

Foundations of the Faith Series

Bible Study Workbook—Course 102



*He shall be like a tree
planted by the rivers of water
Psalm 1:3a*

Prepared for the Safe Haven Berean Fellowship, Ministry of the Word
by Pastor David Braden

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Foundations of the Faith 102

INTRODUCTION

This workbook is the second of four workbooks in the “Foundations of the Faith” series.

In this series of teachings, I am responding to the need of Christians in the body of Christ to be able to give an answer for the things they believe.

Some of the topics were identified by listening to the questions being asked by believers. The lessons in these booklets are designed to provide an introduction to the issues being addressed. Further study on the part of each student is encouraged to solidify the believer’s position relative to these topics. The believer is encouraged to study the scriptures provided and see if the things presented are true. (Acts 17:11)

Some lessons are provided in which the student is to “fill in the blanks.” The answers will be found in the scripture references provided.

Still other lessons are provided in which no “fill in the blanks” are provided. These lessons are generally the impartation of knowledge. This information is found in sources outside of the Bible such as Bible dictionaries and commentaries.

These lessons are prepared for use as homework for the Foundations of the Faith classes or study groups. It is recommended that each lesson be completed prior to the class time on that subject.

In order to maximize your benefits from this course, it is recommended that your homework efforts include a period of time to meditate and consider the things you discover in each lesson, rather than completing the assignment merely to “fill in the blanks.”

BIBLE STUDY #1

Prayer and Devotions

Part I: Prayer

Begin memorizing Philippians 4:6-7

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your requests to God and the peace of God which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Luke 11:1 – *One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”*

Jesus set an example in His prayers. The disciples saw that His prayers were intimate, like talking with a close friend. They wanted to learn how to have the same close relationship with the Father that Jesus did. In this lesson you should learn:

- A. reasons why your prayers aren't answered
- B. how to be sure your prayers are answered
- C. the different types of prayer

A. Reasons why prayers are not answered

1. Why would God not give us what we desire? (Give two reasons) James 4:1-3

Psalm 66:18 – *“If I regard wickedness in my heart the Lord will not hear.”*

Isaiah 59:2 – *“But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, so that He does not hear.”*

2. From the above scriptures do you think God hears our prayers when we are living in continual disobedience to His Word?

3. If there is sin in our lives, what should we do before bringing our requests to the Father? I John 1:9

Read about the prayer of the tax collector in Luke 18:9-14.

B. How to be sure your prayers are answered

1. What is one reason that the Lord wants to give us what we pray for?

John 16:24 _____

2. When we have needs that need to be met, what should our attitude be when we come to God in prayer? Hebrews 4:16

3. How can we pray so that we will be sure God will answer our prayers?

I John 5:14-15 _____

4. When we don't know what God's will is or how we should pray about something, who will intercede for us? Romans 8:26-27 _____

5. What three words describe what we need to do to receive good gifts from our Heavenly Father? Matthew 7:7-12 _____

Verse 7 in the Greek could be better translated "keep seeking, keep knocking, and keep asking." In other words, be persistent!

Read the parable about persistence in Luke 18:1-8.

Sometimes God answers prayer with "WAIT!" If we believe our prayers are in accordance with God's will and He doesn't answer with a definite "yes" or "no", we should be patient and wait for His answer. Keep asking! The Lord not only has the perfect answer, He has the perfect time to give His answer.

6. What happens when we pray for something according to the will of God in the name of Jesus? John 16:23

7. Why do we pray in the name of Jesus? I Timothy 2:5

To ask "in the name of Jesus" means to come to the Father based on the righteousness and finished work of Jesus, not our own righteousness or merits.

8. What promise does Jesus give us if we will abide or remain in Him? John 15:7

Read John 15:1-17 to see what abiding means.

ABIDE means to remain in one place and not change. A good example of abiding is a tree. (see Ps. 1) To abide in Christ means to continue in His teaching and not wander from it.

9. What two things should we do to be sure the Lord hears us? Mark 11:24-25

AMEN comes from the Hebrew word for “true” or “faithful.” When we use it in prayer, it is our way of saying we believe the Lord will answer our prayers.

10. Who is glorified when our prayers are answered? John 14:13

C. What are the different types of prayer?

I Timothy 2:1 What are the different kinds of prayer? _____

A. SUPPLICATION, PETITION, or REQUEST, is asking God to supply our needs.

B. INTERCESSION is praying for others, such as for healing or salvation.

C. THANKSGIVING and PRAISE is giving God the glory He deserves for what He has done and for who He is. This is a part of worship.

D. PRAYER is talking with God and not just to Him. It is time spent in His presence.

15. According to the Bible, when is a good time to pray? I Thessalonians 5:17

For more about prayer, read Matthew 6:5-15 to see what Jesus has to say about it.

From memory, write out your memory verse below.

Part II: Devotions

Begin to memorize: Isa. 40:31 *“But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.”*

I. Devotions: What is it and why have a devotion?

Definitions

DEVOTE: To give or apply one's time, attention or self entirely to a particular activity, pursuit, cause or person; to dedicate; to consecrate. (from *The American Heritage Dictionary*)

Devotion: an act of religious observance or prayer, especially when private
A devotion is often referred to as "having a quiet time alone with God." It is not a command of scripture. It is an expression that we have adopted to designate a daily time to be alone with God.

Often in the gospels, we see Jesus going to a private place, a garden, a hillside, a place away from the crowds, where He could be alone to commune with His Father. The example He gave us was a life in total dependence upon the Father. He only did the things that He was taught by the Father. (John 8:28-29) His was a living, dynamic, daily relationship with God, the Father.

So, we too, must live in daily fellowship with God. If we are not in a living, active relationship with Him, our lives will be out of focus and misdirected. We will dry up and wither as a branch that has been severed from the vine.

The purpose of having a devotional, a quiet time alone with God, is to know God, to fellowship with Him and to learn how to live each day in a way that pleases Him. He is the source of our life. As we come to Him daily, we are refreshed, strengthened, instructed and equipped for our kingdom service.

II. What should I do in my quiet time with God?

There are a variety of ways to spend our time of devotion. Worship, prayer, reading and meditating on the Word of God, and waiting and listening for God's guidance are some of the most common ways people spend their devotional time.

A. WORSHIP

In Lk. 11:1, one of his disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. He began His model prayer by an act of worship, hallowing the Name of the Father. (Hallow means to regard as holy.)

Worship comes from a root word which means to prostrate oneself in homage, to bow down, to kiss towards. To worship means to give honor, reverence or obedience to another.

Vines Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words defines worship as "the direct acknowledgement to God of His nature, attributes, ways and claims, whether by the outgoing heart in praise and thanksgiving or by deeds done in such acknowledgment."

