

Welcome to the Savior Core Course

What is the Savior Core Course?

The Savior Core Course is designed to help you to **love God**, **live community** and **be a servant** in the context of the Savior Community Church. By the end of this course you will be very familiar with the three bold phrases above, and what they mean. Our church is designed to help make this happen in a person's life.

Who is the Savior Core Course for?

If you've been a Christian for a day or a decade you will benefit from this course. If you're *not* a Christian this course is ideal for you. We start at the very beginning, not expecting that people who attend have any knowledge of Christianity whatsoever. We do however get deeper and deeper into the Christian worldview and life as we go. Thus we believe that virtually anyone can benefit from this course.

Why do we offer this course?

➤ **First Purpose: Joy & Transformation**

Our prayer is that God uses this course to change your life, leading you to a deeper, more joyous experience of Christ. The information we present can't change you, but Christ can! We seek more than *information transfer*, and pursue *inward transformation*.

➤ **Second Purpose: Spiritual Formation**

Many people get the Gospel backwards. They think that God wants them to clean up their lives first, and then present themselves before Him for approval. God sent His Son to purchase our approval for us so that we could receive it as a free gift (*explanation later*). Once we receive this free gift God goes to work on our lives.

God's way of changing people moves from the heart outward. He makes internal changes which effect external behavior. This process, often called spiritual formation, is not instant, entirely passive, or without need of instruction. This course is meant to teach you how to let God change you.

➤ **Third Purpose: Unity in Mission**

As we will learn, God has set His Church on a mission. As a local church we want to be on God's mission to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No doubt some of the people who join this church have been members of other good churches and are very familiar with the Gospel and the Christian life. Why ask *them* participate? The reason is simple. We want every person who joins our church, whether new Christian or mature, to know who we are, *what* we believe, *what* we do, *why* we do it, *how* we do it, and most of all to be on board for all of it.

➤ **Fourth Purpose: Membership**

We take membership seriously and so we require that anyone who wants to become a member of the SaviorCC take the Savior Core Course first. If we are going to be a healthy, faithful, and fruitful church we need to build a solid team. Membership helps us know whom we can count on. It is helpful to know who is committed to our covenant, our doctrine, our mission, our ministry, and whom we can count on to pray, work, and give toward fulfilling that mission.

Enjoy the journey!



The Savior Core Course

part 1: the Gospel

An Exploration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



The Gospel Story

The word “Gospel” means “good news”. The center of Christianity is the good news about Jesus Christ. We could talk about the Gospel as a set of ideas that we are called to believe and declare to the world, and we will do that later. We need to first set the news in the context of the broader historical cosmic events that it grew out of.

The Gospel is more than a set of ideas. It is the declaration of events. These events were orchestrated by God to solve a very real problem and achieve a concrete set of goals. The Gospel is **news** because it centers around a set of historical events. It is **good** news because it declares the end of an age of death, and the ushering in of a new age of life. Christ Himself considered His coming to Earth to be good news. He declared in a synagogue . . .

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Luke 4:18-19).

To understand the good news, let's explore the bad news . . . In Four Acts.

Act 1: The Creation, The Fall, and The Problem

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. It was good. It was perfect. It was complete. He blessed it, showing His favor and approval over what He had created. It was His. The One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, together brought all things into being for His glory (Genesis 1:1-2; John 1:1-2; Isaiah 43:7). “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen (Romans 11:36).”

The Great King and His Images

Though God was the King over all things, He created humankind to rule over the creation as His images.

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

As images of God, the lives of humans were to be wrapped up in honoring, glorifying, obeying, serving, and enjoying Him. This explains why humans exist. We were designed to find joy in worshiping One Who is infinitely greater than us.

Genesis 1:28–30 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” 29 And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the

earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.

Just as ancient kings lived in **covenant** relationships with other kings and nations, Adam and Eve were in covenant with God. This covenant relationship required loyalty, and obedience, but promised life and blessing.¹

Ancient covenants came with stipulations. Obedience would be met with blessings (favor, support, loyalty). Disobedience would bring curses (punishment and alienation). God’s first covenant with Adam promised death for disloyalty. “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it **you shall surely die** (Genesis 2:16–17).”

A Dead New World.

When the covenant stipulations were broken, the consequence was death. Adam and Eve did not immediately die physically, of course. The Bible describes rather a new kind of world in which death, both spiritual and physical, would infect every area of man’s existence. Paul describes the state that resulted from Adam’s sin: “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men [with the result that] all sinned (Romans 5:12).”²

God brought down immediate judgment on His images. They had failed to trust Him, rebelled against Him, and traded their King’s blessing for His curse. Their very purpose for existing, which would have brought them joy and blessing, was corrupted bringing toil, pain, disunity, estrangement, and death to all of the creation (see Gen. 3:8-24; Rom. 5:12-21). This event had a dramatic, traumatic, and lasting impact on the human experience.

We were engineered to be dissatisfied with anything less than the glory of the infinite God, so we have a tendency to be generally miserable, restless creatures when we are cut off from Him. Refusing to obey led to the corruption of humanity. Our inclination to worship combined with our inclination to rebel against God leads us to search for joy in worshipping far lesser gods--gods such as *self, stuff, sex, spurious spiritualities*, and so on. This is life in our dead new world.

Act 2: The Promise and God’s People

While Adam, Eve, and the human race had lost the covenant blessings of their King, they hadn’t lost His love. His dedication to justice only served to illuminate His grace. While our parents earned judgement and no longer deserved God’s favor, He persisted in offering them His grace, that is His un-earned, unmerited favor, love, and loyalty. Even before God pronounced His punishment upon Eve and Adam, He made a bold, if somewhat cryptic, promise. To the serpent, He said . . .

What is Sin?

- “Sin is an attitude toward God characterized by disobedience, defiance, indifference which expresses itself in thought, word, and deed and results in patterns of settled conduct.”—David Wells
- “Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature.”—Wayne Grudem
- “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. . . .” —Paul
- “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” —Paul

¹ What is a covenant? Think *contract*, but more intimate, spiritual, and consequential.

² The brackets represent my own translation, altering the ESV, based on the analysis of Thomas Schreiner in the BECNT: Romans.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel (Genesis 3:15)."

The serpent, clearly more than a mere snake, will one day meet defeat from a descendent of the woman, namely Christ. God was already beginning to reveal a plan of rescue, one that would bring His restoring justice to the world--making all things *right*, all things *new*, and all things *His* through the work of His Son.

Years later the promise would be made more explicitly to a man named Abraham.

Genesis 12:1–3 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Throughout the Old Testament God restates, refines, and specifies His promise to bless the world through Abraham's descendants. Despite the ongoing sin, failures and disobedience of His people Israel, God would one day raise up a King, an anointed one (*Messiah* in Hebrew, *Christ* in Greek) Who would bring life, justice, and God's life-giving rule (or Kingdom) back to the earth.

Act 3: The Christ, the Cross, and the Resurrection

God continued to remind His people of His promise to bring restoration. From Adam and Eve, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to the twelve tribes of Israel, to king David--God would make the world right, and He would do it by sending a Savior. Their sin and failure would be made undone by One who would transcend normal human weakness. Even as God was warning of judgment to His people He declared a day of restoration through Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 23:5-6 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a **righteous Branch**, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6 In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: **'The Lord is our righteousness.'**"

Hundreds of years later, after centuries of suffering, sin, and death, God sent His Son.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should **not perish** but have **eternal life**."

Jesus, the Christ

God the Son, Eternal, and Uncreated, Took on Humanity in the Incarnation:

- **John 1:14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- **John 1:18** No one has ever seen God; the only God [Jesus], who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Jesus Existed Eternally prior to the coming to Earth in the Incarnation:

- **John 1:1-5** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
- **Colossians 1:15-20** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

While remaining God in every way, Jesus became fully Human:

- **Hebrews 2:14** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself [Jesus] likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,
- **Hebrews 2:17** Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.
- **Hebrews 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Jesus preached the Kingdom of God:

Jesus proclaimed the coming of the promised Kingdom of God in His ministry, and revealed a little of what it would be like through His miracles, especially through healing. He had come to rescue our dead world from slavery to sin.

- **Mark 1:14-15** Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”
- **Matthew 4:23** And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.
- **Luke 4:17-21** . . . He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” 20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Jesus Dealt with the Problem of *Death* by Defeating its Cause, Sin.

- **1 Corinthians 15:3–5** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that **Christ died for our sins** in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures
- **1 Peter 2:24** He himself **bore our sins** in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.
- **2 Corinthians 5:21** God [the Father] made him [Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (NIV)³

The Death of Jesus: Penal Substitutionary Atonement

Christ's death was *penal* in that He died to pay the penalty for our sins.

It was *substitutionary* in that He died in our place. Our sin makes us objects of God's wrath. Jesus died to absorb that wrath in our place. Paul wrote, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21). For those who trust Him, Christ turns God's wrath into favor.

Having paid the penalty in our place Christ achieved *atonement* or reconciliation.

Atonement = at-one-ment (i.e. *making at one*)!

His death brought the life that the world had lost in the fall of Adam and Eve.

- **Colossians 2:13-15** And *you, who were dead* in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **God made alive** together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Act 4: The Spirit, the Church, and the Kingdom Come

Waiting

Contrary to what most seemed to expect, Christ did not establish a literal kingdom on Earth after His resurrection. He explained that elements of the kingdom would be realized immediately: *the outpouring of His Spirit, cleansing of sin through faith in Him, and inward transformation through dependence upon Christ* (John 15). Believers *would* enjoy a new kind of existence, one of intimacy with and life through Christ. In this sense, the Kingdom of God was, and is, very present on Earth.

The physical establishment of perfect justice, *restorative* as well as *punitive* justice, would come with Christ's promised return another day. In the meantime His people would live *between the times*—no longer slaves to sin and death, but still not yet what we will be at His second coming.

On A Mission

The church was called to wait for Christ's return, but was by no means called to be still. We have been given a mission by Jesus:

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 **Go** therefore and **make disciples** of all nations,

³ NLT 2 Corinthians 5:21 For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 **teaching** them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

To accomplish His mission, Christ promised to provide us with power through the Holy Spirit. After His resurrection, He told His disciples . . .

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

When the Holy Spirit was poured out (Acts 2) it resulted in a ministry similar to that of Christ, but on a much larger scale. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ continues His work through believers.

God's Empowering Presence: Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The Bible teaches that *everyone* who believes in Jesus is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This is known as being *born again*, or as *regeneration*. Every Christian is regenerate by the Holy Spirit. In regeneration, the Holy Spirit *opens eyes to Christ, enables us to have faith* in Him, and *brings us from death to life* when we trust in Him.

The Bible also teaches us that Christ *baptizes* His people with the Holy Spirit.

Luke 3:16 John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will **baptize you with the Holy Spirit** and with fire.

It is also clear that people are often *indwelt by the Spirit* (that is regenerated) prior to being *Baptized in the Spirit*, revealing that these are two separate experiences. You can see this in passages like Acts 8:17-18 and 19:5-7.

The goal of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is clear. Jesus taught that He would send the Holy Spirit and that "He will glorify me" (John 16:14). The reason we seek to be baptized in and regularly filled with the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus Christ.

The book of Acts describes this experience as typically issuing in some kind of outward activity such as prophesy, or speaking in tongues (*languages unknown to the speaker*) (See Acts 2:4; Acts 8:17-18; Acts 10:44-46; Acts 19:5-7). The experiences of Christians vary, but it is common that those who experience the Baptism in the Holy Spirit have these, and other similar experiences.

We get some insight from Paul on what these gifts do for believers:

1 Corinthians 14:2–4 For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. 3 On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. 4 The one who speaks in a tongue **builds up himself**, but the one who prophesies **builds up the church**.

Romans 8:26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Acts also describes people who have already experienced Spirit Baptism as seeking to be filled again in order to continue in effective Gospel ministry later on (See the Apostle Peter pray for this in Acts 4:27-31). The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is not the end, but the beginning of a life of power in God's Spirit.

Reenacting the New Birth: Baptism in Water

The Gospel brings such powerful transformation that the Bible repeatedly refers to conversions in terms of death and resurrection.

Romans 6:6–8 We know that our old self was **crucified** with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has **died** has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also **live** with him.

Colossians 3:3 For **you have died**, and your **life** is hidden with Christ in God.

1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

Likely as a way to help new believers to both understand, internalize, remember, proclaim and celebrate their newly found life, Christ calls every believer to reenact their spiritual death and new birth by being baptized in water. Entering into the water symbolizes death and burial. Coming out of the water symbolizes resurrection and life.

There are a lot of complex ideas about Baptism, but it is actually a simple idea: Jesus died for sin so that we could die to sin. Jesus rose from the dead so that we could be born again and walk in newness of life with Him. He calls us to joyfully recognize and celebrate this reality by being publicly baptized in water.

Power in Weakness

As we have learned already, the concept of the Kingdom of God is a prevalent theme in Christ's teaching. He instructs us to pray "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:9b-10)." The request for God to bring His Kingdom is not limited to the future return of Christ to the Earth. Christ calls His people to be Kingdom focused in their daily lives. We are called to seek to live under and spread the liberating rule of God in our world through Gospel work.

We recognize that the world around us "waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God." That is, all that is broken in the world will find healing in Christ's return. The book of Revelation describes the world we wait eagerly for: "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away (Revelation 21:3–4)."

It is this message of restoration that we, as Christ's Spirit-filled ambassadors, proclaim to the world (2 Cor. 5:20).

