

# CHRIST 101

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## I. Who Is God, Who are we, and what is the problem?

### A. GOD EXISTS AND HE IS A HOLY GOD

God is the Creator and Sustainer of all creation. He is utterly holy, totally separated from evil. He, through the Lord Jesus Christ alone, is the only standard by which all men will be judged. People have tried to make “gods” to suit themselves, but God alone is true and unchangingly perfect. As the Creator, God has the right to demand perfect holiness. All will be held accountable to an all-knowing God. God loves the people He has created and wants all to come into a right relationship with Him.

<b>1 Peter 1:16<sup>1</sup></b>	<b><i>“because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”</i></b>
<b>Psalm 111:10</b>	<b><i>“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.”</i></b>
<b>Hebrews 12:14</b>	<b><i>“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:”</i></b>

### B. GOD'S LAW IS HOLY

Because God is holy, His laws and commands are also holy. God expects obedience from his creation. His holiness is reflected in the Law of Moses (also known as the Ten Commandments), which was first given to Israel in the wilderness following their release from bondage in Egypt.

#### Ten Commandments (The Law)

- 1. You shall worship God alone.***
- 2. You shall not worship idols.***
- 3. You shall not use the Lord's name in vain.***
- 4. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it Holy.***
- 5. Honor your parents.***
- 6. Do not murder.***
- 7. Do not commit adultery.***
- 8. Do not steal.***
- 9. Do not lie.***
- 10. Do not covet.***

### QUESTIONS

- Has God always been first in your life?
- Have you ever lied (including white lies, fibs)?



<sup>1</sup> All Scripture references are New King James Version unless otherwise noted



- Have you ever lusted after someone?
- Have you created a “god” to suit yourself (maybe one who would no judge your sin)?
- Have you ever disrespected your parents?
- Have you ever taken something that was not yours? (Even a paperclip?)
- Have you ever spoken the Lord’s name as an expressive curse word?
- Have you ever jealously desired something that was not yours?
- Have you ever hated?

If you are honest with yourself, you will admit that you have not been able to keep any of the commandments.

Nobody can keep the requirements of the Law. Sin is inherent in all of us.

<b>Romans 7:7, 12</b>	<i>“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, “You shall not covet... 12} Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”</i>
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### **C. MAN IS SINFUL**

God created humanity as the pinnacle of His creation. We were created to enjoy a personal relationship with Him and to rule all of the rest of His creation! As Creator and God, He expects obedience, which we demonstrate in our love-relationship to him.

<b>Genesis 1:27-28 (LB)</b>	<i>“So God created human beings, making them in His image. He blessed them, and said, ...live all over the earth and bring it under control. I am putting you in charge.”</i>
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God created humankind with a free will. Adam and Eve chose to rebel and went their independent way. Fellowship with God was broken. They transgressed against God. Transgression of His will is sin. All are guilty, even those who have not heard of the law because the law is known instinctively to all.

<b>Romans 2:15</b>	<i>“who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them.”</i>
<b>Romans 3:23</b>	<i>“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”</i>
<b>1 John 3:4</b>	<i>“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”</i>
<b>Matthew 5:28</b>	<i>“But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”</i>
<b>James 2:10</b>	<i>“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”</i>

## D. CERTAINTY OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

(The Dilemma of a Loving God)

Because of sin, the wrath of God remains on all humankind. Every person stands guilty before Him. Because He is perfectly just, and holy, He must punish sin. One day every person will have to give an account to Him. Just as a good judge does not let guilty criminals go free without imposing a sentence, neither will the Perfect Judge clear lawbreakers.

<b>Romans 6:23</b>	<i>“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”</i>
<b>Romans 2:5</b>	<i>“But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,”</i>
<b>Hebrews 9:27</b>	<i>“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,”</i>
<b>Colossians 3:5-6</b>	<i>“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. {6} Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,”</i>

Ultimately, as a result of God's wrath there will be...

## E. THE SEVERITY OF GOD'S PUNISHMENT

The penalty for sin is death - a death of eternal separation from God. The Bible calls it hell. Hell is reserved for those who continually refused Him. Do not ask how God can send people to hell, but thank Him for the good news that He has chosen to offer a way out for all.

<b>Psalm 1:5 (NLT)</b>	<i>“The wicked will be condemned at the time of judgment. Sinners will have no place among the godly”</i>
<b>Revelation 21:8</b>	<i>“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”</i>
<b>Luke 12:4, 5</b>	<i>“And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. {5} But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!”</i>
<b>2 Peter 2:9</b>	<i>“then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment,”</i>



How can we avoid this judgment? Although we may try, the fact is that...

