

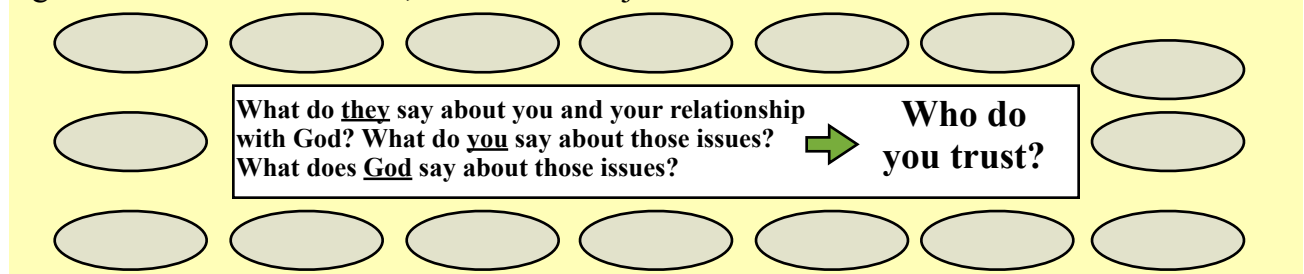
FOLLOW UP # 1 - SECURITY AND ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Hebrews 6:19 - We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.



It's important to know what Christ thinks of you and what the Bible promises about eternal life. Without security, no relationship can grow and develop. This content, if understood, will help you grow spiritually in a healthy way.

THE COMMITTEE TRUTH DIAGRAM: Several friends, family and other influential people are discussing what is most true about you and your relationship with God. After a significant amount of debate, Jesus Himself joins the discussion.

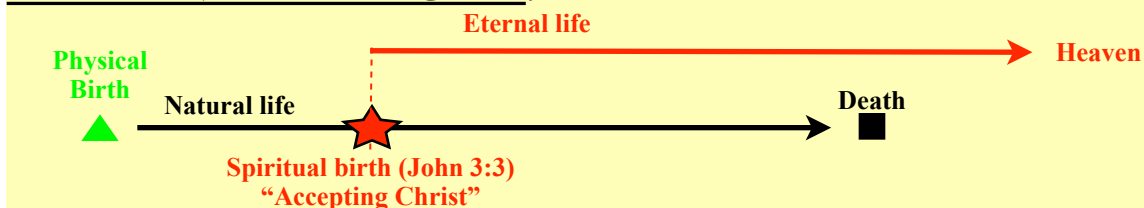


1. Which opinion would you believe to be the most true about you? Why?
2. Do you think that God's opinion of you would be more true than all the others combined?
3. What if you, someone else or everyone, disagreed with what God said about you? Is God still right and true, or is He now wrong?
4. In a relationship with God, why is it important to know what He believes about you?
5. Can you believe what God says about you? Where could you find what He says?

Now, read passages concerning what God says about you:

1. **John 10:27-30** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. Who do the sheep refer to? What does Jesus give to His sheep?
 - b. Who does no-one include, when God says no one can snatch you from His hands?
 - c. How secure is this eternal life?
 - d. When does this eternal life start?

THE ETERNAL LIFE DIAGRAM:



Eternal life isn't something you earn based on what you did during life, it is something that begins here on earth the second you put your trust in Christ, accepting His free gift of salvation, and continues into eternity in heaven. Jesus promises you this in **Jn. 6:35-47**. **As His child, your eternity with Him is secure!**

2. **1 John 5:11-15** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What has God given you?
 - b. Where is eternal life located?
 - c. If you have Jesus Christ, then you also have what?
 - d. Are there any other requirements for eternal life?
 - e. Why does it say these things were written?
 - f. Why do you think that God wants you to KNOW for SURE that you have eternal life?
3. **Romans 8:38-39** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. Can you think of anything that is not included in this list that could possibly separate you from the love of Jesus Christ
 - b. Does this list include you as well (are you included in no created thing)?
 - c. What about anything you might do in the future (would that be included in nor the future)?
4. **1 John 4:18** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. Why is it that you no longer have to fear God's punishment?
5. **Philippians 1:6** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. Who will be faithful to complete the good work He started in you?
 - b. Can you trust this even when you feel like you've failed?
 - c. Will He ever give up on completing the work He started in you?
6. **Hebrews 13:5** - What does God promise in this verse? Would God ever break this promise?
 - a. Can you think of anything in life more secure than that?
7. ***How can you apply these verses and truths in your life?***

Your relationship with God is secure and nothing can take that away from you. You are His Child and He will never leave you but will be with you, and will continue patiently working in your life, making you who He wants you to be.

Next Step:

1. **Begin reading the Bible for yourself to discover more about your relationship with God:**
 - a. Make sure to read a modern english version: The New American Standard, New International Version, Amplified Bible and New King James are all easily understandable.
 - b. Begin with the **Gospel of John**. Why? Because John is all about Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith (**Heb.12:2**). Jesus is the foundation of your faith (**1 Cor. 3:11**).

FOLLOW UP # 2 - LIVING BY FAITH VS. FEELINGS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

Romans 1:17 - The righteous will live by faith.

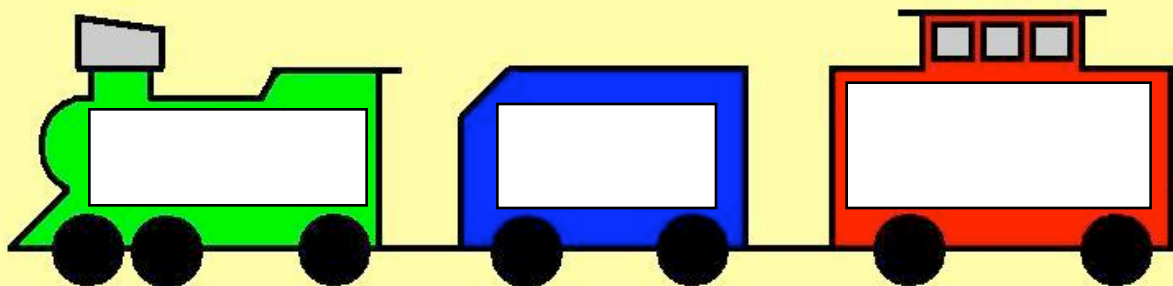
Which of the following pictures best represents how you view faith? Why?