Important Things to Consider:

- ➔ Have you understood the Gospel story? What questions or comments do you have?
- ➔ What "lightbulbs" went off for you while we were working through it? Anything here help make something more clear for you?
- ➔ Have you trusted in Jesus Christ and become a Christian?
(This is most important question you will ever be asked. Let's talk about it. Yes? No? Thinking about it? Ready now?)
- ➔ Have you been baptized in water? Ready to be?
- ➔ Have you ever experienced the Baptism in the Holy Spirit? Would you like to pray to be baptized in the Holy Spirit?

The Cross of Christ

Three Things Jesus Accomplished on the Cross

Romans 3:21-26 ²¹ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it- ²² the righteousness of God through **faith** in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are **justified** by his **grace** as a gift, through the **redemption** that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God put forward as a **propitiation** by his blood, to be received by **faith**. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

He Justified Us

Definition: To be *declared* and *treated* as righteous by God.

Associated Location: Court of Law

God makes it **Just** as **if I'd** never sinned!

What Does This Mean for Your Life Now?

☞ **Forgiveness of Sin—past, present, and future!**

You now have a position in God's kingdom that is dependent wholly upon what Christ has done for you. Your sins have all been paid for (which we will explain under the next two theological words).

☞ **Freedom from Self-Condemnation**

We all feel guilty when we sin, and should take our sin seriously as something God calls us to reject, and as something the Holy Spirit wants to replace with fruit. We must accept however that we are not perfect and God accepts and loves us anyway because of Jesus!

☞ **Reject Emotionally Based & Circumstance Based Confidence before God**

Let the legal nature of Justification take hold your changing emotions and varying levels of personal righteousness!

He Redeemed Us

Definition: To *rescue* from the penalty and enslaving power of sin by paying a *ransom*.

Associated Location: The Slave Traders Block

What Does This Mean for Your Life Now?

☞ **You are Free from Sin's Enslaving Power**

The concept of Christ redeeming us from slavery is expanded significantly by Romans 6 (even though the words "redemption" isn't used, the concepts are related).

Paul reveals that those who have faith in Christ have died with Christ. Jesus died for our sins, and Paul teaches that this means Christians have died to sin—meaning that they are free from its power, or that they no longer have any relationship to it. Paul goes on to teach that this new relationship (or lack thereof) with sin must be enforced by the believer. He writes, “So you also must **consider** yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. **Let not sin** therefore **reign** in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. (Romans 6:11-12)”

➤ ***Redemption is a concrete basis for your Justification***

This helps us to count on it more securely. God’s declaration of righteous over you is not based on His reading of your emotions at the time you accepted Christ, nor is it based on how excited you feel about Jesus at a given time. It is not based on how perfectly you are obeying God at a given time either.

It is based rather upon the redemption which Jesus purchased for us by laying down His perfect life as our substitute for sin. “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).”

He Made Propitiation for Us

Definition: *A sacrifice that bears God’s wrath to the end and in so doing changes God’s wrath toward us into favor (Wayne Grudem).*

Associated Location: The OT Sacrificial system, especially the mercy seat, but ultimately the Cross.

What Does This Mean for Your Life Now?

➤ ***Freedom from God’s wrath***

Many believers think God is mad at them all the time! By His own declaration, He accepts and loves you! You stand under God’s favor now!

➤ ***You stand in God’s grace.***

Christ’s death on the cross propitiated or appeased God’s wrath against those sinners who put their faith in Christ. Those who trust in Him as their substitute for sin have had God’s wrathful disposition and future judgment removed, and thus stand in His favor and grace.

Leon Morris explains, “It is the combination of God’s deep love for the sinner with His uncompromising reaction against sin which brings about what the Bible calls propitiation. Since God would not leave man to suffer all the consequences of his sin, Christ suffered . . .”⁴

⁴ Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, p. 210.

How do you get Justified?

➔ By Grace through Faith in Jesus

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Justification is a gift by His grace (Rom. 3:23) to be received by faith (v.25).

- **Grace** can't be earned. Grace is God's unearned, unmerited favor.

Grace is not a last resort or something God gives occasionally. It is rather the context in which you live out your entire relationship with God. We live under grace—God's unearned, unmerited, unmatched love, faithfulness, and favor!

- **Faith** is trust in Christ alone as the only one who can save you, satisfy you and transform you.

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You Must Make a Decision!

Nothing we described above belongs to you if you have not given your life to Christ. Is there anyone here who would like to pray to receive Christ right now? No pressure, just an opportunity.

Remember Your Salvation At the Lord's Table

The Ordinances

Jesus gave two important Ordinances (called Sacraments by many) to be observed on a regular basis. Both of them are designed to regularly *remind us of* and *focus us on* the central themes of the Gospel—faith in Christ who lived, died, and rose on our behalf. They are Baptism and Communion.

What is the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11: 23-29, 33)

It Is Four Things:

1. The Lord's Supper is a **Reminder** of what Jesus did for us.

1 Corinthians 11:23-25 ²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. **Do this in remembrance of me.**" ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you **drink it, in remembrance** of me."

2. The Lord's Supper is a **Declaration** of our Faith in Jesus.

1 Corinthians 11:26 ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and **drink** the cup, you **proclaim** the **Lord's death** until he comes.

3. The Lord's Supper is a **Dedicated** time for self-evaluation.

1 Corinthians 11:27-29 ²⁷ Whoever, therefore, **eats** the **bread** or **drinks** the **cup** of the Lord **in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning** the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ **Let a person examine himself, then, and so** eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

4. The Lord's Supper is a **Celebration** for the whole church.

1 Corinthians 11:33 ³³ So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another

How Should It Be Eaten?

1. It should be eaten **Reverently**.
2. It should be eaten **Regularly**.
3. It should be eaten **Exclusively** by Christians.

Renew Your Mind With Bible Doctrine

What is a Doctrine?

Doctrine is *good* thing!

Many people have the mistaken impression that doctrine is something that is boring, unimportant and is only good for starting arguments! Good doctrine, applied correctly is anything but boring, unimportant or argumentative. Good doctrine leads to a good life!

Definition: Doctrine refers to what the Bible teaches regarding any particular subject.

For example the “Doctrine of the Salvation” refers to what the Bible teaches about how a person can receive salvation through faith in Jesus and related topics.

Our Doctrine Is Evangelical

What does it mean to be Evangelical?

Our definition: Evangelical Christians believe in a biblically defined “Gospel” (the term “evangelical” comes from the Greek word *euangelion*, meaning “the good news” or the “gospel”). We strive to understand and submit to what the Bible teaches. We believe in the Triune God, preach salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and work hard to make disciples of all people in obedience to the Great Commission (Matt.28:18-20).

Evangelicals recognize that there are many teachings in Scripture that Christians can disagree about and debate over and still be true Christians. As it has been said; “In essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty, and in all things charity.” To be an Evangelical nonetheless means that we hold to certain doctrines as being essential to a Biblical faith—one that reflects the beliefs that were most cherished and defended by the early church and Apostles. These include especially: The Inspiration of the Bible, the Trinity, the Deity of Jesus Christ, the sinfulness of mankind, and salvation by grace through faith in Christ. There are many other things that we hold dear, but these are essentially what define a church as evangelical.

We are Evangelical because of our doctrine, *not* our politics.

In Recent years the term “evangelical” has become increasingly associated with right wing conservative political groups, just as “Mainline” churches have been

associated with left wing political causes. We use the term to describe our theological perspective.

Essential Doctrines

What follows is a short overview of a few important Biblical doctrines. It doesn't include everything we believe, or even everything that we hold to be important, but it does offer a glimpse of what we consider essential to the Christian faith. Other important doctrines (e.g. doctrine of the Church) are covered in other sections of the Savior Core Course or are covered in passing in other sections.

the bible

The Word of God

What is the Bible?

- It is the **inspired** (i.e God breathed) Word of God:

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

What does the Bible tell us?

- It tells us what is **true**, that is what to believe about God

2 Timothy 3:15. . . . and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you **wise for salvation** through **faith in Christ Jesus**.

- It tells us how we should **live** as believers

Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

- To put it another way

The Bible is sufficient to tell us all that we need to know about God and salvation, and all we need to do to live in a Christ-like manner, thus. . .

- ➔ We should turn to the Bible to learn correct **DOCTRINE** (what you believe)—*orthodoxy*.
- ➔ We should turn to the Bible to learn godly **ETHICS** (how you behave)—*orthopraxy*.

Our Convictions:

- ➔ The Bible is **Inspired**: It is “breathed out” by God, and carries His authority.
- ➔ The Bible is **Authoritative**: To disbelieve or disobey is to disbelieve or disobey God.
- ➔ The Bible is **Inerrant**: We can trust the Bible not to affirm anything that is contrary to fact.
- ➔ The Bible is **Sufficient**: The Bible tells us everything God intended for us to know about Him and tell us everything we need to know to serve and enjoy Him.

How can we Trust the Bible?

Four things inspire trust using the acronym **M.A.P.S**

1. **M**anuscript evidence: Numerous reliable, ancient copies exist.
2. **A**rcheological evidence: Historical data supports the accuracy of what the bible reports.
3. Predictive **P**rophecies: Ancient predictions coming to pass confirm that the Bible is divine rather than human in origin.
4. The **S**tatistical probability that so many prophecies (especially those related to Christ) have been accurately fulfilled lends further credibility to our claim that the Bible is inspired by God.

Many people find this helpful. The best way to prove the reliability of the Bible for yourself is to read it, believe it, and apply it. God's Spirit has a way of helping people to see the Bible as God's word, just as He opens people's eyes to see Jesus as God's Son.

God

What has God Done?

- He created the universe and everything in it!

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God created the **heavens** and **the earth**.

Psalm 33:6, 9 ⁶By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the **breath of his mouth** all their host. . . ⁹For he **spoke**, and it **came to be**; he **commanded**, and it **stood** firm.

John 1:3 All things were made through him, and without him was **not any thing** made that was made.

What is God Like?

- He is truly Great, with unlimited and illimitable power which He exercises in sovereignty over the world. He knows all, sees all, is all powerful and unchanging.

Isaiah 46:10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. (NASB)

- He is truly Good, with perfect holiness, purity, truthfulness, faithfulness and gracious love toward humanity. With God being so great and powerful, we should be very glad that He is equally good! Imagine if God were so great, but not so good!

Deuteronomy 32:4 The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.

John 3:16 "For **God so loved** the world, that **he gave** his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

- With God being so great and powerful, we should be very glad that He is equally good! Imagine if God were so great, but not so good! On the other hand, imagine if He were good, but not great.

the Trinity

One God Who Has Always And Will Always Exist As Three Eternal And Distinct Persons.

What Does the Bible Teach about the Trinity?

☞ **Three Concepts Central to the Doctrine of the Trinity:**

First, there is one God.

Second, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all God.

Third, God always has and always will exist in three distinct and equal persons.

☞ **There is one God**

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

☞ **The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all God**

The Father is God

It is clear that the Bible affirms that the Father is God.

Jesus Christ is God

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.² He was in the beginning with God.³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

The Holy Spirit is God

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . .

☞ **God always has and always will exist in three distinct and equal persons. They are distinguished by their relationship to one another.**

Matthew 3:16-17 ¹⁶ And when **Jesus** was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the **Spirit of God** descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, **a voice from heaven** said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

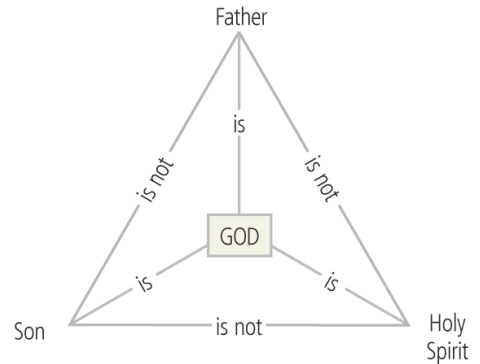
➤ One *What* and three *Who's*—The Shield of Faith

God is *one* in a certain sense and *three* in another sense.

- ➔ God is one is **essence**.
- ➔ God is three in **persons**.

J. I. Packer's explanation of what this means is extremely helpful!!

The basic assertion of this doctrine is that the unity of the one God is complex. The three personal "subsistences" (as they are called) are coequal and coeternal centers of self-awareness, each being "I" in relation to two who are "you" and each partaking of the full divine essence (the "stuff" of deity, if we may dare to call it that) along with the other two. They are not three roles played by one person (that is Modalism), nor are they three gods in a cluster (that is tritheism); the one God ("he") is also, and equally, "they," and "they" are always together and always cooperating, with the Father initiating, the Son complying, and the Spirit executing the will of both, which is his will also. This is the truth about God that was revealed through the words and works of Jesus, and that undergirds the reality of salvation as the New Testament sets it forth. (From *Concise Doctrine*)



humanity

Fallen and in Need of A Savior

People were created to be God's images, but are fallen, sinful, and in need of a Savior.

What is wrong with everybody?

- **God created everything good, but people chose to rebel against Him and sin!**

Romans 3:23 ...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. . .

- **God is a just judge over the entire world and must judge people for their sins, just as a human judge must sentence criminals according to their crimes.**

Romans 1:18-19 ¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- **Christ is God's Answer to our Sin Problem.**

Matthew 1:21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

John 3:17-18 ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

salvation

By Grace through Faith in Christ, who saved us through His Life, Death, and Resurrection.

What makes Jesus uniquely qualified to save people?

➔ **Jesus has always existed as God the Son, a member of the trinity.**

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word (*refers to Jesus*), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

➔ **Jesus became a man while remaining fully God.**

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

➔ **Because Jesus was God, He never sinned. Because Jesus was a man He could die for sinners.**

Hebrews 2:17-18 ¹⁷Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

➔ **Through faith in Jesus a person can be saved.**

Romans 3:23-25a ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified by his **grace** as a **gift**, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by **faith** . . .

