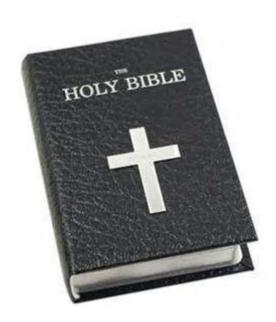


CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION BIBLE STUDY



"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

1 Corinthians 3:11

THE LAW (THE TEN COMMANDMENTS)

- 1. "You shall have no other gods before Me." Exodus 20:3
- **2.** "You shall not make for yourself a carved image--any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me" Exodus 20:4-5
- **3.** "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain." Exodus 20:7
- **4.** "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." Exodus 20:8-11
- **5.** "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you." Exodus 20:12
- 6. "You shall not murder." Exodus 20:13
- 7. "You shall not commit adultery." Exodus 20:14
- **8.** "You shall not steal." Exodus 20:15
- 9. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." Exodus 20:16
- **10.** "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's." Exodus 20:17

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled." Matthew 5:17-18

"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," Romans 3:20,23

Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Galatians 3:24

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'" John 14:6

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Scriptures listed are primarily taken from the New King James Version (NKJV). Scriptures for the salvation class are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB).

SALVATION

SALVATION

"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God." 1 John 5:13

WHAT DOES "SALVATION" MEAN?

Definition – delivered, rescued, safety

WHAT DO WE NEED TO BE DELIVERED/RESCUED FROM?

Romans 6:17-18 – "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin you became slaves of righteousness." Answer -WHAT IS SIN? Definition-"to miss the mark", also called iniquity and trespasses We miss the mark (target) of Holy God's holy standards. How is sin described in the following scriptures? James 4:17 – "Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin." Answer -Romans 14:23 – "...whatever is not from faith is sin."

WHO SINS?

Romans 3:23 - "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."		
Answer		
<u>Isaiah 53:6</u> – "All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him."		
<u>Answer</u> -		
WHAT IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF SIN?		
<u>Isaiah 59:2</u> – "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."		
Answer -		
Romans 6:23 – "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."		
<u>Answer</u> -		
*Because we all qualify as "sinners" who are separated from a Holy God and destined for eternal death – we need a solution.		
*God is absolutely holy which means that He is free from all defilement and pure. Sin in ourselves must be removed from the presence of our Holy God so we can dwell with Him. We need someone to deliver and remove our sin, rescue us and bring us to safety. (Salvation) The Savior's name is JESUS.		
<u>1 Peter 3:18</u> – "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit."		

WHO IS JESUS?

 $\underline{ \mbox{John } 1:1,14} - \hbox{\it `'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word}$

was God And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."
Answer -
<u>John 14:6</u> – "Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."
<u>Answer</u> -
Acts 4:12 – "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
Answer -
WHY DID JESUS SAVE US?
<u>John 3:16</u> – "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."
Answer
Romans 5:8 – "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
Answer
<u>Isaiah 53:5</u> – "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed."
Answer

HOW DID JESUS SAVE US?

$\frac{1\ \text{Peter 1:}18\text{-}19}{\text{lood}\text{the blood of Christ."}} - \text{"knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable thingsbut with precious bloodthe blood of Christ."}$
Answer
<u>Galatians 1:4</u> – "who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father."
Answer
Matthew 26:28 – "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Answer -
<u>Titus 3:5</u> – "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."
Answer
Ephesians 2:8-9 – "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."
Answer

MY RESPONSE TO GOD'S OFFER OF SALVATION

^{*}Salvation has been offered to us as a free gift from God.

^{*}Salvation can never be earned or bought.

^{*}Salvation only comes by responding to God's offer - of Jesus' sacrifice of Himself - to pay our debt of sin.

According to the following scriptures what should be my response to God's offer of salvation?

Acts 3:19 — "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."
Answer
1 John 1:9 — "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
Answer
John 3:36 — "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on Him."
Answer
Mark 1:15 — "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel."
Answer
BENEFITS OF SALVATION
2 Corinthians 5:17 – "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new."
Answer
John 3:16 – "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."
Answer
Ezekiel 11:19 – "Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh."
Answer -

Romans $8:9$ – "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His."	
Answer	
Romans 8:15-17 – "For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him."	
Answer	
$\underline{1 \; \text{John} \; 1:9}$ – "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."	
Answer	
Acts 3:19 – "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." Answer -	
Six Evidences of Salvation	
1. A new awareness of right and wrong (spiritual life)	
2. A hunger for God's Word (spiritual food)	
3. A desire for a changed life (spiritual growth)	
4. An increase in the testing of your faith (spiritual warfare)	
5. A love for other Christians (spiritual fellowship)	
6. A desire to tell others about Christ (witnessing)	

Questions to Consider

1.	Have you responded to God's free gift of salvation in such a way that you are assured of your salvation and your reward of heaven when you die?
2.	Have you seen a change in your behavior since you've changed your belief and received Christ's blood sacrifice to pay your debt of sin?
3.	Do you recognize the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in your life to convict you concerning sin, righteousness and judgment?
4.	Do you love God and others as Christ loves and forgives you?

BAPTISM

Baptism

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Ephesians 4:4-6

What does the word 'Baptism' mean?

- <u>Baptism</u> is from the Greek word "baptisma"
 <u>To baptize</u> in Greek is "baptizo" which means to immerse, cause to be dipped, to submerge, to overwhelm.
- Therefore, to baptize a person in water means to put that person wholly under the *water*.

"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him." Matthew 3:16

"So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both **Philip and the eunuch went** down into the water, and he baptized him." Acts 8:38

"Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized." John 3:23

Who is Baptism for?

• It is for the believer. It is for those who have put Jesus on the throne of their heart as their Lord and Savior.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

"Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?' Then Phillip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may." Acts 8:36-37

What about Infants?

We do not baptize infants at Club Zion Community Church because infants are incapable of understanding they are sinners, repenting or believing.

Instead we do **Baby Dedications** where the parents dedicate their child to the Lord and promise to raise them in a Christian home and promise to teach the child God's word.

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ... Acts 2:38

Do you have to reach a certain age to be baptized?

There is no age requirement for baptism, only that the individual truly understands their sinful condition, need for a savior, and **believe** that Jesus paid the penalty for their sin on the cross, rose from the dead and sits at the right hand of the Father. An individual must have true understanding and belief in the Gospel with a commitment and desire to live their life in obedience to God's word.

What is the importance of Baptism?

1. Baptism is an **act of obedience** by the believer and is one of two sacraments the Lord Jesus told us to follow - the other is communion.

""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

2. A **public testimony**, the outward confession of an inward experience of our spiritual rebirth - of one's faith in Christ alone for salvation

"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven." Matthew 10:32

At Club Zion Community Church, we baptize believers in the Atlantic Ocean on a public beach for all present to witness and all church members are invited to witness.

3. Following Christ's example

"After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea. And He stayed there with them and baptized." John 3:22

What is the purpose of Baptism?

Baptism identifies the believer with the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit

"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

2. Baptism identifies the believer with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection

"buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead." Colossians 2:12 "For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection" Romans 6:5

3. Water baptism is a **picture** representing profound **spiritual truth** – submerged in water shows a burial. **Water baptism symbolizes and appropriates our death, burial and resurrection with Christ.** Water baptism is the biblical expression of a commitment to **die** to the world, the flesh and the devil and **live** for God alone.

Death – Death to the old nature, the old ways, habits and lifestyle. Burial of all these things

"I have been crucified with Christ: it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20

Resurrection to newness of life:

"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection." Romans 6:5-6

"For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:11-12

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17

Does water baptism save or is it a requirement for salvation?

Answer: Water baptism does not save and it is not a requirement for salvation – it is an act of obedience.

<u>Sola Fide – Salvation is by Faith Alone</u>

"For by grace you have been saved through **faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **not of works**, lest anyone should boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him** should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." John 3:36

Thief on the cross one example:

"Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." Luke 23:42,43

Spiritual baptism occurs at salvation:

Believers are immediately and eternally baptized (immersed and overwhelmed) into the fullness of the Father - Father, Son, & Holy Spirit at the moment of their salvation.

"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1:13-14

Is there more than one baptism?

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into **one Spirit**." 1 Corinthians 12:13

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, **one baptism**; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Ephesians 4:4-6

Questions to Consider

- 1. What changes have taken place in your life that signify to you and others that you are a follower of Christ?
- 2. What do you believe your outward confession of new birth demonstrates to others? And what might be a result?
- 3 In baptism, symbolically we died and were buried with Christ, then made alive in Christ, just as He was raised from the dead. As a Christian, what does this "new life" mean to you?
- 4. Have you been baptized since you became a Christian? Do you believe that baptism is a command of God?
- 5. Explain why it is important to encourage, support and attend the baptism of believers. How was your baptism special to you?

PRAYER

Prayer

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

Why pray?

...especially if... " your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him."

Matthew 6:8

Jesus did

"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." Matthew 26:39

"And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." Luke 22:31-32

"So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed." Luke 5:16

We are commanded to

"...pray without ceasing" 1 Thessalonians 5:17

"I desire...that the men pray everywhere..." 1 Timothy 2:8

Prayer brings the power of God to bear on the situation that we are concerned about.

