peter says that prophet is _____.
2. How is Christ different that the Old Testament prophets when speaking for God? See the first part of Matthew 5:22
3. According to Luke 24:27, who did all previous prophets of God speak and write about and point to?
4. Who did Jesus perfectly reveal to us? See John 14:9
5. The priest would offer sacrifices for the offences of the people. What does Hebrews 9:26 say Jesus offered as our Priest?
6. As our Priest, Jesus continually leads us into whose presence? See Hebrews 9:24
7. Hebrews 6:19-20 tells us that Jesus is the High Priest for how long?
8. What does Jesus do for us as seen in Hebrews 7:25 and Romans 8:24?
9. According to 1 Timothy 2:5, who is the only one who is the mediator between God and man?
10. Did Jesus rebuke the people when they said, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord”? Luke 19:38
11. What reason did Jesus give for being born in John 18:37?
12. In the future, Jesus will be recognized as what? See Revelation 19:16
13. In the future, every one will perform this act to King Jesus. What is it? See Philippians 2:10

Application

1. As a prophet Christ revealed God not only in His spoken ministry but also in His life and person. In what ways can you emulate the ministry of a prophet? (not in the sense of telling the future)

The Person of Jesus Christ

2. Do you feel comfortable in spreading the word, teaching the word, and defending the word?
3. As a priest Christ was compassionate on the sins of the people and their suffering as He sacrificed Himself for their salvation and ascended to the Father to continually intercede on their behalf. In what ways can you emulate the ministry of a priest?
4. Do you feel comfortable sacrificing for others and sensing and showing compassion for those who are hurting and in great need?
5. As King, Jesus has the power and authority to rule and reign over the nation Israel and also the entire earth. In what ways can you emulate the kingly ministry of Jesus (In part obviously)?
6. Do you feel comfortable in leading and planning and taking authority and responsibility in situations?
7. Of the three offices of Christ, which one do you most resemble?

Prayer

Father, thank you for Jesus, My Prophet, Priest, and King. Help me to be like Jesus in the ministries you give me. May I emulate Him in boldness and courage along with compassion and sacrifice. If you call me to lead may I do it as a servant leader bringing glory to you. If you call me to show compassion to the suffering may I willingly love those you give to me. If you call me to proclaim your word may I sense your power to share your word with boldness and never seek to please men. May I always be like Jesus in whatever you call me to do.

Notes:

Topic 7:

THE HOLY SPIRIT

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The Holy Spirit

This lesson will examine the person and work of the Holy Spirit. We have seen the Holy Spirit in other doctrines that we have studied, but we will spend this lesson solely focused on Him. We will see again that the Holy Spirit is God and has specific works He does toward unbelievers and believers. We will see that the Holy Spirit desires to exalt the person of Jesus Christ in all of His activity and in all of His activity He never contradicts the mind of God or the word of God.

(*Note: The gifts of the Holy Spirit will be included in the chapter on the church)

Week 17 Lesson 1 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

This lesson will focus specifically on the personality of the Holy Spirit and the deity of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Holy Spirit is not a force but a person and the Holy Spirit is not a part of God, He is God.

Observation

1. According to 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, does the Holy Spirit have the ability to think and reason?
2. As you look at Ephesians 4:30, does the Holy Spirit have emotions?
3. Does the Holy Spirit express a will in leading and making decisions? See Acts 8:29 7 Acts 16:6-11
4. Does the Spirit know all things as does God the Father? See 1 Corinthians 2:10-12
5. Is the Spirit everywhere like God the Father? See Psalm 139:7 (see also 8-12)
6. What is said of the Spirit in 1 John 5:6b? (The Spirit is _____)
7. What attribute of the Father does the Spirit have as seen in Luke 11:13? (How did the Father describe the Spirit?)
8. What does the Holy Spirit do in Titus 3:5?
9. As you read Isaiah 40:13, does the Holy Spirit need any teaching or counsel from anyone? What attribute of God would you call this? Divine _____.
10. What three names do you see in Matthew 28:19?