## F. MANKIND CANNOT SAVE HIMSELF.

The worst thing you can do, at this point in time, is to say you will change your lifestyle and from this day forward, live a good life. Let's say you were able to do that. Who, then, is going to forgive your past sins? Can a judge let a murderer go free because he promises to live a good life from now on? No, the murderer is in debt to justice, which demands that he be punished.

The truth is, we have violated the law of God multitudes of times. The Bible says, because of this, the wrath of God abides on us. The thought may have entered your mind that perhaps God will overlook your sins. Perhaps, in His mercy, He could just look the other way. If He were to do so, then He would be unjust. Or, are you saying that God should only punish the "serious" crimes? Your lying, stealing, adultery of the heart and rebellion are serious in His sight. He is holy and cannot overlook these and other sins. No, the Bible says He will by no means clear the guilty.

No one can save themselves by their good deeds. You would have to be perfect. You can do nothing to earn forgiveness, but are in a helpless state. Our ten cents of righteousness may appease our consciences, but will not appease eternal justice.

<i>Isaiah 64:6</i>	<i>'But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.'</i>
<i>Isaiah 53:6</i>	<i>"All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."</i>
<i>Romans 3:10</i>	<i>"As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;"</i>

We are guilty before a Holy God. We have all sinned. The law cries against us with its impending judgment. We need forgiveness. Is there any hope? Yes, God has revealed His mercy in the person of **Jesus Christ!**

## II. Who Is Jesus Christ?

### A. JESUS CHRIST IS LORD OF ALL

Jesus Christ is the long-awaited Savior (Messiah). He is the infinite God-Man. He is fully God and fully Man. He is not just a good Teacher or example of right living, but God in the flesh. His coming was foretold hundreds of years before his birth by the prophets of Israel.

<i>John 1:1-3, 14</i>	<i>“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. {2} He was in the beginning with God. {3} All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made... {14} And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”</i>
<i>Philippians 2: 6- 7</i>	<i>(Jesus) “who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, {7} but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.”</i>

Not only is Jesus Lord but He is also....

### **B. JESUS CHRIST, THE UTTERLY SINLESS SACRIFICE**

Jesus lived the life we all should have lived. Jesus lived a perfect life. His sinlessness qualified Him to be our only atoning sacrifice. **He bled, suffered and died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, in order to satisfy God’s perfect justice.** Jesus was the only “acceptable offering” who was worthy to be slain. No greater love has ever been shown. When the justice of a holy God cried out for retribution, Jesus cried out on the cross in agony as he satisfied it, by giving himself on our behalf.

<i>Hebrews 4:15</i>	<i>“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”</i>
<i>Romans 5:9</i>	<i>“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.”</i>
<i>1 Peter 3:18</i>	<i>“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,”</i>

Jesus died the death every one of us should have died. God hates your sins, but in God's unspeakable love, He placed them all on his only Son in order to bring you to Himself, so that you might be forgiven of your sins. When the Law called for your blood, Jesus shed His own blood in your place - to offer you salvation!

<i>Ephesians 1:7</i>	<i>“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”</i>
<i>2 Corinthians 5:21</i>	<i>“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”</i>

### C. JESUS CHRIST, THE ONLY WAY

Jesus Christ is the only way to God. All religions do not point the way to the same God. All other religions say, "Get your act together," or "be good." Christianity is the only one that says we can never earn or deserve a right standing with God, **so He took the initiative to save us**. There is no purgatory, no second chance, no other name, no other hope.

<i>John 14:6</i>	<i>"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.""</i>
<i>Matthew 7:13</i>	<i>"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it."</i>

**The good news is not that you have to reach up to God, but that God has reached down to you.** Eternal life is a gift... an offer for all who would come to Him. You must have a personal relationship with Him.

### D. JESUS CHRIST, RAISED FROM THE DEAD

We can experience the life of Christ in us, because **He is alive!** He is reaching out to you with an offer of life. Not just in eternity, but here and now.

<i>Romans 1:4</i>	<i>"and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."</i>
<i>1 Corinthians 15:14</i>	<i>"And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty."</i>

He wants to save us from the penalty of sin and the very power of sin!

