

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

..... and

SERMON TOPICS

for Real Faith
in the Real World

THOMAS D. SHARTS M.ED

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Thomas D. Sharts M.Ed

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Introduction

The greatest challenge that pastors, priests and other teachers of Christianity face in the early 21st century is how to deliver this profound religion in a relevant manner that makes sense to a diverse population of people without corrupting and obscuring the requisite basic truths of the faith. This massive challenge is primarily related to the fact that most persons are inundated with information overkill and cannot determine and/or prioritize what information is relevant for realizing spiritual wellness and health in all other areas of being as they go about their daily affairs.

The hope is that this book will provide ministers of Christianity with relevant ideas for Sunday school lessons, sermons or other teaching experiences that will promote and realize the engagement of people exposed to the basic truths of the faith for the purposes of helping them realize genuine spiritual change and growth in critical areas associated with evolving the fruits of empathy, compassion, mercy, understanding, wisdom and the implementation of human service on behalf of others, etc.

This book provides three years worth of relevant Sunday school lessons and eight years worth of sermon topics for the traditional pastor, priest or teacher instructing congregations of people at least once per week. Likewise, with all the many other challenges that shepherds of the flocks have to contend with, it's my hope that this book assists as a guide for presenting some worthwhile teachings and topics for promoting and realizing positive spiritual and social change for congregants.

Thomas D. Sharts

[Jesus Christ is the](#)
[Rock of Your Welfare](#)

Scripture Readings: John 10:1-15, Ezekiel 34.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Jesus Christ Knows Us And We Know Him (John 10:1-10)

Our intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and his love for us shields us from false teachers such as some charlatan preachers, televangelists, university educators, cults, TV programs that accentuate vanity and foolishness, Internet nonsense, etc. (John 10:7-10).

2. Jesus Christ Gives Himself to Us For Our Well-Being (John 10:11-15)

Jesus Christ is the steadfast rock who can be trusted in all circumstances.

3. Jesus Christ Protects Our Soul By:

- A. Calling us to repentance.
- B. Forgiving us of our trespasses.
- C. Calling us to daily relational fellowship.
- D. Instructing us in reference to his word of truth.
- E. Providing us with spiritual discernment.

Questions to Consider:

1. Are you convinced that Jesus Christ knows you intimately; for instance, enough that he actually knows your name? If not, why not?
2. How has Jesus Christ historically demonstrated his love toward you that demonstrates the fact that he cares for your welfare?
3. On a daily basis, are you cognizant of Jesus Christ's concern for you? If not, why not?
4. How should you respond to Jesus Christ in a spiritual relationship?

[The Vine and the Branches](#)

Scripture Readings: John 15:1-17, Psalm 80:7-19.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Vine (John 15:1-4)

A. The unfailing presence of Christ living within our hearts is the vine.

B. The Almighty Lord God will see fit to prune-out of our hearts and behavioral lives all that is unholy and profits nothing in reference to life and truth.

C. When we separate ourselves from the vine, we separate ourselves from the presence of the Holy Spirit of Almighty Lord God. The consequences are we will experience guilt, fear, anger, bitterness, apathy, selfishness, etc.

2. In Order to Remain Productive, We Must Remain In Fellowship with The Vine (John 15:6-8)

A. Some behaviors we perform that epitomize the fruitful life as inspired by the Holy Spirit are spirit-inspired love for others; purity of motives; wisdom

and understanding, and vocational industriousness.

3. The Vine Bestows Privileges (John 15:9-16)

A. When we continue to have willful fellowship with the Holy Spirit, we remain within the circle of his presence and blessing.

B. We continue to remain in the presence and blessing of the Holy Spirit by performing the following central behaviors: prayer; confession; worship; expressing thankfulness; maintaining fellowship with other believers; and willful separation from worldly beliefs, values and behaviors that serve the carnal mind and body.

4. The Vine Commands Partnership (John 15:12-17)

A. We are the Lord's friend if we do what he commands.

B. The Lord command us to: love others, instruct others, prayer for others, witness to others, listen to others, carry the burdens of those who need us.

Question to Consider:

What areas of your life need to be pruned in order for you to experience a greater presence of the Almighty Lord God's Holy Spirit in your life?

Obeying the Lead
of the Holy Spirit

Scripture Reading: Acts 8:26-39.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Phillip's Sensitivity to Obey The Holy Spirit's Leading (Acts 8:26-39)

A. Phillip obeyed the Lord's instruction to leave a revival in Samaria (Acts 8:4-7). Consequently, he stumbles upon a high-status Ethiopian official reading a passage of Biblical scripture that references the Christ. Phillip proceeds to enlighten the inquisitive official about the salvation power and grace of Christ.

B. Phillip's obedience to the Holy Spirit had some great ramifications such as: the salvation of an individual and the future evangelization of Egypt and Ethiopia.

Questions to Consider:

1. Have you ever coincidentally run into a person that needed instruction or a word from the Lord? If so, how were you utilized as a tool of opportunity for the Lord?

2. How can you know if someone is ready to listen to the instructions of the Lord?

3. What are some experiences that prepare people to heed instruction from the Lord?

4. Why is it important for you to take seriously the leading of the Holy Spirit to move from one geographic location to another – whether temporarily or permanently?

5. Is there anything that exists in your life today that would prevent you from moving from one geographic location to another if the Lord requested you to do so?

6. How can you validate if the Lord's is truly speaking to you about a major geographic move in your life?

Jesus as the Light of the World

Scripture Reading: John 8:12-20.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. When Jesus Claimed That He Was The Light Of The World, How Do You Think People That Followed Him Responded?

- A. Fearfully.
- B. Disgusted.
- C. Incredulously.
- D. Faithfully.

2. Why Did Jesus Make This Claim About Himself That “He Was The Light Of The World?”

- A. To challenge people to allow him the opportunity to demonstrate that he was indeed the way to salvation for their souls.

B. To help people obtain access to understanding, reconciliation, redemption, healing, love and peace.

Questions to Consider:

1. Sometimes, why do you or some people reject claims that Jesus makes in reference to himself?

A. Cannot accept the truth about a spiritual condition of being.

B. Are blind to the truth regarding a spiritual condition of being.

C. Are angry and bitter about life circumstances.

D. Cannot release self-will to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

2. In what ways have you experienced the benefits of Jesus' claim that he is the "light of the world?"

A. Forgiveness and restoration.

B. Daily grace.

C. Understanding.

D. Guidance.

E. Completeness.

F. Purification.

G. Peace.

H. Compassionate service.

Prayer as a Relationship

Scripture Reading: Psalms 63:1-8, 73:23-28.

God is an ardent lover. In our times of committed prayer, God desires for us to communicate openly and honestly with him.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Prayer is Reaching-Out to God (Psalm 63:1-8)

A. God places within our hearts a restless need to know and communicate with him.

2. How Does God Respond and Demonstrate His Love Toward Us Through Prayer?

A. Peace.

B. Guidance.

C. Assurance.

D. Conviction.

3. Prayer is Fed by Our Vision

To strengthen our prayer life, we must become increasingly aware of who God actually is. For example, God exemplifies some of the following physical and behavioral facts: omnipotence; omniscience; omnipresent; glorious; perfect; gracious; merciful.

4. What Ought Our Response to Prayer Be?

A. An expression of love.

B. An expression of our praise.

C. An expression of our obedience.

D. An expression of our adoration/worship.

Question to Consider:

What inhibits some people from communicating with God in prayer? The following are some examples:

A. Worry.

B. Fear.

C. Faithlessness.

D. Depression.

E. Busyness.

F. Exhaustion.

G. Hopelessness.

H. Pleasure seeking.

I. Aggrandizement.

J. Pride.

K. Unbelief.

L. Hate.

How Should We Pray?

Scripture Readings: Matthew 6:5-10, Psalm 145:1-7, 21.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Our Father (Matthew 6:5-10)

An emphasis or portion of our prayers should most certainly make reference to the desire that God's kingdom and holy will be realized upon earth.

2. Hallow God's Name (Psalm 145:1-7, 21)

When we pray, we should make reference to those truths that reveal God as the source of all goodness, grace, compassion, mercy, glory and power. Likewise, we must praise God because of these factual truths.

3. Submission and Praise (Psalm 145: 1-7, 21)

In recognizing God's greatness, we offer ourselves in submission to his holy will and kingdom. We pray for a hope to realize God's holy will accomplished in our lives and upon earth.

Question to Consider:

When we pray, do we really expect or believe that God has the power to change anything in the world that needs to be changed? If we doubt, why is that the case?

God Hears and Cares about Our Prayers

Scripture Readings: Matthew 6:11-15, 25-34.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Prayer is an Expression of Trust

A. God invites us to bring our personal needs to him: spiritual, physical, social, psychological and vocational (Matthew 6:25-34).

B. Prayer is an expression of trust. Jesus asks us to trust him. We are instructed to trust God to meet our needs so we are not burdened with worry and fear. Also, we are instructed to live with joy in our heart.

C. We should pray that God would change us through his grace.

2. Praying and Trusting for Forgiveness

We need forgiveness from our sins so we don't die inwardly. Our inward death also hurts the community of people around us by leaving them bitter, unloved and ignorant of the truth.

3. Praying and Trusting for Deliverance

We need to pray that God will deliver us from our weaknesses, temptations, compromises and those influences of evil that surround us.

Question to Consider:

Are you completely confident that God will provide for your needs? If so, why? If you are not, why not?

Jesus Knows Your Name

Scripture Readings: John 10:1-15, Ezekiel, 34.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Jesus Knows Us By Name (John 10:1-6)

A. Our close relationship with Jesus and his love for us shields us from false prophets, teachers and/or teachings.

B. Some examples of false teachers or teachings derive from the following sources:

Televangelists, cults, television, Internet, magazines, academic institutions, etc.

2. Jesus Protects Us From Harm (John 10:7-10)

A. Jesus desires to protect our soul from darkness, evil, and false teachings.

B. Jesus protects our soul by doing the following:

1. Calling us to repent from sin.
2. Forgiving us.
3. Calling us to an intimate relationship with him.
4. Providing us with spiritual understanding.

3. Jesus Gives Himself to Us For Our Well-Being (John 10:11-15)

A. Jesus is the steadfast rock who can be trusted in all circumstances.

Questions to Consider:

1. How does one know that Jesus knows him/her intimately?
2. How has Jesus demonstrated that he cares for you?
3. How should people respond to Jesus as an authority figure?

Jesus Our Hope

Scripture Readings: John 11:17-27, 38-44.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Hopelessness Expected (John 11:17-21)

Sometimes we feel hopeless to pray about a situation or circumstance that seems unchangeable. Like the Lazarus story, sometimes Jesus delays in answering our prayers in order to glorify God or to further our own sanctification.

2. Hopelessness Understood (John 11:21-27)

Like in Martha's case, even though we know that Jesus is the resurrection and the life of our hope, we sometimes believe that Jesus is powerless to answer our prayers or to change our circumstances because we either do not deserve his help or believe that he doesn't completely love us due to our past and current failures.

3. Hopelessness Confronted (John 11:38-44)

Do we really believe that Jesus still performs miracles for us and is our hope?

Questions to Consider:

1. How do you feel when Jesus does not answer prayers that you believe are important to your well-being?
2. Do you believe your guilt, anger, confusion and impenitence has something to do with why your prayers go unanswered?
3. Are you wearing grave clothes that you passionately wish Jesus would take off of you?
4. What situations or factual realities do you think the grave clothes represent in your life?

[Jesus is Always with Us](#)

Scripture Readings: John 14:15-27, 7:37-39.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Proof of Our Obedience to God

How do we show our obedience to God?

A. Worship Him.

B. Obey Him.

C. Delight in Creation.

2. Why Is Obedience Important to Our Faith?

Obedience helps keeps open lines of communication with God. It also helps us experience the presence and perfection of Christ.

3. The Promise of The Holy Spirit

There are six basic truths that Jesus teaches us about the Holy Spirit:

- A. Believers in Christ will receive him. (John 7:39).
- B. The Holy Spirit is our eternal counselor. (John 14:16).
- C. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of truth. (John 14:17).
- D. The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit. (John 14:17).
- E. The Holy Spirit will live in us. (John 14:17).
- F. The Holy Spirit will teach us about all things. (John 14:26).

4. The Peace of Jesus (John 14:27)

How can the peace and presence of Jesus be understood and accepted by us?

- A. The assurance of eternal salvation.

B. The assurance of the coming Kingdom of God where light, hope and justice will prevail.

C. The stable presence of Christ in an ever-changing world.

Questions to Consider:

1. Are there areas in your life where obedience lags behind in comparison to your knowledge of what God expects of you? If so, what are those areas?
2. How do you experience the daily presence of Jesus?

[Jesus Prays for our](#)
[Conservation and Protection](#)

Scripture Reading: John 17:9-23.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Jesus Conserves and Protects Us (John 17:9-16)

When Jesus refers to the world whom is he referring to?

A. Unbelievers filled with rejection and hatred of God.

B. People controlled by sinful lives without wisdom or understanding.

2. The Joy of Christ Conserves Us (John 17:13-16)

3. Sanctified for the World (John 17:17-19)

What purposes does sanctification have for a believer in Christ?

- A. Sets a believer apart for special vocational ministry.
- B. Helps formulate like-minded unions with God's holy purposes.
- C. Promotes the pure love of Christ.

4. United in Purpose (John 17:20-23)

What often inhibits the church from being united in purpose?

- A. Doctrinal disputes.
- B. Busyness and pre-occupation with personal or corporate economic concerns.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you feel protected by the Lord Jesus Christ from the world? If so, what are some examples of that protection in your life?

2. How does the joy of Christ protect us from the world?

3. What assurances do you have that guarantee your beliefs about Jesus are correct?

4. What gives you the ability to become righteous in your standing with God?

God Breaks His Silence with Hope

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:5-21.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Zechariah's Day in the Temple (Luke 1:5-10)

Zechariah is finally chosen to serve in the inner court of the temple. However, in his personal distress over his wife's barrenness (Elizabeth) Zechariah confuses God's silence with his absence.

2. Zechariah Meets Gabriel (Luke 1:11-20)

Zechariah meets Gabriel and is told he will have a son. For years, Zechariah longed for God to speak, but after years of waiting, he had hardened his heart toward believing that he would have a son as God's angelic messenger had indicated.

Questions to Consider:

1. Are you waiting for something from the Lord? If so, have you been waiting for a long time?
2. During your time of waiting for God to answer, what has been your attitude?
3. What might you be withholding from God or others that might be playing a part in the hindering of your prayers?

[The Perfect Sacrifice of Christ](#)

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 10:1-18.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Impossibility of the Blood Of Bulls and Goats to Eradicate The Guilt For Sin (Hebrews 10:5-10)

Animal sacrifices could not permanently eradicate the guilt of sin from the sinner. In fact, that is why the once and for all sacrifice made by Christ for personal sins was needed.

2. The Perfect Sacrifice of Christ (Hebrews 10:5-10)

We should reflect upon the sacrifice of Christ's body to fulfill God's holy will on behalf of saving humanity from God's wrath. We also should give mindful consideration to the great suffering experienced by Christ in order to set us permanently free from sin and its penalties.

3. We Are Made Holy by One Sacrifice For All (Hebrews 10:11-18)

Ultimately, we are made holy through the grace of God, and the process of sanctification requires cleansing, maturation and the grace of God.

Questions to Consider:

1. When you suffer for obeying God's holy will, do you consider that some of your sufferings are an expected consequence for doing right?
2. What are some ways that you suffer for behaving in conformity with God's holy will?

[The Advocate for Sin](#)

Scripture Readings: 1 John 1:5-10, 2:1-6.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Message of Salvation is Jesus (1 John 1:5-7)

The message of salvation is Jesus. God is holy and God is light. There is no sin or darkness in him.

Sin requires constant confession and purification. To walk in the light is to have fellowship with God that allows for us to be open and vulnerable before God.

2. Hindrances to Salvation (1 John 1:8-10)

Our natural depravity hinders our salvation.

3. The Aim of Salvation (1 John 2:3-6)

To walk in the joy of our salvation and illuminate God's holiness so the world of unbelief can see Christ.

Questions to Consider:

1. What areas of your life are you struggling with in reference to achieving a state of power and holiness?
2. Are you a consistent and viable witness for Christ to an unbelieving world? If so, why? If not, why not?

God's Discipline

Scripture Readings: James 1:2-4, Hebrews 12:1-4.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Perseverance Defined

Perseverance is the tool that God utilizes to make our faith complete and mature - lacking in nothing.

2. How Do We Persevere? (James 1:2-4)

A. We don't run from the pain of suffering upon us.

B. We courageously experience the agony of the spirit and soul and don't shy from it.

C. We patiently endure life and its multiple circumstances obediently - despite the pain such action may bring forth.

3. The Purpose of God's Discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11, James 1:2-4)

- A. To spare us from greater agony in the future.
- B. To confirm God's love for us.
- C. To help us realize the long-term goals of holiness.
- D. To help us become over-comers so we can become peacemakers.
- E. To perfect us.

4. How Should We Respond to God's Discipline?

We should submit to God's discipline and not run from it.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are some potential agonies you could experience if you remain disobedient to God in any particular area you're aware of?
2. What do you think God's long-term goal of holiness is?

3. What fears motivate your disobedience toward submitting to God's holy will in any particular area of your life?

Praying for Others

Scripture Readings: Colossians 1:3-12, Acts 12:5-7, 12-16.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Prayerful Goals

A. We need to pray for others in the church body. Specifically for those we have conflict with and for those who need uplifting in reference to realizing their calling within the body of Christ.

B. When praying for others, we should recall the best qualities of the persons we're praying for. Also, we should realize that the shortcomings of others inevitably become transformed into virtues if Christ is allowed to work in their heart.

C. Appreciate the personal difference that exist among us and thank God for it.

D. When we pray for others, we should have the affection of Christ in our hearts.

2. Those in The Body Of Christ We Pray For are Partners in The Gospel (Col 1:5-7, 10:11)

We need the presence and gifts of others in the church body to support our ministry efforts as well.

We are designed to work most effectively in relationships with others. Likewise, we have been created to be dependent.

3. Prayer for Others Accomplishes Three Major Functions:

- A. Moves our prayer focus beyond our own selfish needs.
- B. Helps our co-workers become more productive.
- C. Keeps our attitudes correct regarding our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Questions to Consider:

1. How often do you pray for persons other than yourself?
2. What prevents you from consistently praying for others?

Have Mercy Upon Us God

Scripture Readings: Psalm 51:1-17, 1 John 1:9.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Prayer for Forgiveness (Psalm 51:1-9)

- A. We must acknowledge our sins.
- B. Our hope for forgiveness rests in God's mercy and compassion.
- C. We must claim God's promise for forgiveness. (1 John 1:9).

2. Prayer for Renewal (Psalm 51:13-17)

- A. We should pray for a pure heart. This focus is accomplished through the presence of God's spirit living within us.
- B. We should prayer for a steadfast heart. This focus is realized through the presence of God's spirit living within us and through our willful trust of God.

C. We should pray for a willing and obedient heart. This purpose is achieved through our daily commitment to be unionized with the Holy Spirit of Almighty God.

3. Spiritual Sacrifices (Psalm 51:13-17)

A. We should pray for opportunities to share God's forgiveness.

B. We should pray for a desire to praise God.

A. We should develop a humble and broken spirit – completely given to God.

Question to Consider:

What reasons prevent you from spending enough quality time in prayer in order for God to direct your life in reference to concerns about your vocational direction, purity, steadfastness in the faith and short and long-term obedience?

Original Sin

**Scripture Readings: Genesis 3:1-24; 16-19,
Romans 8:7.**

Key Points of Instruction:

Original sin and its consequences influence our thinking, clouds our understanding and confounds us in reference to God's will and direction for our lives.

1. Original Sin (Genesis 3:1-24)

A. Original sin was conceived by removing God from the throne of the human heart and abolishing our consideration of the significance of God's fellowship and its historical and future benefits.

B. When we sin, a number of doubtful motives are behind the origins:

1. Doubting God's goodness and concern toward us.
2. Doubting God's fairness and justice toward us.

3. Our need to be in control of our circumstances because of the factual existence of #1 or #2 or both.

4. Our need to relieve pain and suffering and replace it with pleasure or an easier way.

2. The Mind of The Flesh Cannot Submit to God's Will. (Romans 8:7)

We must willfully examine ourselves daily in order to identify those points of contentious ignorance and vanity that separate us from the power and understanding of the Almighty Lord God.

Questions to Consider?

1. How do we escape from the constant curse and power of sin?

2. What sins do you love committing and what are the perceived benefits you receive that motivate you to continue in such sinful actions?

Understanding the Holiness of God

Scripture Readings: Genesis 1:27-28; Exodus 3:1-6; Leviticus 19:2, and Isaiah 6:1-7.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What is Holiness?

Holiness is not solely something we do, but rather is something we continually become. It is an evolutionary process and dynamic state of becoming.

2. What Did Moses and Isaiah Learn About God's Holiness? (Exodus 3:1-6, Isaiah 6:1-7)

A. God demands respect and awe.

B. God is approachable on his terms.

C. God possesses a powerful radiance that brings purity.

D. God's holiness comprises: mercy, compassion, and righteousness.

3. What Does it Mean to Be Created in The Image Of God?

Our spirit, righteousness, consciousness, willfulness, personality and holiness find their essence through God's spirit.

4. Some Steps for Incorporating Holiness in Our Lives

A. Confession.

B. Prayer.

C. Worship.

D. Thanksgiving.

E. Fellowship.

F. Industriousness.

Question to Consider:

What are other ways we can develop in our quest towards incorporating holiness in our daily lives?

Dealing with Interpersonal Tensions

Scripture Readings: Genesis 16:1-16.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Sources of Interpersonal Tension (Genesis 16:1-6)

- A. Disappointment over unfulfilled faith-expected actions.
- B. Unfulfilled promises and commitments.

2. What Kind of Behaviors/Tensions Result from Disappointment over Unfulfilled Faith-Expected Actions, Unfulfilled Promises and Broken Commitments?

- A. Premature judgments.
- B. Premature attempt to bring about change or resolve issues.
- C. Premature inferences regarding an unresolved problem or problems.
- D. Anger or bitterness.

E. Broken trust.

F. Accusing or isolating a perceived wrongdoer.

G. Absolving self from responsibility.

3. Hasty Ill-Advised Solutions to Problems are Often Reached in Unbelief and in The Heat Of Anger. Alternatively, How Should We Evaluate and Respond Toward Problematic Situations with Others?

A. Listen Attentively.

B. Implement Reason.

C. Communicate Rationally.

D. Communicate Instructively.

E. Demonstrate Respect.

F. Spirit of Forgiveness.

G. Work to Reconcile.

4. When We are Despairing over a Situation, What do We Need Most?

A. To be found by the Lord.

B. To hear from the Lord.

C. To be encouraged by the Lord.

D. To be blessed by the Lord.

Question to Consider:

When you have been misunderstood or are the focal point of persecution within a conflict, what have you experienced?