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

➔ **We are justified by grace alone, through faith alone because of Christ alone.**

part 2: The Life

introduction

Part 2 of the Savior Core Course fills two needs: First, it is an introduction to the key ideas and practical disciplines needed for living a successful Christian life. Part 1 covered the Gospel and called for commitment. Part 2 will describe the kind of life such a commitment should lead to. Second, it helps each participant to learn more about the doctrine, structure and ministry philosophy of the Savior Community Church. We hope you will consider membership in our church, but we want you to be well informed about the kind of commitment membership entails.

Our Purpose

We're Called to Fulfill The Great Commission

Matthew 28:18-20 ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ **Go** therefore and ***make disciples*** of all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ **teaching** them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

One Command, Three Parts

The Great Commission contains a single command, to ***make disciples***.⁵

It describes the **process** of disciple making using three Greek participles:

➔ **Going**

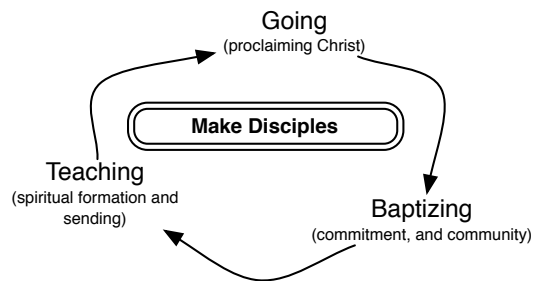
- As believers we should consider ourselves *sent!* We are called to be **missionaries!**

➔ **Baptizing**

- We are called to make a clear **commitment** to Christ and His **Church.**

➔ **Teaching**

- The teaching is the kind that transforms the life of the learner.



When we *promote* the process we are **making disciples**. When we are *going through* the process we call it **Spiritual Formation.**

We're Called to Live The Great Commandment

Matthew 22:36-39 ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ And he said to him, "You shall **love** the Lord your **God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall **love** your **neighbor** as yourself.

It describes the ***product*** of the disciple-making ***process***:

- ➔ Christians who love God, that is live lives of **Worship.**
- ➔ Christians who love People by living in **community** and serving in **ministry.**

⁵ In Greek it is in the imperative mood.

Love God, Live Community, Be Servants.

Based on what we just learned, we believe God wants to do three things in your life:

- He wants you to **love Him**
 - God wants you to get *saved, baptized* and *filled* with the *Holy Spirit* (1 Peter 2:1-2; Psalms 1:1-2; Psalm 19:7-11; Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 6:9-13; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 4:31; Ephesians 5:18).
 - God wants you to enjoy an intimate and transformational relationship with Him through prayer, Bible study and teaching, and other spiritual disciplines (Titus 2:11-15; Timothy 1:3-7).

- He wants you to **live in community**.
 - God wants you get connected with God's mechanism that He set up to caring for you, loving you, and teach you (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:6). That mechanism is his Church both local and universal.
 - He wants you in healthy mutually accountable relationships where you help and are helped to grow in Christ (Philippians 2:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Acts 2:42; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Galatians 6:2; Colossians 3:12-14).
 - He wants you to be plugged into a church where you use your gifts as a member.

- He wants you to **be a servant** like Jesus.
 - To use your time, talent, and treasure for your joy and His glory (2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Romans 12:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7).
 - To discern, develop and use the spiritual gifts He's given you.
 - To live a Missional life, that is to live as a missionary in your community, and among your family, friends and coworkers (Matthew 28:19-20).

Our purpose statement serves on several levels:

- **It's Our Purpose:** It's who we want to be.
 - Worshipers who live in authentic community using our gifts for the glory of God and the good of our neighbors.

- **It's Our Process:** It's what we want to **build** into people's lives.
 - Peter wrote, "As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being **built up** as a **spiritual house**, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:4-5)."

- **It's Our Programs:** It's what we do on a day-to-day basis in our church's ministries.

Our weekly ministry schedule is organized according to our purpose:

- **Love God @Sunday Worship.**
Vibrant worship where people encounter God, learn and apply His Word.

- **Live Community @Community Groups.**
Our Community Groups are designed to help us “Live Community” through forging deep, lasting, *relationships* for for encouragement, accountability, edification, instruction and prayer (Acts 2:42).

- **Be a Servant on a ministry team.**
Varied opportunities to engage in practical, concrete service for the expansion of God's kingdom--serving God, the church, the community and the world for God's glory.

part 2: The Life

section 1: Love God

In this section we'll cover topics related to statements 1-3 from our church Covenant:

- **Statement 1:** I will be faithful to God and His Word in the doctrine I believe and the life I live (Titus 2:11-15; Timothy 1:3-7).
- **Statement 2:** I will seek to be Baptized in and regularly filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4; Acts 4:31; Ephesians 5:18).
- **Statement 3:** I will devote myself to habits that lead to Spirit-driven transformation including prayer and Bible study (1 Peter 2:1-2; Psalms 1:1-2; Psalm 19:7-11; Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 6:9-13).

How Spiritual Formation Happens

God doesn't expect you to change yourself, but you must change!

Spiritual Formation

Salvation is a free gift. It is something that God gives us entirely by His grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone. He does not ask us to do anything in order to earn our justification. We need only believe in Jesus!

In one sense, we are ***instantly transformed*** when we give our lives to Christ. We become born again (or regenerate) sons and daughters of God. The Spirit of God makes us into new people. Paul wrote, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**. The old has passed away; behold, the **new** has come (2 Corinthians 5:17)."

In another sense we need to be ***progressively transformed***. Paul wrote to the Romans, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed** by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:1-2)." The process through which this transformation takes place is often called **Spiritual Formation**.⁶ Really, it is just a fancy way to talk about the process of **Sanctification**, or becoming more practically holy.

In his book *Renovation of the Heart*, Dallas Willard defines spiritual formation this way ...
 Spiritual formation for the Christian basically refers to the **Spirit-driven process** of forming the **inner world** of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the **inner being of Christ himself** (p. 22, *emphasis mine*).

Willard points out that while this will certainly result in **outward change**, it is first and foremost something that happens **internally in the heart**.

Work Out

Spiritual formation is possible, necessary, and delightful, but it is **not automatic or entirely passive**.

Paul put it this way,

Philippians 2:12-13 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out** your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is **God** who **works in you**, both to **will** and to **work** for his good pleasure.

He doesn't say "work for" your salvation as if to earn it, but "work out" your salvation—two very different things!⁷ He also emphasizes that as we work out, we take it seriously because it is God

⁶ The biblical term is sanctification—1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, your *sanctification*.

⁷ Salvation is free for anyone who puts his or her faith in Christ, but once we are in Christ we are to devote ourselves to working it out. We do it with fear and trembling not because we fear to lose it, but because we fear to take it for granted and neglect the incredibly valuable gift we have been given.

who “works in” us, giving us the desire (“will”) and the power (“work”—*the Greek word here speaks of God enabling and empowering us to do it*).

Basic Training

Paul writes,

1 Timothy 4:7-8 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather **train yourself for godliness**; for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

Becoming like Christ requires diligence, and hard work. Paul can actually talk about it as training! The work he uses means “*to train in gymnastic discipline*”; hence, *to exercise* in anything, *train to use*.⁸

Spiritual formation requires discipline and effort! While God makes the changes, they don’t come without hard work on your part!

- It may involve waking up early or staying up late to pray.
- It involves sitting, kneeling, pacing before the Lord while maintaining concentration.
- It involves rejecting physical hunger (*for occasional fasting*) to develop spiritual hunger for Christ.
- It involves the discipline of cracking open an ancient book (the Bible) that is sometimes hard to understand and working hard to see how it applies to your life.
- It involves the discipline of listening as you’re taught, even if the message or lesson is longer than you hoped it would be! (After all, we do not gather to be entertained, but instructed!)
- It involves working hard to make your schedule work *with* instead of *against* the mission God has called you live out so that you can be there for your brothers and sisters and allow them to be there for you in fellowship.

Clear Thinking Helps Us Avoid Externalism!

Externalism is the spiritual equivalent of cleaning the outside of a cup. It equates spiritual progress, maturity and formation with behavior only. True spiritual formation is about having Christ formed in us. Moral behavior is commendable and important, but it can often mask a lack of true internal transformation. Jesus was strongly opposed to those who practiced Externalism!

Matthew 23:25-28 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the **outside of the cup** and the plate, but **inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence**.²⁶ You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.²⁷ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness.²⁸ So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Willard illustrates how trying to merely change our behavior without an internal change of the heart can leave us frustrated and essentially unchanged:

Love, we hear, is patient and kind (1 Corinthians 13:4). Then we mistakenly try to *be loving* by *acting* patiently and kindly—and quickly fail. We should always do the best we

⁸ Mounce’s Analytical Lexicon.

can in action, of course: but little progress is to be made in that arena until we advance in love itself—the genuine inner readiness and longing to secure the good of others. Until we make significant progress there, our patience and kindness will be shallow and short-lived at best (Willard, 24).

The Product of the Spirit

What we are looking for is not a humanly derived product, but Spirit-produced fruit!

Galatians 5:22-24 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

The list of virtues is the *fruit* of the Spirit. It is *His product, His crop*, something *He grows and brings into existence*. It is the Spirit's work.

Thus we can say that all of our work does nothing more than put us in a position to **be** changed.

To understand the process of spiritual formation we need to hold two ideas together:

- *First*, Spiritual formation is something **God accomplishes within us!** It's not to be had through formula-based methods or mere human behavior modification.
- *Second*, Spiritual formation nonetheless requires the application of **reliable methods** to place us on a path in which Christ can do His work and be formed within.

So we can conclude that spiritual formation is **organic, living and relational**, but it is also **reliable** and strangely **predictable**.

The Main Points:

1. **God** changes people who **present** themselves to Him. (Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:22–23)
2. God changes our **will** and empowers us to **work**. (Philippians 2:12–13)

The Basic Disciplines and the Glory Of God

We are now going to talk about two of the most important of those habits known as spiritual disciplines. More will follow under the “Live Community” section.

God Changes us through Prayer

The Glory of God becomes Our Resource through Prayer

The Purpose of Prayer

“And those who know Your name will put their trust in You,
For You, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.”

Psalms 9:10

“You can be undisciplined in a lot of things in your life, but in this area of prayer and seeking God you cannot be undisciplined.”

-David Wilkerson

What is Prayer?

Simply put, prayer is **communicating with God**.

God is sovereign and in control of all things, yet in His sovereignty He has chosen to work in response to our prayers!

Through prayer we express our weakness and need for God.

Paul wrote, “For when I am weak, then I am strong.” We may think of prayer as a tangible expression of weakness before the Lord. In it we express our knowledge of our need for Him and our willing desire that He accomplish His will in our lives. Being weak means being aware of the utter feebleness of the human ability to accomplish spiritual things. Being weak before God in prayer is our way of accessing God’s power to “put to death” the sin within that is ever trying to get a hold of our hearts (Romans 8:13) and destroy our lives (Romans 6:23).

The Parts of Prayer

Prayer Must be God-Centered!

What is prayer really about? The Lord’s Prayer gives us a **God-Centered** Model for our prayers. It contains an address followed by 6 petitions. Each part represents areas of emphasis that we can use to outline our prayers.

Jesus Gave us a Model Prayer to Follow

Matthew 6:9-13 ⁹ Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread, ¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

How would Jesus’ disciples have used this prayer?

- ➞ The prayer was meant to be a **pattern** or outline around which to **improvise** our own prayers.

This Prayer Pattern Shows us What We Should Really Be Focused On

- ☞ Delight in God's Transforming **Glory**
- ☞ Depend upon God's Transcendent **Greatness**

The Disciples' Prayer

The Address: "Our Father in heaven"

- ☞ The Idea: God is at one time our intimate heavenly Father and the illimitably powerful Creator of the universe. Know Who you are talking to!

Petition #1 "Hallowed be your name."

- ☞ The Idea: Pray for God to be treated with high and holy regard.

Petition #2 "Your kingdom come."

- ☞ The Idea: Pray for God to save, fill, and heal, and for Christ to return!
 - The kingdom of God refers to God's sovereign, and dynamic rule which is at a **present** reality and also a **future** hope. Christ is ruling as king now, but He will exert His **full authority** when He returns.
 - We pray that He would powerfully work in and through us to make His influence experienced as fully as possible right now. Where Christ's rule is felt people are saved, lives are transformed, and communities are impacted for the glory of God.

Petition #3 "Your will be done. On earth as it is in heaven."

- ☞ The Idea: Pray for God to do whatever He wants in your life and your world despite the devil and sin.

Petition #4 "Give us this day our daily bread."

- ☞ The Idea: Remember and demonstrate your dependence upon God for your needs. Let go of worry and pride!
- ☞ F.F. Bruce makes the following comments:
 - The word 'bread' here sums up all that we really need for our earthly existence. In view of the foregoing petitions, this is a supplication asking God continually to supply us with the material necessities of life so that we may most effectively sanctify His name, labor for the coming of His kingdom and do His will on earth. [In it] we confess our utter dependence on God and look to Him in faith and love to supply us with all things which we really need to enable us to live according to His will.

Petition #5 "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

- ☞ The Idea: Pray for forgiveness as you recognize God as the one you are morally and spiritually accountable to!
 - Debt here refers to a moral debt caused by sin. It is our guilt before God for our actions. Here we are affirming our **moral obligation** to God. He is the One we answer to as our Judge and turn to as our Savior.
 - In gratitude and humility we extend to others the grace He has given us.

