

What Churches Do

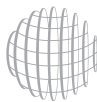


CHRISTIAN LIFE SERIES

What Churches Do

5th Edition

by Robert and Evelyn Bolton



GLOBAL
UNIVERSITY

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Christian Life Series

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The Church

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Bible Ethics

When You Pray

How to Study the Bible

Your Helpful Friend

Christian Worship

Christian Workers

Marriage and the Home

God's Design—Your Choice

John's Gospel

We Believe

What Churches Do

The Teaching Ministry

The Christian in His Community

PREFACE

Have you ever wondered why churches exist? What does it really mean to be baptized, to take communion, and to dedicate babies? Or perhaps you have heard someone ask, “Do I need to go to church? Why can’t I just worship God in nature or in my home?” What would you answer?

Whether you attend church services regularly or not, this course will interest you. We will follow the experiences of Mary, a new convert, and her fiancé, Timothy. Timothy is a church member who suddenly takes a new interest in spiritual things because of Mary’s questions.

The modern method of teaching yourself will help you to learn easily. As you understand more fully what is being done in the church, you can take part more meaningfully. You will then not only gain more blessing, but also be a greater blessing.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SERIES

What Churches Do is one of 18 courses in this practical discipleship program for new believers. The Christian Life Series is a study to help students grow in their relationship with Christ, interact with the Word of God, and better understand God's purposes for their life.

Students will study basic Christian topics under six reoccurring themes. The courses are conversational in style and easy to read. The following chart illustrates how the units of study are organized for the Christian Life Series.

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3
Spiritual Life	Your New Life	When You Pray	God's Design, Your Choice
The Bible	Your Bible	How to Study the Bible	John's Gospel
Theology	Who Jesus Is	Your Helpful Friend	We Believe
The Church	The Church	Christian Worship	What Churches Do
Service	Personal Evangelism	Christian Workers	The Teaching Ministry
Christian Ethics	Bible Ethics	Marriage and the Home	The Christian in His Community

Before You Begin

How to Use this Book

This book is divided into lessons instead of chapters. Each lesson begins with two important pages. After the lesson number are the title and a short introduction to the lesson. On the next page is the outline or **The Plan** for the lesson. It is a list of what you can expect to study in the lesson.

Next are lesson goals. **The Goals** are guidelines for what you should be able to do after studying the lesson. Read them carefully; they will help you focus on the most important points in the lesson.

To help you achieve your goals, each lesson has questions and activities. The subheading **Application** signals you to answer questions on the material learned. Do not skip over this part. Writing out the answers will help you apply what you have learned. Most of the questions can be answered right in your book. If there is not enough room to write your answers in the book, write them in a notebook or journal that you can use to review the lessons later.

After answering a question, check the answer at the end of the lesson in the section marked **Check Your Answers**. Do not look ahead at the answers until you have written your own answer. This will help you remember what you study much better. Correct those you did not answer correctly. The answers are in a jumbled order so that you will not easily see the answer to the next question.

How to Answer Study Questions

This course uses many different kinds of questions. Below are samples of the three most common types and how to answer them.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE

A multiple-choice question asks you to choose an answer from the ones that are given.

Example

- 1** The Bible has a total of
- a)** 100 books.
 - b)** 66 books.
 - c)** 27 books.

The correct answer is **b)** 66 books.

In your study guide, make a circle around **b)** as shown here:

- 1** The Bible has a total of
- a)** 100 books.
 - (b)** 66 books.
 - c)** 27 books.
 - d)** 2 books.

TRUE-FALSE

A true-false question or item asks you to choose which of several statements are TRUE.

Example

- 2** Which statements below are TRUE?
- a)** The Bible has a total of 120 books.
 - (b)** The Bible is a message for believers today.
 - c)** All of the Bible authors wrote in the Hebrew language.
 - (d)** The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the Bible.

Statements **b)** and **d)** are true. You would make a circle around these two letters to show your choices, as you see above.

MATCHING

A matching question or item asks you to match things that go together, such as names with descriptions, or Bible books with their authors.

Example

3 Write the number for the leader's name in front of each phrase that describes something he did.

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| ...1... a) Received the Law at Mt. Sinai | 1) Moses |
| ...2... b) Led the Israelites across the Jordan | 2) Joshua |
| ...2... c) Marched around Jericho | |
| ...1... d) Lived in Pharaoh's court | |

Phrases **a)** and **d)** refer to Moses, and phrases **b)** and **c)** refer to Joshua. You would write 1 beside **a)** and **d)**, and 2 beside **b)** and **c)**, as you see above.

Suggestions for Studying

1. Set aside quiet and regular times for your study. It will be easier to concentrate if study is part of your daily habits.
2. Pray as you begin each study session. With an open Bible, the Holy Spirit, and this course, you are in the classroom of the Holy Spirit. Ask the Lord to help you understand the lesson and apply it to your life.
3. Carefully read the lesson introduction, the lesson plan, and the goals.
4. Begin to carefully read the lesson. Look up Bible references and take any notes that may be helpful. The Bible verses reinforce important points in the lesson.
5. Answer the study questions in the spaces provided. Use your notebook or journal when necessary.

6. Think about what you have learned and look for ways to apply it in discussion with family and friends, in a Bible study, or other opportunity.
7. Take your time. No bell will ring to force you to move on to new material.

Unit Evaluations

At the end of this course, you will find the Unit Evaluations. Questions and Answer Sheets are clearly marked for each unit. Carefully follow the directions given. You should complete and send your answer sheets to your instructor for corrections. If you are not studying with a Global University office you will still benefit by completing the Unit Evaluations.

Ways to Study this Course

This course has been written so that you can study it by yourself. We like to say that the teacher is in the book. However, you may also study this course in various group settings such as mid-week Bible studies, learning centers, home groups, and youth programs. This course can be used as a correspondence or resource tool for prison ministries as well as special ethnic or other community outreach programs. You will find both the content and study methods excellent for these purposes.

If you study this course by yourself, all of your work can be completed by mail. Be sure to use the address of your Global University office. If you are studying in a group or through a Discipleship Training Center, be sure to follow any additional instructions that your instructor may give.

In addition, your church may partner with Global University to open a Discipleship Training Center. Visit us online at www.globaluniversity.edu for more information and start-up helps.

Certificate

Unit or individual certificates are available to students upon successful completion of our courses. For instance, if you are studying through a National Office or Discipleship Training Center, you may receive a certificate from your Global University instructor. If you are studying on your own, you may mail your completed Unit Evaluation Answer Sheets to your local office. National Offices and Discipleship Training Centers may order certificates through the International Office or through Gospel Publishing House in the USA.

Additional Helps

The School for Evangelism and Discipleship (SED) Catalog, Discipleship Training Center Manual, the Study Center Agreement Form, and the SED Order Form are available online for print downloads. Other materials available for this course include supplemental audiocassettes.

Visit us at www.globaluniversity.edu
and www.globalreach.org for additional resources.

About the Authors

Robert and Evelyn Bolton are graduates of Central Bible College, Springfield, Missouri, and Robert later received a Doctorate in Missiology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Trinity International University), Deerfield, Illinois. Beginning in 1955, the couple engaged in evangelization, church planting, and Bible training among the Minnan-speaking Chinese in the large cities of Taiwan, as well as among the tribespeople in the mountains.

After 39 years serving under the Assemblies of God World Missions, the Boltons retired from missionary ministry overseas. In 1994 they were appointed to serve in Intercultural Ministries, specifically Chinese ministries. Today, they are still active in the Chinese church that they pioneered in Pennsylvania.



Lessons

- 1 Churches Worship God**
- 2 Churches Submit to the Holy Spirit**
- 3 Churches Preach the Word**
- 4 Churches Teach the Truth**
- 5 Churches Baptize Believers**

1 Churches Worship God

Everything the church does is aimed in at least one of three directions: upward toward God in worship; inward toward itself in growing; or outward toward the world in sharing the good news.

A church building is sometimes called a “house of worship.” This is appropriate because its main function is to provide a place for people to worship the Lord together. People were made for worship. If they do not worship God, they will worship something else: money, fame, pleasure, nature, idols—or themselves! But they will never be satisfied until they learn to worship God.

Jesus taught us that our heavenly Father desires our worship. Though all the hosts of heaven are praising Him continually, He wants our worship because it brings us into fellowship with Him.

The Plan

- A. Worship Together
- B. Worship With Music
- C. Worship by Prayer
- D. Worship in Giving
- E. Worship Through the Holy Spirit

The Goals

- 1. Describe the basis of true worship.
- 2. Give biblical principles for using music in worship.
- 3. State truths concerning prayer as a form of worship.
- 4. Explain how giving is a part of worship.
- 5. State the ministry of the Holy Spirit in worship.

A. WORSHIP TOGETHER

Goal 1. Describe the basis of true worship.

It is Sunday morning. Mary, a new convert, has come with her fiancé, Timothy, for the first time to a worship service in his church. Timothy is a new convert too, but he has the advantage of a Christian background. Mary's questions arouse his interest.

"But where is God?" asks Mary looking around. "How can I worship when there is no image to kneel to?"

"You don't need an image to worship God, Mary," he answers. "You used to bow before images, but with no real love. God is a Spirit. We can't see Him with our natural eyes. But when we are born again and have His Spirit in us we can worship Him in spirit and in truth. That is what He wants. Love Him and praise Him in your heart while we sing, and in everything else that we do."

The people are now singing joyful songs about God's greatness and His love. Sometimes they clap their hands while they sing. Mary is not used to that, but soon she finds herself smiling and clapping too. Then the song leader tells the people to greet each other. Several shake hands and welcome Mary. She no longer feels like a stranger. She feels closer to the Lord and closer to the other people.

"It's like one big happy family!" she whispers to Timothy.

It is true that a believer can and should worship God at any time and in any place. It is needful, however, for people to worship together. People are not made to stand alone; we need each other. Believers meeting together, sharing and helping one another, grow strong together!

Hebrews 10:25 advises, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." The Lord has commanded that we meet together and He has also promised to bless those who obey Him in this. "'For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them'" (Matthew 18:20).

Believers are called the "body of Christ," with Jesus as its head. The Lord wants His body to be in unity, with all the parts working harmoniously. One way to accomplish this is to meet at a set time and place for worship so His Holy Spirit can unite us.

Application

1 Circle the letter in front of each correct completion to the sentence. As believers we come together for worship because

- a)** we cannot worship alone.
- b)** it helps us to grow spiritually.
- c)** we want to obey God's commands.
- d)** Jesus has promised to be with us.

Check your answers with those at the end of this lesson.



WORSHIP WITH MUSIC

Goal 2. Give biblical principles for using music in worship.

Congregational singing is good for the body of Christ because it relieves tension, brings healing, builds up faith, and helps bring about the togetherness or unity needed for true worship in the body of Christ. Another way to worship is for one or more persons, or a choir, to sing special songs. Listeners should glorify God rather than glorify the singers.

In the Old Testament the people of Israel sang the Psalms. The book of Psalms was their hymn-book. They considered singing to be a very important means of worship. Early Christian believers also sang Scripture. Then gradually hymns and other songs were added. The apostle Paul instructed the church to “speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19).

Our songs can be expressions of thankful praise to God, our testimonies put to music. The words, singers, and musicians should glorify God, for God’s Word says, “He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me” (Psalm 50:23).

Before Jesus came, people sacrificed animals; but since Christ died for us such sacrifices are not necessary. Instead, we offer the Lord the sacrifices of prayer and praise. (Read Hebrews 13:15.)

The congregational singing in the church that Mary and Timothy attend is accompanied by a piano and an organ. Members of an orchestra play a number of different instruments. The music thrills Mary, who exclaims, “I never knew an orchestra could be in a church!”

“They are playing and worshipping the Lord with their talents,” Timothy replies. “People of the Old Testament praised the Lord with all kinds of instruments. Read these words taken from the hymn-book of the Bible:

Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. (Psalm 150:3–6)

Music brings people together in worship. No wonder music has been called the universal language.

Application

Circle the letter in front of the correct sentence completions.

- 2** Our singing becomes worship when we
- a)** can sing choruses from memory.
 - b)** sing praises to God from our hearts.
 - c)** sing with others who are worshipping.
- 3** Songs of worship are songs about
- a)** what we purpose to do for God.
 - b)** nature and the world around us.
 - c)** the Lord's greatness and goodness.
- 4** Circle the letter in front of each true statement.
- a)** Musical instruments are used in church because they create a pleasant background for the service.
 - b)** God can only be worshipped with quiet, restful music.
 - c)** Musicians should be careful to glorify God and not themselves when they perform.
-



WORSHIP BY PRAYER

Goal 3. State truths concerning prayer as a form of worship.

Soon the people begin praying together. “Why do they close their eyes?” whispers Mary.

“To block out their surroundings while they talk to God” answers Timothy. “They are worshipping in prayer.”

Mary hears people saying, “Praise the Lord!” “Thank you, Jesus!” Some people raise their hands in worship, and the sound of voices becomes louder. It seems strange to Mary.

“You will get used to it,” Timothy reassures her. “In a church like this people will often pray together as each person prays individually to the Lord. In prayer we worship Him by thanking and praising Him.”

After a while the pastor calls on a man to lead in prayer. Mary is surprised that he does not read the prayer—yet he prays beautifully. When he finishes, many people say “Amen!”

“What does that mean?” asks Mary.

“*Amen* is a Hebrew word meaning ‘may it be so.’ We say amen when we agree with what has been said,” explained Timothy.

Worshipping the Lord in prayer was common in the early church. Acts 2 records that “every day they continued to meet together . . . praising God” (vv. 46–47). The Bible also says that believers joined together in prayer to God (Acts 4:24).

Our love for the Lord finds fulfillment in worship and fellowship with Him. We should allow worship in prayer to be meaningful, living, and dynamic even as it was in the early church. Otherwise it becomes meaningless, lifeless, and empty. The church must continue to be a house of prayer.

Application

- 5** Circle the letter in front of each true statement.
- a)** Fellowship with God in prayer is a joyful experience because we love Him.
 - b)** We say “amen” after prayers because it means that we are finished talking.
 - c)** We usually close our eyes in prayer to help shut out our surroundings.
 - d)** Jesus called the place where believers met “a house of prayer.”
-

WORSHIP IN GIVING

Goal 4. Explain how giving is a part of worship.

Mary is puzzled when the pastor announces, “We shall worship the Lord by our gifts: His tithes and our offerings.”

“How can we worship the Lord with money?” she asks.

“When we give because we love God and are thankful, that is a way of worship,” answers Timothy. “I’ll explain more later.”

While the ushers pass the offering bags, the orchestra plays a hymn in worship to the Lord. People praise the Lord softly. Mary sees that giving to the Lord can be a joyful experience and a means of worship.

