Reaching Your World:

Biblical Approaches to Evangelism, Discipleship, Church Growth and Church Planting Used Around the World

Introduction:

You want to see people come to Christ. You walk down the street and see friends, family, and neighbors and feel burdened that they are without Christ. You diligently work at your church either as a pastor or layperson. You pray for the lost.

This book is written for you. It is also written for those who haven’t reached the same level of evangelistic passion as you . . . yet.

If you think that you have a desire to win the lost, then remember God’s desire for the lost is far greater than yours.

*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us,[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Peter+3#fen-NKJV-30532b)*] not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.[[1]](#footnote-1)*

On your best day your passion for the lost does not compare with the passion, love, and desire God has for those around you. Understanding God’s passion for the lost will be a key idea in ‘Reaching Your World.” Your brothers and sisters around the world have learned that God, through the working of His Holy Spirit, initiates passion for the lost, gives you the plans for the reaching them, guides you in the words to say when sharing your faith, and draws people to Him. When you see that God does EVERYTHING in the process of reaching your world, you can begin to relax and take the pressure off yourself as you try to evangelize your community as well.

This book will be a step-by-step guide in how you can evangelize your world as well. It is also a discipleship textbook which, if you follow and teach, will be enough material to teach for years to come.

Some of you reading this book are ready to plant churches today. Some of you are just trying to figure out a plan to start evangelizing people one-on-one in your community. All of you would probably like to get to the level in which you could see churches started all over your region. Hopefully this book will give you a plan for how you can begin with evangelism and discipleship and then move toward church planting in your area.

Let us begin by examining some general difficulties you face, followed by some thoughts concerning how God can help you overcome them.

**The difficulties you face:**

If you are trying to reach your world, you face a list of difficulties. Every nation and people in the world has their own difficulties in evangelism and discipleship. Whether you are serving in the United States, Brazil, Egypt, India or the Ivory Coast, wherever God has placed you in the world, you have your own set of difficulties. Most difficulties fall under the following categories.

1. *Spiritual attack-* Your battle is not with men. Family problems, fear, sin in your church, etc stem from the fact that you are under attack.
2. *External persecution*- If you are in the States you face ridicule for your faith. If you are in areas of Africa and Asia, you face possible imprisonment and death. Persecution is a real possibility for the faithful evangelist.
3. *Jealousy-* If you try something new, frequently church planters are confronted with other church people being upset that they are trying to reach out to a lost world.
4. *Misplaced priorities-* Even Jesus said that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are FEW (Luke 10). So many church people place evangelizing very low on their priority list.
5. *Lack of materials/finances-* Most churches might want to reach out to a lost world but don’t have the money to buy Bibles or Bible studies.
6. *Lack of knowledge-* Most churches simply do not know HOW to reach out to the world around them.

Every one of these difficulties has a Scriptural response. Your brothers and sisters around the world have faced these struggles and succeeded to find ways to evangelize. You can do the same. Let us being the process of learning how to plant churches by attacking these six areas head on.

SPIRITUAL ATTACK

***10****Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.****11****Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.****12****For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,[*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians+6#fen-NKJV-29350c)*] against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.****13****Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

***14****Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,****15****and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;****16****above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.****17****And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;****18****praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—****19****and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,****20****for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

Ephesians 6 is clear that our fight is not against individuals. We fight against powers that are all too real. We can feel the attacks internally as fear grips us. We can see them externally as we might be unfairly attacked by Christians and non-Christians alike. What can you teach your church about spiritual attacks from Ephesians 6? Let’s examine step by step what the Scripture says.

**Be strong** vs 10**-** You will be attacked spiritually but you are commanded to be strong. When there is a command such as this one, we are required to obey-- even if we do not feel like being strong. How will we obey? God will give us the strength to obey.

**Be aware** vs 11. Do not forget that the Devil is not God. He cannot be in more than one place a time. He is not probably not attacking you personally, but he does have an army of demons who can tempt and attack. They want you to not pray, spend time in the Word, or share your faith. Remember, do not fall into the trap of thinking that ALL of your attacks come from Satan or demons. In truth, James teaches us that typically we sin because of our own fleshly desires. (James 1:14-15).

**Be prepared** God gives us a plan to overcome spiritual attack (vs 13). There is a way to confront the inevitable attacks we will face. The answer is we take up the full armor of God. In other words, we use the tools He has given us in order to withstand attacks. What are they?

**-Truth-(14)** Truth holds everything together. Just like a belt holds the entire soldier’s armor together, understanding the Truths of Scripture will keep your entire focus when you face attacks from all sides. SPEND TIME IN GOD’S WORD!!!!

**-Righteousness**-When you face attacks, many can become deflected by righteousness. Just as a breastplate is used to withstand attacks against the heart, righteousness is your defense when people will attack you cruelly. The fact that you have lived a righteous life will prevent those attacks from actually having staying power over you. Many times you won’t have to defend yourself at all because people know that you have not lived a life of sin in the past, so it is doubtful that others’ attacks are believable in the present.

-**Gospel of Peace**- Roman soldiers had tread in their shoes on the bottom of their shoes that made it easier to go forward and more difficult to retreat. The more you are moving FORWARD and doing ministry, presenting the Gospel to people around you, the less you have time to reflect on attacks that are coming. When you are too busy doing ministry, you don’t have time to allow mental and emotional attacks come from others to sink into your mind.

-**Faith (16)** Roman soldiers would use shields to not only protect themselves but to protect their comrade. Shields were wide enough to protect one man and partially protect another at the same time. When one man was injured, his friend could use his own shield to protect himself and his friend. Faith is God’s way of giving you peace as you learn to trust him. Faith enables you to relax and avoid the temptation to worry, doubt, and be afraid. At the same time, your faith can be used to hold up a protective shield of prayer over your friends that are hurting and bear one another’s burdens during the difficult times.

-**Salvation** (17) Often times we forget that we are commanded to rejoice not because of the ministry we do, but because of the salvation we have (Luke 10:20). Once you have your salvation settled, then we can take comfort that whatever we face here is only temporary, that our eternal home awaits.

-**Spirit (17)** The very basis of our ministry is the work of the Holy Spirit. He is the one who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. He is the one who will go before you and give you what to say, show people their sin, and lead others to Christ. When we figure out that He does the work, we can relax when we put pressure on ourselves in ministry, or others put pressure on us to perform. Our ministry is based on the Spirit.

Reflect on the tools given in Ephesians 6 that God has given you to avoid spiritual attack, remember that your fight is not against flesh and blood, and you will be able to avoid discouragement in the ministry.

EXTERNAL PERSECUTION

Depending on where you are in the world you will face persecution. Jesus proclaimed that we would face persecution in the world (John 15:20). After all, He did! If you are not facing some form of persecution (loss of friends, job issues, ridicule or possibly imprisonment and death), then you are probably not being visible enough in your faith. How do you overcome persecution?

1. Recognize that what men meant for bad God means for good. When Joseph was falsely imprisoned, God used his imprisonment to save much of the known world from starvation. Joseph came to grips with the fact that his years of pain were in God’s plan. (See Genesis 50:20).
2. Recognize that God works through persecution not only for the good of others but for you as well. Romans 8:28 teaches us that God works both good and bad situations for the betterment of our lives.
3. Recognize that God does not have to free you from persecution. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had complete faith that God would protect them but were ready if God did not save them. (Daniel 3:18)
4. Recognize that you are not alone- Believers throughout history have faced persecution and were able to endure the pain, but still find joy in the process. Paul faced imprisonment as he wrote Philippians but still explained to the church how he found joy (Philippians 1).

JEALOUSY

Jealousy of what you are doing may be an inevitable part of your ministry. Many people in the church become very angry at any ministry that might be considered outside of the norm. Remember a few things that might help you when jealousy strikes your ministry.