What Jesus did

We have direct access to the Father because of Jesus

Jesus tore the veil - we may now enter directly before God

"Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split" Matthew 27:51

"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water." Hebrews 10:19-22

What prayer is not

- It's not reading words
- It's not repeating words

"And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words." Matthew 6:7

• It's not re-directing God's perfect will

What prayer is

- Communication
- Confession
- Connection

"Call to me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know." Jeremiah 33:3

Types of Prayer

• Adoration (worship)

"All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You." Psalm 145:10

Confession

"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

• **Supplication** (petition, request)

"Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You? Show us Your mercy, LORD, and grant us Your salvation." Psalm 85:6,7

Thanksgiving

"Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" Psalm 107:8

Dedication

"And she said, 'O my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to the LORD. For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore I also have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the LORD.' So they worshiped the LORD there."

1 Samuel 1:26-28

• **Intercession** (prayer for others)

"Brethren pray for us." 1 Thessalonians 5:25

"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." James 5:16

Pray for what?

Salvation

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9

Forgiveness

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" Acts 3:19

Health

"Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." James 5:14

Strength

"In the day when I cried out, You answered me, and made me bold with strength in my soul." Psalm 138:3

• Sensitivity to gifts

"Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy." 1 Corinthians 14:1

Service to the Lord

"Then He said to them, 'The harvest is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'" Luke 10:2

Approaching God – How to Pray

Boldness

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16

Humility

"Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth." Numbers 12:3

"Then he said to me, 'Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words." Daniel 10:12

"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." 1 Peter 5:6,7

"But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'" James 4:6

Reverence

"God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those around Him." Psalm 89:7

"Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at His footstool—He is holy." Psalm 99:5

What is your prayer motive/attitude?

• Humility vs. pride

"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 I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place." 2 Chronicles 7:14-15

• Whole-Heartedness vs. Laziness

"And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13

• Faith vs. doubt

"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them." Mark 11:24

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." Hebrews 11:6

• Righteousness vs. sinfulness

"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." James 5:16b

Obedience vs. disobedience

"And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." 1 John 3:22

God's will vs. my will

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." 1 John 5:14

Hearing God's voice through prayer

Are you ready to listen? Once we've prepared our hearts to listen through prayer, we're more likely to hear the voice of God!

God speaks through His Word

"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

- God speaks through our thoughts
- God speaks through conversations with others
- God speaks through circumstances

When God speaks it is always in agreement with His word as revealed in scripture, never contrary to it.

If you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit in you. Ask God every day, and He will prepare your heart to hear His voice. His Spirit, that still, small voice inside you, is the One who will remind you of what God said, and help you recognize God's opportunities in your life.

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." John 14:26

Seek God's will

Knowing God's will is the key to prayer, spiritual growth and fruitfulness in our individual lives. Christ taught us that living in obedience to that will is the key to it all!

- Study the Word of God
- Ask God in prayer to reveal His will
- Look to the Holy Spirit for guidance
- Know that His will is always in accordance to the Scriptures, never contrary to them
- Reflect and take into account providential circumstances

Hindrances to Prayer/Unanswered Prayer

Dishonor

"Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered." 1 Peter 3:7

Unconfessed sin

"Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him." John 9:31

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear." Psalm 66:18

Unforgiveness

"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses." Mark 11:25

Wrong motives (greed)

"You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures." James 4:3

Doubt

"But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

James 1:6-8

• Uncaring attitudes (selfishness)

"Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard." Proverbs 21:13

Stubbornness

"But they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and their ears so that they could not hear. Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath came from the LORD of hosts." Zechariah 7:11,12

Waiting for God

God acts on our behalf as we wait for Him

"For since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen any God besides You, who acts for the one who waits for Him." Isaiah 64:4

• As you are waiting for God, He strengthens you

"But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."
Isaiah 40:31

• When waiting for God, He blesses you

"Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for Him." Isaiah 30:18

Sometimes God will answer "no" to our desperate prayers. Any delay or unexpected outcome must not dishearten us. Sometimes we ask God for things that He knows are not His best for us. If He were to answer them as we asked, we would miss out on blessings He has planned for our lives.

What is God's true purpose in answering our prayers?

"And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." John 14:13

What does God want to complete in us through prayer?

"And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name, ask, and you will receive, **that your joy may be full**." John 16:24

A Devotion Based on Christ's Model prayer - Matthew 6: 7-15

"Our Father in heaven" -- We need to always acknowledge first and foremost who we are talking to. He (God) is our heavenly Father. We address Him with respect just as we should address our earthly father with respect. He is the only true God who created all things in this universe, including us. He loves us and we need to show our love for Him.

"Hallowed be your name" -- We must see Him as being holy, sanctified, consecrated; worthy of praise, honor and glory!

"Your kingdom come" - We acknowledge His coming kingdom. We pray that Christ will soon return and establish His earthly kingdom where we will reign with Him for eternity.

"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" -- We need to be praying for His will to be done in our lives, so that we might bring glory to Him here on earth as He is also glorified in heaven. We need to do things His way, instead of selfishly doing our own things to satisfy our own desires.

"Give us today our daily bread" -- We should ask our Father each day to provide for our needs, just as He promised in His Holy Word. His Word says that we don't have, because we don't ask. Of course, we must first know God through His Son, our personal Lord and Savior. If we don't know Christ, God won't acknowledge this request for daily provision.

"Forgive us our debts (or transgressions) as we also have forgiven our debtors (transgressors)" -- This speaks about forgiveness among our associates, neighbors, friends, family and loved ones. Any and all persons in our lives that we come in contact with in social or business situations are included as well. We are to pray for our enemies also. If we can't forgive others, how can we expect our heavenly Father to forgive us?

"Lead us not into temptation" -- We need to ask our heavenly Father to help us recognize every evil thing, every temptation before us. We need help to stay focused on our Father and see the evil that we might fall into, for what it really is, a trap set by Satan to bring us down to his level.

"But deliver us from the evil one" -- Help us, dear Father, to steer clear of that liar and deceiver. Let us see clearly the path that you want each of us to walk. By the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells within us, may we never stray from your will and way.

A Glorious Ending

"For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever" - This last phrase emphasizes more praise and glory to God the Father - a glorious ending to a model prayer to God!

Questions to Consider

1.	How can you know that what you are praying is God's will or not?
2.	Our prayer time often wanders, especially when we are under pressure, or when there are many things going on around us. How can we make our prayer time meaningful as well as focused?
3.	Share a story of answered prayer in your life. What were the circumstances and how did God answer your prayer?
4.	Sometimes we are frustrated by "unanswered" prayer, but later realized it was due to the wisdom of God in not giving us what we asked for at the time. Can you recall an experience you had like this?
5.	What, specifically, has been your personal obstacle to prayer?
6.	Journaling during prayer and devotion time is another method of communication with God. Have you kept a devotion journal? How has writing to God blessed your Christian walk with Him?

WORSHIP

Worship

"Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a <u>worshiper</u> of God and does His will, He hears him." John 9:31

Worship according to Webster's:

admiration: to marvel, wonder

reverence: honor or respect, felt or shown – especially profound and adoring

awed respect, fear (Greek)

respect: a relation or reference to a particular thing or situation – an act of

giving particular attention – high or special regard – the quality or

state of being esteemed

veneration: respect or awe inspirited by the dignity, wisdom, dedication, or

talent of a person, valuable, precious

adoration: to love somebody deeply, great devotion, admiration, excessive

love, honoring, glorification, exaltation, devotion

What is Worship? – It is praise to God.

You might think that praise is the same as saying "thank you", but there is a difference. Thanksgiving describes our *attitude* toward what God has done, while praise is offered for **who God is.**

"I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised." Psalm 18:3

Praise originates in a heart full of love toward God.

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." Deuteronomy 6:5

Worship and praise are reserved only for God. Only He is worthy, not any of His servants, saints, prophets, statues, idols, angels or any other false gods.

"Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book."

Revelation 22:8-9

"for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God," Exodus 34:14

What worship is not:

- a feel-good opportunity
- fill-in time
- going through the motions
- fleshly displays drawing attention to yourself
- fooling God
- flipping a switch
- an obligation
- to be done with the expectation of getting something in return

People tend to get caught up in where they should worship, what music they should sing in worship, and how the worship looks to other people. Focusing on these things completely misses the point. Jesus tells us that true worshipers will worship God in spirit and in truth.

This means we worship from a pure heart!

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." John 4:23-2

Preparing our Hearts

Examine yourself, check your motivation and things that hinder your worship of God.

Pride

"The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts." Psalm 10:4

Tradition

"And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." Mark 7:7

Unforgiveness

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." Matthew 6:15

• Sin

"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." Proverbs 28:1

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear." Psalm 66:18

Hypocrisy

"But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matthew 6:15

• What's most important

"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love." Revelation 2:4

Giving

"Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase." Proverbs 3:9

Lack of knowledge

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

How to Worship

"Remember to magnify His work, of which men have sung." Job 36:24

- In singing
- In reading God's Word with an open heart
- In prayer
- Participating in communion
- Serving others
- In our everyday actions
- Let the life you live be an act of worship to Him

"Therefore by Him let us <u>continually offer the sacrifice</u> of praise to God, that is, <u>the fruit of our lips</u>, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to <u>do good</u> and to <u>share</u>, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Hebrews 13:15-16

Worship is to glorify and exalt God; Worship shows our loyalty and admiration to our Heavenly Father; Worship is done for God, and God's pleasure alone!

"Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." Psalm 29:2

Where to Begin

- Praise God for His holiness, mercy, and justice 2 Chronicles 20:21, Psalm 99:3-4
- Praise God for His grace Ephesians 1:6
- Praise Him for His goodness Psalm 135:3
- Praise God for His kindness Psalm 117
- Praise God for His salvation Ephesians 2:8-9
- Sometimes we praise God inwardly, in our thoughts.

"I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High." Psalm 9:2

• Other times we have opportunity to give glory and praise to our God publicly.

"But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God; and the prisoners were listening to them." Acts 16:25

Why Worship?

We were created to worship:

"These people I have formed for Myself; they shall declare My praise." Isaiah 43:21

"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created." Revelation 4:11

By worshiping you show that you:

- Know God
- Believe God
- Trust God

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." Proverbs 3:5-6

Who praises God?

The Bible says that when He comes again, all mankind will praise Him and acknowledge Him as Lord. He is King over all the earth. When we know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, our hearts long to praise His name.

"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:9-11

The Bible also records:

- All nature praises God *Psalm 148:7-10*
- The sun, moon, and stars praise Him *Psalm 19:1 and 148:3*
- The angels praise Him *Psalm 148:2*
- Even the wrath of men is used by God to praise Himself *Psalm 76:10*
- Children are to be taught to praise God *Psalm 78:4*

"Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament! Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals! Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!" Psalm 150:1-6

Do you proclaim His Praise?

Your praise to God is evidenced through your salvation.

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." 1 Peter 2:9

Questions to Consider

1.	Worship can be associated exclusively with the singing before the teaching at church. However, worship is part of our daily walk. What have you done to make worship a daily experience with God?
2.	Our mind can wander easily during the time of worship. How can we make our worship time meaningful as well as focused?
3.	How does your view of Christianity affect your worship of God?
4.	When you attend church service, do you come early or late to worship? What does it say about a Christian's relationship with the Lord if they are consistently late for service?
5.	What are some simple steps you can take to always be on time?
6.	Name some ways in which we worship God – other than singing.

TEMPTATIONS & TRIALS

Temptations & Trials

We Live in a Battleground – Not a Playground

Satan...

Destroys by doubting

"The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy" John 10:10

Deceives by distracting

"But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." 2 Corinthians 11:3

Devours by detaching

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Peter 5:8

Our Enemy

Satan is the father of lies

"He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." John 8:44

• He has his own plans for you

"Therefore we wanted to come to you - even I, Paul, time and again - but Satan hindered us." 1 Thessalonians 2:18

• He can do nothing without the Father's permission

"And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat." Luke 22:31

The Focus

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Ephesians 6:12

Temptations

Webster's Dictionary:

Temptation, n. being lured or enticed

Temptation does not come from:

• God. God does not entice us to do evil.

"Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed." James 1:13,14

- **Situations of life.** These are merely circumstances that present us with an opportunity to choose obedience to God.
- The world. The world of evil is the environment in which we live.

"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world." John 17:16,17

Temptation comes from:

Satan, the devil, the tempter

He is seeking to activate his selfish, evil character and seeking to deny glory to God by misuse of humanity.

"So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." Revelation 12:9

Purpose of Temptation

Satan's purpose

- To solicit mankind to manifest his evil character
- To cause men to think that by their self-effort they can become "like God".

"Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" Genesis 3:4,5

 To solicit Christians to misrepresent who they are in Christ; doubt their identity in Christ

"So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God." Romans 8:8

Forms of Temptation

Temptation to Act

- Lust of the flesh human nature and passions; bodily appetites that proceed from our sinful nature personal gratification
- Lust of the eyes the lust of things; evil desires that arise from things we see and covet personal aspiration
- **Boastful pride of life** confidence in self; an unholy ambition for self-display and self-glory personal reputation

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world; the <u>lust of the flesh</u>, the <u>lust of the eyes</u>, and the <u>pride of life</u>; is not of the Father but is of the world." 1 John 2:15,16

Temptation to React

- Fight anger, hostility, wrath, resentment, bitterness
- Fright fear, anxiety, worry
- Flight avoidance, apathy, escape, withdrawal

Biblical examples of "temptation"

- Adam and Eve Genesis 3 Tempted in the garden
- David 2 Samuel 11,12 David & Bathsheba
- **Jesus Christ** Matthew 4:1 Wilderness temptations

Temptation and Sin

• Temptation is not sin; temptation is an enticement to sin

"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed."
James 1:14

We choose to make a sin-decision

"Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." James 1:15

Christian Response to Temptation

• Chose faith in God and His active role

"Therefore submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you." James 4:7

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

"For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted." Hebrews 2:18

Meet temptation with God's Word

"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil....Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If you are the son of God, command these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Matthew 4:1,3,4

Avoid placing ourselves in situations in the world where temptation may be present

"Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn away from it and pass on." Proverbs 4:14,15

"I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me." Psalm 101:3

When faced with temptation, run in the other direction

"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." 2 Timothy 2:22

"A wise man fears and departs from evil, But a fool rages and is self-confident."
Proverbs 14:16

Prayer strengthens us against temptation

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Mark 14:38

Those who do not yield to temptation will be rewarded

"Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

James 1:12

• God will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to resist.

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

1 Corinthians 10:13

Remember that in the midst of a trial:

Satan seeks to develop his character by creating a tempting

God seeks to develop His character by creating a **testing** With no test there is no testimony {teach me}.

Trials

are promised

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." John 16:33

will come

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience." James 1:2,3

come to all

"...for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" Matthew 5:45

"Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;" 1 Peter 4:12

• are defeated when we cry out

"The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all." Psalm 34:17-19

Examples of trials:

Illness, death, divorce, financial hardship, loss of job, wayward children, unfulfilled dreams – they are painful and inconvenient.

The Purpose

To show you what is truly in your heart

"And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all **the** way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not." Deuteronomy 8:2

To learn to trust

"...we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead." 2 Corinthians 1:9

To let God finish, to complete you - becoming more Christlike

"And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope."

Romans 5:3,4

To glorify God

"Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter." 1 Peter 4:16

To humble us

"And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure." 2 Corinthians 12:7

• For our good – to mature us as Christians

"For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." Hebrews 12:6

To refine and purify us

"Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction." Isaiah 48:10

Through trials, impurities such as bitterness, anger, envy, selfishness and stubbornness – behaviors of the flesh – can be released.

How we are to go through trials?

giving thanks praising God
with self-control with meekness
enduring with strength acting in obedience
in the Word of God knowing that God loves us
in the power of the Holy Spirit believing God
in prayer acting rather than reacting seeking God
keeping our eyes on Jesus abiding in Christ
knowing that victory is ours in humility
trusting God's sovereignty with love
standing on His promises
with courage
rejoicing

"This is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith"

1 John 5:4

The Promise

God is with you

"Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."

Deuteronomy 31:6

"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."
Isaiah 41:10

"I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20

God will complete you

"being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." Philippians 1:6

God is faithful to provide a way

"You are of God, little children and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" 1 John 4:4

Dress for Spiritual Battle

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints." Ephesians 6:10-18

Questions to Consider

1.	Have you ever found yourself trying to overcome a trial using your own resources?
	What was the outcome?
2.	Have you felt like you were "losing the war"? What happened?
3.	How has God showed up in the midst of a trial you were facing? What happened?
4.	When facing a temptation, have you taken advantage of the escape God provided?
	"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also <u>make the way of escape</u> , that you may be able to bear it." 1 Corinthians 10:13
	What did you learn from this experience?
5.	In the temptation of Jesus recorded in Matthew 4 and Luke 4, Jesus uses the written Word of God to fight Satan's attempts to persuade Him to sin. Share some key scriptures that help you fight when temptation is knocking.

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship

"It is required in stewards that one be found faithful." 1 Corinthians 4:2

"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much." Luke 16:10

Defining stewardship

Webster's careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's

care

Greek oikonomos (oy-kon-om'-os) a house distributor (i.e. manager), or

overseer, i.e. an employee in that capacity; a fiscal agent (treasurer); fig. a

preacher (of the Gospel);--chamberlain, governor, steward

Synonyms: overseer; caretaker; landlord manager

• Christian stewardship is a way of life in which we recognize that everything belongs to God. All resources must be used for His glory and for helping others.

- It's all His: Home, Family, Job, Future, Health, Finances
- We are simply tenants, occupying until He returns.

Do you think it's yours?

"And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?" 1 Corinthians 4:7

GOD OWNS EVERYTHING

"The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein." Psalm 24:1

"Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it." - Deuteronomy 10:14

GOD IS IN CONTROL

"Whatever the LORD pleases He does, In heaven and in earth, In the seas and in all deep places." - Psalm 135:6

"...for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'" - Daniel 4:34-35

GOD IS OUR PROVIDER

"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." - Philippians 4:19

"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Matthew 6:31-33

What are we stewards of?

- Time (priorities and rest)
- Talent (your strengths and abilities)
- Treasures (material possessions)

As a steward we acknowledge the supremacy of God in our life.

"And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence." Colossians 1:18

"Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.'" Luke 9:23

God or money?

