

GOSPEL FEET CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES (GFCM)

DISCIPLING NEW BELIEVERS OF CHRIST

Contents

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:	4
1) Recognize that it's God's plan of discipleship.	4
2) Don't push too hard too fast.	4
3) Review the basics of the gospel.	5
4) Help them to be confident of their Salvation.	5
5) Tell them it's impossible to follow Jesus.	5
6) Help them take more responsibility for their spiritual growth.	5
7) Teach them how to share the gospel.	6
LESSON ONE:	6
FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY	6
What is Christianity?	6
Who is Jesus Christ?	7
What did he come for?	7
How do I get in touch?	7
Verse to learn	8
Bible study section	8
LESSON TWO	8
The Heart of the Matter - Jesus	8
Jesus was fully human	8
Jesus was more than human	8
Jesus demands a verdict	9
Verse to learn	9
Bible study section	9
LESSON THREE	10
The Holy Spirit - A Lesson for New Believers	10
The Holy Spirit	10
The fruit of the Spirit	10

The gifts of the Spirit.....	10
Verse to learn	11
Bible study section	11
LESSON FOUR.....	11
Christian Assurance.....	11
Verse to learn	12
Bible study section	12
LESSON FIVE	13
Learning to Pray	13
Prayer	13
Learning to pray	13
Unanswered prayer	13
Verse to learn	14
Bible study section	14
LESSON SIX	14
Defeating Evil	14
Why should there be temptation?.....	15
How does temptation come?.....	15
What are the results?.....	15
Where is the answer?	15
Things to avoid	16
Verse to learn	16
Bible study section	16
LESSON SEVEN	17
Christian Fellowship	17
Functions of the church	17
The unity of the church.....	17
Verse to learn	18
Bible study section	18
LESSON EIGHT	18
Serving Christ	18
Verse to learn	19

Bible study section	19
LESSON NINE	20
Bible Verses That Teach Salvation through “Romans Road”	20
Verses about Being Christ’s Disciple	20
Bible Verses to Encourage Us to Grow In Christ Likeness	21
Reference:	22

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“Like newborn babies you should crave (thirst for, earnestly desire) the pure (unadulterated) spiritual milk, that by it you may be nurtured and grow unto [completed] salvation,”

1 Peter 2:2[AMP]

After experiencing the joy of receiving Christ, many new believers are left feeling overwhelmed and confused. Philippians 1:6 tells us that God is committed to working in our lives until He has completed what He set out to do. You can have a significant role in His work in the lives of new believers, informally, one to one, or in a group. Successful nurturing is taking the initiative to share the basics of the Christian life in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God.

Discipleship is the key, but how does one know where to begin? Where does one start from?

Teach them about three key relationships: relationship with God, relationship with other Christians, and relationship with people who don’t yet know Jesus personally.

1) New believers need a vital relationship with God. It will enable them to stand firm and take action. Knowing Jesus can become the most exciting relationship a new believer has.

- They will need assurance of salvation (I John 5:11-13). Affirm that they have been completely forgiven and accepted by God (Ephesians 1:7).
- They need to know God by studying the Bible, which is the primary way God communicates with us. The goal is to teach them how to feed themselves, discovering God's plans and provisions in the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). This will make them dependent on God, not just on others.
- They need to communicate with God through prayer — sharing their thoughts, needs and desires to do His will (Philippians 4:6,7).

- They need to know how to maintain their fellowship with God by dealing with sin (I John 1:9) and appropriating the filling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

2) New believers need relationships with other Christians (Hebrews 10:25). As you disciple them with warmth and encouragement, you will model how they can give and receive with other Christians. Emphasize the importance of attending a local Christ-honoring, Bible-teaching church. Introduce them to other Christians and encourage them to form friendships.

3) New believers need relationships with non-Christians. Becoming a Christian doesn't mean they have to trade in all their "heathen" friends for Christian ones. They can maintain many of the same relationships, but must choose wisely about where and when to meet so they don't end up making compromises. Encourage them to discover and learn to share their testimony of faith. If they start sharing Christ early in their walk with Jesus, it will become a more natural part of their Christian experience. When they start leading others to Christ, spiritual multiplication happens, transforming many more lives.

