

The Vineyard Way of Life

PLANTING



Trinity Church

Ed Niswender, Lead Pastor

4490 Newland St., Wheat Ridge, CO 80033

Tel. 303-424-4473; Fax 303-424-0690

www.ourtrinity.org

Office@ourtrinity.org

2019

INTRODUCTION TO THE VINEYARD WAY OF LIFE

The **Vineyard** is a way of life here at Trinity Church.

It is designed to help you become **connected** through **planting** and **pruning** and **impactful** through **providing** and **producing**.

This way of life is discovered through **four** Vineyard Way of Life manuals:

1. **Planting**

It will help you to become **connected** by bringing you into **membership** with God's family and Trinity's family. It will give you God's **people** to live with. You will come to **know** Christ.

2. **Pruning**

It will help you to become **connected** by bringing you into **maturity**. It will give you God's **principles** to live by. You will begin to **Grow** in Christ.

3. **Providing**

It will help you to become **impactful** by bringing you into **ministry**. It will give you God's **passion** to live out. You will begin to **serve** Christ.

4. **Producing**

It will help you to become **impactful** by bringing you into **mission**. It will give you God's **purpose** to live for.

Since each of these **Vineyard Way of Life** series builds on the other, it is suggested that each manual be studied in chronological order, starting with manual one and working through to manual four.

It is hoped that this **Vineyard Way of Life** series will equip you in understanding God's purposes for your life and His Church. These materials will also help you become a better disciple or follower of Christ!

A Disciple or Follower of Christ:

1. Is **following** Christ.
2. Is **being changed** by Christ.
3. Is **committed** to the mission of Christ.

God bless you as you read and study through this series. May you discover fully the life God has planned for you!

Pastor Ed Niswender

LIVING A PURPOSE-FILLED LIFE

The purpose for your life is far greater than your own personal fulfillment, your peace of mind, or even your happiness. It is much bigger than your family, your career, or even your dreams.

If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must start with God. You were born by His purpose and for His purpose.

Mankind has been searching for the meaning and purpose of life for thousands of years, but most have failed to find it. That is because we typically begin at the wrong starting point.

We begin with ourselves. We ask self-centered questions like: What do I really want to be? What should I do with my life? What are my goals, my ambitions, and my dreams for the future? But focusing on your-self will not reveal your life purposes.

God's purpose for your life is to live a purpose-filled life. We must understand and commit ourselves to the five purposes that God has for each of our lives. Doing this can transform your life, your church, and your community!

GOD'S BIBLICAL PURPOSES FOR YOUR LIFE

The purpose-filled life and the purpose-filled church are based on the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

The Great Commandment was given by Jesus in response to a question about the most important commandment in Scripture. He responded by saying: "Love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself." In some of His last words to His disciples, Jesus gave the Great Commission to them and assigned them three more tasks: Go make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey everything He has taught.

Together, these scriptures summarize the mission of the purpose-filled life and purpose-filled church:

1. Love the Lord with all your heart.
2. Love your neighbor as yourself.
3. Go and make disciples.
4. Baptizing them.
5. Teaching them to obey.

THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind . . . Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."
(Matthew 22:37, 40 NIV)

The Great Commission

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

(Matthew 28:19-20 NIV)

What on earth am I here for?

Knowing God's biblical purposes for our lives we can now answer the question:

"What on earth am I here for?"

Purpose #1 You were *planned* for God's pleasure.

Purpose #2 You were *formed* for God's family.

Purpose #3 You were *created* to become like Christ.

Purpose #4 You were *shaped* for serving God.

Purpose #5 You were *made* for a mission.

The Benefits of Purpose-Filled Living

1. **KNOWING YOUR PURPOSE GIVES *MEANING* TO YOUR LIFE.**

We were made to have meaning. When life has meaning, you can bear almost anything; without it, nothing is bearable. Without God, life has no purpose, and without purpose, life has no meaning. Without meaning, life has no significance or hope. Hope is as essential to your life as air and water. You need hope to cope. Hope comes from having a purpose. Wonderful changes can happen in your life as you begin to live with purpose. God says, *"I know what I am planning for you...I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you. I will give you hope and a good future."* (Jeremiah 29:11 NCV)

2. **KNOWING YOUR PURPOSE *SIMPLIFIES* YOUR LIFE.**

It defines what you do and what you don't do. Your purpose becomes the standard you use to evaluate which activities are essential and which aren't. You simply ask, "Does this activity help me fulfill one of God's purposes for my life?" Without a clear purpose you have no foundation on which to base decisions, allocate your time, and use your resources. You will tend to make choices based on circumstances, pressures, and your mood at the moment. People who don't know their purpose try to do too much - and that causes stress, fatigue, and conflict. It is impossible to do everything people want you to do. You have just enough time to do God's will. If you can't get it all done, it means

you're trying to do more than God intended for you to do. Purpose-filled living leads to a simpler lifestyle and schedule.

3. KNOWING YOUR PURPOSE *FOCUSES* YOUR LIFE.

It concentrates your effort and energy on what is important. You become effective by being selective. Without a clear purpose, you will keep changing directions, jobs, relationships, churches, or other externals - hoping each change will settle the confusion or fill the emptiness in your heart. The real problem is lack of focus and purpose. If you want your life to have impact and meaning, focus it. Stop dabbling. Stop trying to do it all. Do less. Prune away even good activities and do only that which matters most.

4. KNOWING YOUR PURPOSE *MOTIVATES* YOUR LIFE.

Purpose always produces passion. Nothing energizes like a clear purpose. It is usually meaningless work, not overwork, that wears us down, saps our strength, and robs our joy.

5. KNOWING YOUR PURPOSE *PREPARES* YOU FOR ETERNITY.

Many people spend their lives trying to create a lasting legacy on earth. They want to be remembered when they are gone. Yet, what ultimately matters most will not be what others say about your life, but what God says. Living to create an earthly legacy is a short-sighted goal. A wiser use of time is to build an eternal legacy. When you stand before God He will ask you two questions: First, "What did you do with My Son, Jesus Christ?" Second, "What did you do with what I gave you? "What did you do with your life? Did you spend it on yourself, or did you use it for the purposes of God?"

How Can I Bring Glory to God?

1. We bring glory to God by worshipping.
2. We bring glory to God by loving other believers.
3. We bring glory to God by becoming like Christ.
4. We bring glory to God by serving others with our gifts.
5. We bring glory to God by telling others about him.

STARTING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS:

1. Is it possible to have a relationship with God?

The answer is YES! The very reason God created us is so that we might not only know Him but have a relationship with Him.

But to many people God seems very far away, distant, and impersonal.

How can a person have a relationship with God?

2. Isn't everybody a child of God?

The Bible tells us no.

John 1:12 (NASB) says, *"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, even to those who believe in His name."*

The above verse makes it clear that not everyone is a child of God. It says we must receive Him and believe in His name.

What does that mean?

3. Is there a difference between "religion" and "Christianity?"

Yes. Religion is man-made and is man's attempt through "good works" and personal effort to try to please God. Christianity is not about man but about God and what He did to bring salvation and meaningful life to the human race through the person of His Son, Jesus Christ. Christianity is not about religion but all about having a relationship.

The Bible makes it clear that becoming a child of God and having a relationship with Him has nothing to do with religion or doing "religious" things or performing good works in order to somehow earn God's favor and blessing.

In fact, the Bible says salvation and having a relationship with God by becoming a child of God has nothing to do with us. It has everything to do with God. All we need to do is to know what God did for the human race and then choose to believe it. It is not what we can do for God, but what He has done for us. God does not want our religious good works. He wants a *relationship*.

How do we get that relationship?

4. How to have a relationship with God and become part of God's family.

But **how** do you start developing a personal relationship with God?

How do you become a child of God?

How do you become a Christian, instead of just being religious?

The next few pages give us the answer!

The next few pages explain **four things we must know and accept** in order to have that relationship with God. If we believe and embrace these **four principles**, we can become children of God and go on to discover His purposes and plan for our lives.

SALVATION: HOW TO BECOME A CHILD OF GOD

(Understanding the Four Spiritual Principles for Becoming a Christian.)
(All Scripture references in this section are from the NASB)

Four Spiritual Principles

Just as there are physical principles that govern the Universe, so there are spiritual principles which govern our relationship with God.

Principle Number One:

God loves you, and offers a wonderful plan for your life.

God's Love:

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

God's Plan:

(Christ speaking) *"I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly"* (that it might be full and meaningful) (John 10:10)

Why is it that most people are not experiencing the abundant life?

Because...

Principle Number Two:

Man is sinful and separated from God. Therefore, he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life.

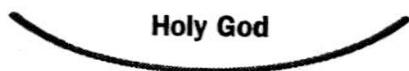
Man is Sinful -

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)

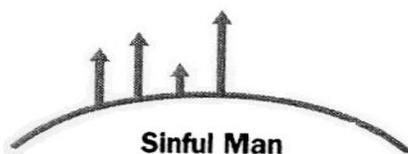
Man was created to have fellowship with God; but, because of his stubborn self-will, he chose to go his own independent way, and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is an evidence of what the Bible calls sin.

