



FAITH BIBLE COLLEGE

2 Timothy 2:15

*"Study to show thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needs not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth."*

RELATIONSHIPS

Volume 11



FAITH BIBLE COLLEGE

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Dear Student

Welcome to Faith Bible College

*Our Vision is to Empower, Edify & Equip the Body of Christ in
The Word of Truth, So that we can be Leaders of Today
& Teachers for Tomorrow.*

*"Leaders are those whose aroma lingers long after they have completed
the task and others who sniff it, wants to be like them"*

*"Leadership is not a title but a Function
& that Function pulls you to its Position
& the Position determines your Title"*

*Blessings & Graceful Studying
Professor Ronnie Moodley*

Faith Bible College

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ASSIGNMENTS

TOWARDS

Final Examination

1st Year Students

Assignments – Must be done in TYPING

Not less than 3 Pages – Not more than 5 Pages each With Name & Student Number

**Marks will be awarded for (I) Presentation; (II) Contents (III) Neatness
& (IV) Research**

Volume 11

1) KNOWING GOD 1 & 11

Explain how the principle found in the Book of John, chapter 3:30 affects knowing God, & why must repentance be an attitude of someone who wants to know God.

2) PRAYER AND FASTING:

Choose three, of the types of prayer in the “hour of prayer” & define and describe how to do each one, even using your own personal experience.

3) PRAISE AND WORSHIP:

Choose six forms of worship, describe them, & defend their validity through the use of various scripture. Explain the Book of Revelation, chapter 7:9-11.

4) CHURCH FELLOWSHIP:

Explain how fellowship is crucial and essential in the witness of the church. List & briefly explain the two general hindrances to fellowship.

Thanking You

Professor Ronnie Moodley

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Knowing God I: Syllabus

Notes —

CLASS # 1:

- I. Introduction to Knowing God.
- II. The Doctrine of Knowing God:
 - A. The Importance of Knowing God.
 - B. How Can God be Known?

CLASS #2:

- II. The Doctrine of Knowing God:
 - B. How Can God be Known? (cont.).

CLASS #3:

- III. Four Aspects in Knowing God:
 - A. Introduction.
 - B. Awareness.
 - C. Attributes.

CLASS #4:

- III. Four Aspects in Knowing God:
 - C. Attributes. (cont.)
 - D. Actions.

CLASS #5:

- III. Four Aspects in Knowing God:
 - E. Attitudes.
- Exam.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

Knowing God I: Exam

Possible 20 Point Questions

- 1) Explain the two basic problems in the knowledge of God (pp. 6, 7).
- 2) Using Scripture, develop the idea of the reception of general revelation (pp. 10, 11).
- 3) Explain how the processes of remembering and forgetting work together in knowing God (pp. 30, 31).
- 4) Use 1 Jn 4 to explain the process of knowing God through attributes (pp. 33-35).
- 5) List the three “P’s” that describe our time spent with God and briefly describe each one (pp. 40, 41).
- 6) Discuss the concept of an eternal attitude (pp. 46, 47).

Possible 10 Point Questions

- 1) Use two Scriptures to show the importance of knowing God (pp. 4, 5).
- 2) Use Ephesians to list three aspects of the mystery of God (p. 5).
- 3) Use two Scriptures to show that it is God who must make Himself known to us (p. 8).
- 4) Define the word “revelation” (p. 9).
- 5) In two or three sentences, explain the idea of progressive revelation (p. 13).
- 6) List three mediums of special revelation (pp. 15-17).
- 7) What is subordinate revelation (pp. 18, 19)?
- 8) Choose two of the “Jehovah” names of God and define and describe them (no Scripture references necessary; p. 28).
- 9) List three negative actions that hinder knowing God (pp. 36, 37).
- 10) Refer to one Scripture to explain how obedience is directly connected to knowing God (p. 39).
- 11) Briefly explain how the principle found in Jn 3:30 affects knowing God (p. 44).
- 12) Why must repentance be an attitude of someone who wants to know God (p. 46)?

KNOWING GOD: PART I

I. Introduction to Knowing God.

Notes —

A. The Importance of Knowing God.

1. The topic of knowing God is the most important topic in Christian theology.
2. The topic of knowing God provides the understanding of what leads to salvation and what comes forth from salvation.
3. Eternal life is to know God (see Jn 17:3).

Discussion Point

What are the implications of Jn 17:3?

B. The Contents of this Course.

1. This course is the first part of a two part series.
 - a. This course focuses on the **doctrine and theology** of knowing God.
 - b. Knowing God II focuses on the **practice** of knowing God.
2. This course is divided into two sections.
 - a. The doctrine of knowing God.
 - 1) This portion of the course focuses on the question of how man comes to know God initially.
 - 2) The contents of this portion of the course are used by permission and based on the teachings of Dr. J.R. Williams, who is Professor of Theology at Regent University.¹

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

b. A theology of knowing God.

- 1) This portion of the course develops a systematic way to understand how Christians grow in their knowledge of God.
- 2) This part of the courses is called “The Four Aspects on the Road (or path) to Knowing God.”

II. The Doctrine of Knowing God.

A. The Importance of Knowing God.

1. In human reflection.

- a. History shows us that man has always been preoccupied with the question of the knowledge of God.
- b. Regardless if the search to answer this question has come through religion or philosophy, the fact remains that man has always considered the question of how to know God as his greatest priority.
- c. Inevitably, there is something in man that reaches out for this supreme knowledge.

Discussion Point

Can you think of ways that man (both Christian and non-Christian) seeks to know God through alternative religious practices, philosophies and sciences?

KNOWING GOD: PART I

2. In the Scriptures.

a. The importance as seen from the human perspective.

- 1) Consider the cry of Job (Job 23:3).
- 2) Consider the heart of Philip in his request (Jn 14:8).

b. The importance as seen from the divine perspective.

- 1) What is God's opinion of the importance of the knowledge of God (see Jer 9:23, 24)?
- 2) What is God's ultimate desire and intention (see Is 11:9 and Jer 31:34)?
- 3) What does God want from His people more than anything else (see Hos 6:6 and Mt 23:23)?

c. The tragedy that results from the lack of knowledge of God. (Follow the progression of thought in Is 1:2-7 and Hos 4:1-6).

Notes —

B. How Can God Be Known?

1. The mystery of God.

a. First, we must understand and accept that God can not be known in the exact same way that other things or persons can be known (see 1 Kgs 8:12).

b. God's actions always include a certain aspect of mystery.

- 1) There is "the mystery of His will" (Eph 1:9).
- 2) There is "the mystery of Christ" (Eph 3:4).
- 3) There is "the mystery of the Gospel" (Eph 6:19).

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

c. There are two problems that add to the “mystery aspect” of knowing God.

1) God is infinite and man is finite.

- a) The finite can not reach the infinite. Man, by himself, is not capable of knowing God (see Job 11:7 and 37:23).
- b) This truth is clearly stated in Is 55:8, 9.
- c) Consider also, the obvious support of this truth in 1 Cor 1:21.

2) God is holy and man is sinful.

- a) Man’s sin keeps him from knowing God. In a certain sense, this problem is even more serious than the first problem.
- b) Study the context of Is 8:17.

Discussion Point

Use the following diagram to explain the problem of a Holy God in relationship to sinful man.

PURITY CAN SEE PURITY (Mt 5:8)	IMPURITY CAN SEE IMPURITY (Pr 17:4)
<u>PURITY CAN NOT SEE IMPURITY</u> (Hab 1:13)	<u>IMPURITY CAN NOT SEE PURITY</u> (Pr 17:20)

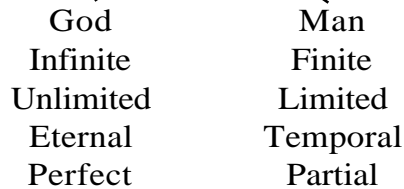
Discussion Point

Use the following diagram to promote discussion concerning how God overcomes the problems that man faces in his quest to know God.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

Mystery is Produced by the Difference Between God and Man



1 Cor 13:10

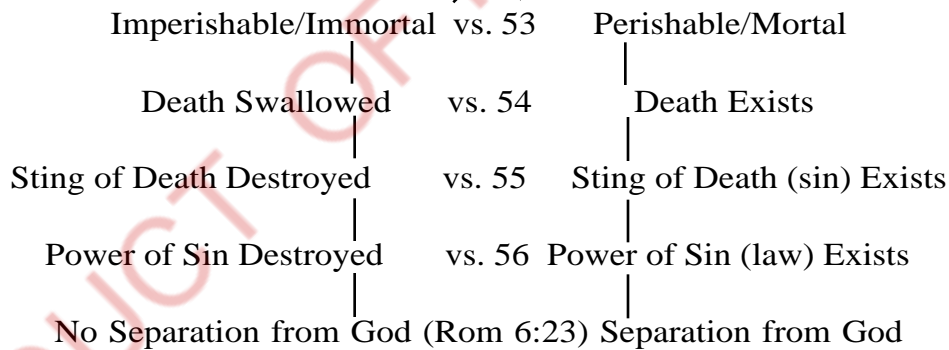
When the Perfect Comes, the Partial will be Done Away

Why is 1 Cor 13:10 true?

Because the process of knowing God is the process of being transformed into the image of Jesus. This process occurs through revelation or seeing Jesus (study 2 Cor 3:18). Thus 1 Cor 13:12 connects the concept of seeing face to face with the concept of full knowledge. Man can not know God. God must make Himself known. He does this through revelation.

1 Cor 15:51

It is a Mystery but We Shall be Changed



Everything is moving towards knowing God perfectly. The problem is moving towards the resolution. In the end we will be changed and we will know God fully. Meanwhile we are being changed and we know God in part. Through revelation we can know God now. As we see God we experience eternal life now (review Jn 17:3).

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

- d. God has provided a salvation that enables us to know Him.
 - 1) How can we know God in spite of the obstacles presented?
 - 2) We can not, by ourselves, know God. God must make Himself known.
 - a) He chooses us. We do not choose Him (Jn 15:16).
 - b) He finds us. We do not find Him (Lk 15:4).
 - c) He draws us. We do not come to Him (Jn 6:44).
 - d) It is His will. It is not our will (Jn 1:13).
 - 3) These truths are hard for man to accept. It means that Jesus is the stumbling block for all mankind; only through Him can man know God. God is the source of all good things (Jms 1:17). He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end (Rev 1:8).
 - 4) Even the ability to know Him begins with Him. God provides knowledge of Himself because He must provide knowledge of Himself. There is no other way that finite and sinful man can know Him. God must provide revelation.
 - 5) The ultimate revelation of God is Jesus Christ. Christ solves both of the problems that prevent man from knowing God.

Man's Problem: God is infinite and man is finite.

Solution in Christ: Jesus becomes finite.

Through the Incarnation God becomes knowable and visible to men (Jn 14:7). God reveals Himself in Christ in a way that man can understand and relate to (Phil 2:7).

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

Man's Problem: God is holy and man is sinful.

Solution in Christ: Jesus becomes sin.

Through the atonement God becomes knowable and visible to men (2 Cor 5:21). God reveals Himself in Christ in a way that man can understand and relate to (Heb 4:15, 16).

2. God is known by Revelation.
 - a. Introduction to Revelation.
 - 1) "Revelation" means a removing of the veil.
 - 2) In Greek, the word is "apokalupsis" (which means uncovering).
 - 3) The uncovering or revelation is done by God Himself. It is God's manifestation of Himself (see Mt 16:17, Jn 1:13 and Jn 6:44).
 - 4) Mystery and revelation are naturally connected.
 - a) Consider Dan 2:19; Eph 3:3; and Col 1:26.
 - b) Consider how Mk 4:11, 12 shows the futility of man's attempt to know the mysteries of God without revelation.
 - b. General Revelation.
 - 1) The medium of general revelation.
 - a) The General revelation of God is revealed through the heavens and the earth.
 - (1) The heavens: sun, moon, stars, etc.
 - (2) The earth: sea, mountains, forests, harvests, etc.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

Discussion Point

Use the following Scriptures to consider how God reveals Himself through His creation:
Ps 19:1, 2; Rom 1:20; and Acts 14:17.

b) Mankind receives and expresses general revelation.

(1) Man was made in the image of God (Gen 1:26), and is therefore a reflection of God.

(2) Man can reason. He has a sense of morality (Rom 2:15). He is given dominion over creation. He has a free will.

c) History expresses general revelation.

(1) History is truly **His story**, the story which belongs to God. Thus, God is revealed in it.

(2) For example, the justice of God is revealed in the rise and fall of nations.

2) The contents of general revelation.

a) God's eternal power and deity (Rom 1:20).

b) God's benevolence and concern for men (Ps 145:15, 16 and Mt 5:45).

c) God's righteousness (Prov 14:34 and Rom 1:32).

3) The reception of general revelation.

a) Study Rom 1:18-32 to see the weakness of general revelation. Because of his sin, man rejects general revelation.

(1) Man suppresses the truth, although God has made it obvious (vs. 18, 19).

(2) Man dishonors God and does not show gratitude to God (vs. 21).

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

- (3) Thus, man is futile in his thinking and his heart is darkened (vs. 21). He can not know God. General revelation is not enough. Man needs something else.
 - (4) The tragedy of this whole process is caused by man's desire to be wicked. Thus, he exchanges the truth about God for a lie (vs. 25). Man is no longer able to know God (vs. 28).
 - (5) It must be remembered that man is **without excuse** (Rom 1:20). He is guilty by his own choice.
- b) The error of natural theology.
- (1) Natural theology says that man can know God through general revelation.
 - (2) Although there is a general revelation, man's sinfulness keeps him from knowing God through it.
 - (3) If man were sinless, then He could know God through natural theology.

Author's Comment:

It is interesting to think about the symbolic language that is used in Psalms (for example: 65:12, 13; 66:1-4; 96:12, 13; 97:1, 6) and other parts of the Bible. Perhaps when Adam walked the earth before the fall (and in the new heavens and the new earth) the natural creation of God actually spoke forth the greatness of God in a way that enabled Adam to know God (consider Ps 19:1, 2).

It is also interesting to realize that a knowledge of God through special revelation allows us to be much more aware of general revelation.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

c. Special revelation.

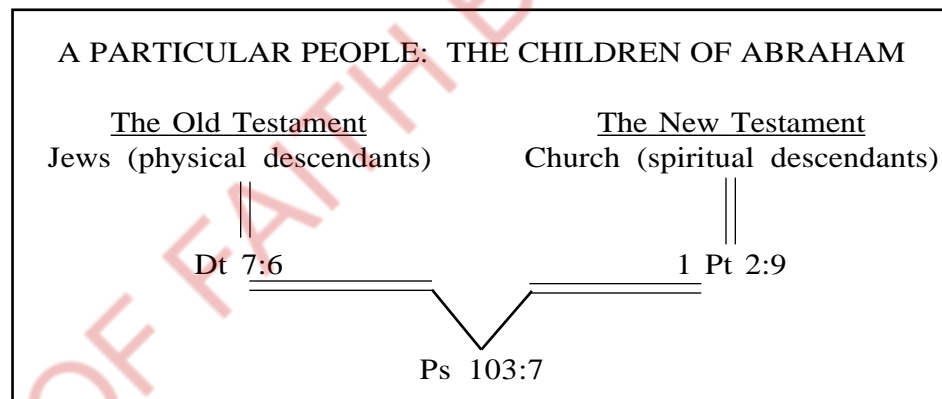
1) The character of special revelation.

a) Special revelation is particular.

(1) God reveals Himself to a particular people. The “people of God” include the physical and spiritual descendants of Abraham (Gal 3:7).

Discussion Point

Use the following diagram to explain how special revelation is particular.



(2) Why is special revelation given to a particular group of people?

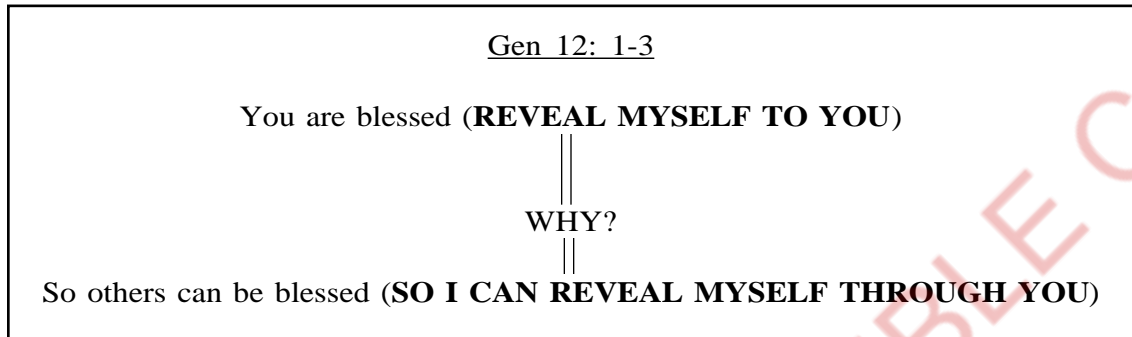
(a) Because God has chosen to use a “vessel methodology,” which means that God works through the vessels of His choosing to make Himself known to all peoples.

(b) Special revelation is given to some, not to exclude others, but to include others. God makes Himself known **through** a particular people.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Discussion Point

Use the following diagram to discuss special revelation.



- b) Special revelation is progressive.
- (1) From Genesis to Revelation, special revelation increases.
 - (2) The increase of special revelation is not from truth to non-truth.
 - (3) It is from lesser revelation to greater revelation.
 - (a) Thus, the law is not destroyed or replaced. It is fulfilled.
 - (b) God does not change. Our ability to understand Him changes. The law does not change. Our ability to do the law changes.

Discussion Point

Use the previous concept to discuss the progressive nature of revelation as revealed in the Old and New Testament.

Notes —

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

c) Special revelation is saving.

(1) General revelation reveals God as Creator and Judge. He is not revealed as Redeemer. Thus, general revelation has no saving power.

(2) Special revelation reveals God as Redeemer.

(a) In the Old Testament, through the atonement sacrifices, the exodus, etc. (see Ex 20:2 and Is 43:3).

(b) In the New Testament, through Jesus Christ.

Discussion Point

Discuss how you would respond to someone who says they are a Christian simply because they believe that God created the world and is the judge of all people.

d) Special revelation is verbal.

(1) General revelation is not verbal (Ps 19:3).

(2) Special revelation is verbal. The general becomes specific and defined. The indirect becomes direct. The non-verbal becomes verbal.

(3) Special revelation is verbal in the Word of God.

(a) In the Old Testament Scriptures.

(b) In the New Testament Scriptures and in Jesus Christ.

(4) Special revelation is verbal through the Word bearers.

(a) Through the Old Testament prophets.

(b) Through the New Testament Saviour, Apostles, and Church.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

e) Special revelation is personal.

Notes —

(1) In the Old Testament.

(a) God gives His personal name to Moses (Ex 3:1-14).

(b) God speaks with Moses like a friend (Ex 33:11).

(c) He personally appears to Samuel (1 Sam 3:21).

(2) In the New Testament.

(a) The climax of personal revelation is Jesus Christ.

(b) God becomes flesh (Jn 1:14).

(c) Man sees God (Jn 14:9).

(3) Ultimately, the revelation must be personal, because:

(a) The revelation is to a personal being (man).

(b) It is from a personal being (God).

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about revelation of God being verbal and personal.

2) The medium of special revelation.

a) Special revelation was expressed through the Old Testament prophets.

(1) The prophet held a unique position. Consider Amos 3:7 in terms of prophets being special communicators of special revelation.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

(2) The prophet was important.

(a) The prophet was used to put the events of history in divine perspective. Historical events were interpreted by the prophets as special revelations of God's purposes.

(b) The prophet declared God's special revelation in many different ways and in many different forms (poetry, law, history, parables, proverbs). The importance of prophecy is not in the form but in the message.

(3) The purpose of the prophet was to prepare for the greater revelation of Jesus Christ (Jn 5:39).

b) Special revelation is revealed through Jesus.

(1) The climax of special revelation comes through Jesus Christ (consider Heb 1:1, 2).

(2) The revelation through Jesus was greater than the revelation through the prophets.

(a) It was more direct in that a prophet would say, "thus says the Lord," but Jesus said, "I say to you" (consider Mt. 12:22-24, 28, and Jn 7:46).

(b) It was with personal and final authority. A prophet was told something, but Jesus spoke what He was taught and what He had seen (Jn 8:28, 38).

(c) It was full. A prophet would say that he knew the way, but Jesus said that He is the way (consider Jn 14:6).

KNOWING GOD: PART I

c) Special revelation was revealed through the New Testament Apostles.

(1) Since the Gospel includes the birth, death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming of Jesus, the Apostles were needed to make known the meaning of the latter events.

(2) The Apostles were also used to explain such things as the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the formation of the Church, and the inclusion of the Gentiles (see Eph 3:4-6).

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote further discussion regarding the different mediums of special revelation.

3) The contents of special revelation.

a) First, the content is God Himself. More than anything else, special revelation reveals God (see Gen 17:1; 35:7; and Ex 3:6, 14).

(1) This does not mean that there is no more mystery. Even with special revelation mystery remains (see Ex 33:20).

(2) Even with the climax of special revelation in Jesus, mystery still remains (see Mt 17:2, 6).

(3) The content, most specifically is Jesus Christ (Gal 1:16; Acts 9:3,5).

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- b) Second, the content of special revelation is divine truth.
 - (1) It is meaningful revelation, not mystical transmission (see 1 Sam 3:21 and Is 22:14).
 - (2) The law is God's revelation of His divine righteousness. It is divine truth.
 - (3) The Gospel is the climax of the revelation of divine truth (Gal 1:12 and Jn 14:6).
- c) Third, the content of special revelation is the proclamation of God's ultimate purpose (see Eph 1:9, 10).

Discussion Point

What is God's ultimate purpose?

d. Subordinate revelation (sometimes called illumination).

1) What is subordinate revelation?

- a) Subordinate revelation is additional revelation only in the sense that it can further explain and clarify the revelation that already exists.
- b) This revelation is always subordinate and secondary to the special revelation of the Scriptures. That is, subordinate revelation must be consistent with special revelation. It must answer to it.
- c) Subordinate revelation consists of things like understanding in Bible study, prophecy, words of wisdom, etc.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

- 2) What is subordinate revelation for?
- a) It is to give the Christian believer a clearer revelation of Jesus (Eph 1:17).
 - b) It is to edify the Christian community (1 Cor 14:26).
 - c) Also consider how prophecy is related to subordinate revelation (1 Cor 12:10).
- 3) A balanced understanding of subordinate revelation.
- a) Subordinate revelation is not additional revelation in the sense of “new revelation.”
 - b) God’s truth has been fully declared in His Word.
 - c) It is not new truth. It is a deeper appreciation and understanding of what has already been revealed.
 - d) At the same time, we must accept the existence and the importance of subordinate revelation.
 - e) We must be balanced in our view of subordinate revelation.
 - (1) We must not fall into the extreme that uses subordinate revelation to gain “new” knowledge that is not consistent with or goes beyond the Scriptures. There is a “sufficiency” about Scripture, what we need to know can be found in God’s Word.
 - (2) We must not fall into the extreme that understands the closing of the “canon” (Bible) as signifying the closing of God’s mouth. This extreme says that God no longer communicates with His people or reveals Himself. The “sufficiency” of Scripture does not cause God to stop revealing Himself, His ways, and His direction through a variety of means (the content of which is consistent with Scripture).

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KNOWING GOD: PART I

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Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote further discussion about subordinate revelation.

3. God is known by Faith.
 - a. Faith is the instrument or the vehicle through which the knowledge of God comes.
 - b. There is mystery in the knowledge of God because it is the knowledge of what can not be seen (consider Heb 11:1). Nevertheless, when revelation passes through the instrument of faith, it produces a beautiful song of the knowledge of God.

Author's Illustration:

Faith is necessary in the process of knowing God in the same way that a gift needs a recipient before it is really a gift.

Faith is like the antenna of a television. The show may be being transmitted over the airways, but if your antenna does not work, then your television will not receive the program. It is the same way in knowing God.

Insert Your Illustration:

KNOWING GOD: PART I

- c. Faith is the exact opposite response to what we see in Rom 1 with respect to man's response to general revelation.
- 1) Instead of suppressing the truth, faith recognizes the truth.
 - 2) Instead of showing dishonor and ingratitude to God, faith glorifies and thanks God for His manifestation of Himself.
 - 3) Instead of exchanging the truth for a lie, faith affirms and responds to God's self disclosure.

Notes —

Discussion Point

Study Heb 11:6 and use the following diagram to explain knowing God through faith.

Faith = **Believe that He is**
|
Please God = **He who Comes to God = Those who Seek Him**

Note: Faith and relationship with God (knowing God) are directly connected. Faith starts the receiving part of the process. Faith pleases God because faith results in knowing God, and knowing God is what God wants for us and from us more than anything else.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

III. Four Aspects in Knowing God.

A. Introduction: This section introduces four aspects in knowing God: Awareness, Attributes, Attitudes and Actions.

1. The reality of knowing God.

a. It is true and it must be said, **God is incomprehensible.**

1) God is incomprehensible in the sense that there will always be those things that finite man will not be able to know or understand about an infinite God (review 1 Kgs 8:12; Is 55:8; Rom 11:33).

2) He is incomprehensible in the sense that He is God and can not simply be known in the same way that we know each other.

3) He is incomprehensible in the sense that the knowledge of One who is infinite must be infinite itself. That is, we can never come to the end of knowing God.

a) A doctor of Theology once described this truth in the following way: “The process of knowing God is like the process of education. I have completed my doctoral studies and the greatest thing that I have learned is that the more I know, the more I know that I do not know. It is the same way with knowing God. The more I come to know God, the more I come to know how much I do not know about Him.”

b) This is certainly true in the sense that the closer we get to God, the bigger He becomes. Since there is no end to His getting bigger, He is indeed incomprehensible!

b. At the same time it must be said, **although we can not know everything that God knows, we can know Him.**

KNOWING GOD: PART I

- c. There is a great difference between our God who is incomprehensible and a God who is impersonal.
- 1) Our God is incomprehensible. However, He is not impersonal.
 - 2) He is a personal God. He wants to have a relationship with His creatures. Thus, we can know God. Indeed, we must know God (review Jer 9:23,24; Hos 6:6; Heb 11:6; Jn 17:3).
 - 3) There is no higher goal than to know God (Phil 3:10).

Notes —

Discussion Point

Everybody has goals in life. Some are good goals. Some are bad goals. What are your goals? What is your highest goal that all other goals depend on? Is it to know God?

2. A review of the beginnings of knowing God.
 - a. To **know** God is very different than to **know about** God.
 - 1) The difference is the difference between being saved and being lost. It is the difference between Christianity and religiosity (outward religious practice, without an inward relationship with God).
 - 2) Christians are not simply involved in religion. We are involved in relationship.
 - b. In salvation (that is, in Jesus), the knowledge of God is revealed to us (Mt 11:27; 1 Jn 5:20). Salvation (eternal life) is to know God through His Son Jesus.
 - c. The **only** way to know God is to know Jesus (Jn 14:6; 8:19; 2 Cor 4:6; and 1 Jn 5:20).

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

Author's Comment:

The modern trend is toward a deification of humanistic tolerance and worldwide “brotherhood.” However, the modern Church must return to an understanding of the truth. The Church must not weaken before the worldly temptation to exhibit the false love of humanism (The philosophy that says - I am O.K., you are O.K.). We can not turn our heads while people are going to hell. We can not say “you are O.K.” when the person is going to hell.

We must hold strongly to the implications of the truth that **Jesus is the only way**. We must boldly declare it to a needy world even if it is against the prevailing philosophy to say such a thing.

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about **knowing vs. knowing about** God. Also, discuss whether a person can know God if they have not yielded their life to Jesus or have not even heard about Jesus yet.

3. The road (or path) to knowing God.
 - a. The road (or path) to knowing God begins at the cross and continues in Jesus.
 - b. The Holy Spirit moves us along the road (path) to knowing God. He is the motivator and the One who enables us to have a growing relationship with God.

Discussion Point

Consider 1 Cor 2:11 and Eph 1:17 and discuss the role of the Holy Spirit in helping us to grow in our relationships with God.

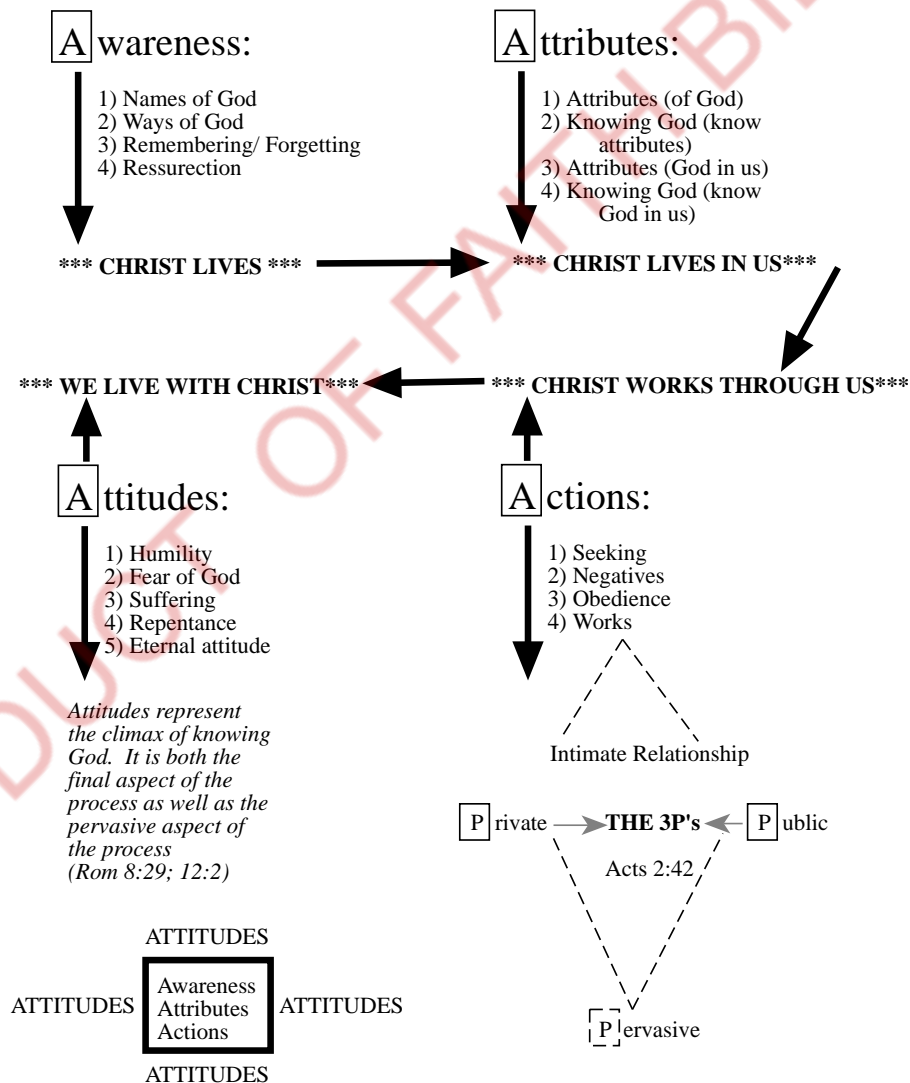
KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

- c. Once we have accepted the fact that God can be known, we should begin to develop a systematic theology concerning how to increase our knowledge of God. That is, how to build a relationship with Him. That is the goal of studying the four aspects to knowing God: Awareness, Attributes, Actions, and Attitudes.

Discussion Point

The following diagram should be referred to throughout the rest of this course. It shows both an outline of the materials of this section as well as the flow of thought of the concepts. It shows the “system” used in this systematic theology. “So let us know and let us press on to know the Lord (Hos 6:3).”



KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

B. Awareness.

1. The Names of God.

a. We are concerned with being aware of the aspects of God that will enable us to know Him better. Awareness of the names of God will enable us to know Him better because His names describe who He is. God's names are very important.

1) In Ex 20:7, it is the **name** of God that we are warned about.

2) In Mt 6:9, we are instructed to pray, hallowed be thy **name**.

3) In Ps 69:36, we are called to love His **name**.

4) In 2 Thes 1:12, we are called to glorify His **name**.

5) In Ps 18:49, we are called to praise His **name**.

6) In Acts 2:21, we are called to act upon His **name**.

7) In Heb 13:15, we are called to give thanks to His **name**.

8) In 1 Jn 3:23, we are called to believe on His **name**.

b. We need to have an experiential awareness of the names of God.

1) Remember, in the Hebrew culture a name was very important. It represented the very existence of a person. It represented that person's character.

2) God uses His names as a way of revealing Himself to us. It is the meaning of the name that adds to our knowledge of Him. Moreover, it is experiencing in our own lives the need for God with respect to what a particular name of God represents.

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- 3) Thus, as we say “El Shaddai” we remember Abraham (Gen 17:1), who was too old to have a son. We realize that God’s power is made perfect in man’s weakness.
- a) It is when we are aware of that power in our own lives that we begin to grow closer to God. As we become aware **in** (as opposed to only being aware **of**) the names of God, we will necessarily know Him more fully.
 - b) We see in Mt 18:20 that where two or three of us are gathered together **in** His name, He is there relating to us.

Notes —

Discussion Point

Discuss the Biblical concept of a person’s character being associated or identified with their name.

Author’s Suggestion:

Use a topical index or other encyclopedic reference tool to find the various names of Jesus that are in the Bible. There are at least 52 different names (for example, **The Lord of Peace** and **The Good Shepherd**).

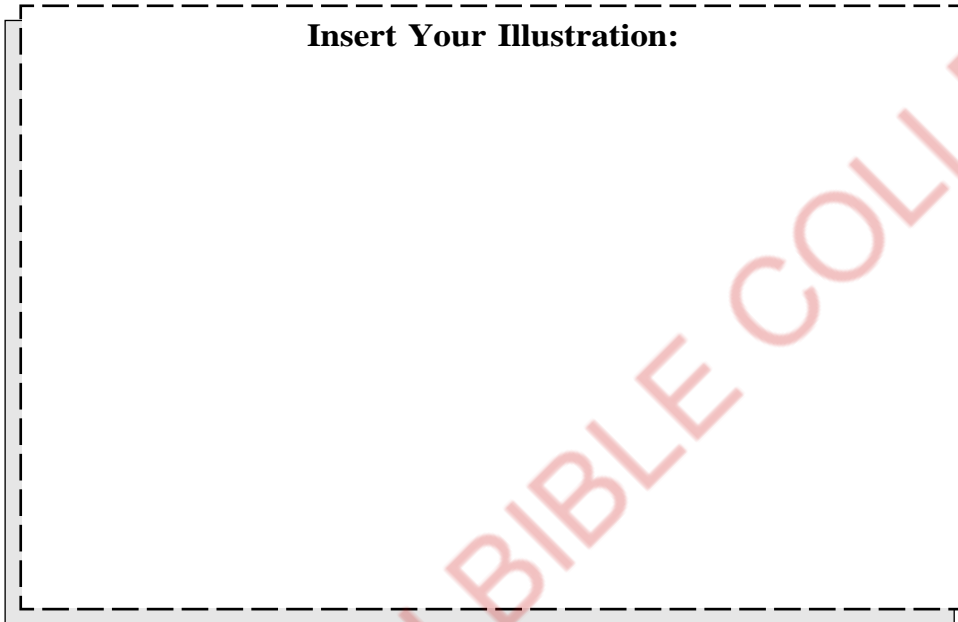
Memorize one name each week for a year. During the week take time during your prayer time to meditate on the significance of the name.