Nurturing new believers is a rewarding first step to launching them on their lifelong process of becoming more like Jesus and finding their unique role in the mission He gave us.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

Discipleship involves a lot, but one of the most important things you can do with a new believer is read the Bible with them—teaching them how to read, understand, respond to, and apply God's Word. Most believers have never been intentionally discipled and most believers have no clue how to go about discipling a new believer. The problem is that people don't have a good understanding of what discipleship is. Here's a definition for you: **Discipleship is truth transferred through relationship.**

1) Recognize that it's God's plan of discipleship.

It's not your plan. It's the Holy Spirit who guides a person into all truth (John 16:13), so your first step is to prepare yourself spiritually. That means making sure you're actively following Jesus yourself, and spending time in prayer both for yourself and for the person you're trying to disciple. Ask God to direct you in what to share and to open the person's heart to what He wants to accomplish through your conversations.

2) Don't push too hard too fast.

You would never push a novice swimmer beyond what they were ready to take on. They could develop fears and start to regress. In the same way, be sensitive to the individual you are discipling. Follow the pace and agenda you discern the Holy Spirit is setting. In this sense, you're not so much an instructor, but a tool used by the Spirit who is already at work doing the discipleship. As Jesus said, *"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them"*

(John 6:44a). God is already drawing them. You just need to encourage them to take the next step.

3) Review the basics of the gospel.

Help the person you're discipling understand what just happened when they prayed to receive Christ. They may be confused or have questions about certain aspects of the gospel. You can fill in the gaps and make sure there is a strong theological foundation. They need to understand God's part in salvation and their part as well. Their part was simply to receive the gift of salvation through faith (John 1:12). God's part was everything else: providing the ultimate sacrifice for sin, pursuing them and opening their heart to understand and believe

If the person has a Christian background, they may assume they're saved because they grew up in a Christian family and know a lot about Jesus and the Bible, so it's important to help them understand the full implications of believing in Jesus (John 1:12). Contextually, the word "believe" carries three meanings in the Gospel of John: 1) agree with your mind, 2) trust with your heart, and 3) commit with your life. Simply ask them if they have done all three.

4) Help them to be confident of their Salvation.

They are going to sin. He or she may be surprised why it was possible to go off the rails so soon and start to wonder: *Did I just lose my salvation? Do I have to start all over again? Was I really saved to begin with?* They need to understand that as they progress and stumble along the way, God is still on their side and has graciously provided a way to deal with recurring sin (1 John 1:9).

As with all followers of Jesus, they need to base their standing with God on Scripture, not on feelings, which can change from day to day. So it's important to review the principles of assurance of salvation — to affirm that despite our unfaithfulness, God remains faithful (2 Timothy 2:13). *Here are some verses to discuss: Hebrews 7:25; John 8:36; 1 John 5:13.*

5) Tell them it's impossible to follow Jesus.

As they continue to progress in their spiritual journey, it won't be long before they begin to think that living the Christian life is impossible. This is your chance to wholeheartedly agree with them. The truth is, it's beyond anyone's ability (in their own strength). Encourage them to memorize these words of Jesus: *"Apart from me you can do nothing"* (John 15:5). They'll need to learn how to live in partnership with Jesus, leaning on His strength daily. Introduce them to the Spirit-Filled Life Teaching, which is all about living a life directed and empowered by the Spirit.

6) Help them take more responsibility for their spiritual growth.

They may be relying on others to facilitate their connection with God. Going forward, they need to develop spiritual disciplines to keep on growing. This is where the following acronym (GROWTH) is useful:

Go to God in prayer daily.
Read God's Word daily.
Obey God moment by moment.
Witness for Christ by your life and word.
Trust God with every detail of your life.
Holy Spirit – Allow Him to control and empower your daily life and witness.

In addition, being in community with other believers is especially important for their spiritual growth. If they are comfortable attending church at this point, this will become a major source of growth. If not, encourage them to start by connecting one-on-one with other believers. Then make sure you remember to revisit the topic of church involvement down the road.

7) Teach them how to share the gospel.

Jesus didn't wait long before getting His disciples actively involved in ministry. He sent them out to share the good news of the Kingdom and make disciples (Luke 9:1-6; Luke 10:1-24). This process of spiritual multiplication changed the world forever, leading to billions of changed lives throughout history.

Help the person discover his or her unique role in fulfilling Jesus' Great Commission. If they develop the habit of sharing their faith early on in their Christian journey, it is more likely to become a natural part of their life. Share with them what you've learned about sharing Christ.