Man is Separated -

"For the wages of sin is death" (spiritual separation from God) (Romans 6:23)



This diagram illustrates that God is holy and man is sinful, a great gulf separates the two. The arrows illustrate that man is continually trying to reach God and the abundant life through his own efforts, such as a good life, philosophy or religion.



The Third Law explains the only way to bridge this gulf...

Principle Number Three:

Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin. Through Him, you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life.

He died in our place -

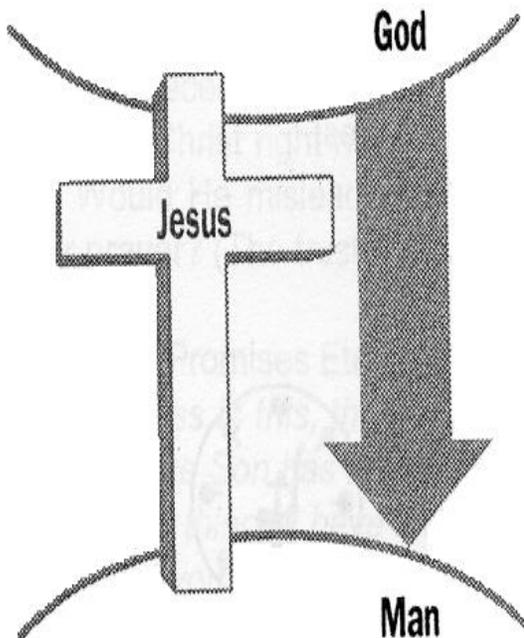
"But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

He rose from the dead -

"Christ died for our sins ... He was buried ... He was raised on the third day, according to the Scriptures ... He appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred..." (I Corinthians 15:3-6)

He is the only Way to God

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me'" (John 14:6)



This diagram illustrates that God has bridged the gulf which separates us from Him by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place to pay the penalty for our sins.

It is not enough just to know these three laws . . .

Principle Number Four:

We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives.

We must receive Christ -

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

We receive Christ through faith –

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast." (Ephesians 2:8, 9 NKJV)

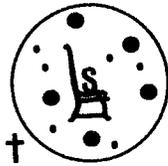
When we receive Christ, we experience a New Birth - (Read John 3:1-8)

We receive Christ by personal invitation -

(Christ speaking) *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door I will come in to him."* (Revelation 3:20 NASB)

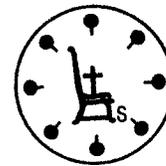
Receiving Christ involves turning to God from self (repentance) and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive our sins and to make us the kind of people He wants us to be. Just to agree intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for our sins is not enough. Nor is it enough to have an emotional experience. We receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of the will.

These two circles represent two kinds of lives:



SELF-DIRECTED LIFE

- S - Self is on the throne
- ✝ Christ is outside the life
- - Interests are directed by self, often resulting in discord and frustration



CHRIST-DIRECTED LIFE

- ✝ Christ in on the throne
- S – Self is yielding to Christ
- Interests are directed by Christ resulting in harmony with God's plan

Which circle best represents your life?
Which circle would you like to have represent your life?

The following explains how you can receive Christ:

You can receive Christ right now by faith through prayer. (Prayer is talking with God.)

God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. The following is a suggested prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be."

Does this prayer express the desires of your heart?

If it does, pray this prayer right now, and Christ will come into your life, as He promised.

How to Know That Christ is in Your Life:

Did you receive Christ into your life? According to His promise in Revelation 3:20, where is Christ right now in relation to you? Christ said that He would come into your life. Would He mislead you? On what authority do you know that God has answered your prayer? (The trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word.)

The Bible Promises Eternal Life to All Who Receive Christ:

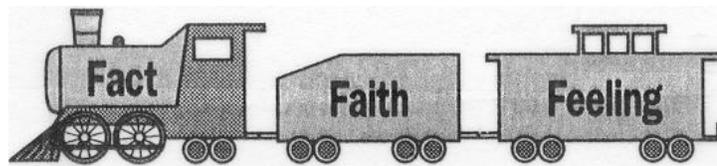
"The witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:11-13 NASB)

Thank God often that Christ is in your life and that He will never leave you (Hebrews 13:5). You can know on the basis of His promise that Christ lives in you and that you have eternal life, from the very moment you invite Him in. He will not deceive you.

An important reminder...

Do not depend upon feelings.

The promise of God's Word, the Bible - not our feelings - is our authority. The Christian lives by faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. This train diagram illustrates the relationship between **fact** (God's Word), **faith** (our trust in God and His Word), and **feeling** (the result of our faith and obedience.) (John 14:21)



The train will run with or without the caboose. However, it would be useless to attempt to pull the train by the caboose. In the same way, we, as Christians, do not depend on feelings or emotions, but we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God and the promises of His Word.

Now that you have received Christ:

The moment that you received Christ by faith, as an act of the will, many things happened, including the following:

- Christ came into your life (Revelation 3:20 and Colossians 1:27)
- Your sins were forgiven (Colossians 1:14)
- You became a child of God (John 1:12)
- You received eternal life (John 5:24)
- You began the great adventure for which God created you (John 10:10; II Corinthians 5:17 and I Thessalonians 5:18)

Can you think of anything more wonderful that could happen to you than receiving Christ? Would you like to thank God in prayer right now for what He has done for you? By thanking God, you demonstrate your faith.

Suggestions for Christian Growth:

- G** *Go* to God in prayer daily (John 15:7).
- R** *Read* God's Word daily (Acts 17:11).
- O** *Obey* God moment by moment (John 14:21).
- W** *Witness* for Christ by your life and words (Matthew 4:19; John 15:8).
- T** *Trust* God for every detail of your life (1 Peter 5:7).
- H** *Holy Spirit*—allow Him to control and empower your daily life and witness (Galatians 5:16,17; Acts 1:8).

(Material from "Four Spiritual Laws"—Campus Crusade for Christ. For this material in tract form, contact the church office – 303-424-4473 or email Office@ourtrinity.org.)

THE IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM (Being Immersed In Water)

To start a relationship with God you must become a child of God. This is called salvation. Salvation is the inward step of repentance, surrender, and acceptance of God's gift of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ.

Water baptism (being immersed in water) is a symbolic step that follows salvation and serves as one of the first outward steps of obedience to God. Baptism publicly identifies us with Christ's death, burial and resurrection and lets others know we are trusting in God's plan of salvation for mankind brought to us through His Son Jesus Christ. (Please see the next few pages for further information on this important step in your Christian walk.)

BAPTISM: A SYMBOL OF YOUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

Matthew 28:19-20 NIV

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Congratulations on reaching this point in your Christian walk. Baptism is as old as Christianity itself. From the first pages of the New Testament, we see that baptism is a very important part of the process of growing as a Christian. We believe that as we answer the following questions, your understanding of baptism, and of your Christian faith, will grow even more.

A. What is baptism?

1. Baptism signifies a spiritual rebirth. It is accomplished by immersion in water.
2. Baptism is symbolic of identification with Christ in His burial and in His resurrection. When the person is lowered under the water, it signifies identity with Christ's dying for our sins. Coming up out of the water identifies with His resurrection to newness of life, just as the believer has a new life in a spiritual sense.
 - Romans 6:4-5
 - Colossians 2:12
 - I Peter 3:21

B. Why do we believe in immersion?

In every instance in the Bible where a Baptism took place there was a lot of water, the person was immersed under the water, and they also "came up" out of the water. The Greek word "*baptizo*" means covered and fully wet. It is a cloth dyer's term. The idea of sprinkling for baptism came about when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire under Constantine. Entire communities needed baptism under his edict and it was simpler and faster to sprinkle large crowds at one time.

- Matthew 3:5-6; 28:19-20
- Mark 1:9-10; 16:6
- John 3:2
- Acts 2:38; 8:36-38

C. Who can be baptized? What is the qualification?

1. Scripture indicates that the requirement for baptism is that a person become a believer, or, that a person has accepted Jesus Christ into their life and has an ongoing spiritual relationship with Him.
2. Baptism is the outward symbol of a spiritual act that has taken place in an individual's life.
 - Matthew 28:19, 20
 - Mark 16:16
 - Acts 2:38-41; 8:36-37; 18:8

D. Do we baptize children or infants?

1. We do not baptize infants because we feel that baptism first requires a person to have made a conscious decision to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. Infants are not capable of making that kind of decision.
2. We do have dedication ceremonies for infants.
3. We rely upon the judgment of parents in deciding when a child should be baptized. If we and the parents feel the child has made a commitment and understands what it means to know Christ, and they understand what baptism is, then we gladly offer baptism to them.
4. We do not have a set age for children to be baptized.

E. What if I were sprinkled as a child, or have been baptized before?

1. Many people realize that their early baptisms may have been decisions that were made for them, or they did not fully understand the implications of what they were doing. We believe the Bible teaches "believer's baptism" that is, water baptism should follow conversion, not precede it.
2. Many people reach a point of recommitment in their lives and desire to make the baptism a more meaningful event in their spiritual walk, a point of starting over. Although the Bible only requires one baptism, it does not restrict a person from being baptized more than once. It was common for the Jews in the Bible to be baptized several times as they crossed meaningful moments in their lives. That is why we try to encourage people to clearly understand what baptism is, so it will be a lasting and meaningful event in their life.

