

WALKING IN CHRIST

DISCIPLESHIP BOOK FOR NEW CONVERTS

Apostolic Christian Church

(Nazarean)



THE PATH OF THE JUST IS AS THE SHINING LIGHT, THAT SHINETH MORE
AND MORE UNTO THE PERFECT DAY. (PROV 4:18)

This book belongs to: _____

Feedback comments, corrections, and suggestions for improvement are welcomed for future editions. Please email Dan Tomic at dan.corina.t@gmail.com

Each lesson contains 2 parts:

1. Worksheet page(s)

- **For converts** – These are designed to get you thinking about the topic, and how it applies to you personally. Please complete the worksheet before the lesson is taught. Take your time and allow the Lord to speak to you as you meditate and write down your thoughts. (Point form answers are fine.) Some of the questions may be discussed in the class, but generally this is for your personal benefit. If you are stuck on something, do not hesitate to ask someone else to help you.
- **For teachers** – Please review this and consider discussing select portions of the worksheet as part of your lesson.

2. Lesson ideas page(s)

- **For teachers** – Please review this as part of your lesson preparation. It is not required that you cover every point listed. Rather, these are ideas intended to help stimulate your personal preparation. Also, point to relevant sections of the “We Believe” document, and “Statement of Faith and Covenant of Fellowship” pamphlet (identified as SOF, COF). (Converts should be given a copy of these along with this discipleship book). Feel free to use additional resources for ideas as well (some suggestions are listed at the end of this booklet). Above all, pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that the class is engaged in an inspiring, relevant, and stimulating discussion about the topic.
“Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” (2 Cor. 3:6)
- **For converts** – These lesson ideas can be used as a guide for personal study at any time, present or future. You are also encouraged to take notes during the class (space is provided on the back of every page) to which you can refer back to as you review this from time to time.

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. 1 Peter 2:2

He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 1 John 2:6

Contents

My Testimony

Pre-Baptism Classes:

1. Salvation
2. God's Word
3. Prayer
4. Doctrine, Traditions and Church Order
5. Baptism weekend preparation

Post-Baptism Classes:

6. Victorious Christian Living
7. Walking in the Spirit, with His fruit and Gifts
8. Christian Service
9. Witnessing
10. Fellowship and Building Spiritual Relationships
11. Christian Purity & Liberties
12. Getting Through the Wilderness

Appendices

- A. Suggested resources

Baptism Date: _____

Names of others baptized with you: _____

My Personal Testimony

You are encouraged to write down your personal testimony. You will share your testimony with the Church on the weekend of your baptism and will have many opportunities to share your testimony throughout your life and now is a good time to begin preparing and learning how to do this more effectively.

Read Acts 26 and see how the Apostle Paul shared "his story". Here are some thoughts & suggestions to help you organize "your story":

- 1. Describe what your life was like before you met Christ, such as:**
 - a. Living in sin, selfishness, rebellion.
 - b. Or if you were a "good person", explain this is not good enough to receive eternal life. "All have sinned...." Romans 3:10-12, 23
 - c. Lacking joy, peace, fulfillment
 - d. Tried being a "good person" on your own, but failed
 - e. Fear of eternal death
 - f. Missed the purpose for which God created you (His glory)
- 2. Describe what you experienced during conversion, such as:**
 - a. How God called you, how you felt, what you did about it
 - b. Share some struggles during repentance (ie: Had no power to do it on your own – needed God's power)
 - c. Share some victories & how it felt to be forgiven & have peace
 - d. Saved by Grace, cleansed by the Blood of Jesus
- 3. Describe what your life is like after conversion, such as:**
 - a. "I am a new person" (2 Cor. 5:17)
 - b. New hopes & dreams, purpose, priorities & passions
 - c. Victory over sin, but not perfect
 - d. Joy of eternal life, no fear of eternal death

The above are just some suggestions. It is important that "your story" be just that – your personal story, and not copied from someone else or a standard pattern. It does not have to be told exactly the same each time, rather it is more effective to share or emphasize the portions that may be more applicable to the situation at hand. The more often you share it, the more comfortable and natural you will become in doing so. Ask the Holy Spirit to provide the motivation and inspiration for this.

You can write it by hand on the following pages, or if you prefer to type it on the computer, you can print it out and attach it to this booklet.

[illegible]

Salvation (Worksheet)

1. Someone who has experienced Salvation is (mark **T**True or **F**False):
___ Justified (Rom 5:1)
___ Still living under the power of sin
___ Perfect and never sins
___ Still possessing the “old self”
___ Never experiencing hardship in life
___ Obligated to obey the Holy Spirit
2. Can't I have a personal relationship with God apart from Jesus Christ? Explain. (John 3:19; 10:9; 14:6; Acts 4:10-12)
3. I am not as bad as others and therefore God chose me over them to be saved. True:___ or False:___ Explain. (Romans 3:9-18; Eph. 2:4-10)
4. What are some pre-requisites for Salvation? Explain. (Mark 1:4-5,15; Romans 10:9-10)
5. Look up the following words in the Bible, Dictionary and a Bible Dictionary and be prepared to discuss their meaning in class:
 - a. Ransom -
 - b. Redeem -
 - c. Remission -
 - d. Atonement -
 - e. Propitiation -

Salvation – Lesson Ideas

Objective: To ensure a good understanding of the essence of salvation.

Reference: SOF #4, 6, 7, 8, 10

1. Essence of Salvation

- a. God begins the work by calling (John 6:37, 65; 12:32)
 - b. All have sinned. Romans 3:10-12, 23.
 - c. Faith in Jesus Christ
 - i. Because we can't see Him physically, we must have faith (Heb. 11:6; John 20:26-31)
 - ii. Firm belief that Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 8:37)
 - iii. Faith that Jesus is the only way (John 3:16; Acts 4:10,12)
 - d. Justified by Faith (Romans 3:21-28; 4:1-11; 5:1. Gen. 15:6)
 - e. Grace and the Blood of Christ
 - i. Saved by Grace through Faith (Eph. 2:4-5, 8)
 - ii. Jesus paid the ransom to redeem us (Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:5-6)
 - iii. Atonement (Romans 5:11) pay for our sins
 - iv. Propitiate (Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10) make merciful
 - v. Remission (Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:22) pardon, payment
 - f. Repentance
 - i. Recognition and Godly sorrow for sins committed (2 Cor. 7:9-10)
 - ii. A complete change of heart, mind, desires, ambitions (Psalm 51:10, Romans 12:2, 2 Cor. 5:17)
 - g. Confession of sins & restitution (fruit of repentance Matt. 3:7-8)
 - i. Confession that you are a sinner (Luke 18:13) and confession of specific sins (Matt. 3:6; Luke 15:18)
 - ii. Confession required to receive forgiveness (1 John 1:9; Prov 28:13)
 - iii. Includes confession to man, especially to those whom you have sinned against, and do what you can to restore the loss or broken relationship (Luke 19:8; Romans 12:18; Matt. 5:23-24)
- 2. Assurance and Hope** – combat doubts such as “Can I remain faithful?”
Inspire confidence in God's keeping power.
- a. Assurance - John 10:27-29; Romans 8:35-39; Phil. 1:6
 - b. Hope - Heb. 6:18-19; 1 Peter 1:3
- 3. Cost, commitment, and rewards of being a disciple**
- a. Cost: Matt. 16:24; Luke 14:26, 33.
 - i. Why is there a cost if Jesus already paid for our sins?
 - b. Commitment: Luke 9:62; John 8:31
 - c. Rewards: 1 Cor. 2:9; Rev 22:14

