



MAKE US ONE ESSENTIALS 201



Hope Christian Fellowship

*Making disciples who
live & love like Jesus*

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FAMILY MEMBER OR ORPHAN

(All scriptures are taken from the New Living Translation, 2nd Edition, unless otherwise indicated.)

EPHESIANS 2:19

So now you Gentiles are no longer _____ and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's _____.

KEY TRUTHS

- The church is a spiritual family.
- God expects you to be an active participant with a church family.
- A Christian without a church family is an orphan.

OUR GOAL

That I will commit myself to Christ and become an active participant with the fellowship at Hope Christian Fellowship.

Two main reasons for these lessons:

- To learn more about Hope
- To “kick the tires” and decide if this is your church
 - There are many different backgrounds involved in our fellowship.
 - Church, to you, is what you were accustomed to experiencing.
 - The purpose of these lessons is to define what “church” looks like at Hope Christian Fellowship. This is not the only way—just our way!
 - Every church should do: evangelism, discipleship, sharing and caring.

OUR BELIEFS

1 TIMOTHY 4:16

Keep a close _____ on how you live and on your teaching. _____ to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you.

FIVE ESSENTIALS

- **The Bible is the Word of God.**

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

_____ Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It _____ us when we are wrong and _____ us to do what is right.

God's Word is the only completely reliable and truthful authority and we accept the Bible as our manual for living. Our first question when faced with a decision is, "What does the Bible say?" We practice daily Bible reading and Bible study. The Bible is the basis for all we believe.

- **Jesus Christ is the Son of God.**

JOHN 14:6

Jesus told him, "I _____ the _____, the _____, and the _____. No one can come to the Father except through me.

ACTS 4:11-12

For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says, 'The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.' ¹² There is salvation in _____! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."

Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, was born of a virgin and lived a sinless life on earth and voluntarily paid for our sin by dying on the cross as our substitute. This accomplished salvation for all who receive grace by trusting in Him alone. He rose from the dead and is the only mediator between God and us. He baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit and will return to earth to fulfill prophecy.

- **You must be Born Again.**

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is _____; a new life has _____!

MATTHEW 16:25

If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you _____ your life for my sake, you will _____ it.

God created humans to have fellowship with Him, but they defied God by sinfully going their own way. As a result, we need God's saving grace (not human effort), and that grace must be received personally by repentance and faith. At the end, everyone will experience bodily

resurrection and judgment. Only believers will enjoy eternal fellowship with God.

- **Believers should be Spirit Filled and Spirit Led.**

ACTS 1:8

But you will receive power when the _____ comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

ACTS 2:1-4

On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. ² Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. ³ Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. ⁴ And everyone present was _____ with the _____ and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

EPHESIANS 5:18

Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be _____ with the Holy Spirit,

Luke 11:13

So if you sinful people know how to give _____ to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.”

We believe the only way possible to live the Christian life is by God's power within us. Every believer can be filled with the Holy Spirit by simply asking. We seek to practice a daily dependence on God's Spirit to enable us to do what is right.

- **Believers should be water baptized.**

MATTHEW 28:18-20

Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, _____ them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

ACTS 8:36

As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look! There's some _____ ! Why can't I be baptized?”

OUR CHURCH GOVERNMENT

(for more in-depth interest, refer to our constitution & by-laws booklet)

1 CORINTHIANS 14:33 & 40

For God is not a God of disorder but of peace, as in all the meetings of God's holy people. . . ⁴⁰ But be sure that everything is done _____ and in _____.

Believers who invest their hearts, time, families, and finances in the building of a local church deserve to have confidence in church leadership. People are looking for leaders who conduct themselves with integrity and respect when making decisions that affect their lives.

- **Guided by the pastoral staff.**

The Senior Pastor leads the pastoral staff team. This team oversees the day-to-day ministry and operations of the church. These staff ministers serve the congregation and are responsible for the development of the spiritual life of the church.

- **Protected and strengthened by the Board of Elders**

The Board of Elders is a group of seasoned ministers who come along the Senior Pastor to help fulfill the mission of Hope.

Church Finances

At Hope we have different levels of accountability to make sure that the finances of the church are used properly, and also that they are accurately reported to the people as well. Neither the Bible or any government ruling says that we *have* to post our end of the month statements on the bulletin board for everyone to see. We do it because we want you to be aware, and we want to be accountable.

OUR MISSION

"Making disciples who live and love like Jesus."

(for more in-depth interest, refer to our Mission Booklet)

COLOSSIANS 1:28-29

So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to _____ them to God, perfect in their _____ to Christ. ²⁹ That's why I work and struggle so hard, depending on Christ's mighty power that works within me.

If you make Hope Christian Fellowship your home church, we expect you to make our purpose your purpose.

THE HOPE GROWTH TRACK

Introduction: Jesus told us to make disciples and to teach them everything He has commanded us. This growth track is our way of helping people initiate that process in their life.

- **New Beginnings 101**

This group is for those who are new believers or new at Hope Christian Fellowship. We want you to understand your relationship to Jesus Christ and also have an idea about how the family at HCF relates to one another and to others.

- **Essentials 201**

This group develops the essential habits that every believer needs to become a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ.

- **Personal 301**

This group will help you discover your source of truth, your values, your priorities, your roles, and how are we to be good stewards of all the Lord has given us.

- **People 401**

This group will discuss the importance of people and the skills necessary to work with them.

- **Ministry 501**

In this group we will discover what our personality traits, gifts, and purpose in life, and see how God combines them for the best fit toward the ministry of others.

