

A People of the Book
A Topical Study

A Study of

Christian Fundamentals

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Lesson Theme: The purpose of this lesson is to show the student that the Bible is God's only inspired pattern for His Church and its member. It will also provide a high level overview of the Bible.

References:

"Pattern Teaching" Woodson, William, Gospel Advocate, November 2003, p. 30-31

The Church of Christ, Wharton, Edward C., Sunset School of Preaching {copied from Chuck Gambill}

"Is the Bible Accurate?: How History and Archaeology Have Confirmed the Innerancy of Scripture", F. Furman Kearley, Gospel Advocate, May 2003, p 12-13

Overview of Bible

- • Divided into Old Testament and New Testament (Covenant)
- • 66 Separate books written in 3 languages by 40+ authors over a period of 2000 years.
- • Discuss some popular English translations

Inspiration of Writers

- • All scripture is God breathed – 2 Tim 3:16:
 - ○ The Bible is the most accurate history and science book. It is supernaturally accurate.
- • Internal Evidence:
 - ○ Obadiah 1:18: Prophetied that descendants of Esau would have no survivors but descendants of Jacob would endure (853-841 BC)
- • External Evidence:
 - ○ Within the last century, seventy different people and events from the Bible have been confirmed as accurate by archeology and science.
 - ○ Psalm 8:4: Paths of the sea; sea currents were discovered and mapped after the American Civil War

The Pattern of the Church

- • To reproduce anything exactly requires a pattern
 - ○ McDonalds Franchise is a pattern
 - ○ Sauder furniture follows a pattern
- • God wants to reproduce Christians and churches according to his model so he made a pattern
 - ○ Rom 6:17-18: Form of teaching
 - ○ John 8:32: Truth shall set you free
- • What authority do we have to alter the pattern
 - ○ Nadab and Abiju offered unauthorized fire: Lev 10:1
 - ○ Do not add or take away from the Word: Rev 22:18-20
- • What if you add something to your Sauder furniture? You void your warranty.

What Patterns are Found

- • **Direct Command**
 - ○ Example: Great Commission: Matt 28:19-20
 - ○ Example: Sing and make music in you heart: Eph 5:19
 - ○ Do we have authority to alter or disobey?
- • **Binding Example**
 - ○ Example: Conversion of Ethiopian Eunuch: Acts 8:26-40
 - ○ If we deviate from the example set, we will not achieve the originally intended result.
- • **Principle**
 - ○ Example: Reap what you sow: Gal 6:7
 - ○ Learning to apply these will bless your life.
- • **Building Noah's Ark: Genesis 6**
 - ○ God commanded gopher wood, pitch, dimensions, door, window, roof.
 - ○ How was Noah to cut the wood, attach it, where should the kitchen be, where should the elephants be housed?
 - ○

Conclusion

- • Upcoming study of some of the important patterns in scripture
 - ○ Patterns of worship
 - ○ Patterns of church organization
 - ○ Patterns of Christian activity
- • Important points to remember
 - ○ Bible is completely reliable and accurate
 - ○ There is a single acceptable pattern for the church

Lesson Theme: The purpose of this lesson is to impress upon the student that there is only one true church and that God adds those who are saved to it.

References:

“What is the Church of Christ” Jividen, Jimmy, Gospel Advocate, November 2003, p. 34-35 (background reading, not directly used)

The Church of Christ, Wharton, Edward C., Sunset School of Preaching {copied from Chuck Gambill}

Introduction:

- • What church do you belong to?
- • Are you a protestant, evangelical, Baptist, Methodist, Catholic etc.?
- • What is the difference between Church of Christ and Baptist/Methodist/...

What is the Church?

- • Greek work for church means “those that are called out”
- • Matt 16:18 – Upon this rock, I will build my *church* (Universal Church)
- • Acts 20:28 – church was bought with the blood of Christ; therefore church is composed of all who have been saved by Christ’s blood.
- • 1 Cor 1:2 – Church is made up of those that are sanctified (made holy) (Local Church)

How does one become a member of Christ’s Church?

- • Acts 2:47 – The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.
- • Romans 6:17-18 – obeyed that form of teaching
- • What was that form of teaching? - see attachment: Conversions in Acts

Conclusion:

- • We are members of the one church that Jesus purchased with his blood.
- • In upcoming lessons, we will look at how Christ’s church is commanded to worship, organize and live.

Lesson Theme: The class will cover the object of worship, types of worship and emotions in worship.

References:

“A Study of Worship”, class taught by Randy Johnson and Leon Brown at Summit Church of Christ during the Winter of 2003

Showtime: Worship in the Age of Show Business, Chambers, Dan, 21st Century Christian, 1997

More than a Feeling: Worship that Pleases God, Jividen, Jimmy, Gospel Advocate, 1999

Introduction:

Why do we need to understand worship?