Application

1. Does it encourage you that the Holy Spirit is a person and not a force?
2. Does it encourage you that the Holy Spirit is God? What difference does that make as you:
Try to understand the Scriptures:
Trust the Holy Spirit to lead you
3. How is it encouraging knowing that the Holy Spirit doesn't need anyone to counsel Him or teach Him.
4. What would you say to someone who says the Holy Spirit's Book (The Bible) is out of date and irrelevant to today's world and your life?
5. Have you ever thought about the Holy Spirit grieving when you are disobedient and sin? What do you think that is like for the Holy Spirit and

The Holy Spirit

what should that motivate you to do?

Prayer

Thank God for the Holy Spirit and His holiness and how that perfection is poured out into your life from the Holy Spirit. Ask God to help you be sensitive of the Holy Spirit so you will not grieve Him. Ask God to reveal more to you about the Holy Spirit in the remaining lessons.

Notes:

Week 17 Lesson 2

(selected scriptures)

Summary

Today we will examine the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to believers and unbelievers.

Observation

1. What is the focus of the Holy Spirit's witness? See John 15:26
2. What work does the Holy Spirit do to unbelievers in John 16:8-11?
3. What does the Holy Spirit impart to those who believe? Titus 3:5
4. Where does the Holy Spirit take up permanent residence in a believer? 1 Corinthians 6:19
5. What is said of the Holy Spirit about the securing of our salvation in Ephesians 1:13,14 & 4:30?
6. What ministry does the Holy Spirit do in Ephesians 5:18?
7. What does the Holy Spirit do (as the agent of Christ) for those who are saved in relation to the body of Christ? (1 Corinthians 12:13 & Matthew 3:11
8. What kind of Christian character does the Spirit produce in Galatians 5:22,23?
9. What does the Spirit give for service in the body of Christ? 1 Corinthians 12:4-11
10. Who authored the Scriptures? 2 Peter 1:21

Application

1. If you feel like something is right and you have a peace about it, is that a guarantee that it is from the Holy Spirit? How would you know the difference?
2. Since the Holy Spirit always exalts Christ, what then should be your driving force or purpose in all you do?
3. In what ways can you put your answer to question 2 in practical terms? IN other words, what does that kind of a life look like in the different responsibilities of your life?
4. Where do you struggle the most in the qualities mentioned in the fruit the Spirit produces in Galatians 5:22,23. What is keeping you from living out those characteristics of the Spirit?
5. Would you say you have a conscious awareness of the need for the power of the Holy Spirit in all you do, or do you rarely think of Him and depend

The Holy Spirit

mostly on yourself (Example: parenting, witnessing, teaching in children's ministry, etc)

Prayer

A prayer of confession might be appropriate at this time as you may have realized how much your life focuses on yourself as opposed to the exaltation of Christ and His purposes as directed by the Holy Spirit.

Notes:

Topic 8:

ANGELS, SATAN, DEMONS

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Angels, Satan, Demons

These next lessons will examine the Scriptures teaching concerning angels, Satan, and demons. We will see where they come from, who they are, what their goals and purposes are, and what our response as God's children should be.

Week 18 Lesson 1 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

Today's study will focus on angels as we examine where they came from, who they are, what they are made of, what they do, and for what purpose did God create them. The following is a summary statement from Wayne Grudem: "Angels are created, spiritual beings with moral judgment and high intelligence, but without physical bodies."

Observation

1. As you read Colossians 1:16, would angels fall under the heading of being created beings by God?
2. Also, in Colossians 1:16, what is the purpose of God creating angels?
3. According to 2 Peter 2:4, are angels able to make moral judgments and decisions?
4. What characteristic of being a "personal" being do angels display in:
1 Peter 1:12 _____
Revelation 22:8,9 _____
Hebrews 1:6 _____
Matthew 28:5 _____
5. What kind of being are angels as seen in Hebrews 1:13,14
6. Do angels marry other angels? See Matthew 22:30
7. Can angels die? See Luke 20:35,36
8. Do angels have the power to take upon themselves a bodily form? See Matthew 28:5 along with Mark 16:5 and Luke 24:4 & Hebrews 13:2
9. Though a powerful being, what limitations do you see in the following verses?
Daniel 9:21-23 _____
Daniel 10:12-14 _____
1 Peter 1:12 _____
10. What do angels excel in? See Psalm 103:20
11. How many angels are there? See Revelation 5:11 & Hebrews 12:22
12. What attribute is given to good angels in Mark 8:38?
13. What are the angels called in 1 Timothy 5:21 who did not rebel against God?