Obeying the Lord in Difficult Circumstances

Scripture Readings: Exodus 5:22-23, 15:1-3, 17:6-7 and Numbers 20:7-12.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. A Doubtful Leader (Exodus 5:22-23)

In Moses understanding, immediate evidence of God's word revealed that circumstances had not improved but were worsened as a result of obedience. Likewise, Moses became discouraged, exasperated and frustrated.

2. Moses Gains Experience and Trust in God (Exodus 15:1-3)

Through the trials and victories of God's hand in vanquishing Egypt, Moses was able to praise the Lord as his strength and rock of salvation.

3. Moses Character Tested (Exodus 17:6-7)

With the people complaining, Moses did not capitulate to their whims but rather sought the guidance of the Lord. Later, Moses obeys God and does something that he does not logically understand – he strikes a rock in order to obtain water from it.

4. A Failure Of Character Under Difficult Circumstances (Numbers 20:7-12)

Moses impulsiveness cost him from entering into the promise land.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are your normal responses to situations where prayer or obedience seems ineffective in changing present circumstances?

2. Why do we tend to forget the power of the Lord's hand over our lives when we confront unique or difficult problems despite the fact that the Lord has reigned supreme in our historical lives past?

3. Why is it often difficult for us to obey the Lord when he asks us to do something we don't understand or that doesn't seem to make any logical sense?

4. What current stressful circumstances are affecting your obedience or have caused you to act impulsively in the past?

Helping Those We Don't Like

Scripture Readings: Jonah 1:1-3; 3:1-5, 4:10-11.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Religious Exclusionist Attitude

After the Babylonian exile, most Jews felt that in order to develop a religion that was pure, they needed to exclude Gentiles from association or worship opportunities. They also believed that Gentiles were excluded from having access to God's love and mercy. Jonah was a prophet who held such a belief and attitude.

2. God Challenged Jonah's Elitist Attitude (Jonah 3:2)

God requested Jonah to preach against the Assyrians (Nineveh) for repentance sake. God requested this of Jonah because he truly desires for all persons to arrive at repentance and that none eternally perish in death. However, Jonah could not accept God's gracious position.

3. Jonah Goes to Nineveh (Jonah 3:3-4)

For Jonah, judgment was an end in itself. Yet, for God, judgment means repentance forgiveness and reconciliation.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is there a specific person or group you could not imagine witnessing your faith toward?
2. What strategies might you implement in order to overcome your prejudice toward a person or group?
3. Examine yourself: what are the origins of your prejudices toward specific persons?

Profaning God's Holiness

Scripture Reading: Daniel 5:1-12.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What Behavioral Acts Does God Consider Most Profane? (Daniel 5:1-4)

A. Deliberate attempts to debase and downgrade the Lord's being.

B. Idol worship of anything created from God or man.

C. Forgetting God's place and influence in directing our lives.

D. Worshiping and trusting technological genius.

E. Trusting in your own knowledge and your own abilities.

2. The Emptiness and Powerlessness of False God's in Times of Crisis
(Daniel 5:5-9)

Often, those that build lives and homes around money, status, prestige, materialism, etc. find out how useless such pursuits are during times of crisis.

3. Is America the New Babylon?

Americans worship materialism, technological innovations, status, prestige, personal achievements, physical appearance, etc.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think people in American society take for granted God's holiness, power and mercy?
2. Like Daniel, how many of us can truly discriminate between the instructive word of God and the instructive word of the pagan world?
3. How was Daniel able to be so powerfully blessed with wisdom, intelligence, and understanding?

We Need Each Other to Complete Ministry Tasks

Scripture Readings: Jeremiah 36:1-10, 45:1-5.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Jeremiah's Call and Task (Jeremiah 36:1-3)

A. Jeremiah received a writing assignment from the Lord to document his past ministry purposes and prophecies concerning Israel, Judah and other nations. This writing assignment would also include all those prophetic judgments the Lord had pending against the above-cited nations because of their sins. Jeremiah's ministry years were from 626 to 587 BC.

B. The moral crisis of Judah was that it continued in its sinful idolatry despite the impending judgment that the prophets had warned about. Unfortunately, the people did not respond to Jeremiah's written assignment from God and Judah was overthrown by Babylon.

C. Jeremiah's rejection by the people and his frustration and confusion with the Lord caused him to lament. Jeremiah's lamentations are found in the following scriptures: Jeremiah 11:18; 12:6; 15:10-21; 17:14-18; 18:18-23, and 20:7-18.

2. Baruch The Scribe Assists With Jeremiah's Written Assignment (Jeremiah 36:4-8)

Sometimes, we need others to help us complete our ministry assignments. Baruch was someone that Jeremiah could trust and depend upon.

3. Together, Baruch and Jeremiah Fulfilled Gods Promises (Jeremiah 45:1-5)

Questions to Consider:

1. What characteristics do we need others to possess in order to help us complete our ministry tasks?
2. When and why do we have a tendency to begin to think about our own selfish needs during the course of our service with the Lord?

Working With
Different Points of View

Scripture Reading: Acts 15:30-41.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Unity and Ministry in The Body (Acts 15:30-35)

Jewish and Gentile believers unite under the common bond of faith in the salvation power of Christ. At council in Jerusalem, agreement is made concerning basic belief systems and requirements for both the Jewish and Gentile Christians. This information is later passed on to Christians at Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. (Acts 15:1-35).

2. Two Strong Belief Systems Clash (Acts 15:36-39)

Paul and Barnabas clash as a result of their belief systems. The Bible does not indicate that the men's disagreement was right or wrong.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is it possible that Paul and Barnabas were both right in reference to what created their disagreement?
2. What types of beliefs, values and/or thinking create argumentative opportunities?
3. What was Paul's major concern for?
4. What was Barnabas's major concern for?
5. Is God able to work out his will through disagreements and conflicts between Christian believers?

We Are Brothers

Scripture Readings: Genesis 13:5-18, Matthew 5:9.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What is a Patriarch?

Patriarch: One who has founded something. Spiritual fathers such as Abraham to Jacob that God established his original covenant with that comprised land, nationhood, and blessings for descendents. 1900 BC to 1500 BC.

2. Conflict Between Abraham and Lot's Herdsman (Genesis 13:5-7)

Conflict arose between Abraham and Lot's herdsman because both men's wealth and possessions could not be sustained within their limited physical surroundings.

3. Abraham Chooses Peace Over Conflict (Genesis 13:8-9)

Abraham chose to preserve brotherhood and sustain relationships over economic concern.

4. Choices Made (Genesis 13:10-13)

Lot chose the best arable land and ostensibly, his choice was motivated by selfishness, greed and unbelief. Hence, Lot ultimately suffered as a consequence of his selfish faithless heart condition.

5. What Consequences Did Lot Suffer as a Result of His Selfish Choice?

Alienation from family and exposure to wicked adjacent cultures.

Questions to Consider:

1. What underlying heart motives created conflict between Lot and Abraham?
2. Why did Abraham react in a flexible and generous manner in reference to his conflict with Lot?
3. Do you have any broken personal relationships in your past? If so, why and how can they be resolved?

[Lessons from Two](#)
[Different Personalities](#)

Scripture Readings: Luke 10:38-42, John 11:17-44.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Personalities are Not at Fault but Behaviors are at Fault (Luke 10:38-42)

The personality of Martha was not at fault in this story; rather her stress, anger and distraction are blame worthy. However, it is the words of God that will help us keep our balance in reference to stressful work versus attentive rest.

2. Lessons from Two Different Personalities (John 11:17-44)

What lesson do we learn from Martha? First, we understand that pouring out our heart-felt questions and emotions will never be rebuked by Jesus but

rather will guarantee us a response from him that provides us with instruction and growth opportunities.

In addition, this story teaches us that like Mary, it is good for us to be quiet and submissive to the wisdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. In truth, we need to learn to be quiet and listen to the Lord's instructions and guidance as it is freely offered.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is willing to respond to your condition and or concerns?
2. Like Mary, do you know people that don't say much but have profound social influence because of their humble posture in communicating with others?
3. What social or physical facts prevent you from living a life of humility?

Spiritual Fellowship Creates Powerful Bonds in Times of Need

Scripture Reading: Ruth 1:1-17.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Facing Personal Losses (Ruth 1:1-5)

In alien Moab, Naomi loses both her husband and sons to death. Later, she apparently has no social support from either God or her neighbor.

2. Making Decisions Under Emotional Strain (Ruth 1:6-14)

Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem as a consequence of faith and trust in God. Naomi did not base her decision upon the command vision or miracles of God.

What bound Naomi and Ruth together is the fact that both are defenseless widows that had experienced common sorrows.

3. A Loyal Friendship Based Upon Trust (Ruth 1:16-17)

Ruth was so trustful of Naomi because her character was modeled through behavioral actions and Naomi was also decisive to act.

Questions to Consider:

1. Have situations in your life ever gone from hopeful to hopelessness? If so, what experiences or emotions can you recall from such times and events?

2. How do you combat perceptions of hopelessness?

3. Do you have any friends that you spiritually bond with that you can trust for social and spiritual support?

Discerning and
Understanding Suffering

Scripture Readings: Job 4:2, 7-8; Job 6:24-25; Job 7:11-21; Job 8:2-3; Job 9:1-3.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Suffering that Doesn't Make Sense to Us Yet is Easily Explained by Others (Job 4:2, 7-8)

A. Job's friend Elipaz held the orthodox position that one's suffering is a result of personal sin. However, not all personal suffering is sin-related. In fact, many people experience sufferings as a consequence of the sins of others.

B. Often times as the suffering person, it is difficult for us to find answers to explain our suffering. In addition, others who judge us from the outside so as to determine the sources of our suffering, in many cases, do not know our truthful heart condition. Therefore, their judgments and explanations for our sufferings are incorrect.

2. Making Sense of Suffering (Job 6:24-25)

If we can find reasons for our suffering – whether for some sin or personal failure or disappointment – then at least we can make some sense out of such experiences.

3. It's Ok to Ask The Lord Deep Questions (Job 7:11-21; 8:2-3; 9:1-3)

Asking deep and difficult questions of the Lord in reference to our situations is not to turn away from him but rather to draw nearer to him. Job argued and lamented with the Lord because he had a deep personal relationship with him. In truth, the Lord is not just a system of beliefs and religious rites and customs; he is our friend.

Question to Consider:

What are some possible reasons for suffering not related to personal sin?

Loving Your Neighbor

Scripture Reading: Luke 10:25-37.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Love for God Cannot be Separated From Love for Your Neighbor (Luke 10:27)

Anyone who is in need is your neighbor.

2. Love for The Lord and Your Neighbor Expresses Eternal Life in Christ (Luke 10:28-34)

A. Express your faith and love for Christ.

B. Don't alienate your neighbor because of bigotry; physical appearance; hypocrisy; intolerance for ethnic diversity; racism, and/or busyness/jealousy.

3. Love for Your Neighbor is a Responsible Action of Your Own Will.
(Luke 10:36-37)

A. Christian love and responsibility asks: “what is best for my neighbor or how can I help?”

B. If we perceive a need and we are available to help, we should then help others.

Questions to Consider:

1. Who is your neighbor?

2. Who is worthy of your help?

3. What factors influence your ability to not love your neighbor?

Establishing a Covenant Relationship

Scripture Reading: Exodus 19:1-9.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. God Initiates a Covenant Relationship with His People

A. At Sinai, God initiates a covenant relationship with Israel. This covenant includes not only privileges, but responsibilities to the community as well.

B. Some of the privileges we have in our covenant relationship with God are as follows:

1. Establishment of self worth.
2. Elimination of loneliness.
3. Divine providence.
4. Accessibility to omniscience and omnipotence.
5. Installation of hope and faith.
6. Direction and purpose.

7. Holy redemption.

C. Some of our responsibilities in our covenant relationship with God are as follows:

1. Obey God.
2. Worship God.
3. Concern with the needs of our community.
4. Strive toward holiness.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the benefits of experiencing a barren desert time in our lives as Israel experienced?
2. What is the Lord's reasoning in setting aside a nation or group of people (church) for a covenant relationship?

[Are You an Unlikely Leader?](#)

Scripture Reading: Exodus 3:1-15.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Do You Still Dream Big Thoughts?

Sometimes, we have given up on dreams that we held precious in our youth. Thus, we find it hard to believe that our desires to fulfill God's plan for us will ever be realized. Instead, we feel like ordinary cogs on a wheel. Likewise, we wonder, are we really called to a specific purpose? Is God really alive? Does God really care about anyone? Does God think any person is special? Unfortunately after such incessant negative thinking, our tendency is to focus upon taking care of self and meeting the basic needs of our idiosyncratic life.

2. God Chose Moses and God Chooses You (Exodus 3:1-6)

God calls us to specific tasks designed for us in his service.

3. God's Timing for Utilizing Our Fullest Potential is Always Best (Exodus 3: 7-15)

God called Moses but Moses did not prepare for the encounter nor expect it.

Questions to Consider:

1. What would you do if God called you audibly by name? Do you think you would ever be the same person again?

2. Is there some purpose or task that God is calling you to fulfill? If so, do you believe this fact and are ready to assume it?

3. Do you feel like your best years are behind you and what you could have accomplished for the Lord has been lost?

4. Like Moses, are you willing to follow God to the place he has called and planned for you?

The Ten Commandments of Exodus

Scripture Reading: Exodus 20:1-17.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Law (Exodus 20:1-2)

All true law is an extension of God's will. Any law that properly orders relationships with God and with others finds its basis in God's holy will.

2. What do The Ten Commandments Teach Us? (Exodus 20:1-17)

The Ten Commandments teach us the following: worship no Gods in place of the Lord; no graven images should be worshipped in place of the Lord; we must keep the Sabbath holy; we should not take the Lord's name in vain; we should honor thy father and mother; we should not commit murder; we should not commit adultery; we should not steal; we should not bear false witness against our neighbor, and we should covet thy neighbors possessions.

3. Why are the Ten Commandments A Positive Series Of Laws?

A. The laws keep us in favorable standing with God because our obedience toward them demonstrates our reverence and love for God.

B. The laws convict us of our wrongdoing and lead us to Christ.

C. The laws preserve our lives.

D. The laws safeguard the community and those behaviors and experiences that benefit the community.

Question to Consider:

Why is it important that established laws should address the needs of the community before the individual?

Holiness Unto God

Scripture Readings: Leviticus 11:44-45; 18:1-5; 20:22-26, 22:31-33.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What is Holiness? (Leviticus 11:44-45)

Holiness is separation from sin and separation unto God. Holiness is both called for by God and made possible for us by God. Holiness is the very essence of God. To experience holiness we are becoming like God as spiritual and ethical human beings. Moreover, holiness advocates for mercy and justice and consequently, our state of holiness promotes mercy and justice.

2. How Should We Live? (Leviticus 18:1-5; 20:22-26)

We are not to live like others who do not know God or as we did before we accepted Christ. Alternatively, we are to become available because of what he has accomplished for us. We should obtain our pattern of living from Jesus Christ alone.

3. God Helps Us to Become Holy (Leviticus 22:31-33)

A. It is the Lord who helps us become holy.

Questions to Consider:

1. What does God actually do in order to help make us into holy people?
2. How do we separate ourselves unto God?
3. What opportunities do you have in your life now where you can promote mercy and justice toward others in your family, community or at work?

Stepping Stones of Faith

Scripture Readings: Joshua 3:5-17, 4:1-24.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Special Moments

God gives his people special touchstone moments that remind us of his love and concern for our lives. The God of your past is the God of your future. Therefore, look to the future and be encouraged by what God is going to do.

2. Expecting Miracles and God's Presence (Joshua 3:5-13)

Expect a miracle and realize that God works through many different people to realize his purposes for our salvation long before we become aware of our own need. God always provides what is needed precisely at the right time. Amen.

3. The Miracle of Providence (Joshua 3:14-17)

God provided a great miracle at a time when it perceptually appeared least possible (for instance, the Jordan River was flowing at flood stage). However, the Israelites had to step into their greatest fears and challenge (stepping into the Jordan) in order to realize the miracle.

4. The Stones of Worship and Remembrance (Joshua 4:1-24)

The stones from the Jordan were erected to remind people of God's omnipotent power and mercy and to motivate others to worship God.

Questions to Consider:

1. What moments or experiences do you recall that have reminded you of God's love and concern for you?
2. How do you erect a monument of worship to God?

3. How does your monument to God motivate others to reflect upon the goodness and mercy of God?

God is Always Faithfully at Work

Scripture Readings: Exodus 1:6-22, 2:1-10.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. God Always Remains Faithful and Answers Prayer (Exodus 1:6-14)

The Lord is always faithful in his covenant relationship with us despite the fact that we are unfaithful and others attempt to circumvent his holy/divine purposes for us.

2. A God Who Remembers His Covenant (Exodus 1:22; 2:1-6)

God remembered his covenant and worked out his plan for the Israelites despite oppressive circumstances.

3. God's Divine Purposes cannot be Thwarted (Exodus 2:10)

The Lord is in control when all appears to be out of control.

Questions to Consider:

1. Like the Israelites, have you experienced the Lord's work and faithfulness in your life over a long period of time? If so, how has the Lord demonstrated his faithfulness?
2. Why was the life and circumstances of Moses such a great miracle for Israel and such a paradoxical disaster for Egypt?
3. What is the great lesson of these historical events?

God is both Immanent and Transcendent

Scripture Reading: Exodus 33:12-23.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Moses Makes a Fervent Appeal to God to Know Him (Exodus 33:12-23)

Moses asks God to reveal himself more fully so that he can find favor and he can obey him. Also, Moses asks God for continued favor for Israel so that they can stay within the circle of God's blessing.

2. God Answers Moses and Promises That He Will Go With Him (Exodus 33:14-17)

God answers Moses desire for assurance and nearness.

3. The Immanence and Transcendence Of God (Exodus 33:18-23)

A. Immanence of God: God is present and evident in our lives and in the world.

B. Transcendence of God: God is above, beyond and different from us.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why does Moses desire for God to reveal himself more fully?
2. What frustrations do you believe Moses was experiencing at this point in his walk of faith?
3. What was happening with Moses that he had become uncertain whether God would continue to go with Israel on their journey to Canaan?
4. How is God different and beyond us?
5. Why cannot a person see God and live?

[The Struggle to Have Faith](#)

Scripture Readings: Numbers 14:2-11, 26:30, 34.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Trustworthiness of God (Numbers 14:2-11)

Knowing that God is always faithful and trustworthy; then unbelief and grumbling are inappropriate responses during difficult times.

2. The Failure of Faith (Numbers 14:2-4)

Israel lost faith in God's promise of ultimate deliverance because of their perceived strength of the enemy. In addition, Israel lost faith in the strength and power of God.

3. The Focus of Faith (Numbers 14:5-11)

Often times, fear and doubt will supplant faith when faith fails. Moreover, sometimes we lose our faith in God because the weight of our historical circumstances is closely related to what we are experiencing or perceive in the present tense. Lastly, people may get weary waiting upon God in faith because of social isolation, physical or emotional bankruptcy, overwork, a lack of prayer, or an unwillingness to face any more disappointments.

Questions to Consider:

1. Are you currently struggling to believe that God will work out a particular situation or need on your behalf? If so, how long have you been wrestling with this faith concern?

2. Currently, is there anything you're having a difficult time believing that God could change or impact on your behalf? If so, why?

The Lord Chooses and Grooms Leaders

Scripture Reading: Joshua 1:1-11.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Lord and Leadership

God provides his people with empowered leadership at crucial and difficult times. God selects, equips and guides the leaders he chooses. In actual leadership, it is the Lord who must reign. In history, many leaders have been self-appointed and that is why their leadership endeavors have ultimately failed.

2. Joshua's Qualities of Leadership

A. Faith.

B. Obedience.

C. Courage.

D. Loyalty.

E. Reverence.

F. Wise Decision-Making.

G. Spiritually-Minded.

H. Spiritually-Guided.

3. Leaders are Equipped with Assurance (Joshua 1:1-5)

The Lord's designs for a leader are often beyond that leader's abilities. The Lord gives his selected leaders: 1) A vision for the task to be completed, 2) A plan for how the task will be completed, and 3) The resources necessary to complete the vision and plan through the power and constant companionship of God.

4. A Leader with an Anchor (Joshua 1:6-9)

A leader becomes strong, courageous and reliable when he/she conquers and overcomes personal difficulties.

5. A Leader Acts (Joshua 1:9-11)

Leaders share visions; act without limited hesitation; delegate willingly and fulfill specific missions.

Question to Consider:

Why did the Lord admonish Joshua to be a strong and courageous leader three times?

Life is About Making the Right Choices

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 30:11-20.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Choices May Lead to Life or Death (Deuteronomy 30:11-20)

The choices we make may lead to life or death. God gives us the free will to choose, but ultimately, his will is that we choose blessings over curses. Some people make unwise choices in life because they experience anomie - a sense of meaninglessness that results from living in this fast-paced world; a frenetic pace of life that alienates people from experiencing intimate relationships or social opportunities with spiritual meaning that model the love of Christ toward them.

2. Clarifying the Right Choice (Deuteronomy 30:11-14)

Through Moses, God speaks clearly and indicates that his wisdom and guidance for making the right choice is not mysterious – it can be found and

understood.

3. The Consequences of Specific Choices (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)

There are two ultimate consequences to the choices we make in life: life or death. When we choose life, we choose God's will, laws and what is valuable, pleasant and good. Alternatively, when we choose death, we choose what is destructive, aimless, and meaningless.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are those blessings that derive from the Lord because of right choices?
2. What are some destructive consequences that you have sown because of wrong choices?

[Giving Thanks to God](#)

Scripture Readings: Deuteronomy 26:1-11.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. How Do We Give Thanks to God?

We praise; worship; adore; contemplate his wonder; tithe and give our thanks to God.

2. Giving Our First Fruits to God (Deuteronomy 26:1-4)

The giving of our first fruits to God is the result of our thankfulness.

3. Revealing God's Goodness (Deuteronomy 26:5-10)

We should witness to others about God's goodness to us. Moreover, we should explain how throughout our lives, God has intervened on our behalf for our good.

4. Celebrating Thankfulness (Deuteronomy 26:10-11)

We should celebrate our thankfulness to the Lord with others – especially those who are less fortunate than us.

Questions to Consider:

1. What stories of thanksgiving do you have that you can share with others that conveys God's message of hope?
2. What are some first fruits that you can give to God?
3. What social or psychological conditions do you experience that make you less than willing to thank God?

[The Holy Spirit](#)

Scripture Readings: Matthew 28:18-19; John 1:32-33; 14:15-18; 25-26; 20:21-22.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Who is The Holy Spirit? (Matthew 28:18-19, John 1:32-33, 20:21-22)

The Holy Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit is a part of the profound trinity of God. The Holy Spirit is God's presence with and within his people.

