



Apostolic Assembly
of the faith in Christ Jesus

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the STRATEGY of

Jesus
FRIENDSHIP GROUPS

12 *Fruits* *of the* **Disciple**

TWELVE LESSONS OF CONSOLIDATION
for ***Friendship*** Groups

By
Ismael Martín del Campo
and Jacob Rodríguez



DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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Presentation



***Dear pastors and leaders,
Praise the Lord!***

We present to you our fourth edition of consolidation lessons of the Strategy of Jesus entitled, ***"The Twelve Fruits of a Disciple."***

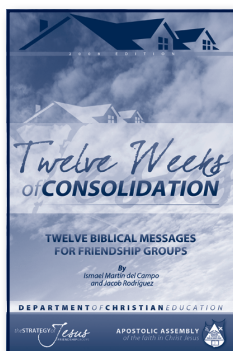
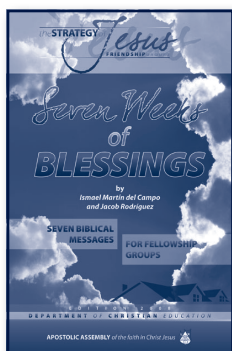
This manual addresses the fruits that should arise in a new disciple of Jesus: *integrity, discernment, the spirit of unity, purity, empathy for others, adoration towards Christ, following Jesus daily, the use of the gifts given to God, loving relationships, a life of order, a life of proclamation and spirit of giving.*

We want to remind you to utilize the materials of the four editions according to the diagram on the other side of this page.

We are praying for the Evangelistic Cycles (the programs occurring week by week), which are occurring in the Southern Cone, Mexico and in various congregations of the United States of America so that they will be blessed with an abundant harvest.

God is calling us to live like disciples, making new disciples in every nation. Not members of religious organizations; but followers of Jesus, and try to live and act like our Savior every day.

Bishop Ismael Martín del Campo
President of the *"Strategy of Jesus"* Committee



FIRST:

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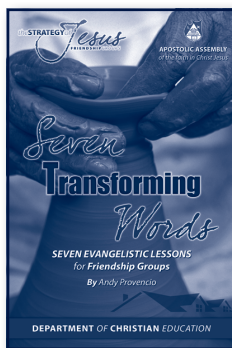
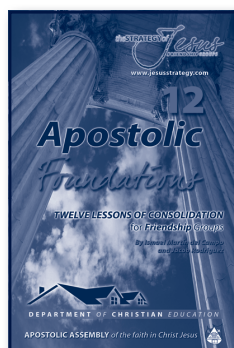
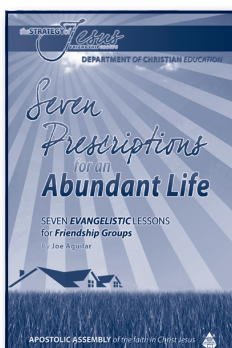
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12 FRUITS OF THE DISCIPLE

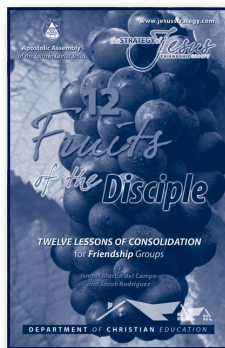
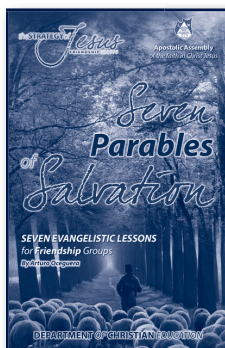


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Lesson 1

The ***Fruit*** of

Integrity



Ice Breaker:

Do you think integrity is something that the world lacks? If so, give an example.

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 1:3-5





Introduction:

In a world where morals have decayed, finding people with integrity and character may feel like an impossible mission. It seems like every time you open the newspaper or log on to the Internet, there's a new headline of political scandal or corporate corruption. The world we live in is tattered by immorality, dishonestly and jealously.

In a culture that idolizes people who flaunt their bad behavior, make insincere public apologies and create sleazy reality TV shows, it's no surprise that many of us are asking, "What happened to integrity?"

Some suggest that the lack of integrity in society could only be repaired when we discover the values that flow from within. However, it's that mindset that fertilizes immorality in today's culture. Centuries ago, during the time of the Judges, God's people lived under the delusion that virtue flows from within. **Judges 21:25** says, *"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."* This was an extreme low-point in Israel's history, a shameful era of spiritual disorder and irreverence for God. The same picture can be drawn today.

When God is not enthroned as **"king"** of your life, it gives birth to chaos. When there is no kingly authority that governs your heart and desires, you'll simply do what feels right at the moment. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ means coming under His lordship—it represents a life that is aligned with the will



and desires of God. Is it possible to live a life of godly integrity in such a secular age? The answer is, yes! Let's look at three keys that unlock integrity.

Keys to Living with Integrity:

1. Shed your Old Self

In Jesus' day, the number one goal of a disciple was to imitate and become like his rabbi, his teacher. Disciples wanted to talk and walk just like their teacher. And a rabbi knew his training was nearly complete when he could look at his student and see his reflection. We first must understand that Jesus Christ alone is our master Rabbi, our Lord and King. He is our prime example of integrity. Jesus embodies the total essence of truth and morality.

Let's carefully read **Ephesians 4:17-24**: *"So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more. You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."*



We must shed our old identity, starve our fleshly impulses and clothe ourselves with the image of Jesus Christ. Notice that the scripture says, “put off your old self”. Sometimes there is an assumption that transforming into the image of Christ is a magical process. However, part of being reshaped into the image of Christ requires intentional, mindful choices in your life. Keeping in mind, also, that it is the Holy Spirit, not ourselves that gives us the power to make these changes.

Question:

In your opinion, what is the hardest part about “putting off your old self”?

2. Be Firm in your Faith

Humanity has always struggled with authority. By nature, we resist it. We avoid being accountable to anything, and especially anyone. Today’s generation largely rejects the notion that we are governed by a code of absolutes, that sin is real, that we are being watched, that our decisions carry consequences, that there’s a God who will judge us. Drawing clear moral lines in a blurry world will always make some feel uncomfortable. This is why the truth can feel offensive at times. When we’re forced to make a decision, take a stand, or choose sides, our integrity will be unmasked. This exact scenario came to a hedge when Joshua spoke out against Israel’s indifference.

Consider Joshua’s words: *“But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River,*



or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15).

Joshua confronted a group of people who were indecisive about their faith and godly heritage. They had allowed outside influences to pollute their relationship with God and taint their unique identity. The key to integrity is to espouse a godly value system that will not bow to the pressures of the age. If we are to maintain integrity, we must be willing to take a stand especially on controversial issues. Webster's dictionary tells us integrity means ***"an unimpaired condition."*** In other words, it means to be sound, sure and immovable. That's exactly what Jesus is looking for in His followers.

Question:

Why do you think there has been such a melt-down of moral values in our nation?

3. Let Honesty Prevail

Integrity is honesty at all costs. It's having a certain blend of bravery and backbone to tell the truth no matter how difficult. Integrity is being truthful, even when cheating may produce better results. The bible has many examples of good and bad character. One of the bad examples is comes from a man named Ananias.

Acts 5:1-5 says: *"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. And he kept back part of the pro-*



ceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last."

When the time came for the believers to bring their proceeds to the apostles, Ananias stashed away some for himself. Although Ananias brought a lot of money, the apostle Peter discerned that he wasn't being honest. Next thing you know, Ananias fell over dead! Death seemed like such a harsh punishment for being deceitful. God may not punish with physical death today, but things still die as a result of dishonesty, such as your relationship with God, your compassion towards others, or perhaps your ability to minister. If someone is willing to lie, there's no telling what else he or she will do to cover up the truth.

Question:

In your opinion, do you think exaggeration is a form of lying? Explain why or why not.