Application

The application questions will come at the end of the section on angels.

Prayer

Father, I never cease to be amazed at your power and wisdom and plan. I thank you for creating Your angels to serve you and obey You and to show Your glory. I look forward to that day when I am joining them around the throne in heaven worshipping you.

Notes:

Week 18 Lesson 2

(selected scriptures)

Summary

This lesson will examine the work of God's good, elect angels. We will see the many things that they do in obedience to God's commands. This lesson should encourage us and strengthen us as we know of God's great love and care for us and now we learn of His employment of His servants on behalf of His children.

Observation

1. Look up the following verses and write down what type of work or service good angels do:
Isaiah 6:2,3 _____
Job 38:4,7 _____ (sons of God refers to angels)
Daniel 10:10-14,20,21 _____
Psalm 103:20 _____
Psalm 91:11 _____
2 Kings 6:17 _____
Revelation 8:1-13 _____
Jude 9 _____
Revelation 20:1-3 _____
Hebrews 1:14 _____
2. The truth of angels reminds us that what "world" is real?
3. Look at Colossians 2:18. Should we worship angels?
4. What did angels do in direct relation to Christ in the following verses?
Luke 1:26,28 ; 2:1-15 _____
Matthew 2:13-15 _____
Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43 _____
Matthew 28:6 _____
Acts 1:11 _____

Application

1. Has this brief study changed the way you look at angels?
2. What kind of difference should it make in your life to know that God's angels are watching you?
3. What do you want to reflect to the angels that are watching you?
4. Can you recall a time in your life where you believed or even wondered if

one of God's angels stepped in to protect you?

5. How does knowing that angels follow and obey God in a swift and joyful obedience motivate you to do the same?

Prayer

Father, your powerful ability to create such beings and to deploy them for your service causes me to rejoice in your mighty power and wisdom. I am thankful that in the world of the unseen that your holy elect angels are carrying out your will, standing against evil, and serving me on Your behalf. Help me to be an obedient and worshipful child of God because you have given me, through Your Son, much more than any angel will ever receive.

Notes:

Week 19 Lesson 1

(selected scriptures)

Summary

Today we will examine what the Scriptures teach concerning fallen angels, or demons. We will see their origin, their works, and their final destination.

Observation

1. What must have happened in the angelic world between Genesis 1:31 when we are told everything that was made was very good, and Genesis 3 where the snake Satan showed up?
2. What does 2 Peter 2:4 say some of the angels did? (See also Jude 6)
3. Did Christ believe in the existence of fallen angels (demons)? See Matthew 10:8
4. What are demons called in Luke 7:21?
5. What are demons called in Matthew 10:1?
6. Look at Matthew 25:41. What are Satan's followers (Demons) called?
7. Do demons have emotions? See James 2:19
8. What do demons promote in Deuteronomy 32:17?
9. What do demons promote in 1 Timothy 4:1?
10. Whose purposes do demons follow? See Matthew 25:41
11. Do Demons hinder God's saints? See Ephesians 6:11,12
12. Can evil angels afflict God's servants? See 2 Corinthians 12:7
13. What is the emphasis in Ephesians 6:10-20 in relation to standing against the tricks and schemes of the devil and his angels.

Application

1. Do you think there are some areas in our society where demon activity has a great influence? If so, which ones, and what would make you think that to be true?
2. If you have an ongoing spiritual struggle, do you think it is possible that some unseen demonic force may be attacking you?
3. Can you have an ongoing spiritual struggle and there be no unseen demonic activity in your life at all? Explain.
4. What should this knowledge of an unseen world of darkness and wickedness cause you to do?
5. Have you taken this subject to lightly? Are you lazy in your spiritual walk? Is prayer lacking? Is walking with a dependent and alert heart something

you need to work on? What specific things can you do to avoid falling in to this trap?

Prayer

Father, I thank you for the cross and resurrection of Jesus, Your Son. I thank you that Satan and his demons were defeated on that day. However, I know that there is an unseen world of darkness of fallen angels who hate You and Your Son, and because You gave me life, they hate me also. I thank you that I do not have to be afraid. I realize that I need to walk with you close daily. Draw me to yourself and protect me from evil.

