

GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

INTRODUCTION

There are two elements that are critical to our service of God — **grace** and **knowledge**.

First of all, to serve God we need his **grace**, that unwavering, undeserved love he has for us. In his **grace**, the Father sent his one and only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. In his **grace**, Jesus willingly laid down his life on the cross. In his **grace**, the Holy Spirit gave you faith that Christ's sacrifice saved you. The **grace** that God has shown us moves us to love God and motivates us to serve God.

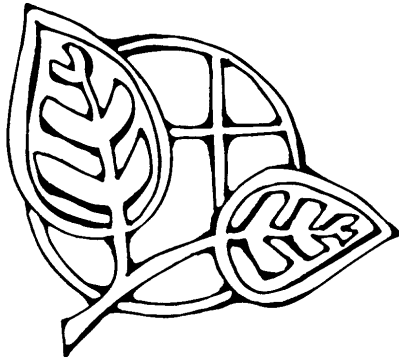
Secondly, to serve God we need **knowledge**. We need to grow in our **knowledge** of our Savior so that our desire to thank him with our lives might grow as well. And we need to grow in our **knowledge** of God's Word. For in God's Word we find out what pleases God. We see his plan for our life.

Grace and **knowledge** — to have one without the other makes it difficult to serve God. If someone understands that in his **grace** God sent his Son to save mankind, but that someone lacks a fuller **knowledge** of God's Word, he or she will quickly grow frustrated. That person loves God and wants to serve him but isn't sure how. Likewise, if someone possesses **knowledge** of how God wants him or her to live but doesn't have any love for God, that **knowledge** will not be put to good use.

For this reason the Bible urges us to “**Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**” (2 Peter 3:18). Now, a plant cannot make itself **grow**. A tree does not need to do anything to **grow** big and strong. Rather, if a plant is in good soil and gets plenty of sunshine it will **grow** naturally. If a tree is nearby a good source of water it is going to **grow**. It's similar in our Christian lives. God does not make the growth of our faith and our faith-life our own responsibility. That growth is the work of the Holy Spirit. Our job is to make sure we're in good soil.

Over the course of this Bible study series you are going to put yourself in some good soil, the fertile soil of God's Word. You are going to get plenty of son-shine, for you are going to bask in the glory of God's Son. As you do that the Holy Spirit will see that you **grow** — naturally. You will **grow** in **grace**, for your love and appreciation for our God will increase. And you will **grow** in **knowledge**, for your understanding of God's will for your life will increase as well.

May the Lord richly bless your study, and bless your growth!



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

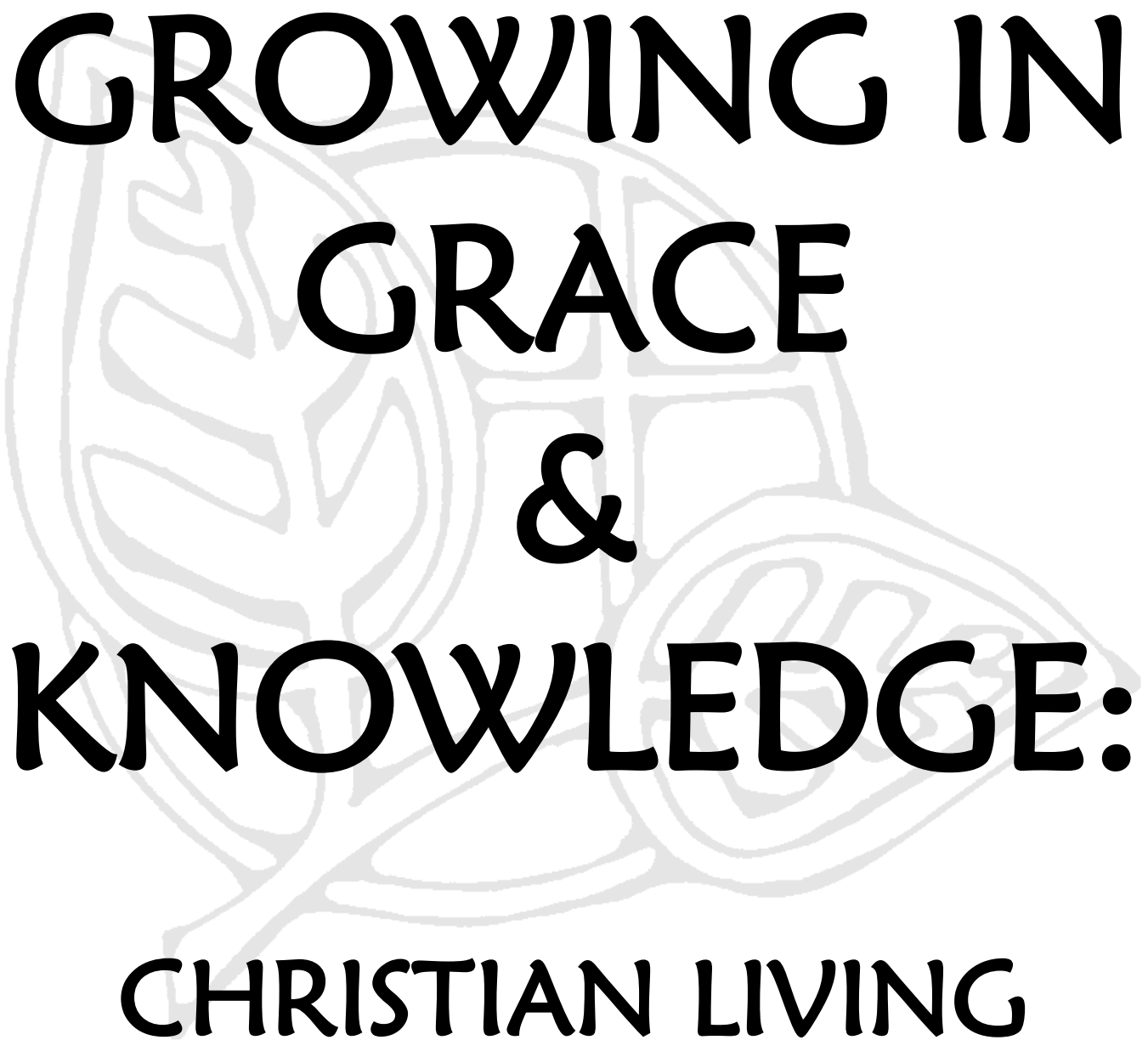
INSTRUCTIONS

The goal of this Bible study is two-fold. First of all, “Growing in Grace and Knowledge” will hopefully help you to grow in your understanding of Christian living by looking at a variety of topics pertaining to Christian life. The first topic is CHRISTIAN LIVING itself. The subsequent topics are: PRAYER, WORSHIP, CHURCH, STEWARDSHIP, FAMILY, THE WORLD, and EVANGELISM.

The second goal of “Growing in Grace and Knowledge” is to make you more comfortable with personal Bible study. Each topic contains five lessons, for a total of forty. Each lesson consists of a portion of Scripture that you will look up. You will be answering questions, underlining Bible verses, and even making notes in your Bible. Hopefully, over the course of the forty lessons you will become more comfortable with the process of studying Scripture.

Here are some suggestions for completing this course of study:

- Place all the lessons together in a 3-ring binder. When it comes time to discuss the lessons in group Bible class you can use the back of sheets to take notes.
- Set aside 15-20 minutes on Monday through Friday to do one lesson. It might be first thing in the morning or last thing before you go to sleep. Or perhaps you could use the lessons for family devotions after dinner. Do all you can to spread the lessons out over one week (rather than trying to do all five in one day).
- Begin each lesson with prayer, asking God to bless your study and make it fruitful.
- If you don't understand a portion of the lesson, don't worry about it. Write down any questions you might have about that day's lesson and then move on. Those questions will provide valuable discussion material during the group Bible class.
- Think about what you have learned. Meditate on it. As you go through your day think about ways that the last lesson you studied is applicable to the various situations you are facing.
- Have fun! The psalmist says, “I delight in your decrees” (Psalm 119:16). Do you remember how excited you were as a child when a relative told you, “My, how you've grown!” Well, don't think of this Bible study so much as work. Think about it as *growth!*



**GROWING IN
GRACE
&
KNOWLEDGE:
CHRISTIAN LIVING**



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: CHRISTIAN LIVING
Lesson One: PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13

Goal: to define “sanctification”

1) Read Philippians 2:12-13.