Conclusion:

One good example of integrity comes from King David. Although David wasn't perfect, the psalmist Asaph wrote the following about his qualities: *"And David shepherded them*



with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them” (Psalm 78:72). Asaph described David as a man with **“integrity of heart”**, implying that he led with pure motives. Did David make horrible mistakes? Yes he did. However, he at least owned up to his faults. Integrity doesn’t equal sinless perfection. But one with integrity acknowledges his failures and admits when he’s wrong.

Final Question:

What can we do as individuals do safeguard our integrity?





Lesson 2

The ***Fruit*** of

Discernment



Ice Breaker:

Whenever you get lost while driving, are you the type to stop and ask for directions, or keep driving until you find your way?

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 2:14-16





Introduction:

Life is full of multiple choices and sometimes we learn the hard way which choices were wrong. We've all made those foolish, "what was I thinking" decisions. Whenever we come to a fork in the road, we're forced to make a decision. We wrestle with the options, the pros and cons, the short-term and long-term. From sunrise to nightfall you're faced with decisions, some only need common sense while others require discernment—wisdom.

Webster's dictionary defines wisdom as: ***ability to discern, good sense. With wisdom, you have the ability to discern, rightly judge matters and demonstrate good sense.*** Wisdom can save you money; save you trouble, save you heartache, and save you from embarrassment.

Being able to make wise decisions is the most valuable tool you can ever have. Wisdom is the spiritual quality of having insight, the power to see what is not obvious. It is the ability to cut through the fog of confusion.

Unfortunately, some Christians don't realize the value of wisdom and discernment. They fail to recognize two essential facts about God:

1. ***God is interested in our decisions*** – God desires an interactive relationship with you. He wants to help you navi-



gate through life and avoid pitfalls that could harm you or your family.

2. ***God offers us the ability to detect His will*** – Although God does reserve some mystery to His plans, He doesn't want us living with blindfolds. In most cases, the greater struggle is not knowing God's will, but accepting it.

Bad decisions can be avoided if we pursue wisdom. When God asked Solomon to make any request he desired, the king responded: *"So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong..." (1 Kings 3:9)*. A king who could have asked for anything in the world, asked only for wisdom from God. King Solomon desired what we all should desire today, an ability to decode what's right and wrong, what's best in God's eyes. Let's talk about three ways we can acquire wisdom for our lives.

Three Keys to Acquiring Wisdom and Discernment:

1. Seek God

The first key to acquiring wisdom is to seek God. Just like Solomon asked God, you too can approach God with the same request. Sadly, some Christians only target their prayers on tangible things. God wants to bless us with His



mind, not just His gifts. When referring to mature Christians, the apostle Paul said, “...we have the mind of Christ” (**1 Cor. 2:16**). Discernment is not a function of the human mind, but of the Holy Spirit—the mind of Christ. This is why we must be filled with the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, it’s impossible to understand the things of God.

James 1:5 states, “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.” This scripture implies that wisdom is not innate, but acquired. If you don’t have wisdom, you should ask God. He’s willing to bless you with spiritual wisdom. **Proverbs 4:7** states, “Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding” These days it seems that everyone is seeking more stuff—more money, more power. According to the Bible, wisdom is the one thing we should seek.

Question:

For some, God is the last resort, a desperate remedy when he or she is at the end of their rope. Why do you suppose this is? And, what can we do to avoid this backwards mentality?

2. Search the Word

Psalms 119:98-100 states, “Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more insight



than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts."

The second key to acquiring wisdom is to search God's Word and follow His statutes. A statute is an authoritative order, a command that must be followed. The bible is filled with non-negotiable statutes (i.e. the ten commandments) that govern our behavior and relationships. These biblical statutes also keep us aligned with God and preserve our relationship with Him.

God's Word offers unfiltered principles and a clear path for living. ***Psalm 119:105*** states, *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."* The word of God lights your pathway. It is a spiritual flashlight for dark and unclear seasons of life. Turning to the Word of God is the most powerful thing you can do when in a tough situation.

Proverbs 1:7 states, *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction."* The fear of the Lord, which is reverence and obedience to His word, opens the door to wisdom. The closer you get to God's word, the bible, the wiser you will become.

Question:

The bible is the ultimate guidebook for life. What are some ways we can get the most out of it?





3. *Solicit* the Wise

God encourages us to solicit spiritual counselors—men and women of God. **Proverbs 15:22** states, *“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.”* Seeking wise counsel has become a forgotten treasure. Should you ever have doubts, don’t be afraid to ask for help. Talk to an elder, a pastor, or a mature Christian who can steer you in the right direction. Some of the most successful people are those who weren’t afraid to pull over and ask for directions. When it comes to decisions that affect your family or your reputation, pause and ask for counsel.

Pride is probably the top excuse why people don’t solicit the wise. **Proverbs 12:15** states, *“The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.”* A proud person doesn’t want to admit they’re wrong, lost, afraid or human. Pride is toxic, however, and it causes tunnel vision. It chokes the flow God’s Spirit and ties His hands.

Surround yourself with wise men and women of God who can inspire you to grow. Take the medicine of counsel, even when it tastes unpleasant. **Psalms 1:1** states, *“Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly...”* If you want to be blessed, walk in godly counsel.

Question:

As a group, discuss when is the best time to ask someone for advice. Also, discuss when is the worst time.



Conclusion:

A Christian without discernment and wisdom is like a submarine without a periscope. You could be traveling at full speed and not realize you're headed into danger. Like a periscope allows the submarine captain to see what's above the water, discernment allows us to see beyond the obvious. Remember, Jesus Christ is personal. He wants to be involved in the key decisions of your life. He is calling us to spend unrushed time in His presence, absorbing His every Word.

Final Question:

What types of key decisions in life require discernment and wisdom?





Lesson 3

The ***Fruit*** of

Unity



Ice Breaker

Have you ever been on a team or worked for a company where there was no unity? If so, how did it feel?

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9





Introduction:

Have you ever noticed that ducks fly in a V formation? Gliding through the air, these gentle birds unite to create a symmetric formation—one that appears to be divinely choreographed. These ducks are not performing an air show, but are actually working together in unity, migrating towards their destination. This V shape reduces air resistance—conserving their energy and allowing them to travel further. All the ducks in the flock take turns at the head. As the leading bird tires, it falls to the back and another one takes its place.

We can learn some valuable lessons from the ducks about unity. Each duck recognizes his purpose and understand where he fits into the flock. Without unity, the “V” would probably become an “O”, and the ducks would only fly in circles. The birds must have trust, a common goal, and be willing to forfeit some individuality. This is exactly what the church needs to be a united body of believers. Unity has a purpose much deeper than just getting along. By reading Psalm 133, let’s establish some principles about unity.

- ***Unity is Pleasant***

King David penned these words: *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1).* When we as Christians can live in unity, serving God is a joyous experience. It is like a musical



band playing in harmony and creating a sweet sound. Division would be like a group of soloists playing their own song, in their own key.

- ***Unity is Powerful***

David continued to say, *“It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments.” (Psalm 133:2)* In this verse, David compares unity to the anointing oil that was poured on Aaron, consecrating him for ministry. This imagery is symbolic of the anointing, the holy enablement of God’s Spirit. Like the anointing, unity produces spiritual power.

- ***Unity is Refreshing***

David finished his psalm with this: *“It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing—Life forevermore.” (Psalm 133:3)* Dew is an image of refreshment. Unity refreshes each individual just like the dew refreshes the thirsty mountains of Zion. It cools the parched areas of our lives.

Now that we understand some principles about unity, let’s learn how we can build unity:



Three Building Blocks of Unity in the Body:

1. Focus on Jesus Christ, not the Church

Above all, it is the saving grace of Jesus Christ that unites the church. **Colossians 1:17-18** states, *“He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church...”* Like a body cannot function without a head, the church cannot function without Christ. Anytime Jesus ceases to be the focal point, the church slowly loses its identity and purpose. If the supremacy of Christ is displaced, what you have is a group of religious people who eventually love their rules more than God. This is why Jesus Christ, not the church, is the centerpiece of our faith. The church is the body, the physical representation of Christ to the world.