As God's child, it is important to know your faith is based on the solid Word of God, the Bible, and not on feelings and experiences that arise out of the circumstances of life. The American culture is one based on feelings and striving for good things to happen. Many times feelings are in conflict with sound reasoning, which actually hinders the growth of a Christian who may be ignorantly basing his faith in feelings rather than the infallible truth of the Scripture. Also, there are many believers who are striving for an emotional experience to validate their faith, rather than building their faith on Christ. For example, most immature Christians want to "feel" that God is in their life. Feelings come and go and are usually activated by the "flesh" and circumstances. Usually, valid feelings come from the result of our faith and obedience (it has been said, "*don't feel your way into acting, act your way into feeling*"). True faith is in contrast to the five senses: sight, smell, feelings, hearing and taste; faith involves trusting God regardless of what our senses indicate.

Our faith is really our ability to trust Christ with every detail of our life. Our trust develops over time as we get to know God better and better, and act on the faith we do have. The bottom line will always be, can I trust God with this decision, issue, or circumstance? The ability to trust deeply regardless of how things look comes from the Bible and the Holy Spirit. As we trust God with the details, He transforms our minds and guides us into His perfect will.

THE TRAIN DIAGRAM



This diagram modified from Dr. Bill Bright's diagram found in the Four Spiritual Laws.

Questions about the Train Diagram:

1. If you experience a really good circumstance, like winning a free car, how would you feel? How would that feeling affect your faith in Christ? Would it go up or down?

2. Conversely, if a bad situation occurred like losing your drivers license, how would you feel? How would that feeling affect your faith? Would your faith in Christ go down?
3. Why should feelings and circumstances be the caboose and not the engine?
4. Why is it important to put your faith in God's Word, the Bible?

The train will run with or without the caboose. However, it would be useless to pull the train by the caboose. In the same way, as Christians we do not depend on feelings or emotions, but we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God and the promises of His Word.

1. **Ephesians 2:8-9** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What role did faith play in your salvation?
2. **Hebrews 11:1 and 6** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What do you think "*being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see*" means?
 - b. What do you think it means when it says "*without faith it is impossible to please God.*"
 - c. How can you consciously place your faith in God and His Word regardless of feelings and circumstances each day?
3. **Hebrews 4:2** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What does it mean to unite belief with faith?
 - i. Hint: live like what you believe is true, apply God's Word daily.
4. **Romans 10:17, James 1:22 and James 2:22 and 26** - read these passages out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What does your faith come from?
 - b. Why must we apply what God's Word says?
 - c. How do faith and application (action work together)?
5. **2 Corinthians 5:7** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. How can you live by faith and not by sight?
6. **Galatians 2:20** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What is the result of living by faith?
7. ***How can you apply these verses and truths in your life?***

As you learn to walk daily, by faith in God and His Word, you will begin living above your circumstances - this is the abundant life Jesus promised in John 10:10.

FOLLOW UP # 3 - DEALING WITH SIN & EXPERIENCING GOD'S LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

Ps.32:1 - Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.



Which of the following pictures best represents how you view God's forgiveness? Why?

It is vitally important for each of us to understand the issue of sin, confession, repentance, and how to stay in good fellowship with Christ, in order to grow strong in our relationships with Christ.

A few key verses about sin:

1. **Mark 7:20-23** - Jesus defines sin.
2. **Galatians 5:19-21** - the deeds of the flesh are sin.
3. **Exodus 20:3-17** - The Ten Commandments describe specific sins.
 - a. **Romans 3:19-20** - The law was given to show us we are sinful and need Jesus.
4. **1 John 5:17** - All unrighteousness is sin.
5. **Romans 14:22-23** - Whatever is not from faith is sin.
6. **James 4:17** - Knowing what you should do and not doing it is sin.

So what happens when we sin after Jesus has already come into our lives?

1. **Hebrews 10:14 & 17** - Jesus already forgave all your sins (past, present and future) by His sacrifice at the cross; He provided a pardon for you.
2. **Ephesians 2:8-9** - The pardon is a free gift, irrevocable, based on grace (grace is getting something for free that you do not deserve).
3. **Why do we still sin after Christ is in our lives?**
 - a. **Romans 7:19-25** - we still have our sinful human nature, called the "flesh."
 - b. **1 John 2:1-2** - God has an answer for daily sin.
4. **How do I get rid of sin?**
 - a. **1 John 1:9** - confess our sin to God daily and continue to be good friends with God
 - i. **Confession** is agreeing with God about our sin and asking His forgiveness. This illustrates **Repentance** which literally means to change the way we think about our sin (instead of being O.K with it, I see it how God does and then He helps me change from there - He cleanses me from all unrighteousness).
 - b. **1 John 3:3** - As you go on in your walk with God, you will want to sin less and less.

5. When should we confess our sin?

- a. As soon as we become aware of the sin.
 - i. **John 16:7-11** - The Holy Spirit will convict us of sin.

6. What happens when we do not confess known sin (sin God makes us aware of)?

- a. **Hebrews 3:13** - We become hardened; fear sets in, fellowship with God is broken, we often run from God and other Christians, we become self-centered and hypocritical again like a non-Christian.

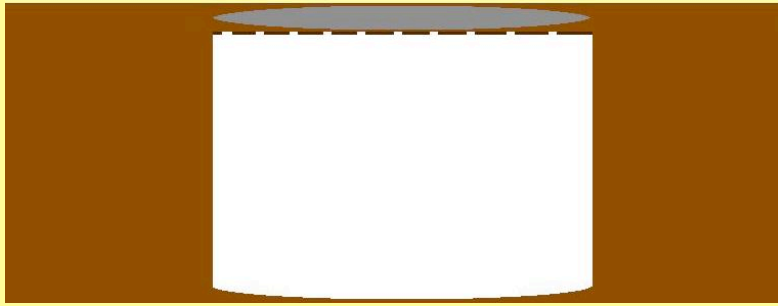
The difference between relationship and fellowship.

1. **RELATIONSHIP** with God is your connection to Him. You're His child, He's your Father.
 - a. Your Father/child relationship with God does not change based on what you do; it is secure based on what He did at the Cross.
 - b. When you sin you don't cease to be His child.
 - c. Your RELATIONSHIP with God is DEPENDENT ON CHRIST ALONE and therefore it is constant regardless of how I live my life because it is DEPENDENT solely on Jesus Christ (Remember assurance verses from Follow Up #1).
2. **FELLOWSHIP** with God is your interaction, communication and intimacy with God.
 - a. Your interaction, communication and intimacy with God are affected by what you do.
 - b. When you sin, your interaction, communication and intimacy with God are hindered.
 - c. Your FELLOWSHIP with God is DEPENDENT ON YOU and a daily attitude of desiring to be what God wants you to be. If I sin willfully, or if God makes me aware of sin in my life, and I refuse to confess and change my attitude about that sin, then my fellowship or friendship with God is temporarily broken until I confess it and ask His forgiveness.

RELATIONSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP CHART:

	Relationship (Father and Child)	Fellowship (interaction, communication, intimacy)
Sin		
Confess		

If I do not confess my sin, then I do not in my conscience "feel clean" before God, and there is no longer the power and sometimes even the desire to live the Christian life. When I do confess my sin to God, regardless of how I feel, I am completely forgiven and clean.



A few more key scriptures:

1. **2 Timothy 2:13** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What does it mean to be faithless towards God?
 - b. Why is it that God continues being faithful to us even when we aren't to Him?
2. **Hebrews 12:1-2** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What do you think it means to lay aside everything that hinders us and the sin that entangles us?
 - b. What does it mean to fix your eyes on Jesus?
 - c. What does it mean when it says that Jesus is the author and finisher of your faith?
3. **Psalm 119:11** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What does it mean to hide God's Word in your heart?
 - b. Do you think that will really keep you from sinning?
4. ***How can you apply these verses and truths in your life?***

Even though you have sinned since accepting Christ and will no doubt sin again in the future, your relationship with God is secure and your fellowship with Him is restored as soon as you confess that sin to Him; He removes it infinitely far from you and fellowship with Him is restored completely. Over time you will begin to notice that God changes you from the inside out and little by little He is making you more and more like Jesus.

FOLLOW UP # 4 - LIVING DAILY IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

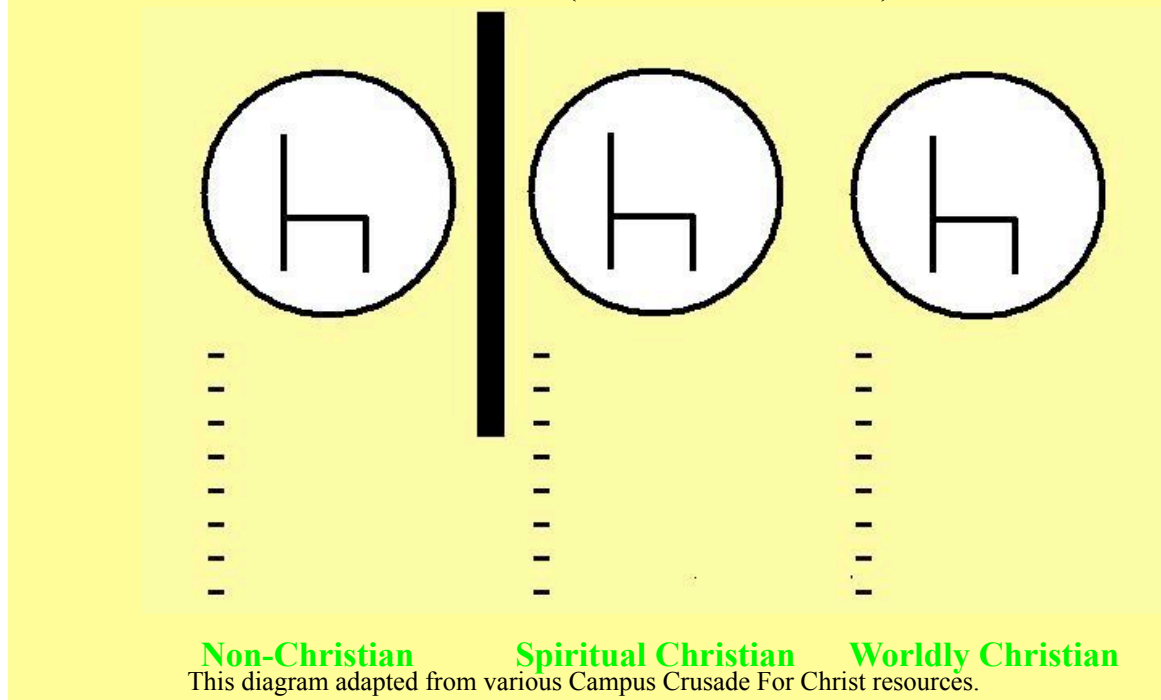
Gal.5:16 - So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Which of the following pictures best represents how you view the power of the Holy Spirit? Why?



It is very important that every Christian understand how to live daily in the power of the Holy Spirit in such a way that they begin to see Christ's life lived through theirs while simultaneously experiencing victory over sin. This is potentially one of the most important follow-ups in this packet.

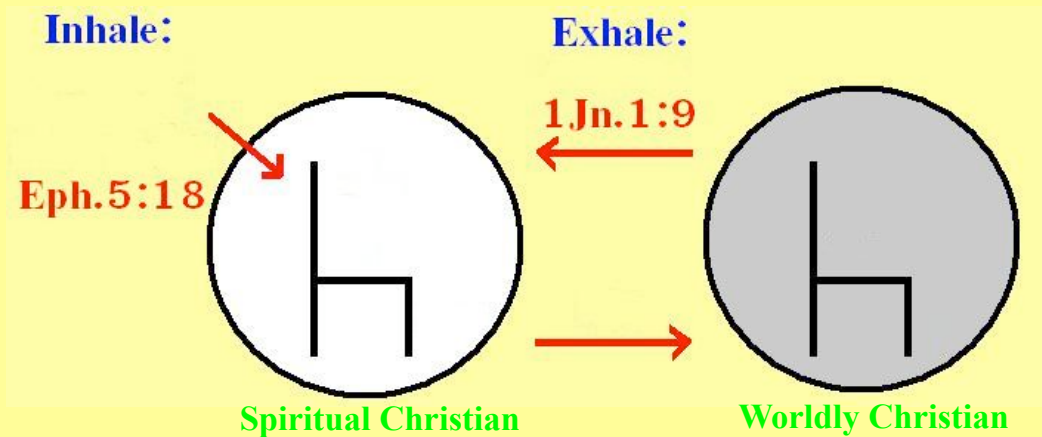
THE THREE CIRCLES DIAGRAM (Read 1 Cor. 2:12-3:3):



The Three Circles Diagram:

Read **1 Cor.2:12-3:3** which describes each of these three individuals (**2:14** - the non-Christian, **2:12, 15** - the spiritual man and **3:1** - the worldly Christian). What are characteristics of each person? How do you go from each circle to the next?

THE SPIRITUAL BREATHING DIAGRAM:



This diagram adapted from various Campus Crusade For Christ resources.

Tying it all together - Spiritual Breathing:

Whenever you take a breath your body converts that to CO₂ which you must exhale. You can think of confessing sin as exhaling - getting rid of the junk. You do not need to sin as a Christian but when you do, be quick to exhale or confess that sin (**Remember 1 Jn.1:9**). What happens if you only exhale and never inhale? You won't survive. Similarly, the Spiritual Christian must constantly inhale also. Inhaling, in this analogy, is consciously being filled with the Holy Spirit (**Eph.5:18**).

