

GROWING DEEPER & WIDER

Student's Edition

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SPIRITUAL MATURITY
& START AND MAINTAIN
GOOD HABITS

SPIRITUAL MATURITY

*"... that you may **become mature** Christians and may fulfill God's will for you."* Col. 4:12b (Ph)

"We are not meant to remain as children ... but to grow up in every way into Christ..."
Eph. 4:14-15 (Ph)

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO PUT SOMETHING INTO PRACTICE?

OUR FOCUS:

We will focus on the **Four Basic Habits** every Christian needs to develop in order to grow to spiritual maturity. We will:

- Equip you with the **skills** you need to begin these habits
- Explain the **tools** you need to continue these habits.

WHAT IS "SPIRITUAL MATURITY"?

"...In the unity of common faith, and knowledge of the Son of God, we arrive at real maturity - the measure of development which is meant by 'the fullness of Christ.'"
Eph 4:13(Ph)

Spiritual Maturity is being like Christ.

*"For from the very beginning God decided that those who came to him ... **should become like his Son...**"*
Rom.8:29(LB)

FACTS ABOUT SPIRITUAL MATURITY

1. IT'S NOT AUTOMATIC

"You have been Christians for a long time now, and you ought to be teaching others, but instead ... you need someone to teach you ... When a person is still living on milk, it shows he isn't very far along in the Christian life ... He's still a baby Christian!"
Heb. 5:12-13 (LB)

2. IT IS A PROCESS

*"**Learn** to be mature."* Prov. 8:5 (GN)

*"**Continue to grow** in the grace and knowledge of our savior Jesus Christ."* 2 Peter 3:18 (GN)

3. IT TAKES DISCIPLINE

- *"Take **the time and the trouble** to keep yourself spiritually fit."* 1 Tim. 4:7b (Ph)
- *"**Discipline** yourself for the purpose of godliness."*

4. The better I get to know Christ, the more I love Him.

The objective of your Quiet Time is not to study **about** Christ, but to actually spend time with him.

UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLESHIP

1. Mature believers are called disciples.
2. I cannot be a disciple without being disciplined.
3. The more disciplined I become the more God can use me.
4. The mark of a disciple is cross bearing.

(Jesus) "Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." Luke 14:27

5. How often am I to do this? DAILY!

(Jesus) "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross **daily**, and follow me." Luke 9:23

6. What is involved in "cross bearing"?

WHATEVER IT TAKES to give Christ first place in my life!

FOUR HABITS OF A DISCIPLE

HOW CAN I BECOME A DISCIPLE? Develop DISCIPLINE HABITS

"... You have **put off the old self** with its **HABITS**, and have put on the new self ... which God is continually renewing in his own image, to bring you to a full knowledge of himself." Col. 3:9-10

1. TIME WITH GOD'S WORD

"If you **continue in my Word**, then you are my disciples indeed. And you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32

2. PRAYER

"If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, then you will **ask for anything you wish**, and you shall have it ... in this way you become my disciples." John 15:7-8 (GN)

3. GIVING

"None of you can be my disciple unless **he gives up all of his possessions**." Luke 14:33 (JB)

"The purpose of tithing is to teach you to always **put God first** in your lives." Deut. 14:23 (LB)

4. FELLOWSHIP

"Love each other just as much as I love you. Your **strong love for each other** will prove to the world that you are my disciples." John 13:34-35 (LB)

START AND MAINTAIN GOOD HABITS

STEP ONE: DESIRE

You must start with a strong desire. You must be internally motivated. External motivations don't last. If you start only half-heartedly, you will never make it to the success point.

STEP TWO: DECIDE

Begin right now! Don't wait. Don't procrastinate. You don't slide into a new habit. "One of these days" never arrives. You must have a starting point. It's easier to break a bad habit today than it will be tomorrow! *"If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done."* Eccl. 11:4 (LB)

STEP THREE: DECLARATION

Announce your intentions publicly. Make a covenant or resolution. The power of a vow is awesome. It is particularly powerful if you put your commitment in writing. *"Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them."* Ps. 76:11

STEP FOUR: DETERMINATION

Never allow an exception until the new habit is securely rooted in your life. Each lapse will be fatal. A single slip unwinds many turns at first. Continuity and success at the start is essential. Never be swayed by "just this once". The act of yielding weakens the will and reinforces your lack of self-control. It takes 3 weeks to become comfortable with a new habit and it takes another 3 to 4 weeks (doing it daily) for it to become a part of your life.

IT TAKES 7 TO 21 REPETITIONS TO LEARN SOMETHING!

STEP FIVE: DO IT

Whenever you feel the slightest urge or prompting to practice this new habit - DO IT THEN! Don't wait. Seize every opportunity to reinforce your habit. Those feelings will not last, so whenever you feel inclined to perform your new habit, do so!

STEP SIX: DOUBLE UP

Get a partner who will support you and encourage you. Find someone who is willing to hold you accountable and check up on you especially in the early days before the habit is firmly rooted in your life.

"Let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over each other, studying how we may stir up and stimulate each other to ... helpful deeds and noble activities." Heb. 1:25 (Amp)

"Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up." Eccl. 4:9-10 (GN)

STEP SEVEN: DEPEND ON GOD

Rely on God's power to help you establish the habit. Remember, Satan does not want you to develop habits that help you grow spiritually and make you like Christ so he will do all he can to tempt you, cause you to slip, or discourage you. Pray!

*"For the Spirit of God has given us ... fills us with power, love, and **self-control**."* 2 Tim. 1:7 (GN)

*"For it is God who is at work within you, giving you **the will and the power** to achieve his purpose."* Phil. 2:13

***T*_{HE} *H*_{ABIT} *O*_F *A* *D*_{AILY}
*T*_{IME} *W*_{ITH} *G*_{OD}**

HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME

DEFINITION: "A quiet time is a daily time I set aside to be alone with God to get to know Him through the Bible and prayer."

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF A DAILY QUIET TIME

Your time alone with God should be the top priority in your schedule for five reasons:

1. We were _____ to have fellowship with God.

"So God created man in his own image ..."

Gen. 1:27, 2:7, 3:8

"Look! I've been standing at the door and constantly knocking. If anyone ... opens the door, I will come in and fellowship with him and he with me."

Rev. 3:20 (LB)

2. Jesus died to make a relationship to God possible.

"God ... has invited you into this wonderful friendship with his Son, Christ our Lord."

1 Cor. 1:9 (LB)

3. Personal time alone with God was Jesus' _____

Mark 1:35, Luke 22:39, Luke 5:16

*"Jesus **often** withdrew to lonely places and prayed."*

4. Every person who has been effective in service for God developed this habit.

Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, Paul, etc.

5. You cannot be a healthy Christian without it!

"Man cannot live on bread alone but on every word that God speaks."

Matt. 4:4 (GN)

"... I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food."

Job 23:12 (NAS)

"How can a young man cleanse his way? By keeping to your Word."

Ps. 119:9 (Mof)

THE PURPOSE OF A DAILY QUIET TIME

1. TO GIVE DEVOTION

"Give to the Lord the glory due to his name. Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness."

Ps. 29:2

*"(Hezekiah) was successful, because everything he did ... he did in **a spirit of complete devotion** to his God."*

2 Ch. 31:21 (GN)

- God deserves our devotion! (Rev. 4:11)
- God desires our devotion! (John 4:23)

2. TO GET DIRECTION

"Show me the path where I should go, O Lord; point out the right road for me to walk. Lead me ..."

Ps. 25:4 (LB)

Consider your way – consider your day

3. TO GAIN DELIGHT IN GOD.

"Delight yourself in the Lord; and he will give you the desires of your heart." Ps. 37:4 (KJV)

"... (God's) presence fills me with joy and brings me pleasure." Ps. 16:11 (GN)

4. TO GROW MORE LIKE GOD.

"Jesus has the power of God, by which he has given us everything we need to live and to serve God. We have these things because we know him.... With these gifts you can share in being like God"

2 Pet 1:4 (NCV)

*"When the council saw the boldness of Peter and John ... they were amazed and realized **what being with Jesus had done for them!**"*

Acts 4:13 (LB)

HOW TO BEGIN A DAILY QUIET TIME

1. SELECT A SPECIFIC TIME.

Whatever time you set, be consistent.

The best time to have a quiet time is when I am at my best!!

We recommend the morning.

Reasons for considering an early morning quiet time:

1. The example of Bible character.

(Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Hannah, Job, Hezekiah, David, Daniel, Jesus.)

2. It seems logical to begin the day with it.

"The best time to tune your instrument is before you play the concert, not after!"

3. It demonstrates that meeting with God is your first priority. You give him the first part of your day!

4. You are likely to be more rested, your mind is less cluttered, and it's often the quietest time!

HOW LONG SHOULD A QUIET TIME BE:

3 Guidelines

- Start with 15 minutes and let it grow.
- Don't watch the clock!
- Emphasize quality, not quantity!

2. CHOOSE A SPECIAL PLACE.

*"Jesus left the city and went, **as he usually did**, to the Mount of Olives ... to pray."* Luke 22:39 (GN)

The Important Factor:

*"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went to a **solitary place**, where he prayed."*

Mark 1:35

3. GATHER THE RESOURCES YOU'LL NEED.

1. A Bible - with readable print.
2. A Notebook - to write down what the Lord speaks to you about, and to keep your prayer list.
3. A Songbook - if you want to sing.

4. BEGIN WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDES

"Be still, and know that I am God."

Ps. 46:10

EXPECTENCY

"Open my eyes to see wonderful things in your Word."

Ps. 119:18 (LB)

"The thing you should want most is God's kingdom and doing what God wants" Mat 6:33 (NCV)

5. FOLLOW A SIMPLE PLAN: See Appendix A - "FIFTEEN MINUTES WITH GOD"**II. HOW TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS WITH YOUR QUIET TIME****1. THE PROBLEM OF DISCIPLINE**

Your first problem in establishing a quiet time will face you the moment you wake each morning: Am I going to get out of bed? (*"The Battle of the Blankets"*)

Suggestions

1. Go to bed on time.
2. Get up immediately.
3. Be aware of quiet time robbers.
4. Fall asleep thinking spiritual thoughts.