At the end of your prayers, use that particular name of Jesus.

For example, if you are praying for the peace of God in your life, then end the prayer **in the name of the Lord of Peace**. When your prayer is answered you will begin to experience (and therefore know) God more specifically in that particular area.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —



Discussion Point

Use the following diagram to study the “Jehova” names of God. Apply what you have studied to your own life. For example, allow God to be “Jehova Jireh” your provider. As you are experientially aware of the names of God, your relationship with Him will grow.

NAME OF GOD	MEANING	SCRIPTURES	DESCRIPTION
Jehova-Jireh	Jehova sees; provides	Gen22:14	Father
Jehova-Rophe	Jehova heals	Ex 15:26; Is 61:1	Doctor
Jehova-Nissi	Jehova my banner	Ex 17:15; Ps 20:5	Warrior
Jehova-M'Kaddesh	Jehova who sanctifies	Lev 20:7,8	Sanctifier
Jehova-Shalom	Jehova is peace	Jdg 6:24; Is 9:6	Comforter
Jehova-Tsidkenu	Jehova our righteousness	Jer 23:5,6	Advocate
Jehova-Rohi	Jehova my shepherd	Ps 23; 1 Pt 2:25	Pastor
Jehova-Shammah	Jehova is there	Ez 48:35	Shadow

Discussion Point

Can you say that you know God as your Father? Your doctor?
 Your warrior? Your sanctifier? Your comforter?
 Your advocate? Your pastor? Your shadow?

KNOWING GOD: PART I

2. The Ways of God.

- a. To know God we must be aware of His ways.

Discussion Point

Use Ex 33:13, Ps 25:4, and Is 58:2 to provide introductory discussion about the ways of God.

- b. Just as we come to know someone better as we begin to know that person's "ways," so too we will know God better as we become aware of His ways.
 - 1) God has certain ways that He does things. We might say something like, "that does not seem like God." This type of statement is an evaluation of God's ways.
 - 2) How do we know someone's "ways?" We are most aware of the "ways" of the people who we spend the most time with.

Author's Illustration:

For example, I am very aware of the ways of my wife. I know her habits, customs, and style of doing things. She is very calm and does not lose her temper. If someone told me that they saw her on the street shouting at someone in anger, then I would have a difficult time believing it. Why? Because that is not like her. That is **not** her way.

It is the same with God. The more time we spend with Him, the more we will come to know His ways. As we come to know His ways we will grow in relationship with Him.

Notes —

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Use Ps 95:10 to discuss the importance of being aware of God's ways.

3. Awareness of God by Remembering and Forgetting.
 - a. Remembering and forgetting are opposites.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

b. Both are necessary for knowing God.

- 1) Being aware of God requires remembering God and his past actions. Knowing is historical. As we remember God and His acts we draw closer to knowing Him. If we do not remember God and His actions, then we will fall into sin.
 - a) This is what happened to the Israelites. They did not remember how God had delivered them miraculously from Egypt. They began to murmur against God because they did not remember His way of provision. So, only four months after the parting of the Red Sea, they committed the great act of idolatry with the gold calf.
 - b) We are just like the Israelites. The solution is to continually remind yourself of God and His past actions. Cultivate an awareness in terms of remembering.
- 2) Being aware of God requires forgetting certain things. To know God better we must forget ourselves. We must forget what we have “lost” in giving our lives to God. We must practice the awareness of Paul in this regard, who was more than willing to forget himself and his past in order to gain Christ.

Notes —

Discussion Point

Study Phil 3:8-10 and its context. Discuss the idea of forgetting yourself and your past in order to know God.

Insert Your Illustration:

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

4. Awareness of the Resurrection.
 - a. In Phil 3:10 we see that Paul desired a very specific awareness. That is, an awareness of the power of His resurrection.
 - b. The reason that Christianity is what it is and other religions are what they are is because Christianity has a **living God** (who was resurrected) and other religions have dead gods.
 - 1) To be aware of the resurrection is to be aware that **He is alive**. To know God you must be able to say that Jesus is alive in your own life. You can not have a relationship with a lifeless god. You can not know something that is not alive.
 - 2) The first disciples were radically changed when they became aware of the resurrection. They went from being a defeated, depressed, and confused group of doubting “disciples,” to a victorious, joyful, and mission oriented group of believing disciples. How? Because of their awareness of the resurrection.
 - 3) This same thing happens to us when we increase our awareness of the resurrection. We grow in our relationship to God.

Discussion Point

In knowing God, we need awareness of the names of God, the ways of God, remembering/forgetting, and the resurrection. Discuss any questions related to these areas.

C. Attributes.

1. The aspects of God’s Person that define who He is may be referred to as His attributes. Throughout the Bible, we notice that these attributes are linked to knowing God.
 - a. We can know God by knowing His attributes (see Hos 2:20 and Jer 9:24).
 - b. When we know God by knowing His attributes then His attributes begin to be lived out in us. This results in a greater knowing of God (see Jer 22:16 and 1 Jn 4:7).

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2. The process of knowing God through His attributes.

a. Where does the process begin? Can man know God through his attempt to live out His attributes?

1) The answer is clearly **No!** (Consider Is 19:21).

2) God must act in order for us to know Him. The process begins with God. It is because He first shines His attributes on us that we are able to know His attributes experientially in our own lives.

3) In 1 Jn 4:19, we see that we are able to love only because He first loved us. How, then, can our love increase?

a) According to the principle of 1 Jn 4:19, our love could only increase if God's love for us increased.

b) Can God's love for us increase? **No!** Then what must increase?

c) Here we see the importance of revelation in knowing God. God's love for us can not increase, but our perception (or revelation) of that love can increase. If our revelation of God's love for us increases, then our love for God and others can increase.

Notes —

The Apostle Paul's Understanding:

Paul understood the principles that our love increases as our perception or revelation of God's love for us increases. Thus, he prayed that the Ephesians would be able to comprehend and know the love of Christ (Eph 3:18, 19).

We must apply this prayer to our lives while on the road (or path) to knowing God.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

b. Examples of the process.

1) Let us use 1 Jn 4 and the attribute of **love** to show examples of how the process of knowing God through His attributes works.

a) The process begins in the existence of the attribute of God. “God is **love**” (1 Jn 4:8).

b) We can know God through knowing His attribute. “And we have come to know the **love** that God has for us”(1 Jn 4:16; and Eph 3:19).

c) When we know God’s attribute, we can then experience that attribute in us. We can **love** (1 Jn 4:19).

d) When we experience the attribute of God in us, then we can know God more fully. “Everyone who **loves** knows God” (1 Jn 4:7).

2) Now let us use one specific verse from 1 Jn 4 (vs.16) to show the flow of the process.

a) The attribute: “**God is love.**”

b) We know God by knowing the attribute: “**we have come to know the love.**”

c) We experience the attribute working in us: “**the One who abides in love.**”

d) We know God more fully: “**God abides in him.**” The result of the process is that God is closer to us.

Discussion Point

Discuss ways in which you can apply the preceding process to your own life.

Discuss ways in which the Awareness level of knowing God leads to the Attributes level of knowing God.

3. When God acts on our behalf, He is expressing His attributes. This expression is directly connected to knowing God.

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Discussion Point

Notes —

Consider and discuss the following examples of how God's expression of Himself is connected to man's knowing Him.

Knowing Him as Reviver: Hos 6:1-3.

Knowing Him as Provider: Ex 16:12 (also see Dt 29:5).

Knowing Him as Deliverer: I Kgs 20:13 (see Ez 13:21).

D. Actions.

1. Introduction to knowing God through our actions.
 - a. It is certainly Biblical to say that we can know God by our own actions. We have introduced this concept in our study of knowing God through His attributes.
 - b. Now let us focus on knowing God through our actions.
2. Seeking God.
 - a. Many Bible passages encourage us to seek God in order to know Him.
 - b. These Scriptures are not inconsistent with our previous conclusion that God is the starting point in the process of knowing God (see Jer 24:7).
 - c. Even the desire and ability to seek God comes from God. We could say, **we seek God because He first sought us** (and gave us a desire to seek Him).

Discussion Point

Ask different students to read the following verses. Pause after the reading of each verse and discuss the opportunity we have to know God through our own actions:

Prov 2:4, 5; Lk 11:10; Heb 11:6; Is 58:2; Acts 17:26, 27;
Amos 5:4; Prov 8:17; 1 Chron 28:9; Mt 7:7; and Jms 4:8.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

3. Negative actions.

- a. Some of our actions can hinder our relationship with God.
- b. It is just as important to not do these actions as it is to do the actions that lead us to God.

1) Sin.

- a) The tragic reality of sin is that it separates us from God (Rom 6:23).
- b) It does this by darkening or hardening our heart toward God (Rom 1:21; Eph 4:17, 18; Heb 3:13).

2) Idolatry.

- a) Idols hide God from us. They become a false substitute and lead us away from God.
- b) God is a jealous God. What is He jealous for? He is jealous for His people to know Him and only Him (see Ez 39:25).

Author's Comment:

Remember, idols come in many different forms. In a pagan culture they may take the form of trees or stones. In a religious culture they may take the form of jewelry, paintings, or statues. In a hedonistic culture they may take the form of drugs, alcohol, sex, or money. In the life of a Christian they may take the form of an habitual sin, or even a vision from God, or the ministry itself. Anything that is put ahead of God, or instead of God, can be an idol and can separate us from God.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Insert Your Illustration:

Notes —

3) Neglect.

- a) The lack of action is perhaps the most negative action. Many psychologists say that the opposite of love is apathy or not caring (instead of hate).
- b) Neglecting God is the quickest way to destroy a relationship with Him.
- c) We must, instead, remind ourselves of the presence of God. Brother Lawrence called this kind of habit development “practicing the presence of God.” We must realize it is rude and insulting to ignore someone who is “with you always (Mt 28:20).”

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

Author's Illustration:

Wives despise it when their husbands are so absorbed in a football game that is on television that they do not even acknowledge their presence in the room or know that they are talking to them. Negligence destroys marriage relationships.

At times, husbands should be ashamed of themselves.

How much more does God despise it when we simply ignore Him? We are so often like Martha (Lk 10:38-42). We are so busy in what we are doing for God that we forget that He is right next to us trying to get attention. Negligence grieves the Spirit.

How much more should we be ashamed of ourselves?

Insert Your Illustration:

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

4. Obedience.

- a. In general, we can refer to those actions that lead to knowing God as actions of obedience.
 - 1) In a sense, obedience is the foundation of the knowledge of God. Consider how this was true in the case of the first disciples (Lk 5:11).
 - 2) Obedience is directly connected with knowing God. (Consider the types of connections in 1 Jn 2:3, Mk 3:35, and Lk 10:27, 28).
 - a) The condition for knowing God in Prov 2:1, 5 is obedience.
 - b) Even Pharaoh understood that there was a direct connection between obedience and knowing God (see Ex 5:2).
- b. Friendship and love are two strong descriptions for the idea of relationship. Note how both of these descriptions are related to obedience in Jn 15:14 and 14:15.

5. Works.

- a. Obedience necessarily includes good works.
 - 1) Because God has chosen to work through his vessels (vessel theology), good works are connected to knowing God.
 - 2) Indeed, relationship with God that does not result in good works is no relationship at all.

Discussion Point

Use the following Scriptures to discuss the preceding concept:
Jms 2:20, Jer 22:16, Tit 1:16, and Jn 5:36.

- b. The most important good work that we can do is to spend time with God.
 - 1) Study Jn 6:28, 29. Remember that “believe” is directly connected with relationship with God (Heb 11:6).

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Notes —

- 2) This time spent with God should be intimate and personal. It can not be superficial and institutional.
- 3) The three elements of our time spent with God: **Private**, **Public**, **Pervasive**.
 - a) Our time spent with God should be **Private**.
 - (1) Jesus had a private relationship with the Father (see Lk 5:16; 4:42; Mk 1:35; and Mt 14:23).
 - (2) God's desire for us to be alone with Him can even be understood in terms of secrecy (see Mt 6:1-6).
 - (3) Best friends are often defined as those selected few who share your most treasured secrets.
 - (4) It is humbling to think that is what God wants from us. It is humbling to think that God wants to be our best friend.
 - b) Our time spent with God should also be **Public**.
 - (1) We must avoid making the same mistake that Peter made. An intimate relationship with God must have a public aspect.
 - (2) Consider the connection between knowing God and having a public relationship with Him (Lk 22:34). (Also see Mt 10:32, 33.)
 - (3) In our public proclamation of Him, we become more dedicated to Him, and we know Him more fully.
 - (4) The better or more that you know Him, the better or more that you will make Him known. The better or more that you make Him known, the better or more that you will know Him.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

c) Our time spent with God should be **Pervasive**.

Notes —

(1) Pervasive in quantity.

- (a) We are told to pray at **all** times (1 Thes 5:17; Eph 6:18) and to acknowledge God in **all** of our ways (Prov 3:6).
- (b) Consistency of recognizing God should be a top priority for the person on the road (or path) to knowing God.

(2) Pervasive in quality.

- (a) Study Acts 2:42 and consider the four elements described (prayer, fellowship, Bible study, and breaking bread or thanksgiving and praise).
- (b) The “Knowing God II” course examines these elements in detail. Let us briefly mention these activities now.
- (c) Prayer is the primary tool or activity in knowing God. To go to prayer is nothing less than to go to where Jesus already is (Heb 7:25).
- (d) Praise and worship and knowing God are inseparable. Praise magnifies God. Somehow it takes our finite minds one step closer to the infinite nature of God.
- (e) Fellowship with others who have Christ in them is a real way of having fellowship with Christ Himself.
- (f) Bible study is more than an intellectual practice. Only the spiritual mind can understand spiritual things. Bible study is the study of the Word. It is the study of Jesus Himself.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion on the private, public, and pervasive elements of spending time with God.

E. Attitudes.

1. Attitude of Humility.

- a. There are certain **attitudes** that should “**be**” in our lives (**Beatitudes**). (See the course called “Sermon on the Mount” Mt 5-7). The first beatitude encourages us to have the attitude of humility.
 - 1) Our attitudes affect our walk with God every step of the way. For example, consider how humility affects our awareness level of knowing God (Ps 25:9).
 - 2) Without humility, a man can not know God. To know God we must be humble enough to die to ourselves and live to God. We must put on Christ. Only the poor in spirit can do this because only the poor (empty) in spirit are available for this.
 - 3) A vessel must be emptied before it can be filled up with something else (2 Tim 2:20, 21). The way to know God is to be full of Jesus. God is searching for empty (humble) vessels to fill up with Jesus.
- b. Recall the earlier statement, “the more I learn the more I find out what I do not know.” Within this remark is an attitude of humility.
 - 1) There is a similar effect on the road (or path) to knowing God (consider Jn 9:39-41 as related to an attitude of humility).

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- 2) To some degree, the process of knowing God becomes the process of knowing His infinity. Indeed, a large part of knowing God is knowing who we are in relation to Him.
- a) We must realize our smallness, our inadequacy, our finiteness, our imperfections, our uselessness, our hopelessness (apart from Him); so that we can begin to see: His greatness, His adequacy, His infinity, His perfection, His effectiveness and His hope.
 - b) To see His perfect power, we must see our weakness (2 Cor 12:9).

Notes —

Discussion Point

Use the following diagram to promote discussion of the various points that are listed above.



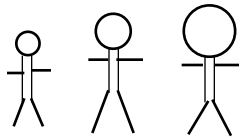
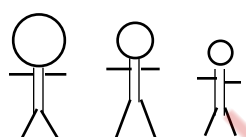
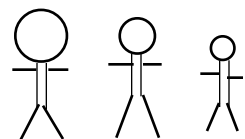
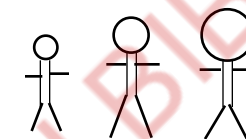
Note: An attitude of humility will bring us to God. We will then know God. The more we know God, the bigger God becomes. The bigger God becomes, the more humble we become. The more humility we have, the more we will come to God. The more we come to God, the more we will know Him, etc.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

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Discussion Point

Use the following diagram to continue the discussion.
 First, study the principle that is found in Jn 3:30
 (only one of us can increase, the other must decrease).

Perception of Myself	Perception of God	Status of Knowledge
		Decrease in knowledge as God becomes smaller because you become bigger— PRIDE
		Increase in knowledge as God becomes bigger because you become smaller— HUMILITY

- c. Our humility is consistent with the Biblical model of the relationship between God and man.
- 1) The Bible offers four main analogies to describe how we know God:
 - a) A son knowing his father.
 - b) A wife knowing her husband.
 - c) A subject knowing his king.
 - d) A sheep knowing its shepherd.
 - 2) For example, consider Ps 100:3.
 - 3) All of the Biblical analogies point to the knower looking up to the one who is known. They all focus on the humility and submission of the knower.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

2. The Fear of God.

- a. The attitude of humility yields a correct perception of God. He is a big and awesome God. Thus, the result is an attitude of fear (respect, awe).
 - 1) Above, we noted that one of the Biblical analogies of how we know God is that of a wife knowing her husband. With this in mind, consider Eph 5:33.
 - 2) Furthermore, note the strong connection between the knowledge of God and the fear of God in Is 11:2, Prov 1:7, and Ps 25:12, 14.
- b. An attitude of respectful fear is necessary to have on the road (or path) to knowing God.

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to discuss knowing God as it relates to having respectful fear of God.

3. Suffering.

- a. Since “the fear of the Lord is to hate evil” (Prov 8:13), the person who desires to know God must avoid sin. How do we avoid sin? One way to do it is to have the attitude of a sufferer.
- b. Review Heb 5:7, 8 and recall our previous study of this passage related to how Jesus suffered in order to avoid sin. Jesus had the attitude of a sufferer.
- c. Paul understood this connection and desired to have this very same attitude (Phil 3:10). He wanted to have the light (knowledge) that comes from suffering (see Job 3:20).

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

- d. Peter stated that we should “share in the sufferings of Christ” (1 Pt 4:12, 13).
 - 1) Note how this declaration is made in the context of 1 Pt 4:1. The attitude of the sufferer is used to avoid sin. Avoiding sin is connected to fearing God. Fearing God is a result of humility.
 - 2) Thus, we see the connection between the first three attitudes on the road (or path) to knowing God.
4. Repentance.
 - a. Jesus did not need to include this final attitude (for himself) in the list of attitudes that we are developing.
 - b. He was tempted in all things. Thus, he needed the attitude of humility, fear, and suffering. Yet He was without sin (Heb 4:15). He did not need to have the attitude of repentance.
 - c. We have been tempted in all things also. However, we have sin.
 - d. Thus, we must include an attitude of repentance. Without an attitude of repentance our relationship will be halted after every sin. We will not move ahead on the road to knowing God.
 - 1) To repent is to turn away from the wall that stands between us and God.
 - 2) To know God is to turn to Him (consider Hos 6:1, 3).
5. The eternal attitude.
 - a. Finally, let us consider the most important attitude that we can have if we want to know God. We will call it **the eternal attitude**.
 - b. Setting our minds on eternal things brings us closer to the Eternal One. Thus, Paul instructs us to set our minds on eternal things (Col 3:1, 2; and 2 Cor 4:18).

KNOWING GOD: PART I

- c. It is an awesome thing to realize how close we actually are to God by having an eternal attitude. We can actually live with Christ in heaven now (see Col 3:1; 1 Cor 15:48; Eph 1:3; Eph 2:6; and Jn 14:3).
- 1) According to the Scriptures we have been raised up with Christ and we sit with Him in the heavenly places. This should be no surprise, since we know that eternal life (heaven) is to know (sit with) God (see Jn 17:3).
 - 2) We can not get closer to God than the immediate closeness of sitting with Him. This is as close as we can get.

Notes —

Discussion Point

In 1 Cor 13 an eternal attitude is an attitude of faith (by faith we know God: Heb 11:6; Phil 3:9, 10), hope, and especially love.

What kind of attitude do you have? Is it a worldly attitude that focuses on the rewards of this world? Or is it an eternal attitude that focuses on eternal rewards and the things that will last?

G. Conclusion.

1. As we walk along the road (or path) to knowing God, our relationship grows more and more.
 - a. On the level of **Awareness**, we know that **Christ lives**. Christ is in heaven and we are on earth, but we can have a relationship with Him.
 - b. On the level of **Attributes**, we know that **Christ lives in us**. He is in heaven, but by His Spirit He lives in us and we live in Him.
 - c. On the level of **Actions**, we know that **Christ works through us**. He still walks the earth through an intimate relationship with His people.
 - d. On the level of **Attitudes**, we know that **we live with Christ**. We have reached the climax of knowing God. Incredibly, we leave the worldly realm and live with Christ in the heavenlies. We live the eternal life as we know God.

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Notes —

2. Growing in relationship with God is an inexpressible joy. Certainly it is the cry of every Christian's heart.

Discussion Point

Hopefully, as this course concludes, we can all commit to the following prayer:

**My God, I want to know you more.
I need to know you more. I have to know you more.**

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Knowing God I: Endnotes

Notes —

¹J. Rodman Williams, Basic Christian Theology: Part One - class notes from Regent University course (Virginia Beach, VA: CBN University Media Center, 1986). The flow of the major points of the outline in this part of the course are adapted directly from the teachings of Dr. Williams. Used by permission.

KNOWING GOD: PART I

Notes —

PRODUCT OF FAITH BIBLE COLLEGE

KNOWING GOD: PART II

Knowing God II: Syllabus

Notes 

CLASS #1:

- I. Introduction to Knowing God II.
- II. The Imitation of God.
- III. The Four Primary Activities in Knowing God: Introduction.

CLASS #2:

- III. The Four Primary Activities in Knowing God. (cont.)
- IV. Discipline in Knowing God:
 - A. Knowing God Requires Consistency.
 - B. Knowing God Requires Commitment.

CLASS #3:

- IV. Discipline in Knowing God:
 - C. The Fruit of Consistency and Commitment.
Historical Example.
- V. Crisis of Dependence upon God:
 - A. What is the Crisis of Dependence?
 - B. Consistency.

CLASS #4:

- V. Crisis of Dependence upon God:
 - C. Reward.
 - D. Intimacy.
 - E. Secrecy.
 - F. Importance.

CLASS #5:

- V. Crisis of Dependence upon God:
 - F. Importance. (cont.)
 - G. Submission.
 - H. Conclusion. Exam.

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes 

Knowing God II: Exam

Possible 20 Point Questions

- 1) Using three Scriptures, explain the essence of the imitation of God by explaining its context (pp. 54, 55).
- 2) Using Jn 15:5 and Prov 3:5, 6 explain the meaning of the “crisis of dependence upon God” (pp. 68-70).
- 3) Discuss intimacy in our relationship with God (pp. 75-77).

Possible 10 Point Questions

- 1) In one or two sentences define a Biblical imitation of God (pp. 54, 55).
- 2) List the four primary activities in knowing God and the Scripture from which the list originates (p. 57).
- 3) Refer to two Scriptures that promote consistency in prayer (p. 62).
- 4) What is the greatest reward of seeking God? Include two Scriptures (pp. 73-74).
- 5) In two or three sentences respond to this question: Why do we need a little more of the attitude of Mary and a little less of the attitude of Martha (p. 79)?
- 6) Use Mk 3:14 to show the importance of knowing God (p. 81).

KNOWING GOD: PART II

I. Introduction to Knowing God II.

Notes 

A. The Desire of Every Man.

1. The pagan world has been always haunted by the understanding that God can not be known. At best, man can search after Him, but He will always be a mystery.
 - a. Plato's words represent the frustration of the common man: "It is hard to investigate and to find the framer and the father of the universe. And if one did find Him, it would be impossible to express Him in terms which all could understand."¹
 - b. Aristotle spoke of God as "The supreme cause, by all men dreamed of and by no man known."²
2. The ancient world did not doubt that there was a God or gods. However, it believed that if gods did exist then they could not be known. They also believed that the gods were only occasionally interested in mankind.
 - a. In a world without Christ, God is a mystery.
 - b. He is a power that is desirable, but never known.

Discussion Point

In your own experiences, have you observed people involved with other religions and philosophies who were continually striving to know God, or many gods, but never able to have that relationship?
At one time, were some of you those people?

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes 

B. The Contents of This Course.

1. This course continues the study that is the desire of every man. That is, the desire to know God. Can God be known? If so, how can he be known?
 - a. These questions were answered in the course, “Knowing God I” from a theological perspective. We studied the doctrine of the knowledge of God, then formed a theology of how to know God.
 - b. This course progresses toward the next step of knowing God, which is the practical realm. This course addresses the question, “What can we do to know God better?”
2. To answer this question, we will study the following topics:
 - a. The imitation of God.
 - b. The four primary activities in knowing God.
 - c. Discipline in knowing God.
 - d. The “crisis of dependence” with God.

II. The Imitation of God.

A. What is the Imitation of God?

1. To know God is to be like God. Therefore, the concept of imitation, is very important in the study of knowing God.
2. However, we must obtain the Biblical understanding of imitation.
 - a. The apostle Paul exhorted Christians to imitate Christ. Paul also encouraged believers to imitate Him and follow His example as he imitated and followed Christ (see I Cor 4:16 and I Cor 11:1).
 - b. Paul often encouraged believers to imitate those believers whose life and faith imitated that of the Lord (1 Thes 1:6, 2:14; Heb 6:12, 13:7).

KNOWING GOD: PART II

- c. However, Paul's understanding of imitating an example does not mean that there is a code or list of rules that must be memorized and followed. Indeed, the knowledge of Christian behavior is not acquired in that type of a process.
- d. Imitation is the result of a new attitude towards God. It expresses itself, not in the following of **a rule**, but in the commitment to an **entire lifestyle**.
- e. The idea of imitation is focused on Christ as the One who enables the follower to imitate Him. Man is not the one who attains or achieves a level of imitated perfection in the likeness of God (see Eph 5:1).
- 1) Man, in his own ability, power, or works can not be like God.
 - 2) Only as man allows Jesus to work through him can he become an imitator of that example.
 - a) It is not "working" or "striving" that results in being more like Him.
 - b) Rather, it is the process of being formed into His image that results in being more like Him. This is done through walking with Him in relationship and obedience.
 - c) It is not a "striving," but instead, it is surrendering that results in the imitation of God.
 - d) The imitation of God is more of a result of relationship and obedience than it is a result of certain actions that might produce a likeness.
 - 3) To imitate God is to surrender to Him, because the only way to actually imitate God is to have God in you. Your life becomes an imitation in the sense that your life becomes a continuation of the life of Christ. Christ in you is the only real method of imitating God.
 - 4) Thus, relationship with Jesus and obedience to Him become the two main manifestations of the imitation of God.

Notes 

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes 

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to discuss what it means to be an imitator of God through Christ.

B. What is the Context for the Imitation of God?

1. References to the imitation of God are always in the following contexts.
 - a. Dying to self/ Suffering/ Laying down of your rights.
 - 1) This makes sense if we remember that in order to imitate God we must allow God to control our life.
 - 2) Thus, we must die to ourselves, be willing to suffer for the Gospel, and lay down our rights to win the lost.
 - b. Being “other” oriented.
 - 1) This makes sense because the imitation of God is actually the continuation of the life of Christ in me (Gal 2:20), and the life of Christ was a life lived for others (Mk 10:45).
 - 2) Thus, we must be others oriented, or live a life of serving others.

Discussion Point

Study the following passages and the context of each passage:
1 Cor 4:16; 1 Cor 11:1; Eph 5:1; 1 Thes 1:6; 1 Thes 2:14; and 2 Thes 3:9.

What are the implications for how we should understand the concept of imitation?

KNOWING GOD: PART II

III. The Four Primary Activities in Knowing God.

Notes 

A. Introduction.

1. Perhaps the best Scripture to use in a study concerning the practice of knowing God is Acts 2:42. In Acts 2:42 we have a list of the four activities that were used by the first members of the Church as they sought God.
 - a. Teaching (we might call this “Bible study”).
 - b. Fellowship.
 - c. Breaking of bread (or “praise and worship” since the Greek word here is “Eucharist” which means “giving of thanks”).
 - d. Prayer.
2. We will briefly study each of these four primary activities in knowing God. A more detailed study of each activity is offered in other courses.

B. Bible Study.

1. The love of the Bible.
 - a. The Bible has been translated into more than 1200 languages. Every year it is the best selling book in the world. People who love God will also love His Word.
 - 1) The purpose of the written Word of God, the Bible, is to reveal the living Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 2) To love the Bible is to love Christ. To love Christ is to love the Bible.

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes

- b. The Bible is not just another book. It is God's Word. It is alive (Heb 4:12).
 - 1) God's purpose is to transform us into the image of Jesus Christ, who is the Word (Rom 8:28, 29; Jn 1:1).
 - 2) One of the most potent ways to do this is by reading and studying the Word of God. There is power in the Word of God. It can change us. It can help us to know God.
 - 3) If you believe this and if your greatest desire is to know God and to be transformed into His image, then you will be motivated to read and study the Bible.

2. Bible study and knowing God.

- a. If we put the Word of God in us, then we will not sin against God (see Ps 119:11).
 - 1) It is our sin that separates us from God.
 - 2) The Bible can help us not to sin, and therefore not to be separated from God. That is, the Bible can help us to know God (see Rom 6:23 and Is 59:2).
- b. The Bible washes us. That is, it cleanses, purifies or sanctifies us (see Eph 5:26).
 - 1) The pure see God.
 - 2) The Bible can make us pure. That is, the Bible can help us to see or know God (see Mt 5:8).
- c. The Bible helps us to initially know God (see 1 Pt 1:23 and Rom 1:16).
- d. The Bible helps us to grow in our knowledge of God (see 1 Pt 2:2).

KNOWING GOD: PART II

Insert Your Illustration:

Notes 

Discussion Point

In what ways has studying the Bible caused you to better know God and grow in a deeper love relationship with Him?

Note: To better learn how to study the Bible, refer to the Bible Study courses in Volume Three.

C. Fellowship.

1. I can know God better by knowing His children better.
2. This is true because God lives in His children. Thus, to a certain degree, fellowship with other Christians is fellowship with God, because Christ lives in them (Gal 2:20).
3. Fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ and fellowship with God are strongly connected in the Scriptures (see 1 Jn 1:3).

Insert Your Illustration:

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes 

Discussion Point

In what ways has fellowship with other believers been a positive aspect in your Christian growth and caused you to know God better?

Note: To further study the concept of fellowship refer to the course, Church Fellowship, found in Relationships, Volume two.

D. Praise and Worship.

1. The “breaking of bread” in Acts 2:42 refers to the taking of the Lord’s Supper. The essence of the Lord’s Supper is that it is a Sacrament of thanksgiving, or praise and worship. Indeed the Greek word used here, Eucharist, means “to give thanks.” Through praise and worship we can approach God and we can know Him better (see Ps 95:2-6 and Ps 22:3).
2. Praise is a response to the greatness of God. It is an expression of gratefulness (Ps 63:3). Praise boasts of God (Ps 106:47).
3. A life of praise is developed through four aspects.
 - a. We develop a life of praise through thanksgiving or verbal appreciation (see Phil 4:6; 1 Thes 5:18; and Ps 50:14, 23).
 - b. We develop a life of praise through vocalizing adoration and recognition of God (see Ps 63:3; 1 Thes 5:16; and Ps 145:1, 2).
 - c. We develop a life of praise through singing to God (see Ps 105:2; Ps 100:2; and Eph 5:19).
 - d. We develop a life of praise through practicing the presence of God (see Phil 3:10; and Ps 27:4).

Insert Your Illustration:

KNOWING GOD: PART II

Discussion Point

Notes 

How has a life of praise and worship caused you to grow closer to God?

Note: For a more detailed study of praise and worship you can refer to the course Praise and Worship, found in Relationships, Volume two.

E. Prayer.

1. Prayer is broadly defined as the process of talking and listening to God. Through prayer we can be in direct communication with God at any moment.
2. Aspects of prayer (see Eph 6:18).
 - a. We should pray regularly (Rom 12:12).
 - b. We should pray in different ways (Mt 6:9-13).
 - c. We should pray with intensity (Jms 5:16).
 - d. We should pray with sensitivity (Mt 26:41; Col 4:2).
 - e. We should pray with perseverance (Ps 57:7; Lk 11:8, 9; Lk 18:1-8).

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Describe how the increase or decrease in your prayer life has effected your relation with God.

Note: For a more detailed study see the course Prayer and Fasting, found in Relationships, Volume two.

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes 

IV. Discipline in Knowing God.

A. Knowing God requires Consistency.

1. Each one of the four basic activities of knowing God includes within its Biblical instructions a sense of consistency and regularity. In each case, the Bible uses phrases like “always”, “day and night”, and “day by day.”
 - a. Bible study (see 2 Tim 2:15 and Ps 1:2).
 - b. Fellowship (see Acts 2:46 and 1 Jn 1:7).
 - c. Praise and Worship (see Ps 63:5, 6; Ps 35:28; 71:6; 72:15; 119:62, 164; 146:2; and Acts 16:25).
 - d. Prayer (see 1 Thes 5:17; and Eph 6:18; and Daniel’s example in Dan 6:10).
2. The process of knowing God must be a continual process. We must seek God consistently (Prov 8:17).
 - a. We must try to be consistent in a general sense. That is, we must be consistent in keeping our minds set on the things of God throughout the entire day (Col 3:1,2).
 - b. We must be consistent in a specific ways also. That is, we must be consistent in our devotional times with God. We must develop good habits of seeking God at planned times of the day.

Insert Your Illustration:

KNOWING GOD: PART II

Discussion Point

Notes 

In what ways can you increase the consistency of your relationship with God? What are things that hinder you? What things have helped you to be more consistent in the past?

B. Knowing God requires Commitment.

1. When we speak of consistency we must also speak of commitment. Consistency is not possible without commitment. Consistency is the manifestation of discipline. Commitment is the foundation and motivation of discipline.
2. We can decide to be committed to practical efforts of seeking God. We can not “decide” to know God. Only God can reveal Himself to us.
 - a. Although the desire burns in us to know God, we can not know Him by our own works or by our own will. God is the source. Our free will is not the source.
 - b. However, we can cooperate, making it possible for us to receive God’s revelation of Himself. We can, indeed, -we must, decide to seek God in a dedicated and disciplined way.
 - 1) Our motivation must be our love and desire for God.
 - 2) By faith, we must act.
 - a) We do not need to understand how we are being transformed into the image of Jesus or how we are growing in our knowledge of God. We simply must act in faith that God is transforming us and that we are growing closer and closer to Jesus.
 - b) It is God who does this. We can not do it ourselves.