As they step out in faith, cheer them on and remind them that *"success in witnessing is simply taking the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God"* (Bill Bright). Make sure you are leading by example — pursuing a dynamic relationship with Jesus yourself.

LESSON ONE:

FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY

If we are going to lay a satisfactory foundation for the house of Christian living, there are four preliminary questions we need to ask and answer from the Bible, which is the handbook of Christianity.

What is Christianity?

There is great confusion here. It is not a religion, but a revelation and a rescue. It sets out to reveal to us what God is like —Creator (Genesis 1:1), holy (Isaiah 6:3), love (1 John 4:8). It shows us how far God is willing to go in order to rescue us (John 3:16; Mark 10:22-34). Christianity is not a matter of church-going, ceremonies, creeds or conduct, though it embraces all four. Christianity is Christ.

Who is Jesus Christ?

He is a human, like us. He was born, lived, suffered and died —very human. But he was more-than-human. He was, as his name *Jesus* means, “God to the rescue” (Matthew 1:21). He was the fulfillment of all God had been showing his people Israel for centuries (Hebrews 1:1-4). He is God’s “Word,” his message to us in the terms of a human life (see John 1:1-4, 14, 18).

What did he come for?

To liberate us from the mess we had gotten ourselves into. The Bible is frank about our sinfulness (Romans 3:23; Jeremiah 17:9), which matters because he is “light and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). All humans have this disease of sin or self-centeredness. It spoils lives, imposes a bondage, alienates us from God, and will be fatal if it is not dealt with (John 8:34; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1-2). Jesus’ death on the cross dealt with the guilt of sin (1 Peter 3:18). His rising from the tomb released the endless power of his Spirit to come and live in the lives of believers (Philippians 4:13, 19).

How do I get in touch?

If we want a relationship restored, there are four steps we need to take. As simple as ABCD — but tough to take:

A: There is something to **admit**: that I am not in touch with him, that I am on my own self-centered path, and that I need a radical change in the way I think—a change that the Bible calls **repentance**. What is more, I need a new power to break the chains of all selfishness.

B: There is something to **believe**: that God cares enough about me to come and find me. He did it by coming to this earth, by dying on the cross to take responsibility for my wrong deeds, and by rising again to a new life that he is willing to share with me.

C: There is something to **consider**: the cost of discipleship (see Luke 14:25-33). It will involve putting Jesus first in my life, not being ashamed to be known as his follower, and allowing him to get to work cleaning up our lives. We will need to spend time regularly with him and with his followers.

D: There is something to **do**: to invite this risen Jesus Christ to come and inhabit the life he made, and for which he died (Revelation 3:20). If we ask him in, he will come. He has promised. Until then we remain out of touch.

If you like, there are three sides to becoming a Christian: *the believing side (faith), the belonging side (baptism), and the divine side (welcoming his Spirit into our lives)*. Note Romans 8:9 —you are a Christian only when the Holy Spirit has been welcomed aboard. When better to begin, than right away? There is no middle ground in allegiance to Jesus Christ. It's a powerful either/or! See Ephesians 2:1; Matthew 7:24-27; 25:46; 1 John 5:12.

Verse to learn

Learn Revelation 3:20: ***“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”***

Bible study section

The Bible passage for study is Luke 19:1-10.

1. Why do you think Zacchaeus felt the need to meet Jesus? Why do we?
2. Why did Jesus bother about Zacchaeus? How long do you think it was since anyone had gone to dinner with Zacchaeus?
3. Did Zacchaeus have to straighten up his life before Jesus would enter his home?
4. What does Jesus bring when he comes into someone's life?
5. What difference did Jesus' visit make to Zacchaeus?

LESSON TWO

The Heart of the Matter - Jesus

Jesus was fully human

Born in a humble family, attested by secular sources, he shared a human body (he was tired, hungry, thirsty— John 4:6; Matthew 4:2; John 19:5). He shared human experiences (he grew up in a big family, worked for a living and knew the force of temptation — Matthew 12:46; Mark 6:3; Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus was more than human

Jews were the last people in the world, with their strict monotheism, to allow that any human being could be one with God. Yet many were convinced. Why?