2. THE PROBLEM OF DISTRACTIONS

Satan will try to use anything to get your mind to wander during a quiet time.

Suggestions

1. Get out of bed.
2. Get thoroughly awake.
3. Read and pray aloud.
4. Walk during your prayer time.
5. Keep a journal.

3. THE PROBLEM OF DRYNESS

Sometimes you will feel like you're not getting anything out of your quiet time. (*"The Battle of the Blahs"*)

Never judge your quiet time by your feelings.

Possible Causes of Spiritual Dryness

1. Your physical condition.
2. Disobedience to God.
3. Rushing your quiet time.
4. Getting in a rut.
5. Not sharing insights with others.

4. THE PROBLEM OF DILIGENCE

Your greatest problem will be your struggle to stay consistent. I find Satan fights nothing harder than my quiet time.

Suggestions

1. Make a covenant or vow to God.
2. Schedule it on your daily calendar.
3. Be prepared for Satan's excuses.
4. Leave your Bible open at night to the passage for the next day!

What if I miss a day?

- **Don't become guilty**
- **Don't become legalistic.**
- **Don't give up**

It takes Three weeks for you to become familiar with a new task. Then it takes another Three weeks before it becomes a comfortable habit.

"Let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up."
Gal. 6:9 (LB)

To view "A Prayer of Commitment", see appendix B.

***T*_{HE} *H*_{ABIT} *O*_F**
***P*_{RAY}*E*_R & *F*_{AST}*I*_{NG}**

How To REVITALIZE YOUR PRAYER LIFE

I. APPROACH PRAYER WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE.

(Matthew 6:5-8)

- BE _____

"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men."

- Don't try to **IMPRESS GOD**
- Don't try to **IMPRESS OTHERS**

(vs. 5)

- BE _____

*"But when you pray go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."
(vs. 6)*

- BE _____

*"Don't recite the same prayer over and over as the heathen do, who think prayers are answered only be repeating them again and again. Remember, your Father knows exactly what you need before you ask Him!"
(vs. 7-8 LB)*

II. USE THE MODEL JESUS GAVE US

*Matt. 6:9-15 "This, then, is **HOW** you should pray ..."*

THE SIX PARTS OF PRAYER

1. PRAISE: I BEGIN BY EXPRESSING LOVE TO GOD

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name."

TWO KINDS OF PRAISE:

- "ADORATION" - Praising God for who he is.
- "THANKSGIVING"- Praising God for what he has done.

*"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Be **thankful** unto him, and **bless his name**."
Ps. 100:4*

HOW TO PRAISE GOD:

***1st:** As you read your Bible, make a list of God's character qualities that you discover and then review them when you pray. (See Prayer Guide 1)*

Examples:

God is patient	Num. 14:18
God is merciful	Num. 14:18

God is forgiving	Num. 14:18
God knows everything	1 Sam. 2:2
God is loving	1 John 4:8

KEY: God's Character is the basis for our boldness in making requests in prayer. God answers the prayers that acknowledge who he is!

2nd: Remind yourself and affirm the promises God has made that are contained in the meaning of his names.
(See Prayer Guide 2)

3rd: Make a list of all that you are thankful for and review them when you pray.
(See Prayer Guide 3)

2. PURPOSE: I COMMIT MYSELF TO GOD'S PURPOSE AND WILL FOR MY LIFE

"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven ..."

Pray for God's will to be done ... in my family ... my church ... my ministry ... my job ... my future ... my city ... the nation ... the world.

"Offer yourself as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his Service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer."
Rom. 12:2 (GN)

3. PROVISION: I ASK GOD TO PROVIDE MY DAILY NEEDS

*"Give us today our **daily** bread ..."*

What needs can I pray about? _____

*"God will supply **all** your needs from his riches in glory because of what Christ Jesus has done for us."*
Phil. 4:19 (LB)

"Since God did not spare even his own Son for us but gave him up for us, won't he also surely give us everything else?"
Rom. 8:32

"You do not have ... because you don't ask God"
James 4:2

THE KEY: BE SPECIFIC

Write down your requests, with a promise you are claiming from the Bible, and expect an answer!(See Prayer Guide 4)

"Don't worry about anything, but in everything, by pray and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."
Phil. 4:6

4. PARDON: I ASK GOD TO FORGIVE MY SINS

"Forgive us our debts ..."

4 STEPS TO FORGIVENESS

1. Ask the Holy Spirit _____ every sin

"Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover my thoughts. Find out if there is any evil in me".
Ps. 139:23-24

2. Confess each sin _____.

"You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up; then God will show mercy to you."
Prov. 28:13 (GN)

3. Make _____ to others when necessary.

"When you remember your brother has something against you ... go at once to make peace with him, then come back and offer your gift to God."
Matt. 5:23-24 (GN)

4. By Faith, _____ God's Forgiveness.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, and purify us from all unrighteousness."
1 John 1:9

5. PEOPLE: I PRAY FOR OTHER PEOPLE

"... as we have also forgive our debtors."

"Pray much for others; plead for God's mercy upon them; give thanks for all he is going to do for them."
2 Tim. 2:1 (LB)

If you want to know how to pray for others ...

Eph. 1:15-19, Col. 1:3-12, 1 Th. 1:2-3, 2 Th. 1:11-12

Make a prayer list of people you want to pray for. You might pray for different people on different days of the week. (See Prayer Guide #5 – Appendix G)

6. PROTECTION: I ASK FOR _____

"And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one."
(vs. 13)

Believers face a spiritual battle everyday. Satan wants to defeat you through temptation and fear. By praying for protection, you will have the confidence to face every situation during the day.

"The Spirit who is in you is more powerful than the spirit who is in those who belong to the world."
1 John 4:4 (GN)

To view "A Prayer Guides 1 - 5", see appendix C - G.

FASTING

"While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting..." Acts 13:2 (ESV)

A. What Fasting Is...

Fasting is to choose to _____ for the purposes of denying the flesh and cultivating a deeper relationship with God.

The practice of fasting can be observed in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament.

Esther 4:15-16a (ESV)

¹⁵ Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai, ¹⁶ "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast

on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day..."

Acts 13:2 (ESV)

"While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting..."

Jesus also fasted.

Matthew 4:1-2 (ESV)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

B. What Fasting Is NOT...

Fasting is not the act of refraining from things _____ than food.
i.e. social media, TV, etc.

While it is a good thing to give some of these things up in favor of giving that time and attention to the Lord, this act is called a _____.

The practice of fasting is not limited to pastors or specific times of the year.
Kinds of fasts

There are two kinds of fasts:

- _____
- _____

A _____ fast is a fast that is done privately by an individual or group when prompted to do so by an extraordinary need or an overwhelming burden to get closer to God.

A _____ fast is a fast which is proclaimed by a leader for an entire group of people at a specific time or due to unusual circumstances.

Bethlehem Assembly practices called fasts at the beginning of each year but also emphasizes the need for private fasts throughout one's Christian walk.

C. Before You Fast...

In Franklin Jentzen's Fasting Journal he writes that there are three things you must ask yourself before you fast:

1. What are the motives behind the fast?
2. What are the specific things I am fasting for?
3. Am I determined to minister to the Lord during my fast?

While there are many health benefits that can be ascribed to fasting such as detoxing and weight loss, if these alone are the motives, you are not fasting – you're just hungry!

The primary motive (reason) for deciding to fast should be internal – spiritual growth: one's desire to feed the spirit and deny the flesh – in short, to be more like God and less like you!

Sometimes, however, the fast is provoked by a dire set of circumstances which one cannot confront without the boldness of the Holy Spirit; therefore, the motives are external: action is provoked by circumstances. In this case the end goal is to be able to confront and overcome those circumstances according to God's will –

which means that we need to become more like God to discern His will.

1. What are the specific set of needs I am fasting for?

Whether your motives are internal (spiritual growth) or external (provoked by circumstances) you should be able to clearly define and/or list the specific set of needs you are fasting for and keep them in the center of your prayers and forefront of your mind throughout your fast.

2. Am I determined to minister to the Lord during my fast?

Fasting shouldn't be all about you. It's not about "persuading" God to do something for you just because you skipped a meal or two. Fasting is about recognizing that I can't get to something or through something without God's help – therefore God is sovereign and worthy of praise. We should be worshipping God because he can do what I need, whether he chooses to or not.

D. Types of Fasts

While there are many names for particular fasts, in actuality there are only two types of fasts:

- Fast
- Fast

A full fast is to abstain from all food and liquid for a set period of time.

A partial fast is to abstain from certain types of foods and/or liquids for a set period of time.
i.e. water fast; Daniel fast.

Again, abstaining from your cell phone, or social media, or TV is NOT fasting, though it might still be a good idea!

E. How to Fast...

*If you are on medication, see your doctor before beginning any long term fasting

- a) 1 Meal – fast any meal during your day
- b) Morning Fast – fast in the morning from 6:00 am to 12:00 pm (full fast or partial fast with liquids).
- c) Half Day Fast – fast from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm (full fast or partial fast with liquids)
- d) Full day Fast – a complete 24-hour period (i.e. 6:00 pm to 6:00 pm the following day- full fast or partial fast with liquids)
- e) Three-day Fast (aka Esther fast) – a complete 72-hour period (full fast or partial fast with liquids)
- f) 21 Day Fast (aka Daniel fast) – a daily partial fast for 21 consecutive days
- g) 30 Days or more - (incorporating a, b, or c)

If you have never fasted before, start with (a) and gradually build up your strength to (b) and beyond.

F. While I Fast...

I pray at the beginning of my fast, making my specific vow, and declaring my needs.

I should be in continual prayer – in constant communication with God.

I should be reading the Bible.

I should be intentional about exposing myself to other resources which will add to my spiritual growth i.e. books, listening to worship, watching sermons, watching a Christian movie.

When the time has been completed, I should pray again surrendering my fast – thanking God for helping me through the fast and thanking God for any new revelation *before* I eat.

Questions...

What if I forget or if I am unable to maintain my fast?

Pray – at that moment pray and surrender your fast asking God to help you to do it better the next time. Also, consider your vow – maybe you weren't yet ready for (c) – go back to (b) next time.

Can I fast at school or at work?

Absolutely! You can fast anywhere, anytime but you should be prepared for the spiritual warfare that comes in the form of distractions, conflicts, and temptations.