We speak to God regarding His matchless character and His awesome deeds. We acknowledge His great worth. We declare God's "worship." We rehearse the goodness of God and His remarkable ways in the lives of mankind. There are many Psalms that can be used in worship. (e.g. 8, 19, 23, 95-100, 145-150) A good place to begin is Psalm 145 in which David uses approximately 40 descriptive words to proclaim God's greatness in His character and in His mighty deeds.

Giving thanks to God can also be a part of our time of worship as we recall the things He has done for others and for us. (see Ps. 112, 113, 116, 135, 139, 145, 150)

Singing songs of praise is another way to worship God in your time alone with Him. Many of the saints of old have used the words of the great hymns in their devotions.

B. PRAYER

Praying is communicating with God. We talk with God about the issues of life. This includes petition (for ourselves) and intercession (for others).

As we bring our petitions and intercessions before God, we can plead the promises He has given us in His Word

- our confidence "Ask and it will be given to you." (Matt. 7:7),
- call upon His character, "The Lord is...slow to anger and great in mercy..." (Ps 145:8b),
- remind Him of His ways, "The Lord upholds all who fall..." (Ps 145:14a)

We can pray back His Word to Him. (See the Psalms for specific issues in our lives.)

Another key help to prayer is to use the Lord's instructional prayer in Matt. 6:5-15 as your guide.

C. The WORD, MEDITATION, WAITING

God's communicates with us in many ways, but the primary way He communicates with us is through His written Word.

God gives us a very significant promise regarding prayer in John 15:7: "*If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask what you will and it shall be done for you.*"

From this verse we see that effective prayer can spring forth from the Word of God as it abides in us. As we remain, continue, stay in the Word of God, we can know how to pray and have an assurance that our prayers will be effective.

One consistent way to stay in the Word is to have a yearly plan for reading through the Bible. Reading approximately 3 chapters a day will keep you in the Word and will give you the whole counsel of God. (Note that there are many ways to read through the Bible. See specialty books which provide a variety of plans to find one that best suits your needs.)

Another way to use the Word is to personalize significant passages that address current issues you are facing. One of the best resources for this is the activity of personalizing the Psalms. (When you pray a Psalm, exchange plural words for first person, singular words. e.g. exchange “we” for “I”.)

Meditating on God’s Word is another devotional activity we can employ. So often, we read through a passage and quickly forget what we’ve read or don’t understand the meaning of the text. Slowing down to seriously think on a passage, memorize a verse, to reflect on it, to consider its meanings and application to our lives will enrich our devotional times. It also provides an opportunity for us to wait quietly before the Lord to understand how He would speak to us through a passage.

The following passages speak of the activity of waiting for God:

Ps 33:20 “Our soul waits for the Lord. He is our help and our shield.”

Ps 62:5 “My soul, wait silently for God alone.”

Isa. 64:4 “...Nor has the eye seen any God besides You who acts for the one who waits for Him.”

Lam. 3:25 “The Lord is good to those that wait for Him, to the soul that seeks Him.”

God will speak to you as you dwell in His Word, as you “wait before Him.” He will often “quicken” a passage to you such that you sense it is speaking directly to you. At other times, He will direct you to passages that provide wisdom or guidance for a specific issue you may be facing.

D. LISTENING, HEARING from GOD

A remarkable feature of the Christian faith is that God, our Creator, can and does speak to His children. However, we need to spend time alone with God and learn how He speaks to each one of us.

In I Kings 19:11-12 God revealed to Elijah that one of His modes of communicating was “a still small voice.” This shows us the importance of “quietness” if we are to hear from God.

As we wait in quietness before God in our time of devotion, He may speak to us in different ways:

(1) He may bring a scripture passage to our mind that bears upon the issue with which we are concerned;

(2) We may sense a quiet confirmation in our heart that confirms God's direction/word to us;

(3) We may have a thought, a sense or strong impression to do a certain thing. (puts it on our heart)

As with all directions we receive, we need to test them for consistency with God's Word. He will never lead us to do something that is inconsistent with his holiness, love, mercy, justice or is contrary to His own attributes.

III. Some final questions regarding a devotion

A. When - This is best answered by trial and error on your part, what works best for you. Many people prefer to begin the day with their thoughts focused toward God in a daily devotional. Others, due to strenuous or difficult schedules find the evening hours to work for them.

B. How long - Again, this is a matter that pertains specifically to you, to your preferences. Do some experimenting in your personal life and see what provides a good fit for your needs and schedule. I suggest, as a start, a minimum of 15 minutes. If you use more than one of the elements of a devotional described in this section, you will find the time of communion "flying by."

C. What order - How to order your quiet time is something you can experiment with until you find what works best for you. Some begin in the Word. Others say that praying is the best beginning for them. The order is what you make it and it may vary from time to time.

What is truly important is that you continue to have a daily time of devotion with God and learn to abide in an ever-increasing intimacy with our Father.

IV. Memory work

From memory, write the memory verse for this lesson below. (Isa. 40:31)

Recommended Additional Reading: "A Quiet Time With God" – a short booklet published by Kay Arthur.

BIBLE STUDY #2

What God Expects

Part I: What God expects

Begin memorizing Matthew 22:37

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

Deuteronomy 10:12 – *And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

As Christians we should always remember what God expects from us. In this lesson you should learn:

- A. We should fear God.
- B. We should love Him and obey Him.
- C. We should serve Him from our hearts.

FEAR does not mean to be afraid or frightened of God. To fear God means to respect Him, have reverence for His holiness, to be in awe of His majesty and glory.

1. What does God promise for those who fear Him?

Luke 1:50 _____

Acts 10:35 _____

2. Rev. 11:18 When God judges the nations, to whom will He give rewards?

Proverbs 1:7 – *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.”*

Proverbs 9:10 – *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”*

3. What is produced by fearing the Lord? _____

Proverbs 15:16 – *“Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and turmoil with it.”*

LOVE – The Greek word AGAPE, translated LOVE (or CHARITY in some translations), means the self-less, giving love that comes from God. It is a sacrificing, caring love that seeks what is best for others and not itself. Read I John 4:7 – 5:5 to get a better idea about AGAPE.

I Corinthians 13:4-7 defines AGAPE. Read it and substitute the name Jesus in the place of love (or charity) to see if He fits the definition. Then try it with your own name and see how it fits you!

4. Why do we love God? I John 4:19 _____
5. What did Jesus say the most important commandment was? Mark 12:29-30

6. What other commandment did He say was also important? Mark 12:31

7. If we are to love God, what else must we do? I John 4:20-21

8. What will we do if we truly love the Lord?
John 14:23 _____
I John 5:2-3 _____

To serve God involves putting our faith into action. Our faith demonstrates itself through our good works. Read James 2:14-26.

