



Global College of Ministry

EMPOWER

The Christian & Church Growth Tools (Part One)

Our Church Family

(Adapted from Raymond Woodward's *Life Course 101*)

“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.
Let all things be done decently and in order”
(1 Corinthians 14:33, 40).



In the animal kingdom, no creature can grow above nine inches without a skeleton. In the same way, every local church needs a supporting structure if it is to be healthy and grow properly. Since the church is a God-ordained institution, its structure should not be determined by culture, business practices, or even denominational traditions. Rather, the **NATURE** of the church should determine its **STRUCTURE**. At The United Pentecostal Church, we believe what the church is should determine how it is organized.

1. The church is a **FELLOWSHIP**.

- **The top priority in a fellowship is unity.**
“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3).
- **Any attitude that causes disunity is sin.**
“Now, dear brothers and sisters, I appeal to you by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ to stop arguing among yourselves. Let there be real harmony so there won't be divisions in the church. I plead with you to be of one mind, united in thought and purpose” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

2. The church is a **FAMILY**.

- **Families operate on the basis of relationships, not rules.**
“You should be like one big happy family, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds” (1 Peter 3:8).
- **The stronger the relationship, the fewer rules you need.**
“(A Pastor) must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his family, how can he take care of God's church?” (1 Timothy 3:4-5).

3. The church is a **BODY**.

- **We are a body, not a business. We are an organism, not an organization.**
“And the church is his body; it is filled by Christ, who fills everything everywhere with his presence” (Ephesians 1:23).

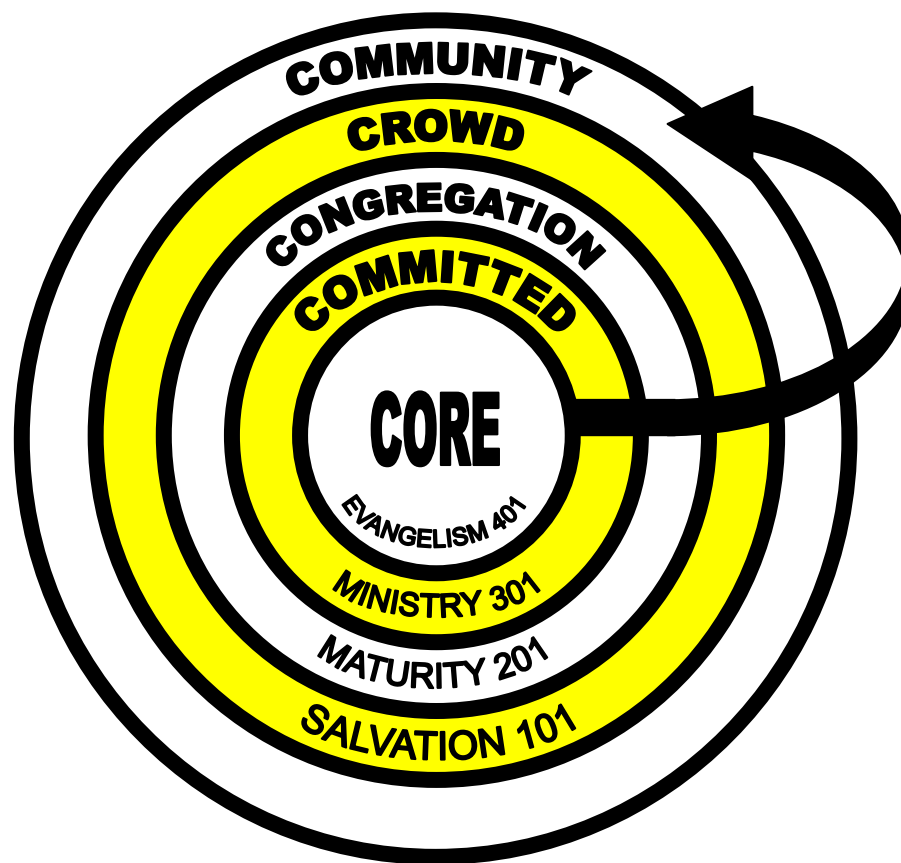
- **We therefore function on the basis of spiritual gifts, not merely elected offices.**
“There are different ways God works in our lives ... A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church” (1 Corinthians 12:6-7).