The devil does NOT want you to fast. He will scheme against you so expect the unexpected, such as:

- People offering to take you to lunch.
- Free food at the office.
- The person in the next cubicle/office eating something that smells soooooo delicious!
- Persons of the opposite sex distracting you.
- People cutting you off in traffic.
- People seemingly trying to provoke you into an argument or even a physical altercation.
- Pressure at work which makes you crave that cup of coffee.
- Etc.

Other questions about specific foods/liquids to eat or avoid –

Don't become legalistic. Make your vow and honor it, whatever that vows may be.

Summary

- Fasting is a discipline that every Christian should develop, not just pastors and leaders.
- My motives should be centered on God, not on me.
- There are different ways to fast, but fasting always involves giving up food.
- I should be in constant communication with God while I fast worshipping him in prayer.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 English Standard Version (ESV)

³For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

I. SPIRITUAL _____

1. We are involved in a Spiritual War each moment of each day of our lives. It is a war that we cannot see with our physical eyes full of battles that cannot be won with our physical bodies.

These battles happen

- At work
- At school
- At home
- Everywhere

The war is for peoples' souls. It started thousands of years ago when the devil forfeited his heavenly position.

Isaiah 14:12-15 English Standard Version (ESV)

¹²"How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! ¹³You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God. I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High. ¹⁵But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.

2. The devil has been warring against God's people since the Garden of Eden; therefore, he is an expert on manipulating people and situations in order to get the believer's focus off of God and on to self.

II. Spiritual _____ - God equips the believer to engage in Spiritual Warfare by providing the Armor of God - **Ephesians 6:10-18 (NIV)**

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ¹³Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with

all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

1. We need the FULL armor of God to stand against the devil's _____.

The Greek word used in the original text is *Methodeia* (meth-od-i-ah) which means travesty, trickery, (to) lie in wait. The devil intends to discourage, discredit, and destroy the believer.

- Belt of Truth
 - Breastplate of Righteousness
 - Feet fitted with the readiness of the Gospel of Peace (AKA Sandals of the Gospel)
 - Shield of Faith
 - Helmet of Salvation
 - Sword of the Spirit
 - Prayer
3. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against rulers, authorities, powers (of this dark world), and spiritual forces of evil (in heavenly realms). The conflict which we perceive in our lives (physical, social, professional, etc.) is a byproduct of the attack on our Spirits. We ARE in Spiritual Warfare. Once we accept this truth, we can adjust our methods of warfare by employing the weapons (armor) provided by God. As long as we refuse to accept this truth, we will be vulnerable to struggle with forgiveness – not being able to forgive others or accept forgiveness for ourselves.

FLESH VS. SPIRIT

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” - Romans 8:5, 6 NKJV

“For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.” –Galatians 5:17 NIV

FORGIVENESS

One of the ways the devil gets the believer to stop focusing on God and start focusing on self is to overwhelm the believer with feelings of bitterness towards someone who has offended or hurt them.

“We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.” - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

1. GOD _____ US TO FORGIVE.

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” - Mathew 6:14, 15 NIV

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” – Colossians 3:13 NIV

2. JESUS _____ US TO FORGIVE.

*“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times? “Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”
– Matthew 18:21, 22 NIV*

*“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, **it keeps no record of wrongs**. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.” - 1 Cor. 13:4-6 NIV*

*“So watch yourselves. “If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”
– Luke 17:3, 4 NIV*

3. WE ALL _____ FORGIVENESS.

“When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” – John 8:7 NIV

“As the Scriptures say, “No one is righteous--not even one.” – Romans 3:10 NLT

*“Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.”
– Eccl. 7:20 NASB*

4. JESUS _____ FORGIVENESS EVEN IN HIS DEATH.

“But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.” – Luke 23:34 NASB

“To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.” – Lewis B. Smedes

THE HABIT OF FELLOWSHIP
&
THE PRINCIPLE OF GIVING

THE HABIT OF FELLOWSHIP

1. I BELONG IN GOD'S FAMILY WITH OTHER BELIEVERS.

*"Let us do good to all people, especially to those who **belong to the family of believers.**"*

Gal. 6:10

"The Christian who is not committed to a group of other believers for praying, sharing, and serving, so that he is known, as he knows others, is not an obedient Christian. He is not in the will of God. However vocal he may be in his theology, he is not obeying the Lord."

Dr. Ray Ortlund

*"You are a member of God's very own family ... and **you belong** in God's household with every other Christian."*

Eph. 2:19 (LB)

*"So in Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member **belongs** to all the others!"*

Rom. 12:5

2. I NEED ENCOURAGEMENT TO GROW SPIRITUALLY.

"Let us think of one another and how we can encourage each other to love and do good deeds."

Heb. 10:24 (Ph)

"Two are better off than one ... If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one to help him ... Two men can resist an attack that would defeat one man alone. A rope made of three cords is hard to break."

Eccl. 4:9-10, 12 (GN)

3. I NEED _____ TO GROW SPIRITUALLY

"People learn from one another just as iron sharpens iron."

Pr. 27:17 (GN)

"Every day ... keep encouraging one another so that none of you is hardened by the glamour of sin"

Heb. 3:13 (JB)

*"Brothers, if someone is trapped in some sin, you who are spiritual should **restore** him gently ... Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."*

Gal. 6:1-2

4. CHRIST IS PRESENT WHEN WE FELLOWSHIP TOGETHER.

"For wherever two or three have come together in my name, I am there, right among them!"

Matt 18:20 (GN)

5. THERE IS _____ WHEN PEOPLE PRAY TOGETHER.

"Whenever two of you on earth agree about anything you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven."

Matt. 18:19 (GN)

6. FELLOWSHIP IS A _____ TO THE WORLD.

(Jesus) "My prayer for all of them is that they will be of one heart and mind... so the world will believe you sent me."

John 17:21(LB)

7. I AM OBLIGATED TO EVERY OTHER CHRISTIAN

"God has given you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other." 1 Peter 4:10 (LB)

There are different kinds of service to God ... together you form the body of Christ and each one of you is a necessary part of it." 1 Cor. 12:5, 27 (LB)

The "One Another's" of Fellowship

(Partial List)

Serve one another	Gal. 5:13
Accept one another	Rom 15:7
Forgive one another	Col. 3:13
Greet one another	Rom. 16:16
Bear one another's burdens	Gal. 6:2
Be devoted to one another	Rom. 12:10
Honor one another	Rom. 12:10
Teach one another	Rom 15:14
Submit to one another	Eph. 5:21
Encourage one another	1 Thess. 5:11

HOW CAN A LARGE CHURCH MAINTAIN CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS?

EVERY MEMBER NEEDS TO BE A PART OF A SMALL GROUP

*"(They met) day after day, in the **Temple courts** and from **house to house**."* Acts 5:42

2 Types of Church Meetings

Large Group:

Small Group:

"Greet the church that meets in their home." Rom. 16:5

Also Acts 2:26, 8:3, 16:40, 20:20, 1 Cor. 16:19, Col. 4:15

At Bethlehem, we believe our church must... Grow larger and smaller at the same time.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF OUR SMALL GROUPS?

Acts 2:42-47

1. BIBLE STUDY

*"They **DEVOTED THEMSELVES** to the apostle's teaching..."*

2. _____

"...and to the fellowship ..."

3. COMMUNION

"... and to the breaking of bread ..."

4. _____

"... and to prayer ..."

"OUR FATHER ... give US ... OUR daily bread ... forgive US ... OUR ... debts ... as WE have forgiven OUR debtors ...lead US not into temptation... deliver US ..."
Matt 6:9-13

5. SUPPORT

"... they gave to anyone as he had a need ..."

"... you shared with me the **fellowship** of giving and receiving."

Phil. 4:15 (Ph)

6. SOCIAL

"... they ate together with glad and sincere hearts ..."

"Get into **the habit** of inviting guests home for dinner or if they need lodging, for the night."

Rom. 12:13 (LB)

7. _____

"... praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people."

8. OUTREACH

"And the Lord added to their number **daily** those who were being saved."

THE PRINCIPLE OF GIVING

"But since you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you – see that you also excel in this grace of giving."
2 Corinthians 8:7 (NIV)

Part of the development process of a maturing Christian is growing in:

- _____ – What they believe
- _____ – What they confess
- _____ – What they learn
- _____ – What they feel
- _____ – What they share

THE PRINCIPLE OF GIVING IN SCRIPTURE

1. _____ spoke about giving in the New Testament.

Jesus said:

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."
Luke 6:38 (NIV)

2. The _____ speaks about giving.

"Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you."
Deuteronomy 16:17 (NIV)

"Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."
Proverbs 3:9-10 (NIV)

3. The principle of giving was present even in the _____.

"Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. And Abel also brought an offering – fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor..."
Genesis 4:2-5 (NIV)

THE REQUIREMENTS OF GIVING IN SCRIPTURE

1. The Old Testament is very specific about the requirements of giving. These requirements were specified as a _____.

"A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord."
Leviticus 27:30 (NIV)

What does “Tithe” mean?

The word “Tithe” simply means _____ or _____.

The Old Testament speaks of several different tithes:

- _____ (Numbers 18:21-24) – given to Levites and Priests for their service to the Temple and the congregation.
- _____ (Deuteronomy 14:22-27) – for pilgrimages with the family
- _____ (Deuteronomy 14:28-29) – for the needy (widows and orphans) every third year.

The Old Testament total giving requirement was actually 23 1/3 % or 20% annually with 30% required every 3rd year!

2. The New Testament also provides instructions regarding giving.

“Now about the collection for the Lord’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.”

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 (NIV)

3. The New Testament Church Giving was _____ than the Old Testament Requirement.

“All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.”

Acts 2:44-45 (NIV)

4. The scriptures promise that God will _____ those who give.

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”

Malachi 3:10 (NIV)

WHAT BAOG TEACHES ABOUT GIVING

1. BAOG requires members and encourages regular attenders to support the church through the giving of Tithes and Offerings.

Question – Why should I give?

God is a giving God; he gave us life, He gave us purpose, and He gave us His only begotten son, Jesus Christ. Christians should give because giving makes us like God.

Question - If Tithes are an Old Testament principle, why does Bethlehem receive them?