9. James said we should not just be hearers of God's Word. What else should we do? James 1:22 _____
10. What does Jesus say about the man who hears His words and then puts them into action? Matthew 7:24-27 _____
11. When we do good works or deeds for others, who does Jesus say we are really serving? Matthew 25:31-40 _____
12. What was God's purpose for creating us in Christ Jesus? Ephesians 2:10

13. If a Christian does a lot of good works, but love (agape) is not the reason for doing them, what does the Bible say about that person? I Cor. 13:1-3

14. The Bible says we are to do good works. Are we saved by doing them?
Ephesians 2:8-9 _____
Titus 3:5 _____

Proverbs 21:2-3 – *“Every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts. To do righteousness and justice is desired by the Lord rather than sacrifice.”*

All works should be from your heart, not just an outward show for others to see. When your works are judged by the Lord, He does not see the outward appearance of the work, but the inward motive. The outward actions of going to church, witnessing, doing good works, etc., do not make you a Christian. Going to church does not make you a Christian any more than going to McDonald's makes you a hamburger. You are a Christian because Jesus has come into your heart. Your outward actions show others what has happened within your heart.

15. When we serve God from a true heart, what will unbelievers do when they see our good works? Matthew 5:16, I Peter 2:12

Write out your memory verse below.

BIBLE STUDY #3

Giving (includes tithing)

This study lesson 3 provides introductory material for the area of giving and tithing.

When Christ touches our life, He touches all of it. Everything we possess, families, homes, gifts and abilities, education, resources, etc. comes under his ownership. However, we remain the stewards of that which has been placed into our hands.

We learn from scripture that as stewards we must be “found faithful”. A significant principle of scripture is that “He that is faithful in that which is least is also faithful in much.” (Luke 16:10) This includes the area of finances.

We also learn from the scriptures that we cannot out give God. In a significant passage in Mal. 3:10, God challenges us to try Him in the matter of giving and see if He will not bless us so much that we will not have room to receive it.

I. The Biblical Attitude in Giving

A. Ownership

Review the following scriptures and record what you discover about God’s ownership.

1. I Chron. 29:11-12; Genesis 1

2. Ps 24:1

3. Ps 50:10-12; Genesis 1:24-25 – 6th day of creation

4. Hag. 2:8

To summarize, everything belongs to God. And when we give to the Lord, we are only returning to Him a portion of what is already His.

B. Personal Attitudes

Read the following passages and record your observations regarding a Biblical attitude in giving.

1. Matt. 23:23 – Pharisees (spices in the garden)

Note: The words of this passage are directed to the Pharisees who were giving according to the OT principle of tithing. (But they missed the key elements of justice, mercy and faithfulness.)

2. I Cor. 13:3

3. II Cor. 8:1-5 Church of Macedonia – “How they gave”

4. II Cor. 9:1-15

5. Acts 20:35

How can we determine if we have the appropriate attitude towards giving?

In summary of the above: our giving should be loving, with willful hearts, not grudgingly, zealous, cheerful, generous and helpful.

II. The Benefits of Giving

The main and obvious benefit of giving with a right heart is that this pleases our heavenly Father.

The scriptures below indicate that benefits do come to those engaged in giving. Read the following scriptures and summarize the benefits identified.

1. Prov. 11:24-25

2. Matt. 6:20

3. Luke 12:34

4. I Tim. 6:18-19 _____

5. Isa. 58:6-11 _____

III. Guidance in Biblical Giving

It is important for each believer to examine the Scriptures and determine, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, how they will contribute to the kingdom of God.

Some questions regarding giving:

A. What about tithing?

Tithing (giving a tenth of the increase) is an Old Testament principle established in the Law of Moses which consisted of three general divisions:

- to support the tribe of Levi (those who ministered in the temple) – 10%, Num. 18:21-24; Deut. 14:27
- to maintain the festivals and sacrifices of the Lord, - 10% of the 90% remaining Deut. 12:5-7, 10-9; 14:22-26
- to support the poor - 10% every 3 years Deut. 14:28-29

These 3 offerings amounted to approximately 23% of a person's increase.

But...the Law has been done away with by the institution of the higher law of grace by the blood of Jesus. (see below)

Therefore, the giving of tithes as delineated in the OT Law, is not a mandate to NT Christians.

B. What does the New Testament teach about giving?

- (1) We are not under Law but under grace. Rom. 6:14; 7:6
See also Acts 15: 5, 19-20 (Judaizers)
- (2) We are to be led by the Spirit. (Gal. 5:18)
Our giving is to be guided by the Holy Spirit.

To summarize these first two points: We are to practice "grace giving led by the Spirit."

A good example of this is seen in the early church in Acts 4:32-35.
Read this passage.

In this segment we see that the people gave willingly. There is no indication that this was mandated but was a free-will choice by each person. Acts 5:4 Peter speaking to Ananias

Note also that this was a one-time event in the narratives of the New Testament church. It was never a commandment from God or an institution established by God for NT believers.

It could occur again, but only as believers are led by the Spirit.

(3) I Cor. 16:1-2 – an example of giving

Note that Paul is giving this instruction to the Corinthians just as he had also given it to the churches in Galatia.

This passage indicates that giving was to be systematic (each week on the first day of the week)

It was to be done individually, each person deciding what he would give. They were to set it aside.

It was to be in proportion to the believer's gain during the week (as he prospered.)

C. To Whom or what should the believer be giving?

(1) I Tim. 5:8 the believer's family

(2) I Cor. 9:7-14 the work of the ministry such as the local church

(3) Gal. 6:6 those who teach the word see also I Tim. 5:17-18

(4) Phil. 4:10-16 missions

(5) Ja. 2:15-17 the believer (brother or sister) who is in need

D. What about Abraham's example of tithing to Melchizedek?

See Gen. 14:17-20

In this passage, Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils of war to a single person, Melchizedek, identified as the priest of Salem. There is no indication that Abraham was commanded to do this. Abraham, in this passage, provides us an example of a man of faith giving willingly, with gratitude to the Lord and out of his increase (in this case, the spoils of war.)

This was a one-time event and there is no record that it was repeated.

This event occurred long before the Law which instituted the principle of tithing for God's covenant people in the Old Testament.

A Christian could use this as an example but not as a mandatory command.

Conclusion:

The New Testament believer is now under grace, not Law.

NT giving is to be "grace-giving led by the Spirit."

The OT principle of tithing is not a mandate to the NT born-again believer. However, it is an example of giving that we might imitate if led by the Spirit. It does provide us an example of how God made provisions for His servants, e.g. Levites who were in service to the temple and the sacrificial system.