- What is the difference between the phrases “to will” and “to act”? What is Paul trying to emphasize by mentioning both?
- Underline all of verse 12 and in the margin write, “Sanctification is God working in me to change my will and my actions.”
- In the margin also write, “See James 1:17-21.” Look up that passage now. That passage tells us specifically how God works in us. What tool does God use to bring us to faith and to enable us to serve him?
- James said that this tool “saves you.” God uses that tool to create faith and keep our faith strong. Through faith in Jesus Christ our sins are washed away, and we are saved. Use that fact to explain what Paul means in Philippians 2:12 when he says “continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” (Hint — Think about what would happen if we deliberately stayed away from that tool.)
- Note that Paul wrote “God *works* in you to will and to act...” and not “God *worked* in you to will and to act...” What does the fact that Paul used a present-tense verb in that verse tell us about our sanctification?

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- Paul writes, “*Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand*” (Romans 5:1-2). When Paul speaks of our justification (i.e. - God declaring us “not guilty” of our sins), he speaks in the past tense — “we *have been justified.*” Our salvation is a completed action. But we just saw that when Paul spoke of our sanctification, he used a present tense verb — “God *works* in you.” Our sanctification is an ongoing process.

What would happen if someone mixed up their understanding of justification and sanctification?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **CHRISTIAN LIVING**
Lesson Two: **2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-17**

Goal: to understand the motivation for Christian living

1) Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

- Underline the phrase “Christ’s love compels us.” What are some other words that have the same meaning as “compel”?
- Compel can mean “to force someone to do something against their will.” What are some ways that the world compels people? For example, how does the police compel people to obey the law? How does a teacher compel their students to behave? Is this the type of compulsion Paul is writing about here.
- In the margin write “See 1 John 4:19.” Look that passage up now. How does that passage relate to these two verses?

2) Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-17

- In verse 17 Paul writes “he *is* a new creation.” Not “he *will be* a new creation.” Nor “He *should be* a new creation.” If anyone is in Christ, he IS a new creation. What does this verse add to our understanding about Christian living?
- When Paul writes “the old has gone,” what do you think he means by “the old”? When he writes, “the new has come,” what do you think he means by “the new”?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- Jim is a regular attendee at St. Matthew’s. He doesn’t really want to go. He’d rather sleep in, but his parents have told him that as long as he lives under their roof, he will follow their rules. So he goes. He hasn’t missed a single worship service or Bible class in three years!
- Carl is in the Navy, and his ship is often at sea for six months at a time. There are worship services held on the ship, but he is not in fellowship with the chaplain who conducts those services, so he doesn’t attend. He misses worship, but settles for personal Bible study.
- Which of these two people is practicing true Christian living?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **CHRISTIAN LIVING**
Lesson Three: **ROMANS 6:1-7**

Goal: to see the power we have for Christian living

1) Read Romans 6:1-4

- Imagine someone would say, “Jesus died to pay for all sin. Therefore, logically, if I commit lots of sins then that makes Jesus’ sacrifice all the more valuable... all the greater!” According to these verses, what is the error in that logic?
- Some church bodies make baptism into something that we do for God. Here Paul writes, “*We were buried* with him through baptism.” Is baptism something we do for God, or is it something that God does for us?
- What part of us gets buried with Christ through baptism? What is God’s purpose for burying that part of us? (Look at the closing words of verse 4).

2) Read Romans 6:5-7

- What are some of the consequences of sin?
- But in these verses, Paul tells us that sin is “powerless.” What are some ways that Christ has rendered sin powerless in our life?
- Underline the phrase “be united with him.” In the margin write “See Galatians 2:20.” In what way are we united with Christ?

What does this mean... for our salvation?

... for life after death?

... for our Christian living?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- People sometimes think of their baptism as something that happened to them when they were just a baby. God saved them through baptism. Does your baptism have any value for you today? If so, what?
- What are some practical ways to keep your baptism in the forefront of your life?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **CHRISTIAN LIVING**
Lesson Four: **PSALM 119:97-105**

Goal: to see where we find guidance for Christian living

1) Read Psalm 119:97-105

- Imagine trying to walk through a home that you are unfamiliar with in the middle of the night. It is pitch dark. What is going to happen? How is that like trying to walk through life without the Word?
- In verse 100 underline the phrase “I have more understanding” and in the margin write “See verse 34.” Look up verse 34 of this psalm now. How does verse 34 relate to verse 100.
- In verse 104 underline the phrase “I gain understanding from your precepts” and in the margin write “See 1 Corinthians 2:14.” Look up that passage now. That passage explains how we gain understanding and wisdom from the Word. Who gives it to us?
- “I have more insight that my teachers... more understanding that the elders.” In what way is the Christian, armed with God’s Word, wiser than the astrophysicist or brain surgeon?
- In verse 101 double-underline the phrase “I have kept my feet from every evil path.” In verse 104 double-underline the phrase “I hate every wrong path.” Mark these passages with an asterisks (*). At the bottom of the page put another asterisks and write, “Christian living involves: 1) avoidance of evil, and 2) opposition of evil.” What are some ways we can oppose evil in our Christian lives?
- In this psalm, does it seem like meditating on God’s Word is a chore for the psalmist, or is it something he enjoys? Why do you think he feels this way? (Look at 1 John 5:3-4 for help.)

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- The Bible teaches that God has written his Law on our hearts. We call it our conscience. Why is our conscience not enough to help us live our Christian lives? Give some examples from our society of things that don’t bother most people’s conscience but that do disobey God’s Word.



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **CHRISTIAN LIVING**
Lesson Five: **Romans 7:15-25**

Goal: to find comfort for when we fail in our Christian living

1) Read Romans 7:15-20

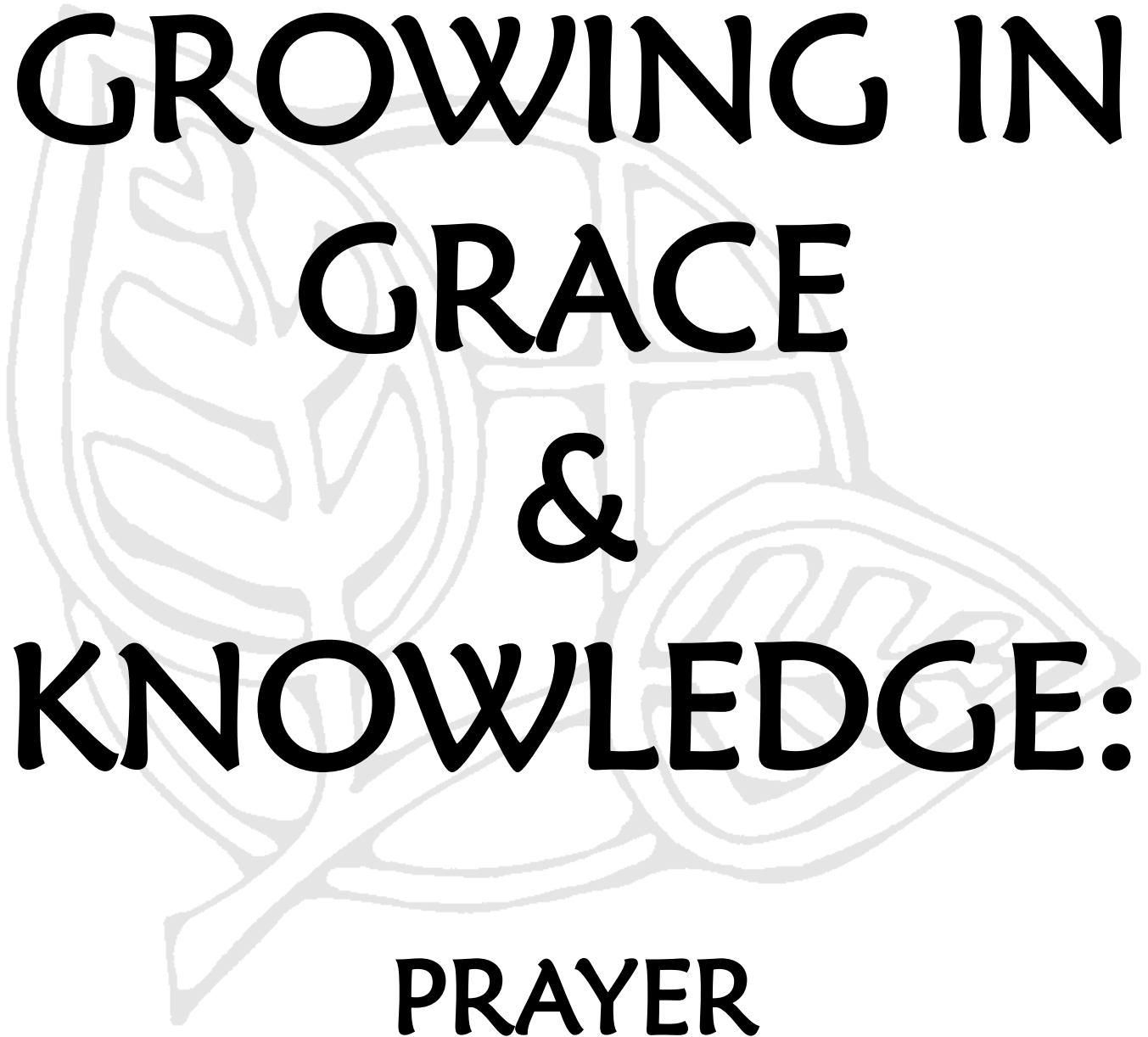
- What problem has Paul identified in his life?
- In verse 18 underline the phrase “my sinful nature” and “I cannot carry it out.” In verse 19 underline the phrase “keep on doing.” What do these verses tell us about our Christian life?
- In verse 16 underline the phrase, “the law is good.” In the margin write “see verse 7.” Read verse 7 of this chapter now. How is the Law good?
- Our Christian life flows out of our Christian faith. But even when Paul is committing the sin that he “keeps on doing,” there is still evidence of the Holy Spirit at work inside Paul. What is that evidence?