The New Testament instruction to the Church at Corinth to “set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income” represents a specific percentage of income as a minimum requirement for giving. This instruction is consistent and in harmony with the Old Testament principle of the various tithes, and, as we believe the entirety of the scriptures to be the inspired word of God, we accept the tithe (10%) as a standard for the minimum obligation of the believer.

Question - What’s the difference between “Tithes” and “Offerings”?

Tithes are the minimum obligation of the believer to support the ministry. Offerings represent giving above and beyond the tithes. BOTH ARE FREE-WILL GIVING.

Question – How often should I give?

According to the instruction to the Church at Corinth, Christians should give “On the first day of every week.” (1 Corinthians 16:2)

2. BAOG teaches that giving is a privilege; God does not look at the amount, God looks at the heart.

“But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, ‘Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything – all she had to live on.’”

Mark 12:42-44

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

2 Corinthians 9:7

To view “A Prayer of Commitment”, see appendix H.

GOD'S **U**NIVERSAL **P**LAN

GOD'S UNIVERSAL PLAN

God has always been interested in the *entire* world.

"Jesus said, 'Go everywhere in the world, and tell the Good News to everyone.'" Mark 16:15 (NCV)

"And the Good News must first be made known in every nation before the end-time finally comes."
Mark 10:13 (LB)

Many Christians mistakenly assume that the responsibility for taking the Good News to all parts of the world belongs only to missionaries and pastors. But the Bible clearly points out that it is every believer's responsibility to be a world-class Christian. Every member is a messenger!

We are all called to be ON-MISSION.

Now, with the Internet, digital communication technologies, and air transportation available to practically every corner of the planet, our responsibility has increased - but *the task has also gotten much easier!* Our world is shrinking. When you can fly across the ocean in less time than it takes to drive to Northern California, the opportunity to be a part of God's Global Mission around the world is now available to all of us!

DEFINITIONS:

MISSION: *The overall task of the church to fulfill its 5 purposes as given in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission – worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, and ministry.*

EVANGELISM: *Introducing people to Jesus Christ. Sharing the Good News.*

MISSIONS: *Fulfilling the 5 purposes of the church in a different culture than your own.*

WHAT ON EARTH IS GOD DOING?

The Status of Christianity in the World

"Look at the nations and be amazed! Watch and be astounded at what I will do! For I am doing something in your own day, something you wouldn't believe even if someone told you about it." Hab. 1:5 (NLT)

GOD IS DOING AMAZING THINGS AROUND THE WORLD

"This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is changing lives everywhere, just as it changed yours that very first day you heard and understood the truth about God's great kindness to sinners."
Col. 1:6 (NLT)

Saturation Evangelism: Using every available means, at every available time, to reach every available person!

"I become all things to all men so that I may save some of them by all means possible."
1 Cor. 9:22 (GN)

"Your faith in God has become known throughout the world."

1 Thess. 1:8 (NIV)

"... God determined the times set for everyone and the exact places where they should live..."

Acts 17:26 (NIV)

THE BIG QUESTION: AM I WILLING TO BE USED BY GOD?

"For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him."

2 Chron. 16:9 (NIV)

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE ON - MISSION FOR GOD

We must make 5 major shifts in our thinking.

1. WE MUST SHIFT OUR THINKING FROM SELF CENTEREDNESS TO GOD CENTEREDNESS.

"When the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere - in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:8 (NLT)

"For the Holy Spirit, God's gift, does not want you to be afraid of people, but to be wise and strong, and to love them and enjoy being with them. If you will stir up this inner power, you will never be afraid to tell others about our Lord..."

2 Tim. 1:7-8 (LB)

2. WE MUST SHIFT OUR THINKING FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL.

"If you ask me, I will give you the nations; all the people on earth will be yours."

Ps. 2:8 (NCV)

Watch the world news with "missionary eyes" then pray!

"From one man God created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand which should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries. His purpose in all of this was that the nations should seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him--though he is not far from any one of us."

Acts 17:26-27 (NLT)

3. WE MUST SHIFT OUR THINKING FROM TEMPORAL VALUES TO ETERNAL VALUES.

"Anyone who lets himself be distracted from the work I plan for him is not fit for the Kingdom of God."

Luke 9:62 (LB)

"No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."

2 Tim. 2:4 (NASB)

"The thing you should want most is God's kingdom and doing what God wants. Then all these other things you need will be given to you."

Matt. 6:33 (NCV)

"Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met."

Matt. 6:33 (Mes)

4. WE MUST SHIFT OUR THINKING FROM SECURITY TO SERVICE.

"Only those who throw away their lives for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will ever know what it means to really live!"

Mark 8:35 (LB)

"Let us strip off anything that slows us down or holds us back... and let us run with patience the particular race that God has set before us."

Heb. 12:1 (LB)

5. WE MUST SHIFT OUR THINKING FROM COMFORT TO SACRIFICE.

"Since God has shown us great mercy... offer your lives as a living sacrifice to him..."

Rom. 12:1 (NCV)

"...Give yourselves completely to God – every part of you... you want to be tools in the hands of God, to be used for his good purposes."

Rom. 6:13 (LB)

Jesus replied, "Let me assure you that no one has ever given up anything... for love of me and to tell others the Good News, who won't be given back, a hundred times over... All these will be his here on earth, and in the world to come he shall have eternal life."

Mark 10:29-30 (LB)

MY LIFE INVESTMENT GUIDE

What percentage is used for God's Kingdom?
C=my current status X=beginning today

-----I MY TIME
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

-----I MY TALENT
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

-----I MY TREASURE
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

"Store your treasures in heaven where they cannot be destroyed by moths or rust and where thieves cannot break in and steal them. Your heart will be where your treasure is."

Matt. 6:20-21 (NCV)

The Best Investment: Getting people into Heaven!

"I tell you, use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. In this way, your generosity stores up a reward for you in heaven."

Luke 16:9 (NLT)

DISCOVERING MY LIFE MISSION

• I WAS CREATED TO FULFILL GOD'S PURPOSE.

"The Lord has made everything for his own purpose..."

Pr. 16:4 (LB)

• GOD PLANNED MY LIFE MISSION BEFORE I WAS BORN.

"God is our Maker, and in our union with Christ, he has created us for a life of good works, which he has already prepared for us to do."

Eph. 2:10 (GN)

My Life Mission has both _____ (what God calls every Christian to do) and _____ (what God custom-designed me to do).

• FULFILLING MY MISSION BRINGS GLORY TO GOD.

JESUS: "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do."

John 17:4 (NIV)

• MY PRIMARY TASK IN LIFE IS TO FULFILL MY MISSION.

"The most important thing is that I complete my mission, the work that the Lord Jesus gave me--to tell people the Good News about God's grace."

Acts 20:24 (NCV)

To discover your mission in this world, you must first understand:

- God's overall purpose in creating human beings.
- Jesus' mission in coming to earth.

I. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR CREATING US

1. We were made to have a _____.

"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness..."

Gen. 1:26 (NIV)

"Long ago, even before he made the world, God chose us to be his very own through what Christ would do for us... His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by sending Jesus Christ to die for us."

Eph. 1:4-5 (LB)

2. We were made to become like Christ.

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."

Rom. 8:29 (NIV)

"God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son... We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him."

Rom. 8:29 (Mes)

"Just as we are now like Adam, the man of the earth, so we will someday be like Christ..."

1 Cor. 15:49 (NLT)

"We know that when Christ comes again, we will be like him, because we will see him as he really is."

1 John 3:2b (NCV)

3. We were made to serve His purpose

"God has made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us to do good works, which He planned in advance for us to live our lives doing."

Eph. 2:10 (NCV)

4. We were made to last forever.

"He has planted eternity in the human heart."

Eccl. 3:11 (NIV)

"This is his purpose: that when the time is ripe he will gather us all together to be with him in Christ forever."

Eph. 1:10 (LB)

THIS LIFE IS PREPARATION FOR LIFE IN ETERNITY!

II. JESUS' MISSION ON EARTH

The Problem: Our sin has broken our relationship with God.

"Your iniquities have separated you from your God and your sins have hidden his face from you."

Isa. 59:2 (NIV)

God's Solution: He took the initiative to bring us back to Himself.

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

John 3:16 (LB)

"God was in Christ, restoring the world to himself..."

2 Cor. 5:19a (LB)

WHAT WAS JESUS' LIFE MISSION?

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Luke 19:10 (NIV)

"This is why I was born and came into the world: to tell people the truth."

John 18:37b (NCV)

"I came to give life--life in all its fullness..."

John 10:10 (NCV)

"I have come as a Light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer wander in the darkness."

John 12:46 (LB)

"I must tell the Good News about God's kingdom... This is what I was sent to do."

Luke 4:43 (ICB)

III. WHY JESUS' MISSION MUST MATTER TO ME

TEN FACTS THAT MOTIVATE ME

1. IF I WANT TO BE LIKE JESUS, _____ LIFE MISSION MUST INCLUDE _____ LIFE MISSION.

Jesus prayed to the Father: *"In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world."*

John 17:18 (Mes)

2. JESUS _____ ME TO CONTINUE HIS MISSION.

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

Matt. 28:19-20 (NIV)

"You are to go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere."

Mark 16:15 (LB)

"With my authority, take this message of repentance to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: There is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to me."

Luke 24:47 (NLT)

"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

John 20:21 (NIV)

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:8 (NIV)

3. SHARING THE GOOD NEWS IS MY _____.

"... you must warn them so they may live. If you don't speak out to warn the wicked to stop their evil ways, they will die in their sin. But I will hold you responsible for their death."

Ezekiel 3:18 (NCV)

"Telling the Good News is my duty - something I must do. And how terrible it will be for me if I do not tell the Good News."

1 Cor. 9:16 (NCV)

If I'm a Christian, my mission is not **OPTIONAL**!

4. SHARING THE GOOD NEWS IS A PRIVILEGE.

"And God has given us the privilege of urging everyone to come into his favor and be reconciled to him... This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others. We are Christ's ambassadors."

2 Cor. 5:18b (LB)

"I am proud of the Good News, because it is the power God uses to save everyone who believes..."

