DISCOVERING SPIRITUAL MATUREY

THE PURPOSE FOR THIS CLASS

"... that you may become mature Christians and may fulfill God's will for you." Col. 4:12b (Ph)

"We are not meant to remain as children ... but to grow up in every way(like) Christ ..." Eph. 4:14-15 (Ph)

THE FOCUS OF THIS CLASS:

During this class we will focus on five basic habits Christians need to develop in their movement towards spiritual maturity. This class will help you better understand and develop these five habits:

- Bible
- Prayer
- Time with God
- Tithing
- Fellowship

WHAT IS "SPIRITUAL MATUREY?"

"... In the unity of our faith, and knowledge of the Son of God, we arrive at real maturity - the measure of development which is meant by 'the fullness of Christ.'" Eph. 4:13 (Ph)

"For from the very beginning God decided that those who came to him ... should become like his Son ... " Rom. 8:29 (LB)

Based on these two verses, we might define spiritual maturity as:

being like Christ
FACTS ABOUT SPIRITUAL MATURITY

1. SPIRITUAL MATURITY IS NOT _______________.
   "You have been Christians for a long time now, and you ought to be teaching others, but instead ... you need someone to teach you ... When a person is still living on milk, it shows he isn’t very far along in the Christian life ... He’s still a baby Christian!"
   Heb. 5:12-13 (LB)
   Growth does not happen _______________.

2. SPIRITUAL MATURITY IS A _______________.
   "Learn to be mature." Prov. 8:5 (GN)
   "Continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18 (GN)
   There are no _______________.

3. SPIRITUAL MATURITY TAKES _______________.
   "Take the time and the trouble to keep yourself spiritually fit." 1 Tim. 4:7b (Ph)
   "Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." (NASB)
   Discipline is _______________.

Sounds serious doesn’t it? Well, growing in your relationship with God is serious. The Bible tells us about twelve men who took Jesus and their relationship with God very serious. These men were called disciples. Today, we continue to use the word “disciple” to describe someone who follows Jesus with intensity and commitment.

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?
(Taliban)

1. Mature believers are called _____________.
2. I cannot be a disciple without being _____________.
3. The more disciplined I become the more _______________.
4. The mark of a disciple is _______________.

God can use me
continual growth
FOUR HABITS OF A DISCIPLE

HOW CAN I BECOME A DISCIPLE? BY DEVELOPING __________ “DISCIPLE-LIKE” HABITS.

“If anyone belongs to Christ, there is a new creation. The old things have gone; everything is made new! 2 Cor. 5:17 (NCV)

“... You have put off the old self with its HABITS, and have put on the new self... which God is continually renewing in His own image, to bring you to a full knowledge of Himself.” Col. 3:9-10

These types of habits are formed by:
• prayer
• repetition
• accountability

1. A DISCIPLE SPENDS TIME IN GOD’S __________________________

“If you continue in my Word, then you are my disciples indeed. And you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”
John 8:31-32

Simply put: _____________  ________________.

2. A DISCIPLE SPENDS TIME IN _________________________.

“If you remain in Me, and My words remain in you, then you will ask for anything you wish, and you shall have it ... in this way you become My disciples.” John 15:7-8 (GN)

Simply put: _________________  _____  _______.

3. A DISCIPLE SPENDS TIME IN __________________________.

“Love each other just as much as I love you. Your strong love for each other will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”
John 13:34-35 (LB)

Simply put: _______________.
4. A DISCIPLE ___________.

"The purpose of tithing is to teach you to always put God first in your lives." Deut. 14:23 (LB)

Simply put: ___________.

(go deeper on giving...New Testament emphasizes tithing as more than just giving $$$)

"None of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all of his possessions." Luke 14:33 (JB)

**THE DISCIPLE'S CROSS**

Try to remember these disciplines by this image.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. John 15:7-8

In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:33

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34-35
WHAT’S AHEAD?

In order for us to implement these habits, we need to study them, dialogue them, and then put together a plan for how they might happen in our lives. We want you to learn how to feed yourself for a life time.

1. The Habit of A Daily Time With God
2. The Habit of Reading God’s Word
3. The Habit of Prayer: Talking with God
4. The Habit of Tithing: Giving Back to God
5. The Habit of Fellowship: Enjoying God's Family
6. How To Start And Maintain Good Habits

After each Habit is discussed you will be required to do the following:

- **Start a journal.** Use either a spiral notebook or notebook paper in your notebook
- **Bible** – You will be required to memorize 5 verses. After saying each verse you will be checked off – you must then write the verse in your journal.
- **Prayer** – You will be required to keep a prayer journal everyday. You will have 28 entries. Use the model given for your entries.
- **Time with God** – You will be required to create one date a week with God and journal it.
- **Tithing** – You will be required to tithe for 7 weeks. The amount you give is up to you, but it must be consistent for the 7 week period.
- **Fellowship** – You will be required to sign up for a week of fellowship with all the active people in our youth ministry. You will do this by contacting all of them during a one week period either by phone calls, e-mail or letters.