4. The church is a **FLOCK**.

- **It is therefore cared for and led by shepherds.**
“To the elders I say ... Be shepherds of God’s flock, serving as overseers ...” (1 Peter 5:1-2).
- **This Biblical structure frees the pastors to be the administrators and the people to be the ministers.**
“God gave ... some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God’s people for works of ministry ...” (Ephesians 4:11-12).

At The United Pentecostal Church, our process for seeing lives changed by the power of God can be diagrammed in five concentric circles, as illustrated below. Our goal is to keep people moving from the outside to the center by encouraging spiritual commitment.

Your Commitment



As you move through these five circles, along the way you will be asked to make **FOUR COVENANTS** with God: a **Salvation** Covenant, a **Maturity** Covenant, a **Ministry** Covenant, and

an **Evangelism** Covenant. We do not ask our members to do more than the Bible clearly teaches, but we do expect them to do the things the Bible expects of every Christian. And we do ask people to enter into these four covenants because **WE BECOME WHAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO.**



The difference between church attenders and church members, and between the spiritually immature and the spiritually mature can be summed up in just one word – COMMITMENT!

The difference between being an attender and a member is like the difference between living together and getting married. If two people are just living together there is no commitment; either one can walk away at any moment. Marriage means you are committed for the duration!

A person who says, “I’m committed to Jesus Christ but I don’t want to be committed to a local church,” is obviously a very immature believer. The Bible tells us that the church is the Body of Christ on earth and the Bride of Christ in Heaven. Jesus gave His life for the church. The more like Christ we become, the more we are willing to give our lives for the church. Church membership is not just a ritual; it is a step in your spiritual development.

At our church, we recognize the need for a **COMMITMENT** to a local church family for the following reasons ...

1. A Biblical reason
(our example is Christ’s commitment to the church)
2. A cultural reason
(It is an antidote to our society’s lack of commitment)
3. A practical reason
(It defines who can be counted on by the leadership)
4. A personal reason
(It produces spiritual growth in the individual)

My Salvation Covenant

Having experienced Bible salvation, as taught in the book of Acts, I declare before God and the members of my church ...

I have experienced the New Birth (Acts 2:38) ...

- By repenting of my sins
- By being baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of my sins
- By receiving the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues

I protect the unity of my church ...

- By submitting to the leadership
- By acting in love toward other members
- By resolving conflicts in a Biblical manner

I share the responsibility of my church ...

- By praying for its leadership and growth
- By being faithful in my attendance
- By inviting the unchurched (those who do not go to church anywhere) to attend and welcoming those who visit

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Study Questions

1. List and briefly explain four (4) things about the nature of the church that determine its structure. Support each answer with Scripture.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

2. What one word sums up the difference between church attenders and church members? _____

3. What one word sums up the difference between the spiritually immature and the spiritually mature? _____

4. List and briefly explain the four (4) reasons why we need a commitment to a local

The Old Weapons Still Work

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”
(Acts 2:42).

In 1 and 2 Samuel we find the story of Saul and David. David, anointed the next king of Israel by the prophet Samuel, had been asked by his father to check on his brothers in battle. Arriving there, he quickly surveyed the humiliating situation between the people of God and the Philistines, (and their Goliath). Realizing that there was a great cause (I Samuel 17:29), he fights and defeats the giant. This great feat was done with a slingshot and just one smooth stone. He rushed and cut off the head of the giant using Goliath’s own sword.

“...But there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith...” (I Samuel 17:50-51).

David’s victory, and popularity among the people, caused Saul to become very jealous. Women would come out of the cities of Israel and sing and dance meeting King Saul. To his surprise, they would sing to one another, “Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” This caused Saul to be very angry and displeased. He said, “...what can he have more but the kingdom?” Saul eyed David from that day forward. (I Samuel 18:6-10) All of the people loved David. Saul understood that the Lord was with David (I Samuel 18:28) and knew that the Lord was not with himself (I Samuel 18:12). This could mean only one thing, that the Lord was going to replace him and give the throne to David. Saul’s jealousy, as cruel as the grave, increased until David had to flee for his own life. He actually could have stayed and used the strength of popularity to fight against Saul. However, David would never touch the Lord’s anointed. Thus, he decided to run for his life. After making a covenant with his best friend, Jonathan, he departed. David ran to a priest and told him, “The king hath commanded me a business...” (I Samuel 21:2). In his haste of leaving Saul, he realizes that he doesn’t have any weapons.