Rom. 1:16 (NCV)

5. I'M GRATEFUL FOR WHAT JESUS HAS DONE FOR ME.

"Remember that in the past you were without Christ... You had no hope, and you did not know God."
Eph. 2:12 (NCV)

"For I have a great sense of obligation to people in our culture and to people in other cultures..."
Rom. 1:14 (NLT)

"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all..."
2 Cor. 5:14 (NIV)

6. BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE _____ WITHOUT CHRIST.

"Jesus is the only one who can save people. His name is the only power in the world that has been given to save people. We must be saved through him."
Acts 4:12 (NCV)

"Anyone who calls on the Lord will be saved. But before people can ask the Lord for help, they must believe in him; and before they can believe in him, they must hear about him; and for them to hear about the Lord, someone must tell them."
Rom. 10:13-14 (NCV)

7. BECAUSE GOD WANTS _____ SAVED!

(Luke 15)

"God wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."
1 Tim. 2:4 (NIV)

"God does not want anyone to be lost, but he wants all people to change their hearts and lives."
2 Peter 2:9 (NCV)

8. I WILL BE REWARDED FOR ETERNITY.

"Remember that you will receive your reward from the Lord, which he promised to his people."
Col. 3:24 (ICB)

9. HEAVEN REJOICES WHEN PEOPLE _____ TO JESUS.

"I tell you there is much joy in heaven when one sinner changes his heart."
Luke 15:7a (ICB)

Knowing this, what should be my response?

"I want to carry out the mission I received from the Lord Jesus - the mission of testifying to the Good News of God's kindness."
Acts 20:24 (NCV)

SHARING THE MESSAGE

SHARING THE MESSAGE

"You are the ones chosen by God... God's instruments to do his work and speak out for him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference he made for you."
1 Peter 2:9 (Mes)

"...He has given us this message of restored relationships to tell others. Therefore, we are Christ's representatives."
2 Cor. 5:19b-20 (GWT)

PARTS OF YOUR LIFE MESSAGE

Unique Part

My Testimony – My story of how I began a relationship with Jesus.

The Universal Part

The Good News – Explaining how to accept Christ.

I. SHARING MY TESTIMONY

A personal testimony is the most persuasive form of communication.

The Bible is full of testimonies:

DAVID

"Come and listen, and I will tell you what God has done for me."
Ps. 66:16 (NCV)

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

"Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony."
John 4:39 (NIV)

THE MAN BORN BLIND

"I don't know whether he is good or bad, but I know this: I was blind, and now I see!" John 9:25 (LB)

PETER AND JOHN

"We cannot stop telling about the wonderful things we have seen and heard."
Acts 4:20 (NLT)

PAUL

On six different occasions (Acts 22-26) Paul used his personal testimony to share the Good News with unbelievers.

JESUS

"Listen carefully. I'm speaking sober truth to you. I speak only of what I know by experience; I give witness only to what I have seen with my own eyes. There is nothing secondhand here, no hearsay."
John 3:11 (Mes)

We are commanded to share our testimonies

"Let the whole world know what he has done for you."
Ps. 105:1b (LB)

"Every day tell how he saves us. Tell the nations of his glory; tell all peoples the miracles he does."
Ps. 96:2-3 (NCV)

THE VALUE OF YOUR TESTIMONY

1. It is unique! There are no others just like it.
2. It is personal and easy to understand.
3. You are the authority on it. It's difficult to argue with.
4. People love to hear personal stories and they remember them.
5. People can relate to it. It builds a relational bridge.
6. In our postmodern world, it may be your most effective witness.

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."
1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

A. IF YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN _____

THE FOUR PARTS OF YOUR TESTIMONY

1. WHAT MY LIFE WAS LIKE BEFORE I MET CHRIST.

*What common circumstances would an unbeliever identify with?
What were your attitudes that an unbeliever would identify with?
What was most important to you?*

What substitute for God did you use to find meaning in your life? (sports/fitness, success at work, marriage, sex, making money, drugs/alcohol, having fun, entertainment, popularity, hobbies)

2. HOW I REALIZED I NEEDED CHRIST.

*What significant steps led up to your conversion?
What needs, hurts, or problems made you dissatisfied with the way you were living without God?
How did God get your attention? What motivated you?*

3. HOW I COMMITTED MY LIFE TO CHRIST.

*What specifically did you do? Where did it happen?
What did you say in your prayer? Be specific.*

4. THE DIFFERENCE IT HAS MADE IN MY LIFE.

*What benefits have you experienced or felt?
What problems have been resolved?
How has Jesus helped you change for the better?
How has it helped your relationships? Give a current example.*

B. IF YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN _____ BUT WALKED AWAY OR NEVER GREW UNTIL A DEEPER RECOMMITMENT AS AN ADULT.

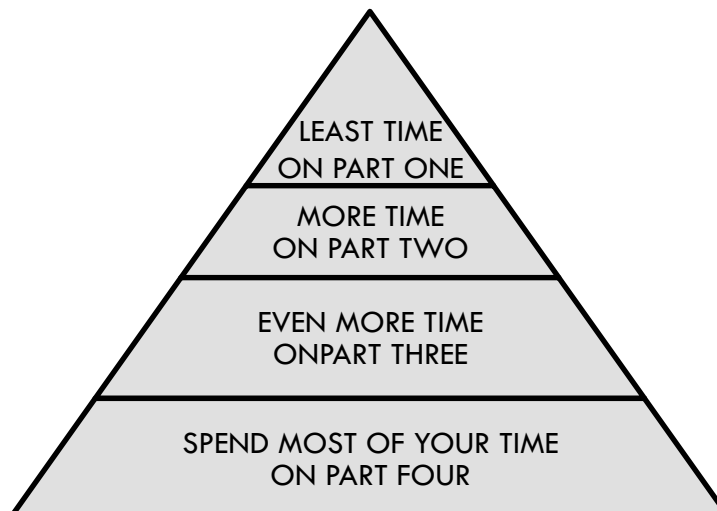
Use the same four steps, but start with the time just prior to your *recommitment*. Give some examples of how you were trying to meet your own needs without Christ but it wasn't working. Describe what caused you to realize you needed Christ directing your life and how you made a full commitment to him. Then explain how Jesus is currently meeting the deepest needs in your life.

C. IF YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN AT AN EARLY AGE AND NEVER STRAYED.

Use the same four steps with this modification: Point out some deep need or common problem that you see *other people* trying to resolve. Point out how unsuccessful their attempts are to meet their own need. Then

explain why you never experienced that problem by trusting Christ early in life. Don't say the exact age. Continue with steps 3 and 4.

The Testimony Pyramid



To see **“SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING YOUR TESTIMONY”**, see Appendix I.

HOW TO LEAD INTO YOUR TESTIMONY

1. Listen for problems or needs that Jesus has helped you with.

“You know, that used to be a big issue in my life too (or my marriage, etc.). In fact, I felt pretty (hopeless, frustrated, etc.) But then I discovered something that made a major difference in my life.”

2. Refer to something in the news or on TV that deals with a common need or problem.

“Did you read about... I can sure identify with how those people feel. It wasn't that long ago that I struggled with that too. But then something happened that changed everything for me...”

Start with a statement they'd agree with or situation they relate to.

- *“It seems like life is getting faster and faster.”*
- *“Sometimes life just gets so complicated.”*
- *“Life doesn't always turn out the way you planned it.”*

3. Apologize to people you've known a long time but haven't witnessed to.

“Bill, I need to apologize to you. We've known each other a long time, and I consider you to be a good friend. But friends don't keep secrets – and I've never told you about the best thing that ever happened to me. I guess I was afraid you'd think I was some kind of nut. Anyway... (begin your story).”

“Each day tell someone that he saves.”

Psalm 96:2b (LB)

II. COMMUNICATION TIPS: HOW TO SHARE EFFECTIVELY

1. RECOGNIZE YOUR PERSONAL STYLE OF WITNESSING

Right brain witness (emphasizes personal experience) *“all your heart”*

Left brain witness (emphasizes facts and scripture) *“all your mind”* Need both!

SOME COMMON STYLES:

- The Serving Style
 - The Intellectual Style
 - The Bringing Style
 - The Testimonial Style
 - The Literature Style
 - The Confrontational Style
-
- Don't feel guilty about styles you don't naturally use.
 - Don't judge others who don't use your style!
 - Realize that Jesus never used the same approach twice!

2. THINK THROUGH WHAT YOU MIGHT SAY

"Everything you say should be kind and well thought out so that you know how to answer everyone."
Col. 4:6 (GWT)

"Intelligent people think before they speak; what they say is then more persuasive." Pr. 16:23 (GN)

3. ASK GOD FOR HELP IN CHOOSING THE RIGHT WORD

"Pray for me that when I speak, God will give me words so that I can tell the secret of the Good News without fear."
Eph. 6:19 (NCV)

4. SHOW LOVE

"If I have no love, my speech is no more than a noisy gong or clanging bell." 1 Cor. 13:1 (GN)

People don't care how much we know, until they know how much we care!

5. BE POSITIVE AND PLEASANT

"A wise, mature person is known for his understanding. The more pleasant his words, the more persuasive he is."
Pr. 16:21 (GN)

"Be tactful with those who are not Christians..." Col. 4:5 (JB)

"A word of encouragement does wonders!" Pr. 12:25 (LB)

6. NEVER USE ANY PUT-DOWNS

Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them out."
Col. 4:6 (Mes)

Don't expect unbelievers to act like believers _____.

7. TELL STORIES - GIVE EXAMPLES - People always relate to a story better.

"Jesus always used stories and illustrations like these when speaking to the crowds. In fact, he never spoke to them without using such parables."
Matt. 13:34 (NLT)

8. LIGHTEN UP! *"The Son of man came enjoying life..."* Luke 7:34 (Ph)

9. BE YOURSELF. BE NATURAL. DON'T TRY TO SOUND "SPIRITUAL"

"When I came to you, it was not with any show of oratory or philosophy but simply to tell you what God has guaranteed."
1 Cor. 2:1 (JB)

"Your speech should be unaffected and logical so that your opponents may feel ashamed at finding nothing in which to pick holes."
Titus 2:8 (Ph)

10. BE VULNERABLE AND AUTHENTIC

"Because we loved you, we were happy to share not only God's Good News with you, but even our own lives."
1 Thess. 2:8 (NCV)

"We've spoken frankly to you, we've opened our hearts wide."
2 Cor. 6:11 (GN)

"Be sure that you live in a way that brings honor to the Good News of Christ."
Phil. 1:27a (NCV)

11. MEMORIZE A FEW KEY VERSES

"Concentrate... on being a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, and who knows how to use the Word of truth to the best advantage."
2 Tim. 2:15 (Ph)

12. KEEP IT SIMPLE

"I fear... (Satan) will corrupt you from the simplicity that is in Christ."
2 Cor. 11:3 (KJV)

13. REMEMBER, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS USING YOUR WORDS

You are not trying to convince anyone on your own.