What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit:

1. God's Holy Spirit already lives in you!

- a. **John 7:37-39**, **Ephesians 1:13**, **1 Corinthians 3:16** and **6:19** all promise that as a Christian, from the second you put your trust in Christ, the Holy Spirit lives in you and won't leave you. But that's just the beginning.

2. All Christians are commanded to be continually filled with (empowered by) the Spirit.

- a. Being filled with the Spirit means to be **empowered** and **directed** by Him.
- b. **Think of it this way:** *Imagine you are four-wheeling in the mountains when your jeep runs out of gas. The gas tank is empty so the jeep is powerless to accomplish anything. In the back of the jeep you have an extra canister of gas. That gas is in the jeep but it isn't filling the tank and until you fill the tank the jeep will go nowhere; as soon as you fill the tank, however, you're on your way. The filling of the Holy Spirit is the same way. He is in your life from the second of your salvation but you must daily allow Him to fill you to experience His power in every part of your life.*

How to be filled with the Holy Spirit:

1. **Ephesians 5:18** - Realize that being filled with the Spirit is God's command to all Christians.
2. **Follow the *ABCD'S* of being filled:**
 - a. **A**sk Him to fill you with His Holy Spirit (**Read Luke 11:13 and 1 John 5:14-15**).
 - b. **B**elieve He fills you and claim it by faith alone (**Read James 1:6-7**).
 - c. **C**onfess all known sin (**Remember 1 John 1:9**).
 - d. **D**esire to have Christ's control in your life (**Read Matthew 5:6**).
 - e. **S**urrender control to Christ (**Read Romans 12:1-2**).
3. **We call this process a "throne check,"** consciously being filled with the Spirit continually throughout the day, allowing Christ to be in control and on the throne.
4. Realize you can't earn the right to be filled with the Spirit, you do not have to beg God to be filled, you must not depend on feelings you claim the fullness of the Holy Spirit **by faith**.
5. **Galatians 2:20** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What's the difference between living life my way and letting Christ live His through me?
 - b. As you walk filled with His Spirit what can stop Christ from living His life through you?
6. ***How can you apply these verses and truths in your life? (Hint - be filled with His Spirit!)***
7. **Develop the habit of a "throne check" every 15 minutes! Seriously, be on the alert, the "flesh" can take control faster than we think.**

The Christian life is not difficult, it is impossible; through the filling power of the Holy Spirit it is not just possible, but guaranteed! The only way you will ever experience the abundant life Jesus promised and the purpose He created you for is to live a daily lifestyle of being filled and controlled with His Holy Spirit in such a way that He lives His life through you.

FOLLOW UP # 5 - WHO THE HOLY SPIRIT IS AND WHAT HE DOES FOR US

2 Cor. 13:14 - The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.



All Christians desperately need to know who the Holy Spirit is and cooperate with what He is doing in and through their lives. Today we're going to continue from last week and look a little more closely at who the Holy Spirit is and what all He does.

Who is the Holy Spirit:

1. **He is not:** An impersonal force, a mystical feeling or emotion, a dove, the symbol of God, a spooky ghost, a hijacking tyrant, an unbridled lunatic, your conscience or sensationalistic experiences.
2. **2 Corinthians 3:3, 17 - He is God, the third Person of the Trinity.**
 - i. Just like you are 1 person, comprised of 3 parts, your body, your soul and your spirit, God is one God with 3 parts, the Father, the Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit.
3. **What He does for the believer:**
 - a. **John 16:14** - All He does is done to glorify Jesus Christ.
 - b. **Romans 8:15** - Gives you access to God through spiritual rebirth (Titus 3:5, Jn.3:3-8) and a Spirit of Sonship.
 - c. **Ephesians 1:13, Romans 8:9-11, 1 Corinthians 6:19** - He lives in you.
 - d. **John 14:17** - He's always with you.
 - e. **Ephesians 5:18** - He fills and empowers you as you allow.
 - f. **2 Corinthians 3:18** - He is transforming you, making you more like Jesus.
 - g. **John 14:6, Romans 8:26** - He encourages, comforts and helps you.
 - h. **Romans 8:14** - He guides you.
 - i. **John 16:13** - He leads you into all the truth.
 - j. **John 14:26** - He teaches and reminds you of God's Word.
 - k. **1 Corinthians 2:12 & Luke 24:45** - He enables you to understand God's Word.
 - l. **Ezekiel 36:27** - He enables and empowers you to obey God.
 - m. **John 16:8** - He shows you your sin so that you can confess it to God and be cleansed.
 - n. **John 7:37-39** - He is the source of the ABUNDANT LIFE (**John 10:10**) and the "streams of living water" that need to flow through all believers.

- o. **Galatians 5:22-23** - He produces the fruit of the Spirit in you.
- p. **Acts 1:8** - He gives you the power to share the Gospel, and to live a super-natural life; to live above your circumstances.
- q. **Ephesians 1:13** - He seals you in Christ.
- r. **1 Corinthians 12:13** - He baptizes you or puts you into the Body of Christ at the moment Christ comes into your lives.
- s. **Romans 8:27** - He intercedes for you.
- t. **Romans 8:26** - He helps you pray according to the will of God.
- u. **Romans 12:4-9 & Ephesians 4:11-13** - He gives gifts, abilities and talents to each believer to carry out the ministry of Christ on earth.

4. ***How can you apply these verses and truths in your life?***

Driving it home:

1. Now that you understand what the Holy Spirit does for you, remember He is God, He lives in you and He desires to fill you continually, empowering you to live like Christ.
 - a. You can try to live the Christian life on your own and constantly fail or you can choose to live a life continually filled with His Spirit.
2. **Remember: You can be filled with His Spirit experiencing His power by following the ABCD'S:**
 - a. **A**sk Him to fill you with His Holy Spirit.
 - b. **B**elieve He fills you and claim it by faith alone.
 - c. **C**onfess all known sin.
 - d. **D**esire to have Christ's control in your life.
 - e. **S**urrender control to Christ.

Like we said last week, the Christian life is not difficult, it is impossible; through the filling power of the Holy Spirit it is not just possible, but guaranteed! The Holy Spirit empowers you to live the Christ like life that God created you for but He does much more than that too. He is God and He is intricately involved in every area of your life!

FOLLOW UP # 6 - HOW TO GROW SPIRITUALLY AS A CHRISTIAN

Eph.4:15 - ...we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ.