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes

3. We can decide to establish a Bible reading program. We can decide to praise and worship the Lord. We can decide to spend time with other Christians. We can decide to pray. Try to plan a daily program.
 - a. In the morning you could spend an hour with God.
 - 1) You could pray for 30 minutes.
 - 2) You could praise and worship for 15 minutes.
 - a) Sing to the Lord. Use a guitar or other instrument if you are able.
 - b) Listen and sing along with praise tapes.
 - c) Sing a new song to the Lord that comes from your heart (Eph 5:19).
 - 3) You could read your Bible for 15 minutes.
 - a) Read two chapters from the Old Testament.
 - b) Read one chapter from the New Testament.
 - b. In the afternoon, you could plan to have lunch with a Christian. You could enjoy a time of fellowship during lunch.
 - c. In the evening you could spend 30 minutes with God before you go to sleep. Perhaps you could pray, read the Bible, and praise God for the day.
4. The key is to be committed to whatever you establish as a program. If it is to spend 10 minutes or 3 hours with the Lord daily, the most important thing is to be committed. As God sees your commitment with a little bit of time, He will motivate you to spend more time with Him (Lk 16:10).

Discussion Point

Are you committed to a consistent plan of spending time practicing the primary activities of knowing God?
What things will help you overcome a lack of commitment?

KNOWING GOD: PART II

Insert Your Illustration:

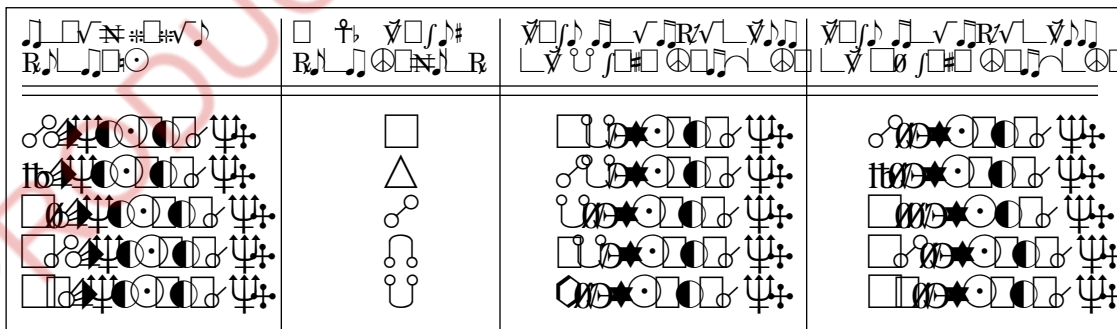
Notes 

C. The Fruit of Consistency and Commitment.

1. Some people try to read the entire Bible in two weeks. Most times, they start but do not finish. Other people practice discipline. They are consistent and committed. They read three chapters each day and read the entire Bible in one year.
2. It is amazing to calculate what the fruit is of the combination of consistency and commitment.

Discussion Point

Consider the following diagram, which illustrates this point in the case of Bible study.



KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes 

Author's Comment:

If you could discipline yourself to read the Bible for one hour each day, then you could read through the whole Bible three times each year. That is, you could read through the whole Bible 30 times in one decade. If you did this you would certainly have the Word of God in you. You would know God very well and would be greatly transformed into His image.

It is not unrealistic to plan on reading the Bible for an hour each day. For many people it would simply mean cutting their television viewing time in half.

If you could discipline yourself to read the New Testament for an hour each day, then you could read through the whole New Testament 14 times each year. That is, you could read the New Testament 140 times in one decade. You would be an expert on the New Testament. Moreover, the fruit of that discipline with respect to knowing God is not able to be calculated.

Insert Your Comment:

KNOWING GOD: PART II

D. The Lessons of Discipline.

Notes 

A Historical Example of Discipline:

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, led a life of discipline with respect to knowing God. (Many examples could have been chosen but Wesley represents a good example of discipline).

Before the Methodist Revivals began, Wesley had formed a group called the Holy Club. This Club was organized under the desire to lead a disciplined life in seeking God.

The following schedule shows a typical day in the life of a member of the Holy Club:

- 1) Wake up at 5:00 a.m.
Sing psalms and read Scriptures until 8:00 a.m.
Pray from 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 a.m.
- 2) Five nights each week they met together for fellowship. They encouraged each other and read religious books.
- 3) Each night, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. they would pray for the petition's of the poor. During this time they also planned for ministry for the next day.

1. Discipline is a method, not a goal.
 - a. The Holy Club members were disciplined, but that was not the goal. It was not for the sake of discipline.
 - b. To be disciplined is not our motivation. Our motivation is the love of God and the desire to know Him.
2. To live a life of discipline, we must have our minds renewed.
 - a. There must be a transition from seeking God in a way that fits into our daily activities and conveniences.
 - b. Our daily activities must fit into a life of seeking God.

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3. The reality of a disciplined life of seeking God will lead to a disciplined life of serving and loving others.
 - a. This is consistent with the progression of the two greatest commandments (see Mk 12:30, 31).
 - b. This is consistent with what happened in the Holy Club. They soon began a disciplined schedule of visiting and ministering to those in hospitals and prisons.

V. The Crisis of Dependence upon God.

A. What is the Crisis of Dependence?

1. In Jn 15:5, Jesus said..."I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."
 - a. If this statement is true, then every moment of your life is a crisis of dependence upon Christ.
 - 1) However, many people only come to God in times of an emergency (a perceived crisis) because that is when they **feel** the urgency of their helplessness.
 - 2) The reality of life is that every moment leaves us in reliance upon God and represents our complete helplessness without Him.
 - a) In this sense, every moment is a crisis of dependence.
 - b) Every moment we must come to God.
 - c) When we begin to see every moment of our life as a crisis, we begin to see the crisis of dependence in our relationship with God.

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- b. The more that you see yourself as helpless without God, the more you will seek God.
- c. To say "God, increase my relationship with You," is to say "God, increase my awareness of how helpless I am without You. Increase my awareness of my need for You!"

Notes 

Author's Illustration:

Once there was a king who had a son to whom he gave a yearly allowance. He paid him the entire allowance on the first day of each year. As the years passed, the king began to realize that the only day that he saw his son was on the first day of the year. So the king changed the payment schedule. He began to pay his son day by day. He paid him what was sufficient for the day. The king began to see his son every day!

Insert Your Illustration:

- 2. Unfortunately, some Christians have a "Deistic" view of God. This means they act as if God is far away and unconcerned about our daily lives. They do not want to bother God too often. However, God is like the king in the story. He makes it so that we are in constant need of Him, so that we might be in constant fellowship with Him.

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes 

Class Activity:

Review Jn 15:5 again, then examine Prov 3:5, 6 (focus on the word **all**). “Trust in the Lord with **all** you heart and lean not on your own understanding, but acknowledge Him in **all** your ways and He will make your paths straight.”

How does the principle of Jn 15:5 logically lead to the principle of Prov 3:6? (Reflect upon the story of the king and the application that it taught).

Each and every moment, we are experiencing the crisis of dependence upon God because every moment we are in need of God.

Now, analyze more closely Jn 15:5 and Prov 3:5, 6. Answer the previous question in terms of the relationship between the words **nothing** (Jn 15:5) and **all** (Prov 3:5, 6).

Author's Comment:

There are six separate aspects within the **crisis** of dependence upon God.

In the English language, we can use each of the six letters of the word **crisis** to develop the following six aspects:

C	onsistency.
R	eward.
I	ntimacy.
S	ecrecy.
I	mportance.
S	ubmission.

This acrostic style teaching method, uses the first letter of each word to teach a different aspect. We realize that this will not apply in most other languages.

KNOWING GOD: PART II

Notes 

B. Consistency.

1. Again, read Prov 3:5,6. Meditate on the seriousness of the word **all**.
 - a. **All** means all! Our relationship with God must be consistent and it must cover every area of our lives.
 - b. Some people say that this type of thinking is fanaticism (which means to be unrational and over-zealous in an undesirable way). They say that people who think that they have to do everything with Jesus in mind are simply fanatics (Read Jn 15:5 again). They say that fanatics are crazy.
 - 1) However, according to what we have just learned, the only crazy thing is to try to do something without Jesus (Jn 15:5).
 - 2) It is only logical to follow Prov 3:5, 6.
 - 3) More importantly, it is disobedience toward God to not follow Prov 3:5, 6.
 - c. What we really need in our Christian lives is a little more of this “fanaticism.” We need more fools for Christ (see 1 Cor 4:10).
 - 1) Remember, it was Paul (who also called himself a fool for Christ) who used the words **always, all**, and **without ceasing** when he talked about prayer.
 - 2) There is no Christian who has too much of Jesus in his life!

Author's Illustration:

Jesus is not like milk. Doctors say that milk is very healthy as long as you do not drink too much of it. They say too much of even a good thing is not healthy. Jesus is not like milk! You can't get too much!

KNOWING GOD: PART III

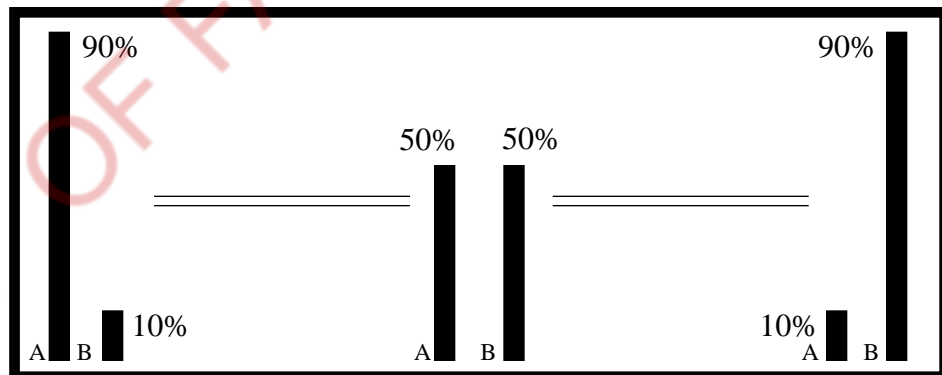
Notes 

Insert Your Illustration:

- Sanctification can be described in many different ways. One of the best ways to describe it is in terms of **consistency** in our relationship with God. Sanctification is the process of spending less time **out of** fellowship with God, and more time **in** fellowship with God.

Discussion Point

Use the following diagram to discuss the relationship between sanctification and consistency in relationship with God.



“A” = percentage of time each day that is not spent with God

“B” = percentage of time each day that is spent with God

To spend time with God is to **acknowledge** Him (Prov 3:6). As Brother Lawrence would say, **it is to practice His presence.**

The process of sanctification is the process of moving more and more consistently into the presence of God. It is moving from left to right on the diagram.

KNOWING GOD: PART II

Notes 

C. Reward.

1. The promise of consistency is reward.
 - a. What is the reward that is promised to those who consistently seek God (study Prov 3:5, 6 again)?
 - b. Study Heb 11:6.
 - 1) Is God a rewarder of those who seek Him?
 - 2) Note how faith is essential.
 - a) Without faith, we can not please God because without faith, we can not even approach God (note that a study of Heb 11:6 shows that it is our coming to God that pleases Him).
 - b) Only faith (which often seems to go against reason) could have climbed the mountain that Moses climbed to fellowship with God.
 - c) God rewarded Moses because God “is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”
2. What is the reward?
 - a. Brother Lawrence, the great monk who learned to live a life continually in God’s presence, said, “There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God.”³
 - b. For Brother Lawrence the reward of seeking God was the opportunity and motivation to seek God more. The reward of having a relationship with God is to have a greater relationship with God.

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Notes 

Class Activity:

Study Ps 73:28. What is the “good” or reward of the psalmist?

Study Dt 10:9. What is the “inheritance” or reward of Levi? Remember, it was the Levitical priests who were the only ones allowed to enter the tabernacle area (Num 18:1-7).

Study Lk 18:30. What is the reward? What is eternal life (see Jn 17:3)?

- c. The reward of seeking, knowing, or having a relationship with God is more seeking, knowing, or relationship with God (also see 1 Chron 28:9; Mt 7:7; Jms 4:8; Prov 3:32, 33 and Rom 6:23), (remember how eternal life is defined in Jn 17:3). From Gen 15:1, we could say that Abraham’s greatest reward was his “direct communication” with God.

Discussion Point

Describe how you personally have reaped the rewards from spending more time with God.

KNOWING GOD: PART II

Notes 

D. Intimacy.

1. The Biblical concept of “to know.”
 - a. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for “to know intimately” is “Yada.”
 - 1) The greatest thing in life is eternal life.
 - 2) Eternal life is to know God.
 - b. In the New Testament, the Greek word for “to know” (in Jn 17:3) is “ginosko.”
 - 1) It means “to know” through personal experiences or experientially.
 - 2) It can also signify the intimate aspect of knowledge and relationship.
 - c. The aspect of intimacy in relationship with God is more clearly represented in the Old Testament word, “yada.”
 - 1) Review Prov 3:5, 6. The word **acknowledge** is the translation of the Hebrew word “yada.”
 - 2) Study Gen 4:1. Again we find the Hebrew word “yada”. It is used in a very intimate context.
 - 3) When we combine the study of these two passages we see clearly that the Word of God is showing us that our relationship with God is not to be superficial.
 - 4) On the contrary, it is described as being analogous to the most intimate relationship that is possible between human beings (physical sexual intimacy).
 - a) We might say that the Bible encourages us to have “spiritual intercourse” with God.
 - b) We are to be intimately united with Him.

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes

- c) We are to be one with Him.
- d) Consider the intimacy of the Biblical concepts of “Christ in us” and “Us in Christ.”
- e) Consider Eph 5:31, 32. The marriage **relationship** is a shadow of the type of **relationship** that should exist between Christ and the Church.
- f) We are to have a love affair with Jesus. There is nothing superficial about it. Our relationship with Jesus must be intimate.

2. Maintaining intimacy with God.

- a. In Rev 2:4, the church of Ephesus had left their first love. This implies that at one time, they were intimate with God.
- b. Our relationship with Jesus needs the romance of a first love (Ps 77:6).
- c. This romance leads to intimacy (Ps 63:6).
- d. This intimacy leads to conception (the creation of life) (Jer 24:7).
- e. This conception leads to birth and life (Dan 11:32).
 - 1) The Hebrew words that describe the actions of the people who **know their God** are words of life.
 - 2) These people are strong and durable. They are able to do exploits, bold deeds, or daring acts.

KNOWING GOD: PART II

Author's Illustration:

Let us think of the vigor and vitality of a young man who is in love.

A shy, weak, young man may live his life as a coward until he falls in love with a girl. If the girl is threatened, the coward can suddenly turn into a lion.

We are spiritually weak when we do not have an intimate relationship with Jesus. The devil beats us down until we fall in love with Jesus. Suddenly, we become like lions.

Notes 

Insert Your Illustration:

E. Secrecy.

1. Who is your best friend?
 - a. One way to define the idea of a “best friend” is to think in terms of secrecy.
 - 1) A best friend is the person who knows your secrets. That person knows the personal details of your life.
 - 2) He knows more about you than anyone else, because he spends more time with you than anyone else, and because you tell him your secrets.

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes 

Discussion Point

Consider the following passages with respect to secrecy:

Mt 6:6 (secrecy in prayer)

Mt 6:17, 18 (secrecy in fasting)

Mt 6:3, 4 (secrecy in giving)

- b. God wants to be your best friend! He wants to create an intimate relationship with you through secrecy. There is a bond between you and God that forms and becomes strong when you share your secrets with Him (when only you and He know).
2. The need for a “lonely place” or “secret place” or “private place.”
 - a. More than once we read in the New Testament that Jesus went to a “lonely place” to pray (for example, see Mk 1:35).
 - b. It is important to have a time (note that in Mk 1:35 Jesus went in the early morning) and a place to seek the Lord privately (or secretly). This type of a setting can help to establish the intimate relationship that is desired by God.

Discussion Point

Discuss the times and events when God has revealed Himself to you, when meeting God at the “lonely or secret place.”

F. Importance.

1. What does Jesus want more than anything else from you? Obedience? Honesty? Faith? Good works?
 - a. No! There is something more important than all of those things. More important than obedience? Yes, because obedience depends on something else. It depends on the strength of your relationship with God.

KNOWING GOD: PART II

- b. More than anything else, God wants your time. He wants to spend time with you. He wants your love (Mt 22:37).
 - 1) Love is expressed by obedience (Jn 14:15).
 - 2) However, love is developed through time spent with God.
- 2. What we need is a little more of the attitude of Mary and a little less of the attitude of Martha!
 - a. Study Lk 10:41, 42.
 - 1) The simplicity of our lives is found in knowing God.
 - 2) How could Jesus say that only **one thing** was necessary (referring to spending time with Him)? Because Jesus understood the reality of Jn 15:5 and the implications of Gal 2:20.
 - a) Relationship with Jesus is the only thing necessary in the sense that everything else is based on it.
 - b) Everything else is based on Christ in us, and Christ in us is based on time spent with Him.

Notes 

Author's Illustration:

A recently married man wanted so much to please his new wife. He worked two jobs so that he could buy her the best home, the nicest clothes, and anything else that she might want. He did **not** have much time to spend with her, but he thought that there would be more time in the future once they were financially stable. After a few years, his wife left him. She did not leave him for more money or for more material things. She left for a man who would spend time with her.

We, also, are often so busy in the things that we are doing for God that we forget to spend time with Him. The tragedy is that the heart of God beats with the desire to spend time with us. His greatest desire is to have an intimate and constant relationship with us.

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes 

Insert Your Illustration:

- b. God is not so interested in us doing something for Him, as He is in Him doing something through us. For Him to do something through us we must be in relationship with Him.
3. Martin Luther, that great German theologian from the 16th century, understood the importance of a relationship with God. The more Martin Luther had to do in a day, the longer he prayed in the morning. He said, “I have so much to do that I must spend the first three hours of each day in prayer.”⁴
4. Physical food is necessary for physical health. Spiritual food is necessary for spiritual health.
 - a. Would you cook a meal for yourself even if you did not feel like cooking? Most people would answer by saying, “no matter if you feel like cooking or not, food is still necessary.”
 - b. Would you spend time with God even if you did not feel like it?
 - 1) Our answer should be the same as the one above.
 - 2) Consider the words of Job 23:12.
 - c. For the Christian, seeking God should be like breathing. Just as breathing is the response of physical life to the presence of air, so prayer should be the response of spiritual life to the presence of God.

KNOWING GOD: PART II

5. In Mk 3:14, Jesus appointed the 12 apostles. Consider the order of priority Jesus gave for the purpose of appointing them:
 - a. First: **To be with Him.**
 - b. Second: To preach.
 - c. Third: To cast out devils.
6. We might be surprised to realize that Christ's disciples never asked their Master how to preach, or what were the five steps to Church growth. They did ask Him how to pray!

Notes 

Discussion Point

Discuss the problem that some ministers face in being too busy serving God to be able to spend time with God. Is this true for you? Are you prepared to make a change?

G. Submission.

1. Relationship begins with submission or surrender. The price or cost is high.
 - a. God does not so much want partnership with us.
 - b. He wants ownership of us.
2. This act of surrender results in selflessness.
 - a. Selflessness has a lot to do with knowing God.
 - b. Review the earlier study of the "imitation of God."

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes

3. To know Jesus is to know the cross, it is to be crucified with Christ.
 - a. Leonard Ravenhill offers these words:

"The man who has died to self has no ambitions and has nothing to be jealous about. Has nothing to fight about. He has nothing he calls his own, and therefore nothing to worry about. He has no rights, so therefore, he cannot suffer any wrongs. He is already dead, so no one can kill him."⁵
 - b. Summary: A man who has died to himself can not be offended because there is no self left to defend. You can not kill a dead man.
4. Relationship necessarily implies positions. The correct position of the believer in his relationship with God is the position of submission or surrender.

Discussion Point

As a leader, do you struggle with feeling like the ministry you conduct belongs to you or is yours to own?
What things must we do to get the right perspective that we belong to God and so does our ministry?

H. Conclusion.

1. Every moment is a **crisis of dependence upon God** because we are in need of God every moment. Thus, our goal must be to spend every moment in relationship with Him.
2. We should make the words of Hosea 6:3 our personal statement of purpose: "So let us know, let us press on to know the Lord."

KNOWING GOD: PART II

3. Challenge each student at the end of this course to do the following four things:

Notes 

a. Make a decision **now** to begin **tomorrow** to spend a certain amount of planned time with the Lord. Be specific.

1) What will you do? When?

2) Review the four primary activities in knowing God and the discipline in knowing God.

3) Pray that God will enable you to be disciplined in your plans.

b. Make a decision to try to be in constant fellowship with God tomorrow. Ask the Holy Spirit to remind you of God's presence and to motivate you to acknowledge Him in all of your ways.

c. Consider the barriers in your life that might hinder your relationship with God.

1) Physical barriers.

2) Mental barriers.

3) Emotional barriers.

4) Spiritual barriers.

a) Form a strategy to destroy these barriers.

b) Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the power to do this and to reveal to you other barriers.

d. Pray for revival in your life.

1) Ask God to stir your heart towards Him.

2) Ask Him to give you a hunger and thirst for seeking Him.

3) Remember, God is the source of all good things. Even your own desire to seek Him comes from Him. Ask Him for more!

KNOWING GOD: PART III

Notes 

Knowing God II: Endnotes

¹Plato, Michael P. Green, ed. Illustrations for Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989) p. 169.

²Aristotle, Michael P. Green, ed. Illustrations for Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989) p. 169.

³Brother Lawrence, The Practice of the Presence of God (Uhrichsville, Ohio: Barbour and Co., 1993), p. 54.

⁴Martin Luther, Michael P. Green, ed. Illustrations for Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989) p. 277.

⁵Leonard Ravenhill, as quoted at Dick Eastman's "Prayer Seminar," 1986.

PRAYER AND FASTING

Prayer and Fasting: Syllabus

Notes —

CLASS #1:

- I. Prayer:
 - A. What is Prayer?
 - B. Seven Considerations of Prayer.
 - C. Prayer Suggestions and Results: Prayer Suggestions.

CLASS #2:

- I. Prayer:
 - C. Prayer Results. (cont.)
 - D. Four Ways to Pray.
 - E. The Hour of Prayer: Study Mt 26:40.

CLASS #3:

- I. Prayer:
 - E. The Hour of Prayer: Types of Prayer.

CLASS #4:

- I. Prayer:
 - F. An Exercise in Prayer;
 - G. The Apostle Paul and Prayer.

CLASS #5:

- II. Fasting.
 - Exam.

PRAYER AND FASTING

Notes —

Prayer and Fasting: Exam

Possible 20 Point Questions

- 1) Choose four of the “Prayer is...” statements and use them to define prayer (p. 87).
- 2) List and describe four ways to pray. Include a Scripture reference for each one (p. 91).
- 3) Choose three of the types of prayer in the “hour of power” and define and describe how to do each one (pp. 93-98).

Possible 10 Point Questions

- 1) List the seven Considerations of prayer found in Mt 6:9-13 (p. 88).
- 2) Give two suggestions concerning prayer (pp. 88, 89).
- 3) Describe two results of prayer (p. 90).
- 4) Draw the hour of power clock (p. 93).
- 5) List three Scriptures that represent prayers of Paul (p. 99).
- 6) List two results of fasting and include a Scripture reference for each (p. 101).

PRAYER AND FASTING

I. Prayer.

Notes —

Author's Comment:

Someone once said, "Christians do not gossip. They just share prayer requests." Unfortunately, the implication of this joke is very real in some parts of the church. Some people consider prayer as being nothing more than a part of their social lives. They think of it as a tool of manipulation. Nevertheless, prayer is not at all like these notions.

A. What is Prayer?

1. **Prayer Is Humility.** Prayer is the thing that says to God: "I can not do it, but you can." Jn 3:30
2. **Prayer Is Reliance.** Prayer is the thing that says to God: "I need you in all my ways." Prov 3:5, 6
3. **Prayer Is Trust.** Prayer is the thing that says to God: "I deposit my time in your bank." Lk 11:10; Jn 15:4
4. **Prayer Is Relationship.** Prayer is the thing that says to God: "I have decided to share with you my problems, my desires, my joys, and my dreams. Most importantly, I have decided to share my time with you." 1 Jn 1:3
5. **Prayer Is Faith.** Prayer is the thing that says to God: "I realize that you are there. I believe that you hear me and that you will answer me." Heb 11:6, Jms 1:6
6. **Prayer Is Love.** Prayer is the thing that says to God: "I have decided to receive your love and to show you my love through the time I spend with you." Rom 8:15
7. **Prayer Is the Correct Perception of Yourself.** Prayer is the thing that says to God: "I am the creation. You are the Creator." Jn 3:30; Rom 9:20

PRAYER AND FASTING

Notes —

B. Seven Considerations of Prayer.

1. Study Mt 6:9-13 to examine the seven considerations of how to pray.
2. Seven Considerations regarding prayer (in English they are called the seven P's).
 - a. Praise (vs. 9).
 - b. Petition (vs. 10).
 - c. Provision (vs. 11).
 - d. Pardon (receive from God--vs. 12).
 - e. Pardon (give to others--vs. 12).
 - f. Protection (vs. 13).
 - g. Proclamation (vs. 13b).

C. Prayer Suggestions and Results.

1. Prayer Suggestions.
 - a. Be simple enough to pray as a child. Pray with the trust and dependence of a child.
 - b. Study the topic of prayer enough to be able to pray more effectively. However, remember that prayer is learned by doing it.
 - c. Avoid selfish prayers (Jms 4:3).
 - d. Make big requests to a big God (he can handle everything).
 - e. Make little requests of a personal God. He is interested in the details of your life.
 - f. To pray **in** the name of Jesus, we must pray according to the will of God. First pray to know the will of God. Then, make the request in the name of Jesus (1 Jn 5:14, 15).

PRAYER AND FASTING

- g. Pray with faith and confidence. Trust God (Jn 14:13, 14; Jn 16:23; and Mt 18:19, 20).
- h. Confess all sins as soon as possible (Ps 66:18).
- i. It is very important to remain in Christ and to obey Him (Jn 15:7; 1 Jn 3:22).
- j. We need to plan a specific time each day to pray (Mk 1:35; Dan 6:10; and Lk 5:16).
- k. More importantly, we need to develop the attitude of prayer. We must live a life of prayer that seeks to be in communion with God constantly (Prov 3:6; 1 Thes 5:17; and Eph 6:18).
- l. Prayer must be specific. The more specific the prayer, the more specific the answer.
- m. Remember that there is a cost to prayer.
 - 1) Many times, the greater the cost, the greater the reward (see Lk 21:1-4).
 - 2) For example, there is a great cost connected to early morning prayer, all night prayer, and prayer and fasting. However, many times the results are greater also.
- n. Be intimate with God. Talk to Him in a personal way.
 - 1) Be natural before God.
 - 2) Be honest and transparent (He knows everything anyway!).
 - 3) Do not pray repetitive, religious prayers. Try to avoid empty rituals.
 - 4) Be sure to take time to listen to God.
 - 5) Establish a minimum daily time to pray.
 - 6) Do not feel condemned when you lack the desire to pray. Pray anyway. The desire will follow.

Notes —

PRAYER AND FASTING

Notes —

2. Prayer Results.

- a. There is a sense of peace and security that comes from spending time with God (Phil 4:6).
- b. Prayer keeps us broken and humble before God. Thus, there is a greater sense of God's favor (1 Pt 5:5; Mt 23:12).
- c. Prayer helps us avoid temptation (Mt 26:41).
- d. Prayer gives us an increased perception of **total** reality. It enables us to see the invisible dimension of reality (2 Kgs 6:17; 2 Cor 4:18).
- e. Prayer gives us a greater sense of success and confidence (2 Chron 26:5).
- f. Prayer gives us a greater sense of intimacy and closeness to God.
- g. Prayer enables us to know God and His ways. Knowing someone's ways is a result of spending a lot of time with that person. It is the same with God.
- h. Prayer helps us to die to self. It helps us to develop selflessness as we focus our prayers on others.
- i. Prayer brings us into unity with others (those that we pray with and those that we pray for).
- j. Prayer helps us to know the purposes and will of God.
- k. God answers prayer.
- l. There is joy in the presence of God through prayer.

PRAYER AND FASTING

Notes —

D. Four Ways to Pray.

1. Private Prayer.
 - a. All other ways of praying begin here. It is the foundational way (see Mt 6:6).
 - b. It is important to have an “inner room.”
 - c. The results of the prayers of individuals are great (Jms 5:16).
2. Two Believers Praying in Agreement.
 - a. Consider Mt 18:19.
 - b. The focus is on harmony. To pray in agreement is to be in unity.
 - c. The most natural example of this is the husband and wife praying together.
3. Prayer in Small Groups.
 - a. Consider Mt 18:20.
 - b. The Methodist revival in England was a result of the prayers of small groups.
 - c. Strong relationships are formed in small prayer groups.
4. Congregational Prayer (the whole church).
 - a. Consider Acts 1:4, 14; and 12:5, 12.
 - b. Remember, the first church was a prayer meeting (Acts 1:14).

PRAYER AND FASTING

Notes —

E. The Hour of Prayer (used by permission of Dick Eastman).¹

1. Study Mt 26:40.
 - a. Jesus asked his disciples, “Could you not keep watch with me for one hour?”
 - b. Jesus asks us the same question today. Can we give one hour of our day to prayer?

Author’s Illustration:

The average North American watches more than four hours of television every day. Yet some of these very same people say that they do not have time to pray. Think about your daily schedule. Consider some of the things that you do for an hour or more each day. Certainly, prayer is more important than many (if not all) of those things. The words of Jesus’ question continue to echo throughout the ages: “Can you give Me one hour of your time?” He is waiting for your answer!

Insert Your Illustration:

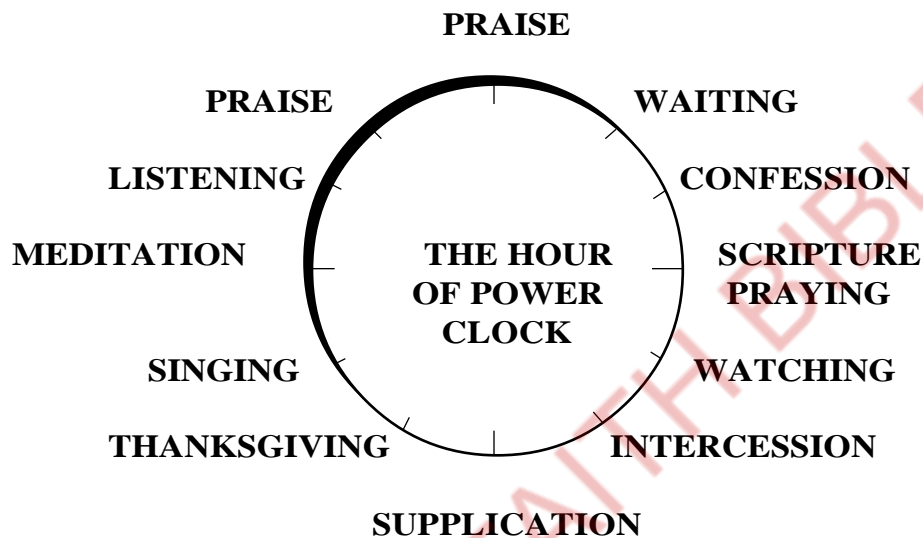
- c. Sometimes it is difficult to pray for one hour.
- d. It is helpful to use different types of prayer. Praying in a variety of ways can help us to pray longer.

PRAYER AND FASTING

Discussion Point

Notes —

Use the following diagram and explanations (used by permission from Dick Eastman)¹ to promote variety in your prayers and to pray for one hour. Five minutes should be spent in each type of prayer.



2. Types of Prayer.

a. Praise--the action of divine adoration.

- 1) Choose a specific theme (the greatness of God, His justice, His mercy, etc.).
- 2) Proclaim all that God is with respect to that theme.

b. Waiting--the action of surrender.

- 1) Allow yourself to rest in complete silence.
- 2) Think only about God. Think about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- 3) Focus on the love of God.
- 4) Focus on your commitment to give yourself to God.

PRAYER AND FASTING

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- c. Confession--the action of admitting that you are a sinner in need of God's grace.
 - 1) Use Ps 139:23, 24.
 - 2) Confess your sins.
 - 3) Confess your need for the guidance and anointing of the Holy Spirit.
- d. Pray according to the Scriptures--the action of standing on the word.
 - 1) Just as we pray for the blessing over our physical food, we should begin with a prayer for blessing over our spiritual food.
 - 2) Examine one passage of the Bible. Pray according to the promises, commandments, and implications of the passage.
 - 3) Use the prayers of the Bible. Pray the prayer as your own prayer.
 - a) Prayer for victory (2 Chron 13:14).
 - b) Prayer for a child (Gen 15:1-6).
 - c) Prayer for those in authority (1 Tim 2:1, 2).
 - d) Prayer for guidance (Gen 24:12-52; 2 Sam 2:1; Judg 13:8-15).
 - e) Prayer for revelation (Acts 10:1-33; Eph 1:17-23).
 - f) Prayer for knowledge (Dan 2:17-23).
 - g) Prayer for blessing (2 Sam 7:18-29; 2 Chron 30:27).
 - h) Prayer for help (1 Sam 23:10-13).
 - i) Prayer for grace (Ps 25:16).
 - j) Prayer for courage (Acts 4:24-31).
 - k) Prayer for proof of the calling (Judg 6:36-40).

PRAYER AND FASTING

- l) Prayer for health (2 Kgs 20:1-11).
 - m) Prayer for prosperity (1 Chron 4:10).
 - n) Prayer for protection (2 Chron 20:5-12, 27).
 - o) Prayer for the glory of the Father (Jn 12:28).
 - p) Prayer for the Church (Jn 17:1-26).
 - q) Prayer for freedom (Mt 26:39, 42, 44; 27:46).
 - r) Prayer for safety on a trip (Ezra 8:21, 23).
 - s) Prayer for understanding (Gen 25:22, 23; Eph 3:17-19).
 - t) Prayer for strength (Judg 16:29, 30; Eph 3:16).
 - u) Prayer for wisdom (1 Kgs 3:6-14).
- e. Watch--the action of mental awareness.
- 1) Be spiritually alert. Consider the methods of attack that Satan might use against you and claim the power of God to be able to overcome the enemy.
 - 2) Consider world events. Pray with compassion through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Notes —

PRAYER AND FASTING

Notes —

f. Intercession--the action of praying for others.

- 1) Ask for a greater burden for others.
- 2) Focus on four areas:
 - a) Pray for more workers to be sent out into the harvest.
 - b) Pray for open doors of ministry for those workers.
 - c) Pray for fruit to come from their ministries.
 - d) Pray for financial resources to assist the ministries.
- 3) Include specific countries and their leaders in your prayers.

g. Supplication--the action of praying for yourself.

- 1) Ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to pray according to the will of God.
- 2) Consider your schedule for the day and the corresponding needs.
- 3) Talk with God about these needs and explain your requests.
- 4) Examine your motives. Make sure that they are pure.

h. Give thanks--the action of expressing your appreciation.

- 1) Consider all of the things that God has done for you over the last few days.
- 2) Offer specific thanks for:
 - a) Spiritual blessings.
 - b) Material blessings.
 - c) Physical blessings.