God's Word (Worksheet)

1. What are the different ways, methods, occasions where you can expose yourself to the Word of God? List as many as you can think of:
2. The 1st point in our Statement of Faith is: “We believe that the Bible has been inspired by God, and is the complete and infallible Word of God.” 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20; Rev. 22:18-19. In your own words explain:
 - a. Inspired by God:
 - b. Complete Word of God:
 - c. Infallible Word of God:
3. Read Romans 10:17 and Heb. 4:2. What can you do to increase your faith in order to receive more benefit from reading the Word?
4. Memorize Psalm 119:11 (hopefully you already know it). List several ways in which you can “hide” (safely store) God's Word in your heart (and mind):
5. Psalm 1:2; 19:7-11; 119:16 all contain expressions of love & delight for the Word. Reading & studying the Word is not intended to become “boring” or “drudgery”. How can you increase your love and delight in the Word of God?

God's Word – Lesson Ideas

6. Read the parable of the sower and the seed in all 3 places that it is recorded: Matt. 13:3-23, Mark 4:3-20, Luke 8:5-15. Write personal examples of how you might be affected by what Jesus is teaching in this parable, and what you can do to fight against Satan's "attack" in each area:
 - a. Satan steals the Word as soon as you hear/read it or because you didn't understand it. (*personal example: This can happen to me during personal Bible study time by being distracted. Therefore I will choose a quiet place and time when my mind is most clear. If I find myself becoming distracted, I will ask God to take my mind off the distraction and become more focused.*) Write your own example here:
 - b. No root, so you become easily offended or discouraged or fall to temptation: *This can happen to me.....*
 - c. The Word is choked by the cares, riches, lusts, & pleasures of this life: *This can happen to me.....*
 - d. What can you do to ensure your heart is "good ground"?

Objective: To inspire the convert to grow in hunger, love and delight for the Word.

Reference: SOF #1, COF #9

3. The Bible is the most fantastic, unique book ever printed

- d. Revelation from God, written by man (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21)
- e. 66 books, written by 40 authors, over a period of 1500+ years
- f. Addresses many aspects of life with perfect unity and with common theme of God's redemption plan for mankind
- g. Infallible, Inerrant, Authoritative, Complete
- h. The Word = God = Jesus (John 1:1, 14)

4. Personal devotions & meditations

- a. Ask God to give you a hunger for His Word
- b. Commune with God through reading and deep thinking about what you are reading and how it applies to your life.
- c. Growing in God's Word. 1 Peter 2:2

5. Bible reading & study methods

- a. Memorize verses, take notes, topical study, character study, book study, read through the bible. Psalm 119:11
- b. Encourage KJV. Other translations can be helpful (use with discretion). Know the KJV well; use it in church & Bible studies.
- c. Know the difference between a translation and a paraphrase
- d. Listen to the Bible on CD

6. Effective use of study resources

- a. Types of Bibles, examples: Chain reference Bible, Nave's Topical Bible, Study Bibles, Reese Chronological Bible (every verse in the Bible arranged in Chronological order), many others.
- b. Dictionaries, Concordances, Commentaries, Devotionals
- c. Caution: notes/commentaries can be helpful, but in all cases they are man's work, not God's Word.

7. Discuss overcoming obstacles to the above

- a. Too busy, distracted, lazy, lack of desire, hard to understand what is being read, hard to see that what I read is relevant for my life, etc.
- b. Media (internet, TV, radio, DVDs, video games, novels, magazines, newspaper)
- c. Usually HARD WORK. Diligence pays off.

8. Claiming God's promises for the believer. Get in tune with specific scriptures that contain personal, positive promises. (Consider memorizing some of these):

- a. Exceeding, great, precious promises (2 Peter 1:3-8)
- b. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Hebrews 13:5)
- c. Answered prayer (John 14:13-14; 15:7)
- d. Peace (Isaiah 26:3, John 14:27)
- e. Rest (Matthew 11:28)
- f. Forgiveness (1 John 1:9, Proverbs 28:13)
- g. Keep you from falling (Jude 1:24, John 10:27-29, Romans 8:31-39)
- h. Wisdom (James 1:5)
- i. Comfort (John 14:16-18)
- j. Love, Joy (John 15:9-11)

Prayer (Worksheet)

1. Begin by reading Matt. 6:5-15 and Luke 18:1-14
2. How would you describe in your own words what an effective, fervent prayer life is?
3. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24). How would this statement apply to prayer?

1. Luke 18:10-14 identifies 2 opposite attitudes we can have when coming to God in prayer. In the chart below, list some ways or examples that you might demonstrate each of these 2 attitudes in your own personal prayer life.

-------	-------

Prayer – Lesson Ideas

2. Compare these scriptures:
 - a. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. (Matt. 6:7)
 - b. And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. (Luke 18:1)
 - c. Pray without ceasing. (1 Thess. 5:17)
3. Does this mean long prayers are a bad idea? _____
4. In your own words, describe or give examples of what you think “vain repetitions” means.
5. Compare Matt. 6:8 to Matt. 7:7-12. If God knows all our needs before we ask Him, why bother praying at all?
6. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. (James 5:16) List some things, attitudes, or habits, that could make your prayers:

Less effective	More effective

Reference: COF #3, 8

1. **Why pray?**
 - a. That’s how we communicate with God
 - b. It’s part of walking with God (Gen. 5:24; 6:9)
 - c. Jesus prayed often. He is our example.
 - d. Scriptural commandment (Luke 18:1; 1 Thess. 5:17)
2. **Purpose, attitude & motives of prayer (Matt. 6:5-6, Luke 18:10-14):**
 - a. For show, because someone is watching you or expecting you to pray?
 - b. So you can tell God what to do? Remind God how good you are?
 - c. Because it is routine, or habit?
 - d. Because you want to talk to God, desire to be close to Him, express your feelings, desires, longings, wants, hurts.
 - e. Humility & reverence before God.
 - f. Ask in faith, with confidence because Jesus is our intercessor (Matt. 21:21-22; Heb. 4:16)
3. **Ideas from the Lord’s Prayer (Matt. 6:5-13):**
 - a. Atmosphere of dedicated prayer time: private, quiet, free from distraction.
 - b. No need for fancy words. Speak from your heart.
 - c. Honour God, includes thanks, praise
 - d. Express submission to His Will
 - e. Confession, repent, ask for attitude to forgive others
 - f. Request protection, guidance
4. **If you come to God with the right attitude, is there any need, problem, issue, thing you cannot pray for?**
 - a. Talk to God about your feelings, problems, challenges, joys, sorrows, friends, other people.
 - b. Spiritual requests: for leading, guidance, wisdom, understanding. (James 1:5)
 - c. “Earthly” requests: school situations, job/career, money, food, shelter, clothing.
 - d. Intercession for others: salvation, family members, leadership (1 Tim. 2:1-2), for the sick, “Enemies” (Matt. 5:44), etc.
5. **Examine 1 Sam. 12:23 & discuss how this statement might apply to us.**

Doctrine, Traditions & Church Order (Worksheet)

6. Practical ideas of how/when/where you can pray:

- a. While walking, working, driving, sitting, standing, kneeling, laying.
- b. Alone or take opportunities to pray together when you are with friends/believers, while traveling, visiting, etc.

7. Fasting

- a. Expectation that Jesus disciples will fast (Matt. 6:16-18 – “when ye fast”, not if)
- b. Certain spiritual power comes from prayer with fasting (Matt. 17:19-21; Mark 9:29)
- c. Examples of fasting: Matt. 4:1-2; Acts 13:1-3; 14:23

1. Look up the word “doctrine” in the dictionary and paraphrase the definition:
2. Titus 1:9 and 2:1 indicates sound (or good) doctrine is important. Why is sound doctrine important?
3. Mark each statement T rue or False, according to Biblical Doctrine:
 - Repentance is necessary before one is baptized. (Acts 2:38; Luke 3:7-8)
 - Baptism is optional. (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21)
 - After one is saved, it is impossible for them to fall away and lose their salvation. (John 15:1-6; Heb. 6:4-6; Rev. 3:5)
 - There is always doubt in the mind of a believer if he/she is really saved. (John 10:14, 27-30; 1 John 3:14; Romans 8:9, 16)
 - The Bible might have errors in it, so therefore it cannot always be trusted. (John 1:14; Heb. 1:1-2; 2 Tim 3:16)
 - Jesus also sinned like a man. (Heb. 4:14; 2 Cor. 5:21)
 - Humans are basically good, just sometimes they do evil things. (Ecc 7:20; Romans 3:12, 23)
 - Because we are saved by grace, living a holy life is optional. (1 Peter 1:15; Romans 12:1-2; Eph. 2:8-10)
 - Because “science” has determined that homosexual orientation is genetic, God will not condemn a person who practices such. (Lev. 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9)
 - Good Christians are always perfect & never sin. (1 John 1:8, James 5:16)
 - Serious sexual sins, such as sex outside of marriage, require excommunication from the church. (1 Cor. 5:1-13)
 - After one is excommunicated from the church, they are automatically condemned to hell, so they might as well enjoy the pleasures of sin as much as they can. (1 Cor. 5:5, 2 Cor. 2:1-11, 1 John 2:1-2, Rev. 2:18-22)

4. Compare each pair of statements and indicate which one is more correct, according to Biblical Doctrine:

___ We are saved by grace, through faith, so works are irrelevant.	___ We are saved by grace, through faith, and works demonstrate our faith.
___ Jesus accepts every sinner, just as they are, and transforms them into a new person.	___ Jesus accepts every sinner, just as they are.
___ The teaching against fraternizing with Christians of another denomination is a good practical application of the Bible's teachings on unity, accountability and discernment..	___ The Bible teaches that fraternizing with Christians of another denomination is a sin.
___ We believe that Christians should not kill another person because Jesus said "Love your enemies".	___ We believe that Christians should not kill another person because of the commandment "Thou shalt not kill".

5. List a few points in our Statement of Faith that are not commonly held by modern Christianity.
6. Pick one item of Church order in your local church and list or describe how this benefits the Church. (Church order is another way of saying "the way we do things").

Doctrine, Traditions and Church Order – Lesson Ideas

Objective: Familiarize the convert with definitions of the above, as well as specific doctrines and local church order.

References:

- SOF #5, 11, 12, 18;
- "Customs, Tradition & Culture and the Bible", article published by Truth for our Time in *The Messenger*, Oct 2010
- "Fraternization Revisited" essay by Bro Mark Igic
- "Try the Spirits – Learn to Discern II" 2001 camp forum by Bro Doug Savin and Edmund Reinhardt (PowerPoint)

1. Definitions, as applied in our context (there is often some overlap between these terms):

- Doctrine** – an established set of teachings we believe from Scripture
- Tradition** – that which is has been handed down to us; how we practically live out our doctrine (i.e. our position of non fraternizing is a tradition based on the biblical teachings of unity, accountability, and discernment).
- Church Order** – practical formats of how we do things (see below for examples).
- NOTE:** Believing the right doctrines, and obeying the traditions and church order is not sufficient by itself to please God – we must have a close, personal walk with Jesus (i.e. abide in Him, John 15).

2. Explain the points in the Statement of Faith which not covered by other pre & post lessons:

- #5 – Bodily resurrection** (Luke 24:36-43). A "spirit-only" resurrection would have been much easier for the apostles to claim, because it would be harder for the skeptics to refute. Easy to refute a bodily resurrection – just produce the dead body as evidence.
- #11 – Oaths.** Commanded by Jesus not to wear oaths. Thankfully in our country we can "affirm". Check legal documents before you sign... "sworn..."
- #12 – Non violence, peace teachings of Jesus.** Matt 5:9,21-22,38-48
 - This doctrine is a major one that makes us unique among many other Christian denominations.
 - The first 300 years of Christianity believed this. Emperor Constantine started to change this thinking.
 - Many other Christians have never even heard of this perspective. Many believe in "Just War" or "Violence for self defense", etc.