2) Read Romans 7:21-25

- Paul describes a war going on inside every Christian. Who are the 2 participants in this war?
- Underline the phrase “What a wretched man I am!” In the margin write, “The fact that sin is unavoidable does not make us comfortable when it occurs in our life.” Paul does not find comfort in the fact that his sinful nature makes sin unavoidable. Where does Paul turn for comfort? Why would this give Paul comfort?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- Mary, a Christian friend of yours, is in the hospital, dying of cancer. You visit her and she tells you, “I know I shouldn’t be, but I’m a little scared to die.” You say to her, “Mary, look at what you’ve done in your life! You’ve been a faithful wife. You’ve raised three wonderful kids. You had those kids baptized and took them to Sunday School. It’s obvious that you’re a Christian, and therefore you’re saved!”
- Would this response provide comfort to Mary? Is there a better way to comfort her?



**GROWING IN
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&
KNOWLEDGE:
PRAYER**



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **PRAYER**
Lesson One: **JOHN 14:6,7**

Goal: to see that the ability to pray is a gift of the Holy Spirit

1) Read John 14:6-7

- According to Jesus testimony, is it possible for someone to reject Jesus and still approach God?
- What, therefore, would we have to say about the prayer of a Muslim? One who practices Judaism? An agnostic who is trying to play it safe?
- It is common to close prayers by saying, “in Jesus name. Amen.” Why is that a great way to close a prayer?

2) Look up 1 Corinthians 12:3

- What is the only way someone can believe in Jesus?
- Put two and two together. We saw that the only way to approach God (including in prayer) is through Jesus. And we saw that the Holy Spirit is the one who gives us the ability to believe in Jesus. What can we call prayer, therefore?

3) Applying what you've learned

- Imagine this situation. You are trying to encourage Jim to come to church more often. You tell him, “It is important that we be in church regularly because we need our faith to be strengthened.”

Jim snaps back at you, “I don’t need church for that! I pray all the time!”

How would you respond to Jim?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **PRAYER**

Lesson Two: **MATTHEW 6:9-13**

Goal: to look at Jesus' model prayer

1) Read Matthew 6:9-13

- “Hallowed” means “to keep holy.” A person’s name is more than the word used to refer to them (John, Carol, etc.). We can use “name” to refer to one’s reputation. With that in mind, what are we asking when we pray “hallowed be your name”?
- God’s “kingdom” is wherever he reigns. Underline the word “kingdom” and write “see Luke 17:20,21” in the margin of your Bible. Now look up those verses. Where are we asking God to establish his reign when we pray, “your kingdom come”?
- List some things that are God’s will. (For suggestions, look up 1 Timothy 2:3,4; Matthew 22:37,38; 2 Peter 3:18.)
- Why do you think Jesus tells us to pray for “daily” bread? Why not pray for a month’s worth of bread and be done with it?
- In light of the rest of Scripture, what is the proper way to understand verse 12.
 - a) God will forgive our sins only after we forgive the sins of others.
 - b) God forgives our sins because we forgive the sins of others.
 - c) If someone understands God has forgiven them, they will naturally want to forgive others.
- Underline the word “temptation” and write “see 1 Corinthians 10:13” in the margin of your Bible. Look up that verse. What does God promise about temptations we face?
- “Deliver us from evil” and “Deliver us from the evil one” are both grammatically acceptable translations of the last half of verse 13. Evil is Satan’s work. Look up Hebrews 2:14. Why do we need not fear the devil?

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- We sometimes refer to the seven requests made in the Lord’s Prayer as “the seven petitions.” Look at those petitions again. In how many of those petitions do we ask God for spiritual blessings? In how many of those petitions do we ask God for physical blessings? Why do you think this is the case?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **PRAYER**
Lesson Three: **LUKE 11:5-13**

Goal: to understand why God wants us to be persistent in prayer

1) Read Luke 11:5-10

- We often call stories that Jesus tells to teach a point “parables.” When interpreting parables it is important to look for one main point. What is the main point of the parable that we read about in these verses?
- Underline the word “persistence” in your Bibles. What are some other words that mean the same thing?
- In Matthew 6:7 it reads, “When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.” What do you think is the difference between being persistent in prayer and “babbling”?

2) Read Luke 11:11-13

- List at least five ways that our Heavenly Father is better than an earthly father.
- What do these verses tell us God intends to do for us when we pray to him?
- Underline the phrase “give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.” In the margin next to that phrase write, “See Matthew 6:33.” In that verse Jesus says, “Seek first [God’s] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” How are Matthew 6:33 and Luke 11:13 related?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- Imagine this situation. You have a twelve-year-old son whom you find pouting in his bedroom. When you ask him what’s wrong, he says, “I prayed that God would make me a better baseball player. But today at recess I struck out twice! I guess God didn’t listen to my prayer.”

On the basis of our lesson today, what are some things you might say to your son?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **PRAYER**
Lesson Four: **PSALM 105:15**

Goal: to see why we pray

1) Read Psalm 50:15

- Chose the best answer: The phrase “call upon me” is:
 - a) a request.
 - b) a suggestion.
 - c) a command.
 - d) a question.
- “I will deliver you.” In that phrase, what does the word “will” communicate to us? How would the meaning of this verse change if instead of the word “will,” it said “might”?
- In your Bible underline the words “will deliver” and “will honor.” In the margin write, “These go together in Christian prayer.”
- What are some ways we can honor God with our prayers?
- True or False — If someone takes their problems to God, God will always deliver them. (Follow up question: How long might that person have to wait for the deliverance?)

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- Let’s imagine some “days of trouble.” In the following situations, where would the unbeliever look for comfort, strength, and hope? Where would the believer look?

SITUATION	UNBELIEVER’S SOURCE OF HOPE AND COMFORT	BELIEVER’S SOURCE OF HOPE AND COMFORT
You lose all your savings on a bad investment		
You are seeing someone you care for, and they dump you		
Your spouse of 48 years dies of a stroke		



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **PRAYER**
Lesson Five: **ROMANS 8:26-32**

Goal: to see why we can be confident in our prayer

1) Read Romans 8:26-27

- What does Paul tell us is the reason that we don't always pray well?
- What are some of the weaknesses that get in the way of our prayer life?
- Why can we be certain that our weaknesses don't get in the way of God hearing about all our concerns and troubles?
- In your Bibles underline all the places you find the word "Spirit" in verses 26 and 27. In the margin write, "Prayer is a fruit of the Holy Spirit."

2) Read Romans 8:28-32

- Paul lists a string of things that God did for us:
 - a: Our predestination - Before time began, God chose to save us.
 - b: Our calling - Through Word and Sacraments, God called us as members of his family.
 - c: Our justification - God declared us to be not guilty of our sin.
 - d: Our glorification - The Holy Spirit has begun sanctifying us, enabling us to live lives that give God glory, and will bring this to perfection when we reach heaven.

What does the fact that God did all this assure us of when we bring all our cares and concerns to Him in prayer? (verse 28, 31,32)

3) Applying what you've learned

Imagine you have two friends who admit to you they don't like to pray. Your friend Mark tells you that the reason he doesn't pray is because he doesn't know what to say. He says, "When I pray I stammer over words or get stuck half-way through."

Your friend Lisa tells you she doesn't like to pray because when she was a young girl her father, who was Christian, became sick with cancer. Both Lisa and her father asked God to take the cancer away, but her father died anyway. So Lisa doesn't believe God places that much weight on prayer. "It's just not worth the time." she says.