PRAYER AND FASTING

- 3) Give thanks in anticipation of future blessings.
 - 4) Every day try to give thanks for something that you have never before given thanks for.
- i. Singing--the action of worship with a melody.
- 1) Choose a special theme.
 - 2) Sing a song about that theme.
 - 3) Ask that God would give you a “new song” from the Spirit.
- j. Meditate--the action of spiritual evaluation.
- 1) Choose a special theme. Concentrate on specific points within that theme.
 - 2) Consider different angles of each point.
 - 3) Ask yourself questions and use the Bible to search for the answer.
- k. Listening--the action of receiving from God (both mentally and spiritually).
- 1) Ask God specific questions. Be specific. Ask for direction and understanding. Ask God to show you how to solve problems.
 - 2) Search and examine the Bible.
 - 3) Evaluate the circumstances of various situations. Ask God to give you wisdom and understanding. Ask Him to share His plan with you and to give you directions.
 - 4) Be sensitive to the Spirit. Listen. Write down the things that you believe God is saying to you.

Notes —

PRAYER AND FASTING

Notes —

1. Praise--the action of divine magnification.
 - 1) Specifically, praise God for His greatness. Focus on His:
 - a) Omnipotence.
 - b) Perfect wisdom.
 - c) Constant presence.
 - 2) Praise God for the opportunity to spend time with Him. Praise Him for the past hour and that He has heard your prayers.
 - 3) End the hour in a spirit of rejoicing. Ask God to go ahead of you and offer a final hallelujah and a strong amen!

An Exercise in Prayer:

Form groups of five or six people.

Draw on the blackboard (or somewhere where all can see it) the “hour of power” circle. Each person should have the notes on the twelve types of prayer in front of him.

Use one hour of the class time to pray. Use the notes as a guide. Do not feel like you must do everything that is in the notes. Be led by the Spirit!

Encourage all of the students to use what they have learned and to spend an hour in prayer every morning. In the beginning of the remaining classes, allow some time for students to share testimonies about what is happening in their prayer time.

PRAYER AND FASTING

The Apostle Paul and Prayer:

We learn from Paul in many different areas. Prayer is an area that the apostle Paul was especially strong in. Paul lived a life of prayer and encouraged others to do the same. We can learn more about prayer through a systematic study of his prayers.

Study, Meditate Upon, and Use the following topical list of the prayers of Paul to pray for yourself and others.

- 1) For right living (2 Cor 13:7; Phil 1:9-11; Col 1:9, 10; 1 Thes 3:12, 13; 1 Thes 5:23; and 2 Thes 1:11).
- 2) For greater knowledge through experience:
 - Of the Lord Himself (Eph 1:17; Col 1:9, 10).
 - Of His will (Phil 1:9, 10; Col 1:9).
 - Of His love (Eph 3:17-19; 2 Thes 3:5).
 - Of the Hope of the Gospel (Eph 1:18; Rom 15:13).
 - Of the resources that we have through the gospel (Eph 1:18; Philemon 6).
 - Of His power (Eph 1:18, 19).
- 3) For strengthening (Eph 3:16, 17; Col 1:10, 11; 1 Thes 3:13; and 2 Thes 2:16).
- 4) For ministry opportunity and success (Rom 1:9-11; 1 Thes 3:10; Rom 15:30, 31; Philemon 6; Col 1:10; and 2 Thes 1:11).
- 5) For more love (Phil 1:9; 1 Thes 3:12).
- 6) For Christians to live and worship in unity (Rom 15:5,6).
- 7) For grace and peace (2 Thes 3:16; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:3; Eph 1:2; Phil 1:2; 4:23; Col 1:2; 1 Thes 1:1; 2 Thes 1:2; 1 Tim 1:2; 6:21; 2 Tim 1:2; Tit 1:4; and Philemon 3).
- 8) For Israel's salvation (Rom 10:1).
- 9) For Christ to dwell in our hearts by faith (Eph 3:14-17).
- 10) For the fullness of God (Eph 3:17-19).

Notes —

PRAYER AND FASTING

Discussion Point

Notes —

What are some of the things we can learn from Paul's prayer life?

II. Fasting.

A. A Bible Study about Fasting.

1. Occasions of fasting.
 - a. Public Disasters (1 Sam 31:11-13).
 - b. Private Emotions (1 Sam 1:7).
 - c. Grief (2 Sam 12:16).
 - d. Anxiety (Dan 6:18-20).
 - e. Potential danger (Esther 4:16).
 - f. National repentance (1 Sam 7:5, 6).
 - g. Sad news (Neh 1:4).
 - h. Sacred ordination (Acts 13:3).
2. Things that accompany fasting.
 - a. Prayer (Lk 2:37).
 - b. Confession (Neh 9:1, 2).
 - c. Mourning (Joel 2:12).
 - d. Humiliation (Neh 9:1).
 - e. Distress (Ps 69:10).
 - f. Humility (Ps 35:13).

PRAYER AND FASTING

3. Safeguards or warnings for fasting.
 - a. Do not display your time of fasting (Mt 6:16-18).
 - b. Focus your fasting on God (Zech 7:5).
 - c. Consider the true meaning of fasting (Is 58:1-14).
4. Results of fasting.
 - a. Divine guidance (Judg 20:26).
 - b. Victory over temptation (Mt 4:1-11).
5. Some examples of fasting.
 - a. Moses (Ex 34:27, 28); Israelites (Judg 20:26).
 - b. Samuel (1 Sam 7:5, 6); David (2 Sam 12:16); Elijah (1 Kgs 19:8).
 - c. Ninevites (Jonah 3:5-8).
 - d. Nehemiah (Neh 1:4).
 - e. Darius (Dan 6:9, 18); Daniel (Dan 9:3).
 - f. Jesus (Mt 4:1, 2).
 - g. John's disciples and the Pharisees (Mk 2:18); Anna (Lk 2:36, 37).
 - h. Early Christians (Acts 13:2); Apostles (2 Cor 6:4, 5); Paul (2 Cor 11:27).

Notes —

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote an open discussion about fasting.

PRAYER AND FASTING

Author's Comments on Fasting:

Fasting can be thought of as a channel through which God can work in your life. To fast is to prepare the way for God. It is to make yourself more available to hear from God and to be used by God.

I have received critical guidance at transitional times of my life through fasting. I have also found that fasting has had its greatest results when I fast for at least five days.

Fasting highlights the sense of my desperate need for God. I feel this need physically, which helps me to feel it spiritually. It also highlights my sense of appreciation for God. I appreciate more what I sometimes take for granted (both physical food and spiritual food).

Do not allow fasting to become an empty ritual or a legalistic burden. Be led by the Holy Spirit. He will show you when it is time to fast. At times, He may show you to fast systematically (once every week, every other weekend). Whatever the case, do not fast unless you are led to fast and your heart is in it.

Your Comments on Fasting:

Notes —

PRAYER AND FASTING

Prayer and Fasting: Endnotes

Notes —

¹Dick Eastman, Based on notes and teachings from Dick Eastman's "Prayer Seminar," 1986. From The Hour That Changes the World by Dick Eastman, Baker Book House Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI, U.S.A. - Used by permission.

PRAYER AND FASTING

Notes —

PRODUCT OF FAITH BIBLE COLLEGE

PRAISE AND WORSHIP

Praise and Worship: Syllabus

Notes —

CLASS #1:

- I. Introduction.
- II. The Life of Worship.
- III. God Centered Worship:
 - A. Idolatry.

CLASS #2:

- III. God Centered Worship (cont.):
 - B. Man Centered Worship.
 - C. God Centered Worship.
- IV. Biblical Survey of Worship Themes.

CLASS #3:

- V. Worship and Celebration in the Church.

CLASS #4:

- VI. Worship and Redemptive Witness.
- VII. Practical Reflections about Worship.

CLASS #5:

- VII. Practical Reflections about Worship (cont.).
 - Exam.

PRAISE AND WORSHIP

Notes —

Praise and Worship: Exam

Possible 20 Point Questions

- 1) Why does the worship of God often tend toward being man-centered (pp. 116, 117)?
- 2) Describe and explain the transition in worship from the Old Testament to the New Testament by referring to Old and New Testament images of worship. Use various scriptures (pp. 120-123).
- 3) Choose six forms of worship, describe them, and defend their validity through the use of various scriptures (pp. 127-133).

Possible 10 Point Questions

- 1) Use one scripture to describe how on a universal/creational level existence is associated with a worshipful response to God (p. 108).
- 2) In one sentence, write a summary definition of 'worship' (p. 110).
- 3) State and describe two kinds of idol worship (p. 113).
- 4) List five elements or ingredients of corporate worship. No references necessary (p. 124).
- 5) List four requirements for those who are in the music ministry. No references necessary (p. 137).
- 6) List three basic functions of a worship leader (pp. 144, 145).

PRAISE AND WORSHIP

I. Course Introduction.¹

Notes —

Call to Worship

After this I looked and there before me was a multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshipped God...

John, The Apostle
(Revelation 7:9-11)

A. Worship: All of Creation’s Reason for Being.

1. Have you ever asked yourself: “Why did God make the world? Why did He make man? Why did He create me? Where does life lead?”
2. Many men, including great philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle have asked the same questions. This curiosity about our origin, existence, and destiny is very normal.
3. Have you ever wondered why Jesus came to earth as a man, lived sinlessly, died amongst criminals, was buried, resurrected, and ascended back to heaven?
4. These are the critical questions with which the Bible concerns itself most. Incidentally, the answer to those questions are found in one single concept in the Scriptures — **worship**.

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B. Course Objectives.

1. To introduce a God-centered view of worship, its elements, and forms. This is contrasted with the tendency toward man-centered and idolatrous approaches to God.
2. To make distinctions between a lifestyle of worship and the corporate expression of celebration. In other words, there is a difference between the praise and celebration which occurs when gathered together, and the practical living of a life of worthiness toward God.
3. To understand the important and sobering distinctions between worship within Biblical boundaries, and what may be considered outside of these Biblical boundaries.
4. To see the relationship between the worship and the work of witness in the world.
5. To provide practical guidelines to consider when organizing corporate celebrations of worship and praise.

II. The Life of Worship: The Normal State of Created Things.

A. Worship is Normal for all Created Things.

1. Creation's reason for existence is tied to a worshipful response to God, our Creator, and Redeemer.
2. Examine the following Scriptures to see this fact:
 - a. Universal/Creatural Level (Ps 19:1-4). If there were no man ever to lift a voice of adoration to God, it would be enough that the heavens forever declare His worthiness and glory.
 - b. Global level (Rev 5:8, 9). The culmination of all world history is a multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic, multi-national celebration of the worthiness of the Creator.
 - c. National/State Level (Ps 2:10-12). Leaders of nations and peoples are warned because they are going against the purpose for which they were authorized to serve.

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- d. The Vital Church Level (Acts 2:4-12). The first distinctive of the newly Spirit-baptized church was its remarkable multi-linguistic worship of God unto witness and redemption.
- e. The Individual Worshiper (Jn 4:23, 24). Jesus removed all doubt about what God was seeking in the earth—true worshipers. His very mission was linked with finding true worshipers.

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Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to discuss how the worship of God is called for at all levels of life (Individual, Church, Nation, Global, Universal).

B. Describing the Life of Worship.

1. A description of worship is not immediately obvious.
2. Are all of the following considered as worship? Hymns, choruses, shouts of celebration, kneeling in reverence, dancing, hands raised, and silence?
3. Is worship more fundamental than its many forms?
4. As we consider worship in global perspective, it is critical that the Scriptures be our guide. This is the only way to understand the many cultural expressions of the forms of worship.

C. Biblical Descriptions of Worship.

1. There are at least six Greek words for worship (there are few differences between the Hebrew and Greek renderings of the word):
 - a. Proskuneo, which means to ‘kiss toward,’ is used most. It can be translated, ‘to adore.’
 - b. Sebezomai, which means an act of reverential awe or respectful reverence.
 - c. Eusebeo, which means a life practice of godliness, or piety.

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- d. Therapeuo, which literally means to heal by manipulation with the hands. In Acts 17:25 such worship—often practiced by idolaters—was denied as being a legitimate form of worship to the Living God.
 - e. Latreuo, which means an act of priestly service rendered to a deity.
 - f. Leitourgeo, which means the fulfillment of a representative office of worship.
2. From this linguistic foundation we see that worship affects outward forms and postures, but by looking more closely, we understand that ‘bowing’ and ‘kissing’ are outward responses to inner attitudes of value.
 - a. A servant bows to a king because he recognizes the king’s worthy position.
 - b. A man gives a kiss out of a deep inner desire to communicate preciousness to the beloved one.
 3. In Summary: Worship is the adoration of God accompanied by reverence - inspired thoughts, words and deeds.

Insert Your Illustration:



PRAISE AND WORSHIP

Discussion Point

Discuss and answer any questions related to “The Life of Worship.”

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III. God-Centered Worship: No Other Biblical Option.

Warning Against False Worship:

I hate, I reject your festivals, nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; and will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream...

Amos, the Prophet
(Amos 5:21-24)

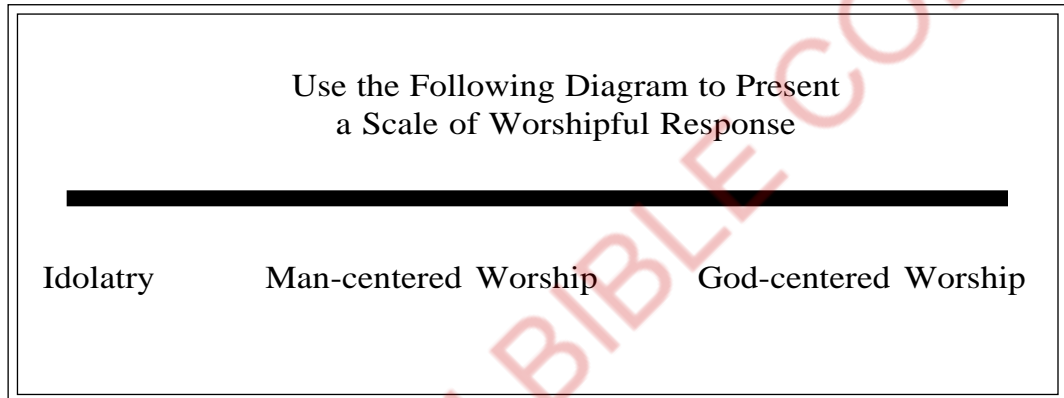
A. What is God-Centered Worship?

1. It goes without saying that worship is to be a God-centered activity.
 - a. However, the evidence of this understanding is not always present in many churches.
 - b. There is a carnal tendency in mankind to relax and move toward self-centeredness.
2. God-centered worship is a matter of diligent response to Biblical revelation on church-wide, family, and individual levels.
 - a. As the passage above indicates, worship transcends meeting times, or singing songs, or even orthodox formulations of the truth about God.
 - b. Worship is a life so captivated by God’s valuableness, that the believer responds by “bowing” with their whole life in response to the truth of Scripture by the Spirit’s empowering.

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3. Because of the element of human response in worship, let us examine the requirements for worship that honors God. We will present a contrast of idolatry, man-centered worship and God-centered worship, on a scale of worshipful response.



B. Idolatry: When Worship Loses its Way.

1. Worship is the most God intended response in creation. We are most human when we practice the spirit and forms of Godward worship and adoration.
 - a. However, because of this reality, Satan is set directly against true worship. He is committed to corrupting, disrupting, and perverting Biblical worship.
 - b. Due to this assault against worship in the world, it is no wonder that worshipers, and humans in general, sometimes lose their way from God-centered worship.

PRAISE AND WORSHIP

2. The Scriptures are absolutely clear regarding one kind of worship, that of idols. In the overall scheme of the world and its religions, this kind of worship is practiced most. Although it may not be called by this name, much of mankind's worshipful response is idolatrous.
 - a. The definition of idolatry is to worship idols, images, or anything made by the hands, or which is not the Living God revealed in the Scriptures. It involves excessive attachment, veneration, or adoration of anything.
 - b. There are two kinds of idolatry.
 - 1) Worship of anything made by the hands or imagination of mankind.
 - a) Images, statues, pictures.
 - b) Possessions, belongings, wealth, etc.
 - 2) Worship of things not made by man
 - a) Heavenly bodies (sun, moon, stars).
 - b) Creation or nature (fire, wind, earth, stone, water).
 - c) Created living things on earth (man, land, sea animals, or vegetation).
 - d) Unseen and spiritual beings, elect and evil (angels, demons, ancestors, even saints).
3. Idolatry: Strictly Forbidden Worship.
 - a. The Scriptures assume that man will worship something, and without guidance will seek to express a worshipful response toward either:
 - 1) Whatever is greater than man (by its appearance, strength, or beauty).
 - 2) Whatever is able to help man meet his needs in this world.

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- b. Let us look at several idols in the Bible. What was their appeal?
- 1) Two forms of Departure from Biblical Worship:
 - a) Worship of false Gods (Ex 20:3).
 - b) Worship of the True God, with images (Ex 20:4).
 - 2) Examples of idolatry in the Bible:
 - a) Idols of the Egyptians.
 - (1) Venerated the Sun and the River Nile. These were sources of life on which they were dependent.
 - (2) Many of their images were drawn from images in the sky, and from within or around the water, (fire, snakes, frogs, crocodiles, bulls, etc.).
 - (3) Study the ten plagues of Exodus to see God defeat the Egyptian gods, one by one (Ex 7-11; 23:24).
 - (4) Notice the repeated phrase: “That they may know that there is no other God...” (Ex 7:5; 8:10, 19; 9:13; 10:2; 11:7).
 - b) Idols of the Canaanites.
 - (1) This sort of worship involved dehumanizing practices and sacrifices, requiring the sacrifice of life, personal dignity, including child sacrifice, religious prostitution, and snake worship.
 - (2) These gods had no moral character to them at all. Human and animal combinations were part of the images. **These represented fertility and ecstatic mystery.**
 - (3) Molech, Dagon, Baal, and Ashotrahs, are examples of these (Lev 18:21; Jud 16:23; Jud 2:11-23).²

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c) Idols of Mesopotamia.

(1) The people that inhabited the land before, worshipped mountains, springs, trees, and blocks of stone.

(2) **These represented visible things perceived to be greater than man.**

(3) An example of this were the “sacred poles,” which Gideon was called to tear down (Jud 6:25-32).

3) Strictly Forbidden: An Abomination to God.

a) The first two commandments deal with regulated worship—no images, and no substitutes (Ex 20:3, 4). The first four commandments are Godward and worship related.

b) Believers are commanded to tear down and be aggressive against idols (Jud 6:7-10; 25-32).

c) Idolatry has a defiling, even dehumanizing effect (Ps 115:8; Rom 1:21-32).

d) Idolatry, is actually humorous by comparison (Ps 115).

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Insert Your Illustration:

PRAISE AND WORSHIP

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Discussion Point

What forms of idolatry are present in our culture and in some of our churches? What are some of the ways we can resist idolatry and prevent it from entering our churches and households?

C. Man-Centered Worship.

1. It is no surprise to readers of the Bible, or readers of church history, that worship often tends to drift away from being God-centered, and becomes man-centered.
2. There are several reasons for this:
 - a. Man's Make-up: The Carnal Tendency.
 - 1) Man has been so created as to be able to transcend time and eternity through the act of worship, or prayer, or through illumination from the Bible.
 - 2) We would think that this tremendous ability would make us more noble, but in fact we tend to prefer the flesh, that which can be seen and that which makes us feel better about ourselves (1 Jn 2:15). We tend towards carnality.
 - 3) In matters of worship, this tendency is evident in man's ability to make the worship experience something which is beneficial to man, and not an offering which is enjoyed by God. (See Cain and Abel Gen 4:1-5).

Insert Your Illustration:

PRAISE AND WORSHIP

b. The Carnal Tendency: Adding to God.

- 1) One tendency seen in the scriptures is adding to what God has allowed. This tendency is based on the notion, “Jesus is not enough.”
- 2) The Colossian and Galation churches were corrected by the Apostle Paul because they departed from true religion by adding features that would make worship more interesting, or “more spiritual” than God had intended (Gal 4:10).

Insert Your Illustration:

c. The Carnal Tendency: Subtracting from God.

- 1) Another tendency is subtracting from what has been intended.
 - a) Undue limitations are placed upon the believer’s worshipful expression in the name of the law.
 - b) Certain worship elements and forms are censured from use, not from a Biblical rule, but from traditions of men, denominational regulations, or cultural preferences.
 - c) The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ time were chastised for this tendency to limit the approach to God (Mt 23:13).

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- 2) In church history, the church at one time prevented common people from reading or hearing the scriptures in their own language at worship gatherings. Some denominations still allow no musical instruments, others disallow certain instruments and forms of expression.

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to discuss the ways in which the problems of man-centered worship (exalting man, adding to God, subtracting from God) are present in our churches. How do we resist or correct the presence of man-centered worship?

D. God-Centered Worship.

1. Having looked closely at idolatry and man-centered expressions of worship, it is very easy to see why it is important to focus all affection, reverence, and adoration toward God. Because we become like what we worship (Ps 115:8).
2. In this respect, it is important to understand that worship is not the prerogative of musicians, or poets, but is the first work of every believer and is under the domain of theology, not hymnology.

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Class Activity:

Consider these attributes of God³ in light of Jesus words:
“But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.” (Jn 4:23, 24).

For each of the following, discuss these questions: How should we respond to these attributes in worship? What forms are worthy?

1. God is in His being - an Invisible, Personal, Living, and Active Spirit (Jn 4:24; 1 Tim 6:16).
2. God is Metaphysically - Self-Existent, Eternal, and Unchanging (Ex 3:14; Jms 1:17).
3. God is Intellectually - Faithful, Omniscient, and Wise (1 Jn 1:9; 3:20).
4. God is Ethically - Holy, Righteous, and Loving (Hab 1:13a; Ps 5:4; 1 Jn 4:8).
5. God is Emotionally - Hating Evil, Long-Suffering, and Compassionate (Nah 1:3; Ex 34:6; Lam 3:22).
6. God is in Existence - Free and Omnipotent (Ps 115:3; Mk 14:36a).
7. God is Relationally - High in Sovereign Majesty, Near in Saving Care (Ps 89:11-15; 113:4-8; 145:18).

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IV. Biblical Survey of Worship Themes.

A. Introduction.

1. This section covers various themes in the Scriptures regarding man's worshipful response to God.
2. It also describes the transition from the temple-centered worship life of Old Testament believers, to the life of the individual believer, the new temple of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

B. Worship in the Old Testament Perspective.

1. In many ways, the features of worship in Israel represent Old Testament types of New Testament fulfilled realities.
2. The following features provide a description of worship in the Old Testament.
 - a. The Altar: Localized Meeting Place with the 'Presence of God.'
 - 1) In Israel, the altar represented the place of meeting between heaven and earth.
 - 2) In the earliest chapters of Genesis, there is a sense that Able and Cain understood the centrality of worthy and unworthy approaches to the presence of God.
 - 3) Abraham, the father of the faithful, demonstrates his personal priorities every time he moves—he builds an altar.
 - 4) Note how his sons, and grandsons imitate his good example (Gen 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18; 22:9; 26:25; 33:20; 35:1, 3, 7).

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b. The Sacrifice: The Lesson of the Exchanged Life.

- 1) For centuries, Israel presented its daily offerings of blood, flesh, and grains. These represented life and God's blessing of fruitfulness.
- 2) Annually, solemn assemblies atoned for daily sin corporately, which instilled the lesson that life is in the blood, and only by substitutionary death can sin be atoned for (Read all of Lev 16 for the Annual Ceremony of Atonement; Heb 10:1-3).

c. The Ceremonial Regulations: The Lesson of Holiness and Order.

- 1) Leviticus 10 teaches a perpetual lesson about God's view of man's approach to Him. He is to be regarded as holy by those who approach Him. He is to be revered.
- 2) The ceremonial regulations in the Old Testament, are revelations of mercy. Man tends to relax the standards of holiness, or make them more restricting than God intends—both are errors—much to his own peril. (Compare Lev 10:1-11 with Acts 5:1-11).

d. The Tent of Meeting: The Lesson of Access and Witness.

- 1) The presence of a traveling tent of worship is the picture of access to God. It is a compassionate offer to man. It says, "Come and know the True God." The message was to Israel, and it was to the surrounding nations.
- 2) It is interesting to follow the path of Israel's wandering. They visited most every nation between Egypt and Canaan. Was God offering Himself to the nations? (Discuss the implications of Ps 105: especially 1, 2 and 13).

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- e. The Music of Israel: The Lesson of Heartfelt Celebration.
 - 1) The Psalms represent the pure hearts of worshipers. They seem to sing with love, adoration, appreciation, and joy.
 - 2) They also express fear, failures, forgiveness, and pain.
 - 3) In them, and other music of Israel, we learn to give ourselves to God in worship. Many forms of worship are sanctioned throughout the Psalms.
- f. The Priestly Order: A Shadow of Christ the Substance.
 - 1) The presence of a priestly class in the Old Testament is a shadow of a Greater Priest in the New Testament, even Christ.
 - 2) It also foreshadows a class of servants at God's altar, the church (Heb 9:11; Rev 5:10).

Discussion Point

Promote further discussion of how these Old Testament features of worship relate to an understanding of our New Testament provisions in Christ.

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C. Worship in the New Testament Perspective.

1. The New Testament completes in substance what was only a shadowy promise in the Old Testament.
2. The Old Testament images offer understanding of New Testament realities.
 - a. The New Altar of God: The Redeemed Heart of Man (1 Col 1:27; 1 Cor 3:16).
 - b. The New Exchanged Life: Our Reasonable Service of Worship (Rom 12:1, 2).
 - c. The New Ceremonial Law: Regulated by Spirit and Truth (Jn 4:20-24).
 - d. The New Meeting Place: Man, the Temple in the Nations (Acts 16:25-30; 1 Pt 2:5).
 - e. The Music of New Israel: Expression of the Spirit's Presence (Eph 5:18, 19).
 - f. The New Priesthood: Christ, the High Priest; All believers, the Priesthood (Heb 3:1-6, 9:11; 1 Pt 2:5, 8, 9).

Discussion Point

Discuss how our worship would stay more God-centered if we allowed these New Testament perspectives to be the focal point of our worship life. How can you incorporate these perspectives into your church's worship?

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V. Worship and Celebration in the Church: Elements, Form and Substance.

A. Elements of Worship and Celebration.

1. The elements of the corporate worship experience are derived from the Bible. These elements are derived from examples in the New Testament.
2. They appear as expected occurrences in a normal fellowship of believers.
3. The spirit of each of these elements is in the context of a celebration of Christ's recent triumph at Calvary, over sin, death, and the grave.
 - a. The Word of God expounded and illumined (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 14:26).
 - b. The Lord's Supper or Breaking of Bread (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 11:23-34).
 - c. Baptism of Believers (Mt 28:19; Acts 2:41).
 - d. Gathering For Fellowship (Acts 2:42; Heb 10:24).
 - e. Praise and Musical Celebration (Lk 24:53; 1 Cor 14:15; Eph 5:19).
 - f. Making Offerings (Acts 4:34, 35; 1 Cor 16:1, 2).

Discussion Point

Are the previous concepts the normal occurrences of your church's gatherings?
Discuss the need for us to follow the scriptural model provided for us.
Discuss the potential dangers of drifting away from these scriptural descriptions.

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B. Other Quality Considerations: The Actual Gathering.

Notes —

1. In the Bible there are descriptions that are not necessarily mandated to be a part of a worship gathering, but they seem to characterize New Testament worship.
2. Consider these descriptions of the gatherings.
 - a. Unified spiritually/materially (Acts 2:44, 4:32).
 - b. In the Temple; house to house (the church was localized).
 - c. Feelings of joy; awe, fear, conviction (Acts 2:43, 46, 47; 1 Cor 14:24, 25).
 - d. Supernatural events occurred (Acts 2:43; Jms 5:13-16).
 - e. All things were in common; meals together, property sold (Acts 2:44-46).
 - f. Supporting structures of service (Acts 6:1-7).
 - g. Met daily, or at least weekly (Acts 2:26; 1 Cor 16:1, 2; Heb 3:13).

Discussion Point

Do our gatherings reflect the New Testament descriptions?
If not, should we be concerned? Discuss this issue.

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C. Form and Substance of Worship and Celebration.

1. Let us now turn our attention toward the most external aspects worship, its form. It is important to relate these features to their more important internal factors.
2. Here are several factors to keep in mind as the attention in this study turns toward the working-out of a theology of worship and celebration.
 - a. Forms are shadows of the reality: Christ is the substance (Col 2; Heb 10:1-3). This is true in our worship practices too. Our expressions of worship must have an eternal nature about them (Rev 5:8-10).
 - b. Forms may change between cultures, but the substance remains; which is Christ.
 - 1) Jesus corrected the Samaritan woman who sought to argue about the “correct” forms and locations for worship.
 - 2) He challenged her thinking by de-emphasizing cultural preferences, and emphasizing eternal realities.
 - 3) He told her that the Father in Heaven was seeking worshipers who knew the Spirit’s presence (the One who points to Christ) and truth (the nature, word and revelation of Christ). (See Jn 4:20-24).
 - c. Forms (both individual and corporate responses) are regulated by Biblical truth, not human invention or misguided zeal (Lev 10:1-3; read about Uzzah’s zealous, but fatal error in this respect).

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d. Form follows purpose and function.

- 1) It is important to consider this simple rule. Asking the question “why” can be one of the most important reflexes of Biblical thinkers.
- 2) Since worship style is often a matter of certain traditions, denominations, or cultural expressions, the honest Christian is at liberty to consider the reason why a certain form is preferred or practiced.
- 3) This is the practical implication of Jesus’ words to the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:24).

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D. Forms of Worship and Praise.

1. **Standing** (see 1 Kings 8:22; 1 Chron 23:30; 2 Chron 7:6; Ps 134:1; 135:2; Rom 5:2). It is out of respect that we stand, and to show that we are attentive to the Lord.
2. **Kneeling** (see Ps 95:6; Acts 20:36; 21:5; Phil 2:10). We kneel as an act of reverence and submission.
3. **Bowing Down** (see Is 45:23; Ps 95:6; 2 Chron 20:18; Rom 14:11).

These three Hebrew words for worship mean to bow:

- a. Shachah - used 171 times.
- b. Qadad - used 15 times.
- c. Kara - used 30 times.

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4. **Dancing** (see Ex 15:20; Ps 30:11; 149:3; 150:4; Judg 11:34; 1 Sam 18:6-7; 21:11; 29:5; 2 Sam 6:14-16; 1 Chron 15:29; Jer 31:4,12, 13; Luke 15:25; Mt 11:17; Luke 7:32).
 - a. The Greek and Hebrew words that are translated as “rejoice” mean to spin, spring, leap, and jump for joy.
 - b. Dance is usually associated with worship and joy, but also has significance for spiritual warfare when the enemy is “under foot” (a sign of victory: see Ps 47:1-3).
 - c. There is much more to the dance than “hopping up and down”, which has become popular in North American Charismatic churches. This is valid, but there is a lot more.
 - d. The following is a brief word study of the Hebrew words for dance and rejoice.
 - 1) Gul; Gil: means to spin around; rejoice; fear; be glad; joyful; to go in a circle. (See, Ps 2:11; 9:14; 53:6; 89:16; 118:24; Is 9:3; 61:10.)
 - 2) Chul; Chil: means to twist or whirl (in a circular or spiral manner); to dance; to turn around; to writhe in pain; to travail (childbirth) (See Deut 2:25; Ps 29:9; 55:4; Is 13:8; Jer 4:19; Ezek 30:16.)
 - 3) Karar: means to dance; move in a circle (see 2 Sam 6:14).
 - 4) Rekad: means to stamp, to spring about (wildly or for joy, dance, jump, leap, skip). (See 1 Chron 15:29; Ps 29:6; 114:4,6; Is 13:21.)
 - 5) Dalag: means to spring or leap (see 2 Sam 22:30; Ps 18:29; Is 35:6).
 - 6) Pazaz means to leap; to bound; to be light or agile (see Gen 49:24; 2 Sam 6:16).
 - 7) Chagag: means to move in a circle; specifically to march in a sacred procession; to observe a festival, keep a solemn feast. (See 1 Sam 30:16; Ex 5:1; Lev 23:41; Ps 42:4.)

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e. The following is a brief word study of the Greek words for dance and rejoice.

- 1) Agalliao: means to jump for joy, be exceedingly glad, rejoice greatly (see Lk 10:21; Mt 5:12; John 5:35; Acts 2:26; 1 Pet 4:13; Heb 1:9).
- 2) Hallomai; Exallomai: means to jump, leap, spring up (see Acts 3:8).
- 3) Skirtao: means to jump, leap for joy (see Lk 6:23; 1:41,44).
- 4) Choros: means a ring or round dance chorus (see Luke 15:25).
- 5) Orcheomai: means to dance. (See Mt 11:17; 14:6; Mark 6:22; Luke 7:32 - it is the Greek word used in the “Septuagint” translation of the Old Testament to describe David in 1 Chron 15:29; 2 Sam 6:21.)

f. Dancing in worship.

- 1) Festival dancing.
 - a) A time of fellowship or celebration.
 - b) “Able-Meholah” (1 Kgs 19:16) is called the meadow of the dance. It was a place set aside for festivals and feast days.
 - (1) Elisha was born there.
 - (2) We might say that “double portion” ministries were born out of worship.
- 2) Prophetic interpretation.
 - a) In Ex 15:21, Miriam danced after the song of Moses.
 - b) In 1 Sam 18:6, 7, David was met by songs and dances that were prophetic to his later ministry.

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5. **Laughing** (see Ps 126:2). It is used as a way of showing and releasing joy.
6. **Shouting** (see 1 Sam 4:5; Ezra 3:11; Ps 5:11; 32:11; 35:11; 47:1; Zeph 3:14; Zech 9:9). It is used as a sign of triumph, a release of joy and exultant praise and worship, and as a weapon of war.
7. **Loud Noise** (see 2 Chron 20:19; Neh 9:4; Ps 98:4; Luke 17:15; Acts 14:10,11; Rev 5:12). It is used to proclaim an extreme and dynamic feeling.
8. **Solemn Sound & Procession** (see Ezek 46:9; Ps 92:3). It is used in a ceremony and is sacred, sober, and slow in movement or action.
9. **Banners** (see Ex 17:15; Ps 20:5; 60:4; Is 13:2).
 - a. God is revealed as “Jehovah-nissi” (The Lord my banner).
 - b. There are many truths associated with “lifting up” the banner of the Lord.
 - 1) When Jesus is “lifted up” He will draw all men unto Himself (Jn 12:32).
 - 2) It represents a weapon of war (see Is 31:9; Jer 4:6; 50:2; 51:12, 27).
 - 3) It is an instrument of worship and healing.
10. **Singing**.
 - a. There are over 120 references to the use of singing in worship.
 - 1) It is but one form of worship.
 - 2) Any mood of the heart can be expressed in song.
 - b. New Song (see Ps 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; Is 42:10; Rev 5:9; 14:3). This is the song of the Lord.

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c. Responsive Singing.