Later she learned that in some churches people walk to the front of the church to give their gifts. But no matter what method is used, a tenth of all that we earn belongs to God. (See Leviticus 27:30, 32.) This is called the tithe. Whatever we give above that is our offering. It, too, should be an act of worship. (Read Proverbs 3:9–10 and 1 Corinthians 16:2.)

Application

6 Tell in your own words how giving can be an act of worship.

.....

.....

WORSHIP THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Goal 5. State the ministry of the Holy Spirit in worship.

The congregation is singing softly and worshipfully, many with their hands raised. Mary notices some with tears rolling down their faces. Timothy explains that they are not unhappy, but moved with love for the Lord. Then Mary hears singing in words she does not understand. The voices blend in a different, yet beautiful, harmony.

“This is what Paul meant when he said, ‘I will sing with my spirit,’” whispered Timothy. It brought a strange feeling of peace and rest into Mary’s heart. It felt as if God was right there!

As the sounds fade away the pastor rises to speak. Worship and praise by the congregation prepares them for receiving God’s Word.

Augustine, a great church leader of the fifth century, wrote, “You have made us, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in you.” One effect of worship through the Holy Spirit is that people feel God’s presence and find spiritual rest and satisfaction in Him. This satisfaction is felt throughout their lives—in work, play, and rest.

Another effect of worship in the Holy Spirit is true freedom or release. As we yield to the Holy Spirit He delivers us from fear, worry, resentment, selfishness, hate, and all emotional hurts. Jesus becomes more precious and real as people worship

Him in the Spirit. It also helps us have greater unity; for “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Corinthians 3:17).

A third wonderful effect of worship in the Spirit is healing for our bodies. This may be a gradual strengthening, or it could be quite dramatic. Evangelist Hattie Hammond tells of an unusual interruption in one of her meetings. A woman gasping for breath was brought in on a stretcher. A chemical container had exploded in her face, burning and blinding her, and friends had rushed her to the church for prayer. Ms. Hammond was about to pray for her, but then she stopped.

Turning to the congregation, she said, “The Lord is telling me to call on everyone to worship Him! Come on, everyone! Worship Him! Worship Jesus!”

What was she doing, telling people to worship instead of praying for the dying woman? But as people responded in praise to the Lord, a wave of worship swept over them. It was the moving of the Holy Spirit! Then suddenly, rising above the sounds of praise, came the sound of another voice—soaring in beautiful song in the Spirit. To her astonishment Hammond discovered it was coming from the woman on the stretcher! God had healed her completely while people worshipped in the Spirit!

You may never have seen anything quite as dramatic as this, but there is healing quality in true worship in the Spirit. The apostle Paul summarized worship through the Holy Spirit when he spoke of those “who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh” (Philippians 3:3).

As churches follow this teaching, they truly become houses of worship. The church building itself is not most important.

The main purpose for its existence should be for the worship of God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit.

Application

7 The place where Christians meet for worship should always be

- a)** beautiful for worship.
- b)** humble and plain.
- c)** in a nice part of town.
- d)** where people are free to worship.

8 List three effects of worship in the Spirit.

.....

.....

.....



Check Your Answers

- 1 **b)** it helps us to grow spiritually.
c) we want to obey God's commands.
d) Jesus has promised to be with us.
- 6 Your answer. We can show our love for God and for others by giving.
- 2 **b)** sing praises to God from our hearts.
- 3 **c)** the Lord's greatness and goodness.
- 7 **d)** where people are free to worship.
- 4 **c)** is true.
- 8 Spiritual rest and satisfaction, freedom, healing, unity, sense of God's presence.
- 5 **a), c), and d)** are true.

LESSON 2 Churches Submit to the Holy Spirit

In the springtime, tree branches burst with new life in light and vivid colors. Buds sprout and blossom into various shades of white, pink, and yellow. Bright flowers of blue, red, yellow and orange hues suddenly appear and decorate gardens. Of springtime King Solomon wrote:

The winter is past; the rains are over and gone.
Flowers appear on the earth; the season of
singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard
in our land. The fig tree forms its early fruit;
the blossoming vines spread their fragrance.
(Song of Songs 2:11–13)

The work of the Holy Spirit in churches is like springtime beauty! As congregations of people submit to His working He revives them with new life and radiance. Unconverted people become reborn spiritually.

The Plan

- A. The Holy Spirit and the Believer
- B. The Spirit's Anointing
- C. Spiritual Gifts for the Church

The Goals

- 1. Distinguish between the indwelling and baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- 2. Describe the anointing of the Holy Spirit.
- 3. Explain how the gifts of the Holy Spirit edify the church.

A. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE BELIEVER

Goal 1. Distinguish between the indwelling and baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Frederic Burke, missionary to South Africa, testified of being baptized in the Holy Spirit:

“I was a young man in Bible school. God was pouring out His Spirit upon the students. I, too, began to seek God. I wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit. One night as I waited quietly before Him, the Holy Spirit seemed to lead me into the garden where Jesus was praying, then to the judgment hall, and then to Calvary. I wept before God as I seemed to share the sufferings of my Savior.

“Then the Holy Spirit came upon me, breathing deeply into me until my whole being seemed filled with His power. I began to speak, first with a stammering tongue, then in a clear language. My soul was filled with the glory of God. Jesus, the great Baptizer, had come and baptized me with the Spirit. My soul was filled with His goodness.

“What a difference this Baptism made in my life. I had been timid and unable to speak in public; now I suddenly had boldness. As I stood before a large congregation the words just flowed out. I heard myself giving forth the Word of God in power—yet it was not I, but the Spirit of God speaking through me.

“While I was still in school, God called me to Africa and later made a way for me to go. Through the 60 years that He has allowed me to minister, the anointing of the Holy Spirit has been with me.”

A testimony like Frederic Burke’s caused Mary to start thinking more about the Holy Spirit. One evening on their way to the church service she asks, “Isn’t the Holy Spirit within me now that I’m saved?”

“Yes, dear, it was the Holy Spirit’s work to lead you to Christ and now He is within you,” replies Timothy.

“Then why do people talk about receiving the Holy Spirit if we already have Him?”

“Because—oh, here is Allen. I think he can explain it better than I can.”

Their friend Allen listens to their questions and then says, “Yes Mary, as a believer you do have the Holy Spirit living in you. Galatians 4:6 says, ‘Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts.’ First Corinthians 3:16 also says that God’s Spirit lives in us because we are children of God.”

Allen continues to explain. “When you hear people talk about receiving the Holy Spirit after conversion, they mean receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. When you are converted the Holy Spirit comes to live within your heart. And when believers receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, He comes upon them, filling them to overflowing. It is like an outpouring of God’s Spirit upon us.

“Let’s look up some Scriptures. Acts 2:17 says, ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.’ Peter explains that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a fulfillment of a prophecy given in Joel 2:28. Peter said,

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. (Acts 2:32–33)

“I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49)

“What happens when a person receives this outpouring of the Holy Spirit?” questions Mary.

“Wonderful things happen,” replies Allen. “As you worship the Lord and surrender to Him, the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then He speaks through you in words you have never learned. The Holy Spirit uses your voice to glorify the Lord. Acts shows the early believers’ experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit.”

“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: . . . ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’” (Acts 2:4, 17–21)

Hearing this Mary asks, “How could I receive? I would like the Holy Spirit to come on me!”

Allen smiled. “This experience is for you, Mary. Open your heart to the Lord and start praising Him. As you worship Him, yield yourself and accept His gift to you. It is the Lord Jesus himself who will fill you to overflowing with His Holy Spirit. Today God is pouring out His Spirit upon millions of believers all around the world. And no one needs to be left out of this blessing.”

Application

- 1** Circle the letter in front of each true statement.
 - a)** On the Day of Pentecost Peter told the crowd that the Holy Spirit was only for the 120 believers.
 - b)** We cannot baptize each other in the Holy Spirit.
 - c)** The Holy Spirit uses our voices to glorify God.
 - d)** God still pours out His Holy Spirit, but only on a few special people.
-

B. THE SPIRIT’S ANOINTING

Goal 2. Describe the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit’s anointing is an important aspect of His ministry. To anoint means to put oil on someone or on something as part of a ceremony. This was done in Old Testament times when persons or objects were set apart for service to God.

The prophet Samuel poured olive oil on David’s head when he set him apart to be king over Israel. “So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power” (1 Samuel 16:13). When Moses dedicated the tent in the desert, he anointed it and the altar with sacred oil (Exodus 40:9–11). Aaron, the first high priest, was also anointed (Psalm 133:2).

Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The word *anointing* is used to describe the special touch of the Spirit's power that enables people to do something for God—something beyond themselves.

Under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, David composed songs, which we call psalms. He was also a prophet and foretold the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah from the dead. This same anointing, or the Spirit's power, came upon Peter when he preached to the crowds on the Day of Pentecost.

When the early church chose seven deacons for the work of handling the finances and business of the church, they chose men who were “full of the Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3). The Spirit's anointing was considered essential for their daily work. Such were the high spiritual standards of the early church. How necessary, therefore, is the anointing of the Holy Spirit on every activity and ministry of the churches in our day! Our praying, preaching, teaching, evangelizing, counseling, singing, or playing instruments all should be anointed by the Holy Spirit to the glory of God. Only then can Jesus Christ be uplifted and people be built up in their faith.

Application

2 For the descriptions on the left write the number which represents the person or concept described (right column).

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| ... a Symbol of the Holy Spirit | 1) Peter |
| ... b Means “set apart” | 2) David |
| ... c First high priest | 3) Oil |
| ... d Church helpers | 4) Deacons |
| ... e Composed many songs | 5) Anointed |
| ... f Preached at Pentecost | 6) Aaron |
| ... g Anointed the tent and altar | 7) Wine |
| | 8) Paul |
| | 9) Moses |
| | 10) Filled |



C. SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR THE CHURCH

Goal 3. Explain how the gifts of the Holy Spirit edify the church.

The Sunday evening congregation has been singing, praying, and praising. It becomes quiet. Then a member of the congregation speaks in a strong, clear voice. His message exalts Jesus the Savior and encourages the people to believe and obey Him. His words ring with authority and bring comfort and hope. The pastor encourages the people to respond to the moving of the Holy Spirit. A new wave of praise goes up to the Lord.

“What is happening?” gasps Mary.

“It’s a message in prophecy,” Timothy whispers. “We will find out more about it later.”

The people are now in a hushed, receptive attitude to hear the Word of God as it is preached, especially since it relates to the utterance given through the church member by the Holy Spirit.

After the sermon the pastor invites people with special needs to come forward for prayer. Some of the church leaders gather around and lay their hands on each one with a need. The people are encouraged to pray and believe together for God’s answer to these requests. The sound of prayer is like rushing waters.

What happened in the earlier part of the service was a manifestation of one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit—an utterance in prophecy. Timothy and Mary later studied about this in 1 Corinthians 14. Verse three tells that the one who proclaims God’s message (the one who prophesies) speaks to people and gives them help, encouragement, and comfort.

When the Holy Spirit moves among a group of Spirit-filled believers, love and power flow from within them. The flow of this power comes through believers by means of the gifts of the

Holy Spirit. Miraculous things take place—people are healed and delivered from sinful habits. The church begins to grow.

The gifts of the Spirit must be manifested according to the guidelines in 1 Corinthians 14. Christ should receive the glory, and believers should be built up spiritually. God wants our coming together to give life; our meetings should not be disorderly but harmonious and peaceful.

Nine gifts of the Holy Spirit are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8–10. Each is unique and supernatural—above or beyond our natural talent or ability. Though we may not fully understand all the workings of the Spirit, we do need to be open to receive whatever the Lord has for us.

Briefly, these supernatural gifts are defined as follows. The word of wisdom is special wisdom for a special need—a bit of God’s wisdom spoken at the proper time. Through the word of knowledge the Holy Spirit causes believers to say things that they in no way could know through their own abilities. The gift of faith is a supernatural ability to believe, especially for a certain need.

The gifts of healing flow out from the Spirit, through the believer, and to the people in need of healing. Through the gift of working of miracles the person through whom the Spirit is moving has supernatural power to do things that would otherwise be impossible. Prophecy is speaking in one’s own language in the power of the Holy Spirit, either telling forth (as in preaching) or foretelling.

Through the discerning of spirits the Holy Spirit enables a person to look beyond what is seen and know what spirit is manifesting itself (God’s Spirit, a human spirit, or an evil spirit). The gift of tongues is the ability given to believers to speak a language they have never learned. It may be an earthly language, or the language of angels. The interpretation of tongues is giving the meaning of what is said in another language. We must remember again that the ability and direction come only through the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul

affirms, “There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:4).

Churches should make room for these spiritual gifts as taught in God’s Word. These gifts will enable them to extend the gracious ministry of Christ and the early church to today’s needy world. Jesus promised that we would do even greater things than He did (John 14:12). This is possible when we submit to the Holy Spirit whom Jesus has sent in His place—to flow into, and upon, and out through His church.

Application

Circle the letter in front of the correct completions.

- 3** The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to
- a)** help us grow spiritually.
 - b)** make other people notice us.
 - c)** make our churches different.
- 4** When gifts of the Spirit are in operation
- a)** they take the place of God’s Word.
 - b)** we feel uncomfortable and confused.
 - c)** they work in harmony with God’s Word.
- 5** If we do not understand all about the gifts of the Spirit we should
- a)** disregard them.
 - b)** accept only what we really do understand.
 - c)** be open to the Lord anyway because we can always trust Him to do right.
-



Check Your Answers

- 3 a)** help us grow spiritually.
- 1** Statements **b)** and **c)** are true.
- 4 c)** they work in harmony with God's Word.
- 2**
- a** 3) Oil
 - b** 5) Anointed
 - c** 6) Aaron
 - d** 4) Deacons
 - e** 2) David
 - f** 1) Peter
 - g** 9) Moses
- 5 c)** be open to the Lord anyway because we can always trust Him to do right.

LESSON 3 Churches Preach the Word

The Word of God is given a place of preeminence or honor in churches that recognize its authority. Pastors of these churches faithfully preach the message of God's Word to the people. Their sermons are full of its truths.

Paul, the experienced evangelist and church-planter, placed strong emphasis on preaching. He urged Timothy, his young assistant, to preach the message (2 Timothy 4:2) and also wrote about elders who work hard at preaching (1 Timothy 5:17–18).

There is no substitute for preaching the Word of God. Its message must be given both to believers in the church and to nonbelievers outside the church. The opinions and beliefs of all people must be corrected and judged by its teachings.

In this lesson you will learn about the message that is preached. You will also discover why this message is preached and the effects it has on the lives of those who respond to it.

The Plan

- A. The Message Must Be Preached
- B. Preaching Strengthens Believers

The Goals

1. Explain the importance of preaching God's message.
2. Discuss how preaching the Word strengthens believers.

A. THE MESSAGE MUST BE PREACHED

Goal 1. Explain the importance of preaching God's message.