Zeroing our focus on Jesus Christ and the Gospel, not creeds or churches, will lay a foundation for unity. An example of wrong focus and how it can create division is found in **1 Corinthians 1:10-15**: *“I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers, some from Chloe’s household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, ‘I follow Paul’; another, ‘I follow Apollos’; another, ‘I follow Cephas’; still another, ‘I follow Christ.’ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized into my name.”*



Paul pleads with the church to refocus their devotion on Jesus Christ, not on any one leader, pastor or believer. He asks a simple, yet profound question, “Is Christ divided?” In other words, we serve the same God and to ensure our own unity we must concentrate on Him.

Question:

What are some dangers in focusing too much on the church and not Christ?

2. Focus on Harmony, not Conformity

In reference to the early church, **Acts 2:44** states, “*All the believers were together and had everything in common*”. This type of unity is characterized by togetherness and commonality. One myth about unity is that in order to achieve it, everyone must talk, walk, look and think exactly alike. This mindset breeds conformity, not unity. That is clearly not God’s design. God enjoys some diversity—otherwise we would all be clones, cookie-cutter personalities. Commonality is about coming into agreement, despite minor differences of opinion.

Philippians 2:2 states, “*then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose*” In this one statement, Paul reveals four marks of spiritual unity:

1. *Like-minded*

Being like-minded is being in tune with one another, to be one in attitude, not in actual thoughts.



2. Same love

Having the same love is demonstrating mutual respect, care and godly compassion towards one another. It means to be impartial with your love.

3. One spirit

Being in one spirit is being one-souled, sharing a common passion or desire.

4. One purpose

This is where passion is mobilized into something constructive. Self-interests and personal agendas are abandoned for the sake of one cause.

It takes real effort for a group of people with different backgrounds, cultures and ideas to harmonize. Most of all, it takes humility in spirit. Echoing Paul's decree, "Do not be proud". Social class does not exist in God's family. We are equally loved, evenly saved by the grace of God.

Question:

Is there room for disagreement in the body of Christ? If so, to what extent?

3. Focus on Actions, not Words

Sadly, "unity" often becomes a cliché, a fond idea or worse—a stale expression without purpose. Someone might stand in front of a congregation or group and say, "We need more unity!"



Yet, this phrase doesn't provide a roadmap, a practical course of action. Unless we attach real actions to the concept of unity, all we're left with is an empty slogan. It's easy to toss around religious buzzwords to fuel emotions. It's challenging, however, to take actual steps.

The apostle Paul revealed some concrete ways to build unity: *"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited"* (**Romans 12:9-16**).

Question:

Based on what we read in **Romans 12:9-16**, what is the most difficult action to carry out? (i.e. sincere love, practicing hospitality, blessing those who persecute you)

Conclusion:

As we wrap up today's lesson, let's not forget about those ducks and the beautiful V formation they create. Each bird recognizes that they need each other to survive. The same



is true in the body of Christ. Another example of unity is a puzzle. The pieces are shaped so different that no two are alike. A puzzle piece by itself doesn't form a complete image. But when the puzzle is assembled, it forms one beautiful image. The body of Christ functions in the same manner. We are a blend of unique personalities, gifts and ministries that reflect the image of Jesus Christ.

Final Question:

What other practices can we do to build unity in the church?



Lesson 4

The ***Fruit*** of

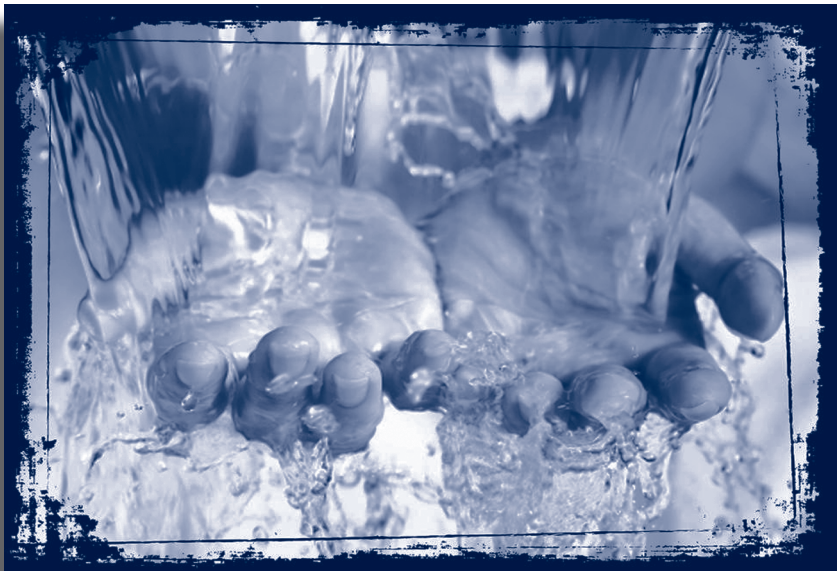
Purity



Ice Breaker

Why do you think commercials and advertisements use sexuality to sell their products?

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20





Introduction:

Sexuality sells just about anything today and is considered one of the most powerful tools of advertising. Calvin Klein, a fashion designer and pioneer of this movement, once commented, ***“Jeans are about sex. The abundance of bare flesh is the last gasp of advertisers trying to give redundant products a new identity.”*** This type of twisted philosophy has pollinated the culture with Satan’s oldest, yet most effective strategy.

When humanity fell into sin (Adam and Eve), God clothed his privacy to cover his shame. Essentially, clothing typifies sexual morality—the covering of nakedness. It’s no surprise that Satan schemes to ***“unclothe”*** what God has ***“clothed”***, to strip the covering of holy purity and batter the human spirit.

One example of fleeing sexual temptation is found in ***Genesis 39:6-15***. Potiphar’s wife embodied the spirit of sexual immorality. Just before Joseph ran off, she managed to disrobe his outer garment. Moments later, she used Joseph’s clothes as false evidence to accuse him of rape. As a result, Joseph was thrown in prison. If Satan can succeed in disrobing you, physically or psychologically, he will stop at nothing to discredit your testimony. Potiphar’s wife exhibits three sexually immoral traits:

1. ***Appealing*** – Presumably, Potiphar’s wife was physically attractive. Satan uses the lure of physical attraction to spark interest and fuel our lusts.



2. **Persistent** – Potiphar’s wife pressured Joseph. In today’s culture, with so many influences, women and especially men feel the constant pressure from sexual imagery.
3. **Cunning** – Potiphar’s wife was deceitful and waited until they were alone. The enemy waits until you let your guards down and become vulnerable.

Sexuality is not confined to the physical, but engages your mind, your sight and your spirit. **“Unclothing”**, then, happens in the heart; depending on the things you watch, read, listen to and entertain yourself with. **Proverbs 6:27** says, *“Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned?”* In other words, the things you digest into your heart and mind affect your spiritual **“clothing”**, your moral purity. Satan excels at using hidden sins to burn down someone’s identity. Let’s review Joseph’s story again and discover how to stay pure in a sexually immoral culture:

How to Stay Pure in a Sexually Immoral Culture:

1. Resist the Bait

Although Potiphar’s wife stripped Joseph’s outer garment, she didn’t steal his undergarment. When it mattered most, Joseph refused the offer. **James 4:7** says, *“So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* When James says, **“humble yourself”**, he’s talking about obedience and submission to God. Before you can resist the devil’s bait, the fear



of God must be in you. When you fearfully humble yourself to Jesus Christ, you build up resistance against the enemy. Those with weak resistance constantly take the enemy's bait and fall prey to his traps. Before learning how to flee temptation, live a life that causes the enemy to flee you. Send a message that says you're God's child, that you're rooted in the Word, and no sexual scheme is going to win.

