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Welcome, New Member!

God bless you and thank you for choosing New Horizon Church International as your center of worship, fellowship, spiritual growth, and Christian service. We are a congregation of believers who are truly blessed each time that the Holy Spirit prompts individuals and families to unite in fellowship with us. As Senior Pastor, I extend my hand and heart in fellowship to you and offer my service to you. I pray that you will take advantage of the opportunities for worship, growth, and service that are available to you as members of New Horizon.

To ease your transition into our congregation, we have created this orientation class which is designed to inform and acquaint you with the policies and people that make New Horizon the dynamic church that it is. This booklet will provide an introduction to the many opportunities for Christian service that are available to you.

I am thankful for your presence and believe that God sent you to us for our mutual benefit and for His glory. I pray you will involve yourself in some aspect of our comprehensive ministry and come to believe, as I do, that our Lord is using New Horizon Church International to achieve marvelous things for His glory and for the good of ourselves and others. I welcome you as we journey to the “new horizon” that our Lord has set before us.

Count It All Joy!

Bishop Ronnie Crudup, Sr.
The Importance of Church Membership

The Bible’s View – Acts 2:46-47

So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

There was a specific group of people in each city that was the “church.” The Greek term from which the word “church” is derived is Ekklesia. The literal meaning of this word is “a called out assembly” of God’s people joined together as a whole community. In New Testament times, the church was viewed as a group that could be numbered, added to, and identified. It was a very identifiable group of people who were called out to be different from the rest of their culture.

Fellowship – Acts 2:42

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers.

We are called into the church to experience relationships with one another. That is a word that means caring for one another in a multitude of ways – from praying, to bearing burdens, to encouraging, to loving.

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Accountability and Authority – Hebrews 13:17

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

When we become Christians, we need to be connected for the purpose of being responsible. This is a concept that has suffered greatly in our culture. The writer of Hebrews advances the idea of being in a body of believers and being under the care and authority of the leadership. Together, we will advance God’s kingdom, build Jesus’ church, bless His people, and help ourselves.

Welcome into membership!
Our Goals for You

Once again, thank you for joining New Horizon Church International (NHCI). The following seven points define the experiences that the leadership team desires for each of you over the next 12 months. They also serve as goals which we hope you will accomplish.

1. We hope that you will develop a number of new and deeper relationships in the church that will enhance your experience in Christ and NHCI.

2. We hope that you will feel excited now and in the future about your choice to join NHCI as you allow us to guide you in being a better, more consistent and mature disciple of Jesus Christ.

3. We hope that you will make the commitment to actively engage with us over the next year.

4. We hope that you will stay involved with your Care/Discipleship Group. A Deacon Couple leads this group.

5. We hope that you will get involved in a ministry work here at the church, one that relates to your passion.

6. We hope that you will grow and eventually provide leadership in some area of NHCI.

7. We hope that you will work hard yearly to bring someone else into our church membership.

Pray the Following:

Lord, help me and give me the strength to complete and fulfill these goals for my sake and for the church’s sake!
Lesson 1: About NHCI

Question 1: When and by whom was New Horizon Church International founded?

New Horizon Baptist Church was founded in September 1987 by Bishop Ronnie C. Crudup, Sr., who was instructed by the Holy Spirit to, “go establish a church that would be on a new horizon.”

- The congregation started with 56 charter members and was blessed of God to experience steady growth.
- During the first three years of its existence, the congregation met in a variety of rented facilities.
- In September 1990, the congregation purchased and worshipped in its first building located on Belvedere Drive in South Jackson.
- In January 1998, the membership voted to delete the term Baptist from the church’s name and was known as New Horizon Church.
- In January 2003, the congregation voted to become affiliated with The Fellowship of International Churches (F.O.I.C.) and to become known as New Horizon Church International.
- In November 2009, the congregation purchased and moved into its present location on Ellis Avenue in Jackson.

Count It All Joy!

Question 2: What is the vision and mission of NHCI?

We are a Loving Church That’s Loving on God and Loving on People

Compassionate – Worshipping – Discipling

1 John 4:11: Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Question 3: What is the purpose of New Horizon Church International?

- The purpose of NHCI is to be a loving assembly who makes strong disciples for Jesus Christ and who helps make Jesus’ Kingdom come.
- It is our purpose to corporately and publicly worship, praise, glorify, and give thanks to the Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to minister the Word of God to believers, to promote fellowship in the body of Christ, and to encourage evangelism at home and abroad.
- It is our purpose to draw from the Scriptures the principles that determine our beliefs and practices. The message we declare to all is based on a literal, grammatical, and historical interpretation of the entire Bible. We proclaim the truths of the Bible, being confident that God is glorified and the needs of man are met when His truths are
presented and obeyed. It is the Word of God, rather than the word of man, that
ultimately directs our church.
- It is our purpose to meet frequently for worship, prayer, instruction, fellowship, and
outreach.
- It is our purpose to represent Jesus well and to fulfill His purposes on the earth.

**Question 4: What are the objectives of NHCI?**

1. To create a congregation where singles and families are growing, excited, and faithful to
Jesus and one another.
2. To encourage an aggressive fellowship of prayer among our members.
3. To promote a supernatural experience for every member that is sometimes called the
filling (Baptism) of the Holy Spirit.
4. To motivate each of our children to educational excellence.
5. To equip each of our youth and young adults to be the leaders, entrepreneurs, and
managers of the state and the nation.
6. To develop our adults into the leaders that God has called them to be spiritually,
emotionally, relationally, financially, as well as in their secular employment and
community, thereby creating personal prosperity and affecting the world.
7. To bring change to the community around the church through our Kingdom presence.

**Question 5: What kind of church is NHCI?**

NHCI is a charismatic Church. NHCI is a Supernatural Church where the power of God is
emphasized and where you are encouraged to become supernatural too. We encourage
you to let God work in and through you to accomplish world-class results.

NHCI is a member of a denomination called the Fellowship of International Churches
(FOIC). The FOIC is made up of formerly independent churches who have joined
together to fellowship, support each other, and accomplish a greater work of Christ. The
FOIC emphasizes consecrated living, a strong commitment to the Bible as the Word of
God, supernatural operations, and missions outreach to the world.

**Question 6: How are members received into the church?**

NHCI receives persons into membership who publicly profess their faith in Jesus Christ
as Lord and Savior, and/or who transfer from another Christian congregation that
practices the same.

Persons seeking membership must agree to be governed as is stated in the church’s By-
Laws and Constitution.

**Question 7: How is the membership of NHCI organized?**

**NHCI is a Cell Church:**
A Cell Church is one that has divided its entire congregation into small groups (cells). We call them Discipleship Groups.

Each Discipleship Group consists of a limited number of family units and is overseen by a deacon or a trained leader who is a member of the church’s laity.

The Discipleship Group’s main purpose is to assure each member receives discipleship that results in spiritual growth, maturity, and pastoral care.

**All NHCI members are required to be active in the Discipleship Group ministry.**

**Question 8: How is NHCI governed?**

NHCI is governed by a Board of Elders. The Board is comprised of the Senior Pastor and at least six others.

- The **Senior Leadership** of NHCI is composed of the Elders, Mothers, Associate Ministers, Deacons, Deaconesses and Staff.
  - **Elders**, other than the Senior Pastor, are elected from among the Associate Ministers and Deacons of the church to serve a term of three years and are affirmed by the congregation. Elders give spiritual oversight, make policy, and support the Senior Pastor in fulfilling his office.
  - **Mothers** are selected ladies, over sixty-five years of age, who assist in giving care to the elderly.
  - **Pastors** are ordained minister of NHCI who oversee an area of ministry.
  - **Associate Ministers** are disciples of the Senior Pastor and assist the Pastoral Staff in carrying out their duties.
  - **Deacons and Deaconesses** are servants of the church who oversee the care of the membership and assist in other functions as assigned.

- The **Staff** of the church is composed of full time and part time employees. This includes paid staff as well as volunteers, Pastors, Directors, Leaders and Support Workers, who conduct the business affairs and activities of the church and New Horizon Ministries, Inc.

- The **Senior Pastor (CEO)** is the chief overseer of the church. It is his responsibility to give vision, train leaders, shepherd the flock, and be the primary preacher of the church.

- The **Executive Pastor (COO)** is a member of the paid staff who serves as the Chief Operating Officer of the church and ministries. He/she reports to the Senior Pastor and the Board of Elders.
The Chief Administrator Officer (CAO) is a member of the paid staff who oversees all the administrative side of the church and ministries. He/she reports to the Senior Pastor and the Board of Elders.
Movement & Involvement Chart
Tracking Your Growth/Getting You Involved

- Prayer
- Commitment to Corporate Worship
- Become An Active Disciple
- Spiritual Formation
- Homogenous Groups
- Discipleship Groups
- New Member's Orientation
- Membership Application
- Worship Experience

Oops! Did you get off track?