Some Time Later

“And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? For I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king’s business required haste. And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that: give it me.” (I Samuel 21:8-9)

When David was offered the sword of Goliath he gladly took it. He knew that there was none

like it. He had a task to do and the *king's business does require haste*. This business will require weapons. It is good to know that the old weapons still work.

Many Years Later

Many years later another king-to-be was hidden in the house of God for six years. He had been saved from the massacre of Athaliah as she jealously destroyed all of the seed royal. This young boy was only seven years old when he began to reign. The captains were given David's swords and spears. They used these weapons and installed the rightful king to the throne.

“And the captains over hundreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields, that were in the temple of the Lord. And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, along by the altar, and the temple. And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands and said, ‘God save the king’” (2 Kings 11:10-12).

From this story we see that the old weapons still work.

We are also in a battle between good and evil. Our battle is not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers. Our enemy is not a man, but the devil, with his army. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Our weapons are not spears and shields but spiritual weapons: “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:3).

These spiritual weapons were hidden in the temple of the Lord when Jesus won the battle for the control of our heart. Our mission is to cause the devil to flee, advance the kingdom of God, and reveal Jesus Christ as the King of Kings. Once again, we see that the old weapons still work.

We know that the entrance requirements to being part of the army of the Lord are found in Acts 2:38. Through repentance, baptism in Jesus' name, and the infilling of the Holy Spirit, we have been enlisted as a good soldier, able to endure hardness (II Timothy 2:3-4).

What are some of the old weapons that still work?

□ Prayer

Acts 1:14; 3:1; 6:4; 10:31; 12:5; 16:13; 27:33; Ephesians 6:18; I Corinthians 7:5; Colossians 4:2

□ Fasting

Matthew 17:21; Acts 10:30; 13:2-3; 14:23; 27:33; I Corinthians 7:5; Esther 4:16; Isaiah 58:5-6

❑ **Boldness**

Proverbs 28:1; Acts 13:46; 9:26; 4:29-31; Hebrews 4:16

❑ **Humility**

Acts 20:19; 3; Proverbs 15:33

❑ **Praise and Worship**

Joshua 6:20; 2 Chronicles 20:19-22; Acts 2:47; 16:25

❑ **Unity**

Psalm 133:1; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Mark 3:25; Acts 4:24

❑ **Gifts of the Spirit**

Acts 8:5-7; 26:18; I Corinthians 12-14

❑ **Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

Isaiah 59:19; Acts 1:8

❑ **Blood of Jesus**

Acts 20:28, 1 John 1:7

“I plead the blood of Jesus!”

❑ **The Name of Jesus**

Acts 3:6,16; 4:7,10,17-18; 4:12; 16:19; Colossians 3:17

❑ **Word of God**

Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6:17; Acts 4:31; 8:4

❑ **Hearing the Spirit**

John 16:13; Acts 8:29; 10:19; 16:7; 21:4

Study Questions




1. What are some of our spiritual weapons that work in our daily battles? _____

Additional Notes

Building Spiritual Muscles the Secret Way

“And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God”
(Acts 10:30-31).

Scripture teaches three spiritual disciplines that should be done in secret. God rewards these openly. The Jews routinely practiced these disciplines.

-  Praying
-  Fasting
-  Giving

Cornelius was a Gentile—not a Jew. He had a heart for God and desired to please Him. He was faithful in all three above areas of discipline, specifically mentioned in Acts 10:30-31. And he got God’s attention.

“And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God”
(Acts 10:4).

The motives of many religious people of the day, especially the Pharisees, were not as pure as Cornelius’s. Jesus devoted much of Matthew 6 to teaching on the correct motives behind spiritual disciplines.

Erwin W. Lutzer in *Your Eternal Reward* explains, “Christ taught that it is possible to succeed in the eyes of men and fail in the eyes of God. If we serve to be seen of men, we will be rewarded by them. . . . We will not be rewarded twice. . . . We are rewarded by the person whose praise we seek.”