Giving should be systematic, individual and in proportion to how God has prospered each person.

Gifts given should go to the believer's family, the work of the ministry, missions, Bible teachers and those who are in need.

God loves a cheerful giver and New Testament passages encourage us to give willingly and liberally. I Cor. 13 cautions us regarding our attitude in giving that if I give all that I have but don't have love, it would be a meaningless gesture.

A key principle of giving is to assure that what we are giving is done with a right heart.

It is clear from scripture that giving is a characteristic of the spiritual person. As we grow in likeness to Christ, we will become like Him in His example of giving. He constantly gave to the multitudes that came to Him and His giving reached its ultimate expression when He gave His life on the cross for our sins.

BIBLE STUDY #4

Grace

I. Introduction

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the student to the theme of God's grace and briefly address some of the issues related to the application of this grace in our lives.

In this lesson, we will address the following questions:

Examples of God's grace in the Bible

What is grace?

What is the law and its purposes?

Where does grace come from?

What does it achieve?

Good day – bad day syndrome

The theme of grace runs throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation.

Examples of God's grace:

1. In the creation account, God fashions His world and then gives man dominion over all that He has made. Man has done nothing to merit this position of prominence nor has He earned the awesome privilege of being created in the likeness of God Himself.
2. Adam and Eve sin. Immediately, we find, in the judgments, the grace of God at work to provide a solution to the problem of man.
3. God's grace is seen in the choice of Abraham who would be the Patriarch of God's family, the chosen nation.
4. God's multiplied graces come to the wilderness Hebrews who were a complaining nation within days of their deliverance from Egypt.
5. David, who sought the Lord with his whole heart and yet became an adulterer and murderer, found God's grace of forgiveness.
6. The history of Israel in the OT is filled with the repetition of their idolatry and God's subsequent graces of deliverance.
7. The life and death of Jesus – the supreme expression of God's grace to us.

8. Paul, in many of his letters to the churches begins and concludes with the petition and desire for grace to be with the readers. Romans is a book abounding in grace.

9. The NT closes with these words: "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people." (Rev. 22:21)

II. Definition

"*Charis*" is the Greek word translated grace. It means a gracious favor or benefit given. The verb "*charizomai*" means to show kindness or favor.

Grace "*Charis*" 5485 (Strong's Number)

To rejoice, joy, favor

Acceptance

Kindness granted or desired

Grace, a favor done without the expectation of return

Absolute freeness of the lovingkindness of God to men finding its only motive in the bounty and freeheartedness of the giver

Unearned and unmerited favor

Charis (grace) stands in direct anti-thesis to "erga" (works) and in contrast to "eleos" (mercy) which is concerned with the misery brought upon a sinner as a consequence of sin.

In grace, God gives us that which we don't deserve.

In mercy, God doesn't give us what we do deserve.

III. Law and Grace

1. Law:

The Hebrew word for law is "*torah*." Its basic meaning is teaching or instruction. It denotes instruction focused on how one should live rather than on abstract or academic subjects.

The *torah* generally refers to the first five books of the Bible but can also indicate the commands and statutes contained within these books.

The torah is God's gift to mankind and is intended to show Israel how to live a holy and fruitful life in this world.

Record the intended results of the *torah* in the following passages.

Prov. 3:1-2 _____

Prov. 13:14 _____

If we think of the law as a cold, rigid set of rules we have missed the true heart of the law. Record the true heart of the law from the following passages:

Deut. 4:5-8 _____

Psalm 19:7-11 _____

Josh. 1:7-9 _____

The problem for the religious leaders of Jesus' day was that they thought keeping the law (works) made them righteous and justified before God.

According to Paul, is this true? Rom. 3:20 _____

Instead, what does Gal. 3:10-12 say that the law does? _____

What then, is the purpose of the law? Rom. 3:19-20

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____

What else does the law do?

(4) Lev. 19:1 _____

(5) Rom. 4:15 _____

(6) II Cor. 3:6-7 _____

(7) I Tim. 1:8-10 _____

The purpose of the Law was never to make a man right with God.
All the law can do is to declare a standard and condemn a person for failure.

What does Rom. 10:4 say was Jesus' effect on the law? _____

2. Grace: "On what basis is a person made acceptable to God?"
Rom. 3:23-24 _____

How was Abraham justified?

Rom. 4:3, 9 _____
Rom. 4:20-22 _____

What does Rom. 5:1-2 say about how a person is justified? _____

Rom. 5:20-21 *“Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, _____ abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so _____ might reign through righteousness to eternal life in Jesus Christ or Lord.”*

Grace: God gives to man a standing of total acceptance as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul says we are not under law but under grace. (Rom. 6:14)

The following chart provides a comparison of grace with “man’s efforts at justification.”

	Grace	Religion of man
View of Mankind	Basically sinful, Unable to please God	Basically good Able to please God
Associated Concepts	Promise Gift Faith	Law Works Obligation
Focus	Jesus	Self
Results	Forgiveness Life Righteousness	Condemnation/a curse Death Sin
Definition	God’s free action – based upon Jesus’ death and resurrection and motivated by love – to redeem all who believe and to make them righteous.	Man’s effort to do good and by his own works to merit salvation as a deserved reward for his behavior.
Gifts	Always unearned and undeserved	I get gifts from God if I do good/right

A part of the difficulty with understanding grace is with our understanding of salvation.

Salvation has 3 aspects:

1. Initial – We enter into the kingdom of God by grace through faith. (saved from the kingdom of the world into God’s kingdom) - settles our eternal destiny
2. Salvation from sin in this life – power to live this life controlled by the Spirit and not the flesh. (also known as sanctification, working out your salvation, dying to self and putting on Christ)
3. Glorification – upon leaving this life, God gives us our glorified body

What does Paul say had happened to the Galatians?

Gal. 3:3 _____

This means that they had entered into Christ by faith but were now, in their daily lives (in phase 2 – salvation from sin), trying to gain their acceptance with God by works.

Did they lose their salvation? _____

Explain your answer. _____

What did Paul tell them to do? (See Gal. 5)

v.1 _____

v.16 _____

v.18 _____

Faith and grace are how we are to continue living our life in Christ. At no time do we ever gain our acceptance in Christ by our works.

Under law, a man works to be accepted by God.

Under grace, a man serves because he is already accepted by God.

Good day – bad day syndrome.

One of the traps we fall into is the good day – bad day syndrome. In it, we feel that if our day is going well, we have a good time of prayer and meditation in the morning, we even get to share our testimony with a person at work...then we are well-positioned to receive God's gifts and blessings. However, if we wake up on the wrong side of the bed, are late to work, spill our coffee, don't do well in our job... we now feel that God can't or won't bless us or give us gifts.