- iv. Also known as Pacifist – comes from peace, not “passive”.
 - v. Peace as a “means” and an “end”, vs. using violence as means to enforce peace.
 - vi. Contrast Romans 12:17-21 with Romans 13:1-7. (Government is given the authority to use the sword, but we as Christians cannot participate in this)
 - vii. Apply the peace teachings of Jesus in every day life with conflicts with brethren in church, neighbours, “enemies”, etc.
- d. **#18 – Head covering**
- i. A doctrine that is no longer commonly practiced among Christians. In previous generations it was almost universally practiced among most denominations.
 - ii. It is not sufficient to merely practice this outwardly – a submissive heart is what pleases God.
- e. **Other expressions of biblical doctrinal that we feel are important and may be somewhat unique to our fellowship:**
- i. Emphasis of inner adornment and an avoidance of outward adornment. 1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:3-4, and “We Believe” #2.2. (Be aware we may be wearing “no jewelry or makeup”, but still be overly adorned in our clothing and accessories. Let’s obey the spirit of these scriptures, not just a specific application)

3. Explain some traditions that are unique to our fellowship:

- a. Non fraternizing (this may also be in the “Fellowship” Lesson)
- b. Giving a testimony to the church before baptism
- c. The Holy Kiss and Greetings
- d. Congregational singing in 4 part harmony

4. Explain denominational and local church order and its benefits.

- a. Things such as order of worship; testimonies; baptisms; communion; choirs; youth, couple’s, evangelistic meetings; members’ meetings; singings, etc.
- b. While these practices support our faith, our faith is not built on these. Seek to develop a mature walk with Christ, so that when we visit another church in our fellowship that has a different order, or when some of these practices change in our local church, our Faith is not easily shaken.

Baptism Weekend Preparation – Lesson Ideas

Objective: To familiarize the convert with what to expect on the baptism weekend

Reference: (SOF #9, 13, 17)

- a. Practical overview of what will take place over the weekend.
- b. Giving a testimony before the church (share your experience, don’t confess sins publicly)
- c. Baptism of Water
- d. Laying on of hands
- e. Communion (what it means, how we practice it, why only members within ACC)
- f. Encouragement beyond the weekend (this is a new beginning, not an end point)

Victorious Christian Living (Worksheet)

1. In your own words, describe what you think it means to be a Victorious Christian? If someone was watching a victorious Christian, what would he see?

2. What is the benefit of being tempted and overcoming? (James 1:12)

3. One way to be victorious over temptation is to avoid it (Prov. 4:14-15). What are some places and situations you will need to avoid personally to ensure that you are an overcomer?

4. Once we become a Christian, does this mean we never sin again?

5. In your own words, describe what you think it means to be free from sin. (Romans 6:2, 16-22; 1 John 1:9-2:6; 3:6-10)

6. Read Prov. 28:13, 1 John 1:9, James 5:16.
 - a. When we sin, what is our natural tendency to do?

 - b. What should we do with our sins, faults, mistakes?

7. From the scriptures (1 John 3:4, James 4:17, 1 Sam. 12:23, Matt. 25:41-45) we learn that there are 2 main types or classifications of sin. In the chart below list some examples of each type that you might sometimes struggle with personally.

Sins of Commission (doing something wrong)	Sins of Omission (failing to do what is right)

8. Describe what you think “a clear conscience” means.

9. If/when Satan would harass you with doubts about whether you were really saved or not, or whether you can remain faithful until the end, what scripture verses would you use to answer him?

Victorious Christian Living - Lesson Ideas

Objective: To appreciate the power and resources God has available for us to live a victorious life.

Reference: SOF #16

Key passage: Eph. 6:10-18

Verse 12: Recognize the Enemy (2 Cor. 2:11, John 10:10, John 8:44)

Verse 14a & 17: Truth & the Sword of the Spirit

- a. What is Truth and why is it important? John 14:6; 8:31-32
- b. Know the Bible well. That's how you will recognize false ideas, wrong motives, attitudes, etc.
- c. Like a skillful swordsman, use the Bible appropriately and effectively. Don't slash it around like a wild swordsman, can cause a lot of unnecessary damage.

Verse 14b: Breastplate of Righteousness

- a. Not our own righteousness Phil. 3:9
- b. Rev. 12:10 – Satan will accuse you falsely to try to make you feel guilty unnecessarily.
- c. A good, clear, pure conscience: 1 Tim. 1:18-19; 2 Tim. 1:3; Acts 24:16

Verse 15: Gospel of Peace

- a. Spreading the Gospel is one way of advancing and overcoming enemy territory 1 Peter 3:15, Eph. 6:19

Verse 16: Shield of Faith

- a. Temptation is one type of “fiery dart”. Three defenses to overcoming temptation:
 - i. Avoid – Prov. 4:14-15
 - ii. Refuse & Resist – Gen. 39:7-10, James 4:7b
 - iii. Flee & escape – 2 Tim. 2:22, 1 Cor. 10:13

Verse 18: Praying Always

- a. Our level of victory is directly related to our prayer life
- b. Mark 14:27-72. Story of how Peter came to the point of denying Christ

1. In regards to sin in our life, what is the difference between a “sinner” and a “Christian”?

- a. Yielding to God vs. yielding to sin (Romans 6:16-18)
- b. No longer a slave to sin (Romans 6:14) but walking in the Spirit (Romans 6:22, Gal. 5:16-25)
- c. However, at times a Christian does sin. Avoid the false pretense that Christians never sin (1 Cor. 8:12; Heb. 12:1; James 4:17; 1 John 2:1)

2. Discuss sins of commission vs. sins of omission (1 John 3:4, James 4:17)

3. Dealing with sin:

- a. Confess, pray, accept God's cleansing, forsake (Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:9; 2:1, James 5:16)

4. Strive to stay faithful until the very end.

- a. SOF #16 – it is possible to loose our salvation.
- b. This is in contrast to a doctrine we believe is false, known as “unconditional eternal security”.

5. Assurance of salvation

- a. While it is possible to loose our salvation, God also provides full assurance so that we do not need to walk in fear or doubt if we are truly saved. (Note: this point is also covered in Pre-baptism lesson #1, but is important enough to be emphasized again)
 - i. “Was I really saved?”
 - ii. “Can I remain faithful?”
 - iii. “I'm starting to struggling (again) with this sin _____, that I had trouble with before I was converted”
 - iv. God's keeping power (Jude 1:24, John 10:27-29, Romans 8:29-39)
 - v. Persuaded (2 Tim. 1:12)
 - vi. Jesus will complete His work in you (Phil. 1:6)

Walking in the Spirit, with His fruit and Gifts (Worksheet)

- Write down the role(s) of the Holy Spirit identified in each Scripture reference below:

John 16:8 _____ John 16:13 _____

John 14:26 _____, _____, _____

1 Peter 1:2 and 2 Thess. 2:13 _____

Romans 8:26 _____

- List the fruit of the Spirit from Gal. 5:22 (this would be a good verse to memorize):

- List all the gifts of the Spirit from each of the passages (some gifts will be listed more than once):

Romans 12:6-8 (7 total)	Eph. 4:11 (5 total)	1 Cor. 12:1-11 (9 total)	1 Cor. 12:28 (8 total)

Now read 1 Peter 4:10-11. Notice how Peter describes gifts in 2 categories. This helps us to simplify things. What are the two categories and what are the stipulations when performing these gifts?