<i>Colossians 1:13</i>	<i>"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,"</i>
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Jesus gave His life **for** you, so that He could give his life **to** you, so that He could live his life **through** you. Jesus wants you to be transformed into His likeness, for those in Christ are *"created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do."* (Ephesians 2:9)

Jesus is coming again to rule His creation to restore His kingdom.

<i>Acts 17:31</i>	<i>"because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."</i>
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Do not reject God's gift of eternal life through forgiveness of sin. Life is short. We all have to give an account to God.

### III. What God demands of You

#### A. REPENTANT FAITH

Trust in Christ alone for salvation. God does not want any to perish.

<b>Ephesians 2:8,9</b>	<i>“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, {9} not of works, lest anyone should boast.”</i>
<b>2 Peter 3:9</b>	<i>“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”</i>

Humble yourself and receive God’s mercy through Jesus. The proud will not enter into His grace. Receiving Christ involves turning to God and away from self (the process of repentance). Just to agree intellectually that Jesus is the Son of God is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. Faith includes intellectual belief, emotional dependence, and an act of the will. Receiving Christ requires willing submission. Repentance means that you are willing to turn from anything you have been doing that is not pleasing to God (sin), and to follow Him, as He reveals His will to you in His Word.

#### B. FOLLOWERSHIP - COUNT THE COST

You must follow Jesus as Lord and Master. He is Lord! Though God promises untold blessings in Jesus Christ, He never promised freedom from hardships. There is always a price, but the price always brings value beyond measure.

<b>Luke 9:23</b>	<i>“Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”</i>
<b>Mark 8:36</b>	<i>“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”</i>
<b>Hebrews 10:26-27</b>	<i>“For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, {27} but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.”</i>
<b>Matthew 10:22</b>	<i>“And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.”</i>
<b>Luke 14:33</b>	<i>“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”</i>

### C. TRUST HIM AS LORD AND SAVIOR.

You must individually receive and acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. You must stop trusting in your own deeds and trust in Jesus Christ, and what He has done for you on the cross. Jesus is Lord. He created you. He paid the penalty for you. He wants to live in your heart - to love you and to guide you. He will strengthen you and give you peace in hard circumstances. He will give you joy and hope while others despair. **He will always love you.**

<i>John 1:12</i>	<i>“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”</i>
<i>Romans 10:9</i>	<i>“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”</i>
<i>Matthew 11:28-29</i>	<i>“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. {29} Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”</i>

### D. BEGIN YOUR RELATIONSHIP THROUGH PRAYER

Prayer is simply defined as talking with God. A prayer cannot save you, but it can be a demonstration of your faith. God is all-knowing and sees what your attitude really is, so your words are not as important as your heart. If God has given you the faith to trust in Christ, through prayer, you can demonstrate your repentant submission to Him, as you receive and begin to walk in Christ's love. Please read the suggested prayer, below. If it expresses the desire of your heart pray, it right now.

#### **Suggested Prayer for Salvation**

*Lord Jesus Christ, I want to know You personally. I admit that I am a sinner. I have sinned against you, broken your laws and I deserve punishment. But I am sorry Lord. I ask You to forgive me now through what you have done. I turn from my sins and thank You for dying on the cross for me. I acknowledge You as Lord and Savior and my only hope. Please come into my heart; take control of my life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be. Show me Your ways that I may follow You always. Thank You for Your gift of salvation and for the promise of forgiveness and eternal life.*

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## WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

A Christian is not somebody born into the church, nor someone born into a Christian family or born in a particular place. A Christian is a Christ-follower. Becoming a Christian involves trusting in the person and work of the Lord Jesus, so that you can be forgiven of sin and receive Him into your life.

Many claim to be born again. Let's look at what Jesus said about those who loved Him.

<b>John 14:21</b>	<b><i>"Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."</i></b>
<b>Matthew 7:21</b>	<b><i>"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."</i></b>



How are we saved then? The Bible says we are saved by Faith.

<b>Ephesians 2:8-9</b>	<b><i>"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, {9} not of works, lest anyone should boast."</i></b>
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Is salvation something you earn?  Yes  No

What is the nature of faith? Unfortunately, Christianity has been reduced, by a large segment of Christendom, to mere belief. By faith you are saved, but what does the Bible mean when it speaks of faith. Does biblical faith mean simply an intellectual belief in Christ?

