

LARGE PRINT EDITION

FOUNDATIONS TWO

- TEACHER'S NOTES -

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The background of the cover features a series of overlapping, wavy, organic shapes in various shades of blue and purple. The colors transition from a dark navy blue at the top to a vibrant purple at the bottom. The shapes are layered, creating a sense of depth and movement, reminiscent of a stylized landscape or perhaps the folds of a garment.

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OUTLINE OF LESSONS FOUNDATIONS 2

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INTRODUCTION

The Bible is one of the most important things that help us grow as we live our Christian lives. In Romans 10:17 it says that “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” If we are going to grow in faith, and progress in our Christian walk, we need to read, study, understand, and live out the Bible, God’s holy Word.

What exactly is the Bible?

1. The Bible is a collection of 66 ancient books written by various authors who had direct historical and/or spiritual impact on modern Christianity, and more broadly, the world’s relationship with God.
2. The Bible is divided up into two segments, commonly referred to as the Old Testament and the New Testament.
 - a. The Old Testament is comprised of 39 books, all written before Christ was born.
 - b. The New Testament is the remaining 27 books written after the birth of Christ.

This is all pretty self-explanatory, facts not pertaining to spirituality. If the student is curious on how the books got chosen you can explain that the Old Testament is the same as the Hebrew Bible (the Jewish Bible) and the new was put together gradually, over time, with the help and consensus of many Christian scholars and God’s guidance. The last book added in the bible was Revelation, putting a final end to anyone wanting to add more books. Catholics have a few additional books in their Bible, called the Apocrypha. While most scholars agree that these books are historically accurate, they are generally not considered to be God’s Word outside of the Catholic church.

What was God’s role in writing the Bible?

1. While the Bible was written by 40 different human authors, those authors were divinely inspired by God the Holy Spirit. *2 Timothy 3:16*
 - a. This means that God used humans as His writing utensil. Just like you or I may use a pen, pencil, or computer to write something, God decided to use the most powerful tool of all, the human!

2. Because the Bible was directly inspired and breathed by God, it is His word, and not the word of the human authors. *2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21*

a. The authors only wrote what God directly inspired them to write.

If they made a mistake, God would have them fix it. Just like you and I fix a mistake when we're writing. If our pencil breaks while writing, the broken pencil may leave an ugly mark, so we simply re-sharpen the pencil and erase the ugly mark.

3. God is all powerful, and all knowing. That means that His Word is perfect! *Psalms 19:7-11*

a. The Bible has no contradictions or flaws. God is all knowing and perfect, and if He wrote the Bible, then there is no room for error.

If the student thinks they know of a flaw, skip down to #3 under "The Importance of Perfection..." Once they are satisfied, return to this point and finish the lesson.

4. God knows the past and the future, thus His Bible is perfectly complete.

a. The Bible was written over a period of about 1,500 years. The most recent book (Revelation) was written on the Island of Patmos, it describes the end of the world and our eternal future.

b. The Bible itself teaches that it is complete. Nothing should ever be added or removed from Scripture.

i. We are told the Law (commands of the Old Testament) is complete. *Deuteronomy 4:2*

ii. We are told the entirety of the Old Testament is complete. *Malachi 4:4*

iii. Finally, we are told that no one should change, add, or remove anything from the book of Revelation. Revelation covers themes and topics from the entirety of the Bible, thus it seals the entire Bible as complete. *Revelation 22:18-19*

c. The Bible covers all topics that humanity will ever need. God, in His infinite wisdom knew what our problems would be and addressed them all in the Bible.

The fact is, ancient people had the same problems that people have today. They had to go to work, pay taxes, get sick, have and raise kids, struggle with sin (lust, lying, stealing, etc.) and every other problem we have today, they just looked a little different. Instead of looking at porn on the internet, for example, one might watch women bathe from their rooftops like in 2 Samuel 11:2.

Why should we read the Bible?

1. To get to know God, His Son Jesus Christ, and our Helper, the Holy Spirit. *Luke 24:27; Isaiah 55:8; John 14:23-24*
2. To learn how to live life the way God wants us to, so we can succeed and prosper. *Josh 1:8; Psalm 119:10-11; 119:105; 2 Timothy 3:16-17*
3. To encourage us. *Romans 15:4; Psalm 56:4*
4. To build our faith (our understanding of, trust in, and follow through for God). *Acts 20:32; Romans 10:17*
5. To expose our flaws and help us better ourselves. *2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12*
It points out our sins and character flaws, teaching us to repent and grow.
6. Because Jesus tells us to! *John 8:31-32; 14:23-24*

Be a “doer” of the Word

1. James 1:21-25 tells us to be “doers” of the Word, not only hearers. That means listening is not enough, we have to do something about it! When the Bible gives us a command, we are to follow it. When it shows us a flaw in our life we are to fix it.

The importance of the perfection of the Bible

1. Some people believe that the Bible is not perfect, but rather a good guide to live by. This is a DANGEROUS assumption.
 - a. All we know about Christ either comes from Scripture, or generations of passed down hearsay. If we trust more in our own beliefs and the thoughts of others more than we trust in the Bible, then we may as well throw the Bible out altogether.
If the Bible is not perfect, we have no reason to believe Christ rose from the dead! We have no reason to believe that anything is a sin, we can just do what feels right! In the end, we are no better off than before we were Christians.
2. While it can be logically and physically proven that the Bible is perfect, without error or contradiction, many choose not to believe this fact. Ultimately, you need to seek God and ask Him if the bible is perfect. *James 1:5*
3. “Hey! I found an error/contradiction in the Bible!”
 - a. Great! That means you are seeking the truth. Some will tell you to “Just believe” and to ignore anything you think might be an error... we do not believe this! God

wants true followers, not brainwashed “sheeple”! If you find something you think is an error or contradiction, study it. (2 Timothy 2:15). There is an answer for every question about the accuracy of the bible, and a good one, too! If you can’t find the answer, find a leader to ask to help you study it. But whatever you do, don’t believe just to believe... believe because you know it to be true and study until you find that truth (John 8:32).

If your student knows of a supposed contradiction or flaw, let them share it. Look it up in the Bible, and see if you can explain why it is not a contradiction. If you do not know what to say, and it looks to be a contradiction to you, then go and find out the truth! Start out with, “I don’t know, but I’ll find out for you!” A great resource is <http://www.answersingenesis.org/> You can also look in study Bibles, Google the question, or ask a leader.

CONCLUSION

The Bible is an exceptional Book. We are privileged to have it in our possession. Let us not neglect this prize which we possess. Read the Word of God daily, choose to obey what you have read, put it into practice, and observe how God totally transforms your life!

“Open your Bible, Read it, and Do What It Says.”

INTRODUCTION

By this point in your Christian life, you probably generally know what prayer is, and pray to God from time to time. Now we want to take a deeper look into what prayer is, and how we can and should pray.

What exactly is prayer?

1. Prayer is just a fancy word for “talking to God”. God is omniscient (all knowing) so He knows what you say and what you think! *Job 37:16; Psalm 147:5*
 - a. This means that at any time you can talk to God by speaking to Him directly (praying out loud) or speaking to Him in your thoughts (praying in your head).

What are the different ways we should pray?

1. Pray with thanksgiving.
 - a. “...in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving...” *Philippians 4:6*
 - b. “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving...Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.” *Psalm 100:4*
 - c. “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving.” *Colossians 4:2*

We should thank God for everything in our life. He is the Creator of everything and the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). We should especially remember to thank God when He answers our prayers!

2. Praise God with your prayers.
 - a. “Enter...into His courts with praise.” *Psalm 100:4*
 - b. “...let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God.” *Hebrews 13:15*

Praise means to give approval, respect, and gratitude for something good. We praise God by telling Him how much we love the good works that He has done, and all the good things we know He will do. In the simplest form, we can praise God for being good: “God you are so good!” or we can be more specific: “God, you have been so good to me by sending your Son to die for me!”