F. Does baptism assure me that I will go to heaven?

1. No, it does not. Only faith in Jesus Christ can give you the assurance of eternal life in heaven.
2. It is possible to go under the water as "a dry sinner, and come out of it a wet sinner."

3. Baptism is an act of obedience to Christ's command to follow Him. Baptism is a spiritual "object lesson" showing others what Christ has done in your life.
 - Acts 16:30-31

G. Does baptism make me a member of this church?

1. No, it does not. We call ours a "believer's baptism." You do not have to become a member of our church in order to be baptized and you will not become a member once you are baptized.
2. Baptism is an act that should follow immediately after a person has made a decision to accept Christ.
3. Membership in our church requires a formal application process and approval by our church elders. There are scriptural qualifications that a person must meet for membership. Baptism is much like participating in the Lord's Supper or communion. It is available to any that believe in Christ; it does not require membership.

(Please note: Believer's baptism by immersion at Trinity or another like-minded church is a requirement for membership at Trinity.)

H. Why should every Christian be baptized?

1. Jesus Christ commands it, and He said if we love Him we will keep His commandments.
 - Matthew 28:18-20
 - Luke 6:46
 - John 14:21, 23
2. Jesus Christ was baptized.
 - Matthew 3:13-17
 - Mark 1:9-11
 - Luke 3:21-22
 - John 3:26
3. Jesus Christ's followers practiced baptism.
 - Disciples – John 4:1-3
 - Philip – Acts 8:12-13; 8:26-39
 - Peter – Acts 10:44-48
 - Paul's followers – Acts 16:13-15; Acts 18:8; Acts 19:1-3
4. Baptism is taught in Scripture.
 - Acts 2:38-41
 - Romans 6:3-5
 - Colossians 2:12

I. *What is baptism's significance?*

1. Baptism of believers by immersion in water is a public, visible, open confession of one's faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.
2. It is an outward symbol of an inward change which has taken place – Romans 10:9-10.
3. It also pictures our identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ – Romans 6:1-4.

J. *Baptism is:*

1. A Believer's Baptism.
For those who have accepted Christ as Savior and Lord.
2. A Christian Baptism.
It is an ordinance of the Christian church as outlined in the Scriptures of the Bible.
3. Not a denominational baptism.
It does not mean church membership or affiliation with a denomination.
Baptism, however, is a requirement for membership in our church.

GOD CARES FOR YOU

You are a special person. You are special because of God. God says you are valuable to Him. He genuinely cares about you and what happens to you. In this study, you will examine four statements of God's concern for you:

- (1) God *created* you.
- (2) God *knows* you.
- (3) God *loves* you.
- (4) God *made you part of His family*.

God created you.

1. Genesis is the book of beginnings in the Bible. Chapter 1 tells us that God created the universe. Read Genesis 1:1-5. Discover at least three facts concerning the creation.
2. Read Hebrews 11:3 and discover how God created the world.
3. Revelation 4:11 tells us how God created all things.
4. Isaiah 43:7 tells why God created you.
5. The dignity God gave man is shown by man's uniqueness, his authority, and his purpose. See if you can find some facts from Genesis 1:26-28 that indicate (a) the uniqueness of man; (b) the position or authority of man; (c) the purpose of man.

God knows you.

1. In Psalm 139:1-6, David mentions several areas of his life which God has "searched and known." Try to discover at least four of them. God knows these things about your life, too.
2. What was David's response when he realized how completely God knew him in Psalm 139:23-24?
3. Matthew 10:29-31 shows us what Jesus revealed about God's detailed interest in you.

God loves you.

1. What was God's greatest demonstration of His love? (See I John 4:9-10)
2. Study John 3:16. Does God love or hate the world? What did God do for the world? What did God's love cause Him to do? What does it mean that God "gave" His Son? Why did God give His Son? How does a person not perish but have everlasting life? What are we to believe? So how can a person receive eternal life?

3. In John 10:9-16, Jesus compares His love and concern to the love and concern of a shepherd. According to this scripture, what are some of the things He wants to give you? Which of these are most important to you? Why?

(Take a moment to pray. Thank God for all the things He wants to give you. Praise Him that these things are given to you because of Jesus, and that you do not earn them by your actions.)

God made you a part of His family.

1. According to Matthew 6:9, how did Jesus teach His disciples to address God?
2. Is it true that God is everyone's Father? Why or why not? (See John 8:42-44)
3. How is one "born" into God's family? (See John 1:12-13)
4. Romans 8:15-17 lists some of the advantages of being a true child of God.
5. How do you know if God is your Father?

It is important for you as a Christian to be *assured* that God is your Father and that you have eternal life. Since feelings change, this assurance must ultimately depend on the Word of God. *"I write these things to you who believe . . . that you may **know** that you have eternal life."* (1 John 5:13 NIV)

Below are three verses that have helped many Christians gain this assurance. (You may want to memorize the verse which helps you most in this area.)

"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." (John 5:24 NIV)

"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (1 John 5:11-12 NASB)

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat (fellowship) with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20 NCV)

Remember these points:

1. God created you for His purpose and His glory. He gave you dignity by shaping you after His own likeness.
2. God considers you to be of great value. He takes personal interest in knowing you completely.
3. He loves you so intensely that He sent His Son to die for you on the cross. This demonstration of His love shows He wants to give you an eternal and abundant life.
4. When God gave you this life in Jesus Christ, you were spiritually born into God's family. He is your Father. You are His child.

THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST

Mankind is incapable of fully understanding God. God is holy and mankind is sinful. To bridge the gap between God and man, God took the form of a man in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is *"the image of the invisible God...For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him."* (Colossians 1:15,19 NIV).

To be the complete expression of God, Christ had to be God. To be seen and understood by man, He had to be human. Jesus Christ has a dual nature - He is the God-man.

In order to begin understanding Jesus Christ, it is necessary to explore His deity and His humanity.

The Deity of Jesus Christ

Some speak of Jesus Christ as a great man. To some He was the founder of a new religion. Others consider Him a prophet. But Jesus Himself claimed that He was God. If this claim were not true, He could not be called even a good man, but would be an imposter and a liar.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews in the Bible discusses Christ's deity in chapter 1. Several things can be learned by this chapter.

1. Jesus' superiority to the angels (verses 4-5; 6, 13-14).
2. Hebrews 1:8-12 tells us Jesus is Creator, unchangeable, eternal and righteous.
3. Hebrews 1:3 gives us several facts as to why Jesus is able to reveal God. Can you find them?
4. God Himself addresses Jesus as God in Hebrews 1:8 and 10.

There are other key scriptures that give us insight into the Deity of Jesus.

1. Look at John 10:28-30 as see what Jesus claimed for Himself.
2. While on the earth, Jesus performed many miracles which clearly demonstrated His divine power. Look up the following verses for yourself and see the ways Jesus showed His supernatural power.
 - a. Matthew 8:3
 - b. Matthew 8:6, 13
 - c. Matthew 8:16-17
 - d. Matthew 8:23-27
3. What did Jesus do in John 11:39-44 that revealed His unique power?
4. After observing Jesus' life, power and preaching, what did Peter conclude about Him in Matthew 16:13-16?

THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST

1. How is Jesus' humanity seen in the following situations?
 - a. John 4:6
 - b. John 4:7
 - c. John 11:35
2. Matthew 4:1-11 is the account of a series of temptations Jesus faced.
 - a. In each of His three answers to Satan, Jesus used the same phrase. What was it? What does it mean?
 - b. Draw lines to connect the verses in Matthew 4 with the corresponding verses in Deuteronomy.

Matthew 4:4

Deuteronomy 6:13

Matthew 4:7

Deuteronomy 6:16

Matthew 4:10

Deuteronomy 8:3

- c. What is one temptation you often face?
 - d. How can you follow Jesus' example and arm yourself against this temptation?

(Take time right now to pray:
- Thank God that He understands what it is to be tempted.
- Ask Him for help to overcome this temptation.
- When you fail, be sure to claim His promise:
"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9)
- Thank Him for His mercy and forgiveness.
3. What has Jesus experienced that is common to mankind according to Hebrews 2:10?
4. How does Jesus address believers? Why isn't He ashamed to address them this way? (See Hebrews 2:11)
5. Hebrews 2:14-15 gives us some results of Jesus becoming a man. What are they?

Remember these points:

1. Jesus Christ is the perfect image of God. As God, He has authority over the earth.
2. Jesus was human, too. Many of His experiences were similar to those you have today. He suffered and was tempted. Though He never yielded, this allows Him to understand when you are tempted. When you fail, remember, He has forgiven you of your sins. Confession restores your fellowship with Him and puts Him back in control of your life.

THE WORK OF CHRIST

Many people have heard about the last events of Jesus' sinless life on earth. He was condemned as a common criminal, hung from a cross until dead, and three days later He rose from the dead. But few people understand the meaning of these events.

This section of the manual will explore Jesus' life, His death, and His resurrection.

