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# SALVATION

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*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

**2 Corinthians 5:17**

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A new creation. A fresh start. For all of us who have ever wished we could start over, this is good news. However, before we can really appreciate this good news, we need to understand exactly why we need to start over. Why do we need to become a new creation? Why do we need salvation?

## **THE PROBLEM: SEPARATION BECAUSE OF OUR SIN**

There is an immeasurable gap separating God and man. Many who sense this vast separation suppose that if they do good things, learn more about their religion, or somehow become a better version of themselves, they would be closer to God. But since our separation from God is not physical or intellectual, neither good deeds nor learning more can bring us any closer to God. What causes the separation between God and man?

*Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.*

**Isaiah 59:1-2**

The cause of this eternal separation between God and man is sin. This is being dismissive of God and His ways in either our thoughts, actions, or attitudes. Simply stated, sin is being **S**eparated from God, **I**ndependent from His presence and love, and **N**egligent for not repenting.

The separation between God and man is a moral separation. God is holy (without and unable to sin); man is not. God is good; man is not. God is just; man is not. All men have sinned; therefore, all are eternally separated from God. All will suffer the consequences of sin, which is spiritual and eternal death.

*... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

**Romans 3:23**

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Romans 6:23**

## **THE SOLUTION: GOD'S SACRIFICE AND SUBSTITUTION**

Since God is holy, righteous, and just, He could not allow sin to go unpunished. Since He is loving and compassionate, He did not want all of mankind to be eternally separated from Him. The divine solution to this problem was for Jesus, God's only Son, to become the sacrifice for sin.

*... for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*

**Hebrews 9:26-28**

Jesus provided the only sufficient payment for sin by dying on the cross. He took our place and our punishment. He exchanged His righteousness for our sin. He took our curse and gave us His blessings. Because of His sinless life, Jesus was the only one qualified to pay the penalty for man's sin and to bridge the gap between God and man.

*For our sake He [God] made Him [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him [Jesus] we might become the righteousness of God.*

**2 Corinthians 5:21**

*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us – for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree” ...*

**Galatians 3:13**

## THE RESULT: OUR SALVATION AND RECONCILIATION

Jesus died on the cross so that we could receive forgiveness of our sins, be reconciled to God, and have eternal life.

We have all sinned against a holy and righteous God. The penalty for sin is eternal separation from God. God is just and must punish sin. He is also loving and does not want us to go to hell forever. Therefore, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to live the life we should have lived and died the death we should have died – in our place. Three days later He rose from the dead, proving that He is the Son of God, and offering the gift of salvation to anyone who repents and believes in Him. In Jesus we are restored to right standing before God and given a new life as God's children.

*For God so loved the world, that He gave  
His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but  
have eternal life.*

**John 3:16**

*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of  
our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ...*

**Ephesians 1:7**

*But now, in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been  
brought near by the blood of Christ.*

**Ephesians 2:13**

## **THE RESPONSE: RECEIVE GOD'S GIFT BY FAITH**

Salvation is a result of God's grace. Meaning, it's based on what Jesus did for us on the cross and has nothing to do with what we do for Him or how good or moral we are.

We cannot save ourselves or earn God's approval through the good things we do. We are saved by God's grace when we realize our need for a Savior, putting our trust in Him alone for salvation.

*...If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*

**Romans 10:9-10**

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

**Ephesians 2:8-9**

## **PERSONAL APPLICATION**

- Have you recognized that you are a sinner and in need of a Savior?
- Have you stopped trusting in yourself and started trusting in Jesus alone for salvation?
- Are you ready to begin a lifelong relationship with Jesus?

## **PRAYER**

*Heavenly Father...I acknowledge there is a separation between us...and I cannot bridge that separation on my own...I confess that I have sinned...and I need a Savior...I thank You that You sent Your Son, Jesus...to pay the penalty for my sin...I believe that He died on the cross for me...I believe that You raised Him from the dead...I am sorry for my sins...and ask You to forgive me...I want to turn away from everything the Bible calls sin...and begin a relationship with You...for the rest of my life...in Jesus' name...Amen!!*

## **A NEW LIFE**

If you have sincerely prayed that prayer, two things have happened:

1. Jesus has become your Savior: When you asked God to forgive you, He accepted you and your sins were forgiven.
2. You have become a child of God: Jesus is now living with you by His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God, living inside those who trust Him for salvation, enabling us to live like Jesus. You have been adopted into God's family and it's just the beginning.