The truth of the matter is that our worst days are never so bad that we are out of reach of the grace of God and our good days are never so good that we are beyond the need of God's grace.

God's gifts always come from His heart of love and are never based on our good works or doing well enough to deserve them.

We are not only saved by grace but we live by grace from day to day.

What does Eph. 2:5 say about our position with regard to grace? _____

IV. What grace achieves

Summarize the grace of God in action in the following passages in the book of Matthew:

11:28-30 _____

18:21-34 The Unforgiving Servant _____

20:1-16. The Workers in the Vineyard _____

In Paul's letter to the Romans, he quotes the OT to show that all people are sinners and in need of God's salvation. No one has a way among themselves to obtain this much-needed redemption. God acted to provide a righteousness in Jesus that comes by faith. Only God's decisive act in Christ— an act of grace — could win our redemption. (3:23-26)

Our salvation is continually presented as a gift that comes to us through Jesus Christ and is an expression of God's grace.

Fill in the blanks below to see some of the many facets of God's grace.

Rom. 3:24 We are _____ by His grace.

Rom. 4:13-16 We have _____ of descendants (heirs).

Rom. 5: 15-17 We have the gift of _____ by His grace.

Rom. 5:21 "...even so grace might reign through righteousness to _____.

Rom. 6:14 grace releases us from _____.

Rom. 6:14 We are no longer under _____ but under grace.

Rom. 11:5 "...there is a _____ (Israel) according to the election of grace."

Rom. 11:5 _____ is by grace

Rom. 12:6 "Having then _____ differing according to the grace that is given to us..."

Rom. 15:15-16 Paul can be a _____ of the _____ because of the grace given to him.

Eph. 2:4-5 "It is by grace you are _____ through faith. It is the gift of God."

V. Conclusion

The Biblical concept of Grace is much greater than the simple definition of unmerited favor.

Grace expresses a radical view of life and relationship with God.

Grace teaches us that God's attitude towards us is one of acceptance and love (in His Son).

Grace is a dramatic statement about the human condition, our desperate need. Everyone is helpless, trapped in sin and incapable of pleasing God or gaining His favor.

Grace is a proclamation, the triumphant announcement that God in Christ has acted and has come to the aid of all who will trust Him for their eternal salvation.

Grace is a way of life. Relying totally on Jesus to work within us, we experience God's own unlimited power, vitalizing us and enabling us to live truly godly lives.

The message of grace provides a totally different outlook on a relationship with God than is found in any religion of human invention. Understanding the nature of grace, we decisively reject any confidence in ourselves and we trust ourselves totally to Jesus, who alone is able not only to declare us truly righteous men and women of God but also to make us so.

BIBLE STUDY #5

Worship

This session will focus on the following:

- I. What is worship?
- II. Why should we worship?
- III. How should we worship?
- IV. How can I have a heart of worship?

Introduction:

Worship was at the very core of God's plan in creation. It was the will of God that men and women, created in the image of God, would desire fellowship with Him above all else. His plan was a fellowship based upon adoring worship of the Creator and Sustainer of all things.

An age-old question has been stated in this way: "What is the chief end of man?" The answer in the church instructional is:

"to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

We were born to worship. God has placed the desire to worship within the hearts of every person on the face of the earth. Worship is not unique to Christians. Throughout history, mankind has proven a need to have a "supreme being" to be the object of his worship.

Everyone will worship something. If people don't worship God, what will they worship? _____

I. What is Worship?

In the OT, the most common words for worship are *salah* and *sahah*. The principle meanings of these words are:

- to bow down
- to prostrate oneself out of respect
- to serve

In the NT, the primary word for worship is *proskuneo*.

Pros –towards
Kuneo – to kiss

Therefore: "to kiss towards"

This word is used approximately 60 times in the NT, 24 of those being in the book of Revelation.

Worship can be defined as showing/giving honor, reverence and homage in thought, feeling or act.

Worship can be shown towards men, angels, or other "spiritual" beings and figuratively to other entities, ideas, powers or qualities.

For the Christian, worship is directed specifically, supremely and only to God.

Read Ex. 20:1-6 to see God's explicit instructions to His people regarding worship.

Summarize your findings _____

Read Num 25:1-4

While at Shittim, what did the people do? _____

What did God tell Moses to do? _____

From these examples we know that God has established our worship to be offered only to Him, and that that we are to put nothing else before Him.

Worship is to be our expression of love, honor, gratefulness and submission to God.

II. Why Should We Worship?

Rev. 4:11a _____

Rev. 4:11b _____

Ps 22: 3 _____

Ps 115:1 _____
(Dethrones our flesh)

II Chron. 20:20-22 _____

Ps 145 _____
(Who He is and what He does)

Ps 18:1-3 _____

Zech. 14:16-17 _____

III. How should we worship?

Worship is not restricted to what we do in our church services. Worship is a way of life - we are called to be worshippers. It can have a variety of different forms.

Read the following passages and identify the form of worship.

Luke 10:39 _____

Ps. 107:32 _____

John 12:3 _____

Hab. 3:17-18 _____

Worship can be expressed though a number of different ways.
Read the following passages and record how worship is shown.

Ps. 33:2-3 _____

Ps 95:1-6 _____

What do the physical postures of this verse indicate? _____

Ps 150:4 _____

Ps 150:5 _____

What did David establish for the worship of God?

I Chron. 25:1-7 _____

Who should praise Him? Ps 150:6 _____

What did the priests do when the temple was dedicated?

2 Chron 5:11-14 _____

What was the result of this action? _____

Was God pleased with the worship? Explain your answer _____

Music is simply a method that we use in unison with the act of our worship to God in our church service. It ushers in the presence and the move of God – not because of the music, but because God’s people are worshiping Him.

“Our hearts are bowed – our hands raised – we are acknowledging that He is our God – we love Him – and that we are forever committed to love and serve Him.”

It is a beautiful expression:

- an overflow of a Spirit filled life.
- an outflow of what's in our heart – the Spirit of God, a love for God.
- evidence of God working in our hearts.
- refreshes – reinforces – rebuilds.

An important thing to remember is - **We are the choir – God is the audience!**

IN FACT - All of creation worships God naturally, instinctively – man is the only created being or entity that has a choice. If we choose NOT to worship God, we live at a level below the rocks and the trees.

Read John 4:21-24

What does this mean? _____

Ps 47:7 _____

What was the problem of Isa. 29:13 _____

What should we do to correct this problem if it exists in our own worship?