- □ Bible
  - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – Habit of Bible
  - Romans 12:12 – Habit of Prayer
  - James 1:25 – Habit of time with God
  - 1 Corinthians 16:2 – Habit of Tithing
  - Hebrews 10:25 – Habit of Fellowship

- □ Prayer – 28 journal entries

- □ Time with God – 3 dates in detail

- □ Tithing – has followed through with commitment

- □ Fellowship – Has contacted all the students in the ministry

THE GOAL OF THIS CLASS

That I will _______ commit _______ to the HABITS necessary for spiritual maturity.
THE HABIT OF BIBLE READING
Exploring God’s Love-Letter

2 Tim. 3:16-17 (MsgB)
Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. [17] Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.
Even though we titled this section “the habit of Bible reading”, there’s more to it than just reading the Bible. Lots of people read the Bible; you’ll find that people that don’t believe in God read the Bible for great literature. Even Satan knows the scriptures. In this section we want to help you understand God’s Word and the disciplines needed to apply God’s love-letter to us.

SIX WAYS TO GET A GRASP ON YOUR BIBLE

The Hand Illustration

On this page trace an outline of your own hand!

1. Hear
2. Read
3. Study
4. Memorize
5. Meditate
6. Apply

You have the tightest grip when all are being used.
I. HOW TO HEAR GOD’S WORD

"Faith comes from **hearing** the Word of God." Rom. 10:17

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PROBLEM: We forget ___% of what we hear after 72 hours.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR HEARING

1. Be ready and **eager** to hear God. (Jesus) “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” Luke 8:8

   “… Be quick to listen …” James 1:19

2. Deal with attitudes that **prevent** hearing God. (Luke 8:4-15)

   Luke 8:10 (MsgB)
   “He said, ”You’ve been given insight into God’s kingdom—you know how it works. There are others who need stories. But even with stories some of them aren’t going to get it:
   Their eyes are open but don’t see a thing,
   Their ears are open but don’t hear a thing.”

3. Confess any **sin** in your life.

   “… **Get rid of** all moral filth and humbly accept the Word …” James 1:21

4. Take **notes** on what you hear.

   Heb. 2:1 (NASB) – “For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.”

5. Act on what you **hear**!

   "Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says!**”
   James 1:22

   James 1:25 (MsgB)
   But whoever catches a glimpse of the revealed counsel of God—the free life—
even out of the corner of his eye, and sticks with it, is no distracted scatterbrain but a man or woman of action. That person will find delight and affirmation in the action.
II. HOW TO READ GOD'S WORD

"Happy is the one who reads this book ... and obeys what is written in it!" Rev. 1:3 (GN)

"(The Scriptures) shall be his constant companion. He must read from it everyday of his life so that he will learn to respect the Lord his God by obeying all of his commands." Duet. 17:19 (LB)

Based on the passages above, how often should I read God's Word? everyday

SUGGESTIONS FOR READING THE BIBLE

• Start in the Gospel of John (pick up a pamphlet on “How to read your Bible).
• Read the Bible in an understandable translation. Ask lots of questions.
• Read it in different translations.
• For easier reading: NCV, The New living Bible, The Message, The CEV.
• Read it aloud to yourself.
• Underline key verses.
• Try the One Minute Bible reading plan.
• Be realistic with your reading goals. (Better to be victorious in small amounts and continue, than to be defeated and give up)
• Write down what you’re learning and any questions you might have.

III. HOW TO STUDY GOD'S WORD

“... they accepted the message eagerly and studied the Scriptures everyday ...” Acts 17:11 (Ph)

"Be a good workman ... Know what His Word says and means." 2 Tim. 2:15

The difference between reading and studying the Bible is that you take notes when you study.

And the secret of effective Bible study is knowing how to ask questions.

Six Basic Questions:
1. WHO are the people involved with this passage?
2. WHAT are the events which take place?
3. WHERE is this passage located within the Bible? (Context: surrounding passages)
4. WHY did God put this in the Bible for me to read?
5. WHEN (in history) did this passage take place?
6. HOW did God work in this passage?
IV. HOW TO MEMORIZE GOD’S WORD

"Guard my words as your most precious possession. Write them down, and also keep them deep within your heart."
Pr. 7:2-3 (LB)

BENEFITS OF MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE

1. Knowing God’s word helps me resist temptation.

"I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you." Ps. 119:11

2. Knowing God’s word helps me make wise decisions.

"Your Word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path."
Ps. 119:105

3. Knowing God’s word strengthens me when I'm under stress.

“... Your promises to me are my hope. They give me strength in all my troubles; how they refresh and revive me!” Ps. 119:49 (LB)

4. Knowing God’s word comforts me when I'm sad.

"Your words are what sustain me ...They bring joy to my sorrowing heart and delight me.” Jer. 15:16 (LB)

5. Knowing God’s word helps me witness to unbelievers.

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." 1 Peter 3:15
WHEN TO MEMORIZE A VERSE

- During your Quiet Time
- While Exercising
- While waiting (spare moments)
- At bedtime (Ps 63:6)

HOW TO MEMORIZE A VERSE

1. Pick a verse that speaks to you.
2. Read the verse aloud many times. (You might even record it on tape!)
3. Emphasize key words when quoting the verse.
4. Write out the verse on a flash card.
5. Carry some cards with you at all times for review.
6. Display your verses in prominent places.
7. Find a partner who you can have help you.