Question:

What can we do as Christians to build our spiritual resistance, and become better at overcoming temptation?

2. Run from Temptation

The apostle Paul urged us: *"flee from sexual immorality" (1 Corinthians 6:18)*. In other words, when faced with sexual temptation, run away. When Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph, the bible says he *"fled and ran outside."* **2 Timothy 2:22** says, *"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."* In other words, avoid activities and situations that stimulate or promote sensuality. If we engage in activities that are prone to kindle lustful thoughts or desires, we open the door for Satan to work.

People justify certain interests or recreation by saying, *"It's not sin"*. But if that action or setting triggers sexual impulses, it's better to avoid the situation all together—rather than instigate



an unnecessary battle. **1 Peter 5:8 states:** *“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”* To be alert means to be clear-headed, to be observant. When you’re alert, you can avoid tempting situations and know when to run.

Question:

As stated, people justify certain interests or recreation by saying, “It’s not sin”. What are some examples?

3. Relate with God

Four times in **Genesis 39** it says, ***“The LORD was with Him”***. When you have a relationship with God, His Spirit is with you. The reason so many people fall into sexual sin is because the Lord isn’t close enough to their hearts. He may visit from time to time (on Sundays), but doesn’t know them intimately. Joseph valued his testimony, his relationship with God. He understood the principles outlined in Exodus 28:42-43, concerning how the priests should present themselves.

Exodus 28:42-43 states: *“Make linen undergarments as a covering for the body, reaching from the waist to the thigh. Aaron and his sons must wear them whenever they enter the Tent of Meeting or approach the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they will not incur guilt and die. This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants”*



When God instructed Aaron to wear linen trousers (covering the waist and thighs), He spoke of sexual purity. Here's the main point: God wants our private lives, the undergarments (unseen) to be pure. The only ones who knew if Aaron wore the right undergarments were Aaron and God. Purity is a personal matter between you and God. Aaron could not enter God's presence without holy undergarments.

Question:

Purity impacts our relationship with God. What are some things we can do to maintain purity in our private lives?

Conclusion:

Today's culture is landscaped with sexual imagery, which has penetrated our schools, universities, communities and families. Whether it's sensual music, clothes or Internet pornography, Satan is doing all he can to sabotage sexual purity and defile the sanctity of marriage. As Christians, we have a critical responsibility to not only uphold purity, but to defend and preach it without compromise.

Final Question:

How does having the Holy Spirit help us to stay pure?



Lesson 5

The ***Fruit*** of

Empathy



Ice Breaker

As a society, do you think we lack compassion? Give some examples.

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 8:9-13





Introduction:

Cultivating unity in body of Christ is a process of sharing, caring and considering each other's needs. Primarily, it's about being conscious of others, rather than being self-centered. People today tend to cocoon themselves from the world. We tend to live with blinders on—too busy, too wrapped up in our own affairs to see what's going on around us. Belonging to a church, the body of Christ, does not immune us from this human trend. Despite our calling to live in community, we're still inclined to build walls and cushion ourselves from each other. Therefore, such virtues as empathy and compassion have withered.

Jesus Christ exemplified so many great qualities, but perhaps the most essential of all was His compassion towards people. We sometimes fail to recognize that many of Christ's miracles, such as healing the sick, were a result of His deep compassion. Jesus wasn't just a powerful man, walking around and zapping people with miracles.

Was He a miracle worker? Yes. But his miracles were driven by compassion. One occasion really captures this truth. It's found in **Mark 1:40-42**. This is the story of a leper who was cleansed. *"Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, 'If You are willing, You can make me clean.' Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed."* What a powerful picture of compassion!



In this case, a man who was suffering from leprosy came to Jesus with hopes of being healed. When Christ saw him, His heart sank. He felt pity. And the verse reads, ***“Then Jesus, moved with compassion.”*** Compassion moves you. It compels you to act. There is a huge difference between feeling sorry for someone, and having compassion. You can feel sorry for anyone and sympathize, but not be moved to reach them. Let’s look at how compassion moved Jesus into action.

Three Ways to Exercise Compassion

1. Stretch your Hand

Because of compassion, Jesus stretched out His hand to this man. Compassion will cause you to stretch yourself into areas you wouldn’t normally go. It will take you out of your circle of comfort. It will stretch you beyond your own needs and desires. God must ***stretch us***. We need Him to enlarge our sphere of influence. Having compassion will do this. Compassion is what drove God to come down to earth and save us. Wouldn’t you agree that heaven-to-earth is quite a stretch? In fact, Jesus Himself—is simply God stretching to reach us.

Jesus stretched his hand. Your hand represents your resources, your abilities, and your human effort. It also represents the blessings or gifts God has entrusted you with. When you ***“stretch your hand”***, you’re stretching your influence out to someone in need.



Question:

Based on what “stretching your hand” signifies, what are some real life examples?

2. Sympathize with Love

Compassion will cause you to encounter people and situations you wouldn’t normally touch. To touch is to sympathize. Sometimes we are afraid of touching people’s lives, especially those without God. Jesus, on the other hand, touches our infirmity. He touched what others feared. He sympathized with society’s misfits and outcasts. Compassion will drive you to touch places that others avoid. Jesus isn’t afraid to feel our pain and problems. As **Hebrews 4:15** reads, “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities...” We should adopt the same attitude.

When you sympathize with someone, you identify with him or her. Sometimes the most effective prescription for emotional healing is being able to relate. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, we read that a priest and a Levite, two religious figures, would not help the wounded man because they were unwilling to touch him (**Ref. Luke 10:30-35**). From a distance, their religious virtue was useless. The Samaritan, like Jesus Christ, touched the feeling of his infirmity and did not turn a blind eye.

Question:

Why do you think showing sympathy is something we don’t do naturally?



3. Speak Life

Jesus spoke a word of life to the leper. It wasn't until He spoke, did the leprosy vanish. Words of compassion can treat the wounds of a broken heart or bring comfort to someone in need. Never underestimate the power of your words. Speak about Jesus Christ—His love, His grace, and His mercy. Say something encouraging, something positive. Share a scripture from the Bible or speak a word of faith.

Jesus said, ***“I am willing; be cleansed.” As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.*** It wasn't just the miracle of being cleansed that changed the lepers' life, but also hearing the words “be cleansed”—something he had never heard before. **Proverbs 18:21** says, *“Death and life are in the power of the tongue...”* What you say to someone can either strengthen or weaken their spirit. Choose words that bring life, words that could change the way someone views him or herself, or the circumstances.

Question:

How can choosing your words carefully be considered an act of compassion (empathy)?

Conclusion:

If you cultivate a heart of compassion, you will be able to reach many people for Jesus Christ. As the adage goes, “people don't care how much you know, until they know how



much you care.” Remember, feeling sorry for someone doesn’t change anything. Feeling sorry is looking from the outside in; it’s impersonal concern. Having empathy and compassion is placing yourself in someone else’s shoes, feeling what they feel, and identifying with their plight. This doesn’t imply that you “must” have experienced the exact situation, but that you’re willing to understand.

Final Question:

Compassion is about taking action. What actions can we take to show compassion towards others?



Lesson 6

The ***Fruit*** of

Worship



Ice Breaker

What is your idea of worship? What does it mean to you?

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 10:14





Introduction:

You may not realize it, but you were created to be a worshiper. When God formed you, He intended on you bringing glory to His name. What an awesome privilege we have. What a great honor it is, to have been created with the purpose of worshipping God.

Isaiah 43:7 reads, *“All who claim me as their God will come, for I have made them for my glory. It was I who created them.”* Worship is wired in your being. It’s woven into the framework of your soul. Worship is a part of everybody’s life. Of course, not everyone is worshipping God. But worship is definitely in us all.