- 1) This was a fundamental form of singing in Israel.
- 2) The songs were probably used to “teach.”
- 3) There are seven types in scripture.
 - a) Two companies/choirs (Neh 12:31,40,42; Ezra 3:11). This is a “planned” use of this form.
 - b) One to another (1 Sam 18:7; 21:11; 29:5; Is 6:3-4).
 - (1) One solo being responded to by another solo.
 - (2) The Song of Solomon could have been sung this way.
 - c) One to a group (Ex 15:21). Also the titles of Ps 44, 47, 99, indicate the possibility that they were sung by the sons of Korah in response to the chief musician.
 - d) Leader to the congregation (Ps 107; 136; and 106; 118). The congregation singing the written response.
 - e) Singers to dancers (Ex 15:21). To interpret the song with the dance.
 - f) Singers to instruments (Is 38:20). The instruments could play with the singers or in response to them.
 - g) One generation to another (Ps 145:4). A way to teach children about the praise and the ways of the Lord.
- 4) There are three ways to form the responsive song.
 - a) To develop a theme (Song of Solomon).
 - b) With an echo of all or part of each statement.
 - c) With the question and answer. These need to be practiced.

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11. **Instruments** (Ex 15:20; Ps 71:22; 150:3-6; 144:9; Rev 5:8).

- a. Instruments need to use all the elements of music in order to better express the word of the Lord.
 - 1) Rhythm: This can add to the “feel” of the word.
 - 2) Timbre: This is the effective use of the unique sounds of each instrument. It can emphasize the mood.
 - 3) Dynamics: It can also emphasize the mood. It is more than just the volume.
- b. All types of instruments were used in praise and worship.
 - 1) Tambourines (Jer 31:4).
 - 2) Stringed instruments, pipes, and cymbals (Ps 150:4,5).
 - 3) Horns and trumpets (Ps 98:6).
 - 4) Harps (Ps 33:2).
 - 5) A complete symphony (2 Sam 6:5)!

12. **Lifting of Hands** (there are 12 variations in the Scriptures).

- a. Supplication - a prayer of asking humbly for something (see Ps 28:2; 88:9, Lam 2:19).
- b. Repentance - a prayer of penitence (see Lam 3:40,41; Ezra 9:5,6; Job 11:13).
- c. Praise and Blessing - (see Ps 63:4; Neh 8:6; Ps 134:2).
- d. Worship - (see Ps 44:20).
- e. Thirsting and Seeking after God - (see Ps 143:6).
- f. Form of Prayer (see 1 Tim 2:8, “lifting up holy hands”; 1 Kings 8:22,54; 2 Chron 6:12,19; Ps 141:2).

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- g. Warfare (see Ex 17:11,12).
 - h. Divine Power (see Ex 9:15; 10:21,22; Num 20:11).
 - i. Meditation (see Ps 119:48).
 - j. To Bless Others (see Luke 24:50; Lev 9:22).
 - k. Making a Solemn Declaration or Oath (see Duet 32:40; 14:22; Is 62:8; Dan 12:7).
 - l. A Sign of the Heart. (see Heb 12:12; Neh 8:6; Job 11:13; Lam 3:41).
13. **Clapping of the Hands** (there are seven variations mentioned in scripture).
- a. Rejoicing (see Is 55:12; Ps 98:8).
 - b. Coronation (see 2 Kings 11:12).
 - c. Triumph (see Ps 47:1; Ezek 25:6).
 - d. Anger (see Num 24:10; Ezek 21:14; 21:17).
 - e. Contempt (see Lam 2:15; Job 27:23; 34:37; Nah 3:19; Exec 25:6, 7. This can also be used in spiritual warfare).
 - f. Sorrow (see Exec 6:11; 21:14).
 - g. Making a Pledge (see Prov 11:21).

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VI. Worship and Redemptive Witness.

Author's Comment:

There is a small church which has two signs over its door. As you enter you see the words, **enter to worship**. When you leave the church there is another sign which says, **exit to serve**. The signs might be simple, but there is a great deal of good theology written over those church doors—Biblical worship actually produces acts worthy of God's honor.

A. The Message and Aim of Witness.

1. Perhaps few have thought of evangelism in terms of worship—worshippers living lives that reproduce other worshippers.
2. In the scene around the throne, there are worshippers from every tribe, tongue, and nation, from all of history. The underlying reality is that these people, led by the Holy Spirit at particular times, each influenced some others to be turned towards their God. (Consider Daniel 6:10-28; Acts 2:47 and the role that worshipful and celebrative living plays in the events.)
 - a. Celebrating our Relationship with a Mighty God (Ex 15).
 - b. Celebrating our Rightful Place; King and Bowing Servants (Rev 5:8-10).
 - c. Celebrating to Dethrone Dehumanizing gods/idols (Ps 149).

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B. The Culminating Event: The Throne-ward Gaze.

1. Worship is perhaps one of the few human acts that requires the total person—spirit, body, and might.
2. It is also one of the few acts of mankind that transcends the bounds of time. In every glimpse into Heaven, we see spiritual beings fixed upon a central object of worship—the Reigning Lord Upon the Throne.
3. The vision of God causes spontaneous response of the highest of praise and the most reverential and celebrative postures of honor, love and joy. The Scriptures from beginning to end, portray the focus of history—to aim toward the recognition of His supreme worthiness.

Discussion Point

Study and discuss the following passages. Look for similarities and differences. Notice that Him who sits on the throne is at the center of all attention, praise, and effort. (Ezek 1:4-28; Is 6:1-6; Rev 4:8-11).

VII. Practical Reflections about Worship.

Author's Comment:

It has been said: “We cannot achieve the anointing and blessing of God through our planning and preparation, but by failure to plan and prepare we can prevent such anointing and blessing” (anonymous).

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A. Organizing for Excellence. In this final section, the practical matters regarding the coordination required for worship are presented.

1. The Worshipers: Spiritual Preparations.

- a. In one true sense, worship cannot be led. Music and people can be orchestrated, and moods can be created through the influence of a few technicians, but worship is the individual response of a believer to the revelation of God.
- b. If the believer has not prepared through personal reflection, then worship will at best be sentimental, or purely external demonstrations.

2. The Worship Service: Liturgies and Celebrations.

- a. Worship transcends liturgical preferences, styles, musical expertise, and the cultures which determine these. However, every corporate expression of worship must be coordinated in some way, even if minimally. This coordinated approach to God is called liturgy.
- b. In some churches, liturgy may be very formal with an emphasis on reverential approach. Others may be more informal, with the emphasis on celebration. Perhaps balance is the best aim as individual worshipers reflect different moods, needs, and understandings.

3. Decency and Order: Celebration, within Bounds.

- a. Regardless of whether the worshipful response of believers is characterized by formality or informality, the Bible teaches that some practices are outside its bounds and others are within its boundaries. The scriptures must dictate, not our tradition, preference, culture, or style.
- b. In all cases, the gathering should be conducted by authorized persons in decency and order so that visitors might discern God in the midst, and thereby be converted (1 Cor 14:26). This is celebration, within boundaries.

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4. Worship, According to the Glory Due Him.

- a. Our worship, regardless of our styles and forms, will be in direct proportion to how we value God. We never rise above our view of Him.
- b. This is to call to deep reflection upon God in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures. There is no other source for valid worship, but the rich reservoir of the Word.

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B. A two-part Appendix for Worship Leaders.

APPENDIX PART I

Use the following outline as time allows and as it is applicable to your situation.

A. Biblical Guidelines for Worship Leaders and Teams.

1. The Musicians displayed a life of righteousness (see 1 Chron 15:7; 2 Chron 5:12; 29:15; Neh 12:30).
 - a. They wore a garment of white linen. This fine white linen signified a life of holiness.
 - b. They were sanctified and purified. This is also a need for the musician today.
 - 1) To keep themselves set aside for the purposes of the Lord.
 - 2) To keep themselves pure and undefiled from the things of the world. In the restoration of Nehemiah's time, the musicians were consecrated by an oath to the ministry (see Neh 10:28-39).
 - c. They separated themselves and their families from the world and unto the law of God.
 - 1) They were committed to their "brethren."
 - 2) They were committed to their leaders.
 - 3) They were committed unto the Lord and His Sabbath rests.

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- 4) They were committed to help in the practical needs of the church.
 - 5) They were committed to the tithes and other offerings.
 - 6) They were committed to be committed!
 - a) This might mean playing or going to a practice or prayer meeting when we do not feel like it.
 - b) It might be good for the members of the team to be “ordained” into the ministry in view of the congregation and with the laying on of hands by the pastors/elders.
2. The Musicians Must Keep a Teachable Spirit (see 1 Chron 15:22; 25:6-8; Eph 4:11-16; 1 John 2:27).
- a. They must have a humble spirit that can rejoice in correction and instruction. God gives certain people musical abilities. However, these abilities must be developed. Thus, the musician must be teachable.
 - b. Musicians should take lessons and other classes that can improve and complement their talent.
3. Faithfulness is Essential in the Life of the Musician (see 1 Chron 6:32; 16:37; 2 Chron 7:6; 8:14; Neh 12:45).
- a. There was continual ministry before the ark until it came into its final resting place (Solomon’s temple). This was a span of about thirty years.
 - b. The worship was continual. We can not just play our instruments when we want to. We need to be ready to play our instruments every day if it is necessary.

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4. A Musician Must Be a Person Who Desires Unity (see 2 Chron 5:13; 1 Thes 3:12; Eph 4:3).

a. As the team prays and practices together they should be able to produce “one sound.” Harmony is essential in music. Harmony in the music depends on the harmony between the musicians.

1) There is no place for “competition” in the music team.

2) Musicians can cover each other’s mistakes in an attitude of love if there is unity between them.

b. Unity and peace are found in the Spirit.

1) Practice and prayer as a team helps to develop a sensitivity to this spiritual unity.

2) It will also develop the spiritual discernment needed to meet the needs of the congregation and to maintain a smooth flow in the service.

5. The Directors or the “Chief Musicians” Were Appointed (see 1 Chron 15:16-27; 16:5; 25:1-8; 2 Chron 5:12; Neh 12:42).

a. In fact, all the musicians were appointed. They were not “elected.”

b. There was an order (hierarchy of authority) and organization of musicians.

1) It allowed someone to be on “worship duty” every hour.

2) There was an order of responsibility and authority and covering.

3) Twenty four (24) sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun were over 288 singers and musicians. Eventually there were 4000 that were included in this governmental order of the music ministry (see 1 Chron 23:5).

4) They cast lots to see when they were to be responsible for ministry.

5) There were times when they all played and ministered together.

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c. Much can be learned about the music ministry from the four chief musicians.

1) Asaph: means “a person that gathers” (see 1 Chron 6:39; 15:17; 25:1,2; 2 Chron 20:14; 29:30; 35:15).

a) From his name we can see that it is important for a worship leader to be able to bring unity to the team.

(1) They need to truly love people.

(2) They will need pastoral skills.

b) By his example, he will disciple the team to “gather” the congregation into the presence of the Lord.

2) Heman: means “right-handed; faithful” (see 1 Chron 6:33; 25:5; 2 Chron 35:15; Ps 88). Thus, worship leaders must be faithful.

a) He should be able to disciple the others on the team.

b) Faithfulness is essential for such a “publicly visible” ministry.

3) Ethan-Jeduthon: means “strength; perpetuity; let them give praise” (see 1 Chron 6:44; 25:1-3,6; 2 Chron 5:12; Neh 11:17; Ps 39; 62; 77). The worship leader must be energetic and steadfast in order to be able to consistently lead the team and the congregation in praise.

4) Chenaniah: means “Jehovah has established” (see 1 Chron 15:22, 27). Indeed, the music ministry must be built and powered by the hand of the Lord.

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6. Musicians Were Involved in Other Practical Ministries (see 1 Chron 9:26-33; 25:8-31; 26:29; Neh 11:22).
 - a. They were in charge of the “maintenance department.”
 - b. They handled the finances.
 - c. They opened the gates.
 - d. They were responsible for the vessels and furniture of the sanctuary.
 - e. Some of them helped with legal and governmental needs of the people.
7. There Were Both Male and Female Musicians (see Ezra 2:65; Neh 12:43).

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APPENDIX PART II

The following section is primarily for churches and cultures in which a team is preferred. It will be helpful to those who organize worship services in these churches.

B. Practical Suggestions for Forming a Worship Team:

1. The team must understand the purpose of instruments.
 - a. To minister before the ark (the Lord). (see 1 Chron 16:4, 6, 37.)
 - b. To “praise” the Lord (see 1 Chron 23:5; Ps 33:2; 71:22; 92:1-3; 98:5, 6; 149:3; 150:3-5).
 - c. To accompany the singers (see 1 Chron 15:16).
 - d. To call together the assembly and to lead them (see Num 10:1-10; Ps 81:3; 92:1-3).
 - e. For deliverance and guidance (see 2 Kings 3:15; 1 Sam 10:5, 6).
 - f. For prophesy (see 1 Chron 25:1-3; Ps 49:4).

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g. A weapon of warfare (see Num 10:2-10; Ps 144:1).

h. A missionary tool (see Ps 57:7-9).

2. You Will Need a “Chief Musician.”

a. It is important (although not essential) that they are musicians themselves.

b. They need to understand their responsibilities and be given authority over those areas.

c. The chief musician must have the following qualities:

1) Spiritual (gifts and callings). (see 1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1 :5-9).

a) He must be able to handle the word of God correctly.

b) He must be a person who has established the disciplines of prayer and faithfulness in his life.

c) It should be obvious that his authority is from God.

d) He should be a man of proven integrity.

e) He needs to have a genuine love for the people (God’s love).

f) He should have the ability to bring together the people in unity and harmony.

2) Skill (talents and abilities that can be developed).

a) Organizational and leadership skills. He must have the ability to communicate well so that he can define what is expected of each member of the worship team.

b) He should have the ability to learn and grow in music skills and its theory.

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3. Pray, Choose, and Appoint or Ordain Musicians.

- a. Pray and ask God for the musicians that you need. Involve the congregation in praying.
- b. Encourage (and when possible provide for) the instruction of young and unskilled musicians. Do not just use unskilled musicians (if at all possible) to fill in the empty spots.
- c. Promote discipleship of the musicians.
- d. Promote development of the musical skills of each one.
- e. Consecrate instruments.
 - 1) Ask the congregation for donations of funds or for old instruments.
 - 2) Set aside church finances for the purchase and repair of instruments.
- f. Develop a regular and organized practice time.
 - 1) Include individual and group prayer.
 - 2) Practice as a team.
 - 3) Learn new songs.
 - 4) Study music theory and try to broaden the style and abilities of each musician.
 - 5) Each member should have his own folder of the notes of the music.
 - 6) Set goals as a group.
- g. Worship team members should come early to services to tune their instruments, pray, and be “prepared” for worship.

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4. Ideas and Suggestions For Worship Leaders.

- a. This is a very difficult job! The worship leader will need to lead (not push) an entire congregation into the presence of God for communication with Him on an individual and corporate level.
 - 1) The congregation will often be tired, sick, discouraged, rebellious, hurting, or not in harmony with each other.
 - 2) The worship leader can not lead the service according to his emotional state. The Lord wants to minister to the congregation, and the worship leader must set aside his personal feelings and become sensitive to the spiritual condition of the congregation as well as the direction of the Holy Spirit. The worship leader, in harmony with the other musicians, can then become a channel of grace.
- b. There are three basic functions of the worship leader, which all have certain requirements.
 - 1) To lead the congregation into the presence of the Lord.
 - a) The worship of God must be a “lifestyle” for the worship leader.
 - b) He must have a deep “knowledge” of God.
 - c) He must have a sensitivity to the direction of the Spirit in order to minister to the needs of the congregation.
 - d) He must be a servant.
 - e) He must have a genuine Godly love for God’s sheep.
 - f) He must avoid having a critical spirit. It is very difficult to lead people in worship whom you consistently criticize.
 - g) He must be punctual and organized in his own life.

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- 2) To lead and cover the musicians.
 - a) His love for the musicians must be genuine and from God.
 - b) He should have skill in the various forms of worship (banners, dance, prophecy, new song, etc.).
 - c) He should have skill in the basics of music.
 - (1) Pitch.
 - (2) Range.
 - (3) Other music theory.
- 3) To lead and prepare the congregation for the rest of the service into what the Lord is going to do.
 - a) He must be in submissive harmony with the leadership of the church.
 - b) He must be sensitive to the flow of the Spirit and the direction that the Lord wants to take the church.
- c. Preparation for worship.
 - 1) Personal sanctification (see 1 Chron 15:14; 2 Chron 29:14, 15; Neh 12:30; Gal 5:25; 1 Cor 6:11).
 - a) This takes personal effort.
 - b) It should be done on a daily basis.
 - c) A worship leader will lose all anointing without a clean heart.

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- 2) Waiting on the Lord (see 1 Chron 6:32; 2 Chron 7:6; 35:15, 16; Rom 12:7).
 - a) The Lord has a plan for each service.
 - b) He wants to share His plan with us.
 - c) He reserves the right to change it! This is analogous to a preacher who prepares a sermon. While he is preparing He seeks God's guidance. Yet, he is prepared to make changes as the Holy Spirit guides him during the service.
- 3) The worship leader should have a list of the songs that he "plans" to use.
 - a) This list of songs should have a flow with respect to key, theme, rhythm etc.
 - b) There needs to be sufficient practice with the team. The team will develop a style and will begin to flow together. This should be happening during practice sessions.
- d. Various practical points for leading worship.
 - 1) As much as possible, the worship leader needs to be at peace with all the musicians!
 - a) If correction is needed, do it in private.
 - b) Practice with them as much as possible.
 - c) Develop a simple set of hand signals to communicate with the musicians.
 - d) Do not use songs that the team can not play or sing well.

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- 2) Talking should be kept at a minimum during worship.
 - a) Talking can break the “flow of the Spirit.”
 - b) Never correct or rebuke the congregation. This is the work of the pastor. If necessary, share your concerns with him after the service.
 - c) Introductions of people should focus on lifting up Jesus and not the person being introduced.
- 3) Choose songs carefully and skillfully.
 - a) Develop a theme.
 - b) Become skillful in the use of keys, rhythms, and themes to make transitions and to create a flow.
 - c) Have “more” songs prepared than you plan to use.
 - d) Be open and available to the Lord to change things. Be flexible enough to sing a song that you did not plan to sing.
 - e) Never use the service as a time to practice.
 - f) Teach new songs that are consistent with what the Lord is saying to the congregation at that particular time.

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- 4) You need to be strong in your leadership.
 - a) You are the leader (not the congregation or the worship team).
 - b) The first note is the most important. You need to initiate it in an obvious way.
 - c) Most of the time you should sing the melody.
 - d) Try to be comfortable. If it is obvious that you are not, then the congregation will be negatively effected.
 - e) Lead people to the Lord, not to yourself.
- 5) Be sensitive to the Spirit.
 - a) Establish an attitude of praise and thanksgiving before moving on to other areas of ministry.
 - b) Sing a song until you feel in your spirit that the people have received its message in their spirit and are singing it to the Lord.
 - c) Know “when” to enter into a time of prophecy. You should know the Biblical basis for this and other spiritual gifts.
 - d) Do not be afraid of silence.
 - e) Lead the congregation in responding to any prophetic utterance.
 - (1) Rely on the anointing of the pastor. Let him decide if the gifts are “in order.”
 - (2) Establish a means of “silent communication” with the pastor.
 - f) Know when to stop. Submit to time limits.
 - g) Do not try to create too many “peaks.”

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- h) Be sensitive of when to move on after a specific “climax” of ministry.
- 6) Other ideas and suggestions.
 - a) Be aware of “habits and ruts” with respect to the form of worship.
 - (1) Clapping can become meaningless if it is used all the time.
 - (2) Be careful not to fall into a pattern where the same songs always follow each other.
 - b) Encourage the congregation to stand up sometimes (especially in the beginning).
 - c) The responsibilities of the deacons with respect to seating, lighting, sound systems, etc. can have a great effect on the flow of the worship.
 - (1) Be open in communication with these people.
 - (2) Share your needs and your concerns with them.
 - d) Focus the worship on God Himself. Lead the people in singing to Him (not to each other or to themselves).
 - e) Promote a perspective of worship that seeks to please God and minister to Him. Avoid the perspective that focuses on the benefits of the one who is worshipping (people sometimes worship because they want to “feel good” or “spiritual”).
 - (1) Remember, we are worshipping God. It is for Him, from Him, through Him, and to Him. He is the focus.
 - (2) We, of course, will also receive from God during worship. We will be blessed. However, this is not the goal of worship. It is a result.

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Praise and Worship: Endnotes

¹West, Russell W. "Personal Reflections on Worship." Virginia Beach, Virginia 1994. This course except for those sections credited to Terry Kyle, is derived from personal reflections on excellence in living, worship and witness. It is contributed for use in MOTMOT (2nd Edition) by permission.

¹Kyle, Terry, MOTMOT, 1st Edition. Adapted from a course developed for training institute in Guatemala, 1991. Section II.B, "Forms" and III. retitled "Appendix for Worship Leaders and Teams." Used by permission.

²Tenny, Merrill C. Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan's. Entries: Ashtorahs, Baal, Dagon, Idolatry, Molech.

³Attributes adapted from Elwell, Walter A. Evangelical Dictionary of Theology. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984, pp. 451-458.

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CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Church Fellowship: Syllabus

Notes —

CLASS #1:

- I. Introduction.
- II. Fellowship in the Early Church.
- III. The Necessity, Nature, and Neglect of Church Fellowship:
 - A. Introduction to Section III.

CLASS #2:

- III. The Necessity, Nature, and Neglect of Church Fellowship: (cont.)
 - B. The Necessity of Church Fellowship.

CLASS #3:

- III. The Necessity, Nature, and Neglect of Church Fellowship: (cont.)
 - C. The Nature of Church Fellowship.
 - D. The Neglect of Church Fellowship.

CLASS #4:

- III. The Necessity, Nature, and Neglect of Church Fellowship: (cont.)
 - D. The Neglect of Church Fellowship. (cont.)
 - E. Conclusion.
- IV. A Modern Day Application: Christian Fellowship and Tribalism.
 - A. Introduction.
 - B. Loyalty.
 - C. Implications of **One** Household.

CLASS #5:

- IV. A Modern Day Application: Christian Fellowship and Tribalism. (cont.)
 - D. The Lord's Supper.
- Exam.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

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Church Fellowship: Exam

Possible 20 Point Questions

- 1) Describe the sharing of fellowship by referring to sharing in, sharing out, and sharing with (pp. 156, 157).
- 2) Explain how fellowship is crucial and essential in the witness of the church (pp. 167-170).
- 3) Describe how fellowship is based on relationship (pp. 181-184).
- 4) Explain how the fear of confession hinders fellowship (pp. 188-190).
- 5) Use the concept of the **One** body of Christ to promote fellowship in the Church (pp. 199-200)
- 6) In 1 Cor 11:27 what does an “unworthy manner” mean (pp. 203-205)?

Possible 10 Point Questions

- 1) Briefly describe one of the “secrets” of fellowship in the early church (pp. 157-159).
- 2) List three scriptures that offer “one another” instructions (p. 165).
- 3) Briefly explain the implications of the fact that the term “saint” is always in the plural form (p. 171).
- 4) What is the meaning of “koinonia” (pp. 179-180)?
- 5) List and briefly explain two general hindrances to fellowship (p. 185).
- 6) List three specific fears that hinder fellowship (pp. 185-188).
- 7) Briefly comment on this statement: “We do not have to create fellowship. We already are a fellowship (p. 192).”
- 8) Define “tribalism” (pp. 194-195).
- 9) Use Eph 2:11-22 to argue against prejudice (p. 199).
- 10) List three bases for division in the Corinthian church (pp. 201, 202).
- 11) What is “not judging the body rightly” mean in 1 Cor 11:29 (p. 206)?
- 12) What is the solution to the problems of tribalism (p. 207)?

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

I. Introduction.

Notes —

A. The Power of Fellowship (Sharing and Togetherness).

1. During World War II, Adolph Hitler's scientists conducted experiments to find the most effective type of punishment or torture for eliciting information from prisoners.
 - a. They found that solitary confinement (being isolated from other people) was the most effective form of torture. After a few weeks of solitary confinement, most men would cooperate with the enemy.
 - b. 'Fellowship' is an Old English word which simply means "sharing and togetherness."
 - c. The human need for fellowship is very high. Indeed, fellowship is more than a need. It is a basic part of human life. We must have social interaction. Without fellowship we will die.
 - 1) Studies have shown that newborn babies are more adversely effected by a lack of human contact than by a lack of food.
 - 2) A newborn baby will live longer without food than it will live without human contact and affection.
2. Solitary confinement (a lack of human sharing and togetherness) resulted in weakness. The prisoner fell to the temptation and abandoned his own value of loyalty.
 - a. In the same way, Christians who lack spiritual fellowship with other Christians will be weakened. They will inevitably abandon their values and fall to the temptations of the enemy.
 - b. The Christian's need for spiritual fellowship with others is more than a need. It is a basic part of the Christian life. Without it Christianity can not exist, because without it Christianity can not be practiced in its fullness.

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- c. Spiritual lives die when there is no spiritual fellowship with others. No Christian can stand alone. God has formed the **people** of God, not simply the **person** of God. His goal is to have a **family**, not simply an **individual**.

Discussion Point

Conduct a brief discussion about the effects of being isolated as a Christian and how fellowship with other believers helps to overcome those effects.

B. The Contents of This Course.

1. The necessity of fellowship in the Church does not automatically mean that there is fellowship in the Church or that it is easy to practice that fellowship.
2. From the beginnings of the Church we can see that life in the family of God is not always practiced the way it should be practiced. It is difficult to live in such a large family and always get along with each member.

Author's Comment:

There is a sting of reality in the words of the following poem:

To dwell above with saints we love,
O, that will sure be glory.
But to dwell below with saints we know,
Well, that's another story.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

3. This course is divided into three sections:

- a. A brief study of fellowship in the early Church.
- b. A more extensive study of the theology of fellowship according to the Bible. We will focus on three topics:
 - 1) The **Necessity** of church fellowship.
 - 2) The **Nature** of church fellowship.
 - 3) The **Neglect** of church fellowship.
- c. A modern day application of church fellowship principles applied to African tribalism problems in the African church. Here we will consider how the concept of Church fellowship can be the cure for a common spiritual sickness in the Church of tribal areas.

Notes —

II. Fellowship in the Early Church.

A. The Testimony of Fellowship.

1. Lucian (120-200 A.D.) was a very famous Greek writer in the days of the early Church. He was not a Christian, but when he observed the strong fellowship between Christians he wrote the following words:

“It is incredible to see the fervor with which the people of that religion help each other in their wants. They spare nothing. Their first legislator has put it into their heads that they are brethren.”¹

2. Lucian was skeptical, but he could not ignore the fact that these Christians were sincere in their fellowship.
3. The sincere fellowship between Christians was a great testimony of the early church. We need to ask ourselves today: “Is the fellowship in our churches providing a positive testimony to unbelievers?”
4. We will see later in the course, fellowship and evangelism are directly related.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes —

Discussion Point

Is the fellowship of our churches different than the fellowship of the early church?
If so, why do you think it has changed?

B. The Sharing of Fellowship.

1. Sharing **in**.

- a. The Christians in the early Church understood that it was their fellowship with God that was the basis for their fellowship with each other (1 Jn 1:1-4).
- b. Fellowship with others was based on a **common** belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ.
- c. They had in **common** the beliefs they “shared in.” (See Jude 3 and Tit 1:4).

2. Sharing **out**.

- a. The Christians in the early Church also had in **common** the things that they “shared out.”
- b. They gave out the same Gospel (Lk 5:10).
- c. They had a **common** responsibility to share their material possessions with those in need.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

3. Sharing **with**.

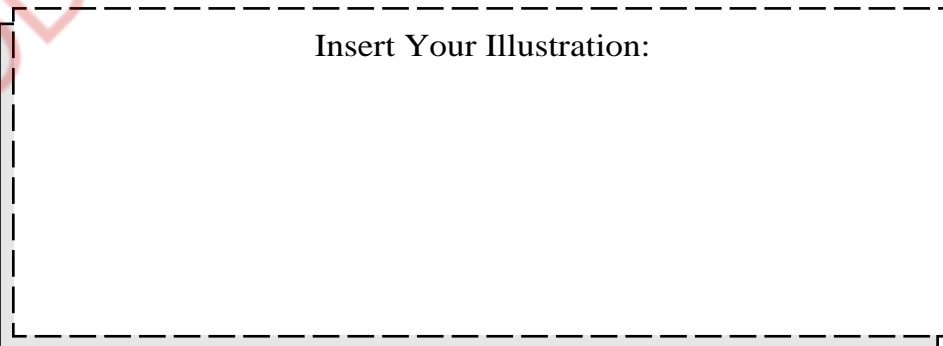
- a. The Christians in the early Church “shared with” each other reciprocal responsibilities and relationships (see Phil 4:15 and Rom 15:27).
- b. Consider Rom 1:11, 12.
 - 1) There was a give and take relationship within the Christian community.
 - 2) The important word in this context is “one another” (the Greek word is “alaython”). The practice of community in the Church was based on a series of New Testament commandments that included this term.
 - 3) The Christians were to do certain things “one to another.” They were to give and to receive. They were to “share with” each other. We will study the “one another” commands in more detail later in the course.

Notes —

C. **The Key Aspects of Fellowship.** How was this type of fellowship made possible in the early Church?

1. All Christians became witnesses.
 - a. It was commonly accepted and understood that a Christian was a witness. The common practice of “witnessing,” of giving public testimony for Christ naturally formed strong relationships between Christians.
 - b. This is still true today. Fellowship in a church is strengthened when evangelism is a focus of its members.

Insert Your Illustration:



CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

2. Owners became stewards.

- a. There was a renewal of the mind in the area of money and possessions. Christians understood that God owned everything. They viewed themselves as stewards of material things. This, of course, affected their fellowship greatly. It was much easier for them to share their things because they had the perspective of a steward.
- b. This is still true today. The more we see ourselves as stewards, the more likely it is that we will share. Sharing is the essence of fellowship.

Insert Your Illustration:

3. Self interest was lost due to a holy passion for Jesus.

- a. The cross was embraced. Early Christians understood that the Christian life was a life that took up the cross daily. They gave up their own lives. It is much easier to share (fellowship) with others after you have let go of yourselves.
- b. This is still true today. The cross frees us to have sincere fellowship. The direction of fellowship is toward others. The direction of the cross is toward others. The cross and fellowship are brothers.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Insert Your Illustration:

Notes —

4. They act in small groups.
 - a. The early Church understood that without small groups fellowship would simply become a theory (or just an idea). They practiced their Christianity in the context of small house churches. Their fellowship was real and effective.
 - b. This is still true today. We can not have the intimate relationship that the New Testament commands requires in the midst of hundreds of people. In some way we must be a part of a smaller group so that we can truly (not theoretically) practice having fellowship.

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about the key aspects of fellowship: witness, stewardship, denying self, and small group fellowship.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

III. The Necessity, Nature, and Neglect of Church Fellowship.

A. Introduction to Section III.

1. Study Ps 133:1.

- a. Why would Christians choose to not take advantage of the blessing and joy of fellowship?
- b. Perhaps the real question is: "Is it even possible for a Christian to negate the blessing and joy of fellowship? Is fellowship simply an optional aspect of the Christian life?"
 - 1) The Biblical answer to this question is no. Fellowship is not an option, it is a commandment.
 - 2) Thus, Ps 133 ends with the words: "For there the Lord commanded the blessing."

2. Renewing our minds.

- a. Some Christians think that the type of fellowship that is seen in the New Testament Church is a "radical" aspect of Christianity.
 - 1) However, the New Testament passages do not read like that. The accounts of this "radical" form of Christianity are presented in a "matter of fact" way. The New Testament form of fellowship was "normative," not "radical."
 - 2) For example, Acts 2:44 is presented very naturally. We do not get the idea that there was a forced type of fellowship. It was the fellowship that comes from the understanding that we have been born into the same family.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Author's Illustration:

A brother does not say to his sister: "Let's try to organize a family. We can get a mother, father, and a little brother to form a family."

The family is not humanly pieced together, but is divinely appointed.

A father asked his daughter: "Are you glad that Billy is your brother?"

The daughter replied: "Well, I really did not have a choice."

Notes —

Insert Your Illustration:

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

- b. Our minds must be renewed with respect to our spiritual families.
 - 1) Fellowship is not an option in the Church. It is a requirement.
 - a) It is required in order to obey God.
 - b) It is required in order to grow in your relationship with God.
 - 2) The sharing that we see in the fellowship of the New Testament Church is not “radical.”
 - a) Yes, compared to worldly fellowship it is radical.
 - b) However, relative to the Bible it is normative.
 - 3) The members of the Church must renew their minds to understand and accept the implications of the requirements of living in a family. Families spend time together and share things. The members of a family share their lives with each other.

Discussion Point

Discuss the need for fellowship and the obstacles that prevent real community and fellowship from happening in your local congregations.

B. The Necessity of Church Fellowship.

- 1. Fellowship is a **requirement** for successful Christian living. It is a **priority** in the Christian’s life.
 - a. **A requirement.**
 - 1) Ralph Martin, in his book The Family and the Fellowship, writes:

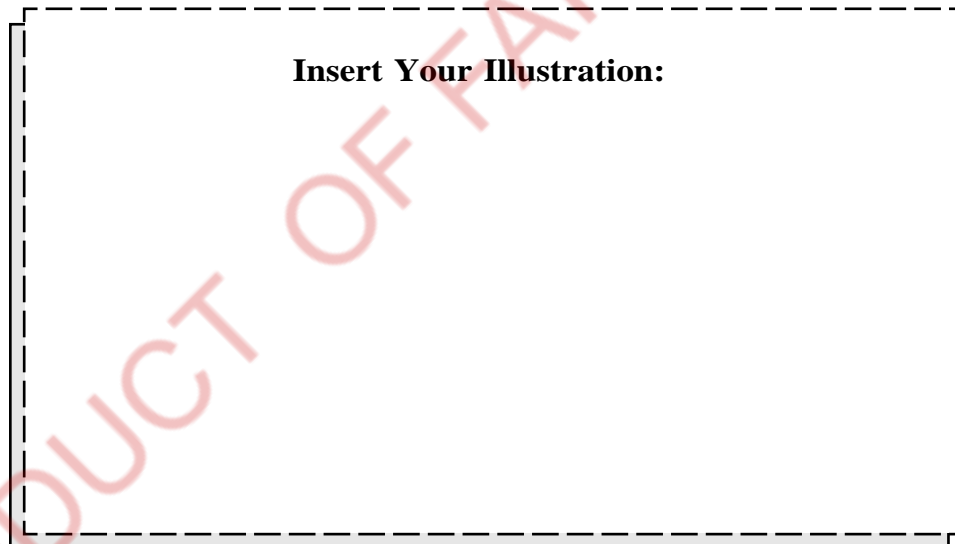
“The new life in Christ requires a social context for its maintenance and maturity. The Christian life is possible only within a network of interpersonal relationships that both lay their claims upon us and invite us to contribute our best.”²

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

- 2) Paul, in Eph 4:15, 16, points to the Body of Christ as being the vehicle through which Christians mature.
- 3) The concept of the Body of Christ assumes and requires interaction (fellowship) between its various members (Prov 27:17).
- 4) The concept of the Body of Christ is consistent with the concept of synergy.
 - a) Synergy is the phenomenon that results in the whole being greater than the sum the parts (Eccl 4:9-12).
 - b) It is the result of an evangelist working together with a teacher. Their combined ministry is greater than the sum of their individual ministries. They complement each other and add to each other's ministry.
 - c) Synergy requires fellowship.