<b>Ephesians 2:10</b>	<b><i>"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."</i></b>
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According to Ephesians 2:10, why were we given new life in Christ?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

How does this same verse tell us good works relate to our salvation?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>James 2:17</b>	<b><i>"Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."</i></b>
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If we are saved by faith, is the nature of that faith simply a state of believing, or must it affect our actions?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_



## REPENTANCE

The Greek word for repentance is *metanoia*. It means a change of mind. What a change it is! It is a change of mind about sin, about God, about everything! Repentance is a combination of two things. First, we are sorry for the sin and stop living in it. Second, we start living in obedience to Christ.

**Matthew 4:17** *“From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”*

What was the summary of Jesus first message?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

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

What was the theme of Peter’s first sermon after Pentecost, in this verse?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

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

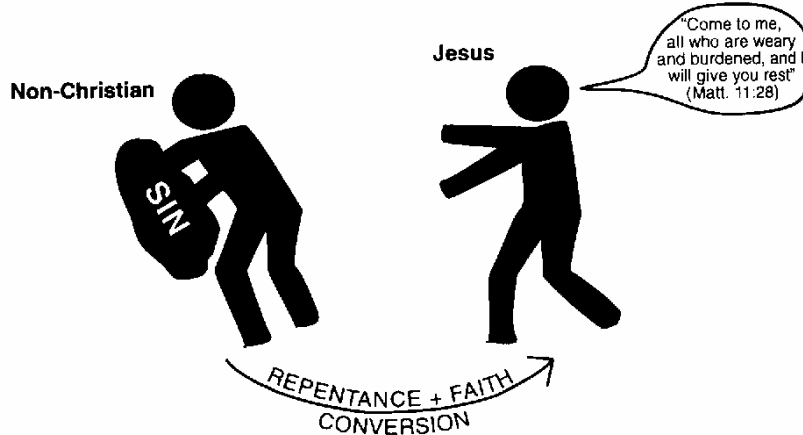
How did the Apostle Paul characterize the heart of his message in the above verse?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 15:7** *“I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”*

Who do the angels rejoice over?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_



CONVERSION IS A SINGLE ACTION OF TURNING FROM SIN IN REPENTANCE AND TURNING TO CHRIST IN FAITH



<b>Matthew 11:28-29</b>	<i>“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. {29} Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”</i>
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Conversion to Christ involves two things in one action: First, a turning **from** sin and second, a turning **to** Christ. You cannot have one without the other. True conversion brings a relationship with the Lord Jesus that involves a **threefold commitment of one’s intellect, emotions and will.**

**THREE ELEMENTS TO SAVING FAITH**

**1. Intellectual Element**

<b>Romans 10:14</b>	<i>“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?”</i>
<b>James 2:19</b>	<i>“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe; and tremble!”</i>



According to James, is intellectual knowledge or belief in Jesus enough to save?  Yes  No

**2. Emotional Element**

<b>Luke 8:47-48</b>	<i>“Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. {48} And He said to her, “Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.””</i>
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Was she healed because of her emotions or her faith?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Matthew 12:47-50</b>	<i>“Then one said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.” {48} But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” {49} And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! {50} “For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.””</i>
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Emotional love is good, but what was the basis for being in Jesus’ family?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_



### 3. Volitional Element

<i>Isaiah 55:7</i>	<i>Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon."</i>
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### THE COST OF FOLLOWING CHRIST

<i>Luke 9:23</i>	<i>"Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."</i>
<i>Matthew 10:37, 38</i>	<i>"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. {38} And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."</i>
<i>Luke 14:27-29</i>	<i>"And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. {28} For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it; {29} lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,"</i>
<i>Luke 9:62</i>	<i>"But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."</i>

How would you characterize Jesus' call to discipleship from the above verses?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_



# ENTERING HOME GROUP MINISTRY

## What does the Bible say about community?

### I. What is Church?

When we hear the word church, we tend to think of a building, a pastor, or priest, and a bunch of people sitting in pews obeying many church rules. Would you be surprised to learn that there were no church buildings for the first three hundred years of the church?

What is the church? Simply stated, the church is the people of God.

<b>Philemon 1-2</b>	<i>“Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our beloved friend and fellow laborer, {2} to the beloved Apphia, Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:”</i>
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Throughout the New Testament, there are references to the church that meets in the home. The “church” that met in these homes was the basic unit of Christianity in the foundational years of the Church of Jesus Christ. There were (and still are) certain dynamics that can only be found in small, close-knit groups. Living in community is a very important part of Christianity. Let’s take a look at the early church.