IV. How can I have a Heart of Worship?

A heart of worship is not brought about by having good praise music, nor is it a gift that only some have. God desires that we ALL be worshipers.

In 1 Peter 2:9-10 we are told how we were chosen “so that we may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness.”

As noted earlier, mankind is inclined to worship a “supreme being,” but the only true worship is that which is given to a true God – the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob - YAHWEH.

A heart of worship is a byproduct of our love for the Lord. If He is in us, and we in Him, then our fruit will be apparent – including a desire to worship Him:

- A heart of worship is obtained by developing a relationship with the object of our worship
- We become like what we worship

2 Cor 3:18 “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. “

“Worship is all-consuming, because God is all-deserving. So, we live our lives eager to breathe every breath, think every thought and do every deed for the glory of God.”

Our worship will be a natural outpouring of our love for the Lord, as we have embraced the truth of our God and we are prompted by the Holy Spirit.

Worship is a state of the heart. We are able to worship when we:

- acknowledge that God is the creator of all and the one true Lord of Heaven and earth,
- accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and receive His Holy Spirit,
- understand that He created us in His image,
- acknowledge that He is the only one worthy of our love, adoration, devotion and allegiance,
- willingly submit ourselves to Him, mind, body and spirit, and
- rejoice that He created us, that we belong to Him and that He wants to dwell with us.

Worship is an act of the will.

We choose to worship.

We don't have to wait for feelings to worship.

A good place to start = personalize a Psalm (e.g. 8, 19, 29, 104, 138, 145, 150)

BIBLE STUDY #6

Trials

Begin memorizing I Corinthians 10:13

“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so you can stand up under it.”

I Peter 4:12-13 – *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed.*

Soon after we are born again the Lord begins to TEST our faith. He often removes the emotions and feelings we have been experiencing to cause us to walk by faith. This does not mean He has deserted you! In this lesson you should learn:

- A. What trials are
- B. How God uses trials
- C. What we should do when we are in the middle of a trial

A TRIAL occurs when God allows temptations, tribulations, (hardship or affliction) or our relationship with other people to TEST OUR FAITH. It is the process He uses to refine us, make our faith stronger and teach us to trust Him more.

1. Becoming a Christian does not mean we will stop having troubles. How did Jesus describe our lives in this world? John 16:33

2. What should be our attitude when we are having our faith tested by trials or temptations? Why? James 1:2-4_____

3. What are some of the results of trials? II Corinthians 4:17-18, I Peter 1:6-7_____

PATIENCE or PERSEVERANCE means steadfastly enduring adverse circumstances, holding to a course of action.

One aspect of trials, is enduring hardship and affliction. When the Lord is dealing with us as His children, He will allow tribulations to chasten or discipline us.

CHASTEN or DISCIPLINE in Greek means to train, educate, instruct, correct, reprove or admonish. It is a positive, loving method of eliminating evil and encouraging good. It is not harsh punishment.

4. When our Father disciplines or chastens us, He is demonstrating our relationship to Him. What is that relationship?

Hebrews 12:5-8 _____

5. Why does God discipline or chasten us? Hebrews 12:9-10

HOLINESS means morally perfect or free from sin.

6. What are the end results when our Father disciplines us? Hebrews 12:11

Another way God tests our faith, is by allowing Satan to tempt us.

God Himself does not tempt us. Jesus' model prayer in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6) states "Do not allow us to be led into temptation."

Each time the Lord helps us resist a temptation, we learn to trust Him more. He uses it to build our faith in Him.

TEMPTATION occurs when Satan tries to get us to sin. He may tempt us by something we see. He may tempt us by sending evil thoughts into our minds. He may tempt our flesh or our pride. He has many temptations. It is not a sin to be tempted! It is only a sin when we give in to the temptation.

7. Satan's temptations are strong, but what promise do we have that is stronger? I John 4:4 _____

8. Read I Corinthians 10:13 and answer the following questions:

Are your temptations ever new, something no one else has gone through before? _____

Will the Lord allow your temptations to be so strong that you will be unable to resist it? _____

What will the Lord provide when you are tempted? _____

9. When we ask our High Priest, Jesus, for help with our temptations, how can we be sure He understands what we are going through? Hebrews 4:15

10. In Matthew 4:1-11 when Jesus was tempted by Satan, what did He use to respond to Satan's temptations? vv. 4,7,10

11. What results when we give in to temptation? James 1:13-15

12. If we find that we have sinned, what should we do about it? How will Jesus respond to us? I John 1:9

II Corinthians 4:17-18 tells us three things about trials:

- A. They are trivial compared to the sufferings of Christ and the glory we are to have in heaven.
- B. They are temporary compared to the eternity Jesus has prepared for us.
- C. They are transforming. They cause us to be conformed to the image of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

13. What encouragement does the Lord give us concerning every event and circumstance that happens to us in the world? Romans 8:28

14. We see that God uses all of the events in our lives to shape us and mold us. Whose likeness is He trying to make us into? Romans 8:29

Jesus told us in John 14:27 that the peace He gives us is not like the peace the rest of the world has. His peace does not depend on favorable circumstances.

His peace comes from knowing that regardless of how things appear, God is still in control and we can trust Him to see us through the rough times.

The hardships we suffer are not a surprise to Him. They are part of His plan. By them He prepares us, not for a temporary life of comfort, but for an eternity of holiness.

If you find yourself in a trial, seek guidance from God's Word and from Him in prayer. You might pray something like this: "Lord, help me to learn from this, help me to become what you want me to be, help me trust you through everything."

Example from Scripture: Joseph

1. His trial:
 - His brothers mocked his dream.

- His brothers sold him into slavery.
- Potiphar's wife lied about his righteous behavior.
- The cupbearer forgot him after he had successfully interpreted his dream for him.

2. The features of his trial:

- friends and family disbelief
- mistreated
- His will was denied (taken from him).
- He was treated unjustly.
- He was lied about (falsely accused).
- Promises were broken
- The trials occurred over a lengthy period of time (13 years).

3. His reward:

- promoted to #2 in the kingdom, 2nd only to Pharaoh
- liberated from prison
- received great rewards
- restored to His father and family
- His dreams were fulfilled and his integrity confirmed.

From memory, write out your memory verse below.

BIBLE STUDY #7

How to Study the Bible

(Note: The information below was taken from The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting - Omega Course - Bible Study Methods and How to Study the Bible by John McArthur.)

I. How to Study the Bible

There are two ways to study any subject and come to conclusions. They are called the *deductive* and *inductive* methods. Deductive reasoning moves from the general to the specific. Inductive goes from the specific to the general. Both methods are used by Christians to study the Bible, even though they are usually unaware of how each method affects their study and conclusions.