Suggested beginning rate: __________ new verses a month.

THREE KEYS TO MEMORIZING: __________ , __________ , __________.

We remember what is __________ important to us.

"The law you gave me means more to me than all the money in the world." Ps. 119:72 (GN)
SCheeture Memory Course

The following verses suggest a "balance" in Scripture Memory. The verses selected are key verses in understanding the foundations of the Christian Life and Christian Growth. Do not feel tied-down to this suggested list. This is only a tool to lead you in an understanding of the importance of memorizing "key" verses.

Live the New Life:
- Christ the center: II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20
- Obedience to Christ: Rom. 12:1; John 14:21
- The Word: II Tim. 3:16; Josh. 1:8
- Prayer: John 15:7; Phil. 4:6-7
- Fellowship: Matt. 18:20; Heb. 10:24
- Witnessing: Matt. 4:19; Rom. 1:16

Proclaim Christ:
- All have sinned: Rom. 3:23; Isa. 53:6
- Sin's penalty: Rom. 6:23; Heb. 9:27
- Christ paid the penalty: Rom. 5:8; I Peter 3:18
- Salvation not by works: Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5
- Must receive Christ: John 1:12; Rev. 3:20
- Assurance of salvation: I John 5:13; John 5:24

Rely on God's Resources:
- His Spirit: I Cor. 3:16; I Cor. 2:12
- His strength: Isa. 41:10; Phil. 4:13
- His faithfulness: Lam. 3:22; Num. 23:19
- His peace: Isa. 26:3; I Peter 5:7
- His provision: Rom. 8:32; Phil 4:19
- His help in temptation: Heb. 2:18; Ps. 119:9, 11

Be Christ's Disciple:
- Separate from the World: I Jn. 2:15-16; Rom. 12:2
- Be steadfast: I Cor. 15:58; Heb. 12:3
- Serve others: Mark 10:45; II Cor. 4:5
- Give generously: Prov. 3:9-10; II Cor. 9:6-7
- Develop world vision: Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19-20

Grow in Christ likeness:
- Love: John 13:34-35; I Jn. 3:18
- Humility: Phil. 2:3-4; I Peter 5:5-6
- Purity: Eph. 5:3; I Peter 2:11
- Honesty: Lev. 19:11; Acts 24:16
- Faith: Heb. 11:6; Rom. 4:20-21
- Good works: Gal. 6:9-10; Matt. 5:16
V. HOW TO MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD

"(Those) who are always meditating on His Laws ... are like trees along a river bank bearing fruit ... they never wither, and whatever they do prospers." Ps. 1:2-3 (LB)

Meditation is focused thinking about a Bible verse in order to discover how I can apply it’s truth to my own life.

WHY MEDITATE ON SCRIPTURE?

1. It is the key to become like Christ.

   “... Your life is shaped by your thoughts.” Pr. 4:23 (GN)

   “... Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Rom. 12:2

   "As we ... contemplate the Lord’s glory, we are being transformed into His likeness ...” 1 Cor. 3:18

2. It is the key to answered prayer.

   "If you live your life in Me, and My words live in your hearts, you can ask for whatever you like, and it will come true for you.” John 15:7(Ph)

3. It is the key to successful living.

   “... Meditate on (the Word) day and night, so you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” Joshua 1:8

FIVE WAYS TO MEDITATE ON A VERSE

1. Picture it! Visualize the scene in your mind.

2. Pronounce it! Say the verse aloud, each time emphasizing a different word.

3. Paraphrase it! Rewrite the verse in your own words.

4. Personalize it! Replace the pronouns or people in the verse with your own name.

5. Pray it! Turn the verse into a prayer and say it back to God.
IV. HOW TO APPLY GOD'S WORD

"Do not fool yourselves by just listening to the Word. Instead, put it into practice." James 1:22

"... Whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:19

HOW TO APPLY SCRIPTURE

1st ask: What did it mean to the original hearers?

2nd ask: What is the underlying timeless principle?

3rd ask: Where or how could I practice that principle?

Write out a sentence that describes a project or action you will take to apply the truth.

Most applications will focus on one of 3 relationships:

With God ...
Within myself ...
With other people

"Now that you know these things, do them! That is the path of blessing!"

John 13:17 (LB)

√ Your challenge is to start memorizing the 5 verses for this series. You will be tested on each verse the week after its theme is talked about.

The verses are:

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – Habit of Bible
- Romans 12:12 – Habit of Prayer
- James 1:25 – Habit of time with God
- 1 Corinthians 16:2 – Habit of Tithing
- Hebrews 10:25 – Habit of Fellowship
"Base your happiness on your hope in Christ. When trials come, endure them patiently; steadfastly maintain THE HABIT OF PRAYER." Romans 12:12 (Ph)
HOW TO REVITALIZE YOUR PRAYER LIFE

I. APPROACH PRAYER WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE.
(Matthew 6:5-8)

• BE real

"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men." (vs. 5)

• Don’t try to impress God.
• Don’t try to impress others.

• GET relaxed.

"But when you pray go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." (vs. 6)

• BE revealing.