Has this lesson taught you what you might say to Mark? What you might say to Lisa?



**GROWING IN
GRACE
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KNOWLEDGE:
WORSHIP**



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **WORSHIP**
Lesson One: **HEBREWS 10:19-27**

Goal: to see that God wants us to make public worship a regular part of our lives

1) Read Hebrews 10:19-24.

- The writer to the Hebrews uses an adverb to describe how we are to hold onto our hope of eternal life. What is it (verse 23)? Underline that adverb in your Bible
- What would be some synonyms for that word? What would be the opposite of that word?
- Express the first half of verse 23 in your own words.
- In verse 24 we are told to “spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” How is this goal accomplished in worship?

2) Read Hebrews 10:25-27.

- In verse 25 underline the phrase “meeting together” and in the margins make the note, “This means worship.” For the Greek word translated “meeting together” is closely related to the word “synagogue,” a house of worship. Going to a house a worship is to be a “habit.” What is a habit? What are some examples of habits you have?
- How does “the day approaching” (I.E. — the coming Judgment Day) add a sense of urgency to the habit of worship?
- If we know God wants us to make worship a habit and yet we refuse to go, the Bible says that is a “deliberate” sin. It is not a sin we are committing in ignorance, but one we are committing against our conscience. If we “keep on” in that sin, what is the consequence (verse 26 & 27)?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- During a lunch break at work you and some friends are talking about worship. One of your friends says, “I go sometimes, especially on holidays, but I don’t think you have to go to church regularly to be a believer.” What might you say to this person?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **WORSHIP**
Lesson Two: **PSALM 27:1-6**

Goal: to realize that God offers us security in worship

1) Read Psalm 27:1-3.

- David talks about the security he feels because of his relationship with the LORD. He calls the LORD his “stronghold.” List some ways God has provided you with security in your life...

...when it comes to your income.

...when it comes to your marriage (if married).

...when it comes to your and your family’s physical safety.

...when it comes to the time of your death.

...when it comes to where you will spend eternity.

2) Read Psalm 27:4-6

- In verse 4 David tells God of one freedom that he wants preserved above all others. What is it? (In your Bibles underline that phrase and write, “David’s highest priority in life” in the margin.
- How does God “keep us safe in his dwelling”? In other words, how does God grant us security (make us feel safer) through worship?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- Historically, churches thrive during difficult times. For example, churches often grow stronger during times of religious persecution. Church attendance generally rises during economic recessions. Why do you think that the church prospers in difficult times?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **WORSHIP**
Lesson Three: **ROMANS 1:15-17**

Goal: to see that the Gospel must take center stage in our worship

1) Read Romans 1:15-17

- In verse 15 circle the word gospel and in the margin write, “Gospel means ‘good news’.” In one sentence answer this question: What is the good news of the gospel?
- In verse 16 underline the phrase “it is the power of God.” Double underline the phrase “for the salvation.” Why must worship revolve around the proclamation of the Gospel?
- List some ways the Gospel takes center stage in worship?
- Paul tells us “I am not ashamed of the Gospel.” What are some ways we might act like we *are* ashamed of the Gospel?
- In worship we proclaim a “a righteousness *from God...* a righteousness that is *by faith from first to last.*” Why is that such a comforting message?

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- In Galatians 1:8 Paul writes, “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!”

Why would Paul speak so strongly about preaching the Gospel?

What does this verse tell us about the responsibility believers have as they listen to the pastor’s sermon?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **WORSHIP**
Lesson Four: **COLOSSIANS 3:15-17**

Goal: to understand the importance of the people participating in the worship service

1) Read Colossians 3:15-17.

- List some ways believers demonstrate they are “one body” when they worship together.
- Underline the word “richly.” What does that word add to the meaning of verse 16?
- What is the difference between teaching and admonishing? How are both accomplished when the congregation sings “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs”?
- Go through the three verses of our lesson and circle every word which deals with the topic of being thankful. In the margin of your Bible write, “Worship is an expression of thanks to God.”
- List some things we thank God for by participating in worship... by joining together with our fellow Christians for one hour of spiritual growth and praise.
- Would it be accurate to say that if someone regularly kept themselves from worship, that might be a sign they don’t completely understand all they have to be thankful for?

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- Your teenage son Tim tells you that he hates going to church on Sundays and would rather sleep in. Here are three possible responses.
 - 1) “That’s a decision you’ll have to make for yourself, Tim. I think you’ve made the wrong decision however.”
 - 2) “Tim, God tells us in the Bible we are supposed to go to worship. I’m afraid if you disobey God, you’ll go to hell.”
 - 3) “Tim, I really need you to worship with me. It strengthens me to hear you confess your faith with me.

Which of those responses is best, and why?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **WORSHIP**
Lesson Five: **PSALM 149:1-4**

Goal: to establish some principles of worship

1) Read Psalm 149:1-4.

- Sometimes people will say, “I can worship God all by myself in my own home.” This is a true statement. But where else does God ask us to worship him (verse 1)?
- What are some benefits that you can enjoy worshipping in a group which you cannot enjoy worshipping on your own?
- Verse 3 describes “dancing” and “making music.” Both of those are art forms, but they are different types of arts. What does this tell us about worshipping God?
- What are some other art forms that we might utilize in worship? Are you skilled in any of these art forms?
- Verse 4 reminds us of the motivation for worship. Why do we worship God?

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- We have seen that it is clearly God’s will for us to join other Christians in worshipping him. Apply this truth of Scripture to the following situations.
 - A) You are offered a job promotion, but it means that you will have to work almost every Sunday. What are your options?
 - B) You are considering buying a home, but it is 90 minutes away from a church that you are in fellowship with. What should you do, and what shouldn’t you do?
 - C) You are on vacation, and you don’t know if there is a WELS church in the area. What could you do?



**GROWING IN
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THE CHURCH**



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **THE CHURCH**
Lesson One: **EPHESIANS 2:11-22**

Goal: to define the word “Church”

1) Read Ephesians 2:11-18

- Circumcision was a minor physical difference between Jews and Gentiles in Paul’s time. What does Paul consider to be the biggest difference between the Jews and the Gentiles? (verse 12)
- Paul calls the Gentiles “foreigners to the covenant of the promise.” Underline this phrase and write “See Genesis 12:1-3, Isaiah 54:10, Ephesians 3:6” in the margin. What covenant promise is Paul referring to?
- In what ways has Christ united all people, Jews and Gentiles? (verse 14-18)

2) Read Ephesians 2:19-22

- Underline the phrase “no longer foreigners and aliens.” Put a double underline under the “no longer.” Paul tells us we are now “fellow citizens with God’s people” and “members of God’s household.” Those two phrases stress two relationships that are now possible through Christ’s death. What are those two relationships?
- In what sense are those relationships “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets”?
- What is a cornerstone? How is Jesus the cornerstone of our relationship with God and our relationship with other Christians?
- Look at the last part of verse 18 and the last part of verse 22. Who is responsible for creating the bond between God’s children?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- Complete the following statement: “The Church is _____.”
_____.”



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **THE CHURCH**
Lesson Two: **1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-31**

Goal: to see that the Holy Spirit gives each member of the Church spiritual gifts

1) Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

- Why do we have faith that Jesus is Lord? (verse 3)
- Why do we serve the Lord? (verse 6)
- In verse 11 underline the phrase “each one.” What does that phrase tell us about who is responsible for serving in the Church?
- Double-underline the phrase “just as he determines.” What does that phrase tell us about the way the Holy Spirit gives out spiritual gifts?

2) Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31

- What does Paul cite as evidence that we are all members of one body? (verse 13)
- Can a body function without a left arm? Without functioning ears? Without big toes? Does it function *as well* without those items? What, therefore, is Paul’s point in comparing the Church to a body?
- Underline verse 26. What can we expect to happen when someone doesn’t make use of their spiritual gifts? What can we expect to happen when all use their gifts faithfully?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

Imagine the following two people belong to your church. Karen is very knowledgeable about the Bible. She has no problem sharing her faith with friends and even strangers. In fact, about a dozen people have joined the church as a result of Karen’s witnessing. Bob is terrified talking about the Bible because he doesn’t feel he knows enough about it. He volunteers his time regularly at church, doing things like cutting the lawn and raking leaves. But he feels bad that he can’t do as much as people like Karen.

What does this lesson have to say to Karen?