Romans 1:18-25: If we don't worship him, he will give us over

We have a need to worship something greater than ourselves

Who do we Worship:

- • Gen 1:1: God Creator
- • Jn 3:16: God Savior
- • Matt 16:16: God is living

How do we Worship:

John 4:19-24: Worship in spirit and truth

- • Matt 15:8-9: “honor me with their lips but heart far”
- • Ps 51:16-17: “you do not desire sacrifices”

Types of Worship:

- • Proskuneo – ‘prostrating before a person, kissing his feet’ – Formal worship
- • Latreuo – life of service – Daily living

Motivation for Worship:

- • God is the object of our worship.
- • Not about what we get out of worship i.e. emotional high
- • Must worship in spirit and truth Jn 4:19-24

Conclusion:

- • God is the only acceptable object of worship
- • His glorification is the only acceptable reason for worship
- • Bible speaks of worship in the formal sense as well as a life of service.

Lesson Theme: This class will cover the scriptural basis for singing as a component of worship.

References:

“A Study of Worship”, class taught by Randy Johnson and Leon Brown at Summit Church of Christ during the Winter of 2003

Showtime: Worship in the Age of Show Business, Chambers, Dan, 21st Century Christian, 1997

More than a Feeling: Worship that Pleases God, Jividen, Jimmy, Gospel Advocact, 1999

Introduction:

- • What’s the purpose of singing in worship? (teaching, admonishing, to God)
- • Unfortunately, this subject sets us apart from most of the Christian world.

What Does the Bible Say:

- • Eph 5:19: sing and make melody
- • Col 3:16 sing to God with grace in your hearts
- • We are bound to follow the pattern

What Does Singing do for Us:

- • Teach and admonish Col 3:16
- • Comfort: Acts 16:23-25
- • Express Joy, Sadness, any emotion

Conclusion:

- • Don’t allow the contention over the pattern to rob you of the benefits of singing

Lesson Theme: This class will cover the scriptural basis for the observance of the Lord's Supper as well as the symbolism inherent in our participation in this central act of worship.

References:

Showtime: Worship in the Age of Show Business, Chambers, Dan, 21st Century Christian, 1997

Introduction:

- • Why do we participate in the Lord's Supper each week?

The Pattern of the Lord's Supper:

- • Text: Matt 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20
- • Background: Jesus and disciples have just finished the Passover meal which symbolized God's deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery by killing the firstborn of every Egyptian while sparing each family with blood on the doorpost. – Ex 12:1-6
- • Unleavened bread: represents His body
- • Fruit of the vine: represents His blood
- • Upon the first day of the week
 - ○ Acts 20:7: first day of week they came together to break bread
 - ○ No example in scripture or other early Christian writings of any practice other than every Sunday.

Symbols of the Lord's Supper:

- • Belongs to the Lord 1 Cor 11:21
- • Communion:
 - ○ with Jesus and each other - 1 Cor 10:16-17
 - ○ Intimacy of sharing a meal together
- • Memorial: Proclaim His death until he comes -1 Cor 11:26
- • Anticipation of Future Glory: - 1 Cor 11

Partake in a Worthy Manner:

- • Understand the significance of the symbols
- • Examine ourselves in order to understand our sinfulness – 1 Cor 11:28

Conclusion:

- • Much more than a ritualistic act; communion with Jesus and each other

Lesson Theme: This class will cover the scriptural basis for prayer both public prayer in the worship service and personal prayer. We will seek to understand many aspects of prayer, including: how to pray, what to pray for, when to pray, who to pray to and why to pray.

References:

Worship: Bowing at the Feet of God, Waller, Ted H., 21 Century Christian

More Than a Feeling: Worship That Pleases God, Jividen, Jimmy, Gospel Advocate Company

Introduction:

- Prayer, like singing, should permeate our life – public worship, private meditation, family devotion, and momentary requests for strength and guidance or thanksgiving. It is part of our culture – prayer before meals, invocations
- It is also one of the most under utilized gifts God has given us

How Should we Pray:

- Pray for things we care deeply about
 - Wrestle in prayer – Col 4:12
 - Jesus prayed earnestly – Luke 22:39-44
 - The church prayed earnestly for Peter’s release – Acts 12:5
- Continuously
 - Pray without ceasing – Thes 5:17
 - Persistent widow – Luke 18:1-6
- Humbly - Luke 18:9-14
- In the Spirit; for things the Spirit desires - Eph 6:18-20
- In the Name of Jesus – Heb 4:15-16
- With Holy Spirit Interceding – Rom 8:26-27

How Should we not Pray:

- For our Glory – Matt 6:5-6
- Without Faith – James 1:5-6
- Selfishly – we should be praying for things meaningful to God

Conclusion:

- Prayer must be more than superstitious phrases, proud words and selfish pleadings.

Part I: The History of Tithing

Introduction

The Practice of Ancient Pagan Nations

Giving in the Patriarchal Age

Giving in the Jewish (Mosaic) Age

Conclusion

Introduction

When we refer to tithing, it specifically means the giving or paying of one tenth of anything, as a tax or sacrifice. It may be money, cattle, crops, land, etc.

Also, I would like to mention that every tithe has two reasons or effects.

- ➤ The first reason/effect is that of the giver of the tithe. An example of this would be to teach us to not be so dependent on material things or to just have the great satisfaction that we are sacrificing something valuable to us as a token of our love for God.
- ➤ The second reason/effect is that of the receiver of the tithe. Obviously, God does not need our material belongings, but the effect of our contribution is that this congregation may further the work of God by paying its obligations.