A. Deductive Approach

In general, the deductive approach moves from the general to the specific. That is, it starts with the known and accepted idea or premise. That pre-existing understanding is then compared to a particular situation, and a conclusion is formed. In other words, the general idea controls, or at least strongly influences the way we look at the particular situation.

For example, since snow-covered steps are usually slippery, we will approach any set of snow covered steps with caution - even if we have never slipped on that particular set of steps. Our general experience with snowy steps leads us to this logical and reasonable conclusion.

Deduction has a major weakness. If our general understanding is wrong, so will be our conclusion. For example, suppose a Russian hears someone talk about a doctor. In Russia, most doctors are women. Therefore, it would be logical for him to deduce that the doctor is a woman. Often, however, he will be wrong. There are also male doctors in Russia, and in some countries most doctors are men. In this case, the influence of our prior experience can often lead us in the wrong direction. We assume we know the answer, rather than continuing to look for other clues to the correct answer.

Note: Because the Word of God is so important in a Christian's life, it is important that we don't let preconceived ideas, denominational beliefs and traditional teachings on subjects determine what we think the Bible says. God is speaking to each of us in His inspired, perfect Word. It is the only book in the world, in all of history that is "alive". We want to read it, study it, with a heart that says, "Holy Spirit, You and You only be my Teacher". He will amaze you with the

truth that He gives you individually when we go to His Word from the next approach - Inductive Reasoning.

B. Inductive Approach

The inductive method is superior to the deductive method because it makes the Scriptures the authority, rather than our understanding. It is also better because it matches the process of understanding and applying biblical principles to our lives. As we study the Bible, we look at how God dealt with people in a particular situation, at a particular time, and in a particular culture. Our task is to take these facts and to form from them a biblical principle. We then translate that principle into our equivalent situation so that we can correctly apply it to our lives. The process of the inductive Bible study method is therefore:

- **Observation** of the facts in the Scriptural context.
- **Interpretation** to find the principle that the passage teaches.
- **Application** of the principle to equivalent situations in our lives.

1. Observation: What does it say? The FACTS.

The key to this step is to ask an endless series of questions such as “Who?, What?, Why?, Where?, When?, etc.” These questions help us focus on what the Bible says, rather than bringing our ideas to it. We also look closely at the context of the verse, paragraph, chapter, and book to discover and understand the situation in which it was written. At this stage, it is very important not to interpret or apply the text.

For example:

- Who are the persons mentioned in the passage?
- Who is the author speaking to?
- What event is taking place?
- What is the theme of the paragraph?
- What do the preceding verses talk about?

2. Interpretation: What does it mean? PRINCIPLE.

Prayer, sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and practice are necessary in order to develop the ability to sift through all the facts from the observation stage, identify the most important ones and understand the main message of the passage.

What subject is the author writing about?

What is he saying about that subject?

General Principles of Biblical Interpretation:

- The Bible is the authoritative Word of God.
- The Bible is its own best interpreter, reflecting the character of God.
- Saving faith and the Holy Spirit are necessary to understand the Scriptures.
- You should interpret history, actions, attitudes, personal experience, etc., in the light of Scripture and not Scripture in the light of these things.

The primary purpose of the Bible is not to increase our knowledge, but to change our lives.

3. Application: What should I do? TASK.

Application should always be made to oneself, rather than only to others. If we do not apply the scriptures to ourselves first, we become hypocrites. Whatever we teach others should always flow out of what we have already learned and applied in our own life.

An important point is to make sure that our context is the same as the original context. We cannot, and must not apply a message given to biblical characters to our own lives unless our situation is equivalent. Therefore, much of the application stage consists of asking “What in my life is similar to the situation described in the passage?”

A significant question during this stage of study is: What did this message mean to the original audience?

Application Topics:

- **Faith:** What can I learn about personal faith?
- **Attitudes:** What attitudes are good or bad? What are their results? How can I change negative ones?
- **Actions:** What should I start doing? What should I stop doing?
- **Sins:** What sin(s) have been pointed out to me? How can I right things with God/others?

General Questions to Ask:

- Is there an example for me to follow?
- Is there a sin to avoid?

- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there a prayer to repeat?
- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a condition to meet?
- Is there a verse to memorize?
- Is there a challenge to face?
- What does the teaching of this verse say to me about my personal relationship with God, the Creator?
- What does this verse say to me personally about my call to ministry?
- What does this verse say personally to me about God's will for my life?

II. BIBLE HELPS

First of all, nothing can take the place of your Bible. There are many choices regarding publishers and version. We recommend a Study Bible with a concordance and footnotes. Here are a few ideas. Note that this list is not all-inclusive:

- Life Application Study Bible (KJV, NKJV, NIV)
- Nelson's Study Bible (KJV, NKJV)
- The Open Bible - Study Edition (KJV, NKJV)
- The Scofield Study Bible (KJV)
- Thompson Chain Reference Bible (KJV, NIV, NKJV)

There are many tools and helps that can assist in the process of interpretation. These include:

Commentaries - A Commentary provides a deeper explanation or comments about the scriptures. Commentaries explain a verse in more detail than the average Bible notes. Many bibles have some commentary at the bottom of the pages.

***Caution about commentaries:** A commentary can assist you in finding background information, scripture cross references, and even interpretation...but remember that a commentary is NOT the inerrant Word of God. It is a man's interpretation of the Word of God and is subject to that man's possible pre-held position of the scripture.

Handbooks - A handbook gives you more information about the people, places, and customs of the bible. Some recommendations are:

- Haley's Bible Handbook,
- Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary
- Holman's Bible Handbook and
- Holman Bible Dictionary.

Dictionaries - Sometimes it helps to have a regular dictionary available when you encounter words that you don't understand or just want a better understanding of what the word/s mean.

Concordance - This enables the reader to locate almost any scripture passage in the Bible. The best is The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible.

Greek and Hebrew Lexicons: A Lexicon is a type of dictionary that helps the user develop a better understanding of the original *Greek or Hebrew* word. A Lexicon uses the Strong's reference numbers to identify and define the term.

Cross Reference: Usually found in the margin of your bible, they give a reference of other scripture with the same theme as the verse you are reading.

The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge - This tool gives you a cross reference of a *phrase of a verse*, with the same or similar theme of the phrase in question. (Ex: John 1:1 "In the beginning", references to Gen 1:1 "In the beginning")

Internet Study Helps: If you use a computer and have access to the internet, then you have a virtual biblical study library at your disposal. Most of the above mentioned study helps are available for use. A few recommendations are:

www.studylight.org
www.blueletterbible.org

***Caution about internet study:** A search engine is a wonderful tool, but it can lead you to unsound doctrine: *Anyone can put their opinion on the internet*. Just because you read something on a web site does not mean it is truth! If you stay with known, trusted authors and study helps, you will avoid the pitfalls of unscriptural teaching and doctrine.