Notes:

Week 20 Lesson 1

(selected scriptures)

Summary

We will now turn our attention specifically to Satan, the prince of demons, and the leader of evil and hatred toward Jesus and all those who belong to Him. We will see his origin, his fall, the results of that fall, his present position, his works, and his future.

Observation

1. Many Scholars believe Isaiah 14:12-17, a description of judgment on the king of Babylon, is also a description of the fall of Satan. What is the basic sin you see in these verses?
2. What things do you see about Satan's character in John 8:44?
3. What job does Satan have in Matthew 25:41?
4. Who is the ruler of the world system as seen in 2 Corinthians 4:4? (See also Ephesians 2:2)
5. As you look at the scene in Job (1:12) for example, what do you see about God's authority of Satan?
6. Many people depict Satan as evil looking and hideous, which no doubt he is, but what can he appear like in 2 Corinthians 11:14,15
7. Look at those verses again and answer this question. If a person preaches false doctrine (13) who is their leader?
8. What power and influence does Satan have as seen in Revelation 20:3?
9. What present activity is Satan active in? See 2 Corinthians 4:3-4
10. What does Satan do against believers? See Revelation 12:10
11. What does Revelation 20:1-3 say the future holds for Satan?
12. Is Satan released for a short time after he is bound? See Revelation 20:7-9
13. What is the final outcome of Satan's rebellion? See Revelation 20:10

Application

1. Why is it a comfort to know that even with all of Satan's evil wicked hatred and power against Christ's people, he still is under the sovereign hand of God?
2. How does Satan's hatred for Jesus motivate you to live a holy life?
3. Have you ever looked back at your life and realized that you were under the direct influence of Satan and his worldly and ungodly system? Would you share this with your group?
4. How does the fact that Satan has such power over the lost world motivate

you to prayer with greater earnestness for he lost?

5. Look at 2 Corinthians 4:4-6 & 1 John 3:8. Does the gospel have the power to give lost people victory over satanic influence and spiritual blindness in their life?

Prayer

An examination of your life to see if you are giving Satan an opportunity to laugh in the face of Jesus is appropriate. Confess any sin and repent that you may bring God glory and not give the enemy an opportunity to gloat in the face of your Savior. Thank Jesus for the gospel which destroys the work of the devil.

Notes:

Topic 9:

THE CHURCH

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The Church

We will now turn our attention to what the Bible calls “the church”. The word church comes from a word which means “called out”. Those who belong to God’s church are those He has called out from sin and darkness and rebellion to belong to Him along with all others who also have been called out. We will see God’s power, plan, and purpose for those He has called out for His body. We will see how “church” is much more than a building or a thing we do once a week as a part of our social culture. Being a member of the body of Christ as seen visibly in a local church is our very life and purpose as we love and serve the Head of the church, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus has provided all we need to be a member of His church, to be a gifted servant in His church, and to be a worshipper along side a multitude of others who have been called out by His power, and created for His plan and His purpose.

Week 21 Lesson 1

(selected scriptures)

Summary

In this first lesson we will see truth about Who the church belongs to and how a person gets into the church and the difference between the “visible” church and the “invisible” church.

Observation

1. What is the great work Jesus is doing as described in Matthew 16:18?
2. In Acts 2:47, who decides who gets into the church, (the body of Christ)?
3. How does Acts 20:28 prove that the church belongs to Jesus?
4. Who is the Head of the church as seen in Ephesians 1:22,23 & 5:23?
5. As you read 2 Timothy 2:19, is there a sense in which the church is “invisible” as only God can see who really is a part of the His body? (You may need to think on this a while) (A hint: focus on the phrase; “The Lord knows those who are His”)
6. Is there a sense in which the church is also “visible”? There are several similar verses, but read 1 Corinthians 1:2 to help you. How do we see the “visible” church?
7. Looking back at Ephesians 5:23, Jesus is not only the Head of the church, but also the _____?
8. In Ephesians 5:29, what loving act does Jesus do for His church? After you identify this loving act, in what ways do think He carry’s this out?

Application

1. If Christ’s great work is building His church, what is the greatest thing I can involve my life in?
2. How can this great work that you are involved in become something more than just attending a church service a couple times a week? (Be specific)
3. What does it mean to you that Christ is the Head of the church? How should that been seen in the working of your church?
4. What things might go on if Christ is not viewed and exalted as the Head of His church?