"Don’t recite the same prayer over and over as the heathen do, who think prayers are answered only by repeating them again and again. Remember, your Father knows exactly what you need before you ask Him!" (vs. 7-8 LB)

II. USE THE P.A.C.T.S. MODEL

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**Praise** ... ”I praise you God because ...”

*Give thanks to the Lord and pray to Him. Tell the nations what He has done. Sing to Him. Sing praises to Him. Tell about all the wonderful things He has done. Be glad that you are His.” 1 Chronicles 16:8-9*  

**ASK** ... “I ask you for ...”

*“Do not worry about anything. But pray and ask God for everything you need. And when you pray, always give thanks. And God's peace will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. The peace that God gives is so great that we cannot understand it.” Phil. 4:6-7*

**Confess** ... “I ask for forgiveness for ...”

*“But if we confess our sins, He will forgive our sins. We can trust God. He does what is right. He will make us clean from all the wrongs we have done.” 1 John 1:9*

**Thank** ... “I’m thankful for ...”

*“Oh, how grateful and thankful I am to the Lord because He is so good.” Psalm 7:17*

**Submit** ... “I give you ...”

✓ Your challenge is to start a prayer journal and make entries every day. What this looks like:

- Use the P.A.C.T.S. format and write down what you prayed
- Entries are as long as you need them to be
- If you have a private request just put down – Unspoken
- Be honest and don’t get behind.
This, then, is how you should pray: Mt.6:9

**PRAISE:** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

**ASK:** Give us today our daily bread.

| Family | School | Friends | Youth group |

**CONFESS:** Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

**SUBMISSION:** your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
"The one who looks steadily at God's perfect law ... and makes that law his HABIT - not listening and then forgetting, but actively putting it into practice, will be happy in all that he does." James 1:25 (Ph)
HOW TO HAVE A QUIET TIME

DEFINITION: A quiet time is a daily time I set aside to be alone with God to get to know Him better.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF A DAILY QUIET TIME

Your time alone with God should be the top priority in your schedule for five reasons:

1. We were ________________ to have fellowship with God.
   "So God created man in his own image ..." Gen. 1:27, 2:7, 3:8

   "Look! I've been standing at the door and constantly knocking. If anyone ... opens the door, I will come in and fellowship with him and he with Me." Rev. 3:20 (LB)

2. Jesus _______________ to make a relationship to God possible.
   "God ... has invited you into this wonderful friendship with his Son, Christ our Lord." 1 Cor. 1:9 (LB)

3. Personal time alone with God was Jesus' ________________ .
   "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Mark 1:35; Luke 22:39; Luke 5:16

4. Every person who has been effective in ________________ for God, developed the habit of spending time with God.
   [Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, Paul, etc.]

5. You cannot be a _______________ Christian without it!

   "Man cannot live on bread alone but on every word that God speaks." Matt. 4:4 (GN)

   "... I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." Job 23:12 (NASB)

   "How can a young man cleanse his way? By keeping to Your Word." Psalm 119:9
II. THE PURPOSE OF A DAILY QUIET TIME

1. TO GIVE _______devotion______ TO GOD.
   "Give to the Lord the glory due to His name. Worship the Lord in
   the splendor of his holiness." Ps. 29:2

   "(Hezekiah) was successful, because everything he did ... he did in
   a spirit of complete devotion to his God." 2 Ch. 31:21 (GN)

   • God deserves our devotion! (Rev. 4:11)
   • God desires our devotion! (John 4:23)

2. TO GET _______direction______ FROM GOD.
   "Show me the path where I should go, O Lord; point out the right
   road for me to walk. Lead me ... " Ps. 25:4 (LB)

2 Things To Do In A Quiet Time

1. Commit your day:
   "Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him to help you do it and he
   will." Ps. 37:5 (LB)

2. Consider your way:
   "Ponder the path of your feet and let all your ways be established." Pr. 4:26
   (KJV)
   "In all your ways acknowledge Him, and he will direct your paths." Pr. 3:6
   (KJV)

3. TO GAIN ______delight______ IN GOD.
   "Delight yourself in the Lord; and he will give you the desires of your heart."
   Ps. 37:4 (KJV)

   "... (God's) presence ills me with joy and brings me pleasure." Ps. 16:11 (GN)

   FACT: The better I get to know Christ, the more ___ I love him ____ .
   The objective of your quiet time is not to study about Christ, but to actually spend
time with Him!

4. TO GROW ______more______ LIKE GOD.
   "For as you know him better and better God will give you, through
   His great power, everything you need for living a truly good life ...
   He has promised to save us ... and to give us his own character!"
   2 Peter 1:3-4 (LB)

   "When the council saw the boldness of Peter and John ... they were
   amazed and realized what being with Jesus had done for them!"
   Acts 4:13 (LB)
III. THE PLAN FOR A DAILY QUIET TIME

1. SELECT A TIME THAT CAN BECOME Regular _______________________.

Circle one that seems most likely for you:

- Before school
- During school
- After school
- Before bed

Now try to find a specific time for the time-block you circled.

??????? A Great Question ???????
HOW LONG SHOULD A QUIET TIME BE?

1. Start with a few minutes and allow your time to grow.
2. Don’t keep track of your time (don’t watch the clock!).
3. Emphasize quality, not quantity!
4. Remember, any time with God is better than no time.