Over the next few weeks you will learn more about this new life and how to live it well.

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Let us know if you started a relationship with Jesus today!

Email us: [discipleship@orlandowoc.org](mailto:discipleship@orlandowoc.org)

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# REPENTANCE & BAPTISM

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*Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord...*

**Acts 3:19**

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Driving a car in the wrong direction on a one-way street is foolish and dangerous. Some drive the wrong way out of ignorance; others out of rebellion. There's a spiritual parallel. Whether out of ignorance or rebellion, we're all on a dangerous one-way street that will ultimately lead to a broken relationship between God and us.

## **WHAT IS REPENTANCE?**

Repentance means to turn around and away from both our actions, and the thinking that caused us to do what is wrong.

Changing our direction without allowing the Word of God to change our thinking will not last. Turning away from sin will only last if we turn to God, not to someone or something else.

## **REPENTANCE: REBIRTH AND CHRIST-LIKENESS**

*Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins..."*

**Acts 2:38**

There are two parts to repentance that we need to understand. The first, is repentance where we turn to God as Lord and Savior by repenting from being a sinner. This repentance is a one-time happening that means we are no longer separated from God relationally and eternally.

The second part of repentance is an on-going lifestyle of repentance. From this point forward, we repent as children of God in areas that we are not yet like Christ, desiring Him to daily change us into His likeness.

*Then I acknowledged my sin to You and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.*

**Psalms 32:5**

Repentance starts by taking responsibility, firstly for being a sinner, and after salvation, for the sins committed as a believer. As believers, our repentance should be motivated by our desire to become Christ-like, and not just receive forgiveness for the wrongs we have done.

## **GODLY SORROW AND WORLDLY SORROW**

Real repentance begins when we are truly sorry for our sins. This "godly sorrow" makes no excuses, takes full responsibility, and never places blame on people, society, or circumstances. It acknowledges that our sin is primarily against God. Godly sorrow produces true repentance and a changed life.

*For godly sorrow produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly sorrow produces death.*

**2 Corinthians 7:10**

On the other hand, "worldly sorrow" only produces excuses. While godly sorrow is having a broken heart when we realize we have offended a holy God, worldly sorrow is being sorry we got caught, or being sorry we have to suffer the consequences of sin. Covering up our sin can happen in different ways; either we lie about it, deliberately not confessing it, or we compare our sin with the sin of others who we think sin more, minimizing what we have done to make us look and feel better.

The ultimate difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow is the fruit - evidence in our lives. Worldly sorrow cannot produce the fruit of a changed life; it only produces spiritual disappointment, and ultimately, death.

Godly repentance graciously produces in us a new desire to love and obey God, that will result in a changed lifestyle. If this desire, created by the Holy Spirit, is not present, true repentance is still needed. No amount of self-effort and works will produce what only true godly sorry and repentance can produce.

*See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.*

**2 Corinthians 7:11**

*Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.*

**Matthew 3:8**

## **REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS**

The parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11–24 is a beautiful picture of true repentance. The wayward son came to his senses, turned his back on his folly, and returned to his father. He made a 180 degree turn, walking away from his former life of sin and rebellion. His father forgave him for his offenses and received him back. In the same way, our Heavenly Father is faithful to forgive us when we turn to Him and repent of our sins.

*Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord...*

**Acts 3:19-20**

Imagine a stain on your favorite shirt that, no matter how hard you tried, wouldn't come out. Now, imagine a stain remover that would not only remove the stain, but would make the shirt just like new again. That's what happens when we repent and receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior. He not only cleans the sin's stain of guilt and shame from our hearts, He gives us a new heart.

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

**1 John 1:9**

## **REPENTANCE: NO REGRET**

Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to God. It means we stop trusting in our own good deeds and religious activity, and we start trusting in Christ alone. We were going in the wrong direction; now we're going in the right direction. We were running from God; now we're walking with Him. Repentance is the starting point of a new life. Repentance takes us off the treadmill of a self-centered life and puts us on the fast track of God's glorious purpose for our lives. Turning to God means no looking back and no regrets.

*For godly sorrow produces a repentance that leads to salvation  
without regret...*

**2 Corinthians 7:10**

## **WATER BAPTISM**

While repentance is an inward change of the heart, water baptism is the outward declaration of that change. Everyone who has genuinely repented of his or her sins and has given their life to Christ should be baptized in water.