Which of the following pictures best represents how you view spiritual growth? Why?



Spiritual growth is positive and continued development in a person's relationship with God, becoming who He desires them to be. Just like any other relationship, development and progress involves two-way communication and time. Intentional, spiritual growth must be a high priority.

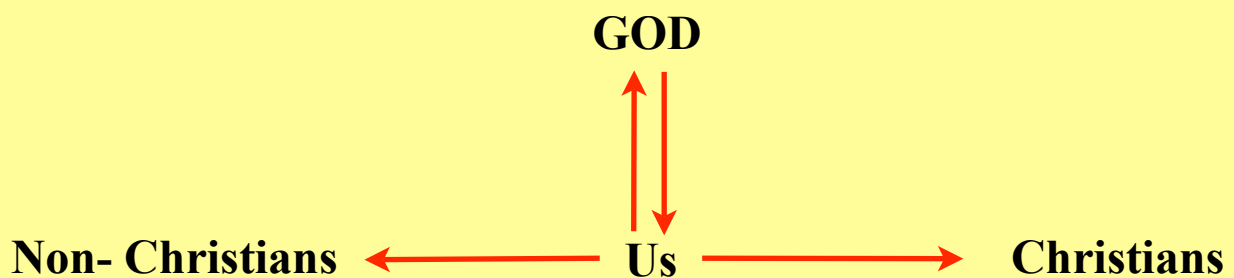
Spiritual growth has a goal:

1. **2 Peter 1:3-9** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. Where does His divine power for your growth come from?
 - b. **V.5** says "make every effort" to grow in your walk with God; what does that mean?
 - c. What does **v.8** say is the result of this growth.
 - i. God's desire is that we would become mature and complete (**James 1:4**), bearing fruit for Christ (**Jn.15:5,16**).

Spiritual growth is dependent on:

1. **Philippians 1:6 and Colossians 2:6-8** - Growth is dependent on Christ.
2. **John 14:26, 16:13, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 5:18** - Growth is dependent on The Holy Spirit and allowing Him to fill us.
3. **1 Peter 2:2** - Growth is dependent on growing in God's Word.
4. **James 1:21-22** - Growth is dependent on Trusting what God's Word says and applying it by faith in your daily life.
 - a. You must *desire* to obey God and be *available* to obey Him.
5. **Hebrews 3:13** - The encouragement of other more mature Christians who will take the time to meet and share how God has helped them to grow.
6. **2 Peter 3:9** - God is patient with each of us, so be patient with yourself. Growth takes time!!!

THE GROWTH DIAGRAM:



This diagram adapted from various Campus Crusade For Christ resources.

The Growth Diagram Explained:

1. **Hebrews 4:12** - God speaks to us personally through His Word, the **Bible**.
2. **Philippians 4:6-7** - We speak with God through **prayer**.
3. **Hebrews 10:24-25** - **Fellowship** isn't just hanging out with other Christians, but spending time with Christ controlled Christians, encouraging each other in our walks with God.
4. **Acts 1:8** - **Witnessing** (talking to non-Christians about Jesus Christ), is communicating the Gospel and sharing what He has done in our lives, so that they can know Jesus Christ also.

Results of growth taking place in our lives:

1. **1 Corinthians 10:31** - We can glorify Christ in everything that we do.
2. **1 John 3:3** - We sin less and less.
3. **Romans 5:3-5** - Our convictions and character become much stronger.
4. **John 15:5,16** - Spiritual multiplication/fruit takes place.
5. **Galatians 5:22-23** - The "Fruit of the Spirit" becomes a life-style.
6. **John 10:10** - The "Abundant Life" becomes real.
7. **1 Thessalonians 5:11** - We become a blessing and encouragement to others.
8. **2 Corinthians 3:18; Romans 12:1-2** - We are being transformed into His likeness.
9. **James 1:5** - Given wisdom for decision-making in life.
10. **Psalms 5:12** - Surrounded with God's favor.
11. **Psalms 84:11** - God will not withhold any good thing from us.

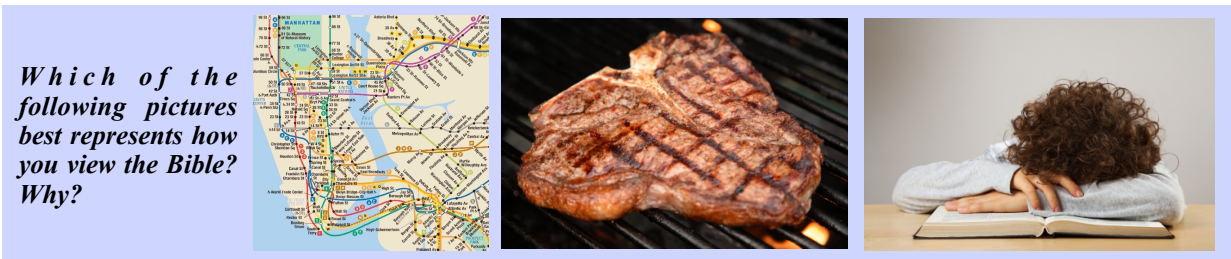
Study passage:

1. **Philippians 2:12-13** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What does it mean by "work out your salvation..."?
 - b. What does this verse promise God will do as you participate in this process?
2. ***How can you apply these verses and truths in your life?***

Growth in your walk with God will continue till the day you go home to be with Jesus. He is the one who is in charge of your growth (Phil.1:6) but it is vitally important that you intentionally submit to that process on a regular basis. Time in God's Word, prayer and sharing your faith are 4 main areas that will promote growth in your walk with God!

FOLLOW UP # 7 - HOW THE BIBLE HELPS US GROW

2 Tim.2:15 - Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.



Everything a Christian believes should rest on the **truth and authority of the Scriptures**. The Bible is incredibly and uniquely different from any other book on earth and it alone is the inspired and infallible Word of God. The Christian's **identity, confidence, conscience, and life-style** are developed by the Bible. The Bible is the Christian's greatest resource to combat the temptations of the "flesh" and the world, and it is the foundation of our faith which shields us from the "fiery darts" of Satan. Any believer can speak with clarity, purpose, direction, hope, and authority because of the written Word of God.

The Holy Spirit enters the process of our learning by turning the Scriptures into the **Living Word (Heb.4:12)**. Through the Holy Spirit's ministry of **Illumination** the believer can now understand and apply the truth of the Scriptures to his or her life, or a current situation. He leads the believer in making decisions that only reflect God's Will and plan for life. The Holy Spirit uses the Scriptures to transform our lives, to convict us of sin, righteousness, and judgement, to encourage, to comfort, to re-direct our thinking, to give us wisdom, to sensitize our conscience of right and wrong, and to draw us into godliness, righteousness, and a holy life-style. He builds our faith with the Scriptures (**Rom.10:17**).