1. **Paul did not allow the wrong actions of others to affect his ministry** (Philippians 1) . Paul learned to find peace in Christ alone, and not in what others did or said. It has been said that when you can “receive compliments and criticism and treat them just the same”, then you know that you have arrived in the ministry.
2. **Understand that others’ jealousy is their sin not yours.** When people critique you, you should first evaluate whether you are doing anything outside of what Scripture allows. Sometimes “jealousy” can actually be used as a moment for you to reflect on what you are doing incorrectly. If you come to terms that what you are doing a) doesn’t break any expressly written commands in Scripture b) seems to follow a pattern of what Christ or the Apostles followed, then you can rest in the fact that someone’s jealousy is their own problem and not yours.
3. **Often jealousy occurs when you aren’t honoring someone else’s ministry** Do not speak poorly of others’ ministries when they are trying methods other than what you are accustomed to. As long as someone is attempting to be Biblical, you should spend time uplifting and extoling what your fellow brother is doing. People become jealous often not because of your success, but because they do not feel honored in their own ministry.
4. **Speak truth-** There comes a moment in which you might have to simply speak truth in love when someone is jealous of your ministry. Christ, at times, was very confrontational when people spoke untruthfully or callously about Him and His ministry. Be careful, however, we are often very quick to speak truth without remembering that Christ confronted others to point them to Him. We don’t speak truth for our own validation or justification.

MISPLACED PRIORITIES

Do you ever feel like you are alone in your work? Do you feel like no one else is willing to do the necessary tasks to see people come to Christ? You are not alone in your frustration. Remember, Christ first recognized that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few (Luke 10:3). Many people talk about evangelism but very few actually go out and do it. How can you get your people to become part of a team that reaches your world?

1. **Guilt is not the answer-** The worst motivator for ministry is guilt. People generally react the opposite way you hope when you try to guilt them into service.
2. **Using people’s skills-** The pastor of the largest church in the world, Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea said that he recognized that most of his church members would never go to a stranger door-to-door and share their faith. He decided to start using their natural skills and giftings in order to get them to do evangelism rather than guilting them in something they would never do.

You should do the same thing. Teach your people to start working with the giftings they have in order to make friends and do outreach. For example, if they like riding bikes, get them to start a Bike riding group and start to share their faith through the group. Maybe they like to sew, so create a weekly sewing club where people can talk about the trade and then, consequently, direct the conversation toward Christ. Maybe someone in your church just loves to host parties. Maybe someone is a natural teacher in their chosen field (gardening, farming, crafts). Any of these skills should allow an opportunity to make friends, spend time with them, and start sharing one’s faith.

1. **Explain another purpose of evangelism-** Do we share our faith because there are lost people who are hurting? Yes. Do we share our faith because it glorifies God? Yes. Is there another reason for evangelism that actually benefits the evangelist? Yes. How does it work?

The ultimate purpose in our life is to know God. (John 17:3). How do we know God? *We know him by fulfilling the purposes of our life.* What are our purposes? Is it to have a good job, make a lot of money, have the most impressive crops in the field, or be the best athlete you can be? While there is nothing wrong with any of those options, none of those are clearly God’s purposes for our life. While God doesn’t tell us all the exact details of how we should go about living every minute of our day-to-day lives, He does give some special tasks/purposes to the church. Guess who is the church? We are! When we fulfill God’s purposes of the church in our individual life, we know God more deeply and fulfill His ultimate purpose for our life.

We can read Acts 2:41-47 to see the best picture of the early church, and see what ministries/purposes the early church fulfilled in order to thrive. One can easily see evangelism (2:47), discipleship (2:42), worship (2:47), ministry (2:44-45), fellowship (2:42) and prayer (2:42) as specific tasks the church accomplished When the church fulfilled those tasks, they experienced the power of God in their lives. The individual church members did as well!

The problem is that many believers today do not feel like they need to do all of the above listed purposes. They might feel ‘better’ at some than at others. For instance, someone can be excellent at worship but not feel that good at fellowshipping with other believers. Others might be really good at fellowshipping with fellow believers but not nearly as comfortable at studying God’s word (discipleship). Most believers feel comfortable with prayer or worship, but they feel VERY uncomfortable with evangelism. In a sense, when a believer says, I am NOT going to do evangelism, they are missing that opportunity to know God in a deeper way as they fulfill His purpose.

Teach your people that evangelism, in the end, is a key way to know God. When they fulfill that purpose that might be difficult for them, they will know God’s power as they work through them. Consequently, we do evangelism to know God.

LACK OF MATERIALS

The vast, vast majority of churches around the world do not have extra money. This has been the pattern from the beginning of the Church. The first church that was founded struggled so much for a drought that Paul had to take up offerings from daughter churches just to keep it afloat. (2 Corinthians 8) If your church is struggling financially you are not alone. How can you get the necessary materials to attempt to grow your church and disciple your people? There are several concepts you need to understand in order to overcome this financial problem.

a) **Evangelism brings finances**-We do not do evangelism for money. There are plenty of churches around the world who center their ministry on money. However, this is not a biblical pattern. However, there is no doubt that the more people you reach the more people that will become tithers in your church. Many churches do not have enough money because they are trying to ask more and more financially of the few people that are still in the church rather than evangelizing others.

b) **Dependency on external materials breaks a church financially-** There is nothing wrong with using outside Bible studies. In fact, there are several that you can use even in the plan that we are giving you. However, ultimately, the only source you have to have is the Bible itself. You must teach your people how to create their own studies or lessons just from the Bible itself.

c) **Most churches have far more money than they realize**. Many church people give sacrificially to the Kingdom. However, many people spend whatever extra money they have on entertainment, overabundance of savings, or frivolous items. Our God owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50), which means that actually all of our money belongs to him. For many individuals, they have overlooked the importance of not only the tithe (Matthew 23) but also the concept of sacrificial giving. In truth, God doesn’t just deserve 10%, but ALL of our money. He doesn’t require all of our money because he knows that we still need food, water, and shelter. However, for many church people 10% for the Kingdom is not a sacrifice.

Ultimately, if you can get your team to understand these principles, they will be less intimated by having a lack of money.

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

Maybe you are not sure how to go about evangelizing, making disciples and planting churches. This book’s purpose is to eliminate the lack of knowledge. You can take the first section of this paper and begin to prepare your people in a step-by-step method how they can be used to reach their world for Christ.

You might be thinking however, the more knowledge that you get the better prepared that you will be. That is so far from the truth. Actually, God does want you to be prepared (2 Timothy 2:15) but at the same time you become prepared by PRACTICING the principles of the faith. Growing in Christ is based on two lines of growth. Just like a railroad track has two rails that work at the same time to move the train forward, the Christian walk has a balance of STUDY and PRACTICE in order to move yourself forward in your ministry.

Many believers think they must study, study, study, study in order to be prepared. In a sense they are feeding, feeding, feeding on the word of God. All of that feeding, can be good, but if it is never backed up by action then what Christians become is nothing but “fat” Christians. All feeding with no exercise creates imbalance in our lives. The same with our walk with Jesus.

Teach yourself and your people these truths about spiritual warfare, jealousy, misplaced priorities, persecution, and relying on God with finances, and they will be on their way to growing in Him and growing others as well.

Still, after you begin to understand ways to overcome these struggles, how do we apply these truths to our lives in order to do evangelism, discipleship, and very quickly church planting? The following 90 pages give you an plan with ready-made material for you to go out and evangelize, disciple, and plant churches.

**A THREE STEP PLAN**

We overcomplicate evangelism. There are many approaches to do evangelism. No one approach is correct. However, I learned an approach from a man named Dr. Wade Akins. He teaches a method of evangelism called Pioneer Evangelism. Akins teaches that you can summarize Christ’s ministry of reaching out to the world by following two steps:[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. Christ formed a team.
2. Christ trained the team and Christ sent the team out.

Quite simply, I do not know a better way to create an overall plan than what Akins has observed from Scripture. Yes, this book has some significant changes from Pioneer Evangelism, but the basic two step process remains the same. If you want to see your church grow, do evangelism, and disciple others, you need to follow the same plan. The first thing you should do as you read this book is to begin to set goals. First, set a goal after reading this book that you will form a team within 3 weeks. Why 3 weeks? Typically once we learn something new, we have three weeks to try it or we talk ourselves out of trying it.