2. CHOOSE A special PLACE.

"Jesus left the city and went, as he usually did, to the Mount of Olives ... to pray." Luke 22:39 (GN)

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went to a solitary place, where he prayed." Mark 1:35

Two important ingredients are:

1. consistency  
2. place  

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3. **GATHER THE **resources** YOU'LL NEED.**

3. A Bible with an understandable translation.
4. A Notebook - to write down what the Lord speaks to you about, and to keep a prayer list.

4. **BEGIN WITH THE RIGHT **attitude**.**

   - **reverence**
     - Key word: **awe**
     - "Be still, and know that I am God." Ps. 46:10
   - **expectancy**
     - Key word: **hope**
     - "Open my eyes to see wonderful things in your Word." Ps. 119:18 (LB)
   - **obedience**
     - Key word: **trust**
     - "And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love." 2 John 1:6

5. **FOLLOW A PLAN YOU can keep**.

   **What if I miss a day?**
   - Don't **feel guilty**.
   - Don't **become legalistic**.
   - Don't **give up**.

   It takes 3 weeks for you to become familiar with a new task.

   Then it takes another 3 weeks before it becomes a comfortable habit.

   "Let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up." Gal. 6:9 (LB)

   ✓ Your challenge is to start planning a date with God once a week.
   To get started:
   - Pick a time and place
   - Pick the activity
   - Decide what resources you will use. (Book, music, etc.)
   - Pretend you are setting up a real date!!!
THE HABIT OF TITHING

Honoring God With My Giving

"On the first day of every week, set aside some of what you have earned and give it as an offering. The amount depends on how much the Lord has helped you earn."

1 Corinthians 16:2
HOW MY GIVING REVEALS MY SPIRITUAL MATURITY

"Just as you excel in everything else ... in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness ... see that you also excel in the grace of giving." 2 Cor. 8:7

KEY BIBLE WORDS

- Believe: used 272 times in the Bible
- Pray: used 371 times in the Bible
- Love: used 714 times in the Bible
- Give: used 2162 times in the Bible

WHY GOD WANTS ME TO GIVE
7 Benefits to My Life

1. GIVING MAKES ME _______________ like God.
   "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son ..."  John 3:16

2. GIVING DRAWS ME _______________ closer to God.
   "Where your treasure is, there your heart is also." Matt. 6:21

3. GIVING IS THE REMEDY TO _______________ materialism.
   "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to be generous and willing to share. In this way ... they may take hold of the life that is truly Life!" 1 Tim. 6:17-19
4. GIVING STRENGTHENS MY faith.
   "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Honor the Lord by giving Him the first part of your income, and He will fill your barns to overflowing." Prov. 3:9
   "Give and it will be given to you ... For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you." Luke 6:38

5. GIVING IS AN INVESTMENT IN eternity.
   "... Give happily to those in need, and always be ready to share whatever God has given you. By doing this, you will be storing up real treasure for yourselves in heaven - it is the only safe investment for eternity.
   1 Tim 6:18-19 (LB)

6. GIVING BLESSES ME in return.
   "A generous man himself will be blessed." Prov. 22:9
   "A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed." Prov. 11:25
   "Good will come to him who is generous ..." Ps. 112:5

7. GIVING MAKES ME happy.
   (Jesus) "There is more happiness in giving than in receiving." Acts 20:35
   "The people rejoiced ... for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord." 1 Chronicles 29:9

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT GIVING

Another word used for giving is tithe.

WHAT IS TITHING?
   "Tithe" means "a tenth part."
WHY SHOULD I TITHE?
8 REASONS FROM GOD'S WORD

1. Because God commands it.
   "A tenth of all you produce is the Lord's, and it is holy." Lev. 27:10

2. Because Jesus commands it.
   "Yes, you should tithe, and you shouldn't leave the more important things undone either." Matt. 23:23

3. Tithing demonstrates that God has first place in my life.
   "The purpose of tithing is to teach you to always put God first place in your life." Deut. 14:23 (LB)

4. Tithing reminds me that everything was given to me by God!
   "Always remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you the ability to produce wealth." Deut. 8:18

5. Tithing expresses my gratitude.
   "How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?" Ps. 116:12

6. God says that refusing to tithe is stealing from Him!
   "God says 'Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing me!' But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' God says 'In tithes and offerings ... Bring your whole tithe to My house.'" Mal. 3:8-10

7. Tithing gives God a chance to prove he exists and wants to bless you!
   "Bring your whole tithe to My storehouse. Test me in this," says the Lord, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of Heaven and pour out so much blessing that you won't have room enough for it! I will prevent pests from devouring your crops and the vines in your fields will be protected from plagues." Mal. 3:10

8. Tithing proves that I love God.
   (Jesus) "If you really love Me, do what I command." John 14:15
   "... I want you to be leaders also in the spirit of cheerful giving ...This is one way to prove that your love is real, that it goes beyond mere words." 2 Cor. 8:7b-8(LB)
WHAT SHOULD I TITHE?
The _______ _________ part of what I earn, not the ________ ____________.

"Honor the Lord by giving Him the first part of all your income ..." Prov. 3:9-10

WHEN SHOULD I TITHE? every Sunday ___________.