- The average adult male spends 50% of his focused time thinking about money.
- Money terms:
 - Assets = possessions, belongings, cash
 - Liabilities = borrowing, debt
 - o Riches = investments, prosperity, wealth, savings
 - o Mammon = anything that takes the place of God in your life
 - Materialism = seeking joy & peace through acquiring things

Where is your heart?

"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." 1 Timothy 6:10

"And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." Luke 12:15

Choose this day whom you will serve:

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." Matthew 6:24

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. "You shall have no other gods before Me." Exodus 20:2-3

Giving

God is The Greatest Giver

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32

Advantages of giving:

1) If a gift is given with the proper attitude, the giver benefits more than the receiver.

"And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" Acts 20:35

2) Giving draws our hearts toward Christ

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:21

- 3) Giving develops character
- 4) Giving allows us to invest for eternity

"but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." Matthew 6:20

5) Giving produces a material increase to the giver

"There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich and he who waters will also be watered himself." Proverbs 11:24,25

6) Giving brings blessings

"He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor." Proverbs 22:9

To whom should we give?

- Our local church
- Christian ministries
- The poor

"Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You? And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'" Matthew 25:37-40

Three areas of our Christian life are affected by giving to the poor

1) Our prayer life

"Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out...then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am'" Isaiah 58:7-9

2) Our provision

"He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many curses." Proverbs 28:27

3) Knowing the Lord intimately

"He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. 'Was not this knowing Me?' says the LORD." Jeremiah 22:16

How to give

• Giving with the proper attitude is crucial

"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, but have not love, it profits me nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:3

Biblical stewardship is giving out of devotion rather than duty

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7

• It's about the heart of the giver – the Christian willing to give out of poverty, not wealth

"So He said, 'Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, buts she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had." Luke 21:3,4

The Tithe

Webster's a tenth part of one's annual income contributed voluntarily

Hebrew ma'aser (mah-as-ayr') a tenth

Biblical stewardship calls a Christian to give back to God through tithing. Tithing is a way of acknowledging God's ownership.

"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy to the LORD." Leviticus 27:30

As stewards we give to God first.

"Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase." Proverbs 3:9

Firstfruits defined:

The first products; Profits of any activity; Gross income; Total Gains

God doesn't need our money.

Money is simply an indicator of where our heart is.

Do you trust God enough to return 10% and believe He will provide all your needs with the remaining 90%?

Do you steal from God?

"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be good in My house, and try Me now in this", Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:8-10

This Old Testament test of the heart was carried right over to the early Church. Practically speaking, we observe this when we bring into the Body of Christ, that which has always belonged to God.

"On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come." 1 Corinthians 16:2

What stops us from giving?

- Doubt
- Unknown
- Fear
- Disobedience
- Selfishness

Questions to Consider

1. What is your definition of "The Good Life?"	
2. Have you ever expressed extreme behavior in matters of money? Explain.	
3. Discuss how money affects your attitude and outlook on life.	
4. Which is more spiritually dangerous to you: having too much or too little? Wh	ıy?
5. How do you determine the difference between something you need and something you want?	
6. Do you follow a budget in your finances? If not, what is keeping you from doin so?	g
7. Are you obedient in tithing? What is your view of giving to God?	

SERVANTHOOD

Servanthood

"just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" Matthew 20:28

What is a servant?

- The Greek word for servant means to menially wait upon as a host, friend or teacher. (menial speaks of lowliness)
 - --This is where we get our word for deacon or *minister*.
- The word *servant* in the Bible is also used as an "under-rower." This was the lowest position assigned on a boat, down below where it's hot and laborious.
- A servant is someone who is selfless

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind <u>let each esteem others better than himself</u>. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." Philippians 2:3,4

"He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30

"Greater love has no one than this, than to <u>lay down one's life</u> for his friends." John 15:13

"Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, <u>let him deny himself,</u> <u>and take up his cross daily</u>, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.'" Luke 9:23,24

Jesus – our Model

• humbled Himself

"but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men" Philippians 2:7

offered Himself

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:5

• gave us the perfect example

"He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded." John 13:7

"For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."
John 13:15

Why We Serve

Love for God

"For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again." 2 Corinthians 5:14,15

Love for others

"Therefore be imitators of God as dear children and walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma." Ephesians 5:1,2

Unto the Lord

"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ." Colossians 3:23,24

The world:

- o Intimidates
- o Bullies
- o Threatens
- o Pressures
- o "Look out for #1"

Lie, cheat and steal

Biblical principles totally fly in the face of worldly teaching

"Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant." Matthew 20:26

What about you?

• Servanthood is a sign of your love for Jesus

"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" John 13:35

Be salt and light in a dark and flavorless world

"You are the salt of the earth" Matthew 5:14

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16

You're a member of a team

"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." 1 Corinthians 12:12

How should I serve?

Motivated by obedience

"You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey his voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him." Deuteronomy 13:4

Motivated by gratitude

"Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you." 1 Samuel 12:24

Motivated by gladness

"Serve the LORD with gladness; come before His presence with singing." Psalm 100:2

Motivated by forgiveness, not guilt

"Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: 'Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.' Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying" 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?' Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me." Isaiah 6:6-8

Motivated by humility and meekness

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." Philippians 2:3

Motivated by love

"For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." Galatians 5:13

We are called to be servants, are we not?

What does a servant do? He (or she) carries out the will of his master. A servant doesn't tell his master what to do — he performs whatever tasks the master requests of him. A servant doesn't choose what days or times are most convenient to serve his master. A servant's function is simply to follow and obey his master's instructions. A servant does not develop a vision for the master either. The master is the one with the vision — and he wants his servants to be ready and available to carry out that vision and bring it to fruition.

How can we experience fulfillment in our lives?

Simply by serving our Master - our Heavenly Father. The world encourages us to seek counterfeit fulfillment – power, success and prosperity. The more of these things we gain, the more our flesh wants more. It is our sinful human nature. We will never find true fulfillment when we seek these things.

We must become servants if we want to experience true fulfillment.

We need to become lowly, meek and humble. As God's servants we should have no other agenda, except to do His will. When we become faithful to do His will, then He will fulfill the aspirations He desires for us in our lives...and even those things we desire!

As God's faithful servant — we share in His success, we have direct access to His power and wealth and are able to walk in His authority! Let's get our hearts in servant mode and watch how God brings about all the things we need and want.

Questions to Consider

1.	Can you remember a time in your life when you were ministered to, or served by someone else?
2.	Do you know someone who lives the life of a true servant? What is it about their life that makes them stand out to you?
3.	Do you think that anyone says the same things about you? Why, or why not?
4.	The Bible reminds us that each of us is to be actively involved in service to the Lord. How are you being an active member of the body of Christ?
5.	If you are not actively serving, what can you do to change that today?

FELLOWSHIP

&

COMMUNION

Fellowship & Communion

What is Fellowship?

Webster's:

- To share similar interests, ideals, or experiences, through profession, religion, or nationality
- The companionship of individuals in a congenial atmosphere and on equal terms.
- Friendship; comradeship

koinonia (Greek, koy-nohn-ee'-ah), partnership, participation – to communicate, distribution, fellowship

Fellowship in the New Testament

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts 2:42

• Included "all" believers; no cliques or favoritism

"My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?" James 2:1-4

Promoted unity...one mind, heart and goal

"Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common" Acts 2:44

Met the needs of others...sharing, and caring unselfishly

"And sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need." Acts 2:45

At Club Zion we have a benevolence program administered by the deacons to provide temporary financial help for members experiencing a crisis. Refer individuals to the deacons if you become aware of someone needing assistance and the deacons will determine if Club Zion can help.

Fellowship starts with God

"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created." Revelation 4:11

- God created mankind for fellowship
- Man broke this fellowship by choosing sin over relationship
- God provided restoration
- God's plan is for eternal fellowship

"that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" 1 John 1:3

"God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Corinthians 1:9

The Ingredients of Fellowship

• Love and acceptance

"And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins" 1 Peter 4:8

"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death." 1 John 3:14

Honesty and humility

"Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking"
1 Peter 2:1

Concerns and restoration

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2

Confession and forgiveness

"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." James 5:16

Encouragement and availability

"not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" Hebrews 10:25

· Generosity and flexibility

"But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?" 1 John 3:17

Consider

Are my closest friends Christians?

Do I seek fellowship or wait for it?

Am I "others centered" or "self-centered"?

Am I flexible to change or am I stubborn?

What keeps me from meeting new people?

The Lord's Supper – Communion – Eucharist

"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you; that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Transubstantiation – Some Christian denominations believe that the bread and wine actually become the flesh and blood of Christ when taken during communion. At Club Zion we understand the bread and wine to be symbolic of Christ's torture and shed blood at the cross.

Why do we observe Communion?

- We observe communion because the Lord told us to and we are to obey His commands. One of two sacraments the Lord commanded us to follow.
- In observing communion, we are remembering Christ and all that He has done for us in His life, death and resurrection
- In observing communion, we are proclaiming His death until He comes— a statement of faith.
- In observing communion, we celebrate the final victory of Christ.

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:57

When observing communion, we take time to examine ourselves.

"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." 1 Corinthians 11:27-29

When we observe communion, we show our participation in the body of Christ. His life becomes our life and we become members of each other.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28

When we celebrate communion, we open ourselves to the divine love that's already there; we become more ready to receive that love and to respond to it.

Communion is a practice that is meant to be observed over and over throughout the life of a Christian. It is a holy time of worship when we corporately come together as one body to remember and celebrate what Christ did for us.