3. Pray for your own requests (petition God).

- a. "...in every situation, by prayer and petition... [presenting] your requests to God."
Philippians 4:6
- b. "In this manner, therefore, pray: Give us this day our daily bread." *Matthew 6:8, 6:11*

It is impossible to waste God's time, He is all powerful and all knowing (the ultimate and infinite Multitasker!), so feel free to ask God for any of your desires or needs, big or small "God, I need a house in a nice neighborhood to raise my kids, will you please help me find one?" or "God, should I eat at Taco Bell or McDonalds for lunch?". God cares so much about you He even has the hairs on your head numbered (Luke 12:7)! If God cares enough about you to number each and every hair on your head, then we can safely conclude that He cares what kind of food is going into your body (be it a double quarter pounder, or a grilled stuff burrito). You can even bring the most selfish requests to God "God, let me find a million dollars on the side of the road!" God will not rebuke you for such requests (He already knows the desires of your heart) but don't be surprised if He says "No!" to such requests.

4. Pray for others (intercede).

- a. "...far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you..."
1 Samuel 12:23
- b. "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people." *1 Timothy 2:1*

We should be praying for others; it is as simple as that. Pray for family members and friends that they might get saved, pray that others will be blessed, pray for their needs. Sometimes a great evangelism tool is to be able to tell someone that you have been praying for them, especially after God has answered those prayers.

How should we pray when praying out loud in groups?

1. Pray briefly, God already knows what you are going to pray! *Matthew 6:5-8*
 - a. Do not use prayer to try to impress anyone.

You are praying to God, and Him alone. It does not matter what other people think of how you pray, you are not praying on their behalf! So, don't try to sound holy, or passionate... don't try to impress others with loud prayers, long prayers, or prayers that sound theologically deep. Pray from your heart, if you are

passionate in your heart and it comes out in your prayer, great! But don't fake it, God knows!

2. Make your prayers and requests clear, so that others can agree with you. *Matthew 18:19*
 - a. Our prayers are only for God, and to God. The reason we pray in groups is so that others can agree with us in prayer, making a unified request.

We only need to pray long enough, when in groups, to make our request to God clear to the group. For example, if I need a new car I can simply pray, "God, please bless me with a new car, mine has broken down!" We don't need to drag it out like this: "God, please bless me with a new car. I believe you can give me a new car! I know you will give me a new car! I need a new car, so please give me a new car! I will praise your name when you give me a new car, so, Lord, please miraculously and powerfully grant me a gift of a new car! Amen!" Such needlessly long prayers help no one and are specifically rebuked in Matthew 6:5-8. A short and clear prayer gives others a chance to agree with you and pray with you for your request.

How should we pray by ourselves?

1. You can pray out loud or in your head (silently).

There is power in praying out loud using your voice. It helps your mind get on board with what your spirit is declaring in prayer. You should practice praying out loud while you're alone so you feel confident the next time someone asks you to pray out loud. However, sometimes silent prayer is needed (i.e. when you're in the middle of a conversation with someone and you need the Lord's help) or desired depending on circumstances. Either way of praying is communicating with God.

2. Converse with God and listen for his response *Psalms 17:6; John 8:47*
 - a. When not praying in a group, our prayer should be a conversation, not just a one-way message. Listen to God, give Him time to speak to you.

Share the example of talking with your dad: Think about it like a phone call. If you called your father to ask for money, and never let him speak, would he be happy? *ring ring* "Hey dad I really need some money to pay the bills this month, things have been really hard. Can you send me a thousand dollars, by check, to my home address, by Sunday? Thanks! Love you!" *Click* How would your father feel if that was the conversation you had with him on the phone? How much more does God, our heavenly Father want to converse with us! Let God talk, give

Him time to speak, listen for His still small voice... whatever you do, don't treat God like an answering machine!

3. Spend time with God, fellowship (hang out) with God. *1 John 1:3*
 - a. God loves us and cares about us, talk to Him! *1 Peter 5:7*

Tell Him about your day, your work or school life... share your struggles with Him. He is your Father and He loves and cares about you, and that means He cares about the things you care about!

4. Always be in prayer. *1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*
 - a. You can't waste God's time, talk to Him all the time!

Why do we pray in Jesus' name?

1. The name of Jesus is powerful and has authority. *Matthew 28:18; Philippians 2:9-11*

There is no power in the word "Jesus", it is not a magical word (I.E. Abracadabra). Instead, it is the power of the person and character behind the name. Read Acts 19:13-16 to see what happens when you try to use the word 'Jesus' as a magic word.

Think of it this way: In medieval times, if you were a servant of the king on official duty, you could ride into town and give orders "in the name of the king!" If you were truly a simple peasant, people would mock you and not listen to your orders, but if you were a knight in royal armor, with a letter sealed by the king's signet, people would do whatever you told them... because they know, fear, and respect the king, and they know you were sent by him. In the same manner, we are sent from the King of heaven and earth, and when we pray in Jesus' name we are proclaiming that we are representatives of Jesus Christ Himself.

2. Jesus Himself tells us to pray in His name. *John 14:13*

How does God answer our prayers?

1. God is not a "Magic 8 Ball". His answers to prayer are not simply, "Yes, no, or ask again later".
 - a. God is intelligent and will answer your prayers intelligently. *Romans 11:33-34*
2. God's ways and thoughts are higher than ours, He knows what we need and when we need it.
 - a. Our prayers might not be answered the way we want or in the time we want, but we trust God that He knows what's best and has everything under control. *Isaiah 55:8*

3. God will give you what you ask for, if you ask according to His will. *1 John 5:14*
4. God loves us and is our heavenly Father! As our Father He will give us what we need (and sometimes what we want!). *Matthew 7:7-11*

God may not give us everything we want, but He knows what is best for us... He might even give us something better!

Does sin affect prayer?

1. This is a topic of hot debate; however, the Bible is clear that if we love our sin God will not hear our prayers. *Psalm 66:18*
 - a. God knows we will not be perfect while we live on this earth, but he does expect us to strive for perfection (*Matthew 5:48*). If you are living a life that loves sin, God is not going to answer your prayers. But, if you are doing your best to live a godly life, and working on ridding your life of sin, God will hear your prayers. *Psalm 34:17; John 9:31; 1 Peter 3:12*

CONCLUSION

Talk to God, it really is as simple as that! Spend time with Him, ask for things, ask about things, ask for direction in life, listen to Him, praise Him and thank Him for all He is and what He's done. Just enjoy conversing with Him!

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INTRODUCTION

The Trinity is a vital part of our Christian faith. We, as Christians, believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, all being equal, all being part of one God, and all being fully God themselves. We talk a lot about the Father and the Son, but often we neglect getting to know the third Person in the trinity. If we study the New Testament, we see that the third Person, the Holy Spirit, is an important part of our Christian walk. We must seek to know Him more!

If your student asks about the Trinity, be sure to share with them that we believe in ONE God in three parts. Just like us as humans have three parts, a spirit, a soul, and a body, we are one human with three parts, such is the character of God. He has a Spirit (The Holy Spirit) a Leader (The Father) and a Servant (the Son) all working together as one God. Each three parts are individually fully God and together as one fully God. No one part is greater than the other, they are all three perfect.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

1. The Holy Spirit is God's own Spirit, sent to us to be our helper and guide. *John 14:16-17*
 - a. He will never leave us *John 14:16*
 - b. He will teach us all things *John 14:26*
 - c. His work is to convict us of our sin *John 16:8*

The Holy Spirit (also known as the Holy Ghost) is God, and part of the Trinity (which is also God). He is our guide and the One who convicts us. He leads us and dwells within us as Christians.

The Holy Spirit functions in many more ways, this is just an overview.

When do we receive the Holy Spirit?

1. The Bible makes it clear that when we are saved we receive the Holy Spirit, that He comes and dwells inside of us right at the moment of salvation. *Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14*
 - a. How then do we receive the Holy Spirit?