How will you know how to form a team? Let’s go through step-by-step how to form the team.

**FORMING A TEAM**

**1. Accept the fact that you can be used to form a team (WHEN POSSIBLE)**

Many people think that they are not qualified to form a team of people to evangelize. You in particular might think that you are too young, too old, not experienced enough, too much of a sinner, etc. to start this ministry.

The Bible is clear that there are people who are called to be elders in the church. I Timothy 3 is very clear that to be an elder there are very strict qualifications. These qualifications are outlined because this person will shepherd a group of people and they need long term care and support in order to grow in Christ.

I Timothy 3 is an excellent guide and should be followed for those who will ultimately pastor a church. However, God called a variety of people to leadership positions in the church, not just the pastor position. Ephesians 4:11-12 lists several. There are not only pastors listed but apostles (those who were sent out by God), prophets (proclaimers of the word), and evangelists (those who were involved in full time Gospel presentation through evangelism).

You will be fulfilling several of these roles. You will be forming a team of people ready to go out and share their faith. You WILL face moments when you do not feel capable of this task. At those moments remember the words of Paul to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12.

***12****Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit,[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+timothy+4%3A12&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-29760a)*] in faith, in purity.*

Even Timothy faced a crisis of faith moment. He felt inadequate. Paul, however, commanded him to press on and in 2 Timothy 4:5 said,

***5****But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*

You may or may not be called to pastor a church. However, you are called to be involved in evangelism regardless of how underconfident you feel. Christ gave all of us permission to be involved in evangelism and discipleship when he gave us His final command in Matthew 28:17-20:

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.****19****Go therefore[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew+28%3A17-20&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-24215a)*] and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,****20****teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew+28%3A17-20&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-24216b)*]*

Therefore, use the permission that God gave you in Ephesians to rise up and be a leader for your church. Do the work of an evangelist!

Remember, this section is titled “when possible” at the end. Why? Many of you are the only believer in your area. In that case, you will not form a team immediately. YOU are the team. You will be involved in evangelism, win souls, and then form a team with the new converts. Do not fear, new converts make the best team members anyway!

**2. Approach the pastor and discuss the vision**

If you are already a pastor and have bought into this vision, then you can skip this section. However, if you are a member of the church and want to form a team you need to approach your pastor first. Why?

1. He is the leader of the church and you need to submit to his authority.
2. He can become either your biggest advocate or your worst enemy in this task. If a pastor understands that you are only working to help grow the ministry and not to take away any of his members then he will feel much more comfortable. Remember that most pastors struggle to make ends meet. If you start this ministry without him, he might fear that you are trying to start another church and take away his members.

Simply explain to your pastor that you know he works very hard, and that you would like to help bless the church by helping to grow it. You will train a team in evangelism and **have them work for 3-6 months one day a week.** You will use this goal of a brief period of time as a means to attract people to your ministry.

**3. Already have a location where you want to begin to evangelize or plant a church**

You want to be as prepared as possible before beginning. Look for the following things when picking a target location.

1. Look for a location where you or someone you want to have on your team already knows someone.
2. Look for a location that is in crisis (lack of employment, natural disaster, recent death). People come to Christ in times of crisis and transition. Those communities will be more open.
3. Look for a location in which you know your people can find transportation at least 1 afternoon a week.
4. Above all, seek God’s face and choose the location he guides you to find. This might mean He takes you to a place where NONE of the first three options are available. If you feel Spirit led, then go with wherever God tells you.

**4. Create a time strategy in your mind**

People work better with a time frame in mind. If you tell people that they are going to work with you and don’t tell them there is an end date, they will feel overwhelmed by the offer. For example, if you are targeting an area in which you need to have transportation (such as starting a new church), a good idea would be to tell them that you are going to target an area on Saturday or Sunday afternoon for 3-6 months. If you are only forming a team initially to help grow your church, then tell your people to commit to 2 hours a week for 3-6 months to do ministry in their neighborhood.

**5. Begin to think through who can be on your team**

Who can be on your team? The short answer is **anyone who has given their life to Christ and is in fellowship with your church, or a supporting sister church, can be on your team**. Why? You are not asking your team members initially to be pastors. You are only asking them to do evangelism. Each team member can do evangelism. Why?

1. Jesus commanded ALL of us to do evangelism- Matthew 28:17-20.
2. Jesus and Paul used a variety of people to do evangelism
* He used an adulterous women- Samaritan woman (John 4)
* He used temper filled brothers- James and John (see Luke 9)
* He used a murderer- Paul (Acts 9)
* He used the greedy- Matthew (Matthew 9)
1. Each person in Christ is guided by the Holy Spirit who will give them the words to say.- Luke 12:12
2. You are not asking them to be pastors, you are asking them to evangelists. That is all. Some of them might be called to become pastors through this, but initially they are just evangelists.

Realize that ANYONE on your church can be on your team. However, in the end, choose a variety of people. Who will you use to form a team?

1. People you know you can work with well. You know whom in church you feel more comfortable around.
2. People who are open to learn. They will have to be willing to try new things in order to be involved with this team.
3. People with different giftings (Romans 12).
4. New converts- Christ used new converts for his ministry. Read through Luke 10:1-2. He sent out 70 people across Judea. Who were these people? They were individuals who had followed Jesus for 2.5 years at that point in his ministry. Today they would be considered new converts. In many ways, new converts will be your most successful evangelists. Why? They have the passion of recently knowing Christ, they are grateful for this newfound love they experience, and they have a much wider group of non-believers as contacts than someone who has been in the church for many, many years.

**6. Approach people individually and ask them to join your team.**

People need to feel honored. If you want to have people commit to you, show them the honor by going to them individually and asking them to be a part of what you are doing. They will get the sense that they are important to you because you felt the need to approach them. Simply approach them and tell them that God has laid this ministry on your heart, and you think He wants you to work side by side with your friend. You need his skills and giftings. He will feel honored.

You will probably want to make an announcement to the church of what you are doing. This will help you find other individuals that you did not expect to be a part of your team. Plus, asking the entire group will inform the entire church of the vision.

**7. Set the parameters of when and where the team will meet.**

You should set a time to meet with your team that is convenient for all. Remember that you want to meet for only one hour at a time so that you do not tire out yourself or your people. We often suggest either meeting before or after church on Sunday or on Saturday before your team goes out to minister for the afternoon.

**8. Set the parameters of how long the team will work and what will be said in the meetings.**

Remind the team that they are committing for a definite period of time (3 months, 6 months, etc.) Go ahead and determine what you will do in the meetings. Meetings tend to work best when one follows a pattern similar to this:

* Begin with conversation about personal lives to strengthen friendships among the team (10 minutes)
* Opening prayer (2 minutes)
* Discipleship/teaching (30 minutes)
* Closing prayer requests for team members and people that you are evangelizing (10 minutes) Make sure that you pray for the people you are evangelizing by name.

**9. Commit to long-term team building.**

Christ discipled his men for a bit longer than three years. We are not suggesting that you train your team for three years. However, we have learned that groups that meet as a team CONTINUE doing the ministry and groups that end up allowing their team members just to work on their own STOP after a few months.

**10. Divide your team into groups of two**

Jesus had the pattern of dividing up his workers in groups of two within the overall team (Luke 10:2) Why? It is not clear from Scripture exactly why he divided these teams up but there are some obvious benefits in dividing up your team.

* Iron sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17) Each person will push the other person to work harder. People are by nature—lazy. We long not to work. If each team member can push the other team member to work when the other doesn’t feel like it, the team will work better.
* Safety- Many of you will be working in dangerous areas. It is easier to avoid being attacked when you are with someone else.
* Accountability- if you are a single male working alone, it is very difficult to visit many homes. For example, it would be very unwise to enter the home of a single female if you are working by yourself as a male. Having a partner avoids many of those struggles.
* Training- Everything you do, everything you do, EVERYTHING YOU DO, should be centered on taking someone with you to train them in the ministry. Your job should always be to multiply your ministry in the next generation. 2 Timothy 2:2 says,

***2****And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*

YOU WILL TEACH YOUR TEAM FROM THE VERY BEGINNING TO TRAIN/DISCIPLE OTHERS IN WHAT THEY ARE BEING TAUGHT. THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS IN THIS TRAINING.