Let’s answer a couple questions about worship.

- ***What is true worship?*** By definition, worship is ascribing worth to something or someone. But true worship is also an outflow of the heart towards God. It must be experienced, not just recited or performed externally. Worship is a sincere expression of love, wonder and awe.
- ***Why is worship important?*** Worship is vital to the Christian life because God calls us to worship Him. He desires it, He pursues it and more importantly, He deserves it. If you don’t worship God, you are worshipping something else. Some people worship their careers, their money, their possessions, and even their own ego. Nearly anything can become an object of worship. Even those who say they don’t worship anything, worship their own ideologies.



Worship is about pursuing God. King David said, “O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You, In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory” (**Psalm 63:1-2**). His hunger and desire for God was unparalleled. He wanted nothing more than to be in the presence of God. Even though he was a king and had access to all the treasures, nothing could substitute his appetite for God. In fact, of everything David is known for; including being a giant slayer, David’s most celebrated attribute was that he was **a man after God’s own heart**—a true worshiper.

Many people assume that worship is expressed only through music or song. True worship is a lifestyle of heartfelt expression of love and devotion for Jesus Christ. There are various forms of worship that we should identify and practice on a daily basis.

Three Ways to Express True Worship

1. Honor God

To honor God is to place greater value on God, than other things in life. **Proverbs 3:9** says, “Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.” This scripture basically says to esteem God with everything you own—that God be purposefully placed at the center of our lives. Honoring God is about placing the focus of our appreciation on Him and living in light of what pleases Him. It’s to remember that we don’t live for ourselves—that self-pleasure is not the sum total of our existence.



Our life reflects honor when our attitude of gratitude shapes our lifestyle, when our behavior matches our beliefs. Honor is also about walking in godly fear—holy reverence. **Hebrews 12:28** says, *“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”*

Question:

How is honoring God different than just singing a worship song?

2. Enjoy God

It appears as though people usually view **joy** as a by-product of our relationship with God, when it should be an essential part of it. Joy is not an elective, but a required fruit in Christian living. We are actually **commanded** to rejoice in God. **Psalms 37:4** says, *“Delight yourself also in the LORD...”* In other words, find gladness and enjoyment in God. Let Him be your chief goal in life, the sum of your desire and contentment. Enjoying God should be viewed as worship, because it glorifies God. It says to God, “You’re all I want, all I need. I don’t need to look for joy outside of You.”

Worship is to enjoy and value God to the fullest. David said to God, *“...In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalms 16:11)*. David also called God his “exceeding joy” (**Psalms 43:3**); and declared, *“Serve the*



LORD with gladness" (**Psalm 100:2**). God is glorified when we are satisfied and delighted in Him. Enjoying God and praising God are not divided devotions, but one act of worship.

Question:

What are some examples of how you can enjoy God?

3. Praise God

Praise is also a mode of worship that God desires. **Psalm 106:1** says, "Praise the LORD. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever." The Bible doesn't say to give thanks to the Lord because you feel good, but because He is good. **Psalm 150:6** says, "Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the Lord." Praise is a conscious choice, an act of your will. When you offer God praise, you make a conscious decision to commend and glorify Him. David said, "I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth" (**Psalm 34:1**). Praise is not predicated on human emotion or present circumstances, but a will, a **determination** to worship God.

Hebrews 13:15 says, "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name." Praise becomes sacrificial when you praise God just because He's worthy, when you slay your self-centeredness and dwell on His goodness. Although praising God has various forms, praise is outwardly expressive. It is not silent, but is always seen or heard.



Question:

What are some examples of how you can offer a sacrifice of praise?

Conclusion:

Don't wait until you're coming to church, to worship God. Ignite, or re-ignite, a life of worship and praise. Jesus said, "*But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him*" (**John 4:23**). God is waiting for us to desire him with all our hearts, and not be limited to a specific location or sacred place. True worship is housed in your heart. The real sanctuary is your whole body. **Romans 12:1** says, "*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.*" Let your whole being, your whole life be an act of worship.

Final Question:

How can you worship God with your whole being?



Lesson 7

The ***Fruit*** of

Following



Ice Breaker

As a kid, did you ever play the game, "Follow the Leader"? What was the hardest part about playing this game?

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 11:1





Introduction:

When Jesus called humanity to follow Him, He said, “... *If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it*” (**Luke 9:23-24**). Becoming a follower of Jesus is a personal decision, an act of your will. We have the ability to accept or deny the call. “If” is a powerful word. It is the conjunction of your destiny and purpose. Another powerful word is “**desire**”. Jesus said, “**If anyone desires**”. Having a desire is all you need. God can work with desire. He can take your desire, like clay, and mold something wonderful. He can shape your destiny and form you into His disciple. All He needs is your desire, your passion.

The closest people to Christ were His disciples. They were His followers. And by following Him, they experienced a more intimate relationship. These men had access to the private life of Jesus. They saw sides of Him that others didn’t. Others only saw His miracles and heard His dynamic teachings. They ate with Him. They saw Him sleep like an ordinary man. But beware. The closer you get to Christ’s inner circle of followers, the costlier it gets. It requires less of you. John the Baptist said, “He must become greater; I must become less” (**John 3:30**).

Becoming his disciple is a hard walk of self-denial, cross bearing, and following his lead. The good news is that by doing this, you enter a closer fellowship with God. Based on **Luke 9:23-24**, let’s investigate and discuss some essential characteristics of following Jesus Christ.



Three Characteristics of Following Jesus Christ:

1. Deny Yourself

Everywhere you turn, the focus seems to be on “self.” From product ads to life improvement books, everything is aimed at “my” interests, my likes, my satisfaction, and my way. There are some misconceptions about self-denial. Some teach and believe that self-denial is to deny yourself of pleasurable things, fun, modern technology, and rest. Self-denial is not self-dissatisfaction. It’s not about abstaining or avoiding everything that is satisfying.

To deny yourself, is really to reject your **self-lordship**. In other words, it is to reject and decline the god, the boss, the lord within you. It is to surrender your control, authority and superiority to Christ. My best definition of self-denial is to dethrone yourself, and to **enthron**e Christ in your life. As long as you are enthroned in your life, where you rule, Jesus Christ is **dethroned**. Self-centeredness uncrowns Christ in your life. When Jesus says to “deny yourself”, He’s saying to dethrone your lordship. Hand over the reigns. Move out from the driver’s seat. Put your selfish endeavors to one side

Question:

What are real ways we can deny our self-lordship and self-dominance?



2. Take Up the Cross

What could Jesus possibly mean, when He tells us to “take up your cross daily”? Jesus is saying that to become his disciple, we must sacrifice our lives, to live for Him. This sacrifice isn’t a literal one, but a spiritual one. Being a disciple is about dying to your will, and coming alive to God’s will. The cross is meant for death; and although we aren’t required to die physically, our old nature—our sinful ways must be buried. Paul said in ***Galatians 2:20***, *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”* The Apostle paints a clear portrait of being crucified with Christ. It’s about surrendering your life, and letting Christ live inside of you.

Taking up your cross is about giving your whole life to Christ. It’s about forsaking all to follow Him. Sadly, many people make this the **“fine print”** of Christian living. It’s too harsh, too unfriendly, too much to swallow. The cross in your life is the bittersweet surrender of your personal will and wishes. It is choosing what pleases God, instead of what pleases you. It is doing your best to obey God’s word. It is allowing Christ to shine through your spirit and actions.

Question:

*Why do you think “**taking up your cross**” is not a popular message in today’s culture?*



3. Follow Jesus

Following Jesus is tough. No matter how easy we try to make it seem. Following Jesus has always been unattractive, countercultural and uncomfortable. It's important that we don't soften the true message of the gospel and what it means to become a follower of Jesus. What we gain in following Jesus—is **Jesus**. Following Jesus is not just about following orders, but following in His steps—becoming like Him.