Prayer

Thank Jesus for purchasing you that you might be a part of the body of Christ to serve in a visible church which reflects Jesus from your heart. Express your desire to Christ to serve Him and love Him and seek His purposes

The Church

for His church through your life.

Notes:

Week 21 Lesson 2

(selected scriptures)

Summary

In this lesson we will examine the responsibilities or purposes of the church as seen in Scripture.

Observation

1. What does Ephesians 1:12 say should be characterizing our lives?
2. As we read Colossians 3:16, what expressions from our heart should be the normal everyday practice of the church as well as when we gather together?
3. As you read the singing part of Colossians 3:16, do you think this is just something to prepare to hear a sermon, or is it in itself something much deeper and greater? Explain (Hint: see also Ephesians 5:16-19)
4. What was Paul's goal for believers as seen in Colossians 1:28,29?
5. After reading the above verses in Colossians, would you say that our task is only to be used of God to bring people to an initial saving faith, or is there more to accomplish?
6. As you read Matthew 28:19, what responsibility of the church do you see?
7. Should the church be engaged in ministering to the physical needs of its fellow believers? See 2 Corinthians 8:3,4; 1 John 3:17
8. Should the church be involved in ministering to the physical needs of the lost? See Luke 6:35-36
9. What is major responsibility of the church as seen in 1 Timothy 3:15?
10. What goal is seen in 1 Corinthians 10:31 in relation to the desire of the church in all they do? What do you think that means or in other words, what would that look like?

Application

1. In what ways can you be a part of worshipping God and drawing others to focus and worship God as a part of the church?
2. In what ways do you need to grow and change when it comes to talking about spiritual things and spiritual needs in the lives of others in the church? (Example: Do you ever approach someone specifically to encourage them, pray with them, challenge them, or ask them how their life is going – or are your conversations mostly about cooking, work, sports, or the weather?)
3. If you struggle with question 2 – why do you think it is easier to talk about

The Church

sports than to talk about spiritual issues?

4. How can you be more effective in sharing the gospel with those who are lost?
5. How can you be a part of meeting physical needs of fellow church members and those who are lost?

Prayer

We are realizing that being a part of the church is much more than just coming to a service. Examine your heart in light of the truths of this lesson and confess any sin that has been revealed to you and express your desire to bring glory to God and your willingness to stretch yourself to minister to others and reach the lost. Ask God for strength and wisdom to uphold truth in your family and community.

Notes:

Week 22 Lesson 1 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

This lesson will examine the pattern of the church as seen in Acts 2:42. While these verses do not cover every detail on how ministry can take place, they do lay a biblical pattern to be followed that will be a foundation for all that takes place in the Lord's church.

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Observation

1. What are the implications when you read the words “continued steadfastly”?
2. What would be the opposite of “continued steadfastly”?
3. Read Mark 10:34-39. What is the potential outcome for one who holds to the teachings of Jesus?
4. As you see that they continually focused on doctrine (teaching), do you think their gatherings were geared toward believers or unbelievers?
5. What does Romans 15:1 tell us as a church what we should be doing?
6. How does Colossians 2:2 describe what our relationships in the church should like.
7. According to Hebrews 10:25, what should be your mind-set as you enter the church gathering of believers?
8. What does 1 Corinthians 11: 27-30 say is a reason why some were weak and sick and even died?
9. In 2 Corinthians 1:11, what did Paul say would help his ministry and is necessary for blessing in God's plan?

Application

1. Is your life as a spiritual part of the church characterized more by “continues steadfastly” or “continues sporadic”? (Sporadic = occasional; happening at irregular intervals).
2. Have you experienced a time when you suffered from someone, maybe even a close friend or family member, because of what you believe? Would you share that with your group?
3. In what ways can you become more “knit together” with the church? (Be specific)

The Church

4. How can you in practical ways fulfill the command in Hebrews 10:25 as you come to a service or gathering of the church? (Be specific)
5. Evaluate your prayer life as a part of the church, for the church body and its leaders. How would you describe yourself?