1. They listened to his teaching (Matthew 5:44; Acts 20:35 ; John 7:16). Nothing like it had appeared before or since.
2. They watched his behavior. It was utterly sinless. His own claims (John 8:28) and the evidence of his friends (1 Peter 1:18-22; 1 John 3:5; Hebrews 4:15), his enemies (Luke

23:13-16 ; 47 ; John 8:46), and onlookers (Matthew 27:4, 19 , 54) show that his life was utterly unique, a moral miracle.

3. They witnessed his miracles. If recorded of someone else, they would be bizarre. With Jesus they fit. Never for selfish ends, never to show off, they were signs, dramatic illustrations, of who he was. Feeding the crowd (John 6), raising the dead (John 11:43-44) healing disease (Luke 4:39), and controlling nature (Mark 6:47-52) highlight his claims and stand or fall with them. *“The only Christ for whom there is a shred of evidence is a miraculous figure making stupendous claims” (C.S. Lewis).*
4. They assessed his claims. He claimed to forgive sins (Mark 2:1-12), to accept worship (John 20:26-29), to be the final Judge of everyone (Matthew 7:21-23; 25:31-46), to be the only bridge between God and humans (Matthew 11:27; John 14:6). They could not believe he was deluded or a deceiver. Could he be what he claimed?
5. They saw him die. He went there voluntarily (Luke 9:51). His innocence, his concern for his murderers, and the way he died convinced them that he had come to give his life a ransom for the world’s sin, that he was the Suffering Servant of God foreshadowed in the Old Testament (Mark 10:45; Isaiah 53) — that he was indeed “Jesus,” God the Savior (Matthew 1:21).
6. They met him after he had risen. Jesus and his followers based their convictions about him on his resurrection (Matthew 12:39-41; Romans 1:3-4). The evidence is compelling: the empty tomb (all four of the Gospels), the resurrection appearances (1 Corinthians 15:3-11), the emergence of the church with its special practices (baptism and the Lord’s Supper) all rooted in the Resurrection, and the experience of believers ever since (1 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 1:19-20).

Jesus demands a verdict

There are only three options — he was a deceiver (Matthew 27:63) or crazy (John 8:52) or “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28). The one thing that is not open to us is to say he was just “a good man.” The challenge was well understood by Pilate, though he made the wrong choice: “What shall I do with Jesus?” (Matthew 27:22). The wise response is to “receive him” and so to accept that we belong in the family of God (John 1:12-13).

Verse to learn

Matthew 16:16: **“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”**

Bible study section

The Bible passage for study is Philippians 2:1-13.

1. What does this passage tell us about Jesus before his birth?

2. What does it mean that “he made himself nothing” (v. 7) and “humbled himself” (v. 8)?
3. Look up Isaiah 45:22-23. There, it is “at the name of God” that every knee will bow. What is that saying when it is applied to Jesus, as it is verse 10?
4. What difference should the example of Jesus make to us in practical behavior?
5. When did your knee bow and your tongue confess that Jesus is Lord?

LESSON THREE

The Holy Spirit - A Lesson for New Believers

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has always been part of the Triune God. Now, as the Spirit lives in human beings, the Spirit is the life of God among us. The Spirit was there at the beginning (Genesis 1:2-3, 2:7). In the Old Testament the Spirit led people for special tasks: in particular, various prophets, priests and kings of Israel were gifted by the Spirit. The Old Testament looked for the day when the Spirit would be widely available (Ezekiel 36:25-27; Jeremiah 31:31-34) — when the Messiah came (Isaiah 11:1-16; 61:1-11; Joel 2:28-32).

Jesus was uniquely filled with the Holy Spirit (John 1:32-34; 7:37-39). He promised that the Spirit, his “other self,” would come and live in believers after his death (John 14:15-18; 16:7-15). That happened at Pentecost (Acts 2). In contrast to Old Testament days, the Spirit now lives in all believers; he does not withdraw from us, but remains with us; and he is no longer impersonal but marked with the imprint of Jesus.

The fruit of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit enters our lives at conversion (Galatians 4:6). He then sets to work getting good fruit to grow in the garden of our lives (Galatians 5:22-24). As the branches stay in the vine, the sap of God’s Spirit slowly but surely produces fruit (John 15:1-5). We cannot make these fruits of character, but we can prevent them if we grieve or quench the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The gifts of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a great giver. He inspired the Scriptures to be written (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21), he participated in the incarnation of Jesus (Luke 1:35; 4:14, 18), and he gave new life to men and women under sentence of death (Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 37:1-14). He also equips the people of God to live the life of heaven here on earth (1 Corinthians 12:4-13; Romans 12:3-13). His supreme aim is to make us like Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Questions about the Spirit

1. Who has the “baptism” of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3, 13; cf. Romans 8:9)?
2. Can we tell the Spirit what gifts he must give us (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)?
3. What is the purpose of the spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:5)?
4. What is the supreme spiritual gift (1 Corinthians 13)?
5. What would it be like to be “filled” with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:15-20)?
6. How can we be filled with the Spirit (Acts 5:32; Luke 11:13)?