Let's look at the "offering" practices of several different groups of people. These will include various ancient pagan nations, the different peoples of Bible history, and Christians of today. The first group of people is the ancient pagan nations. By "pagan nations", I mean those nations that do not worship the God of the Bible, but worship idols and other creations of their minds and hands.

The Practice of Ancient Pagan Nations

As archaeologists have found clay tablets, picture writings, and historic manuscripts, we have been able to learn the practices of many ancient civilizations. Here are some:

- ➤ ***Egypt*** - Many ancient Egyptians were conscientious in giving. These have been found among Egyptian writings: "I have not cut short the rations of the temples." "I have not diminished the offerings of the gods." "I have not stolen the property of the gods." Ancient Nile Valley inhabitants dedicated the first fruits of their harvest to their gods. They gave a tenth of slaves, cattle, precious metals, and even fields, towns, and provinces were allotted to gods. The claims of the gods had to be satisfied before those of men.
- ➤ ***Babylon*** - Babylonians evidently supported temples by contributions, both obligatory and voluntary, and by tithes paid by all classes of people.
- ➤ ***Greece*** - Greeks apparently paid tithes to gods before they supported their kings. Anyone who would not give first fruits to gods should be destroyed. It is said that Greek youths would dedicate their tithes to a god of war who had taught them to be good soldiers.
- ➤ ***Rome*** - Many Romans, rich and poor, made vows to some god, usually Hercules, to give him a tenth of all. This included the farmer with his produce, the commander with spoils of war, even to sacrificing cattle taken in war.
- ➤ Some of the purposes of these offerings were: 1.) To appease the anger of the gods, 2.) To secure divine favor, 3.) To redeem a vow, 4.) To act in accordance with the law of the times, and 5.) As an expression of gratitude.

Giving in the Patriarchal Age

This is the era that you don't usually hear much about the tithe. This is before any account that we have of God specifically instructing the people to give a tithe, so we have to infer what we can about the tithe.

It is not spelled out for us as it is in the Mosaic Age. But, there are two instances that we will look at to prove that the tithe was observed.

- ➤ The very first mention in the Old Testament of the giving of tithes is in Genesis 14:17-20.
 - ○ After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.
- ➤ Here is the significance: Abram (THE patriarch), who had been called of God to be a channel of blessing to all nations, gave the tenth to a person who was a "priest of God Most High." He did this without any suggestion or coercion from any source. **He appears to have considered it the normal thing to do.**
- ➤ The second instance we evaluate is from Genesis 28:18-22.
 - ○ "Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's house, then the LORD will be my God and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."
- ➤ Here, we see that Jacob had been driven away from his home by the anger of Esau, his brother. He was lonely, and he was facing an uncertain future. He thought of God upon whom he must depend, and his religious duties. With the remembrance of his religious duties, the tithe came to mind. Jacob promised the tithe when he was alone, yet realized that God was near. **The suggestion that he should do this must have come from the practice of his parents and from the training of his childhood.**

Giving in the Jewish (Mosaic) Age

There were two or three different kinds of tithes referred to in the Mosaic age. There are different views over whether there were two or three, but basically one view combines two of them together and the other view breaks them out into three distinct and separate tithes. Regardless, they each had different purposes and beneficiaries.

The first tithe is the one with which we are most familiar. This was sometimes called the "priestly tithe." We see the reference to this in Leviticus 27:30-33.

- ➤ "A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD. If a man redeems any of his tithe, he must add a fifth of the value to it. The entire tithe of the herd and flock--every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod--will be holy to the LORD."
- ➤ This is where the requirement of the tithe became a basic law for the Israelites. Although the law of the tithe was not one of the Ten Commandments, it was given at Sinai. So clearly, this was the practice of the people of Israel during the era of Moses.
- ➤ This tithe was used to support the religious leaders and to maintain the worship of God.

In addition to this first tithe, the people were required to give a second tithe. This was to be eaten by the worshipper, his household, and the Levites at Jerusalem. We see the reference to this in Deuteronomy 14:23

- ➤ "Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always."
- ➤ The purpose of this tithe was so that the people would learn to revere the Lord, and so that each family would be maintained on their pilgrimage to the national feasts.

The third tithe is the one that is sometimes grouped into the second one, but some people do differentiate it as a separate third tithe. This one is for the support of the poor, and was levied every third year. This is sometimes referred to as the "charity tithe." This is referred to in Deuteronomy 24:28-29.

- ➤ "At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands."

In reviewing the three separate tithes, we see that each year the Jews gave two tenths (twenty percent), and in addition to that they gave another tenth (ten percent) every third year. This, in effect, appears to be a twenty to thirty percent contribution, but we need to clarify that.

- ➤ These offerings supported the Jewish church-state, which was the theocracy in which civil government and religious administration were combined.
- ➤ This would be equivalent to this twenty to thirty percent equaling their tax bill as well as their contribution. HOWEVER, in addition to giving twenty percent every year, and thirty percent every third year, they gave many other annual and occasional free-will offerings and vows that added up even more.
- ➤ Finally, we need to discuss Malachi's comments about the tithe. Examine Malachi 3:7-9.
 - ○ "Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty. "But you ask, 'How are we to return?' "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse--the whole nation of you--because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."
- ➤ God reveals that the failure to tithe had marred the fellowship between Himself and His people. He appeals to the people that they bring the whole tithe into the storehouse immediately in order that they may have His blessing, and that they may be restored to fellowship with Him.