Our attitude determines whether we succeed or fail. When we pray, fast, and/or give for public show rather than to please God, we have a problem. When we practice a spiritual discipline to please people, we receive a reward—the praises of people, and it has no eternal value. It makes us look spiritual. It does not necessarily mean we are. Looks can be deceiving. John Stott said, “Deeply ingrained in our fallen nature is this thirst for the praise of men.” Let’s face it, he is correct. We like to be noticed, appreciated, and complimented. It is part of human nature, our fallen nature. However, our spiritual nature desires to give all glory to God.

In His teaching Jesus targeted the Pharisees, who were often motivated by hypocrisy. They put on an act like in a drama or theatrical production. The word “hypocrite” is taken from the word that refers to “stage players.” It is “appearing to be what the person is not; putting on the

appearance of being religious to get the applause of men.” (*Barnes’ Commentary*)

Tom Hovestol in *Seeing Ourselves in the Pharisees Extreme Righteousness* writes, “The religious show is practiced all the time, every day, in every part of the world. The big productions take place on Friday among Muslims, Saturdays among Jews, and Sunday among Christians.” This quote is taken from an interesting chapter aptly entitled, “When a Private Relationship Becomes a Public Show.”

Praying

“And prayed to God alway” (Acts 10:2).

“Thy prayer is heard” (Acts 10:31).

“When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking” (Matthew 6:5-7).

My value to God in public is determined by what I am in private.

The Pharisees knew how to pray. Jesus did not condemn prayer. He condemned standing on the street corner to make a public spectacle. He did not criticize praying in a public place. He did recommend finding a solitary place to talk to God. This is especially difficult in a culture where most live in one-room houses. Many Jewish houses had a place of private devotion. The roofs were normally flat and made an excellent place to pray. Peter was praying on the roof when Cornelius’s messengers arrived. Often a small room was designed and was commonly referred to as the “Upper Room.” It was a place set apart to get alone with God. What do you do when you do not have an “Upper Room” or “Prayer Closet”? Jesus encountered the same problem. Why not try a garden, mountain, beach, forest, or any place where you can get alone with your Maker? Jesus is more concerned with the attitude than with the place.

Jesus did not condemn praying for long periods of time (unless it was for show). The Gospels reveal that He spent all night in prayer several times. He does not require fanciful words (designed to impress the listeners).

Fasting

“Four days ago I was fasting until this hour” (Acts 10:31).

“When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:16-18).

Giving

“Which gave much alms to the people” (Acts 10:2).

“And thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God” (Acts 10:31).

“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:1-4).




Jesus does not tell us not to give in front of others, but never to give to be seen of them. When we do something for the right motive and in the right attitude, it will not matter whether it is public or private. Not letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing, means give as secretly as possible.

Begin, Others Will Follow

During World War 1, General Douglas MacArthur was a thirty-eight-year-old brigadier general and a brand new brigade commander in France. He went forward and waited in the trenches with the battalion that was going to lead the way in a major attack.

He called the battalion commander. “Major,” he said, “when the signal comes to go over the top, I want you to go first, before your men.” He paused and then continued, “If you do this, the battalion will follow.” He then promised, “You will earn the distinguished cross, and I’ll see that you get it.” He took off his own prized medal and pinned it to the major’s chest. When the command was given, the major was the first to climb over the top. He charged out in front of the troops, and they followed him.

It has often been said that:

-  Everything rises and falls on leadership.
-  Followers cannot rise any higher than their leadership.
-  A leader that leads precedes. (He goes first.)

An effective leader sets the example for his followers. We must lead the way in prayer, fasting, and giving, not to make a show, but to set an example for our followers.

Musicians say that the hardest part of practicing is taking the instrument out of the case. To begin is to be half done. Let us begin to build spiritual muscles through spiritual disciplines. The New Testament likens our involvement in the Christian life to that of a farmer, fisherman, boxer, athlete (runner), and a soldier (to name a few). Each of these positions required hard work, discipline, exercise, and daily participation. Like any other discipline, prayer, fasting, and giving are not easy. When exercised, they produce spiritual muscles.

“Spend your time and energy in the exercise of keeping spiritually fit. Bodily exercise is all right, but spiritual exercise is much more important and is a tonic for all you do. So exercise yourself spiritually, and practice being a better Christian because that will help you not only now in this life, but in the next life too” (1 Timothy 4:7-9 TLB).