Ooops! Did you get off track?
Question 9: What should be my summarized understanding of NHCI?

1. NHCI is compassionate about and committed to four activities:
   a. Worship
   b. Prayer
   c. Discipleship
   d. Missions

2. If you, as a New Member, will follow this vision and leadership, then we make you these four promises:
   a. You will get Saved
   b. You will become more Prosperous
   c. You will cause change on the Earth
   d. You will get some Eternal Rewards
Lesson 2: Emphasis and Style of Worship

Question 1: What is the most important activity of a believer’s life?
Loving on God, which is worship, is the single most important activity of a believer’s life. To do so reveals the depth of one’s understanding of who God is and what He requires of His people.

**Individual Worship** is the activity through which a believer seeks, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to render to God the glory, honor, submission and praise that is due Him.

**Corporate Worship** is the activity of a congregation of believers in which they seek by the power of the Holy Spirit, to render to God the adoration, praise, confession, intercession, thanksgiving and obedience to which He is entitled to.

Question 2: What are the Core Values of NHCI?
Core Values are activities and practices that give direction to our worship of God.

1. We are a **worshipping** church. We are committed to reverencing God based on a Trinitarian understanding.
2. We are a **bibliocentric** church. We are committed to the Bible as having been written under divine inspiration and recognizing that it is the authority and guide for life.
   a. Bible helps: (Deuteronomy 4) (2 Timothy 3:16)
3. We are a **praying** church. We believe God’s authority and power are revealed to us and through us when we communicate with Him.
4. We are a **compassionate** church. We are committed to developing and maintaining a proper relationship with God and to reaching out to others in a manner that is mindful of His love for us.
5. We are a **serving** church. We are committed to showing Christ-like behavior toward others through unselfish and sacrificial service.
6. We are a **giving** church. We are committed to the proper use of our time, resources and spiritual gifts to the glory of God.
7. We are a church of **excellence**. We are committed to the practice of doing our very best in all things at all times.
Question 3: What is Bible-oriented preaching?
Bible oriented preaching is expository in nature. It is based on presenting specific text passages as the writers were inspired to write them, rather than presenting them as a means of supporting the preacher’s interpretation of the text.

Bible oriented preaching focuses on basic Bible truths. The center is Jesus Christ and it provides practical guidance for life.

Question 4: What is Spirit-led praying?
Spirit-led praying is communication with God the Father, through God the Son and guided by God the Holy Spirit.

Question 5: What is the significance of giving?
The Bible clearly teaches that cheerful giving is an act of worship. Giving is an expression of faith that shows trust in God and follows the example of Jesus Christ.

Question 6: What is the focus of NHCI’s Music and Arts Ministry?
Our music and arts ministry focuses on who God is and what He has done. We use voices, instruments and movement to praise God! The type of music we emphasize is intended to encourage congregational participation!

Question 7: What is meant by “Freedom in the Spirit?”
We encourage everyone to surrender more of themselves to God. Surrendering fully to God allows the Holy Spirit to lead us into various expressions of worship as He sees fit.

Question 8: What is the reason for every Sunday communion?
The Scripture teaches that we meet God in communion and grace is imparted each time one takes it reverently. Communion helps us to deal with our sinfulness and is more effective when done often.

Question 9: What is a tithe and why do we emphasize it?
A tithe is a tenth of one’s gross income. Scripture teaches us that God instructs how much we are to give to Him. Tithing is a sign of our acceptance of God’s standards and our willingness to trust Him with our best. Tithing also connects the giver into God’s economy of sowing and reaping which equals prosperity. An offering is a love gift to God that the giver decides the amount.

Question 10: What membership requirements am I asked to fulfill?
- Each member is to desire to grow by submitting themselves to leadership and participating in regular activities and events.
- Each member is to give their tithe and offerings regularly.
• Each member is to reach out and bring at least one person a year into the church membership.
• Each member is to serve in some ministry in the church regularly.

**Question 11: What is the purpose of the NHCI creed?**

The Creed is a confession of who we are in Christ Jesus. In it we confess what is occurring and what surely shall take place in our lives. Confession connects into the power of agreement for each believer and builds up the faith of all present. Confession also creates an atmosphere in the Church which is conducive for miraculous occurrences.
Lesson 3: Creed, Bylaws & Tour

The New Horizon Creed

Having received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of my life and having been filled by the power and the presence of the Holy Ghost, I believe the following to be true about myself, other members of this church, and those in the body of Christ.

1. I am the beloved of the Lord and highly favored!
2. I am saved for all eternity, covered by the Blood, and clean before the Father!
3. I am a citizen of heaven and an heir to the promises of God!
4. I am God’s superman/superwoman: a strong man/woman over my family and home and in all the areas God has allowed me to tread upon!
5. I am a sin-buster, an enemy of the devil and demons, a living weapon, divinely powerful – destroying the works and strongholds of the enemy!
6. I am a saint of God, a faithful brother/sister, a proclaimer of God’s Word and a model of holy living!
7. I am more than a conqueror, a member of the royal family and royal priesthood!
8. I am the redeemed of the Lord, a new creation, a minister of reconciliation, and an ambassador of the kingdom!
9. I am somebody in the Lord! I am special, talented, brilliant, beautiful, courageous, and competent – I am strong!
10. I am God’s man/woman!

Written by Bishop Ronnie C. Crudup

See Membership Agreement Form & Bylaws

Important Questions
In light of what you have heard, do you want to go forward?
Do you still want to join NHCI?
Lesson 4: Salvation

Salvation is the free gift of God to man by grace through faith, completely aside from human works. Works in the life of a believer are tremendously important, but they are to be the result of receiving and appropriating God’s grace in the salvation they receive. As the prophet declares, “Salvation is of the Lord.” (Jonah 2:9) “Therefore, in every aspect it is a work of God in behalf of man and is in no sense a work of man in behalf of God.”

The Holman Bible Dictionary defines salvation as:

The acutely dynamic act of snatching others by force from serious peril. In its most basic sense, salvation is the saving of a life from death or harm. Scripture, particularly the New Testament, extends salvation to include deliverance from the penalty and power of sin.

No doctrine of the faith is more fundamental than that of salvation. Misconceptions here result in eternal destruction, because faith that is placed in the wrong object cannot save. Let me ask you the question I often ask those who come to my office: If you were to die today and stand before God, what reason would you give Him for admitting you into His heaven? Are you relying on your efforts to live a good life, keep the Ten Commandments, do good, help others, go to church, or even putting something in the offering plate? Are you trusting in the fact that in the past you raised your hand, walked an aisle, or signed a card? Do you believe that joining a church, being confirmed, or being baptized will save you? None of these reasons are acceptable to God. None of these things will save anyone.

The Meaning and Scope of Salvation

Even a casual look at the world quickly reveals man’s condition in sin and the awful plight in which this fallen condition has left him. Furthermore, it is a condition against which mankind is completely helpless when left to his own human resources. In spite of all man’s expectations of a new society in which man is able to bring about peace and prosperity, the world remains shattered and torn by the ravages of sin locally, nationally, and internationally. The Bible speaks, however, of God’s gracious plan to provide a solution to man’s problem. We call it salvation.

According to the broadest meaning as used in Scripture, the term salvation encompasses the total work of God by which He seeks to rescue man from the ruin, doom, and power of sin and bestows upon him the wealth of His grace encompassing eternal life, provision for abundant life now, and eternal glory (Eph. 1:3-8; 2:4-10; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; John 3:16, 36; 10:10).
The word “salvation” is the translation of the Greek word soteria which is derived from the word soter meaning “savior.” The word “salvation” communicates the thought of deliverance, safety, preservation, soundness, restoration, and healing. In theology, however, its major use is to denote a work of God on behalf of men, and as such it is a major doctrine of the Bible which includes redemption, reconciliation, propitiation, conviction, repentance, faith, regeneration, forgiveness, justification, sanctification, preservation, and glorification. On the one hand, salvation is described as the work of God rescuing man from his lost estate. On the other hand salvation describes the estate of a man who has been saved and who is vitally renewed and made a partaker of the inheritance of the saints.

The Essence of Christianity

The essence of the gospel message is that God has achieved eternal salvation for all who will believe, through the work of the sinless Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who died on the cross of Calvary as the sin bearer of the world. In a word, salvation was accomplished for men by the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ. We shall attempt to briefly point out the most important features of the death of Christ as indicated in various biblical passages.

(1) While the life and teachings of our Lord Jesus are of great value and import to the Christian, it is His death on the cross which saves us Romans 5:6-11.