The growth track doesn't end here – it continues as you engage in ministry to others. God's ultimate goal for our life is to make an eternal difference in the lives of others.

OUR HOPE FOR YOU

2 CORINTHIANS 10:15

. . . Instead, we hope that your faith will _____ so that the boundaries of our work among you will be _____ .

THE NEXT STEPS

- Become an active participant at Hope Christian Fellowship.
- Join a Small Group.

- Complete Growth Track.
- Serve others in your area of ministry.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN "ACTIVE PARTICIPANT"

The difference between “attendees” and “participants” can be summed up in one word: commitment. An attendee is a consumer. A participant is a contributor.

At Hope Christian Fellowship we understand commitment is vital for anything we hope to accomplish in Christ. **We ask you to commit for four reasons:**

- **A Biblical Reason: Christ is committed to the church.**

Christ loved the church, and he gave His life for it. (Ephesians 5:25)

- **A Cultural Reason: It is an antidote to our society.**

We live in an age where very few want to be committed to anything: a job, a marriage, our country. This attitude has even produced a generation of “church shoppers and hoppers.” Membership swims against the current of America’s “consumer religion.” It is an unselfish decision. Commitment always builds character and that character joined with other mature believers produces a mighty force for good in our culture and communities.

- **A Practical Reason: It defines who can be counted on.**

Every team must have a roster. Every school must have an enrollment. Every business has a payroll. Every army has an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and requires voter registration. A commitment to active participation helps us identify our family and helps us properly identify and care for those in our church family.

- **A Personal Reason: It produces spiritual growth.**

The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable and responsible to each other for spiritual growth. You cannot be accountable and responsible when you’re not committed to any specific church family.

Come join our family of believers and let’s do something great for God together!

THIS IS WHAT WE ASK YOU TO COMMIT TO:

When you commit to being an "active participant" at Hope, here are four areas that your committing to mature in.

- **I will protect the unity of my church**
 - by acting in love toward other members.
 - by refusing to gossip.
 - by following the leaders.

ROMANS 14:19

So then, let us _____ for _____ in the church and try to build each other up.

ROMANS 15:5

May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in _____ harmony with each other, as is _____ for followers of Christ Jesus.

1 PETER 1:22B

. . . so now you must show sincere love to each other as _____ and _____ . Love each other deeply with all your heart.

EPHESIANS 4:29

Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be _____ and helpful, so that your _____ will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

HEBREWS 13:17

Obeys your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.

- **I will share the responsibility of my church**

- by praying for its growth.
- by inviting the unchurched to attend.
- by warmly welcoming those who visit.
- by giving regularly

1 THESSALONIANS 1:1-2

. . . to the church . . . We always thank God for all of you and _____ for you constantly.

LUKE 14:23

So his master said, 'Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to _____ , so that the house will be full.

ROMANS 15:7

Therefore, _____ each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.

LEVITICUS 27:30

_____ of all you produce is the Lord's, and it is holy.

- **I will serve the ministry of my church**

- by discovering my gifts and talents.
- by becoming equipped to serve.
- by developing a servant's heart.

1 PETER 4:10

God has given each of you a _____ from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to _____ one another.

EPHESIANS 4:11

Now these are the _____ to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers.

PHILIPPIANS 2:4-5 & 7

Don't look out only for _____ interests, but take an interest in _____, too. ⁵ You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. . . ⁷ Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form,

- **I will support the testimony of my church**

- by attending church and small groups faithfully.
- by living a godly life

ACTS 2:42

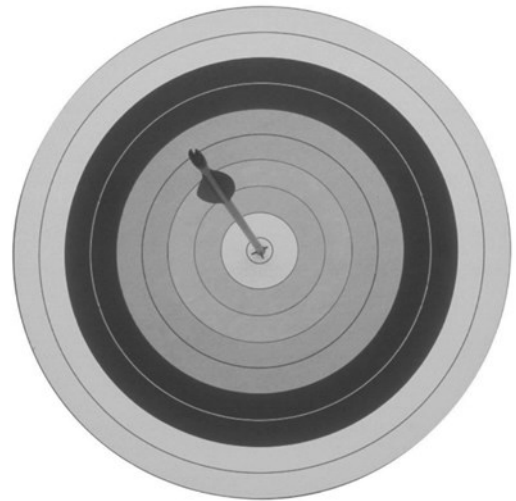
All the believers _____ themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.

HEBREWS 10:25

And let us _____ our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

PHILIPPIANS 1:27A

Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner _____ of the Good News about Christ. . .



The Target Example

If you have no target, you aim at nothing and you hit nothing. If you have a target, you aim at the target – even if you miss the target entirely, you're still shooting in one direction. The more you practice shooting in the direction of the target, the more your aim can improve.

As in any growth process, we set forth the principles we learn from the Word of God as our target, and bring our ways into conformity with the ways of God. Our aim is to be pleasing to Him. As we learn and grow and put His principles into practice, we become more like Him.

ISAIAH 55:8-9

“My _____ are nothing like your thoughts,” says the LORD.
“And my _____ are far beyond anything you could imagine. ⁹ For just as
the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are _____ than
your ways and my thoughts _____ than your thoughts.

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUPS

Have you ever attended a different church?

Prior to this lesson, had you ever thought of the church as a family?

What is the difference between a person who attends a church and a person who participates in a church? Why is it important to understand the difference?

Why do you think we ask those who commit to HCF to protect the unity of the church?