- Regardless of how many gifts we have or how great we are at exercising our gifts, 1 Cor. 13 says it is all useless if we lack _____.
- Since you likely don't know your gifts until they are actually being used there are two areas which need to be considered in order to discover your gift. First, it is logical that God would give you gifts that you take pleasure in. List things that you enjoy most doing and areas you find fulfillment in. (For example you may love to work with children or bake, landscape or passion for music.) *Remember to consider your motive for enjoying these things, if you enjoy them because of the recognition it gives you this is prideful and not from the Spirit.
- Secondly, and most importantly consider the needs that surround you, in the church, in the individual members. Consider the needs in your family, at work or school and in your community. List these needs and elaborate on what you could do to meet the needs.

7. Read Romans 8:1-9 and Gal. 5:16. In the chart below, point out examples from the lives of any 1 or 2 Bible character(s) you choose (i.e. Joseph, Samson, King Saul, King David, King Solomon, Disciples of Jesus, Saul/Apostle Paul, etc. You can use the same or a different character for each column):

Character: _____	Character: _____
Examples of when they were: “Walking in the Spirit” or “Being Spiritually minded”	Examples of when they were: “Walking in the Flesh” or “Being Carnally minded”

Now do the same thing in the chart below, from your own personal life:

Personal examples of: “Walking in the Spirit” or “Being Spiritually minded”	Personal examples of (or what I will avoid): “Walking in the Flesh” or “Being Carnally minded”

Walking in the Spirit, with His fruit and Gifts – Lesson Ideas

Objective: To learn about the role of the Holy Spirit, walking in the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit.

Reference: SOF #9

The promise of the Holy Spirit. (John 14:16, Acts 1:8.)

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The words of the song writer sums up what our prayer is for today:

"Come Holy Spirit, dark is the hour, we need your filling, your love and your mighty power. Move now among us, fill us we pray, come Holy Spirit, revive the church today."

1. Role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian

- He fills the believer, guides and comforts (John 14:16-18)
- He empowers the believer to live righteously (Gal. 5:16)
- He empowers for bold witnessing and gives us the words (Acts 1:8, Mark 13:11)
- He gives "Christian character" through the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22)
- He gives "Spiritual Gifts" to the church (1 Cor. 12)

2. Walking in the Spirit (Knowing Him personally as our abiding friend, guide and source of strength)

- He wants us to get to know Him better (John 14:17, 20)
- He will give more of Himself to us if we ask (Luke 11:13, Matt..25:1-13)
- We can commune with the Spirit in prayer and He can pray for us (Romans 8:26)
- He wants us to walk in step with Him (Gal. 5:25) (Review examples in the worksheet)
- Grow close to Him, and follow His leading, and learn to know His voice speaking to you. This is God's Will for the believer. The thoughts/ideas you hear from the Holy Spirit will be supported by:
 - God's Word (The Holy Spirit will never contradict the Bible)
 - Other mature believers
 - Spiritual leaders in your life
 - Opportunities, doors the Lord is opening or closing
 - Spiritual Gifts you have been given or will be given
- Avoid resisting, grieving, quenching the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30, Acts 7:51; 1 Thess. 5:19)

- g. Sadly, if we ignore the progression above it can lead to blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:28-29)

3. Fruit and Gifts of the Holy Spirit

- Desire to experience, grow in the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-25).
Expound on several of the fruit listed.
- Ask for and “earnestly desire” Spiritual Gifts (1 Cor. 14:1)
- How to recognize what Spiritual Gift(s) I’ve been given:
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to show you
 - Things I’m good at (or others have told me so)
 - Things I enjoy doing and feel I’m being a blessing
 - Things the Holy Spirit is inspiring & leading me to do
- Growing in my gift, practicing it is usually hard work – just because it is a gift does not mean it will always come easy. (1 Peter 4:10-11)
- Your gifts may change as you grow in Christ, and according to the needs in your church.
- Select a few gifts that you feel might be applicable for a new believer to understand better and explain them in more detail.

General Questions

- What does it mean to be Baptized and empowered with the Holy Ghost?
- What does it mean to “walk in the Spirit and we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh?”
- Do we receive the “entire portion” of the Holy Spirit when we are saved, to last a life time?
- If not how can we get more oil as time goes on? (Luke 11:13)
- Where or how do we receive more? What should we be asking for in our quiet times of prayer?
- How can any gift be discovered or developed?
- What results did outpourings of the Holy Spirit in the past have (as described by Joel 2 or Acts 2)?
- What is the result of us having powerful, personal encounters with the Holy Spirit today?
- What does it mean to resist, grieve, quench and finally blaspheme the Holy Spirit?
- How can a daily time set aside for God allow the Holy Spirit to speak, lead, fill and empower us?

Christian Service (Worksheet)

- I could be doing many great things in Christian service, but if I don’t have _____, it does me no good. (1 Cor. 13).
- Because we are saved by grace, does that mean good works are optional? Why or why not? (John 15:8-10, Eph. 2:8-10)
- Who is the owner of everything? _____ (Psalm 24:1)
- Therefore we are not owners, but _____ of things God has given us. (Luke 16:1-13)
- Read Matt. 25:14-29, Acts 4:32-37, Phil. 2:20-21. In the chart below, write down some of the things God has given you (things, money, time, abilities, resources, etc), and give an example of how that can be used for Selfish vs. God’s Kingdom purposes.

Selfish or worldly purposes	God’s Kingdom purposes

Christian Service – Lesson Ideas

6. 1 Tim. 6:18 is a charge to “be rich in good works”. What do you think is the difference between “doing good works” and “being rich in good works”?
7. Read Matt. 25:31-46 and Luke 10:25-37.
 - a. List the good works that Jesus identified.
 - b. Identify which one(s) you think are the easiest or most comfortable for you to do.
 - c. Identify which one(s) you think are the hardest for you to do, or are outside your comfort zone.
 - d. Consider which one(s) the Holy Spirit would have you begin with and write down how you could begin, what obstacles you may need to overcome, who may be able to help you move forward in this, etc.

Objective: Recognize the greatness of the harvest & inspire vision to labour in the Kingdom of God.