What does it have to say to Bob?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **THE CHURCH**
Lesson Three: **MATTHEW 13:47-50**

Goal: to understand the difference between the Church and visible churches

1) Read Matthew 13:47-50

- A parable makes a comparison between an earthly story and a heavenly truth. In this parable, Jesus is comparing people with fish caught in a net. What is the point of comparison?
- Is it possible that some members of Christian churches would be among the “bad fish”? What does the term “hypocrite” mean?
- Compare this lesson with Ephesians 5:25-27. Is any member of the Church going to go to hell? What, therefore, is the biggest difference between the Church and visible churches (i.e. — congregations, synods, etc.)?
- Underline the phrase “good fish” in verse 48. In the margin write “true believers.” Underline the phrase “bad fish.” In the margin write “unbelievers & hypocrites.”
- Look up 1 Samuel 16:7. Can we see faith? Why or why not?

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- The Apostles’ Creed says “I believe in the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints.” Are we talking about the Church or visible churches? Why?
- From what we’ve learned in this lesson, please fill out the following chart.

	The Church	visible churches
How does one become a member?		
How do we know who’s a member?		



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **THE CHURCH**
Lesson Four: **MATTHEWS 28:18-20**

Goal: to learn the mission of the Church

1) Read Matthew 28:18-20

- Why can and does Jesus direct the work of the church? (verse 18)
- Put an asterisk next to verse 18 and in the margin write “see Colossians 2:9-10.” How do Colossians 2:9-10 and Matthew 28:18 relate to each other?
- What does the word “go” in verse 18 tell us about the mission of the church?
- Double-underline the phrase “make disciples of all nations” and in the margin write “This is our mission.” Then underline the words “baptizing” and “teaching” and write “These are the only tools that can accomplish that mission.”
- Do you think it’s possible to build a congregation by using other tools than God’s Word and Sacraments? Do you think it’s possible to build up the Church by using other tools than God’s Word and Sacraments?
- How does the last sentence of verse 20 assure us that this is our mission, and not just the mission of the apostles? How does the last sentence of verse 20 encourage us to carry out the mission of the Church?

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- At a congregational open forum, one of the members gets up and says, “We don’t do enough for the needy in our church! Every year we send so much money off to synod to do missions. Why don’t we cut back a little and use some of that money to open a food pantry. After all, if we aren’t caring for the needy, we really aren’t acting like a church, are we?”

Does this person have a point?

What might you say to them?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **THE CHURCH**
Lesson Five: **2 PETER 2:1-3**

Goal: to see why there are so many different visible churches

1) Read 2 Peter 2:1-3

- What is heresy?
- Is there such a thing as non-destructive heresy? Why or why not? (Look up 2 Timothy 2:16-17 if you need help.)
- What does the word “secretly” tell us about heresy? Is it possible that sometimes even the false teacher doesn’t know he’s teaching heresy?
- What happens if we allow heresy to remain in the church? (verse 2)
- Since heresy is so destructive, the Bible gives us very clear instructions about how to deal with it. Look up each of the following passages and write down what it adds to our understanding of our lesson:
 - a: Romans 16:17 —
 - b: 1 John 4:1-3 —
 - c: 2 John 10,11 —

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- A friend says to you, “There are so many problems in society today: drugs, pornography, violence! The only way we’re going to stop this is if churches forget about little doctrinal differences and get on to dealing with what’s truly important!”

Is your friend right? What would you say to them?

- Agree or Disagree — Christians should not judge each other’s faith.
- Agree or Disagree — It is impossible for someone to be saved if they belong to a church that teaches false doctrine. (Look up Isaiah 55:11 for help.)



**GROWING IN
GRACE
&
KNOWLEDGE:
STEWARDSHIP**



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **STEWARDSHIP**
Lesson One: **MATTHEW 25:14-30**

Goal: to define “stewardship”

1) Read Matthew 25:14-18. (Note — A “talent” is a unit of money.)

- What are some possible reasons that the third servant didn’t invest the talent that he had been given?
- This is a parable. We sometimes define parables as “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.” If the master is Jesus, the servants are obviously Jesus’ followers — the disciples and us. What do you think the talents represent?

2) Read Matthew 25:19-23

- In verse 21 the master uses an adjective twice to refer to the servant. He uses that word twice again in verse 23. Circle that word all four places it occurs in those two verses, and in the margin write this definition:

Stewardship is being _____ with the blessings God gives you.

- Is there any difference in the way the master rewarded the first servant and the way he rewarded the second servant? What does this tell you about stewardship?

3) Read Matthew 25:24-30

- What was the mistake of the third servant?
 - a) He did not use his talent.
 - b) He did not understand his what his master wanted.
 - c) He did not love his master.

4) Applying what you’ve learned

- Why do you think Jesus used the servant with only one talent as the example of the unfaithful servant?
- Why not use the one with five talents?
- What was he trying to teach us?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **STEWARDSHIP**
Lesson Two: **2 CORINTHIANS 5:14,15**

Goal: to learn why we practice Christian stewardship

1) Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

- In the world, how do authority figures (police, military) get people to obey them?
- According to verse 14, what is it about Christ that motivates us to serve and obey him?
- In verse 14 underline the phrase “Christ’s love compels us” and in the margin write, “Look up 1 John 4:19.” That passage tell us, “We love because he first loved us.” How are 1 John 4:19 and 2 Corinthians 5:14 related?
- In verse 15 underline the phrase “the life I live” and in the margin write, “Stewardship involves my entire life, not just my money.” What are some other areas of your life that God wants you to manage in a way that gives him glory?
- Re-read verse 15 and then fill in the blank:

Living a life of Christian stewardship is a demonstration of my _____.

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- Later on in 2 Corinthians Paul writes, “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”

True or False — If something is done or given out of compulsion (such as fear, guilt, etc.) it is not proper Christian stewardship.

True or False — God is the one who is responsible for producing Christian stewardship in his children.



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **STEWARDSHIP**
Lesson Three: **1 PETER 4:10,11**

Goal: to see the awesome benefits of practicing Christian stewardship

1) Read 1 Peter 4:10-11.

- What do the words “has received” tell us about our talents?
- What do the words “each one” tell us about the gifts that God gives?
- What does the word “faithfully” tell us about whether or not we will use those talents?
- According to verse 10, for what reason did God give us gifts?
- Peter writes about “God’s grace in its various forms.” Grace is undeserved, unmotivated love. The way God loves us motivates us to show the same love for others. But that love can take “various forms.” List at least five ways that members (other than the pastor) can show love for each other, using their various talents?
- According to verse 11 what is accomplished when we serve each other faithfully with the gifts that God has given us?

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- A common reason why people don’t offer service at church (or at home... or in the world!) is that they aren’t sure how. Or perhaps their church doesn’t offer any area of service that fits the person’s interests or talents. In the following space, list between three to five of your favorite things to do. Then list three to five things that you may not like to do, but you’re still good at. Ask yourself, “Is there any way I can use these talents or interests to serve others at church?”

THINGS I LIKE TO DO

THINGS I AM GOOD AT



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **STEWARDSHIP**
Lesson Four: **1 CORINTHIANS 16:1,2**

Goal: to learn the principles of giving

1) Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.

- In these verses Paul establishes some basic principles about giving an offering. Each of these phrases teaches us something about how Christians will want to give.

“On the first day...” — What does this say about the priority our offering is to take against other expenses (bills, recreation, etc.)?

“...of each week...” — What does this say about the regularity of giving an offering?

“...each one of you...” — What does this say about whom is to give an offering?

“...set aside...” & *“...saving it up...”* — What does this say about using our offering for something other expense?

“...in keeping with his income...” — What does this say about the size of our offering?

- The New Testament makes it clear that the Old Testament ceremonial laws (the laws telling the Jewish people how to worship) no longer apply to us. Therefore, would the principle of giving “in keeping with his income” mean we *must* give a tithe (10%)?

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- Figuring an offering that follows these principles is not difficult. Here are the steps.
 - ⇒ Pick a percentage that you can give willingly and cheerfully.
 - ⇒ Now take your income for the year and multiply it by that percentage.
 - ⇒ Take that amount and divide by 52 (the number of weeks in a year). That number is the weekly amount you want to set aside to the Lord.
 - ⇒ Bring the offering to church with gladness in the heart that God has blessed you so richly you can give back to him!



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **STEWARDSHIP**

Lesson Five: **MALACHI 3:6-12**

Goal: to see that failing to practice Christian stewardship displays a lack of love for God

1) Read Malachi 3:6-7

- How do each of these two statements comfort and encourage us:

“I the LORD do not change.”

“So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.”

2) Read Malachi 3:8-9

- Did God need these people’s money? Why is he upset, then, that they aren’t bringing him a tithe? (Look again at verses 6 and 7 if necessary.)
- In verse 8, what does God call it when we refuse to practice Christian stewardship?