SPIRITUAL MATURITY

(All scriptures are taken from the New Living Translation, 2nd Edition, unless otherwise indicated.)

What is Spiritual Maturity?

Spiritual Maturity is being like Jesus.

ROMANS 8:29

For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to _____ like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

Consequences of Not Growing Spiritually

- God's people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.
- God's people have gone into captivity because they have no knowledge.

Facts about Spiritual Maturity

- It is a process.

MARK 4:26-29

Jesus also said, "The Kingdom of God is like a farmer who scatters _____ on the ground. . .

- It takes discipline and effort. It is not automatic!

HEBREWS 4:11

So let us _____ to enter that rest. But if we disobey God, as the people of Israel did, we will fall.

2 TIMOTHY 2:15

_____ so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.

The #1 barrier to spiritual growth is the flesh.

GALATIANS 5:16-25

So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. ¹⁷ The sinful nature **wants** to do evil, which is just the **opposite** of what the **Spirit wants**. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. ¹⁸ But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

¹⁹ When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

Understanding Biblical Christianity

ACTS 11:26

When he found him, he brought him back to Antioch. Both of them stayed there with the church for a full year, teaching large crowds of people. (It was at Antioch that the believers were first called _____.)

Before followers of Jesus were called "Christians," they were known as disciples. The term "disciple" comes from the word "disciplined."

The more like Christ I become, the more God can use me.

The mark of a disciple is "cross-bearing."

LUKE 14:27

And if you do not _____ your own _____ and follow me, you cannot be my disciple.

1 PETER 4:1

So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must _____ yourselves with the same _____ he had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you have suffered

physically for Christ, you have finished with sin.

After we are converted to Christ, we must be converted to his cross. The conversion to the cross is an ongoing process that involves a series of deaths: death to experiencing life on our own terms, death to our quest for comfort and happiness, death to our own dreams, and death to autonomy and independence. Death is the only way to resurrection, and none of these deaths is bigger than God.

Four Things for Which We Must be Ready

- Troubles and trials will come.

ACTS 14:22

. . . where they strengthened the believers. They encouraged them to continue in the faith, reminding them that we must suffer many _____ to enter the Kingdom of God.

- God does not bring temptation to us.

JAMES 1:13

And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he _____ tempts anyone else.

- We have the strength (grace) to overcome whatever we face. We never have to lose.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13

The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a _____ so that you can endure.

- We must embrace a godly attitude toward trouble.

JAMES 1:2-4

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. ³ For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to _____. ⁴ So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

We Become Disciples by Developing the Habits of a Disciple

COLOSSIANS 3:9-10

Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. ¹⁰ Put on your _____, and be renewed as you learn

to know your Creator and become like him.

DEFINITION OF HABIT:

An acquired behavior pattern regularly followed until it has become almost involuntary

AS DISCIPLES, WE DEVELOP SPIRITUAL MATURITY THROUGH HABITS:

- **Bible study and prayer**

ACTS 2:42

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' _____, . . . and to _____.

- **Fellowship with other believers**

ACTS 2:42

All the believers _____ themselves to . . . fellowship

- **Giving of ourselves**

ACTS 2:45

They sold their property and possessions and _____ the money with those in need.

- **Live an empowered Spirit-led life governed by the Word of God**

ACTS 2:43

A deep sense of _____ came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.

Our Personal Goal

Our personal goal should be that we would commit to the habits necessary for spiritual maturity and stay passionately in love with Jesus.

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUPS

Prior to this lesson, had you ever considered the concept of spiritual growth, or spiritual maturity?

Discuss the #1 barrier to spiritual growth and some things you can do to break down that barrier.

Discuss the concept of dying to self and living for God.

Life on this earth is often difficult. Does becoming a Christian guarantee that you will have a problem-free life?

BIBLE STUDY

(All scriptures are taken from the New Living Translation, 2nd Edition, unless otherwise indicated.)

BIBLE STUDY, "Feasting on the Word."

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

All Scripture is inspired by God and is _____ to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It _____ us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. ¹⁷ God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

Since the study of Scripture is the primary vehicle for laying hold of a God's perspective on the world and our purpose in it, this discipline is pivotal to our spiritual nourishment and growth.

Consistent study of the Word cultivates eternal values and priorities, provides guidance for decision-making, assists us in overcoming temptation, and enhances our knowledge of God and of ourselves.

The problem is that most people are daunted by the prospect of personal Bible study, since they have little idea of what to do.

A hit-and-miss approach provides little spiritual nourishment. Without an ability to understand and apply the truths of Scripture in a practical and meaningful way, believers miss the benefits of exploring and discovering biblical truths for themselves. This is why so many Christians have only a secondhand knowledge of the Bible and rely almost exclusively on the input of teachers and preachers.

How to Get More From my Bible

- I must accept its authority.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13

Therefore, we never stop thanking God that when you received his message from us, you didn't think of our words as mere human ideas. You _____ what we said as the very word of God—which, of course, it is. And this word continues to work in you who believe.

- We believe in the closed canon of scripture:

There are not, nor will there ever be, any other books, verses, or ideas added to the

Bible or placed beside it as equal in authority or revelation.

- I must assimilate its truths.

- Hearing God's Word

ROMANS 10:17

So faith comes from _____, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.

- Reading God's Word

REVELATION 1:3

God blesses the one who _____ the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near.

- Studying God's Word

ACTS 17:11

And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They _____ the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth.

- Meditating on God's Word

PSALM 1:2-3

But they delight in the law of the LORD, _____ on it day and night. ³ They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.