At Club Zion we celebrate communion on the 1st Sunday of the month.

Questions to Consider

1. How does the concept of fellowship as outlined in the Bible differ from what you experienced before you became a Christian? What has your experience been so far as a Christian?
2. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'" How can your choice of friends affect your life as a Christian?
3. How is God's heart reflected by our fellowship with others?
4. Are you an easy person to be a friend with? Why or why not?
5. When we celebrate communion we are to examine ourselves. Name some areas of our lives we are to look at.
6. Communion is a time of remembrance. What can you remember about Christ and what He did for you?

SHARING GOD'S LOVE with OTHERS

Sharing God's Love with Others

"that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgement of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus" Philemon 1:6

Witness – one who gives a firsthand account of something seen, heard, or

experienced

Testimony – evidence given, a declaration by a witness given under oath, something

that supports a fact or a claim

Evangelism - sharing the Good News of the Gospel

The Message of the Gospel

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

Why should we witness?

Jesus commands us and it is our ministry

"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
"Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation," 2 Corinthians 5:18
"But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?" Romans 10:14 NLT

Because of our love for the unsaved.

"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." 1 John 4:10-11

It is a wise thing to do

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise."
Proverbs 11:30

To keep people out of hell

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12

As Christians we represent Jesus to the world

"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." 2 Corinthians 5:20

So they may find the love and fellowship of God

"that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" 1 John 1:3

• The angels of heaven rejoice greatly when anyone passes from judgment into salvation

"Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Luke 15:10

What are you called to do?

You are called by God to accurately know His word

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

You are called by God to grow in your walk with Him

"Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection" Hebrews 6:1

You are called by God to search the scriptures daily

"These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" Acts 17:11

Know that: God's Word will accomplish what God desires

"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but <u>it shall accomplish what I please</u>, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." Isaiah 55:11

The Word (the Bible) is unique – unlike any other writing:

It is inspired

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

It is truth

"You are near, O LORD, and all Your commandments are truth." Psalm 119:151

It makes free

"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32

It produces faith

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17

It judges

"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

The gospel is powerful to save

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for <u>it is the power of God to salvation</u> for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." Romans 1:16

It is Jesus who draws all men to Himself

(the responsibility of salvation does not rest on you, but on God)

"Salvation belongs to the Lord." Psalm 3:8

"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself." John 12:32

You are the teacher, the deliverer of Good News

"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not heard?" Romans 10:14

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit works in two types of people during witnessing: the saved and the unsaved.

In the saved:

He dwells within

"But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." Romans 8:11

Teaches

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

John 14:26

Anoints

"But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him." 1 John 2:27

Guides

"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come." John 16:13

Sanctifies

"...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" 1 Peter 1:2

Without the Holy Spirit, we would be like ships without rudders, unable to live as Christians and certainly unable to witness effectively.

In the unsaved:

• Holy Spirit convicts of sin

"And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8

Sinners come to Jesus to have their sins cleansed. They do this after they discover their guilt before God. This is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Since the natural man is separated from God because of his sin, the Holy Spirit uses the Scriptures to convict him of his sinfulness, convince him of his need for salvation, and convert him through the Word.

Importance of Prayer in Evangelism

When you witness, you need the blessing and support of the Lord. You need to be in fellowship with Him. Prayer makes this all possible.

- When you witness you plant the seeds of the Gospel, but it is God who causes the growth. In prayer you ask God to give that growth.
 - "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." 1 Corinthians 3:6
- In prayer ask God to convict the unrepentant of their sin and by that awaken in them the need for salvation.
- Our real battle is in the spiritual realm, prayer is one of God's ordained means for you to do spiritual warfare and sharing the Gospel is definitely spiritual warfare.

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." Ephesians 6:12

You can influence God with your prayers

"Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father; 'I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you.'" 2 Kings 20:5

What should you pray for?

• Pray for more people to witness

"Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'"

Matthew 9:37-38

• Pray for compassion and a burden for the lost

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved."
Romans 10:1

- Pray for the desire to witness
- Pray for boldness

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God." 2 Timothy 1:7-8

"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." Mark 8:38

- Pray to the Lord to bind Satan and his angels
- Pray for your needs

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." Philippians 4:6

The Do's and Don'ts of Witnessing

Do's

- Do pray
- Do speak to please God
- Do read your Bible
- Do start with a positive witness for Christ
- Do be yourself
- Do keep things simple
- Do share your salvation experience with them
- Do know what you believe
- Do have a genuine love
- Do be simple and define your terms
- Do memorize appropriate Scriptures if possible
- Do be ready to learn from the people you witness to
- Do be patient and gentle
- Do listen attentively
- Do answer their questions
- Do ask questions
- Do let them save face
- Do bring them, if possible, to a decision about Jesus
- Do encourage them to study the Bible by itself
- Do use scripture in context
- Do remember that "He that is in you is greater than he that is in the world."

 1 John 4:4

Don'ts

- Don't attack directly or make fun of someone
- Don't jump from one subject to another
- Don't expect too much from them
- Don't have a spiritual chip on your shoulder
- Don't lose patience
- Don't come on too strong
- Don't debate peripheral issues or doctrines
- Don't get sidetracked defending your denomination
- Don't speculate if you do not know the answer to a question
- Don't assume
- Don't argue
- Don't speak too fast or unclearly

The Four Spiritual Laws

If you've gone through a discussion with someone and you want to present the gospel message in a simple and systematic way, the well known "Four Spiritual Laws" can be of help. They are simple, to the point, and use Scripture to convict, convince, and convert. They are:

- 1. <u>God loves you</u> "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16)
- 2. Man is sinful and separated from God. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23); "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23); "But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God" (Isaiah 59:2).
- 3. <u>Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin</u> "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 14:6); "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).
- 4. We must individually receive Jesus as Savior and Lord "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12); "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved" (Rom. 10:9); "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).

The Roman Road

Another list of verses usable in the same way as the Four Spiritual Laws is the "Roman Road." The advantage to these seven verses is that they are all in the book of Romans. Sometimes this is an advantage when you don't want to flip through a lot of pages.

- 1. Rom. 3:10, "As it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one..."
- 2. Rom. 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."
- 3. Rom. 5:12, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned."
- 4. Rom. 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- 5. Rom. 5:8, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
- 6. Rom. 10:9-10, "if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."
- 7. Rom. 10:13, "For whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

Put the Roman Road in your Bible. Go to <u>Romans 3:10</u> underline it and write <u>Romans 3:23</u> next to it. Then go to <u>Romans 3:28</u>, underline it and write <u>Romans 5:12</u> next to it, and so on. That way all you need to do is memorize where you start: <u>Romans 3:10</u>.

Your own testimony can be a powerful tool in evangelism

Create a three-minute version of your testimony that includes:

- Your life before meeting Christ
- How you came to Christ
- How knowing Christ has changed your life

Questions to Consider

- 1. How has God used you to plant and water (1 Corinthians 3:6)?
- 2. Have you ever used your testimony in evangelism? How did that go?
- 3. What prevents you from sharing the Gospel today and what will you do about that?
- 4. Did you encounter a situation in which you felt "manipulated" by someone to make a decision for Jesus before becoming a Christian? How did this make you feel?
- 5. What can you do to make sure that your motives and approach are right when sharing God's love with others?

THE BIBLE Understanding the Value of God's Word

The Bible-

Understanding the Value of God's Word

What is the Bible?

- The Bible is comprised of 66 separate writings or books
- It was written over a period of approximately 1400-1800 years
- It was written by more than 40 authors

The Bible is divided into:

The Old Testament – comprised of 39 books

Divided into 4 segments:

The Law or Torah [Genesis – Deuteronomy]
History [Joshua – Ester]
Wisdom [Job – Song of Solomon]
The Prophets - Major & Minor [Isaiah – Malachi]

Written in Hebrew and Aramaic (vast majority in Hebrew)
Translated into Koine (common Greek around 250-100 B.C., referred to as the Septuagint or the LXX)

The New Testament – comprised of 27 books: [4 Gospels; Acts; 21 Epistles; Revelation.]

Written in Koine Greek – with a few Aramaic phrases (language of the people of Israel)

How was the Bible written and translated?

• The Bible itself tells us

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" 2 Timothy 3:16

Inspired...*God-breathed*

"for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1:21

The Bible does not merely contain the words of God, but it actually is the Word of God. Thus the original writings, often called autographs, are infallible – without error.

The Accuracy of the Copies

Copies of the Old Testament were transcribed by hand under the strictest measures. The men who copied the manuscripts were called scribes. If one error was found the entire copy was destroyed. Thus the accuracy of the Old Testament is phenomenal. This accuracy has been confirmed by the large number of copies, by the Septuagint, and by the Dead Sea Scrolls. More than 5000 ancient Greek copies of all or portions of the New Testament have been found.

Translations

The Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek copies of the 66 books of the Bible are the basis of the translations made in the various languages of the world.

Primary translation

A translator will study the original words of these copies, determine what those words mean, and then select the best way to faithfully transmit the meaning of the original words in their context into the language of their translation.

Secondary translation

This occurs when a translation is made from a primary translation of another language, say English, into a third language. Thus a secondary translation is not made from a copy of the original language.

Which Bible is best?