<b>Acts 2:42-47</b>	<i>“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. {43} Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. {44} Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, {45} and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. {46} So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, {47} praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”</i>
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Was the life of the early church characterized as individualistic in nature, or is it described as corporate and communal?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you think there was some power in the way that they were “*devoted to the fellowship*”?  Yes  No

What effect might had this have had on onlookers?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_



## II. Types of Church Meetings

### A. TEACHING MEETINGS

In these meetings, the apostles taught the new converts.

<i>Acts 20:7</i>	<i>“Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.”</i>
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### B. PRAYER MEETINGS

<i>Acts 4:24</i>	<i>“So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: “Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them,”</i>
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### C. EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS

In these meetings, Christians preached publicly to the win souls.

<i>Acts 14:1</i>	<i>“Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed.”</i>
<i>Acts 8:6</i>	<i>“And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.”</i>

### D. FELLOWSHIP MEETINGS

These were the predominant meeting in which fellowship was the purpose, and the result was mutual edification.

<i>1 Corinthians 14:26</i>	<i>“How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.”</i>
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Except for the public ministry of the apostles and prophets, most ministry in the early church occurred in the homes of believers.

## What are God’s Purposes for these Fellowship Meetings?

### First Purpose: Mutual Encouragement

<i>Hebrews 10:24, 25</i>	<i>“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, {25} not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”</i>
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Each believer needs friendships. The strongest relationships are built in times of need and crisis. In the fellowship group setting, each person's needs are constantly being addressed. Fellowship group members do the caring, praying, and need-meeting for every member of their group.

### Second Purpose: Mutual Accountability

<b>James 5:16</b>	<i>“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”</i>
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### Third Purpose: Mutual Edification

Every member participates in building up the various members of the group. Paul set the standard for the church: Whenever and wherever we get together, we are to edify each other. Everyone is to participate.

<b>1 Corinthians 14:26</b>	<i>“How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.”</i>
<b>Ephesians 5:19</b>	<i>“speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,”</i>
<b>Colossians 3:16</b>	<i>“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”</i>

It is virtually impossible to fulfill Colossians 3:16 in a large setting, but very easily done in a fellowship group setting.

The Bible commands us all to be involved in building up each other! It is not a question of whether or not you need it. The issue is that mutual edification is the command of the Lord!

<b>John 13:35</b>	<i>“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”</i>
<b>John 4:21-24</b>	<i>“Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. {22} You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. {23} But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. {24} God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.””</i>

# WATER BAPTISM

There is a strong difference of viewpoint among Christians regarding this subject. It should not be a point of division among believers, but is a matter of importance for church life. Therefore, we must consider it fully.

Baptism is a non-saving act of obedience, administered to those who give a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

## I. The Case for Immersion in Baptism

The Greek word *baptizo* literally means to plunge, dip or immerse.

### NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

<b>Mark 1:9-10</b>	<i>"It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. {10} And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove."</i>
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John and Jesus were not "by" the Jordan, but were "in" the Jordan. Then Jesus came up out of the water.

<b>John 3:22-23</b>	<i>"After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. {23} Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized."</i>
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John was baptizing in that particular location because there was plenty of water there. John would only need plenty of water if he used a method of baptism which required it - full immersion!

<b>Acts 8:36-39</b>	<i>"Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" {37} Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." {38} So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. {39} Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing."</i>
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Both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and came up out of the water. In the desert, Philip and the Eunuch undoubtedly carried enough water for drinking. Therefore, they could have sprinkled, but Philip chose full immersion.

## II. What does Baptism Signify?

### A. REPENTANCE AND CONFESSION OF SIN

<b>Matthew 3:1-6</b>	<i>“In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, {2} and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” {3} For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.’” {4} And John himself was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. {5} Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him {6} and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.”</i>
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The baptism of John was associated with repentance and confession of sins.

<b>Matthew 3:7-10</b>	<i>“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? {8} Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, {9} and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. {10} And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”</i>
<b>Matthew 3:11</b>	<i>“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”</i>

Was this baptism a *means to* repentance or the *result of* repentance? The Greek word translated “*unto*” is “*eis*,” which could mean either a future goal or a past reason. Here it seems to denote a past reason, because they had already repented (in contrast to the Pharisees, who had not repented). The reference to the Holy Spirit shows that water baptism prefigured and pointed to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.