Conclusion

Finally, we will sum up the history of the tithe:

- 1.) 1.) We know from history that many pagan nations gave offerings, and many specifically refer to the act of tithing to their gods.
- 2.) 2.) The tithe was at the heart of the religion of Israel from the beginning of Israel's history. It was practiced by Abram and promised by Jacob long before the era of Moses.
- 3.) 3.) It was commanded at Sinai when the Ten Commandments were given. The people were required to bring the first tithe to the place of worship for the support of the religious leaders and the maintenance of public worship.
- 4.) 4.) An additional tithe (or two) was required to maintain each family upon their pilgrimage to the national feasts. Also a separate tithe was required every third year to support the poor.
- 5.) 5.) The forerunner of the Messiah (Malachi) and the Messiah himself (Jesus) called for repentance, which included a new attitude and practice concerning the tithe.

Now, sit down and figure how much you give to God. We do not content that we are bound by the Mosaic Law, but should not the Jewish liberality challenge us to do greater things for God?

Part II: Scriptural Giving by the New Testament Christian

Introduction

Requirements for Giving:

Motivated By Love, Voluntary, An Act of Worship, Proportionate, Regular

Other Responsibilities in Giving

Conclusion

Discussion

Introduction

In the last lesson, we discussed the tithe of the pagan nations, the tithe as it was confirmed in the Patriarchal days by Abram and Jacob, and the tithe of the Mosaic (Jewish) age as it was commanded by God at Mount Sinai along with the rest of the law. In this lesson, we should examine the direct references to New Testament giving in scripture, and lessons that can be made by these.

First, it should be noted that we of the New Testament covenant are not directly commanded to tithe, i.e. - give ten percent. Many references in the New Testament are made to the tithe of history and of Jesus' day, but at no time does Jesus make the specific act of tithing binding on New Testament Christians.

Requirements for Giving

By the examples of Jesus, his disciples, and his teachings, we can draw several requirements for giving.

- ➤ We know that our giving is to be **motivated by our love**. As we studied a few weeks ago, when Jesus ran the people out of the temple area, His main concern was the attitude of the people. The motive was and is far more important than the outward act. Jesus denounced those who gave in order to be seen by men.
- ➤ All giving must be **voluntary**. First, let's look at the hearts of God's people in the Old Testament and their voluntary and giving spirit. After God had given Moses the law, Moses told the people what needed to be done in order to build the Tabernacle.
 - ○ Exodus 35:4-9 "Moses said to the whole Israelite community, "This is what the LORD has commanded: From what you have, take an offering for the LORD. **Everyone who is willing** is to bring to the LORD an offering of gold, silver and bronze; blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ram skins dyed red and hides of sea cows; acacia wood; olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece."
- ➤ Now, let's read the effects of what Moses had told them earlier in the chapter. Notice the repeated mention of "willing" as opposed to "as they were commanded."
 - ○ Exodus 35:20 "Then the whole Israelite community withdrew from Moses' presence, and **everyone who was willing** and **whose heart moved him** came and brought an offering to the LORD for the work on the Tent of Meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred garments. **All who were willing**, men and women alike, came and brought gold jewelry of all kinds: brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the LORD. Everyone who had blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen, or goat hair, ram skins dyed red or hides of sea cows brought them. Those presenting an offering of silver or bronze brought it as an offering to the LORD, and everyone who had acacia wood for any part of the work brought it. Every skilled woman spun with her hands and brought what she had spun--blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen. And all the women **who were willing** and had the skill spun the goat hair. The leaders brought onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece. They also brought spices and olive oil for the light and for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense. All the Israelite men and women **who were willing** brought

to the LORD freewill offerings for all the work the LORD through Moses had commanded them to do."

- ➤ Now, let's look at a New Testament example of voluntary giving. In 2 Corinthians 9:5-7, Paul was appealing for contributions to care for the poor in Jerusalem.
 - ○ "So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a **generous gift**, not as one grudgingly given. Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should **give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion**, for God **loves a cheerful giver**. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."
- ➤ Paul reveals the truth that giving must be voluntary. The believers at Corinth were to give "what he has decided in his heart", not "reluctantly or under compulsion." God is only pleased with voluntary gifts.
- ➤ Giving is **an act of worship**. In the churches of the New Testament, offerings were to be made on the day of worship.
 - ○ In First Corinthians 16:1-2, Paul tells the Corinthians, "Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made."
- ➤ Giving must be **proportionate**. What we mean is this: If we have been given more, we give more. If we have been given less, we give less. Jesus gave His approval on proportionate giving in His encounter with the poor widow.
 - ○ Mark 12:41-44 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything--all she had to live on."
 - ○ This widow gave much, much more proportionately than the rich people.
- ➤ Giving must be **regular**. I Corinthians 16:2 says "On the first day of the week..." This is pretty regular. Other things also bring us to this conclusion such as the fact that giving is a part of worship. Giving must be regular since worship is regular. The need for Christians to recognize God's ownership of all things is constant. Also, there is the practical reason for giving to be regular. The financial obligations of the congregation, the supporting mission and benevolent works, etc. all are dependant upon regular giving. Some people question how they should give when they go on vacation: to the visiting congregation or to their home congregation. Parallel that to your own financial obligations: when you go out of town, do you get to skip a month of the rent/mortgage payment or utilities? No. The obligations of the home congregation are still there and are dependent upon its membership - whether they are away from the church that Sunday or not.