Anything Jesus walked on, we can walk on. As long as He's ahead of us, and we're following Him, His steps can become our steps. If Jesus healed the sick, we are empowered to heal the sick. If Jesus fed the hungry, we are capable of feeding the hungry. Jesus defended the defenseless, forgave the unforgivable, accepted the rejected, blessed the cursed, touched the untouchables, and brought life to the lifeless. Wherever He walked, He made the blind to see and the lame to walk. Lepers were cleansed, deaf ears were opened, the dead were raised, and the gospel was preached. As **Corinthian 11:1** says, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." When you imitate Jesus, people see less of you, and more of Him.

Question:

What are some ways we can imitate Jesus Christ?



Conclusion:

Being a follower of Christ, a disciple, is probably one of the most undervalued themes in Christianity today. Even though being a disciple should be our main purpose, it's extremely unpopular because the requirements are uncomfortable to the common believer. So many things are calling to us these days. So many distractions seem to stretch us in different directions. Yet, there is a voice that slices through the noise of life and beckons us to come. Jesus Christ is calling us to be His disciple—His follower. This is not simply an invitation, but a heavenly call. The time has come for us to respond to this call and fulfill our mission.

Final Question:

What might be stopping or slowing you down from fully following Jesus Christ?



Lesson 8

The ***Fruit*** of

Gifts



Ice Breaker

What would you consider to be a miracle?

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 12:11





Introduction:

One of the hallmarks of the Apostolic church is its emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit. Some Christian movements overlook the gifts of the Spirit, while others simply dismiss the gifts as something that died in the book of Acts. However, the gifts of the Spirit are alive today and meant to be embraced, experienced and used to grow the Kingdom of God. **Hebrews 2:4** says, *“God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.”* According to the Bible, every believer is an integral part of the body of Christ. God has graciously endowed the members of His church special gifts and abilities.

Paul encouraged the church to pursue the gifts of the Spirit: *“Earnestly desire the best gifts” (1 Corinthians 12:31), “Desire spiritual gifts” (1 Corinthians 14:1).* Keep in mind, that the gifts of the Spirit are supernatural, not natural or human. For instance, the gift of healing is not the ability to be a good doctor or nurse. Neither is the gift of tongues the power to learn foreign languages. These would be examples of human origin, instead of divine origin. Some commentators, who do not believe in miracles today, improperly define these gifts as human abilities. **1 Corinthians 12:8-10** lists nine gifts of the Spirit, which can be classified into three groups:





Three Types of Spiritual Gifts:

1. Gifts of Revelation

- A. Word of Wisdom** – The Greek word used for “*wisdom*” implies “*understanding of what is true, right or lasting; good judgment.*” Wisdom engages insight, not simply for the sake of knowledge, but for guidance. The purpose of this gift is to reveal a piece of divine guidance for a specific need.

- B. Word of Knowledge** – The Greek word used for “*knowledge*” implies “*familiarity, awareness, the sum of what has been learned or perceived.*” When someone has this gift, at certain times he or she will receive information about a person or situation by means of the Holy Spirit.

- C. Discerning of spirits** – The word “*discernment*” implies “*keenness of insight or judgment.*” This gift then, allows someone to divinely discern the difference between spirits (the Holy Spirit, evil spirits, or the human spirit). Discerning of spirits can also reveal the motive behind a certain action.

Question:

Consider the gifts of revelation. In your opinion, which one do you think is more valuable and why? Or share why you think they are equally valuable.



2. Gifts of Power

- A. Faith** – The word “faith” signifies trust, reliance, or belief without tangible evidence. Beyond our daily faith, the gift of faith is an uncommon degree of faith for a particular need. Sometimes God will grant someone this gift in order to endure an extraordinary test, or to mediate the faith of someone else.
- B. Working of miracles** – The New Oxford American Dictionary defines **“miracle”** as an **“event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws”**. Miracles are unexplainable, yet undeniable, such as a physical healing, resurrection of the dead, or any work of the Holy Spirit that transcends a rational explanation.
- C. Healing** – **“To heal”** implies **“to restore to health or wholeness, to cure, to make right.”** Although God is not subject to the gift of healings in order to heal someone, God does intervene through this gift in order to cure someone from illness, injuries, and other impairments. Unlike miracles, healings don’t always have immediate results.

Question:

Being that gifts of power are similar, how might they work in tandem?



3. Gifts of Utterance

A. Tongues – The gift of tongues is a supernatural expression in one or more languages unknown to the speaker. The gift of tongues mostly edifies the speaker, as others do not usually understand the utterance. Paul said, *“He who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God...He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself”* (**1 Corinthians 14:2, 4**).

B. Interpretation of tongues – There are occasions when God speaks to the church through the combined gifts of tongues and interpretation. The gift of interpretation translates the actual message that God desires to pass on. Whereas tongues only edify the speaker, interpretation edifies the whole congregation. *(For further study on this subject, read 1 Corinthians 14:12-13; 27-28)*

C. Prophecy – The word **“prophecy”** implies **“an inspired utterance”** or **“a prediction of the future, made under divine inspiration.”** Prophecy can be either forth telling or foretelling. Unlike other forms of prophecy, such as preaching, the gift of prophecy is a unique utterance for a specific need. **1 Corinthians 14:4-5** says, *“He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification”*.



Discussion:

The gifts of interpretation of tongues and prophecy deal directly with God's message to the church. Discuss why hearing from God in these forms is so essential.

Conclusion:

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 says, *"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."* In this scripture, the apostle Paul explains that despite a diverse mixture of gifts and service, it is the same God who works in all of us. The Holy Spirit is the wellspring from which all spiritual gifts flow. The gifts of the Spirit can certainly be mimicked, but never replicated or cloned. Moreover, Paul reminds us that, *"the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good"*. In other words, spiritual gifts are given to us so we can help each other.

Final Question:

Have you ever witnessed or benefited from one of the nine gifts of the Spirit? Briefly share your testimony.



Lesson 9

The ***Fruit*** of

Love



Ice Breaker

*Do you think we as a society show enough love for one another?
Explain why or why not.*

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13





Introduction:

One of the most famed scriptures in the Bible is found in First Corinthians 13. It is often recited, yet rarely understood—routinely read, but is quickly forgotten. First Corinthians 13 describes love as a behavior, not just the warm feeling you get inside. People typically associate love with how they feel, or by how often they say, ***“I love you.”***

Paul’s portrayal of love reveals a type of love much richer than the emotion-based love that is celebrated in today’s culture: *“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” (1 Cor. 13:4-7).* Let’s unpack this passage into two sections: what love is and what love is not.

What Love Is:

- 1. Love is Patient** – It’s enduring and tolerable. Because you love someone, you sometimes have to tolerate difficult circumstances. Love’s patience is the ability to be inconvenienced over and over again. Patience is not just a time of waiting, but rather your attitude while you wait. You can wait on someone, yet scorn every second. Love’s patience is accommodating and understanding.



Question:

What can we do to become more patience with challenging people?

- 2. Love is Kind** – This is a simple call to be nice and gracious towards others. No matter how awful your day is, kindness is still a choice. Kindness is more than just warm thoughts, fondness or good intentions. Rather, kindness puts feet to your goodwill. Love's kindness is not static, but active. Nor is it fueled by fleeting emotions. Kindness is purposeful acts of grace.

Question:

Why is it important that kindness be practiced, and not just felt?

- 3. Love is Forgiving** – There's no need to keep record of every wrong done to you. Chances are, someone will offend you at some time. People are imperfect and make mistakes. However, true love makes allowances and reminds us that one day, we too will need to be forgiven. With the same grace that has been given to you, freely give. Plotting revenge or settling the score only leads to more pain and emptiness.

Question:

Why is it important to make allowances for people who offend us?