Key perspective:

1. **The Holy Spirit's role** is to guide, teach, and illuminate our minds to understand, and then to empower the believer to apply by faith the Biblical truth to his or her life.
2. **The Christian's role** is to be faithful to read and study the Bible.

Just a few basic facts about the Bible ([for more on this go to http://www.trainbyfaith.com/Reasonstobelieve.mp3](http://www.trainbyfaith.com/Reasonstobelieve.mp3)):

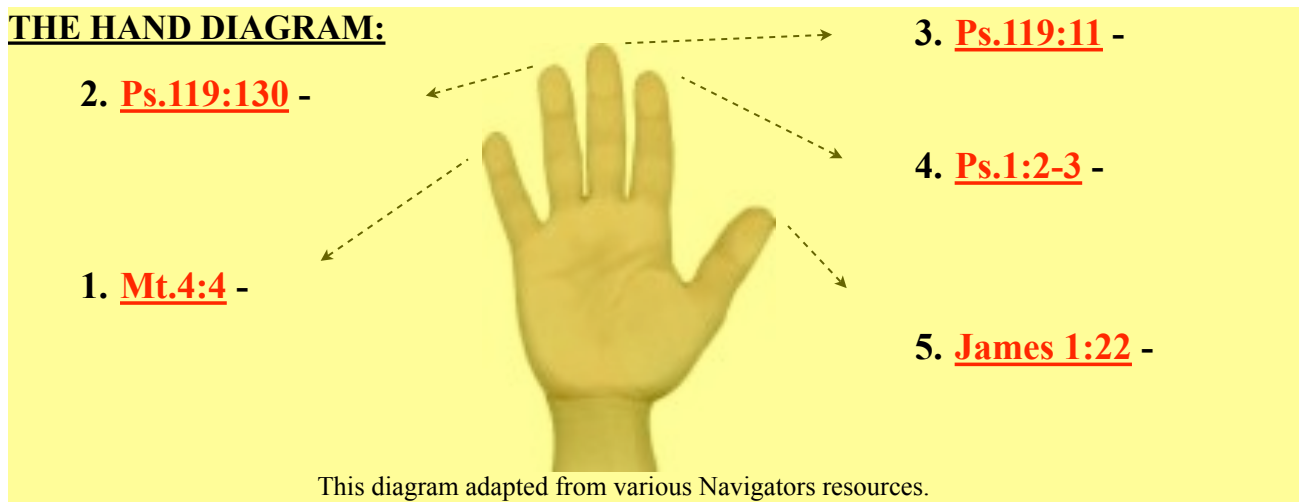
1. **It is scientifically accurate** - The Bible makes accurate scientific claims about radioactivity, hydrology, astronomy, biology, physics and other areas of science.
2. **It is historically accurate** - Archeology and history fully corroborate the Bible.
3. **It is prophetically accurate** - There are hundreds of prophetic claims in the Bible which have been fulfilled with dramatic accuracy.
4. **It is textually authentic** - There are so many thousands of copies of the Biblical manuscripts that no text is in question.

5. **It's continuity is staggering** - 60 generations over 1600 years produced this book. 40 authors including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, physicians, poets, statesmen, and scholars. There is perfect agreement with prophecy and fulfillment, historical facts and sequence. The Bible is printed in over 2200 languages, and is the best seller every year.
6. **It is unique** in that it all agrees, doesn't contradict itself, points to Jesus as the Savior, proclaims the authority of God, and if applied, transforms people and nations.

Biblical claims:

1. **2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21** - All of the Bible is the inspired written Word of God, right from the mouth of God.
2. **2 Timothy 3:17** - The Scripture is all a Christian will ever need to be "adequate, equipped for every good work."
3. **John 14:6; John 8:31-32** - It is the very Truth of God.

THE HAND DIAGRAM:



The Hand Diagram:

Just like all 5 fingers on your hand work together so that you can use your hand in your daily life, so also, these 5 key areas will make God's Word relevant in your life.

God's Word in our daily lives:

1. **Finger 1 (read): Matthew 4:4** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. Do you ever go without eating just because life gets busy? Similarly, why would someone go a single day without being fed by God's Word?
2. **Finger 2 (study): Psalm 119:130** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What does it mean to "unfold" God's Word?
 - b. What will you gain if you do this?

3. **Finger 3 (memorize): Psalm 119:11** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What does it mean to hide God's word in your heart?
 - b. What does it promise will result from this?
4. **Finger 4 (Meditate): Psalm 1:2-3** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - * **Note:** *Meditating on God's Word simply means that you continue to think about what you read in God's Word and all that means, throughout your day.*
 - a. How might meditating on God's Word be beneficial?
 - b. What does this verse promise will result from meditating on God's Word.
5. **Finger 5 (apply): James 1:22** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - * **Note:** Imagine trying to eat a bowl of cereal without a thumb. Very difficult! Likewise, if we read, study, memorize and meditate on God's Word, without applying it, we will never see the abundant life become a reality for us.
 - a. Why is application (doing what God's Word says) critical to growth as a Christian?
 - b. What does this verse say will happen if we don't apply God's Word?
 - c. Read **1 John 3:18**. How does that relate to **James 1:22**?

The Point:

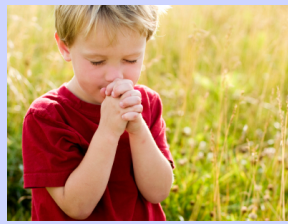
1. **Luke 6:46-49** - How can you build your life on the foundation of His Word?
2. ***How can you apply these verses and truths in your life?***

God's Word is the Truth we must live our lives by if we are ever to experience the abundant life God promises! The believer must learn to read, study, memorize, meditate on and apply God's Word daily. If we will do this Jesus Himself promises that when life gets difficult we'll be strong and secure.

FOLLOW UP #8 - GOD HELPS US GROW THROUGH PRAYER

1 Thes.5:17 - pray continually. (keep a constant attitude and line of communication with God)

Which of the following pictures best represents how you view prayer? Why?



It has been said that, "Satan laughs at our toiling, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when he sees the weakest saint on his knees." The Christian has no strength of his own. Eph. 6:10, says, "be strong in the Lord and the power of His might." Prayer and the Word of God are inseparable. Pray for what the Bible promises, expect God to answer in His way and at His time. **Prayer is personal communication with God through His Spirit in the name and authority of Jesus.** Andrew Murray rightly said, "Do you not realize that time is needed; much time in fellowship with the Father and the Son, if you would experience the power of God within you?" And John Bunyan, in the Pilgrims Progress, captured the heart of prayer, saying, "In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart."