The ideal would be to learn Hebrew and Greek and read each testament in its original language. But that's not realistic, so linguists and theologians have translated these original languages for us. In fact, they've done this for many languages to fulfill the Great Commission. The problem is that all translations have problems because you can't always get an exact parallel expression when translating.

At Club Zion we use the New King James version as it is based on a reliable Greek text.

How do we know that the Bible is what it claims to be – the Word of God?

Authentic – genuine, trustworthy and reliable; uncorrupted; undisputed credibility; receive assurance.

In order to know **why** we believe **what** we believe, we must decide where we are getting our information.

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever." Isaiah 40:8

As Christians, our very foundation is built on the rock of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11), who is also spoken of in Scripture as the Living Word (John 1:1,14). And it is primarily by His Word that we know Him.

What is absolute Truth?

Knowing the truth settles something in our spirit.

"For the word of the LORD is right and all His work is done in truth." Psalm 33:4

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" John 17:17

<u>Is truth the consensus of what the majority of people think?</u>

If that were the case, then the truth would change.

Believing the Bible is ultimately a matter of informed faith. You either believe what the Word of God says about itself or you don't. You either believe the testimony of Jesus Christ regarding the Word of God or you don't.

There is **bibliographic** evidence.

- No other ancient writings have as much manuscript evidence as does the Bible.
- There is an ample **quantity** of copies of the Bible, but the **quality** of the biblical manuscripts surpasses that of other manuscripts.

There is **internal** evidence.

- The Bible claims to be the Word of God
- It states that not the smallest letter or stroke will pass away from the law (the Old Testament) until all is accomplished
- Many of the writers claimed to be eyewitnesses who wrote what they saw, heard, or experienced.
- Although there were so many different authors from every walk of life, who wrote over such a long time span, with different purposes, in many different places and under many different circumstances, there are no contradictions in what they wrote.
- What was written in the Old Testament is often seen fulfilled in the New Testament. Thus there is internal evidence of fulfilled prophecy.
- The Holy Spirit who convicts the world of sin also assures the believer that the Bible is God's Word.
- The transforming ability of the Bible, with power to change lives

There is **external** evidence.

- When the Bible speaks on matters of history or science, it speaks accurately.
- Recent archaeological evidence has affirmed the historical accounts as it speaks regarding rulers, nations, languages, battles, customs, geographic locations, tragedies and other events.
- The Bible is medically and scientifically accurate.
- The Bible is indestructible even under attack by skeptics, it proves itself to be true again and again.
- Prophecy hundreds of specific and accurate prophecies have come to pass, no book in history has ever come close – there are over 300 prophecies made of Jesus in the Old Testament.

The following probabilities are taken from Peter Stoner in Science Speaks (Moody Press, 1963) to show that coincidence is ruled out by the science of probability. Stoner says that by using the modern science of probability in reference to eight prophecies, "we find that the chance that any man might have lived down to the present time and fulfilled all eight prophecies is 1 in 10^{17} ." That would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. In order to help us comprehend this staggering probability, Stoner illustrates it by supposing that "we take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep.

The estimated number of electrons in the universe is around 10^{79} . It should be quite evident that Jesus did not fulfill the prophecies by accident."

Questions to Consider

1. Considering the evidence presented, do you believe the entire Bible is the written Word of God? Why or why not?
2. Why is this issue so important to settle in our hearts?
3. How does Paul's admonition to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:15) apply to you? "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
4. In order to easily spot a counterfeit, we must take time and examine The Original. Bible study is necessary for a Christian. What are you currently studying? If you are not, why not?
5. Scripture memorization provides a "ready defense" and "comfort in time of need.' Make a commitment to memorize Scripture. Recite at least 1 verse from memory now.

An OVERVIEW of the BIBLE

An Overview of the Bible

The Bible is one book. Seven great marks attest this unity.

- 1. From Genesis the Bible bears witness to one God. Wherever He speaks or acts He is consistent with Himself, and with the total revelation concerning Him.
- 2. The Bible forms one continuous story the story of humanity in relation to God.
- 3. The Bible makes the most unlikely predictions concerning the future, and when the centuries have brought around the appointed time, records their fulfillment.
- 4. The Bible is a progressive unfolding of truth. Nothing is told all at once, and once for all. Without the possibility of collusion, often with centuries between, one writer of Scripture takes up an earlier revelation, adds to it, lays down the pen, and in due time another man moved by the Holy Spirit, and another, and another, add new detail until the whole is complete.
- 5. From beginning to end the Bible testifies to one redemption.
- 6. From beginning to end the Bible has one great theme the person and work of the Christ.
- 7. And, finally these writers, some forty in number, writing through twenty centuries have produced a perfect harmony of the doctrine in progressive unfolding. This is, to every candid mind, the unanswerable proof of the divine inspiration of the Bible.

The books of the Bible fall into groups:

- 1. Preparation for Christ The Old Testament
- 2. Appearance of Christ The Gospels
- 3. Preaching of Christ Acts
- 4. Explaining Christ's Works The Epistles
- 5. Christ Judging the World Revelation

The Beginning

Genesis 1-11

God creates the universe.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1

Man chooses to turn his back on God

"but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" Genesis 2:17

God judges a wicked world

"And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth" Genesis 6:17

God disperses mankind when man tries to become like God

"its name is Babel, because the LORD confused the language of all" Genesis 11:9

God's Plan

Method: Friendship

Desired Response: "I will trust You!"

Abraham through Solomon

Genesis 12 – 1 Kings 10

The promise of land and descendants is given to Abraham

"Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Genesis 12:1-3

This promise is then passed from father to son as it goes from Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob. At this time, God renames Jacob and calls him Israel. We also see a tribal framework develop. Twelve brothers become twelve tribes who rule twelve regions of the country.

One of these brothers, Joseph, is sold into slavery and taken away to Egypt. Through God's providence, Joseph becomes a very powerful Egyptian ruler and is a key progenitor in the lineage of Jesus Christ. Also through this lineage comes Moses, who leads the Israelites out of Egypt and provides two important devices:

- 1. The Law.....God's standards of righteousness
- 2. The Tabernacle.....a place where God desires to meet with His people

During this time, God prolongs Israel's time in the desert because of their ungrateful and disobedient hearts. At the end of a 40-year period of wandering in the wilderness, the mantle of leadership is passed from Moses to Joshua. Joshua finally conquers the land by following God's orders to drive out its pagan inhabitants.

After the conquest is the pre-kingdom period of Judges and Ruth. Ruth is a very godly woman who seeks after God with all of her heart. She is a key descendant in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, a bridge between the time of the judges and the monarchy, and an example of love through loyalty.

Samuel is also an important bridge, not only as two books in the Bible, but as a man. He is the last judge and the first prophet to anoint a king. This first king is Saul, and he fails. Because he fails, that blessing of kingship falls on David.

David then passes this blessing on to his son, Solomon. Solomon's greatest achievement was building the temple, which David was not allowed to build because of his sin. God's glory inhabited the temple.

God's Plan

Method: the Law

Desired Response: "I will follow."

He wants to know if He says "Go, we won't say 'No'." The message of this time period was, "Fear Me" (or reverence Me). This was the perfect prescription for this time in Israel's walk with the Lord. They were a rebellious, stiff-necked people, which caused the Lord to deal harshly with them at times.

Division, Captivity & Exile

1 Kings 11 – 2 Chronicles 36

Solomon's heart turns to pagan idolatry. Upon his demise and death, the kingdom of Israel is broken in two pieces:

- 1. Israel becomes the northern part of the kingdom with 10 of the 12 tribes remaining and turning to idolatry.
- 2. Judah becomes the southern part of the kingdom with the remaining two tribes staying faithful to God, for a season.

In 722 BC the Assyrian kingdom attacks and carries Israel into captivity. The next world power to come on the scene is Babylon. Babylon conquers Assyria, and in 605 BC attacks Judah. After a series of three attacks, they carry Judah off into captivity.

God's Plan

Method: Chastisement for disobedience

Desired response: Repentance & Intimacy

God is writing love stories to Israel. His desire is to create intimacy, but Israel did not desire this. So God humbles them and, during their 70-year Babylonian captivity, took them to a place in their walk where they could relearn what it was to have an intimate relationship with Him.

During this time, Israel is reflecting on the Psalms. They are listening to God's poetry and wisdom. Some of these Divinely inspired poems are of lament and sorrow with the attitude of, "I'm sorry. I wish things hadn't turned out this way."

The Return to Israel

Ezra – Esther

Babylon was then conquered by Cyrus the Persian. Under the rule of Cyrus, we see three waves of Jews return to repopulate Israel:

1. Zerubbabel.....leads them back

2. Ezra....rebuilds the temple

3. Nehemiah.....rebuilds the walls

God's Plan

Method: Prophecy Fulfilled

Desired Response: Repentance & Spiritual Revival

Intertestamental Period

The stage is being reset. God's plan is to be silent for approximately 400 years as we watch the world powers rearrange themselves;

- Persia declines.
- Greece takes over. Their importance and relevance is culture and precise language.
- Rome shows up. Their importance and relevance is government, stability, and means of transportation for trade and commerce. Under the Greek empire of Alexander, the pieces were united, but they were disjointed. Rome connects the pieces and makes them a single unified commercial machine

Jesus

Matthew – John

Ties into the theme of God wanting to be with His people

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." John 1:1,14

Jesus adopts the tribal framework of the Old Testament and chooses twelve disciples to carry His Word into all the world.