- i. We receive the Holy Spirit when we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior (I.E. get born again). *John 3:5-16, 7:38-39*
- ii. It is a free gift from God at the moment of salvation, we need to do no more than be born again. *Acts 2:38-39*

We receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit by being baptized in Him

1. The Bible tells us to “repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”. *Acts 2:38*
2. There are two types of baptisms: baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit.
Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5
 - a. To receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit we should be baptized physically in water, and spiritually by the Holy Spirit.
3. We should be baptized in the Spirit to be able to witness to others about Christ throughout the world. *Acts 1:8*

If you are saved you should be baptized in both water and the Holy Spirit. Being baptized in water does not save you, salvation comes the moment you are born again, likewise, being baptized in the Spirit does not make you receive the Spirit, you receive the Spirit the moment you are born again; however, as believers we are called to be baptized in both water and Spirit after being born again. If you have not been baptized in the Holy Spirit, we will show you how at the end of the lesson. Some call this being “filled with the Spirit,” but we try not to use this terminology as it can cause confusion. Usually, when someone says they are “filled with the Spirit,” they are referring to being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

There are many gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul gives a concise list as follows:

1. The gift of words of wisdom *1 Corinthians 12:8a*

This is the ability to have supernatural messages from God that offer divine wisdom to difficult situations.

2. The gift of words of knowledge *1 Corinthians 12:8b*

The ability to have supernatural messages from God that speak of facts you should not be able to know on your own; such as Jesus knowing the number of husbands the woman at the well had. John 4:17-18.

3. The gift of divine faith *1 Corinthians 12:9a*

The ability to have extreme faith in hopeless situations. This means that you have such a trust in God that even in the most hopeless of situations (being thrown into a flaming furnace to be burned alive, for example, in Daniel 3:16-17) you know that God can deliver you and you are not afraid at all.

4. The gift of healing *1 Corinthians 12:9b*

The ability to pray for the sick and injured and see them healed by God's power.

5. The gift of miracles *1 Corinthians 12:10a*

The ability to show signs and wonders from God, such as moving mountains, turning water into wine, walking on water, etc.

6. The gift of prophecy *1 Corinthians 12:10b*

The ability to know and speak about the future.

While the word "prophecy" can mean simply "hearing from God" here it is used to mean the foretelling of future events. Before Christ died for our sins, it was a big deal if someone could hear and speak directly to God, these people were called prophets and anything they heard from God was considered a prophecy. Now that God dwells within us, it is not hard at all for us to speak with Him and hear from Him... it's what all Christians should be doing. Thus, here Paul is taking it a step further suggesting that New Testament prophets are those that can foretell the future.

The word prophet can also mean someone with strong gifts of Words of Knowledge or Wisdom.

7. The gift of the discernment of spirits *1 Corinthians 12:10c*

The ability to recognize good and evil spirits, and their workings in the world and the lives of others.

8. The gift of tongues *1 Corinthians 12:10d*

The ability to speak in other languages (earthly languages) and/or the ability to speak in a heavenly language.

9. The gift of interpreting tongues *1 Corinthians 12:10e*

The ability to understand and interpret tongues of other languages, both earthly and heavenly.

Not every gift is for every believer

1. Not every gift is for every believer, God gives different gifts to different believers. *1 Corinthians 12:8-11*
2. God knows each of us intimately, He calls us to unique services, and as such He gives different gifts to different believers to accomplish what He has called them to. *Romans 12:3-8*
 - a. That being said, some gifts are for all believers, such as speaking in tongues. *Mark 16:17; Acts 2:4*

The evidence and gift of speaking in tongues

1. The Bible shows us that speaking in tongues accompanies the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and that speaking in tongues is a sign that accompanies those who believe in Christ. *Mark 16:17; Acts 2:4, 10:44-48, 19:1-7*
 - a. This is generally accepted to mean the speaking of heavenly tongues.
2. Heavenly tongues is a language we as Christians can use to talk to God, it is our spirit crying out to Him, bypassing the logic of our mind. *Romans 8:26-27; 1 Corinthians 14:2, 14:15*
3. Because the gift of tongues is so often paired with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, it is generally accepted as a sign that a believer is indeed baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Not all Christians believe this, and that's ok. Many churches believe that the gift of tongues and many other gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased after the early church. They believe these gifts were given to the first disciples and apostles in order to kick start the church into high gear. However, there is ample Biblical evidence that leads us to believe that not only is the gift of tongues, as well as all the other gifts, around today, but that they are powerful and available for all believers. We use the gift of tongues to talk to God when our mind does not know what or how to pray. It allows our soul to cry out to God without the hindrance of our mind trying to over analyze or think prayers through. It also allows our soul to sing new praises to God that our mind may not be able to comprehend. Remember, this is not an issue of salvation, you can be saved without ever being baptized in the Spirit, but without the gifts you are handicapping yourself and your usefulness in God's kingdom.

How do we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

1. Simply ask, and it will be given to you! *Luke 11:9-13*

- a. It is that simple, ask and you shall receive. *Luke 11:10-13*
- b. Certain gifts come through prophecy and the laying on of hands, find a group of strong Christians who are baptized in the Spirit and ask them to pray for you and with you, let them lead you prophetically as they pray for you and lay hands on you. *1 Timothy 4:14*

That's all there is to it, simply pray and ask God to baptize you in His Spirit. Jesus will be faithful to answer your prayer. **If your disciple has not been baptized in the Spirit, ask him or her if they would like to be. If they answer yes, lead them in prayer to see them baptized.** Pray over them, pray in tongues, and encourage them to speak in tongues. Sometimes the gift of tongues doesn't come to a believer the first time they pray for it, don't be discouraged and listen to the Holy Spirit to guide you how to pray. Continue to pray over them until they feel confident they are baptized, this is especially evident when they start speaking in tongues. Don't force your disciple to do anything, allow the Lord to lead this time of prayer and if more help is needed, reach out to a leader.

CONCLUSION

When we read Acts 1:4-5, we realize that the Holy Spirit is important and necessary for all Christians. We gain our direction through the Holy Spirit and He reveals truth to us. The Holy Spirit will teach us the things of God, direct us towards God's purpose for our life and give us boldness to be His witness to the world. If you have not been baptized in the Holy Spirit, what is stopping you? Ask to receive His baptism right away and begin to receive the many good and powerful gifts He has in store for you and your ministry!

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Sanctification & Living By Faith

Foundations 2 | Lesson 4

INTRODUCTION

Sanctification and faith are two of the most important aspects of our Christian walk. We need to know the importance of both and learn to live a life of sanctification and faith.

What is sanctification?

1. Sanctification means to be separated from our sins and in doing so, move closer to God. To be set apart from sin and to be set apart unto God.

Another way to describe sanctification is “To be made holy”. Since the word holy means without sin, then to be made holy means to be removed or separated from our sins.

2. There are two kinds of sanctification: instant and progressive.
 - a. Instant sanctification happens the moment we are saved. *1 Corinthians 6:11; Hebrews 10:10,14*

Psalm 103:12 literally says that God separates us from our sins as far as this east is from the west, that is a beautiful metaphor for just how sanctified we are when we get saved!

- b. Progressive sanctification happens as we live our Christian life; trying to stop sinning and bettering our walk with God. *2 Corinthians 3:18*

Everyone knows Christians aren't perfect! We still sin, and that means that even though we were sanctified at the moment we were saved, we also have to live a life where we try to get better, try to stop sinning, ask for forgiveness from our sins, and seek God's help with repentance. This is progressive sanctification, the process of removing sins from our lives.

3. Sanctification can only be accomplished with the help of Jesus. *John 17:2; Philippians 3:21; Hebrews 13:12; Jude 24-25*

We need to ask Jesus to help us be sanctified, every day we can humbly ask Jesus, “Lord, help me be separated from sin, separate me from the desire and temptation to sin, and give me the strength and desire to say NO to sin.” Psalm 139:23-24

- a. It does not come from the church or the church leaders.

The church and its leaders are great tools to lead us to Christ and to encourage us as we seek Him, but they can't take our sins away! Only the blood of Christ can do that!

What does God expect from me?