The Life of Jesus Christ

Over 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ was born in the obscure town of Bethlehem. While Jesus was an infant, Joseph and Mary took Him into Egypt to escape the wrath of an irate king, Herod the Great. Then, while He was still a young child, they moved to Nazareth of Galilee.

1. What purpose did the angel give for Jesus' coming into the world when he announced the Child's birth?
(Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:31-33)
2. In what ways did Jesus develop as a youth according to Luke 2:52?
3. Matthew 4:23 lists some of the activities of Jesus' public ministry.
4. What was His purpose in selecting the twelve apostles according to Mark 3:14?
5. What characterized Jesus' leadership according to Luke 22:25-27?

The Death of Jesus Christ

1. What did Jesus predict would happen to Him? (Matthew 16:21)
2. What kind of death did Jesus suffer? (Matthew 27:35)
3. With what kind of men did He die? (Matthew 27:38)
4. Did Jesus go to the cross voluntarily? (John 10:17-18)
5. What is the condition of mankind apart from Christ? (John 3:18)
6. Look up 1 Peter 3:18. What did Jesus do to bring condemned men to God?
7. Can anything be added to Christ's death to make you more acceptable to God? Why or why not? (Hebrews 10:12-14)

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

1. After Jesus died and was buried, what was done to secure His tomb according to Matthew 27:62-66?
2. Read Matthew 28:1-7. What was discovered at the tomb on the first day of the week? What did the angel say about Jesus?
3. What were the soldiers bribed to say? (Matthew 28:11-15)
4. After His resurrection, Christ appeared to His disciples.
 - a. What was their first impression? (Luke 24:36-37)
 - b. What things did He do to show them He had a body? (Luke 24:39-43)
5. What is the essence of the gospel ("good news") message? (See I Corinthians 15:1-5)

Remember these points:

1. Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, raised in Galilee, and became a carpenter. He spent three years ministering to thousands and proving that He was the Christ (Messiah).
2. Then He was condemned to die on a cross to bear the penalty for our sin.
3. After three days, Jesus rose bodily from the dead. His resurrection is a historical reality and guarantees our entrance into God's heaven.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD WITHIN YOU

Christ arose - and now He lives! When He ascended into heaven to His Heavenly Father, He did not leave His followers alone. He sent them the Holy Spirit so that all Christians might live under His control and help.

Jesus Christ's Ascension

1. The account of Jesus' ascension is recorded in Acts 1:9-11 of the Bible. Read this account carefully.
 - a. In your own words, how would you describe the events recorded in verses 9-10? What do they mean to you?
 - b. Where is Jesus now? (See verse 11)
 - c. What did the two men clothed in white predict? (See verse 11)
2. What is one reason Jesus has gone to heaven according to John 14:1-3?
3. Read Ephesians 1:20-23. To what place of authority has Christ ascended? (Verse 20). From this position of authority, over what does He reign? (Verses 21-23).

Jesus Christ's Work of Intercession

1. According to Romans 8:34, what is Christ doing now? (Intercession means to plead on behalf of another)
2. In Jesus' great prayer recorded in John 17, what were some of the things He asked for His followers? (See verses 13, 15, 17, 21, and 24).
3. Do you think Jesus is praying the same things for you today?(See Hebrews 7:24-25)

The Indwelling Holy Spirit of God

1. What did Jesus promise His disciples that His Father would do? (John 14:16, 26)
2. What can be said of a person who genuinely acknowledges that Jesus is His Lord? (I Corinthians 12:3)
3. What is true of every believer?
 - a. Romans 8:9
 - b. I Corinthians 2:12
 - c. I Corinthians 3:16

- d. Titus 3:5-6
- 4. Why does God send His Spirit to indwell the believer? (Galatians 4:6)
- 5. What are some results of the Holy Spirit's presence in the life of the believer? (2 Timothy 1:7)
- 6. Review the above five questions. How do you personally know that the Holy Spirit lives in you?

Living Under the Holy Spirit's Control

- 1. What are two conflicting natures in your life? (See Galatians 5:16-17 and Romans 7)
- 2. Who should control your life according to Galatians 5:16-17?

Here is one illustration from J. Oswald Sander of the power which results from the union of the Holy Spirit with the believer:

"I have in my hand a piece of lead. I hold it over a pool of water, and relax my grip. The lead is drawn irresistibly earthwards and sinks to the bottom of the pool. It has been mastered by the law of gravitation. I take the same piece of lead, attach it to a piece of wood and drop it into the pool.

Now it floats. No change has taken place in the nature or tendency of the lead, nor has the law of gravitation ceased to function, but through its union with the wood, it has been mastered by a stronger law, the law governing floating bodies, and has been emancipated from the downward pull of gravitation."

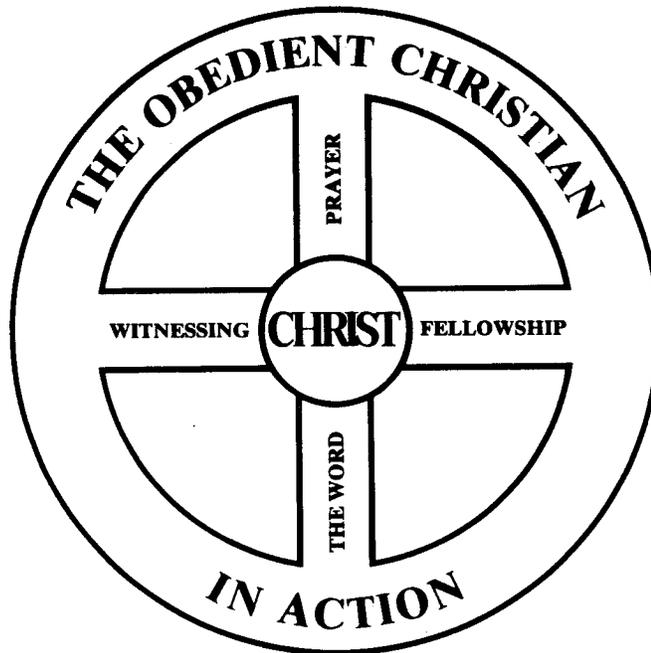
- 3. Whom does the Holy Spirit seek to glorify? (John 16:13-14)
- 4. What is the "sword" of the Spirit? (Ephesians 6:17)
- 5. What effect does the Word of God have on the believer? (Hebrews 4:12)
- 6. What is one activity in which the Holy Spirit helps you? How? (Romans 8:26)
- 7. What were some of the disciples' activities after being filled (controlled) by the Holy Spirit? (Acts 2:42)
- 8. In Acts 1:8, Jesus used the expression "you will" twice. He made both of these statements in conjunction with the Holy Spirit coming on the disciples. What two statements did He make? How does the Holy Spirit help in witnessing for Christ?

What Is the Spirit-Filled or Controlled Life?

Ephesians 5:18 tells us to be filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit. What does that involve?

1. A life of obedience to the Holy Spirit.
(See questions 1 and 2 in *Living Under the Holy Spirit's Control*)
2. A life centered on the person of Jesus Christ. (See question 3 above)
3. A life founded on God's Word. (See questions 4 and 5 above)
4. A life of prayer. (See question 6 above)
5. A life of fellowship. (See question 7 above)
6. A life that witnesses. (See question 8 above)

The Wheel Illustration:



Source: *Design for Discipleship—Your Life in Christ* (Harpers)

The Wheel Illustration is a helpful way to remember these basic truths about the Spirit-filled or Controlled Life.

It is a Christ-centered life.

The Holy Spirit focuses your attention on **Christ** and empowers you to live a life of obedience to Him.

God's Word and prayer build you up in your relationship with Christ.

In this way, the Holy Spirit can live through you and reach others through fellowship and witnessing.

Without drawing attention to Himself, the Holy Spirit shapes each activity into an avenue of spiritual blessing.

(Read Acts 4:31-33. List examples of the principles from the Wheel which are demonstrated by the disciples in this scripture passage.)

Remember these points:

1. Jesus Christ promised that after He left He would prepare a place for believers. The apostles watched as Jesus ascended out of their sight into heaven.
2. Sitting on the right hand of God, Christ reigns over all creation and in particular the Church for which He is constantly praying.
3. Jesus Christ also promised to send the Holy Spirit after He left. Today He comes to live in every believer. (See Ephesians 1 for more exciting details!)
4. The Holy Spirit gives us power to lead an obedient, Christ-centered life. This is what it means to be "filled" or "controlled" by the Holy Spirit.

YOU WERE CREATED FOR GOD'S PLEASURE

If you want to know the **purpose of life**, you will not find it on a talk show, in a self-help book, or at some seminar. If you want to know the purpose of life, you have to talk to the Creator who made you, or look in the owner's manual called the Bible. There you will discover that you were made *by* God and you were made *for* God. And until you understand that, life isn't going to make sense.

Revelation 4:11 NLT

"You (God) created everything, and it is for your pleasure that they exist and were created"

The Bible says you were created for God's enjoyment and pleasure. God made you just to enjoy you. God planned you for His purpose. The only reason that you are alive is God wanted you alive and He gets enjoyment out of watching you.