11. **Form a team of one if you have no other option**

Many of you work in areas where you cannot form a team. You might be the only believer in the area that you can work with. That is okay. You will begin with one. It is not ideal, but it is better to work by yourself than for no work to be done at all. You will go out and WIN SOULS for Jesus and begin to train those disciples. Do not be discouraged if this is your pattern. You are in good company. Jesus and Paul started out having to do the same thing!!!!!

**DISCIPLE YOUR TEAM/SEND THEM OUT**

You have now formed your team. You have reached the moment where you now have to prepare your team to minister. You might be thinking. I do not know how to disciple anyone. No one ever discipled me! Relax, you have the Holy Spirit who will guide you every step of the way. Will you make mistakes? Yes!!! When you learn to accept the fact that mistakes will be made, you will be able to relax and enjoy what God will do with you.

Your first temptation will be to think you must train your team for a long time before they can go out and evangelize. This could not be further from the truth. True discipleship has a Biblical pattern. Please follow the pattern of Christ. He taught us that discipleship occurs because of two factors- study and practice. You will do both study and practice at the same time. **You will teach them with this book as your guide, moving quickly to only use the Bible as a guide, and have them practice what you teach from the very beginning.**

Remember unless you ARE the pastor of the church, you are not trying to pastor your team. You are not trying to take the role from the pastor in your church. Instead, you are trying to disciple them and guide them under the authority of your church.

How will you disciple them? First, remember they will grow in Christ as they work. However, they will need guidance as they work. So, what will you teach them as they are working? We have enclosed 10 areas to cover with your people. We are going to give you step-by-step exactly what you need to disciple your people. Also, we are going to show you exactly what you need in order to disciple your people with JUST THE BIBLE as your material. You must, must, must, must get beyond needing outside material to disciple others. This book will help you do it. The eleven items that you will use to disciple your team are:

1. **Model what you teach (Luke 10:1)**
2. **The Holy Spirit (John 14-16)**
3. **Prayer (Luke 11)**
4. **The Bible and How to Use it (Hebrews 4:11-12)**
5. **Evangelism-People of Peace and How to Find Them (Luke 10:1-6)**
6. **Evangelism- Multiplication through who you know (Acts 16:31)**
7. **Evangelism- Leading Home Groups**
8. **Evangelism- Individual Evangelism**
9. **Discipleship- Long Term Groups**
10. **Church Planting-What is the Church?**
11. **Church Planting- Next Steps**

Let us work through the ten steps. You can already use the teaming from FORMING A TEAM for the initial meetings with your team. Now you can begin to teach these 10 steps as well.

1. **Model what you teach (Week 1)**

The first thing you should model for your team is servant leadership. In Mark 10:45 we see that Christ came to serve and not to be served. We see this play out practically as Christ sent out people to work, he also planned on working as well. (Luke 10:1). A leader cannot ask anyone to do anything they aren’t willing to do themselves. Sit down with the team and ask them to pray that everyone together can make commitments of:

1. Time
2. Resources
3. Priorities
4. Willingness- (to try new things such as Bible study and discipling others).

Tell your team that you are asking them to make commitments, but that you will commit to doing everything that you are asking them to do. This will help your people have confidence as they follow you.

1. **The Holy Spirit (Week 2)**

The second topic you should teach your team the Holy Spirit. Once they learn that the Holy Spirit is God’s gift to us and that He will actually guide you throughout the entire evangelism, church planting, and discipleship process, it will take the pressure off of them.

How can you teach the Holy Spirit and His role in you life? Scripture is filled with references of the Holy Spirit concerning His role in creation (Genesis 1), His equality with God (Acts 5), His ability to have personality (Ephesians 4:30), and His intercession for us (Romans 8). You can have your team review and reflect on each of these ideas. However, if you want to guide your team through a very simple study of the Holy Spirit you will take them through John 14-16. In that passage you can have them read and find that He is our Counselor and that his job will be to convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgement. John 14-16 is the best overview of the Holy Spirit and what He does in all of the New Testament. Take an hour, or several weeks for an hour a week, and have the team –

1. Read John 14-16
2. Highlight things they see about the Holy Spirit
3. Commit to praying daily that the Holy Spirit will guide and direct the team.
4. Consistently remind the team, not only this first lesson, but in other lessons as well, the role of the Holy Spirit in each aspect of what the team is doing.
5. **Prayer (week 3)**

The next week you will discuss prayer. All of the ministries that a church has must be based in prayer. You must teach your team how to pray as this ministry serves a variety of purposes:

* Prayer helps you have fellowship wih God
* Prayer helps you take your focus off of yourself as you pray for others
* Prayer helps remind you of activities that you need to do.
* Prayer changes lives (James 5)
* Prayer is pleasing to God.

So how do you pray? Often times we overthink the process of prayer and make it extremely complicated. If you read Luke 11:1-4, the disciples asked to be shown how to pray. Jesus didn’t go through a 10-week study on how to pray. He simply told them to “pray like this.” He gave them an example to follow. The disciples had seen him pray so frequently throughout their life that they were able to follow His pattern. They knew when to pray (without ceasing), they knew how to pray (by the pattern he gave them) and they knew why to pray.

So how does one pray?

After the disciples saw their Lord taken up into heaven they did not split up or run away and panic. They stayed together, waited, and prayed. They started their ministry in the correct way. They wanted to talk to God and learn what to do next. They certainly already had been praying during Christ’s ministry (Luke 11:2). Now they were putting prayer into practice as they awaited the Holy Spirit.

Prayer is our way to communicate with the Father through Jesus Christ (I Tim 2:5). Many people have said that is God’s way of talking to us, but that prayer is our way of talking back to God. There are five things to do in prayer:[[3]](#footnote-3)

 -**Ask-** Ask God to help you in your daily needs. You are not being selfish to spend time with God on your own needs. He is big enough to hear your needs and the needs of everyone around the world at the same time. (See Nehemiah chapter 1)

 -**Thank**- Thank God for all that He has done for you or for others. Being thankful is the number one guard against discouragement in the ministry (Phillipians 4)

 -**Praise**- Give God the glory for all that HE IS. There is only one Being in the universe who deserves praise, and that is God. Give Him the praise that He deserves. (Much of the book of Psalms)

 -**Seek Forgiveness-** Ask God to forgive you for your daily sins (1 John 1:9) You will fail. You have two options. You can JUSTIFY your sins in your own mind, or you can confess your sins and accept the JUSTIFICATION that God gives you. Once you confess, it will help you become more aware of your sins, and move to not make the same mistake again.

 -**Intercede-** Take time in asking God about the needs of others. (Job 42:10) How will can you ask for the needs of everyone that you need to in your life. Our advice is to organize your prayer life. Take a notebook and organize the pages by days. On each day, create a list of people that you can pray for. Pray for those people on that particular day. You will pray for MORE people in LESS time if you organize your intercession time. A plan might look like this.

-EVERYDAY PAGE- These are people you are very close to that you will pray for daily such as family and close friends.

-SUNDAY- Pray for the people in your church.

-MONDAY- Pray for the lost people to whom your team is ministering

-TUESDAY- Pray for extended family

-WEDNESDAY- Pray for leaders in your life, your church, your government, and your work. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

-THURSDAY- Pray for your neighbors

-FRIDAY- Pray for your friends

-SATURDAY- Leave this day open for God to guide you to people you haven’t remembered to add to your list.

 For those of you have already come to Christ, these aspects of prayer should be part of your daily prayer life. However, as you begin to look at forming a church, you will not only pray individually, but you will pray as a group. There is special power in group, or corporate prayer. As Christ said, “when two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). Note that when Christ taught his disciples to pray, He taught them to pray as a group. After all, he started the Lord’s Prayer with the words “**Our** Father in heaven,” (Matthew 6:9) instead of “**My** Father who is in heaven!” Instead of thinking individually about the Father, he wanted them to focus on how He relates to the group.