1. God expects you to be perfect and holy (sin free) as He is holy. *Leviticus 19:2; Matthew 5:48; 1 Peter 1:14-19*
 - a. God knows that we will not be sin free until we reach heaven. *Romans 3:10; Revelation 21:27*
 - b. Nonetheless, God still calls us to be perfect, so it is our job to strive for perfection while on earth.
2. Sanctification can then be seen as the perfecting of ourselves for God. *2 Corinthians 7:1*

Does it seem unreasonable that God expects us to be perfect? Yes! That's because it is unreasonable! There is no way we will ever be perfect until we reach heaven! We will always struggle with sin, but we should always be striving to get more and more perfect, more and more sin free. God is a perfect God; thus His expectations are perfect! Any expectation less than perfection, as unreasonable as it may seem, will only go against God's perfect character.

How can we pursue sanctification?

1. We must decide to present ourselves as a living sacrifice to God.

Not a physical sacrifice, but a spiritual one. One who chooses to use their life to serve God.

- a. This means that we care more about what He wants than what we want, so even though our flesh desires to sin we decide not to because we know God does not want us to. *Romans 6:12-13, 12:1-2*

If you don't know what God wants, ask Him! Or read about Him and His desire for you in the Bible.

- b. God will help you sanctify yourself! Ask Him for help. *Psalms 51:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:23*
- c. God's Word, the Bible, will help you sanctify yourself. *Psalms 119:9-11; John 17:17; Ephesians 5:26*

Read the Bible as much as you can! God wrote it with you in mind! If you are struggling with understanding what you read, pray to God and ask his Holy Spirit to help you interpret it.

How should we live our lives as Christians?

1. "...we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age." *Titus 2:12 (NKJV)*
 - a. To live soberly (pure minded and focused) and righteously (without sin) we must live as ones who have been sanctified by Christ.

Basically, live sin-free and focus on God.

2. A Christian's life should be one of constant sanctification and growing in faith.
 - a. The Bible says that "...without faith it is impossible to please God". So in order to live a godly life we must have faith! *Hebrews 11:6*

Put your life in God's hands, this is a simple but powerful act of faith. Ask God to guide your life for you, instead of dictating to Him what you want your life to be.

What is faith?

1. Faith is described as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" *Hebrews 11:1*
 - a. In a nutshell, faith is trusting God. But it is NOT blind trust! Instead, it is trust based on evidence and substance.
 - i. Substance: If I pray for a new car, and God miraculously provides, that car is the substance of what you hoped for. You can look at the car, touch it, feel it, drive it, and remember what God did when he gave it to you! Thus, you can trust in God because you know that He has already given you a car, so what would stop Him from giving you something else?
 - ii. Evidence: Imagine you have a friend who is an abusive husband, drunk, and all-around dirt bag. Then, one day all of that changes. He cleans up his life, treats his wife right, and starts doing charity work! You ask him what happened, and he tells you he got saved and Jesus changed his life. His conversion, and dramatic life change is evidence of the unseen power of God! This evidence allows you to trust God to do miracles in your life and others!

Use the Mona Lisa Example: Who painted the Mona Lisa? Do you know? It was Leonardo Di Vinci! How can we know this? We did not watch Leonardo paint the Mona Lisa, nor do we know anyone who did! However, we have faith that Leonardo Di Vinci painted it. Why? Well for starters, the fact that we have the painting proves there must be a painter (that is substance) and the evidence of his signature tells us he painted it! Such is faith, we see all of

creation, so there must be a Creator. We know people who are saved, so there must be a Savior. We have met people who have been miraculously healed, so there must be a miraculous Healer!

How do we grow our faith?

1. God gives us each a measure of faith when we are saved. *Romans 12:3*

This means God gives each of us a bit of faith when we get saved, it is there to start us out on our walk with Him. In God's infinite wisdom he gives some more faith than others to use for His glory. We are expected to grow and strengthen the faith that God gives us (regardless of how much He gave us at salvation).

- a. To grow, or strengthen, the faith we are given we must use it (like a muscle).
 - b. We have a choice; we can remember the evidence of God's salvation in our life and because of that, trust God for more, or we can choose to not trust God for more.
2. As we put our trust in God (the more faith we have), He is faithful to reward us. *Matthew 8:5-13*
 - a. The more we trust God, the more He gives us... allowing us to trust Him even further!
 3. To grow in faith, we must "...walk by faith, not by sight." *2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 10:23*
 - a. This means that in our daily lives we must choose to trust God over what we can see happening in the natural, around us.

CONCLUSION

Living life as a Christian will not always be easy, fun, or comfortable. Sanctification can hurt, and faith can be fleeting in dire situations. But with the help of God, we can live a life of sanctification and faith, perfecting ourselves over time, until one day we are made perfect (sinless) in heaven.

My Role in the Church & Tithing Foundations 2 | Lesson 5

INTRODUCTION

In our Christian walk, we are not only responsible for our personal growth, but we also have a responsibility to help the body of Christ (the church) grow. The church is meant to be an encouraging and unified place to lift up, protect, and guide believers. Since the time of Jesus, churches have protected and spread the Gospel throughout the nations; churches continue with that same mission today. Church isn't just for the hyper religious either, instead it is God's desire that every believer would be a part of this extremely important aspect of the Christian faith! Let us study together and see how we can be a vital member of the body of Christ.

God wants believers to attend a local church

1. We are commanded to gather together, and not to forsake the gathering of believers.

"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

Church is a place where we meet together to encourage each other, love one another, and basically just hang out (fellowship) with other believers in Christ. Church serves as a meeting place for local believers to gather, and we are very clearly called not to forsake this gathering.

2. We are compelled to love the house of the Lord. *Psalm 122:1*
 - a. Church should be something we look forward to, not something we do out of obligation. If you choose to love God and His people, then loving church should come naturally.
3. God wants us to worship and praise Him together.
 - a. We are called to sing praises to God by singing songs and playing instruments in His sanctuary. *Psalm 150*
 - b. We are called to worship God together, not just alone. *Psalm 34:3*

Some people claim they can be a good Christian without ever needing to go to church. But in reality, without a church to attend, how often will we actually

gather together with other believers to worship God with singing and instruments?

4. We are in the presence of God when we gather together.
 - a. We should gather together because God says He will be in our midst there.
 - b. We should pray together because God says He will answer our prayers when we pray together.

“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

Matthew 18:19-20

Even though as a believer, God lives inside of us, we still see something special when we gather together. The presence of God becomes tangible, as if He fills the room with His presence when two or more believers gather together in His Name.

5. God wants us to learn His Word.
 - a. The Bible tells us that it is impossible to please God without faith! It also tells us that faith comes from hearing the Word of God, and specifically, listening to preaching from a preacher is a main way we grow in faith. *Hebrews 11:6; Romans 10:14, 17*

This does NOT mean that we can only grow by hearing a sermon by a preacher in church. On the contrary, God wants us to study His word on our own (2 Timothy 2:15, 3:15-17), as well as learn from sermons preached in church. However, God has given certain people (preachers/pastors/teachers) a special calling and gifting to teach the Bible in a compelling and convicting manner that no one should be without. So, you should study on your own and learn from sermons in church.

God wants believers to serve at a local church

1. We should go to church not only for ourselves but also for the benefit of others.
 - a. When we are around other believers at church, we get to know them and their needs, both physical (such as needing healing or help paying bills), and spiritual (such as emotional needs). We should always be on the lookout for how we can use our own strengths to help others, and church is a perfect place to do that. *Psalms 133:1; Matthew 25:31-46; Romans 15:1-2*

Church is not only about us, but it should be about others, too. God wants a united church, a united body of believers. When one member feels weak, a strong believer should be there to help out. If we all work together, lifting one another up and bearing each other's burdens, then the church will stand strong, united, and victorious. If we keep to ourselves, then our weaknesses will hold us all back from the glory that God has intended for our lives!