Notes —

Insert Your Illustration:



CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

- 5) The Church is the gathering together of “the called out ones.” (This is the direct translation of the Greek word ‘church,’ ekklesia in the New Testament.)
- a) When Paul writes to “the called out ones” in Eph 4:1 it is in the context of the instructions given in 4:2.
 - b) Read Eph 4:2.
 - (1) To be called out (to be in the Church) necessarily involves fellowship with other “called out ones.”
 - (2) Fellowship becomes an obvious requirement when we begin to see the nature of many of the instructions that are given to the Church.
 - (3) As is the case in Eph 4:2, many instructions to the Church are “one another” oriented. They are instructions that include doing something “alaython” (one to another).

Discussion Point

Study the following diagram of “one another” instructions found in the New Testament. Use the diagram to challenge the students. Ask them if they are actually doing the things that are required of them as Christians. Remind them that a “one another” instruction necessarily requires the practice of fellowship.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

“ONE ANOTHER” REQUIREMENTS	SCRIPTURE
Devotion to ONE ANOTHER	Rom 12:10
Give preference to ONE ANOTHER	Rom 12:10
Have the same mind toward ONE ANOTHER	Rom 12:16
Accept ONE ANOTHER	Rom 15:7
Admonish ONE ANOTHER	Rom 15:14
Greet ONE ANOTHER (affection)	Rom 16:16
Wait for ONE ANOTHER (courtesy, respect)	1Cor 11:33
Care for ONE ANOTHER	1Cor 12:25
Serve ONE ANOTHER	Gal 5:13
Bear the burdens of ONE ANOTHER	Gal 6:2
Encourage and build up ONE ANOTHER	1Thes 5:11
Live in peace with ONE ANOTHER	1Thes 5:13
Seek that which is good for ONE ANOTHER	1Thes 5:15
Showing forbearance to ONE ANOTHER	Eph 4:2
Be kind to ONE ANOTHER	Eph 4:32
Be subject to ONE ANOTHER	Eph 5:21
Bearing with and forgiving ONE ANOTHER	Col 3:13
Confess your sins to ONE ANOTHER	Jms 5:16
Pray for ONE ANOTHER	Jms 5:16
Love ONE ANOTHER	1Pt 1:22
Be hospitable to ONE ANOTHER	1Pt 4:9
Be humble toward ONE ANOTHER	1 Pt 5:5
Have fellowship with ONE ANOTHER	1Jn 1:7

Notes —

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

6) David Watson, in his book Called and Committed, reports:

“This sense of Christian community for all disciples was so strong and fundamental in the first century that salvation apart from the church was considered impossible.”³

a) It was the reality of this type of commitment to fellowship that created an strong sense of something radically new and different.

(1) Fellowship was a visible and necessary aspect of the Church.

(2) The early disciples’ understanding of “church” would have completely fallen apart without a strong sense of fellowship.

b) The necessity of fellowship in the early Church is fully realized in 1 Cor 5.

(1) To be excluded from fellowship was the most severe form of discipline.

(2) For this type of discipline to be effective, fellowship must exist. It is a logical requirement.

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts about the requirement of fellowship to promote further discussion and to answer questions.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

b. A Priority.

Notes —

- 1) Howard Snyder, in his book The Community of the King,⁴ points to the following four Biblical truths that should establish the priority of fellowship:
 - a) The concept of the people of God.
 - b) The model of Christ with His disciples.
 - c) The example of the early Church.
 - d) The explicit teachings of Jesus and the apostles.
- 2) John Wesley (the founder of the Methodist movement) could see no alternative to forming small fellowship groups as he considered the implications of the previous four truths. Fellowship was a focus of the revivals that developed under this movement.
- 3) Howard Snyder suggests that Jesus spent more time preparing a community of disciples than proclaiming the Gospel.⁵ Indeed, fellowship must be a priority in our Christian lives.

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to discuss the prioritizing of fellowship.

2. Fellowship is **crucial** to the life of the Church. It is **essential** in the witness of the Church.
 - a. **Crucial.**
 - 1) The Church is the body through which Jesus continues to work on the earth.
 - 2) Fellowship is not simply extra weight to carry on the body.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

- 3) Fellowship is like the ligaments and sinews which connect the different parts of the body together.
 - a) If there are no ligaments, then the body can not hold together. If there is no fellowship then the Church will fall apart.
 - b) For the body to keep functioning, the parts need to stay connected. For the Church to keep functioning as it should, the members must remain in unity. They must stay connected to each other. This is done though fellowship.

Insert Your Illustration:

b. Essential.

- 1) David Watson writes:

“We live in an age of personal insignificance, and great loneliness. More than ever the church needs to recapture the priority of community in Christian discipleship.”⁶

- a) Watson’s point is clear. The Church has a great opportunity. The world has left many people lonely and starved for real fellowship.
- b) The Church is the only thing that can truly fill the empty lives.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

2) Fellowship and evangelism.

Notes —

a) Fellowship is the ultimate goal of evangelism.

(1) The main focus is not on converting people. It is not even on discipling people. The main focus of evangelism is to bring others into the family of God. It is to bring others into the Body of Christ and the fellowship of that Body.

(2) Jesus came to build His Church. He came to form a people (community) of God. Indeed, this must be our primary goal and motivation in **Biblical** church growth.

b) Fellowship is the basis of evangelism.

(1) We must have something to offer to people.

(2) Watson writes:

“Until the kingdom of God can be demonstrated in our relationships of love with one another, we have nothing credible to say to an unbelieving and broken world.”⁷

(3) Jn 13:35 reveals that our love for one another is the world’s evidence that we are the children of God.

(4) Our credibility (and therefore the credibility of the Gospel) depends on how well we can demonstrate love for one another.

(a) If the world can not see us showing love to each other, then why would they believe our message about love?

(b) The nature of God is the Trinity and the essence of the Trinity is fellowship.

(c) If the Church wants to present a God of fellowship, then it must demonstrate that same spirit of fellowship.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes —

Author's Illustration:

A business that does not exist does not conduct advertising to promote a nonexistent business.

Evangelism without a corresponding community is like an advertisement without a corresponding business.

The customer is attracted to the business because of the advertisement. However, when he arrives at the advertised location of the business, he finds that it does not exist. This is false advertising.

Unfortunately, the same thing happens sometimes in Christianity. The new believer hears the evangelism and is attracted to the church. However, when he arrives he can immediately see that the family of God that was part of the "advertising" (evangelism) is cold and uncaring. He could understandably shout, **false advertising**.

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Discuss how fellowship is crucial to life within the church and essential for witness of the church. Answer any questions.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

3. Fellowship is **assumed** in the Word of God and is **inherent** in His plan.

Notes —

a. **Assumed.**

1) In the New Testament, the Bible refers to believers as “saints.”

a) Of the 62 times this reference is used, 61 times the word “saint” is in the plural form.

b) The only exception is when Paul says in Phil 4:21 to “Greet every saint.” Even the exception indicates the same meaning.

2) The Bible assumes the fellowship of believers. It assumes the plurality of the people of God.

a) The Bible assumes that the people of God are a group, not an individual.

b) It assumes that the Church is a community in fellowship, not an individual alone.

b. **Inherent.** Fellowship is inherent in who we are in the plan of God in three aspects.

1) Fellowship is inherent in who we are in creation.

a) Study Gen 1:26.

(1) Notice that we are made in the image of “us.”

(2) Of course, “us” refers to the Trinity. Remember, the essence of the Trinity is relationship. The Trinity is the manifestation of the perfect community (fellowship). To be created in the image of “us” is to be created in the image of a perfect fellowship.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

b) Now study Gen 1:27.

- (1) Because all of this is true, man is then created as a fellowship. He is created male and female.
- (2) The man, alone, was incomplete. Thus, God creates the most basic community or fellowship (that of marriage).
- (3) Indeed, a sense of fellowship is inherent to who we are in creation. We were created as social beings. Consider again the medical fact that a new born baby left alone for some weeks will die even though it receives food.

2) Fellowship is inherent in who we are in the Fall.

- a) Man is by nature a social being. However, in the fall man's nature was distorted. He became alienated from himself and others.
- b) Nonetheless, fellowship is inherent to who we are in the fall because of the things we have in common.
 - (1) We are all sinners (Rom 3:23).
 - (2) There is only one solution (Jn 14:6).
 - (3) Thus, we have a **common** problem and a **common** solution.
 - (4) This is a basis for fellowship (consider 1 Cor 10:17). The same thing is true in the world.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Author's Illustration:

Some of the strongest communities or groups of people have formed around a common problem and a common solution.

Mothers Against Drunk Drivers. (A program created by the mother of a teenager who was killed by a drunk driver.)

Neighborhood crime watch teams. (Groups formed to prevent crime in local areas).

Russians and Americans came together in World Wars I and II because they had a common problem, who was their enemy named Hitler, and a common solution called "victory in the war".

How much more true should this dynamic of bringing people together be in the Church. We have a common problem, and a common solution of eternal significance, not simply temporal importance.

Notes —

Insert Your Illustration:

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

- 3) Fellowship is inherent in who we are in Christ.
 - a) The initial purpose that Jesus had for His followers was to have fellowship with them.
 - b) Study the order of purposes in Mk 3:14 (be with him, then be sent out to preach).
 - (1) Notice that community precedes evangelism. Fellowship with Jesus and with each other comes first, because as we have seen, fellowship is a foundation of evangelism.
 - (2) Remember, when Jesus called them to be **with Him** He did not call an individual. He called a group. Yes, this group would share everything. They had a common purse. They had a common purpose. They shared their time, their joys, their sorrows, their triumphs and pains.
 - c) Study Jn 13:15.
 - (1) Jesus gave an example of how the community should operate. He then told the members of the community that they should do the same things.
 - (2) Jesus developed the idea of community (fellowship), gave the example of how it should operate (service in humility), and then encouraged the community to continue. Later on, He also sent the Spirit, who was the One who enabled the community to continue.

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote further discussion about how fellowship is assumed in the Word and inherent in God's plan. Answer any questions.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

4. Conclusion to Necessity of Church Fellowship.

Notes —

- a. We must repeat that fellowship with God must be the basis for fellowship with other Christians (see 1 Jn 1:3).
 - 1) Just as Church fellowship precedes evangelism, knowing God precedes Church fellowship.
 - 2) There is a definite order in the listing of the two greatest commandments (see Mt 22:37-39).
- b. Review the flow of the previous points.
 - 1) Fellowship is **required** of members of the family of God.
 - 2) This is not one of the lesser requirements. It is a **priority**.
 - 3) It must be a priority because it is **crucial** in the life of the Church.
 - 4) It is **essential** in the growth of the Church.
 - 5) It is so crucial and essential that it is **assumed** in the Word of God.
 - 6) It is assumed because it is **inherent** in who we are in the plan of God.
- c. Therefore, to conclude in this section which focuses on the necessity of church fellowship: Fellowship is necessary because it is natural. We should naturally be in fellowship with one another. We are in the same family!

Discussion Point

Briefly discuss any questions or comments related to the necessity of church fellowship.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

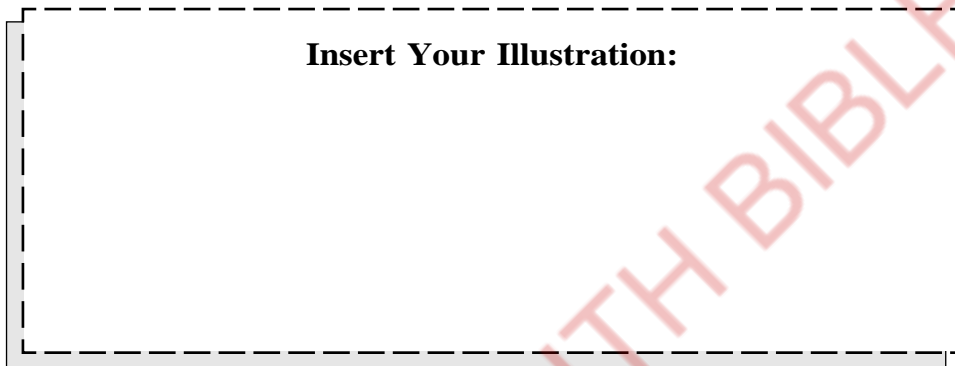
C. The Nature of Church Fellowship.

1. Introduction to the nature of church fellowship.
 - a. Christian fellowship must be a Christ centered fellowship.
 - b. It must be a sharing of the life of Christ, which is identified by three key attributes.
 - 1) The life of Christ is the life of the cross. Thus, our fellowship must be based on the cross.
 - 2) The life of Christ was a life of sharing. Thus, our fellowship must be based on sharing (koinonia).
 - 3) The life of Christ was a life of relationship. Thus, our fellowship must be based on relationship.
2. Fellowship based on the cross.
 - a. The cross brings selflessness.
 - 1) Jesus' life was a life of selflessness (Mk 10:45).
 - a) His coming was an act of selflessness (Phil 2:6, 7).
 - b) His death was the climax of selflessness (1 Tim 2:6).
 - 2) Without a denial of self, a laying down of rights, and a dying to self, it is impossible to have **Christian** fellowship. Instead, we will only have a Christianized humanistic community.
 - a) Christian fellowship is a cross centered fellowship that is based on "agape" (divine) unconditional love. It builds itself because it gives of itself.
 - b) Humanistic fellowship is a crossless fellowship that is based on "phileo" (human) conditional love. It destroys itself because it takes for itself.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

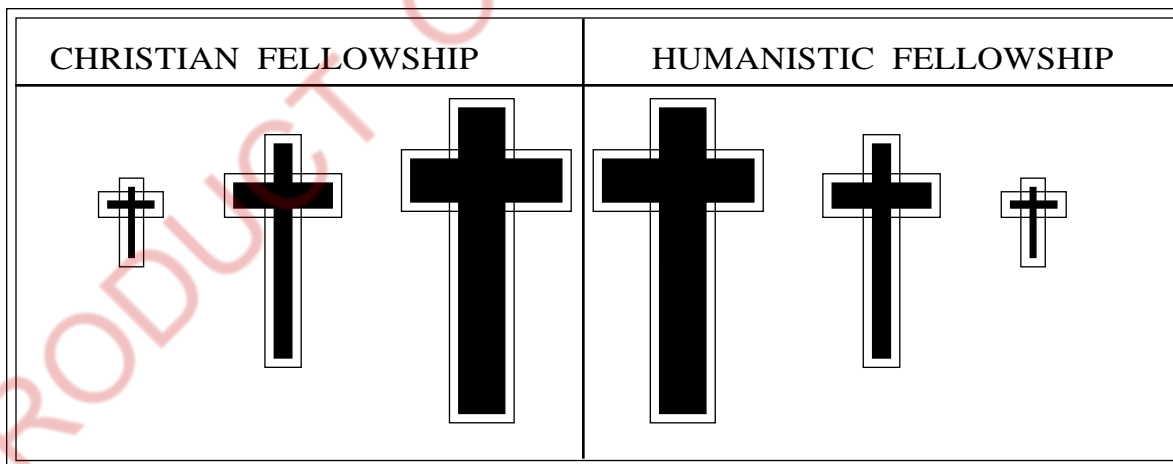
- 3) A Christian community is distinguished by its members who willingly lay down their rights for the sake of the community.
- a) It is not to say that we have no rights. It is to say that we are willing to lay them down for the sake of fellowship (See Cor 9:4-11, 12 and 2 Thes 3:9).
 - b) When rights are selfishly held onto, then service, love, and fellowship are usually let go of.

Notes —



Discussion Point

Use the following diagram to promote discussion about fellowship and selflessness.



Note: In the Christian community, the fellowship increases because the cross increases. A “cross community” equals a strong community. As death to self increases the life of the fellowship increases.

Note: In the humanistic community, the fellowship decreases because the cross decreases. A “crossless community” equals a weak and fake community. As death to self decreases the life of the fellowship decreases. Without the cross, fellowship eventually dies.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

b. The cross brings service.

1) Fellowship is based on the cross in two different ways. Both ways need to be understood and practiced.

2) If self denial is practiced without service, then there is the danger of moving into mysticism. Christianity must not stop at self denial. It must continue in service.

a) The Christian community is an “other” oriented community.

(1) It is a community whose members try to outdo one another in showing honor (Rom 12:10).

(2) It is a community whose members think of each other as more important than themselves (Phil 2:3).

(3) It is a community that focuses on the good of the other. More than anything else, these members should be conscious of their responsibility to each other and their willful desire to put each other first.

b) Its members imitate its founder who said the words of Mk 10:45.

(1) Natural authority develops in the community through service.

(2) Domination and oppression is not part of the community.

c) And so, the structure of the community is unique. Its leaders are its servants. Authority takes on the character of service.

Insert Your Illustration:

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Discussion Point

Notes —

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about fellowship and service.

3. Fellowship based on koinonia (sharing).
 - a. The Greek term “koinonia” is not used until after the day of Pentecost. When the group gathered together in Acts 1 a different Greek term was used.
 - 1) After the day of Pentecost the word “koinonia” is used to describe the fellowship of believers.
 - 2) The only way to have the type of fellowship that is required in the New Testament is to have it in the power of the Spirit evidenced by transformed lives.
 - b. The Greek term “koinonia” can be defined as having “all things in common.”
 - 1) We have a common problem and a common solution (1 Cor 10:17 uses the word “koinonia”).
 - 2) The understanding of this “common situation” as a basis for “koinonia” is the motivation of the writing of the letter to Philemon.
 - 3) The heart of koinonia is sharing.
 - 4) We have a shared faith (Tit 1:3), a shared grace (Phil 1:7), and a shared salvation (Jude 3). These things form the foundation of koinonia.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

5) The sharing of material possessions was not a law. It was a desire. It was not done with respect to obligation. It was done with respect to privilege (see Acts 2:43-47 and 4:32-35).

a) The idea of koinonia is very complete. It includes sharing in every aspect of life. David Watson offers the following challenge:

“This striking statement exposes the superficiality of many church fellowships today. It is interesting that “koinonia” occurs in the context of the sharing of money or possessions more frequently than in any other context. It means much more than singing the same hymns and joining in the same church meeting. It will involve the full commitment of our lives, and of all that we have, to one another.”⁸

b) The Christian community today must challenge itself with the words of Acts 4:32.

(1) The sharing of possessions was an outpouring of love. It was a logical response to a sincere belief and understanding of being part of a family. Family members share their things. They share everything.

(2) The sharing of possessions was an acknowledgment and manifestation of the unity the early Christians knew in Christ through the Spirit.

(3) For real fellowship to exist, we must agree that our brother has equal rights to the things that our father has entrusted to us (review Acts 4:32).

(a) The practice of sharing possessions should not be forced (communism). It is not an end in itself. It is not a goal.

(b) Rather, it is a natural response of the sincere acknowledgment of the true relationship of brothers and sisters who have the same Father.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Insert Your Illustration:

Notes —

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about fellowship and sharing. Answer any questions.

4. Fellowship based on relationship.
 - a. The word relationship is an intimate word. Especially among Christians, its meaning and manifestation should avoid the superficial. It should be real.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes —

Author's Illustration:

Some Christians think that relationship simply means eating ice cream together. A “fellowship” in many North American churches, for example, consists of eating ice cream after the Sunday meeting.

Sometimes we spend so much time eating ice cream cones that we have no time to minister to the needs of hurting people in our midst.

Insert Your Illustration:

- 1) Christian fellowship must be personal, intimate, and real.
- 2) We must go beyond superficial and casual concerns. We must become familiar with each others lives. How else could we have compassion (to suffer with) for our brother.
- 3) Our fellowship with God is intimate. We speak to God from the depths of our souls. Our fellowship with each other must be intimate also.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

b. One of the fastest ways to destroy real fellowship is to base our relationships on accomplishing tasks.

Notes —

1) We can not have intimate, real relationships when the primary reason for meeting together is to accomplish a task or to organize a project.

2) The main reason to come together must always be to commune with God and each other. We must come together as brothers and sisters who desire the good of each other through seeking the good of the Father.

3) When the main reason to come together is to accomplish a task, we invert the order of the Gospel. Faith before works is changed and becomes works before faith.

a) Jesus required a deep relationship with His disciples. He did not promote casual acquaintances or “working relationships.”

b) The tragedy of Western Christianity is that the focus that Christ had on filling the community with loving hearts has been replaced by a focus of filling up the community numerically.

(1) In some of our large gatherings we would never notice if 75% of the people who were at the previous gathering were not there as long as the 75% who were not there were replaced by other people. When we look at the members of the community as simply representing a filled place in the community, then we necessarily forfeit true community and fellowship.

(2) The result is a focus on filled chairs (having many people present) instead of on filled lives (lives filled with God’s Spirit).

c) This does not happen in a church that understands what real, intimate, and personal, relationships require. The members must interact with each other and share their lives. It is not enough to meet together and share a building.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes —

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about fellowship and relationships. Is the focus of your meeting together to accomplish tasks or experience deeper relationships?

- c. How can we promote and experience real relationships in our fellowship?
 - 1) We must realize that the Christian community is ‘a called out’ people who are members of a covenant community. The covenant is with their Father and with each other.
 - 2) We must make this covenant something concrete and defined. In order to do this, we must make a covenant with a small group of believers.
 - a) A small group is necessary for fellowship to become concrete, real, personal, and intimate.
 - b) To think that we can have that kind of fellowship with 500 people is to make fellowship an unrealistic theory, instead of a reality.

Discussion Point

Briefly discuss any questions or comments related to the nature of Church fellowship.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes —

D. The Neglect of Church Fellowship.

1. General hindrances to fellowship.

a. Individualism (especially a vulnerability of Charismatic churches). It denies the existence of fellowship.

- 1) Individualism can hinder our ability to look at other's needs as more important than our own needs (Phil 2:3).
- 2) It can hinder our ability to bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2).
- 3) It can hinder our ability to submit to others (Eph 5:21).
- 4) It can hinder our ability to outdo one another in honor (Rom 12:10).

b. Institutionalism (especially a vulnerability in main line churches).

- 1) It denies the flow of natural fellowship by trying to regulate or force it.
- 2) It tries to make fellowship a formula or a recipe.

2. Specific fears that hinder community.

a. The fear of dependency.

- 1) The Western culture puts such a high value on independence that being dependent on others is thought of as a weakness.
- 2) However, true Biblical fellowship accepts and desires the mutual dependency of its members.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes —

Author's Illustration:

The foot's recognition of its dependency on the hand is only natural when it is time to take off its shoe.

The eye does not question its dependence on the mouth when it sees something good to eat.

The recognition and acceptance of unity in diversity within the body of Christ is essential for true fellowship, and also for effective evangelism and testimony.

Insert Your Illustration:

- 3) Jerry Horner, in his book Living in the Family, writes the following words:

“When individual Christians humble themselves both to give and to receive from one another, facing each other in a circle of interdependency, the witness of the church to the world will be irresistible.”⁹

Discussion Point

Discuss the problems that come with being unwilling to allow or acknowledge dependency upon one another.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

b. The fear of commitment.

Notes —

- 1) Fellowship without a clear declaration of commitment is like a marriage without wedding vows. Neither will make it through the storms that will come.
 - a) A marriage is built on covenant and commitment.
 - b) A husband and a wife do not need to decide in each situation whether or not they will help each other. They have already made that decision in their covenant with one another.
- 2) As Christians, we must realize that we are committed to each other.
- 3) We must make this commitment to all Christians. More specifically, we must make the commitment clear, concrete, specific, and practical to a small group of Christians.
 - a) We can not create this commitment, because it already exists. We must actively accept it.
 - b) We do not strive to be committed. We surrender to be committed.
 - c) Some Christians might say: “I do not want to commit myself to this ministry or that Spiritual discipline.” The reality is that if they are Christians, then they already are committed to other Christians. They must choose to accept or reject that commitment.

Insert Your Illustration:

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

Discussion Point

Does your culture or personal background cause it to be difficult for you to make commitments and keep them?

Discuss this common problem.

c. The fear of confession.

1) Confession of sins one to another (Jms 5:16) is an essential part of fellowship (as seen in many, if not all, of the revivals throughout Church history).

2) The only occurrences of the term “church” that are found in the Gospels are in the context of confession and a lack of confession (or loosing and binding).

a) Study Mt 16:18 and 18:17.

b) The power of fellowship (Mt 18:19) is also seen in the context of confession.

3) Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book Life Together, points out that:

“He who is alone with his sin is completely alone. In confession the breakthrough to community takes place.”¹⁰

a) This is certainly true in our relationship with God.

b) It is also true in our relationships with each other. Strong cords of fellowship are created in the midst of the confession of sins.

Insert Your Illustration:

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

- 4) Christians remain alone in their sin because of the self righteous reaction of the church when sin is exposed.
- 5) There is an unhealthy and hypocritical attitude about sin in some parts of the church.
 - a) Often, when someone confesses their sins, others begin to not associate with that person. How ironic! In the New Testament Church the opposite was true. It was when someone refused to confess his sin others would not associate with him.
 - (1) In the New Testament, it is understood that the members of the Church are sinners (1 Jn 1:8).
 - (2) It is understood that they need to confess their sins (1 Jn 1:9).
 - (3) Moreover, it is understood that they need to confess their sins to one another (Jms 5:16).
 - b) The unhealthy attitude is a result of a false sense of purity and righteousness.
 - (1) We are filthy. Jesus is pure and righteous. It is Jesus in us that is the only thing that makes us pure and righteous.
 - (2) All have fallen short of the glory or “ever existing presence” of Jesus in their lives. That is, all Christians fail to let Jesus in their lives sometimes. Thus, all Christians sin to some degree. Thus, all Christians need to confess sins.
 - (3) This should not be a great shock to us. Our reaction should not be one of self-righteous surprise. We are all sinners and we all need to confess our sins.

Notes —

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes —

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

How do you respond when someone confesses sin to you? Do you think differently of them because of their sin? Is there an atmosphere within your church that allows for confessing sin? Are you willing to initiate it if necessary?

6) Until we take off our masks (stop trying to hide our faults) and accept the fact that we have a sin nature, we will not be able to establish the atmosphere in the church for transparent fellowship to exist. We will not be able to confess our sins to one another.

a) David Watson speaks these words of truth:

“Genuine fellowship comes when Christians stop relating to one another as righteous saints, and accept one another as unrighteous sinners.”¹¹

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

- b) Some theologies say that confession of sin is a denial of faith.
- (1) Some extreme forms of “prosperity theology,” “victory theology,” and “positive **confession** theology” do not allow for confession of sins.
 - (2) They say that it would be a “negative” confession. They say to confess sin is to negate who we are by faith. They say to look to the victory and away from the defeat.
 - (3) These theologies focus so much on victory in the life of the believer that they seem to forget who the **victorious one** is. It is Jesus in us. It is not us in us. We are victorious in Him.
- c) To confess sin is not to deny faith because our faith is not in ourselves.

Notes —

Discussion Point

Has your background discouraged the confession of sin to fellow believers? Can you see how this blocks true fellowship not only with others, but also with God? Discuss this issue.

- 7) The community of confession must be a community that is willing to take risks. It must be a community that is open and transparent.
- a) Many Christians fear these types of ideas and words. It is a risk to be transparent. However, the alternative is to close the windows of our lives. We may all live on the same street but no one ever comes out of their house and no one ever lets others in.
 - b) We must not allow the fear of being misunderstood and offended to keep us from confessing our sins to one another.
 - c) The way to do this is to die to ourselves. A selfless person can not be offended because there is no self left to offend.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes —

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Are you able to be vulnerable and transparent? Can you encourage others to be open and confess their sin if you demonstrate a contradictory example? Discuss.

E. Conclusions to Necessity, Nature and Neglect.

1. Perhaps as we focus on the thought that community is not an ideal, but is an already established fact, we will begin to allow real community and fellowship to occur.
 - a. We do not have to create fellowship. We already are a fellowship.
 - b. As with many other aspects of our walk with Christ, we must stop striving and start surrendering. We must stop trying to create something and start trying to obey Someone.
 - 1) We must stop trying to create and start accepting what has already been created by the Creator.
 - 2) We must stop dreaming of an ideal community and start living in the existing one.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

2. We must remember that fellowship with the Father assumes fellowship with His children. One can not successfully exist without the other.
 - a. We must accept brothers and sisters the way they are even if they are different than we are. This is a basic rule of a family. A brother does not refuse to have fellowship with a sister because of “personality differences” (consider Rom 15:7).
 - b. We seem to be united more easily to the fellowship of the flesh that is temporal than to the fellowship of the Spirit that is eternal. Fellowship in our physical families is important and necessary, but it is even more important and necessary in our spiritual family.
 - 1) We must have an eternal attitude. We should begin to live now in the community which we will live in for the rest of eternity.
 - 2) As sure as the kingdom of God is in our midst, the community of God is in our reach. Christian fellowship is possible in Christ.

Notes —

Discussion Point

Briefly discuss any questions or comments related to the neglect of Church fellowship. Finish any discussion related to the necessity, nature, or neglect of Church fellowship.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

IV. A Modern Day Application: Christian Fellowship and Tribalism.

A. Introduction.

1. The definition of tribalism.

a. In Central Africa there are many different tribes. For example, there are the Batusi and the Bahutu.

1) The Batusi are taller than the Bahutu. They are physically superior and have looked down on the Bahutu for generations. They have to some extent controlled the Bahutu. The Bahutu have an historic hatred for the Batusi.

2) The Batusi and the Bahutu do not like each other. The loyalty to their own tribe increases the hatred toward the other tribe. They are separated by their perceptions of each other and by the loyalty/hatred dynamics.

3) This is called Tribalism.

a) In India, it is called the caste system.

b) In South Africa, it is called apartheid.

c) In the United States, it is called discrimination against minority groups.

d) In the Church, it is called denominationalism.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

- b. Whatever the name might be, prejudice or discrimination comes from the same mixture of sin.
- 1) They come from selfishness and pride that are rooted in insecurity.
 - 2) Wherever you find this sin there is the same result:
 - a) Division.
 - b) Disunity.
 - 3) To say the least, tribalism can destroy the opportunity for real fellowship.

Notes —

Discussion Point

Can you see how our ethnic, cultural, social, and even denominational prejudices are just like tribalism? Do you recognize this as sin? Are you prepared to be an example of someone who does not stand for these prejudices or discrimination?

2. The concepts of Christian fellowship and tribalism can not exist together.
 - a. Tribalism is a very strong force in Africa. It provides the various and diverse groups of people with a form of cultural identity and pride.
 - 1) It negatively affects the Church and slows the progress of the Gospel.
 - 2) When tribalism is practiced within the churches, it destroys the unity that Jesus desires (Jn 17:20, 21).

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

Author's Comment:

I have seen the effects of tribalism in the African churches. I have seen how one man who did the same job and who had higher credentials than others was treated differently because of tribal discrimination. He was given half the pay and none of the privileges of others who did that same job (it was a job within the church).

- b. Teaching and understanding the idea of Christian fellowship can be used to destroy the spirit of tribalism, which can exist in many forms, by different names, in churches all over the world.
- c. The rest of the course will suggest various points of teaching that can be used to promote fellowship and end tribalism in the Church.

Insert Your Illustration:

B. Loyalty.

1. Modern tribalism is a strong social force. Many times it results in a stronger loyalty to the tribe than to the country.
 - a. For example, this is the reality of what has happened in countries like the C.I.S. and what used to be called Yugoslavia. Different people groups who have a higher loyalty to their “people” than to their “country” have separated themselves from the control of the single country.
 - b. With respect to the Church, the problem comes when a Christian has more loyalty to his tribe than to his faith and to his church.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

2. There must be a renewing of the mind (Rom 12:2) with respect to loyalty.
 - a. African Christians must realize that they are new creations and that **all** things have become new (2 Cor 5:17).
 - b. Christians are called to a new loyalty.
 - 1) This does not mean that they can not show loyalty to their family and tribes.
 - 2) It does mean that their new loyalty to Christ must be much greater than their old loyalty to their tribe.
3. Tribal loyalty exists on three levels:
 - a. Loyalty to the family.
 - b. Loyalty to the chief.
 - c. Loyalty to the tribal community.
4. There must be a renewing of the mind on each one of these levels.
 - a. With respect to the family, the loyalty to Christ must be so much greater than the loyalty to the family that Lk 14:26 becomes a reality, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate (place below me) his father, mother, his wife and children, his brother and sisters, yes even his own life - then he can not be my disciple."
 - 1) This is not to say that Christians do not have love, respect, and loyalty for their families. (See Mk 7:10 and 1 Tim 5:8).
 - 2) However, there must be a higher loyalty to Christ and His family.

Notes —

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

- b. With respect to the tribal chief and government, the African Christian must be able to say the words of Acts 5:29, “We must obey God rather than men!”
 - 1) This is not to say that Christians do not obey authorities or show respect to rulers (See Rom 13:1-7).
 - 2) However, there is a higher loyalty to Christ and the government of the kingdom of God.
- c. With respect to the tribal community, the African Christian must agree with the priority that is found in Gal 6:10, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially those who belong to the family of believers.”
 - 1) This is not to say that Christians must leave their tribes. It does not mean that Christians can not help their own people.
 - 2) However, there is a higher loyalty to Christ and the Christian community.
- d. Loyalty to tribe and chief do not have to change. The priorities within the idea of loyalty must change. There is a higher loyalty because there is a higher citizenship (Eph 2:19; Phil 3:20).