- 4. Love is Truthful** – When God’s love is alive in your heart, you don’t get excited about unfairness and evil. Sometimes we get some satisfaction when our enemies suffer evil. For instance, a boyfriend has broken up with you; when his new girlfriend dumps him you think he’s getting what he deserves. If your business fails and creditors are knocking at the door, it’s tempting to rejoice when your competitor closes shop. We must rejoice in the truth. Jesus Christ said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).*

Question:

Why do you think we sometimes (without realizing) rejoice when our challenger or competitor faces injustice?

What Love is Not:

- 1. Love is not Jealous** – At the heart of envy is discontentment. There is a well-known phrase that says, “The grass is always greener on the other side”. This implies is that no matter how blessed your life is—your family, your marriage, your career, your possessions, your ministry—someone else always seems to have it better. The truth is, every lawn gets crabgrass or weeds from time to time. If not, what you’re comparing yourself to might be artificial turf. Learn to appreciate and thank God for the blessings you already have, instead of coveting someone else’s.



Question:

What can we do to become more content with the things we already have?

- 2. Love is not Proud** – Love has a way of dissolving your ego. When God's love soaks your heart, it humbles you. Being humble is not being weak, broke, shy or timid, as people often think. In fact, humility has nothing to do with how much money you have. **Proverbs 18:12** says, *"Before his downfall a man's heart is proud, but humility comes before honor."* If your heart is proud (arrogant, high minded, above obedience or self-righteous), expect failure. If your heart is humble (lowly, submissive, teachable, caring or meek), expect honor.

Question:

What are some practices we can do to keep ourselves humble?

- 3. Love is not Self-seeking** – In love, we actually lose ourselves. We seek to give, rather than to take—to serve, rather than be served. In a culture ruled by self-love and selfishness, love compels us to look beyond our own wants and sacrifice our personal desires. Love shifts the focus off self and widens our view towards those around us—those in need of help, of healing, or maybe just of a hug. Everyday we are tempted to indulge in whatever pleases or satisfies self. However, when we are baptized in God's love, we look out for the interest of others before ourselves.



Question:

What is most destructive or unhealthy about being selfish?

- 4. Love is not Easily Angered** – When God's love is growing in your heart, you are not short-tempered or easily provoked. We need to learn to listen and not allow our tempers to get the best of us. Don't empower your anger by allowing it to control your emotions and actions. Since God is slow to anger, we should reciprocate it to others. Anger is not a sin, but we must deal with it promptly. **Ephesians 4:26** says, "Be angry, and do not sin": *do not let the sun go down on your wrath...* Unresolved anger can spread like venom in the heart. Let God's love soften you and give you patience.

Question:

What can we do to become better listeners, and not allow our angry feelings to fester?

Conclusion:

It's absurd to say we love God, and yet be in constant quarrel with our neighbors. In fact, Jesus said, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:35) There's no question that we need to learn



how to get along, especially with difficult people. The writer of Hebrews said, *"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:"* (**Heb. 12:14**). Every-day we're faced with situations and personalities that prove if we are His disciples, or just pretending to be. Don't worry about minor things. As soon as someone says or does something that offends you, let it go and let love lead.





Lesson 10

The ***Fruit*** of *Order*



Ice Breaker

What do you think would happen, if there were no police in our city?

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 14:33, 36-40





Introduction:

Order is the glue that keeps our society from falling apart. Imagine for a moment what our nation would be like without civil order, laws or a governing authority. Whether we recognize it or not, order brings balance and peace to a world that is prone to chaos. Whenever a government is disorganized or law enforcement is corrupt, the citizens live in fear. In addition, we also realize the necessity of having order in our daily lives. When a home is disorderly, messy or family members don't respect each other, living under one roof can feel like a battle zone. When parents don't discipline their children or establish some rules, there is sure to be some disorder and tension in the home. The church is no different. Without order, God's house would become chaotic.

Our God is a God of order. Isaiah, the prophet, told King Hezekiah *"Thus says the Lord: 'Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.' (2 Kings 20:1).* The Lord wanted his house in order before he died. The apostle Paul reminds us: *"Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40).* The word **"decently"** implies **"graciously or politely"**. The word **"order"** implies **"succession or organization"**. The one phrase that may get overlooked in this scripture is, **"Let all things..."** The apostle encourages us to apply decency and order to all of our acts of worship and fellowship.

Order in God's family starts with yielding to Jesus Christ (His lordship), yielding to spiritual leaders, and yielding to one another.



Establishing Order in God's Family:

1. Yield to Jesus Christ

Yielding to Jesus Christ is about coming under the covering of His Lordship. As Lord, Jesus Christ deserves honor, reverence and obedience. What does the lordship of Christ mean? It means that we acknowledge Him for who He is and render the honor that He deserves. Jesus said, *"...All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me"* (**Mat. 28:18**). God's throne is built on authority or order. Even love, which many consider fluid and unbridled, is yoked to the lordship of Christ through obedience. Jesus once commented, *"If you love me, you will obey what I command"* (**John 14:15**).

Surrendering to the lordship of Christ through obedience, cultivates the fruit of order in our lives. **Psalm 37:23** says, *"The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way."* God ordains and orders the steps of the righteous—those who belong to Him. In other words, God lines up your path; He brings divine structure to your life. **1 Peter 3:15** says, *"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord..."* Establishing order begins with yielding to Jesus' lordship.

Question:

What do you think is the hardest part about living under the lordship of Christ?



2. Yield to Spiritual Leaders

In the fabric of God's order, we also are called to obey and honor those who lead us. The apostle Paul said, *"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God"* (**Romans 13:1**). In the local church, these authorities are the pastors and leaders who are responsible for shepherding the family of God.

The word **"authority"** has been scrubbed away in this generation. Frankly, we don't like being under anybody. And for the most part, we live in an anti-authority culture who makes heroes out of rebels; whose anthem is **"I am my own boss"**. This mindset breeds disorder. We who belong to God's family must guard against this mindset. **Hebrews 13:17** says, *"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you."* Regardless of how one feels about this scripture, it cannot be edited or revised for the 21st century. God still expects His people to obey spiritual authority.

Question:

Why do you think God places such high emphasis on spiritual authority?



3. Yield to One Another

Romans 12:10 says, *“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.”* In this scripture, the apostle Paul pleads with the church to unite in brotherly love and look past the things that only bring self-glory. Most people don’t realize that how we treat one another brings order. It has everything to do with heart and attitude. When we yield to one another and sacrifice personal ambition, we actually show reverence for Christ.

Ephesians 5:21 says, *“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”* In this scripture, the term for submission means be subject to, be under the authority of, take a subordinate place. If submitting to an authority figure is difficult to do, imagine how difficult it is submit to someone you consider your equal, your peer. But this is precisely the culture of God’s kingdom. In His kingdom, we are equally loved, forgiven and saved by grace. Our job is not to boss people around and pull rank in the church, but to humble ourselves and live in light of God’s grace.

Question:

What kind of disorder would there be if the brethren were to treat one another with disrespect or superiority?





Conclusion:

Is your life in order today? As we've learned, order is an essential part of our walk with God. When our houses, our marriages, our relationships, our churches are in order, we have more peace and contentment. When things are in disarray, we tend to lose sight of the things that really matter. You have the power to set the tone in your life and dictate what kind of environment you desire. If you're struggling with disorder, ask the Lord to reveal ways you can improve. More often than not, establishing order about yielding to the disciplines of Christian living.



Lesson 11

The ***Fruit*** of

Proclamation



Ice Breaker

What do you think is the most effective form of communication?

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 15:3





Introduction:

The Gospel is a constant reminder that it isn't our good works, holiness, heritage, religiousness or conduct that saves us, but purely the grace of God. **Ephesians 2:8-9** reads, *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."* We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Maybe the most concise summary of the gospel is in **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**: *"Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."*

The essence of the gospel is that Jesus died for our sins and suffered the wrath of God in our place. Jesus atoned for our sins and in our place. He became our substitute. **2 Corinthians 5:21** reads, *"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."* This scripture doesn't mean that Jesus sinned, but that He was made sin. Jesus exchanged His perfection for our imperfection, His righteousness for our unrighteousness, His obedience for our disobedience, His godliness for our ungodliness, His blessing for our cursing, His life for our death. Let's take a look at three ways we can proclaim the gospel.