### B. RIGHTEOUSNESS

<b>Matthew 3:15</b>	<i>“But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him.”</i>
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Jesus implied that baptism was connected to the fulfilling of righteousness, which means, it is an action taken by one who wants to enter a state of, or continue to be right with God.

## C. DISCIPLESHIP AND OBEDIENCE

**Matthew 28:19-20** *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, {20} teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.”*

Jesus ties water baptism to (1) being a disciple and (2) observing what He commanded. Baptism is not optional!

Baptism by immersion in water signified repentance, confession of sins, willingness to obey righteousness, commitment to discipleship, observance of the commands of Jesus... and prefigured the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

### John's Baptism

**Acts 19:3-5** *“And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John's baptism.” {4} Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” {5} When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”*

John's baptism was preparatory and incomplete.

## III. Water Baptism and Salvation

Please note - What follows teaches the doctrine of baptismal emersion. The authors respect and honor believing Christians who baptize in other ways, but we will be teaching only emersion, as it is the example Christ and His disciples gave us, and the doctrine we follow and teach.

### A. BAPTISM DOES NOT SAVE YOU.

**Mark 16:16** *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”*

Water baptism is an important act of true Christian obedience. An obedient Christian will be baptized, though baptism does not save him. Who did Jesus say would be condemned? Answer: “Whoever does not believe”  
Condemnation comes from unbelief, not a lack of baptism.



### The House of Cornelius

The house of Cornelius received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized. Water baptism was not necessary for their salvation.

<b>Acts 10:46-48</b> (For the complete context, refer to Verses 34-45)	<i>“For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, {47} “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” {48} And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.”</i>
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### The Thief on the Cross

<b>Luke 23:43</b>	<i>“And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.””</i>
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This was spoken to the thief who never had a chance of being baptized.

### Peter’s Sermon at Pentecost

<b>Acts 2:38</b>	<i>“Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”</i>
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The crowd responded to His preaching by asking Peter “what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37) Peter responded by saying that each person must repent. Then they could be baptized in the Holy Spirit and in water. Repentance had to be an individual decision. It is important to ask of each Scripture that mentions baptism, if it refers to water baptism or the work of the Holy Spirit that water baptism represents. Let’s look at the following verses.

### Additional Scriptures

<b>Romans 6:3-6</b>	<i>“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? {4} Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. {5} For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, {6} knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.”</i>
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Romans 6:3-6 does not refer to water baptism, but to what water baptism symbolizes - the spiritual act of union with Christ in his death.

<b>1 Peter 3:21</b>	<i>“There is also an antitype which now saves us; baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,”</i>
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1 Peter 3:21 says, it is not the outward act of water baptism which saves us, but the petition of the inner man in faith towards God.

## B. TRUE SALVATION

<i>Acts 16:31</i>	<i>“So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.””</i>
<i>John 3:16</i>	<i>“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”</i>
<i>Romans 4:3</i>	<i>“For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.””</i>
<i>1 Corinthians 1:17</i>	<i>“For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.”</i>

The Scriptures show us that faith in Christ saves, not faith plus baptism.

## C. THE FALSE GOSPEL

<i>Galatians 1:6-9</i>	<i>“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, {7} which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. {8} But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. {9} As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”</i>
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Any gospel that requires something in addition to faith in the cross of Christ is a false gospel. Faith plus anything else is a false gospel. This applies equally to water baptism.

## IV. The True Effect of Baptism

Believer’s water baptism is an outward demonstration of an inward reality. Baptism is a spiritual act and it represents spiritual realities.

### A. SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

One of the most important aspects of baptism is that it signifies separation from the world’s sinful system. It signals union with Christ and His people. . Jesus commanded us to baptize. God wants his disciples to identify with the people of God and make a clean break with the world.

## B. TESTIMONY

### 1. Outward Testimony

It is interesting to see that many of the early baptisms were done in the open air. It was a testimony before God but also before men. Today, as before, a person who claims to be a Christian, but secretly practices Hinduism, Islam, or Judaism may not be persecuted, but once they are baptized, watch out! They are likely to be disowned, ostracized, or perhaps even murdered. Testimony in baptism is a true commitment.

### 2. Inward Testimony

In the marriage ceremony, saying, "I do" confirms the inner commitment that a new husband makes to his wife. In the same way, baptism confirms our inner commitment to the Lord. It is a source of strength and rejoicing to know on that on a certain day, we publicly said, "I do" to Jesus and "I do not" to the world.