"Someday I would like to be a preacher like our pastor," said Timothy to Mary after a Sunday morning service.

"Why?"

"Because I think it would be great to have God give me a message from His Word to give to people. Besides, there was a Timothy in the Bible who was a preacher."

"You can!" Mary encouraged. "I know you can because I heard someone say that we must all preach or tell people about Jesus."

Preaching is proclaiming a message in such a way that it commands a hearing. Its purpose is to persuade people to trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord. The apostle Paul emphasized both the basic need of humankind and the grace of God to meet that need. His Christ-centered message proclaimed the good news of salvation through faith in Christ. Thus, to the church at Corinth, Paul wrote:

Brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand . . . For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins

according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:1, 3–4)

The preached message must also be Bible-centered, including Scripture to meet the needs of the whole person. It offers salvation for people's souls, healing for their bodies and minds, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit to revive their spirits. Added to this, the gospel offers the glorious hope of the second coming of Christ. What a message!

Such a message includes not only the life of Christ as recorded in the Gospels, but the action of the book of Acts. When we preach Christ risen, we remember His promise to send the Helper. (See John 14:16.) This promise was fulfilled at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. A Bible-centered message includes the whole Bible.

Preaching this message is not just for full-time pastors or evangelists. Millions of believers share the gospel in an informal way. For instance, the early church did this. Scattered by terrible persecution, laymen fled to Antioch in Syria. There they preached the gospel to Gentiles (non-Jews), telling them the good news about Jesus. As a result, a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. These lay folks caused the founding of a new church, the first among the Gentiles. (Read Acts 11:19–21.)

A more modern example of lay preaching comes from Ivory Coast, West Africa. Spirit-filled farmers and teachers, during their off season from work, gave several days a week to evangelism. Under the direction of their African pastors, groups went to various outposts. Dividing into small teams, they shared the good news with families sitting under shade trees. Villagers hearing the gospel from lay people like themselves accepted Jesus as Savior. As a result, many new churches were started.

Churches preach this message not only in their sanctuaries, but also in homes, in marketplaces, in evangelistic campaigns held in tents or halls, in prisons and hospitals, and in homes

for the aged or for the mentally ill. We have also preached in services held on board ocean freighters, inside stone houses in mountain villages, in booths along crowded streets, and in high-rise apartment buildings.

Application

1 Which three words below would describe the message about Christ that Paul preached (according to 1 Corinthians 15:3–4)?

- a)** Born
- b)** Crucified
- c)** Buried
- d)** Risen
- e)** Ascended

2 Circle the letter in front of the correct completion of the sentence. A Bible-centered message is one that

- a)** begins with a passage of Scripture.
- b)** branches out from a Bible story or parable.
- c)** applies the truth of Scripture to people's needs.

3 What are some of the places believers should preach the good news?

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B. PREACHING STRENGTHENS BELIEVERS

Goal 2. Discuss how preaching the Word strengthens believers.

Look at Paul's church-planting ministry in Corinth: "Many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). First they had to hear the Word of God. The hearing of the Word then created faith in their hearts, and through faith in Jesus Christ they were converted. Paul writes, "faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

The apostle John wrote his gospel for the specific purpose that his readers might believe, and that through their faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, they might have life (John 20:31).

After preaching a gospel message, an African invited his listeners to accept Christ. Several were converted. One man, however, seemed very distressed. The minister talked kindly to him, then read from Isaiah 53:6: “Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”

The man exclaimed, “That’s me! I’ve led a terrible life. I’m only fit to be lost!”

“Don’t despair,” the preacher said. “Listen to the remaining part of the verse.” He then read, “‘But the Lord made the punishment fall on him, the punishment all of us deserved.’ Did you understand that? God laid the punishment for your sins upon Jesus the Savior who died on Calvary in your place. Do you believe it?”

“That’s what it says.”

“Then where is the punishment for your sins?” the preacher asked.

“It has fallen on Jesus.” And with these words the man raised his face and exclaimed with joy, “O thank God, I’m set free! Jesus bore my punishment!”
Saving faith for this man rose out of hearing and then believing the Word of God.

Application

4 In your own words describe the relationship between faith and God’s Word.

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When Jesus faced temptation, He used Scripture as a weapon with which to defeat His enemy. For us, too, God's Word serves as the "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17) to win the victory. One of the temptations our Lord faced after fasting came in this form:

The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" (Matthew 4:3-4)

With that statement Jesus defeated the devil. And with that statement we are told how important God's Word is—more important than our daily food.

We must eat if we are to grow and to keep up our physical strength. We must feed on the Word of God if we are to grow spiritually and to have strength to withstand temptation. The psalmist put it this way: "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103). Acts 8:8 tells us that after Philip preached in Samaria there was "great joy in that city."

Joy does more than make us feel good. "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). And the source of this joy is in His Word. God's Word gives us the message of God's grace, His divine favor. When Paul was leaving Ephesus after three years of ministry there, he knew that the people would be facing new problems, so he comforted them with these words:

Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. (Acts 20:32)

Application

5 Circle the letter in front of the correct completions to the sentence. God’s Word is spiritual food that

- a)** we need for spiritual growth.
- b)** is good but not necessary.
- c)** we should be sharing.

6 Why did Jesus say we need God’s Word as well as bread?

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7 Paul said that the message of God’s grace would

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Check Your Answers

- 1 **b)** Crucified
 c) Buried
 d) Risen
- 4 Faith comes from hearing and believing God's Word.
- 2 **c)** applies the truth of Scripture to people's needs.
- 5 **a)** we need for spiritual growth.
 c) we should be sharing with others.
- 6 Bread only nourishes our physical bodies; we also need spiritual nourishment.
- 3 Your answer. You might have listed jails, rest homes, public parks, or your own homes and communities. As you look for opportunities you will find them.
- 7 build us up and give us God's blessings.

4 Churches Teach the Truth

All through the ages great minds have searched for truth. They came short of finding it, however, if they did not look for it in the right place. Jesus said in prayer to God the Father, “Your word is truth” (John 17:17).

The Bible is a marvelous book, a volume of 66 books written over a span of about 1,600 years. Churches have the task of teaching truths from this tremendous work. More has been written about the Bible than about any other book as truths of the Bible are inexhaustible.

As you get into a lifelong study of the Bible, you will discover gold, silver, and precious stones in the mines of Scripture. It contains treasure worth digging for!

The Plan

- A. Teaching: A Ministry Gift
- B. Church Schools
- C. Bible Study Classes
- D. Lay Leaders' Training

The Goals

- 1. Discuss the ministry gift of teachers.
- 2. Describe the varieties of church school and Bible study classes.
- 3. State the advantages of Bible study classes.
- 4. Identify the purpose of lay leaders' training classes.

A. TEACHING: A MINISTRY GIFT

Goal 1. Discuss the ministry gift of teachers.

In Lesson 2 you were introduced to nine gifts of the Holy Spirit. In addition to gifts of the Holy Spirit, God has given ministry gifts for the building up of His church. "In the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers" (1 Corinthians 12:28).

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. (Ephesians 4:11–12)

In 1 Corinthians 12 the teaching ministry is rated as very important. Where Paul actually numbers the ministry gifts, the work of a teacher comes third. Some Bible scholars place the combined gifts of pastor and teacher on the same level.

Mary and Timothy enjoy the Bible class for young adults. Their teacher, Andrew Jay, gives well-prepared lessons and encourages everyone to participate in their lively discussions.

Timothy asks him, “What is the difference between the ministry of a pastor and that of a teacher?”

“What do you think?” asks Mr. Jay.

Timothy ponders, then replies, “It seems to me that there is a close relationship. Both a pastor and a teacher should study the Bible and pray in preparation for what they present. Maybe the main difference is in the manner in which it is given.”

“Yes,” says Mr. Jay. “Perhaps we could put it this way. All pastors must also be teachers. They must study hard and be able to teach, to instruct others, and to inspire them with their sermons. All teachers, however, are not pastors. As you see, I’m a teacher, but not a pastor. I do not preach publicly or pastor a church. Both pastors and teachers have their distinct functions or ministries in the church.”

You learned in Lesson 3 that preaching is proclaiming a message to persuade listeners to respond in repentance and dedication. Teaching is explaining truth with the purpose of informing people, to help them grow spiritually.

Christ has placed teachers in the church. A person with a gift of teaching needs to develop that gift. A good teacher, like an accomplished violinist, is not born as such. Teachers must receive training; they must study if they are to know their subjects well. They shoulder the great responsibility of teaching God’s Word to people who, in turn, teach and train others. This is why the apostle Paul encouraged Timothy:

The things you have heard me say in the
presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable
men who will also be qualified to teach others.
(2 Timothy 2:2)

Earlier he had written, “Of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher” (2 Timothy 1:11). Here

he placed his offices of apostle and teacher together. Paul the apostle became a teacher of teachers.

Application

- 1** Choose the best answer of the two given in parentheses and write it in the blank.
 - a)** Teaching is God's Word.
(proclaiming/explaining)
 - b)** Preaching is God's Word.
(proclaiming/explaining)
 - c)** Paul lists third on the list of ministry gifts.
(preaching/teaching)
-

B. CHURCH SCHOOLS

Goal 2. Describe the varieties of church school and Bible study classes.

Mary and Timothy represent millions of believers who participate in church schools. Those meeting on Sunday are usually called Sunday Schools. The first Sunday School was held in England in 1780, where Robert Raikes noticed the wild behavior of children on Sundays when they were free from their work in the factories. He invited many of them to a school where he had arranged for some women to teach them reading and church doctrine. Once he encouraged poor, hungry children to come by offering cooked potatoes.

His work with the children was so successful that the district in which he worked was described as "quite a heaven upon Sundays!" The idea of Sunday School spread rapidly to other parts of the world. These schools play an important role in fulfilling Christ's command to go everywhere and make disciples.

Though Sunday School began with children, all ages need this training. Some churches have activities and classes for every age and type of student. Many churches now prefer to

use the term *church school* because classes may be held at times other than on Sundays, for example, on Saturday or on weekday evenings.

Church school facilities may be elaborate with a complete building primarily for this purpose. Each class has its own meeting place with adequate teaching aids and materials. Other church schools have little or no equipment. Students may be seated on the ground in the shade of trees or other shelter. Perhaps no literature is available. But some teachers are able to do amazingly well with so little! Whatever the facilities may be, teachers must have a message and be trained to teach it.

Vacation Bible School (VBS), a branch of the church school ministry, is usually conducted for a week or two when children are free from their regular schooling. VBS may be held in the home community, in another building, or at a camp.

Some churches have developed Christian schools offering primary and even secondary education. Others have classes for adults who want to learn to read. These classes use the Bible as one of their textbooks.

Whatever avenue they choose, the main function of church schools is to provide Christian education for all. Public preaching of God's Word is not enough. Our children and young people especially need Bible teaching. A strong church school will help make a strong local church.

Application

- 2** Circle the letter in front of each true statement.
- a)** Church schools are only for children.
- b)** Teaching in Sunday School or church school is an important ministry.
- c)** Teachers need training even if they teach only one hour a week.
- d)** The church school has no real effect on the church as a whole.

3 List four possible avenues of outreach that the church school may have.

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C. BIBLE STUDY CLASSES

Goal 3. State the advantages of Bible study classes.

Closely linked with church schools are Bible study classes. These classes, devoted to the study of the Scriptures, are usually attended by adults. They do not have the range of age levels as do the church schools although the studies may be divided into groups for men, women, and youth. Often larger churches divide their studies so that people may take classes that fit a particular need or interest.

Many churches conduct a midweek service that includes both a time for prayer and a period of Bible study. Pastors or lay leaders teach these classes.

Sessions may deal with a theme of the Bible, such as salvation; or the class may choose to study the life of a person, like Moses or David. The studies can also center on a section or passage of Scripture such as the Beatitudes or the book of James.

Interesting Bible studies taught under the anointing of the Holy Spirit is a blessing. Paul encourages, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another ” (Colossians 3:16). After the Day of Pentecost the apostles taught believers doctrines of faith, and through the years that followed, teaching was emphasized (Acts 19:9–10; 20:20).

A church deeply rooted in God's Word is a strong church that will not be easily swayed by strange doctrines. As we become spiritually mature, "we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming" (Ephesians 4:13–14).

Bible studies conducted in believers' homes have been successful. Classes are held during the week at a time and place suitable for a group of perhaps ten to twenty people. This form of study and sharing has the advantage of bringing the teaching of God's Word closer to the lives of those attending. In a home atmosphere people feel more free about sharing truths and experiences with each other.

In this system of home studies the teachers themselves often attend classes beforehand. Besides receiving this added help, the teacher must spend much time in prayer and preparation before giving the lesson to others.

Correspondence courses such as those offered by Global University are being used effectively by many groups. Sharing a series of lessons makes it more interesting for all. Certificates can be given to those who successfully complete a course.

Bible studies can also be conducted at camps or retreats. As people come away from home and work, they find more time for meditating on God's Word. Sound Bible study classes yield fruit. And when combined with prayer and waiting upon God they bear more fruit.

Application

4 Circle the letter in front of each correct completion to the sentence. One of the advantages of having Bible study groups is that

- a)** people often feel freer to share their experiences in an informal setting.
- b)** they can be structured to fit a particular need or age group.
- c)** group study can be both interesting and effective.
- d)** it takes the place of going to church.

5 Our lesson suggested three possible ways to study in a Bible class. One was to choose a theme to study. The other two were to study

D. LAY LEADERS' TRAINING

Goal 4. Identify the purpose of lay leaders' training classes.

It is a pleasant spring evening and Mary and Timothy are walking home from church.

"What about this lay leaders' class to begin tomorrow night, Timothy? What are lay leaders? Are you going?" asks Mary.

"No." Timothy replies. "Lay leaders are people who have secular work, but also work in the church. They hold offices like elders, deacons, group leaders, and Sunday School teachers. Allen is one."

"Allen is one what?" asks Allen as he catches up to walk with them.

"Wouldn't you like to know!" laughs Timothy, teasing him. "But seriously, Allen, we were talking about your being a lay leader and about the training classes beginning tomorrow. You're going, right?"

"Yes, indeed!" replies Allen. "I need all the training I can get! Being a leader in the Lord's work is a big responsibility. You may sit in on the classes if you wish, Timothy. We need every leader that can be trained for the future. Our pastor and his assistants can't take care of everything, especially as the church grows. We must free them so they can devote more time to spiritual ministry. In fact, all God's people must be prepared for Christian service."

First Timothy 3:1–7 lists high qualifications for all church leaders. They must be mature in the faith, be trustworthy, and lead respectable personal lives. Lay leaders training classes include Bible studies as well as practical helps for dealing

with people's needs and church matters. It is important for all those God has called into lay ministries to be trained for these responsibilities.