2. God has gifted each of us differently, we should use those gifts to serve Him.
 - a. The church has many things that need to be done, from cleaning the sanctuary, to preaching, to counseling others. All of these tasks are important, we should help out the church however we can. *1 Corinthians 12:7, 12-30; 1 Peter 4:10*

It doesn't matter how great a preacher is, or how awesome the worship is, if no one ever cleans the bathroom, eventually the church will smell, and people will stop coming. Every job, from cleaning toilets to preaching sermons, is important for the wellbeing of the church. Be excited to serve God, it is a huge honor!

3. We serve because Jesus served. *Matthew 20:25-28*

God wants believers to give to a local church

1. We are all called to tithe.
 - a. The word tithe literally means "10%" and means in a Christian setting to give 10% of our income back to God.

I.E. If you make \$100 a week you should give \$10 a week to God.

- b. We should give our tithes to the church to handle. *Nehemiah 10:37; Malachi 3:10*

In the Old Testament, the tithes of the people of God were given to the priests and the temple store house to handle. The priests would then use those tithes to feed the hungry, and help the poor, as well as use them to help the temple buy things it needed to run. Further, the tithe was how the priests made their living. Today we give to the local church in the same way for the same reasons. Tithes still help feed the poor, hungry and homeless, they also help pay for church buildings and needs such as coffee to drink, chairs to sit on, heat and air conditioning.

Jesus said in Matthew 23:23 that what the pharisees were doing in tithing was a good thing – they should continue to do so; however, in addition to tithing they needed to attend to other matters of the law as well (such as justice, mercy & faith). Tithing is not just an Old Testament concept.

2. We are also called to give offerings

- a. An offering is a gift that is separate from our tithe, it is not counted towards a 10% tithe.

An example of an offering is the Missions Faith Pledge. Another type of offering can be a free will offering; giving more than 10% for no other reason than “just because”, this kind of offering is standard for seasoned Christians, they give as God tells them!

- b. Unlike tithing, there is no set amount we are called to offer. We should give God offerings as He leads us and when He leads us. *Ezra 7:14-16*

We can offer one cent or a million dollars, whatever God calls us to offer!

3. We should give faithfully

- a. Not paying tithes and offerings is a serious thing to God! It is a sin and is literally called “robbing God”. *Malachi 3:8-9*

In Malachi 3:8 God tells us that we are robbing Him when we don't tithe! The Bible says that every good thing comes from God (James 1:17); that includes our money, it came from Him and is ultimately His to control, and we should give it to Him when He asks!

- b. We should give our “First Fruits”. This means that we should give or set aside money as soon as it comes in for tithes and offerings. Don't wait until the end of the month and give God your leftovers! *Proverbs 3:9-10*

Right when you get paid, set 10% aside for God, this shows God that you always think about Him first!

- c. God will trust us with more if we show Him we are faithful in the little. *Luke 16:10-12*
- d. Everyone should give tithes and offerings, not just those who have lots of money. *Mark 12:41-44*

God calls everyone to tithe, even the young and the poor. You can tithe off of your allowance, or tithe from the very little money you have. God does not care if you only make \$10 a month, but He does care that you are faithful to return \$1 a month (that is 10% of \$10) to Him.

4. God will bless us for faithfully giving tithes and offerings. *Malachi 3:10-12*

- a. In fact, God encourages us to “test” or “try” Him in this, it is the only area of our faith we are allowed to test God!

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.”

Malachi 3:10 NKJV

Should only the wealthy be blessed by God with such abundance? Of course not, if we suggest that those with less should not tithe, then we are withholding God’s blessings from their lives!

Note: Tithes and offerings are always something tangible and almost always monetary. In the Bible, all tithes and offerings were either money, valuables, crops, or livestock (the latter three were as good as money in ancient days). Some people think they can tithe with their time or service, but there is no Biblical example of time or service being called a tithe. Thus, we should always tithe by giving a tenth of all our incoming finances back to God, and offerings should be given as something in addition to our tithe that is tangible (money, food, goods, et cetera).

CONCLUSION

God wants us all to be involved with His work, so we all should be a part of a local church where we can gather together to grow, worship, fellowship, tithe, offer, and serve!

If your disciple is not attending a church, this is your time to invite them to come! Pick them up every Sunday if you need to, as your disciple they should have no excuse not to be a part of a church body, and they should attend the church you attend so they can grow alongside you! Don’t be afraid to ask them about tithing and serving too!

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INTRODUCTION

For most Christians, one of the most common things we pray is to ask God for healing: We ask Him to heal our friends, our loved ones, and ourselves. Sometimes we ask for something small, such as “God, heal my headache” or “Please cure my cold, Father”, but other times we ask for miracles: “God, heal my mother of cancer” or “Father, let my friend be able to walk again!” We might even be so bold to pray for a blind man to be able to see! The question is, are these requests Biblical? What does the Bible teach us about divine healing?

When we say “divine healing” we are specifically talking about God healing someone, not any special ceremony, treatment, medicine, procedure, operation, or anything else...but literally the hand of God moving to cure or heal someone.

Who does the healing?

1. The Bible calls God Jehovah Rapha. *Exodus 15:26*
 - a. This is Hebrew for “I am the Lord who heals you”.
2. Jesus is often called “The Great Physician” because He could so easily heal people, often just by speaking to them, as He did with the man who had been sick for 38 years. *John 5:1-9*

The Bible never calls Jesus “The Great Physician”, it is simply a name that has been used for Jesus in modern times because of all the healing that Jesus did in the Bible and still does today.

3. The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit gives the gift of healing to some Christians so that when we pray people can be healed. *1 Corinthians 12:9*

This divine gift means having a special anointing to have your prayers for healing answered. It does not mean you have superpowers and are able to heal (only God can heal). Anyone can ask God to heal others or themselves, but those with the gift of healing have an extra anointing in this area.

4. Many times believers are encouraged to pray for others to heal them, it is important to remember that it is God (The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) who does the healing, not us. *Exodus 23:25; Psalm 30:2; Isaiah 53:4-5*

Again: some Christians are especially gifted, and many people are healed by their prayers, we need to remember that these Christians are not the ones doing the healing, but it is God who is doing the healing through them!

Who is healing for?

1. Healing is for believers (Christians)

- a. We learn in the Old Testament that Jesus Christ would suffer and die for our sins, it also tells us that “By His (Jesus’) wounds we are healed” *Isaiah 53:4-5*
- b. In the New Testament this message is repeated, by his wounds we are healed! *1 Peter 2:24*

Jesus died to give us life and life more abundantly (John 10:10).

2. Healing is for unbelievers

- a. Jesus healed multitudes of unbelievers. He healed the blind, the sick, and the handicapped, he healed all who came to Him seeking healing. We never see Jesus turn anyone away who was looking for healing! *Matthew 9:35; Mark 5:34; Luke 8:43-56*

Matthew 9:35 says that as Jesus went town to town, He healed EVERY disease and sickness!

- b. Jesus healed unbelievers so that they could know the Gospel and be saved. *John 10:37-38*

As in Matthew 9:35, we often see the preaching of the Gospel paired with Jesus healing.

Healing in believers

1. God said that we are healed by Christ’s wounds (*Isaiah 53:5*), so why do Christians still get sick?
 - a. Christians get sick for a variety of reasons. One large reason we get sick is because of sin. Sin separates us from God, the divine Healer, and sometimes as a consequence of our sinful behavior we open the door for sickness to afflict us. *Deuteronomy 28:58-60; 1 Corinthians 11:27-31*
 - b. Sickness is an evil distortion of God’s perfect creation of man. We brought sickness into the world when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden. Since then, Satan and his minions (demons) have been using all sorts of evil to slow us down. Sickness is one such evil that the enemy tries to use against us.

- i. The Bible states in many places that Satan has the direct authority over the laws of sin, sickness, and death. *Luke 13:16; John 10:10; Acts 10:38; Romans 8:2; Ephesians 2:1-3; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8*

Ephesians 2:1-3 calls Satan “The prince of the power of the air” which is a name of Satan’s in the Bible. Following Satan, according to this verse, leads to us to our own death in our sins.