JOSHUA 1:8

Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it _____ and _____ so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

- Receiving God's Word with an open heart

LUKE 8:13-18

The seeds on the rocky soil represent those who _____ the message and receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they believe for a while, then they fall away when they face temptation. ¹⁴ The seeds that fell among the thorns represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. And so they never grow into maturity. ¹⁵ And the seeds that fell on the good soil represent honest, good-hearted people who hear God's word, cling to it, and patiently produce a huge harvest. ¹⁶ "No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a bowl or hides it under a bed. A lamp is placed on a stand, where its light can be seen by all who enter the house. ¹⁷ For all that is secret will eventually be brought into the open,

and everything that is concealed will be brought to light and made known to all. 18 “So pay attention to how you hear. To those who _____ to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But for those who are not listening, even what they think they understand will be taken away from them.”

- I must apply its principles.

JOHN 13:17

Now that you know these things, God will bless you for _____ them.

What is the Source of Our Foundation?

- The Bible the Word of God

- The Word of God in writing

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

All Scripture is _____ by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

- Jesus: The Word of God in person

JOHN 1:1

In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the _____ was God.

JOHN 1:14

So the Word _____ and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.

REVELATION 19:11-13

Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war. ¹² His eyes were like flames of fire, and on his head were many crowns. A name was written on him that no one understood except himself. ¹³ He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his title was the _____ of _____ .

There is total agreement between the two.

Five Important Facts:

JOHN 14:23

Jesus replied, "All who _____ me will _____ what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them.

- Keeping God's Word distinguishes true disciples from the world.
- Keeping God's Word is the supreme test of the disciple's love for God. Love is the motivation for obedience.
- Keeping God's Word draws God to be one with us.
- Through God's Word, stored-up and obeyed, Christ manifests Himself.
- Through God's Word, the Father and the Son together inhabit the disciple.

YOU CAN'T LOVE GOD MORE THAN YOU LOVE HIS WORD

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUPS

When you think of studying the Bible, does it seem intimidating to you?

When we say that we must assimilate the truths of the Bible, what do you think we mean by that?

Discuss the difference between knowing what the Bible teaches and doing what the Bible teaches.

PRAYER

(All scriptures are taken from the New Living Translation, 2nd Edition, unless otherwise indicated.)

PRAYER - "Pray without ceasing."

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-17

Always be joyful. ¹⁷ _____ praying.

The concept of communicating with God, of talking directly and openly with Him just as we would talk with an intimate friend, is one of the great truths of Scripture.

When prayer is overlooked or appended as an afterthought to service, the power of God is often absent. It is dangerously easy to move away from dependence upon God and to slip into the trap of self-reliance. But prayer and action are complementary, not contradictory, and it is wise to overlap them as much as possible. Christian service is most effective when prayer not only precedes it but also flows together with it.

Jesus exemplified a personal relationship with God through prayer that gave Him great strength. Every person who has ever been effective in service for God has developed this habit. The only way to be a healthy Christian is to commune with God daily through prayer!

The Purpose of Daily Prayer Time

- **To give devotion to God.**

2 CHRONICLES 31:21

In all that he did in the service of the Temple of God and in his efforts to follow God's laws and commands, Hezekiah sought his God _____. As a result, he was very successful.

- **To get direction from God.**

PSALM 25:4-5

Show me the right path, O LORD; point out the road for me to follow. ⁵ _____ by your truth and teach me, for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put my hope in you.

- **To grow more like God.**

2 PETER 1:3

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a _____
_____. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to
himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence.

- **Use the Model Jesus Gave Us**

LUKE 11:1

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him
and said, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

This, then, is how you should pray:

MATTHEW 6:9-13

Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. 10 May your Kingdom
come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us today the food we
need, 12 and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. 13 And don't
let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

- Connect with God relationally

“Our Father in heaven . . .”

- Run to His name

“May Your name be kept holy . . .”

- Pray His agenda first.

“May Your Kingdom come soon. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven . . .”

- Depend on Him for everything

“Give us today the food we need . . .”

- Keep your heart right with God and people.

“Forgive us our sins as we have forgiven those who sin against us.”

- Take your stand against the enemy.

“And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.”

- Have faith in God's ability.

“For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.”

Suggestions for Enhancing Your Practice of Prayer

- Choose the best time. -Select a particular time of the day, and dedicate it only to personal prayer.
- Choose the best place. -Select a place where there will be a minimum of interruptions and distractions.
- Set a minimum time for daily prayer. Try to be realistic—don't attempt too much at first, or your prayer life will become mechanical and discouraging.
- Be consistent. -Regard your prayer time as a daily appointment you have made with God and respect it as such.
- Focus on the person of God. -Prepare your heart and mind for prayer by releasing all stresses and concerns and giving them to the Lord.
- Come before Him in humility. -You are in the unmediated presence of the holy God who is like a blazing light and a consuming fire, before whom all things are manifest.
- Come expectantly to the throne. -The significance of prayer is not what we are asking but the Person we are addressing. Come in simplicity and trust like a child to a father. Expect the supernatural—ask Him for something only He can do.
- Pray at all times in the Spirit

ROMANS 8:26-27

And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the _____ prays _____ us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. ²⁷ And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will.

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUPS

How do you talk to God?

Do you listen for Him to speak to you?

Is your prayer time a one-way, or two-way conversation?

Do you have a special place where you like to pray?

MAKE US ONE – ESSENTIALS 201-05

FELLOWSHIP

(All scriptures are taken from the New Living Translation, 2nd Edition, unless otherwise indicated.)

FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS - "Build Relationships"

HEBREWS 10:25

And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

The devastating consequence of the Fall in Genesis 3 was the fourfold alienation from:

- God
- Ourselves
- Others
- Nature

For those in Christ, a significant healing has begun on each of these levels, but it will not be complete until the redemption of our body and the redemption of the created order.

ROMANS 8:19-23

For all creation is _____ eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. ²⁰ Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, ²¹ the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. ²² For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, _____ with eager hope for the day when God will give us our _____ rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.

God's redemptive plan is to restore relationships on every level—with God, self, others, and creation—so that we will experience and express the shalom (peace, love, unity, harmony) of the Trinity.

Commitment to Fellowship

God never intended for us to go through life alone. Throughout the Bible, we see the importance of being in fellowship. In fact, authentic life-change happens in the **context of relationships**.

As believers grow in the solitude of intimacy with the Lord, their capacity for life in community increases as well.

True fellowship in Christ is not a collection of lonely or isolated individuals but a dynamic interaction of people who know they are accepted and beloved in Christ. God does not call us to be Christians at large or a colony of hermits but a vital organism of others-centered people of which Christ is the head.

True solitude and fellowship enrich each other through the creative interplay of the vertical and horizontal dimensions of our love for God and our love for His people.

Since God made us in His image and likeness, we were **created** for fellowship with Him and with one another.

The Bible is unique in its portrayal of God as a covenant maker and keeper. As we enter into the benefits of the new covenant through the blood of Christ (Jeremiah 31:31–33; Luke 22:20), we become members of a new fellowship that is called to reflect the glory of the Godhead in its corporate unity.

JOHN 17:22-26

“I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be _____ as we are one. ²³ I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. ²⁴ Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began! ²⁵ “O righteous Father, the world doesn’t know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me. ²⁶ I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be _____, and I will be in them.”

The two greatest commandments are to love God and our neighbor (Mark 12:30–31).

The clearest expression of our love for God is our love for others. (1 John 4:7, 11, 20–21)

How do We Make a Way for Fellowship at HCF?

At Hope Christian Fellowship, we believe our church must grow LARGER and SMALLER at the same time.

ACTS 5:42

And every day, in the Temple and from _____ to _____, they continued to teach and preach this message: “Jesus is the Messiah.”

ACTS 20:20

I never shrank back from telling you what you needed to hear, either _____ or in your _____.

How can a church grow large, yet maintain close friendships?

Every member needs to be a part of a **small group**.

Why are Small Groups Important?

ACTS 2:42-47

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. ⁴³ A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. ⁴⁴ And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. ⁴⁵ They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. ⁴⁶ They worshiped _____ at the Temple each day, met in _____ for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— ⁴⁷ all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.

Small Groups Provide Opportunities for:

- **Bible Study**

“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching . . .”

– I need people to strengthen and balance the Word of God in my life.

- **Fellowship**

“. . . and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals . . .”

– I need people who really know me.

- **Prayer**

“. . . and to prayer.”

– I need people to pray for me personally.

- **Support**

“. . . all the believers met together in one place and shared . . . with those in need.”

– I need people who will protect me.

- **Outreach**

“. . . each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.”

- I need people with whom I can share my story.

True fellowship or community in Christ is not created by attempts to make it happen; instead, it is a by-product of others-centeredness, and this in turn is a by-product of finding our lives by losing them for Jesus' sake as Matthew 16:25 tells us.

If the leading enemy of corporate spirituality is selfishness, the leading contributor to community is the servanthood that issues out of self-denial.

While the world values celebrities, the Word values servants. When Jesus became a servant to His disciples by kneeling down with a towel and a basin. He showed that greatness in the kingdom of God does not look like greatness in the eyes of the world.

To live and love like Jesus, we must become conformed to His Son.

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUPS

What are the biblical foundations for fellowship?

How are you presently integrating the three dimensions of intimacy with the Lord, fellowship with the body, and ministry?

Which is the strongest in your life? The weakest?

What challenges to fellowship have you encountered in your own experiences with the body of Christ?

What can you do to move further away from an individualistic mentality as you continue your spiritual growth?

GIVE OF YOURSELF - "Learn to Give"

2 CORINTHIANS 8:7

Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of _____.

JOHN 3:16

“For God loved the world so much that he _____ his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

Three Areas of Giving

- **Give of your time.**

EPHESIANS 5:15-16

So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. ¹⁶
Make the most of every _____ in these evil days.

- **Give of your treasure.**

MATTHEW 23:23

What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should _____, yes, but do not _____ the more important things.

- **Give of your talents.**

MATTHEW 20:27-28

. . . and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. ²⁸ For even the Son of Man came _____ to be served but to _____ others and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Benefits of Giving

- **Giving makes me more like God.**

JOHN 3:16

For God loved the world so much that he _____ his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

- **Giving draws me closer to God.**

MATTHEW 6:21

Wherever your treasure is, _____ the desires of your heart will also be.

- **Giving blesses me in return.**

PROVERBS 22:9A

Blessed are those who are _____ . . .

- **Giving is an investment in eternity.**

1 TIMOTHY 6:18-19

Tell them to use their money to _____. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to _____ with others. ¹⁹ By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.

- **Giving strengthens our faith.**

PROVERBS 3:5

_____ in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.

PROVERBS 3:9-10

Honor the LORD with your _____ and with the best part of everything you produce. ¹⁰ _____ he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine.