2. Functions of The Holy Spirit (John 14:15-18, 25-26)

A. Counselor: A trusted advisor and listener. The Holy Spirit of truth that the world cannot receive because of vanity and unbelief.

B. Comforter: One who gives strength and hope so we can complete our mission and purposes in life.

C. Advocate: Legal counselor and advisor. The Holy Spirit advises us in reference to circumstances that we may face in future.

D. Helper: An ever-present helper in all situations. The Holy Spirit is a deliverer in reference to whatever is required.

Question to Consider:

1. In what ways has the Holy Spirit helped you face everyday life problems or circumstances?

[The Coming of the Holy Spirit](#)

Scripture Readings: Acts 2:1-4; 37-39; 15:8-9, Romans 12:1-2.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What Occurred at Pentecost?

- A. The Holy Spirit empowered the tired and fearful disciples of Christ.
- B. The Holy Spirit's baptism brought forth purity – a cleansing of sin.
- C. The Holy Spirit energized the disciples to proclaim the salvation of Christ without fear.

2. Repentance and Baptism (Acts 15:8-9)

To receive the Holy Spirit we must willfully repent from our unbelief in Christ and be baptized in our belief that he indeed can save us from our sins.

3. The Community of the Holy Spirit (Acts 15:8-9)

Under God's grace, all persons are eligible to receive the salvation of Christ and receive the Holy Spirit by faith.

4. Sacrificing Our Bodies (Romans 12:1-2)

We should be inclined to sacrifice our bodies in willful service to God's Kingdom because of what he has accomplished for us in reference to our salvation and redemption through Christ.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are some sacrifices you make daily because of your faith in Christ?
2. What willful sins are you not willing to release in order to become pure?

[The Call Unto Holiness](#)

Scripture Readings: Romans 6:1-14; 19; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, 1 Peter 1:16.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What is Sanctification? (1 Peter 1:16)

The process of becoming holy is a daily experience.

2. Shall We Keep On Sinning? (Romans 6:1)

God's grace, mercy, power and leading enable us to continue to live holy lives on a daily basis. These four intercessory facts of God's presence in our lives equip us with the ability to overcome sin on a daily basis if we allow them to do so.

3. Freedom from the Compulsion to Sin (Romans 6:12-14,19)

- A. Through the Holy Spirit, our will can be moved to choose Christ.
- B. Through self-discipline – if we pray, praise and worship God - we can awaken the Holy Spirit within us and deaden our desire to sin.
- C. After justifying us, God begins to sanctify our desire to move toward holiness, and as a result, self-discipline begins to predominate our daily behavior and likewise, we will actively seek God's presence.

4. Freedom to Sin More (Romans 6:12-14, 19)

When we are alive to Christ, we are dead to sin. However, if we do not stir-up the Holy Spirit within us, we are powerfully tempted by our weak emotions and physical desires to sin.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why might you fear having a lifestyle void of sin?
2. Do you really believe that you will ever live a pure life void of impure thoughts and motives? If not, why not?

Tearing Down Walls

Scripture Readings: Joshua 6:1-16, 20, 1 Corinthians 15:58.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Walls of Inhibition (Joshua 6:1)

Some of the walls we face in life that inhibit our movement toward fulfilling God's vocational purpose and will for our lives are: 1) financial, 2) facing hostile people, and 3) social rejection. To overcome these various walls we need the strength of the Lord.

2. God Often Utilizes Illogical Plans for Overcoming Walls (Joshua 6:2-7)

Sometimes, the Lord's plans for us to overcome obstacles do not seem workable or logical from our perspective. Likewise, there are times when

the Lord will implement plans that eliminate the possibility of human contribution. We call such interventions miracles.

3. Miracles Need Our Obedience and the Lord's Power (Joshua 6:16-18)

The combination of our obedience and God's power can eradicate walls of inhibition. The Lord chooses to work some miracles with us as obedient partners.

Questions to Consider:

1. A holy life is not reserved for a continuous time of rest, reflection and relaxation but rather is utilized by the Lord for his purposes. What are the Lord's purposes?
2. Do some walls in your life seem so overwhelming that you have no idea how to attack and/or overcome them?
3. Identify your walls of inhibition.
4. What walls of inhibition does God desire to destroy in your life?

Speaking the Truth in Darkness

Scripture Readings: Ezekiel 1; 2:1-10, 3:3.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Oppressive Reality (Ezekiel 1:2)

As a result of their historic disobedience and unbelief since God delivered them out of Egypt, the Babylonians overran Judah in 596 BC.

2. Courage to Fight Against Evil (Ezekiel 2:1-10)

A. God called Ezekiel to speak truth to Judah about their oppressive circumstances and the origins of their sinful heart condition.

B. Some of the oppressive realities that make it difficult for Christians to effectively witness the truth of people's sinful heart conditions are: gross materialism, the frenetic pace of social and economic life, media overkill of information and technological genius.

3. Eating the Scroll (Ezekiel 3:1-3)

Jesus Christ is the word and the scroll. In order to be an effective encourager and communicator of God's truth, we must feed on Christ's word and spirit, not the idolatrous values of a mainstream culture.

Questions to Consider:

1. What was the Lord's intended purpose for allowing Judah to be conquered by the Babylonians?
2. What reality in your life might give you the assurance that what you say on behalf of truth and righteousness will not return void?

Maturity and Community-Based Behavior

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:1-11.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Maturity and Community Redemption

A. God desires that we become mature enough in our faith walk to be of redemptive assistance to those who are in need of guidance, support and resources.

B. If the church is divided amongst itself, it cannot effectively help others in the mission of redemption.

2. What Does a Church Full of Infants Model? (1 Corinthians 3:1-4)

A. Selfish and quarrelsome behavior.

B. Hypocrisy.

C. The worship of people or their positions held.

D. Unproductive behavior that discourages community-based behavior.

3. Church Growth is the Result of the Lord's Work and Power (1 Corinthians 3:5-11)

We should never become too prideful in reference to our positions held because church growth is the result of the Lord's Holy Spirit.

Questions to Consider:

1. What positions in society do you believe deserve the greatest level of prestige applied toward them?

2. What positions in society are overblown in reference to perceived importance and respect?

Evidence of Our Loving God

Scripture Reading: 1 John 2:3-11,15-17.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Demonstrating Love for God (1 John 2:3-8)

Love for God and knowing God requires our obedience to God.

2. Hatred Sows Darkness and its Evil Ramifications (1 John 2:9-11)

A. Hatred brings forth darkness.

B. Hatred causes stumbling.

C. Evil darkness blinds and inhibits one's ability to know right from wrong.

3. Do Not Love The World (1 John 2:15-17)

The term world means the following:

- A. Those people with an intense and uncontrolled desire to serve self and physical desires.
- B. The omission of God's Holy Spirit and will within a culture or society.
- C. The spirit of vanity that wars against the holy will of God.

4. What do People in the World Love More Than God's Holy Will?

- A. Money.
- B. Materials.
- C. Fame.
- D. Power.
- E. Pleasure.

Question to Consider:

What do you love more than God and why?

Who is The Child of God?

Scripture Reading: 1 John 2:28, 3:1-10.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Who is The Child of God?

The child of God is the person that is changed through the grace and Holy Spirit of Christ, yet is still being changed throughout the course of his/her lifetime.

2. Sin is Equated with Lawlessness (1 John 3:4-10)

Sin is the commitment to fulfill one's own pleasure pursuits even if such choices adversely affect others. Individual transgressions are visible signs of a rebellious spirit.

3. Christians are Purified Through Submission to Christ (1 John 3:1-3)

Christian's purify themselves by submitting to the Lord's power to overcome sin.

4. How do We Know We Our Christians? (1 John 3:9-10)

- A. We don't practice continual sin.
- B. God's Holy Spirit remains in us.
- C. We love our brothers.

Questions to Consider:

1. What areas of your life have been changed by the power of the Holy Spirit of Christ?
2. Five years from now, what areas of your life will be changed more into the likeness of Christ's Holy Spirit?

3. What areas of your life do you resist allowing the Holy Spirit to change in your life?

What Does It Mean to Love One Another?

Scripture Reading: 1 John 3:11-24.

1. What does it Mean to Love One Another? (1 John 3:11-24)

A. Patience regarding the failure of others.

B. Respect for others – the golden rule.

C. Self-sacrifice.

D. Deference to the needs of others.

E. Flexibility with our possessions, money, time and lives.

2. What are Some Factors That Inhibit Us from Loving People as The Lord Commands?

A. Irrational fear.

B. Jealousy.

C. Lust.

D. Guilt.

E. Sins that have received no forgiveness.

Questions to Consider:

1. What irrational fears, jealousies, lusts, or guilt experiences are limiting your ability to purely love people?
2. What personal sins are you harboring that remain without confession?

Some Explanations for Church Body Division

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:1-23.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Why does Spiritual Divisiveness in a Church Body Fuel Moral Decline?

With social division in a church, there is no consistent authority that brings forth consequences for immoral behavior.

2. What Motivates Spiritual Division in a Church Body?

A. Prideful knowledge that is void of the Holy Spirit's guidance and instruction.

B. Power struggles.

C. Misuse or errant interpretation of spiritual gifts.

D. Erroneous interpretation of doctrine.

3. What Hope does Paul Give a Congregation Troubled by Divisions/Problems?

A. God's grace has been given to us.

B. We have been given various spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit to be utilized in an orderly and wise fashion.

C. The Lord is faithful in helping us complete our spiritual journey.

4. How Can We Allay Spiritual Divisions in the Church?

Preach Christ and embrace his spirit of love.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways do you help build the divisions that exist in your church?

2. What is more important to you, your personal affairs or the health of your church?

Doing What's Right for Your Brother

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. It's Important to do What is Right Rather Than Trying to Justify Behavior You Know is Wrong
2. The Rights of the Community are More Important Than The Rights of the Individual
3. We Should Adjust Our Lifestyles/Behaviors to Meet the Spiritual Knowledge of those Weaker Fellow Christians in Our Presence
4. It is More Important to Demonstrate Love and Ask Yourself, "What Would The Lord Do" in a Particular Situation in Dealing With a Weaker Brother, Than Trying to Assert Power and Appear More Knowledgeable

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways have you historically (or are currently) meeting the needs of a fellow Christian that possesses less spiritual knowledge than yourself?
2. In what ways might you be spiritually ignorant and/or arrogant?
3. How hard is it for you to say you're sorry or cite that you were in error or at fault?

Betraying the Faith

Scripture Reading: Mark 14:12-31.

Key Points of Instruction:

Until you walk into the fullness of God's holy will for your life, what do you really have but a simple repetitive life of futility? TS 99

1. What Behaviors did the Apostles Exemplify that Indicated They Would Eventually Abandon Jesus in His Time of Need?

A. Love of self.

B. Ignorance.

2. What are Some Reasons Why You Don't Support Jesus' Ministry Completely?

A. Irrational fears.

- B. Fear of failure.
- C. Fear of pain.
- D. Ignorance.
- E. Love for the world.
- F. Hard-times.
- G. Selfishness.
- H. Anger.
- I. Weariness.

Questions to Consider:

1. For what reasons did Judas abandon faith in Jesus?
2. Why would Jesus make a binding covenant with a bunch of people that would abandon him?
3. Who have you abandon in your life and how did you rationalize the action?

What do Good Friends do for You?

Scripture Readings: Proverbs 12:25; Proverbs 17:9, Proverbs 17:17.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What do Good Friends do for You? (Proverbs 12:25; 17:9,17:17)
 - A. They will encourage you.
 - B. They will cheer you.
 - C. They don't make fun of you.
 - D. They don't gossip about you.
 - E. They will prove trustworthy.
 - F. They will provide security.
 - G. They will share resources.
 - H. They will not flatter you with lies.
 - I. They will share sober judgment with you about what is factual.
 - J. They offer forgiveness.

Questions to Consider:

1. Are you a good friend? If so, what behavioral evidence confirms that fact?
2. What have you behaviorally done to lose friends?

Spiritual Gifts and the Body of Christ

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Who Gives Spiritual Gifts?

God gives spiritual gifts to individuals for the edification of the church body – not for vain personal gain.

2. Selfish Attitudes Create Division in the Church Body as a Result of:

A. Self-centeredness.

B. Vanity.

C. Ignorance.

3. Why has God Created a Diversity of Spiritual Gifts in the Church Body?

A. Diversity expresses the brilliance and creativity of God.

B. Diversity provides for cooperating opportunities with those whom possess spiritual gifts that can help all of us.

C. Diversity promotes community-based behavior.

4. What References in the New Testament Scriptures Teach Us About Spiritual Gifts?

A. Romans 12:6-8.

B. 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.

C. 1 Corinthians 12:28.

5. What are Those Spiritual Gifts the Holy Spirit may Choose to Endow Us With?

Prophecy, teaching; pastoral; evangelism; encouragement; apostleship; administration; serving; giving; compassion; faith; healing power; miracles; discerning spirits; speaking in a new tongue; interpreting tongues; wisdom and knowledge.

Question to Consider:

What spiritual gifts have you received from the Holy Spirit?

[A Proper Perspective on Love](#)

Scripture Readings: 1 Corinthians 12:31, 13:13.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Relational Love and its Factual Consequences

In our relationships with others, we should exhibit love and respect. Such actions provide a healing remedy to the burdened soul. Moreover, love inspired through the Holy Spirit has the power to unite a divided church body.

2. What is The Most Important Fact? (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

It doesn't matter what spiritual, physical or natural gifts you possess, one's heart motive is the most important fact of maintaining healthy social relationships.

3. Holy Spirit Inspired Love Creates a Favorable Social Environment that Promotes and Shapes the Following Facts and Behaviors in Others:

- A. Spiritual growth.
- B. Personal instruction.
- C. Encouragement.
- D. Creativity.
- E. Freedom of Expression.

4. What are Some Ways We Can Demonstrate Love Within the Church Body?

- A. Be available for others.
- B. Pray with and for others.
- C. Encourage others.
- D. Fellowship with others.
- E. Call upon others.

Question to Consider:

Is there someone you should be making the center of your concern?

Suffering

Scripture Readings: 1 Corinthians 1:3-11, 4:7-12.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Some Types of Suffering:

A. Physical: Pain, disease, and weariness.

B. Emotional/Perceptive: Fear, despair, guilt, confusion, frustration, anger, anomie and waiting.

C. Financial: Insolvency, insurmountable debt and unemployment.

D. Social: Alienation, rejection, and unjust persecution.

E. Environmental: Community division, pollution, noise, and geographical isolation.

2. God's Purpose in Our Suffering:

A. To help us realize and develop strategies for overcoming suffering.

- B. To help us experience the compassionate strength of God.
- C. To help us realize that God is in control of our circumstances regardless how bad or difficult a situation may appear to be.
- D. To help us minister to others who are experiencing similar sufferings.
- E. To allow us to experience the power of God to overcome sufferings.
- F. To realize purity and cleansing.

3. What is Our Hope in Our Suffering?

- A. God will deliver us out of our suffering into a place of strength usefulness.
- B. God will never leave us or forsake us.

Question to Consider:

Are you suffering today? If so, how might God be able to help you and do you really believe he can? If not, why not?

Living Godly Lives

Scripture Readings: Titus 2:11-14, 3:3-8.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Salvation Changes Us (Titus 3:3-8)

A. Faith: We are saved because of the Lord's mercy – not because of our works.

B. Humility: We are saved by the Lord's mercy and not by our works; therefore, we should be humble and respectful towards the Lord and be patient and loving towards lost sinners.

C. Practical: Salvation teaches us how to live moral upright lives upon earth today.

D. Works: The Holy Spirit cleanses our hearts and motivates us to perform good works.

2. Grace Disciplines Us (Titus 2:11-14)

A. Works: Grace disciplines us to have self-control.

B. Future Hope: The salvation work of the Lord Jesus Christ gives us hope for a glorious future.

Questions to Consider:

1. What were you like before you accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your savior and what did you value?

2. When you fall away from the grace of the Lord due to disobedience in your life – how do you feel about yourself, other people or God?

3. Now that you're a member of the Kingdom of God, are you eager to do good?

4. What can help us from falling into disobedience toward God?

5. Who can help us from falling into sin?

Pastors and Others can Motivate Us

Scripture Readings: Titus 2:15, 3:2-8.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Pastors and Others can Motivate Us (Titus 2:15, 3:2-8)

Pastors, the church body, family and friends can motivate us to live Godly lives.

Questions to Consider:

1. What behaviors do other Christian's model that motivates you to live a holy life?
2. What factual experiences does the Lord provide on your behalf that motivates you to live a holy life?
3. What cultural or relational factors discourage you from living a holy life?

4. Where would you rank holy living in reference to your everyday lifestyle behavior and goals?

5. What are the benefits associated with holy living?

Interpersonal Conflict and Forgiveness

Scripture Readings: 2 Corinthians 2:5-12.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Why Should Confrontation (Which Sometimes Brings Conflict) be Manifested in Relationships?

A. It illuminates those conflicting issues that may be hindering the health of any relationship.

B. It provides for an opportunity for truth to be discussed.

C. It provides for the eradication of problems.

D. It creates an opportunity to allow justice, goodness and peace to prevail.

E. Healthy interpersonal relationships should make one feel encouraged, supported and loved.

2. Sin Not Confronted by Social Institutions, the Church or Individuals – Brings Grief and Strife to the Following:

- A. Almighty God.
- B. The Community.
- C. Society/Culture.
- D. The Offending Individual(s).

3. Why do We Need to Forgive?

- A. It is the behavior modeled by Jesus Christ.
- B. Forgiveness prevents resentment and divisions.
- C. Forgiveness maintains community.

Questions to Consider:

1. Have you forgiven all those people that need your forgiveness?
2. If you choose not to forgive, what consequences are you living with for doing so?

[The Spiritual Disciplines](#)

Scripture Reading: 1 Timothy 3:1-16.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Spiritual Disciplines (1 Timothy 3:1-16)

The spiritual disciplines help us to become like Jesus Christ. They are the means that we apply to help God's grace transform us. The spiritual disciplines are as follows:

- A. Prayer and meditation.
- B. Fasting and study.
- C. Submission to the Holy Spirit.
- D. Service to the community.
- E. Simplicity and solitude.

2. Through the use of Spiritual Disciplines, We Are Able to Master Christ-Like Character in the Following Areas:

A. Speech.

B. Social Relationships.

C. Faith.

D. Purity.

Questions to Consider:

1. What areas do you need to improve upon in your life?

2. What are your New Year resolutions?

3. Is there a behavior or attitude that you possess that you really don't believe you can change? If so, why?

Prayer and Meditation

Scripture Readings: Philippians 4:4-9.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What is Prayer?

Speaking and listening to God.

2. What is Meditation/Contemplation?

Listening to God's instruction.

3. What are Some Objectives of Prayer?

- A. Make personal requests.
- B. Confess sins.
- C. Worship God.
- D. Give thanks to God.
- E. Obtain access to power for spiritual, physical and psychological renewal.
- F. To change circumstances.
- G. Conviction of impure heart motives.

4. For What Purposes do We Meditate?

- A. To develop wisdom through understanding and applying God's knowledge and guidance.
- B. To become more reverent and fearful of God.
- C. To more completely worship God.
- D. To become more knowledgeable about God's love for us.

Question to Consider:

1. How might prayer and meditation change some circumstances in your life that need assistance?

Fasting and Study.

Scripture Readings: Isaiah 58:1-11.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What are the Purposes of Fasting?

- A. Realization that God is the sustenance of life.
- B. Access to spiritual nourishment, guidance and renewal.
- C. Discipline bodily appetites.
- D. Communication with God during times of trial and temptations.

2. During Times of Fasting, What are Some Behaviors We Might Perform?

- A. Confessing our sins.
- B. Praying for the community of believers and those in the world who are suffering from various oppressions and injustices.

C. Wait upon God for a Holy Spirit anointing in reference to: guidance, humility, mercy, healing and purifying grace.

3. What are the Purposes of Study?

A. Guidance for daily living.

B. Enlightenment in reference to the truthful facts of our humiliated and powerless conditions due to our ignorance.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is your degree of commitment to study God's word?

2. What changes might you make in your lifestyle to create an opportunity to fast and/or study God's word more consistently?

3. How committed are you to fasting?

4. Do you believe fasting really can change your spiritual condition and promote healing?

Simplicity and Solitude

Scripture Readings: Psalms 55:1-11; Philippians 4:1, 4:10-13.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What is Simplicity?

A. Kingdom life does not consist of frantic schedules and hectic lifestyles. In truth, we must have time to hear from God.

B. A simple lifestyle can help us re-orient our lives away from gross materialism and toward daily contemplation of Christ.

C. You cannot call yourself a Christian if you have not experienced the sufferings of doing Christ's holy will. TS 09

2. Embracing a Simple Lifestyle

Embracing a simple lifestyle that is – denying the culture of self-indulgence, aggrandizement and the relentless pursuit of every passion – allows God’s transforming grace to teach us the following:

A. To wait upon God and trust in him to supply our needs.

B. To find peace in the confidence that God will sustain us in difficult times.

3. What is Solitude?

A. Something good is happening to us inwardly when nothing’s going on outwardly.

B. A place where the soul is purified and transformed as a result of our continued willful separation from the world.

4. What are the Purposes of Solitude?

A. Contemplate Christ.

B. Receive Instructions from Christ.

C. Worship and Praise God.

Question to Consider:

How much time do you spend with Christ in solitude?

Submission and Service to Christ and Others

Scripture Readings: Psalm 100:1-5, 1 Peter 2:9-25.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Submission to Christ and Serving Others

A. Submitting to and serving others is antithetical to American mainstream cultural values that esteem personal freedom - the, I'll do it my way attitude or mentality.

B. Submission and service toward others for Christ's sake is our rightful response to him.

2. Service and Worship (Psalms 100:1-5)

We worship God because he is deserving of our praise.

3. Submission and Worship (1 Peter 2:9-25)

We submit to others who are living right as a way of honoring God.

Questions to Consider:

1. How many people do you know who lovingly submit to your needs or wishes?
2. Submission is required of all of us. Are you willing to submit to others when it is required?
3. Why do certain people who hold positions of power find it difficult to submit to others in authority.

The Disappointment of God

Scripture Readings: Hosea 1:1-9, 6:1-6.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Our Willful Sin Separates Us From God

For Christians, their faith in God is constantly under siege and tempted to break communion with God. The four greatest tools utilized by Satan to separate us from the love of God are: technology, aggrandizement, money and the power of images.

2. What Causes Us to Sin Or Separate From God?

A. Disappointment in God.

B. Lack of trust in God to deliver or help us.

C. Impatience.

D. Anger.

E. Lust.

F. Pride.

G. Selfishness.

H. Greed.

3. What Kind Of Disappointment and Reaction Does God Experience When We Willfully Separate From Him?

A. Grief.

B. Implementation of judgment.

C. Hope for our repentance and reconciliation.

4. The Three Children of Hosea And Their Names Symbolized God's Disappointment and Judgment of Israel's Sin

Jezreel – God will sow judgment upon Northern Israel.