3) Read Malachi 3:10-12

- The people have been robbing God. What is God’s amazing response?
- What does this assure us of if we have practiced poor stewardship in the past?

4) Applying what you’ve learned

- Examine the following budget of single, 28-year-old, John Doe...

Yearly income: \$32,000

<u>Expenses:</u>	Taxes\$4800.00	Rent & Utilities..... \$7800.00
	College loans\$7200.00	Food and clothing.....\$2000.00
	Car payments.....\$4200.00	Car expenses..... \$1850.00
	Other insurance..... \$410.00	Telephone/Internet \$480.00
	Recreation..... \$1200.00	Church offerings..... \$480.00
	Total expenses..... \$30420.00	Savings \$1580.00

- ◇ Does this reflect good stewardship?
- ◇ Poor stewardship?
- ◇ What applications can be drawn from our lesson?



**GROWING IN
GRACE
&
KNOWLEDGE:
FAMILY**



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **FAMILY**

Lesson One: **GENESIS 2:4-7, 15-25**

Goal: to see that the institution of marriage is God's plan, not a man-made invention

1) Read Genesis 2:4-7 and Genesis 2:15-18

- In vs. 17 underline the phrase “you will surely die.” In the margin write “Obedience to God = Life. Disobedience = Death.” Note that we are not told anywhere in Scripture that God gave these instructions to Eve. What did God obviously intend Adam to do?
- What adjective does God use to describe the various things he created in the following verses of chapter 1: verse 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31. Now look again at chapter 2, verse 18. What do we hear God say for the first time in the creation?
- Adam was living in Paradise. He was the master of all living creatures. And yet God says, “It is not good for the man to be alone.” What are some blessings that Adam would not experience as long as he was “alone”?
- What does the word “helper” tell us about God's purpose for bringing man and woman together in marriage? What does the term “suitable” tell us about God's intentions for the relationship between husband and wife?

2) Read Genesis 2:19-25

- What was God trying to show Adam by having all the animals come before him?
- God created Adam out of the earth, but he created Eve out of Adam. What point would this drive home for Adam and Eve? Did Adam understand this significance?
- The blessings of marriage are sometimes summarized as: companionship, children, and chastity. Does this lesson tell us which of those three is the primary blessing of marriage?
- In vs. 23 underline the phrase, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” In the margin write, “This is the attitude of marital love.” In vs. 24 underline “will leave” and “be united.” In the margin write, “Marriage involves: 1) leaving, and 2) cleaving.”

3) Applying what you've learned

- What does this lesson have to say to the following people?
 - ✓ Whenever Kristin has a problem, her husband James is one of the last people that she talks to. He is so consumed with work, Kristin doesn't think he listens to her. Instead, she calls one of her girlfriends or her sister.
 - ✓ Matt and Julie have recently found out they cannot have any kids. They are crushed. They feel like their marriage is not complete.



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **FAMILY**
Lesson Two: **JOSHUA 24:1-15**

Goal: to see why we will want to keep God at the center of the family

1) Read Joshua 24:1-13

- In these verses the LORD, through Joshua, recounts the history of the Israelites all the way back to when God called Abraham to live in the land of Canaan. What is the purpose of this history review?
- The most significant portion of those verses is found in verse 2 and 3. Re-read those verses. Underline the portion of those verses that reads, "...worshiped other gods. But I took..." What was one of God's purposes in having Abraham move away in order to raise his family? Make note of this in the margin of your Bible.
- What are some events in your life that you might point to as evidence of God's goodness? Did your family play a role in your receiving these benefits?

2) Read Joshua 24:14-15

- "Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped." If your extended family has traditions or practices that get in the way of your worship of the LORD, what should you do with those traditions and practices?
- Joshua is referring to actual idols — false gods made of wood and stone. What are some modern idols we might need to throw away in our family?
- "As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." What is the relationship between this statement and the first thirteen verses of this chapter?

3) Applying what you've learned

- Make a list of some basic ways that you and your household can serve the LORD. Share them with your family. Ask them to add ideas to the list.



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **FAMILY**
Lesson Three: **PSALM 127**

Goals: 1) to see that raising a family without the LORD is futile in relation to eternity
2) to see that children are a blessing from God

1) Read Psalm 127:1-2

- By vs 1 & 2 write, “None of our efforts will prosper without the LORD’s blessing.”
- Do you know any families that prosper (“build a house”) and avoid danger (“stand guard”) even though they have no relationship with the LORD? How long will that prosperity last? How long will the members of that family avoid danger?
- In 1 Timothy 5:8 Paul writes, “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” In the immediate context of that passage Paul is referring to caring for the elderly. In light of our lesson for today, what is another way a person could fail to “provide for” his family?

2) Read Psalm 127:3-5

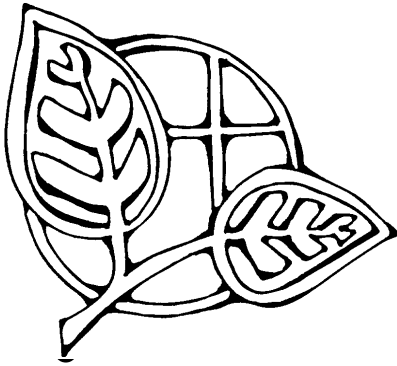
- What is the difference between a “reward” and a “heritage”? In what way do children serve as both of these things?
- “Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.” Put this statement together with the first part of the psalm, which we said demonstrates the importance of doing a job with the LORD. Why does a Christian feel that having children is a blessing?
- Does our society understand that children are a blessing? Point to examples from society to support your answer.

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- In Romans 10:17 Paul writes, “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”

Does God make it the parents’ responsibility to create faith in the hearts of their children?

What is the only thing parents can do to provide spiritually for their children?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **FAMILY**

Lesson Four: **MATTHEW 19:1-9**

Goal: to understand the high honor that God expects us to give to marriage

1) Read Matthew 19:1-9

- Underline the phrase “for any and every reason.” In the margin write, “The Pharisees wanted to know if ‘no fault’ divorces were biblical.”
- In verse 7 the Pharisees say that “Moses commanded” divorce. In verse 8 Jesus corrects them: “Moses permitted” divorce because “your hearts were hard.” Look up Zechariah 7:12. What exactly is a “hardness of heart”?
- Underline the phrase, “What God has joined together, let man not separate.” Double-underline the word “man.” In the margin write, “No human, not even the couple, has the right to end a marriage.” Who alone has the right to end marriage? When does that happen?
- Jesus doesn’t define “marital unfaithfulness” in this portion of Scripture. Look up the following passages and tell us what they add to our understanding of marital unfaithfulness.

Hebrews 13:4 —

1 Corinthians 7:15 —

Malachi 2:16a —

2) Applying what you’ve learned

Look up Matthew 5:27-30. Compare those verses to what you read in Matthew 19:6. Why would God consider a “wandering eye” and a “lustful heart” so offensive? What do Jim’s actions say to God?

How will Jim get past this problem? (See Acts 3:19-20 and Philippians 4:13 for help.)



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **FAMILY**

Lesson Five: **EPHESIANS 5:21-6:4**

Goal: to see that God gives different roles to husband, wives, parents, and children

1) Read Ephesians 5:21-33

- Paul begins this section of Scripture by giving an over-arching instruction in verse 21. What is that instruction? Rephrase that instruction in your own words.
- Paul then instructs women to recognize their husband’s “headship.” In 1 Corinthians 11:3 Paul writes, “The head of Christ is God.” How does that passage demonstrate that biblical “headship” does not mean “superiority” or “dominance”? What do you think headship means then?
- Why does the Church submit to Christ?
 - (a) The Church is Christ’s slave.
 - (b) A lack of submission leads to punishment.
 - (c) Christ has motivated the Church to submit to him by showing unfailing love.What does this tell us about a wife’s submission to her husband?
- Paul instructs men to “love your wives, just as Christ loved the church.” What are some adjectives you would use to describe the love that Christ has for the Church?
- Paul also writes, “Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies...” (vs 28,29). What is the logic behind this “selfish” reason for husbands to love their wives?

2) Read Ephesians 6:1-4

- What is the difference between a child obeying a parent and obeying a parent “in the Lord”?
- Why do children’s obedience and a happy life go hand in hand?
- What does “exasperate” mean? What are some ways parents can exasperate their children? What specific instruction does God give to parents?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- Some people would look at this portion of Scripture and say, “This is so old fashioned!” Try this exercise: List five specific ways a husband could show Christ-like love to his wife. List five specific ways a wife could submit to her husband. Now answer these two questions:
 - 1) If couples made these ten things regular habits in marriage, how many relationship problems would there be?
 - 2) When the things on that list aren’t carried out, does the fault lie with God’s plan?