Petition #6 “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

- ☞ The Idea: Pray for God to keep you from and have power over sin!
 - ‘Lead not’ possibly has the idea of, “let us not fall into,” temptation. The word temptation seems not to mean a temptation to sin, but rather the idea of a test or a trial that would cause us to stumble in our faith.
 - In this prayer we acknowledge our weakness before God, and invite Him to be our strength in sustaining us and keeping us. We show our trust in Him to keep us from stumbling in times of testing.

The Disciple’s Prayer Gives us a Clear Focus in Prayer!

- ☞ The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd petitions, are focused on God receiving **glory and honor**.
- ☞ The 4th recognizes our **dependence** upon Him as our sole provider.
- ☞ The 5th as the one we are **morally accountable** to.
- ☞ The 6th as the one who is our **spiritual strength and sustainer**.

Thoughtfully working through the Lord’s prayer can feed heart and guard it from sin:

- ☞ Calling on God as **Father** reminds us that He is near and loving (6:9).
- ☞ Calling on Him as our Father in **Heaven** reminds us that He rules and is in control (6:9).
- ☞ Praying that God’s name be **hallowed** helps us root out idolatry before it takes root in our hearts (6:9).
- ☞ Praying that God’s **kingdom come** reminds us that we are to live on mission for the glory of God and not for our prosperity (6:10).
- ☞ Praying for God’s **will to be done** reminds us to release control and submit to His plan for our lives freely and without hesitation just as His will is done freely in heaven (6:10).
- ☞ Praying for our **daily bread** reminds us that we trust God our provider for everything we need and that we may not need as much as we think (6:11)
- ☞ Praying for **forgiveness** as we forgive helps us to keep short accounts with the Lord and reminds us that those who owe sin-debts to us should be freely and regularly released from the heart (6:12)
- ☞ Praying for **deliverance from evil** reminds us that we are bent toward rebellion and sin and need God to constantly deliver us from the sin we gravitate toward (6:13)

Power in Prayer

Praying Involves the Whole Trinity

- ☞ We Pray to the Father (Generally)
- ☞ We Pray through the Son (Only)
 - **Romans 5:1-2** Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
 - **Hebrews 4:14-16** ¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet

without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

☞ We Pray **by** the Spirit's Power

The Spirit Helps Us Pray!⁹

- ☞ **Galatians 4:6** And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"
- ☞ **Ephesians 6:18** And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.
- ☞ **Romans 8:15** For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"
- ☞ **Romans 8:26** Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

The Priority of Prayer

The unfulfilling prayer life.

Many Christians find prayer boring, difficult, and unsatisfying. As a result, they don't do it as much as they really need to. This leads to feelings of guilt and frustration. We know that God wants to do great things in and through us, but we know it won't happen unless we get focused and disciplined in prayer!

So why don't people pray as they know they need to? Lack of discipline? Lack of devotion? Lack of spiritual commitment? Perhaps a bit of all three, but in general (*I think*) people don't pray because **they don't get much out of it**. If they did, they would do it more and with greater passion.

Why don't they get much out of it? Imbalance seems to be a big part of it. We find that a lot of prayerless people tend to emphasize one or more of the parts of prayer to the exclusion of the others.

- Some pray primarily for personal comfort, seeking intimacy with God above all other things.
- Others pray for spiritual power, seeking greater manifestations of various spiritual gifts in their lives.
- Others see prayer as an extension of a song service, all singing and praise.

Still others have an unhealthy understanding of prayer all together. Some see prayer as that quick thing you do before you get down to studying the Bible. Other have an incomplete understanding of God's grace and use prayer as an opportunity to beat up on themselves, always pleading for forgiveness they have already received.

**The fulfilling prayer life: Feel like you should. Get what you need. See things change.
Give God a chance to be glorified in every area of your life!**

⁹ See Appendix C for a discussion of the doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

- Prayer is for comfort.
- Prayer is for intimacy with God.
- Prayer is for making things happen.
- Prayer is for fighting against the powers of darkness (spiritual warfare).
- Prayer is confession and soul-searching.
- Prayer is for meditation and hearing from God's Spirit.
- Prayer is for getting answers to your questions.
- Prayer is for making the impossible happen in cooperation with the will of God.

Pray thoughtfully and intentionally:

Some people have a strange way of disconnecting their day-to-day life from their prayer life.

- Don't deny your worries, pray through them.
- Don't complain about the devil or fear, pray against him.
- Don't fear the future, pray God bring His plans into reality.
- Don't entertain hopelessness, but believe in the sovereignty of God by calling upon Him to act.
- Don't hunger. Eat! Taste and see that the Lord is good!
- Don't live in confusion! Go ask, mediate, seek, find, know and walk through the door.
- Don't fight distractions! Organize your life in the Lord's presence (i.e. pray for the mundane things on your mind, those little issues and problems that perplex you.)

Create Prayer Projects and watch for God to Work:

- Whatever you are worrying about is a prayer project.
- Anything in your life that you are chronically unhappy about.
- Areas of personal weakness and sin.
- People who need Jesus.
- Your own love for God and His word.

The Point: Be intentional and focused in prayer and you will see God do incredible things. Be patient, persistent, and trusting.

The Practice of Prayer

If Prayer Is So Important, You Should Try It

Get Organized

- Pray **First**
- Pray **Frequently**—Every day!
- Time is not an issue, only our **priorities**!

God Changes us through Bible Study

Four Ways to Take In the Bible

What is the Bible?

The Word of God

☞ **Tim 3:16** All Scripture is breathed out by God . . .

What does the Bible tell us?

☞ It tells us what is true, that is what to believe about God

2 Timothy 3:15. . . . and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you **wise for salvation** through **faith in Christ Jesus**.

☞ It tells us how we should live as believers

Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

☞ To put it another way

The Bible is sufficient to tell us all that we need to know about God and salvation, and all we need to do to live in a Christ-like manner, thus. . .

- ◆ We should turn to the Bible to learn correct **DOCTRINE** (what you believe)—*orthodoxy*.
- ◆ We should turn to the Bible to learn godly **ETHICS** (how you behave)—*orthopraxy*.

Four Ways to Take the Bible In

First, Take in by Hearing

Easy Listening: Hearing via Radio, Podcasts, Vodcasts etc.

We are fortunate to have access to endless solid Biblical content online, (to a less extent) on radio, and (to an even lesser extent) on television.

2 Cautions

☞ **Be Discerning:**

So much garbage is available on TV, radio, and internet! The large majority of high visibility "Christian" ministries produce terrible content, so be discerning. Sure, we can say that nobody is perfect and that God can use it. Still, we have to ask: why

would you fill your ears, head, and heart with corrupt content (prosperity Gospel, liberal emerging, weak self-help stuff) when we have access to extremely rich, high-quality teaching (www.Desiringgod.org, www.marshallchurch.org, our podcast at www.SaviorCC.com and many others)?

➔ **Your radio/computer/iPod is not a church!**

We will talk about the absolute spiritual necessity of being connected and committed to a local church. For now, let's just say that it is far more beneficial for you to hear solid Biblical teaching in the context of an accountable, on-mission, community of believers than to listen anonymously to strangers (regardless of how skilled they may be)!

Hardcore Soul-Construction Listening: Hearing at Sunday Morning Preaching and Community Group

Whitney writes, "For most of us, disciplining ourselves to hear God's Word means developing the practice of steadfastly attending a New Testament church where the Word of God is faithfully preached."¹⁰ Merely attending, of course, does not mean that we are taking in the Scriptures in a transformational way!

How should I listen?

Paul's exhortation to Timothy gives us an important insight into what we should do when we gather for worship and teaching:

1 Timothy 4:13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.

You need to ask yourself: If my pastor has been called to proclaim the Scriptures with exhortation and teaching, what does that mean for me?

It means, active listening.

We belong to an entertainment culture that implicitly teaches us to passively participate in all forms of media. Because of this, we are conditioned to sit back, wait for something to peak our interest, and see if anything exciting happens.

This may be okay when you're watching a play, or a movie, or a TV show, but this kind of approach to Biblical teaching is sinful in its apathy.

Luke 11:28 But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

What should I listen for?

2 Timothy 3:16–17 helps us to understand the kinds of things we can expect to "profit" from when we apply ourselves to actively hearing the Word of God preached and taught.

¹⁰ Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, (L 217-219)

2 Timothy 3:16–17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for **teaching**, for **reproof**, for **correction**, and for **training in righteousness**,¹⁷ that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

- **Teaching**: Listen for the exposition and explanation of doctrinal truth that will expand your understanding of, appreciation of, enjoyment of, and affection for God.
- **Reproof**: Listen for Biblical truth that corrects false ideas you have about God, yourself, and the nature of reality in general (i.e. errors in doctrine).
- **Correction**: Listen for God to speak to you through your teachers regarding sinful behaviors and attitudes that you need to repent of and have God change in your life.
- **Training in Righteousness**: Listen for instruction on how people who have been born again should live in Christ in a way that truly glorifies God.

Second, Take in by Thoughtfully Reading

I only need to eat once a week, right? (No.)

Human souls can no more stock up the grace of God than human stomachs can hold food for next week's energy and nourishment. We need to be constantly refreshed with truth. The Bible describes us as weak and in constant need of grace. The nature of the human condition is one of spiritual deterioration. Even with the presence of God's Spirit encouraging us within, we nonetheless benefit from a steady diet the truth of God's Word.¹¹

Three Practical Ways to Succeed in Regular Reading:¹²

1. Make the Time

- The Bible is a big book, but don't be scared.

The Bible may seem huge, but in reality the Bible can be read in as little as **70 hours**! That is remarkable when you realize that just a month's fast from television would cover that for most Christians! (Feeling guilty?:-) Even if you read 3 times slower than the person who could do it in 70 hours, you could read the entire Bible in a year if you took just over a half an hour a day to read! That isn't much of a commitment considering all of the benefits of Bible in-take that we already discussed.

Wherever/however you organize yourself (to-do lists, calendar, sticky notes), **set up a reminder** to spend some time in God's Word every day (along with prayer!).

Make sure that it is a good time! If your Bible keeps putting you to sleep, choose a better time of day when you are less likely to nod off. If you keep getting interrupted, try and find those moments, few as they may be, when you will be left alone. Put some thought into making this time work for you!

- Don't Have Time?

¹¹ Based on a quote from D.L. Moody. Whitney, L 272-274.

¹² These are also based on Whitney, chapter 1.

Really? Really? Really? Could this be a matter of priority? Could it be a matter of faith? Considering the amount of time you spend on Facebook, Twitter, TV, video games, reading magazines/newspapers, and so on. It would seem that claiming to not have enough time means one of two things:

One: **You lack faith in the Word of God.** Jesus taught us Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth (John 17:17).

Or

Two: **You don't have sanctification as a priority in your life** (since it comes from taking in God's Word). Remember, out of order priorities indicate idolatries!

Either way, you need to repent of these things and ask God to grant you **faith** and/or **change your priorities** (idolatries) at the heart level! Rejoice, because God is ready, willing, and able to do both!

2. **Get a Plan**

➡ Start with Jesus

Many Christians make the mistake of assuming that they should read their Bible from beginning to end. Reading ALL of the Bible is great, but that doesn't mean it is necessary, or even helpful to read it in order. Some books are easier and more immediately beneficial than others.

Some good books to start with include the Gospel of John, Romans, Ephesians, Genesis, Exodus, Psalms, Proverbs and many others. If you start with Genesis and just read you will likely run out of gas somewhere around Leviticus. Every word of the Bible is God's Word and is profitable, but some books contain revelation that is easier to grasp and apply when you start out.

➡ Use a Bible Reading Plan

Numerous Bible reading plans are available online and in study Bibles. Most will take you through the Bible in a year. My favorites are ones that allow you to read from different portions of the Bible on the same day.

If you are slow reader, or easily get distracted you may benefit from reading along with an audio Bible. The ESV Study Bible Online has free audio of every passage in the Bible. Simply go to a chapter and click play. Awesome.

*Through the New Testament in 30 Days*¹³

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Matthew 1-9 | 17. Acts 22-28 |
| 2. Matthew 10-15 | 18. Romans 1-8 |
| 3. Matthew 16-22 | 19. Romans 9-16 |
| 4. Matthew 23-28 | 20. 1 Corinthians 1-9 |
| 5. Mark 1-8 | 21. 1 Corinthians 10-16 |
| 6. Mark 9-16 | 22. 2 Corinthians 1-13 |
| 7. Luke 1-6 | 23. Galatians - Ephesians |
| 8. Luke 7-11 | 24. Philippians - 2
Thessalonians |
| 9. Luke 12-18 | 25. 1 Timothy - Philemon |
| 10. Luke 19-24 | 26. Hebrews |
| 11. John 1-7 | 27. James - 2 Peter |
| 12. John 8-13 | 28. 1 John - 3 John |
| 13. John 14-22 | 29. Revelation 1-11 |
| 14. Acts 1-7 | 30. Revelation 12-22 |
| 15. Acts 8-14 | |
| 16. Acts 15-21 | |

3. Find a Point of Focus Every Day

Look for at least one "take away" every time you read the Bible. Focus in on a word, phrase, verse or common theme to contemplate, pray through, and return to at different points during the day. Ask God to help you understand and apply this truth to your life in a way that would bring Him glory and bring you deeper joy in Him. God calls us to engage in this kind of activity:

James 1:22–25 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵ But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

The attitudes and awareness we discussed above also apply here.

Many Christians treat the Bible like they would a psychic (not that Christians would ever dream of seeing a demonically empowered psychic). They are looking for every page to speak a sort of prophetic word to their current circumstance.

God can certainly do that, but this kind of approach distracts us from things God may be wanting to reveal to us--things we may not at all be expecting! Before you read, ask God to open your eyes to behold wonderful things in His Word--things you wouldn't see without His help. Ask Him to penetrate any resistance you might be prone to put up when He wants to convict, correct, or even comfort your heart.