Lo- Ruhamah – The Lord will no longer show love to the House of Israel.

Lo-Himmi – For you are not my people.

Question to Consider:

What types of behaviors do you habitually behave that might disappoint God?

The Compassion of Christ

Scripture Reading: Hosea 2:14-23.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. God's Compassionate Workings

Despite our unfaithfulness, God's compassion performs the following on behalf of saved or unsaved humankind:

- A. Continues to pursue us despite our idolatrous lifestyles.
- B. Seeks out the lost.
- C. Develops an intimate covenant relationship with us.

2. In Restoring Israel or the Back-Slidden Believer From Idolatry, What Steps Might God Take for Such a Restoration to Occur? (Hosea 2:14-17)

- A. Lead one into the desert to experience learning, discipline, trust and demonstrated faithfulness on the part of God.
- B. Develop an intimate covenant relationship with a person during this desert season so as to demonstrate his faithfulness as a provider, protector and lover.
- C. To speak compassionately to one's true heart condition.

3. What is the Redemptive Plan or Situation that God has for Israel in the Future Referred to as: In That Day?

- A. Establish a peace covenant with creatures of the field and air.
- B. Eradicate war.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you feel that you're beyond the reaching refuge of Christ's compassion? If so, why? If not, why not?
2. What area of your life needs redemption?

[The Judgment of God](#)

Scripture Readings: Hosea 2:2-13, 3:1-5.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Non-Repentance and Consequences

Non-repentance or the forsaking of God's holy will brings forth consequences. When we forget God, we destroy ourselves.

2. What is the Primary Purpose of God's Judgment?

To bring people back to God.

3. How Does God Implement His Judgment Upon Those Who are Unfaithful – Including Believers and Unbelievers?

- A. He leaves us to suffer the consequences of our own senselessness.
- B. He destroys or circumvents our natural resources.
- C. He destroys or afflicts our material prosperity.
- D. He destroys or afflicts us physically.
- E. He removes blessing from our lives.

Questions to Consider:

1. If your salvation was to be based upon your good works, then why should God allow you to enter his heavenly rest?
2. If your salvation was based upon your evil behaviors, then why would God be justified in not allowing you to enjoy his eternal presence?

Examining Religious Traditions

Scripture Reading: Mark 7:1-23.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What are Some Traditions Most Readily Exercised in the Christian Faith?

A. Tithing.

B. Helping the needy.

C. Ceremonial washing.

D. Baptism.

E. Eucharist partaking.

F. Monastic lifestyles (Celibacy).

2. What Should Religious Traditions Serve to Perform?

A. Compliment our desire to move toward the fulfillment of a holy lifestyle.

B. Reflect one's heartfelt love for serving God and humankind.

3. What is a Major Limitation of Religious Traditions?

A. Alone, religious traditions do not have the power to tame the unsanctified heart – only the power and presence of the Holy Spirit can perform such a transforming function.

B. Religious traditions cannot purge the heart of idolatry, sexual immorality, envy, slander, covetousness, vanity, folly, etc.

4. What are Some Communal Negatives that may Result From an Inordinate Observance of Religious Traditions?

A. Legalism: Religious actions implemented without a committed heart for God.

B. The discrimination and exclusion of others.

Questions to Consider:

1. What traditions do you observe that demonstrate reverence for God?

2. What religious traditions do you think are empty exercises and nothing more?

The Trustworthiness of God

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Eight Ways God Shows Us His Trustworthiness:

- A. He makes the sun shine.
- B. He waters the plants and trees.
- C. He meets our daily needs for food, water, shelter and work.
- D. He hears and answers our prayers.
- E. He heals us of our wounds or hurts.
- F. He performs miracles for us.
- G. He resurrects us when we die so we will live forever.

Questions to Consider:

1. How cognizant are you on a daily basis regarding the ways God demonstrates his trustworthiness towards the human race?

2. Does your lifestyle limit the time you have to recognize the love and mercy of God as manifested through his creation?

Empathy and Caring for People in Need

Scripture Readings: Amos 5:24, 2 Samuel 9:1-13.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What are Some Needs People May Have that Deserve Our Service?

A. Relational Needs.

B. Psychological Needs.

C. Spiritual Needs.

D. Employment Needs.

E. Financial Needs.

F. Shelter Needs.

G. Medical Needs.

H. Vocational Direction.

2. The Great Hope for People Who are in Need is That God Utilizes His Servants to Implement the Following Goals Upon Their Behalf:

A. Promotion and realization of justice.

B. Promotion and realization of righteousness.

C. Promotion and realization of mercy.

3. The Primary Ethic That Should Govern Our Behavior When Dealing With People Who Have Serious Needs/Concerns is:

Love others as you love yourself.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways are you currently involved in the helping process regarding someone that is need?

2. Who do you consider to be the most helpless and how might you help?

3. What is your community's greatest social problem and how might you help?

4. What is the world's greatest problem and how might you help?

Stewardship

Scripture Readings: 2 Timothy 1:1-14, Ephesians 3:1-3.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What is Stewardship?

Stewardship is faithfully being responsible to assume management of God's word and kingdom as entrusted to us.

2. What do We Have Stewardship Responsibilities Related to?

- A. Teaching others about the administration of God's grace for all humankind.
- B. Maintaining fellowship with believers in Christ.
- C. Managing human resources with merit and justice.

D. Promoting and maintaining law and justice in society.

E. Managing property assets, in-kind goods and money.

3. What was the Great Mystery Paul Wrote/Preached to Timothy About That Has Finally Been Revealed?

The eternal salvation plan of God includes those people (Gentiles) outside of the Jewish tribes.

Questions to Consider:

1. What stewardship responsibilities do you feel most involved with in your lifestyle?

2. Are there any stewardship responsibilities that you need to assume more faithfully?

Stewardship: Managing Human Resources

Scripture Readings: Exodus 18:13-27, Ecclesiastes 4:9.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What is Effective Stewardship?

Effective stewardship requires knowledge of discernment and discretion: particularly in managing those human resources around us.

2. Effective Leadership in Managing Resources Requires:

- A. Recognition and appropriate placement of other people's talents and abilities.
- B. Delegation of authority.
- C. Involving people in leadership roles.

3. How do Some People Benefit from Having an Opportunity to Participate in Leadership Roles?

- A. The realization of a healthy self-esteem.
- B. Improved social relations with others.
- C. Improved economic circumstances.
- D. Increases the joy of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

4. What are Desirable Qualities for People in Leadership?

- A. Initiator.
- B. Courageous.
- C. Trustworthy.
- D. God-fearing.
- E. Organized.
- F. Communication skills.

5. What Dangers and Realities did Moses Face in Attempting to Assume All of the Leadership Responsibilities Over The People?

- A. Psychological and spiritual burnout.
- B. Geographic Limitations: he couldn't be in more than one place at a time.
- C. Circumventing the talents of others who had the potential for leadership.

The Forgiveness of God

Scripture Readings: Hosea 11:1-4; 8-11, 14:1-9.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. A Great Hope: God is Our Father

A. God said, “Israel is my firstborn son.” (Exodus 4:22).

B. God said, “When Israel was a child, I loved him. Out of Egypt I called my son.” (Hosea 11:1).

2. What Disobedient Actions Did Israel Habitually Perform That Broke Their Covenant Relationship With God?

A. Worshiping the Baals of Canaan.

B. Forming and trusting in military alliances with other Godless nations (Egypt and Assyria).

3. What Requirements Does God Have For Israel Forgiveness And Restoration?

Israel should confess and repent of their sins.

4. What is God's Forgiving Response to Israel's Sins?

- A. God will have compassion on Israel. (Hosea 11:8).
- B. God will heal Israel's waywardness. (Hosea 14:4).
- C. God will not utterly destroy Israel because he is not like man. (Hosea 11:9).
- D. As a roaring lion, God promises hope of stability and blessing.

5. What Forms of Idolatry are Pervasive and Continue to Exist in an Unrepentant Manner In American Culture?

- A. Aggrandizement.
- B. Sexual Sins.
- C. Career Worship.
- D. Egocentrism.

Question to Consider:

Has God forgiven you for your sins?

[The Ten Commandments](#)

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 5:1-22.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What does Deuteronomy Mean?

Deuteronomy means second law or repetition of the law.

2. Great Harm can Result When The Ten Commandments are Ignored and Disobeyed. The Following Human Conditions are Adversely Effected:

- A. The spiritual condition of individuals, society or culture.
- B. The emotional and psychological condition of individuals.
- C. The social condition of individuals, society or culture.

3. What and How do The Ten Commandments Teach Us About Sustaining Life?

- A. Teach us to honor and love God above all else.
- B. Maintain law and order in personal life and society.
- C. Promotes justice and truth.
- D. Protects the sanctity of life.
- E. Helps us obey God because there are serious consequences when we disobey God.
- F. Teach us to love and respect people.
- G. Teach us to honor our parents.
- H. Promote Rest.
- I. Teach us to honor and respect covenant relations.
- J. Teach us to be gracious for what we have been given.

Questions to Consider:

1. What commandment is your greatest challenge in reference to your continued obedience?

2. What are some origins for explaining why you cannot remain obedient to a particular commandment?

Responsible Use of Our Resources/Talents

Scripture Readings: Matthew 25:14-30, 1 Corinthians 4:1-2.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Giving an Account

Everyone must give an account of the material resources and talents that God has given them. God will reward our responsible use of resources and talents; alternatively, irresponsible use will result in judgment and/or correction from God.

2. Types of Material Resources

A. Assets: Property, homes, automobiles, clothes, furniture, etc.

B. Money.

C. Time.

D. Information and Knowledge.

3. How Does God Reward the Faithful Use of Our Resources and Talents?

A. He gives the faithful more resources to utilize to promote good.

B. He sends people to affirm our wise use of such resources and talents.

4. How Does God Judge One's Irresponsible Use of Resources and Talents?

He takes them away.

5. What Criteria Does God Apply When Judging Us in Reference to Our Faithful Stewardship of Our Talents?

A. Have we utilized and shared our talents with others?

B. Have we improved upon our talents?

C. Have we utilized our talents to faithfully build the Kingdom of God?

Question to Consider:

1. What processes are associated with developing the mastery of a talent you hold?

The Encompassing Extent of the Good News

Scripture Readings: Luke 4:14-30, Isaiah 61:1-2.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. New Wine

At times, we need to break from our familiar lifestyle of worship and church life and be open to hearing some new instructions from God in reference to his purposes for us.

2. The Good News of The Gospel of Salvation is That it Encompasses All Humankind and the Following Primary Areas of

Being Human Associated With the Human Struggle

A. Spiritual Being.

B. Physical Being.

C. Social Being.

D. Psychological Being.

E. Vocational Being.

3. The Following Scriptures Reflect God's All-Encompassing Provision and Care For Us in Various Life Circumstances. Certainly, These Scriptures Reflect His Awareness of The Human Condition:

A. Good Times: Psalm 32:11: Praise Him.

B. Uncertainty: Psalm 97:1: The Lord Reigns.

C. Obstacles: Jeremiah 1:19: I am With Thee.

D. Temptation: 1 Corinthians 10:13: Not Beyond What You Can Endure.

4. Sometimes, We are Called of God to Perform a Work and Those Close to Us (Family, Friends or Hometown) do Not Accept Us or the Work We Have Been Called to Perform as Directed From God

5. The Good News as Indicated in Isaiah 61:2 is Not Only For Israel But For All Humankind

Examples of those Gentiles most despised by the Jews are exemplified in 1 Kings 17:13-22 (Widow at Zarephath) and 2 Kings 5:1-14 (Naaman of Syria).

Question to Consider

1. Is there something new that God is calling you to do?

Sexual Ethics

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 6:12-7:9.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Why is Sexual Sin a Desecration Of What Is Holy?

A. The Human body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

B. The Human body is a member of Christ himself.

2. Why are Sexual Sins Such As: Extramarital Affairs, Promiscuous Behavior and Pornography Use Immoral?

A. Breaks trust in relationships: God's laws are not honored and the marriage partner is not honored.

B. Desecrates the human body.

3. Why are Unmarried Sexual Unions Problematic?

A. All sexual experiences forge an emotional and spiritual union that require or expect a person to be committed.

B. Sexual unions are meant for the purpose of procreation and the demonstration of commitment.

4. What are the Sexual Benefits of A Marriage Relationship?

A. Bonding of one flesh.

B. Physical intimacy desires fulfilled.

C. Release of sexual and emotional stress and guilt.

Questions to Consider:

1. If you are experiencing sexual sin, what is motivating your choice?

2. What are the benefits of the single celibate lifestyle?

3. In what ways do non-marriage sexual relations create social upset in the lives of the partakers?

Reviewing Generosity.

Scripture Readings: 1 Samuel 30:3-26, 1 Timothy 6:18-19.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Early Church and Generosity

The early church was especially earmarked by examples of gracious generosity. In fact, the early church was generous towards itself in reference to: learning, worship and prayer, and meeting the physical and material needs of the fellowship of believers.

2. In What Areas Can We Display Generosity Towards Others?

A. Time.

B. Money.

C. Perishable Items.

D. Material Assets.

E. Knowledge.

F. Talents.

G. Prayer.

3. What Hinders Generosity in People's Lives?

A. Irrational Fear.

B. Anger.

C. Jealousy.

D. Unbelief.

4. In-coincidental Generous Consequences

Sometimes, God will use our seemingly in-coincidental generosity to actually be a part of a greater plan in giving us the victory he has promised in reference to a particular matter in our lives (1 Samuel 30:11-15).

5. What Was the Reasoning behind David's New Policy Regarding the Spoils Of War?

A. What has been won through victory is because of God – not our own strength. Therefore, we should share generously with others.

B. Sharing generously with others reinforces a spirit of community.

C. Give back to those who have helped you in your past because their faithfulness toward you in your dark hours has made your sustenance possible.

D. Who ever sows generously reaps generously.

Evangelism: A Commitment to Spreading the Good News

Scripture Reading: Romans 15:14-33.

Key Point of Instruction:

1. Equipping the Evangelist

God equips people for the works of evangelism that he desires for them to perform. In many instances, God will take years to fully prepare someone for effective evangelistic/missionary service.

2. What are the Primary Objectives of Evangelism?

- A. People hear the good news of Christ's salvation work and power.
- B. People positively respond to Christ.
- C. People who receive Christ become stalwart foundations for the faith.

3. What are the Behavioral Components of Effective Evangelism?

- A. A humble/pure vessel to deliver the truths of the gospel.
- B. A consistency related to what one says and behaves.
- C. A powerful passion for Christ's call to service.
- D. A thorough understanding of God's word.
- E. Competent and accurate teaching of God's truth.
- F. A willingness to preach the gospel where it is neither known nor accepted.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is there a particular place or person you know that needs to hear the Gospel of Christ? If so, where is that place or who is that person?
2. Why are you sometimes hesitant to present the Gospel to an unbelieving world?
3. In life, do you deny Christ by your lifestyle or affirm him?

Hard Sayings of the Bible
(Blaspheming the Holy Spirit)

Scripture Readings: Luke 12:9-10, Hebrews 6:4-8.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What is Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit?

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is when one persistently and pervasively rejects the holy will of God for his/her own life and the Lord's purposes for humankind.

2. What is A Hard Saying or Teaching?

A. Something difficult to grasp or understand because of one's limited knowledge or life experiences.

B. Something hard for one to accept because the saying or teaching's substance is painfully convicting.

3. What are Some Factors that Make it Difficult for People to Repent of Their Sins and Accept the Hard Teachings of the Holy Spirit's Convictions?

- A. Fear of unknown consequences.
- B. Fear of ridicule.
- C. Fear of losing self-value.
- D. Fear of losing a lifestyle of ease.

4. The Teaching of Unsound Doctrine Leads to a Hardening of the Heart in Reference to Accepting the Conviction of Christ's Hard Teachings. What are Some Erroneous Doctrinal Teachings Regarding Jesus Christ Today?

- A. Jesus Christ should only make us feel good about ourselves and seldom ever convicts us of wrongdoing.
- B. God is Santa Claus and will give us the desires of our carnal hearts.

5. What are the Great Blessings of Jesus Christ in Reference to the Truthful Facts of Our Condition?

Christ challenges our misconceptions, ignorant notions about life and those misguided priorities that are leading us toward self-destruction.

Question to Consider:

Why do you deserve to live?

Hard Sayings of the Bible
(Hating One's Own Family)

Scripture Readings: Luke 9:23-27; 14:25-35, and Deute-ronomy 6:4-8.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Devotion to God More than Family

Historical Jewish law taught that obeying one's parents was highly regarded and expected; only God deserved higher respect and devotion. Therefore, for Christ to call upon people to give him greater devotion than parents and/or family was a radical statement – one that made him equivalent to God and caused many followers to abandon him.

B. Christians are called to an allegiance to Christ that transcends all other heart allegiances in life. Anything less is idolatry.

2. The Hard Saying of Jesus "To Hate One's Family Really" Means:

That the disciples of Christ must love him in devotion more than anything else – even surpassing that degree of devotional love a person might have for his/her family members.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are some experiences or material things that demand a passionate devotional heart allegiance in our lives aside from God?
2. Is there anything in your life that is your idol?
3. Are you willing to place service to God as a priority before your family?
If not, why not?

Not Peace, But a Sword

Scripture Reading Matthew 10:17-36.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What Does the Saying Not Peace but a Sword Mean?

A. That in living and revealing the truth of life through the wisdom of Christ, believers in Christ will face persecution from those who cannot accept the truth.

2. What are Some Truthful Facts About Christian Discipleship that Jesus Spoke About in Reference to Persecution For His Sake?

A. We have to carry a cross. (Mark 8:34).

B. We have to carry a daily cross (Luke 9:23).

C. We will face trouble for what we believe, profess and act. (Matthew 10:34, John 16:33).

3. Why Does a Gospel Message that Promotes Peace, Love, Mercy, Forgiveness and Reconciliation, Provoke So Much Anger and Rejection by Those that Do Not Accept It?

A. The truth of the Gospel reveals people's sin and failure.

B. Some people are fearful that they cannot adhere to a lifestyle requiring such a high behavioral standard – specifically a standard that requires them to be forgiving of others.

C. Some people would rather seek revenge and hate upon those that have wronged them because it's easier to think and behave in such a manner in comparison with exercising forgiveness.

D. Some people fear losing control over those that have less status and education than themselves. Likewise, they don't desire for others (especially the poor) to be blessed through God's providence because without such a blessing – the powerful can continue to exercise power over the poor.

E. Christ's conquest is right over wrong – not compromise.

Question to Consider:

Do you have the courage to stand for what you believe in? If not, why not?

Strategic Tools for Sharing the Gospel

Scripture Readings: Acts 4:23-37, Romans 1:16.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. God's Power for Witness

God's Holy Spirit in our lives makes it possible to preach the good news about him intelligently, accurately and with fearless power.

2. What Strategic Tools are Useful for Promoting the Effective Preaching of the Gospel?

A. Corporate Prayer: Two or more people pray about the same concern.

B. Unwavering Belief: The belief in Christ's power to affect or transform life.

C. Prayer for Others: To affect miraculous change in people's lives.

D. Selfless Giving: Giving through love.

E. Fearless Preaching: Make known the facts of life.

F. Fearless Witness and Service: To be available for helping service.

3. What Forces Threaten to Undermine Faithful Christian Witness and Service?

A. Fear of circumstances, social rejection, and punishment.

B. Actual social rejection and punishment for serving God.

C. Compromise, fleshly temptation, sin and deception.

Question to Consider:

Are any specific forces adversely affecting your spiritual life and witness?
If so, what can you do to correct the problem?

Lifestyle Evangelism

Scripture Readings: Luke 24:13-35, Deuteronomy 6:7.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Through Our Witness What Most Readily Wins Non-Believers to Christ?

A. Not what we say but what we do.

B. Despite life's difficult circumstances, our faith and hope will remain with Christ.

C. Christ still dominates our life despite life's adversities.

2. What Impedes Our Hopeful Witness to Others in Reference to Our Faith in Christ?

When dark circumstances produce negative thinking and believing regarding God's ability to be a victorious force in our life.

3. What Are Some Reasons Why We May Not Share Christ With Others in a Workplace Setting?

Persecution; unforeseen consequences; fear of failure; fear of persecution, etc.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why should we - without hesitation - speak to those who hate Christ about Christ?
2. If you lost your job because of witnessing for Christ, how would you react?
3. If you lost your job because of witnessing for Christ, could you cope with the consequences?

Materialism and Heart Idolatry.

Scripture Reading: Mark 10:17-31.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Relinquishments to the Lord

The truth of this lesson is painfully clear; we must relinquish everything in our hearts that competes with our devotion to Christ. Specifically, some things that powerfully compete for our heart's allegiance that we must renounce to the Lordship of Christ are:

- A. Our dreams/will.
- B. Drive for status and/or prestige.
- C. Love for power.
- D. Aggrandizing materials.
- E. Love for money.
- F. Wine, women, and song.

G. Pursuit of multiple-sexual love relationships.

2. Forsaking All for Christ

In forsaking all for Christ, God will in turn supply our needs for those things we are willing to abandon or have renounced for his kingdom purposes. Remember the story of Abraham.

3. Inheriting Eternal Life

A. The question what must I do to inherit eternal life? was answered by Christ with the following profound teaching truth:

B. Eternal life is inherited as a result of being filled with Christ's Holy Spirit rather than doing something to earn it.

Question to Consider:

1. What are some desires that might still be sitting on the throne of your heart that are impeding your heart's devotion to Christ?

The Kingdom of God is Unlike the Kingdom of the World

Scripture Reading: Matthew 20:1-16.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. God's Kingdom vs. Kingdom of Man

This parable teaches us that God's Kingdom is not like the Kingdom of Man. In this story, we understand that within God's Kingdom, the Lord's graciousness, mercy and generosity is superior compared with our works.

2. Access Into the Kingdom of God

This parable teaches us that access into the Kingdom of God relates to:

A. The fact that we cannot earn our way into the Kingdom of God.

- B. God is sovereign and does what he pleases with his resources.
- C. The fact that our labor sacrifices have no bearing on our justification.
- D. God's justice and mercy is sometimes far different than our social norms and cultural rules for living.

Question to Consider:

In what ways have you transcended social and cultural expectations for living by doing something positive for someone that so-called didn't deserve it?

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet:

Many are Invited, but Few are Chosen

Scripture Readings: Mathew 22:1-14, Revelation 19:9.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Who is Chosen?

To be chosen to participate in the Kingdom of God by God, one must accept his invitation and live according to God's holy will.

2. Through the Parable of the Wedding Banquet, We Learn Two Important Truths:

A. Much of Israel (God's chosen people) has and will reject his offer of eternal salvation and access into his Kingdom through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

B. Because much of Israel has rejected God's gracious offer into his Kingdom through Jesus Christ, God has included the despised Gentiles to have access into his Kingdom.