Think about how you as a group can come together for prayer. What are specific needs you can pray for? Take some time at the end of this lesson for intense prayer for yourselves and for others. Prayer should be an integral part of all the other purposes of a church: fellowship, worship, ministry, discipleship, evangelism and missions.

1. **Bible Study (How to Study the Bible- Hebrews 4:11-12-week 4)**

Nothing will help the people you disciple grow quicker than teaching them how to study the word. You can find spiritual truths anywhere in the Bible as you meditate on God’s Word. Why? Because God has given us the Bible as a means to learn more and more about Him anytime we read it (Hebrews 4:11-12) How do you study God’s Word?

1. Begin with prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the Truth to you. It is through the Holy Spirit that we learn all Truth (John 16:13).
2. When you finish praying, begin to read. We suggest starting with the Book of John, Proverbs, Psalms or maybe one of Paul’s Epistles. However, you can start anywhere. All of the Bible is good to study! You may want to read an entire chapter or you may just want to read a few verses. This is not a race. You do not have to finish the Bible in a year or in a month. Take your time.
3. Let the Lord speak to you. When he speaks to you about something in your life, we call these things SPIRITUAL TRUTHS. Spiritual truths need to be personal. They need to be ideas that can be applied to your own life or to the life of the church body. Don’t read a passage waiting for the Lord to tell you something about someone else. Let Him touch your life first and then you will be able to teach with more passion to others. When you meditate on a verse, and it really touches your heart, this might be the Holy Spirit trying to teach you. In order to help see God’s truths in your life, we suggest asking three questions of every passage that you read:
4. What can I learn about God from these verses?
5. What can I learn about myself from these verses?
6. How can I apply this passage in my life?

Asking these questions will help guide you as you read the passage and personalize what God may be trying to show you.

1. As you meditate on the verses, there might be one verse, or one story, that really touches you. For some reason, this verse will simply stand out to you. You might have read the passage 20 times, but today you need to dwell more on that one verse. Stop. Ask God to help you apply that particular verse or section to your life. Think about what happened in that verse and see what you or your church is going through that might be similar to that situation. Or, look and see what that verse is teaching you about the Father that you’ve never thought about before. Take your time. The Lord may be highlighting something from Scripture that can be applied to your life.
2. Confirm- If you are newer in the faith or newer to the Bible, confirming your spiritual truth with other Scriptures might be more difficult. However, you want to make sure that what you have learned actually agrees with what the Bible says. After all, someone can take any verse out of Scripture and make it say just about anything they want. God will never tell you to do something that is in direct contrast with other parts of His Word. Study other parts of Scripture to make sure you are teaching sound doctrine. This step will become easier as you have more time and experience in the Word.
3. Apply- As you’ve gotten your spiritual truth and confirmed it with Scripture, then you can apply it to your people’s hearts as well as your own. If you are going to teach this principle, try to find examples and illustrations that are applicable to this truth. Your people will not learn unless they understand how this truth applies to them. You have to be able to teach your people how this truth that God has revealed affects you, them and the world that they live. If they understand how the truth affects them, then it will be easier for them to apply the truth.
4. Close with prayer- Always thank God for all He has shown you, and ask for His help as you show your people what you have learned.

NEVER FORGET TO ASK GOD TO HELP YOU TO TRAIN OTHERS TO STUDY THEIR BIBLE. Remember God wants you to raise up more leaders for His Kingdom. There will be many men and women in your church that you can train to study Scripture so that THEY can teach others.

You can use these ideas above to daily get spiritual truths from the Bible. Using these ideas from a daily devotion time with the Father, you never have to rely on others’ pre-written Bible studies or sermons again. You will probably still use others’ Bible studies from time to time, but you will never HAVE TO RELY PRIMARILY on others’ studies for your church again. The only book that you will need to guide your church is the Bible. Let God teach you DAILY through His word, so that you can teach others.

1. **Evangelism- People of Peace and How to Find Them (week 5 and 6)**

As you teach your team about evangelism and church planting, the first question they are going to have is WHO DO WE EVANGELIZE? The short answer is . . . everyone! Never assume that anyone knows Christ. If you have a family member, neighbor, coworker or friend that you have doubts about their salvation, then share Christ with them.

However, finding someone to evangelize can be very intimidating. If you realize how the Holy Spirit works in evangelism, it will help you evangelize with more confidence. Luke 10:1-6 teaches a Master Plan from Jesus in how to evangelize and find others for the Kingdom. Let us walk through these verses.

1. Jesus divides up his disciples in groups of two to send them out. We should do the same (Luke 10:1)
2. Jesus planned on ministering as well (Luke 10:1)
3. Jesus prays for more workers (Luke 10:2). We should pray for more workers as well starting with ourselves.
4. Jesus warns of the difficulty of the task (Luke 10:3)
5. Jesus tells us to find people of peace (Luke 10:5) What is a person of peace? A person of peace is someone who the Holy Spirit has laid on their heart to be open to your ministry. For some, it might be a saved person who is allowing you to come into their home as a base of operations. For others, God has already prepared their hearts to listen to the Gospel. Paul taught about this idea in Acts 18:9-10. God told him while he was ministering in Corinth that He had already prepared the hearts of many people in the city. Long before Paul knew who they were, God was working on them.
6. Jesus tells us of the blessing that comes to the person of peace’s home. So often our ministry has seen around the world how God blesses a home when an evangelist brings the Gospel to it. God has taught us that to share our faith we are not just to “come and see” or invite people to church. Instead we are to “go and tell” and share our faith out in the community, at work, and in the home. The idea is to go and target where people are the most comfortable, and that can be the home.

Teach your people that God has already prepared the hearts of people. Not everyone is ready to hear from you, but God has already prepared the hearts of some that are ready and willing to hear and be saved.

So how do we FIND people of peace? You first must teach your team that people of peace (people ready to hear the Gospel or be used in the ministry) exist. Then you must teach them how to find them.

Each approach utilized to find a person of peace below involves the following things:

* You must go outside of your comfort zone and reach out to people
* You must do something nice for someone as an act of kindness. That will open the door to determine if someone is a person of peace.
1. Meeting physical needs- The first approach to find people of peace is by meeting someone’s physical needs. This is a simple process. Train your team in how to go out and provide an act of kindness for someone. Do not ask for anything in return but just explain when finishing that you provided the service because of “the love of Jesus in your life”. If they express interest that day or in the days following, you will offer to visit their home, work or a neutral location, and tell them what Christ has done for you. What are some things you can do? Rake someone’s yard, watch a single mother’s baby for a few hours, provide a shirt to someone without clothes, or give someone a ride in your car one. Each of these small acts of kindness will smooth the heart of someone with whom you are ministering and provide the opportunity to share your faith. Once you have performed a kind act for a person, you can then explain why you acted and offer to discuss Christ with them.
2. Meeting emotional needs- In many cultures they need less help with physical needs and more help with emotional needs. You will train your team to go out and observe when someone looks like they are hurting. Maybe they already know someone in their neighborhood who has had a tragedy in their life. Offer to sit with them for an hour and just let them express their pain. Do not preach, but at the end describe some pain that you have been through. Offer condolences for their pain. Then you will explain that Christ helped you get through the pain. Ask if you can meet for another time to explain what Christ has done.
3. Meeting visitors needs- This is the only option that does not involve going from the church and finding someone. With this option, you will try to find people of peace by reaching out to individuals who visit your church.

We know that most people do not visit an evangelical church without a specific purpose. God is drawing them to church because they wouldn’t just come on their own. (John 6:65). You should offer to visit someone in their home who has just visited your church. You will be amazed at how many will accept your offer because they are already interested in spiritual things.