**GROWING IN
GRACE
&
KNOWLEDGE:
THE WORLD**



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **THE WORLD**
Lesson One: **GENESIS 3:1-19**

Goal: to understand why the world is the way it is

1) Read Genesis 3:1-5

- If God was going to forbid Adam and Eve from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, why did he create it in the first place? What did God's command concerning the fruit of that tree allow Adam and Eve to do?
- Put an asterisks next to verses 4 and 5 and in the margin write, "See John 8:44." What does that passage tell us about the way that the devil tries to get us to fall away from God?
- How do the devil's lies in verses 4 and 5 call God's truthfulness into question? How do those lies call God's love into question? What are some lies the devil tells people today that question God's truthfulness or love?

2) Read Genesis 3:6-13

- List the various emotions that Adam and Eve feel in these verses. What brought about these emotions? Are these emotions prevalent in the world today?

3) Read Genesis 3:14-19

- What was God's punishment upon the serpent? Upon the devil? When did this proclamation against the devil take place?
- What are the punishments that Eve received? What are the punishments that Adam received? Do we see people still suffering from these punishments in the world today? Why is that the case? Are we being punished for Adam and Eve's sin?

4) Applying what you've learned

- Look up James 3:14-16. That portion of Scripture talks about "every evil practice." Suppose someone said to you, "I don't believe there is a God! Or if there is, he certainly isn't a loving God. Look at all the evil and suffering in the world. If a loving God existed, he wouldn't let this happen!" On the basis of our lesson for today and that portion of Scripture from James, how would you respond to this person?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **THE WORLD**
Lesson Two: **ROMANS 8:18-25**

Goal: to see that sin has ruined creation and learn what God is going to do about it

1) Read Romans 8:18-22

- "... the creation was subjected to frustration." "... the whole creation has been groaning..." The perfection that existed in the world was lost after the fall into sin. What are some of the "frustrating" consequences of sin that we now see taking place in the world?
- Underline the phrase "creation itself will be liberated from it's bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God." In the margin write, "See 2 Peter 3:6,7,10 and Isaiah 65:17." How will God liberate the world from all its problems?

2) Read Romans 8:23-25

- Circle the phrase "our adoption as sons." Circle the phrase "the redemption of our bodies." Draw an arrow from the first circle to the second. God has already adopted us as his sons and daughters. But the full benefit of that adoption will be realized when God raises our bodies from the dead on Judgment Day. In the margin write, "See 1 Corinthians 15:42-44." What will God do for our bodies on that day?
- There is no denying that sin has taken an awesome toll on this world and on our bodies. And yet Paul tells us that Christians wait patiently and hope for quick deliverance. In the time being, what is it that gives us the strength to go on in this world of suffering? (For help, re-read verse 18.)

3) Applying what you've learned

- You have a friend, Tony, who spends a ton of his free time working for various environmental causes. He gets a little upset at you for not being more interested in things like pollution, endangered species, and global warming. One day he says to you, "You claim to be a Christian, but wouldn't a Christian be more interested in taking care of God's creation?"

Does our lesson have anything to say to Tony? How would you respond to him?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **THE WORLD**
Lesson Three: **MARK 4:35-41**

Goal: to see that even though the world is ruined, Christ is still in control

1) Read Mark 4:35-41

- “A furious squall came up.” Do you think that before the fall into sin there were powerful storms like the one described in our lesson? Before the fall into sin were there any storms that would threaten someone’s safety?
- The disciples turned to Jesus in trouble, and yet Jesus rebukes them. He asks, “Do you still have no faith?” In what way did waking Jesus demonstrate a lack of trust in him?
- In verse 39 underline the word “completely.” In the margin write, “The Creator is still in complete control of his creation.”
- Note that Jesus didn’t do anything but speak. Look up Hebrews 1:3. What does this passage remind us?
- Mark tells us that Jesus was “sleeping on a cushion.” What does this remind us about our Jesus and how does this fact comfort us? Mark also tells us that, “Even the wind and the waves obey him!” What does this remind us about Jesus and how does this fact comfort us?
- Jesus asked his disciples a question, “Why are you so afraid?” They were with the Son of God, and yet they were afraid! How foolish! Now look up Matthew 28:20b. What does this passage have to say to us when “furious squalls” arise in our life?

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- It is clear that Jesus is still in complete control of the world. Why, then, do we still suffer problems in this world? If Christ can deal so easily with such problems, why doesn’t he? The following passages give us insight into to the way God uses problems and hardships. What do they tell us:
 - ✓ Hebrews 12:7-11 —
 - ✓ Psalm 50:15 —
 - ✓ Colossians 3:1-2 —



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **THE WORLD**
Lesson Four: **ROMANS 13:1-7**

Goal: to see how God brings a degree of order into an unbelieving world

1) Read Romans 13:1-7

- Paul's letter to the Romans was written around AD 57. The Roman Emperor from AD 54 to AD 68 was named Nero. He is the one who fed Christians to the lions and had them killed in contests with gladiators. How does that fact broaden your understanding of verses 1 & 2? What type of leaders would we include in the statement, "The authorities that exist have been established by God"?
- Underline the phrases, "free from fear" and "do what is right and he will commend you." In the margin write, "This is civic righteousness." Civic righteousness is when we do good in order to avoid punishment and / or receive commendation from our government. How does this differ from our motivation for doing good works for God? (See 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 if you need help.) Why not just preach the Gospel to everyone and motivate people to do good that way, rather than using threats and intimidation?
- Underline the word "sword" and in the margin write, "See 1 Timothy 2:1-2." Look up that passage now. What are some ways that the government uses "the sword" to make life "peaceful and quiet"?
- Re-read verses 1 & 5. Why are we conscience bound to obey the government? When is the only time we would disobey the government? (See Acts 5:27-29)
- According to verse 6, what God-given right does the government have in order to carry out its God-given responsibilities?
- In Mark 12:17 we read, "Then Jesus said to them, 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.'" The Bible makes it clear that the Church and the state exist for two separate purposes. What is the purpose of the church? What is the purpose of the state?

2) Applying what you've learned

- During World War II you had Americans, many of whom were Christian, going overseas and killing Germans, many of whom were Christian! How is this possible? What does this lesson have to say about this situation.
- Bill wants to join the Army after high-school. Tracy, a member of the teen group at church, says to him, "Bill, if you join the army you might have to kill people! That would be sin against the Fifth Commandment." What does this lesson have to say to Bill?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **THE WORLD**
Lesson Five: **ACTS 17:29-31**

Goal: to see what will happen at the end of the world

1) Read Acts 17:29-31

- Underline the phrase “In the past God overlooked such ignorance.” In the margin write, “Our live is a time of grace when God does not treat us as our sins deserve.” During a man’s life God does not punish him immediately for his sin. Rather God gives man a “time of grace” to come to faith and repent.
- Underline the phrase “he will judge the world” and “ by raising him from the dead.” In the margin write, “The end of the world will include: 1) the resurrection, and 2) the judgment.
- The following passages tell us more about the resurrection.
 - a) Acts 24:15 — Who will be raised?
 - b) Philippians 3:20-21 — What will be the condition of believers in the resurrection?
 - c) Revelation 21:4 — What sensations will believers experience?
 - d) Mark 9:43— What will be the condition of unbelievers in the resurrection?
 - e) 1 Corinthians 15:20 — How can we be sure there will be a bodily resurrection?
- The following passages tell us more about the judgment.
 - a) Mark 13:31-33 — When will this judgment take place?
 - b) Matthew 25:31-33 — Who will do the judging?
 - c) Romans 14:10-12 — Who will be judged?
 - d) Mark 16:16 — On what basis will the judgment be made?
 - e) Luke 23:43 — For those who have died, Judgment Day is simply a public announcement of a judgment that already took place. When?

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- On the basis of this lesson, how would you respond to the following two situations?
 - ✓ Your friend Tim has visited church with you a couple times. He tells you, “It’s not that I hate church or anything. I just don’t think I need it right now. When I have kids or when I get old, then I’ll worry about church.”
 - ✓ Your Uncle James, a struggling alcoholic, confesses to you, “I’m hate thinking about Judgment Day. When you look at my life, it’s obvious that I don’t stand a chance!”