Reference: COF #6, 11, 12

Introduction: We are servants in the Kingdom of God. However, we live in this earthly kingdom and every day we are faced with choices that call for us to “work” in one kingdom or the other.

1. We are saved to serve

- g. Servants of God (Romans 6:22; Eph. 6:5-7)
- h. Winning the conflict between 2 masters (Matt. 6:24, Luke 16:13)

2. Good vs. bad motives to serve

- a. Because we love God (John 14:15)
- b. Because we love people (Matt. 22:37-39)
- c. NOT because we want to be seen by people (Matt. 23:5)

3. Servant attitude

- a. Great in humility (Matt. 20:25-28; 23:8-12)
- b. Example of humble service (John 13:12-17)

4. Good works

- a. Walk in good works (Eph. 2:10)
- b. Being rich in good works (1 Tim. 6:18)
- c. Good Samaritan (“go and do thou likewise”) (Matt. 25:34-36)
- d. Bearing Fruit. (Matt. 7:16-20)

5. Tithing and Giving

- a. Jesus affirmed tithing [giving 10%] (Matt. 23:23; Luke 11:42)
In the NT, we are not under the “law” of the tithe. Giving is taught:
- b. As love in action. (1 John 3:17-18)
- c. Cheerful giving to the Lord’s work (2 Cor. 9, especially vs. 7)
- d. Looking for opportunities to give (Phil. 4:14-17; Job 29:11-16)
- e. Other ref (Mark 12:41-44; 10:21; 1 Cor. 16:1-4)

6. Discuss areas of opportunity for service in the local church

7. Being a good Steward

- a. Using what I have been blessed with to further God’s Kingdom work (money, time, abilities, resources, etc)

Witnessing (Worksheet)

1. Find at least one passage where Jesus talks about how great the harvest is and how few the workers are. _____
What is the harvest?

2. Mark each statement **T**ue or **F**alse:

- ___ The Great Commission (Matt. 28.19-20) is an optional command.
- ___ I should avoid witnessing until I know the Bible from cover to cover.
- ___ Everything I do can either be a witness FOR or AGAINST Christ.
- ___ If I am really gifted in speaking about Christ, my actions won't matter.
- ___ Every Christian is called to be an Evangelist. (Eph. 4:11)
- ___ I should only speak to people about Christ if I think they will be receptive.
- ___ The purpose of witnessing is to prove that I have the truth.
- ___ To love people as Jesus loves them is the best motivation for witnessing.
- ___ If the Holy Spirit prompts me to share Jesus with someone, and I decide not to, I have sinned. (1 Thess. 5:19; James 4:17)
- ___ I can still be a good witness, even if I don't really care about the person.
- ___ The main goal of witnessing is to persuade people to attend our church.
- ___ My personal testimony can be an excellent thing to share during witnessing.
- ___ Some Christians are more gifted than others in witnessing.
- ___ Witnessing is a gift you either have or you don't, it cannot be learned.
- ___ If I don't feel very gifted at witnessing, I should just be content with that and stop trying. (1 Peter 3:15)

At times during witnessing, the Holy Spirit may prompt you to share your personal testimony. Take some time now to meditate on your experience and how you might share that with someone.

3. One way to be an effective witness is to be prepared (1 Peter 3:15). Jot down some answers/responses to the statements below as a way of getting your preparation started:
- a. What leading questions might you ask to begin steering an ordinary conversation towards Christ?
 - b. "God can't be loving or all powerful if he does nothing to stop all the innocent suffering in this world."
 - c. "All religions are basically worshipping the same God"
 - d. "Since the Bible was written by man, how can I trust it to be the Word of God?"
 - e. "I'm not an evil person. Deep down, I'm a good person. In fact, I'm a better person than most Christians"
 - f. "How can I be saved?"

Witnessing – Lesson Ideas

Objective: Inspire vision to spread the Gospel, motivated by a divine love and compassion for sinners.

Reference: SOF #15, COF #7

1. Definition of “Witness”:

- a. To testify or give evidence of what we’ve experienced & know to be true. Acts 1:8
- b. Contrast the gift of evangelism vs. personal witnessing. Not all are called to be an evangelist (Eph. 4:11), but all are called to be witnesses for Christ (1 Peter 3:15).

2. The Great Commission (John 20:21, Matt. 28:19-20, 1 Peter 3:15)

- a. “We Believe” pg 6, 1.3: Mission of the Church
- b. How can I use my gift(s) to further the Great Commission?
- c. How much are you willing to give for the spread of the Gospel? (SOF #15).

3. Live a consistent Godly testimony in all areas of life:

- a. Words, actions, reactions, attitudes, lifestyle, appearance, etc
- b. In all places/situations: home, school, work, church, playing (ie. sports & games), vacationing, leisure, in difficult situations, etc.
- c. Being genuine vs. being a hypocrite.
- d. If you were “accused” of being a Christian, would enough evidence in the above be easily found in your life to declare a “guilty” verdict?

4. Personal witnessing:

- a. Not being ashamed of the gospel. (Romans 1:16, Romans 5:5)
- b. Pray for and recognize opportunities to share about your faith and act when the opportunity is there. (1 Peter 3:15)
- c. Don’t overlook family & friends – you are witness for them!
- d. How to share your personal testimony effectively. Refer to “My Testimony” section at the beginning of this book.
- e. Your main motive should be love - ask God to give you love for them. The “battle” is for God to win their heart and save them from sin, not for you to win an argument that Christianity is the best religion.
- f. Use the Word of God skillfully & humbly – not slashing it around in arrogance – can create hurt and offense which hinders the Gospel.
- g. Contrast potentially competing interests that could hinder effective witnessing: (pursuits of career, leisure, comfortable living, etc)

5. How to share the essence of the Gospel in a conversation.

- a. Examples of evangelistic messages: Acts 2:23; 36-47; 17:16-34
- b. Lost in sin (Acts 2:23; 17:30; Eph. 2:1-2; James 4:17)
- c. Jesus is the only way to God (John 3:16; 14:6; Acts 2:36; 4:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:19-21)
- d. Repent, and believe in Christ as Saviour and Lord (Acts 2:36; Romans 10:9-10)
- e. Baptize with water and Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)
- f. Live in newness of life (Acts 2:42; 46-47; Romans 6:4)

6. Be aware of distractions John 4:20-24

- a. Easy to get mired into forms and distractions and miss the essence of the gospel just as the woman at the well tried to change the conversation to where to worship. Jesus quickly corrected it back to the heart issues, not outward forms.
- b. Don’t focus on what we “don’t do”: We don’t drink, smoke, date, wear jewelry, don’t pay our ministers, fraternize
- c. Don’t focus on what “we do”: i.e.: we sing 4 part harmony, we sit segregated, dress up for church, go to church 3-4 times on Sunday, mid-week, etc (Luke 18:10-14)
- d. Focus on the heart issue and ask for the Holy Spirits guidance on detecting the real issue, not just on what is being said
- e. Above all ask God to give you a genuine compassion and love for the individual. (John 13:35)