Study Questions

1. What three spiritual disciplines should be done in secret? _____

2. How many spiritual disciplines did Cornelius practice? _____

3. What reward will we receive for practicing spiritual disciplines to get the attention of other people? _____

4. Why do we like the praises of men? _____

5. The word “hypocrite” refers to? _____

6. Did Jesus condemn praying in public? Explain. _____

7. Describe what “Upper Room” commonly means. _____

8. Did Jesus condemn praying for long periods of time? Explain. _____

Becoming a Mature Christian – Part I

(Adapted from Raymond Woodward's *Life Course 201*)

"... that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God"
(Colossians 4:12).

"That we henceforth be no more children, ... may grow up into him in all things ..."
(Ephesians 4:14-15).

This lesson is the first of several that will help us understand and develop the BASIC HABITS every Christian needs to grow to spiritual maturity.

WHAT IS "SPIRITUAL MATURITY"?

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

A simple definition of "SPIRITUAL MATURITY" is "BEING LIKE JESUS CHRIST."

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

FACTS ABOUT SPIRITUAL MATURITY

1. IT IS NOT AUTOMATIC

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

2. IT IS A PROCESS

"Learn to be mature" (Proverbs 8:5).

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

3. IT TAKES DISCIPLINE

"Take the time and the trouble to keep yourself spiritually fit" (1 Tim. 4:7, Phillips Translation).

"Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7, *New American Standard Translation*).

UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLESHIP

1. **Mature believers are called DISCIPLES.**
2. **I can't be a disciple without being DISCIPLINED.**



Physical fitness is not automatic – neither is spiritual fitness. Both take hard work.

3. **The mark of a disciple is "bearing my cross."**

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

4. **Bearing my cross means "denying my own desires" in order to put God first in my life EVERY DAY.**

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

The Habits Of A Disciple

To become a disciple, you must develop the habits of a disciple. Some of these habits have already been discussed in earlier lessons. Let's review the habits of a good disciple of Jesus, then learn more about those we have not discussed in depth before.

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

1. **BIBLE STUDY**

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

2. **PRAYER**

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

3. **TITHING**

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

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

4. **FELLOWSHIP**

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

5. HOLINESS

"Therefore, come out from them and separate yourselves from them, says the Lord. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete purity because we fear God" (2 Corinthians 6:17–7:1).

WHAT IS A HABIT? (Webster's Dictionary)

- A continual, often unconscious inclination to do a certain activity, acquired through frequent repetition.
- An established disposition of the character.
- A customary practice.

THE HABIT OF PRAYER

"Base your happiness on your hope in Christ. When trials come, endure them patiently; steadfastly maintain the **habit** of prayer" (Romans 12:12).



God can communicate with us in many ways, but we can only communicate with Him one way – through PRAYER. That's why it is vital that we establish prayer as a DAILY habit.

1. HAVE A SPECIFIC TIME FOR PRAYER.

Reasons for considering an early morning prayer time:

- The example of many Bible characters (Abraham, Job, Jacob, Moses, Hannah, Hezekiah, David, Daniel, Jesus, etc.)
- It is logical to begin the day with prayer. The best time to tune your instrument is before you play the concert, not after!
- It demonstrates that meeting with God is your first priority. You give Him the first part of your day.
- You are likely to be more rested and your mind is less cluttered first thing in the morning.

2. HAVE A SPECIFIC PLACE FOR PRAYER.

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

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went to a solitary place where he prayed" (Mark 1:35).

3. HAVE A SPECIFIC ROUTINE FOR PRAYER.

- **A Bible**
 - use an understandable translation
 - use a Bible with readable print
 - use a Bible without distracting study notes

- **A Notebook and Pen**
 - write down anything the Lord speaks to you about
 - keep a personal prayer list
 - write down thoughts for further Bible study later on

- **Other Helps**
 - take the phone off the hook, or use your answering machine
 - play soft instrumental music in the background
 - have tissue nearby, if you tend to weep when you pray
 - have a to-do list nearby, if you are a “type A” personality who can’t stop thinking about the day ahead (when a task comes to mind, don’t do it now – write a quick reminder for later, so you can stop thinking about it and get back to prayer)
 - use anything else that will keep you from being distracted

Jesus taught us to have the right ATTITUDE in prayer (Matthew 6:5-8)

- **BE REAL**

"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men" (Matthew 6:5).
- **BE RELAXED**

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

"Don't recite the same prayer over and over as the heathen do, who think prayers are answered only by repeating them again and again. Remember, your Father knows exactly what you need before you ask Him" (Matthew 6:7-8).