¹³ From Rick Warren's Class 201. A number of Bible reading plans are available at esv.org. The ESV Study Bible also has a *Bible in Year* program in the back.

Third, Take in by Studying

There is a time to go deeper.

While not everyone will become a Bible scholar, we should all make some time for deeper study and investigation of the Scriptures. Here are a few simple tips for doing better in depth Bible study.

Get a Good Translation

Any of the following are great translations: **ESV**, **NIV**, **NASB**, and so on.

We strongly recommend the **ESV** (English Standard Version) for its accuracy, readability, and beauty. It is what is known as an *essentially literal* or *word-for-word* translation, yet it was done in such a way that readability and beauty of language were maintained.

Move from big picture, to the details, back to the big picture and then bring it home!

Five Things to Give Attention to in Bible Study.¹⁴

1. Who was the writer and to whom was he writing?
2. What was the cultural/historical setting of the writer and his audience?
3. What was the purpose for the author's writing and why was he saying it the way he said it?
4. What was the meaning of the words used at the time of the writing?
5. What does this mean for believers in the contemporary church?

Get your hands on some good books and software.

How And Where Can We Find The Answers?

The first four questions mentioned above are easily answered by consulting any of the following resources:

- A Good Study Bible, such as the ESV Study Bible (Also online, for Blackberry, iPhone, Android, Mac, and PC.)
- *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*, by Fee and Stuart
- The New Bible Dictionary, *Third Edition* (Douglas)
(See the **Appendix B** for more book recommendations!)

Check out Appendix C for a discussion of how to study words.

The Critical Step of Application

Remember where we started. We study God's Word because it is truth and truth sanctifies us for our joy and God's glory.

John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

¹⁴ From Christian Scripture, by David S. Dockery, p. 153.

Whitney writes, “the truth is, your growth in Godliness is greatly affected by the quality of your Bible intake. . . . If we settle for a poor quality of hearing, reading, and studying God’s Word, we severely restrict the main flow of God’s sanctifying grace toward us.”¹⁵

Six Questions to Help Us Apply God’s Word (from Roy Zuck):

- Is there any **example** for me to follow?
- Is there any **command** for me to obey?
- Is there any **error** for me to avoid?
- Is there any **sin** for me to forsake?
- Is there any **promise** for me to claim?
- Is there any new **thought** about God Himself?

Fourth, Take in by Meditating, Memorizing, and Internalizing

We come back to the point.

Our goal is not just to get into the Word, but to get God’s Word into us in a way that keeps it before us. Ultimately, our Bible study is about worshiping, adoring, and enjoying God more.

Whitney discusses the relationship between memorization and meditation.

One of the most underrated benefits of memorizing Scripture is that it provides fuel for meditation. When you have memorized a verse of Scripture, you can meditate on it anywhere at anytime during the day or night. If you love God’s Word enough to memorize it, you can become like the write of Psalm 119:97, who explained, “Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.”¹⁶

Check out www.fighterverses.com for a great list of verses to memorize based on John Piper’s Fighter Verse program.

¹⁵ Whitney, (L 335-41)

¹⁶ Ibid., L 397-404.

part 2: The Life

section 2: Live Community

In this section we'll cover statements 4-8 from our church Covenant:

- **Statement 4:** I will respect and follow those who lead (Hebrews 13:17).
- **Statement 5:** I will welcome Biblical correction and discipline when I sin, and respect the direction of the church with regard to the discipline of others (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:6).
- **Statement 6:** I will seek to be a source of encouragement and help to the whole church (1 Thessalonians 5:11; Philippians 2:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14).
- **Statement 7:** I will regularly attend worship and other meetings (Hebrews 10:24-25).
- **Statement 8:** I will seek out ways to connect with and serve through Community Groups and other ministries. (Acts 2:42; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Galatians 6:2; Colossians 3:12-14).

God Changes us through Community

The Church and the Glory Of God

We discussed the need to cultivate spiritual habits in order to live a joy-filled, God-glorifying life. In addition to that we need to cultivate spiritual relationships on the context of Christ's Church.

What is *the Church*?

When we speak of *the Church* (with a capital C) we usually mean the Church universal, that is all of the people who ever have and ever will be members of the body of Christ. We can speak more specifically of the Visible, invisible, and local church.

Visible, Invisible, and Local

- **The invisible Church: what God sees**
- **The visible Church: what we see**
That is the Church consisting of everyone who identifies with it, both genuine believers and believers in name only.
- **The local church: where we worship, grow, & serve**

What constitutes a legitimate local church?

Gerry Breshears & Mark Driscoll offer a great definition of a legit local church:

“The local church is a community of confessing believers in Jesus Christ who obey scripture by organizing under qualified leadership, gather regularly for preaching and worship, and scatter to evangelize and care for people everywhere. They observe the Biblical [ordinances] of Baptism and Communion, are unified by the Spirit for mission in the world, and disciplined to live out the Great Commandment and the Great Commission to the glory of God.” – Gerry Breshears & Mark Driscoll

6 Marks of a Genuine Local Church

First, The **Bible** is trusted in and preached faithfully.

Paul tells Timothy (a pastor), “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching (2 Timothy 4:1-3).”

To another Pastor he writes, “But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine (Titus 2:1).”

Second, Biblical **ordinances** are administered.

We covered the Biblical basis for this in detail in part 1. Packer writes, “Reception into the visible church is part of what being baptized means; confirmation of one's place in it is part of what

The First Two are Marks of Authenticity: *what can rightly be considered the basic requirements for a group to be considered a church.*

J.I. Packer notes, the Reformers concluded that two things in particular helped to distinguished the *true* church. Thus we call these *Marks of Authenticity*.

sharing in the Lord's Supper means. Right use of the sacraments involves an element of church discipline whereby professions of faith are tested and public behavior is reviewed."¹⁷

Third, The Local Church is Organized under Biblical leadership.

We can be flexible on the details, but that there are qualified leaders overseeing, teaching, and pastoring the flock is one of the things that distinguish a local church from any other Christian gathering (Acts 14:23; 20:28). In the New Testament the word "elders" denote the pastoral leaders of a local congregation. Packer writes, "**the elders** (presbyters: Greek: presbuteroi) are also called "**shepherds**" (Greek: poimenes, or "pastors," Eph. 4:11) and **overseers** (Greek: episkopoi, or "bishops," Acts 20:28, cf. v. 17; Titus 1:5, cf. v. 7), and are spoken of in other terms that express **leadership** (Rom. 12:8; 1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24). The congregation, for its part, is to acknowledge the God-given authority of its leaders and **follow the lead they give** (Heb. 13:17)."

- ☞ **Hebrews 13:17** Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.
- ☞ **1 Thessalonians 5:12** We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you
- ☞ **Titus 1:6-9** ⁶ if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. ⁷ For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, ⁸ but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. ⁹ He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

The Last Four are Marks of Health: *what we should expect to see in a functioning New Testament church.*

Packer writes, "Ideally, a Christian congregation will exhibit other marks of its identity alongside these minimal two." We do not want to excel at meeting the minimal requirements! We want to be healthy and vibrant. For that we need to have a few other things in place if we are to be faithful to Christ and the New Testament model for His local churches.

Fourth, The Local Church exercises discipline.

*When we talk about discipline we are simply focusing on the need to uphold Christian standards.*¹⁸ Church discipline is about more than a judicial process by which immoral people get in trouble in the church (though that is part of it!). In fact we could say that our entire concept of membership is related to the idea of discipline in that it assumes the local church is an identifiable group of people who willingly submit to one another to be held accountable to Christ.

- ☞ *The foundation for all discipline is the Word of God.*

Becoming a member means that you want to live for Christ, and thus welcome being **taught, reprovved, corrected** and **trained** via the Scriptures. Paul tells Timothy that the Scriptures are "profitable" for these four things. This is of course true in general, but when he writes it to Timothy he does it to one who serves as a pastor. Pastor Timothy is to use the Scripture both to teach and reprove (positive instruction); to correct and train (discipline). Thus discipline is built into the pulpit of a solid church.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

- ☞ *The entire church participates in discipline.*

We see modeled in the New Testament that the members of a local body are all participants in the discipline of those members who refuse to repent of sin. There are numerous New Testament examples of instances where the church was called upon to act as one with regard to a member who fell into sin and refused to repent (1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15; Titus 1:10-14; 3:9-11). We are not talking about casually embarrassing people who are struggling to “work out” their salvation. We are talking about those who don’t care what Scripture says and persist stubbornly in sin. Such people need to be corrected or dismissed. Again, this applies to members—professed, baptized believers who enter into our church covenant.

Fifth, The Local Church Gathers for Worship and instruction.

Hebrews 10:24-25 ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Sixth, The Local Church is on Christ’s Mission.

Clearly it was Christ who organized the Church. He did it with His mission in mind. We will talk about the mission of the church in detail in another section, but for now . . .

- ☞ **The Great Commission: Matthew 28:18-20** ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and *make disciples* of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
- ☞ **The Great Commandment: Matthew 22:36-39** ³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

A final word about local churches.

Everything we just described has one basic presupposition behind it: a local church has an identifiable group of members. However they did, the local congregations that developed in the first century had a clearly defined set of leaders, and apparently members. We follow the spirit of that model by asking people to commit to membership.

Membership requirements at the Savior Community Church

*Our current church bylaws call for the following:*¹⁹

- You are a Christian (*that is a born again believer in Jesus Christ*)
- You have been Baptized in water (*believer’s or adult baptism*)
- You seek to live a consistent Christian live.
- You are in harmony with our church’s doctrinal statement.
- You are willing to give sacrificially as the Lord enables you.
- You regularly attend our meetings and events.

¹⁹ The relevant section of our MANY bylaws are paraphrased here.

In addition we ask people do the following prior to membership:

- Attend the Savior Core Course.
- Sign our church covenant (covered at the end of this section of the S-Core).
- Complete a brief interview with the Pastor or Church Council member (totally stress-free!).

God Changes us through Relationships

Some Things Can't Be Done Alone

Fellowship Is Essential for Your Spiritual Health

What is Fellowship?

- “Fellowship” translates the Greek word, *koinonia*, which is defined by Louw & Nida as “an association involving **close** mutual **relations** and **involvement**.”
- The early church was wholeheartedly devoted to fellowship. It centered around at least 3 other things:
 - **Acts 2:42** And they devoted themselves to the apostles' **teaching** and **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and the **prayers**.

Some of the "One Anothers" of Fellowship²⁰

God Calls Us To . . .

- **Serve** one another
 - **Galatians 5:13** For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.
- **Accept** one another
 - **Romans 15:7** Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.
- **Forgive** one another
 - **Colossians 3:13** bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
- **Greet** one another
 - **Romans 16:16** Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.
- **Bear** one another's burdens
 - **Galatians 6:2** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.
- Be **Affectionate** toward one another
 - **Romans 12:10** Love one another with brotherly affection . . .
- **Honor** one another
 - **Romans 12:10** . . . Outdo one another in showing honor.
- **Teach** one another

²⁰ “One Anothers” from Rick Warren’s CLASS 201.

- **Romans 15:14** I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.
- ➔ **Submit** to one another
 - **Ephesians 5:21** Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (NIV)
- ➔ **Encourage** one another
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:11** Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

*If it's important for you to do these things for others,
then it is important for others to do them for you too!*

All of this is because Christians are intimately, spiritually connected to “One Another”!

- **Romans 12:5** so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members **one of another**.
- **Ephesians 4:25** Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members **one of another**.

Some Things Can't Be Done As A Crowd

Strong Communities Are Built Upon Intimate Smaller Groups

What's A Small Group?

- ➔ Our Definition: Any group of 12 or less people who meet regularly to study, pray, eat, and encourage each other in Christ.
- ➔ Our small groups are known as Community Groups
- ➔ The Purpose of Community Groups at SaviorCC:

Our Community Groups are designed to help us “Live Community” through forging deep, lasting, relationships for encouragement, accountability, edification, instruction and prayer (Acts 2:42).

Community Groups at Savior

- ➔ A community group functions as a microcosm of our church.
 - We gather together during the week to eat, pray for each other and show hospitality. We take significant time to discuss the passage of the Bible that was taught during the previous Sunday worship service.
- ➔ The priority of Community Groups at Savior
 - At Savior Community Church we consider participation in Community Groups among the most important things that we do. Considering everything we said about the local church earlier, it is impossible to truly be healthy member (that is, *in the biblical sense of being a part of the body*) without developing and maintaining strong, intimate relationships with other believers, especially from your own church.



- Because of this, we work hard to keep our weekly schedule light so that more people can participate in Community Groups.
- A Community Group requires two things:
 - A **host**
 - A **leader**
 - The leader and the host are responsible for gathering and maintaining their own group!

Make a Commitment

- Join a Community Group
- Become a **member**.

part 2: The Life

section 3: Be Servants

In this Section we'll cover statements 9-12 in our church Covenant:

- **Statement 9:** I will give regularly, joyfully, generously, and sacrificially (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).
- **Statement 10:** I will seek God's direction and help to discern and develop my spiritual gifts so that I can use them to serve in ministry to *enlarge* and *strengthen* His Church, both local and universal (Romans 12:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7).
- **Statement 11:** I will be a godly representative of Christ to those outside of His Church (Romans 12:9; Romans 12:21).
- **Statement 12:** I will share the joy of the Gospel with the lost by living as a missionary to my community (Matthew 28:19-20).

You are Gifted to Serve

1 Peter 4:10-11 gives us some very clear information concerning the gifts of the Spirit.

- ☞ **1 Peter 4:10-11** ¹⁰ As **each** has received a gift, **use it to serve** one another, as **good stewards** of God's **varied grace**: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies- **in order that** in everything **God may be glorified** through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Every Christian has received a gift. (v.10—“ each has received a gift”)

What is a gift?