7. Keep the primary purpose in mind

- a. Goal is not necessarily to convert them to our church. While this is wonderful, most people we meet in our life may never set foot into our church. We still have an obligation with each opportunity the Lord gives us.
- b. Jesus wants us to see that our neighbours, colleagues, students, people sitting next to us in the bus or plane as divine appointments and not as interruptions.
- c. Goal is to share the gospel and that our words are full of grace and truth (John 1:14; 17; 2 Cor. 5:20)

Fellowship and Building Spiritual Relationships (Worksheet)

1. Is forsaking the assembling of ourselves together something that only applies to Sunday services? Explain.
2. List ways that we can have fellowship, encourage one another and build strong spiritual relationships and friendships. Take some time now to pray about which one(s) the Lord wants you to practice more.
3. What are practical ways that James 5:16 (confess your faults.. pray one for another) is done in our lives? Why is this important?
4. What might be some common barriers or obstacles in a Christian's life that prevent close knit fellowship? What will you do if/when you begin to see this happening in your own life?
5. What does it mean to be your brother's keeper? How does this relate to offenses, exhortation and prayer?
6. How can being part of a small fellowship group help us grow spiritually? List advantages.
7. What are some types of people we should NOT have close spiritual fellowship with? (Eph. 5:11; 2 John 1:7-11). How can we discern to allow good or wholesome influence and yet guard against dangerous influence?
8. How does a victorious, Spirit filled life relate to fellowship, mentoring and personal ministry?

Fellowship and Building Spiritual Relationships – Lesson Ideas

Objective: Inspire believers to develop deeper personal spiritual relationships & commitment to the local fellowship, building up one another in our faith.

Reference: SOF #14, COF #1, 2, 4, 5

1. Fellowship at the personal and congregational level:

- a. Attendance, contribution and commitment to the local church and denomination (Heb.10:25)
- b. Importance of small group fellowship and prayer ("Where two or three are gathered in my name...")
- c. The Biblical call to spiritual relationships (Gal. 6:2, 1 Thess. 5:11) "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." We need to be practicing this throughout the week.
- d. Am I my brother's keeper? Are we responsible to a point to help each other spiritually? (Gal. 6:2) "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."
- e. Exhorting and encouraging one another (Heb. 3:13) "But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
- f. Discerning the dangers of fraternizing (how to discern and guard against influences that leads to error)

2. Biblical Guidelines for relationships

- a. Dealing with Offenses (Matt 18:15-35)
- b. Being vulnerable with each other (James 5:16 - confess your faults one to another, pray one for another)
- c. Gossip vs. confidentiality (2 Thess. 3:11; 1 Tim. 5:13; 1 Peter 4:15). We need to be a "safe" person people can come and share their struggles with.
- d. Not covering or partaking in another's sin (1 Tim. 5:22)
- e. Understanding church discipline and restoration. (Matt. 18:17-18)

Christian Purity & Liberties (Worksheet)

1. There are many different expressions in Christian life. In order to discern if we should allow ourselves some liberty, what should motivate us? Choose one or more of the following:
 - a. Honouring and loving God
 - b. Because we believe it's ok to do it anyway
 - c. Obeying church rules
 - d. Not offending brothers and sisters
 - e. Personal enjoyment

2. With music, movies, reading books, etc., what are we exposing ourselves to? Read 1 John 4:1. How does John's warning about false teachers relate to this?
 - a. Consider ideas you learn in school, which may seem like a safe place, for example in a science class about evolution. What is the key to protecting ourselves from false ideas and spirits? (Prov. 3:21, Psalm 119:125)

 - b. How can we train ourselves to get better at not exposing ourselves to things that can be potentially corrupting? (Heb. 5:14)

3. Jesus sets a very high standard on the definition of sin. Are our thoughts just as important to God as our actions? Read Matt. 15:11.
 - a. Are thoughts something that can be controlled and overcome in a Christian life? (2 Cor. 10:5)

4. How does this relationship of thought and action translate into the realm of male/female relationships between brothers and sisters in the church? (Matt. 5:32, 1 Tim. 5:1-2)

5. Compare each pair of statements and indicate which one is the most correct definition according to Biblical Doctrine: (See Psalm 119:165, 1 Cor. 8:13, Matt. 18:6,7, Mark 9:47, Prov. 18:19)

___ An offense is to cause someone to sin by putting a stumbling block in front of that person through our liberty.	___ An offense means to hurt someone else's feelings.
___ People who are more mature in Christ are more easily offended.	___ Those that love God's word and law are not easily offended
___ It is very easy to win over an offended person.	___ An offended person is harder to win over than a fortified city.
___ Even if we offend someone who is weak in faith and know we are right, it is better to give up our liberty for their sake.	___ We should practice our liberty based on our own convictions and not worry about others feelings.

6. In your own words, describe what you think Apostle James means by "the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25)
 - a. What are some of the dangers we can encounter when there is too much emphasis on liberty, and not on sound doctrine or temperance? (Gal. 5:13)

 - b. Is it possible for one to go so far into sin as a Christian, by a slow process of allowing sin to harden one's heart, that God would deem it necessary to cut us off completely? (Read Heb. 10:22-27 and Heb. 12:14-17)

Christian Purity & Liberties – Lesson Ideas

Objective: To be able to discern between liberty and license, and to maintain a pure conscience towards God and peace with all men in the exercise of liberty.

Reference: COF #11

Introduction:

The topic of liberties is often a tricky area in which to discern right and wrong amid the diversity of opinions in the body of Christ. It is important to discern between non-doctrinal liberties and those that might stem from false doctrine. When we put the proper weight and emphasis on the elements of Christian life, it helps us stay humble and be graceful towards our brothers and sisters. We must see the glory of God as our main objective in all interactions.

List of main lesson points:

1. **Discerning Media:** Entertainment, video games, videos, movies, internet, public performances, music, TV, reading material, etc.

Do these things:

- a. violate the revealed will of God?
- b. demonstrate good stewardship of time and resources?
- c. positively affect my growth in Christian character?
- d. lead to the edification of my brothers and sisters?

1 Cor. 10:31 - This text is the KEY PRINCIPLE for everything that follows. Where liberties may be granted, we must remember, THE GOOD IS THE ENEMY OF THE BEST. Even if a liberty is clean and justifiable, it can lead us astray and distract us from communion with God and working for his kingdom. If something is not done for the glory of God, there is a chance it is not the best use of our time.