- ii. If we are not opening the door to sickness because of our sin, then we must look to rebuking the enemy as our sickness may be brought on by demons. *Matthew 12:22, 15:21-28; Mark 9:17; Luke 4:38-41, 8:2, 13:10-13; Acts 10:38*
- iii. In many cases of sickness in the New Testament the prayer that resolved the illness was not necessarily a prayer for healing, but a prayer of rebuke! *Matthew 9:32-33, 12:22-28; Mark 9:17-29; Luke 4:39*

We will talk more about rebuking demonic forces in further Foundations 4

- c. One final reason why Christians get sick: The law of sowing and reaping (you reap what you sow or, you harvest what you plant). *Galatians 6:7-8*
 - i. If you do not take care of your body, if you sow unhealthy decisions, then you cannot expect to reap health.

The law of sowing and reaping is a metaphor. The imagery is this: if you plant corn seeds, then you will get a harvest of corn; you cannot expect to harvest grapes if you planted corn. This is a spiritual law, if you sow good things & things that help your spiritual growth, you will reap good things & reap things of the Spirit. This applies to all areas of life, even our health.

Example: If a man stabs himself in the gut, he has no one to blame for his injuries but himself. He may pray and even receive healing at first, but if he keeps stabbing himself, he will eventually die of his own wounds. How foolish would it be for the man who is stabbing himself to say, “I am bleeding and even dying because God refuses to heal me!” If we can agree that is foolish, then we can agree that it is foolish to ignore exercise and eat a horrible diet and then cry out to God for healing.

- 2. So then, for a Christian to receive healing they need to make sure they are not living in sin.
 - a. If they are living in sin, then they need to repent and turn back to God.
- 3. The Christian needs to make sure that God gets the Glory for any healing. *Matthew 5:16*

4. The Christian must be making healthy choices and not actively contributing to their own harm. *1 Timothy 4:8; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17*
5. Believers should seek the church's help in finding healing. The believer is instructed to call the elders (leaders) of the church to intercede (pray) for them. *James 5:14*
6. The Christian should "lay hands on the sick" and we are told the sick will recover. *Mark 16:18b*
 - a. There is a Biblical precedent for physically "laying hands" on someone (touching their body where the illness or infirmity is) as you pray for them. Jesus and Paul both demonstrated this, and we should follow their example. *Mark 6:5; Luke 4:40, 13:13; Acts 28:8*

This is one of the reasons it is important when praying for healing to be praying with someone of the same sex: men with men, women with women. We certainly do not want men laying hands on women or vice versa as such touching could be inappropriate.

Healing in unbelievers

1. Why does God heal unbelievers?
 - a. God heals unbelievers to lead them to Him so they might be saved. *Mark 2:3-12; John 3:2, 5:36, 10:37-38, 14:10-11, 20:30-31*

God is not willing for any to perish (go to Hell) but for all to come to repentance (be saved and turn away from their sins) (2 Peter 3:9). This means that God wants everyone to become followers of Christ, and He is more than willing to use healing to convince them.

2. Who does God use to pray for and bring healing to the unbelievers?
 - a. God uses Christians. To successfully ask God for the healing of an unbeliever you must be a Christian. *John 9:31*

If you are not a Christian, then God will not listen to your requests to heal others!

- b. God uses those who ask according to His will. *1 John 5:14*

For example, if you want people to be healed so they will pay you for it, God will not honor that because that is not God's will. However, if you ask God to heal someone so they know that God is real and alive, He will hear your prayer and will often answer it with a miracle!

- c. God uses those who have the gift of healing. *1 Corinthians 12:9*

If you feel inclined, ask the Lord for this gift! But even without the spiritual gift of healing, you can still pray for others to be healed and God can and often will respond to those prayers by bringing healing.

3. If you are saved, asking for healing for the right reason, and have faith for that healing, then there is nothing holding you back from praying for others to be healed! God can and will use you to pray for healing others so they might know Him!

CONCLUSION

God can and does heal people still today. If you're struggling to believe this, stop and pray with your discipler for God to reveal Himself in this area to you. He is faithful! If you've personally experienced healing or been a part of praying for healing, share that testimony with your discipler now! Next lesson we will talk about false beliefs and mindsets that can hinder our own healing and faith for others to be healed.

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INTRODUCTION

In the last lesson we talked about divine healing; what the Bible says about it for the believer and unbeliever in today's world. Today we will uncover some false beliefs & mindsets that we ourselves might have or have heard about healing. Allow the Lord to speak into your spirit about what His Word says about healing.

NOTE: Make sure to read all bold sections of Scripture together as these are the verses that will be discussed in tearing down false beliefs. This lesson dives **deep** into theological concepts that may be over your disciple's head. Use discernment as you lead them through the following notes.

False beliefs about divine healing

(This section is derived from Finis Dake's book, "God's Plan For Man".)

1. The most common false belief about health and healing is that God makes some people sick so that He can get glory out of their healing. **Read John 9:1-3.**
 - a. The story in John 9:1-3 is used as the chief example. The false belief goes like this: The blind man was healed for the glory of God, therefore it must have been the will of God for him to be blind in the first place.
 - i. This argument is only a half truth. Naturally, God cannot get glory out of healing someone who is not sick in the first place, but that does not prove that it is God's will for them to be sick in the first place.
 - ii. In fact, the glory God got from healing the blind man was in the fact that God did not want the man to be blind at all. If God wanted the man to be blind, He would not have healed him.
 - iii. If the blind man would have remained blind, God would not have gotten the glory. Thus, the glory comes from the healing (the returning of the man's eyes to the perfect state that God willed for them) and not in the blindness.
 - iv. Though this man's blindness from birth was not a result of his or his parents' sin, it was still the result of man's sin (sickness and infirmities are a direct result of sin entering the world through Adam & Eve). Thus, it was sin

which made him blind, and God who waited to heal him until this very moment, that He Himself might be glorified.

Take this example from Finis Dake's "God's Plan for Man": Suppose a rich man in a community would promise to pay all hospital bills and buy new cars for all who got into a serious accident. Suppose there were a number of accidents; should he be accused of deliberately causing them just because he promised to help men out of their troubles? Should he be accused of causing [the accidents] just to get some praise for helping his neighbors? It is true his goodness would be magnified by such acts of kindness, but this would not be the cause of the wrecks. He does not will such, and he would prevent them if at all possible. If he deliberately caused the wrecks so that he could get praise for helping those who were wrecked, all of society would rise up and destroy him and reject such benevolence.

So it is with God, that men get into sin and sickness, or they are attacked by satanic powers and He helps men out of their troubles and thereby receives the glory due Him for His goodness does not prove that He wills the affliction or that He is the cause of the trouble. It is simply the fact that God gets glory in spite of them, not because He is responsible for them.

2. Another common false belief about healing is that sometimes people get sick because they are being punished or disciplined by God. **Read Hebrews 12:5-10.**
 - a. The go-to verse for this false belief is Hebrews 12:5-10 which compares a loving parent disciplining a child to that of God disciplining those whom He loves.
 - i. This falls apart straight from the get-go, for what loving parent would want their child to get sick?

What loving parent would use sickness to discipline their child? Discipline is controlled, and pointed, it serves its purpose and then it is over. A spanking hurts for a short while, but the lesson is learned for a long time. This is vastly different than an illness that can last for a long time and cause serious harm, that can mutate and get out of control, that can infect others, that can lead to lifelong problems or even cause death.

3. A final false belief is that God is the one who may be afflicting someone with illness, thus it is futile to pray for healing. **Read Psalm 34:19**
 - a. This belief stems around Psalm 34:19 in which David states, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous".
 - i. Of the at least 177 times the word affliction is used in the Bible, it only clearly refers to sickness once.

If your disciple is struggling to believe this, let the Word of God speak for itself and look up every verse: do not rush through and just name the references. If your disciple is not really struggling with this, pick a few verses and then move on.