"For when we brought you the Good News, it was not only with words but also with power, for the Holy Spirit gave you full assurance that what we said was true."
1 Thess. 1:5a (NLT)

To see **"SHARING YOUR LIFE MESSAGE"**, see Appendix I.

To see **"POSSIBLE TESTIMONY THEMES"**, see Appendix J.

To see **"COMMON GROUND CIRCUMSTANCES"**, see Appendix K.

To see **"TRANSLATING CHRISTIAN WORDS"**, see Appendix L.

To see **"MY STORY"**, see Appendix M.

To see **"MY CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE"**, see Appendix N.

FISHING IN MY POND

Fishing In My Mission Pond

“Jesus called out, ‘Come follow me and I will show you how to fish for the souls of men.’”

Matt. 4:19 (LB)

FISHING and **FOLLOWING** go together!

Introducing people to Christ is like fishing, not hunting!

HUNTING

Aggressive

Based on confrontation

“Go out there & shoot them”

Uses “1 size fits all” bullet

Take your best shot & it’s over

Scares off the animal if you miss

The animal has no choice

Must be a skilled shot

VS

FISHING

More gentle

Based on attraction

“Get them to nibble on your bait”

Allows you to try all kinds of lures

Reeling in a fish requires *give & take*

You get more than one chance

The fish gets a choice!

Anyone can put bait into the water!

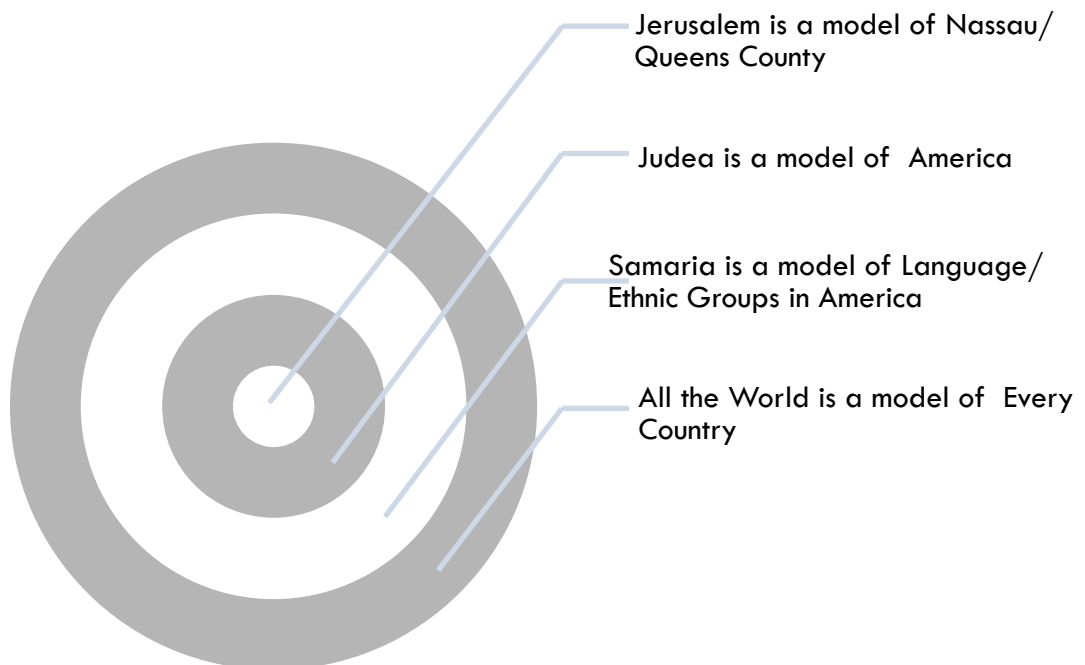
In Jesus’ day, they only used nets for fishing. Today, we have many kinds of methods for fishing, even bass boats with built-in sonar equipment!

5 KEYS TO SPIRITUAL FISHING

1. IDENTIFY YOUR _____.

“You will be my witnesses - in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world.”
Acts 1:8b (NIV)

The New Testament & Our Church’s Pattern



To see **“MY CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE”**, see Appendix O.

2. LEARN ABOUT THE KINDS OF FISH IN YOUR POND.

“To the Jews I became like a Jew to win the Jews...to those who are without the law I became like a person who is without the law... to those who are weak I became weak so I could win the weak. I have become all things to all people so I could save some of them in any way possible. I do all this because of the Good News and so I can share in its blessings.”
1 Cor. 9:20-23 (NCV)

“Every prudent man acts out of knowledge.”

Pr. 13:16 (NIV)

The more you know about a person, the easier it is to reach them.

3. WHAT ARE THEIR _____ ?

“Jesus knew what they were thinking...”

Matt. 9:4, 12:25; Mark 2:8; Luke 5:22, 9:47, 11:17

A powerful filter: Your Reticular Activating System

What gets our attention?

1. Things we value.
2. Things that threaten us.
3. Things that are unique.

4. WHAT DO I _____ WITH THEM?

“...Whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him. I do this to get the Gospel to them and also for the blessing I myself receive when I see them come to Christ.”
1 Cor. 9:22b-23 (LB)

This is the fundamental secret of telling others about Christ.

“With many stories like these, he presented his message to them, fitting the stories to their experience and maturity.”
Mark 4:33 (Mes)

- Before you can share the Good News, you must first find a common ground.
- Before you can reach them, you must be able to relate to them.

Make a list of areas where you have common ground with the unbelievers in your life.

- Common Experiences
- Common Interests
- Common Needs
- Common Hurts

5. REMEMBER THAT FISH _____.

“Be wise in the way you act toward those who are not believers...”

Col. 4:5 (GN)

This is called “Receptivity.” How open are they to the Good News?

It is important to realize that people go through a process in coming to faith in Christ and they must be approached differently depending on where they are.

Examples of levels of spiritual receptivity

"Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are far from righteousness." Isa. 46:12 (NIV)

(Jesus with an unbeliever) "Realizing this man's understanding, Jesus said to him, 'You are not far from the Kingdom of God.'" Mark 12:34(LB)

"He has brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were very far away from him, and to us Jews who were near." Eph. 2:17 (LB)

"Now you belong to Christ Jesus. Though you once were far away from God, now you have been brought near to him because of the blood of Christ." Eph. 2:13 (NLT)

The Parable of Soils (Matt. 13); Four kinds of receptivity

Hard soil = The defensive heart

Shallow soil = The impulsive heart

Soil with weeds = The distracted heart

Good Soil = The receptive heart

Facts:

- Some people are close to making a commitment to Christ, while others have a long way to go!
- Effective evangelism relies on assessing how receptive a person is and then helping them take the next step.

INSIGHTS

- Evangelism is a process of moving people through the stages!
- People move through these stages at different speeds.
- People often require multiple exposures at each stage before moving on.
- A person can get stuck at any stage. The #1 reason is **FEAR**.
- Every stage requires a different response by me!

"My work was to plant the seed in your hearts, and Apollos' work was to water it, but it was God, not we, who made the garden grow in your hearts." 1 Cor. 3:6 (LB)

WHAT TO DO WITH PEOPLE AT EACH STAGE

☒ What do you do when someone is at the **RESISTANT** stage?

They are skeptical, *self-satisfied*, resistant, or spiritually apathetic.

1. _____ to become receptive.
2. _____ through love and service.
3. Invite them to a fun bridge event (like a Block Party).
4. What NOT to do with resistant people: **DON'T ARGUE!**

"Don't get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. The Lord's servants must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone. They must be able to teach effectively and be patient with difficult people. They should gently teach those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will believe the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the Devil's trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants." 2 Tim. 2:23-26 (NLT)

Note: Some people we might think are “resistant” are actually just unaware of the gospel or they’ve never heard it in terms they can understand.

☒ **What do you do when someone is at the RECEPTIVE stage?**

They are aware of an unmet need or spiritual void in their life.

1. _____ in a practical way.
2. Share _____ about the same need.
3. Tell them that you are praying for them.
4. Ask open-ended questions.” *Tell me about the spiritual side of your life.”*
5. Assess if they are ready to hear or learn more about the plan of salvations.

“Evangelism is helping people discover how God is already at work in their lives.” - Sam Williams

What makes people receptive? CHANGE (either positive or negative)

☒ **What do you do when someone is at the SEEKER stage?**

They are looking for answers to questions or solutions to problems.

1. Invite them to a service.
2. Invite them to a church event (Hope Day)
3. Give them reading materials, website links, apps.
4. Open a dialog on spiritual issues with questions like:
 “Have you ever considered what Jesus said?”
 “What do you need to know to take the next step?”
 “How can I help you?”

☒ **What do you do when someone is at the CONSIDERATION stage?**

They begin to notice the real differences between themselves and believers.

1. Introduce them to other Christians.
2. Invite them to a ONE group.
3. Discuss the different ways believers respond to life.

☒ **What do you do when someone is at the UNDERSTANDING stage?**

They need to understand why and how to become a Christian.

1. Explain God’s plan of salvation!
2. Explain how you made your decision for Christ.
3. Help them see the benefits, implications & costs.

☒ **What do you do when someone is ready to receive Christ?**

Offer to lead them in a prayer of commitment!

☒ **What do you do after they have received Christ?**

1. Take them to Foundations.
2. Encourage and attend their baptism!
3. Encourage them to commit to a ONE group!

To see “**FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM PLANNING CARD**”, see **Appendix P**.

To see **“HOW TO BUILD A BRIDGE OF FRIENDSHIP”**, see **Appendix Q**.