Thus we must see the cross of Calvary not just as a part of the gospel; it is the heart of it.

(2) The death of Christ was not an accident or an after-thought, but a part of the plan of God from eternity past.

Some have attempted to teach that Jesus died a tragic martyr, misunderstood and killed by an unfortunate turn of events. The Bible tells us that our Lord’s death was a part of God’s eternal decree, determined before creation:

... knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a Lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you ...

(1 Peter 1:18-20).

(3) The death of Christ was substitutionary.

Jesus did not die for His own sins, because He was guiltless:
... who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed (1 Peter 2:22)

(4) In His death our Lord died in our place, bearing the penalty for our sins.
The prophet of old announced that the coming Messiah would be a sin bearer:

Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him (Isaiah 53:4-6).

(5) The death of Christ was a final, once-for-all, payment for sins.
In the Old Testament God merely passed over the sins of the nation (cf. Romans 3:25-26). The blood of the sacrificial animals did not forgive sins. These bloody sacrifices did not bring pardon, but merely a reprieve. By offering the sacrifice, the Old Testament saint expressed the faith of one who looked forward to the coming of the “Lamb of God.”

... and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12).

(6) In large measure, the work of the cross can be summarized in four words: redemption, propitiation, justification, and reconciliation.
Redemption refers to God’s purchase of a people for Himself. The price paid is the blood of Christ. At times the emphasis is on the idea of buying back, with the imagery being that of the slave market. We have been purchased out of bondage to sin by the work of Christ on the cross (cf. Exodus 6:6; 15:13; Leviticus 25:25-27; Ruth 4:1-12; Romans 3:24; Colossians 1:14; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

Propitiation describes the appeasement of the righteous indignation of God, which is aroused by our sin. God’s standards have been violated, His word ignored or rejected. The wrath of God is thereby incurred by fallen man. The death of Christ satisfies the demands of justice, and God is now able to deal with us in mercy and grace (cf. Romans 3:21-26; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:1; 4:8-10).
Justification has a two-fold reference. In the first place, justification refers to our innocence under the Law and our resulting immunity from condemnation under the Law’s requirements. Our sins have been borne by Christ on the cross. Our penalty has been paid, and so the Law has no claim on us. God therefore declares us innocent, justified. Beyond this, justification declares us to be positively righteous in God’s sight. While our sins were imputed to Christ, His righteousness was imputed to us and so God, as judge of the earth, declares us to be both free from guilt and deserving of the rights and privileges of righteousness (cf. Acts 13:39; Romans 4:6ff.; 8:14ff.; Galatians 4:4-7).

Reconciliation is the result of all these. We who were once alienated from God by our sin (Ephesians 2:11ff.), are now brought near through the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:16ff).

Lesson 4 Questions:

1. Have you asked Jesus to come into your life?
   Romans 10:8-10

2. How do you know you are saved?
   1 John 5:12-13

See your attached Personal Commitment Guide for more information.
Lesson 5: Prayer

Luke 18:1 The Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

What is prayer

Prayer is powerful. It allows us to cast our burdens on the Lord and receive guidance and provision from Him. We can experience God’s power for daily living when we’re willing to seek Him earnestly and bow in reverence. If you and I approach prayer correctly, we can have confidence that He will respond to our requests.

Prayer is a vital part of the disciple’s life. Jesus Christ is our great and ultimate example of how to pray. If Jesus prayed, how much more should we pray? Because we are believers in Jesus Christ we pray out of our relationship with Him. Based upon our relationship with Christ, our prayer life should grow and mature. We should not come to God in prayer when things are wrong only. We pray out of our delight in our relationship with God and not out of duty.

Prayer should demonstrate a total consciousness of our need, a sense of our complete inadequacy along with a sense of God’s complete adequacy and willingness.

Matthew 6:7-8 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Why Pray

Throughout scripture, we are commanded, admonished and encouraged to pray. Why? Because there is purpose and benefits in prayer for the believer.

- Prayer strengthens our relationship with Christ - James 4:8
- Prayer transforms us to be more like Christ
- Prayer helps the believer discover the will of God
- Prayer is for repentance – Psalm 51
- Prayer allows us to be naked and not ashamed – Psalm 109
- Prayer expresses gladness and joy – Philippians 1:4
- Prayer allows us to disclose our full emotional state
- Prayer provides direction
- Prayer provides comfort and relief
• *Prayer provides covering*

**How should we pray?**

**Recognize that God is the Sovereign of the Universe.** Psalm 103:19 says, “The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all.” Our heavenly Father never ceases to be the ruler and master of the universe.

**Recognize that God is holy.** When Isaiah saw the Lord in His glory, he felt unclean, even though he had lived a faithful, righteous life (Isa. 6:1-6). The picture we see of God in the book of Revelation is similar in its majesty. As humans, we all fall short of His absolute holiness. We should approach Him with reverence and awe.

**Confess sin.** Scripture teaches that the Lord won’t hear our prayers if we’re holding onto unconfessed sin (Ps. 66:18). Purity of heart and the power of God are connected.

**Recognize your inadequacy.** When the Lord tells you to do something, He hasn’t made a mistake. He will never call you to do something that you can’t accomplish through His power and strength. In fact, God delights in using your weaknesses to teach you how to rely on Him.

**Be available for God to use you.** Some prayers will never be answered unless we take an active role in their fulfillment.

**Experience the Holy Spirit’s enabling power.** God wants you to look at yourself as He does—as someone with potential. In the power of the Spirit, you have the ability to do whatever He asks.

**Acquire God’s vision and direction.** What’s on your heart? Surrender every dream or goal to the heavenly Father, and watch what He will do in and through you.

**BARRIERS TO PRAYER**

**Sin**

As Christians, we must take a look at known sin in our lives. Sin corrupts and separates us from God. We must begin to call it what it is “SIN”, not issues, not problems etc....

*Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear.*

*2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

22
Lack of Faith
Jesus is all powerful, but we can limit his power by our lack of expectation, by our wimpy faith! His work is hidden, sometimes even denied, to those who refuse to believe in Jesus’ power. So let’s be a people who not only pray, but pray with faith and expectation, anticipating Jesus’ mighty work.

*Hebrews 11:6* And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

*Matthew 21:21-22* Jesus replied, “Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”

*Mark 11:23-24* “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Outside The Will Of God
Again and again in the Bible the truth is emphasized that prayer must be according to God's will. Prayer is not a means for us to persuade a reluctant God to do something which is against His better judgment. Prayer, rather is coming to God for the fulfillment of His will, coming to a God who delights to answer prayer.

Praying in the will of God means that the prayer must be in harmony with what God has revealed to be His plan for the world. Our petitions must be in harmony with God's holy and righteous character. What we desire from God must be to the best interest of ourselves and others, even though we may not always know what is ultimately best.

If we pray in the will of God, we can be sure that God will answer. The Apostle John wrote, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us —whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him" (1 John 5:14-15). These are great promises. In prayer we can approach God with complete assurance of His ability to answer us. There is no limit to what we can ask, if it is according to His will.
John goes on to say that there are prayer requests that God cannot answer because they are not according to His will and not for our best interest (1 John 5:16). *James expressed it, "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures" (James 4:3)*. Selfish prayers will not be honored by God. Prayer is God's appointed means to receive what is best for us and others and to realize what Paul called "*what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will*" (Rom. 12:2b). But what infinite power and possibilities there are in prayer that is according to the will of God. (Study by John F. Walfoord)

**Consequences of a Prayer-less Life**
When a believer does not pray, it puts him/her in direct conflict with the word of God. There are consequences when we live life on our own without direction from the Father. Some of those consequences are listed below:

- **Broken Fellowship**
- **Double-Mindedness** — James 1:5-8
- **No Direction**
- **Lack of Confidence That God Will Hear Us**

**Conclusion**
As a child of God, you have the awesome privilege of falling on your knees and talking to the Ruler of the universe. Don’t take this precious gift for granted. Humbly approach the throne of grace with your needs, confess your wrongdoing, and admit that life’s challenges are too much for you to handle. The Father will reveal His plans and equip you to succeed.

- **Prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance, but laying hold of God’s ever present willingness.**
- **Prayer is not for emergency use only, when we get in a pinch and need someone to bail us out.**
- **Prayer is not an “Aladdin’s Lamp” or a trip to the wishing well for our wants.**
- **By contrast, prayer is a means of intimate communion, fellowship, and dependence upon God the Father who has promised to work in and through us through His Son, just as God worked through Him.**
- **Prayer is for everyday living, moment by moment.**
- **Prayer is a means of claiming God’s promises and knowing and becoming abandoned to God’s will.**

**Lesson 5 Questions:**
1. What is the one thing each of these prayers above has in common?
2. Why Is Prayer important to you?
3. Does the believer take advantage of his/her opportunity to pray? Why or Why not?
4. (Self-Reflection) What is your prayer life like?