Finis Dake in “God’s Plan for Man” proves this point from Scripture Not even James 5:13 is clear that it refers to sickness. It is used in many ways other than in reference to sickness, such as: “man afflicting man” (Gen. 15:13; Exod. 1:11); “husbands afflicting wives” (Gen. 31:50); “men afflicting their own souls” (Lev. 16:29-31); “loss of loved ones” (Ruth 1:21); “family troubles” (Gen. 29:32); “imprisonment” (Ps. 107:10; Phil. 4:14); “persecutions” (1 Thess. 1:6); “trials” (Isa. 48:10); “wars” (Ps. 44:2; Isa. 9:1); and “fastings” (Isa. 58:5).

Men are also spoken of as afflicting themselves (James 4:9; Lev. 16:29). Both God and Christ are spoken of as being afflicted (Isa. 53:4, 7; 63:9; Col. 1:24). Shall we say that God, Christ, and all these persons referred to in these Scriptures had diseases when they were afflicted? If we say that all these kinds of afflictions are physical diseases, then none of these Scriptures would make sense.

- b. Nowhere in the Bible does it claim that God causes sickness.
- i. The Bible says that demons cause sickness (*Matthew 9:32-33, 17:14-18; Mark 9:17-27; Luke 9:37-42, 11:14, 13:11*), that sin causes sickness (*Psalms 38:3; 1 Corinthians 11:28-30*), and that God sometimes allows sickness (*Job 2:3-7*) ... but never that God causes sickness.

A question that might arise: But what about a baby born blind (deaf/mute/etc.), did God not make them blind? No, God did not, God does not make sickness, or disease, or disability, God makes things perfect. It is sin that causes sickness, or disease, or disability. That baby would not have been born blind if Adam and Eve had never sinned. Now, God made that baby *knowing* it would be blind, but did not Himself cause the blindness. Exodus 4:11 is sometimes incorrectly translated as “who makes men blind... is it not I the Lord” whereas the correct translation is “Who makes blind men... is it not I the Lord”. This small distinction means that God makes men who are blind, but He is NOT the cause of the blindness. Sin and the corruption from sin is the cause. **Ask a pastor if you have more questions on this, it’s not always an easy concept to understand.**

CONCLUSION

In the end, it is clear that divine healing is a Biblical principle. We know that God can and will heal both unbelievers and believers alike, for different reasons. He heals the believer to help them live a more abundant life, and for His Name to get glory; He heals the unbeliever to show them His power so they might be saved, and again to get the glory. Though we can't always say for certain why someone is sick, and we know it is not always the consequence of that person's sin, we can say for certain that it is not God's perfect will for His children to be sick.

Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven" (*Matthew 6:9-10*). Are there sick people in heaven? We know there are not (*Revelation 21:4*). Thus, if it is not God's will for there to be sickness in heaven, and we are to pray God's will on earth as it is in heaven, then we know it is not's God's will for His children to be sick on earth.

Pray together and talk through anything that this lesson may have brought up. Don't be afraid to pray for the gift of healing with your disciple, or to pray for healing over them. Encourage them to contact the elders (if you don't feel you are one) of the church if they need healing. Remember, "elder" in James 5:14 refers to someone seasoned in the faith often accompanied by an older age, not just the office of "elder".

INTRODUCTION

Think for a moment about how you became a Christian. The odds are, you became a Christian because someone told you about Jesus or invited you to church. The truth is, most people become Christians because someone else (family, friends, or even a total stranger) decided to “witness” to them.

Share a short testimony about how you were saved and who witnessed to you.

What is “witnessing”?

1. In Matthew 28:19 Jesus commands all who follow Him to “go out to all the world and make disciples”, this is called the Great Commission. A disciple is someone who follows the teaching of Christ daily, learning and growing in Him. Witnessing is the act of making a disciple through sharing the Gospel.
 - a. In short, “to witness” means “to tell someone about Jesus”.
 - b. Another word for witnessing is evangelism. The word evangelist literally means “preacher of the Good News”!

Is every Christian supposed to witness?

Some people think that evangelism should only be done by pastors, preachers, or people with a special gift for evangelism... but we know that the Bible calls everyone to witness!

1. Yes, all Christians are commanded by God to Witness!
 - a. Jesus Himself commanded us to go out into all the world to proclaim the Gospel and to baptize new believers into Christ. *Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8*
2. In Romans 10:13-14, the Bible tells us that everyone who calls on the name of Jesus will be saved. It then goes on to ask, “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him if they have never heard [of Him]? And how are they to hear [about Him] without someone preaching [about Him]?”

How are people supposed to know about Jesus without someone telling them?

- a. We are told not to be ashamed of the Gospel. *Romans 1:16*

If we are not ashamed of the Gospel, then what is stopping us from sharing it?

- b. We are told to “do the work of an evangelist”. *2 Timothy 4:1-5*

How am I supposed to witness?

1. First, you need to be prepared to witness.

- a. You must be saved, with the power of the Holy Spirit inside of you. *2 Timothy 4:5*

This does not mean you need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, it just means that when you are saved you receive the Holy Spirit to live inside of you and that the Holy Spirit will help you evangelize. That being said, being baptized in the Holy Spirit will certainly help, because gifts like healing and prophecy will help lead people to Christ (Matthew 10:7-14).

- b. You need to be doing your best to be living a holy (sin free) life. *2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 2:12*

One of the biggest complaints against Christians in America is that they are hypocrites! They go around telling people to stop sinning and then they themselves are living a sinful lifestyle. Do your best not to be a hypocrite so when people try to say you are a hypocrite, they can examine your life and see Christ through how you live and how you try to be holy always.

2. Next, make sure you know your audience.

- a. Become all things to all men so that some might be saved! Paul tells us to be a “Greek to a Greek, and a Jew to a Jew” this means that you should speak and behave differently depending on who you are talking to, so that they will feel comfortable with you and receive what you are saying. *1 Corinthians 9:20-22*

For example, the way you share Christ with children is different than with teenagers, which is different from adults. You should speak and act in a way that you will be received, make people comfortable with you! This does not mean however, that you should ever sin to make a sinner more comfortable! For example, instead of joining your friend at the bar for drinks, invite them over to your house for dinner.

- b. Don't force Jesus down people's throat, if your audience clearly does not want to listen to you, then move on! *Matthew 10:14*

3. Further, you need to literally tell people (with your own words) about Jesus! *Romans 10:10-17*

Some people think it is enough to just live a good life as a testimony to Christ. We should live a good life to be a living testimony, but we also must share about Christ, Romans 10:10-17 makes that clear.

- a. Someone, at some point, had to tell you about Jesus; you need to be that someone for others!
- b. Tell people your testimony (how you got saved, what God has done for you) *Luke 8:39; 1 Timothy 1:8*

Refer back to Foundations 1, Lesson 8 if your disciple needs a refresher on how to share their testimony.

4. Finally, you need to bring people to a decision.

- a. It is not our job to force someone to become a Christian, it is our job to bring them to a place to make a choice. After telling someone about Jesus, and you feel they understand, ask them if they want to be saved and baptized. Let them make the choice! *Joshua 24:15*
 - i. If they choose to be saved, help them pray to Jesus! Help them ask Jesus for forgiveness and confess him as Lord, then talk to them about baptism. Feel free to call a church leader for help if you need it!
 - ii. If they choose not to be saved, that is ok! Let them choose that but continue to pray for them and love them. Sometimes it takes a while for someone to come to Christ. *1 Corinthians 3:6-8*

CONCLUSION

The Bible says that the angels in heaven rejoice when one person decides to follow Christ (*Luke 15:7-10*), be a party planner for heaven and go get some people saved!

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Temptation & Victory

Foundations 2 | Lesson 9

INTRODUCTION

As we have learned in earlier lessons, we live in a fallen world. That means that even though we are Christians we still must live in a world that is obsessed with sin. We are surrounded by sin every day, in the media, at our jobs and in our schools. Naturally, being surrounded by so much sin is going to tempt us, make us desire to sin as the world does. In this lesson you will learn how to deal with temptation and be victorious in overcoming the draw of sin!

What is temptation?