Application

- 6** Circle the letter in front of each correct completion to the sentence. Lay leaders training classes help to prepare workers
- a)** to teach biblical truths.
 - b)** to be pastors.
 - c)** for practical Christian service.
 - d)** for further responsibilities in the church.
-



Check Your Answers

- 4 **a)** people often feel more free to share their experiences in an informal setting.
 b) they can be structured to fit a particular need or age group.
 c) group study can be both interesting and effective.
- 1 **a)** explaining
 b) proclaiming
 c) teaching
- 5 a Bible passage or the life of a person.
- 2 **b)** and **c)** are true.
- 6 **a)** to teach biblical truths.
 c) for practical Christian service.
 d) for further responsibilities in the church.
- 3 You may have listed any of the following: teaching children and young people, classes for the deaf, vacation Bible school, summer camps, Christian schools, adult education classes, or other forms of outreach that you know about.

LESSON 5 Churches Baptize Believers

Years ago in mainland China some Chinese Christians were discussing various churches' views on water baptism. One lay leader expressed said, "Some groups believe in 'Big Wash.' Others hold to 'Little Wash.' And the rest have 'No Wash.'"

The speaker meant that those in the "No Wash" group do not practice any form of baptismal ceremony. To them it is not essential.

The "Little Wash" group represents the churches that practice baptism by sprinkling water as a symbol of water baptism. Most of these churches also use colorful and impressive rituals.

"Big Wash" groups practice baptism by immersion, putting the candidates under the water. Pentecostal or full gospel churches are in this group. Before being baptized, however, a person should understand the meaning of baptism and why it is recognized as an ordinance of the church.

The Plan

- A. The Symbolism of Baptism
- B. Its Purpose
- C. Its Forms

The Goals

- 1. Explain what water baptism symbolizes.
- 2. State truths concerning the importance of water baptism.
- 3. Evaluate forms of baptism in light of Scripture.

A. THE SYMBOLISM OF BAPTISM

Goal 1. Explain what water baptism symbolizes.

Mary has not yet been baptized in water, although she has seen others being baptized. Timothy, who has already taken the step, is encouraging her to do the same.

“I don’t understand why we have to be put under the water. I wouldn’t want people to see me come up with my hair all wet!”

“They won’t be looking at that,” encourages Timothy. “Haven’t you noticed how people seem to glow with joy after they are baptized? That is because they have identified themselves with the Lord Jesus. All the Christians rejoice with them.”

“I do want to obey the Lord,” agrees Mary. “But I still don’t fully understand.”

“After we attend the class for baptismal candidates, you will,” Timothy assures her. “And you will be eager to be baptized too!”

Jesus instituted two ordinances—water baptism and communion, both of which portray great Bible truths in visual form. An ordinance is an established rule or an authoritative decree. Church ordinances are based on the authority of

God's Word. In this lesson we will look at the first of these ordinances, water baptism. Water baptism gives a two-fold picture. The first is that of Christ dying in our place. The apostle Paul writes,

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)

The convert going down into the water pictures Christ dying for our sins. His or her being momentarily under the water speaks of Christ being buried. Then when he or she is lifted out of the water this demonstrates Christ being raised to life. Paul writes, "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification" (Romans 4:25).

Baptism is also a picture of our deliverance from sin and union with Christ. The believer baptized in water illustrates the following truths:

1. He or she is "crucified with him" (Romans 6:6). Galatians 2:20 also refers to the old nature being crucified with Christ.
2. He or she is "buried with him" (Colossians 2:12). The believer being baptized is attending, in a spiritual sense, his or her own funeral. The old self life must die and be buried.
3. He or she is "raised with him" (Colossians 2:12). Jesus said, "'Because I live, you also will live'" (John 14:19).
4. He or she now lives "a new life" (Romans 6:4). Like Paul, he or she can say, "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20).

Christian baptism is summarized in these words: "All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

Application

1 Complete the following sentence. For a believer being baptized, going into the water symbolizes that Christ ;
being under the water symbolizes that Christ was ;
coming out of the water symbolizes that He was

.....
2 Water baptism is also a picture of something that happens to the old self. Write it in your own words.

.....
.....



B. ITS PURPOSE

Goal 2. State truths concerning the importance of water baptism.

Christian baptism probably had its origin in a custom observed by the Jews before the time of Christ. When a Gentile (non-Jew) chose to follow the true God, he underwent a baptism. The convert would stand in water while a rabbi read to him a passage from the law of Moses. Then the convert would plunge into the water as a sign of cleansing himself from the old life of heathenism. Coming out of the water symbolized his new life as one of God's covenant people. He "acted out" his decision to serve the Lord.

Today baptism in water is a public witness that a believer has accepted Christ and chooses to follow Him in the fellowship of a local church.

A church leader, such as the pastor, performs the baptismal ceremony. Baptism in water is usually a once-in-a-lifetime experience. However, a person who was baptized at a time when he or she was not truly converted might desire to be

baptized again, in order to experience a meaningful baptism in place of an empty ritual.

In simple terms, baptism is an outward sign of an inner trust in Christ. It is a public confession of Christian discipleship in obedience to Jesus' command to make disciples and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

The Bible does not say where baptismal services should be held. We recall some rather unusual services, one which took place at the seashore. For this we had to get special permission from the authorities. Soldiers holding their guns with bayonets fixed watched as the national pastor and I baptized converts. Seeing the candidates for baptism being put under the waves and then brought up again while people sang joyful choruses made them curious.

"What kind of ceremony is this?" they asked.

Thus the way was opened for believers to tell about their salvation and why they were following the Lord in baptism.

Regardless of the facilities, whether in a church baptistry or in a river or stream, the spiritual significance of baptism and our confession of Christ are of primary importance.

Application

- 3** Which of the following statements are true?
- a)** My loyalty to Christ is expressed by my obedience to His commands.
 - b)** Water baptism is an outward sign of an inward trust, an acceptance of Christ as my Savior.
 - c)** It is important for me to be baptized if it is part of our family tradition.
 - d)** I should be willing to confess Christ publicly and let the world know that I have accepted Him as Lord of my life.
 - e)** Baptism is worthwhile but optional for Christians.
-

C. ITS FORMS

Goal 3. Evaluate forms of baptism in light of Scripture.

John's Baptism

In a desert area by the Jordan River a prophet named John the Baptist preached repentance. Luke later wrote, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus” (Acts 19:4).

Then one day Jesus appeared and He, too, asked to be baptized. John declined for he knew who Jesus was—the Son of God! Jesus had no sin and did not need to repent and be baptized. But Jesus told John that by being baptized He would fulfill what God required, and John agreed to baptize Him (Matthew 3:13–15).

As soon as Jesus was baptized, He came up out of the water. Then heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and lighting on Him. A voice spoke from heaven, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:16–17). Thus Jesus identified himself with sinful humankind, becoming an example for us all.

Application

4 Complete the following sentences.

- a)** John’s baptism was a baptism of
- b)** Christ’s baptism identified Him with



Baptism in the Early Church

The baptism of John served a unique purpose in preparing people to receive their Messiah (Matthew 3:1–6). It was a sign of confessing and turning from their sins. After the death of Christ baptism took on new meaning. Now, because their sins were washed away by the shed blood of Jesus, believers were baptized to identify themselves with His completed work of

redemption. (Acts 22:16; 1 John 1:7). However, the water of baptism in itself can never wash away sins! Cleansing from sin comes only through the merit of Christ's shed blood.

In the Great Commission, Christ's clear command is to make disciples by going to all people everywhere, baptizing and teaching them (Matthew 28:19–20). The early church leaders baptized converts in obedience to Christ's command. We read of 3,000 baptized on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41). Philip the evangelist baptized the Ethiopian official when he believed on Jesus Christ (Acts 8:36–38). Ananias, a layman, baptized Saul who later became the apostle Paul (Acts 9:18). Cornelius, captain of the Italian Regiment, together with relatives and close friends, was baptized in water after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them (Acts 10:24–48).

During Paul's first ministry in Europe, Lydia and her household were baptized (Acts 16:15). Later the Roman jailer and his family were baptized (Acts 16:32–34). Then in Corinth a leader of the synagogue, Crispus, and his family believed on Christ and were baptized along with many others (Acts 18:8).

From all these records of baptisms we learn that turning from sin (repentance) and believing in Jesus as Savior were essential requirements. We also learn that baptism in water was not the same experience as conversion, or the same experience as the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Application

- 5** Which of the following statements is true?
- a)** The baptism of John the Baptist and ours today have the same meaning.
 - b)** The early church baptized in obedience to Christ.
 - c)** Conversion, water baptism, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit are all terms for the same general experience.
-

Forms of Baptism Today

Pentecostal churches believe that immersion (putting the candidate completely under the water) agrees with New Testament teaching and practice. In some churches, tradition (and perhaps a lack of water long ago) changed baptism by immersion to baptism by sprinkling or pouring. This form of baptism, however, does not give as clear a picture of Christ who died, was buried, and rose again.

A few groups who believe in immersion also make an issue of being baptized in the name of Jesus, because this phrase is used in Acts 2:38 and Acts 19:5. It was probably used to distinguish Christian baptism from John's baptism, and most evangelical churches do not try to build a doctrine on it. Christ's own command leaves no question: "'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'" (Matthew 28:19).

Another group baptizes three times—once in the name of the Father, once in the name of the Son, and once in the name of the Holy Spirit. They do it to honor the persons of the Trinity (Triune God), but we do not see that as essential. The act of baptism needs to be only once, even as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one.

Tradition also brought about infant baptism—sprinkling water on a baby to be sure he or she will go to heaven upon death. But a baby has not sinned; neither has he or she knowledge of right and wrong. Therefore, babies have no need of repentance. Many believers choose instead to dedicate their children to the Lord. We shall study about this in Lesson 8.

If you have not been baptized in water, we hope this lesson has helped you to see what the Bible teaches on baptism. As you follow the Lord in baptism, His blessings await you!

Application

- 6** Circle the letter in front of each true statement.
- a)** Babies should be sprinkled with water to wash away their sins.
 - b)** Baptism should be a sad experience because it reminds us of our sin.
 - c)** Religious traditions may not always follow Bible teaching.
 - d)** One must be baptized to be saved.
 - e)** Every believer should obey the Lord’s command to be baptized.
- 7** Fill in the following blanks.
- a)** Jesus’ command was to be baptized in the name of the
....., the, and the
 - b)** Baptism by putting the believer under the water is called
 - c)** Why do Pentecostals practice baptism by immersion?
.....



Check Your Answers

- 1** died for us, buried, raised to life.
- 5 b)** is true.
- 2** Your own words. Your answer might be something like this: When we accept Christ our old life is put away and we are raised to live a new life in Him.
- 6 c)** and **e)** are true.
- 3 a), b), and d)** are true.
- 7 a)** Father, Son, Holy Spirit.
b) immersion.
c) They believe it agrees with New Testament practice and teaching.
- 4 a)** repentance.
b) sinful humankind.

Now that you have completed the first unit, you are ready to answer the questions in Unit One Evaluation. Review the previous lessons, then follow the instructions in your student report. Send your answer sheet to the address given on the copyright page of your study guide.



Lessons

- 6 Churches Remember the Lord's Death**
- 7 Churches Provide Fellowship**
- 8 Churches Celebrate**
- 9 Churches Grow**
- 10 Churches Serve People**

6 Churches Remember the Lord's Death

During the seventeenth century in Scotland the Covenanters, an evangelical group, faced severe persecution. They had to meet secretly.

One evening a Scottish girl was on her way to a believers' meeting. Suddenly some enemies sprang into her path. Seizing her roughly, they asked where she was going. In a flash of inspiration she bravely replied, "I'm on my way to a supper to hear my Elder Brother's will and testament read."

"That sounds harmless enough," the leader of the men replied, and let her go. Joyfully the girl hurried on to the secret meeting to partake of holy communion.

The Scottish girl referred to the Lord's table as being the supper to which she was going. Jesus was her Elder Brother. The will to be read was the new covenant the Lord made in effect by His death on the Cross.

The Plan

- A. The Lord's Table
- B. The Bread and the Cup
- C. Forms and Purposes of Holy Communion

The Goals

1. Explain the significance of the Lord's table.
2. State the importance of the emblems of communion.
3. State the purposes of the Lord's Supper or holy communion.

A. THE LORD'S TABLE

Goal 1. Explain the significance of the Lord's table.

"Mary looks radiant," Timothy beams as she takes her place beside him. She and several others have just been baptized in water. A communion service is about to begin, and she will participate for the first time.

Mary had already received teaching on the meaning of the Lord's Supper. So she joins in the singing and worship. Later, as she hears the pastor read the words of Jesus, "'This is my body given for you'" (Luke 22:19), tears fill her eyes. She understands so much better now what it means to worship. Instead of looking around as the emblem of bread is passed, she praises the Lord in her heart. The pastor continues, "'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you'" (Luke 22:20).

The believers take communion with reverence. How wonderful that the Lord should offer himself for the sins of the world! Mary feels the nearness of the Lord and hungers for more of God's Spirit.

"We need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit," she whispers to Timothy. He squeezes her hand in agreement.

In Paris, France, stands a great monument, the magnificent Arch of Triumph. Beneath the huge arch in a tomb lies “The Unknown Soldier,” representing all the soldiers who have died in battle. Every evening members of a patriotic group light a “flame of remembrance,” expressing the gratitude of a nation for its men who sacrificed their lives for their country.

Believers, too, have a memorial. The Lord’s Table, or holy communion, reminds us of the suffering and death that Jesus endured for us. The broken bread and the cup represent His body that was crucified and His blood shed for all the sin of humanity. We partake of the bread and cup of the Lord’s table to remind us of this great sacrifice of Jesus (1 Corinthians 5:7).

Taking part in holy communion symbolizes the suffering and death of Jesus. In remembering, however, we must not just sympathize with His sufferings. We should think of and accept His victory and finished work. Christ’s death was not in vain. He fulfilled the work the Father sent Him to do that He might claim a people for His own.

In addition, we must remember that the Lord’s table is a memorial. It speaks to us of how Christ “appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Hebrews 9:26). The Lord’s table is not an altar upon which Christ is to be sacrificed again! When we observe the Lord’s death, we thank Him for His sacrifice that is complete. We proclaim His death until He comes again (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Application

- 1** Circle the letter in front of each correct completion to the sentence. Observing the Lord’s Supper is significant because it
- a)** reminds us of Jesus and His sacrifice for us.
 - b)** reminds us of His victory over sin.
 - c)** helps us remember that He still reigns.