- ☞ It is something that is given “as the result of a gracious act of God”.²¹ The word is a derivative of the word for “grace” in Greek.
- ☞ It is “a concrete manifestation of grace in the form of extraordinary powers given to individuals”²².
- ☞ He makes a point of relating it to God’s “varied grace,” highlighting the fact that God gives everyone different gifts and abilities.

Gifts are meant to be used in service to the Church and its mission. (v.10—“ use it to serve one another”)

- ☞ What is our Mission?
 - **Matthew 28:19-20** ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

You need to be a good steward or manager or your gifts. (v.10—“ as good stewards of God's varied grace”)

- ☞ You can use your gifts incorrectly or not at all. Do either and you are a poor steward of God’s gifts! As believers we must strive to use our gifts for the building up of the church and the advancement of the Gospel.
 - **Romans 12:4-6** ⁴ For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them . . .

God is glorified when we use His gifts by the power of the Holy Spirit (v.11 —“ in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ”)

- ☞ It is imperative that we develop a sincere confidence that God wants to use *us* to do great things— *things that bring His glory into clear focus for us and others.*

²¹ Friberg lexicon.

²² Ibid.

Gifts are Meant to be Used

You Should Do What You Enjoy and are Good at for the Lord!

God doesn't want you to be frustrated and failing!

- ☞ Being gifted means being **good** at something.
- ☞ Being gifted means **enjoying** what you do.
- ☞ Being gifted means doing what you are **passionate** about.
- ☞ Being gifted means **succeeding!**

The Point: While sacrificial service is often called for, each of us should focus our energy on doing what God has called, gifted, and given us a passion to do.

Three Dangers to Avoid²³

- ☞ The danger of “gift **projection**”.
 - Gift projection happens when a person who is gifted in one area expects everyone to be gifted the same way and has a condemning attitude when they aren't gifted in the same way.
- ☞ The danger of **disobedience**.
 - Some gifts correspond directly to universal “Christian responsibilities” such as evangelism.²⁴ Not having the gift of evangelism does not excuse a person from the universal Christians responsibility to share the faith and be a missionary.
- ☞ The danger of gift **worship**.
 - Giftedness does not necessarily equal qualification. Jesus made this clear in Matthew 7:
 - **Matthew 7:21-23** “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ ²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’
 - The point we want to make here is that giftedness does not necessarily determine what a person should or should not do! There are other factors including spiritual maturity, personal character and so on. Desire and ability are not the only criteria for determining where a person fits in the ministry of our church!

8 Steps to Discovering Your Gifts

Step 1: Open Your Heart to God in Prayer

²³ The first two dangers are from Christian A. Schwarz “The 3 Colors of Ministry”, pp. 48f.

²⁴ Ibid.

- Let God do something new in your life.

Step 2: Be Ready to Apply Your Gifts

- God gave you your gifts so that you could help build the church!
- How many hours are you willing to put into developing your gifts per week?

Step 3: Get Informed

- You can't identify your gifts without some knowledge of what kinds of gifts there are.

Step 4: Begin with what You Enjoy

- Reject the idea that you have to hate what you're doing in order for it to be *real* ministry.

Step 5: Experiment as Much as Possible

- Not sure what you enjoy? Start trying stuff. Not sure what you're good at? Give something new a try and see if you have any aptitude for it!

Step 6: Verify Your Effectiveness

- Think you have the gift of healing but everyone you pray for stays sick? Maybe you should think about it some more.

Step 7: Seek the Opinion of Others

- Sometimes we need the insights of others to see certain things about ourselves, both positive and negative. This is especially applicable if you want to be a part of the worship team. Ask your mom if you can sing before you ask Pastor Frank.

Step 8: Experiment with Using your Gifts on One of SaviorCC's Ministry Teams.

- Ministry Teams provide opportunities for people to joyfully give of themselves in serving God and His mission.

The Why, What, and How of Ministry Teams at Savior Community Church

WHY we establish and join Ministry Teams:

Christ and His glory is *the* source of true, deep, soul-satisfying, joy. We participate in Ministry Team to glorify Christ and to increase our joy. *What* we do and *How* we do it flow from *Why*.

WHAT Ministry Teams Do:

Teams do lots of different things, yet each one is designed to help support our purpose of *Loving God, Living Community, and Being Servants*.

HOW Ministry Teams Relate to Our Purpose:

Every Ministry Team is designed to help people move forward down the **disciple's path** in some meaningful way. As awful as our current graphic is, we are nonetheless committed to what it represents. This also means that each of our teams should serve to support, not distract or take energy from our major programs. -->



Our Programs
Love God
 @Sunday Worship
Live Community
 @Community Groups
Be Servants
 On Ministry Teams

Serve God by Giving

The Generosity Ethic!

God owns everything. It's not really *my* stuff!

- ➔ **Psalms 50:10** For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.
- ➔ **Deuteronomy 8:17-18** Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' 18 You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day

What Does The Bible Teach About Tithing?

What Is Tithing?

- ➔ "Tithe" means "a 10TH part"

Question: Should I Tithe?

- ➔ God **commands** it in the Old Testament.
 - **Leviticus 27:30** ³⁰ "Every tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD.
- ➔ Jesus **commended** it in the New Testament.
 - **Matthew 23:23** ²³ . . . For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.
- ➔ God's way of supporting ministry in the New Testament **hasn't** changed²⁵
 - **1 Corinthians 9:13-14** ¹³ Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? ¹⁴ In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.
 - The idea here is that there is continuity between the Old and New systems. I find this to be a great argument. (Got this from Piper)
 - Tithing in the OT didn't just cover the Priests, it covered expenses and fed the poor.

Answer: Generosity is the New Testament Ethic (not tithing)

- ➔ We're called to **Joyous** Generosity

6 Ways Giving Benefits My Life

(Rick Warren)

- Giving draws me **closer** to God (Matthew 6:19-21)
- Giving is the antidote to **materialism** (1 Timothy 6:17-19)
- Giving strengthens my **faith** (Proverbs 3:5-10; Luke 6:38)
- Giving is an investment in **eternity** (1 Timothy 6:18-19)
- Giving **blesses** me in return (Proverbs 22:9; 11:25; Psalm 112:5)
- Giving makes me **happy** (Acts 20:35)

²⁵ I owe these incites to John Piper.

- **2 Corinthians 8:1-5** We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, **2** for in a severe test of affliction, **their abundance of joy** and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. **3** For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, **4** begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints— **5** and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves **first to the Lord** and then by the will of God to us.
- ☞ We're called to give **willingly** and **cheerfully** (that is, voluntarily, not reluctantly, or under compulsion)
 - **2 Corinthians 9:7** Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
- ☞ We're called to have our minds set on the greater **rewards** that flow from generosity (especially our **joy** and **God's glory!**)
 - **2 Corinthians 9:6** The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.
 - **2 Corinthians 9:10-15** He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the **harvest of your righteousness. 11** You will be **enriched in every way** to be **generous in every way**, which through us will produce **thanksgiving to God. 12** For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also **overflowing** in many **thanksgivings to God. 13** By their approval of this service, they will **glorify God** because of your submission flowing from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, **14** while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing **grace of God** upon you. **15** Thanks be to God for his **inexpressible gift!**
- ☞ We're called to **excel** in generosity by God's **grace.**
 - **2 Corinthians 8:7** But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also.
- ☞ NOTE: We must recognize that all of the above must be done by the grace of God, and not by our own strength!

Isn't it easier to just teach tithing?

*Easier and **dangerous!***

- ☞ Dangerous because the New Testament doesn't command it, so we lack authority.
- ☞ Dangerous because the New Testament offers us a higher standard than a mere percentage of our income!
 - Tithing does not (necessarily) equal generosity, and we are called to generosity!
 - Tithing does not (necessarily) equal joy, and we are called to give cheerfully!
 - Tithing does not (necessarily) equal sacrifice, and we are called to give sacrificially!

A Summary

Mark Driscoll writes, “God’s people are today not required to tithe. But, . . . like everything else in the New Covenant our grace giving is to exceed Old Testament requirements of the law. Therefore, 10% should be for God’s people a **floor** and **not a ceiling** and a **place to begin** but not a **place to end**. Lastly, since God is ultimately the owner of all of our wealth the question is never how much should I **give** to God, but rather **how much of God’s money** should I **keep**?”²⁶

Where Should I Give?

- ☞ Everywhere, spontaneously, and continuously!
 - **James 2:15-17** If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, **16** and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? **17** So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
- ☞ But don’t neglect to give consistently and systematically where you **worship!** Put it in your budget and budget big!
 - **Malachi 3:10** Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.
 - **1 Corinthians 9:13-14** ¹³ Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? ¹⁴ In **the same way**, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.
 - The point being that New Testament Christian/Gospel ministry is to be funded by God’s people just as Old Testament Temple ministry was funded by God’s people. Just as the Temple had a budget for ministry, charity, and staff, so a local church must fund ministries, charity, and staff. We should not be shy about the fact that God’s work costs money!

²⁶ From his sermon notes on stewardship.

The Goal of the Spiritual Disciplines

Don't Forget WHY We are Doing These Things!

The Great Danger

There is a great danger that I suspect MANY, many, Christians have fallen into. We rightly emphasize the practice of the basic disciplines that we've talked about here: Prayer, Bible Study, practicing Community, Giving, and Serving. We run into a wall if we think that simply doing these things is the goal! You absolutely should do them, but doing them is not an end, but a means to a greater end.

What is the end goal? That our inner being would become more and more like the inner being of Christ for our joy, for His glory, and for the advance of His kingdom!

Things to Look For

Simply doing these things doesn't mean you are growing. They are **tools** that make growth possible. As you pray, as you take in the Word, live in community, serve, give and so on, do it with a **seeking heart**. Pursue God and the internal transformation He wants to accomplish.

Be **mindful** of what your heart is set upon.

- Are your desires so set upon something other than Christ so that it is becoming an idol?
- Are you thoughtfully repenting of sin, or are you resistant toward conviction?
- Are you intentionally seeking to enjoy God?

You Become What you Worship

We were created to worship. Our specific sins are a problem, but they indicate something much more sinister. Our individual sins are **symptoms** of the true condition of our hearts.

Ask yourself:

- What am I struggling with?
- What makes me angry?
- What temptations do I give in to or fight against again and again?
- What do I believe I'm entitled to?
- What kind of things provoke me, insult me, or hurt me?

The answers to these questions can help to reveal your **idols**. Individual sins are symptoms of a deeper disease called **idolatry**. Human beings, that's us, have worship problem! Don't just treat the symptoms. Treat the disease. Root out idolatry as you seek God!

X-Ray Questions

Author and Christ-Centered Christian Counselor David Powlison has developed a list of "X-Ray Questions" to help you think through what you may be worshiping in your life. They are printed in **Appendix D** for your benefit.

To read a detailed introduction and exposition to these questions go to <http://www.metronorthpca.org/documents/X-RayQuestions-JBC.pdf>.

United By Our Covenant

Savior Community Church Covenant

I have given my life to Christ. I trust in Him as my Savior, worship Him as my Lord, and cherish Him as my Treasure. I have reenacted the end of my old life and entrance into His life through Baptism. In Him, for His glory, and *by His grace* I commit to God, and the members and leaders of the Savior Community Church to . . .

Love God

1. I will be faithful to God and His Word in the doctrine I believe and the life I live (Titus 2:11-15; Timothy 1:3-7).
2. I will seek to be Baptized in and regularly filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4; Acts 4:31; Ephesians 5:18).
3. I will devote myself to habits that lead to Spirit-driven transformation including prayer and Bible study (1 Peter 2:1-2; Psalms 1:1-2; Psalm 19:7-11; Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 6:9-13).

Live Community

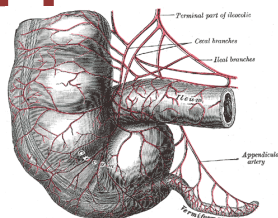
4. I will respect and follow those who lead (Hebrews 13:17).
5. I will welcome Biblical correction and discipline when I sin, and respect the direction of the church with regard to the discipline of others (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:6).
6. I will seek to be a source of encouragement and help to the whole church (1 Thessalonians 5:11; Philippians 2:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14).
7. I will regularly attend worship and other meetings (Hebrews 10:24-25).
8. I will seek out ways to connect with and serve through Community Groups and other ministries. (Acts 2:42; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Galatians 6:2; Colossians 3:12-14).

Be a Servant

9. I will give regularly, joyfully, generously, and sacrificially (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).
10. I will seek God's direction and help to discern and develop my spiritual gifts so that I can use them to serve in ministry to *enlarge* and *strengthen* His Church, both local and universal (Romans 12:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7).
11. I will be a godly representative of Christ to those outside of His Church (Romans 12:9; Romans 12:21).
12. I will share the joy of the Gospel with the lost by living as a missionary to my community (Matthew 28:19-20).

For my Joy and God's Glory!

Appendix A



Books for Bible Study

(Note: a “*” indicates our top recommendation in each category.)