Reference Scriptures

Prayers in Scripture:

The Prophet’s Prayer – The prophet Habakkuk prays a prayer of worship and rejoicing to the Lord. Habakkuk 3:2-19

The Prayer of Ezra – Ezra intercedes to God for the guilt and sin of the people. Ezra 9:5-15

The Lord’s Prayer or Model Prayer – Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray. Luke 11:2-4


Hezekiah’s Prayer – On his deathbed, Hezekiah cries out in prayer and God Extends his life. Isaiah 38:2-8

The Prayer of Jabez – Jabez prays for God to bless him. 1 Chronicles 4:10

Daniel’s Prayer – Daniel pleads for the Lord’s mercy in petition and fasting for the captive Jews. Daniel 9:4-19

David’s Prayer – After God makes a Covenant Promise to David, he prays this Prayer of Thanks. 2 Samuel 7:18-29

Priestly Prayer of Jesus – Christ Intercessory Prayer. John 17

Types of Prayers

Prayer of Adoration – We praise the greatness of God and we acknowledge our dependence on Him for all things.

Prayer of Thanksgiving – Thanksgiving should be a regular part of our talking to God. Giving God the thanks He deserves.

Prayer of Petition – We ask God for things we need, primarily spiritual, but physical ones as well. We bring our requests before God for ourselves, our family or our friends.
Our prayer of petition should always include a statement of our willingness to accept God’s will.

**Prayer of Intercession** — To intercede means to plead on behalf of another person, government and church leaders.

**Supplication In Prayer** — How we make our request known to God is important. We cannot talk to God any kind of way and expect to get an answer. We must be humble.

1 Timothy 2: 1-6 "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (KJV)

**Spiritual Warfare Prayer** — The combat performed in the spirit against evil, dark forces to overcome Satan’s attacks, lies and deception through the reading of God’s word and Prayer. Ephesians 6:10-20

Clearly, prayer is an area where believers experience spiritual warfare. Our spiritual enemy is fully aware of the power and promises available to us in prayer. He knows that every major spiritual revival began with prayer. He knows we are all called to be “praying menaces” to his cause. Therefore, he fights us from every angle to keep us from praying effectively. The devil launches his weapons of mass distraction to keep us too preoccupied with other things to take time to really connect with God. He bombards us with his fiery darts of doubt to keep us from praying in faith to the One who is “a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). Our enemy seeks to discourage us at every turn because he is threatened by believers and congregations that take prayer seriously and pursue Christ passionately.

*Transforming Prayer by Daniel Henderson*
Lesson 6: Every Christian a Proclaimer & How to Write your Testimony

There is a doctrine in the United States Marine Corps that is known as "The Rifleman's Creed". It states that every enlisted Marine, regardless of their military specialization (MOS), is trained first and foremost to be a rifleman. And every Marine officer, regardless of MOS, is trained as an Infantry Platoon Commander. This doctrine is in place so that no matter what happens in combat, every Marine and officer is prepared to continue the mission to destroy the enemy. This way if a cook is in the kitchen and a fire fight breaks out, he or she can stop cooking, grab a rifle and help their fellow Marines deal with the adversary.

The Christian should have a similar mentality in life. We should use "The Evangelist's Creed". That means that every Christian (whether a Pastor, Deacon, Elder, or Layperson) is first and foremost an Evangelist. We should all be able to communicate the plan for salvation to our peers, regardless of our age, position, or location in the church. Evangelism is not just the job of the Pastor. It is the job of every born again believer to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone that we run into. We should not only be prepared to witness to the world, we should desire to run into unsaved people so that we can share the good news with them. Notice that I did not say that we had to convert everyone. It is ultimately up to the individual whether or not they accept Christ. But we have to actively expose them to Jesus so that the word of God can penetrate into their heart. How can we make sure that we are prepared to do this? We need to know the truth for ourselves. We need to spend time with God ourselves. And we need to want the person to receive salvation.

Evangelism Defined:
Evangelism is joyfully sharing the good news of the sovereign love of God. It is calling people to repentance, to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, to active membership in the church, to being a disciple and to obedient service in the world by reaching others.

Why Evangelize?
- **It was the last command that Jesus gave us.** Before ascending to heaven, Jesus gave us this command found in Mark 16:15, "...Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to all creation."
- **There is a real hell to shun and a heaven to gain.** In Revelation 20:15 it says, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
- **Life is but a vapor.** This life we are living is not even a drop in the bucket compared to eternity. As Christians we need to help people become aware of this. Everyone needs to decide on this side of eternity how they are going to spend eternity. According to the Bible there are only two choices, heaven or hell. **Why, you do not even know what will**
happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. James 4:14

- God has promised us an abundant life here on this earth.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10. Despite all appearances, people who do not have a relationship with God through Jesus do not have true peace or joy. Submitting to the Lordship of Christ is the most fulfilling thing a person can do.

**The Agricultural Imagery of Evangelism in 1 Corinthians 3:5-8**

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. I Cor. 3:5-8

1. **Prepare the Soil.**

   We are not living in a result-oriented society. We are living in an instant result-oriented society. Nearly every store carries instant coffee, instant oatmeal, instamatic cameras, and instant breakfasts. We use instant messenger, drive-up windows, automatic teller machines, credit cards, and fax machines. If we have to wait more than five minutes, it’s considered a travesty of justice! However, in the spiritual realm patience is a part of God’s program. Nowhere is this more evident than in the conversion of a man or woman. Although conversion is the miracle of a moment, the Bible uses agricultural imagery to portray the dynamic process of evangelism. Crops do not simply “happen”—reaping a harvest is the outcome of a lengthy series of events that cannot be bypassed or overlooked. Unless the ground is cleared and plowed it will not be ready to receive the seed. Likewise, in the spiritual realm, before people are ready to receive the seed of the Word their souls must be prepared. God often uses trials and tragedies to tear down any illusions of autonomy so people can begin to see their true condition of spiritual need. Divorce, the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, and a major move all prepare souls for Christ. These trials and transitions in life are often what God uses to draw people to Christ.

Although God is the One who ultimately does the work of transforming a person’s soul, He invites each one of us to participate with Him. Notice, the key word is participate. In any area of life and ministry we should understand that we contribute nothing to the purposes of God. He has no lack or deficiency, and for us to make a contribution would mean that we bring something to the table that He does not already possess. However, God does invite us to participate in His purposes by being a part of what His Spirit is accomplishing in the lives of people.
There are a number of ways that we can participate with God in His work of preparing the soil. First, we can and must pray. This is where the real work is found—preparing the soil through prayer. The Lord uses His servants in each phase of the process as people without Christ the lost are prayed. Prayer is part and parcel of seeing individuals believe in Christ. We must never forget or neglect this critical step. What to pray:

Three Life-changing prayer segments based on Colossians 4:3-4:

*Meanwhile praying also for us,* that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.*

- “Lord, Open a door.”
- “Lord, open their heart.”
- “Lord, open my mouth.”

The second human element of preparing the soil is: we must have a presence. We must go to sinners if we expect sinners to come to the Savior. Many Christians assume that it is the job of the pastoral staff to save the lost when in reality, it is the job of the body to go out into the world and share Christ and then bring those that they have led to Christ to the church for growth and discipleship. This means we must love lost people enough to go after them. Loving the lost is the first step in leading the lost to Christ

2. **Sow the Seed.**

After preparing the soil, it is imperative to sow the seed. This is simply putting the Word before people. It may be leaving a gospel of John booklet or tract at a restaurant. It may be giving a person a Christian book that has been especially meaningful to you. Often, it is simply sharing your personal testimony and the gospel. Is this easy? No, it is not. It can be downright scary, but the rewards of witnessing are worth the risks.

3. **Cultivate the Soil.**

Cultivation is the lengthiest part of the agricultural process since it involves irrigation, fertilization, and weed control. The cultivation phase is illustrated in the fact that Jesus was called “a friend of tax collectors and sinners” (Matt 11:19) and in Paul’s desire to find areas of common ground in order to win Jews and Gentiles to Christ (1 Cor 9:19-23). Again, if we are to be faithful witnesses we must learn to love lost people. We must not see lost people as trophies to be won. If this is our mindset we will find ourselves quickly and easily discouraged.

We have looked at three stages: preparing the soil, sowing the seed, and cultivating the soil. We have learned that we must pray for laborers and specific lost people. We have also learned that we must spread the Word through any available means. We have also
been reminded that evangelism is a process that takes time. Yet we must be patient and persevere in each of these stages, for a fruitful harvest requires a faithful witness. We have considered three stages of gardening; we are now ready to undergo the brief fourth phase.