"On the first day of every week, set aside some of what you have earned and give it as an offering. The amount depends on how much the Lord has helped you earn." 1 Cor. 16:2 (LB)

GIVING WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDES

• GIVE _______ willingly _______.

"For if the willingness is there, your gift is acceptable according to what you have, not according to what you don’t have." 2 Cor. 9:12

"Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under pressure ..." I Cor. 9:7a

• GIVE _______ joyfully _______.

“... for God loves a cheerful giver!” 2 Cor. 9:7

• GIVE _______ generously _______.

"They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service ...” 2 Cor. 8:3-4

• GIVE _______ expectantly _______.

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and whoever sows generously will reap generously." 2 Cor. 9:6

THE KEY TO GIVING

" ... THEY FIRST GAVE THEMSELVES TO THE LORD ..." 2 Cor. 8:5

✓ Your challenge is to start Tithing.
How do I do this?

• Set up a budget. (Determine what you bring in each week)
• Commit to a realistic yet sacrificing amount to give.
  (let your teacher know the amount privately)
• Give consistently on Sunday for 7 weeks.
  (If you get paid every two weeks use that structure)
• Put your tithe in the envelope during Sunday School class.
I used groceries to show how much 10% is compared to the 90% we get. I used two tables. One tables was designated God's table and the other was our table. I then took groceries and used things with 10 to 12 items in the box. Like a box of fruit snacks; 1 on God's table and the rest on our table. If there was more than 10 items I then handed them out to the group as an "offering"; something above and beyond my 10%. It was fun filling up our table with food and passing out "offerings". There was a significant difference between the two tables. It really lets you see how much we get versus giving to God.

Theme: Tithing

Object: Use the letters from the word TITHE as an acrostic to teach the children what it means.

Scripture: "Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes..." Malachi 3:10-11 (NKJ)

Ten tenths
Explain that tithe means tenth, and have some bills and coins on hand for the children to practice calculating how much that would be for an earnings of $5, $10, etc.

Into the storehouse
We are instructed to bring the tithe into the storehouse. That would be the church where we get our spiritual food.

Test God
God tells us we can prove Him or put Him to the test. If we give our tithes He will bless us abundantly!

Heaven's blessing
That's right. God promises to open the windows of heaven and pour out a great blessing on us! Keep in mind, God's blessings do not always come in the form of money although He will bless us in that way. But He also blesses us in other areas: health, peace, joy, favor, needs met, etc.

Enemy stopped
God says He will rebuke the enemy (which is Satan) for our sakes. That means when Satan tries to hinder our blessings from coming to us, God Himself will put him in his place!
On a recent jog, I began to think again about the issue of tithing. It occurred to me that there’s more than one way to tithe. In fact, three distinct forms of tithing are practiced in the Bible. Only one is legitimate for the believer.

The form of tithing most often addressed in Scripture is “tithing as covenant.” This practice of tithing was specific to Israel as the covenant people of God. It was part of the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 27:30-33; Numbers 18:21-32; Deuteronomy 14:22-29). Under the Covenant, God promised to materially bless Israel for obedience and, conversely, to judge them (strip them of their prosperity) for disobedience (Deuteronomy 28 and Malachi 3:8-12).

This model for tithing has no direct relevance to us as New Testament believers. In Christ, we live under a new covenant. Our lives are not governed by the written code but by the indwelling Holy Spirit who writes His “law” on our hearts (Galatians 5:18; Hebrews 8:7-13).

The Bible also describes a second kind of tithing that is both condemnable and, I fear, far too common—“tithing as legalism.” In Jesus’ day, it was the religious leaders who practiced this perversion of Israel’s covenant tithe. Christ’s condemnation of legalistic tithing was absolute,

"Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel” (Matthew 23:23-24)!

In His relationship with Israel, God intended the tithe to be an avenue to blessing. The religious manipulators of Jesus’ day turned the blessing into burden. Instead of expressing faithfulness to God—and oneness of heart with God for ministry and the poor—the tithe became little more than a means to satisfy “religious obligations.” Such satisfaction leads to pride (Luke 18:9-12) and, in the end, restricts giving. After all, once our "obligation" is satisfied, what more could God want? It’s no wonder Jesus so strongly denounces legalistic tithing.

Yet, how easily the sin of the Pharisees can become our sin too! Effective ministry requires money—money that comes from God’s people. Believers need to give—both for their own sake and the sake of the Kingdom. Since they need to give, we need to preach about giving. When we do, however, we must be careful not to turn blessing into burden. We must refuse to preach “tithing as legalism.” So what’s the alternative?

Tithing as worship!

In Scripture, “tithing as worship” was practiced prior to both the establishment of “tithing as covenant” and the perversion of “tithing as legalism.” The principle of “tithing as worship” is “pre-Law.” It’s established in Genesis 14:17-24 where Abram gives a tenth of his plunder to Melchizedek, King of Salem. Melchizedek, in turn, blesses Abram. Hebrews 7:1-10 defines the significance of these acts declaring that it is the superior who blesses the inferior and the inferior who pays tithes to the superior.
“Tithing as worship,” then, is first an act by which we acknowledge that God is both our superior (the Sovereign Lord) and the source of all blessing.