Non Existent _____

I pray, but it is sporadic _____

Faithful and steady _____

Prayer

This lesson should have not only encouraged your heart but also challenged it to be a member of Christ's church that sticks to the New Testament pattern. Examine your life as to what the Holy Spirit exposed to your heart in areas that need repentance and growth, and ask God's help to change.

Notes:

Week 23 Lesson 1
(selected scriptures)

Summary

This lesson will examine how the church functions or how it is governed.

Observation

1. As you look at Acts 1:22; 4:33 & 1 Corinthians 15:8,9, why do we not have apostles today in the specific sense of an office of the church? (Note: the word apostle can be used as simply being a messenger)
2. What office was appointed in Acts 14:23?
3. According to the following verses, what common thing do you see in reference to the elder's that were appointed in each church? (don't think too deep here – it's a simple common thing in each verse)
Acts 14:23 _____
Acts 20:17 _____
Titus 1:5 _____
1 Timothy 4:14 _____
James 5:14 _____
1 Peter 5:1-2 _____
4. What office is mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and Philippians 1:1?
5. What were the "elders" concerned about in Acts 6:2?
6. What type of functions do elders have as seen in 1 Timothy 5:17?
7. What does Hebrews 13:17 say is the responsibility of the congregation to the leadership of elders?
8. How does 1 Peter 5:2-5 keep elders from a domineering spirit in their leadership?
9. As you look at Acts 6:1-6, did the congregation of believers have any say in the decision that was being made?
10. In Acts 15:22, do you see the elders along with the congregation being unified and working together in the decisions that needed to be made?
11. Who sent those appointed to this council as found in Acts 15:3?

Application

1. Why do you think God's design for the church is a plurality of elders as opposed to one man? (What are potential dangers?)
2. What can you do to ensure that the elders are able to be in the Word and pray?

The Church

3. Have you ever thought about your ministry in the church as also a ministry to the elders that will benefit the whole church? How is that so?
4. Do you difficulty submitting to church leadership? If so, why might that be?
5. How is it a blessing that God gives to the church leadership but also He shows in His word that the leadership are to be loving shepherds, including the congregation on decisions resulting in all moving ahead for God's purposes together?

Prayer

A prayer of thanksgiving for God raising up elders and leaders in His church to give the church direction and spiritual shepherding is in order. Pray for your elders and deacons as they have such an important calling and responsibility for our Lord's church. Pray for one another that all follow the leading of God so that this church is used for His glory.

Notes:

Week 23 Lesson 2
(selected scriptures)

Summary

Today's lesson will cover the area of church discipline or church restoration. The purpose of church discipline of a member who is refusing to repent of an ongoing sin in their life is to restore them upon their repentance. We will look at the various steps of church discipline while highlighting the purpose for any action taken by the church as a whole.

Observation

1. Looking at Galatians 6:1, answer the following questions:
Who is this verse addressed to? _____
What is possible for a believer? _____
What is a qualification to help this person? _____
What kind of spirit must the restorer have? _____
Why should the restorer stay humble? _____
2. According to 1 Corinthians 5:2,6-7, what is the danger to the whole body if sin is not dealt with in the church as directed by God's Word?
3. What should the church as a whole do and sense in their heart when they had knowledge of the sin committed and being practiced? See 1 Corinthians 5:1,2
4. The first step in church discipline is to discipline ourselves, examine our lives, confess sin, and walk with God. When this fails it is necessary for others' measures to take place. What steps do the following verses describe?
Matthew 18:15 _____
Matthew 18:16 _____
Matthew 18:17 _____
5. What is the common factor that shows the step you are on is not working and you need to move to the next step?
6. When a person refuses to repent after every step has been exhausted, how does Christ say he or she is to be viewed in Matthew 18:17b?
7. How does Paul word this same act in 1 Corinthians 5:5?
8. In 1 Timothy 5:19-21, what measures does Paul say by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in relation to the discipline of Elders?

Application

1. After studying this section, how important is it to God and for the church that His church be holy? Does God take ongoing persistent sin serious?
2. When ongoing consistent practicing sin and rebellion is tolerated in the church, what view of God does that give to a lost world? What does that say about our view of God?
3. Have you ever found yourself breaking the spirit of humility and gentleness as you view the sins of others or deal with others who are living in sin?
4. Does being gentle and loving mean that we just let sin go on? Or, is addressing it the greatest act of love we could display?
5. Do you struggle with the idea of removing someone, by church action, from the church who is living in persistent sin? What is the bottom line in resolving this conflict?