4. **Reap the Harvest.**

Crops go through three stages: green, ripe, rotten. Harvest is effective only at one stage. If we prematurely harvest the fruit before it is ripe, we run the risk of ruining the fruit. However, if we wait too long to harvest the fruit it may be too late. The key is sensitivity to the Spirit and timely intervention. Many of us need to simply remove the pressure and guilt that we feel under. God expects for sharing our faith with others to be fun and natural. He also wants us to know that it is His work. I have yet to convert a single soul; the only conversion that takes place is through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. This is helping me to relax and not take so much personal responsibility. If I accept the blame when a person rejects Christ, quite naturally, I would need to accept some of the credit when a person believed Christ.

The key concept to be gleaned from this process principle is the liberating truth that if we are involved in any one of these four phases, we are doing evangelism. Believers who prepare the soil, sow the seed, or cultivate the planted soil are as much a part of the evangelistic process as those who are given the privilege of reaping the harvest.

In addition, when we are sensitive and responsive to the opportunities God places in our path, we will find ourselves participating in different phases of the process, depending on the individual and the purposes of God. With one person we may be given an opportunity to participate in the seed-planting phase by sharing truths from Scripture. In another case, we may have an opportunity to water or fertilize the spiritual truth that has already been sown. While our desire is to see our friends come to Christ (the harvest), we can be assured that whether we are involved in preparing, sowing, watering, or reaping, we are part of that process.

So how do these four stages of gardening work in action? Jesus will show us in John 4. Jesus “prepared the soil” when He asked the Samaritan woman for a drink of well water (4:7-10). Even in speaking to her, Jesus overcame three barriers:

- First, the racial barrier (Jews had no dealings with Samaritans),
- Second, the gender barrier (Jewish rabbis would not address women as Jesus did),
- Third, the social barrier (this woman had a poor reputation among her own people). Jesus sowed the seed. Jesus knew everything she had done, and yet He gently and lovingly offered her the living water of eternal life (4:10). Jesus
cultivated the seed by getting intimately involved in this woman’s personal circumstances and then answering her theological questions (4:16-26). Finally, Jesus reaped the harvest. After telling this woman that He was the Christ (4:26), the woman left Him. The disciples then approached Jesus and urged Him to eat (4:31). Jesus responded with these powerful words in John 4:34-39:

“My food,” said Jesus, is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work. Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until the harvest’? I tell you open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying ‘One sows and another reaps’ is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor.”

We are tools in the hand of the master Gardener. God is using many of us in remarkable ways, but God is anxious for a greater harvest because the fields are white unto harvest. He wants to use you and me to participate with Him in bringing about a bumper crop!

7 Tips for Effective Evangelism

1. **Know your audience and tailor the message to them**, don’t just do things the way you always do. Take the gospels as an example of this, there are 4 accounts each tailored to a specific audience, addressing the needs of each group. But the message remains consistent (i.e. Jesus Christ is the Savior of the World).

2. **Be led** (Acts 16:6, 9-10). Paul wanted to go to Asia but the Spirit forbade Him. He was led to Macedonia (Europe) and that’s where the ministry was effective. Likewise, Philip was led into the desert to the Ethiopian (Acts 8), it seemed crazy to leave a thriving Samaritan revival and go into a desert of Gaza, but that’s where he was led and as a result the gospel travelled down into Africa with the Ethiopian.

3. **Be burdened**. According to 1 Cor. 13 the gifts work by love. Without love and a burden for souls we won’t reach them.

4. **Preach Jesus**. Be single minded in your message. It should be Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Don’t preach your pastor, your church rules, politics or anything else – focus on Jesus and esp. what He has done means to you.

5. **Be empowered** (Acts 1:8). Without the indwelling Holy Spirit you cannot be an effective witness for Christ.

6. **Be in agreement**. Imagine if Peter & John did not agree at the Gate Beautiful, imagine if Peter wanted to go to get some cash, while John wanted to pray for him. Thanks be to God they both said: silver and gold have we none, but such as we have we freely give, rise up and walk in Jesus Name. Make sure you are walking with people who agree on doctrine when you go out to share the faith.
7. **Have faith** (Mark 16:16-18). Believe that souls will respond to the call. There’s nothing worse than an unbelieving evangelist... why bother? The excuse that ‘we told them so they can’t say they didn’t hear the gospel on judgment day’ simply is not good enough. Everyone won’t respond positively to the call, but as good stewards we should be of the view that with God NOTHING shall be impossible.

**Other Considerations on Sharing your Testimony**

If you have really drawn near to God, you will be like Peter, who said, "For we cannot but speak of the things we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20) even when he was persecuted and threatened on account of his testimony, and the power of the name of Jesus that he was operating in. The most important thing to testify of, though, is not physical miracles, as wonderful as they are, but the way God has redeemed your soul - bought you out of the hand of the devil for himself. The Bibles says in Psalm 107:2, “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy". It’s a wonderful thing when we can honestly testify that we now know God has forgiven our sins. If God has redeemed you, then you should say so - publicly. And one of the best public forums today for this is the internet.

**What if your testimony is not so great?**

Your testimony does not have to be super dramatic or unusual to be effective. Not everyone can relate personally to a sensational testimony. If on the other hand your testimony is weak because you can't point to a change in your life, could it be that you have not really consecrated your life to God properly? Are you trying to living with one foot in God's Kingdom, and the other in Satan's?

The Bible says, *"For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience."* (Ephesians 5:5,6).

Is your heart still in love with this present age, this world system? If so, it would be a great time to decide to live for God and to get serious about it, because none of us are guaranteed a tomorrow. Perhaps your testimony is weak because you have not given attention to the wonderful truths concerning the Holy Spirit and overcoming Satan that can be found in God's Word. I have begun to explain these things on my site elsewhere, for example, here. God wants your testimony to be strong, so you can live unashamed before God and men, and give honor and glory to God. He wants your life to show forth His power - what He can do. And God has done absolutely amazing things for people in all kinds of trouble, who were messed up and without natural hope. Some testimonies of how God helped such people can be found on this site.
If God has worked powerfully in your life, please share it so others can benefit. It will remind you of how God has worked and it will encourage others to believe in God. It may be the means by which another precious person comes to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. So do it. Begin to write down your story.

**How to Organize your Testimony**

If you read Acts 26:1-29 and Acts 22:1-21 you will see two examples of how the apostle Paul gave his testimony in the midst of great pressure, where his destiny hung in the balance. Paul talked about his early life, before meeting Christ - both the good and the bad points. Then he talked about how Christ revealed Himself to him and his response. In Acts 26 (where he was not interrupted) he is able to spend more time talking about his life since his conversion. It’s good to devote about 40% to "Before Christ", about 20% to the conversion experience, and about 40% to "After Christ." People want to know what kind of a difference Christ made in your life. Be honest and authentic. Don't try to make it look better than it is, or to make your past sound worse than it really was. God will bless a testimony that is truthful. People are usually pretty good and spotting phony things.

**Here are some ideas to get you thinking about writing your testimony.**

A. Before I received Christ, I lived and thought this way:
   a. What did my life revolve around?
   b. What issues or things were important to me?
   c. What did I think of God? Of Jesus?
   d. On what did I rely for security and happiness?

B. How I received Christ: Paint a "word picture" of the situation.
   a. Where were you? Alone in your room? Driving? Home?
   b. What feelings did you struggle with?
   c. What thoughts went through your mind?
   d. How did you yield your life to Christ?

C. After I received Christ, these changes took place:
   a. Did you struggle with your faith?
   b. How did God answer prayer, or strengthen you in difficult situations?
   c. How are you different than you were before?
   d. How have the changes in your life influenced others around you?

**Do's and Don'ts of strong personal testimony**

**DO's**
• Ask the Lord to give you wisdom and guidance as you write (James 1:5-6) Follow the three-part outline shown above (A. Your life before Christ, B. How You came to know Him, and C. How things are now).
• Emphasize the final point (how things are now) if you became a Christian as a small child.
• Begin with an interesting, attention-getting sentence and close with a strong conclusion. Make sure you tie everything together. Include relevant, thought-provoking secular facts and experiences.
• Write in such a way that others will feel associated with you in past and present experiences. Talk about things others can relate to.
• Give enough details to arouse interest.
• Use at least one, but at the most two, Scripture verses.
• Edit carefully and rewrite as often as necessary. Have someone else look it over, and welcome their comments, even if some of those are critical. It may be difficult to accept criticism, but seeking sincere feedback is a sign of wisdom.