Other Responsibilities in Giving

- ➤ Evaluate regularly how we have been prospered. Giving on the basis of how we have been given is a discipline - something we should actively evaluate. One who has received salary increases for the last five or ten years and yet gives the same amount as a decade ago is not giving as they have been prospered.

Conclusion

- ➤ We know the tithe of the Old Testament was the base and not the ceiling of giving.
- ➤ Remember that we are not commanded in the New Testament to tithe. However, the principle behind it applies today, and is magnified. This can be explained by a parallel: We do not sacrifice animals for the atonement of sins as they did in the Old Testament because we have a new law that is based on something better than the commands of then - Jesus' blood. Similarly, we are not required to tithe like they did in the Old Testament because we have a new law that is based on something better than the commands of then - giving as we have been prospered.
- ➤ Although we are not commanded to tithe today, this is not so we can have an excuse to give less, (though we have been given more by Christ) but should be a freedom from the commandment and accepted as a desire to do more.
- ➤ A Christian once prayed, "Father, help me to have the strength to give ten percent of my income until I learn to give as I have been prospered."

Discussion

- 1.) 1.) Did Jesus tithe? - *We can conclude that he did since the Pharisees criticized him for **every** breach of custom, yet never about the tithe.*
- 2.) 2.) So how much should we be giving today?
- 3.) 3.) Is it OK to give my check every other week when I get paid?
- 4.) 4.) What are some examples of giving God the first or best? *One tree in Eden, One day in seven, The firstborn in Israel, The first tenth, The first city that was captured*

Appendix A: Handout for Christian Giving

- ➤ Money is a good servant but a poor master. The lure for gold is stronger than the human will, and with many a man it stands between his soul and his God. Someday it will be discovered that the bars that shut many out of the kingdom of heaven are forged of silver and gold.

The Devil's Reasons for Not Giving

In January because of Christmas bills due.
In February because of fuel bills and car upkeep.
In March because of income taxes.
In April because of clothes for Easter.
In May because too much rain threatens the crops.
In June because too little rain threatens the crops.
In July because of vacation expenses coming up.
In August because of vacation expenses to be paid.
In September because of the children's school needs.
In October because of winter clothes and doctor bills.
In November because of the Thanksgiving trip.
In December because of the Christmas shopping.

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I'M GLAD MY CHURCH NEEDS MONEY!

If it didn't, it would mean:

It wasn't supporting missionaries and preaching the Gospel in other places and ***has no missionary zeal***.
It wasn't doing anything to support the homeless and needy and ***had no compassion***.
It wasn't interested in providing wholesome activities for our teenagers and ***had no concern***.
It wasn't interested in teaching children in those impressionable years and ***had no future***.

Some People Give:

"When they ask me" - It is forgotten that God has already asked.
"When I make a fortune - once in a lifetime" - The fortune may never be made.
"When all my debts are paid" - We could stay in debt continually and never give.
"When I am present." - The expenses of the church go on in our absence.
"When I am dead, through my will." - This could avoid any personal sacrifice.

How do we know how much we have prospered?

- ➤ To prosper means to gain or receive something. When we give as we have prospered, we give according to our gains or receipts of something.
- ➤ We own clothing, houses, cars, and take vacations as God has prospered us, in proportion to our ability to do so. These things reflect our prosperity. Why should we have trouble with this in regard to God?
- ➤ We tell the Internal Revenue Service how much we prosper.

Appendix B: Misc Financial Topics of Discussion

Gambling

Is gambling wrong?

Immoral - "It is immoral because it violates God's basic plan designed for man and that is that he is to earn his living by the sweat of his brow. This, of course, does not mean that only those who engage in physical activity to the point of perspiring do God's will; the familiar statement of Genesis 3:19 is metaphorical in nature and designates labor whether physical, mental or intellectual." - Guy N. Woods

Destructive of character - Most people who fall prey to gambling lose their moral stamina, their strength of character and any desire to earn their living by honest work (as God intended).

Justifications for gambling:

- 1.) 1.) **There is an element of chance in all that we do, which makes us all gamblers to a point. Examples: farming, investing, insurance.** - It is true that farmers and investors assume risk in their planning, but this is an exchange of mental or physical effort in order to produce tangible and useful benefits for others as the fruit of their labors. Gambling differs in the sense that artificial risks are created and the results simply take from the many in order to benefit the few. No goods, labor or services (as in legitimate efforts) result. Gambling is a form of greed, which takes from others without offering anything of value in return. Many people regard investing in the stock market "legalized gambling" and it can be that if improperly used - i.e. day trading to make the quick buck; hoping you get in and out before someone else. However, the point of long term investing is to invest in a business with the hopes of that business producing a profit from goods or services to reward you as a part owner.
- 2.) 2.) **It is OK if it is for a worthy purpose; i.e. the lottery benefits the schools.** - The end justifies the means? See the next argument.
- 3.) 3.) **People are going to do it anyway, so why not let the state, church, etc. benefit from it?** - This is the age-old fallacy of doing evil that good may come. We could use this argument for state run prostitution, since we know that some people are going to be inclined to engage in prostitution regardless of the laws against it, the potential harm to themselves or others.