But “tithing as worship” does more than acknowledge God. It expresses our personal allegiance to Him. We see this in Genesis 28:10-22. Here, God reveals himself to Jacob in a dream. In response, the patriarch vows, “the Lord shall be my God...and of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you.” For Jacob, the "tithe as worship" became a natural expression of his decision to follow the God of His Fathers. In the same way, the "tithe as worship" becomes an almost instinctive way for us to express our allegiance to the God of our Salvation.

A third, and critical, element of “tithing as worship” is thanksgiving. "Tithing as worship" expresses overflowing gratitude towards God. It breaks free from guilt as the motivation for giving. Its ultimate focus is the condition of one’s heart—not the percentage of one’s income.

On the topic of percentages, I find the words of John H. Walton and Andrew E. Hill to be practical. They write,

“How are we to show our gratitude to God other than by giving back a portion? If 10 percent was considered an acceptable portion by God as an expression of gratitude then, why should we view it any differently today? We might consider 10 percent as a benchmark just as we consider 15 percent a benchmark for tipping. The extent of the customer’s gratitude and appreciation is demonstrated in the size of the tip. It would be considered the ultimate rudeness or the consummate insult to leave no tip at all. So it is to God if we return no portion to him. In addition, there are occasions when the situation calls for a contribution exceeding the benchmark” (Old Testament Today; Zondervan: 2004, 270-271).

Again it must be said—ultimately, “tithing as worship” isn’t about percentage of income. It’s about the overflow of one’s heart. 2 Corinthians 8:5 is clear. When we first give ourselves to the Lord, any act of giving pleases him—whether above or below the “benchmark.” “For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have” (2 Corinthians 8:12).

How then, can we preach the tithe? First, we recognize that “tithing as covenant” has no direct relevance to New Testament believers. Second, we acknowledge that “tithing as legalism” is just plain sin—both for those who practice it and those who preach it. Only the principle of "tithing as worship" remains. That’s the tithing we can preach! “Tithing as worship” is our opportunity to acknowledge that God is God. He is ruler over our lives. He is the source of every blessing we enjoy. More than that, "tithing as worship" expresses our allegiance to God in a very personal and concrete way. And finally, “tithing as worship” manifests a heart overflowing with thanksgiving towards God.

With this in mind, perhaps we should be less concerned with whether people tithe and more concerned with why they tithe. Ultimately, tithing isn’t about percentage of income or money in the plate. It’s about worship!

Tithing as worship—I think that will preach!
THE HABIT OF FELLOWSHIP

Participating in God's Family

"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage each other."

Hebrews 10:25 (GN)
WHY IS FELLOWSHIP SO IMPORTANT?

1. I _______________ IN GOD'S FAMILY WITH OTHER BELIEVERS.

"Let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." Gal. 6:10

"You are a member of God's very own family ... and you belong in God's household with every other Christian." Eph. 2:19 (LB)

"So in Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others!" Rom. 12:5

"The Christian who is not committed to a group of other believers for praying, sharing, and serving, so that he is known, as he knows others, is not an obedient Christian. He is not in the will of God. However vocal he may be in his theology, he is not obeying the Lord." --Dr. Ray Ortland

2. I NEED _______________ TO GROW SPIRITUALLY.

"Let us think of one another and how we can encourage each other to love and do good deeds." Heb. 10:24 (Ph)

"Two are better off than one ... If one of them falls down, the other can reach out and help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one to help him ... Two men can resist an attack that would defeat one man alone. A rope made of three cords is hard to break." Eccl. 4:9-10,12(GN)

3. I NEED _______________ TO GROW SPIRITUALLY.

"People learn from one another just as iron sharpens iron." Pr. 27:17 (GN)

"Every day ... keep encouraging one another so that none of you is hardened by the glamour of sin." Heb. 3:13 (JB)

"Brothers, if someone is trapped in some sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently ... Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Gal. 6:1-2
4. **FELLOWSHIP IS A ______ TO THE WORLD.**  
(Jesus) "My prayer for all of them is that they will be of one heart and mind ... so the world will believe You sent Me." John 17:21 (LB)  
"By your love for one another, people will know that you are My followers." John 13:35

5. **I AM AN ______ PART OF OTHER CHRISTIAN'S GROWTH!**  
"God has given you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other ... " 1 Peter 4:10 (LB)  
There are different kinds of service to God ... together you form the body of Christ and each one of you is a **necessary part of it.**" 1 Cor. 12:5, 27 (LB)

6. **IT IS ______ !**  
"Yea, that's exactly what I said, fellowship IS fun." Davalichi B:14

The "One Another’s" of Fellowship

| Serve one another | Gal. 5:13 |
| Accept one another | Rom 15:7 |
| Forgive one another | Col. 3:13 |
| Greet one another | Rom. 16:16 |
| Bear one another's burdens | Gal. 6:2 |
| Be devoted to one another | Rom. 12:10 |
| Honor one another | Rom. 12:10 |
| Teach one another | Rom 15:14 |
| Submit to one another | Eph. 5:21 |
| Encourage one another | 1 Thess. 5:11 |

**HOW CAN A LARGE CHURCH MAINTAIN CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS?**
**BY BEING IN SOME TYPE OF ______ .**

"(They met) day after day, in the **Temple courts** and from **house to house.**"  
Acts 5:42

2 Types of Church Meetings

- Large Group: **Sunday Morning**
- Small Group: **Mid-Week**

"Greet the church that meets in their home." Rom. 16:5; Acts 2:26, 8:3, 16:40, 20:20; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15

Within our Youth Ministry we believe that we must ... grow ______ and ______ at the same time. (101 review, remember?)
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF SMALL GROUPS?
Acts 2:42-47

1. Bible study
"They DEVOITED THEMSELVES to the apostle's teaching ..."

2. fellowship
"... and to the fellowship ..."