Jesus taught us to have the right APPROACH in prayer (Matthew 6:9-15)

- "This, then, is **HOW** you should pray ..." (Matthew 6:9).



SIX WAYS TO GET A GRASP ON PRAYER

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

RULE #1: Never judge your prayer time by your feelings.

RULE #2: If you miss a day, DON'T GIVE UP.

1. **PRAISE: I express my love to God**

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name" (Matthew 6:9).

TWO KINDS OF PRAISE:

- ADORATION: praising God for who he is
- THANKSGIVING: praising God for what he has done

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

A. Remind yourself of the promises found in the various meanings of God name, and affirm

them as you pray.

- B. Remind yourself of all the blessings God has given to you, and express your thanks for them as you pray.

THE NAMES OF GOD			
<p>God is so magnificent that the Hebrew language uses compound names to describe the many aspects of His character. You can use each of these compound names to focus on what God is really like. Think on the implications of these names and you'll have lots to praise God for.</p>			
Compound Name	Meaning	Scripture	What It Means To Me
Jehovah Shammah	God is present with me	Ezekiel 48:35	You are with me, so I am never alone.
Jehovah Rohi	God is my shepherd	Psalms 23:1	You lead me, feed me and protect me.
Jehovah Jireh	God is my provider	Genesis 22:14	You see what I need before I even ask.
Jehovah Rapha	God is my healer	Exodus 15:26	You can heal my body, emotions and relationships.
Jehovah Tsidkenu	God is my righteousness	Jeremiah 23:6	You accept me and forgive me of my sins.
Jehovah M'Kaddesh	God is my sanctification	Exodus 31:13	You give me the power to live holy.
Jehovah Shalom	God is my peace	Judges 6:24	You give me peace in spite of life's circumstances.
Jehovah Nissi	God is my banner	Exodus 17:15	You are my victory through conflict and confrontation.
<p>All God's attributes are summed up in the name of Jesus. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ..." (Phil. 2:9-10).</p>			

2. **PURPOSE:** I commit myself to God's will for my life

"Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

Pray for God's will to be done...

- In my family
- In my church
- In my job
- In my future
- In my neighborhood
- In my city

- In my ministry
- In my nation

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

3. **PROVISION**: I ask God to provide for my needs

"Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11).

WHAT NEEDS CAN I PRAY ABOUT? ALL OF THEM!

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

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

THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL PRAYING: BE SPECIFIC: Write down your request, along with a promise you are claiming from the Bible, and expect an answer.

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

4. **PARDON**: I ask God to forgive my sins

"And forgive us our debts" (Matthew 6:12).

Four Steps to Forgiveness:

A. Ask God to reveal my sin.

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

B. Confess each sin specifically.

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

C. Make restitution to others when necessary.

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

D. By faith, accept God's forgiveness.

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

5. **PEOPLE**: I pray for other people

"...as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12).

Make a list of people you want to pray for. You might pray for different groups of people on different days of the week (missionaries, family, unsaved friends, church leadership, etc.).

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

6. PROTECTION: I ask for spiritual protection

"And do not lead us into temptation but deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:13).

All believers face spiritual battles. Satan wants to defeat you through temptation and fear, but by praying for protection you will have the power to face every situation.

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

7. PRAISE: I end my prayer the same way I started.

"For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever" (Matthew 6:13).

Study Questions

1. Define "spiritual maturity." Write out at least one (1) verse of Scripture that supports this definition. _____

2. List three (3) facts about spiritual maturity, supporting each one with Scripture.

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

3. Mature _____ are called "_____."

4. You cannot be a disciple without being _____.

5. What is the mark of a disciple? Support your answer with Scripture. _____

6. What does it mean to "bear your cross?" Support your answer with Scripture. _____

7. List five (5) habits of a good disciple, and give Scripture reference to support why each of these is so important to the Christian walk of faith.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

8. List the three (3) parts to the Webster’s Dictionary definition of a habit.

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

9. List the four (4) steps to forgiveness with a Scripture reference for each.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

10. List three (3) ways to help make prayer a daily habit.

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

11. Mention and briefly explain the two (2) types of praise.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

12. List and briefly explain the six (6) ways to get a grasp on prayer.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____

Becoming a Mature Christian – Part 2

(Adapted from Raymond Woodward's *Life Course 201*)

"... that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God"
(Colossians 4:12).