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to discuss the Christian’s response to prioritizing of loyalty concerning family, government, and community.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes —

C. The Implications of One Household.

1. In Eph 2:19 and Gal 6:10 we can see the repetition of a very important word in the study of Church fellowship. The word household points to the “oneness” of the people of God.
 - a. In Eph 2:11-22 Paul specifies this idea by explaining that there is only **one** (tribe) in Christ.
 - b. This makes the practice of prejudice or discrimination impossible, since there must be at least two groups for it to exist. One group discriminates against another group. If there is only **one** group to begin with, then discrimination is not possible.
 - c. Thus, tribalism is not really possible within the Church because for tribalism to exist it needs at least two tribes. The Gospel has made all tribes into **one** tribe.
2. The **One** body of Christ.
 - a. In Eph 2:14, Paul writes about making both groups **one** by “breaking down the barrier of the dividing wall.”
 - 1) Never in history has there been a stronger tribalism than that which existed between the tribes of Israel and the tribes of the Gentiles.
 - 2) They hated each other. However, in the early Church, they needed to realize that Christ came to break down the wall between them.
 - 3) We too, must allow Christ to break down any walls that divide us. Racial and tribal barriers stand as walls that must be broken.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

- b. In Eph 2:16, Paul writes about the result of Christ breaking down these walls.
 - 1) The result is that there is **one** body.
 - 2) Again, consider the truth of the following words: **Tribalism** (discrimination and prejudice) **needs at least two groups to exist. It is not possible in the one body of Christ. You can not discriminate against yourself.**
 - 3) Consider how the principle of Eph 5:28, 29 can apply to this truth.
 - c. Study Eph 4:4-6. Note how Paul repeats and emphasizes the idea of “oneness.”
 - d. Study 1 Cor 10:16, 17.
 - 1) Note how Paul repeats and emphasizes the idea of “oneness.”
 - 2) The word “since” in vs. 17 introduces the reason why there can not be tribalism in the church. It is because all Christians partake of **one** bread. There is only **one** cross.
 - 3) Thus, the emphasis for Christians is the thing which is in common and shared. It is not the things that are different and divided.
3. The **one** family of God.
- a. We must include the idea of being born again.
 - 1) Tribalism is a result of the fleshly birth. You are born into a tribe that hates another tribe. Thus, you hate the other tribe.
 - 2) Fellowship in the Church is a result of the spiritual birth. Christians are born into the same family.
 - a) A Batusi is born a Batusi. A Bahutu is born a Bahutu. They are born into tribalism.
 - b) A Batusi is born again as a Christian. A Bahutu is born again as a Christian. They are born again into fellowship.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Discussion Point

Notes —

Discuss and answer questions related to the concept of “oneness.”

D. The Lord’s Supper.

1. Study 1 Cor 11:17-34. A specific study and understanding of this passage can be used very effectively to promote fellowship in the midst of the threat of tribalism (or any other form of prejudice and discrimination).
 - a. In the New Testament Church, the Lord’s Supper was often served in the context of the “agape love feast.”
 - 1) However, in Corinth the atmosphere of fellowship and love was replaced by division and selfishness.
 - 2) P. Theissen, in his book The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity, writes the following words about the situation in Corinth:

“The Lord’s Supper, instead of providing the basis for the unity of the body of Christ, is in danger of becoming the occasion for demonstrating social differences.”¹²
 - 3) The basis for these differences is not unlike the basis for the differences amongst tribes that leads to tribalism.
 - a) There was a divisive effect in how the Corinthians looked at their leaders.
 - (1) Study the implications of 1 Cor 11:18, 19, 1 Cor 1:12, and 3:3-5.
 - (2) Africans might call Apollos, Cephas, and Paul “chiefs.”

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

b) There were economic divisions.

(1) Consider 1 Cor 1:26; 7:20-24; and 12:13. Some of the Corinthian believers were slaves or ex-slaves and not many were of noble birth. Many were probably very poor.

(2) Consider Rom 16:23 and Acts 18:8. At the same time, some of the Corinthian believers were probably very rich. Gaius had the economic means to host the whole church. Erastus was the city treasurer. Crispus was the leader of the synagogue.

(3) Tribalism can be a result of economic divisions.

c) There were religious divisions.

(1) The Corinthian church included both Jews and Gentiles.

(2) Tribalism can be the result of different religious beliefs.

b. In the midst of social differences, Paul focused on the Lord's Supper as a way to teach about unity. Contemporary Christians can do the same thing. Tribalism in the Church can be destroyed through the teaching and practice of the Lord's Supper.

Discussion Point

Discuss how the issues of division are still related from the 1st century until today.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

2. Review 1 Cor 11:17-22. Paul rebuked the Corinthians for their type of Lord's Supper (vs. 17, 22).

Notes —

- a. In the social clubs of that time, there were organized feasts where the members of the club came together to eat. Food was allotted to each member according to social status. At the feast, certain members ate more food and better food than other members.
- b. The same thing was happening at the Corinthian love feasts where the Lord's Supper was served. The wealthier Christians were eating and drinking until they were full, while the poorer Christians had nothing (review 1 Cor 11:17-22 with vs. 33, 34).
- c. The Lord's Supper became a manifestation of inequality instead of a celebration of unity.
 - 1) Therefore, when they met together it was not to eat the Lord's Supper. Their form of the Lord's Supper actually negated the real Lord's Supper. It was a contradiction.
 - 2) Study the following diagram to see how Paul described this contradiction in his writing of 1 Cor 11:17-22.

Verses	The Contradiction	Comments
18	Come TOGETHER as a CHURCH DIVISIONS	The ideas of the "church" and "together" are not consistent with the idea of "divisions"
20,21	LORD's supper OWN supper	Selfishness negates the Spirit of the celebration
21	HUNGRY DRUNK	Inequality negates the essence of the celebration
17	BETTER WORSE	The tragic reality

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

3) Whether it be in Corinth, Africa, or anywhere in the world; disunity, selfishness, and inequality are not consistent with the celebration of the cross that brought unity, selflessness, and equality.

3. What is an “unworthy manner” (vs. 27)?

a. “Unworthy is the translation of the Greek word “anaxios” (“an” and “axios”).

1) “Axios” means to bring up the other end of the scale or to bring into equality. Equality is the central idea.

2) “An” means “not.”

3) Thus, the term “anaxios” or “unworthy” means “not equal” or “unbalanced.”

b. To take the Lord’s Supper in an “unworthy manner” is to take it in a manner of inequality. It represents those who were taking the Lord’s Supper with an attitude or action of prejudice or discrimination.

1) C.K. Barrett, in his book A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, writes:

“To eat and drink unworthily is to contradict both the purpose of Christ’s self offering, and the spirit in which it was made.”¹³

2) The death of Christ (which is what the Lord’s Supper is supposed to celebrate) brought unity, equality, and the destruction of discrimination (Eph 3:6).

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

- 3) The spirit of his death was one of sacrifice, love, and self denial.
- a) Some of the Corinthian Christians were celebrating the Lord's Supper in a way that was completely contradictory to this spirit.
 - (1) Instead of sacrifice they were filling themselves, while others went hungry.
 - (2) Instead of love, they were showing apathy towards their brothers.
 - (3) Instead of self denial, they were denying others.
 - b) To take the Lord's Supper with these attitudes and actions was to sin against the body and blood of Christ. It was to despise the work of the cross and to undervalue your own redemption.

Notes —

Author's Illustration:

Taking the Lord's supper in a selfish and prejudice way would be like having a remembrance supper "in honor" of Dr. Martin Luther King (who gave his life for the cause of equal rights for blacks) and making all the blacks sit in the back.

The supper **for** Martin Luther King would be **against** him (see 1 Cor 11:17).

It would actually be an insult or sin against his shed blood (see 1 Cor 11:27).

The supper would be **unworthy** of Dr. King and would actually be a mockery of him (see 1 Cor 11:27).

Insert Your Illustration:

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

- c) Tribalism and the Lord's Supper do not mix. Tribalism is **unworthy** of the Lord's Supper.
 - 1) The prejudice of tribalism is the result of selfish pride. The Lord's Supper is the result of selfless humility (Phil 2:3-8).
 - 2) The prejudice of tribalism is the result of insecurity. The Lord's Supper is a result of security (Jn 13:1-3).
4. What is "not judging the body rightly" (vs. 29)?
- a. The general context is 1 Cor 10:17 where the "body" is the Church or the believers.
 - b. The immediate context relates to the actions of different members of the church or the "body."
 - 1) To not judge the "body" rightly is to pre-judge (prejudice) the members of the church incorrectly.
 - 2) It is to act in discrimination against another equal member of the "body" through one's actions or attitudes.
 - 3) The result is judgment (see vs. 29, 30).
 - c. The actions and attitudes of tribalism do not judge the body rightly. The result is the same today as it was 2000 years ago. The result is judgment.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

5. Summary and conclusion about Christian fellowship and tribalism.

Notes —

a. Summary.

- 1) Paul states the abuse of the Lord's Supper in vs. 17-22.
- 2) He magnifies the abuse by putting it in the light of the true practice of the Lord's Supper (vs. 23-26).
- 3) He defines the implications and consequences of the abuse (vs. 27-32).
- 4) He gives instructions to end the abuse (vs. 33, 34).
- 5) These instructions can be paraphrased for African Christians who practice tribalism, "If anyone is of a different tribe, let him leave his prejudices at home, so that you may not come together for judgment."

b. Conclusion.

- 1) Many people feel that there is no solution to the problems of tribalism in Africa. The political governments of the various African countries have not provided an alternative to tribalism.
- 2) Christianity is the only alternative. The divisions of tribalism must be replaced by the unity of the cross. The only way that this can happen is through the fellowship of the Church.
- 3) Likewise, the unity of the cross applies to the other forms of prejudice and discrimination that are practiced around the world. Christianity and the true fellowship of the church represent a global solution to these problems.

Discussion Point

Discuss any comments or questions related to our study of Christian fellowship and tribalism.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Notes –

Church Fellowship: Endnotes

¹Michael P. Green, ed. Illustrations for Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), p.225.

²Ralph Martin, The Family and the Fellowship (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979), p. 15.

³David Watson, Called and Committed (Wheaton, Ill: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1982), p. 30.

⁴Howard Snyder, The Community of the King (Downers Grove, Ill: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977), p. 74.

⁵Ibid., p. 74.

⁶Watson, p. 18.

⁷Ibid., p. 20.

⁸Ibid., p. 24.

⁹Jerry Horner, Living in the Family (Lamp Press, 1982), p. 35.

¹⁰Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together (New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row Publishers, 1954), pp. 110, 112.

¹¹Watson, p. 31.

¹²P. Theissen, The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), p. 160.

¹³C.K. Barrett, A Commentary on the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 272, 273.

SMALL GROUPS

Small Group Dynamics: Syllabus

Notes —

CLASS #1:

- I. Introduction to Small Groups.
- II. Small Groups as Facilitators of Community.

CLASS #2:

- III. Solving Needs Through Small Groups.
- IV. Practical Ideas for Small Group Dynamics:
 - A. The Small Group Letter.

CLASS #3:

- IV. Practical Ideas for Small Group Dynamics:
 - B. Suggestions for Small Group Leaders.

CLASS #4:

- IV. Practical Ideas for Small Group Dynamics:
 - B. Suggestions for Small Group Leaders. (cont.)

CLASS #5:

- IV. Practical Ideas for Small Group Dynamics:
 - B. Suggestions for Small Group Leaders. (cont.)
 - C. Suggestions for Small Group Activities.
- Exam.

SMALL GROUPS

Notes —

Small Group Dynamics: Exam

Possible 20 Point Questions

- 1) Describe the early Methodists use of small groups (p. 215).
- 2) Choose two needs that are solved by having small groups and explain each one (pp. 216-218).
- 3) Use three points to show how to create a good climate for open communication in a small group (pp. 224-227).

Possible 10 Point Questions

- 1) List four needs that are solved by having small groups (pp. 216-218).
- 2) List three of the five “commandments” for small group leaders (pp. 219-220).
- 3) Explain one way to keep one group member from talking too much (pp. 221-222).
- 4) List four types of questions that a small group leader can use to promote participation (pp. 223-224).
- 5) List three ways in which humor can benefit the small group (p. 230).
- 6) What is the idea of the “empty chair” exercise for small groups (p. 232).

SMALL GROUPS

I. Introduction to Small Groups.

Notes —

A. The Importance of Small Groups in Church History.

1. It is true that whenever spiritual awakenings have occurred throughout the history of the Church, they have always been accompanied by a restoration of the idea of community or fellowship.
 - a. “Koinonia” becomes a focus. Koinonia means fellowship or sharing relationships from one household to another.
 - b. Confession of sins becomes a focus.
 - c. Bearing one another’s burdens becomes a focus.
2. Therefore, the use of the small group becomes a focus.
 - a. For example, the Wesleyan revival in the 18th century used the dynamics of small groups to feed its revival.
 - b. During this time, the great evangelist George Whitefield wrote to his converts the following words:

“My brethren, let us plainly and freely tell one another what God has done for our souls. To this end, you would do well, as others have done, to form yourselves into **little companies** of four or five each, and meet once a week to tell each other what is in your hearts; that you may then also pray for and comfort each other as need shall require. None but those who have experienced it can tell the unspeakable advantages of such a union and communion of souls. None, I think, that truly loves his own soul and his brethren as himself, will be shy of opening his heart, in order to have their advice, reproof, admonition and prayers, as occasions require. A sincere person will esteem it one of the greatest blessings.”¹

B. The Importance of Small Groups Today.

1. Today, some call these **little companies** “home groups” or “cell groups.”
2. Especially in the age of the “mega-church,” (churches over 1,000 people in size) these groups are essential. They provide the opportunity to have real community.

SMALL GROUPS

Notes —

3. The largest church in the world in Seoul, Korea uses the dynamics of the small group as one of its key elements in feeding, maintaining, and growing the movement.

Insert Your Illustration:

II. Small Groups as Facilitators of Community.

A. Introduction to Community.

1. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity” (Ps 133:1).
 - a. Unfortunately, many people force themselves to give up the joyous blessings of community, especially in the fast paced societies of the Western world.
 - 1) We rationalize our actions by saying that community is an optional part of Christianity.
 - 2) However, community is not optional for Christianity, because Christianity can not exist without community.

Discussion Point

Community is assumed in the definition of the word “**church.**”
Can a church be a church without community?
Remember, a church is the **gathering together** of the called out ones.
Discuss these issues.

SMALL GROUPS

2. In Acts chapter two, we see that the believers were formed into a family. They “were taking their meals together and breaking bread together from house to house” (Acts 2:46).
 - a. Immediately after the Church of Jesus Christ was born, it began to meet in small groups.
 - b. They met in houses. They praised God together.
 - c. The results were incredible. They had favor with others and the Church was growing daily (Acts 2:46, 47).
3. Today, as always, real fellowship must be a priority in the Church.
 - a. We must understand the Biblical necessity of community. (For a more detailed discussion of this topic see the course called “Church Fellowship”).
 - b. We must develop a biblical strategy to facilitate community.

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Discussion Point

Discuss ways to facilitate community in your local churches.

B. Small Groups as Facilitators.

1. We need to have real community as a church body.
 - a. Our communion with our brothers and sisters must be intimate as is our communion with our Father.
 - b. We cannot simply have a superficial type of community that is often found in social clubs. Our community must be more similar to that of a family.

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2. How can we avoid a superficial type of community?
 - a. We must first realize and accept that the Christian community is a people called out in **covenant** with their Father and in covenant with each other.
 - b. We must then act on this belief. It must be made practical and specific.
 - 1) The best way to do this is to make a covenant with a particular small group of believers.
 - 2) It is not realistic to think that we can effectively pray for 250 people. It is not healthy to bear the burdens of 300 people. It is unlikely that a person will feel comfortable enough to confess his sins in front of 750 people. Building a sense of community can become very unrealistic if we try to practice it in the midst of a large group of people. For community to be practical and real, we must practice it in a small group.
 - 3) In the New Testament Church, community was practiced in small groups. They organized small house churches. Community was real and concrete.

Discussion Point

What are the barriers to having covenant community in your church?
How can these barriers be overcome?

SMALL GROUPS

An Example From History:

The original Methodist movement provides a good example of community. This example is not intended to show partiality to any denomination, but to show how God's principles work in action.

John Wesley was the leader of one of the greatest revivals in the history of the Church. The Methodist movement grew out of Wesley's understanding of the need for small groups.

Wesley saw through the superficial attempts of the Church of his day to have community. He realized that without the organization of small groups community would only be a theory (and therefore it would not be real). The revived Church needed to have a real and strong sense of relationship and community.

In 1742, Wesley began to organize what were called "class meetings." These meetings were actually house churches.

Each group usually had about 12 members from the same neighborhood. It was led by a Pastoral leader or leaders. Within this intimate form of community it became a reality (not simply an abstract theory) to:

- Bear one another's burdens.
- Encourage and exhort one another.
- Begin to form relationships that would allow the needed atmosphere to speak the truth in love.

This structure and practice of community allowed the group to begin to function as a church. The group really became (not just in theory) the body of Christ.

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SMALL GROUPS

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III. Solving Needs through Small Groups.²

A. The Need for Intimate Interpersonal Relationships.

1. As human beings we have a need to have intimate relationships.
2. The world offers many “shallow” relationships (relationships that are not fulfilling) to try to fill this need.
3. The Christian small group can replace the emptiness of these shallow relationships with the fullness of real, intimate relationships. These relationships must be based on commitment to care, love, and serve one another.

Discussion Point

Discuss how the small group can help create more intimate relationships.

B. The Need for Individual Expression.

1. All people need to feel like they are a part of something. They need to be participators.
 - a. This is especially true in the Church. Each member of the body must participate.
 - b. However, many Christians can not find their place in the body.
 - c. In a small group, individual ministries and gifts can be discovered, used and developed.
2. The small group can be a “practice field” and a “proving ground” for the operation of the gifts of the Spirit.
3. The small group gives each Christian the opportunity to find his place in the body. It should promote and multiply ministry.

SMALL GROUPS

Discussion Point

Discuss ways that small groups have helped develop ministries and allow individual's to express their gifts.

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C. The Need for Effective Outreach.

1. In the New Testament Church, the body of believers (“the sheep”) not the shepherds (pastors), gave birth to “the lambs.”
 - a. The small group provides a natural training ground for new ministries to be developed.
 - b. The focus should be on training and motivating for evangelism.
2. The small group can also provide for a place to invite those who are interested but are not yet believers. An interested unbeliever will often respond to an invitation to come to someone's house before he will respond to an invitation to come to a church.

Discussion Point

Discuss how a small group setting was able to be used effectively for evangelism.

D. The Need for Training Future Leadership.

1. Leadership must be formed from within the church.
2. The small group can provide a place where potential leaders can be trained and given the opportunity to lead.
3. Small groups can be multiplied as leaders are multiplied. This is a very effective strategy for Church growth.

Discussion Point

Discuss how you have seen leadership multiplied and developed through small groups.

SMALL GROUPS

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E. The Need for Improved Oversight.

1. It is impossible for one pastor to effectively shepherd 350 people. The pastor must work with a team of leaders. He must delegate responsibility and authority to others. These other leaders can effectively shepherd 10-15 people in a small group.
2. For church growth (both in numbers and in quality) to occur there must be a continuous multiplication of leaders. The sheep and the shepherds must be divided into small groups.
 - a. If this does not happen then there will be limited growth.
 - b. The sheep will not be cared for and the Shepherd will “burn out”, or become frustrated and ineffective from overwork.

Discussion Point

Discuss the results of not having enough pastoral leadership in a church.

F. The Need For an Emergency Alternative.

1. When there is an emergency in your life you need to call on a close friend.
 - a. A small group can provide those close friends.
 - b. It can provide a pastoral leader who has a strong relationship with his members.
2. One pastor of the church can not respond to the needs and emergencies of 500 people. A small group leader can respond to the needs and emergencies of 15 people.

Discussion Point

Discuss situations where a small group leader ministered in a time of trouble.

SMALL GROUPS

IV. Practical Ideas for Small Group Dynamics.

Notes —

A. The Small Group Letter.

1. Most of the following suggestions are adapted from articles in a publication called The Small Group Letter.³
2. This is a periodical that focuses on the dynamics of small groups. It contains articles by various authors. We will note the author when it is appropriate.

B. Suggestions for Small Group Leaders.

1. Five commandments for small group leaders (based on an article by David Trembley).⁴
 - a. Keep the “threat level” or “intimidation factor” low.
 - 1) Do not push the group members. Go slow. People are afraid of new things. They do not like to feel pressured.
 - 2) Therefore, proceed slowly with new ideas and projects. In the beginning, delegate responsibilities that you know can be completed. Allow members to simply be spectators at times.
 - b. Be specific about the amount of time that members should commit to give or serve.
 - 1) Most people will participate in something if they know there is a definite end to it.
 - 2) Specify the number of weeks you will do one particular Bible study.
 - 3) Specify the hours of the Bible study.
 - 4) Maintain a strict schedule.

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Notes —

- c. Keep confidential things confidential.
 - 1) Agree together that personal things will be kept confidential.
 - 2) If a group member thinks that other group members will tell his “secrets” to other people, then he may not be open about his life.
- d. Do not simply talk all the time. Do something practical that has purpose.
 - 1) A meeting should have a time for talking and a time for some activity.
 - 2) Take time in the meeting to do something practical. Some suggestions include:
 - a) Make toys for poor children.
 - b) Write cards to people who are in jail, hospitals, etc.
 - c) Write a letter of encouragement to a missionary.
- e. Divide the group.
 - 1) It is important to restructure the group after a certain period of time.
 - 2) This can keep things “fresh” and interesting.
 - 3) It can help to avoid “cliques” (forming of small groups within a group).
 - 4) It is necessary when there is growth. A small group should always be growing. Thus, a small group should always be dividing (multiplying).
 - 5) It gives an opportunity for new leaders to perform as leaders.

Discussion Point

Discuss real life situations involving these small group suggestions.

SMALL GROUPS

2. How to keep one group member from talking too much (Paul Thigpen).⁵
 - a. Arrangement of the seats. Studies have shown that the arrangement of the seats can affect group dynamics.
 - 1) In a circle, the person sitting directly across from the leader receives the most eye contact from the leader. This eye contact will often encourage that person to speak. The person sitting next to the leader receives the least eye contact and therefore the least encouragement to speak.
 - a) Wait until the “talker” in your group is seated. Sit next to him. Try to get someone who does not talk much to sit across from you.
 - b) By sitting next to the one who talks too much you can also use body contact if you do need to interrupt him.
 - 2) At a rectangular table, the people who sit on the two ends will be the most likely to dominate the discussion.
 - a) The leader should sit at one end. A person who does not talk too much should sit at the other end.
 - b) The person who talks too much should be seated next to the leader.

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A Class Experiment:

Form small groups. One person is the leader. One person should play the part of the “talker.” First, arrange the seats in a circle. Next, arrange them in a rectangular formation.

The leader should try to keep the “talker” from talking too much.

Allow different ones to be the leader. Allow different ones to sit in different positions. How does it seem to affect you?

b. The use of questions.

- 1) Direct specific questions to individuals instead of to the whole group. This does not give the “talker” the opportunity to answer every question.
- 2) Ask questions to the “talker” that have yes/no answers, multiple choice answers, true/false answers, etc.
 - a) If you ever have to interrupt the “talker,” you can use a yes/no question. This will not be so obvious.
 - b) When the “talker” answers yes or no, you can immediately move the discussion to someone else by saying something like: Do you agree, Maria?

A Class Experiment:

Form the class into groups again. Someone must be the leader and someone must be the “talker.” Practice using questions to keep the “talker” from talking too much.

c. Note taking.

- 1) Ask the talker to take notes at the meeting.
- 2) The talker is too busy to talk all the time.
- 3) It forces him to listen to others. This is something that can be very good for someone who talks too much.

SMALL GROUPS

3. How to use questions to promote participation.

- a. A common problem in small groups (especially in the beginning) is the lack of group participation. The leader can become frustrated. He prepares the Bible study and tries to involve each group member. But many are not willing to share in the discussion.
- b. A leader can use four types of questions to promote discussion. Questions are tools for leaders who want to include others in a discussion.
 - 1) Observation questions.
 - a) What does this passage say about faith?
 - b) A group member must give more than a yes or a no answer.
 - 2) Interpretation questions.
 - a) What does it mean that faith is the assurance of things hoped for?
 - b) Someone might answer that it is the present reality of something that has not happened yet.
 - c) The leader can use the answer to the interpretive question to promote more discussion: Does that mean that faith negates reality?
 - 3) Summary questions.
 - a) Can someone summarize what we have said about faith?
 - b) After a lengthy discussion it is important to give a summary of what has been said. Allow the group members to do this.

Notes —

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- 4) Application questions.
 - a) Do you have this type of faith? Can someone give an example of a current situation in which you are practicing faith?
 - b) At this point you want to allow the Holy Spirit to move. Ask people to be open. Perhaps you can help by giving your own answer first. Make it personal.
 - c) Once the initial fear or hesitation is broken, most people want to share something that applies to themselves. Depending on the topic of discussion, it may be that someone **needs** to share something with someone. This is his opportunity. It may lead into a time of ministry.

A Class Experiment:

Form the class into groups again. Allow different people to act as the group leader. Choose a passage to study. The leader must use all of the questions to promote discussion in the group.

4. How to create a good atmosphere for open communication in your group (Thigpen).⁶
 - a. Evaluation vs. Description from the leader.
 - 1) An evaluative leader can destroy the willingness of people to be open in communication. Certainly, there is a time for evaluation. However, initially, a leader should simply describe what the person has said.
 - a) For example, a descriptive leader may respond to a group member by asking the question: Are you saying that the Church must be involved in the salvation process? The leader can use description to create an open climate for communication.
 - b) An evaluative leader might say: That is a very dangerous statement. Salvation is by faith. The Church can not save someone.

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- 2) Be patient. If evaluation is necessary, then do it in a gentle and non-threatening way. Do not evaluate immediately. Do not evaluate if it is not necessary. Use description. Allow people to have their own opinions without evaluating every one of them.

Notes —

Discussion Point

Use Prov 18:13 to promote discussion about evaluation vs. description.

- b. Advice vs. Experience from the leader.
 - 1) Promote experience instead of advice. If someone mentions a problem, then the leader does not always have to give his advice. He can say to the group: Has that happened to anyone? Could you share your experience and how you solved the problem.
 - 2) Instead of telling people what you think they should do, you tell them what happened to you. This carries more weight. It also creates a better climate for open communication.

Discussion Point

Use 2 Cor 1:4 to promote discussion concerning giving advice vs. sharing your experiences.

- c. Dogmatism vs. Teachability from the leader.
 - 1) As a leader try to avoid words like “always”, “never”, and “the worst.” Certainly, there are things that are absolute. Jesus is always God. However, most of us use these absolutes too often and with topics that do not warrant that type of perspective.
 - 2) This is not to say that we should not have convictions. We do not want to be leaders who seem to have many doubts. We are only speaking here about the way you present your points and opinions. Phrases like: "it seems to me" and "from my experience" can be used to create an open climate of communication.

SMALL GROUPS

Notes —

Discussion Point

Use 1 Cor 13:9 to promote discussion concerning dogmatism vs. teachability.

- d. Expert vs. Learner from the leader.
 - 1) Avoid using “the experts” as a weapon to win an argument or as an excuse to not study the matter yourself.
 - 2) Phrases like: "scientists say" and "most people will agree" inhibit open communication. Who wants to disagree with the scientists or with “most people?”
 - 3) Be a learner. Lead a group of learners. We can be helped by information that other credible sources can offer. However, we must first learn for ourselves.

Discussion Point

Use 1 Cor 1:20 to promote discussion concerning being an expert vs. being a learner.

- e. Rushed vs. Relaxed approach from the leader.
 - 1) Do not be in a hurry to get an answer to a question. Relax. Give someone time to think. Allow for a time of silence. Wait!
 - 2) If people feel rushed to answer a question, then they will not be as open in their communication. An open communication climate is often a relaxed communication climate.

Discussion Point

Use Jms 1:19 to promote discussion concerning the use of a rushed vs. relaxed approach.

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- f. Apathy vs. Empathy from the leader.
- 1) A leader must show support and interest in the person, even if he is not supportive or interested in the person's comment.
 - 2) Open communication can be destroyed if a comment is ignored.
 - 3) Each comment must be recognized, because each person must be recognized.

Notes —

Discussion Point

Use Prov 20:5 to promote discussion concerning apathy vs. empathy.

5. Ways to develop the ministries of small group members (Hannelore Bozeman).⁷
- a. Delegate the responsibility and authority to lead group praise and worship.
 - b. Encourage group members to do most of the praying during group prayer time.
 - c. Allow group members to solve problems and make decisions.
 - d. Encourage the ministry of hospitality. Delegate the responsibility and authority to host the meeting. The meeting could be in a different home each week.
 - e. Limit your talking to a brief time of teaching, asking good discussion questions, and offering a summary and conclusion. Allow others to talk most of the time.
 - f. Choose potential leaders. Teach them how to plan and prepare for a meeting. Prepare a meeting with them. Allow them to lead specific parts of the meeting.
 - g. Pray specifically for each group member.

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Discussion Point

Discuss the items listed. Can you think of others?

6. What have you accomplished?
 - a. We might say that **without a vision, purpose, goal, or sense of accomplishment, the small group will perish.**
 - b. A group leader can avoid this failure by making sure the goal and purpose for the meeting is specific and clear. If a group member asked: "What are we doing here?," then another group member should be able to answer him specifically: "The leader said that tonight we will consider ways in which we can carry one another's burdens."
 - c. A group leader can also avoid this by making sure to define what has been accomplished. At the end of the meeting, the leader should summarize what has happened in the meeting. He might say: "So we have decided to commit to pray for each other 10 minutes each day. We have also decided to receive special requests for help at the beginning of each meeting, and as a group we will decide how to respond to each request."
7. How to start a small group session. Choose an activity that will prepare and propel the group into the meeting.
 - a. The activity should start at the time agreed upon.
 - b. The activity should be fun and energetic.
 - c. The activity should have the effect of inviting people to be part of the meeting. It should promote a sense of friendship.
 - d. The activity should be clearly explained. Give good directions.
 - e. Define the amount of time that the activity will take.
 - f. The activity must be well organized. The rest of the meeting will be affected by an opening activity that results in confusion.

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- g. The activity should direct the focus of the group toward the theme or topic of the meeting.
- h. The activity should include every member of the group.
- i. The activity should encourage group interaction. Every member should be interacting with at least one other member.

Notes —

Discussion Point

Discuss some activities that you have seen be successful in a small group setting.

- 8. Empower the members of your group to help themselves and others.
 - a. Help members to help themselves.
 - 1) When the Bible says that we must bear one another's burdens, it does not mean that we must do all things for that person.
 - 2) We must be careful not to create situations where other people depend on us for everything. This does not help the person. It handicaps the person. We must always focus on helping someone to help himself. This is empowering them.
 - b. Help members to help others. In Galatians 6:2, Paul instructs the Galatians to "bear one another's burdens." We must learn which burdens to bear, and which are appropriate for that person to bear.
 - 1) This means to help another Christian carry an exceptional weight that creates a physical, emotional, or a spiritual crisis. It does not refer to the common, everyday tasks that each one of us are faced with.
 - 2) Paul makes sure to clarify this point. In Gal 6:5, he says that "each one shall bear his own load." The word here in the original Greek is different than the word in 6:2. The word "load" refers to the weight that each person must carry. We must carry this weight on our own. We must depend on God.

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Notes —

Discussion Point

Discuss experiences related to helping others and helping people to help themselves.

9. Do not be too serious all of the time. Allow and use humor (Thigpen).⁸
 - a. Humor can benefit the small group in the following ways.
 - 1) Humor builds a sense of belonging. Research shows that shared laughter will increase the sense of unity in a group.
 - 2) Humor can stop or ease tension. What can the leader do when members get mad at each other? If it is the right situation, the leader can use humor to break the tension.
 - 3) Humor can make it easier to accept the truths that are not easy to accept. Humor has a way of diminishing the threat of a hard or direct teaching.
 - 4) Humor can be used to create a climate of open communication. It can tear down the walls that people put up to protect themselves. The group will be more relaxed and more willing to be intimate with each other.
 - 5) Humor can put things in perspective. It can bring balance to a “heavy” or depressing situation.
 - 6) Humor can bring relief. In times of grief, depression, or emotional stress people sometimes need a time to laugh.
 - 7) Humor can make the meeting fun. Small group meetings do not have to be boring. They do not always have to include work and serious discussion.

Discussion Point

Use Prov 17:22 to discuss the use of humor in a small group meeting.

SMALL GROUPS

Insert Your Illustration:

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b. Guidelines for using humor.

- 1) As the leader, you must establish how humor will be used. Can you laugh at yourself? Do you know when to use humor?
- 2) Use small group exercises that will promote humorous discussion.
 - a) Tell about yourself through stories or experiences (this can be used to allow the group members to get to know each other and will often be very humorous).
 - b) Tell about some of the funniest or the most embarrassing events of your life.
- 3) Research shows that a group's sense of humor is affected by the size of the room. If the room is too big the group of people will tend to laugh less.
- 4) Repeat funny stories that have happened in the life of the group. This is fun and it promotes a sense of group identity.

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Notes —

c. Warnings regarding humor.

- 1) Be sensitive. Use humor that everyone will understand. Avoid “inside jokes” (jokes that only a few people will understand). Laughing together promotes unity, but individual laughing can promote division.
- 2) Do not use humor that discriminates against others or humiliates another person. Do not belittle or make fun of someone else.
- 3) Do not force the use of humor. It must be natural.

Discussion Point

Discuss some good and bad uses of humor related to a small group setting.

C. Suggestions for Small Group Activities.

Example Activity #1:

The empty chair (for building up the group).

Put an extra chair in the room. If the group has seven members, then put eight chairs together for the meeting.

Each meeting pray that God will fill the empty chair:

- This puts a focus on evangelism.
- It promotes the idea of the multiplication of small groups.
- It keeps the purpose of the group focused on expanding the kingdom of God.

SMALL GROUPS

Example Activity #2:

This is an activity to promote unity and intimacy. Use the following questions and have the members write down their answers.

What are two struggles in my life?
How do they affect me? How do they affect my relationship with God?
How do they affect others?

Encourage group members to be open with the group. Allow enough time for each group member to write out his answers.

One by one, each group member should share his answers with the group:

- The leader should try to get others to respond.
- The other group members should provide suggestions and support.
- The group should then pray over the one who shared his struggle.

The group members should discover that other people have the same struggles they have. They will receive helpful suggestions. They will be able to let go of something that they have kept secret. The group will feel the unity that is developed when someone shares a secret.

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Group Evaluation Activity:

Decide on who should evaluate the group. Everyone should have an opportunity to give some form of evaluation.

Decide when to do the evaluation:

- Some groups may want to have a time for evaluation after every meeting.
- Other groups may decide to do an evaluation after a long period of time.

Decide what to include in the evaluation. Here are some examples of points to evaluate:

- 1) Are our goals clear?
- 2) Have we completed our goals? What new goals should we make?
- 3) Have our methods to complete the goals been effective? What other methods could we use?
- 4) Are we in unity? How can we promote unity within the group?
- 5) Is the group organized? How can we be more organized?
- 6) Do we communicate well with each other? How can we communicate more effectively and efficiently?
- 7) Is the leadership effective? How can it be more effective?
- 8) Do all the members participate? Are they allowed and encouraged to participate? How can the group promote more participation?

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Group Member Evaluation Form:

Develop an evaluation form for each individual member to evaluate himself. Members can share the results with the whole group or they can simply be challenged to consider ways to improve themselves.

Here are some suggested questions.

- 1) Do I come with an attitude of expectation? Am I willing to learn from others?
- 2) Am I a good listener? Do I give my attention to others?
- 3) Am I sensitive to the needs and opinions of others?
- 4) Do I talk too much? Do I talk enough? Does what I say add to the discussion in a valuable way?
- 5) Do I help to solve a problem? Does my involvement go beyond my words?
- 6) Am I honest and open with the group?
- 7) Do I encourage others in their ministries or am I jealous of their ministries?
- 8) Do I accept help, encouragement, and correction from others in the group?
- 9) Do I accept my share of responsibility and authority in the group? Am I committed to the group?