Verse to learn

Luke 11:13: “If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Bible study section

The Bible passage for study is 1 Corinthians 12:1-13.

1. How does verse 3 link Jesus and the Holy Spirit?
2. What do you learn from the variety of gifts and their unified source?
3. What do verses 8-10 teach about the kind of ministries we should be exercising in our churches?
4. What is meant by being “given the one Spirit to drink” (see John 7:37-39)?
5. Does this passage give any support to the idea that there are two kinds of Christian — ordinary and “Spirit-filled”?
6. Will you ask the Spirit to fill you and equip you for service with whatever gifts he sees are needed? “Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

LESSON FOUR

Christian Assurance

When we have come to know Christ (Philippians 3:10), received him (Revelation 3:20; John 1:12), or come to him (John 6:37) — they are all pictures of Jesus and ourselves getting in touch — we need to know where we stand. You cannot build a satisfactory house on an insecure foundation.

Scripture anticipates — and answers — the questions that assail us:

- Can I be sure I am accepted? (John 6:37).
- Will God hold my past failures against me? (Romans 8:1).
- When I fail, do I get thrown out of the Christian family? (1 John 1:9).
- Can I keep it up? (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- How can I overcome temptation? (1 Corinthians 10:13).

One of the most pressing early problems is doubt. How can I be sure I am accepted? Here are three grounds for a quiet confidence, which will grow with experience:

- What the Father promises us (1 John 5:10-12).
- What the Son achieved for us (1 John 4:10; 1 Peter 3:18).
- What the Spirit does in us (1 John 4:13).

What does the Spirit begin to grow in the garden of our lives, once he has been planted there? Gradually we shall find clear marks of his presence if we have asked him to be active in us. They will not all come at once or in any special order, but they *will* come! And it will all be wonderfully new. The first letter of John tells what they are:

- A new desire to please God (2:5).
- A new assurance of pardon (2:1-2).
- A new willingness to face opposition (3:13).
- A new delight in the company of fellow Christians (3:14).
- A new generosity of spirit (3:17).
- A new experience of victory over temptations (4:4; 5:4).
- A new discovery of answers to prayer (3:22).
- A new understanding and set of priorities (5:20-21).

We are not meant to guess or hope that we belong; we are meant to be sure of it (5:12-13).

Verse to learn

Learn **1 John 5:12**: ***“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”***

Bible study section

The Bible passage for study is Acts 9:1-22. Much of the story of Saul’s conversion was unique, but much applies to every person who discovers Jesus for himself.

1. Saul of Tarsus was intelligent, religious, virtuous, enthusiastic and sincere. Surely a person like that needs no conversion, then or now?
2. Later on Saul called his conversion “an example” (1 Timothy 1:16). In what ways is this true?
3. Was any “Ananias” a help to you in your discovery of Jesus?
4. What differences began to be seen in Saul’s life to convince him and others that the change was real?
5. What struck you most in this story?

LESSON FIVE

Learning to Pray

Prayer

There is a big difference between knowing *about* a person and knowing a person. A person who never prays can know a lot about God, but only a prayerful person can know God (Psalm 73:25-26; John 10:27-30). We are called to an ever-deepening life of knowing the Lord who loves us and wants us to share our whole lives with him (1 Thessalonians 5:10).

Any mature relationship involves “give” and “take.” Because of who God is, we receive far more than we can ever give, but he asks us to offer:

Praise — appreciating and enjoying him for what he is (Psalm 96:7-8).

Confession — getting rid of blotches on the page (Psalm 32:3-5; 51:1-2).

Thanks — for his gifts, his rescue, and his answers to prayer (Psalm 103:1-5).

Meditation — reflecting on his Scriptures (Joshua 1:8).

Ourselves — willingly, gladly for his service (Romans 12:1-2).