Many believers today think so little of baptism that they have not yet made the commitment to be baptized. However, when we look back to the early church, we see that people usually were baptized immediately.

### 3. Immediately!

When possible, believers ought not to delay being baptized. Baptism demonstrates commitment to Christ and separation from the ways of the world. Following a commitment to Christ, baptism opens the door of obedience to all God's blessings... and is a testimony of separation unto the Lord. The spiritual significance of baptism is this; We have died with Christ to the world and are now alive in Him.

## C. STRENGTHENING

Separation from the world, our good testimony in baptism and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the act of baptism work to strengthen the believer and confirm his or her standing in Christ. In some sense, baptism is also a means of grace. It brings blessings to God's people.

## D. SHOULD INFANTS BE BAPTIZED?

Some groups that follow Christ believe baptism is a necessary work that bestows saving grace. Some Protestant denominations teach that infants of believing parents should be baptized. We believe and teach that baptism follows an individual's decision to receive Christ as Savior. It is a symbol and testimony of that act.

<b>Galatians 3:27</b>	<b><i>"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."</i></b>
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<b>Matthew 28:19</b>	<b><i>“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”</i></b>
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### CONCLUSION REGARDING BAPTISM

Baptism is a post-salvation act of obedience. It is to be administered by immersion, to those who give a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ. It should be one of the first acts of obedience for new believers. It will greatly help them in their separation from the world. Water baptism will be a powerful spiritual blessing to those who it as an act of loving obedience.

## V. Devotional Times with God

One of the privileges of having a personal relationship with the Lord is that we can spend times alone with Him. There are many reasons why Christians choose to do this. Here are two of the most important!

### FIRST REASON: TO GIVE DEVOTION TO GOD

<b>Psalm 29:2</b>	<b><i>“Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.”</i></b>
<b>2 Chronicles 31:21</b>	<b><i>“And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart. So he prospered.”</i></b>

- God deserves our devotion! (Revelation 4:11)
- God desires our devotion (John 4:23)

### SECOND REASON: TO GET DIRECTION FROM GOD

<b>Psalm 25:4</b>	<b><i>“Show me Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths.”</i></b>
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God still speaks to his people. One of the greatest lies of our times is that God is silent towards us because he only speaks through His written Word. Your spirit is able to perceive God’s spirit. Part of prayer is listening to God and hearing Him.

<b>Acts 11:12</b>	<b><i>“Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house.”</i></b>
<b>Acts 13:2</b>	<b><i>“As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.””</i></b>

### TWO THINGS TO DO IN A QUIET TIME WITH THE LORD

## CONSIDER YOUR WAYS.

<b>Proverbs 3:6</b>	<i>“In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.”</i>
<b>Proverbs 4:26</b>	<i>“Ponder the path of your feet, And let all your ways be established.”</i>

## COMMIT YOUR DAY AND EVERYTHING IN IT TO HIM.

<b>Psalm 37:5</b> <i>Living Bible Paraphrase (LB)</i>	<i>“commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him to help you do it and he will.”</i>
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## THIRD REASON: TO GAIN DELIGHT IN GOD

<b>Psalm 16:11</b>	<i>“You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”</i>
<b>Psalm 37:4</b>	<i>“Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.”</i>

***The better you get to know Christ, the more you will love Him!***

The objective of your devotional time is not to study about Christ, but to actually spend time with Him, so you will come to know Him.

## FOURTH REASON: TO GROW AND BECOME MORE CHRIST-LIKE EVERY DAY

<b>Acts 4:13</b> <i>Living Bible Paraphrase (LB)</i>	<i>“When the council saw the boldness of Peter and John... they were amazed and realized what being with Jesus had done for them.”</i>
<b>2 Corinthians 3:18</b> <i>Living Bible Paraphrase (LB)</i>	<i>“We... are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”</i>
<b>2 Peter 1:3, 4</b> <i>Living Bible Paraphrase (LB)</i>	<i>“For as you know him better and better God will give you, through his great power, everything you need for living a truly good life... He has promised to save us... and to give us his own character!”</i>

## DAILY DEVOTIONAL TIME: A DISCIPLINED PROCESS

### 1. SELECT A SPECIFIC TIME FOR YOUR DEVOTIONS

The best time for quiet devotions is when you are fresh and open to hear the voice of God. Following a busy day, it can be difficult to focus on the Lord.