Christian Fund Raising

Can we do things such as church-sponsored yard sales, youth car washes, craft shows or bazaars?

Why not? **All examples and inferences in the New Testament clearly show that the Lord's way of meeting financial needs of the church is by the contributions of its members.**

- ➤ 1 Corinthians 16:1&2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

Can we take a special collection for things such as a missionary, flood victims, or orphanages?

Why? Our example in 2 Corinthians shows that the Corinthians were asked and gave generously to the Macedonian church, who evidently were poor and in need.

- ➤ 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

Christian Fundamentals
Lesson 8: Church Organization
Winter Quarter 2004

Lesson Theme: The purpose of this lesson is to show God's pattern for how his church should be organized and governed. Scripture is clear that Christ is the head of the church while elders are to watch over the individual flocks and deacons are to serve.

References:

None

Governance of the Church

- · Who is the head of the Church? – Eph 1:22-23, Col 1:18
- · All churches are coequal under Christ's kingdom
- · No person, church or group has the authority to change the pattern or commands.

Elders:

- · Role of the Elder – 1 Peter 5:1-5
 - ○ Shepherd over God's flock
 - ○ Willing
 - ○ Not lording it over – rather an example
- · Qualifications to be an Elder
 - ○ Titus 1:5-9
 - · Blameless
 - · Husband of one wife
 - · Children believe and not wild/disobedient
 - · NOT: overbearing, quick-tempered, given to drunkenness, violent, pursuing dishonest gain
 - · Hold firmly to message and encourage/refute others
 - ○ 1 Timothy 3:1-7
 - · Manage own family well
 - · Not a recent convert
 - · Good reputation with outsiders

Deacons:

- · Role of the Deacon – Acts 6:1-6
 - ○ *Diakonos*- To run on errands, to wait tables, an attendant
 - ○ Role is to serve the congregation by taking care of physical needs within the congregation
- · Qualifications to be a Deacon - 1 Timothy 3:8-13
 - ○ Worthy of respect
 - ○ Not much wine
 - ○ Keep hold of deep truths of the faith
 - ○ Must be first tested
 - ○ Temperate and trustworthy wife
 - ○ Husband of one wife
 - ○ Manage family well

Lesson Theme: The purpose of this lesson is to help the student to understand their continuing responsibilities as a Christian according to the pattern of the New Testament.

References:

Sewell, Laurel S., The Six Gifts of Hospitality, Gospel Advocate Company, 2003

Role of Women

- 1 Tim 2:8-15

8 I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

9 I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, 10 but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

11 A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. 15 But women will be saved through childbearing-if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

- ○ Overall theme of women to be modest, decent and submissive
- Woman should never place herself in a position where she would have authority over a man
- She should not seek to exert dominion by the questions she asks.

- 1 Cor 13:33-35

As in all the congregations of the saints, 34 women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. 35 If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

36 Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? 37 If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. 38 If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored.

- ○ Again, women should not seek to draw attention to themselves through their questions
- This was a command for all congregations, not just this one.
- V 36 shows we have no authority to countermand this command.

Duties of all Christians:

1 Peter 4:7-11

7 The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray. 8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 9 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. 11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

- • **Keep Life in Proper Perspective:**
 - Do not presume upon tomorrow (Jas 4:13-16)
 - Present sufferings not worth comparing to future glory (Romans 8:18)
 - “This world is not my home I’m just passing through. My treasure is laid up somewhere beyond the blue...”

- **Pray:**
 - Pray in the Spirit on all occasions (Eph 6:18)
 - Devote yourself to prayer; for gospel to be spread (Col 4:2-4)
 - Pray for each other; powerful and effective (Jas 5:16)

- **Love Each Other:**
 - By this they will know you are my disciples... (John 13:34-35)

- **Offer Hospitality**
 - Share with one another (Romans 12:9-13)
 - 6 Gifts of Hospitality: (Matt 25:31-36)
 - Hunger – gift of nourishment
 - Thirst – gift of service
 - Stranger – gift of shelter
 - Clothing – gift of benevolence
 - Sick – gift of comfort
 - Prisoner – gift of companionship

- **Utilize Your Gifts:**
 - 1 Peter 4:10
 - Parable of the Talents (Matt 25:14-30)

Evangelize:

- Go into all the world (Mark 16:16)
- To have a full understanding of what we have (Philemon 5-6)

Conclusion: Remain Faithful

- Be faithful unto death Revelation 2:10
- Walk in the Light (1 John 1:5-10)

What Happens When I Fall?

It's common for Christians to view some people in the Bible as "super Godly". That's why God put them in the Bible, right? Next in line after people in the Bible are a few people we know who appear to be spiritual that we look up to which might include well-known Bible teachers, elders and preachers, and others that you personally know who have a reputation of being "super" Christians. Because of the perception that some people make up some kind of "upper class" quality of spirituality, we often settle for average in our own Christian walk believing that we can never achieve such high standards. We think we can't possibly be as "good" as the famous people in the Bible or those Christians we know who are so powerful in their walk with God.