To see the **“NEXT STEPS FOR FISHING IN MY MISSION POND”**, see **Appendix R**.

The problem is not the harvest. It's the lack of _____.

“Jesus said to his followers, ‘There are many people to harvest but only a few workers to help harvest them.’”
Matt. 9:37 (NCV)

“Anyone who calls on the Lord will be saved. But before people can ask the Lord for help, they must believe in him; and before they can believe in him, they must hear about him; and for them to hear about the Lord, someone must tell them; and before someone can go and tell them, that person must be sent.”
Rom. 10:13-15 (NCV)

What are some possible goals we can set as a church for the next few years?

“Send us around the world with the news of your saving power and your eternal plan for all mankind.”
Psalm 67:2 (LB)

- To have every new member graduate go on **at least one** “on-mission” experience in each of the four areas of our Acts 1:8:
 - *In our own community*
 - *In our county*
 - *A cross-cultural experience within the U.S.*
 - *A project in another country*
- To have 25% of our members involved in some type of volunteer on-mission experience every year.
- To continue to raise money and support missionaries
- To send out missionaries from our church (*For many, this will be a new career in the second half of life.*)

To see the **“HOW TO GET IN ON WHAT GOD IS DOING”**, see **Appendix S**.

To see the **“EVERYDAY MISSIONS”**, see **Appendix T**.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO LIVE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE? THE CHOICE IS YOURS

“David served God's purpose in his own generation....”
Acts 13:36a (NIV)

“If you keep yourself pure, you will be a utensil God can use for his purpose. Your life will be clean, and you will be ready for the Master to use you for every good work.”
2 Tim. 2:21 (NLT)

“I want to finish the race I'm running. I want to carry out the mission I received from the Lord Jesus-- the mission of testifying to the Good News of God's kindness.”
Acts 20:24 (GWT)

“For what is it we live for, that gives us hope and joy and is our proud reward and crown? It is you! Yes, you will bring us much joy as we stand together before our Lord Jesus Christ when he comes back again. For you are our trophy and joy.”
1 Thess. 2:19-29 (LB)

Will anyone be in heaven because of you?

*“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, **“Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”** And I said, **“Here am I, Send me!”**”*
Isaiah 6:8 (NIV)

***A*PPENDIX**

Appendix A: "FIFTEEN MINUTES WITH GOD"

(A Plan to Get You Started)

1. RELAX.

Be still and quiet! Slow down! Prepare your heart. Take a few deep breaths and wait on God.

2. READ A VERSE.

Begin reading where you left off the day before. Read until you feel God has told you something. Then stop and think about it.

3. REFLECT ON A VERSE.

Think about what the passage means to your life. Write down your thoughts. Part of reflecting is *memorizing* verses that speak to you in a special way.

4. RECORD WHAT GOD DID.

Write out a personal application statement that is practical, passable, and measurable.

"Thoughts disentangle themselves when they pass through the lips and the fingertips."

5. REQUEST.

Conclude your Quiet Time by talking to God.

Appendix B: A PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

"Father, I realize that I was created to have fellowship with you. Thank you for making this privilege possible through Jesus' death. I know that daily fellowship with You is to be the most important thing in my life. I now want to commit myself to spending at least some time every day with you in a quiet time of Bible reading and prayer. I'm trusting in your strength to help me be consistent. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Appendix C: PRAYER GUIDE 1 - CHARACTER TRAITS OF GOD

Faithful	II Cor. 1:20
Righteous	II Tim. 4:8
The Light	John 8:12

Appendix D: PRAYER GUIDE 2 - THE NAMES OF GOD

Did you know that God has several names? They are all in the Bible and each name describes a facet of his character. You can take each of these 8 names and focus individually on what God is really like! Pray the names of God as affirmations of praise!

8 HEBREW NAMES OF GOD - DECLARE WHO GOD IS

Jehovah-Shammah- "God is Present with me" (Ezekiel 48:35)
You are here! I am never alone!

Jehovah-Rohi- "God is my Shepherd" (Psalm 23:1)
You lead me and feed me and protect me!

Jehovah-Jireh- "God is my Provider" (Gen. 22:14)

You see what I need before I even ask!

Jehovah-Rophe- " God is my Healer"

(Exodus 15:26)

You can heal my body, emotions, and relationships!

Jehovah-Tsidkenu- " God is my Righteousness"

(Jer. 23:6)

You accept me and forgive me because of Jesus!

Jehovah-M'Kiddish- " God is my Sanctification"

(Lev. 20:8)

You make me holy and like Jesus!

Jehovah-Shalom- " God is my Peace"

(Judges 6:24)

You give me peace in spite of circumstances!

Jehovah-Nissi- " God is my Banner"

(Exodus 17:15)

You are my victory in conflict and confrontation!

Think on the implications of these names and you'll have plenty to praise God for!

Appendix E: PRAYER GUIDE 3 - MY THANKSGIVING LIST

Appendix F: PRAYER GUIDE 4 - MY PERSONAL REQUESTS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Promise</u>	<u>Date Answered</u>

Appendix G: PRAYER GUIDE 5 - PEOPLE I'M PRAYING FOR

Family _____

Christian Friends _____

Friends I'd like to see become Christians _____

Spiritual Leaders _____

Government Leaders _____

Others _____

Appendix H: A (GIVING) COMMITMENT PRAYER

"Father, I know you love me and want what's best for me. I recognize that all I have, or will ever have, comes from you. I am more interested in pleasing you than in having more possessions. I want you to have first place in my life and I am willing to begin tithing as you have commanded. Out of gratitude for all you've done for me, and in expectation that you will continue to provide for me, I commit myself to giving a first portion of all I earn back to you. I want to begin investing for eternity. Help me to remain faithful to this commitment. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Appendix I: SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING YOUR TESTIMONY

- Pray and ask God to give you the right words.
- Write it out on paper. God honors preparation.
- Keep it short and to the point. Don't lose site of your goal.
- Be succinct. Avoid excessive, unnecessary details.
- Try to keep your testimony below 3 minutes.
- Refer to experiences most people have in common.
- Share a slice of your life (a story) that they will identify with.
- Be honest about your continuing struggles. Your life is not perfect.
- Don't imply that all of your problems ended at conversion.
- Spend the most time on part 4: the difference Christ has made.
- Emphasize WHY you received Christ (the benefits of doing it).
- Mention the benefit of being certain of your destiny when you die.
- Don't exaggerate or brag about pre-conversion sins.
- Don't make negative remarks about other religions or people.

- Don't mention any denomination.
- Don't quote a lot of Scripture.
- Don't answer questions they haven't asked.
- Give concrete examples of the changes in your life.
- The more specific you are, the more dynamic it will be.
- Avoid using dates, names, and ages. It doesn't matter to them.
- Be prepared. Practice it until it feels and sounds natural.
- Read it aloud and edit it to make it conversational.
- Let a friend read it and make suggestions.
- Speak casually and informally, in a matter-of-fact tone.
- Don't dramatize or embellish your story.
- Don't share mystical experiences. Share on *their* level, not *yours*.
- Don't talk down to people. Don't sound "preachy."
- Use "*I, me, and my*" not "*You*". It's about you – not them.
- Use humor - it reduces tension and relaxes people. Smile!
- Choose a central theme. (See list)

Appendix J: POSSIBLE TESTIMONY THEMES

How Trusting Jesus has helped me deal with my...

- ☐ Worries / Anxiety
- ☐ Guilt/Shame
- ☐ Anger / Temper
- ☐ Emptiness/Lack of Purpose
- ☐ Grief
- ☐ Stress / Burnout
- ☐ Low self-esteem
- ☐ Poor health
- ☐ Disappointment
- ☐ Insecurity
- ☐ Regrets
- ☐ Discontent / frantic activity
- ☐ Fears
- ☐ Loneliness
- ☐ Lack of emotional support
- ☐ Addictions / Habits
- ☐ Self-centeredness
- ☐ Despair / Depression
- ☐ Cheap thrills
- ☐ Boredom with my life
- ☐ Fear of Death
- ☐ "Something was missing"
- ☐ Bitterness & resentment
- ☐ Pain of rejection
- ☐ Marriage Problems
- ☐ Financial Problems
- ☐ Business Problems

How Trusting Jesus has given me

- Inner Peace
- Forgiveness and a fresh start
- Patience and love
- Purpose in life and meaning
- Comfort and Joy
- New energy and power for living
- Significance. I am valuable to God
- Strength to go on
- Trust in his good plans
- Confidence and sense of security
- A second chance at life
- Contentment and peace
- Faith to face my fears
- Assurance He's always with me.
- A church family that supports me.
- Power to change. Freedom
- Love for other people
- Hope
- Real, lasting happiness
- Adventure with God
- Assurance of heaven
- A sense of fulfillment
- The ability to be free from my past
- God's unconditional love
- Positive changes in my marriage
- Positive changes in my finances
- Positive changes in my business

God allows experiences in my life so I can relate to others who need Christ!

Appendix K: COMMON GROUND CIRCUMSTANCES

Could you give a testimony about how Jesus helped you with any of the following experiences?

POSITIVE:

Adoption, breaking a bad habit, financial gain, raising kids, marriage strengthened or restored, new baby, new business, new friends, new home, new marriage, new job, success, renewed love, restored relationships

MAJOR CRISES

Abuse, accident, addiction, abortion, bankruptcy, broken dream, eating disorder, death, depression, disease, discrimination, divorce, empty nest, financial problems, infertility, incest, jail, rape, surgery

- Realize you have more than one testimony!
- Different situations will require different testimonies!
- Choose the testimony that best matches your listener.
- Realize you can tell about how others' lives have been changed too. Your small group can share your stories with each other.
- Don't use religious terms or clichés or broad generalities.
- Ask: "If I were an unbeliever, would this make sense to me?"