DON’T DO’s
• Don’t use Christian "jargon." Avoid the following words, which do not communicate truth to the average non-Christian. Though these words and phrases are precious to us, they are often misunderstood and consequently ridiculed by non-Christians: saved, convicted, converted, born again, sin, repentance.
• Don’t be too wordy, beat around the bush, or emphasize how bad you used to be. People feel uncomfortable if you dwell on it.
• Don’t speak in glittering generalities or superlatives.
• Avoid words like "wonderful," "glorious."
• Don’t mention church denominations, especially in a negative way. Never speak critically or negatively about any other individual or group.
• Don’t give the impression that the Christian life is a "bed of roses."
• Don’t preach to people. Make it a testimony, not a "preachimony.

Lesson 6 Questions:
1. Do I see myself as God’s “servant,” called to proclaim Jesus Christ? Why or why not? Is my first priority to God or to others (e.g., my spouse, my children, my employer)? How can I preach Christ in adverse circumstances? What is my responsibility in the midst of these situations?
2. Over the course of my Christian life, have I seen sharing Christ as a process or an event? If I have seen it as an event, what can I do to correct my faulty thinking? What struggles have I experienced in sharing my faith that stem from perceiving sharing Christ as an event?
3. Do I see the human harvest of souls as “white?” If so, will I change my attitude and perspective this week so I become more optimistic and Holy Spirit dependent?
Lesson 7: The Christian Life

1 Peter 1:13-16 Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ revealed at this coming. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

When we declare in our Creed that we are a model of holy living, we are making a very bold statement. A model is a standard or example for imitation or comparison. In this case, we are claiming that if people look at us they will be able to see what it means to live holy. It is the same statement that Paul makes in 1 Corinthians 11:1: Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. Are you really ready for people to say to you: “I want to live my life exactly like you live yours. I am going to watch how you live and live the same way.”

We are to be models of holy living. Holiness means to be set aside for God’s special use, and set apart from sin and its influence. We are to be set apart and different, not blending in with the crowd, yet not being different for the sake of being different. What make us different are God qualities in our lives. In Mark 10, the disciples are arguing over who is the greatest. Jesus gets straight to the point with them when he says: You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever want to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. (Mark 10:42-44, emphasis added). “Not so with you” Jesus tells them. We are to be different.

Finally, we are to be models of holy living. The emphasis on this part of our creed is on how we live out what we say we believe. In fact, we cannot claim that Jesus is our Lord unless we are living out what He says: Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord’ and do not do what I say? (Luke 6:46) Being “a model of holy living” brings us to consider what it means to live a Christian lifestyle.

What does it mean to be a Christian?

In our culture, it has become merely a label that says we are part of a particular religion that distinguishes us from a Jew, Muslim, Buddhist or some other faith perspective. The term “Christian” means literally “little Christ”. How did the term come into being?

Acts 11 tells us that the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. What prompted this designation to be given to the followers of Jesus Christ for the first time?

Acts 11:19-26 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about
the Lord Jesus. The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the disciples who first earned the name “Christian” was that they refused to be held captive by the cultural norms of the day. Jews were not supposed to have anything to do with Gentiles, or Greeks as they are called in this passage. So intent were these Jewish Christians on telling the good news of Christ, that they took the risk of telling the message to the Gentiles. God blessed their efforts and a great number of people believed. The fact that Jews and Greeks were spending time together to learn about Jesus got the attention of those around them. What could possibly make these Jews and Gentiles get along? It must be that they are followers of Christ, or “little Christs”. The proof positive of being a “Christian” when the word first appears in Scripture is when people are brought together in the name of Christ who normally would not associate with one another in their culture. They are able to come together because of their common experience of believing and proclaiming the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Another glimpse into the life of the church at Antioch is given by Paul in Galatians:

Galatians 2:11-14 When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?

Paul says that he confronted Peter because “he was clearly in the wrong” and was not “acting in line with the truth of the gospel”. What was it that caused Paul to give them such a strong rebuke? “He began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.” Peter gave in to the pressure to conform to the religious mandates not to associate with Gentiles. Once
again, we see a clear testimony that the essence of being a Christian is to be so committed to following Christ that it destroys all manmade barriers.

**Being a Christian means that we ignore all manmade barriers in order to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ through our words and our lifestyles.**

**The Major Issues of the Christian Lifestyle**

If being a Christian means proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through our words and lifestyles, then we had better base it on the things that Jesus did and taught. What are some of the major issues in the teaching and life of Christ? For this we should look at those things Jesus emphasized.

1. **Christian lifestyle is a life lived by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

   From the beginning of the earthly ministry of Jesus the Holy Spirit was involved.

   *Luke 3:21-22 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”*

   Of course, this event does not mean that the Holy Spirit had never come up on Jesus before, since Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit was with him even while he was in his mother’s womb. But the Holy Spirit lighted on Jesus in a visible, bodily form as a demonstration to the onlookers that his ministry was to be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

   When Jesus was getting ready to be crucified, he comforted his disciples by assuring them: *And I will ask the Father and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.* (John 14:16-18) So closely is the Holy Spirit identified with Christ in this passage that Jesus says I am leaving, yet I am also coming to you in the person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will live in you, which is the same as Jesus living in you.

   After His death and resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples and promised them power when the Holy Spirit comes as recorded in the book of Acts: *But 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, emphasis added) After the Holy Spirit came as promised in Acts 2, the disciples began to the death and resurrection of Jesus. In Acts 3, Peter and
John heal the lame beggar, and afterward they take the opportunity to deliver a message in the power of the Holy Spirit that said: **By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that completely healed him, as you can all see.** (Acts 3:16) Having been warned previously not to testify any more about Jesus, they were arrested and thrown in jail. The next day they appear before the Sanhedrin, and once again testify about the Lord Jesus. In Acts 4, we read these revealing words: **When they [the Sanhedrin] saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.**” (Acts 4:13, emphasis added) The early disciples based all their teaching, and all their actions, so fully on the teachings and lifestyle of Jesus, that everyone took note that they had been with Jesus. Thus the term “little Christs” was applied to them. In the beginning it was not meant to be a compliment, but rather an insult. To be a Christian was to be one who taught, lived and did the things that Jesus Christ did in the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. **Christian lifestyle is a life of love.**

   Jesus gives us a clear statement of how He read all of Scripture:

   **Matthew 22:35-40 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him [Jesus] with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”**

   If we are going to presume to teach what Jesus taught and live as Jesus lived, our primary motivation has to be love for God and love for others. Furthermore, Jesus tells us exactly what this love will look like.

   In the book of Luke, after Jesus had said a similar thing to another expert in the Law, this man asked Jesus a follow up question: **And who is my neighbor?** (Luke 10:29) It is at this point that Jesus tells the well-known story of the Good Samaritan. Jesus illustrates through this story, that surely must have shocked His Jewish listeners, that true love for our fellow man will not stop at cultural taboos, a theme we have already noticed. You must love your neighbor, especially those whom our culture may tell us are unlovable.
Powerful movements have begun by those who embraced this radical concept of loving even those who we would not normally love as part of their Christian lifestyle. Consider Frederick Douglass:

"I was not more than thirteen years old, when I felt the need of God, as a father and protector. My religious nature was awakened by the preaching of a white Methodist minister, named Hanson. He thought that all men, great and small, bond and free, were sinners in the sight of God; that they were, by nature, rebels against His government; and that they must repent of their sins, and be reconciled to God, through Christ... I was, for weeks, a poor, brokenhearted mourner, traveling through the darkness and misery of doubts and fears. I finally found that change of heart which comes by "casting all one's care" upon God, and by having faith in Jesus Christ, as the Redeemer, Friend, and Savior of those who diligently seek Him. After this, I saw the world in a new light. I seemed to live in a new world, surrounded by new objects, and to be animated by new hopes and desires. I loved all mankind—slaveholders not excepted; though I abhorred slavery more than ever. My great concern was, now, to have the world converted."¹

3. **Christian lifestyle will be authenticated by service to the poor and oppressed.**

At the kick off of His earthly ministry as recorded in Luke, this is what we read:

Luke 4: 16-21 He [Jesus] went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Ministry to the poor and oppressed should be at the center of our Christian lifestyle. Jesus said that he came to fulfill this particular scripture from Isaiah. We sometimes relegate service to the poor into a special category called “missions”. Jesus is saying that it should be at the center of all that we do if we are going to call ourselves Christian.