1. Event oriented approaches- In many countries believers have found success by having outreach oriented events and at the end of the event offering to visit individuals in their home. Events that have worked are:
* door to door surveys
* sports clinics
* medical outreach clinics
* community parties
* community clothes distribution
1. Look for pivotal moments- You can find people being more open in certain moments in life—moments of tragedy and transition. Why, because in moments of tragedy and transition, people are more likely to take their eyes off themselves and look for outside help. When someone faces death, divorce, sickness, loss of job, moving to a new city for a new job, new marriage- these are all moments of either tragedy or transition. These are moments to not “pull away” from people but instead to get directly involved in their lives.
2. Look for moments that ONLY GOD CAN BE ACTING- There are certainly things that only God can do. Only God can convict people of sin (John 16:8) so when you see someone showing conviction of wrongdoing- ONLY GOD can be the one causing that to happen. When you see someone talking about guilt over wrongdoing, that person is more than likely a person of peace. You should begin the process of seeking to evangelize them. Another example would be if someone is showing interest in God. If someone talks about thinking about God at all (John 6:44), then you know they might be a person of peace.
3. **Evangelism-Multiplying Through Who You Know (week 7)**

Paul taught us a key principle in Acts 16:31. He told the Philippian jailer that if he would believe in Christ not only he, but his household would come to know Christ. This idea of a “household” actually means that jailer’s circle of influence. Does this mean that if a father comes to Christ his entire family will come to Christ? No. However, it does mean that evangelism can have a domino effect? If one person converts, if you will minister to people this person knows then they are more likely to convert as well.

For example, train your team to start a Bible study with a lost person. After a few weeks, ask the lost person if he would be willing to ask his cousin, aunt, brother, or friend if they would be interested in doing a study as well. His friend or relative is far, far more likely to accept a study from his cousin then from you. This occurs because he already trusts that person. If your team will follow the lines of family or friend influence, then they will find many, many people of peace and start many home groups.

1. **Evangelism- Home Groups (week 8-11)**

There are a variety of ways to evangelize. Starting Bible studies in the home or in a place of business is possibly the most productive?

* Bible studies in the home occur where people are most comfortable.
* Bible studies in the home or place of business allow for more lost people to participate at one time.
* Bible studies in the home allow for relationships to form over a span of a few weeks. This will help the person feel more comfortable with you and with the Church. Often people join the church even after the Bible study is over because they have already formed a friendship with the person leading the study.

You would plan to start a 4 to 7 week study in the home or place of business with a lost person. This study would take about an hour per lesson in order to not tire everyone out but also to give you time to start more studies. Enclosed is a four week study which tells you exactly how to guide someone through a study. It even includes an appeal to give to someone to accept Christ.

Who is Jesus?

This study has 4 lessons. Each lesson should take about 45 minutes. This time will be brief enough to study God’s word and not exhaust both you and your friend. You will give the person 4 lessons to reflect on who Jesus is and what He can do in your life.

To the Christian-

Leading your friend to understand who is Jesus is the greatest gift you can ever give them. Before you lead this study, I would like to give you a few tips as to HOW to lead this study. Below is a step-by-step guide in how to give this study to your non-Christian friend.

1. **Conversation-** Enter the home and begin with some conversation. Show your friend that you care about them. Ask about their parents, wife, child, husband. Ask how their work is going. Ask how they are feeling. You should spend about 10 minutes talking to them.
2. **Prayer-** Pray a short prayer asking the One True God to show each of you something new about Himself so that you can know Him better.
3. **Read-** Read the passage of Scripture together. If your friend cannot read, you read it for him If he can read, make sure he reads it once and then your
4. **Ask-** Tell your friend that you and he will be studying three things in this passage:
* What can we learn about Jesus from this passage?
* What can we learn about ourselves and others?
* How can we apply this passage to our lives?

Allow your friend to talk through the passage with you. Look for SPIRITUAL TRUTHS- things we can learn about God and about ourselves from the passage.

1. **Close-** Close your time with your friend in prayer. Ask if you can come back next week or in the next couple of days. Ask if your friend has any prayer requests for his life and make sure that you pray for them right then.
2. **Invitation-** Ask your friend after the fourth lesson if he is willing to surrender his life to Christ as the ONE TRUE GOD.

Lesson 1

John 1:1-17

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

6There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. 7This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. 8He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. 9That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

10He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11He came to His ownand His owndid not receive Him. 12But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

15John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’”

16Andof His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. 17For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him.*

What can we learn about Jesus?

1. Jesus is eternal – John (vs 1)

Jesus has always been in existence. There has never been a time when he was created.

1. Jesus is God- John (vs 1)

Jesus and God are one. Christianity teaches that God is actually three persons. In other words, God is a Trinity. There is only one God, but he exists as three individual beings as well. He is Three in One. How can he be three in one? We do not know. We just know that you and I CANNOT be three persons in one being. In fact, nothing else in creation can be three in one. However, God can. This proves that there is only one God- and we cannot be Him or be joined to Him. (See John 10:27-30)

1. There is only one God- (vs 1)

This verse reminds us that Jesus and God are one.

1. Jesus is the light- (vs 2)

This world can seem very dark. Have you been through a very difficult time in your life? Does it feel like the world is against you? The world can seem very evil. Jesus is the light in a very dark place. Just as a candle brings comfort and vision in a very dark room, Jesus gives light and meaning to this world.

1. Jesus made the world- (vs 10)

Jesus was part of the creative process of the world. He not only loves you, but he also created everything around you. (See Genesis 1:1-2)

1. Jesus wants you to become His child (vs 12)

Jesus loves everyone (John 3:16), but he doesn’t call everyone in the world his child. However, for those who surrender their life to Him, the relationship changes. As a Father protects a child, so Jesus will be as a Father to His children.

1. Jesus gives grace and truth in your life (vs 17)

Deep down we are all emotionally looking for grace and intellectually looking for truth. So many people tell us so many stories about what is truth. Jesus however, brings truth. In fact, Jesus said that He IS truth. (John 14:6)

What can we learn about ourselves?

1. We were made by the one true God (vs 1)

The one true God created everything. Including you. That means he KNOWS you. We know what we create.

1. We can have light and truth because of Jesus (vs 4)

Jesus gives you the light and truth that you need to have a fulfilled life.

1. Many people will reject Jesus (vs 11)

Throughout history, many people have rejected Jesus and the work that He did. Even some of his own people rejected Him.

1. We never have to be alone because we are children of God (vs 12)

It gives children great comfort to recognize that their father or mother is near. It calms their fears. You and I are not alone either if we give our lives to Jesus.

1. There is a way to find grace and truth in this life (vs 17)

In the coming lessons we will learn how to have grace and truth in this life in more detail.

How can we apply what we’ve learned in our lives?

1. Think through what it means to you to be able to know absolute grace and truth in your life. What would that mean?
2. Why do you think so many have rejected Jesus in the past?
3. What does it mean that the one true God has created You?

Lesson 2

John 2:1-11

What Can Jesus Do?

2 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. 3 And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.”

4 Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.”

5 His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do *it.*”

6 Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. 7 Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And He said to them, “Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to the master of the feast.” And they took *it.* 9 When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. 10 And he said to him, “Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the *guests* have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!”

11 This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

1. **What Can We Learn About Jesus?**
2. Jesus was 100% man (vs 2)

Jesus went to social gatherings. Jesus had a mother. Jesus had friends (disciples). Jesus knew how to interact with others in their daily lives.

1. Jesus was concerned about others (vs 7)

In Jewish culture in that day, wedding feasts lasted about a week. For the host, to run out of food or drink was very embarrassing. Jesus took the opportunity to help the family avoid embarrassment and be able to continue the feast.

1. Jesus has power over everything (vs 10)

Jesus was able to change the water into wine miraculously. He had the men fill the jars up completely (showing that no wine was mixed), and the wine that he made was the best that the people had all week (vs 10). Jesus has power over the weather (Mark 4:35-41) over sickness (Mark 2:1-12) and death (John 10).

1. **What Can We Learn About Ourselves (and the people in the story)?**
2. It is okay to be social. (vs 2)

If Jesus had friends and went to wedding parties, it is okay to relax and have a good time. Many people think that when they are religious they cannot enjoy themselves. Jesus proved otherwise.