The first purpose of your life is to realize that *God wants you to love Him back*. He wants you to bring enjoyment back to Him. He wants you to love Him back.

YOUR FIRST PURPOSE IN LIFE IS TO WORSHIP GOD

Matthew 22:37-38 NIV

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment."

Notice two key words here: "first" and "greatest." God says if you don't get anything else, here's what you're supposed to do in life: *You are to learn to love me back*, because I made you to love you and know you. And I want you to *know* and *love* me back.

There is a word for knowing and loving God. It is the word "*worship*."

My first purpose is to **worship God**. It is your primary objective. It is your highest priority. It is your number one purpose in life.

But what is worship? How does God define it?

A BIBLE VERSE THAT DEFINES WORSHIP

There are a lot of ways to worship God. Worship is more than singing, praying or taking communion. This section will help you discover what it really means to worship.

Romans 12:1

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship." (NIV)

This verse best defines worship. This verse tells us *two things about worship*:

- (1) Worship is **my response** to God's love.

Worship is the way I react or respond to God when He loves me. The phrase "*in view*" (or "*because*") tells us that we react or respond back to God in view of or because of something He did. He showed us mercy. He showed us love. In view of this or because of this, then we worship Him back.

God takes the initiative. God always makes the first move. He creates us. He saves us. He forgives us. He blesses us. He protects us. All these things and more! And then, because of all these things, we worship. What do we do?

- (2) Worship is **giving back** to God.

Notice the word "*offer*." The Bible says that you are "*to offer your bodies as living sacrifices*." Worship is giving back to God. He gives to us, and we give back to Him. Whenever you give back to God, whenever you offer anything to God, that's called *worship*! This brings pleasure to God!

What am I supposed to offer to God?

What do you give a God who has everything? What do you give Him?
You give Him your love!

Mark 12:30 NIV

*"Love the Lord your God with all your **heart** and all your **soul**;
all your **mind**; and all your **strength**."*

This verse tells me that I am to offer God my heart, mind and strength.

God wants me to love Him three ways:

Mark 12:30 tells me that I can love and worship God three ways:

- (1) **Thoughtfully**—"Love Him with my mind."
- (2) **Passionately**—"Love Him with all my heart and soul."
- (3) **Practically**—"Love Him with all my strength."

There are *three things* God does not have unless you give them to Him.

He doesn't have your **attention** unless you give it to Him. (That is loving Him with your *mind*).

He doesn't have your **affection** unless you give it to Him. (That's loving God with your *heart and soul*).

And God doesn't have your **ability** unless you give it to Him. (That is loving God with your *strength*).

Of course, all these things God gave to you first. You have *attention*, the ability to have attention. You have *affections*. You have strengths and *abilities* because God gave them to you.

Whenever you take the things God has given to you and you give them back to God, that is true worship!

WHAT IS WORSHIP?

1. Worship is **focusing my attention** on God.

What does that mean?

It is focusing my mind, my thoughts, my attention on God.
God wants you to worship Him thoughtfully.

Why does God want my focus?

God wants your focus because He is focused on you.
Psalm 139:1-3(CEV) says, "*You have looked deep into my heart, Lord, and You know all about me. You know when I am resting or when I am working... You notice everything I do and everywhere I go.*" God pays constant attention to you. He never takes His eyes off you. He never stops thinking about you. Attention is an incredible expression of love.

What can distract me from focusing on God?

While God has no problem focusing on you, you must learn to focus on Him. You have to decide to focus. You have to choose to focus. Human beings become easily distracted.

Two things distract humans from focusing their attention on God:

- (1) Humans are *self-centered* by nature. Romans 8:7 (MSG) says, "*Focusing on yourself is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self ignores God and ends up thinking more about self than God.*"
- (2) Humans live in a *self-centered culture*. Romans 12:2 (MSG) says, "*Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God.*"

We must choose to stop thinking about some things and start thinking about God.

How can I focus my attention on God?

- (1) Establish a *daily time with God*.

I'm going to stop everything else and just be with God.

Matthew 6:6 (MSG) says "*Find a quiet, secluded place, so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage.*" The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense His grace.

(2) Develop a *constant conversation with God*.

This is praying or talking to God all day long. Psalm 105:4 (NASB) says, "*Worship Him continually.*" That means you think about Him throughout the day.

Isaiah 26:3 (NLT) says, "*You will keep in perfect peace all who trust You, whose thoughts are fixed on You!*"

When you focus on yourself, the result will be thoughts of worry, insecurity, anxiety, guilt, fear and discouragement. But when the focus shifts from you to God, you begin to sense gratitude, hope, confidence and love.

2. Worship is **expressing my affection** to God.

What does that mean?

This is loving God with your heart and soul. You may or may not feel comfortable expressing affection to anyone, let alone God. It is risky to say "I love you." But God has taken away the risk. He said it first. God said it first to you. God said, "I love you."

Why do I love God?

I John 4:19 (NKJV) says, "*We love Him, because He first loved us.*"

In many religions, God is an angry tyrant. One you have to appease or avoid. One which you fear. But that is not the God of the Bible. The Bible says God wants to be loved. God says, "*I don't want your sacrifices, I want your love! I don't want your offerings, I want you to know Me!*" (Hosea 6:6 NKJV).

The most important thing you can *know* in life is that God loves you. The most important thing you can *do* in life is to love God back. So when you get up every morning before you get out of bed, say something like this, a little prayer: "God, if I don't get anything else done today, at the end of this day, I want to know You a little bit better and I want to love you a little bit more." Because if you do that, at the end of the day, no matter how bad the day has gone, if at the end of the day, you know God a little bit better and you love Him a little bit more, that day was a success. If at the end of the day you can check off all your "to do" list but did not get to know or love God a little bit better, that day was wasted as far as God is concerned. Why? Because you were not put on earth to check things off your "to-do" list. *The first reason God put you on this planet was to get to know Him and love Him back.*

How do I express my affection to God?

- (1) Start just by saying "Thanks." Look around and thank God for all the good things He gives and does for you.
- (2) Give your *life* to Him. Romans 6:13 teaches, to give ourselves completely to God since we have been given new life. Romans 12:1, teaches that we are to be a "living sacrifice."
- (3) Realize that not loving God enough is not your problem. Your problem is not realizing how much God loves you. Worship is just a response. We love God because He first loved us. He loves you so much He came to earth to die on the cross for you. Realizing this can help you surrender yourself to Him.

3. Worship is **using my abilities** for God.

What does that mean?

This is loving God with all your *strength*. God wants you to see Him with your mind. He wants you to sense Him with your heart and soul. He wants you to *serve* Him with your *strength*.

How do I use my abilities?

It takes more than just words to express appreciation and affection. It takes practical expressions of love. You can use your abilities to show God you really love Him.

Colossians 3:23 (NIV) says, "*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people.*" What does this verse mean? It does not mean you have to spend five hours in a quiet time with God every day. It does not mean you must be at the church every time the doors are open. *It does mean you change who you are working for.* And when you change who you are working for, even your work can become worship!

God wants to be involved in every area of your life. Invite Him into the whole thing. It is not what you *do* that matters. It's *Who* you do it for! *All your work can be turned into worship!* You simply tell God, "I'm going to do this and I'm doing it for you, God." When you can turn work into worship, then you are worshipping God 24 hours a day.

Real worship does not just take place on Sundays. Real worship can take place even in the ordinary, routine, mundane things of life. You can take out the garbage, make beds, clean out the garage, even clean the bathroom for the glory of God. *Everything can be turned into an act of worship!*

Decide to go to work with a new boss. That new boss is God Himself. "I'm going to do my work for You, God!" God is into the kind of worship that says, "God, whatever I'm doing, I'm going to do it for You." When you do that, then your life becomes an act of worship.

EVERYBODY WORSHIPS SOMETHING

You were wired to worship by God Himself. You couldn't stop worshipping if you had to, because it is part of every human being. Everybody worships something. That's why you can go to any culture in the world and find people worshipping. If you don't worship God, you're going to find a substitute real quick, even if it is just yourself.

What are you worshipping?

There are thousands of American idols that one can worship. What are you worshipping? You will worship whatever you're giving your primary *attention* to, whatever you're giving your primary *affection* to, and whatever you're giving your primary *abilities* to.

Some worship their careers and live for their job. Some worship making money. Others worship retirement or pleasure or sex. The list can go on and on.

The greatest temptation of your life

The greatest temptation of your life and the worst sin you could possibly commit is the temptation to worship something other than God. It is the number one problem in life, because it is the root behind every other one of your problems. Whenever you love something more than God, you're going to have chaos, conflict, stress and problems in your life. When you love anything more than God, it creates all kinds of havoc in your life. The biggest temptation in life is always to worship something else other than God.

God is worthy of your worship.

When you understand how passionate He is about you, how much He loves you, how much He cares about every detail, you can't help but love God.

Do you know what you are going to do in Heaven? The Bible says you will be giving your *attention*, you will be giving your *affection*, you will be giving your *abilities* to God for all eternity. So here on earth, God wants you to *practice* so that when you get to heaven, *you will know how to worship*.