For Starters: Four Things You Should Have

1. A Study Bible
2. A Bible Dictionary
3. Commentaries—(At least one single-volume on the whole Bible)
4. A Systematic Theology

Specific Book Recommendations: Study Bibles

1. *The ESV Study Bible (Due for release in October 2008)**
 - a. From their website,
 - i. “The ESV Study Bible includes 20,000 notes, written specifically for the ESV Study Bible.”
 - ii. “The introductions to each book include essential information about the author, date, and place of writing; an extensive chart of key themes; a summary of how the book fits in with the rest of the biblical storyline; a description of literary features; an outline of the book; and a large full-color map showing the setting of the book.”
 - iii. “Another unique feature is the inclusion of over 50 helpful articles on topics such as the authority and truthfulness of the Bible, reading the Bible for application, the Bible in worship and prayer, the reliability of the biblical manuscripts, the relationship between archaeology and the Bible, an overview of biblical theology, and many more.”
 - b. Absolutely awesome. Hardcover for about \$30 at Christianbook.com, which gives you full access to all of the online resources.
2. *NIV / NASB Study Bible*
 - a. Strengths: Excellent introductions, footnotes, maps and more. Written by a large number of respected evangelical scholars.
 - b. Weakness: Not available in the ESV translation, though the NIV and NASB are great versions.
3. *The Reformation Study Bible (ESV)*

- a. Strengths: Uses the ESV text. Excellent introductions to each book of the Bible. Numerous articles cover important doctrines and doctrinal issues. Excellent footnotes to help the reader understand what they are reading. Written by a large number of respected evangelical scholars with R.C. Sproul as Editor.
 - b. Weakness: The articles and footnotes are written from a strongly Calvinistic perspective (*R.C. Sproul is editor*), but is still awesome. That just means that issues related to eternal security, predestination etcetera are approached in manner different from us.
4. The MacArthur Study Bible
- a. Strengths: Written by leading Evangelical Pastor, Dr. John MacArthur. This study bible is almost as detailed as a one volume commentary. His comments are extremely helpful as well.
 - b. Weakness: Doesn't come in the ESV, but does come in the NASB. Written by one only one guy. The NIV Study Bible has people working on books that they are experts on. No one is an expert on it all!

Software Packages

1. *ESV Study Bible Online (Included with hard copy of book)**
 - a. Online Version: Everything in the ESV Study Bible plus audio version of the ESV text. A code to get access comes with every hard copy of the ESVSB.
 - b. Software Packages: Crossway promises to publish offline the ESVSB for the Mac, PC, Windows Mobile, Palm, iPhone, Blackberry, Google Android, and Symbian.
 - c. Advice: The ESVSB Online is a more complete software package than anything in its price range. This is the place to start as far as Bible Software is concerned. If have regular access to the Internet there is no reason to buy further software.
2. *Logos Bible Software 4*
 - a. Without question the most complete, elegant Bible study tools on the market. Syncs (sort of) with a free iPhone app as well.
 - b. Packages start around \$150 and go up, up, up, from there. If you plan on building any kind of library this is an incredibly affordable way to start. They have no interest payment plans for a \$5 monthly fee.
3. *The Essential IVP Reference Collection 3.0*
 - a. A deep software package for about \$100 (Christianbook.com). Includes the following resources:
 - i. Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels
 - ii. Dictionary of Paul and His Letters
 - iii. Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments
 - iv. Dictionary of New Testament Background
 - v. IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament
 - vi. IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament
 - vii. New Bible Dictionary
 - viii. New Bible Commentary
 - ix. Hard Sayings of the Bible
 - x. The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery
 - xi. New Bible Atlas
 - xii. New Dictionary of Biblical Theology

- xiii. New Dictionary of Theology
- xiv. Pocket Dictionary for the Study of New Testament Greek
- xv. Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics and Philosophy of Religion
- xvi. Pocket Dictionary of Biblical Studies
- xvii. Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms
- xviii. King James Bible

- b. The bulk of these resources are expensive, up-to-date, scholarly materials. If you are looking for an all-in-one library, this is the place to go.
- c. Available for Logos (PC and Mac), or Accordance (Mac only).

Bible Dictionary and Word Study Dictionary

1. *The New Bible Dictionary, Third Edition* (Douglas) *
 - a. Strengths: Excellent articles on almost every major topic related to Bible study
 - b. Weakness: It may, at times, go over the head of some readers, but hang in there!
2. *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, by William Mounce
 - a. Strengths: Covers important words/concepts from both testaments. It offers an update on the old standard, "Vine's".

Bible Commentaries

1. *New Bible Commentary, 21st Century Edition*, by G.J. Wenham, J.A. Motyer, D.A. Carson & R.T. France, eds.*
 - a. Excellent evangelical writers and editors. Covers the whole Bible in one affordable volume. About \$30. Also available in several software packages for both Mac and Pc. (Part of IVP Collection mentioned above.)
2. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Abridged Edition--2 Vols*
 - a. Strengths: Abbreviation of an excellent commentary on the whole Bible. About \$55 from christianbook.com
 - b. Weaknesses: I don't know, because I've never used the abbreviated version, but the full version is good.
3. The MacArthur Bible Commentary
 - a. Strengths: Written by leading Evangelical Pastor, Dr. John MacArthur.
 - b. Weakness: It reads more like notes than commentary, but its reliable. No need to get this if you have his study bible and vice versa.

Systematic Theologies or Bible Doctrine Books

1. Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem*
 - a. Strongly Reformed (Calvinistic). Very good theology. Grudem has a couple of smaller versions of it that are abbreviated and cheaper, but most people should be able to handle the big one. Also on CD-Rom from logos.com.
2. Christian Theology, by Millard J. Ericson
 - a. Baptist. Very good, very solid. Also available for download or CD-Rom at logos.com.
3. The Moody Handbook of Theology: Revised and Expanded, by Paul Enns
 - a. This is a very handy volume. This is not merely a theology book, but a book about various approaches and systems of theology. Filled with charts and simple

breakdowns of complex theological issues and how various groups approach them. Great for students and inquisitive types.

4. What about a Pentecostal Systematic Theology?
 - a. I'm working on it. I haven't found any that are in the same league as the two mentioned above. My favorite Pentecostal theology is out of print, and wasn't great anyway! We have some disagreements with the two above, but they are usually small or on more complicated issues, and thus you should just buy those. They are balanced and Biblical in their approach to every topic. Of course, our doctrine on the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a big issue. We have our own literature on that to supplement what you find in these great books.

Hermeneutics or "How To Study the Bible" Books

1. *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, by Gordon D. Fee, and Douglas Stuart *
 - a. Strengths: It is focused on helping people to read the Bible better. The focus is on the various Genres of literature represented in the Bible and how one should approach them.
 - b. Weakness: Fee recommends the TNIV. No one is perfect.

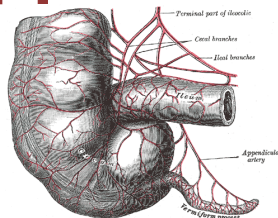
Bible Introductions and Handbooks

1. *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*, by Fee and Stuart *
 - a. The follow-up to the previous book, this one "holds your hand" as you read through every book of the Bible. It is brief, but very useful. No obvious weaknesses really. It is designed to help you read better, not to answer all the questions for you. Great book by a great New Testament scholar (Fee) and a great Old Testament scholar (Stuart).

More basic stuff to go a little deeper

1. *Introduction to the New Testament, Second Edition* (Carson, Moo)*
2. *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Dillard, Longman III)*
3. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*
 - a. Strengths: Covers the whole Bible in depth from a solidly Evangelical perspective! About \$280 from christianbook.com
 - b. Weaknesses: Currently being revised, so you might be annoyed when the new version comes out if you bought the old one!
4. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary on CD-ROM* (Unabbreviated version)
 - a. Strengths: Same as above! Under \$100
 - b. Weaknesses: Have to read off of a computer screen.
5. *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, edited by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.
 - a. Great commentary on selected passages that are difficult to understand, or seem to be in conflict with other passages. The introduction has articles related to the reliability of the bible and some frequent questions such as, "Why Are There Four Different Gospels?" About \$24. (Also included in IVP Software mentioned above).

Appendix B



In this appendix you will find a little more guidance in how to study the Bible. It includes a breakdown of how to answer the 5 questions mentioned in the section on Bible Study as well as tips on doing word studies.

More Information on Choosing a Bible Translation

There are Three Major Kinds of Bible Translations

Paraphrases—Message and the Living Bible

- Goal: A paraphrase or free translation “tries to eliminate as much of the historical distance as possible and still be faithful to the original text (Fee & Stuart).
- Examples: The Message and the Living Bible
- John 3:16-18 in The Message
 - "This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. Anyone who trusts in him is acquitted; anyone who refuses to trust him has long since been under the death sentence without knowing it. And why? Because of that person's failure to believe in the one-of-a-kind Son of God when introduced to him.

Dynamically Equivalent Translations—Thought for Thought

- Goal: Give an accurate representation of the ideas communicated in each verse with the freedom to interpret and explain concepts through some mild paraphrasing. It is an interpretive translation in some respects.
- Examples: NIV (The best in this category), NLT
- John 3:16-18 in the New International Version
 - **John 3:16-18** ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Formally Equivalent Translations—Word for Word

- Goal: Keep as close to the original grammar as possible while maintaining good English.
 - Some are better than others. Some don't maintain good English at all.
 - One of the most positive aspects of literal translations is that they maintain technical terms in the NT such as propitiation "Propitiation"! Compare for example Romans 3:25 in the NIV and the ESV. The NIV replaces the word "propitiation" with "sacrifice of atonement."
 - NIV: **Romans 3:25** God presented him as a **sacrifice of atonement**, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished . . .
 - ESV: **Romans 3:25** whom God put forward as a **propitiation** by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.
 - The NIV is not technically wrong here, but it obscures a concept in the text that most readers would feel compelled to look up. The goal of the NIV translators was no doubt to make something obscure more clear. A "sacrifice of atonement" is an idea that most readers would assume they already understand. "Propitiation," which is key to understanding the idea of atonement, is something most people in fact do not understand. Thus in trying to make it easier to read, they have in fact made it impossible to truly understand for most readers.
 - NOTE: This is not the end of the world, but it is a good reason to choose a literal translation such as the ESV.
- Examples: King James Version, New King James Version, New American Standard Version and the English Standard Version
 - KJV—not based on the best MSS or latest Scholarship
 - NKJV—Easier to read, but not much improved from the KJV
 - NASB—not extremely readable, though great
 - ESV—Readable, accurate, based on best available MSS.
- John 3:16-18 in the English Standard Version
 - **John 3:16-18** ¹⁶"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

A quick walkthrough of the Five Questions that will help you understand the Bible Better²⁷

As we noted above, there Are Five Important Questions That Are Essential To A Good Understanding Of Each Book Of The Bible:

1. Who was the writer and to whom was he writing?
2. What was the cultural/historical setting of the writer and his audience?

²⁷ From Christian Scripture, by David S. Dockery, p. 153.

3. What was the purpose for the author's writing and why was he saying it the way he said it?
4. What was the meaning of the words used at the time of the writing?
5. What does this mean for believers in the contemporary church?

Let's look a little closer at how to answer each of these important questions:

Questions 1, 2 and 3: Background

The first three questions are easily answered by consulting any of the following resources:

- **A Good Study Bible:**
 - The ESV Study Bible
 - The NIV Study Bible
- ***How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour***, by Fee and Stuart
- **The New Bible Dictionary, Third Edition** (Douglas)

Illustration of the Value of Answering Questions 1-3 From Colossians 2:8:

- In His letter to the Colossians Paul writes,
 - **Colossians 2:8** "See to it that no one takes you captive by **philosophy** and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the **elemental spirits** of the world, and not according to Christ (2:8)."
- A basic understanding of the background of the letter will aid in understanding exactly what Paul is referencing when he speaks of "philosophy" or "elemental spirits". In the introduction to Colossians in the *Reformation Study Bible* we find these helpful words:
 - "The Christians Paul addresses in this letter were struggling with a Greek-influenced form of Jewish philosophy that viewed Christians as still vulnerable to spiritual forces. It was thought that these forces needed to be placated through veneration, through some sort of asceticism of food, and drink, and by honoring certain days prescribed in Old Testament Ceremonial law. The epistle is designed to help Christians understand that in order for them to gain acceptance before God, they need *Christ only*."

Question 4: Studying Words

Defining words is something that requires great care. This is perhaps the most common area where interpreters and readers make serious mistakes. It is first of all important to understand the purpose of studying words:

Purpose: to add clarity, color, and theological depth to our understanding of a passage of Scripture.

Important Things To Remember About Studying Words

1. Words have different meanings or different shades of meaning depending on the context in which they were used. The goal is not to force additional meaning onto a word, but to clarify which of the available definitions of a word is the correct one for the particular context.
2. Rely heavily on the choices reflected by the major translations (ESV, NASB, NIV).

- a. Remember that we are looking for color, clarity and depth, not novelty. If your new understanding can't be translated anything like the ESV, NASB, or NIV you're probably wrong!
3. Remember that range of meaning **does not** mean you have the right to simply pick your favorite definition! It means rather that you need to figure out which one fits the context best.
4. The context is the determining fact for determining the meaning if there is more than one definition for a given word.
5. Avoid fanciful or extraordinary definitions or applications.
 - a. Good commentaries are the best place to turn for clarity on meaning and application of words.
6. Take great care with the tools that you use. I recommend *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*.
 - a. Older resources used rules for determining word meanings that have been shown to be false in light of recent research:
 - i. First Use—*The first instance of a word occurring in the Bible determines its use in future contexts. Absolutely ridiculous.*
 - ii. Meaning of parts adds up to the meaning—sometimes helpful, but not always. As one person said, a Butterfly is not a flying dairy product.
 - b. Popular Outdated Materials
 - i. A **Strong's** concordance is good for **finding words**, not defining them.
 - ii. **Vine's** is out of date in its understanding and application of language
 - iii. **Thayer's** lexicon
 1. Various online Bible resources use Thayer's as their free lexicon. It is way out of date, and offers a lot of incorrect information.
 - iv. Generally, using Greek is not advised for someone without serious training. Rely on Bible studies, popular commentaries, and the like.
7. It is more helpful to outline and examine the flow of thought in a passage than to rigidly define what all of the words mean!
 - a. It is not uncommon for someone to define every word in a passage and still have no idea what it is actually about. Context, flow of thought, and what the author had in mind when he was writing are what we should be most concerned about.