**GROWING IN
GRACE
&
KNOWLEDGE:
EVANGELISM**



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **EVANGELISM**
Lesson One: **MARK 16:15-20**

Goal: to see what evangelism is

1) Read Mark 16:15-16

- Underline the phrase “preach the good news” and in the margin write “Evangelism is nothing more than sharing the ‘good news’ about Jesus.” What does the phrase “go into” add to our understanding about how we are to do evangelism? What about the phrase “all the world”?
- In 1 Corinthians 12:3 Paul writes, “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.” The Bible teaches us that the Holy Spirit is responsible for creating faith in someone’s heart. What does this add to the understanding about our role in evangelism? How does this understanding “take the pressure off” our evangelism efforts?

2) Read Mark 16:17-20

- Jesus told the disciples what they were to preach — the Gospel. Now Jesus tells them how he will confirm their message — with miraculous powers and signs. Today, some are so interested in signs that they lose sight of the Gospel! The Bible makes it clear that the proclamation of the Gospel is to continue until Christ returns. It does not tell us to expect the miracles to continue. The following passages help us understand signs and miracles:
 - 2 Corinthians 12:12What is an apostle? Are there any apostles today?
 - Matthew 12:38-40What is the only “sign” we need that the Gospel is true?
 - John 10:40-42.....Did God have all of the great preachers / teachers in the Bible do miracles to authenticate their message?
 - John 12:37.....Do miracles convert people? If yes, how? If no, what does?
 - 2 Thessalonians 2:9.....If a church is caught up in signs at the expense of the Gospel, what might that be evidence of?
- In verse 19 we’re told Jesus ascended into heaven. And yet in verse 20 we read, “...the Lord worked with them.” Underline that phrase and in the margin write, see Matthew 28:20. What gives us courage as we go about the awesome job of evangelism?

3) Applying what you’ve learned

- Jim works on the evangelism committee at church. He has done door-to-door work, trying to share the gospel, but few people take the time to listen to him. He has tried to tell co-workers about Jesus, but they don’t listen. Jim concludes, “I’m just a bad evangelist!” Is he?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **EVANGELISM**
Lesson Two: **ROMANS 10:11-15**

Goals: 1) to understand why evangelism is so important
2) to see that evangelism is a privilege and honor

1) Read Romans 10:11-15

- In verse 11 we read about “everyone who trusts in him.” In verse 13 we read about “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord.” What do the phrases “who trusts” and “who calls” tell us about salvation? What does the fact that Paul mentions the word “everyone” twice emphasize about salvation?
- Think for a moment about all the Bible study you’ve done in your lifetime. Do you remember anywhere that the Bible even hinted that people will or might be saved *outside of* faith in the Lord?
- Restate vs 14 in your own words. What is the simple cause-and-effect logic of that verse?
- In verse 15 Paul writes, “How can they preach unless they are sent?” What is one way you can do evangelism in a distant location without actually going there yourself?
- The Scripture Paul cites in verse 15 is from Isaiah, chapter 52. Look up Isaiah 52:7 now. What is the “good news” that is being brought?
- Isaiah talks about the “beautiful feet” of the messenger? To whom are these feet beautiful? Why do you think Isaiah talks about the messenger’s “beautiful feet”? Why not talk about the beautiful mouth which spoke the message? What does this tell us about evangelism?

2) Applying what you’ve learned

- Fill out the following list identifying people whom you believe to be unbelievers:

A relative: _____ A close friend: _____

A co-worker: _____ A neighbor: _____

Perhaps you have been praying and praying for God to do something to save them. What does this lesson have to say to you? Perhaps you have simply contented yourself with the thought, “If God desires to save them, he will make it happen.” If that’s the case, what does this lesson have to say to you?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **EVANGELISM**

Lesson Three: **1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5**

Goal: to learn what is and what isn't required to do evangelism

1) Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

- Paul is the one who evangelized the Corinthians. In these verses Paul first of all tells us something about himself, the messenger. He did not display “eloquence” or “superior wisdom.” Then Paul tells us about the message. It did not contain “persuasive words” nor “wise words.” In the margin write, “Evangelism does not require great speaking skills nor great intelligence.”
- Underline verse 2. Double-underline the phrase “nothing except.” What do those words tell us about what is required in order for us to do evangelism?
- Paul writes, “I *resolved* to know nothing...” It wasn't that Paul was unintelligent. Paul was highly educated. But when it came time to spread the good news, Paul put all that behind him. Why? What did Paul know was the true power behind his words?
- In verse 5 underline “God's power” and in the margin write, “See Romans 1:16.” Look up that passage now. Where do we find God's power? How is that power unleashed?
- Think of some of the teachers you've had. Which ones did you like the best? What did you like about them? How can you apply that to your evangelism?

2) Applying what you've learned

- Look up Luke 12:11-12 & 1 Peter 3:15. Those passages describe a “balance” that we want to achieve in our evangelism. After reading those passages, complete the following:

*When it comes to doing evangelism, on the one hand, we want to be _____
(1 Peter 3:15) so that we are able to answer people's questions about the hope that we
have. To achieve this goal we will want to...*

*On the other hand, there is no need for us to _____ (Luke 12:11-12) about
doing evangelism, for we have Christ's promise that the _____ will
help us when the time comes.*



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **EVANGELISM**
Lesson Four: **EZEKIEL 33:1-11**

Goal: to realize the responsibility we have (and don't have) as evangelists

1) Read Ezekiel 33:1-6

- What are some adjectives you would use to describe the watchman and his job performance if he refused to sound the warning?
- Is the watchman responsible for saving the city? Does God make him responsible for counter attacking the enemy? What important truth does this teach us about evangelism?
- In vs 6 we read, “that man will be taken away *because of his sin.*” Even though this man didn't get a warning, what will be the ultimate cause of his destruction?

2) Read Ezekiel 33:7-11

- Underline the phrases “I say” and “you dissuade.” In God's plan of salvation he gives us the message, and then we share it. What are two ways we can stand in the way of that plan? (Hint — Think of the question first of all from the aspect of sharing the message, and secondly from the aspect of the message itself.)
- Remember, evangelism means “good news.” Yet God has Ezekiel warn, “O wicked man, you will surely die.” Is there any good news to be found in these verses? Why is it often necessary to share a warning about sin (the Law) *before* we share the good news about our Savior from sin (the Gospel)?
- In the Old Testament, God gave the responsibility of sharing his Word to a select group of people — the prophets and priests. Look up 1 Peter 2:9. Who bears this responsibility in the New Testament era, which we are now in?
- This portion of Ezekiel serves as Law. What do we need to remember when we fall short of what God has asked us to do as evangelists? (Look up Psalm 103:12).

3) Applying what you've learned

- Read Luke 15:7. In the word “evangelism” you see the word “angel.” Indeed, the two words are related. Angel means “messenger.” Evangelism means “good message.” What are some jobs that we normally associate with angels? How was the job that God gave to Ezekiel (and he gives to us) *even greater* than that of angels?



GROWING IN GRACE & KNOWLEDGE

Topic: **EVANGELISM**
Lesson Five: **2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21**

Goals: to learn the basic message that we will share as evangelists

1) Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-20

- “We regard no one from a worldly point of view.” How does the world look at people? What types of things does the world consider important? How do we, as evangelists, look at people?
- Paul describes God’s work with the word “reconciliation.” Underline all the places in verses 18 to 20 where this word (or variations of it) occur. What exactly does this word mean? (For help, look up 1 Corinthians 7:10,11.)
- In verse 19 circle the words “God was” and “in Christ.” Draw an arrow from the first circle to the second. In the margin write, “Jesus is the God-man.”
- What does the word “ministry” mean? Therefore, what is a “ministry of reconciliation”?
- What is an ambassador? What gives an ambassador’s message authority? What “message of reconciliation” does God ask us, as ambassadors, to share?

2) Read 2 Corinthians 5:21

- In verse 19 we read that God does not count sin against the sinner. Verse 21 tells us how this is possible. It isn’t that God just lets sin slide. Rather, how did God deal with sin?

3) Applying what you’ve learned.

2 Corinthians 5:21 illustrates that to share the truth of God’s Word we’ll need to talk about:

- 1) our sin,
- 2) Christ’s lack of sin,
- 3) our lack of righteousness,
- 4) Christ’s righteousness, and
- 5) the great exchange that took place between us and Christ.

Each of the following passages illustrates one or more of those five points.

Hebrews 4:15 Romans 3:23-24 Matthew 5:48 Romans 6:23 John 3:16

Look up each passage and write it on the back of this sheet of paper. What do those passages illustrate? (Our sin? Christ’s lack of sin? Etc?) If you want to be prepared to share a basic Law/Gospel message with someone who needs it, memorize those passages (and 2 Corinthians 5:21). It will give you a great start! May the Lord bless your evangelism efforts.