3. This Kingdom Parable Teaches the Following Important Factual Truths:

A. The King in the story is God.

B. The son in the story is Christ.

C. The killing of the messengers represents the persecution of those who proclaim Christ's message.

D. The destruction of the city is possibly a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD.

E. The man at the wedding with soiled garments symbolizes those who think they are part of the Kingdom of God but in actuality are not. Such persons do not have Christ and the works of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and lives.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways do you exclude people access to the good experiences or resources you have to offer them?

2. What are your good and bad reasons for practicing exclusionary behaviors towards others?

[The Courage of Jesus](#)

Scripture Reading: Gospel Stories of Jesus' Execution.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Jesus Did Not Compromise God's Teachings

Regardless of whether or not people liked what he said, Jesus always taught the truth about life and people's sinful hearts and behaviors.

2. In Loving Instruction, Jesus Criticized People for Their Own Good

Jesus always told people what they needed to hear about themselves so they would become better people - not what they wanted to hear.

3. Jesus Confronted His Enemies, He Didn't Run From Them

Jesus was willing to confront his enemies rather than run away from them.

4. Jesus Suffered Personal and Physical Agony

A. Jesus suffered great personal agony when his friends abandon him after he was arrested and condemned to die.

B. Jesus suffered inordinate physical pain in carrying the cross and hanging upon the cross.

Question to Consider:

What actions did Jesus perform that made him a courageous person?

The Darkness of Feeling Forsaken

Scripture Readings: Matthew 27:32-50, Psalms 22.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Why was Jesus Willing to Experience and Endure Such Physical Pain and Spiritual Agony Upon the Cross Unto Death?

His love for us in order to receive salvation through his sacrifice held him upon the cross.

Questions to Consider:

1. What kind of feelings would you experience if you were betrayed, arrested, falsely accused and publicly humiliated through public nudity?

2. Have you experienced a time in your life when you felt forsaken by God? What were the circumstances and emotions you experienced?

3. How can prayer with God help you during times of unbelief?

4. What emotions leave us with the impression that God is not willing to help us during our times of struggle?

5. What types of behaviors do we perform that leave us with the impression that we deserve to be disowned by God?

[Discourse on the End Times](#)

Scripture Reading: Matthew 24:1-35.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Destruction of the Temple

The destruction of the temple by the Roman army led by Titus occurred in 70 AD as predicted by Jesus in Matthew 24:15-25. Also, see some prophetic references made regarding this event in Daniel.

2. Warning Signs Given by Jesus that Underscores his Second-Coming

A. Increased Deception (Matthew 24:4-5,11).

False teachers and leaders will preach, teach and uphold lies.

B. Persecution (Matthew 24:9).

There will be increased persecution and even death for standing by truth and living for Christ.

C. Apostasy (Matthew 24:12).

There will be increased indifference toward rampant evil.

3. Signs of Christ's Second-Coming

A. The beginning of birth pains. (Matthew 24:6-8).

B. The completion of the Great Commission (Matthew 24:14).

C. Christ's return to power and glory (Matthew 24:24-30).

Questions to Consider:

1. What do you love in this world more than Christ?

2. Are you ready for the return of Jesus Christ or do you believe you will not live to see it?

Assuring Our Salvation

Scripture Reading: 2 Peter 1:1-11.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Three B's of Spiritual Transformation

A. Believing: We need faith in Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 1:3.

B. Belonging: We need each other.

C. Becoming: We are in the process of becoming like Christ.

2. What did the Gnostic's Believe?

Peter's second letter was written around 65-67 AD to Christians in Asia Minor who were being persecuted by Nero. The letter's content emphasized information to address the false teachings of the Gnostics who believed that only "they" possessed the knowledge necessary to be saved. The following is what the Gnostics believed:

A. All material things are evil; therefore, God is forever separate from this world.

B. God revealed a special plan to the Gnostics (knower) regarding how to obtain access to God in the spiritual realm apart from this material world.

3. How do We Make Our Calling and Election Certain Within the Kingdom of God?

A. Salvation: We receive the gift of salvation through Christ.

B. Self-Control: We allow the Holy Spirit to control our lives and choices.

C. Service: We pursue service objectives and gather information that will equip us for service unto God.

D. Relational: We know Christ personally and receive his Holy Spirit and appropriate his promises.

4. According to Peter's Instruction, What Should We Equip Our Faith With?

A. Faith: We should build upon our existing faith.

B. Goodness: We should develop moral excellence.

C. Knowledge: We should know God's holy will and truthful purposes.

D. Self-Control: True knowledge leads to self-control.

E. Perseverance: We should learn to overcome adversity.

F. Godliness: We should develop reverence for God and respect others.

G. Brotherly Kindness: We should love our brothers and sisters of the faith.

H. Agape Love: We should love all people in the spirit of God's love.

The Issue of Excommunication

**Scripture Readings: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13,
Leviticus 18:8.**

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Church Purity

Christ's desire is to keep the body of the church pure. However, he always seeks to be redemptive in the cleansing process.

2. Excommunication Instructions

As a believing church, we are instructed by the Holy Spirit not to be associated with anyone who is: sexually immoral; greedy; a slanderer; a drunkard and a swindler.

3. What Two Primary Purposes Were Involved in Paul's Desire to Excommunicate the Offending Church Member?

A. To keep the entire church body from further contamination related to willful sin.

B. The redemption and repentance of the offending person.

4. What is the Process for Dealing With Internal Sin in The Church?

A. Challenge the offending person vis-a-vis.

B. Encounter the offending person with the support of others.

C. Contest the offending person with the support of the entire congregation.

D. Excommunicate the individual who refuses to listen and accept instruction.

5. Why Do You Think So Many Christians and People Struggle With Sexual Immorality?

A. Spiritual undernourishment.

B. Physical deprivation.

C. Sociological or psychological conditions: alienation, anomie, bitterness, etc.

D. Economic issues.

Question to Consider:

What sinful behaviors do you commit (without others knowing) that deserve excommunication?

Separation From the World

Scripture Readings: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14, 7:1.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What Should Christians Learn to Free Themselves From in Reference to Those Worldly Pursuits that Serve Only to Defile Their Holiness?

- A. Social status and prestige pursuits.
- B. Sexual immorality.
- C. Aggrandizement.
- D. Gossip.
- E. Jealousy.
- F. Hatred of people.
- G. Love and trust of money.
- H. Fellowship with those who have no faith in God.

2. Contrarily, What Should Christians be Moving Toward Regarding the Further Development of Purified Holiness in Their Lives?

- A. Personal risk-taking.
- B. Trust in God's ability to be faithful.
- C. Love for God and people.
- D. Faithful service.
- E. Consistent prayer life.
- F. Knowledge of God.
- G. Worship of God.

3. What Modern-Day Gods or Idols do Christians Struggle With that Threatens or Actually Shipwrecks Their Relationship With God?

- A. Career worship.
- B. Money pursuits.
- C. Love of status and prestige.
- D. Love of personal dreams.
- E. Love of romanticism and relationships.
- F. Love of self.

G. Sexual perversions.

H. Love of fashion.

Question to Consider:

1. What idol(s) do you need to rid your lifestyle of?

Loving Those in Need

Scripture Reading: 1 Timothy 1:19-20; 3:7, 5:3-16.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Why Is The Lord Interested in How We Treat Widows, Orphans and Aliens?

Read Deuteronomy 14:28-29, 27:19, and 24:19-22.

2. What are Some Outward Expressions of Love?

A. Encouraging words.

B. A willingness to discern and meet needs without being asked.

C. Sacrificial giving such as: compliments, happiness for someone else's success, sharing of material resources and availability.

3. How Can We Effectively Activate Our Christian Witness Toward the World?

A. Have a good reputation with unbelievers. 1 Timothy 3:7.

B. Possess faith and a good conscience. 1 Timothy 1:19-20.

C. Continue to fight the good fight for justice and truth.

D. Care for our own family members in need.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can you brainstorm a list of those needy persons in your community besides the elderly and widows?

2. What can we do as a church to actively help such disadvantaged groups of people?

The Arrival of Christ

Scripture Reading: Mark 1:1-20.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Why Was the Arrival of Christ a New Beginning For Israel?

A. There had been no authentic prophetic voice in centuries.

B. The old religious values were dead and ineffective in vitalizing Israel's faith.

C. The arrival of Christ brought forth hope, salvation and spiritual freedom.

2. What is the Plan of Change For One's Lifestyle and Spiritual Condition?

A. Repentance: A change in one's mind, beliefs, values and heart's desire.

B. Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

C. To help others see the light of their spiritual bondage to idols.

3. Often Times, After a Christian Experiences Spiritual Victory, He/She May Experience:

- A. A desert experience.
- B. Times of great testing.

4. Why is Heart Idolatry so Harmful?

- A. Its desires feed the physical/carnal body and the physical body profits nothing eternal.
- B. Idolatry cuts an individual off from the power and wisdom of God.
- C. Idolatry blinds a person from spiritual truth.
- D. Idolatry enslaves the spirit of a person.

Question to Consider:

1. What are the origins of your heart's idolatry?

Revealing the Authority of Christ

Scripture Reading: Matthew 9:1-8.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Fact That Jesus Both Implied and Stated that He Was Able to Forgive Sins Proclaimed that He Was:

Emmanuel: God is with us and among us.

2. The Intentions of the Healing Purposes of Christ are to Help One be Healed Holistically in the Following Areas Of Being:

Spiritual, physical, social, psychological and vocational areas of being.

3. Jesus Understands All of Our Needs as People. What are Some of Our Deepest Needs?

A. Spiritual: We have a need for the knowledge of God and resting in the understanding of his love for us.

B. Physical: We have a need for optimum physical health.

C. Social: We have a need for relationships that are meaningful and edifying.

D. Psychological: We have a need for peace of mind.

E. Vocational: We have a need to understand our calling and develop work-related skills.

F. Educational: We have a need for knowledge attainment and application of that knowledge.

G. Economic: We need access to capital and material resources.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways do you commit yourself to helping others find Christ?

2. How can you encourage others who are unwilling to change to realize positive transformation in their lives?

New Wineskins

Scripture Readings: Mark 2:13-24, 3:1-6.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Teaching: New Wineskins into New Wineskins Really Means:
 - A. Jesus and his forgiveness is a new opportunity for finding life.
 - B. Those who have determined to follow Christ must yield to him, allowing Christ to prioritize their values and lifestyles.
 - C. Some old lifestyle choices must be ditched.
2. During His Outreach Ministry, What Kept Jesus From Not Being Overcome by Sinful Lives that Others Led?
 - A. Jesus was spiritually pure from within.
 - B. Jesus had already overcome the world.

3. What Specifically Did Jesus Dislike About Religious Traditions?

Some traditions have a tendency to take precedence over a person's desire to exercise introspection of his/her heart condition.

Question to Consider:

1. Why does Jesus place such a high priority upon relating with so-called sinners?

Jesus Commences the
New Family - The Kingdom of God

Scripture Reading: Mark 3:13-21.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. In Establishing the New Family of God, Jesus Took Two Major Actions:

A. Jesus called twelve apostles.

B. Jesus acknowledged how precious the new family of God was and understood that it was a family that should have priority over one's love for blood family.

2. In What Ways Did Jesus Best Instruct the apostles in the Christ-Centered Lifestyle?

He allowed the apostles to spend intimate fellowship time with him on a daily basis.

3. Who Were the Apostles?

A. The word apostle means the sent one.

B. The twelve apostles were chosen as representatives of the twelve tribes of Israel as referred to in the Old Testament. However, the twelve were also to represent the New Israel and the New Community of faith as established by Jesus Christ.

Question to Consider:

Why did Jesus choose only twelve apostles?

The Parable of the Sower

Scripture Reading: Mark 4:11-20.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Why Did Jesus Teach Through the Utilization of Parables?

A. Parables are interesting stories that most people can relate to through their own experiences.

B. Parables revealed truths that need to be heard and applied to everyday living.

C. The purpose of the parable is to stimulate the conscience and to divulge the person of God through the lowly status-person of Jesus.

D. Parables revealed the mystery of the Kingdom of God when people were searching to find the truth about the Kingdom. In truth, when the authority of God is acknowledged the true meaning of a parable's truth can be made known.

2. Defining the Parable of the Sower:

A. Rocky Places: Those people who hear the word of instruction but do not understand so they quickly forget it.

B. Rocky Soil: Those people who initially accept the word of instruction but cannot withstand the spiritual tribulation and social persecution associated with its acceptance.

C. Thorns: Those people who accept the word of instruction but cannot stay faithful because they love the “world” too much. Likewise, they can never make a complete commitment to God because they are double-minded and serve two masters.

D. Good Soil: Those people that accept the word of instruction, obey it and produce good works from it.

Questions to Consider:

1. According to the parable of the sower, what person are you?
2. Who is responsible for the seed of the word to be accepted by the world?

Jesus' Suffering at the Cross

Scripture Reading: Mark 15:16-39.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. How Was Jesus Mocked?

As a king and as a prophet.

2. Why Did Jesus Not Come Down From the Cross and Answer His Mockers so that They Would Believe in Him?

A. In order to complete the work of salvation for all humankind.

B. If Jesus would have saved himself, then such an action would have contradicted his own teaching (If one saves his life, he loses it. Mark 8:35).

Questions to Consider:

1. During Jesus' time of abandonment, he trusted God even though God appeared impotent to help him. Have you had a similar experience of perceived rejection by God?
2. During your times of great difficulty and trouble, does it sometimes seem as if God has rejected you or is powerless to help you? If so, why might this be the case?
3. What particular issues or situations are you currently feeling helpless about?
4. Do you feel that God is deserting you in the time of your greatest need? If so, what are you doing about this?

The First Shall Be Last

Scripture Reading: Mark 10:31-45.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. According to Christ, Being Truly Great is Directly Related to Servant-hood. What are the Virtues Of Servant-hood?

- A. Patience.
- B. Endurance.
- C. Faith.
- D. Suffering for leading others in righteous pursuits.

2. Why is the World's Standard of Leadership Unacceptable to Christ?

- A. It focuses upon egocentrism/self exaltation.
- B. Numerous persons who are in authority positions do not promote justice.

C. Many persons that are in authority positions are oppressive because of their vanity.

D. Numerous people in leadership positions are not led of the Holy Spirit in their decision-making.

E. Many people are in leadership positions that they have not earned through justice or merit.

3. What are Some of the Greatest Temptations of Those People Holding Positions of Authority?

A. To be exalted by others.

B. To serve warped culturally-agreed-upon symbols of status and prestige.

4. Why Doesn't the World Recognize the Complete Gospel and the Truthful Virtues of the Suffering Costs Associated With Discipleship as Taught and Modeled by Christ?

A. Serving others is perceived as having low status distinction and little or no prestige.

B. A servant doesn't exalt himself; therefore, his presence will be ignored.

C. Sacrifice and suffering demonstrates weakness.

Who is Jesus?

Scripture Reading: Mark 8:27-9:1.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Who is Jesus?

A. Jesus was a suffering Messiah. This reality contradicted the apostles and Jewish populations' expectations.

B. God's own anointed son who possessed sovereign power as demonstrated through miracles.

C. An individual completely committed to living God's holy will in its fullness.

D. The suffering servant.

2. Growing Spiritually

In order to grow spiritually, you have to know Jesus personally. Everyone who comes in contact with Jesus must decide who Jesus is.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can you accept the way of suffering and self-sacrifice that is upon the road that Jesus has called you to follow?
2. What changes are you in need of making in your life in order to become more conformed to the expectations of God's holy will for your life?
3. What factors inhibit you from making changes in your life in order to be in greater congruity with God's holy will for your life?

Assessing Inappropriate Communion Behavior

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What Were Some of the Problems that Paul Addressed Regarding the Communion Behavior of the Corinthian Church?

- A. Divisions among the wealthy and poor.
- B. Selfish behavior – causing some to go hungry.
- C. Drunken behavior.

2. What Makes People Worthy of Approaching the Communion Table?

- A. Confession of Sins.
- B. Recognition of what Christ has done for us and desires to do for us.

3. What Words Celebrate the Lord's Supper?

A. Communion: The unity of believers celebrating the sacrifice of Christ for our sins.

B. Eucharist: Giving thanks to Christ for his salvation; the body of Christ.

Question to Consider:

Is participating in the communion ceremony a requisite action for having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?

God is Light

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-18.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What is Advent?

Time of celebrating Christ's coming to earth.

2. What is The Incarnation?

Christ is fully God and human.

3. What are the Purposes of Celebrating Advent?

- A. To acknowledge God's redemptive purposes through Christ.
- B. Time of affirmation regarding Christ's spirit.
- C. Time of preparation for Christ imminent return.

4. What are Two Primary Purposes of Jesus Being the Light?

To illuminate the truthful facts about:

- A. The fallible human condition.
- B. God's will regarding the eternal destiny of souls.

5. What is the Word of God as Representing Light Like?

Graceful, merciful, righteous, holy and faithful.

6. Some Primary Truths of the Human Condition

- A. Sin and separation from God.
- B. Intellectual finiteness and fallibility.

C. Geographic limitations.

D. Death.

7. Some Modern Idols That Trivialize God's Glory And Our Reverence for His Infinite Being Are:

Aggrandizement, career worship, lust for romanticism, sexual lust, image worship.

The Love of Christ

Scripture Reading: 1 John 4:7-21.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. How Can the Love of Christ be Defined?

- A. Self-sacrifice.
- B. Consistent action rather than just talk.
- C. Dependability and availability.
- D. Trustworthiness.
- E. Faithfulness.
- F. Divine instruction.
- G. Pure motives.

2. Why is There Currently a Lack of the Divine Presence of Love in the Modern Church as Well as in Destitute Places?

- A. Unbelief.
- B. Selfishness.
- C. Irrational fear.
- D. Non-forgiveness.
- E. Heart idolatry.
- F. Lack of prayer.
- G. Untrustworthiness.

Questions to Consider:

1. How has Jesus Christ made his love a real presence in your life?
2. In what ways are you currently expressing the love of Christ toward others in your interpersonal interactions?
3. Do you model any of the following behaviors: self-sacrifice; action rather than talk; dependability; availability; trustworthiness; faithfulness; pure motives and correct instruction?

Resurrection Lessons

Scripture Reading: Mark 16:1-20.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What Is God's Response to Us When We Experience Fear or Dread the Divine Presence of God?

Do not fear I am with you.

2. In What Ways Does God Reassure Us During Our Times of Grief and Bewilderment?

A. Through the encouragement of others.

B. Through a real presence.

C. Through the peace of nature.

D. Through his instructional word.

E. In miraculous acts.

F. Angelic messengers.

3. What Powerful Hope Does the Act of Resurrection Bring Into Our Lives?

A. Salvation (victory over death).

B. Hope to turn failure into victory.

C. God's continual faithfulness toward those who fail him.

D. Jesus always keeps his word.

Questions to Consider:

1. After Jesus was crucified, it was the women disciples who had more courage than the men disciples; why was this the case in a male-dominated culture?

2. Who raised Jesus from the dead?

3. What areas of your life need the resurrection power of God?

The Power of God

Scripture Readings: Psalm 147:1-20, Isaiah 40:28-29.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. God's Power

God's power is sovereign and purposeful. It is primarily utilized for sustaining life and those eternal loving purposes associated with it.

2. God's Infinite Power Exercised On Our Behalf Is Inexhaustibly Demonstrated As Follows:

A. Forgiveness.

B. Mercy.

C. Healing.

D. Restoration.

E. Providence.

F. Sustenance.

G. Infinite Wisdom.

3. The Incommunicable Attributes of God Are:

Immutability and self-sustenance.

4. How Can the Sovereign Power and Holy Will of God Be Limited by Us?

A. Through our disobedience or the disobedience of others.

B. Through own unbelief or the unbelief of others.

5. What Is Our Great Hope in Reference to God's Providential Care?

A. That God's spirit and power liberates us from the limitations of ourselves.

B. That God's spirit and power liberates us from the fear of the future.

C. In every negative circumstance we experience, God is still working for our ultimate good.

6. How is God's Strength Appropriated to Us?

Hope in the Lord; wait upon the Lord; trust in the Lord, and look to the Lord.

Holiness of God

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 1:13-25.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What is Holiness?

Holiness is being set apart: wholly unlike unbelieving others and wholly for us.

2. The Productive Consequences of a Holy Lifestyle

Lawfulness, moral living and civility.

3. What is the Tri-fold Character of God?

- A. Separateness: God has no equal.
- B. Relational: God's holiness helps redeem the world.
- C. Ethical Purity: God is perfectly moral and just.

4. How Does One Live a Holy Life?

- A. Through the grace of God and presence of the Holy Spirit.
- B. Engaging self-discipline.
- C. Applying knowledge and wisdom.
- D. Fellowship with and receiving encouragement from other believers.

5. We Are Resident Aliens Because of Our Holiness

We are resident aliens in this world because our holiness rejects the limited and temporal priorities of this world. In addition, our values and priorities are shaped by our citizenship in the Kingdom of God.

6. What are Some Social Costs of Living in a Pagan Culture?

Aloneness; non-accessibility; non-respect; ill health, and unjust criticism.

Question to Consider:

What makes us resident aliens while living in social environments that reject the power and presence of God?

Righteous Living

Scripture Reading: 1 John 2:28, 3:1-10.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Definition of Righteousness

Righteousness is how we should treat others in accordance to God's law. It is also God's just way in interacting with us. God is the source of where our righteousness derives.

2. Why Should We Treat Others the Same Way

God Treats Us?

Righteous living is the by-product of a heart that is seeking after God. Therefore, we are to be righteous people in all of our roles and within those different social environments that we inhabit.

3. Main Points of Reflection in Reference to

God's Righteousness

- A. God is the source of our righteousness.
- B. Christ is our example of righteousness.
- C. Willful sin is incompatible with righteous living.
- D. Righteous living distinguishes the child of God from the child of the world.
- E. God's righteousness is continually being worked out in us.
- F. We should treat others as God treats us.

Question to Consider:

What are some examples of evidence that God is working out his righteous character in your life?

The Faithfulness of God

Scripture Reading: Psalm 89:1-18.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What are Some Parts of Creation that Witness God's Faithfulness?

- A. Molecular reality.
- B. Astrological realm.
- C. Oceans and stable climate.
- D. The stability of the season cycle.
- E. Human and biological life reproduction processes.

2. Why is God Faithful in Protecting Us Against Evil Forces?

Because evil forces are intent on destroying the present and eternal good God has willed for his people.

3. In His Faithfulness, God Performs the Following Good Deeds on Behalf of His People:

Protects, blesses, sustains, heals, forgives, strengthens, and breaks the powers of evil intent on destroying truth and justice.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways does God demonstrate his faithfulness toward you?
2. In what ways does God demonstrate his faithfulness toward the global community?
3. Recently, how has God demonstrated his faithfulness toward you?
4. What is the most difficult area in your life to trust God for?