### Consider the Morning for your Devotional Time.

- ☑ **The Example of Bible Characters**  
(Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Hannah, Hezekiah, David, Daniel, Jesus, etc.)
- ☑ It seems logical to begin the day with it.  
*“The best time to tune your instrument is before you play in the concert, not after!”(Source unknown)*
- ☑ Meeting with God in the morning demonstrates that He is your first priority. You give Him the first part of your day.
- ☑ You are likely to be more rested and your mind is less cluttered. It is often the quietest time!
- ☑ Whatever time you set. Be consistent!

### How long should a devotional time be?

- ☐ Start with 15 minutes and let it grow. Do not watch the clock!  
Emphasize quality, not quantity!

## 2. CHOOSE A SPECIAL PLACE.

<b>Luke 22:39</b>	<b><i>“Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him.”</i></b>
<b>Mark 1:35</b>	<b><i>“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.”</i></b>

## 3. GATHER THE RESOURCES YOU WILL NEED.

- ☑ A Bible - with readable print
- ☑ A notebook - to write down what the Lord says to you , and to keep your prayer list
- ☑ A songbook - if you want to sing (perhaps even a guitar or similar instrument)
- ☑ Some people have daily devotionals published by others that present a short thought for the day.

## 4. BEGIN WITH RIGHT ATTITUDES

Have reverence and a willingness to obey what is in your heart.

<b>Psalm 46:10</b>	<b><i>“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”</i></b>
<b>Psalm 119:18</b> <i>Living Bible Paraphrase (LB)</i>	<b><i>“Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.”</i></b>

## 5. FOLLOW A SIMPLE PLAN

### **Eighteen Minutes with God (A plan to get you started)**

**1. Relax and Rejoice (two minutes)**

Be still! Be quiet! Slow down! Prepare your heart. Take a few deep breaths. Wait on God. Worship!

**2. Read (four minutes)**

See the section on “How to Read God's Word”

Begin reading where you left off the day before. Read until you feel God has told you something. Then stop and think about it. If you can, use a devotional study.

**3. Reflect. (four minutes)**

Meditate on what you have read. What does it mean, concerning your day ahead and your life? Write down your thoughts.

**4. Record (two minutes)**

Write a personal application statement that is practical, possible, and measurable.

**5. Request (two minutes)**

Conclude your quiet time by talking to God about what He has shown you and making requests from your prayer list.

**6. Relax and Rejoice (four minutes)**

Just as you began with this, end by wrapping yourself in rejoicing, with praise for God. Rest in Him and then go face the day!

## OVERCOMING PROBLEMS WITH YOUR DEVOTIONAL TIME

### FIRST PROBLEM: LACK OF DISCIPLINE

(This is often called “the battle of the blankets.”) Your first problem in establishing a quiet time comes the moment you wake up each morning and struggle with the question, Am I going to get out of bed?

#### Suggestions

- Go to bed on time.
- Get up immediately.
- Be aware of quiet time robbers (Distractions steal your attention - see the next problem, below.)
- Fall asleep thinking spiritual thoughts.

### SECOND PROBLEM: DISTRACTIONS

Satan will try to use anything to get your mind to wander during quiet time.

### Suggestions

- Get out of bed.
- Get thoroughly awake.
- Read and pray aloud.
- Walk during your prayer time.
- Keep a notepad nearby.

### THIRD PROBLEM: DRYNESS (The battle of the blahs)

Sometimes you will feel like you are not getting anything out of your quiet time. **Never judge your quiet time by your feelings.**

### Possible causes of Spiritual Dryness

1. Your physical condition
2. Disobedience to God
3. Rushing through your quiet time (lack of focus or determination)
4. Getting in a rut
5. Not sharing insights with others
4. Lack of diligence

**Your greatest problem will be your struggle to stay consistent. Satan fights nothing harder than a devotional time.**

### Suggestions

- Make a covenant or vow to God.
- Schedule your devotional time on your daily calendar.
- Be prepared for excuses. Your day will provide a never-ending supply.
- Leave your Bible open at night to the passage for the next day!

### What if I miss a day?

These are three simple reminders to help you persevere in your quiet time.

1. Don't get on a guilt trip when you do miss a day.
2. Don't get legalistic. You live by grace.
3. Don't give up. It bears repeating. Do not give up! It takes three weeks for you to become familiar with a new task. Then it takes another three weeks before it becomes a comfortable habit.

**Galatians 6:9**  
Living Bible Paraphrase  
(LB)

***“Let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up.”***