Biblical Giving is Done:

- **Willingly**

2 CORINTHIANS 8:12

Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it _____. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have.

- **Cheerfully**

2 CORINTHIANS 9:7B

“For God loves a person who gives _____.”

- **Sacrificially**

2 CORINTHIANS 8:3-4

For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but _____ more. And they did it of their own _____.⁴ They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem.

- **Expectantly**

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6

Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants _____ will get a generous crop.

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUPS

Most people think of giving in terms of money. How has this lesson changed your thinking about that?

Discuss some ways we can give of our time.

Discuss some ways we can give of our talents.

Discuss some ways we can give financially.

Why do you think many people struggle with the idea of giving?

MAKE US ONE – ESSENTIALS 201-07 EMPOWERED

(All scriptures are taken from the New Living Translation, 2nd Edition, unless otherwise indicated.)

Live and Empowered, Spirit-led Life Governed by the Word of God

EPHESIANS 5:17-18

Don't act thoughtlessly, but _____ what the Lord wants you to do. ¹⁸ Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be _____ with the Holy Spirit,

Do I have the Holy Spirit when I accept Jesus as My Savior and Lord?

Yes, but there is a difference between being “Born of the Spirit” and being “Filled with the Spirit.”

- Born of the Spirit

JOHN 3:1-7

There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. ² After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.” ³ Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth unless you are _____, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.” ⁴ “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?” ⁵ Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. ⁷ So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’

- Filled with the Spirit

ACTS 8:12-17

But now the people believed Philip’s message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized. ¹³ Then Simon himself believed and was baptized. He began following Philip wherever he went, and he was amazed by the signs and great miracles Philip performed. ¹⁴ When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God’s message, they sent Peter and John there. ¹⁵ As soon as they arrived, they prayed for these new believers to receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ The Holy

Spirit had not yet come upon any of them, for they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they _____ the Holy Spirit.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

The difference can be stated in two words: *WITHIN* and *UPON*.

First let us look at the *within*. This is where we are born-again by the Holy Spirit, that person receives:

- **The Holy Spirit WITHIN.**

JOHN 20:21-22

Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." ²² Then he breathed on them and said, "_____ the Holy Spirit.

ROMANS 8:9-11

But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. You are controlled by the Spirit if you have the Spirit of God living _____ you. (And remember that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ living in them do not belong to him at all.) ¹⁰ And Christ lives _____ you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. ¹¹ The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living _____ you.

JOHN 14:15-17

"If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be _____ you.

So as we can see it is very clear that every Christian has the Spirit dwelling within him/he, which is synonymous with having a "new life" or being "born-again."

Now let's look at the word UPON or ON as some Bibles say.

- **The Holy Spirit UPON**

The word "baptism" comes from a Greek word meaning "to dip." It was a word used among the Greeks to signify the dying of a garment or the drawing of water by dipping a vessel INTO another. In other words, when a man is baptized in water, water comes UPON him and com-

pletely covers him, envelopes him or clothes him. Just like when John was baptizing in the Jordan.

So when a Christian is baptized or filled with the Holy Spirit, they will have the Holy Spirit both WITHIN and UPON them. The Greek word for baptized is the same which means “to be enveloped; to be completely covered or clothed in.” Again when a Christian is baptized with or in, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit comes UPON them to give them the power to do all that God wants them to do.

Let’s look at some Scriptures where the Holy Spirit came UPON them.

JOEL 2:28

“Then, after doing all those things, I will pour out my Spirit _____ all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions.

LUKE 24:49

“And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with _____ from heaven.”

ACTS 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes _____ you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

ACTS 8:14-17

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God’s message, they sent Peter and John there. ¹⁵ As soon as they arrived, they prayed for these new believers to _____ the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ The Holy Spirit had not yet come _____ any of them, for they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then Peter and John laid their hands upon these believers, and they received the Holy Spirit.

ACTS 10:44

Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell _____ all who were listening to the message.

ACTS 11:15

“As I began to speak,” Peter continued, “the Holy Spirit fell _____ them, just as he fell _____ us at the beginning.

ACTS 19:1-7

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions until he reached Ephesus, on the coast, where he found several believers. ² “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” he asked them. “No,” they replied, “we

haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

³ "Then what baptism did you experience?" he asked. And they replied, "The baptism of John."

⁴ Paul said, "John's baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus."

⁵ As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

⁶ Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came _____ them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. ⁷ There were about twelve men in all.

Now let's go back to that famous day of Pentecost where the first Christians had their extraordinary experience with the Holy Spirit. In that experience we find that the Holy Spirit settled UPON each of them.

ACTS 2:1-4

On the day of Pentecost all the believers were meeting together in one place. ²

Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. ³ Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled _____ each of them. ⁴ And everyone present was _____ the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

The bottom line is that it is NORMAL for all born again/Spirit-filled Christians to later be baptized by the Holy Spirit, where the Holy Spirit comes UPON them to so they can more effectively do His will. Which leads us to our next question.

Why be baptized in the Holy Spirit?

This can also be determined by two words: *Conception* and *Anointing*.

The killing of the Passover Lamb and placing its blood in the basin did not *save* Israel (Ex. 12:21). The blood had to be *applied* to the doorpost of each Israelite being delivered. Without the application of the blood, Israel's firstborn would have died along with the Egyptians.

The same is true for us. The blood of Jesus must be applied personally to every believer. This fact made it necessary for the Holy Spirit's second work in Jesus.