Prayer is not twisting the arm of God. Rather, it is cooperating with him in his purposes for the world. In prayer we discover his mind (Ephesians 5:10, 17) and join in his purpose (Matthew 9:38; 10:5). Praying and working go together (James 2:18-26).

Learning to pray

Though prayer is as natural as speech, like speech, it has to be learned.

1. *Learn by doing.* Make regular times for prayer (Daniel 6:10). Pray alone (Mark 1:35) and with others (Matthew 18:20) because, as in a family, we do not learn to speak in isolation. Learn to pray brief “arrow” prayers as needs arise (Matthew 14:30; Nehemiah 2:4-5).
2. *Learn from Jesus,* starting from his great “pattern” prayer (Luke 11:1-13) and going on to his meditation in John 17.
3. *Learn from books* — e.g., Michel Quoist’s *Prayers*, and above all else, the Psalms. Hymn and song books can be an inspiration, too.
4. *Learn from the Holy Spirit,* who is given to us to help us pray (Romans 8:15-16, 26-27).

Unanswered prayer

If your prayers aren't getting answered: Do you actually pray (James 4:2)? Do you mean it (Matthew 7:7)? Are your goals selfish (James 4:3)? Is there unconfessed sin in the way (James 4:8)? Do you persevere in prayer (Luke 18:1-8)? Are you seeking God's will (Mark 14:36)?

Remember that answers do not always come in the form we expect or at the time we demand; we may be meant to answer our own prayer (Matthew 14:15-16); the answer may be no; and sometimes, if he appears not to answer, maybe he wants us to start loving him for who he is, not for what we can get out of him!

Verse to learn

Learn **John 15:7**: **"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."**

Bible study section

The Bible passage for study is Colossians 1:3-14.

1. What are the main things for which Paul thanks God in the lives of these people he had never seen?
2. Why is thanksgiving such an important part of prayer?
3. Paul is not slow to ask God for things in prayer — but what are the main things he asks for? How should we pray for our friends?
4. Paul prays that they may know God's power. What sort of things will that power do?
5. What are the main marks of Christian discipleship in this passage?

LESSON SIX

Defeating Evil

Memory verse:

"But every person is tempted when he is drawn away, enticed and baited by his own evil desire (lust, passions). Then the evil desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully matured, brings forth death. Do not be misled, my beloved brethren.

James 1:14-16[AMP]

Temptation is a universal experience, and it increases rather than decreases after we have become Christians. This is to be expected, because we have changed sides. Temptation comes at us through:

1. "The world" — i.e., society, which leaves God out (1 John 2:15-16).
2. "The flesh" — i.e., our own fallen nature (Romans 7:21-23).
3. "The devil" — i.e., the anti-God force of evil (1 Thessalonians 3:5).

Genesis 3 gives a wonderfully clear insight into the way temptation operates. Don't miss the important truths it has to teach.

Why should there be temptation?

Because we have a great outside enemy, Satan: not a figure of fun with a tail and horns, but the concentration of evil, one of God's creatures who rebelled against God and wants to wreck all that is good in God's world. Does this seem incredible? Jesus clearly believed the devil existed (Matthew 4:1-11). Experience points the same way (1 Peter 5:8-9).

How does temptation come?

It often comes carefully disguised (Genesis 3:1). It never wears its true colors. It seeks to catch us by surprise. Satan cannot create — only spoil.

Satan attacks through:

1. The body — twisting its proper desires (v. 6).
2. The mind — causing doubt about God's goodness (v. 1), his word (v. 1), his holiness (v. 4).
3. The ambition — the itch to be top dog (verses 3-4).

All these temptations are designed to reach our will, and result in disobedience (v. 6). However, only when we yield does temptation turn into sin.

What are the results?

When we give in to temptation:

- It makes us feel guilty (vv. 7, 9-10).
- It often affects other people (v. 6).
- It makes God seem unreal and unwelcome (vv. 8-9); see Isaiah 59:1-2.
- It produces fear and moral cowardice (vv. 10-12).
- It brings God's judgment (vv. 14-19).

Where is the answer?

Verse 15: Jesus, "the woman's seed," crushed the serpent's head on the cross. He endured the full force of temptation and overcame it. He is alive and lives within us as conqueror (Colossians 2:15). He offers us his moral power to turn our defeats into victories (Romans 8:37).

Things to remember

- a. Temptation is not sin. Yielding to it is.