Question 5: Applying God's Word to My Life

Look for the timeless principle!

The First Four Questions Are Designed To Answer One Important Question:

- ☞ What did the author mean when he wrote this originally?
 - Understanding the historical setting, grammar, theological emphasis and meaning of words helps us to understand very, very old literature and what it meant to the people it was originally written for.
- ☞ In other words: **What did it say?**
 - The goal is to dig deep to uncover what it meant to the original audience. When we have an idea of this we can move on to question number 5.

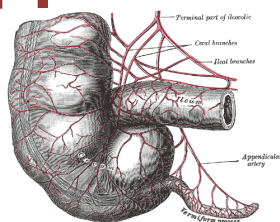
The Fifth Question Is Extremely Important.

- If we don't seek to answer this question then the other questions have little or no value to us as followers of Christ!
- The fifth questions could be simplified this way: **What does it say?**
 - In other words, what does it mean for me, my life, my family, my culture, my church, my world? We are looking for the timeless principle in the text and how God wants us to apply it now.

Six Questions to Help Us Apply God's Word (from Roy Zuck):

- Is there any **example** for me to follow?
- Is there any **command** for me to obey?
- Is there any **error** for me to avoid?
- Is there any **sin** for me to forsake?
- Is there any **promise** for me to claim?
- Is there any new **thought** about God Himself?

Appendix C



The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you . . . ”

A Distinctive

The Savior Community Church can be described using any number of terms: awesome, cool, best thing ever. Two terms that are important for any potential member to understand are *Evangelical* and *Pentecostal*.

First, we are **Evangelical** because of our **doctrine** (not our **politics**).

Our definition: an Evangelical is a person who believes in and seeks to live by Biblical Doctrines, or doctrines that accurately reflect the teaching of the Bible.

Belief in the Bible as the inerrant, infallible Word of God is at the heart of who we are as Evangelicals.

Second, we are **Pentecostal** because of our doctrine, not because we're **crazy**. Pentecostal means different things to different people. In many circles, *Pentecostal* is the equivalent of off-the-wall emotionalism, strange practices, shabby doctrine, and raging legalistic externalism. That's not us.

What is a Pentecostal?

A Pentecostal Is Especially Passionate About 4 Things:

1st) Jesus Saves

You may be thinking, “Yea, we know. That is what this whole course is about. Why bring it up again!”

Pentecostals believe whole-heartedly that the message of the Gospel must get out because people are lost and need a savior. For us, the salvation that comes through Christ is more than a doctrinal belief. It calls for decisive action on the part of all who know and love Him to passionately communicate the good news to the world around us.

2nd) Jesus Heals

We believe that miracles are for today and are to be an important part of the ministry of the Church as God's people on earth.

3rd) **Jesus Fills**

We believe that the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of a person when they become a Christian. This is true for everyone who is a true believer (Rom. 8:9). This belief is common to all evangelical believers. Pentecostals believe that in addition to indwelling the believer when they become a Christian, Christ also Baptizes and regularly fills believers with His Holy Spirit. This is the doctrine that really sets Pentecostals apart. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a powerful work of the Spirit which enables believers to serve God with power and effectiveness.

Two Things We Need to Keep Straight!

- #1: Every believer has the Holy Spirit living within them!
- #2: Every believer can and should seek to be Baptized in the Holy Spirit!

4th) **Jesus Will Return**

We believe all of these things knowing the Christ could return for His Church at anytime. This is not meant to cause us fear, but should stir us to live lives of devotion, purity, and passion for Christ.

Get Baptized *in* and Stay Filled *with* the Holy Spirit!

The Spirit of God is the key to everything in the Christian life. The Holy Spirit is the one who makes everything Christ did in His life, death, and resurrection a reality in the lives of believers. Whatever God calls us to do, He calls us to do it by the power of His Spirit whom He provides us with. The Galatian church didn't get this. Paul wrote to them asking these questions, "Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh (Galatians 3:2b-30)?" We cannot be "perfected by the flesh," that is by mere human efforts and techniques. It is something God must empower and accomplish in us.

We learned earlier that all believers receive the Holy Spirit when they trust in Christ. The Bible speaks of another experience of the Spirit known as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. We see throughout the New Testament that the church experienced the Spirit in at least three ways: 1st) via regeneration (Titus, 3:5) 2nd) the Baptism in the Spirit (Acts 2:4) and 3) regular fillings with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31).

"All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry."

-#7 from the Statement of Fundamental Truths of the Assemblies of God

The Bible speaks of the Spirit of God baptizing us *into* Christ. "**For by one Spirit** we were all baptized into **one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13 NASB)." (See also Gal. 3:27). This is regeneration.

It also speaks of Christ baptizing us subsequent to regeneration **with** the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist said of Jesus, “**He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire** (Matthew 3:11).” This is of course the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Regeneration

Baptizer = Holy Spirit

Element = Christ

Result = Salvation

“**For by one Spirit** we were all baptized into **one body** . . . (1 Corinthians 12:13 NASB).”

Baptism in the Spirit

Baptizer = Christ

Element = Holy Spirit

Result = Empowerment

“**He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire** (Matthew 3:11).”

The “*Physical Evidence*” of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a precious gift that opens a doorway into a deeper spiritual experience with the Lord, especially as it relates to receiving the gift of a **prayer language**, or **tongues**. This gift is given to help encourage, or build us up in prayer:

1 Corinthians 14:2-4 ²For one who **speaks in a tongue** speaks not to men but **to God**; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. ³On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their **upbuilding** and encouragement and consolation. ⁴The one who speaks in a tongue **builds up himself** . . .

Paul speaks of the tongues in Romans 8 as the Spirit interceding for us.

Romans 8:26-27 ²⁶Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but **the Spirit himself intercedes** for us with **groanings too deep for words**. ²⁷And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

This means that when we are speechless and troubled before the Lord we can be confident that the Spirit of God will pray just the right words on our behalf.

The pattern described in the book of Acts shows that Spirit Baptism is accompanied by the gift of speaking in tongues.

- **Acts 2:4** And they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit** and **began to speak in other tongues** as the Spirit gave them utterance.
- **Acts 8:17-18** ¹⁷Then they *began* laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸Now when Simon **saw that the Spirit was given** . . .
- **Acts 9:17** So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and **be filled with the Holy Spirit**."
- **Acts 10:44** While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. ⁴⁵All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the **Holy Spirit had been poured out** on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶For they were hearing **them speaking with tongues and exalting God**.
- **Acts 11:15-16** ¹⁵As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them **just as on us at the beginning**. ¹⁶And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'
- **Acts 19:5-7** ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the **Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying**.

Seek God without Fear!

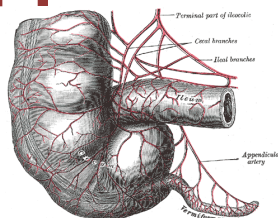
- Trust God and open your heart to what He wants to do in your life!
- Remember what happened to Peter. Before the crucifixion He was denied his relationship with Christ out of fear. After being filled on Pentecost he preached boldly to thousand of people, and thousands got saved. What can God do in your life if you allow Him to fill you with Himself?
- This doctrine is controversial, and some object that it is unbiblical to insist that every believer speak in tongues. **We respect that position**, but encourage you not to get hung up on it. Regardless of what you think, it is clear that there is great benefit to be derived from being filled with God's Spirit. Whether you believe that the gift of tongues is the "initial physical evidence" or not is not the most important thing. **The most important thing is that you seek God with all your heart, and obey God's command "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18)!**

There are two different uses of the gift of tongues:

- Tongues as a gift in **Public Worship** to benefit the whole church (1 Cor. 12:4-11)
- Tongues as a **Private Gift** in Prayer (Romans 8:26-27; 1 Cor. 14:2-4)

We believe that the **Private Gift** is for *every believer*, while the **Public Gift** is for *some believers*.

Appendix D



X Ray Questions by David Powlison

(As used by permission in the book *How People Change* by Paul David Tripp and Timothy Lane)

For an invaluable introduction and exposition of these questions, go to <http://www.metronorthpca.org/documents/X-RayQuestions-JBC.pdf>.

From the author:

The following list of “X-ray questions” provides aid in discerning the patterns of a person’s motivation. The questions aim to help people identify and unveil the ungodly masters that occupy positions of authority in their hearts. These questions reveal “functional gods,” what or who actually controls particular actions, thoughts, emotions, attitudes, memories, and anticipations. Note well, “functional gods” in a particular situation often stand diametrically opposed to the “professed God.

- 1) What do you love? Is there something you love more than God or your neighbor?
- 2) What do you want? What do you desire? What do you crave, long for, wish? Whose desires do you obey?
- 3) What do you seek? What are your personal expectations and goals? What are your intentions? What are you working for?
- 4) Where do you bank your hopes? What hope are you working toward or building your life around?
- 5) What do you fear? Fear is the flip side of desire. For example, if I desire your acceptance, then I fear your rejection.
- 6) What do you feel like doing? This is a synonym for desire. Sometimes we feel like eating a gallon of ice cream, or staying in bed, or refusing to talk, etc.
- 7) What do you think you need? In most cases a person's felt needs picture his or her idol cravings. Often what we have called necessities are actually deceptive masters that rule our hearts. They control us because they seem plausible. They don't seem so bad on the surface and it isn't sin to want them. However, I must not be ruled by the "need" to feel good about myself, to feel loved and accepted, to feel some sense of accomplishment, to have financial security, to experience good health, to live a life that is organized, pain-free, and happy.
- 8) What are your plans, agendas, strategies, and intentions designed to accomplish? What are you really going after in the situations and relationships of life? What are you really working to get?
- 9) What makes you tick? What sun does your planet revolve around? Where do you find your garden of delight? What lights up your world? What food sustains your life? What really matters to you? What are you living for?

10) Where do you find refuge, safety, comfort, and escape? When you are fearful, discouraged, and upset, where do you run? Do you run to God for comfort and safety or to something else? (To food, to others, to work, to solitude?)

11) What do you trust? Do you functionally rest in the Lord? Do you find your sense of wellbeing in His presence and promises? Or do you rest in something or someone else?

12) Whose performance matters to you? This question digs out self-reliance or self-righteousness. It digs out living through another. Do you get depressed when you are wrong or when you fail? Have you pinned your hopes on another person? Are you too dependent on the performance of your husband, wife, children or friends?

13) Whom must you please? Whose opinion counts? From whom do you desire approval or fear rejection? Whose value system do you measure yourself against? In whose eyes are you living?

14) Who are your role models? Who are the people you respect? Who do you want to be like? Who is your "idol"? (In our culture, this word is used for role model.)

15) What do you desperately hope will last in your life? What do you feel must always be there? What can't you live without?

16) How do you define success or failure in any particular situation? Are your standards God's standards? Do you define success as the ability to reach your goals? The respect and approval of others? Is it defined by a certain position or the ability to maintain a certain lifestyle? By affluence? By appearance? By acceptance? By location? By accomplishment?

17) What makes you feel rich, secure, and prosperous? The possession, experience, and enjoyment of what would make you happy? The Bible uses the metaphor of treasure here.

18) What would bring you the greatest pleasure? The greatest misery?

19) Whose political power would make everything better for you? Don't just think in a national sense. Think about the workplace and the church. Whose agenda would you like to see succeed and why?

20) Whose victory and success would make your life happy? How do you define victory and success?

21) What do you see as your rights? What do you feel entitled to? What do you feel is your right to expect, seek, require, or demand?

22) In what situations do you feel pressured or tense? When do you feel confident and relaxed? When you are pressured, where do you turn? What do you think about? What do you fear? What do you seek to escape from? What do you escape to?

23) What do you really want out of life? What payoff are you seeking from the things you do? What is the return you are working for?

24) What do you pray for? The fact that we pray does not necessarily mean we are where we should be spiritually. On the contrary, prayer can be a key revealer of the idols of our hearts. Prayer can reveal patterns of self-centeredness, self-righteousness, materialism, fear of man, etc.

25) What do you think about most often? In the morning, to what does your mind drift instinctively? When you are doing a menial task or driving alone in your car, what captures your mind? What is your mindset?

- 26) What do you talk about? What occupies your conversations with others? What subjects do you tend to discuss over and over with your friends? The Bible says it is out of the heart that our mouths speak.
- 27) How do you spend your time? What are your daily priorities? What things do you invest time in every day?
- 28) What are your fantasies? What are your dreams at night? What do you daydream about?
- 29) What is your belief system? What beliefs do you hold about life, God, yourself, others? What is your worldview? What is the personal "mythology" that structures the way you interpret things? What are your specific beliefs about your present situation? What do you value?
- 30) What are your idols or false gods? In what do you place your trust or set your hopes? What do you consistently turn to or regularly seek? Where do you take refuge? Who is the savior, judge, controller of your world? Whom do you serve? What voice controls you?
- 31) In what ways do you live for yourself?
- 32) In what ways do you live as a slave to the Devil? Where are you susceptible to his lies? Where do you give in to deceit?
- 33) When do you say, "If only..."? Our "if onyls" actually define our vision of paradise. They picture our biggest fears and greatest disappointments. They can reveal where we tend to envy others. They picture where we wish we could rewrite our life story. They picture where we are dissatisfied and what we crave.
- 34) What instinctively feels right to you? What are your opinions -- those things that you feel are true?