These are tools to help you understand the Bible; but these tools should not replace your applying the steps of observation, interpretation and application. *They should not do the work for you!*

III. SIMPLE STEPS

Find a place to start

Perhaps start where the pastor is currently teaching, where you can read ahead before the scripture is taught. If you have never studied before on your own, a good place to start would be the book of John and get to know Your Redeemer, Father and Friend in a deeper way. Most bibles have, at the beginning of the

books of the Bible, the historical and informational facts that will help you understand the author, date, setting, theme, and background information of that book.

Observation

- **Commit a time (preferably in the beginning of your day) to be alone with the Lord daily.**
- **Pray before you open the Word of God.** Ask the Holy Spirit, who teaches us all things we need to know, to teach you personally what He has for you that day.
- **Read** through the chapter, even several chapters, to get a feel for the overall message. Then, read a small portion of the chapter and meditate on it. Read over anything that you found unclear or interesting. Then continue to read the entire chapter.
- **Write down** some of the answers to the questions you should ask. Who, What, When, Where, etc.

Interpretation

- **Look up the cross - references** for specific verses that God makes jump off the page to you. Begin to ask and pray regarding what does the author mean? What spiritual principles/doctrines are being taught?
- **Look up** any words that seem to be key words—what is the meaning of the word?
- **Read** the notes at the bottom of the page of your Study Bible. This can also be a time when you look at other Bible helps and define terms, etc.

Application

- **Seek to know the author**, which is our Lord, of the pages more than gathering the facts. Knowledge is good, but we want to know the person, not just the facts. What message does My Lord want to teach me that I can apply to my life to be more like Himself.
- **Close in prayer** for God to help you apply what He spoke to your heart. Praise Him for His Word that is living and active in your life. Confess your sins to Him as He reveals them and lay them at His feet. There is no condemnation in Christ, but humbling ourselves before Him in our weakness brings forgiveness, power and victory. Ask Him for what you need and for Him to guide your day moment by moment. Pray for those Christians that He brings to your mind and heart.

Don't rush God. He says for us to be still and know that He is God. Allow at least 30 minutes to an hour to really study and pray. A devotional and quick prayer is a great place to start with the Lord but this will only grow you to a point. We need to seek Him for ourselves and let His truths become personal to us. Then no one or no circumstance will ever be able to take them away from

us...because they did not come from man but from God Himself through His Pure Word.

IV. CLOSING

As we focus on the Word of God, the effect He will have in our lives is incredible. As we meditate on it, it empowers us. It's like the old computer saying, "GIGO" garbage in-garbage out. Whatever we put into our hearts will come out in our lives. As we feed on the Word of God, it is going to come right back out in our lives.

But, for this to become real to us personally and not just hearsay, we have to study the Word of God. It is life changing for us to discover for ourselves that the Word is the source of truth, the source of happiness, the source of victory, the source of growth, the source of power and the source of guidance.

ABOUT PASTOR DAVID

I grew up in Illinois; my wife, Brenda, in Oregon. It was a path of many twists and turns to get the two of us connected in California! We entered into our marriage covenant in 1986 after she had agreed to my proposal for a life of adventure. Brenda claims that she scarcely comprehended the adventure that our life would be simply by saying those two little words (I do).



We had both been Christians for a number of years and determined to make God the center of our marriage. In order to make a good beginning, we structured our wedding vows around the instructions of Scripture. We are convinced that this is the reason for our successful, growing relationship.

I received my BS in Civil Engineering in 1966 from the University of Missouri. Having taken ROTC in college, I next served as an officer in the U.S. Army, stationed in Germany.

After returning home to the states, I attended Golden Gate Seminary in California and received a Master of Divinity in 1972.

I worked for three Engineering companies before settling in with GE Nuclear Energy in San Jose, California. I finished my engineering career with 25 years of service at GE.

I was ordained a minister of the gospel in 1991.

Brenda is blessed with musical gifts and has played numerous instruments, e.g. bassoon, flute, guitar, piano, bass. She taught piano to children for 14 years until our move to Wilmington, NC. I also had some musical inclinations, growing up in a musical family in which everyone played at least one instrument. Brenda also has a heart for and is involved in a local "Special Touch" ministry, a ministry to people with disabilities.

Several years ago, we began attending Calvary Chapel San Jose, CA where Don McClure was pastoring. The emphasis on God's Word and the presence of God's Spirit in the worship kept us coming back until we felt confident that this was to be our church home.

Brenda became involved with the Praise team playing flute and singing. She also led the worship for two Women's Bible studies. I became involved in the teaching ministry working principally with the mature adults class (ages around 50-95, they called themselves the "Sonshiners") and also a young married couples class.

Even though we felt like we were settling into the San Jose Fellowship, in early 2004 we were presented with a company relocation, and we began to feel that God was leading us to a significant change, relocating from the West Coast to the East Coast. Little did we know what was in store for us in Wilmington, NC.

We often felt like Abraham who was told to leave his homeland but was given no information regarding what he would encounter when he arrived at his destination.

The next very shocking surprise was my early retirement, something we had not even considered when planning the move to the east coast. Nevertheless, God made it very clear that my engineering career of 37 years was soon to be ended. The retirement occurred almost 5 years in advance of my plan. But God had a bigger (and better) plan. One of my reoccurring supplications to God has been that I would rather be expending the main energy of my life teaching the Word of God than pouring it into the management of engineering projects and writing technical engineering reports. Now, God was giving me the desire of my heart.

I eventually came on staff with a local church and served for 7½ years as an associate pastor teaching Bible studies and ministering principally in the Equipping the Saints ministry. Brenda was involved in several ministries... Praise Team, Special Touch, hospitality/helps, Home Fellowships, to mention a few.

After a 1-year sabbatical in 2014, God has led us to begin a new fellowship which is called Safe Haven Berean Fellowship. Our focus is principally on the Word of God, with both Bible book studies and doctrinal teachings in progress at this time. Principal focuses are on the assurance of salvation, knowing what God in Christ has done for us, learning to live in a way that honors and glorifies God, and a continual focus upon our End Times preparations for our coming King.

Looking back now over the years that led us to this place in life, we are amazed at the Sovereignty of God and how he has orchestrated the events that have brought us to this place in this time. His loving and merciful hand has been seen time and again as he has opened doors and brought us quickly to where He wants us to be. He is, without question, an awesome God.

A painting of a ship on a stormy sea with a white text box overlaid. The text box contains the following text:

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