¹ Douglass, Frederick. *My Bondage and My Freedom.*
From the earliest days of the Church this has been understood by those who called themselves Christian. In Galatians, Paul recounts the incident when he went to Jerusalem to privately put before the leaders of the Church the content of the gospel that he had been proclaiming among the Gentiles “I was not running or had not been running my race in vain”. He received the endorsement from the leaders at the “home church” of his ministry: They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised [Jews]. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do. (Galatians 2:9b-10)

Saint Augustine (354-430 AD), Bishop of North Africa, had a practice of ending his sermons with the words: Give to the poor. Augustine dared to dream of a time when there would be no poor: You give bread to a hungry person; but it would be better were no one hungry, and you could give it to no one. You clothe the naked person. Would that all were clothed and this necessity did not exist.²

Those of us who are Protestants are part of a movement that holds a deep belief in the impetus of our faith in meeting the needs of others. Martin Luther said: Faith is a living, unshakeable confidence in God's grace... Through faith, a person will do good to everyone without coercion, willingly and happily; he will serve everyone, suffer everything for the love and praise of God, who has shown him such grace. It is as impossible to separate works from faith as burning and shining from fire.³

In 1540, city officials in Geneva, Switzerland invited John Calvin to that city to enact reforms. As soon as he arrived he set about revolutionizing Geneva society. His most important innovation was the incorporation of the church into city government. He developed a Deacon ministry modeled on Acts 6 to care for the sick, the elderly, the widowed and the poor.⁴ Calvin took great care to provide for the poor, because he believed that all the Church possesses rightfully belongs to the poor, and consequently how those resources are handled is of utmost seriousness:

You will frequently find both in the decrees of synods and in ancient writers that all that the church possesses, either in lands or in money, is the patrimony of the poor. And so this song is often sung there to bishops and

² Augustine. Tractate 1 John 8,8.
³ Luther, Martin. Preface to the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans, 1545.
⁵ “Patrimony” is an inheritance from one’s father.
deacons, that they should remember that they are not handling their own goods but those appointed for the need of the poor; and if in bad faith they suppress or waste them, they shall be guilty of blood. Accordingly, they are admonished to distribute these goods to whom they are owed, with the greatest awe and reverence, as if in God’s presence, without partiality.  

4. Christian Lifestyle is most fully articulated in the Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Mount was Jesus’ first teaching recorded in the book of Matthew, and it is the longest teaching recorded by Jesus. Matthew gives the setting to the Sermon on the Mount:  

Now when he [Jesus] saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying …  

(Matthew 5:1-2, NIV) Just at the time Jesus’ popularity was growing, he called aside his disciples to give them this special teaching. It was as if Jesus was saying: What I am about to say is just for you, and it is to set you apart from all of this multitude that is beginning to come to me. Herein Jesus gives his first disciples – and consequently to us, his modern day disciples – the essence of what it means to be a Christian that will distinguish us from the rest of the world.

- Christians have a different understanding of what is blessed than the rest of the world. (5:3-10) The Christian sees the blessed as those who are poor, who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted. These are the opposite of the qualities valued by the unbelieving world. Ronald Kraybill has called this The Upside Down Kingdom.

- Christians rejoice when they are persecuted, as opposed to taking revenge when they are persecuted. (5:11-12)

- Christians see themselves as the salvation of the world, as they serve as salt and the light of the world to lead others to God. (5:13-16) Thus, Christians actively pray for and work for the salvation of the world. This means that no part of the lives we live in this world is outside the influence of Christ, but we are to bring Christ into everything we do.

- Christians conform themselves to the Law of God because Jesus came to fulfill the Law. (5:17-20)

- Christians go out of their way to keep from harming another, and indeed seek to be reconcilers. (5:21-26)

- Christians do not commit adultery, neither by committing a sexual act outside of marriage, or even looking lustfully at another person not their spouse. (5:27-30)

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• Christians do not condone divorce like the world. (5:31-32)
• Christians are people of their word. (5:33-37)
• Christians do not take revenge, but turn the other cheek. (5:38-42)
• Christians love those who are their enemies and pray for them. (5:43-48)
• Christians give to the needy in secret as an act of worship of God. (6:1-4)
• Christians are people of prayer and fasting. (6:5-18)
• Christians have a different view of worldly wealth, as they are mainly concerned with treasures in heaven. They keep a healthy skepticism about the wealth of the world so as not to get caught up serving two masters. (6:19-24)
• Christians do not worry, because they trust that God will take care of their needs. (6:25-34)
• Christians do not judge others, and they look at themselves first when they want to criticize someone. (7:1-6)
• Christians are people of faith who are not afraid to ask, seek and knock, because they know they have a loving Father who is listening to them. (7:7-12)
• Christians do not wonder why the multitudes are not following because they know that the way to life is narrow and only a relative few will find it. (7:13-14)
• Christians are wise when it comes to teachers or those who come in the name of the Lord, knowing that not everyone who says that Jesus is their Lord really knows him. (7:15-23)
• Finally, Christians are those who not only hear the words of Jesus but actually practice them. (7:24-27)

Conclusion
Proclaiming that we are a “model of holy living” is a huge statement. The God of Israel and of the Christian church is holy. He sets the standards and expects us to imitate him by following His standards. Our focus and priorities must be His. Thankfully, it is not up to us to live it out in our own power. Jesus said that he would be with us always, and that he would send the Holy Spirit to give us his power to be his witnesses.

Lesson 7 Questions:
1. How would it make you feel if you knew someone was using you as a model of holy living?
2. Are there areas of your life that you would want to improve to be a better model of holy living?
3. What part(s) of the Sermon on the Mount do you think are the hardest to live out?
Lesson 8: Spiritual Gifts Discovery & Personal Assessment

A Basic Definition: The word, Spiritual Gift, comes from the Greek phrase chrismata or sometimes referred to as Charisma, and is defined as, "a gift of grace."

The Spiritual Gifts Survey is a discovery tool that provides you with a personalized analysis. Not a test, but a simple questionnaire giving you a profile of your God given spiritual gifts.

Discovering and exercising your God-given spiritual gifts allows you to experience maximum fulfillment with minimum frustration in your Christian life and ministry.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS SURVEY

DIRECTIONS
This is not a test, so there are no wrong answers. The Spiritual Gifts Survey consists of 80 statements. Some items reflect concrete actions; other items are descriptive traits; and still others are statements of belief.

• Select the one response you feel best characterizes yourself and place that number in the blank provided. Record your answer in the blank beside each item.
• Do not spend too much time on any one item. Remember, it is not a test. Usually your immediate response is best.
• Please give an answer for each item. Do not skip any items.
• Do not ask others how they are answering or how they think you should answer. Work at your own pace.

Your response choices are:

5—Highly characteristic of me/definitely true for me
4—Most of the time this would describe me/be true for me
3—Frequently characteristic of me/true for me—about 50 percent of the time
2—Occasionally characteristic of me/true for me—about 25 percent of the time
1—Not at all characteristic of me/definitely untrue for me

1. I have the ability to organize ideas, resources, time, and people effectively.

2. I am willing to study and prepare for the task of teaching.

2003 LifeWay Christian Resources
3. I am able to relate the truths of God to specific situations.
4. I have a God-given ability to help others grow in their faith.
5. I possess a special ability to communicate the truth of salvation.
6. I have the ability to make critical decisions when necessary.
7. I am sensitive to the hurts of people.
8. I experience joy in meeting needs through sharing possessions.
10. I have delivered God’s message of warning and judgment.
11. I am able to sense the true motivation of persons and movements.
12. I have a special ability to trust God in difficult situations.
13. I have a strong desire to contribute to the establishment of new churches.
14. I take action to meet physical and practical needs rather than merely talking about or planning to help.
15. I enjoy entertaining guests in my home.
16. I can adapt my guidance to fit the maturity of those working with me.
17. I can delegate and assign meaningful work.
18. I have an ability and desire to teach.
19. I am usually able to analyze a situation correctly.
20. I have a natural tendency to encourage others.
21. I am willing to take the initiative in helping other Christians grow in their faith.
22. I have an acute awareness of the emotions of other people, such as loneliness, pain, fear, and anger.
23. I am a cheerful giver.

24. I spend time digging into facts.

25. I feel that I have a message from God to deliver to others.

26. I can recognize when a person is genuine/honest.

27. I am a person of vision (a clear mental portrait of a preferable future given by God). I am able to communicate vision in such a way that others commit to making the vision a reality.