Baptism immediately follows the personal conviction of every believer after the sinner's repentance. The book of Acts gives multiple examples of repentance followed by water baptism. It is not a means for salvation, but an act of faith and obedience after believing the gospel and turning to God.

*As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."*

**Acts 8:36-37**

## **WHY SHOULD BELIEVERS BE WATER BAPTIZED?**

*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...*

**Matthew 28:19**

Baptism is a command from Christ. We obey His instruction when we're water baptized.

*What are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized. Have your sins washed away by calling on the name of the Lord.*

**Acts 22:16**

Baptism is a decision in faith to leave your sinful life behind and obey Christ.

*For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.*

**Romans 6:4**

Baptism is a demonstration of truth. Being born again, we have been united with Jesus in His death, His burial, and His resurrection from the dead.

*After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy."*

**Matthew 3:16-17**

Through baptism, we follow Jesus' example. He was baptized publicly, not because He had sin, but to demonstrate His wholehearted submission and obedience to His Father. He identified Himself with sinful man, pleasing His Father.

## **HOW SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?**

*He [the eunuch] ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.*

**Acts 8:38**

*After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water...*

**Matthew 3:16**

Baptism comes from the Greek word "baptisma" which means "to dip or to immerse" someone. Both Jesus and the Eunuch went into the water and came up from the water. In the same way, we should be fully immersed under water. Submerging symbolizes our complete surrender to Jesus and us laying down the old life. Coming up from the water signifies our arising from the old life into a new life because of Christ.

The Bible presents several illustrations to help us understand water baptism. One of these is a burial and resurrection. Paul compares a Christian baptism to a burial. In order to be buried, a person must first die. In the same way, the prerequisite for baptism is death to sin. After we are buried in baptism, then we are raised to new life, just like Christ.

*Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.*

**Romans 6:1-4**

We see then, water baptism shows the old life being put away, and a new life emerging in obedience to Christ.

## **PERSONAL APPLICATION**

- Is your life going in a new direction?
- Have you repented of all known sin in your life? If so, are there any you're still feeling condemnation about?
- Have you been water baptized? If not, is there anything stopping you?

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Let us know that you're ready to be baptized!

Email us: [discipleship@orlandowoc.org](mailto:discipleship@orlandowoc.org)

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# THE HOLY SPIRIT & SPIRITUAL GIFTS

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*And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."...So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

**Acts 2:38, 41**

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When the crowd asked Peter what they should do in response to his sermon, he gave them a three-fold answer: repent, be baptized, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

A person receives the Holy Spirit at salvation. When you received Jesus as Savior, you were baptized into the body of Christ and also received the Spirit within.

*Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we are all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

**1 Corinthians 12:12-13**

## JESUS THE BAPTIZER

In each gospel, the author introduces Jesus as the One who baptizes us into the Holy Spirit. This is done at the moment of salvation.

*“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

**Matthew 3:11**

*“I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”*

**Mark 1:8**

*John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

**Luke 3:16**

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!... And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’*

**John 1:29, 33**

## THE HOLY SPIRIT: GOD WITH US

It has always been God's intention to dwell with humanity - His people, and to allow them to experience His love and affection. First it was through a structure. Then, after Jesus' death and resurrection, within us.

*Moses and Aaron then went into the tent of meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. Fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.*

**Leviticus 9:23-24**

*When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it. When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the Lord above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, "He is good; his love endures forever."*

**2 Chronicles 7:1-3**

*When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

**Acts 2:1-4**

In Leviticus, this is when the first tabernacle was finished. We see God confirming this tent structure as His temporary earthly home. In 2 Chronicles, at the completion of Solomon's Temple, God again confirmed it as His temporary dwelling place.

Finally, in Acts we see the same evidence of the Spirit of God (Holy Spirit) dwelling with His people. This time, however, He came to dwell IN us - His people, not a structure. When we are saved, we become the temple of the Holy Spirit.

*Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?  
You are not your own...*

**1 Corinthians 6:19**

## THE HOLY SPIRIT: OUR HELPER

Why is all of this important? Because it's impossible to live the Christian life apart from the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. He leads us into all truth. That is why Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit when we are saved. It's from that moment forward that we need Him to be our helper to live in a new way.