What was that? We are referring to the anointing that come UPON Him in the Jordan and empowered His preaching ministry. Prior to the Spirit's dove-like descent at His baptism, Jesus healed no one, performed no miracle, preached no gospel of the Kingdom. That abruptly changed when the Holy Spirit's anointing came UPON Him.

Let's understand something very clearly, Jesus was the Son of God from the moment of His *conception* by the Holy Spirit. Later, He became the Messiah in the Jordan.

The word “Messiah” is the Hebrew word for “anointed one.” In the Greek it is “christos.”

The conceptive work of the Holy Spirit destined Jesus to the cross and the work of redemption for you and I. It was the messianic anointing that made it possible for the news of redemption to be carried to the end of the world.

No Substitute for Anointing

Anointing and ministry are inseparably connected. Not only did the Holy Spirit anoint Jesus in the Jordan, but in the same way at Pentecost the Holy Spirit anointed the second Body of Christ, the Church (1 Corinthians 12:27).

Jesus’ specific instruction to the disciples was “Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift he promised, as I told you before. John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

With **anointing** comes **power** as it was said of Jesus in Acts 10:38.

ACTS 10:38

And you know that God _____ Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy _____ and with _____. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

That same anointing or power is what the Lord desires for us to have.

ACTS 1:8

“But you will receive _____ when the Holy Spirit comes _____ you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The disciples were born again before Pentecost and that work of the Holy Spirit in them was complete. However they had not yet been anointed by the Holy Spirit for miraculous ministry and evangelizing the world.

Without the anointing of God’s power upon them individually and corporately the Gospel could not be presented to the ends of the earth.

In every capacity, Jesus intended the Church, like Himself, to operate in the power of the Holy Spirit. If we try to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom without the anointing, we will experience frustration in many vital areas.

If Jesus depended on the Holy Spirit, how can we succeed with less? We **NEED** to baptized in the Holy Spirit!

HOW DO WE RECEIVE?

We know God's ways are not our ways, therefore trusting God does not always make sense to the natural mind. (Prov. 3:5)

So like everything else in our obedience to the Lord, receiving the anointing is done by faith.

HEBREWS 11:6

And it is impossible to please God without _____. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

Here's a three-step approach for exercising faith:

- Understand first that the Lord tells us what *He* will do — *IF* you do what He told you to do.

LUKE 11:11-13

“You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? ¹² Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! ¹³ So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.”

- Second, you act in faith and do what He told you to do.
- Third, then God does what He said He would do.

For example: Just like receiving salvation –

ROMANS 10:9-10

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.

So practice your faith by asking Him for the gift He offers!

So, Here we Go!

- Prepare your heart

The Spirit of God is holy and He many times will act as fire to the Believer, in our preparation He purifies our hearts of the things that are not Christ-like.

MATTHEW 3:11

“I baptize with water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not worthy even to

be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

- Ask Jesus to send the Holy Spirit to be UPON you.

You do not need to jump through a bunch of hoops to get God's attention, because He is eager to answer your request for the baptism He provides.

- Without doubt, in your natural language thank Jesus in advance for what He is about to do.
- As you are thanking Him, relax, take a deep breath and submit your life and your future for His purpose and use. As you are doing this if you start speaking in tongues (a language you don't know), let it flow! It's ok, it comes from the Lord!

God Speaks -You Do- God Does!

Let's believe and receive, let's not be like those who doubt and do without.

For further study, we encourage you to read our booklet, *The Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, as well as completing our *Discovery Series, section four: Discovering the Holy Spirit*.

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUPS

Discuss the difference between being born of the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit.

How has this lesson challenged you?

Have you had the Holy Spirit within you? Are you allowing Him to work in your life?

Have you had the Holy Spirit come upon you? If so, what happened? If not, why not stop and pray for that right now?

MAKE US ONE – ESSENTIALS 201-08

WATER BAPTISM

(All scriptures are taken from the New Living Translation, 2nd Edition, unless otherwise indicated.)

The Purpose of Water Baptism in a Believers Life

Water baptism is a symbol of the forgiveness of sins we experience at salvation.

In Christianity, baptism is not intended to be a private experience. Although finding Christ as your personal Savior can be an intensely *personal* experience, once you have entered the family of God there is nothing *private* about it. You are a part of this wonderful thing called the Church, the Body of Christ. We are brothers and sisters, related together in God's family.

A mark of identification with the Body of Christ is to be baptized publicly, or before witnesses. Even as Pontius Pilate attempted to show his innocence by washing his hands with water (Matthew 27:24), Christians show they are cleansed by Christ when they are baptized in water. It is an outward demonstration of something that has happened within us.

Water baptism is a solemn ceremony. It is something that might easily be distorted through tradition, ritual, or religion. Baptism does not save a person, only Jesus can do that. However, Jesus commanded that we be baptized.

MATTHEW 28:19-20

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, _____ them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

It is an essential element in the life of a disciple of Christ. In fact, Jesus set the example by submitting to water baptism Himself.

MATTHEW 3:13-17

Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to talk him out of it. “I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,” he said, “so why are you coming to me?”

¹⁵ But Jesus said, “It should be done, for we must carry out _____ that God _____.” So John agreed to baptize him.

¹⁶ After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”

Biblical Forms of Baptism

Historically, baptism has been a ritual of initiation, indicating a commitment to a new belief or observance. Baptism did not start with Christianity. It was a common religious practice. Baptisms were done in a variety of modes -- sprinkling, immersion, of blood, of water. John the Baptist, for example, got his name (“the baptist” or “the baptizer”) because he was administering public baptisms, calling the people to repentance.