Wrong. That's a myth, a misperception, a built-in excuse meant to trap you in being spiritual lukewarm.

In a moment we will look at the type of people some of our Bible heroes really were, but let me make a statement concerning the "great" Christians you may know today. **The more Godly a person is, the more they realize what a weak and inconsistent sinner they are.** The most Godly and consistent Christians you know will be the first to proclaim how utterly weak and prone to failure and sin they really are. Given the chance they would argue strongly that they are the least and the last person who possesses the goodness and qualities that God should be looking for.

Ask a "great" or "strong" Christian how "good" they think they are. Ask them if they ever fall spiritually. Ask them if they fall short of the glory of God.

Their self-realization of weakness and fault is in essence what makes them a "great" Christian, because that realization drives them towards dependence on God. It's true today, and it was true of people in the Bible as well. The heroes of the Bible that we elevate to an unattainable elite Godly status were some of the most sinful and unlikely people you would think God would choose to do His work.

Moses

- Questioned and doubted God's word - Ex. 3:11
- Was a complainer and grumbler - Ex. 5:22-23; Num. 11:10-15
- Was impatient - Ex. 5:22-23; 6:12; 32:19; Num. 11:10-15; 16:15; 20:10; 31:14.
- Was very unambitious and pessimistic - Num. 14:12-20; Deut. 9:13-29

David:

- Was an adulterer - 2 Sam. 11:2-5
- Was a murderer - 2 Sam. 11:6-25
- Was a thief - 2 Sam. 11:26-27; 2 Sam. 12:1-14
- Was self absorbed at times - 2 Sam. 18:33; 19:1-4
- Pride caused him to disobey God and allow Satan to influence him - 2 Sam. 24; 1 Chr. 21; 27:24

Peter

- Was presumptuous and impulsive - Matt. 16:22-23; Mark 8:32-33; Luke 8:45; John 13:6-11
- Had failing faith at times - Matt. 14:28-31
- Acted without thinking - Matt. 26:51; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:50
- Denied Christ completely - Matt. 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:55-62; John 18:17-18
- Was a hypocrite - Gal. 2:11-16

Paul

- Was a prideful religious zealot - Acts 22:3; 23:6; 26:5; 2 Cor. 11:22; Gal. 1:14
- Was a murderer and persecutor of Christians - Acts 7:58; 8:1-3; 9:1; 22:4

- Was the least of Christians - Eph. 3:8
- Was the worst of all sinners - 1 Tim. 1:15
- Struggled constantly with sin - Rom. 7:14-25

What made these men great servants of God?

What matters is how we respond to our sin when we *do* fall.

When you sin, do you just feel bad and go on? When you fall, do you act that nothing happened and give the impression to others that you are spiritually strong even though you feel terrible inside? Do you believe that you will never be the kind of Christian that God wants you to be? You are no different than every other Christian. **We ALL have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.**

Romans 3:19-24 - Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

When we sin and fall, God is able to forgive us and make all things new again. Jesus continually intercedes on our behalf to our heavenly father. We just need to humble ourselves and ask for forgiveness in prayer.

1 John 1:8-10 - If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

1 John 2:1-2 - My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Luke 18:9-14 - To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'" "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

The next time you think you can't ever be like those "great" believers in the Bible, or like those "super" Christians that you know in your life, remember that they are all made up of liars, murderers, adulterers, cowards, hypocrites and weak sinners. God doesn't look for the "good", the "best" or the "exceptional". God looks for the "available", the "repentant", the "humble" and the "willing". It doesn't matter what you were in the past, whether 5 years ago, or 5 seconds ago. **What will you be from this moment forward?** We often remember our sin and guilt for a long time, letting it rob us of joy and motivation to serve God and making us lukewarm as Christians.

Philippians 3:12-14 - Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do:
Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Even though we are not perfect and often fall, we strive for the goal in Christ. God can use you no matter what you have done in the past, even if you "worst" sin is being lukewarm towards God. So don't settle for being an average Christian in your life. Because of the power of God and the blood of Jesus that continuously cleanses us from sin, we are qualified to serve Him as Christians even when we fall. God typically does things just the opposite of how we would do them. If we were God, we would search out the "best" people to do our will. But God uses the weakest and least likely of us who may possess some terrible sinful qualities, but have in common a heart of repentance, willingness and availability. Remember, even though David committed adultery and murder, God proclaimed him to be "a man after God's own heart". Why? David was willing to humble himself and repent and serve God. We can do the same thing when we fall.

How I Mature As A Christian

Introduction

A tremendous calling has been given to us as Christians – to live a worthy life. Jesus paid the price for our sins & we are righteous before God because of that sacrifice. Now Jesus wants us to live a life that honors God in everything that we do. As Christians we are responsible for the reputation of God here on earth. When we fail to live godly lives, God's reputation is damaged. Nathan the prophet told David after his sin with Bath Sheba that now "you have given great occasion for the enemies of God to blaspheme Him" (2Chron.12:14).