*"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. . . . When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."*

**John 16:7, 13**

## THE HOLY SPIRIT: WHO EMPOWERS

The Holy Spirit empowers us to be effective witnesses. A witness is one who not only tells the truth, but also lives the truth. As His witnesses, the Holy Spirit helps us to do what we cannot do on our own: to boldly proclaim and live out the truth about God. He empowers us to proclaim the gospel wherever we go.

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

**Acts 1:8**

## THE HOLY SPIRIT: GIVER OF GIFTS

The Holy Spirit is accompanied by the manifestation of spiritual gifts. Some gifts are to build up the church and serve the world around us (Romans 12). There are gifts of leadership and for equipping the body of believers (Ephesians 4). Then, there are gifts used for ministry and advancing the gospel or the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 12). We don't decide which gifts are given to us, that's the job of the Holy Spirit. However, we are to eagerly desire all gifts.

*All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.*

**1 Corinthians 12:11**

*Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.*

**1 Corinthians 14:1**

## PERSONAL APPLICATION

- Do you know what gift or gifts of the Holy Spirit (according to the references above) you have received?
- Over the next week, take time to ask God to reveal the gift's He's given to you.

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# LORDSHIP

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*Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God  
has made Him both Lord and Christ,  
this Jesus whom you crucified.*

**Acts 2:36**

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Lordship is one of the central messages of the Bible. Jesus is referred to as "Lord" significantly more than "Savior" in the New Testament. The Biblical emphasis is overwhelmingly on the concept of Lordship.

Lord means master, the one who calls the shots, the one who makes the decisions.

## **LORDSHIP AND SALVATION**

The starting point of salvation is the acknowledgment of the Lordship of Christ. Confessing Jesus is Lord implies a submission to His Lordship in every area of life. We do not have the option of receiving Him as Savior and not as Lord. Salvation is a both/and proposal not an either/or.

*...If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in  
your heart that God Raised Him from the dead,  
you will be saved.*

**Romans 10:9**

## WHY LORDSHIP?

If our view of Lordship only sees God as domineering and overbearing, we miss the point. Lordship has much more to do with responsibility than with domineering. With Lordship, God has committed Himself to being responsible to provide, protect, guard, lead, care for, and much more, those that are submitted to Him.

Many people want God to do what His word says He can do, but they don't give Him the right to own them. He's asking us to willingly surrender ownership of our time, talents, treasures, relationships, and life plans to Him. In doing so, we give God the right to own us and He will take the responsibility of giving us the ultimate freedom that only He can give.

A good illustration of how God responds to our submission can be found in Psalm 23.

*The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.*

*He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.*

*He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.*

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.*

*You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

*Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

**Psalm 23:1-6**

## **LORDSHIP DEMANDS OBEDIENCE**

Anyone who claims Jesus as their Lord is expected to do what He says. Intellectual faith and empty confession is not enough. If we say Jesus is our Lord, our lifestyle should back up our claim.

*Why do you call me "Lord, Lord," and not do what I tell you?*

**Luke 6:46**

*Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord", will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."*

**Matthew 7:21**

## **LORDSHIP BEGINS IN THE HEART**

Submitting to Christ Jesus as Lord is not about following a set of religious rules and traditions. Rather, Lordship is a matter of the heart. Lordship begins as an internal submission of the heart. If it's genuine, it will eventually reveal itself in outward obedience.

*...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy ...*

**1 Peter 3:15**

## **LORDSHIP IS A CONTINUOUS WALK**

We begin our Christian life by acknowledging that Jesus is Lord. We must continue to walk under His Lordship for the rest of our lives. Lordship is not having a one-time experience with God or living "perfectly", but developing a lifetime walk with God and growing to be like Him more and more every day. The more we know Him, the more we trust His goodness, the more we submit to Him.

*Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord,  
so walk in Him....*

**Colossians 2:6**

### **PERSONAL APPLICATION**

- Are there areas in your life that you have not yet submitted to the Lordship of Jesus?
- Areas to consider:
  - Relationships
  - Finances
  - Time
  - Thoughts and Attitudes

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# DEVOTION

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*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*

**Acts 2:42**

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What made the early church vibrant and healthy was their devotion to God. Because they were devoted to grow in their relationship with Him, they developed disciplines that expressed this devotion. Two of these vital disciplines are reading the Bible and praying.

## **WORD**

More than just a random collection of stories, poems, and letters, the Bible is the inspired written Word of God. We can follow the example of Job who valued God's Word more than food.