Prayer

“Father, draw me to yourself and show me if there is anything in my life that is not pleasing to you. Help me to love others who are struggling with sin and to be obedient to your way of reaching them.”

Notes:

Week 24 Lesson 1

(selected scriptures)

Summary

God has not left His church without provisions to accomplish His purpose through them. He has graciously and supernaturally gifted those He has brought into the church to serve Him for the benefit of others. A mark of a successful church, in the eyes of God, is when every member is an active servant, using faithfully his or her gifts for the glory of God and the benefit of others. This lesson will examine spiritual gifts to see where they come from, who gets them, what they are, and what they are to be used for.

“Spiritual gifts are abilities given by the Holy Spirit at salvation through God’s grace for serving others in God’s power and for God’s glory.”

Observation

1. As you look at 1 Corinthians 12:1, do you think God wants us to be informed on the subject of spiritual gifts? If the answer is yes, how important should this subject be to us?
2. In 1 Cor. 12:4-6, are all the gifts the same?
3. Paul calls them a gift or gifts; what is the significance of calling them a gift? Also, who is the gift giver? (1 Cor. 12:7,8,9,11,18,24,28)
4. Look in 1 Cor. 12:7 and determine a purpose for receiving a spiritual gift?
5. As you look at Ephesians 4:7, does every believer have a spiritual gift? If you are a believer what then do you have?
6. Looking at the last part of Eph. 4:7, would you say that the portion of gift you and others have been given is important to the church?
7. Is one gift more important than another gift? If a person thinks their gift is small and it won't matter whether they use it or not, is that acceptable with God for His church? See 1 Cor. 12:22
8. Look at the following verses and write down the results of a church that faithfully uses the gifts God has given:

Eph. 4:13 _____

Eph. 4:14 _____

Eph. 4:15,16 _____



Dig a Little Deeper

The following passages contain a list of the spiritual gifts that the Word of God mentions:

Romans 12:3-8

1 Corinthians 12:1-31

Ephesians 4:7-16

Application

1. What are some ways that you may know what your spiritual gift(s) is?
2. How can pride greatly reduce or even destroy the effectiveness of your service, even if you are using your spiritual gift?
3. What would you say to someone who doesn't serve but they say, "I am still searching for my gift."
4. Are you satisfied with the gift(s) God has chosen to give you and also with the proportion or measure of the gift? Do you ever find yourself desiring what someone else has?
5. With the understanding of spiritual gifts and their purpose, what would you say is a focus in the church that God takes very seriously? Maybe you can think of a couple. Are you committed to that focus?
6. How might I be damaging the church and holding it back, if I do not serve and exercise my gift?

Prayer

A prayer of thanksgiving and maybe even confession and repentance is appropriate right now. Examine your life with the Lord in relation to your service to the body of Christ in your church for God's glory and for the benefit of others.

Notes:

Topic 10:

THE FUTURE

 LHBC
community
groups

The Future

We now turn our attention to our study of the end times, or the doctrine of last things. This is a study that has been hotly debated for years and years and this debate continues to this day. This study alone, while being beneficial, would take us months and months to study and examine. Many are so convinced that they are right in their interpretation of end time events that they argue and fight to defend their position. While having a position is perfectly fine and will eventually come from a careful biblical study of end time events, it seems that many times the main thrust of the biblical revelation given to us is missed. Did God reveal these truths to us so that we could fight and argue and defend our position with our charts and figures and “guesstimations”, or did He reveal them to us that we might be ready and prepared for the coming of the King and the setting up of His kingdom? I have found that many believe in the events of the end times, but disagree to the timing of those events. Many are confused by the book of Revelation, but when you see The Revelation as a book to worship Christ and exalt Him in His rightful place, it puts the emphasis where it should be – on the King of Kings and Lord of lords. It is not wrong to study the events the Bible speaks about for they are there to fulfill the purpose found in 2 Timothy 3:16 and are profitable for every believer. For the purpose of our study we will focus on some of the events, but with an emphasis on the exaltation of Jesus in our lives as we await His coming.