- 2** Circle the letter in front of each true statement.
- a)** The Lord's Supper is an altar of sacrifice for us.
 - b)** Jesus' death brought a new covenant into effect, and now we are saved by faith.
 - c)** Communion is a continuing observance until Jesus comes again.
 - d)** Everyone should take part in the Lord's Supper, even if he or she does not know what it means.
-

B. THE BREAD AND THE CUP

Goal 2. State the importance of the emblems of communion.

The Bread

At the Passover supper that Jesus ate with His disciples He took a piece of bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave His disciples saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

Earlier in His ministry Jesus had spoken of himself as the "bread from heaven" and the "bread of life" (John 6:32, 35). He was the bread that God gave, the One who came from heaven and gave His life to the world. John writes of Jesus: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51).

That Jesus meant all this to be in a spiritual sense is clear from the reading of John 6:25–58. Some of His listeners thought the Lord meant His actual physical flesh, and they argued about it. However, one must interpret this language in the same way as one interprets the words, "I am the gate for the sheep" (John 10:7). Jesus is not a literal gate; the gate typifies Him and His work. Certain features of a gate, such as its strength and protection, represent His character and ministry.

When we eat of bread at the Lord's table, we in faith receive the life of Jesus. Just as literal bread strengthens our physical bodies, so His life gives us spiritual strength.

The Cup

After the supper Jesus took the cup and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:25). The fruit of the vine represents His shed blood; the cup also represents the new covenant sealed with His blood that was poured out for us (Luke 22:20).

Later that night, after the supper and His talk with the disciples, the Lord Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. There, in a place called Gethsemane, He knelt alone and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). The "cup" He drank from represents the sins of the world. This burden was far more terrible than the physical pain that He bore. His anguish was so great that His sweat fell like drops of blood to the ground.

The cup of suffering and sin that Jesus drank has become the cup of salvation for us. May we always be full of gratitude to Him who loved us and gave His life for us.

Application

- 3** Jesus broke the bread and said that it was His
He later gave the fruit of the vine, which typifies His
- 4** The "cup" has a twofold meaning. Circle the letter in front of each correct definition.
 - a)** The new covenant sealed with Jesus' blood
 - b)** The suffering Jesus went through for us
 - c)** Forgiveness of sin if we take communion

5 For the descriptions on the left write the number which represents the symbol or object described (right column).

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| ... a Guards and protects | 1) Bread |
| ... b Leads | 2) Vine |
| ... c Disperses darkness | 3) Light |
| ... d Supports | 4) Lamb |
| ... e Quenches thirst | 5) Water |
| ... f A sacrifice | 6) Shepherd |
| ... g Spiritual life | 7) Door |

C. FORMS AND PURPOSES OF HOLY COMMUNION

Goal 3. State the purposes of the Lord's Supper or holy communion.

A variety of church practices exist with respect to the Lord's Supper. For the bread some groups use only unleavened bread. This follows the pattern of the Passover bread made without yeast or leaven. Others prefer that the bread be in one piece, either a loaf or a wafer to be broken by the leader into small pieces. Large churches may find individual-size wafers more practical.

Some churches use one or two large cups that are shared by all the participants. In this case the cup is wiped with a cloth after each person takes a sip. Other congregations make use of small individual cups. The drink is usually grape juice, but may be wine or wine mixed with water. In parts of the world where grape juice is not obtainable, juices of other fruits are substituted.

Some churches observe the Lord's Supper every Sunday as part of the morning worship. Others serve communion

the first Sunday of every month. Rural churches might have communion only once in several months—whenever a minister is able to come for a service. The Scripture says “whenever” (1 Corinthians 11:25–26), which leaves it up to the local churches to decide what is best for them.

Though some churches practice “closed communion” (restricting it to their own members), most Pentecostal churches have “open communion.” This means that all who are born-again believers are invited to participate.

Application

6 Reflect on how communion is practiced at your church. List the characteristics mentioned above that apply.

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.....



Its Purposes

While the forms for observing holy communion vary from place to place, its purposes should be the same. They are as follows:

1. To remind us of Jesus Christ and what He did. It is a memorial feast to honor, worship, and thank Him. The Holy Spirit wants to make Christ’s sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension meaningful and real to each person.
2. To draw believers together in love and unity through fellowship with Jesus Christ. John, the apostle of love, writes: “If we walk in the light, as he [Jesus] is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).
3. To point believers to the glorious hope of the future, when Christ will set up His kingdom. At the table Jesus said, “I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s

kingdom” (Matthew 26:29). And Paul exhorts us at the communion table to “proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26).

4. To provide healing and restoration. The Bible teaches that each one must examine himself or herself first before eating the bread and drinking from the cup (1 Corinthians 11:28). We are to come in humility and dependence on Him. In faith we can draw from His life and strength, even for our physical bodies.

This last point is illustrated by the following story. Au-ma was a Chinese tribeswoman who had heard the gospel from missionaries. She in turn became a “Bible woman” ministering to her own people. One day while partaking of the Lord’s Supper, Au-ma felt led of the Holy Spirit to take some of the bread and juice to a poor outcast leper woman who desperately needed help. She hurried up the mountain path to the leper’s home to pray for her. Then, with a heart full of faith and love, she shared the symbols of the Lord’s body and blood. As the leper received these emblems, Jesus’ power came upon her and she was completely healed!

Application

- 7** Circle the letter in front of each true statement.
- a)** “Open” communion means that only the members of the church may partake.
 - b)** Communion is nothing but a memorial.
 - c)** The Bible does not say how often communion should be taken.
 - d)** Forms of serving communion may vary, but the purpose remains the same.
- 8** Which are purposes for celebrating the Lord’s Supper?
- a)** To remind us of the Lord’s Second Coming
 - b)** To remember the death of Christ for our sins
 - c)** To create a beautiful service
 - d)** To provide for healing
 - e)** To bring believers together in love

9 Tell what partaking of the Lord’s Supper has meant to you.

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Check Your Answers

- 1** **a)** reminds us of Jesus and His sacrifice for us.
 b) reminds us of His victory over sin.
 c) helps us remember that He still reigns.
- 6** Your answer.
- 2** Statements **b)** and **c)** are true.
- 7** Statements **c)** and **d)** are true.
- 3** body; blood
- 8** **a)** To remind us of the Lord's Second Coming
 b) To remember the death of Christ for our sins
 d) To provide for healing
 e) To bring believers together in love
- 4** **a)** The new covenant sealed with Jesus' blood.
 b) The suffering Jesus went through for us.
- 9** Your own words. (Possible response: It has helped me not to take for granted what the Lord has done for me. It gives me new hope and courage as well.)
- 5** **a** 7) Door
 b 6) Shepherd
 c 3) Light
 d 2) Vine
 e 5) Water
 f 4) Lamb
 g 1) Bread

LESSON 7 Churches Provide Fellowship

Just before a Sunday morning communion service, five persons to be received as church members stood before a pastor and a group of deacons. One new member was a Chinese businessman and another was a girl who worked as a maid in a wealthy home. The others were an old man, a teenage boy, and a factory woman. Impressed by the variety of backgrounds, the pastor remarked, “Today five different people will receive the right hand of fellowship, becoming members of this church. Though not alike in race, position, or age, through salvation in Christ each has been brought into one fellowship. As the apostle said, there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free men, between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus. Today you see proof of this!”

God has designed fellowship that we may be a help, strength, and joy to each other. This is one of the important functions of the local church.

The Plan

- A. Fellowship in the Local Church
- B. Fellowship Between Churches

The Goals

1. Explain the importance of fellowship in the local church.
2. Identify various forms of fellowship activities.

A. FELLOWSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Goal 1. Explain the importance of fellowship in the local church.

Reasons for Fellowship

Something wonderful happened. During a week of special meetings both Timothy and Mary received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It made them want to share the good news with everyone. Mary's parents, who showed no interest in the gospel before, were impressed by the change in Mary. While not yet ready to visit the church, they did accept an invitation to a church picnic at the park.

There was plenty of food and games. The people seemed to really care about each other, and they warmly included Mary's parents in all the activities. Mary's younger brother especially enjoyed the races. When he heard the others talk about what they did in Sunday School, he decided he wanted to go too.

Mary's family began to attend meetings and soon all three were converted. Christian fellowship first attracted them to the church and eventually led to their hearing and responding to the message of salvation.

The early church provided for this basic need for fellowship. After Peter's preaching on the Day of Pentecost, many believed and were baptized. About 3,000 people were added to the church that day. They "devoted themselves to the apostles'

teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42).

We have drawn the following guidelines from the example left us by the early church:

1. *Believers took time to learn from the apostles.* With the large numbers being saved, each one could hardly have had private instruction. Perhaps they were in classes comparable to our church school. As we study God’s Word together, we not only learn, but also develop closeness as we share the beautiful truths of our heavenly Father.

2. *Believers all took part in the fellowship.* In today’s world people still need the fellowship of a local church. Listening to gospel broadcasts or watching church services on television does not substitute for being part of a local body.

It can be especially difficult for young converts to live the Christian life by themselves. They need the strength and the experience of mature believers, and seasoned Christians need the zeal and enthusiasm of new Christians. By meeting the entire church is strengthened.

3. *They shared meals together.* Eating is an essential part of life, and eating together is a vital kind of fellowship. Inviting a person to eat with you is a sign of friendship. Fellowship meals play an important part in church life.

4. *The early church emphasized praying together.* Prayer gatherings in a church building or in homes strengthen spiritual fellowship. As believers worship the Lord and pray for each other, they grow together in grace and love.

5. *They shared needs together.* Members of the early church were considerate of each other. They helped widows and the poor (Acts 2:44; 4:32; 6:1; 9:36). Because of this sharing, Paul was able to write to the young church at Philippi, “If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion” (Philippians 2:1). This is how it should be done in the churches today.

Application

1 If a local church meets only for teaching and prayer, what three activities are lacking?

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.....

Structures for Fellowship

We have seen how doing things together is a vital part of our Christian life. We shall now look at some of the organizations within the church that help meet our need for fellowship.

Christian women often form their own groups for fellowship and outreach in prayer, work, and giving. Their concerns are for the church, missionaries, and local needs. They work together on projects such as sewing for needy families, decorating Sunday School rooms, or visiting shut-ins. Their giving may seem small, but it is surprising what big things they accomplish! They find real joy in this fellowship of helping.

Men also organize into groups and meet for prayer. They raise funds for missionary projects, or perhaps for Christian literature. In some places they help to build their own or another church building. Not least in their activities is that of reaching other men for Christ.

Children are encouraged to engage in programs designed especially for them. Capable, consecrated adults teach them various skills: cooking, sewing, handwork, camping, woodwork, and survival skills. These fun times help them stay interested in church. Both boys' and girls' groups are trained in Christian principles. They memorize Scripture and are given goals to strive toward. Guided while young and responsive, they are more likely to grow into well-rounded adults who love and serve the Lord.

Youth also need activities suited to them. Given worthwhile goals, they can do much for the church and its outreach. They have their own services with leaders from within their group, under the direction of the pastor. Some larger churches have a youth pastor in addition to the regular pastor. Young people should be provided with interesting activities and teaching to counteract the attractions and temptations of a sinful world.

The church can meet the needs of elderly people. One of the greatest problems of older people in many societies today is that of loneliness—they feel forgotten. Churches reaching these people in retirement homes or private residences not only help to fill their empty hours, but serve as a reminder that God cares.

These organizations and others within the church provide needed fellowship. There can also be get-togethers for special occasions and holidays. A picnic is a common favorite. Some churches have a fellowship hall, a place with tables, chairs, and a kitchen unit, where all kinds of gatherings can take place.

Perhaps you can think of other ways that people can have fellowship. Sometimes fellowship takes place without previous planning as the Lord lets us meet other believers in unexpected ways. Although the main purpose of the church is to worship, fellowship contributes to the well-being of a balanced church. Worship is lifting our hands to God. Fellowship is holding our hands out to each other.

Application

- 2** Circle the letter in front of each true statement.
- a)** The early church spent all its free time in study and in prayer.
 - b)** Children can have fun and learn in church-related activities.
 - c)** Young people should be provided with interesting activities to counteract the temptations of the world.
 - d)** Fellowship with believers helps produce a well-balanced Christian life.

3 From the list below, select the key word to having fellowship.

- a)** Study
- b)** Organization
- c)** Picnic
- d)** Togetherness
- e)** Needs

4 Which activities or organizations in the church appeals most to you?

.....

.....



If you are not already involved in some form of fellowship with other believers, look for a way to get involved. If your church is lacking in opportunities for fellowship, ask others to work together with you to get it going.

B. FELLOWSHIP BETWEEN CHURCHES

Goal 2. Identify various forms of fellowship activities.

Taking part in fellowship between churches is a stimulating experience. It broadens our outlook and helps each church realize it is part of a much greater whole—the body of Christ. Wider ranges of friends are formed as we associate with other churches.

Fellowship meetings. In some areas fellowship meetings are held once a month. Churches take turns being the host to other churches. Preaching of the Word, testimonies of answered prayer, perhaps a meal together in between services, and special singing and music are features of a fellowship meeting.

Rallies. These are usually get-togethers of the various groups with similar groups from other churches. Young people enjoy youth rallies conducted by their youth leaders. Women

respond to women's rallies and men like to attend men's conventions.

Contests. Memory work competition, or Bible Quiz competition between churches, encourage the study of God's Word. Musical competition is also a means of attracting people to the church.

Camps and Retreats. Church members over a wide area get away from their everyday work schedules to attend camps or retreats. As they take time out for spiritual things they are refreshed and edified. Many people have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit at a camp or retreat.

United Evangelistic Outreach. Churches near each other can work together in a joint outreach. Special speakers or musical groups may be invited to minister. Such meetings make a strong impact on the community. Follow-up work should be organized so new converts will find fellowship in a church near them. Local churches need to look beyond their own walls to the ripening harvest field of souls. Working in cooperation with other churches reinforces that the body of Christ includes all believers.

Churches need each other in fellowship just as individual believers do. Today we are seeing a coming together among born-again and Spirit-filled people. The large interchurch gatherings show the world that the love of Christ and the fellowship in the Spirit are stronger than denominational lines. Jesus said, "'By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another'" (John 13:35).

Although some churches prefer being independent, most of them belong to a denomination. Midway between these two is a "cooperative fellowship," to which many Pentecostal churches belong. Though in a cooperative fellowship, each local group governs and supports itself, those involved in such a movement are banded together to work for God. Through cooperation greater ministries can be carried out, such as printing gospel literature, producing radio programs, sending out missionaries, and conducting large conventions or evangelistic crusades.