1. It was to the humble servants that Jesus revealed Himself (vs 9)

Did you notice that in the story Jesus didn’t reveal himself to the master of the feast? Instead, it was to the humble servants and his disciples that Jesus revealed himself. It does not matter your level in life, rich or poor, Jesus can reveal his truth to you.

1. People began to believe the more they knew about Him (vs 11)

As his disciples began to walk and work with Jesus, they began to understand more. As they saw Jesus perform miracles, they drew closer and closer to understanding who He is.

1. **How Can We Apply This to Our Lives?**
2. If Jesus has power over anything, what does this mean in terms of my confidence in the things he asks me to do?
3. If Jesus has power over the earth, what does this mean in terms of his ability to take care of me.
4. Christ was concerned about the embarrassment of the host, should I be concerned about others and their concerns in this life?

**If you would, like you can take the time to read the rest of John 2. You can see how Christ cleansed the temple of people who were trying to take advantage of individuals coming to worship God. (The moneychangers were set up in the court of the Gentiles. This was the place where people from all over the world were to come and worship the Lord during the Jewish festivals. They were taking advantage of the people by taking their money from their countries and giving them less money in return and selling them products that were to be used for worship at much higher prices.)**

**As you read, ask yourself-**

1. **Is it okay to get angry when it is to protect the weak?**
2. **Why did he have such passion for the Temple? Is worship of the One True God that important?**

If you would like, you can bring these thoughts back with you in the next session.

Lesson 3

John 3:1-17

How to Know Jesus and Have Eternal Life

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?”

10 Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? 11 Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is,* the Son of Man who is in heaven. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

1. **What Can We Learn About Jesus?**
2. Jesus knows the way to eternal life. (vs 3)

When this religious leader came to him, Jesus plainly told him the way to eternal life. Jesus, who is God, knows how to have eternal life with Him.

1. Jesus is setting up a Kingdom (vs 3)

Jesus is preparing His Kingdom. Jesus is preparing a place for us to worship him forever (John 14:1-3). Eventually Christ will return again for those people that have chosen to follow Him. For those of us who have surrendered our life to Him, we will be able to live with him forever.

1. Jesus knew how he was going to die (vs 14)

At the end of Christ’s earthly ministry, Jesus died on a cross. This death was not a surprise to Jesus. He knew that he had come to earth to pay the penalty for our sins. He knew that he was going to pay the penalty of sins by shedding his blood on the Cross for the sins of the world (John 15:3). This was a plan that God had made before the foundation of the world. He knew that Christ would die, be buried and then 3 days later rise from the grave. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Jesus is alive today and he wants to live in your heart!

1. Jesus gave us the plan to be with Him forever (vs 16)

The most famous verse in the Bible is John 3:16. Why? Because in this verse we learn how to have eternal life. Eternal life is not an endless cycle of being born and reborn. Instead eternal life is being with God (John 17:3). The King of the Universe wants us to be with Him. We cannot BE Him. However, he does want us to be with Him forever. He has given us the plan to do this.

1. **What Can We Learn About Ourselves?**
2. Jesus was open to hearing questions (vs 4)

Do you have any doubts about Jesus? Are you afraid that if you raise them Jesus will get angry? You should not be. Jesus never got angry when people who had doubts about Him came to Him with questions. We can go to Jesus with confidence whether we are Christians or not and ask Him questions. (Luke 7:18-28)

1. You can be very religious and not know the truth (vs 9, 10)

Nicodemus was a very religious man and a ruler of his people. Yet, he did not understand some very simple truths. In truth, when he was talking to Jesus, He was talking to God. The truth of eternal life was right in front of him but he didn’t see the truth.

1. We must believe in Jesus to spend eternity with Him.

Everyone wants to have eternal life. Most people try to lead very good lives in order to go to paradise after they die. Jesus reminded Nicodemus, who was a very moral man, that one does not have to be good to have eternal life, He must believe in the One who is Good.

1. **How Can We Apply These Truths to Our Lives?**
2. **Make a Choice** You have an opportunity to think through what you have heard about Jesus. You can decide that today is the day that you BELIEVE in him and are ready to receive eternal life. How do you show that you believe in Christ?
3. **Recognize that you need Jesus.** The Bible is very clear that we all have a need. Did you notice something about Nicodemus? He was very religious but the Bible does not say that Jesus counted him as one of his followers. Why not? You can be very religious and still be stuck in your SIN. All of us know when we do something wrong. If we lie, steal, cheat, are lazy, jealous or angry with someone, we know that we have done something wrong. The Bible says that when we do something wrong that is called Sin. Sin is DISOBEYING GOD. God tells us that we all are sinners (Romans 3:23) and that the consequence of our sin is that we will die (Romans 6:23). We need someone therefore to take away our sin so that we can live not in this life but in the age to come.
4. **Recognize what Jesus can do for you.** Jesus talked about being born again? Can we be born many times? The Bible says no, “It is appointed for men to die once and then face judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).Jesus teaches us that if we surrender our life to him he can give us eternal life. How do we surrender our life to Him?
5. **Pray and ask Jesus to be Lord of Your Life.**  In prayer, ask Jesus to take away your sin and be Lord of your life. There is no formula or specific way to pray. The key is that you make a heart decision to surrender your life to Jesus. You are admitting to Jesus that He is the ONLY way for you to have eternal life and to live with Him forever. (John 14:6). He is also the only way for you to have true joy and a full life here on Earth (John 10:10).

**A sample prayer would be something like this:** Dear Jesus, I know that I have sinned. I also know you love me. I believe that you are the only way to have eternal life. I want to give my life to you, turn from my sins, and surrender everything to you. I want to experience the joy and peace that you give. Thank you for my salvation. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Lesson 4

John 4

What to do Now that You Believe in Jesus.

Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), 3 He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. 4 But He needed to go through Samaria.

5 So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from *His* journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give Me a drink.” 8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?” For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.”

11 The woman said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? 12 Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?”

13 Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

15 The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.”

16 Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”

17 The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.”

Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”

19 The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.”

21 Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

25 The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.”

26 Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am *He.*”

### The Whitened Harvest

27 And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why are You talking with her?”

28 The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, 29 “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” 30 Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

31 In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”

32 But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.”

33 Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?”

34 Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. 35 Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! 36 And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ 38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

### The Savior of the World

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I *ever* did.” 40 So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of His own word.

42 Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

1. **What Can We Learn About Jesus?**
2. **Jesus got weary-** vs 4

Jesus is 100% God but he was also 100% man. Consequently, he understand when we have moments of weariness and exhaustion. (John 4:15)

1. **Jesus was interested in everyone**- vs 7-10

Jesus was a Jew. The typical Jew did not like Samaritans. They were considered “half-Jews” because they had interbred with other peoples. Jesus however, showed that the woman was important even though she was not a Jew. Jesus also was a man. He showed honor to the woman by stopping and talking to her. Jesus was teaching his disciples that ALL people have equal value in the Lord.

1. **Jesus is greater than others religious traditions** vs 11-12; 21-22

This woman had many religious traditions. Jesus was teaching her that even though she worshipped with sincerity, she was worshipping incorrectly. God wants all worship to go to Him alone.

1. **Jesus knows our hearts** vs 15-18

Jesus knew that this woman had been married 5 times and was living with another man. There are no secrets from God. He knows all of our innermost thoughts and secret actions.

1. **Jesus knew he was the Christ** vs 26

Jesus knew that He was the “Messiah” or the anointed one. There was no doubt in his mind that He was God.

1. **What Can We Learn About Ourselves?**
2. **Just like the Samaritan woman, we know when people don’t like us**- vs 9

The Samaritan woman was stunned that Jesus would talk to her. She knew that Jews looked down upon her. People can sense when others do not like them.

1. **People are looking for relief from the struggles of life** vs 15

The Samaritan woman was tired of having to get water. The land was hot and it was hard work. Jesus however did not relieve her of her job of getting water. Instead, he gave her “living water” which stood for the news of how to have eternal life.