1. Three types of Christians – Hot; Cold; Lukewarm

a. Definitions

- 1) Hot – those that seek to fulfill all their needs in the Lord Jesus Christ (continuously drawn closer to Jesus)
- 2) Cold – Those who seek to fulfill their needs in the world (continuously drawn closer to the world)
- 3) Lukewarm – Those who feel they have no needs (content to stay as they are – OK)

b. Problems

- 1) Cold – go back to the world & hardened to Jesus
- 2) Lukewarm – no different from world, therefore world not convicted (are a hindrance to the cause of Jesus – see Rev.3:15-17)

c. God's promise to His people – 2 Chron.7:14

"if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land". (NIV)

d. Paul's goal as an Apostle – Col.1:28

"We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ". (NIV)

2. Spiritual maturity involves responding to 8 callings – 2 Peter 1:3-11

a. Spiritual reality

- 1) God has given us everything we need for life & godliness
 - a) No excuse for us to not be what God calls us to become
 - b) Everything spiritual is found in knowing & accepting Jesus
 - c) Able to participate in God's nature & escape world's corruption
- 2) God expects us to take personal responsibility for our spiritual growth
 - a) Make every effort – hasten, jump, act now with earnestness
 - b) Add – fully supply or contribute

b. It all begins with faith

- 1) **Means** – assurance, conviction & trust based upon Jesus & what He has accomplished for us on the cross.
- 2) We have trusted Jesus & have responded in obedience to His calling by repenting of our sinful attitude & actions. We have also confessed Jesus as Lord & have accepted Him as our Lord in baptism. Now we are His, children of God, forgiven & indwelt by God's Spirit.

3) Everything we do must be centered in Jesus - Jn.15:1-8; Col.1:29

c. Add to faith goodness

- 1) **Means** – moral goodness & excellence of character; become an excellent person spiritually; develop the courage to live faithfully.
- 2) **Idea** – live in the most excellent of ways, a model citizen, as a real man & woman of God should live.; an exemplary life for Jesus

d. Add to goodness knowledge

- 1) **Means** – intelligence & understanding (in context about Christianity)
- 2) **Idea** – practical intelligence & insight into spiritual things; knowing how to act & what to do in the midst of trials & temptations. (Jn.8:31,32 – continue in His word = know truth & set free)
(See also Prov.2:3-5; 15:14; Rom.12:1,2)

e. Add to knowledge self-control

- 1) **Means** – ability to master ones desires, passions & sensual appetites
- 2) **Idea** – to restrain oneself & stand against the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye & the pride of life.

f. Add to self-control perseverance

- 1) **Means** – steadfastness & endurance; being unswerving from your deliberate purpose regardless the hardship; fortitude & constancy; a never give up attitude
- 2) **Idea** – an active word, not passive – not just sit back & put up with trials & situations in life, but standing up & facing them by conquering & overcoming them. Deliberately seeking to overcome & conquer for the cause of Jesus. Understand reason James 1:2-4

g. Add to perseverance godliness

- 1) **Means** – respect & piety towards God; reverence & awe, continuously conscience of God’s presence in ones life.
- 2) **Idea** – seeking to possess the character, behavior & nature of God; to live as God would here upon earth. 2 Cor.3:18

h. Add to godliness brotherly kindness

- 1) **Means** – to love & cherish other brothers & sisters in Christ
- 2) **Idea** – having a deep affectionate unbreakable union with others who are Christians. Love & concern for them like those who come from the same womb. Jn.13:34,35

i. Add to brotherly kindness love

- 1) **Means** – affection, good will, benevolence (highest form of love); love of the mind & reason (not based upon the emotions)
- 2) **Idea** – Love that loves in spite of feelings (feel like it or not); loves even if the person is undeserving & unworthy. Rom.5:6-8

3. How can we tell if we are growing spiritually?

a. New & greater awareness of right & wrong.

- 1) Jn.16:8 – Spirit convict us
- 2) Words, thoughts, actions that are displeasing to God will become more evident to us & we will feel the pain of guilt (see Rom.7:18-25)

b. A hungering for God's word

- 1) A healthy body has a healthy appetite. Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.
- 2) Our spirits need daily food

c. A genuine desire for a changed life

- 1) Delight in the commands of God – Jn.14:15
- 2) 2 Cor.5:17 – in Christ we are new creatures

d. An increase in personal testing

- 1) Often by those who are closest to us & do not understand spiritual things.
- 2) 2 Tim.3:12 – all who seek to live godly will suffer persecution

e. Increased love for other Christians

- 1) Sincere enjoyment of fellowship
- 2) Acts 2:42-47

f. An increasing desire to share your faith in Christ with others

- 1) One of the first signs of a genuine Christian is the desire to witness; the desire to tell others of your experience.
- 2) 1 Pet.3:15

4. Practical ways to maintain spiritual growth

- a. Discipline yourself to be in God's word daily – Ps.119; 2 Tim.3:16,17
- b. Always seek God's strength & help daily & stop depending upon you – Jn.15
- c. Become accountable (prayer partner; study partner; someone to spur you on) Heb.3:13-15; 10:24,25
- d. Examine every thought, word & action (don't be afraid to repent)
- e. Always maintain the spirit of a disciple (always room to grow) 2 Pet.1:8

A People of the Book

Where Truth and Love Abound



Our Service Schedule

Sunday:	10:00 a.m.	Bible Study (classes for all ages)
	11:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.	Worship
Wednesday:	7:00 p.m.	Bible Study (classes for all ages)

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