God's Concern for Communal Living and Injustice

Scripture Readings: Amos 4:1-3, 5:11-24.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What Were the Specific Concerns of Corruption in Northern Israel as Addressed by Amos?

A. Corruption of Women: selfish, vain, ignorant and un-teachable.

B. Oppression of the poor.

C. Oppression of the righteous.

D. Deprivation of justice for the poor.

2. According to Amos, What Will the Day of the Lord be Like?

Darkness without light.

Questions to Consider?

1. Why is the Lord so offended by some church people's offerings and worship?

2. Why do you think some people are so apathetic about promoting justice for others that are clearly in need?

3. Why do righteous people sometimes fall silent in corrupt social environments?

Judgment Regarding Sin

Scripture Readings: Amos 2:6-12, Romans 6:23.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What Were Those National Sins Identified by Amos?

A. Slave Trade: selling righteous people for money (See US employment system).

B. Oppression of the poor (See US economic system).

C. Sexual immorality (See US culture).

D. Stolen garments taken in pledge (See US Banking system – high interest loans).

2. Why Was God Angry With Israel?

Israel had broken its covenant relationship with God.

3. According to Amos, What Would be the Consequences for Israel's Sin?

Military catastrophe and complete judgment from God.

4. What are Some Profound Underlying Causes for Unrepentant Sin in a Person's Life?

A. Social rejection.

B. Perennial discouragement.

C. Continued injustice.

D. Perceived hopelessness.

E. Economic poverty.

F. Historical record of believing that God has failed to deliver on his promises.

5. What Must Occur as a Prerequisite if a Person is to Change His/Her Habitual Lifestyle of Sin?

A. Dialogue with God.

B. Confession of condition.

C. Enlightenment of additional correlates for explaining origins for sinful behavior.

D. Healing of past wounds.

E. Forgiving God.

Question to Consider:

Have you ignorantly blamed God for an injustice against you—when in actuality-God's action or inaction was really related to your betterment?

Mercy, Forgiveness and Restoration

Scripture Readings: Amos 9:15, Acts 3:19.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Delegation of Responsibility in the Church

The delegation of responsibility is one of the most important in the church. The workload of ministry should be distributed equally and intelligently.

2. Amos' Negative Message of Impending Judgment was Related to:

A. God wasn't impressed with Israel's worship because he knew of the injustices prevailing within its society.

B. Israel's economic prosperity was not an indication that God approved of their behavior.

3. How Did God Intend to Restore Israel After Her Destruction Through Assyrian and Babylonian Armies?

Preserve a remnant.

Questions to Consider:

1. In your life, what areas do you need God's mercy applied toward?
2. In your life, what areas do you need mercy, forgiveness and restoration?

Introduction to Wisdom

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 1:1-7, 2:1-8.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Lord and Wisdom

The Lord is our everlasting source of wisdom. Moreover, the Bible can provide us with practical wisdom for understanding and coping with everyday life.

2. What are the Wisdom Books of the Bible?

Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, and Psalms.

3. What is a Proverb?

A proverb is not a promise but a rather a maxim; a proverb tells us how situations or experiences work out in reference to a certain pre-action. It is also a concise statement regarding life principles that can be practically applied. Some proverbial statements focus upon personal behavior, work habits, moral integrity, social relations, and worship.

4. What are the Primary Purposes of the Wisdom Books?

- A. Acquiring a disciplined life.
- B. To learn about the implementation of justice.
- C. To understand God's holy will for practical living.
- D. To produce in one's life: enlightenment, discretion and knowledge.

Question to Consider:

How much of an effort do you make toward becoming a wise person?

Wisdom Study #2

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 3:5-20.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. How Do We Honor God With What We Have?

Through the faithful stewardship of our time, talents, monetary and material resources, etc.

2. What Prerequisite Actions Do We Take In Order to Fully Trust God?

A. Maintain our commitment to God through bad times.

B. Lean not upon our own understanding.

C. Have intimate fellowship with God.

D. Exercise humility.

E. Avoid evil.

F. Be generous.

G. Remain teachable.

Question to Consider:

What are some lifestyle benefits associated with practicing wisdom?

God's Word

Scripture Reading: 2 Peter 1:12-2:10.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What Does God's Word Reveal to Us?

A. The authority and law of God.

B. The word of life related to salvation and obedience.

C. A comprehensive understanding of the human condition.

D. Attributes of God.

E. The power of God.

2. In Order for a Person to Develop Trust in God's Word, One Must Test the Word Allowing God Opportunities to Reveal His Word's Trustworthiness

3. In Relation to the Redeemed Life of Christ, What are Some Behavioral Characteristics We Should Begin to Model?

Faith; goodness; perseverance; Godliness; brotherly kindness, and love.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are some severe consequences associated with preaching/teaching false doctrines?
2. How often do you read the Bible? What are some factors that inhibit your desire to read the Bible on a daily basis?
3. Do you believe that reading God's word can actually have the power to transform your behavior and life's fortunes?
4. We are not Lord over our own lives. Therefore, do you submit to God's sovereign authority over your life? If not, why not?

[Psalm 2](#)

Scripture Reading: Psalm 2:1-12.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Types of Psalms

- A. Praise Psalms.
- B. Lament Psalms.
- C. Trust Psalms.
- D. Prophetic Psalms.

2. Major Points of Psalm 2

- A. The hope that the Messianic King will act as God's righteous representative.
- B. The righteous believers thirst for God's leadership.

C. The wicked hate God's authority.

3. Why do People and Nations Rebel Against Being Ruled by a Sovereign God?

A. They perceive being ruled by a God as humiliating.

B. They believe that being ruled by a God limits personal freedom.

4. How is God's Wrath Against Sin Carried Out?

God gives people/nations over to their own sins and the natural consequences associated with rebellious actions.

Question to Consider:

How is Christ's Kingdom established through human hearts?

Introduction to Ecclesiastes

Scripture Readings: Ecclesiastes 1:4-14; 9:9-10, 12:13-14.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Searching for Meaning in Life

The Preacher of Ecclesiastes searched for meaning in life from the following futile sources:

- A. Pursuit of wealth.
- B. Aggrandizement.
- C. Access to power.
- D. Scholarly achievement.
- E. Religion.
- F. Sexual gratification.

2. What Experiences Make Our Lives Meaningful?

- A. Having a mission purpose from God to fulfill.
- B. Knowing we are known, accepted, and loved by God without merit.
- C. Observing and experiencing God's power on behalf of our mission work without our initiation.

3. What are Some Sociological and Psychological Conditions that Threaten to Make Our Lives Meaningless?

- A. People's apathy toward commitment.
- B. Our lack of intimacy.
- C. Fast-paced cultural and social life.
- D. Our peripatetic lifestyles.
- E. Low self-esteem or vanity.
- F. Ignorance.
- G. Economic Bondage.
- H. Poverty.
- I. Work-a-holism.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why did the Preacher believe life was meaningless after all of his pursuits to eradicate such an experience?
2. Is your life heading in the direction of meaninglessness? If so why?

Wise Response to Suffering

Scripture Reading: Job 1:13-22, 23:1-10.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What Were Three Wise Responses Initiated by Job During His Suffering?

- A. He allowed himself to grieve.
- B. He worshipped God.
- C. He did not charge God with wrongdoing.

2. How did Job React in His Delayed Grief-Stricken State?

- A. With bitterness.
- B. He struggled with contrary feelings about God.
- C. He was depressed and disillusioned.

3. What Opened-Up Job to God's Healing?

Job's honesty before God.

4. What Does the Story of Job Teach Us?

A. When we cannot see and feel God, the Lord sees and feels for us.

B. Trouble is sometimes a trust-test from God that provides a purifying work.

C. Hope shines in darkness.

Questions to Consider:

1. How do you wish God would respond to your suffering?

2. When others are suffering, how do you respond to them?

3. How does suffering make you a better person?

Some Wisdom Rebuke from James

Scripture Reading: James 2:1-13.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Major Theme of James Chapter 2.

Don't show favoritism to the wealthy or those of a particular status, gender or race.

2. Why are Some Modern-Day Church's Corrupt?

A. They cater to the wealthy because they trust in money.

B. They support through their actions specific cultural status distinctions that exclude others.

3. Living According to the Law Liberates People From:

- A. Selfishness.
- B. Vain judgment
- C. Aggrandizement.
- D. Cliques.
- E. Social class favoritism.
- F. Tribalism.

Questions to Consider:

1. Are you willing to perform the work of the Lord and stand in the commitment required to do so?
2. In your church congregation, are too few workers doing all of the work?
If so, how can this fact be changed?
3. How can we encourage others to be willing participants in completing specific tasks within the church body?

Works and Faith

Scripture Reading: James 2:14-26.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What Doctrine is Most Perverted in Reference to Faith Versus Works?

The doctrine of justification: Once saved always saved.

2. What are Some Compassionate Ministries that We Can Involve Ourselves in that Demonstrate The Holy Spirit's Presence in Our Lives?

A. Works for the poor.

B. Encouragement toward the downtrodden.

C. Teaching.

D. Sacrificial giving.

Questions to Consider:

1. How reliable of a friend are you toward others in their times of need?
2. What particular concerns constrain your ability to be a dependable source to help others?
3. Can you count on your fingers five people that you could depend upon in a time of financial need? If not, why not?

Intercessory Prayer

Scripture Readings: 1 Timothy 2:1-8; Exodus 32:7-14, 30, 32.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What is Intercession for Others?

A. Praying for others needs and concerns.

B. Praying that others will be all they are called to be in Christ.

2. What are Some Benefits of Intercessory Prayer?

A. The person praying thinks of others and not just himself.

B. The development of genuine friendships with others.

C. The development of a compassionate and loving heart.

D. To help move the hand of God's blessing and goodness on the behalf of others.

Questions to Consider:

1. How generous is your heart toward consistently praying for others?
2. When was the last time someone who was a stranger demonstrated an act of kindness toward you?
3. What prevents you from being kind and helpful towards strangers in need?

Corporate Prayer

Scripture Readings: 1 Kings 8:22-56.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Thinking as a Member of the Community

A. Many experiences we have inherited come from the community – specifically our faith.

B. We need the stability of the body of Christ to mature and complete our mission in life.

2. What Factors Inhibit People From Thinking as a Member of a Community?

A. Our economic bondage.

B. Our cultural belief systems.

C. Our socialization mechanisms: TV, Internet, radio, print media, family, teachers, etc.

3. Praying as a Member of the Community

A. We pray for all believers in the body of Christ so it can be strong and built-up.

B. Our prayers for others should transcend beyond our local community church.

4. Joining Our Prayers with Christ's Will

A. We should pray for the body of Christ as Christ would.

B. We should align our hearts with Christ's purpose and the history of his salvation for people.

Question to Consider:

1. Do you believe that corporate prayer can have an impact upon individuals' lives?

Prayer, God's Will and Healing

Scripture Readings: James 5:13-18, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Circumstantial Prayer

God has the power to answer our prayers in any circumstance. However, he knows what's best for us and will enable us to accept his answer.

2. When Someone or Our Self is Ill or in Deprivation or in Need of Healing, How Should We Pray?

A. Confession: We should reveal our sins and inadequacy before God.

B. Exercising Faith: We should believe that because of God's love for us, he would do what is best for us.

C. Pray for God's Will: We should ask for a discerning spirit to understand God's holy will and obtain the grace to accept it.

D. Invite Corporate Prayer: We should invite others to prayer for our needs.

3. Why Doesn't God Sometimes Heal Our Points of Weakness?

God sometimes does not heal our points of weakness or infirmities because there is a greater spiritual good to be achieved through our weakened condition.

Questions to Consider:

1. What might be some spiritual consequences or reasons associated with God not healing our weaknesses or wounds immediately when we ask?

2. What might be some social consequences associated with our weaknesses not being immediately healed by God?

Persistent Prayer

Scripture Readings: Luke 11:5-13, Matthew 15:21-28.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Persistence in Prayer (Luke 11:5-13)

If a human neighbor will give you a favorable hearing regarding your needs (out of self-interest) then how much more can we expect from the Lord when we entreat him? Therefore, be confident in the Lord's response to your prayers.

2. Resilience as Faith in Action (Matthew 15:21-28)

Why should we persist in prayer?

- A. Because we trust and believe that God hears us despite delays in his response.
- B. Our perseverance demonstrates our faith that the Lord can help us.
- C. We believe that God has our best interests at heart.

Questions to Consider:

1. How much time do you spend in prayer with the Lord on a daily basis?
2. What hinders your ability to practice a daily consistent session of prayer with the Lord?
3. Do you really believe that God cares about your prayerful petitions?

Hindrances to Prayer

Scripture Readings: Matthew 26:36-44, James 4:2-3, 7-8.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What are Some Hindrances to Prayer?

- A. Confusion over life circumstances.
- B. Sin and guilt.
- C. Fear of answers or non-trust in answers.
- D. Love of pleasure pursuits.
- E. Inadequate knowledge of how to pray.
- F. Physically tired.
- G. Praying alone without support.

2. How do We Develop an Overcoming Prayer Life?

A. Commitment.

B. Discipline.

C. Be physically rested and refreshed.

D. Be creative.

E. Attitude: Have a correct attitude of humility, motive and expectation. Pray for God's holy will not your own will to be realized. Also, have a teachable spirit.

Questions to Consider:

1. When you pray, do you pray for others or just your own needs?

2. When you pray, do you pray for God's holy will to be done or your own will to be done?

Praying for God's Guidance

Scripture Readings: Psalm 25:1-10, James 1:5-7.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Why do We Need Guidance from God?

We need to ask God for guidance because we can't see the future. Our fulfilled directional paths not only bless us but also bless the corporate body of Christ as well.

2. Relying on God in Our Need (Psalm 25:1-3)

Remember God's faithfulness and reliability in your past. Think about how much God loves you. When praying for guidance, give your whole life to the Lord in utter dependency.

3. Praying for Guidance (Psalm 25:4-5)

We need God's guidance every day – specifically our lifestyle choices.

4. Times of Reflection (Psalm 25:6-10)

We should examine our past disobedience and weaknesses. Also, we should desire God's holy will for us not what we want.

5. Why do We Disobey God's Holy Will?

A. Selfishness.

B. Irrational fear.

C. Lack of faith.

D. Ignorance.

Question to Consider:

Why sometimes, when we're in desperate need, do some responses to our prayers take so long to arrive?

Has God Disheartened You?

Scripture Readings: Habakkuk 1:1-4; 3:1-2, 16-19.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Is God Worthy of Trust?

Disappointment in God can come to any of us, yet through such disappointment, we can discover that God is worthy of our trust. The events of life are not foolproof signs of God's favor or disapproval.

2. Why Might We be Disappointed in God?

A. Unanswered prayers (God's silence on a matter).

B. Non-healing.

C. Non-relief of suffering.

D. Continued oppression, depression, and repression.

E. Unmet needs.

F. Continued prevalence of social injustice.

3. Bring Your Disappointments to God (Habakkuk 3:1-2, 16-19)

We should continue to bring our frustrations, confusion, and disappointments to God. Confession prevents hidden resentments.

4. Bring Your Judgments and Perspectives to God

Our judgments may be inaccurate and based upon ignorance, but we must bring them to God and allow him to show us his perspective on a matter of concern.

Questions to Consider:

1. What fuels our disappointment in God?

2. What negative consequences can result because of our disappointment in God?

Instructions for Sanctified Living

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:1-18.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Purpose of Good Actions

Our good actions to serve others must be done for the correct reasons.

2. What are Some Specific Reasons Why We Serve Others?

To please God and bring glory to God.

3. How Should We Pray? (Matthew 6:5-15)

- A. Do not pray to be seen by others.
- B. Do not pray with non-forgiveness in your heart.

4. How Should We Give Gifts to the Poor? (Matthew 6:1-4)

When you give gifts to the poor give them in secret.

5. Prayer Petitions that Glorify God

- A. Honor God's name.
- B. Submit to God's authority.
- C. Obey God's holy will.

6. How Should We Fast? (Matthew 6:16-18)

Fast in secret.

Question to Consider:

How much of a priority is sanctified living in reference to your daily lifestyle?

Giving Thanks to God

Scripture Readings: Psalm 65:1-13, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Mature Prayer

Mature prayer includes daily recognition of God's help and answers to our prayers. Our thanksgiving recognition also serves as worship. In order to inspire a consistent heart of thanksgiving in prayer, we must begin to understand the cosmic power and nature of God.

2. What are Some Things we Have to be Thankful For?

A. God gives life.

B. God is in control of the universe and predisposes order.

C. God inspires creativity and gives spiritual gifts.

- D. God instructs and guides us.
- E. God heals our infirmities and diseases.
- F. God forgives us.
- G. God has blessed our past and will bless our future.

3. Faith is the Foundation of Giving

In thanksgiving, we find a perspective that is hopeful despite our perceive difficulties.

4. What are Some Life Difficulties that Discourage Our Hopefulness and Faith?

God's silence and unanswered prayers.

Questions to Consider:

1. Are you waiting for a spiritual drought to end in your life?

2. Why are you not as thankful as you should be?

Teachings for the

[Sermon on the Mount](#)

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:17-32.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Only Through God's Grace and Power

Without the grace and power of God, the standard of living Jesus taught on the Sermon of the Mount would be impossible to attain.

2. Murder as Understood by Christ (Matthew 5:21-22)

To viciously degrade anyone through gossip, slander, unrighteous criticism and deliberate fault-finding is just as unacceptable as murder.

3. Reconciliation (Matthew 5:24-25)

At all times, we must maintain positive relationships with others in order to have a right relationship with God. We must reconcile ourselves with those whom we have disputes as soon as possible.

4. Adultery (Matthew 5:27-30)

Our thoughts and imaginations might also be guilty and unacceptable to God if they're consumed by lust. We are instructed by the Lord to have a clean mind.

5. How Can We Obtain the Lord's Standards for Lawful Behavior?

If Christ has called us to a higher standard of lawfulness and conduct, then he will help us to achieve it. We cannot achieve victorious holy living through our own power, but only through the power of the Holy Spirit of Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:24; Hebrews 10:23; Hebrews 13:20-21 and Revelations 19:11).

Questions to Consider:

1. What kind of person would you judge yourself to be?

2. Although you're judging others, what are you hiding from others that would come under condemnation if known?

Trusting in God's Provision for the Future

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:19-37.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Shakiness of Stability

Those experiences and material things that we actually believe and trust as stable are in many cases, very shaky. In truth, when we think everything is in control that's usually when something's on the brink of becoming out of control. Only God can provide trustworthy stability for our lives and circumstances.

2. Physical and Material Things Don't Last (Matthew 6:19-24)

A. Physical and materials things don't last. Therefore, store-up treasures in heaven and invest in experiences that will last.

B. In order to combat lust, focus your eyes and heart upon those things that are pure and good.

3. Why do You Worry? (Matthew 6:25-32)

- A. You don't believe that God knows your needs.
- B. You believe your sinful behavior will motivate God to be unfaithful toward you.
- C. You have guilt over your personal sins and lack of prayer life.

4. What Priorities Should You Establish in Your Life? (Matthew 6:33-34)

Serve the Kingdom of God first.

Question to Consider:

1. How much does your lifestyle accommodate the needs of the Kingdom of God?

Instructions Regarding Relationships

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7:1-12.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Respect

Every person needs to be treated with respect because every person has great worth in God's eyes. People have great worth in God's eyes because he has created them and has a plan and purpose for their lives.

2. Judging Others (Matthew 7:1-5)

Do not judge others with a critical spirit for the purpose of harming or discrediting them.

3. Discerning Others Needs (Matthew 7:9)

Be perceptive and thoughtful in regards to others needs.

4. Asking (Mathew 7:7-11)

Ask God to help you become:

- A. Self-controlled.
- B. Open for reconciliation.
- C. Loving toward enemies.
- D. Less inclined to hurt others with criticism or words.
- E. Longsuffering and able to endure hardship.

5. Respecting Others (Matthew 7:12)

The Golden Rule: Treat others the way you want to be treated.

Question to Consider:

Do you love yourself more than other people? If so, why?

**Additional Instructions for Holy Living as Outlined Upon the Sermon
on the Mount**

Scripture Reading: Matthew 7:13-27.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Obedience in Accordance With the Holy Will Of God (Matthew 7:13-27)

Obedience in accordance with the holy will of God brings order and blessing to one's life whereas disobedience leads to confusion and self-destruction.

2. The Danger of the Wide and Easy Road (Matthew 7:13-14)

The narrow road is the way of the self-disciplined lifestyle, whereas the easy road is the way of an undisciplined lifestyle; a lifestyle that is motivated by self-indulgence and self-centeredness.

3. The Danger of False Teachers (Matthew 7:15-20)

False teachers can be recognized by their deeds and disingenuous behavior. If we are wise and follow the Holy Spirit, we can discern falsehood and bogus teaching.

4. The Danger of Self-Deception (Matthew 7:21-23)

If our hearts are not truly committed towards obedience with God's holy will for our life, we will deceive ourselves and destroy goodwill and peace.

5. The Danger of Disobedience (Matthew 7:24-27)

We must apply Christ's teaching and laws to our lifestyle. Our application of Christ's teachings, laws and truth will help us endure difficult and harsh life circumstances when they appear.

Question to Consider:

Do you love your lifestyle more than God's holy will? If so, why?

First Corinthian Letter

Scripture Readings: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, 2:1-16.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Why Was the Message of the Cross Foolishness to the Jews and Greeks in the Corinthian Church?

A. Jews believed in the miracle power of a God who demonstrated victory. A crucified savior didn't make sense to them.

B. Greeks worshipped the power of reason and human wisdom. Respect for wisdom and knowledge was part of their heritage and culture.

2. What Arguments did Paul Utilize in Attempt to Convince Unbelievers in the Notion of The Cross As A Salvation Plan?

A. Christ is the source of headship and unity. His headship should not be divided by human wisdom attempting to understand the mysteries of God.

B. Man's wisdom is foolishness to God.

C. Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

D. Social class, knowledge acquisition, wisdom, material assets, etc., do not qualify one for God's favor in reference to salvation.

3. Why Does the World Reject The Cross Of Sacrifice and Christ?

A. The cross is not prestigious enough.

B. Self-sacrifice is not perceived as a vehicle to power.

C. The belief that eloquence, intelligence and scholarly degrees are requisites for obtaining a hearing regarding what is relevant to the human condition.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is your opinion of self-sacrifice?

2. Are you willing to make sacrifices that might take away your access to status or prestige opportunities?

Some Basic Facts of Christianity

Scripture Readings: 1 John 1:1-2:2.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Some Basic Facts of Christianity

- A. Jesus Christ is the eternal word of life.
- B. God is light and there is no darkness in him.
- C. We have all sinned and must repent in order to have fellowship with God.
- D. We can all be cleansed and purified from sin.
- E. Jesus Christ is the sacrificial Lamb of God for our sins.
- F. As our savior, Jesus Christ is our advocate and helps us return to the Almighty Father God.
- G. Jesus Christ is the Son of God: both divine and human.