Application

5 Before each example, write the number of the phrase that applies:

- | | | |
|--------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| ... a | To help young people meet other youth | 1) Fellowship |
| ... b | To spend time in prayer and relaxation
along with other believers | 2) Rally |
| ... c | To stimulate interest in God's Word | 3) Contest |
| ... d | To have fellowship with other
churches | 4) Camp or
retreat |
| ... e | To work with other churches in
evangelistic outreach | 5) United
evangelistic
outreach |

6 Circle the letter in front of each correct sentence. Fellowship between churches strengthens

- a)** our fellowship as individuals.
- b)** the local church.
- c)** missionary outreach.
- d)** our witness to unbelievers.



Check Your Answers

- 1** Fellowship, sharing of meals, and sharing of needs.
- 4** Your answer.
- 2** Statements **b)**, **c)**, and **d)** are true.
- 5**
 - a** 2) Rally
 - b** 4) Camp or retreat
 - c** 3) Contest
 - d** 1) Fellowship meeting
 - e** 5) United evangelistic outreach
- 3** **d)** togetherness
- 6** You should have circled all of them.

8 Churches Celebrate

It seems to be within human nature to lean to one extreme or another. As a result, some churches have added so much ceremony and ritual to their services that they have left no room for the moving of the Holy Spirit. Others, on the other hand, have declared freedom from all ceremony and would not so much as sing from a hymnal. But the freedom we have in Christ allows for a balance between ritual and free form worship. This balance can be achieved in other church celebrations as well.

Churches celebrate with a variety of ceremonies and meaningful festivals. No doubt you have attended a beautiful wedding, a touching baby dedication, or a sad but celebratory funeral of a church member who passed away into God's presence. Christmas, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter, and Thanksgiving are some favorite festivals celebrated in church. These and other ceremonies and festivals should be done as a remembrance of the Lord.

The Plan

- A. Church Ceremonies
- B. Church Festivals
- C. Ritual or Free Form Worship

The Goals

1. Describe the variety of church ceremonies.
2. Identify the great festivals of the church.
3. Explain what place both ritual and free form worship have in the church.

A. CHURCH CEREMONIES

Goal 1. Describe the variety of church ceremonies.

The great day has arrived for Timothy and Mary—their wedding day. Both of their families are involved in the planning and preparation. All their church friends are invited to attend the ceremony performed by the pastor. Afterwards refreshments will be served in the fellowship hall.

Mary is starry-eyed, but she also feels awed at the solemnity of the occasion. She wants to be the wife that God intends her to be. Timothy is excited, yet he has considered seriously the vows he will take—to love and provide for his bride, and to be the spiritual head of his home. They have had several counseling sessions with the pastor and realize that a solid marriage does not just “happen”—it is built. With Christ as the center of their relationship, their love will grow deeper with the years. And they are so happy about the church they will be married in! The congregation sharing in their joy will make it complete.

We have already discussed water baptism and the Lord’s Supper. These are known as ordinances because the Bible tells us to observe them. These we studied in Lessons 5 and 6. The church also conducts ceremonies with definite scriptural basis,

such as weddings. Others, like the dedication of a new home, are optional. That means we may have them if we wish, or we may not—the choice is ours. We will look at some of the rites that help us to share in both the joys and the sorrows we all may experience.

1. *Performing marriages.* Because God himself instituted marriage, it is most appropriate to have weddings in the church. The ceremony centers around a promise made between a man and a woman to be true to each other as husband and wife as long as they live. In some countries ministers are recognized as legal officers with authority to perform weddings. In other lands a civil marriage must be conducted first and a church wedding may then follow.

2. *Dedicating children.* Christian parents may bring their babies or young children forward in a church service to present them to the Lord in a public act of consecration. The pastor takes the infant in his or her arms and offers prayer for both the child and the parents who promise to bring up the child in the fear of the Lord. The whole congregation enjoys this lovely custom.

3. *Praying for the sick.* Often in a meeting people who are ill ask for special prayer. One of the church leaders may anoint them on the forehead with a touch of oil before praying for them. It is not unusual for healings to take place. It may come instantly or gradually. The sick may also be prayed for in their homes or in the hospital. Jesus said that believers “will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well” (Mark 16:18). See also James 5:14–15.

4. *Dedicating homes.* When someone moves into a new home, he or she may want a ceremony of dedication. Church leaders and friends gather for this happy occasion to dedicate the house to the Lord, to invite Christ as head of the home. Christians have also asked for a dedication service when opening a new place of business, a school, an activity center, or a church, because they want to honor Christ in all that they do.

5. *Conducting funerals.* Everyone needs the church when there is a death in the family. A funeral ceremony with believers to help share the burden can do much toward lifting sorrow. The pastor speaks comfort from God's Word, reminding the family that we are not sad as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13). We have the glorious hope that our loved ones in the Lord have been received into the presence of Jesus where they will suffer no more. The Bible assures us that we shall see them again.

At funerals, people who never go to church otherwise are presented with an opportunity to hear the gospel and accept Christ. Christians can also minister to the family by preparing food or offering to help in other ways. Sometimes a family likes to have a special service to remember the departed loved one on the anniversary of his or her death. They may give an offering to the church as a memorial. This is a good substitute for the ancestor worship formerly practiced by some new converts.

Application

1 Look up each Scripture (left column) and write the number that represents the ceremony or custom it refers to (right column).

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ... a Genesis 50:1–14 | 1) Wedding |
| ... b 1 Samuel 1:27–28 | 2) Funeral |
| ... c 2 Chronicles 7:9 | 3) Baptism |
| ... d John 2:1 | 4) Praying for the sick |
| ... e Acts 28:7–9 | 5) Dedication of children |
| | 6) Dedication of a building |
-

Two other ceremonies relating to the church and conducted in the church are customary.

6. *Receiving new members.* After instruction in membership classes, candidates for membership are extended “the right hand of fellowship” by the pastor and the board. This ceremony

should be conducted when most of the other members can be present. It is a beautiful way to say “Welcome!”

7. *Installing officers and teachers.* Some churches conduct installation services for those who are taking on new duties in the church. The pastor exhorts them to carry out their responsibilities in a way that would please the Lord. Usually the congregation stands as the pastor prays for the new officers and teachers. More than a custom, this short ceremony encourages the leaders and assures them of the support of the whole body.

Application

- 2** Circle the letter in front of the correct completion to the sentence. According to Romans 12:15, we should share
- a)** mostly in other people’s sorrows.
 - b)** mostly with others and their happiness.
 - c)** when a particular need touches us.
 - d)** both in happiness and in sorrow that comes to others.
- 3** Write the word *ordinance* after each of the following ceremonies about which the Bible gives definite instructions.
- a)** Water baptism
 - b)** Receiving of new members
 - c)** Installation of officers
 - d)** The Lord’s Supper
 - e)** Funeral



B. CHURCH FESTIVALS

Goal 2. Identify the great festivals of the church.

A church festival is a special time of celebration, usually one of rejoicing, in memory of a great event in the life of Christ or the history of the church. Most church calendars highlight

four major festivals: Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, and the Day of Pentecost (Whitsunday). Others are Palm Sunday, Ascension Sunday, and the Lord's Day.

Christmas is a festive occasion. Churches usually have a program for which there is much preparation. The young people practice carols while children learn verses to recite and songs to sing. Perhaps they will act out the Christmas story. Candies or other treats may be given out. Whatever the church plans, simple or elaborate, it is all done to commemorate the birth of Christ, the Savior who is God's gift to the world. Parents and unsaved friends may, through the program, be introduced to the gospel message.

Palm Sunday recalls the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. Crowds waved palm branches, spreading them on the road before Him. They praised Him, shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Matthew 21:9). Palm Sunday begins the Holy Week, when churches remember the last week of Christ's life before His crucifixion and burial.

Good Friday reminds us of the sufferings of Jesus and His death on the Cross. Some churches open their doors all day for prayer; others celebrate three hours by meditating on the seven last words of Jesus and having appropriate hymns and a time of prayer.

Easter is a day of special rejoicing because Christ is risen from the dead. People like to decorate the church with flowers. Some choose to wear bright, new clothes. It is a time of gladness as pastors preach the resurrection of Jesus. Without this truth all church celebrations would be meaningless. Instead, we rejoice because we know that Jesus lives. Not only do we have scriptural proof (1 Corinthians 15:20), but also inner assurance that by His Spirit He is living in us.

Ascension Sunday comes the sixth Sunday after Easter. The Ascension actually falls on Thursday, 40 days after Easter, but most churches observe it the following Sunday. We must never forget that Christ literally left this earth and ascended into

heaven. He sat down at the right hand of God (Hebrews 10:12), as head of the church and our Great High Priest again, just as He promised (Acts 1:11).

Pentecost comes 50 days after the Crucifixion. It coincides with the Jewish Harvest Festival that came 50 days after their Passover. Pentecost also celebrates the birthday of the church, when the Holy Spirit came upon believers who met in Jerusalem. They were gloriously filled with power and joy and began to talk in other languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak. In explaining the Pentecostal experience to those standing around, Peter quoted from Joel, ““In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people”” (Acts 2:17).

The Lord’s Day, the usual day of worship among believers today, is the only festival known to be observed by the early church. Christians then celebrated a “weekly Easter,” to remind themselves of Christ’s resurrection. They kept this “Christian day,” the first day of the week, by praying, preaching, teaching, and partaking of the Lord’s Supper.

A few church celebrations have developed in recent years. Both Mother’s Day and Father’s Day honor our parents. New Year’s Eve celebrates the arrival of a new year in an atmosphere of prayer, worship, and dedication. Churches may also hold a Thanksgiving service or a Harvest Festival in the autumn. Or believers might ask for a special service of thanksgiving in gratitude for something the Lord has done for them. It may be a definite answer to prayer, or some achievement through God’s help. At such times they might want to give a special “thank offering” to the Lord through the church.

Your church may celebrate some or all of these special days or some others not mentioned. What is important to remember is that the day must not be celebrated for its own sake, but as a remembrance of the Lord’s work and presence with us. Keep this in mind and your celebrations will not become empty rituals without spiritual meaning.

Application

4 For the descriptions in the middle column, write the number that represents the festival described (right column).

- | | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| ... a | The birth of Jesus | 1) Palm Sunday |
| ... b | The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem | 2) The Lord's Day |
| ... c | The Crucifixion | 3) Good Friday |
| ... d | The Resurrection | 4) Christmas |
| ... e | Jesus' return to heaven | 5) Easter |
| ... f | "Birthday of the church" | 6) Pentecost |
| ... g | Weekly remembrance of Easter | 7) Ascension Day |

5 Circle the letter in front of each correct completion to the sentence. The festivals we studied are valuable to the church because they

- a)** remind us of important spiritual or biblical events.
- b)** help us hold to tradition.
- c)** give us something interesting to do.
- d)** provide a way for us to witness to others.

6 List at least three church celebrations that have developed in recent years.

.....

.....



C. RITUAL OR FREE FORM WORSHIP

Goal 3. Explain what place both ritual and free form worship have in the church.

Ritual worship in a religious ceremony uses an orderly, set pattern of words and actions. Free form worship includes more

spontaneous (natural) wording and action. Both of these play a role in the church.

Reading about the early church, you will discover a lack of rigid forms and rituals. Their informal ministry and worship allowed the Spirit to work and the people to respond. Since then, however, many churches have become too formal or ritualized and, thereby, have restrained the moving of the Holy Spirit. The rituals have remained but their meaning has been lost.

Is there a place, then, for ritual in our churches? Yes, there is. On occasions such as weddings, funerals, and the communion service, ceremony with its planned wording and procedure lends dignity and ensures that nothing will be forgotten or left out.

Reciting church creeds and repeating Scripture also has value, especially for those who cannot read. Moreover, Scripture teaches that worship should be “done in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Corinthians 14:40). Such forms, however, must not be used so much that we become dependent upon them. A balance should be sought between ritual and free form, remembering that the ceremony is not as important as the meaning behind it.

In contrast to the dress required for Old Testament priests, no mention is made of special clothing for pastors or other church leaders in the New Testament. Status and position in the church were not emphasized since there was no longer a wide distinction made between clergy and laity. Instead, we read of simple worship, rich Christian fellowship, vibrant faith in Jesus Christ, and humility of ministry and service.

Churches must celebrate! What events could be more exciting to celebrate than what we have in the drama of redemption?

Check Your Answers

- 1** **a** 2) Funeral
 b 5) Dedication of children
 c 6) Dedication of a building.
 d 1) Wedding
 e 4) Praying for the sick.
- 4** **a** 4) Christmas
 b 1) Palm Sunday
 c 3) Good Friday
 d 5) Easter
 e 7) Ascension Day
 f 6) Pentecost
 g 2) The Lord's Day
- 2** **d)** both in happiness and in sorrow that comes to others.
- 5** **a)** remind us of important spiritual or biblical events.
 d) provide a way for us to witness to others.
- 3** **a)** Water baptism
 d) The Lord's Supper
- 6** You could have listed Mother's Day, Father's Day, New Year's Eve, Thanksgiving, Harvest Festival, or another celebration important to your town or country.

9 Churches Grow

A great forest in central Europe is famed for its beauty in the spring and fall seasons. Footpaths, bicycle routes, and horse trails thread through the stately trees whose leaves form a lace pattern against the sky—a pattern so tight that sunlight scarcely pierces through.

We have been awed by the magnificence of these trees. If we were hungry, however, their beauty would not meet our need. We would rather be in a fruit orchard where our hunger could be satisfied.

Psalm 1:3 compares those who obey the Lord to trees that grow beside a stream and bear fruit at the right time. Christ has set the church in the world to meet a need—not just to be admired for its magnificence. It is to be like a tree whose roots hold firm, growing deep down to the water of life, whose branches blossom and bear fruit!

The Plan

- A. Establishing Roots
- B. Branches and Blossoms

The Goals

1. State responsibilities and requirements for membership in a local church.
2. Indicate the importance of church organization.

A. ESTABLISHING ROOTS

Goal 1. State responsibilities and requirements for membership in a local church.

Timothy and Mary return from a short wedding trip and attend a class for church membership. During the second class, Mary asks, “Didn’t I become a member here when I was converted?”

“When you were saved,” the teacher explains, “you became a member of the body of Christ. But you can also choose to become a member of a local church. This requires certain qualifications, such as being baptized in water and understanding basic doctrines and practices of the church.”

“Would you explain the real purpose of church membership?” asks Timothy.

“Yes, it’s like this,” the teacher continues. “The members of a local church are like a foundation or a base—something firm and steady to be built upon. This makes it possible to carry out the various church ministries and to be firmly established in a community.”

Members Form a Base

Perhaps you, as a member of Christ’s body, have wondered why you should also become a member of a local church. The true church, or body of Christ, is made up of all people

everywhere who have been redeemed through His death on the Cross (Colossians 1:20). This spiritual organism, also called the invisible church, needs a visible form on earth for people to see and relate to.