3. communion
"... and to the breaking of bread ..."

4. prayer
"... and to prayer ..."

"OUR FATHER ... give US ... OUR daily bread ... forgive US ... OUR ... debts ... as WE have forgiven OUR debtors ... lead US not into temptation ... deliver US ... " Matt 6:9-13

5. support
"... they gave to anyone as he had a need ..."

"... you shared with me the fellowship of giving and receiving." Phil. 4:15 (Ph)

6. social
"... they ate together with glad and sincere hearts ..."

"Get into the habit of inviting guests home for dinner, or if they need lodging, for the night." Rom. 12:13 (LB)

7. praise
"... praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people ..."

8. outreach
"And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

✓ Your challenge is that you contact all of your Christian family by phone, e-mail or letter.

✓ Help and participate in our Adopt-A-Teen program.
HOW TO START
AND MAINTAIN
THESSE HABITS
HOW TO START AND MAINTAIN THESE HABITS

STEP ONE: desire
You must start with a strong desire. You must be internally motivated. External motivations don't last. If you start only half-heartedly, you will never make it to the success point.

STEP TWO: decision
Begin right now! Don't wait. Don't procrastinate. You don't slide into a new habit. "One of these days" never arrives. You must have a starting point. It's easier to break a bad habit today than it will be tomorrow!

"If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done." Eccl. 11:4 (LB)

STEP THREE: declaration
Announce your intentions publicly. The power of a vow is awesome. It is particularly powerful if you put your commitment in writing and tell others about it.

"Make vows to the Lord your God and fulfill them." Ps. 76:11

STEP FOUR: determination
Never allow an exception until the new habit is securely rooted in your life. Each lapse will be fatal. Continuity, at the start, is essential of a habit. Don’t allow yourself the "just this once." The act of yielding weakens the will and reinforces your lack of self-control. It takes 3 weeks to become comfortable with a new habit and it takes another 3 to 4 weeks (doing it daily) for it to become a part of your life.

IT TAKES __________ TO __________ REpetitions TO LEARN SOMETHING!

STEP FIVE: do it
Whenever you feel the slightest urge or prompting to practice this new habit - DO IT THEN! Don't wait. Seize every opportunity to reinforce your habit. Those feelings will not last, so whenever you feel inclined to perform the habit, do so!
STEP SIX: Get two partners who will support you and encourage you. Find someone who is willing to hold you accountable and check up on you, especially in the early days, before the habit is firmly rooted in your life. Get 3 X 3 partners today before you leave.

"Though one may be overwhelmed, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." Ecc. 4:12

"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." Mt. 18:20

STEP SEVEN: Rely on God's power to help you establish the habit. Remember, Satan does not want you to develop habits that help you grow spiritually and make you like Christ. Therefore, Satan will do all he can to tempt you, cause you to slip, or discourage you. Pray!

"For the Spirit of God has given us ... power, love, and self-control." 2 Tim. 1:7 (GN)

"For it is God who is at work within you, giving you the will and the power to achieve his purpose." Phil. 2:13 (Ph)

What about the challenges?

We hope that you better understand and have developed these five habits:

- Bible – Prayer - Time with God – Tithing – Fellowship

Check off what you have completed and try to finish the rest:

- Bible - Memorize
  - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – Habit of Bible
  - Romans 12:12 – Habit of Prayer
  - James 1:25 – Habit of time with God
  - 1 Corinthians 16:2 – Habit of Tithing
  - Hebrews 10:25 – Habit of Fellowship

- Prayer – 28 journal entries

- Time with God – 3 dates in detail – written in your journals

- Tithing – give ___% of all money gained for 7 weeks

- Fellowship – Has contacted all the students in the ministry
3 X 3

**Live it!**
Pray for your hit list
- Matthew 28:18-20

**Love it!**
Pray for your 2 partners
- Matthew 22:37-40

**Leave it!**
Pray for eternal focus
- Matthew 6:19-21
Three people
Three Prayers
Three Commands

Live it! – Matt. 28:18-20

Pray for your lifestyle to impact your hit list and those within your sphere of influence.

Hit List:
1. ______________________
2. ______________________
3. ______________________
4. ______________________
5. ______________________


Pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed.
Your strong love for one another will prove to the world that you are Christ’s disciples.

Prayer Partners:
1. ______________________
2. ______________________

Leave it! – Matt. 6:19-21

Pray that you will keep your focus on heaven and God.
What you think about and who you seek after will determine what you do and who you are like!

I commit to be 1 of 3 people praying for the courage to LIVE the life, LOVE others, and LEAVE worldly things behind.

X ______________________