What do you think of the most? Whatever you think about most is what you love the most. Your checkbook and your schedule will tell you what you love, because the way you spend your time and the way you spend your money shows what you love the most.

The Bible says *you were planned for God's good pleasure*. You were made to *know and love God*. Make as your number one goal *getting to know and love God* because that *brings good pleasure*.

2 Corinthians 5:9 NIV tells us what Paul's goal was in his life. This verse says, "*We make it our goal to please Him.*" (There's not a better goal in life to have than this goal of Paul's. Why not make it your goal as well?)

WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN GOD WANTS YOU AS A FRIEND? HOW CAN YOU BECOME A BEST FRIEND OF GOD?

Six Secrets of Friendship with God

(1) Choose to be in constant conversation.

You will never grow a close relationship with God by just attending church once a week or even by having a daily quiet time. God wants you to share *all* your life experiences with Him. God wants more than an appointment in your schedule. He wants to be included in *every* activity, *every* conversation, *every* problem, and even *every* thought.

You can carry on a continuous, open-ended conversation with God throughout your day, talking with Him about whatever you are doing or thinking. "Praying without ceasing" means conversing with God while shopping, driving, working, or carrying out everyday tasks.

The key to friendship with God is not changing what you do, but changing your *attitude* toward what you do. What you normally do for yourself you start doing for God, whether eating, bathing, working, relaxing or even taking out the trash!

Simply offer up to God "conversational prayers" throughout your day.

(2) Choose to continually meditate.

A second way to establish a friendship with God is by thinking about His Word throughout your day. This is called *meditation*. The Bible tells us to meditate on *Who He is*, *what He has done*, and *what He has said*.

It is impossible to be God's friend apart from knowing what He says. You can't love God unless you know Him and you can't know Him without knowing His Word. While you can't spend all day reading or studying the Bible, you can *think* about it throughout the day, recalling verses you have read or memorized and mulling them over in your mind...reviewing the truth in your mind over and over . . . and soon you will understand more the "secrets" of this life and the life to come from the heart of God Himself.

Remember, **prayer** lets you speak to God; **meditation** lets God speak to you.

Both are essential to becoming a friend of God.

(3) Choose to be honest with God.

One of the most basic building blocks of a deeper friendship with God is *complete honesty*. God does not expect you to be perfect, but He does desire you to be honest with Him and yourself. Because of God's grace, Jesus will always remain the "friend of sinners."

A brief examination of the lives of Abraham, David, Jeremiah, Job, Moses, and other Biblical friends of God reveal that they were honest about their feelings, often complaining, second-guessing, accusing, and even arguing with their Creator. God, however, didn't seem to be bothered by their frankness; in fact, He encouraged it. God can handle frank, intense honesty from you. Genuine friendship is built on disclosure.

God desires *authenticity*. To be God's friend you must be honest with God. You must be willing to share your true feelings, not what you think you ought to feel or say. Be willing to confess hidden anger and resentment, even at God, for certain areas of your life where you have felt cheated or disappointed. Until you mature enough to understand that God uses *everything* for good in your life, you may well harbor resentment toward God over your appearance, background, unanswered prayers, past hurts, and other things you might change if *you* were God.

Realize that God *always* acts in your best interest even when it is painful and you don't understand it. This is one way God wants you to *worship* Him - by holding back nothing of what you feel. All of God's Biblical friends had bouts with doubt. But instead of masking their misgivings, they candidly voiced them openly to their dearest Friend. Expressing doubt is sometimes the first step toward the next level of intimacy with God.

(4) Choose to obey God in faith.

Every time you trust God's wisdom and do whatever He says, even when you don't understand it, you deepen your friendship with God. *Obedience* is a characteristic of friendship. Jesus made it clear in John 15:14 (NIV) that obedience is a condition of intimacy with God. He said, "*You are my friends if you do what I command.*"

You are a friend of God, but remember, you are not His equal. He is your loving leader and boss, and you follow and obey Him. You obey God, not out of duty or fear or compulsion, but because you *love* Him and *trust* that He knows what is best for your life. You *want* to follow Christ out of gratitude for all He has done for you. The closer you follow Him, the deeper your friendship will become. Because you have been forgiven and set free from your sin, you obey out of love and your obedience brings great joy!

True friendship is not passive. True friendship acts. When Jesus asks you to love others, help the needy, share your resources, keep your life clean, offer forgiveness, and bring others to Him, love motivates us to obey immediately.

(5) Choose to value what God values.

This is what friends do - they care about what is important to the other person. The more you become God's friend, the more you will care about the things He cares about, grieve over the things He grieves over, and rejoice over the things that bring pleasure to Him.

Paul is the best example of this. God's agenda was his agenda and God's passion was his passion (2 Corinthians 11:2). David felt the same way (Psalm 69:9).

What does God care about most? The salvation or redemption of lost humanity. That is the whole reason Jesus came to earth. The dearest thing to God's heart is the death of His Son. The second dearest thing is when His children share that news with others. To be a friend of God you must care about all the people around you whom God cares about. Friends of God tell their friends about God.

(6) Desire friendship with God more than anything else.

David passionately desired to know God above all else. He craved God. (See Psalm 27:4; 63:3). Paul was another who was passionate for friendship with God. Nothing mattered more. It was his first priority, total focus, and ultimate goal of his life. (Read Philippians 3:10).

The truth is, you are as close to God as you choose to be. Intimate friendship with God is a choice, not an accident. You must intentionally seek it. Do you really want it? More than anything else in your life? What is it worth to you? Is it worth giving up other things? Is it worth the effort of developing the habits and skills required?

The Christians in the Church at Ephesus had lost their first love. They had been more passionate about God in the past but they had lost that desire. They did all the right things, but more out of a sense of duty, not love.

God may bring pain and discomfort in your life to bring you back to a love relationship with Him. It is God's way of arousing you from spiritual lethargy. Your problems may not be punishment but rather a wake-up call from a loving God. God is not mad *at* you; He is mad *about* you, and He will do whatever it takes to bring you back into fellowship with Him. But there is an easier way to re-ignite your **passion** for God: *Start asking God to give it to you, and keep asking until you have it.*

Let your prayer be, "Dear Lord, more than anything else, I want to get to know You more and more intimately."

There is nothing more important than developing a friendship with God. It is a relationship that will last forever!

Have you been missing out on the most important thing in life?
You can do something about it starting now.
Remember, it is your choice.
You are as close to God as you choose to be.

YOU WERE CALLED TO BELONG, NOT JUST BELIEVE

- 1. Even in the perfect, sinless environment of Eden, God said, “It is not good for man to be alone.”**

We are created for community, fashioned for fellowship, and formed for a family, and none of us can fulfill God's purposes by ourselves.

- 2. The Bible knows nothing of solitary saints or spiritual hermits.**

God does not desire any of us to be isolated from other believers or deprived of fellowship. The Bible says we are put together, joined together, built together, members together, heirs together, fitted together, and held together and will be caught up together. You are not on your own anymore.

- 3. While your relationship to Christ is personal, God never intends it to be private.**

In God's family you are connected to every other believer, and we will belong to each other for eternity. The Bible says, *"In Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."* (Romans 12:5 NIV)

- 4. Following Christ includes belonging, not just believing.**

We are members of His Body - the Church. To Paul, being a "member" of the Church meant being a vital organ of a living body, an indispensable, interconnected part of the Body of Christ. The church is a body, not a building; an organism, not an organization.

- 5. For the organs of your body to fulfill their purpose, they must be connected to your body. The same is true for you as part of Christ's body – the Church.**

You were created for a specific role, but you will miss this second purpose of your life if you're not attached to a living, local church. You discover your role in life through your relationship with others. If an organ is somehow severed from its body, it will shrivel and die. It cannot exist on its own, and neither can you. Disconnected and cut off from the lifeblood of a local body, your spiritual life will wither and eventually cease to exist. This is why the first symptom of spiritual decline is usually inconsistent attendance at worship services and other gatherings of believers.

- 6. Membership in the family of God is neither inconsequential nor something to be casually ignored.**

The church is God's agenda for the world. Jesus said, *"I will build My church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it."* (Matthew 16:18 NLT) The church is indestructible and will exist for eternity. It will outlive this universe, and so will your role in it. The Bible calls the church "the bride of Christ" and "the body of Christ". I can't imagine saying to Jesus, "I love You, but I dislike Your wife". Or, "I accept You, but I reject Your body." God commands us to love the church – His spiritual family.

YOUR LOCAL FELLOWSHIP

In most cases, when the word *church* is used in the Bible, it refers to a *local, visible congregation*. The New Testament assumes membership in a local congregation. The only Christians not members of a local fellowship were those under church discipline who had been removed from the fellowship because of some serious public sin.

The Bible says a Christian without a church home is like an organ without a body, a sheep without a flock, or a child without a family. It is an unnatural state. *The Bible says, "You belong in God's household with every other Christian."* (Ephesians 2:19 TLB).

Today's culture of independent individualism has created many spiritual orphans - "bunny believers" who hop around from one church to another without any identity, accountability, or commitment.

Many believe they can be a "good Christian" without joining (or even attending) a local church, but God would strongly disagree. The Bible offers many compelling reasons for being committed and active in a local fellowship.