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Notes —

Small Group Dynamics: Endnotes

¹Taken from a portion of a sermon given by George Whitefield.

²Adapted from class notes, Church and Ministry course at Regent University taught by Dr. Joe Umidi, 1987. Used by permission.

³Some ideas and flow of thought have been adapted from various articles in “The Small Group Letter” (Colorado Springs, Colorado: The Navigators, 1985).

⁴David Trembly, “The Small Group Letter” (Vol. 2, Issue 5), p. 1.

⁵Paul Thigpen, “The Small Group Letter” (Vol. 2, Issue 5), pp. 1, 2.

⁶Paul Thigpen, “The Small Group Letter” (Vol. 2, Issue 6), p. 5.

⁷Hannelore Bozeman, “The Small Group Letter” (Vol. 2, Issue 6), p. 5.

⁸Paul Thigpen, “The Small Group Letter” (Vol. 2, Issue 1), pp. 1, 2.

MARRIAGE

Marriage: Syllabus

Notes —

CLASS #1:

- I. Introduction.
- II. Marriage: A General Bible Study.
- III. Marriage and Marriage Roles:
 - A. Introduction.

CLASS #2:

- III. Marriage and Marriage Roles:
 - A. Introduction. (cont.)
 - B. The Divine Order of Creation.

CLASS #3:

- III. Marriage and Marriage Roles:
 - B. The Divine Order of Creation. (cont.)
 - C. What are the Functional Roles in Marriage?

CLASS #4:

- III. Marriage and Marriage Roles:
 - C. What are the Functional Roles in Marriage? (cont.)

CLASS #5:

- III. Marriage and Marriage Roles:
 - D. Analogies of the Marriage Relationship.
 - E. Conclusion
- Exam

MARRIAGE

Notes —

Exam

Possible 20 Point Questions

- 1) Defend the fact that women are equal to men by referring to creation (pp. 244, 245).
- 2) What is Biblical submission of a wife (pp. 259-262)?
- 3) Describe the Biblical role of the husband (pp. 265-267).

Possible 10 Point Questions

- 1) State one of God's purposes for marriage. Include a Scripture reference (p. 242).
- 2) The marriage relationship is figurative of ...? Give two examples (include references; p. 243).
- 3) What do we mean when we use the word "hierarchy" to explain marriage roles (p. 249)?
- 4) What is the "correct motive" within marriage (p. 254).
- 5) In one or two sentences explain the difference between "50/50" love and "100/100" love (p. 264).
- 6) Use the concepts of identity and relational roles in the Trinity as an analogy of the concepts of identity and relational roles in marriage (p. 271).

MARRIAGE

I. Introduction.

Notes —

A. The Importance of Marriage.

1. The most basic unit of society is the family.
 - a. The most basic relationship of the family is the marriage relationship. The relationship between a husband and a wife is the most foundational human relationship.
 - b. Marriage was the initial human relationship as it was ordained by God in the garden of Eden.
2. It has been said that marriage is not finding someone whom you can live with, but finding that person whom you cannot live without.
 - a. This statement highlights the sovereignty of God in putting two people together.
 - b. It also highlights the importance of marriage. Marriage serves to complete the other. Indeed, according to the Scripture, the woman was created as a “helper” or completion of the man (Gen 2:18).

B. The Contents of This Course.

1. First, we will offer a short, general Bible study of the theme of marriage.
2. Second, we will study more specifically the concept of marriage roles to understand what the Bible says about marriage and the relationship between husband and wife.

MARRIAGE

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II. Marriage: A General Bible Study.

A. Study of Gen 2:18-24.

1. First we see that God made a “helper” for the man (vs. 18-22).
 - a. The Hebrew word that is translated “helper” is a word that means “completion or complement.”
 - b. That is, the woman is the completion of the man. She complements him and completes him.
2. In vs. 23, we see man’s response to the creation of this “helper.”
 - a. The focus is that the man and the woman are naturally related to each other because the woman was taken from the man.
 - b. The relationship is natural and intimate.
3. Finally, in vs. 24, we see the declaration of the reality of the institution of marriage.
 - a. **“For this cause:”** The existence of the institution of marriage is based on God’s choice as the Sovereign Creator.
 - 1) Marriage is established **because** (“for this cause”) of how God created man and woman.
 - 2) Because God created the woman from the man, there is marriage. It is logical, natural, and intimate.
 - b. **“A man shall leave his father and mother:”** The man takes the initiative.
 - 1) He must leave his original family to begin a new family.
 - 2) His new priority must be to this new family.

MARRIAGE

c. **“And shall cleave to his wife:”** The new beginning includes both the man and the woman.

- 1) The man must leave and cleave. That is, he must leave behind the old and cling to the new.
- 2) The word “cleave” signifies the idea of permanence. This is not a temporary arrangement. It is a permanent and strong relationship.

d. **“And they shall become one flesh:”** The result is that the man and the woman become so united as to reflect the original design of creation. They were originally and literally one (because the woman was taken out of the man).

- 1) The use of the word “become” here points to what we might call the process of marriage. That is, the relationship is built. It is worked on, improved, and perfected over time.
- 2) The idea of “one flesh” signifies that the marriage relationship creates a single identity. It also points to the sexual aspect of the marriage relationship. Most generally, it points to a unified and intimate relationship.
- 3) The word “they” is very important. Although they become one flesh through their relationship, they do so as a “they.” That is, there are two of them, unified yet distinct, together yet as individuals.
- 4) This will be important to keep in mind when we begin to talk about marriage roles in the next part of this course.

4. Conclusions to our Bible Study.

- a. The marriage relationship was instituted by God.
- b. It is the beginning or foundation of all human relationships.

Notes —

MARRIAGE

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Discussion Point

Discuss some of the modern problems in marriage related to the lack of understanding of the following concepts:

- helper/complement
- leave/cleave
- they become one flesh

B. God's Purposes For Marriage.

1. Marriage is used as a way to mirror God's image. A triune God (Gen 1:26) who operates in unity and oneness creates a man (who is male and female: Gen 1:27 and 5:1) in His own image who must operate in unity and oneness.
2. Marriage is created to multiply a godly heritage (Gen 1:28; Mal 2:14, 15).
3. Marriage is created to be part of the way that man will manage God's creation (Gen 1:28).
4. Marriage is created in order for man and women to mutually complete one another (Gen 2:18-24).
5. Marriage models Christ's relationship to the church (Eph 5:23-32).
6. Marriage is used to discourage immoral behavior (1 Cor 7:2, 9).
7. Marriage is meant to provide complete satisfaction (Prov 5:19).

MARRIAGE

Aspects of Marriage:

Descriptions of the marriage relationship:

It should be honored (Heb 13:4).
It should be permanent (Mt 19:6).

The marriage relationship is figurative of:

God's union with Israel (Is 54:5).
Christ's union with the Church (Eph 5:23-32).

The marriage ceremony:

Jesus recognized its validity (Jn 2:1-11).
It is equated with joy (Jer 7:34).

Notes —

III. Marriage and Marriage Roles.

A. Introduction.

1. The Importance of Marriage. To understand the roles of marriage, we must first review the importance of marriage.
 - a. We have already demonstrated that marriage was established by God Himself (Gen 2:18, 24). It was not an invention of man.
 - 1) It was established because it was necessary (Gen 2:18, 20).
 - 2) It was established as a process (Gen 2:22-24).
 - a) The process begins when God Himself brings the couple together (vs. 24).
 - b) Original family ties are replaced with new family ties (leave and cleave: vs. 24).
 - c) It is a permanent relationship (one flesh: vs. 24).

MARRIAGE

Notes —

- b. Marriage provides a way for the man to be completed (review our comments on the meaning of the word “helper”).
 - 1) The analogy found in Eph 5 establishes a direct relationship between Christ and the husband and the church body and the wife.
 - 2) With this in mind, read Eph 1:23.
 - a) The body is “the fullness” of Christ.
 - b) Using the Eph 5 analogy, we could say that the wife is “the fullness” of the husband. That is, she completes him (note how this is consistent with the meaning of the word “helper”).

Discussion Point

Share testimonies of how marriage has brought completeness for those of you who are married.

2. Inferiority versus equality. Women are not inferior to men. They are equal to them.
 - a. Women are equal to men in the creation.
 - 1) God formed man. God also formed the woman. God was directly and equally involved in both creations.
 - 2) The woman was not made by the man (the man was sleeping during her creation). The woman was made from the man. She was made by God.
 - 3) The difference between men and women is based on the divine order of creation.

MARRIAGE

- 4) Equality of men and women is based on the fact that both have the same Creator.
- a) Man is inferior to God because God made him.
 - b) The pot is inferior to the potter because the potter made it.
 - c) The misunderstanding that the woman is inferior to the man comes from the misunderstanding concerning who made the woman. Man did not make woman. God made woman. Man and woman have the same Creator.

Notes —

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to discuss the fact that women are completely equal to men in creation. What barriers exist within your culture that oppose this perspective?

- b. Women are equal to men in the continuation of the human race.
 - 1) Study 1 Cor 11:11, 12.
 - 2) If one person relies on a second person for existence, then the second person can not be considered inferior. They are equally and mutually dependent.
 - a) This is true with both men and women. They rely on each other to continue their kind.
 - b) Two women can not continue the human race. Two men can not continue the human race. It takes a man and a woman. They rely on each other for their own existence, and therefore are equal to each other.
 - c) The hierarchical difference that does exist between man and woman is not based on their identity, but on how they relate to each other in their roles.

MARRIAGE

Notes —

- 3) Men and women are equal in their identities.
 - 4) They are different in their roles. To say that men and women are equal does not require that we say that they are the same.
- c. The doctrinal error of the “inferiority of women” is based on bad logic.
- 1) The old Hebrew Rabbis said that women were inferior because Eve was formed from Adam. This type of logic would mean that men are inferior to dirt because Adam was formed from dirt!
 - 2) The old Hebrew Rabbis also said that women were inferior to men, because Eve was formed after Adam.
 - a) If that is true, is man inferior to the animals that were formed before him?
 - b) Actually, the fact that woman was made from man establishes her equality with him. She is, as Adam proclaimed, bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh. They are part of each other and therefore equal in identity.
 - c) Again, that does not negate their differences. The woman was formed from man and after man. There is a divine order of things. Thus, there is a divine order within the relationship between man and woman. This is the basis for marriage “roles.”

Discussion Point

Has your cultural or religious background taught that women are inferior?
If so, are you prepared to help correct this way of thinking?
You can start in the church. Discuss this issue.

MARRIAGE

- d. Jesus came against this bad logic during His time, but would not be an advocate of the modern day women's liberation movement which is prevalent in the Western world.
- 1) Jesus rebuked the double standards of the Pharisees that were formed by their discrimination and prejudice against women (see Mt 5:28).
 - 2) He did this because he looked at men and women as being equally responsible for sin.
 - 3) However, Jesus never became an advocate of "women's liberation" as it is promoted today in the Western world.
 - 4) He understood that men and women are different.
 - a) The modern women's liberation movement actually proposes the opposite of liberation. For a woman to be liberated, she must be liberated as a woman. To be free from being a woman is no freedom at all.
 - b) The women's liberation movement does not want to make women equal with men. It wants to make men and women the same.
 - c) Men and women are equal. They are not the same. As obvious as this should be it is not seen by a futile, sinful world (see Rom 1:18-32).

Notes —

Discussion Point

In what ways has the modern women's liberation movement (particularly as influenced in the Western world) seemed to help and hurt the actual role of today's women.

MARRIAGE

Notes —

- 5) Women are equal to men in Christ.
- 6) It is fallen humanity that has created the inferiority of women. From the beginning of creation it was not like that.
 - a) Redemption has brought fallen humanity back to its original intention. Freedom for mankind is found in God's original intention. So, in the truest sense, Christ liberates women.
 - b) He redeems man's mind to be able to understand the equality of men and women while applying correctly the difference between men and women.
- e. We have seen that the difference between women and men is not found in their identities (their identities are in Christ). The difference between women and men is found in God's sovereign relational order that was established at creation.

Discussion Point

Use the following Scriptures to discuss how the Bible declares the equality of men and women: Gen 5:1, 2; Gen 1:27; Gal 3:28; Eph 5:28; and 1 Pt 3:7.

B. The Divine Order of Creation.

1. Yes, husband and wife are equal in terms of identity. Now we must ask: How do they relate to each other?
 - a. The family is the basic unit of the society.
 - b. In the order of the family, the wife is subject to the husband as the children are subject to the parents. There is a divinely ordained authority structure.
 - 1) We must repeat that husband, wife, and children are equals in the sense of their identity as human beings.
 - 2) They are different in terms of how they function in the family (role).

MARRIAGE

- c. In the order of the Trinity, the Father has a certain precedence over the Son and the Spirit although all three are equally God. That is, they are equal in identity and different in function or role. As it is in the family, the Trinity includes a divinely ordained authority structure.

Notes —

Discussion Point

Use the following diagram to discuss creation order. Consider 1 Cor 11:3 in relation to creation order and the diagram below.

Equal In: Identity	Different In: Function/Role/Relational Order
Man = Woman = Child	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="text-align: center; margin-right: 20px;"> Man Woman Child </div> <div style="margin-right: 20px;"> 1 Cor 11:3 Eph 6:1 </div> <div style="font-size: 2em;">}</div> <div style="text-align: left;"> Authority Structure </div> </div>
Father = Son = H.S.	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="text-align: center; margin-right: 20px;"> Father Son Holy Spirit </div> <div style="margin-right: 20px;"> John 3:16 Acts 13:33 John 15:26 John 16:14 </div> <div style="font-size: 2em;">}</div> <div style="text-align: left;"> Authority Structure </div> </div>

2. What do we mean when we use the word hierarchy?
- Hierarchy does not refer to what men and women are worth. It does refer to the position that each takes according to God's established order.
 - Hierarchy does not imply inferiority and superiority because it is a hierarchy of function. It is not a hierarchy of dignity or value.
 - Hierarchy does refer to a hierarchy of function and order because it is a hierarchy of responsibility and authority that was established at creation.

MARRIAGE

Notes —

Insert Your Illustration:

3. Study Eph 5:22-24.

a. Paul says that the husband is the head of the wife. He does not say that the husband is ahead of the wife.

- 1) The husband is the head in his functional and relational position.
- 2) He is not ahead in superiority and identity.

b. In Eph 5 Paul speaks about two different functions of two equal beings.

- 1) That is, the functions of husband and wife are different, not uneven. Simply because they are different and have different functions within God's order does not mean that they are not equals.
 - a) To say one is inferior to the other is the common error of proud and oppressive men.
 - b) To say that one is the same as the other is the popular error of rebellious and confused women (commonly seen in the women's liberation movement in the Western world).
- 2) Again, the reason for this is because men and women are at the same time equal and different.

MARRIAGE

Insert Your Illustration:

Notes —

4. Review Gen 2:18-24.
 - a. We have already studied this passage to see the equality of husband and wife. Now we must see how husband and wife are different.
 - b. The hierarchy of function previously described is not a result of the fall of man. It is the result of Divine choices and organization at creation (consider 1 Tim 2:13).
 - 1) Woman is made from man.
 - 2) Woman is made for man.
 - 3) Woman is given to man.
 - 4) Woman is named by man.

MARRIAGE

Notes —

5. Conclusions.

- a. Thus, the redeeming of the marriage relationship does not negate the different functions and roles of husband and wife. Instead, it makes the functions healthy again, after they have been distorted by a fallen society.
 - 1) When the functions and roles are healthy, then the marriage is healthy. Without a proper understanding and practice of these functions or roles, the family will be thrown into chaos. It will lack order and unity.
 - 2) Yes, there must be order in a family. Someone must lead. This responsibility of leadership is clearly given to the husband and father. His authority must be accepted.
- b. This need for order is true in all other types of fellowships. Consider the example of the local church.
 - 1) There is a certain hierarchy of function within a local church.
 - a) A church member needs to submit to a pastor (see 1 Cor 16:16; 1 Thes 5:12, 13; Heb 13:7).
 - b) At the same time a pastor or leader must selflessly serve and be devoted to the members of the church (see 1 Cor 16:15, 16).
 - 2) There is a certain hierarchy of function within a family.
 - a) A wife needs to submit to a husband (Eph 5:21, 22). Interestingly, the same Greek word (upotaso) is used in 1 Cor 16:16 to describe the submission of a church member to a church leader, as is used in Eph 5:21, 22 to describe the submission of a wife to a husband.
 - b) At the same time a husband must selflessly serve, love, and be devoted to his wife (Eph 5:25).
 - 3) Each type of fellowship must respect these relational positions in order for the fellowship to exist and function correctly.

MARRIAGE

- 4) The church leader and the church member are different in their structural and functional roles in the church. However, they are equal in their identity because their identity is in Christ.
- 5) The husband and the wife are different in their structural and functional roles in family. However, they are equal in their identity because their identity is in Christ.
 - a) Husband and wife must understand their equality.
 - b) They must also understand that they are different and both must submit to Christ in serving Him within their divinely ordained functional roles.

Notes —

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Use the previous concept to promote discussion and answer questions.

MARRIAGE

Notes —

C. What Are the Functional Roles in Marriage?

1. The Correct Motive.

- a. The commands to be filled with the Spirit and to submit to one another in the fear of Christ (Eph 5:18, 21) function as the introduction to Paul's explanation of the marriage roles in Eph 5:22-33.
- b. This introduction puts the focus on who is under Christ, not on who is over who.
 - 1) The point is that husband and wife must relate to each other according to the desire of Christ.
 - 2) They must obey His ordained structures. The correct motive with respect to functioning in your particular marriage role is obedience to Christ.
 - a) A husband who does not selflessly love, serve and lead his wife disobeys Christ.
 - b) A wife who does not submit and respect her husband disobeys Christ.
- c. If we do not allow submission and obedience to Christ to be our correct motive, then we will begin to focus on the responsibilities of our mate.
 - 1) We will begin to make our role dependent on the completion of the other's role
 - 2) We will begin to focus on our "rights" in our marriages, instead of on our responsibilities in our marriages.
 - 3) This all leads to a selfish, false love.
 - 4) In a healthy marriage, a husband and wife are motivated to function in their roles by the responsibilities of their roles, not by the privileges of their roles.
 - 5) More than anything, they are motivated by their desire to obey and please Christ.

MARRIAGE

2. The role of the wife is **submission**.

a. The importance of a wife's submission.

- 1) She is to learn in submission (1 Tim 2:11).
- 2) She is to teach about submission (Titus 2:5).
- 3) She is to evangelize through her submission (1 Pt 3:1).

b. What submission is not.

- 1) Submission is not 'oppression.'
- 2) This distortion of 'submission' is a result of the fall of man in the garden.

Notes —

Author's Bible Study:

Bible study of Gen 3:16 and Gen 4:7.

What is meant by the word "desire?" (note: the Hebrew word for "desire" is "teshuka," and these are the only two places in the book of Genesis that we find this word).

First, we must see from 4:7 that it is not a "positive" sense of "desire." The interpretation that equates "desire" in 3:16 with a woman's physical desire for her husband is probably the result of both wishful thinking (on the part of men) and poor Bible study.

Exegetically, the term "desire" is a "negative" concept. In 4:7, it is used in the context of sin's "desire" to control. In 3:16, we can conclude that the "desire" of the woman is not a positive one (remember, this is part of the punishment or curse of the fall). The wife negated her **natural** role of submission in the garden when she took the leadership position with respect to the fruit of the forbidden tree. Thus, the wife is now punished by desiring to control her husband.

MARRIAGE

Notes —

Author's Bible Study:

Interpretation of Gen 3:16 and Gen 4:17

Secondly, as the Lord tells Cain in 4:7 to master or rule sin, so too does he tell the husband in 3:16 to rule the wife. Natural submission is forcefully changed to unnatural subjection. (Remember: this is the result of the fall of humanity and the fall of humanity is redeemed in Christ).

The consequence and corruption of the fall is clear. It is not what God intended (remember: through redemption this curse can be redeemed).

The fall has corrupted the willing submission of the wife by making it a desire to control the husband.

It has also corrupted the loving headship of the husband by making it an oppressive ruling or oppression.

If we continue our comparison of 3:16 and 4:7, then we could say that if a husband does "well" (that is, if he loves his wife as Christ loves the Church), then the wife will not be "crouching at the door" or trying to control him.

This is a very important truth in our discussion of marriage relationships. They are very natural. Sin makes them unnatural. If the husband loves the wife as he should, then it will be more likely that there will be a natural response by the wife to be in submission. The opposite is also true. If the wife submits to the husband then it will be more likely that there will be a natural response by the husband to love his wife.

MARRIAGE

- 3) Punishment is to live life unnaturally. It is to go against the current of the river or to cut against the grain of the wood. It is to resist what is natural.
- a) In this sense God does not punish us at all. We punish ourselves by not obeying and thus experiencing the consequences (see this principle in Jn 3:18, 19).
 - b) This is a truth of life. Sin results in punishment not so much because God inflicts punishment upon us (although He does discipline us: see Heb 12:4-11), but because to go against God (to sin) is to go against creation and what is natural. This results in inflicting pain upon yourself by doing something the wrong (unnatural) way (see Rom 6:23; Jn 3:18, 19).

Notes —

Author's Illustration:

Analogy #1: If you are hammering a nail and you put your finger over the head of the nail, then you will feel pain. This "punishment" is not from a God who in that moment decided to make you pay for your error. It is the result of doing something the wrong way.

Insert Your Illustration:

MARRIAGE

Notes —

Author's Illustration:

Analogy #2: If you are playing soccer and trying to score a goal and you run ahead of the ball and all of the defensive players, then the referee will call you "offsides." You are penalized by the referee because you did something wrong. The referee does not punish you. You punish yourself.

Insert Your Illustration:

Author's Illustration:

Analogy #3: The deadly disease called AIDS is not so much a judgment of God against sinners as it is a result of doing things against God's natural creative order. God does not so much judge or punish the person whose life is lived in sexual error. That person punishes himself by going against God's order. We actually, for the time being, judge ourselves (consider Jn 3:18, 19; 1 Cor 11:31; Mt 7:1, 2).

Insert Your Illustration:

MARRIAGE

c. What is Biblical submission?

Notes —

1) It is **dependence**.

- a) In Eph 5:21-24 Paul uses the concept of the body of Christ (which he had already defined in Eph 1:22, 23; 4:15, 16) to explain the concept of marriage roles.
- b) It is interesting that in 4:16 Paul uses the Greek word “epichoragia” (translated as “supplies”) to show that the body receives its nourishment, life and direction from the head. This same word was a technical word used during that time to indicate the obligation of a husband to provide basic necessities for his wife.
- c) When we consider the analogy of the body of Christ that Paul uses to describe the submissive role of the wife in Eph 5, we can make the connection with Eph 4:16. An important part of submission is accepting and practicing a sense of dependency.
- d) The wife who depends on her husband is being consistent with nature. In Gen 2 we saw how the creation of the woman depended upon the creation of the man.

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Discuss Biblical submission in light of today’s society and the pressure for women to be employed outside the home (in Western culture).

MARRIAGE

Notes —

2) It is **subordinance**.

- a) Again, we can refer to the analogy of the body of Christ being subordinate to the Head.
- b) This subordination includes a love for the Head and production for Him (evangelism, good testimony and reputation, etc).
- c) We see these same kind of actions in the submissive wife who is referred to in Titus 2:4, 5.
 - (1) She loves her husband (vs. 4).
 - (2) She is sensible and pure (vs. 5: she provides a good reputation for the husband.)
 - (3) She works at home (vs. 5: she is productive for him).
- d) We also see these same kinds of actions in the Proverbs 31 woman. She is productive and provides a good reputation for her husband (see vs. 11, 12, 15, 18, 23).

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to discuss Biblical subordination.

MARRIAGE

- 3) It is **respect** and **honor** to your husband.
- a) Read Eph 5:33.
 - b) An important part of submission is showing respect.
 - c) In Paul's day, this was done by wives as a legal requirement. The Christian submission of a wife must go way beyond this. It must be sincere, real, and must be motivated by a fear (respect) for Christ and His order of things.
 - d) It is referred to within the context of Christians, in general, submitting "to one another in the fear of Christ" (Eph 5:21).

Notes —

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

What is the impact on a husband when he knows his wife does not respect him? What is his response when the wife does respect him and even demonstrates this publicly?

MARRIAGE

Notes —

d. Conclusions about Submission.

- 1) A wife must understand submission in terms of the divine order. She must see it as the way in which she can assume her own divinely ordained position.
 - a) Thus, her submission must be based on freedom and love, and not on compulsion and fear.
 - b) Indeed, the Church is not forced into submission. She submits out of her own free will and desire to be obedient to the head.
 - c) Appropriately, a wife's motivation to submit to her husband must be based on her fear of God (Eph 5:21). That is, it must be based on her desire to obey God.
- 2) A wife must understand and accept that her submission to her husband can not depend on her husband's willingness to fulfill his role.
 - a) Her motivations must be pure. That is, they must be based on her desire to please Christ. Her eyes must be on Him, not on her husband.
 - b) If her eyes are on her husband, then she will fail because her husband will fail. Her submission cannot depend on her husband's actions.
 - c) If her eyes are on Christ, then she will not fail because Christ never fails. Her submission must be an unconditional one.
 - (1) It must be motivated by her desire to operate in the divine order.
 - (2) It must be motivated by her desire to be righteous (to stand in the correct position before God).

MARRIAGE

3) Here we can establish a key principle for a good marriage. The husband and wife must focus on their own responsibilities instead of on the other's responsibilities (Mt 7:3-5).

Notes —

a) The ironic thing about this point is that if it is applied, it usually will correct an unhealthy marriage.

(1) The submission of a wife naturally motivates a husband to love and lead her.

(2) The love and leading of a husband naturally motivates a wife to submit to him.

b) An unhealthy marriage is often the result of a husband or a wife who focuses on the responsibilities of the other instead of focusing on his or her own responsibilities.

(1) When this happens, a husband tries to **force** a wife to fulfill her role of submission, and a wife tries to **manipulate** a husband into fulfilling his role of headship.

(2) This reminds us how the fall of man distorted the marriage roles (review Gen 3:16 and 4:7).

(3) The husband **oppresses** (rules).

(4) The wife **manipulates** (desires to control).

MARRIAGE

Notes —

Author's Comment:

Christian Love vs. Carnal Love

Let us examine the differences between worldly, or carnal love (called “50/50” love), and Christian love, or agape love (called “100/100” love).

Carnal (“50/50”) love is the type of love that is self-interested. Each partner gives half of their total being, or makes a 50% effort in the marriage. Each person gives with the expectation that the other person must give an equal share. This is actually a form of selfishness.

Jesus exposed the hypocrisy that is associated with this type of love in Mt 5:46-48.

Christian love is “agape” or unconditional (“100/100”) love. This type of love is unconditionally committed to the success of their partner, without self-concern. Each partner gives all of their total being, or 100% of their effort in the marriage. Each partner desires to help the other partner without any expectation of a return, even when the giving is at their own expense and is at great cost.

Paul described this love in 1 Cor 13: 5 when he said that it “does not seek its own.”

A Christian marriage must be full of “agape love” and practice “100/100” love. Both husband and wife must fulfill their roles without expecting or requiring anything in return. Their motives must be pure. Pure motives are the result of being motivated only by Christ.

MARRIAGE

3. The role of the husband is **headship**.

a. The meaning of headship.

- 1) The Greek word for “head” is “kefalay.” It refers to someone who has a higher rank.
- 2) Headship points to two main ideas: **authority** and **direction**.

b. Authority.

- 1) Authority is not a result of domination. It is a result of service (Mt 23:11).
 - a) When a husband views authority as his “right,” then he will inevitably begin to demand it. He will practice domination instead of service. This will result in an unhealthy marriage.
 - b) When a husband views authority as his responsibility, then he will work for it and earn it. He will serve instead of dominate. This will result in a healthy marriage.
- 2) Authority is not a result of the fall. It is a result of creation.
 - a) We should remember that the man received the role of headship in the garden of Eden.
 - (1) Adam was given the authority to name the animals (Gen 2:19).
 - (2) He also named his wife (Gen 3:20).
 - b) In the redeemed marriage of Abraham and Sarah, Abraham practiced this authority. In a passage about the submission of a wife and the authority of a husband, we see that Sarah called Abraham “lord” (see 1 Pt 3:1-6).

Notes —

MARRIAGE

Notes —

Insert Your Illustration:

c. Direction.

- 1) The aspect of direction in a husband's headship includes the ideas of leadership and initiative.
 - a) Again we must stress that leadership is the result of service (see Lk 22:26). A husband is not the leader of his family until he is the servant of his family.
 - b) In the Bible, leadership and initiative are seen to be aspects of the role of the man.
 - c) In Gen 3:20, we see that the man takes the initiative to name the woman. Those who reject the Biblical concept of the headship of the husband might argue that Adam should have consulted Eve and allowed her to make the decision with him.
 - d) In Gen 3:17, it becomes obvious that the husband must lead and give direction to his wife. The man's error, according to God, is that instead of leading the wife he allowed the wife to lead him.
 - e) Remember, the fall of man was much more complex than the fact that he ate a piece of forbidden fruit. The roots of the fall of man are those of rebellion. Man was to lead. He did not. The woman led. They rebelled against God's creation and His creative order.

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- 2) The act of leadership and initiative which is divinely ordered, should not be forced upon the wife. Instead, it is established by love.
- a) Paul establishes this difference in Col 3:18, 19. He says that husbands should love their wives instead of being “embittered” against them.
 - b) The husband who is embittered against his wife may try to force his leadership on her. He might become impatient with her lack of response to him and try to force her into submission.
 - (1) This leadership that tries to force itself upon someone is not true Biblical leadership.
 - (2) This leadership is characterized by a leader who is constantly irritated with the one he is leading and is constantly focusing on the faults of that person.
 - c) The husband who loves his wife is patient and does not criticize her. His leadership and initiative are received by the wife in submission.

Notes —

Insert Your Illustration:

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about Biblical headship and to answer any questions.

MARRIAGE

Notes —

d. The key action of headship is love.

1) “Love your wives” (Eph 5:25) is for husbands what “be subject to your own husbands” (Eph 5:22) is for wives.

a) Christ and His love for the Church is the husband’s model.

(1) It is unconditional love.

(2) It is a love without limits.

b) This love must be motivated by a profound understanding of the great worth of the wife. This is consistent with Christ’s understanding of the great worth of the Church. It leads to a willingness to give oneself up for the other (Eph 5:25).

c) This love must be a sacrificial love. It must go to the cross.

d) This love must be a compassionate love. It must be willing to suffer with the wife to understand and be sensitive to her.

(1) It must motivate the husband to “walk in her shoes.”

(2) It must enable him to love her as his own body (Eph 5:28).

2) The Scripture says, “He gave Himself up for her” (Eph 5:25).

a) This is the heart of “agape” love.

(1) Christ acquired the Church by giving of Himself.

(2) Adam acquired Eve by giving of himself (his rib).

(3) A husband receives a wife by giving himself for her.

b) Thus, a man does not so much “take a wife” for himself as he gives himself for a wife.

MARRIAGE

Insert Your Illustration:

Notes —

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about “agape” love and answer any questions.

- c. The key attitude of headship is **patience and understanding**.
- 1) The husband must live with his wife in an understanding way (see 1 Pt 3:7).
 - a) He must understand that she is a **fellow heir** and therefore equal to him in terms of identity in Christ.
 - b) He must also understand that she is a weaker vessel. She is subordinate to him in relational order.
 - 2) The husband must respond to the wife in an understanding way. That is, he must take the initiative and lead her knowing that it is not natural for her to be leading him.
 - 3) This is the point of “your” (plural in the Greek) prayers being hindered in 1 Pt 3:7.
 - a) A husband who does not understand the role of his wife and who does not accept his divinely ordained position of headship, will not take the initiative to lead his wife in prayer.
 - b) The verse refers to husbands and wives who do not pray together because the husband lacks understanding of marriage roles.

MARRIAGE

Notes —

Author's Illustration:

Sometimes a husband's attitude is that he is tired of having to initiate everything. He says: **Why is it that she can not take the initiative and lead us in prayer?**

It takes a strong husband who understands Biblical marriage roles to lead a wife in prayer. This is the **reality** of headship. We might say that it is the difficult part of headship.

Yes, husbands have the authority, but they also have the responsibility! A humble and effective husband will be one who is much more concerned with his responsibility than with his authority.

Discussion Point

Use the previous concepts to promote discussion about the husband's need for understanding and patience. Also, answer any questions about headship.

Insert Your Illustration:

MARRIAGE

D. Analogies of the Marriage Relationship.

Notes —

Marriage Analogy #1:

The Trinity (see 1 Cor 11:3).

It remains essential to understand that the husband and wife find their equality in terms of their identity in Christ, and their headship and submission roles in terms of their relationship to each other.

This same thing is true in the Trinity. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal. They are all God. Yet the Son is in submission to the Father. And the Spirit is in submission to the Son.

The cross reveals the equality of men and women (Gal 3:28). Yet it does not nullify the divine structure of the relationship between husband and wife. The cross reveals the equality of the Son and the Father that exists within Trinity (Phil 2:6). Yet it does not nullify the divine structure of the relationships within the Trinity (see 1 Cor 15:27, 28).

Also note the Biblical progression that describes the Son only doing what He sees the Father doing (Jn 5:19), and the Spirit only saying what He hears the Son saying (Jn 16:13, 14). They submit to each other in an order of relationship, yet they are perfectly equal in identity.

This is the paradox of the Trinity. The three natures of the Godhead are equal yet different. This is, perhaps, the paradox of marriage also. The husband and wife are equal yet different (consider the idea of “mystery” in Eph 5:31, 32).

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Marriage Analogy #2:

The relationship between Yahweh and Israel.

Marriage, in the Old Testament, revealed the nature of the relationship between God and Israel.

Generally, we can study the book of the Song of Solomon to see how this analogy is used.

Specifically, we can study the Prophets who often refer to this analogy (consider Is 54:1-8; 62:4, 5; Jer 2:2; 3:6-14; 31:32; Ez 16; Ez 23; Hos 1-3; especially Hos 2:2).

Marriage Analogy #3:

The relationship between Christ and the Church.

We have referred to this analogy throughout this course. Christ the Head is analogous to the husband. The submissive Church is analogous to the wife. Indeed, the mystery is great (Eph 5:32).

MARRIAGE

E. Conclusions to our Course.

Notes —

1. Christ must be the focus of every marriage. Obeying and pleasing Him must be the motives to function in your marriage role.
2. The headship/submission relationship of husband and wife must not be understood in terms of what the husband **is** and what the wife **is not**. It must be seen as the divine order that allows each partner to complete the other. Each partner is equally important. Although they are equal, they are not the same.
3. Freedom of sex is not established by trying to be what one is not. Men are men and women are women. A man can only be a free man. A woman can only be a free woman. Fulfillment and freedom are found within the divine order of relationships, not outside of it. Fulfillment and freedom for men and women are available because they are equal, not because they are the same.
4. When husbands and wives accept and practice the divine order established by God, then they do not view headship as oppressive and submission as slavery. They do view headship and submission as the open door into a marriage of freedom and joy.

MARRIAGE

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