***Let us be careful we are not too austere and severe, however, and work from our flesh to achieve things for the Kingdom. This will merely make us critical and judgmental if we look on others with a perfectionist standard, much like the Pharisees. (Ecc. 7:16)

2. **Healthy brother/sister relationships**

1 Tim. 5:2 - Treat all brothers and sisters equally, in purity and not showing favouritism or partiality.

(as regards those who are concerned about considering marriage, see booklet “Approaching Marriage”)

3. **Purity in our thoughts and imaginations** (2 Cor. 10:5, Prov. 23:7, Phil. 2:5). Mere deliverance from the ACTS of sin in the believer’s life is not enough; we must even overcome in the inner life, in the mind and thoughts of the heart. This IS possible and should be the position of the overcoming Christian.

We must beware of pride and our view of ourselves, for it influences our view of others. (Romans 12:3, Phil. 2:3) Christ was HUMBLE (Phil. 2:5).

4. **Christian liberties**

When a liberty causes our brother to sin (the literal meaning of “offence”), it is the higher principle to “give up meat” for our brother in order not to tempt them to enter into sin against their own conscience. (1 Cor. 8:13).

*** It is essential to exercise discernment in these cases. If a brother, due to a weak conscience, disagrees with practices that are totally biblical, and wants to prevent godly behaviours due to his lack of understanding, we must first obey the Word of God, rather than simply give up that practice to avoid conflict with that brother. Instead, we speak the truth in love to help them grow to greater maturity. (Eph. 4:15)***

5. **Danger of Worldliness**

2 Cor. 6:17 – We are to be a separate people. Worldliness is a longing and a love for the world, and the things of the world. We must stay focused on the narrow way in order to avoid the temptations of the world. This requires dying to our fleshly desires and will, and following the Spirit, and seeing eternal things rather than material. (Gal. 5:25, 2 Cor. 5:1-5)

Getting Through the Wilderness (Worksheet)

1. John the Baptist prophesied that [Jesus] “shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matt. 3:11). What do you think this baptism of fire means?
2. Jesus is to be our example and pattern in all things, the forerunner of our faith and profession. What does it mean for us when you read Mark 1:12 that right after Jesus’ own baptism “...immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.”
3. Is it normal for a Christian to be tempted after their baptism, and if so, is that temptation going to be stronger or weaker than before? (Mark 1:13, Matt. 4:1-11)
4. Read Matt. 20:22-23. What is the baptism that Jesus was baptized with? In order to enter into glory, what did Jesus say must first come? (Matt. 20:17-19)

5. Jesus also refers to a “cup” that he has to drink in the previous question. What was in the cup that Jesus did not want to drink? Read Matt. 26:39.
6. Jesus’ friends abandoned him, he felt loneliness, suffering, pain, and endured God’s wrath in order to save humanity. What was his motivating factor for enduring such hardship – this should also be our motivation. (Heb. 12:2)
7. Why would God allow us to experience setbacks and seasons in the wilderness as Christians? How might these experiences bring forth more fruit for Christ’s kingdom in us, and in helping others? (Psalm 51:12-13; 2 Cor. 1:3-7)
8. What is the hope we should always keep in sight during periods of suffering, persecution, or trial? (2 Cor. 4:17, 2 Tim. 2:12)

Getting Through the Wilderness – Lesson Ideas

Objective: To understand that trials, struggles, and temptation is part of a normal Christian life, but that there is victory to overcome and God's grace is sufficient for every situation.

1. Preparation for setbacks, valley experience.

- a. These experiences are normal and natural to every Christian. Consider the Psalmist in the 23rd Psalm --- there we find the presence of the valley, the shadow of death, and the presence of many enemies.
- b. A focus on the Book of Psalms can bring great comfort, for we see deep struggles and doubts in the heart of David & others, but always a return to God's faithfulness.

Psalm 74:1-2, Psalm 38; *the entire Psalm is great example of a heart in the wilderness*

2. Suffering, baptism of fire.

- a. Jesus himself suffered being tempted in the wilderness. He returned, however, in the power of the Spirit. We must get through the wilderness weakness in order to be granted the power of the Spirit again. God will test us to see if we trust him throughout this wilderness period. (Luke 4:14)
- b. Suffering can come due to faithfulness to Christ, in the form of persecution (1 Peter 3:14-15)
- c. God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29). In order that we may receive more of HIMSELF, he will allow suffering and fiery trials to purify us. It is a symbol of his presence upon us that he allows us to suffer this way, a type of fire like himself.

3. Growing in compassion for others to help comfort them when they suffer (Psalm 51).

Many wilderness moments come due to an occurrence of sin in the life of the believer. Sin can disconnect us from relationship with God, because we know it violates his desire for us to be holy (1 Peter 1:15). When we stumble, God provides grace to heal us (1 John 1:9), in order that we may in turn guide and comfort those who have experienced similar setbacks, or other problems such as grief from the loss of a loved one, or disappointment and rejection.

4. Hope for Christ's return.

Romans 8:22-25 - We groan for our redemption, because while we live, we will always wrestle against the flesh, because the Spirit and the flesh are constantly at war (Gal. 5:17). We look for the blessed hope of Christ's return according to his promise in Phil. 3:21, when that war will end.

List of helpful resources and Recommended Further Reading

(most are available in the church library)

1. “A Bible Study on Salvation”
2. Statement of Faith and Covenant of Fellowship (pamphlet)
2. “We Believe” - document explaining ACC beliefs in detail
3. “Biblical Discipleship” lessons published by ACC Foundation
4. “My New Life in Christ” – discipleship workbook
5. “Try the Spirits – Learn to Discern II” 2001 camp forum by Bro Doug Savin and Edmund Reinhardt (PowerPoint)
6. Eastern Camp 2009 Forum: “Bold Evangelism” by Timothy Munther (Power Point presentation and audio CD/MP3)
7. “I Will Remember The Works Of The Lord” – A Historical Sketch of the Apostolic Christian Church from an address by Henry Michel at Apostolic Christian Camp 1947
8. “Stories of Faith and Courage” (book set of 3 volumes, or CD set)
9. “Fascination of the Race and other Essays”, by Benjamin L. Sommer.
10. “Approaching Marriage in Faith” - booklet
11. “Against Fraternization” – booklet
12. “Customs, Tradition & Culture and the Bible”, article published by Truth for our Time in *The Messenger*, Oct 2010
13. Spiritual Gifts – resources on the ACCA counseling website:
www.accacounseling.org/spiritualgifts