*"I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I  
have treasured the words of his mouth  
more than my portion of food."*

**Job 23:12**

Before turning to Christ, we lived by the world's standards. Now we accept the Bible as the final authority for what we believe and how we live. God's Word is the ultimate and absolute standard for every area of life.

The measure of our spiritual progress is not how much of the Bible we know, but how much we obey. Those who constantly learn but fail to obey end up deceiving themselves

*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

**James 1:22**

The Bible is our key to spiritual growth. It is also how we resist temptation, how we become successful, and how we can know God's will for our lives.

*Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation — if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

**1 Peter 2:2-3**

*How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. . . I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*

**Psalms 119:9, 11**

*"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success."*

**Joshua 1:8**

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

**Romans 12:2**

## **PRAYER**

Christianity is more than just a religion. It is first and foremost a relationship with God. The foundation of any healthy relationship is communication. The better the communication, the better the relationship will be. God talks to us in many ways but primarily through His word, the Bible. We talk to Him through prayer. We learn to listen to the sound of God's voice in our lives when we read His word. He listens to us when we pray. We respond to His word with action. He responds to our prayers with action.

Jesus is our best example for prayer. By observing His personal prayer life, we can learn important principles on how to have an intimate time of connection with the Father.

*Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."*

**Luke 11:1**

Jesus told us not to pray like the hypocrites and those who don't know God.

*"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. . . And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."*

**Matthew 6:5,7,8**

Jesus told us to pray directly to the Father. We are to pray through Jesus, because He is the only way to the Father.

*"But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."*

**Matthew 6:6**

*For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus ...*

**1 Timothy 2:5**

*Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

**John 14:6**

Jesus taught His disciples to pray for God's will to be done, provision, forgiveness, victory over temptation, and protection from the devil's schemes.

*Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

**Matthew 6:9-13**

As we read and obey the word, and as we pray and trust God with our lives, let us not forget that God really answers prayer. The more specific the prayers, the more specific the answers will be. The secret is to pray according to His will. We know His will by knowing His word. Therefore, as we pray according to His word, we know He will answer.

*And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.*

**1 John 5:14-15**

## **PERSONAL APPLICATION**

- Do you have a set time and place for daily Bible reading and prayer?
- What has God been speaking to you during your time of daily devotion?

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# THE CHURCH

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*Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

**Matthew 16:16-18**

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Through a revelation of the Holy Spirit, Peter confessed the true identity of Jesus: the Son of the living God. Jesus said that this truth would be the foundation stone on which His church would be built. He also described the type of church He would build - a victorious church that would overcome the kingdom of darkness. Jesus and Paul used the word "church" in reference to the people of God - followers of Jesus, not a religious building. Following are four of the benefits of being part of a local church body.

## **FRIENDSHIP**

Real friends. Everyone needs them. Few find them. The best place to look for a real friend is in the church, the people of God. True friends are those who have our best interest in mind. They stick with us through thick and thin. Real friends never lead us away from God. Instead, they provoke us to godliness.

*A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*

**Proverbs 17:17**

*A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend  
who sticks closer than a brother.*

**Proverbs 18:24**

## **FELLOWSHIP**

If a piece of burning coal is removed from the fire, it will cool off. If it is put back in the middle of a pile of red-hot coals, it will burn again. The same is true of Christ-followers. If a Christian is removed from fellowship with other red-hot believers, he or she will cool off spiritually. If a Christian remains in true fellowship - walking in the light, he or she will stay on fire for God.

*And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. . . And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts...*

**Acts 2:42,44-46**

*Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?*

**2 Corinthians 6:14**

*But if we walk in the light, as he [God] is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

**1 John 1:7**

Fellowship also involves forgiveness. Just as we received forgiveness from God, we are now commanded by God to forgive those who have sinned against us.

*Then Peter came up and said to Him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?"  
Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times."*

**Matthew 18:21-22**

But if we refuse to forgive, the Bible says that we will be defiled by a root of bitterness, which causes trouble.

*See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled ...*

**Hebrews 12:15**

## **WORSHIP**

God is looking for sincere worshipers. Worship is simply the expression of our love, devotion, and commitment to God.

*"But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."*

**John 4:23-24**

## **DISCIPLESHIP**

The last command Jesus gave His followers before He ascended to heaven was to go and make disciples, to baptize these disciples, and to teach them how to obey God's Word. Therefore, we should first be disciples or followers of Jesus, then we should teach others to follow Him.