WHY YOU NEED A CHURCH FAMILY

1. A church family identifies you as a genuine believer.

I can't claim to be following Christ if I am not committed to any specific group of disciples. Jesus said, *"Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are My disciples."* (John 13:35 NLT) When we come together in love as a church family from different backgrounds, race, and social status, it is a powerful witness to the world. You are not the body of Christ on your own. You need others to express that. *together*, not separated, *we are His body*.

2. A church family moves you out of self-centered isolation.

The local church is the classroom for learning how to get along in God's family. It is a lab for practicing unselfish, sympathetic love. (See 1 Corinthians 12:26). Only in regular contact with ordinary, imperfect believers can we learn real fellowship and experience the truth of being connected and dependent on each other. Biblical fellowship is being committed to each other as we are to Christ. God expects us to give our lives for each other. (John 3:16; 1 John 3:16). This is the love God expects you to show other believers - a willingness to love them in the same way Jesus loved you.

3. A church family helps you develop spiritual muscle.

You never grow to maturity by just attending worship services and being a passive spectator. Only participation in the full life of a local church builds spiritual muscle (see Ephesians 4:16). Real maturity shows up in relationships. (It may seem easier to be holy when no one else is around to frustrate you, but that is a false, untested holiness. It is easy to fool ourselves into thinking we are mature if there is no one to challenge or test us.) We grow faster and stronger by learning from each other and being accountable to each other. Biblical membership

involves loving, praying, serving, admonishing, teaching, accepting, honoring, bearing each other's burdens, forgiving, submitting and being devoted to each other.

4. The body of Christ needs you.

God has a unique role for you to play in His family. This is called your "ministry". God has given you special passions, gifts and a personal style for you to use in His body, the church. 1 Corinthians 12:7 (NLT) states, "*A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church.*"

5. You will share in Christ's mission in the world.

When Jesus walked the earth, God worked through the physical body of Christ; today He uses His spiritual body. The church is God's instrument on earth. As members of Christ's body, we are His hands, feet, eyes and heart. He works through us in the world. We each have a contribution to make.

6. A church family will help you keep from backsliding.

None of us are immune from temptation. God knows this, so He has assigned us as individuals the responsibility of keeping each other on track. We are called and commanded to be involved in each other's lives. The church also offers the protection of godly leaders who help shepherd, guard, protect, defend and care for the spiritual welfare of His flock.

Satan loves detached believers, unplugged from the life of the Body, isolated from God's family, because he knows they are powerless and defenseless against his tactics.

(Used by permission from Rick Warren's book *The Purpose-Driven Life*, Chapter 17 "A Place To Belong", pages 133-135)

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER

Any person verbally professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and holding views of faith and practice as outlined by this church, may be received into its membership by transfer letter, or statement of Christian experience, or following baptism. Below are the steps necessary to make membership a reality:

1. Accept Christ as Savior and Lord.
2. Be baptized by immersion.
3. Acknowledge agreement with the Declaration of Faith, Fundamentals of the Faith.
4. Apply for membership by filling out a Membership Commitment sheet and an application, found in the back of this manual, and return them to the church office or Elder or Pastor.
5. Meet with the Pastor or Elder to discuss your interest in membership.
6. Be received into the fellowship and membership of the church.

FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FAITH

Statement

God is a person who has revealed Himself as a Trinity in unity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; three persons and yet but one God, infinite and eternally existent.

Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, sinless in His life, making atonement for the sins of the world by His death on the cross. We believe in His bodily resurrection, His personal, visible, bodily, and pre-millennial return to the world according to His promise.

The Holy Spirit came forth from God to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and comfort those who believe in Jesus Christ.

The Bible is God's Word, and was written by men divinely and uniquely inspired, and is absolutely trustworthy and His supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

Man was created in the image of God, but fell into sin; therefore, man is by nature and by choice sinful and lost. Holy Spirit regeneration is absolutely essential for salvation, and man is justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

Satan is a person and Hell is a place of eternal conscious punishment of all unsaved.

Eternal Security is the precious possession of every believer.

The Church is an elect company of believers baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body. It will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air before He appears to set up His Kingdom.

The Local Church is a body of immersed believers associated together for work, worship, and observance of the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, and fellowship. Its mission is to witness concerning its head, Jesus Christ, preaching the Gospel among all nations. It is autonomous and is free from all ecclesiastical or political interferences.

The Resurrection of the Just and the Unjust is a Biblical truth, the just for eternal blessedness and reward in heaven, the unjust for judgment and eternal punishment.

Scripture

Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19;
1 Cor. 8:6; Gen. 1:1;
Isa. 45:21-22

John 3:14-16; Matt.
1:18-25; 2 Cor. 5:21;
Eph. 1:7; John 11:25;
Matt. 28:5-6; Acts 1:9-
11; Heb. 4:14-16; Rev.
19:11-16

John 16:8-11; John
14:26; Titus 3:5

2 Tim. 3:16

Gen. 1:26; Gen. 3:1-24;
Rom. 3:23; Titus 3:5;
Eph. 2:8,9; 1 John 1:7

Job 1:6-7; Luke 16:23;
Rev. 20:15

John 10:28-29;
Rom. 8:38-39

Acts 2:41; Acts 15:13-
17; Eph. 1:3-6; 1 Cor.
12:12-13; Matt. 28:19-
20; Acts 1:6-8; 1 Thess.
4:13-18

Dan. 12:2;
John 5:28-29

RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CHURCH

In the Bible the church is called "the body of Christ." The Bible goes on to teach us that individual Christians in a local church are like the arms, legs, fingers, eyes, ears, etc. of the body.

It will be a great help to you to understand some of the implications of being a part of the body of Christ.

1. Each member must stay in fellowship with the Head, which is Jesus Christ. (John 15:4-5)

Each one has developed a personal relationship to Christ. And each person needs to continue to walk in fellowship and in faith in Christ.

You will need to learn how to walk with Christ and how to grow in Him. No one can do that for you.

2. Each member must relate rightly to other members of the body.

This means many things, but it especially means that we:

- (a) Put the success of others above our own.
- (b) Clear up relationships that are messed up.
- (c) Live an honest, open life before each other.
- (d) Give and receive Scriptural correction.

3. Each member is important and has a role to play in doing the will of the Head, Jesus Christ.

Again, that means several things; however, we especially need to:

- (a) Participate in ministry in the local body.
- (b) Support the work financially.
- (c) Submit to spiritual authority as they seek to serve Christ and the church body.

The seven things listed above under points 2 and 3 make up what we call "The Crucial Heart Attitudes."

THE CRUCIAL HEART ATTITUDES

No one lives out the life of Christ fully in all relationships at all times. No one is perfect - except Christ.

Yet the New Testament is clear that there are guidelines for how we relate in the church. Certain heart attitudes that result in action seem to be especially important in group life.

A church member commits him/herself to work together with the church toward living out the following:

1. **Put the success of others above my own** (within Scriptural limits).

"Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." (Phil. 2:2-4 RSV)

Jesus Himself set the example for us in going to the cross and dying for us.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:12-13 RSV)

As Christ laid down His life for us, so we are to lay down our lives for one another. Our pattern is to "treat others better than ourselves." We are able to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

2. **Clear up relationships with others.**

"So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (Matt. 5:23-24 RSV)

Each part of the Body is connected to not only the Head, but also other members. Each part is to pass on nourishment and life to the other members (Col. 2:19). That means things like love, encouragement, physical help when others are under a heavy load, and financial aid.

Problems come when a member gets angry with another. The flow of life is shut off, and the whole body suffers. So it is important for you to learn how to clear up relationships that have become messed up.

The one who is supposed to "go first" in getting the relationship cleared is the one who first noticed something is wrong.

Some steps you can take:

1. Pray for God to open their heart.
2. If you have sinned and you know it, confess your sin (not theirs); call it sin, don't soft-pedal what you did; ask them to forgive you.
3. If you are unsure what is wrong, say: "It seems to me that there may be something wrong between us. Is there? Have I sinned against you?"
4. If you are unsure what to do in a situation, check with your pastor or leaders of the church.

3. Live an honest life before others.

"Therefore, putting away falsehood, let everyone speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." (Eph. 4:25 RSV)

Lying is not of God. God Himself cannot lie (Num. 23:19) and we are to be like Him.

Lying to others in the body is disastrous: they are unable to help you because they never get to know the truth about you. And, the Holy Spirit is grieved and His power is shut down in your life.

One does not have to tell all about him/herself to everyone. But, they must be willing to be honest, even about things that hurt. Lies, when told, need to be confessed and forgiveness asked. As we speak the truth to each other, we grow up in all aspects to our Head, Jesus Christ.

4. Receive and give Scriptural correction.

"But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." (Heb. 3:13 RSV)

"Anyone willing to be corrected is on the pathway to life. Anyone refusing has lost his chance." (Prov. 10:17 TLB)

The idea of these Scriptures is that we all need correction from others occasionally. We need others to watch over our spiritual "blind spots" and let us know when we're in trouble before we have a disastrous spiritual "accident."

So we need occasionally to correct others - and we need to receive correction with thankfulness.