Examples of baptism abound in Scripture, here are just a few:

- **Baptism of Moses** (1 Corinthians 10:1–3), the apostle Paul writes that when the Israelites were delivered from slavery in Egypt, they were “baptized as followers of Moses.”
- **The Baptism of John** (Mark 1:4) John called people to repentance in preparation for the Messiah, and baptized them in the Jordan River. Those who were baptized by John were showing their faith in John’s message and their need to confess their sin (See also Acts 19:1–7).
- **The Baptism of Jesus**, our example. (Matthew 3:13–17). Jesus did not need to repent of sin, yet He came to John to be baptized. As Jesus came up from the water, the Father spoke from Heaven, and the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form upon Jesus. With this baptism, Jesus confirmed John’s ministry and also began His own.

Who Should Be Baptized?

Water baptism is a public profession of personal faith in Jesus Christ and our surrender to Him. This profession can only be done if a person is able to understand the reality of their sinful state and comprehend the necessity of Jesus’ great sacrifice. This understanding occurs as a uniquely individual revelation, regardless of age or experience. For this reason, we *dedicate* babies to the Lord, rather than baptize them in water.

- **We baptize disciples.**

MATTHEW 28:19-20

Therefore, go and make _____ of all the nations, baptizing
_____ . . .

- **Those who believe.**

Acts 2:38 & 41

Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins, turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ to _____ that you have received forgiveness for your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

⁴¹ Those who _____ what Peter said were baptized and

added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

ACTS 8:12

But now the people _____ Philip’s message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized.

What Does Water Baptism Look Like?

The process of water baptism involves

- Standing before a gathering of witnesses
- Walking into a pool of water
- Making a confession of your faith in Christ
- Allowing yourself to be briefly immersed under the water by another believer
- Being formally welcomed into the fellowship of the Body of Christ

What does water baptism symbolize?

Immersion in water demonstrates some wonderful spiritual truths:

- When we go down into the water, we are “buried” with Christ. We symbolically die to ourselves (our own way) and to our old ways of thinking and acting.

ROMANS 6:4

For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live _____
_____.

- When we come up out of the water, we “rise to newness of life.” We are “born again” into a new life.

COLOSSIANS 2:12

FOR YOU were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to _____ because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

- Our sins are “washed away,” and we are completely cleansed. (Acts 22:16).

ACTS 22:16

What are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized. Have your sins _____
_____ by calling on the name of the Lord.’

Thus, we practice baptism through full immersion in water, rather than sprinkling with water, following the **pattern of Scripture**.

Conclusion

Salvation and baptism mark the beginning of a lifelong journey with Christ. This is called **discipleship**.

Your public baptism identifies you as a person who is now ready to live and love like Jesus. You are free to love God completely, love yourself correctly, and love others compassionately. Go. Be. Love.

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUPS

Discuss the symbolism inherent in the ritual, or sacrament of Water Baptism:

- Water—cleansing us from sin.
- Going under the water—death to old ways.
- Rising up out of the water— new life, new beginning.
- Public declaration of intention to follow Christ.

How do we know that water baptism was important to Jesus?

TEST

Name _____

Test Score _____

4 points each answer

THIS IS AN OPEN-BOOK TEST. You will need a score of 80% to receive a certificate of completion.

INSTRUCTIONS: Fill in the correct words missing in the statements below.

1. There is a fourfold _____ from God, ourselves, others, and nature.
2. God loves a person who gives _____.
3. No one can enter the _____ of God without being born of water and the _____.
4. The promise in Acts 1:8 is, “You will _____ power when the Holy Spirit comes _____ you.”
5. Your public baptism _____ you as a person _____ is now ready to live and love like Jesus

Fill-ins <small>(not in order)</small>	Alienation	Cheerfully	Identifies	Kingdom	Receive	Spirit
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INSTRUCTIONS: On the following page, circle the correct answer (T for true, F for false) for the true or false questions:

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|---|---|-----|--|---|---|-----|--|
| T | F | 1. | Gentiles are members of God's holy people. | T | F | 11. | We believe our church should grow larger and smaller at the same time. |
| T | F | 2. | God does not care if we actively participate in a church family. | T | F | 12. | We are only required to give financially. |
| T | F | 3. | Growing spiritually is very easy, and comes very naturally. | T | F | 13. | Being a giver is an investment in eternity. |
| T | F | 4. | We become disciples by developing the habits of a disciple. | T | F | 14. | There is a difference between being born of the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit. |
| T | F | 5. | Most people study the Bible. | T | F | 15. | There is no reason for any Christian to pursue the Baptism in the Holy Spirit today. |
| T | F | 6. | What makes Christians stand out from the rest of the world is that we keep God's Word. | T | F | 16. | Water baptism is to be a private experience. |
| T | F | 7. | We can connect with God relationally. | T | F | 17. | Jesus did not consider water baptism to be important. |
| T | F | 8. | We do not pray to get direction from God. | T | F | 18. | In Christianity, only believers should be baptized in water. |
| T | F | 9. | God wants to restore relationships on every level. | T | F | 19. | We seek to practice a daily dependence on God's Spirit to enable us to do what is right. |
| T | F | 10. | Since God made us in His image, we function best when we live our lives alone. | T | F | 20. | Becoming a Christian means that we have no more trouble for the rest of our lives. |

When you have completed your test, tear it out of the book and turn it in to the office or to your Home Group Leader.
If you score 80% or above you will receive a certificate of achievement.

MASTERPIECES