The visible church is made up of groups of people forming local bodies. Each church must recognize Christ as the Head, and that it is a part of the whole body. Each finds ways of functioning that suit its needs. These ways or methods of governing a church may differ, which results in different denominations being formed. These differences, however, are often only a matter of preference, or what works best for the group to function as a unit. What is essential is that its teachings are soundly biblical and that its members form a solid base from which the church can operate.

The church must be a voluntary association. No one is forced to attend or to support the church or to get involved in its activities. Its members love the Lord and willingly serve Him.

REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

We suggest the following points as general qualifications for belonging to a church. Each member should:

- Have a clear experience of salvation through trust in Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9–10)
- Have an understanding of the basic doctrines and practices of his or her church (John 14:23; Acts 2:42)
- Be baptized in water (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38)
- Be baptized in the Holy Spirit or sincerely desire to be filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:4; Ephesians 5:18)
- Follow the moral standards taught in God's Word (1 Corinthians 6:9–10; 18–20; Hebrews 13:4)
- Be a respectable member of society, obeying the laws of his or her country and honoring its leaders (Romans 13:1–7; 1 Peter 2:13–14)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

People who flit from one church to another do not add to the stability of any group. But faithful members keep the church going and growing, forming the base to which newcomers can be added. We suggest the following points regarding the responsibilities of church members. Church members should:

- Live consecrated to God and open and clean before the world (Matthew 5:13–16; 1 Peter 2:9, 12, 15; 2 Peter 1:4–8)
- Respect the pastor and cooperate with him or her and other church leaders (1 Thessalonians 5:12–13)
- Support God’s work through regular giving of tithes and offerings (1 Corinthians 9:12–14)
- Regularly attend church services and Bible classes, and take part in activities of the church (Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:25)
- Establish a time of Bible reading and prayer in their homes. Family devotions bring great blessing to any home (Deuteronomy 11:18–20)
- Share the gospel with the unsaved and witness of what Jesus has done for him or her (2 Corinthians 5:18–19)
- Participate in the business sessions of the church and offer help and advice, according to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

It is important for you to join a church so you can serve the Lord more effectively. You can help the local group fulfill its mission as an expression of the body of Christ.

Application

- 1** Circle the letter in front of each true statement.
 - a)** Everyone, believers and unbelievers alike, should join a church.
 - b)** Church members should follow the moral standards taught in the Bible.
 - c)** Faithful members keep a church going and growing.

2 If you joined a church, would you feel it necessary to attend the business sessions? Give a reason for your answer.

.....

Giving Keeps the Church Alive

The various ministries of the church need support. Faithful stewardship, steady and reliable giving, makes it possible for the church to take care of present costs and plan for future growth.

The earliest churches may have needed help to get started, but nowhere do we read of their continued dependence on other churches. Instead, the churches in Macedonia, though they were very poor, sent gifts to distressed believers in Judea. (Read 2 Corinthians 8:1–4.)

We have already learned that we can worship by giving the tithe (one tenth) of what we earn, and our offerings (more than the tenth) to the Lord. No one is too poor to give. Though in some areas actual cash income may be very small, a person can tithe in other ways (Leviticus 27:30, 32).

A tribeswoman of southwest China raised chickens for a living. She learned to tithe the eggs —laying aside one out of every ten for the pastor and his family who lived at the log-cabin church.

One day as she trudged down a mountain path to the market with a basket of eggs on her head, she said to herself, “I have such nice large eggs in my basket. What pity to keep back five for the church. Today I will sell them all, and later I will replace the tithe for the church.”

Just then she stumbled over a tree root in her path. She fell—and all the eggs were broken!

The woman learned a lesson that day which she shared with other believers. “If you hold back from God, you will be

the loser. That was my mistake, and that was the mistake of Ananias and Sapphira.”

In one Asian country Christians are taught to bring three “holy things” to the house of God: the Holy Bible, the holy songbook, and “holy rice.” Each time a housewife cooks for her family, she first puts one spoonful of rice into a bag. She takes this to church on Sunday and empties it into a container kept inside the pulpit. It is called “holy rice” because it is given to the Lord for His servants. It is surprising how this adds up when done faithfully by a group!

You can also find ways of giving your time and talents to the Lord. God will not be a debtor to anyone; He will bless you abundantly and His church will prosper.

Application

3 Circle the letter in front of the correct completion to the sentence. A church becomes strongly rooted when it has

- a)** visitors who give generously to its work.
- b)** strong backing from other churches.
- c)** faithful members who support the work.

4 What three things can any believer give to the work of God through his or her church?

.....

.....

5 Circle the letter in front of each true statement.

- a)** Joining a church and helping to support it should be done willingly.
- b)** Even a person living in poverty has something he or she can give to the Lord.
- c)** If we give money, we do not need to give time and talent.
- d)** The first requirement for church membership is that a person desire to help others.



B. BRANCHES AND BLOSSOMS

Goal 2. Indicate the importance of church organization.

From the trunk of a tree grow branches. These spread out to give the tree form or structure. A church, like a tree, needs structure and strength to fulfill its purpose: structure in its organization and government, and strength in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Organization Gives Form and Unity

In Lesson 7 you studied about various groups within the church. Like the branches of a tree, they need to be held together as one. Proper organization not only gives stability, but helps the groups work together in harmony as well. The church needs leaders if it is to be self-supporting and self-governing. The Bible tells us something about the structure of the early church.

The churches had deacons. Acts 6:1–6 records that the church at Jerusalem chose seven deacons, or helpers. These were men of good character and filled with the Holy Ghost who helped the apostles by taking on some of the church responsibilities. See also 1 Timothy 3:8–13.

The churches had elders. In each church that Paul and Barnabas founded, they appointed elders—men who were able to teach and to minister (Acts 14:23). Like shepherds over a flock, they looked after the congregation, which the Holy Spirit had placed under their care (Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1–7).

From this we learn that the local church was not under the control of one man, but rather, guided by a group of men. In any group of leaders, however, there is usually one head. The pastor today is the head of the local church and together with the elders and deacons serves and leads the church.

The Church's Strength

A tree's strength comes from the sap that flows throughout its system, giving it life. The spiritual strength of a church

comes from the Holy Spirit when He flows through every part and through every member.

The early church was a Spirit-filled church. Acts 4:31–33 tells that when the believers at Jerusalem met for prayer “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.” And, “with great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all”

Application

6 For the descriptions in the middle column, write the number that represents the person or factor described (right column).

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| ... a | Gives the church structure | 1) Holy Spirit |
| ... b | Gives the church strength | 2) Deacons |
| ... c | Helpers within the church | 3) Organization |
| ... d | Care for “the flock” | 4) Pastor |
| ... e | Leads the local church | 5) Elders |

The blossoms of a fruit tree are not meant just to be admired. They are for producing fruit. One day Jesus came to a fig tree looking for fruit. When He found only leaves He cursed the tree and it died (Matthew 21:18–19). Jesus said, ““This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples”” (John 15:8).

The church is to bear fruit first in the lives of the believers. This spiritual fruit is named in Galatians 5:22–23, the greatest being love. These qualities are impossible to attain naturally; therefore, we need the Holy Spirit. Secondly, the Lord wants the church to be fruitful in winning souls (John 10:21; Matthew 28:19–20). The Lord founded His church for this purpose—for us to belong to Him, to serve Him, and to glorify Him by bearing much fruit.

Application

7 State two ways in which Christians can be fruitful.

.....

.....

8 Circle the letter in front of the correct completion to the sentence. Our primary purpose in bearing fruit is to

- a)** encourage church membership.
- b)** draw attention to ourselves.
- c)** interest people in Christianity.
- d)** glorify God.



Check Your Answers

- 1** Statements **b)** and **c)** are true.
- 5** Statements **a)** and **b)** are true.
- 2** Your answer. I would have answered *yes* because as part of the body I have a responsibility to fulfill in participating in its business activities.
- 6**
 - a** 3) Organization
 - b** 1) Holy Spirit
 - c** 2) Deacons
 - d** 5) Elders
 - e** 4) Pastor
- 3** **c)** faithful members who support the work.
- 7** Your own words. For instance, by bearing spiritual fruit and by winning souls
- 4** Money or other natural resources, time, talent.
- 8** **d)** glorify God

10 Churches Serve People

Some visitors went into a fine cathedral. They took time to marvel at its beauty, its architecture, and its treasures. Local church leaders remarked to their guests, “Long ago Peter said to the lame man at the Beautiful Gate, ‘I have no money at all.’ Now we need no longer say that we have no silver and gold!”

“Ah,” replied one of the visitors, “unfortunately, neither can you any longer say with Peter, ‘what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk’” (Acts 3:6).

Churches today must minister to the needs of people as the New Testament churches did! Wealth, education, and prestige are no substitute for the power of God. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). May we minister to people in His Name!

The Plan

- A. Churches Nurture Believers
- B. Churches Help the Needy
- C. Churches Evangelize

The Goals

- 1. Give reasons why churches must nurture believers.
- 2. Discuss how churches can help the needy.
- 3. State the urgency of evangelizing the lost.

A. CHURCHES NURTURE BELIEVERS

Goal 1. Give reasons why churches must nurture believers.

True church leaders are like faithful shepherds who look after the sheep. Jesus told a story about a good shepherd and a hired man. He said,

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.” (John 10:11–15)

Soon after Timothy and Mary’s wedding they were received into their church as members. Besides attending Bible studies, they have been going to leaders’ training classes and have taken several correspondence courses. Because of this, and the times of prayer they spend together, they have both grown rapidly in the Lord.

Serving as a youth leader has taught Timothy many lessons too. He has discovered how the Holy Spirit helps him speak when he seeks God and depends on Him. Mary has been teaching a Sunday School class. She also has been practicing the piano and now plays for their youth meetings. They really enjoy their church!

Timothy and Mary’s church illustrates ways that a church can nurture its believers. The word nurture means to supply with nourishment, to train, and to educate. Church leaders are to nourish the flock of God, helping new converts to feed on the Word of God. The church provides opportunity for people to pray and seek the Lord; it encourages them to be filled with the Holy Spirit; it is there to pray for the sick and to comfort in time of sorrow. The church is the visible expression of the body of Christ.

Application

1 List five ways in which a church nurtures its members.

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.....

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2 Perhaps you would like to write one or two ways in which the church has already nurtured you or your family.

.....

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B. CHURCHES HELP THE NEEDY

Goal 2. Discuss how churches can help the needy.

At the beginning of Christ’s own ministry He stood up to read the Scripture in the synagogue (house of worship) at Nazareth, His hometown. Unrolling the scroll He read:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” (Luke 4:18–19)

Jesus is called the Christ, meaning “Anointed One.” God anointed His Son with the oil of the Holy Spirit and power. “He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him” (Acts 10:38). Like Christ, people of His church must be anointed with the power of the Spirit to tell the good news. You studied about this in Lesson 2.

Jesus came with good news for the poor. The poor represent needy people everywhere. The message of salvation and deliverance must be given to them in a way that they will understand and respond to. Jesus also spoke of the captives, the blind, and the oppressed. These words may describe people either spiritually or physically, but Christ came to meet every need. The gospel offers complete salvation for the whole person—body, soul, and spirit!

The Bible tells us to balance our faith with our actions:

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. (James 2:14–17)

In some countries large populations live in makeshift shacks, wondering where the next meal will come from. They face desperate shortages of food and clothing. In other places refugees face starvation. How can God’s people help them?

Churches can give through organizations that know how to reach these distressed areas. Many church denominations also have relief programs and the local churches can send money, food, and clothing through these agencies.

At the same time we must not neglect the needy people in our own communities. The women’s group or another arm of the church often takes on this responsibility. Perhaps a child coming to the church school lacks proper clothing or shoes. Someone can visit the family and with understanding and tact find ways to help.

And we must not neglect the rich and needy! Many people rich in this world’s goods carry heavy burdens of confusion and emptiness. They, too, need the message of salvation and hope!

Application

3 Consider each of the needs below and suggest a practical action you might take in ministering to the needy.

- a) A car with a family of six breaks down. They are a long way from home and have little money.
.....
.....
- b) An earthquake destroys a city in another country.
.....
.....
- c) A nearby community is flooded.
.....
.....
- d) A child comes to church barefooted on a cold winter morning.
.....
.....

4 Complete the following statements.

a) According to James 2:14–17, faith must be accompanied by

.....

b) The Bible says that Jesus came with good news for the

.....

C. CHURCHES EVANGELIZE

Goal 3. State the urgency of evangelizing the lost.

Jesus spoke of His own life and ministry as coming to “seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10). The lost are people in spiritual need of salvation and forgiveness of sins.

The churches’ primary task is to evangelize the lost. They do this by telling the good news of salvation to all, by witnessing of the power of Christ, by winning people to the Lord, and by making disciples who will evangelize others.

Three years have passed since Mary and Timothy’s wedding.

“What are you thinking about?” Mary asks Timothy, who has been very quiet all day.

“You know those four families who were saved last month—the ones who live on the other side of the city?”

“Yes. What about them?”

“They aren’t able to come regularly to church from such a distance. And there is no church at all in that area though it is heavily populated.”

“I know what you are going to say,” offered Mary earnestly. “God has been speaking to me about that too. We have to help them.”

“Praise the Lord!” exclaimed Timothy. “I’m so glad you are willing to do that, but do you realize what it will mean? We will have to give up attending the services we love so much.”

“Yes, I know,” assured Mary. “That was the hardest part. But I have finally surrendered and said yes to the Lord. I knew He was dealing with you about it too.”

“That confirms it to me, then, that it wasn’t just my imagination. I feel that God wants us to have a branch church there under the supervision of our pastor. I can keep my job and we can minister on weekends. The four families could form the base to start with. We will talk it over with Pastor and see what can be done.”

The preaching Timothy and Mary have heard about the field being ripe and ready to be harvested has challenged their hearts. And the training they have had in evangelism and church leadership along with actual experience in outreach has been preparing them. Now they feel that they have been nurtured by their church for a purpose—to put into action what they have learned.

Timothy and Mary are right! A church nurtures new converts and believers through the pastor’s messages, Bible teaching, and meaningful activities. But if all of this is merely flowing into people’s hearts, it will stagnate. Believers should be channels through which the blessing can flow out, and the more they give out, the more they will receive.

A church thrives on evangelizing the lost, as a fire blazes by burning wood. Our Lord before His ascension into heaven said, “‘You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth’” (Acts 1:8). At Pentecost the Holy Spirit came like fire; He provided power for the church to expand.

Today, churches around the world are being revived by the fiery power of God’s Spirit. As they obey Christ’s command to evangelize to the ends of the earth, they will become blazing fires in a world of darkness, chill, and gloom.

Of all the things that churches do, this is the most important—for when the Savior’s gospel has been preached

and taught to all peoples of the world, Jesus Christ himself will return for His own!

Application

5 In a spiritual sense, those who are lost are those who

.....