- b. Jesus was tempted more than we are, but he never gave in (Hebrews 4:15).
- c. Because Jesus won the war, he can win our battles, too (Hebrews 2:18).
- d. There is always a way through — if you will take it (1 Corinthians 10:13). Ask for his strength when temptation strikes.
- e. You can lose a battle — many battles — and still win the war. Take heart; he hasn't finished with you yet (1 John 3:2-3).

Things to avoid

- a. Don't flirt with the world — society, films, magazines, talk, attitudes, ambitions that dull your love for Christ.
- b. Don't spare the flesh — that selfish "you" needs to be kept on the cross daily so that the Spirit of Jesus can shine through you (Galatians 2:20; Romans 8:13).
- c. Don't compromise with Satan. Resist him (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9). Have nothing to do with the occult — occult books and practices need to be discarded (Acts 19:18-20). There is nothing so miserable as a half-hearted Christian life.

Verse to learn

Learn ***Philippians 4:13: "I can do everything through him who gives me strength."***

Bible study section

The Bible passage for study is Luke 4:1-13.

1. What temptations were presented to Jesus? How would those temptations be translated into our day?
2. Is there anything significant about the time and place when temptation struck?
3. Jesus quoted various scriptures when handling these temptations (they came from Deuteronomy 8:3; 6:13; 6:16). What do you learn from that?
4. In Eden (Genesis 3), humanity fell. In the desert, Jesus overcame. What comparisons and contrasts do you see in these two events?
5. The first and the last words of the passage are highly significant.

LESSON SEVEN

Christian Fellowship

Christian living is not an isolated affair but a matter of belonging with others in God's alternative society, the church. The church has a bad image in many people's eyes, but the Bible presents something much better than the stereotype.

Images of the church in the New Testament

Each of these images emphasizes a different aspect of Christian belonging. What do those images imply?

- The family of God (Galatians 4:4-7; Ephesians 2:17-19).
- The bride of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:1-3; Ephesians 5:25-33; Revelation 21:2-8).
- The temple of the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19).
- The colony of heaven (Philippians 3:17-21).
- The body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-28; Romans 12:1-14).
- God's army (Ephesians 6:10-20).

Functions of the church

Worship — our responsibility to God.

Fellowship — our responsibility to one another.

Witness and Service — our responsibility to the world for which Christ died.

Read 1 Peter 2:1-12 and see how all three functions interlock.

The unity of the church

Jesus prayed for his followers to be one (John 17:20-21), and they (more or less) managed it in the early days. In due course, human frailty and particular emphases led to denominations. But God hates division in his people. Despite appearances, there *is* a God-given unity among all Christians (Ephesians 4:4-6). We must seek to bring that unity into better expression.

The New Testament does not divide the clergy from the laypersons. It does not know anything of denominations. And it is very clear that nominal membership is not enough. The church is a one-class society, transcending all barriers of sex, education, class and nationality (Ephesians 2:14-18; Galatians 3:28). It knows no differing status among Christians, only differing functions (Ephesians 4:11-12). Love is the bond that should unite us all (Colossians 3:14).

The church is both universal (Matthew 16:18) and local (for example, Colossians 1:2). It is both invisible and visible. Repentance and faith are the gateway into God's invisible church (1 Peter 2:4), and baptism is the mark of members of the visible church (Acts 16:30-31). If you have not been baptized, you should request it (Matthew 28:19; Galatians 3:26-27). And you should participate in the family meal, the Lord's Supper, which Jesus commanded for his followers in memory of his death, as a means of growing in his grace, and as a foretaste of heaven (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Verse to learn

Learn **1 Corinthians 12:27**: *"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."*

Bible study section

The Bible passage for study is Romans 12:1-13.

1. What does true worship involve?
2. The church is Christ's body on earth. What implications flow from this? Do you see them in your local church?
3. If "each member belongs to all the others" (verse 5), what does this mean for our relationships?
4. According to Paul, we all have different gifts and abilities. What do each of you think you have? What do others in the group think you have? How is it being used for the common good in your church or college group?
5. Examine the practical fruit mentioned in this passage, which flows from wholehearted surrender to the Lord. Is anything holding you back from "presenting your body as a living sacrifice"?