We don't need to go around correcting others all the time. What we need most is encouragement. Our approach to others should be 90% encouragement, 10% correction.

5. **Participate in ministry in the church.**

"As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace . . . in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (1 Pet. 4:10-11 RSV)

In simplest form, what Christ wants done in the world is this: that God be honored as Christians become more like Him in character and Non-Christians come to know Him - and He works through the **Body** to see these things done.

Each member is important. None can say he or she is unimportant to the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:14-18). And, each member has a role to play in helping the Body to do Christ's will in the world.

Some things all members are involved in: giving, serving, encouraging, praying, witnessing, etc.

But, over a period of time, you will find that you have been given special abilities ("gifts") by the Lord. You will discover them as you experiment and try out new ways of ministering and helping others.

As you discover your gifts, you are to use them in serving in the ministry of the Body (1 Pet. 4:10-11). Your gifts working together with the different gifts of others will result in a stronger ministry than you could do alone.

6. **Support the ministry financially.**

"The point is this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work." (2 Cor. 9:6-8 RSV)

Each of us has a responsibility to contribute financially to the work of the church. 1 Cor. 9:7-9, 11, 14 makes that clear. But the above passage in 2 Corinthians points out another facet of giving: you get a spiritual harvest in proportion to how you plant financially. If you want a large harvest, plant heavily.

Jesus Himself said: *"For where your treasure is there will your heart be also."* (Matt. 6:21 NKJV) If your heart is in the work of the church, then your "treasure" will be there, too.

The money that we pool together goes for staff personnel to train people; missions in the USA and around the world; building and maintenance, and purchase of equipment and materials.

7. Follow spiritual authority within Scriptural limits.

"Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you." (Heb. 13:17 RSV)

According to Scripture, the church has leaders and followers.

Pastors, according to Scripture, are to be overseers of the church work, trainers of believers, and direction-setters for the church. (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11-12; Acts 6:1-7)

Members in the church are to take their counsel seriously (Titus 2:15). And, there is to be discussion between leaders and followers in arriving at decisions, but pastoral direction has heavy weight.

Leaders must base their leadership on Scripture and should not try to make decisions for people in areas where the persons themselves are responsible to God.

But the member needs to have a heart to follow leadership - and to make it easy on the leader and not be a grumbling complainer. (Phil. 2:14).

"Obey" and "submit" are strong words. They are balanced by Jesus' command that the leader be the "servant of all" - a true servant at heart and not a dictator (Matt. 20:26-28).

8. Fulfillment and responsibility

Over a period of time, as you take responsibility to:

- walk with Christ
- relate rightly to other members of the Body
- invest yourself in ministry to others with a free heart

You will find a growing sense of fulfillment in your walk with Christ. Those who take responsibility will also find true joy.

THE BAPTIST DISTINCTIVES:

1. A fellowship of true disciples

The church consists of a regenerate membership. Each local church, while ministering to the unconverted, is to be a fellowship of those who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ. Each formal member of the local church should profess Christ as Savior and participate in the life of the local body.

2. A priesthood of believers

We are all priests as believers and are equal in the sight of God. So we do not need a priestly class to mediate between us and God. When we gather together, we do not need special performers to "do the service," but each of us is responsible to participate in the service as a believer-priest. Each member of the church is to participate and share in the ministry and mission of the church equally.

3. A congregation under the Word of God

Assembled believers should look to the Scriptures as their authority in matters of faith and practice. God's Word is expressed in two ways: 1) in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ where God spoke the loudest and the clearest to humanity, 2) in the written words of the Bible. It is in the Bible where we have the sole authority for matters of faith and practice.

4. Participants in the gospel ordinances

There are two biblically commanded ordinances: Baptism and Communion. These are special, symbolic events in the church which look back at His death and resurrection, and look forward to His return. They enact the Word of God in symbolic expressions of the Gospel. Therefore, while the participants in these events should be only believers, unbelievers should be able and encouraged to observe.

5. A spiritual democracy at work

The autonomy and interdependence of the local church is based on the priesthood of the believers. As a community of believers they are united in Christ and are interdependent with one another as the Body of Christ. Believers are not united by an organization. As a believer-priest, each member of the church is responsible for the church's government and the selection of qualified spiritual leaders. The church and its government have authority in three areas: 1) the spiritual maturity and vitality of its membership, 2) the nature of the ministries the church will participate in, and 3) the manner and extent the church will participate with other churches and organizations.

6. A free church in a free state

The final Baptist distinctive is that of religious liberty. This liberty is to express a faith different from the majority and stresses the equality of all persons. This liberty should not be confused with toleration which makes a false distinction between seemingly superior and inferior persons. A Baptist can live and worship under any government system; however, they

expect that the government should exercise its authority in civil matters only, and that they will expect no special rights from the government beyond religious liberty.

OUR VALUES

1. A commitment to prayer

We believe that God desires His people to pray and that He hears and answers prayer (Matthew 7:7-11; James 5:13-18). Because of this, we desire the ministries to be characterized by a genuine reliance upon God that is demonstrated by incorporating prayer in everything we do. We believe the church “advances on its knees.”

2. A commitment to worship

We believe that the Worship of God begins with a reverence for God expressed in submission to His will. We also believe that a major factor in being a healthy church includes corporate gatherings of the entire body for teaching, prayer and songs of praise. We want our worship services to be characterized by a spirit of celebration and reflection maintaining a balance between truth and spirit.

3. A commitment to friendships and relationships

We believe that building friendships and relationships is a high priority. Everybody needs to be loved and accepted. Through our small group ministries, it is our goal to express and receive that love. We believe that small groups are the most effective means of building relationships, stimulating spiritual growth and developing leaders.

4. A commitment to see all of God’s people unleashed to carry out their particular God-given ministry

We believe that God has uniquely gifted every believer and that every believer has a special “calling” to minister. According to Scripture every believer is a minister and has the potential of a very fruitful ministry! We want to see God’s people unleashed both in our community and around the world to use their specific gifting to advance God’s Kingdom upon earth! We believe the church is to be an army, not an audience!

5. A commitment to grace oriented ministry

We believe that people grow best in an environment of grace. Legalism kills. Grace gives life. We believe that teaching and living a grace-oriented lifestyle is the greatest witness to a watching world. We believe that grace does not negate the importance of obedience to God’s Word. Grace frees us to obey Christ with the right heart and the right attitude. We believe that the church (the body of Christ) is supported through the grace-giving of its members!

6. A commitment to give away our faith

We believe that reaching spiritually lost people is one of the main reasons why God has left His church here on earth. Scripture says that all believers are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Through friendship evangelism, we see our community being reached for Christ. Our desire is for all believers to get out of the salt-shaker and into the world in order to minister to hurting people with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. We deeply believe that lost people matter to God!

7. A commitment to simplified ministry

We feel that because of the busyness of people's schedules in today's society, we want to free people up to spend time with their families in order to develop a strong and healthy home environment. We also want to free people up so they have time to develop relationships with their unchurched neighbors and friends so that they can share the message of Christ with them.

8. A commitment to relevant Bible teaching

We believe that the Bible is God's inspired Word, the authoritative and trustworthy rule of faith and practice for Christians. We are committed to equipping Christians, through the preaching and teaching of God's Word, to follow Christ in every sphere of life. Our focus is on teaching people God's Word in a way that applies to the everyday situations of life. Our desire is to help people see how Scripture is relevant to their lives.

9. A commitment to cross-cultural ministry

We believe that reaching the lost of all cultures is the reason Jesus came to earth. Missions is a major focus in the life of the church. We are committed to giving generously toward missions. We further intend to multiply our world-wide ministry by planting churches, by preparing our people for leadership roles in vocational ministries and para-church groups, by sending out missionaries and by becoming a resource center and model to our community.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENT

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and having been baptized by immersion, and being in agreement with the “Fundamentals of the Faith” and the “Responsibility in the church,” and “The crucial Heart Attitudes.”

- I have united with this church family by becoming a member.
- I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the church family by becoming a member.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

A copy of this application for you to fill out is located in the back of the manual

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Age: _____ Birthdate: _____ M___ D___ W___ S___

Business profession: _____

When did you become a Christian? _____

Have you been baptized by immersion? _____ If so, when and where?

Of what church are you now a member, if any? _____

Give in a few words your testimony of your conversion experience and how you came to know Christ as your personal Savior:

Give the reason or reasons you know that you are a Christian; give some verses upon which you base your salvation:

List any of the church offices you have held, and any type of work you have done in the church:

I have carefully read and affirm all of the Doctrines of this church. With God's help I will accept and do my best to meet the responsibilities and enter into the Church Covenant.

Signed _____

Date _____

For Office Use Only:

Received into Membership

Date _____

WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP?

After reading through "**PLANTING**," you may have some specific needs, questions, or have further need of guidance and direction on becoming a participating member.

Here Are Some Suggestions:

1. *Become a Christian.*
2. *Be Baptized.*
3. *Become a Member.*
4. *Join a Small Group.*
5. *Continue through the **WAY OF LIFE MANUALS**:*
6. *Fill out "Ministry Survey" and find a place of ministry*