2. Christ is the Word Among Us (1 John 1:1-4)

Jesus teaches us about life, fellowship and joy through his life example and relational fellowship.

3. Christ is the Purity Within Us (1 John 1:5-10)

God is light and desires to guide captives out of darkness.

4. Christ is Our Advocate for Our Sin (1 John 2:1-2)

Through faith in Christ, we have forgiveness for our sins and a way to have fellowship with the Father.

Question to Consider:

What practices can you implement in order to become more knowledgeable about the Christian faith?

Facts of the Spirit's Witness

Scripture Reading: 1 John 4:1-18.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Access to the Holy Spirit

Christ gives us access to his Holy Spirit so we can live according to his commands.

2. There are Many Lying Spirits in the World. Therefore, how do We Know that Certain Spirits are not in Accordance With the Holy Spirit?

A. Such lying spirits do not acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ.

B. Such lying spirits reject the mystery of the incarnation; that Jesus is both divine and human.

C. Such lying spirits do not obey the commands of Christ that instruct us to embrace a pure lifestyle.

3. As a Christian, Why Doesn't the World Listen to Us When We Speak or Teach?

A. People's selfish motives predominant their behavior because of ignorance.

B. People's ignorance of their own truthful humiliated condition.

C. People's absence of the Holy Spirit within their heart.

4. Who Will Receive Our Love? (1 John 4:11-18)

If God sees that we are ready to love others with a pure love, he will bring them to us.

Question to Consider:

Why does Christ's Holy Spirit live within us?

[Our Safety and Security in Christ](#)

Scripture Reading: 1 John 5:6-21.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What are the Primary Witnesses that Affirm Our Salvation Through Christ?(1 John 5:6-9)

A. Water (our baptism).

B. The blood of Christ.

C. The Holy Spirit upon us.

D. Water is the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts and the blood is Christ's death upon the cross for our salvation's sake.

2. He that has Christ has Life: He Who Does Not Have Christ is Dead (1 John 5:10-12)

Let us pray that God will give us the courage to be faithful toward his leading so that our obedience will allow Christ an opportunity to demonstrate his salvation, power and faithfulness.

3. Results of Prayer (1 John 5:13-17)

If we ask/petition the Lord in accordance with his holy will, we can be assured that he hears us and will answer our prayer. However, we cannot dictate to God when and how he will answer the request.

4. Stay Away from Idols (1 John 5:18-21)

We should stay away from idolatry because it destroys our faith and love relationship with God.

Question to Consider:

What idols in your life are circumventing your love for God?

God's Will Glorified through Our Weakness

Scripture Readings: 2 Corinthians 10:12-18, 12:7-10.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Who Does God Choose?

Almighty Lord God chooses what appears to be weak or is frail so that he will be glorified and his purposes will be made manifest to an unbelieving world without pretension. Almighty God does not think or act the way human beings reason and behave. In fact, there is a profound spiritual lesson to be learned through natural or ordained weakness. Therefore, let him who has eyes and ears take heed in order to understand the holy will of God.

2. What Were Some Weaknesses that Some Christian Jews Identified With Paul?

- A. Paul didn't present the image of authority.
- B. Paul didn't charge for his ministry services.
- C. Paul didn't have the correct bloodlines.
- D. Paul didn't perform miracles.

3. The Lord Chose Paul to Complete His Work With the Gentiles Despite Some of His Apparent Weaknesses. What Good Purposes did Paul's Weaknesses Accomplish?

- A. Paul's weaknesses allowed him to keep his priorities straight in reference to what was most important in life.
- B. Paul's weaknesses kept him humble despite his influential ministry.
- C. Paul's weaknesses exalted God's power and strength.

4. What are Some Thorns in the Flesh that We Experience in Life?

- A. Poverty.
- B. Interpersonal conflict.
- C. Social rejection.
- D. Physical afflictions.
- E. Injustices.
- F. Wrong place/wrong time.

Question to Consider:

What are your weaknesses and are you letting God help you overcome them?

[The Suffering Servant](#)

Scripture Readings: Isaiah 52:13-53:1-12.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Suffering Unites People – Not Sovereignty

- A. All social classes, races and ages of people suffer.
- B. Suffering inspires empathy across all social class lines.
- C. Suffering encourages a bond of community and intimacy.

2. Why Can Jesus so Easily Help Us in Our Times Of Suffering?

Jesus can help us because he has suffered and been tempted like us (Hebrews 4:15-16).

3. Some of Our Sufferings are Self-Imposed Because We Stray from God Through Disobedience. What are Some Specific Emotions that Powerfully Influence Spiritual Disobedience?

A. Sorrow.

B. Disappointment.

C. Anger.

D. Guilt.

E. Fear.

F. Jealousy.

G. Pride.

H. Lust.

4. For Those of Us that Suffer, What are the Great Hopes We Realize Through these Experiences that Propel us to Continued Endurance?

A. Relief of Suffering.

B. Freedom from Oppression.

C. Salvation and redemption.

D. Cleansing.

E. Exaltation from God.

F. Eternal life.

Question to Consider:

What great traits did Jesus possess that allowed him to complete God's work on earth despite his sufferings?

Humility Modeled in the Savior

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:1-7.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What Were Some Humbling Circumstances Surrounding Jesus Christ's Birth and Life?

- A. He was born in an animal stable.
- B. He was born of parents who were of no reputation.
- C. Jesus didn't wear nice clothes or the latest fashions.
- D. He didn't have a permanent home.
- E. Jesus didn't have a girlfriend or his own family.
- F. Jesus never held a college degree.
- G. Jesus didn't write any books.
- H. Jesus didn't hold any political office.

2. In Truth, Why do so Few People Rarely Accept a Lifestyle of Humility?

Primarily because such persons obtain no acclaim, status opportunities or prestige from others for embracing and practicing a humble lifestyle.

3. In Measuring a Person's Worth, What do Most Americans Consider Important Criteria for Making Such an Assessment?

- A. Status/Titles held.
- B. Physical appearance.
- C. Capital or material assets.
- D. Access to power.
- E. Self-proclamation.

Question to Consider:

What is the ironic lesson to be learned from the historical lifestyles of Jesus Christ versus Caesar Augustus? Who is the most remembered and why?

[Other Thoughts on Humility](#)

Scripture Reading: John 13:1-7.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. When You're Weak

When you're weak, God is faithful to make you rise again through the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Some Facts Related to The Kingdom Life of This World and Into Eternity Are:

Service, sacrifice, humility, and generosity.

Questions to Consider:

1. Jesus loved his disciples despite being ditched in his greatest hour of horror. What has been your response when a friend, family, or employer has forsaken you?

2. Today, a major crisis in the church is the loss of service toward helping others. How committed are you in taking a less visible role of helping in your church?

Spiritual Realities of
the New Covenant

Scripture Readings: 2 Corinthians 2:14-16, 3:7-18.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. The Aroma of Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14-16)

To those who are perishing, our presence is the smell of death.
Alternatively, to those who are being saved, our presence is the fragrance of life.

2. Where the Presence of Christ Is, There is Freedom

3. Great Saints May Often Experience Desperate Emotions and the Consequences of Persecution, Frustration and Social Rejection Such As:

A. Despair (2 Corinthians 1:8).

B. Anxiety (2 Corinthians 2:12-13).

4. The New Covenant Glory Far Surpasses the Old Covenant Glory. Why?

A. The Old Covenant condemns.

B. The New Covenant provides grace, power and forgiveness.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you face persecution for your Christian faith?

2. Is there freedom of spirit in your home or workplace? If not, why not?

3. What hinders the free spirit of Christ to reign in this world?

4. Do you love someone enough to let him/her be free to make his or her own decisions?

[Sharing Our Resources](#)

Scripture Readings: 2 Corinthians 8:1-9, 9:6-15.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Some Truthful Facts about Giving

- A. When we give to others who need our resources, we bless them.
- B. The givers attitude is more important than the amount given.
- C. We reap what we sow.

2. What Resources are We to Share With Others in Need?

- A. Time.
- B. Compassion.
- C. Mercy.
- D. Availability.

E. Money.

F. Material Assets.

3. Our Attitude in Giving Should be Motivated by the Following:

A. Love for fellow believers.

B. Dedication to Christ's creation.

C. Joy of helping those in need.

D. Common-sense: It is the right thing to do.

4. What are Some Benefits that Result from Our Giving?

A. Motivates others to praise God.

B. Promotes unity, prayer, and thanksgiving.

C. Helps others complete their work and service on behalf of others.

5. What are Some Spiritual Attitudes that Inhibit Us from Giving to Others?

A. Irrational Fear.

B. Resentment.

C. Jealousy.

D. Anger.

Question to Consider:

How generous of a person are you toward others that need your help?

Hurdles of Success

Scripture Readings: Proverbs 1-30.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What is Success?

The ability to overcome obstacles in reference to any identified goal and to maintain effective or evolutionary performance in reference to that goal.

2. Successful Components Associated with Triumphant Behavior and Outcomes:

- A. Access to raw materials.
- B. Access to capital resources.
- C. Optimal physical health.
- D. Knowledge acquisition.

- E. Accurate assessment of problems.
- F. Discipline and perseverance.
- G. Creating databases.
- H. Organization of energy.
- I. Using time wisely.
- J. Meeting deadlines.
- K. Flexibility toward daily priorities.
- L. Treating people right.
- M. Maintaining healthy social relationships.

3. What are Some Behavioral Virtues Associated with Success?

- A. Patience.
- B. Self-control.
- C. Perseverance.
- D. Accepting constructive criticism.

Question to Consider:

1. Do you have a goal in place that you would like to achieve success in?

2. What behavioral virtues do you need to improve upon in order to achieve success in reference to your goal?

Strongholds

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 10:1-7.

Key Point of Instruction:

1. What are Some Types of Strongholds that Undermine Our Relationship with God?

- A. Imaginations or fantasies.
- B. Traditions of men.
- C. Emotional states.
- D. Behavioral Patterns: habits or vices.
- E. Erroneous belief systems not open to criticism.
- F. Social isolation.
- G. Subjugation of will or freedom of movement.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you have any strongholds that exist in your life that undermines your relationship with God?

2. What methods might you apply to eliminate strongholds in your life?

[The Lord's Return](#)

Scripture Readings: Matthew 25:1-13.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Readiness (Matthew 25:1-4)

Many people want to go and meet the bridegroom and participate in the celebration but few are prepared for unexpected events.

2. Preparation (Matthew 25:5-9)

Be wise and prepare yourself for delays.

3. Faithful/Vigilance (Matthew 25:10-13).

Jesus will return unexpectedly.

4. What Events and Behavioral Actions Make Us Weary and Undermine Our Hope in the Lord's Second Coming?

- A. Physical and material needs.
- B. Lack of encouragement and fellowship with other believers.
- C. Weariness in doing good without recognition.
- D. Little visible evidence of Godly people in the community.
- E. Dry times of waiting.

5. Evangelism

Christians must demonstrate to the unbelieving world the relationship of wise living and eternal salvation.

6. The Prize

Eternal union with the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be understood by our earthly minds. We cannot visualize how glorious eternity will be; therefore, we must trust the Lord's understanding and not our own.

Question to Consider:

What events and actions keep your hope in the Lord's second coming?

[The Lord of Wholeness](#)

Scripture Reading: Luke 8:26-39.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Possession (Luke 8:26-29)

Evil influences and demonic strongholds in our life cause us to move into solitary places.

2. Why are Demonic Strongholds in Life so Extremely Negative?

- A. Restriction of individual and community freedom.
- B. Increased individual isolation.
- C. Inhibit joy.
- D. Their ultimate end is the destruction of the individual and community.

E. Demonic strongholds are powerful and difficult to break free from (Luke 8:29).

3. Deliverance (Luke 8:30-33)

A. The Lord Jesus Christ has the power and authority over all people and circumstances. Likewise, he is able to deliver us from any demonic evil influence or stronghold. The Lord's primary objective for us is to become whole beings.

B. Deliverance is realized through repentance; individual and community prayer; patience; fasting, and miracles.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are some personal evil influences or practices that you need deliverance from?
2. When we allow Jesus Christ to utilize us as tools of his healing grace towards others, what kinds of conflict and warfare do we contend with?
3. Do you see the potential for healing and wholeness in those individuals that obviously lack the faith, knowledge and wisdom regarding Jesus Christ's capacity to heal?

4. What personal deliverance or healing has the Lord Jesus Christ performed in your life?

Jesus: The Bread of Life

Scripture Reading: John 6:1-13.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Multitudes Need Hope and Healing (John 6:1-6)

A. Many people follow Jesus for the physical and material benefits that he provides for us in this temporal earthly realm.

B. Multitudes are attracted to false prophets and those who promise Get Rich Quick Schemes. Also, many people are attracted to methods that will obtain them access to physical, material and financial well-being.

2. Jesus Needed Rest and We Need Rest Too (John 6:3-5)

The Lord Jesus Christ often retreated from teaching and helping the multitudes because he needed rest. The following are reasons why we need rest:

A. To break from our busy scheduled lives in order to receive instruction from God.

B. Emotional release from the fleeting material cares of this world.

C. To replenish our physical strength and spirit.

D. To gain empowerment through the Holy Spirit.

E. Refocus our objectives/goals through prayer, study and organization.

3. The Miracle (John 6:5-13)

A. The Lord uses our limited resources to accomplish great purposes – that's another miracle.

B. Nothing in our lives is ever wasted. The Lord uses our time, trials, mistakes and pain and redeems them in accordance with his purposes – that's the miracle of God.

Questions to Consider:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ specializes in the impossible. What impossible situations are you facing today?

2. What particular situation or need have you given up on that the Lord may be willing to utilize in order to salvage a situation in your life?

Miracle at the Pool

Scripture Reading: John 5:1-15.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Do You Want to Get Well? (John 5:1-9)

A. What are some signs or behaviors that sick people perform?

1. Negative talk and confessions.
2. Self-imposed isolation.
3. Pity parties.
4. Lack of faith.

B. In varying degrees, we are all less than whole.

2. What is the Ultimate Purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ's Ministry?(John 5:9-12)

- A. Eternal salvation for our souls.
- B. Physical and spiritual healing.
- C. Consummated holiness.
- D. Liberty to love others and life.

3. If the Lord is Actively Doing a Healing Work in Our Lives, What Should Our Response Be?

Do not sin anymore (John 5:13-14).

4. Why Should We Stop Practicing Sin?

- A. Something worse may happen to us.
- B. Sin hinders our physical and spiritual wellness.

5. Evangelism (John 5:15)

Sometimes we must tell others what they do not want to hear in reference to the truth of their deplorable conditions or destructive ways of life.

Question to Consider:

Are there some people you know that are sick but really don't want to get well? If so, how can you help them change their behavior?

Biblical Preaching

Scripture Reading: Acts 13:16-39.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. What Made Paul's Preaching Biblical Sound?
 - A. His preaching instructed listeners in reference to the doctrines of faith (Acts 13:16-23).
 - B. Paul's preaching exalted the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 13:23-33).
 - C. Paul's message brought the truth of Jesus Christ's resurrection and salvation into the contemporary situation of the day (Acts 13:33-39).
 - D. Paul's preaching was inspired by the Holy Spirit.
2. What Message of The Day did the People of Paul's Time Need to Hear?
 - A. Forgiveness.
 - B. Salvation through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

3. The Following are Some Strategies Paul Implemented in His Preaching Ministry:

A. Evangelized population centers. Paul went where the people were gathered.

B. Speaking boldly (Acts 13:16).

C. Appealed to what knowledge people already held in reference to God (Acts 13:17-22).

D. Appealed to the interest of his listeners (Acts 13:17-22).

4. Evangelism

To share Christ with others effectively, we must be genuine, believable, empathetic, and interested in the concerns of our listeners.

Questions to Consider:

1. Paul obeyed and loved the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you?

2. What social environments do you feel most uncomfortable in to share the hope of Christ?

3. Does one have to be a great preacher to share Christ with others?

What is Your Vocational Mission?

Scripture Reading: Acts 13:1-12.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. God Calls Us to a Vocational Mission in Life (Acts 13:2-3, Galatians 1:15)

Prayer, study, skills development and the help of the community of believers assist us in understanding our ordained mission in life.

2. How Does the Lord Set Us Apart to Realize Our Vocational Calling? (Acts 13:2-4)

A. Enacts a germane preparation process.

B. Utilizes relevant life experiences.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why do those called of the Lord for a specific purpose face opposition from various destructive forces?
2. What is your mission or calling in life as ordained by the Lord?
3. Are you fulfilling the vocational call the Lord has placed upon your life? If not, why not?

Marriage

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Prerequisite Facts for a Successful Lasting Marriage.

- A. One can't be committed to another if he/she doesn't love that person.
- B. Marry someone who is crazy about you as much as you're crazy about them.
- C. Find an individual who shares similar interests.
- D. Find someone who holds similar religious and/or spiritual beliefs and values.
- E. Find someone that you believe is attractive to you.
- F. Find someone close to your age.
- G. If you have an adulterous or lustful spirit – don't get married.
- H. Get grounded in a career and pursue some life goals.
- I. Find a partner with congruent beliefs and values in reference to family life.
- J. If you don't like being committed – don't get married.
- K. Don't get married just for sex. Marriage is about commitment - not sex.

L. Get to know each other before you get married.

M. Getting married later in life may actually be more prudent because people change a lot regarding what they believe and value from ages: 20-40.

N. If you don't like yourself don't get married – someone else won't be able to fix you.

Playing Church

Key Points of Instruction:

1. In What Ways do People Play Church Rather than Live Church?

A. Church members imitate the behaviors of others due to the sociology of environmental influence.

B. Church members are controlled to behave certain ways by the pastor's influence.

C. Congregants are controlled to behave certain ways because of their role expectations as church members.

D. Church leaders never have time for others and their needs – they always have to go!

E. Church congregants witness to others out of obligation - not sincerity.

F. Church service lasts forty-five minutes to an hour (and no more) in order to help the congregants get to lunch ASAP!

G. All the pastor does is talk but never builds any social programs to back up his blather.

H. Church members stand and sit at the pastor's beck and command and resemble the toy we call a yoyo.

I. Church members recite rote prayers such as the Apostles Creed and Our Father, etc.

J. Church members sing hymns that pre-date the start of time with the same amount of enthusiasm that a death row inmate has for attending his own execution.

K. The same pastor preaches week after week not allowing anyone else in the church congregation to say anything worthwhile.

L. Little or no extensive prayer time is a staple of the church service.

M. The pastor tries to intellectualize Christ meanwhile circumventing the mysteries and powers of the Holy Spirit.

N. There is little or no personal testimony regarding God's active involvement in people's lives.

2. How Should a Church Service Be Structured?

A church service should begin with no apparent structured ending in the details. Prayer, healings, instruction and personal testimonies should be imperative activities prior to song and worship or throughout worship.

Jesus Understands What We Endure

Scripture Readings: Revelations 2:9-11, 3:7-13.

Key Points of Instruction:

1. Jesus Christ is Adequate for Our Needs

A. To the church at Smyrna, Jesus Christ gives evidence of his sufficiency with the following truths: “I am the first and last, the one who died and came back to life again” (Revelations 2:8). He also says, “I know your afflictions, do not be afraid.” (Revelations 2:9-11).

B. To the church of Philadelphia, Jesus Christ gives evidence of his providence with the following truths: “These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the keys of David. What he opens no one can shut, what he shuts no one can open” (Revelations 3:7). He also says: “I know your deeds, you have kept my word... Although you are weak, my strength and love will deliver you from your enemies... I am coming soon, hold on to your faith... He who overcomes will become a pillar in the temple of my God.” (Revelations 3:8-13).

2. What Significant Factors are Revealed About The Lord Jesus Christ in the Above-Cited Passages of Scripture?

- A. Jesus Christ is the creator of all humankind.
- B. Jesus Christ is holy.
- C. Jesus Christ will help us overcome opposition.
- D. Jesus Christ will rule the world/universe with his future government.
- E. Jesus Christ will bring us into the eternal presence of God.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you believe that Jesus Christ really cares about your needs and struggles?
2. How do you believe Jesus Christ would greet you if he wrote you a letter or sent you an email?
3. If you had lunch with Jesus Christ, what issues of concern would he address about you?
4. How does Jesus Christ communication with you express relevance toward the needs of your soul and life?

Sermon Topics

1. The frenetic pace of this world.
2. The power of married couples to transform communities.
3. The power of single people to transform communities.
4. Childhood experiences: the rejection of parental love.
5. A wounded spirit takes the joy out of life.
6. Why does God make people blind and deaf? Exodus 4:11.
7. Speaking out against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven. Luke 12:10.
8. Those who oppose the good of Christ. Acts 13:9-11.
9. Publish the greatness of the Lord. Psalm 96.
10. God created the heavens and the earth. Psalm 96:5, 95:2-6.
11. We have heavenly names. Isaiah 40:25-26.
12. Waiting on God when you're totally befuddled, exhausted and weary. Isaiah 40:27-31.
13. What's divine worship?
14. Sometimes your efforts are futile to affect change. Luke 5:4-9.
15. Invalid criticism will come back to you. Luke 6:36.
16. Suffering can be a consequence of going your own way. Proverbs 1:29-33.

17. People who lack common sense kill themselves. Proverbs 2:22.
18. The World's social economic system is a bondage founded upon pride.
19. Have you found your lily among the thorns? Song of Songs 2:2.
20. Are you too entertained to pray? Psalm 14:1-4.
21. Complaining when God is testing us. Hebrews 3:7-11.
22. Finding and doing God's will in the midst of testing. Hebrews 3:7-11.
23. Beware of deception that takes away your love for God. Hebrews 3:12-14.
24. What is the source of your glory; your spouse, sons and daughters? Ezekiel: 24: 25-26.
25. Completing the race for the realization of salvation. Ezekiel 18:20-29.
26. Are your friendships messed up? Matthew 7:6.
27. Why our personal sufferings always seems so great.
28. God will destroy those people who cast him aside. 2 Kings 22:17-20.
29. The gift of helps. Romans 16:1-4.
30. Leadership and experience. Hebrews 2:10,14,18.
31. Wisdom is a lifestyle of listening, learning and application.
32. Sinning after God delivers relief. Exodus 8:15, 32.
33. When your enemies gloat over your failures and powerlessness. Psalm 13:1-4.
34. The anguish of no intimacy. Psalm 13:1-3.