Matthew 6:9-13 - Jesus describes the point and process of prayer:

- a. Adoration - Spend time communicating with God and telling Him what He means to you.
 - i. The point of prayer is relationship, not what we get out of it.
 - 1. Spend time simply talking to God and praising Him.
- b. Confession - Make sure to confess all known sin to God in prayer (**1 Jn.1:9**).
- c. Thanksgiving - Spend time thanking God for all He gives you and does for you.
- d. Supplication - Ask God to meet your needs and for Him to work in your life.
 - i. Also spend time praying for others.

Key verses on prayer:

1. **Ephesians 3:20** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What limits God from answering our prayer?
 - b. What limits us in our prayer?
2. **Romans 8:26-27** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What is the Christian's problem in prayer?
 - b. What role does the Holy Spirit have in our prayer?
 - c. Why does the Holy Spirit intercede for us only according to the Will of God?
3. **Psalms 37:4** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What does it mean to delight yourself in the Lord and how does it relate to prayer?

- b. What will be the results of expressing our desires to God?
- 4. **1 John 5:14-15** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. How can we know that God hears our prayers?
 - b. How can we be sure that He will answer?
- 5. **Matthew 7:7-11** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What is the Christian's part in prayer?
 - b. Why does God greatly desire to answer our prayers?
- 6. **Philippians 4:6-7** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. Describe the limitations of prayer in these verses?
 - b. What personal benefits are a direct result of prayer? Why?
- 7. **John 15:7** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What is the promise of prayer?
 - b. What are the pre-requisites to God answering prayer? Why?
- 8. ***How can you apply these verses and truths in your life?***

Tools that help us stay strong in prayer:

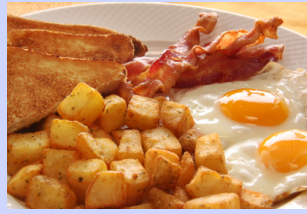
- 1. **Keep with it.** It isn't natural at first, but we learn to pray by praying, make it a habit.
- 2. **Schedule time to pray every day,** and continue that attitude of prayer throughout the day!
- 3. **Prayer List/Diary:** As God directs, write down prayer requests and concerns. Put together a "10 Most Wanted" list - these are the people that you would like to see become Christians.
 - a. **The Divine Order:** Talk to God about people first, then go talk to people about God.
- 4. **Prayer Partner:** Find someone you can pray with on a consistent basis.
- 5. **Prayer Meetings:** These are great places for encouragement to pray with a number believers. You can learn a lot from listening and agreeing in prayer with others.

Prayer is quite simply, communication with God. The point of prayer is not what you can get from God but developing close fellowship with Him. Cultivating a habit of constant prayer will develop your walk with God and enable you to see Him working in every area of your life.

FOLLOW UP # 9 - DEVELOPING A PERSONAL CONNECT TIME

Jer.30:21 - "...who is he who will devote himself to be close to me?" declares the LORD.

Which of the following pictures best represents how you view daily time with God? Why?



There is probably no other greater priority a Christian could ever have than his or her daily Connect Time with God. A Connect Time is a time alone with God each day to refocus our life according to Biblical Truth, and to apply His power to the concerns of our day. We need to see where we have failed and allow the Holy Spirit with the Word to transform our lives into His perfect Will. We should use our Connect Time to re-group our forces after the battle of the previous day and to plan for the next day's attack. It is a time spent hearing from God, getting in His Word, confessing sin, thanking and praising Him, praying and committing the day to Him, consciously beginning the day filled with His Spirit (**Eph.5:18**).

Key components of a Connect Time:

1. The purpose should be to meet with God on a friendship/fellowship level, to grow closer to Him and to have our spiritual needs met.
2. A Connect Time should consist of **time in God's Word, prayer, confessing sin, thanking God, praising God and committing the day to Him, consciously filled with His Spirit.**
3. A Connect Time should be unhurried, not full of various distractions and thinking about various things to do that day. Those things and other events represent the battle that God must give you the power to win before you leave your meeting with God.

Getting Started:

1. Schedule a definite **time** when you are most alert. Effective CTs will need 15-60 min.
 - a. **Schedule this time daily** into your weekly schedule so that it becomes your most consistent priority and habit pattern of your life.
 - b. **The morning is the best time** for your Connect Time as it is the time with the fewest distractions, and it helps you start your day off right.
2. Find a definite **place** free from outside distractions where you can concentrate.

Key Verses:

1. **Mark 1:35** - Jesus' example.
2. **Luke 5:16** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What type of places did Jesus spend time with His Father?
 - b. How frequently did Jesus spend time with His Father?

- c. Why do you think Jesus emphasized His time with His Father in His life?
3. **Psalms 5:3** - King David's example.
 4. **James 4:8** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What do you think it means to draw near to God?
 - b. What is the promise here for you as you take the initiative to grow closer to God daily?
 5. **Philippians 1:9** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. How can you your love for God grow in knowledge?
 - b. What will your daily time in God's Word do for your walk with God?
 6. **Matt. 26:41** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What did Jesus say would happen if we neglect prayer?
 - b. What will your daily time in prayer do for your walk with God?
 7. **Luke 10:38-42** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What was Mary doing and why was that important?
 - b. What was Martha's problem?
 - c. What did Jesus say was the only thing that matters?

The results of a Connect Time over time:

1. It really helps you to know God, to have **fellowship with Him** on a more intimate level.
2. **Psalms 119:18** - He will "open your eyes to see wonderful things" from the Scripture.
3. **James 1:21** - You will "receive the Word implanted..."
4. It changes your basic attitude everyday from trusting yourself to **trusting God**.
5. A Quiet Time **nurtures a "Heart for God."** Our desires become softened and conformed to His. We want to be more like Jesus.
6. **2 Timothy 1:7** - It gives us **confidence and assurance** for making decisions according to God's Will.
7. **Philippians 2:13** - It **increases our motivation** to see God change our character, and to actually do what He says (Obedience to the truth).
8. **1 John 2:27** - It gives the Holy Spirit a great opportunity to **teach you directly**, so that you will be able to gain wisdom and "Reason with others over the Scriptures."
9. ***How can you apply these verses and truths in your life?***

Your daily Connect Time with God is the foundation for the rest of your day. Ravi Zacharius described its importance saying, "if you fail there, you will fail everywhere else also." It is vitally important that we make a daily time with God a life habit.

FOLLOW UP # 10 - HOW ENCOURAGING FELLOWSHIP HELPS US GROW

Heb.3:13 - Encourage one another daily...