Week 25 Lesson 1 *(selected scriptures)*

Summary

Our first lesson will focus on the believer's life and purpose as he or she is awaiting the return of Jesus Christ.

Observation

1. What did Jesus tell his disciples that would be comfort to them in John 14:1-3?
2. When Paul spoke of the coming of Jesus in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, what was this intended to do for his readers and how were they to use that in each others lives?
3. What amazing thing is God going to do at the coming of Jesus? See 1 Corinthians 15:50-52. What is the trumpet called in verse 52?
4. What does James 5:7 tell believers to do who are under the oppression of the rich in relation to the coming of the Lord?
5. What does James 5:7 tell believers to do with their heart as they await the return of the Lord?
6. What does James say in chapter 5 verse 9 about their relationship with each other while suffering? This is still in the context of awaiting the Lord's return.
7. How should you view your trials in view of the Lord's coming? See 1 Peter 1:6,7
8. In 1 Peter 1:13 we are told to hope to the end for the coming of Jesus. Look at verses 14-16 and determine what that hope should motivate your life to be.
9. In 1 Peter 4:7a Peter tells us the end of all things is near. What characteristics do you see in verses 7b-11 that are to be a part of our lives while we wait for the end or rather Jesus return?
10. Look at Romans 13 verses 11-14. What is the emphasis here when Paul is speaking about the end times?
11. Look at 2 Timothy 3:1-9. Do these verses describe our society and culture?
12. Look at Revelation 19:11-16. Who triumphs over the evil rebellious world?

Application

1. Would you say that the coming of Jesus motivates you to holiness and spiritual purpose doing the will of God, or have you thought of it mostly as a position to defend?

2. Do you grow impatient in trials and suffering? What does the promise of Jesus return mean to you as you look at your trials in the perspective of His coming?
3. Do you have any fears related to end time events? Maybe you could share them with your group.
4. If you lack an eagerness of waiting the appearing of Jesus return, what factors do you think may be contributing to that? What do you need to do to change?
5. In the light of Jesus soon return, what things should occupy your time?

Prayer

Praise God for the promise of the return of Jesus. Confess your lack of focus on this event and possibly your lack of allowing it to purify your life and purpose for the will of God. Examine deeply areas of your life that are not affected by the fact that your Lord and Savior is returning for you and returning to once for all destroy evil and set all things right.

Notes:

Week 26 Lesson 1
(selected scriptures)

Summary

In this lesson we will examine two judgments that are future: The judgment seat of Christ which is for believers, and the Great White Throne Judgment which is for unbelievers.

Observation

1. 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 & 2 Cor. 5:10 describes the judgment seat of Christ. Answer the following questions from this passage.
This event concerns the judgment of _____.
Who is the judge? _____
What are those being judged, judged for? _____
What is the result of the judgment? _____
2. Look at Revelation 20:11-15 and answer the following questions concerning the Great White Throne Judgment:
Who is the Judge? _____
Who are the recipients of this judgment? _____
If a person is "great" will he or she be exempt from this judgment? _____

What is used to judge these unbelievers? _____
What book were they not in? _____
What is recorded in the "books" about these people? _____

Did these works that were recorded prove they did not work enough to earn salvation or do you think they are used by God as proof that they were not a child of God and therefore are condemned? _____
What is the final result of this judgment? _____
3. After the Great White Throne Judgment, what does Revelation 21-22 say we have to look forward to?

Application

1. As a believer, (forgiven and justified), does the judgment seat of Christ show you that your present day activity has eternal consequences? (not talking about losing salvation)
2. Can you honestly say that knowing you will face Jesus at this judgment motivates you to order your life for Jesus?
3. Is your relationship with Jesus growing closer and closer now that your

heart breaks if you disappoint Him?

4. Would you say that when you fail and sin you are more concerned about earthly results rather than eternal results?
5. How does knowledge of the Great White Throne pierce your heart as you think of unbelievers, even some you know, that will be at the awful event?
6. What can you do to more actively share Jesus with those who are lost?

Prayer

Ask God to give you a broken heart for those things in your life that break His heart. Ask God for a broken heart and burden for those whose destination is an eternity away from Him in severe judgment. Ask God to help you be a servant who is faithful and works for God's glory and not your own.

Notes:



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baptist church

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