"And when it was day, He called His disciples to himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles." Luke 6:13

"Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Revelation 21:14

Among these men He chooses three (Peter, James and John) for a closer, deeper walk.

Through His ministry, Jesus:

Taught "seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, when He was seated His disciples came to Him...He opened His mouth and taught them..." Matthew 5:1,2

Died "for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

Arose "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here." Mark 16:6

Sent "...Jesus said to them...,'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you'" lohn 20:21

Promised to return "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." John 14:3

Ascended "So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God." Mark 16:19

God's Plan

Method: Incarnation
Desired Response: Belief
Responsibility: Spread the Gospel

"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

The Church

Acts – Jude

- The Holy Spirit falls upon the Church and Jerusalem Pentecost
- Peter takes the Gospel into Judea and Samaria
- Paul takes the Gospel from Samaria to the ends of the earth
- We are now living in the age of missions

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." Matthew 24:14

- In his epistles, Paul uses practical spiritual solutions to deal with real life problems.
- We are presently at the end of this era.

God Speaks

Method: the Holy Spirit, letters (epistles)

Desired Response: righteousness, be holy

The End of the Age

Revelation

Rapture

• The beginning of the end; the next major event on the biblical timeline

"Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

1 Thessalonians 4:17

Tribulation

A time of unprecedented, worldwide horrors as detailed in Revelation 6-19

"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."

Matthew 24:21-22

Return

Jesus returns to settle all accounts and to usher in the millennial reign of His kingdom

"Then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24:30

and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:11

Retribution

• Upon the completion of the millennial reign, non-believers receive final judgment

"Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." Revelation 20:14-15

Re-Creation

• Believers receive their new, glorified bodies.

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea...then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful" Revelation 21:1,5

God's Plan

Method: Completion/Resurrection

Desired Response: "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Matthew 27:54

"And they shall reign forever and ever." Revelation 22:5b

Questions to Consider

 Explain why we need to study both Old and New Testaments? We get a perception of what the Bible says from the world. For example, Christmas cards and world religion classes. Can you remember a time when you read a story in the Bible for the first time and realized that it wasn't anything like you were told, or you saw on TV? What did you learn for the first time in this study? How do you feel when you make new "discoveries" when you are reading the Bible? What is the most amazing thing you have learned this year from the Bible? The Bible is relevant for today; "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." Hebrews 13:8. How does this biblical truth impact your study of the Bible? 	1.	Why is it important to have a big picture perspective of the Bible?		
 For example, Christmas cards and world religion classes. Can you remember a time when you read a story in the Bible for the first time and realized that it wasn't anything like you were told, or you saw on TV? 4. What did you learn for the first time in this study? How do you feel when you make new "discoveries" when you are reading the Bible? 5. What is the most amazing thing you have learned this year from the Bible? 6. The Bible is relevant for today; "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." Hebrews 13:8. 	2.	Explain why we need to study both Old and New Testaments?		
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CLUB ZION COMMUNITY CHURCH

History

Pastor Keith Capizzi started Club Zion Community Church in 1998 in a storefront located at 165 Minutemen Causeway. In 2011 Club Zion purchased the former First Baptist Church property at 830 S Atlantic Avenue – our present location.

ORGANIZATION

The organizational structure of Club Zion would be defined as elder rule with the senior pastor as the administrative head.

Why the name Club Zion?

The original idea for Club Zion was a Christian youth club where young people could gather for fellowship. It quickly became a contemporary church and the name was kept because by definition a **CLUB** is a group of people organized for a purpose, united, combined together to contribute towards a common goal: Worship God, know Him, and make Him known. **ZION** is Heaven and the final gathering place for true believers of our Lord Jesus Christ

Mission Statement

Club Zion Community Church offers the surrounding communities a place where they can congregate, worship, and learn in a tranquil and casual setting. However, the result of inward tranquility and peace only occurs when an individual is faithfully committed to the teachings and principles of God's Word.

Statement of Faith

We believe the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. We believe that the triune God exists eternally in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe that Jesus is God, was born of a virgin, died on a cross and shed His blood as man's substitutionary sacrifice, rose bodily, and ascended to heaven, where He is presently exalted at the Father's right hand. We believe that salvation consists of the remission of sins, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and the gift of eternal life received by faith alone apart from works.

Main Focus

We are committed to teaching the Word to the children of God in an expositional manner: word upon word, line upon line, using the inductive Bible study method. We believe the only way a Christian can truly grow is by ingesting the Word of God.

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17

WHO I AM IN CHRIST

LAM ACCEPTED

I am God's child.	John 1:12	
As a disciple, I am a friend of Jesus.	John 15:15	
I have been justified.	Romans 5:1	
I am united with the Lord, and I am one with Him in spirit.	1 Corinthians 6:17	
I have been bought with a price and I belong to God.	1 Corinthians 6:19-20	
I am a member of Christ's Body	1 Corinthians 12:27	
I have been chosen by God and adopted as His child.	Ephesians 1:3-6	
I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.	Colossians 1:13-14	
I am complete in Christ.	Colossians 2:9-10	
I have direct access to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ	Hebrews 4:14-16	
I AM SECURE I am free from condemnation.	Romans 8:1-2	
I am assured God works for my good in all circumstances.	Romans 8:28	
I am free from any condemnation brought against me and I cannot be separated from the Love of God.	Romans 8:31-39	
I have been established, anointed and sealed by God.	2 Corinthians 1:21-22	
I am hidden with Christ in God.	Colossians 3:1-4	
I am confident that God will complete the good work He started in me. Philippians 1:6		
I am a citizen of heaven.	Philippians 3:20	
I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7		
I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.	1 John 5:18	
I AM SIGNIFICANT I am a branch of Jesus Christ, the true vine, and a channel of His life	e. John 15:5	
I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.	John 15:16	
I am God's temple.	1 Corinthians 3:16	
I am a minister of reconciliation for God.	2 Corinthians 5:17-21	
I am seated with Christ Jesus in the Heavenly realm.	Ephesians 2:6	
I am God's workmanship.	Ephesians 2:10	
I may approach God with freedom and confidence.	Ephesians 3:12	
I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.	Philippians 4:13	

CAN YOU LOSE YOUR SALVATION?

A frequently asked question and concern of some believers is whether they can lose their salvation by some deed, action, inaction, behavior, sin or decision they make. It is not surprising that confusion can arise because of opinions pushed as doctrine or scriptures taken out of context to bolster an opinion. However, if we examine God's Word, the total counsel of God concerning salvation is clear and comforting.

1. Jesus tells us that no one comes to Him unless God the Father draws him and that once they are given to Jesus – Jesus says He will lose NONE but raise them up at the last day.

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:44

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day." John 6:37-39

2. Jesus also tells us that no one can take a believer from Him because He is God.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one." John 10:27-30

3. When you are born again Jesus comes and lives inside you and will not leave you.

"The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Colossians 1:26-27

"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Hebrews 13:5

4. Once we believe in Jesus and accept Him as our Lord and Savior the Holy Spirit seals our salvation and is the guarantee of our eternal inheritance. A genuine believer is sealed and preserved for eternal life with Jesus.

"In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1:11-14

5. God loves us and has promised that whoever believes in Jesus will not perish but have everlasting life. God is love, Jesus is God and nothing can separate us from that love. A genuine born again believer (while he would never want to) could not reject his own salvation.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." John 3:16-18

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:35, 38-39

6. A born again believer cannot commit blasphemy against the Holy Spirit often referred to as the unpardonable sin. The main ministry of the Holy Spirit is to testify about Jesus, if you reject that testimony all your life and remain unsaved until you die, then you are calling the Holy Spirit a liar and blaspheming Him.

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me." John 15:26

"Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men." Matthew 12:31

It is clear from the totality of Scripture that a genuinely saved person cannot lose his/her salvation and there are more verses testifying to this fact than listed here. There is nothing you can say or do that will result in loss of salvation. Your sinful deeds or actions will have consequences and Godly discipline but you will not have your salvation removed.

A scripture often used to argue that you can lose your salvation is John 15:5-6. The argument goes that if you once believed and then quit abiding in Christ then you will be cast out. However, this scripture does not refer to a saved individual. Jesus does not say they once abided but no longer do, it says anyone who does not abide in Christ will be cast out.

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned." John 15:5-6

Jesus also makes it clear that in the last day many will call Him Lord but He tells them to depart because he **never** knew them – not that He once knew them or they once abided with Him – they never abided in Jesus.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' Matthew 7:21-23

Those who do not abide in Christ are the unbelievers who were never saved. There are people who may think they are saved because they were baptized as a baby or because they are members of a church.

Some people have an emotional response to an altar call or have an intellectual understanding of the Gospel only. These people may think they are saved but they never really bent their knee and surrendered their life to Jesus. They live their life their own way and do not abide in Jesus - they display no spontaneous fruit.

Scriptures used to argue that an individual can lose their salvation upon closer examination and context always refer to individuals who were never saved.

UNDERSTANDING the TITHE

Definition – Tithe means a tenth part. 10%

<u>When was the tithe established</u>? The principle of tithing 10% to God was established in Genesis when Abraham, after defeating the Kings who stole his nephew Lot and who had plundered several cities, gave the King of Salem 10% of all the riches he recovered from the defeated kings. This was 400 some years before the law was given to Moses.

This Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem and also a priest of God Most High. When Abraham was returning home after winning a great battle against the kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him. Then Abraham took a tenth of all he had captured in battle and gave it to Melchizedek. The name Melchizedek means "king of justice," and king of Salem means "king of peace." Hebrews 7:1-2 NLT

<u>The tithe belongs to God</u> – As Christians we recognize that God owns everything and we are stewards or managers of whatever He provides us whether that is a little or a lot. God then tells us that 10% of what He has provided us He wants us to return to Him. He considers it holy, to be set apart for God.

"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's. It is holy to the LORD." Leviticus 27:30

"And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD." Leviticus 27:32

"You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year."

Deuteronomy 14:22

Robbing God – Since the tithe is holy and belongs to God, not returning it to God is robbing God.

"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings." Malachi 3:8

<u>Does God need our money</u>? God does not need our money - He owns everything already. God is looking at our heart and whether we put Him first in our life and trust Him to meet all our needs. Do we trust God enough to return 10% to Him and have faith He will meet all our needs with the remaining 90%?

"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
Philippians 4:19

"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." Matthew 6:31-33

"I have been young, and now am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, Nor his descendants begging bread." Psalm 37:25

Is it God or money? Which is first (#1) in your life?

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." Matthew 6:24

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." You shall have no other gods before Me". Exodus 20:2-3

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Matthew 6:21

Tithing with the proper attitude acknowledges that God is first in your life. The proper attitude means the tithe is given not as an obligation, a duty, begrudgingly, with a sense of loss; but given joyfully as an act of love and worship.

"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing." 1 Corinthians 13:3

"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7

What if I don't tithe? Two important things happen if you do not tithe:

1. You miss out on God's promised blessings for obedience:

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:10 God says, "test Me, and see if I do not do what I say I will do."

"Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." Luke 6:38

2. You don't get to keep it - God's tithe will be consumed by something called the devourer. (An unexpected expense in modern terms)

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:10

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the LORD of hosts;" Malachi 3:11

<u>How do you calculate the tithe?</u> The Tithe is calculated by taking 10% of any increase God provides for you. Examples: Wages, Investment Income, Capital Gains, Gifts, Etc. and is calculated on gross or total increase.

"Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the first fruits of all your increase;"
Proverbs 3:9

"You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year."

Deuteronomy 14:22

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come." 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

- Calculate your tithe on your gross increase. (If you earn \$500 gross pay a week, your tithe would be $[$500 \times 10\%] = 50 .
- If you purchased an asset for \$1,000 and sold that asset later for \$10,000, your increase was \$9,000. You prospered by \$9,000. (Your tithe would be $[$9,000 \times 10\%] = 900 . This assumes that you have been tithing right along and the \$1,000 used for the purchase came from funds that you already tithed on. If not, then you would calculate the tithe on the sale price of \$10,000. $[$10,000 \times 10\%] = $1,000$.
- Examples used to illustrate tithing in the Bible are given from an agrarian or farming culture that everyone understood in that time. Today most people are removed from farming but those same principles still apply when adapted to the ways we prosper. One example: Some employers contribute funds for an employee in a 401K, the assets in the retirement fund may increase or decrease during the year. Should you tithe on the employer contribution or increase in value even though you have not actually received it? Using the farming example, the tithe was calculated on what the field produced when it was harvested. Considering the farming concept of harvest, I believe you calculate the tithe when you begin receiving the harvest from your 401K retirement.
- Keep in mind that God is looking at your heart and wants to bless you for your faithfulness and is not going to withhold blessings because you honestly missed something in determining your tithe.
- Also keep in mind that tithing should not be looked at as a calculation to determine the minimum amount you can get away with giving. See <u>Is it God or money</u> notes above.

<u>Where is the tithe paid</u>? God's people brought their tithes to the Temple. Under the new covenant, Christians should give their tithes to their local church where they are taught, nourished and refreshed in the word of God and other Christian ministries.

<u>Are Christians not free from the law?</u> Yes, we are not bound by the law to tithe like the Jews. However, why would we not tithe considering the following?

- 1. Tithing was established in Genesis 400+ years before God gave Moses the law.
- 2. The tithe belongs to the Lord that has not changed.
- 3. The blessings for tithing have not been revoked.
- 4. Jesus confirmed the tithe in the New Testament.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! <u>For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin</u>, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. <u>These you ought to have done</u>, without leaving the others undone." Matthew 23:23

5. As Christians we possess a better covenant than those under the law, should we not give freely to God at least as much as those under the law were required to give?

"Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." Luke 22:20

"But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises". Hebrews 8:6

<u>Is not tithing a sin?</u> Tithing does not affect your salvation, tithing does not add to your righteousness; robbing God would be a sin, but as Christians our past, present and future sins have been forgiven – we have great liberty. Whether you tithe or not is between you and the Lord.

"All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify." 1 Corinthians 10:23

The elders at Club Zion tithe and can testify that the promises and blessings of God are real. We encourage any Christian who is not tithing to honor God with your tithes and watch God bless you for putting Him 1st in your life over mammon. Understand that God's blessings come in many forms and often in unexpected ways, it may well be a blessing of financial increase but the teaching that sowing seeds guarantees you a financial bounty is known as the prosperity gospel and is a distorted teaching. Giving to get rich is not giving with the right heart.

<u>I'll tithe when I have more</u> – We are called to be faithful stewards no matter how much God has placed in our lives. If we were not faithful with a little, why would God give us more? Start tithing on what God gives you.

"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much." Luke 16:10

Doesn't my time count?

As Christians and members of the body of Christ we are called to service for the kingdom and we will be rewarded for those things we allow Christ to do through us.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." Matthew 6:19-20

"Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you." 1 Samuel 12:24

"For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another." Galatians 5:13

Yes, we should serve the lord, but in addition we should tithe from our financial increase. Donating our time in service to the Kingdom does not take the place of tithing on the money God gives us. See IS IT GOD OR MONEY above. Some individuals use serving as a self-justification/excuse for not tithing. As faithful stewards we should serve and tithe.

<u>Tithes & Offerings</u> – For a Christian the tithe is the starting point for giving. Offerings are gifts given above and beyond the tithe, also given out of a heart of love for God, for the work of the ministry, and to help the poor. There are blessings for those who give from a heart of love:

"I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' " Acts 20:35

There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself." Proverbs 11:24-25

"I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread." Psalm 37:25

"Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." Luke 6:38

"He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor." Proverbs 22:9

"He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many curses." Proverbs 28:27

EVANGELISM SPRIPTURES

REALITY OF SIN

"As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;" Romans 3:10

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," Romans 3:23

For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin. Ecclesiastes 7:20

"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. Jeremiah 17:9-10

"But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away." Isaiah 64:6

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

1 John 1:8

THE PENALTY FOR SIN

"Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father As well as the soul of the son is Mine; The soul who sins shall die. ... "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. Ezekiel 18:4, 20

Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. James 1:15

"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment," Hebrews 9:27

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
Romans 6:23

"So then each of us shall give account of himself to God." Romans 14:12

"And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books." Revelation 20:12

MAN'S INABILITY TO SAVE HIMSELF

"not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit," Titus 3:5

"knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified." Galatians 2:16

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Romans 3:20

"There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death." Proverbs 14:12

"But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Isaiah 64:6

GOD'S REMEDY

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
Romans 6:23

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me". John 14:6

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12

"for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10

"For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures," 1 Corinthians 15:3

MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord," Acts 3:19

"testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 20:21

"So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." Acts 16:31

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" John 1:12

"that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10:9-10

"For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." Romans 10:13

RESULTS OF SALVATION

"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." John 3:18

"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." John 3:36

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17

"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." Romans 8:16-17

"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27

"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." Romans 8:9

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

OLD TESTAMENT

(39 BOOKS)

THE LAW

GENESIS

EXODUS

LEVITICUS

NUMBERS

DEUTERONOMY

HISTORY

JOSHUA

JUDGES

RUTH

1SAMUEL

2SAMUEL

1KINGS

2KINGS

1CHRONICLES

2CHRONICLES

EZRA

NEHEMIAH

ESTER

WISDOM/POETRY

JOB

PSALMS

PROVERBS

ECCLESIASTES

SONG OF SOLOMON

MAJOR PROPHETS

ISAIAH

JEREMIAH

LAMENTATIONS

EZEKIEL

DANIEL

MINOR PROPHETS

HOSEA

JOEL

AMOS

OBADIAH

JONAH

MICAH

NAHUM

HABAKKUK

ZEPHANIAH

HAGGAI

ZECHARIAH

MALACHI



NEW TESTAMENT

(27 BOOKS)

THE GOSPELS

MATTHEW

MARK

LUKE

JOHN

BIRTH OF CHURCH

ACTS

EPISTLES (Letters)

ROMANS

1 CORINTHIANS

2 CHORINTHIANS

GALATIONS

EPHESIANS

PHILIPPIANS

COLOSSIANS

1 THESSALONIANS

2 THESSALONIANS

1 TIMOTHY

2 TIMOTHY

TITUS

PHILEMON

HEBREWS

JAMES

1 PETER

2 PETER

1 JOHN

2 JOHN

3 JOHN

JUDE

CULMINATION

&

JUDGEMENT

REVELATION