"That we henceforth be no more children, ... may grow up into him in all things ..."
(Ephesians 4:14-15).

Following in the footsteps of Jesus will cause us to develop certain habits . . . repeated practices that form a lifestyle. This lesson covers two more of these:

THE HABIT OF TITHING

"On the first day of each week, set aside some of what you have earned and give it as an offering. The amount depends on how much the Lord has helped you earn" (1 Corinthians 16:2).

MY GIVING REVEALS MY SPIRITUAL MATURITY

"Just as you excel in everything else ... in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness ... see that you also excel in the grace of giving" (2 Corinthians 8:7).

DID YOU KNOW ...?

- The Bible talks more about GIVING than it does about either HEAVEN or HELL?
- Over HALF of the parables Jesus told have to do with the subject of MONEY?
- There are more promises in the Bible related to GIVING than to any other subject?
- Your giving is VERY IMPORTANT to God – and to your SPIRITUAL LIFE?

KEY BIBLE WORDS			
Believe	Pray	Love	Give
used 272 times	used 371 times	used 714 times	used 2162 times

You can give without loving but you cannot love without giving!

WHY GOD WANTS ME TO GIVE (7 BENEFITS)**1. GIVING MAKES ME MORE LIKE THE LORD.**

"God so loved the world that He gave his only Son" (John 3:16).

2. GIVING DRAWS ME CLOSER TO GOD.

"Where your treasure is, there your heart is also" (Matthew 6:21).

3. GIVING IS THE ANTIDOTE TO MATERIALISM.

"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to be generous and willing to share. In this way they may take hold of the life that is truly Life" (1 Timothy 6:17-19).



We make a living by what we GET, but we make a life by what we GIVE.

4. GIVING STRENGTHENS MY FAITH.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding ... Honor the Lord by giving him the first part of your income, and he will fill your barns to overflowing" (Proverbs 3:5,9).

"Give and it will be given to you ... for with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (Luke 6:38).

5. GIVING IS AN INVESTMENT FOR ETERNITY.

"... Give happily to those in need, and always be ready to share whatever God has given you. By doing this, you will be storing up real treasure for yourselves in heaven - it is the only safe investment for eternity" (1 Timothy 6:18-19).

6. GIVING BLESSES ME IN RETURN.

"A generous man himself will be blessed" (Proverbs 22:9).

"A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed" (Proverbs 11:25).

"Good will come to him who is generous ..." (Psalm 112:5).

7. GIVING MAKES ME HAPPY.

"(Jesus said) ... There is more happiness in giving than in receiving" (Acts 20:35).

What Is Tithing?

The word "tithe" means "a tenth part"

A "tithe" is giving 10% of my income

An "offering" is anything I give above my tithe

WHY I SHOULD TITHE (7 REASONS)**1. Because God commands it.**

"A tenth of all you produce is the Lord's, and it is holy" (Leviticus 27:30).

2. Tithing shows that God has first place in my life.

"The purpose of tithing is to teach you to always put God in first place in your life" (Deuteronomy 14:23).

3. Tithing reminds me that all I have is from God.

"Always remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you the ability to produce wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:18).

4. It expresses my gratitude for what I have been given.

"How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?" (Psalms 116:12).

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

5. Refusing to tithe is actually like stealing from God.

"God says 'Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing me!' But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' God says 'In tithes and offerings ... Bring your whole tithe to My house'" (Malachi 3:8-10).

6. Tithing gives God an opportunity to bless me.

"'Bring your whole tithe to My storehouse. Test me in this' says the Lord, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you won't have room enough for it! I will prevent pests from devouring your crops and the vines in your fields will be protected from plagues'" (Malachi 3:10).



Only in your TITHING does God say, "Test Me! Let Me bless you and prove Myself to you!"

7. Tithing proves that I really love God.

"(Jesus said) If you really love me, do what I command" (John 14:15).

"... I want you to be leaders also in the spirit of cheerful giving ... This is one way to prove that your love is real, that it goes beyond mere words" (2 Corinthians 8:7-8).

WHAT SHOULD I TITHE?

The first part of what I earn, not the left-overs.

"Honor the Lord by giving him the first part of all your income" (Proverbs 3:9-10).