28. I am willing to yield to God’s will rather than question and waver.

29. I would like to be more active in getting the gospel to people in other lands.

30. It makes me happy to do things for people in need.

31. I am successful in getting a group to do its work joyfully.

32. I am able to make strangers feel at ease.

33. I have the ability to plan learning approaches.

34. I can identify those who need encouragement.

35. I have trained Christians to be more obedient disciples of Christ.

36. I am willing to do whatever it takes to see others come to Christ.

37. I am attracted to people who are hurting.

38. I am a generous giver.

39. I am able to discover new truths.

40. I have spiritual insights from Scripture concerning issues and people that compel me to speak out.

41. I can sense when a person is acting in accord with God’s will.
42. I can trust in God even when things look dark.

43. I can determine where God wants a group to go and help it get there.

44. I have a strong desire to take the gospel to places where it has never been heard.

45. I enjoy reaching out to new people in my church and community.

46. I am sensitive to the needs of people.

47. I have been able to make effective and efficient plans for accomplishing the goals of a group.

48. I often am consulted when fellow Christians are struggling to make difficult decisions.

49. I think about how I can comfort and encourage others in my congregation.

50. I am able to give spiritual direction to others.

51. I am able to present the gospel to lost persons in such a way that they accept the Lord and His salvation.

52. I possess an unusual capacity to understand the feelings of those in distress.

53. I have a strong sense of stewardship based on the recognition that God owns all things.

54. I have delivered to other persons messages that have come directly from God.

55. I can sense when a person is acting under God’s leadership.

56. I try to be in God’s will continually and be available for His use.

57. I feel that I should take the gospel to people who have different beliefs from me.

58. I have an acute awareness of the physical needs of others.

59. I am skilled in setting forth positive and precise steps of action.

60. I like to meet visitors at church and make them feel welcome.
61. I explain Scripture in such a way that others understand it.
62. I can usually see spiritual solutions to problems.
63. I welcome opportunities to help people who need comfort, consolation, encouragement, and counseling.
64. I feel at ease in sharing Christ with nonbelievers.
65. I can influence others to perform to their highest God-given potential.
66. I recognize the signs of stress and distress in others.
67. I desire to give generously and unpretentiously to worthwhile projects and ministries.
68. I can organize facts into meaningful relationships.
69. God gives me messages to deliver to His people.
70. I am able to sense whether people are being honest when they tell of their religious experiences.
71. I enjoy presenting the gospel to persons of other cultures and backgrounds.
72. I enjoy doing little things that help people.
73. I can give a clear, uncomplicated presentation.
74. I have been able to apply biblical truth to the specific needs of my church.
75. God has used me to encourage others to live Christ-like lives.
76. I have sensed the need to help other people become more effective in their ministries.
77. I like to talk about Jesus to those who do not know Him.
78. I have the ability to make strangers feel comfortable in my home.
I have a wide range of study resources and know how to secure information.

I feel assured that a situation will change for the glory of God even when the situation seem impossible.

SCORING YOUR SURVEY

Follow these directions to figure your score for each spiritual gift.

1. Place in each box your numerical response (1-5) to the item number which is indicated below the box.

2. For each gift, add the numbers in the boxes and put the total in the TOTAL box.

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Now that you have completed the survey, thoughtfully answer the following questions.

The gifts I have begun to discover in my life are:

1. ______________________________________________________

2. ______________________________________________________

3. ______________________________________________________

After prayer and worship, I am beginning to sense that God wants me to use my spiritual gifts to serve Christ’s body by ____________________ ____________________ ____________.

I am not sure yet how God wants me to use my gifts to serve others. But I am committed to prayer and worship, seeking wisdom and opportunities to use the gifts I have received from God.

Ask God to help you know how He has gifted you for service and how you can begin to use this gift in ministry to others.

Gifts Description

Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30; Ephesians 4:11; and 1 Peter 4:9-11 contain representative lists of gifts and roles God has given to the church. A definition of these gifts follows.

__________________________

8 LifeWay Christian Resources

9 These definitions exclude the “sign gifts” because of some confusion that accompanies these gifts and because they are difficult to fit into ministries within a typical church’s ministry base.

50
Leadership – Leadership aids the body by leading and directing members to accomplish the goals and purposes of the church. Leadership motivates people to work together in unity toward common goals (Rom. 12:8).

Administration – Persons with the gift of administration lead the body by steering others to remain on task. Administration enables the body to organize according to God-given purposes and long-term goals (1 Cor. 12:28).

Teaching – Teaching is instructing members in the truths and doctrines of God’s Word for the purposes of building up, unifying, and maturing the body (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7; Eph. 4:11).

Knowledge – The gift of knowledge manifests itself in teaching and training in discipleship. It is the God-given ability to learn, know, and explain the precious truths of God’s Word. A word of knowledge is a Spirit-revealed truth (1 Cor. 12:28).

Wisdom – Wisdom is the gift that discerns the work of the Holy Spirit in the body and applies His teachings and actions to the needs of the body (1 Cor. 12:28).

Prophecy – The gift of prophecy is proclaiming the Word of God boldly. This builds up the body and leads to conviction of sin. Prophecy manifests itself in preaching and teaching (1 Cor. 12:10; Rom. 12:6).

Discernment – Discernment aids the body by recognizing the true intentions of those within or related to the body. Discernment tests the message and actions of others for the protection and well-being of the body (1 Cor. 12:10).

Exhortation – Possessor of this gift encourage members to be involved in and enthusiastic about the work of the Lord. Members with this gift are good counselors and motivate others to service. Exhortation exhibits itself in preaching, teaching, and ministry (Rom. 12:8).

Shepherding – The gift of shepherding is manifested in persons who look out for the spiritual welfare of others. Although pastors, like shepherds, do care for members of the church, this gift is not limited to a pastor or staff member (Eph. 4:11).

Faith – Faith trusts God to work beyond the human capabilities of the people. Believers with this gift encourage others to trust in God in the face of apparently insurmountable odds (1 Cor. 12:9).

Evangelism – God gifts his church with evangelists to lead others to Christ effectively and enthusiastically. This gift builds up the body by adding new members to its fellowship (Eph. 4:11).
Apostleship – The church sends apostles from the body to plant churches or be missionaries. Apostles motivate the body to look beyond its walls in order to carry out the Great Commission (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11).

Service/Helps – Those with the gift of service/helps recognize practical needs in the body and joyfully give assistance to meeting those needs. Christians with this gift do not mind working behind the scenes (1 Cor. 12:28; Rom. 12:7).

Mercy – Cheerful acts of compassion characterize those with the gift of mercy. Persons with this gift aid the body by empathizing with hurting members. They keep the body healthy and unified by keeping others aware of the needs within the church (Rom. 12:8).

Giving – Members with the gift of giving give freely and joyfully to the work and mission of the body. Cheerfulness and liberality are characteristics of individuals with this gift (Rom. 12:8).

Hospitality – Those with this gift have the ability to make visitors, guests, and strangers feel at ease. They often use their home to entertain guests. Persons with this gift integrate new members into the body (1 Pet. 4:9).

God has gifted you with an expression of His Holy Spirit to support His vision and mission of the church. It is a worldwide vision to reach all people with the gospel of Christ. As a servant leader, God desires that you know how He has gifted you. This will lead you to where He would have you serve as part of His vision and mission for the church.¹⁰

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**Personal Assessment of Needs**

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”

1 John 3:16-18

Scripture clearly teaches that every person who comes into church membership should come expecting to receive and to give. Functionally, each of us is to bring resources to meet the needs of others. (Eph.4:16; Rom.15:1-6; Acts 4:34-35). By so doing, we learn that by working

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¹⁰ Gene Wilkes is pastor of Legacy Church, Plano, Texas. This article was adapted from Jesus on Leadership: Developing Servant Leaders, by Gene Wilkes (LifeWay Christian Resources 1998).
together under His guidance and blessing, we can meet every need in the body and provide a model to the world of how God takes care of His body. We prove that together all things really are possible if we believe and operate accordingly.

The Operation for Every Need Being Met

Every member should operate in the following manner:
1. Collecting helpful information that answers a stated need;
2. Praying for success concerning the needs;
3. Using your influence to open doors for others;
4. Preparing others with the soft skills to succeed; and
5. Rejoicing with the group in this success.

What do you want or need help with from NHCI? What is your self-interest? (Check as many boxes that apply)

Financial Assistance

Job/Career

Housing

Food

Childcare

Counseling

Other(s): ____________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

If You Have a Need, Then Help Us Meet a Need!!!
Recommended Books for Spiritual Growth

- *The Normal Christian Church Life* by **Watchman Nee**
- *Mere Christianity* by **C. S. Lewis**
- *God’s Chosen Fast* by **Andrew Wallis**
- *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God* by **Dallas Willard**
- *The Spirit of Christ* by **Andrew Murray**
- *Bone of His Bone* by **F. J. Huegel**
- *Discipleship* by **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**
- *The 5 Love Languages* by **Gary Chapman** (for couples)
- *The Key to Triumphant Living* by **Jack R. Taylor**
- *Simply Jesus* by **N. T. Wright**
- *The Purpose Driven Life* by **Rick Warren**
- *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* by **John Maxwell**
- *Intercessory Prayer* by **Dutch Sheets**
- *Know What you Believe* by **Paul Little**