LESSON EIGHT

Serving Christ

The whole ministry of Jesus was one of service. He came not to be served but to serve (Mark 10:45). He found this theme in the Old Testament, particularly in Isaiah 40-55. There, three themes predominate: obedience (Isaiah 44:1), witness (Isaiah 43:12) and endurance (Isaiah 43:1-6). Israel failed these tests. How do you make out on them?

This was the pattern of leadership Jesus adopted: service, not status. He told his followers to do the same (John 13:12-17; Mark 10:43-44; Luke 22:24-27). Every Christian is called to serve. Every Christian has a ministry. It is impossible to be a Christian without becoming a minister of Christ. Don't use the word "minister" only for clergy and missionaries. It includes you!

There are three main words for “servant” in the New Testament, and all three are applied to every Christian.

The first means “slave” (1 Peter 2:16; Revelation 1:1). It describes the total surrender of every part of our lives —home, work, love life, ambitions, and everything else — to Jesus, who gave all that he had for us. Ponder Romans 12:1-2 and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. In ancient society the slave had no rights but was totally at the command of his master. The New Testament writers chose this word *slave* to describe their relationship with Jesus. How does it fit you?

The second means “worship leader” (the word from which we get *liturgy*). It speaks of our worship (Acts 13:2). *Worship* is a big word. It includes our giving (2 Corinthians 9:12), our faith (Philippians 2:17), the proper doing of our jobs (Romans 13:6), even evangelism (Romans 15:16). How important is worship to you? What does it cost you? Does it spill over into telling others about your Lord? If not, it will grow stale.

The third means “helper”; our word *deacon* is derived from it. It is widely used of practical help of all kinds. It describes our relationship with fellow Christians and with those who as yet are not (2 Corinthians 4:5). Prison visiting and personal service (Philemon 13; Acts 19:22), handing out soup, and preaching are all called by this word; *service* (Acts 6:1, 4). We should not separate the sacred from the secular; everything belongs to God.

“This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ” (1 Corinthians 4:1). Ask yourself how faith has made a difference in your life, wholeheartedness, worship and practical service.

Verse to learn

Learn **Romans 12:1**: *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God —this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

Bible study section

The Bible passage for study is Acts 5:40 - 6:8.

1. What motivated these people to want to serve the Lord? How about you?
2. How many forms of service are mentioned here?
3. Are the “spiritual” jobs more important than the practical ones?
4. What spiritual qualifications were necessary for those who wanted to serve lunches?
Apply this to your church or group.
5. How was it that the disciples “multiplied” in Jerusalem?

6. What service are you now engaged in which you would not be if you were not a Christian?
7. What new area of fellowship and service is each of you going to commit yourself to now that this short course has ended? Be specific!

LESSON NINE

Bible Verses That Teach Salvation through “Romans Road”

This simple list of verses from Romans can walk anyone through presenting the gospel message.

Romans 3:23 *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”*

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

Romans 5:8 *“but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

Romans 10:9 *“Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

Romans 10:13 *“For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

Verses about Being Christ’s Disciple

Matthew 6:33 *“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*

Luke 9:23 *“And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”*

Mark 10:45 *“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

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

1 Corinthians 15:58 *“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”*

Bible Verses to Encourage Us to Grow In Christ Likeness

Isaiah 26:3 *"You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you."*

Acts 24:16 *"So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man."*

Romans 1:16 *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."*

Romans 4:20-21 *"No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised."*

2 Timothy 3:16 *"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."*

Hebrews 10:24 *"And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,"*

Hebrews 11:6 *"And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."*

1 Peter 2:11 *"Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul."*

1 Peter 5:5 *"Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

1 Peter 5:6 *"Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,"*

1 John 3:18 *"Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth."*

As 2 Timothy 3:16 says, *"All Scripture is breathed out of God and is profitable."* It is all worthy of our time and meditation. I always recommend to new believers to find passages that deal with topics that they are dealing with. For example, if they are facing much conflict and stressful situations I would recommend they memorize and meditate on Isaiah 26:3 *"You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you."* The reason for this recommendation is that we need to hear God's truth in our life and it will help us become more like Christ. I encourage all of us to memorize Scripture. We often want our young children to memorize the Bible but we (as adults) often get lazy in this area. Be committed to God and to the hearing of His word.

Reference:

1. Article written by Daryl Evans titled *"Bible Verses for New Believers To Memorize and Study"* from www.wcwtk.org
2. Article written by M. Jantzen titled *"Discipleship 101"* from www.thelife.org
3. Grace Communion International.org