Which of the following pictures best represents how you view fellowship? Why?



Fellowship is deep and meaningful mutual encouragement in following Christ that benefits every area of the believer's life. This fellowship is always a natural by-product when two or more believers who have put Christ first in their lives take the personal initiative to build each other up in Christ. Fellowship is vital to our growth because we can learn a lot from other believers as well as share how God has worked in our lives. There is a great sense of encouragement when we can share the reality of Christ through our victories and the mistakes we have made. Fellowship helps us understand our dependency on God and each other. We need close relationships where we are mutually accepted, developed, and encouraged in order to grow. We need to sense that we are truly in the family of God. Fellowship is a lot like a burning fire that gives off light and heat, but the logs in the fire must be close to each other or the fire will go out.

Key Verses:

1. **Acts 2:42-47** - What types of things did the early Christians do together in fellowship?
2. **Romans 1:11-12** - What did Paul say would result from His time with the Romans?
3. **John 17:20-23** - What value did Jesus place on unity and why is that important?
4. **John 13:34-35** - What does Jesus say will be the result of unity among believers?
5. **John 15: 9-12** - What essential key issue must take place among believers before we can love each other as we should? Why?
6. **1 John 1:5-9** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. If we are to have genuine fellowship with God, what must be true of us?
 - b. If we are to have genuine fellowship with other believers, what must be true of all of us?
 - c. What does it mean to "walk in the light" and how is that demonstrated? (**1 Cor. 13:4-8**)
7. **Romans 12:5** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What does "we who are many form one body" mean?

b. How can you be better committed to being one with the rest of Christ's Body.

8. **Hebrews 10:24-25** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:

- a. The purpose of fellowship is to "spur each other on to love and good works." What does that mean and how can we do that?
- b. According to this verse is fellowship "just hanging out" or does it involve more active, Christ centered encouragement than that?

9. **Philippians 2:1-4** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:

- a. What does it mean to be like-minded, having the same love and being one in spirit and purpose with other Christians?
- b. How can you humbly and unselfishly put others' good above your own?
- c. What "atmosphere" of fellowship would that produce?

10. *How can you apply these verses and truths in your life?*

What happens when there is little or no genuine fellowship:

1. Christianity becomes more theoretical than real for you.
2. You become a "lone ranger" believer who becomes ingrown, undeveloped, self-centered, and live a life of futility.
3. True fellowship fades because of personal sin. When a believer allows sin to take over, he rebels and runs from God and other believers.

How can you be involved in genuine fellowship:

1. Where and how could you find this kind of fellowship?
 - a. **Hint:** "Connect," Christ centered church and other good Christian groups, Bible study small groups, one-on-one discipleship and other good, encouraging friendships.

Christ centered fellowship which encourages obedience to Him is one of the most positive contributors to growth you will find. Without that strengthening community we are bound to live a life of failure after failure, never experiencing the help God intends from those around us.

FOLLOW UP # 11 - SHARING YOUR FAITH MAKES YOU STRONG

Philemon v.6 - I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.

Which of the following pictures best represents how you view evangelism? Why?



Every follower of Christ is called to partner with Him in reaching this World for Him. Communicating the Gospel, involves taking the initiative in the power of the Holy Spirit to reach out and share with another person how he can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is truly the greatest miracle of all to see a person come out of "darkness into the light of Christ." We witness verbally with words and non-verbally by our lives. Both ways are necessary and complimentary, not mutually exclusive. "Our talk needs to match our walk, and our walk needs to match our talk." Evangelism is one of the most exciting parts of the Christian life. Unfortunately only about 2% of American Christians share their faith - mostly because they are scared and have never been shown how. Evangelism is a lifestyle that involves: **prayer, sharing the Gospel, getting a response, follow-through and more prayer.**

Questions to consider:

1. How valuable is your relationship with Christ?
2. Can you think of any greater decision you could make than inviting Christ into your life?
3. What is the greatest thing that has ever happened to you?
4. What is the greatest thing that you could ever do for another person?

Key Verses:

1. **2 Peter 3:9** - Describe one of God's greatest wishes. Why does God have this wish?
2. **Ephesians 2:1-3** - What miraculous work Has God done in your life that you can now be a part of in another's life?
3. **1 Corinthians 9:16** - What is Paul Saying here and why is he saying this?
4. **2 Corinthians 5:17-20** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What did God give all believers?
 - b. Describe the process of reconciliation? What is the function of an ambassador?
5. **Matthew 28:18-20** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. Who has given us the authority to tell others?
 - b. What is the first step of discipleship?
 - c. Can you think of any greater purpose for your life? Why or why not?

6. **Romans 10:9-15** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. What must someone do to be saved?
 - b. What does it take for them to hear the gospel?
 - c. Who has God chosen to bring the “good news?”
7. **Colossians 4:2-6** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. How does prayer relate to outreach?
 - b. What qualities should come from our words as we share the Gospel?
8. **1 Peter 3:15** - read passage out loud together, then discuss these questions:
 - a. How can you “always be prepared” to share your faith?
 - b. What would you say if someone asked you how you became a Christian?
 - c. How could you be sure that you would be able to communicate effectively?
9. ***How can you apply these verses and truths in your life?***

Practical steps to getting started:

1. Learn how to use your **personal testimony** as an evangelism tool.
2. Learn how to use the **Soularium, surveys** and **KGP** as evangelism tools.
3. Go with someone. Taking a friend with you to share your faith will encourage you.
4. **Practice!** No one will be good at sharing their faith right away. Keep on going. You will get much better at it and it will become a natural way of life, over time.

What are the results of sharing our faith:

1. **Great joy and excitement** to be used by God to share the greatest message from the greatest Person of all time and eternity!!
2. **Confidence** based in God’s faithfulness, is quickly produced.
3. **Fears are over-come** (even the fear of rejection) by reaching out to others consistently.
4. You gain a full understanding of everything you have in Christ Jesus (**Philemon v.6**).
5. Seeing God work in another person’s life expands your faith, especially if you’ve been praying for and sharing with this person.
6. Generally, witnessing will “**spark**” and **motivate** the Christian in all the other areas like prayer, reading the Bible, and fellowship. The Christian's general attitude seems to become more positive, and “walking in the Spirit” more real.
7. As the Christian is involved in God's battle against Satan for the lives of others, he gets a much better **understanding of his purpose for life**.
8. **Fruitfulness** and the **Abundant Life** become a way of life.

Pray first, then step out in faith, filled with the Spirit, taking the initiative to share the gospel and then trust the results to God. Get ready for a great adventure!