Three Ways to Proclaim the Gospel:

1. Proclaim through *Preaching*

What is the gospel? The gospel is simply that Jesus died for our sins, He rose, and through faith in Him we can be saved. It is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The word gospel is translated from the Greek, which literally means good news. If the gospel is good news, then it must be spread throughout the world. "News" becomes "old news" the moment we stop sharing it. And the news we have is not mere gossip or information, it is the message of hope and salvation.

The apostle Paul said, *"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!'" (Romans 10:14-15).* A preacher is not necessarily someone who stands behind a pulpit and delivers a sermon. A preacher is anyone who proclaims and shares the gospel. If you have a voice, you have an instrument to reach anyone who will listen.

Question:

Besides a sermon, what are some other ways we can communicate the gospel?



2. Proclaim through *Practice*

Here's what we must remember: the gospel is not just meant to be preached, but practiced—not just lectured, but lived. It is the proclamation of your life that speaks louder than words. The gospel must be practiced and expressed. It must become flesh. Essentially, the gospel should shape the desires of your heart. The gospel should drive you, compel you, humble you, balance you, heal you and hunger you for a deeper, more significant, more meaningful, more satisfying relationship with Jesus Christ. Again, Paul said, ***“By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.”*** If we don't hold the gospel tightly against our hearts, to point that it's imprinted in us, we can eventually lose it. The result, then, is that our faith becomes empty, religious, bland and worst of all, meaningless.

Perhaps the greatest factor in leading people to Christ is your lifestyle. How you live and conduct yourself outside the church walls will be your best instrument of evangelism. Although Peter is counseling on how to win an unsaved spouse, his advice is relevant for any relationship. *“Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives” (1 Peter 3:1-2).* The Gospel must be demonstrated, not just spoken.

Question:

Why is it important to have a lifestyle that complements the gospel message?



3. Proclaim through *Perseverance*

When exhorting young Timothy, Paul said, *“Do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God” (2 Tim. 1:8)*. Most Christians don’t realize that not only does preaching and practicing further the gospel, but so does perseverance in the midst of suffering. Make no mistake; Paul’s chains were real, not figurative. His physical and emotional pain actually served to proclaim the gospel. Sometimes, the trials and hardships we go through advance the furtherance of the gospel.

Perhaps you’re wondering, *“How is it possible that suffering advances the gospel?”* Let’s look at what Paul said: *“Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly” (Phil. 1:12-14)*. The Roman soldiers succeeded to imprison Paul, but failed to imprison the gospel. As Paul sat in a dark, dingy prison cell, the brethren were emboldened to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. If you have the right attitude and persevere through your prisons of disappointment, God will impart a fearless spirit into His people.

Question:

What do you think makes the difference between someone who complains or rejoices in the midst of suffering?



Conclusion:

We are living in a generation where people want to see, not only hear the gospel. They are tired of hearing a message that is not supported by a lifestyle. **2 Corinthians 3:2-3** says, *"You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."* The world needs is a church who will authenticate the gospel being a living example of Jesus Christ. As the old saying goes, **"actions speak louder than words"**. Your life maybe the only bible people will ever read. **Let us proclaim!**



Lesson 12

The ***Fruit*** of

Offering



Ice Breaker

Has God ever blessed you in return for an offering you gave?

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 16:1-2





Introduction:

Money. When you think about money, you quickly realize that it's something we all need on a daily basis. And contrary to popular belief, money is not evil—nor is it good. The apostle Paul said, *“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” (1 Timothy 6:10).* In other words, it's what you do with money that shapes its moral worth. Money is neutral, and doesn't have a mind of its own. Also, wealth doesn't make you generous just like poverty doesn't make you selfish. What you do with your money shows what you love and value in life.

When you give to God's work, you become a partner in spreading the gospel. When the Apostle Paul remembered his partnership with the church in Philippi, he said, *“Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only” (Phil. 4:15).* Although they couldn't physically travel with Paul on his trips, their financial support allowed him to focus on ministry.

Four Aspects of Giving:

1. The Requirement of Giving

Leviticus 27:30 says, *“A tithe (tenth) of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs*



to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.” Some people fail to realize that giving your tithe is required, not optional. When giving, try not to dwell on the ten percent you’re giving back, but rather on the 90 percent you’re able to keep.

Giving is not a dollar amount; it’s a spirit, a reflection of the heart. Beyond that, however, giving is a spiritual principle that God invented to support His kingdom work. In God’s economy, preachers of the gospel and kingdom laborers are to be financially sustained for their ministry. Without question, God considers ministry real work and, thus, they ought to be reasonably compensated (**1 Timothy 5:18**). When Jesus dispatched his disciples out to preach the Gospel, he told them to leave everything behind—money, possessions, clothes. Jesus said, *“Take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep”* (**Matthew 10:10**). These disciples were dependant on the giving of body of Christ.

Question:

Why do you think God makes certain aspects of giving a requirement, and not optional?

2. The *Relationship* of Giving

2 Corinthians 9:7 says, *“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”* Most Christians don’t realize that



failure to give affects their relationship with God. When the bible says, ***“God loves a cheerful giver”***, it means He is drawn closer to him. Giving is about trusting God to nourish your needs, even through seasons of famine and recession.

Proverbs 3:6 says, *“in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”* Giving acknowledges how great God is. God isn’t bankrupt, so He really doesn’t need our money. Yet, giving is a physical testimony that God owns both the material and spiritual things of our lives. Returning your tithe or giving an offering is a tangible form of worship, one that actually requires a sacrifice. Worship should be the greatest motivation for giving.

Question:

Why is it good to remember that giving is about your relationship with God, and not solely about obligation?

3. The **Responsibility** of Giving

Being a good steward of your finances is a personal responsibility. **Philippians 4:15** says, *“Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only.”* Although this church couldn’t physically travel with Paul on his missionary trips, their financial support made it possible for him to minister.



Think of giving as God's stock market. When you invest into the work of God, you become a spiritual shareholder. When you purchase stock from a corporation, you own a portion of it—even though you may never set foot on company property, talk with the employees or see them in action. Still, their success means your success. The same is true in the kingdom of God. When a missionary, pastor or evangelist is financially supported, they can take the gospel of Jesus Christ to people you'll probably never meet, and to places you'll probably never go. Yet, their success becomes your success.

Question:

Why do you think it's important to view giving as a partnership?

4. The **Reward** of Giving

What is an investment without a return? God's stock performance has the greatest return on investment you can find anywhere. His record is impressive and flawless. He has undeniably crushed the competition (which really isn't a fight at all) since the beginning of time. Everything He touches, transforms into something greater. Every promise He makes, He keeps.

Malachi 3:10 says, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse...Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." Give



ing opens the window of heaven over your household. This is a promise we have from God, that if we bring the tithe, He'll bring us invaluable blessings. Unlike other investments in this world, sowing into God's work is a secure investment that yields a heavenly reward. **Luke 6:38** says, *"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."*

Question:

Have you ever been prompted by God to give sacrificially (when you didn't have much)? If so, share why it's important to respond to that inner prompting.

Conclusion:

Jesus Christ wouldn't ask us to invest into something that He hasn't already invested into Himself. He paid the price with His own blood. No one is more invested into the kingdom, then the King of kings. Through your financial giving, you are actually partnering with God in saving a lost world. Every dollar you give helps our dedicated laborers fulfill the Great Commission (**Mat. 28:19**). Is giving a substantial love-offering going to make you prosperous? That's for God to decide. However, it will make your home, your church or your business blessed.