We will talk about this more in the next chapter.

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

**Matthew 28:19-20**

*...and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

**2 Timothy 2:2**

## **PERSONAL APPLICATION**

- Are you in a Life Group? If not, you can find one at OWOC through the app or website.
- Are you an active member of or attend your local church?
- Name two or three Christians you can call on for help in case of spiritual emergency.
- Are you making disciples?

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# DISCIPLESHIP & EVANGELISM

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*. . . but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you . . .*

**1 Peter 3:15**

*As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed with demons begged him that he might be with him. And he did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."*

**Mark 5:18-19**

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If you were the doctor who discovered the miracle cure for cancer, wouldn't you want everyone to know about your discovery? You now have a miracle cure for something deadlier than cancer. You have the solution for sin. Making disciples starts with sharing the good news of God's solution for sin to your family and friends. In order to be prepared to tell others about the hope of salvation, we must learn how to give our testimony and share the gospel. As we do this, we are starting to make disciples.

## HOW TO GIVE YOUR TESTIMONY

In a court of law, a witness tells "the truth and nothing but the truth" about what he or she has seen, heard, and experienced. We are called to be God's witnesses. We are to tell the truth about what He has done for, in, and through us as we share our testimony.

Being a witness also demands that we live a life that testifies to the grace of our Lord Jesus. A witness is something we are, not something we do. We are to "be" witnesses. The only way we can be a witness is through the power of the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to boldly proclaim our testimony and the gospel.

The word of your testimony is powerful. It is a personal, irrefutable account of what Jesus has done for you and how He has changed your life.

There are three parts to sharing your testimony, which is your "two-minute miracle":

1. Briefly describe your life before Christ.
2. Carefully explain how you came to the point of submitting your life to Christ.
3. Joyfully describe your life since Jesus became Lord.

*And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.*

**Revelation 12:11**

## HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL

The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of all who believe. It is the reason we engage culture and community, are a witness, and share our testimony.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

**Romans 1:16**

Share the gospel using two simple verses to your family and friends.

*Note: this is also in the Salvation chapter. Feel free to use this discipleship tool with them!*

*. . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . .*

**Romans 3:23**

Everyone has sinned. Sin is any act of disobedience or rebellion against God and the truth is, not a single person on earth has perfectly obeyed God's commandments.

*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**Romans 6:23**

Since we have all sinned, we deserve death and are disqualified from even being in God's presence. The good news is salvation is a free gift from God! Salvation is found in Christ alone because He died on the cross for us, in our place. We receive this free gift by faith as we trust in His finished work on the cross.

After you have shared the gospel with your family and friends, feel free to lead them in prayer.

## **HOW TO MAKE DISCIPLES**

We make disciples as we introduce people to Jesus and teach them how to obey God's commands. Paul told Timothy to transfer everything he had learned to others who would be able to teach it to others. This is discipleship.

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

**Matthew 28:19-20**

*. . . and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

**2 Timothy 2:2**

## **PERSONAL APPLICATION**

- Share your testimony with the person who has led you through the One-2-One.
- Make a list and start praying for family and friends who need to hear the gospel.
- Go and make disciples!

## RELATIONSHIP EVANGELISM

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

**Matthew 28:19-20**

As followers of Christ, we are commanded to share the gospel and make disciples, starting with those closest to us. Use this Relationship Evangelism section to pray for your friends, relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances to begin a relationship with Jesus.

I will commit to pray for the following people:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## **ACTION STRATEGY**

- List up to 10 people that you're believing God for to come into a relationship with Jesus.
- Pray for them every day.
- Invite them for dinner, coffee, etc. - Build relationships with them.
- Share the gospel or your testimony with them and invite them to church with you.
- Follow up with them! Continue to pray, continue to build relationships with them, and continue to invite them into a place of belonging and believing.

## **PRAYER STRATEGY**

- Pray that the father would draw them to Christ. (*John 6:44*)
- Pray that they would receive the gospel through the revelation of Jesus. (*Galatians 1:11-12*)
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would convict them of sin, righteousness, and the judgment to come. (*John 16:8*)
- Pray that they will have ears to hear, eyes to see, and a heart to understand God's word and turn to God. (*Matthew 13:15*)
- Pray that you will have boldness to build relationships with them and to share the gospel with them. (*Ephesians 6:19*)