Appendix L: TRANSLATING CHRISTIAN WORDS

A cliché lexicon

CHRISTIAN TERM

"Blessed"
"I was Born Again"
"I was Saved"
"Jesus is my Lord"

"I repented"
"I had sinned"
"All are sinners"
"I felt convicted"
"The Holy Ghost"

WHEN TALKING WITH SEEKERS

"Happy"
"I was given a fresh, new start"
"My life changed at that moment"
"He's the Manager/CEO of my Life"
"I put Jesus in the driver's seat."
"I changed my mind" (a mental U-turn)
"I knew I'd blown it"
"Nobody's perfect. No one bats 1000"
"I realized that..."
"God's Spirit"

PHRASES TO AVOID IN A TESTIMONY TO UNBELIEVER

"I just Praise the Lord for..." "Now I am so blessed" "Hallelujah!"
"Amen" "It was glorious" "I was convicted" "The Lord laid on my heart"

Appendix M: MY STORY

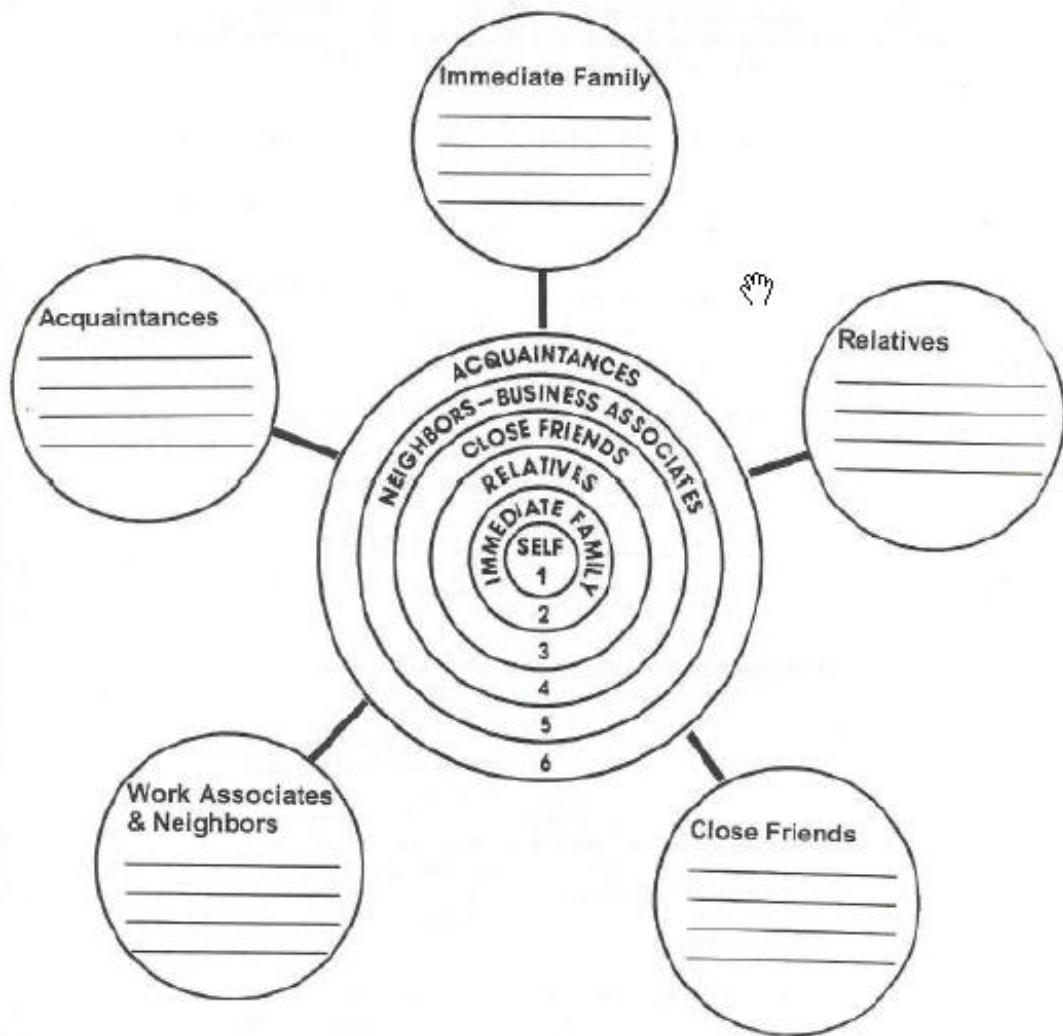
Appendix N: NEXT STEPS FOR SHARING YOUR LIFE MESSAGE

- ☐ Finish writing out your Testimony that you began in this session.
- ☐ Begin praying for God to bring people into your life that you could share the Good News with in a natural, casual way.
- ☐ Read *Gentle Persuasion* by Joe Aldrich (Multnomah), or *Out of the Saltshaker And Into the World*, by Rebecca Manley Pippert (Intervarsity).

Appendix O: MY CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

(My Fishing Pond)

God holds me most responsible for people I already have relationships with.




Where do I start first?

"Go home to your family and friends. Tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you."
Mark 5:19 (NCV)

Family (John 1:40-46), Coworkers (Acts 18:1-4), Friends (John 4:39-42)
People who cross our paths (John 4:4-30)

Appendix P: FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM PLANNING CARD
A Tool For Cultivating Eternal Friendships
"Work at bringing others to Christ." 2 Tim. 2:4c (NLT)

 FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM How to Cultivate an Eternal Relationship																
Name of Friend	Possible Activity	Pray for them regularly	Build a relational bridge	Do something fun together	Do a favor for them	Share my testimony	Invite them to my home	Invite them to church	Bring them to church	Hear another's testimony	Give an evangelistic booklet	Present the gospel (The Bridge)	Get them involved in an evangelistic Bible Study	Take them to an evangelistic meeting or crusade **	They pray to receive Christ **	Start followup
		-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1							
Readiness Scale P (see back of this card)																

Appendix Q: HOW TO BUILD A BRIDGE OF FRIENDSHIP
A plan for sharing your faith

Good friendships are usually intentional, rather than accidental. Developing friendships with unbelievers often requires going the second mile, taking some risks, and moving outside your own comfort zone. And with our busy lifestyles, it takes *planning*. If you don't plan to cultivate friendships with unbelievers, you'll find that you never have the time to do so.

"We should make our plans - counting on God to direct us." Pr. 16:9

STEP #1: BECOME AWARE - of the unbelievers God has placed in your life.

- ✓ Make a list of them by name.
- ✓ Realize that they are your responsibility.
- ✓ Assess each person's level of spiritual receptivity.
- ✓ Discover and write down what their interests and needs are.
- ✓ Look for areas of common ground that you can build on.
- ✓ Figure out what kind of testimony each would respond to.

STEP #2: COMMIT TO PRAYER

- ✓ Use your list to pray daily for your unsaved friends.
- ✓ Pray that God will draw them to himself. John 6:44
- ✓ Pray that God will remove their spiritual blindness. 2 Cor. 4:3-4
- ✓ Pray that the Holy Spirit will make their heart receptive. Jn. 16:8-13
- ✓ Pray you'll get the opportunity to share a clear witness. Col. 4:3-5
- ✓ Pray that God will give you wisdom in what to say. James 1:5
- ✓ Pray the Holy Spirit will use the words you say. 1 Thess. 1:5

STEP #3: SHOW YOU CARE

- ✓ Treat everyone with respect as people, not as "prospects".

- ✓ Be a genuine friend. Help them in practical ways.
- ✓ Be a good listener. It is a great way to show love.
- ✓ Make service your aim, not recruitment.
- ✓ Invite them into your home.
- ✓ Consciously focus your concern on meeting their needs.
- ✓ Go out of your way to love them until they ask you why.
- ✓ Accept people as they are without being judgmental.

STEP #4: BE READY TO SHARE

- ✓ Identify yourself as a positive, joyful follower of Christ.
- ✓ Share a testimony when the occasion naturally arises. (It will)
- ✓ Never force the Good News. Be patient. God is working!
- ✓ Use crisis situations to show why we all need God.
- ✓ Ask questions that lead to spiritual discussions.
- ✓ Give them appropriate message tapes or books to read.
- ✓ Concentrate on the essential. Don't get sidetracked by hang-ups.
- ✓ Invite them to a seeker service at church.
- ✓ Offer to lead in a prayer to commit after sharing the Good News.

Appendix R: NEXT STEPS FOR FISHING IN MY MISSION POND

- ☐ Prepare a Friendship Evangelism Planning Card for reaching your unsaved friends.
- ☐ Begin praying for them.
- ☐ Read *Inside the Mind of Unchurched Harry & Mary*, Lee Strobel, (Zondervan)

What do you think of the potential of relational evangelism?

Appendix S: HOW TO GET IN ON WHAT GOD IS DOING

"Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." John 13:17 (NIV)

Quick Start to Missions Opportunities

	Activity	Next Step
Local (Jerusalem)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
North America (Judea)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
Cross Cultural (Samaria)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
International (the World)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

Appendix T: EVERYDAY MISSIONS
20 IDEAS FOR DEVELOPING A MISSION HEART

1. Create a plan for inviting your neighbors to bridge events at the church (Christmas & Easter services, Block Parties, Need-Based Support Groups).
2. Host an “Open House” to get to know your neighbors. (Hand deliver the invitations so that you make face-to-face contact).
3. See the schools as a mission field. Volunteer as a chaperone for field trips, dances, grad night or PTA.
4. Establish a guestroom in your house to house missionaries & pastors.
5. Invite a friend to go to a movie with you, and then, over coffee, utilize the movie to discuss their outlook on life.
6. Leave a piece of evangelistic literature for a waiter or waitress along with a generous tip!
7. Memorize Luke 19:10 and create a list of the potential “lost” people you’d like to reach in your area.
8. Invite some people from other cultures into a discussion on the question, “What do you think a Christian is?”
9. Make a list of various ethnic and cultural groups you come across in Nassau/Queens
10. Memorize John 3:16-18.
11. Attend a local cultural or ethnically distinctive event in an effort to understand the cultures around your area.
12. Read Matthew 25 and try to identify one project per month that you can do for the types of people Jesus lists.
13. Read Six Dangerous Questions by Paul Borthwick.
14. Pray for the country on the label of your clothes.
15. Get an up-to-date map of the world and prominently post it to provoke prayer.
16. Pray for a week for the Muslim countries in North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Indonesia.
17. Pray for your children to be open to wherever God might call them in service around the world.
18. Start an email or pen pal connection to any of our long-term missionaries.
19. Keep up to date on Missions throughout the World – subscribe to a missions’ magazine.
20. Listen to CNN or another world news report and pray through the countries mentioned.