WHERE SHOULD I TITHE?

Where I worship and get fed spiritually.

"Bring your whole tithe to My Storehouse ..." (Malachi 3:10)

WHEN SHOULD I TITHE?

When I go to worship each week.

"On the first day of every week, set aside some of what you have earned and give it as an offering. The amount depends on how much the Lord has helped you earn." (1 Corinthians 16:2)

HOW SHOULD I TITHE?

WILLINGLY

"Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under pressure ..." (2 Corinthians 9:7).

JOYFULLY

"... for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

GENEROUSLY

"They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability" (2 Corinthians 8:3).

EXPECTANTLY

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and whoever sows generously will reap generously" (2 Cor. 9:6).

Tithing is not an equal AMOUNT from everyone, but an equal PROPORTION from everyone. God's system is absolutely fair!

THE HABIT OF FELLOWSHIP

"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage each other" (Hebrews 10:25).

1. I need a church family to help me grow spiritually.

"You are a member of God's very own family ... and you belong in God's household with every other Christian" (Ephesians 2:19).

"So in Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the other" (Romans 12:5).

2. I need encouragement to help me grow spiritually.

"Let us think of one another and how we can encourage each other to love and do good deeds" (Hebrews 10:24).

"Two are better off than one ... If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if

someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one to help him ... Two men can resist an attack that would defeat one man alone. A rope made of three cords is hard to break" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12).

3. I need accountability to help me grow spiritually.

"Every day ... keep encouraging one another so that none of you is hardened by the glamour of sin" (Hebrews 3:13).

"Brothers, if someone is trapped in some sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently ... Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:1-2).

4. There is great spiritual power in unity.

"For wherever two or three have come together in my name, I am there, right among them" (Matthew 18:20).

"Whenever two of you on earth agree about anything you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven" (Matthew 18:19).

5. God has given me gifts to bless my church family.

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

"... together you form the body of Christ and each one of you is a necessary part of it" (1 Corinthians 12:27).

There are nearly 60 "one another" commands in the New Testament that you cannot obey unless you are faithful to a local church!

- ✓ Serve one another Galatians 5:13
- ✓ Accept one another Romans 15:7
- ✓ Forgive one another.....Colossians 3:13
- ✓ Greet one another Romans 16:16
- ✓ Bear one another's burdens Galatians 6:2
- ✓ Be devoted to one another..... Romans 12:10
- ✓ Honor one another Romans 12:10
- ✓ Teach one another Romans 15:14
- ✓ Submit to one another Ephesians 5:21
- ✓ Encourage one another 1 Thessalonians 5:11

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

The main purpose of all of our services and groups is to **BUILD BRIDGES** to the unsaved of our community. We firmly believe in having "church for the unchurched."

“If any of you has a hundred sheep, and one of them gets lost, what will you do? Won’t you leave the ninety-nine in the field and go look for the lost sheep until you find it?” (Luke 15:4).

Study Questions

1. My _____ reveals my spiritual _____.
2. Given the following key Bible words, write in the blank the number of times each of these is used in God’s Word.
 Believe _____
 Pray _____
 Love _____
 Give _____
3. You can _____ without _____ but you cannot _____ without _____.
4. List and provide Scripture reference for the seven (7) benefits of giving studied in this lesson.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____
5. Define “tithing.” Include at least three (3) things. _____

6. List (with Scripture reference) the seven (7) reasons why we should tithe.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
 - 6) _____
 - 7) _____
7. Answer (with Scripture reference) the following questions about tithing.
 What should I tithe? _____

Where should I tithe? _____

When should I tithe? _____

8. List four (4) answers (with Scripture reference) to the question “How should I tithe?”

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

9. Tithing is not an equal _____ from everyone, but an equal _____ from everyone. God’s system is absolutely _____.

10. List (with Scripture reference) the five (5) reasons why we need the habit of fellowship.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

11. Given the following Scripture references, which “one another” command is mentioned in each?

- Ephesians 5:21 _____
- Romans 15:7 _____
- 1Thessalonians 5:11 _____
- Galatians 6:2 _____
- Romans 16:16 _____
- Galatians 5:13 _____
- Romans 15:14 _____
- Colossians 3:13 _____
- Romans 12:10 _____

12. The main purpose of all our services and groups is to build _____ to the _____ of our community.