1. The KJV dictionary defines temptation as, “The act of tempting; enticement to evil by arguments, by flattery, or by the offer of some real or apparent good.” Read the story of Jesus’ temptation by Satan in Luke 4:1-13 to see these few great examples of what temptation looks like.

Being tempted is like being offered a trade: something evil for something good. In most cases this would be a trade like “If I sin, I will feel better” or “If I steal that iPhone, it may be a sin but at least I get a new iPhone”!

- a. Sometimes temptation is the offer of physical goods that we need (like food, clothing, and shelter) in exchange for some kind of sin. Satan offered a very hungry Jesus some bread if Jesus would obey him. *Luke 4:3*
 - i. An extreme example of this would be a drug dealer who is selling drugs to support his family. The drug dealer is clearly sinning, but temptation tells him that it is worth it so he can pay for all his family’s bills.

People sometimes like to ask, “Is it a sin to steal bread to feed your starving family”? Or some people pose a similar question, suggesting that if the sin fulfills a need, then it may somehow be OK. That is exactly what temptation tries to tell us, that this sin is somehow OK because the reward is so good! The answer, of course, is that yes, it is clearly a sin to steal (the 8th commandment is “thou shall not steal” Exodus 20:15) but moreover, as we see below:

- ii. God promises to fulfill our needs, so to suggest we need to sin in order to live is to call God a liar! Jesus demonstrates this principle in His response to Satan in Luke 4:4. *Matthew 6:25-33; Philippians 4:19*

- b. Sometimes temptation offers something you really want, but don't necessarily need, in return for sin. Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would sin, this would have been a huge temptation for Jesus who came to save the world! *Luke 4:5*
 - i. In our lives, an example of this could look like the temptation to steal music off the internet. We sin if we break the law (it's illegal to pirate music and movies from the internet in America) but we would get something in return (free music, movies, and TV shows) for that sin.
- c. Another form of temptation has to do with our feelings and even our ego. Sometimes we are tempted to sin to make us feel good, or to inflate our ego (this is pride, a sin in and of itself (*Proverbs 8:13*)). Satan demanded that Jesus prove Himself to be the son of God, but Jesus had nothing to prove. While it may have been tempting to shut Satan up, Jesus knew that would require sinning. *Luke 4:9-12*
 - i. Many times we are tempted to lie to make ourselves look better. I.E. fishermen who lie about how big the fish they caught was!
 - ii. Other times we are tempted to sin because it makes us feel good. We are tempted with sexual sin because it feels good, and it makes us feel loved. We are tempted to steal from a store because it gives us a rush. But no matter how good the feeling, it is never worth sinning against God! *Romans 6:23; James 1:15*

When does temptation come?

1. Temptation comes when it can do the most damage, when you are at your weakest and most vulnerable moments. When Satan was done tempting Jesus it says that Satan left to come back at "an opportune time." *Luke 4:13*
 - a. The Bible tells us to be alert and clear minded because the devil is roaming around like a lion looking for people to steal from, kill and destroy. It is when we are not alert and clear minded that the devil will strike! *1 Peter 5:8*

Take a moment to note that while the devil is the great tempter, he is not the only tempter. The devil is not omnipresent (everywhere at once) nor is he omnipotent (all powerful) like God is, that means that most of the time we are tempted either by our own flesh or by one of the devil's minions (demons). The odds of the devil tempting us himself, as he did Jesus, are actually pretty low.

Instead, when many Christians refer to “the devil” causing them to be tempted, they are actually referring to demons.

- b. We also must worry about temptation from our flesh! The Bible tells us that our flesh is sinful, wanting to do bad things, the opposite of what our spirit wants. Temptation comes when our sinful desires are stronger than our godly desires.

Romans 7:15-25; James 1:14

- i. If we spend too much time in the world, watching secular movies and TV, hanging out with non-Christian friends, or reading books that are not godly then we are inviting temptation to come into our lives, because we are feeding our flesh instead of our spirit. *Galatians 5:17*

This does not mean that we should never watch TV, go to the movies, or hang out with non-Christian friends, it just means we should be careful not to spend too much time doing these things, and we should rather focus on spending time with God and other believers. Especially with non-Christian friends, the Bible says “...friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God...” in James 4:4. Your closest friends should not be unbelievers. (1 Corinthians 15:33) Invite them to know the Lord, to come to church!

Is it a sin to be tempted?

1. The simple answer to the question “Is it a sin to be tempted?” is no. Jesus was tempted with every kind of temptation and never sinned! So, we know that being tempted is not a sin.
- a. Jesus was not tempted with every exact temptation (he was not tempted to steal a laptop from Best Buy, for example), but every kind of temptation (He was tempted to steal). *Hebrews 4:15*
- b. Some temptation may be from a direct result of sin. If you have corrupted your mind with sinful behaviors and addictions, your temptations may get worse and more horrible (your temptation may start with, “just download a few songs illegally, no one will get hurt,” but it may evolve into, “as long as you don’t shoot anyone, no one will get hurt if you rob this bank”). The important part is not asking, “was this temptation a sin,” but instead saying “No!” to any and all temptations. As you live holy, your temptations will naturally decrease as your brain heals from the corruption of sin.

Sometimes we are tempted with horrible thoughts. Such temptations are not necessarily sin! The sin comes when you respond to the temptation by saying yes,

or even by saying maybe. Never dwell on temptation, never let it stay in your mind (2 Corinthians 10:5). Choosing not to rebuke temptation is where temptation starts to turn to indwelling desire, which is sinful and can lead to sinful actions.

How do we overcome temptation and avoid sin?

1. One major thing we need to do to overcome temptation is to ask for God's help.
 - a. In fact, one of the lines in the famous "Lord's Prayer" is a request for help with temptation. "Lord, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."
Matthew 6:13
2. Submit to God and resist the devil when he tempts you!
 - a. The Bible says that if we submit to God and resist the devil then he will flee from us, just as he did with Jesus in Luke chapter 4. *James 4:7*
3. Take "captive" every thought that enters your mind that is not of God *2 Corinthians 10:5*
 - a. This means when thoughts of temptation enter our thoughts, do not dwell on them and give them "room" in your mind. Take them "captive" (think of it like putting them in jail, so they can't roam free in your mind). If you are a believer, Jesus has given you weapons to fight temptation and demolish strongholds – prayer, praise, worship, and the Word of God being some of those weapons.

We'll talk more about spiritual warfare in Foundations 4.

4. Look for God's provided way out of temptation.
 - a. Every temptation that you are faced with is common amongst other believers, there is no uncommon or rare temptation! Know that you are not alone, and God will always provide a way out of temptation for you! *1 Corinthians 10:13; James 1:13-14*

This means that Christians NEVER have an excuse to sin! God always provides a way out for temptation. NEVER blame sin on temptation, because by doing so you are calling God a liar, suggesting that the sin was too hard to overcome and that God did not provide a way out.

- b. Ways out of temptation may include:
 - i. Fleeing from the temptation, especially if it is sexual. *1 Corinthians 6:18*

Literally remove yourself from the situation. Leave the area the temptation is in... physically get up and get away. If a movie is causing sexual thoughts

and temptations, stop watching the movie. If a co-worker is flirting with you, stay away from that co-worker. If you know you always sin when you're alone with your significant other, set boundaries not to be alone together until you're married.

- ii. Resisting temptation. Tell it no! Submit your desires and yourself to the Lord's ways and command the temptation to leave you in the Name of Jesus. *James 4:7*
- iii. Focusing on good and godly things instead of things that lead to temptation. *Philippians 4:8*

CONCLUSION - LIVING IN VICTORY

1 John 5:4 tells us that our faith is the victory that overcomes the world. As we continue to live life as Christians we can expect to be tempted and tempted a lot. Living in victory does not mean never being tempted; instead, it means having the faith to say "No" when temptation arises. As our faith matures, our ability to resist the devil and our ability to see God's provided way out of temptation will grow, and we will find resisting temptation to be easier. Living in victory looks like living in faith, studying the Word of God, remembering all He does for you, and not forgetting Him in those times of hard and deep temptation by using the weapons He has given you to fight with!