6 Circle the letter in front of each activity that is part of evangelizing the lost.

- a)** Sharing the good news of salvation
 - b)** Witnessing and giving our personal testimony
 - c)** Winning people to Christ
 - d)** Making disciples who will in turn win others
-



CONGRATULATIONS

You have finished this course. We hope that it has been a great help to you. Remember to complete the second Unit Evaluation and return the answer sheet to your instructor.

Check Your Answers

- 1** You might have listed teaching, praying for the sick, training, educating, encouraging people to pray and to be filled with the Holy Spirit, comforting, and giving opportunities to minister.
- 4** **a)** actions (or works).
b) poor.
- 2** Your answer.
- 5** are in sin, or those who have not accepted Christ as their Savior.
- 3** Suggested answers:
 - a)** You might prepare a meal for the family and get help from a mechanic.
 - b)** Send financial aid.
 - c)** Organize a work crew to help make their homes livable again.
 - d)** Visit his or her home and then help according to the need.
- 6** You should have circled them all, as each is important in evangelizing the lost.

CL4340 What Churches Do**UNIT ONE ANSWER SHEET**

Please fill in the blanks below:

Name

Student Number
(Leave blank if you don't know your number.)

Mailing Address

.

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Country

Directions

When you have completed your study of each unit, fill out the Unit Evaluation answer sheet for that unit. Read each question carefully. There is one best answer for each question. Blacken the space for the answer you have chosen. *Be sure the number beside the spaces on the answer sheet is the same as the number of the question you are answering.*

Example

1 To be born again means to

a) be young in age.

b) accept Jesus as Savior.

c) start a new year.

The correct answer is **b) accept Jesus as Savior**, so you would blacken space **(B)** like this:

1. (A) ☒ (C) (D)

Turn page over when you are ready to begin.

UNIT ONE ANSWER SHEET

Carefully blacken the correct space for each numbered item.

- 1

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This is the end of the requirements for Unit One. For grading, return your Unit One Answer Sheet to your instructor or office in your area. Continue your study in Unit Two.

*For GU Office Use
Only*

Date

Score

UNIT ONE EVALUATION

- 1** Christians come together for worship because
 - a)** we cannot worship alone.
 - b)** it is a well-established custom.
 - c)** it helps us to grow spiritually.
- 2** Our singing becomes a means of worship when we sing
 - a)** lively, upbeat worship songs.
 - b)** praises to God from our hearts.
 - c)** choruses from memory.
- 3** *Amen* is a Hebrew word meaning
 - a)** “That is all I have to say.”
 - b)** “May it be so.”
 - c)** the same as a period or an exclamation mark.
- 4** Jesus called the place where believers meet
 - a)** the true church.
 - b)** a Christian center.
 - c)** a house of prayer.
- 5** Giving can be a part of worshipping God if we
 - a)** give with a joyful heart.
 - b)** give more than the tithe.
 - c)** show others we are giving.
- 6** One of the three effects of worship through the Holy Spirit discussed in this course is
 - a)** protection.
 - b)** freedom.
 - c)** maturity.
- 7** The experience of receiving the Holy Spirit sometime after one’s conversion is called
 - a)** indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
 - b)** being gifted by the Holy Spirit.
 - c)** baptism in the Holy Spirit.

- 8** To anoint means to
- a)** put oil on to set apart.
 - b)** appoint as a deacon.
 - c)** make something shine.
- 9** The gifts of the Holy Spirit always operate
- a)** through people in places of leadership.
 - b)** in harmony with what the Bible teaches.
 - c)** when something new is being taught.
- 10** The message that churches preach must be
- a)** beautifully crafted.
 - b)** centered upon Christ.
 - c)** inspiring of good deeds.
- 11** Faith comes through hearing
- a)** and believing the Word of God.
 - b)** many inspired sermons and songs.
 - c)** and reading Christian books.
- 12** Why is the Word of God spoken of as “bread”?
- a)** Some form of bread is found in almost every country of the world.
 - b)** It provides spiritual nourishment and helps us to grow in the Lord.
 - c)** Nearly everyone likes to eat bread.
- 13** The Word of God builds up believers by
- a)** strengthening them to resist temptation.
 - b)** making them experts in Bible knowledge.
 - c)** giving them irrefutable arguments.
- 14** The relationship between preaching and teaching is best summed up this way:
- a)** preaching is proclaiming while teaching is explaining.
 - b)** the purpose of both is to provide information for believers.
 - c)** preaching and teaching are two names for the same ministry gift.

- 15** The function of church schools is to provide
- a)** supplemental teaching to the public schools.
 - b)** training for the ministry.
 - c)** Christian education for persons of all ages.
- 16** Bible study classes often offer
- a)** a substitute for Sunday worship services.
 - b)** age level instruction for all ages.
 - c)** an atmosphere that encourages participation.
- 17** To teach God's Word one must
- a)** spend much time in prayer and preparation.
 - b)** have a large library of commentaries.
 - c)** quote from other teachers and writers.
- 18** Water baptism pictures
- a)** our bodies being filled with the Spirit.
 - b)** new life replacing the old self.
 - c)** periodic renewals of our spirit.
- 19** Conversion, water baptism, and the baptism in the Holy Spirit are all
- a)** basically the same thing.
 - b)** important to our Christian growth.
 - c)** good, but not necessary.
- 20** Pentecostal churches baptize
- a)** new members by immersion.
 - b)** new converts by immersion.
 - c)** babies and small children by sprinkling.

CL4340 What Churches Do**UNIT TWO ANSWER SHEET**

Please fill in the blanks below:

Name

Student Number
(Leave blank if you don't know your number.)

Mailing Address

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.

Country

Directions

When you have completed your study of each unit, fill out the Unit Evaluation answer sheet for that unit. Read each question carefully. There is one best answer for each question. Blacken the space for the answer you have chosen. *Be sure the number beside the spaces on the answer sheet is the same as the number of the question you are answering.*

Example

1 To be born again means to

a) be young in age.

b) accept Jesus as Savior.

c) start a new year.

The correct answer is **b) accept Jesus as Savior**, so you would blacken space **(B)** like this:

1. (A) ☒ (C) (D)

Turn page over when you are ready to begin.

UNIT TWO ANSWER SHEET

Carefully blacken the correct space for each numbered item.

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This is the end of the requirements for Unit Two. For grading, return your Unit Two Answer Sheet to your instructor or office in your area.

*For GU Office Use
Only*

Date

Score

UNIT TWO EVALUATION

- 1** The significance of the Lord's table is that it
 - a)** memorializes Christ's death for us.
 - b)** represents church membership.
 - c)** is the primary furniture in the church.
- 2** The emblems of communion are
 - a)** the actual body and blood of Jesus.
 - b)** representative of Jesus' body and blood.
 - c)** similar to flesh and blood.
- 3** Jesus said at His last supper with His disciples, "Do this"
 - a)** as a ritual."
 - b)** to take away your sin."
 - c)** in remembrance of me."
- 4** Most Pentecostal churches have "open communion," which means that
 - a)** it takes place in a public meeting.
 - b)** all born-again believers may take part.
 - c)** it is open to all, saved and unsaved alike.
- 5** Organizations within the local church need to provide fellowship for
 - a)** the elderly and the lonely.
 - b)** young people especially.
 - c)** all age groups.
- 6** When we worship, we often lift our hands to God; when we fellowship, we
 - a)** give our hands a rest.
 - b)** hold our hands out to each other.
 - c)** do something with our spare time.
- 7** The key to having fellowship is
 - a)** being together in love.
 - b)** getting well organized.
 - c)** providing suitable entertainment.

- 8** The specific purpose of a church rally is to
- a)** work with other churches in evangelism.
 - b)** stimulate interest in God's Word.
 - c)** gather similar groups from different churches.
- 9** Church ceremonies offer an opportunity for believers to
- a)** do something different.
 - b)** share in each other's joys and sorrows.
 - c)** keep up with the world.
- 10** The early church kept a "weekly Easter" that we
- a)** call "the Lord's day."
 - b)** no longer observe.
 - c)** observe once a year.
- 11** We do not celebrate Christian observances flippantly, but
- a)** as an opportunity to relax.
 - b)** for the sake of tradition.
 - c)** as a remembrance of the Lord's work and presence among us.
- 12** Within the church, leaders should
- a)** give priority to ritual over free form.
 - b)** remove all ritual and allow free form.
 - c)** seek to balance ritual with free form.
- 13** Church membership is important to
- a)** provide a foundation for ministry.
 - b)** prove one's devotion to Christ.
 - c)** establish one's salvation.
- 14** If we do not have money to give to the Lord, we can
- a)** excuse ourselves for not giving.
 - b)** borrow from someone.
 - c)** give of other resources, our time, and our talent.
- 15** The source of the church's strength is
- a)** the pastor.
 - b)** the Holy Spirit.
 - c)** its organization.

16 One of the ways we recognize Christians who bear fruit is by

- a)** their fine church building.
- b)** the capable leaders they have.
- c)** the souls they win for the Lord.

17 A church becomes strongly rooted and grows when it

- a)** asks for help.
- b)** has faithful members who support it.
- c)** gets financial backing from other sources.

18 The Bible says that faith

- a)** answers all things.
- b)** can stand alone.
- c)** without actions is dead.

19 According to Scripture, churches are to help the needy by

- a)** meeting spiritual and physical needs.
- b)** relieving them of financial debts.
- c)** not requiring certain things of them.

20 Evangelizing the lost is

- a)** a task for mature churches.
- b)** the primary task of the church.
- c)** a task given to a few churches.

FINAL WORDS

Dear Student,

We hope this study has made you think about your relationship with God. After studying the lessons and answering all the questions, have you wondered, “Am I really a Christian? Do I know God? Is He real in my life?” We want to give you the opportunity now to have a relationship with God.

We have all done wrong things. We have hurt ourselves and others. The Bible calls that sin and we are all guilty: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Our sin keeps us from knowing God as a loving Father. But God loves us in spite of our sin. He loves us so much He sent His Son to die for us. “God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). When He died, Jesus took the punishment we deserved for our sins.

Do you want to make sure Jesus is your Savior? It is really so simple:

- Admit that you are a needy sinner separated from God, and ask Him to forgive you.
- Believe in Jesus with all your heart, and let Him know you accept Him as your Savior.

You can talk to God in your own words by saying a prayer like this:

Dear Jesus, I know I am a sinner. Please forgive me. I believe You are the eternal Son of God. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. Come into my life. Make yourself real in my life. Be Lord of my life today. Thank You for saving me.

If you prayed this prayer and meant it with all your heart, your sins are forgiven and you have eternal life. Jesus is Lord of your life. The Bible says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Welcome to the family of God. We want to rejoice with you, so please write and tell us what God has done in your life. Blessings to you!

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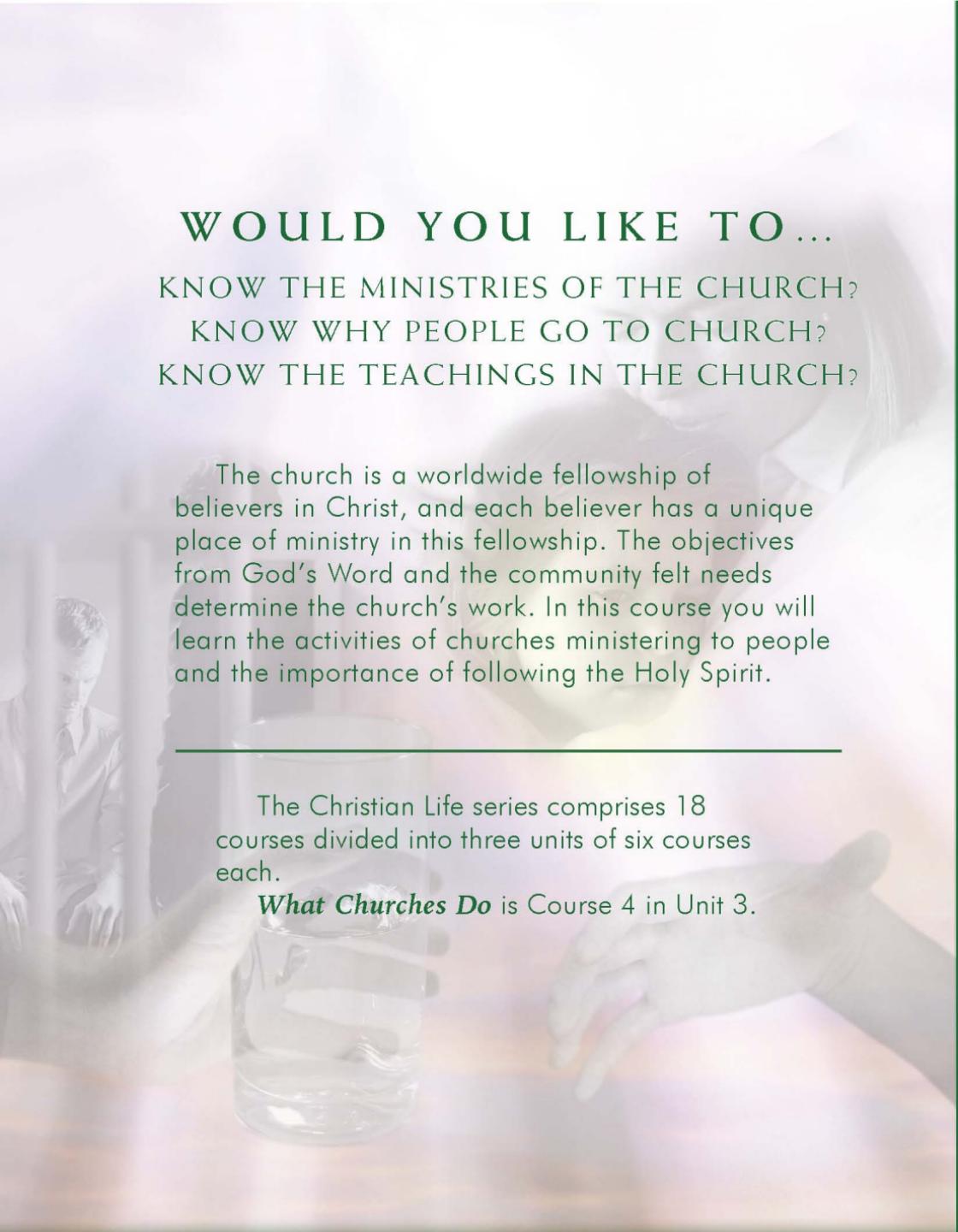
Do you have a friend who needs to know more about Jesus?

Send us your friend’s name and address for answers to the great questions of life.

Name

Address

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KNOW THE MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH?
KNOW WHY PEOPLE GO TO CHURCH?
KNOW THE TEACHINGS IN THE CHURCH?

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