35. Breaking the Barnacles: fighting the enemy. Psalm 18:29.
36. On the virtue of work and the life struggle of man. Job 7:1-4.
37. Marriage for lust or for love? 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4.
38. People who trust in relationships may lose them. Ezekiel 24:15-18, Job 1:10.
39. God will hold you accountable. Job 7:12-20.
40. When overwork becomes a bondage.
41. Building your own little kingdom on earth and ignoring the socialization needs of your children.
42. There is a God. Psalm 14:1-2.
43. Marry for love and compatibility. Genesis 29:17-20.
44. You have to build your own sanctuary.
45. Sin = chaos and confusion.
46. Worship God = order and blessing.
47. Vanity undermines the reality of a community.
48. The Body of Christ and the similarity of demonic attacks: lust, health ailments, frustration, confusion, discontentment.
49. Sin and separation. Job 11:13-20.
50. Christians don't always have everything they need. 1 Corinthians 4:11-12.
51. Who are the enemies: the vain, and those who reject the knowledge and wisdom of God.

52. Your enemies attack you when you're weakest. Psalm 18:18.
53. We all serve two masters. Matthew 6:19-34. James 1:8.
54. We all make mistakes so why blame anyone else. James 3:1.
55. God sees everything we have done. Job: 11:4-6, 11.
56. Being surrounded by ungodliness. Psalm 18:4.
57. Some social disorder is fueled by jealousy and selfishness. James 3:16-18.
58. The profound consequences of laziness. Proverbs 10:4-5 and 10:26.
59. Being faithful to God's laws. Psalm 18:21-24.
60. A message to an intellectual. 1 Corinthians 3:18-20.
61. Confessing Rightly. 1 Peter 5:8-9, James 4:7.
62. Who has the guts to stand alone?
63. We must believe that our prayers have relevance. Matthew 21:22, Mark 11:24.
64. Praying for our Death. 1 Kings 19:4.
65. Why are you seen by some as the plague? John 3:19-20.
66. When we serve Christ, our temple is offered for destruction. John 2 or 3.
67. Flesh gives birth to flesh. John 3:6.
68. Are you a sower, reaper or destroyer? John 4:35-38.
69. Prophets are hidden from mainstream life. 1 Kings 17:2-3.
70. The church rejects the office and faithful work of the prophet.

71. With the rejection of some prophets derives seclusion and immorality. 1 Kings 19:9-14.
72. The powerful and faithful prayers of a prophet. 1 Kings 17:1.
73. Sometimes prophets have no social support. 1 Kings 19:3-4.
74. The economic faithfulness of God. 1 Kings 17:1-17.
75. Let the Peace of God Rule. Colossians 3:15.
76. Jesus has overcome the world. John 16:33.
77. You have no reason to let the world fill your heart with nonsense. Colossians 2:8-10.
78. We are the clay and God is the potter. Jeremiah 18.
79. The United States has lost its blessing. Jeremiah 18:8.
80. A Prophet's words are hated. Jeremiah 18:18.
81. Are you wondering why you were born? Jeremiah 20:14-18.
82. The prophetic spirit that lies. 1 Kings 22:22.
83. If you're wise, then don't worry that you're poor. Ecclesiastes 9:11.
84. Economic bondage chokes creative pursuits and vocational potential.
85. Don't worry that you're not famous. Ecclesiastes 9:11.
86. Vocations: God appoints each man's work. John 3:27.
87. The classic question: Are you working? 1 John 3:21.
88. If choice is an inalienable right from God, then the pro-life movement is remiss.

89. The conflict of desiring sex and children but not marriage.
90. The mistake of believing that you want marriage when you really just want sex.
91. How to deal with people's ignorance regarding your abilities.
92. Everything you ever need is available.
93. Pushing the right buttons doesn't always guarantee results.
94. If you utilize idols to cope, then what do you trust in? Psalm 40:4.
95. The sacrifice of your life-long service. Psalm 40:6-8.
96. The unsolvable problems of your life. What's going to rescue you? Psalm 40:11-12, 17.
97. Why some social relationships that we utilize to help ourselves are actually harming us. Deuteronomy 28:47-48.
98. God never leaves the frail man alone. Job 14:4-6.
99. Arguing your case with God. Job 13:14-17.
100. God notices every mistake you make. Job 14:16.
101. Why would you want to marry someone with incongruent beliefs? Luke 11:17.
102. Christians that cannot accept living by faith, but instead try to prosper on their own covetous initiative will fail. Luke 12:14-24, 27-31.
103. Finishing is better than starting. Ecclesiastes 7:18.
104. Tackle every task that comes along and if you fear God you can expect his blessing. Ecclesiastes 7:18.

105. When it's time to move on from an oppressive situation. Genesis 31:1-8, 10-13.

106. Does it seem like God has forgotten your hard work?

107. The unsolvable problems of your life: What's going to rescue you? Psalm 40:11-12,17.

108. Fruit of the Unwise: We make ourselves poor.

109. Scars of Rejection are the way of the cross.

110. The stupidity of wanting a great leader. 1 Samuel 8:6-21.

111. God cannot be mocked.

112. Sometimes you're rejected because you're too close to God. Exodus 34:30.

113. The Lord desires us to use our skills for him. Exodus 35:10, 30-34.

114. The church has to pool its own resources together to get things done. Exodus 35:22-29.

115. Your life should be like a saturated sponge – so squeeze it out.

116. Did anyone ever ask Jesus to change his image?

117. Jealous people who want to control a group or organization. 3 John 1:9

118. Why people love it when you fail.

119. The stolen water of adultery. Proverbs 9.

120. Wisdom founded before the world. Proverbs 8.

121. Seven Things that God hates. Proverbs 6:16-19.

122. Why do people want what they can't have?

123. What do you fill your house with?
124. Integrity: inside and outside should reflect the same.
125. Evil spirits inside of man. Matthew 12:43.
126. The purposes of withdrawal: wisdom, direction, rest, confession and refocus.
127. Spiritual strongholds. 2 Corinthians 10:1-7.
128. Children of God. 1 John 3:1-2.
129. Sanctification at Christ's return. 1 John 3:1-3.
130. The second death. Revelation 20:14.
131. What matters most? Luke 10:38.
132. Serving two masters. Matthew 6:24-34.
133. What is the Love of God? James 3:17-18.
134. The Argument for He and She language. Genesis 5:2.
135. Our work ethic is a result of God's curse. Genesis 5:28.
136. Not eating when you're depressed. 1 Samuel 28:23
137. Ordinary people with extraordinary power or intelligence. Acts 3.
138. Treating people right.
139. The Nobody Loves Me Mentality.
140. Suffering and wanting to die. Jonah 4:3, 8-9.
141. Fools for Christ. Acts 9:16.
142. The Jekyll and Hide Syndrome.

143. Persecuting bad news bearers. Micah 2: 6-7, 11; 3:5,8.
144. Seeking the Lord and restoring a righteous heart. Hosea 10:12-13.
145. The failure of your own strength. Habakkuk 1:11, Hosea 10:13.
146. The origins for the spirit of pride.
147. The origins for the loss of patience.
148. This world isn't worth loving. Hebrews 11:14-16, 39.
149. Waiting on the Lord. Hosea 12:6.
150. Getting rid of entangling sin. Hebrews 12:1-3.
151. Forgetting God once he's done something for you. Hosea 13:5-6.
152. Why sinners think prophets are crazy fools. Hosea 9:7.
153. What modern forces work against believing in Christ?
154. Taking our leisure comforts for granted.
155. Prophets can become ensnared by corruption around them. Hosea 9:8.
156. Why is Israel a wandering nation? Hosea 9:17.
157. Planning Evil. Acts 3, 4.
158. When your own reject you. Matthew 7, Luke 6:22.
159. Who is a false prophet? Luke 6:26.
160. In the end, people's love will grow cold. Matthew 24:12.
161. Are you faithful in the little things? Matthew 25:21.
162. The real gospel: the cost of following Jesus. Matthew 8:18-23.

163. Going to the streets. Matthew 9:10-13.
164. Laughing at faith. Matthew 9:23-25.
165. Weeding out the theological liars. Matthew 24:9-11.
166. Being called evil for doing what's right. Matthew 9:34, 12:24.
167. Evil and isolation. Luke 8:29.
168. Summing up the world's problems. Luke 8:29.
169. Compromise and hell. Luke 9:23-26.
170. Fools wanting to be called Doctor.
171. Evil speaks out in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Luke 4:33-34, 41.
172. Sin immobilizes industry.
173. Sometimes our works harvest futility. Luke 5:4-7.
174. Not getting caught-up in celebrity. Luke 5:13-16.
175. Using your time wisely.
176. The sinful eyes. Mark 9:47-48.
177. The greatest servant. Mark 10:43-45.
178. How do we disown Jesus? Mark 14:27-31.
179. Don't lose sleep over the hood of your car.
180. I want it now! Luke 4:1-3.
181. The Nationalism of Roman Catholicism. Galatians 4:16-20.
182. What's in tears?

183. Your salvation is your faith.
184. Who ever thinks about heaven? 1 Corinthians 2:6-10.
185. Do you complain too much?
186. Has Jesus cleared your temple? John 2:12-19.
187. The heavy burdens of tradition. Matthew 23: 3-10; 14-15, 27-28.
188. Has your faith healed you? Mark 5:34, 9:23-24.
189. Sometimes busyness needs to cease. Mark 6:31-32.
190. The falsehood of the prosperity doctrine. Mark 8:31-38.
191. Are you alienated from the church?
192. Who is the greatest? Mark 9:33-36.
193. The cost of sin to the mind and body. Isaiah 64:6-7.
194. Who really wants to be humble? Philippians 2:1-18.
195. Are you truly converted? Luke 22:31-34.
196. Are you ever spiritually ready enough to use your talents?
197. "I'll talk to you later."
198. Are you faking 90% of your life?
199. God uses little children to love us.
200. Who makes us poor?
201. What is your idolatry?
202. Constant success doesn't matter in life but faithfulness does.

203. Television and the socialization of vanity.
204. The imperativeness of holiness.
205. When was the last time your church called a sacred assembly? Joel 1:14-15.
206. The world doesn't know how far away from God they are.
207. The church is in ruin and who cares? Haggai 1:11.
208. Don't pray for members, pray for pure hearts.
209. Are you guilty of waste?
210. Are you a lamb among wolves? Luke 10:3. Matthew 10:16.
211. The pain of male-hood.
212. The reply to racism. Luke 10:29-37.
213. The harlotry spirit of modern women. Hosea 2:13-14.
214. Did you invite God to your wedding?
215. Are you distracted by worldly preparations and pursuits?
216. Reasons why people throw you out the door, back away from you or don't call you.
217. The healing touch of others.
218. Why will the poor always be with you? Matthew 26:11.
219. False witnesses will come forward. Matthew 26:60.
220. The suffering Christ. Matthew 26:36-39.
221. False witness will come forward. Matthew 26:60.

222. Evil will speak out its presence from the supernatural into the natural. Mark 3:11.

223. Ever seeing but not perceiving. Mark 4:12.

224. Faith creates its own circumstances.

225. Humility witnesses the truth of man's fallibility.

226. Prophets are needed to govern. Jeremiah 1:10.

227. Do you have a place to be housed?

228. Unbelief is increased by our own murmuring.

229. Is your manhood being thwarted?

230. Are you amongst the thorns? Matthew 13:7.

231. Some say there is no hell. Matthew 13:29-30; Matthew 25:31-33; 41-46. Matthew 13:7.

232. A lack of faith binds. Matthew 13:57.

233. Time for prayer and reflection requires solitude. Matthew 14:13, 23 Mark 1:35, 45.

234. What is compassion?

235. Telling the truth will help someone.

236. Losing your patience will cost you more.

237. Constant sinning creates death. Hosea 4:1-3.

238. What persons actually read their Bible? Hosea 4:6.

239. Wine, women and song have robbed people of their brains. Hosea 4:10-11.

- 240. In your misery, you will earnestly seek him. Hosea 5:15.
- 241. Repentance leads to healing. Hosea 6:1.
- 242. Acknowledge and hear God through nature. Hosea 6:3.
- 243. The masses are shepherd-less. Matthew 9:35-36.
- 244. Jesus has come to divide. Matthew 10:34-36.
- 245. When people's sin hurts themselves. Hosea 5:11-15.
- 246. Sin chains the geographic freedom of the sinner.
- 247. Show us how to rest. Matthew 11:28-30.
- 248. The forms of idol worship. Daniel 3:1-5.
- 249. The penalties for not worshipping idols. Daniel 3:4-6.
- 250. The narrow gate: how many people are preaching it these days? Matthew 7:13.
- 251. The deception of false prophets. Matthew 7:15.
- 252. Our sins are our downfall. Hosea 14:1, 9.
- 253. The man with the least amount of toys wins.
- 254. There is no place of refuge in your desert.
- 255. We don't want any fanatics. Matthew 15:8-9.
- 256. Who's a blind guide? Matthew 15:13-14, 16:5-6, 12.
- 257. Out of the heart derives evil. Matthew 15:16-20.
- 258. The fallacy of the prosperity doctrine. Matthew 15:26-27.

259. Addictions and bad habits make you unfaithful to your God. Hosea 4:12.
260. The plight of the poor. Joel 1:10-12, 16-18.
261. Prayers to God when your life is ebbing away. Jonah 2:7-8.
262. Mustard seed faith. Matthew 17:20.
263. The power of images. Matthew 18:9.
264. God doesn't want anyone to perish. Matthew 18:14, 10:13-14.
265. Divorce: are you really free to remarry? Matthew 19:4-9.
266. Can you drink from the bitter cup? Matthew 20:22.
267. The church is dead because it serves God and mammon. Matthew 6:19-24.
268. Asking the Lord for incentive to change.
269. Doubting God can do the impossible. Genesis 17:15-18; 18:11-13,14.
270. Is anything too hard for the Lord? Genesis 18:14.
271. The longsuffering of the mercy of the Lord. Genesis 18:20-33.
272. Has the Lord heard of your misery? Genesis 16:11.
273. Have you born an Ishmael? Genesis 16:1-11.
274. God is God Almighty – it's true. Genesis 17:1-3.
275. Are you getting over the hurdles?
276. Being put to the bed. Psalm 4:4.
277. Can you fight the fight?

278. The agony of no peace and no certainty. Psalm 13:1.
279. Rejection of radical feminism. Genesis 3:16.
280. Enemies in your household. Micah 7:6.
281. Do you help create social rejects?
282. When there's nothing left to say. Psalm 77:4.
283. Have you lost a fortune? The Lord will restore it in the end. Zeph 3:17, 19-20.
284. Are you a treacherous person: unfaithful and unreliable?
285. Being attacked for being good. Psalm 11:2.
286. Being maligned for being weak and poor. Psalm 12:5.
287. The righteous one's are examined. Psalm 11:5.
288. Are you losing your mind and hope? Psalm 13:2.
289. Are you making leisure time?
290. Is your self-esteem too much for you?
291. Why humility is the only behavioral choice worth pursuing.
292. Are you getting physical exercise?
293. Is your choice of friends to your detriment?
294. Do you know what your vocational calling is?
295. Why you should identify and develop your talents.
296. Why you should know your limitations.
297. Why you should know your strengths.

298. How should you manage your money?
299. Do you know why you hate your job?
300. Art is the celebration of God's creation.
301. Honesty with yourself.
302. Are you depressed, oppressed or both?
303. Why you must believe your prayers. Matthew 21:22, Mark 11:24.
304. When you're adios are you comatose? Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10.
305. Maturity develops talents.
306. Do you lack wisdom? If so, what should you do? James 1:5-8.
307. What is objective truth? James 1:9-11.
308. The truth of humility. James 1:11.
309. Practicing God's law. James 1:21-26.
310. The corrupted tongue. James 1:26-27. 3:5-12.
311. Faith is made perfect through our obedient actions. James 2:22-24. Ezekiel 18.
312. The causes of social disorder and confusion. James 3:16, 4:1.
313. How do you resist the Devil? James 4:7.
314. Humility before honor. Proverbs 15:33.
315. Hard work and profitability. Proverbs 14:23.
316. The benefits of a heart of peace. Proverbs 14:30.
317. Misfortune pursues the sinner. Proverbs 13:21.

318. Good men obtain favor from the Lord. Proverbs 12:2.
319. The stupidity of chasing fantasies. Proverbs 12:11.
320. Why conceal knowledge? Proverbs 12:23.
321. How should I make friends? Proverbs 12:26.
322. A lack of guidance makes a nation fall. Proverbs 11:14.
323. The benefits of empathy, encouragement and generosity. Proverbs 11:25.
324. Ignorance regarding the future Kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 13:9-13.
325. Strongholds of relational subjugation.
326. Consequences of financial strongholds.
327. The purpose of God's cleansing. 1 Peter 1:7.
328. Trials and purity. 1 Peter 1:7.
329. We are called to holiness because we are God's children. 1 Peter 1:14-15.
330. God has no favorites when he judges. 1 Peter 1:17.
331. Sin destroys the physical body.
332. Do people think you're a leech because you're an evangelist?
333. Adversity and physiological consequences. Job 2:7-9.
334. Even if God calls you to rest, bill collectors will come calling.
335. Why expect suffering before a blessing?

336. Do you visit the imprisoned? 2 Timothy 1:16.
337. Ceasing foolish talk. 2 Timothy 2:16-18.
338. Pursue integrity, faith, love, peace and a pure heart. 2 Timothy 2:22.
339. Tolerating hardship. 2 Timothy 4:5.
340. Your vocational actualization may take years. Ephesians 2:10.
341. The Lord will make you greater than you could hope. Ephesians 3:20-21.
342. Being called by name excites and motivates us. Luke 19:5, Ephesians 2:10.
343. Our sinful attitudes change when we are loved. Luke 19:8-9.
344. Trying to be like Christ – instead of being Christ.
345. Do we really desire to understand Christ? Ephesians 1:16-20, 4:17-32.
346. You're a traitor when you take sin lightly.
347. Stories of un-success: Abraham, Joseph and Moses.
348. God's will for us is: order, peace, and blessing.
349. Prisoner for Christ's sake. 2 Timothy 1:8.
350. Suffering for Christ's sake. 2 Timothy 1:12, 2 Timothy 2:9.
351. A fool for Christ's sake.
352. Persecution and Abandonment for Christ's sake. 2 Timothy 3:12, 4:14.
353. Benefits of the Holy Spirit of God: courage, loving, and wisdom. 2 Timothy 1:7.

354. Can one be an apostle, preacher and teacher? 2 Timothy 1:11.
355. The fornication spirit: the great prostitute. Revelations 19:2.
356. Self-Destruction #1: The smoking demon.
357. Self-Destruction #2: The intellectual demon.
358. What is the fear of God? Revelations 19:5.
359. The curse of genius.
360. Jesus is faithful and true: completely antithetical to our ways. Revelations 19:11.
361. What is Armageddon?
362. Jesus is greater than anything on earth. Revelations 1:5.
363. Jesus is A-Z. Revelations 1:8, 17-18.
364. Who comprises the body of Christ? Romans 12:1-8.
365. Love fulfills the commandments of God. Romans 13:9.
366. All stand before God's judgment? Romans 14:11-12.
367. Who distorts truth and why? Acts 20:30.
368. Some people require a miracle to be saved. Acts 16:25-30.
369. False character accusations. Acts 17:18.
370. The farce of intellectualism. Acts 17:19-33.
371. Creation theory. Acts 17:24.
372. Creation's revelation of God's existence. Romans 1:20.
373. Worshipping created life and things. Romans 1:22-24.

374. Homosexuality and folly. Romans 1:26-28.
375. Hypocritical judgment. Romans 2:1-2, 21-22.
376. God's kindness leads to repentance. Romans 2:4.
377. There's no favoritism with God. Romans 2:11, Acts 10:34-35.
378. God's universal expectations of behavior. Romans 2:16.
379. Circumcision of the heart. Romans 2:29.
380. All our sinners. Romans 3:9-17, 20-23.
381. Justification for sin. Acts 13:36-40.
382. What makes a man righteous? Romans 4:5.
383. Who would dare die for anyone? Romans 5:6-8.
384. What is the hope of our redemption?
385. God's righteousness is through faith not works. Romans 10:3-4.
386. Who will be saved? Romans 10:9-13, Acts 13:46-48, Acts 15:11.
387. God will always welcome Israel back. Romans 11:2-24.
388. How is the kingdom of God defined? Romans 14:17-19.
389. Spirit of unity, compassion and deliverance is the will of God for Church. Romans 14:17-19, 15:5-7, Acts 3:5-11.
390. God delivers us. 2 Corinthians 1:8-9, Acts 10:38.
391. Experiencing the despair of death. 2 Corinthians 1:8-9.
392. The decisiveness of Christ. 2 Corinthians 1:19.
393. Preaching for sincerity sakes. 2 Corinthians 2:17.

394. We are the aroma of life and death. 2 Corinthians 2:15.
395. Denominational divisiveness rebuked. Acts 4:32.
396. Sharing resources with others. Acts 4:32.
397. The power and joy of the Lord inspires generosity? Acts 4:30-37.
398. Who are the modern thwarters of the Holy Spirit: organized church, university system, mass media and pleasure seekers. Acts 4:15-18, 25-26, 5:20, 6:9-10.
399. What is zealously and what inspires it? Acts 2:38-47, 4:20, 5:42.
400. The metaphysical presence of God. Acts 4:31.
401. The futility of man's intelligence. 1 Corinthians 1:18, 3:18-21.
402. God chooses foolish things to shame the wise. 1 Corinthians 1:26-27.
403. Every man's work is tested by fire. 1 Corinthians 3:10-14.
404. Evil spirits can be healed. Acts 5:16, 8:7, 10:38.
405. Religious traditions rebuked. Acts 5:29.
406. Revelation of the Holy Spirit depends upon obedience. Acts 5:32.
407. False witnesses testify against true prophets. Acts 6:13.
408. The blessing of God's timing. Acts 7:34-35.
409. Where does the Lord dwell? Acts 7:48-49.
410. Great stories of redemption: Scrooge and Paul.
411. Who is ready to receive Christ? Acts 8:29-40, Acts 15:10-11.
412. What is the role of baptism? Acts 8:34-40.

- 413. God can strike down anyone at anytime. Acts 12:23-24.
- 414. The precursor of healing is faith. Acts 14:8-10, Acts 3:5-11.
- 415. Healing through Jesus' name. Acts 3:12-19.
- 416. The kingdom of God is power not talk. 1 Corinthians 4:20.
- 417. Fellowship and prayer as priorities. Acts 2:42-47.
- 418. Suffering for preaching the truth. Acts 4:1-5-21.
- 419. The capstone Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation. Acts 4:12.
- 420. Using the lowly to serve God. Acts 4:13-15.
- 421. The Lord of wholeness. Luke 8:26-39.
- 422. Do you have the Moses Syndrome?
- 423. The re-creation of the universe. Psalm 102:25-27.
- 424. Playing Church.
- 425. Don't act like Christ - be Christ.
- 426. Don't worship your gadgets.
- 427. You can't make love to your gadgets.
- 428. Don't worship the Internet.
- 429. Develop, maintain and prosper real geophysical social relationships – not cyber-relationships.