1. **Even people with “great” sin can hear from God.** Vs 18

All sin is disobedience to God. Whether your struggle is lust, anger, pride, jealousy, laziness, etc, it’s all wrong before God. Jesus however looked at her as a person and not just the sum of her sins.

1. **The disciples were stunned Jesus would be talking to her** vs 27

Even the people that had walked with Jesus as his disciples did not understand why he talked to her. Often it takes people a long time to understand just how to love everyone.

1. **When people truly understand Jesus they will tell others about Him.** Vs 28-30

This woman had probably been viewed shamefully in her town because of having so many husbands. After she met Jesus, she was so moved by what He had done for her that she went out and told everyone she could about Him. In the end, the people in our village believed in Christ. (vs 42)

1. **How Can We Apply These Truths to Our Lives?**
2. **Look upon everyone as important to Jesus- vs9**

Who in your life could you start showing Christ’s love? To whom can you start telling about Christ? If Christ, can take the time to talk to a woman and a Samaritan, can’t we talk to anyone as well?

1. **Give that person exactly what they need- vs 13, 14**

There are times when you need to help someone out physically (Matthew 10:42). However, Jesus focused on the woman’s eternal needs rather than on her physical.

1. **Its okay to talk about sin- vs 16**

People will not know they need Christ until they know they are a sinner. In love, Christ told the Samaritan woman about her sins. He knew that deep down she was struggling in that particular area of relationships. It is okay to talk about people’s struggles, if you are willing to do it in love and for the purpose of pointing them to Christ.

1. **Tell them about Christ. – vs 26**

What people need to hear is about Christ. They do not need anything else but to learn how to give their life to him. How can you do that? Tell the person who Christ is and what he is done in your life. You can do that by sharing your testimony of how you gave your life to Christ. Give people a brief 3-5 minute explanation of three things

* your life before you came to Christ
* how you gave your life to Christ
* your life now in Christ

In each of these three sections, take about a minute to explain how Christ changed you. Explain how you recognized that you had to do three things to give your life to Christ- a) Recognize you were a sinner b) Recognize that only Christ could save you c) Surrender your life to Christ. If you need to, use the end of the third lesson as a guide as to what to say.

God bless you as you begin your journey with Christ.

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1. **Individual Evangelism (week 12-15)**

We’d like to give you a variety of ways to do evangelism. First, let us give you two general ways. Next, a specific set of ways to share with people in your particular region of the world.

1. The first method is by sharing your “testimony.” A testimony is simply a brief conversation about how Christ changed your life. When I share my testimony, I like to divide my testimony in three parts- 1) my life before Christ 2) how I gave my life to Christ 3) my life with Christ now. I take a minute or two for each part and explain how my life was slowly changed by Christ. After I have done this, I like to share with that person how they can give their life to Christ as well. Take a minute and practice sharing these three parts. Remember, keep this brief (5 minutes) and keep it simple. Let the Holy Spirit guide.
2. The second method is called the Roman Road. These are six verses that you can use to share your faith in just a few minutes and show WHY someone can come to Christ. The verses are as follows:
3. I John 5:13- This verse shows that God’s Word was written to show you how to have salvation.
4. Romans 3:23- This verse shows that we are all sinners.
5. Romans 6:23- This verse shows God’s punishment for sin.
6. Romans 5:8- This verse shows that God sent Christ died for us.
7. Romans 10:9-10- These verses show what we have to do to accept Christ- believe, and call Christ as Lord (make a commitment)
8. Romans 10:13- This verse shows that anyone can come to Him.

As a church take, 10-30 minutes and read through these verses- talking about how you can explain each verse to your friends.

Please remember that when you evangelize, you shouldn’t be worried that you will say exactly the right thing. The Bible promises us that the Holy Spirit will guide us in what to say. (Luke 12:12, John 14:26, 16:13), God simply has chosen to use you as the instrument that delivers the Good News to that particular person. If you help evangelize a lost world, you will be part of a team of people that have helped spread the love of Christ from the time of His resurrection until now.

1. You can also evangelize using Bible stories. Instead of going in with a specific plan to evangelize such as the Roman Road, you can use the multitude of Bible stories that God has already given us. The approach to use this method is as follows:
2. Find your person of peace
3. Take time to sit with them and listen to their story (tragedy, transition, sin issue, life problem).
4. Think of a story from Scripture that deals with a problem similar to that story in their life. The story must be REDEMPTIVE and not necessarily a story with a negative ending (the story of Judas for example would be a bad one to choose).
5. Use that story as a bridge to share your testimony or the Roman Road.

For example, let’s imagine that you are listening to a friend who is struggling with family problems. A brief overview of how Joseph overcame bitterness toward his family would be a perfect bridge to the Gospel. You can show your friend that he is not the first person to go through his particular issue, and that the Bible gives a solution for his problems. You don’t have to retell the story word for word, just the general idea of the story. They can go back and study the story later. In fact, you are giving them motivation to look up

There are many other examples-

Someone going through anger issues- Peter

Someone without hope- Woman with the issue of Bleeding

Someone with problems with lust- Tell about how Paul wrote Romans 7

Someone who has made poor choices in life- David and Bathsheeba

Someone who has pride issues- Adam and Eve

Someone who is being persecuted- Daniel

You will find that you know these stories better than you thought, and that the Lord will bring these stories to your mind at the right moment. People learn through hearing simple stories, and this method is highly productive because, in the end, it’s so simple.

There are other ways to evangelize as well. In your culture there are many nominal Catholics and Protestants. Enclosed at the end of this book is a chapter from another book I have written called, “How to Share Christ With Your Friends of Another Faith.” This gives specific plans from Godly individuals who have worked with Protestants and Catholics to share your faith in one on one evangelism.

1. **Long term Bible Study—How to Disciple Others (week 16 up to three years)**

**The number one question we receive as trainers and authors is how do we disciple our people.** Remember, true discipleship occurs form STUDY AND PRACTICE. Your team is being discipled as they are going out and doing the ministry with others. At the same time, you have been given 15 weeks (minimum) of lessons to train your team. However, what is next? **YOU DO NOT NEED ANY MATERIAL TO DISCIPLE YOUR TEAM LONG TERM OUTSIDE OF THE BIBLE.** This section teaches you to create your own studies, get your own spiritual truths, and disciple your people long term. The preparation is the same pattern that you see in HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE in section 4. However, this time you will do everything listed with another individual or in a group setting. Guide your people in exactly how you spend time in the Word. As you work through entire books of the Bible together, you will be discipling your people!

**How to Study the Bible**

You can find spiritual truths anywhere in the Bible as you meditate on God’s Word . How do you study God’s Word?

1. Begin with prayer with the other person or group. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the Truth to you. It is through the Holy Spirit that we learn all Truth (John 16:13).
2. When you finish praying, begin to read. The person or people you are discipling can read God’s Word. We suggest starting with the Book of John, Proverbs, Psalms or maybe one of Paul’s Epistles. However, you can start anywhere. All of the Bible is good to study! You may want to read an entire chapter or you may just want to read a few verses. This is not a race. You do not have to finish the Bible in a year or in a month. Take your time.
3. Every section of the Bible is good to read, but you have already been studying John 1-4 in your Bible study called “Who is Jesus”. Why not take your group through John 5-21 for the next few months? After that, you can pick a different book of Scripture. Just follow the pattern you have already been learning in your own walk with God.
4. Let the Lord speak to you and to your disciples. Spiritual truths need to be personal. They need to be ideas that can be applied to your own life or to the life of the church body. Don’t read a passage waiting for the Lord to tell you something about someone else. Let Him touch your life first and then you will be able to teach with more passion to others. When you meditate on a verse, and it really touches your heart, this might be the Holy Spirit trying to teach you. In order to help see God’s truths in your life, we suggest asking three questions of every passage (possibly John 5-21) that you read:
5. What can I learn about God from these verses?
6. What can I learn about myself from these verses?
7. How can I apply this passage in my life?

Asking these questions will help guide you as you read the passage and personalize what God may be trying to show you.

1. As you meditate on the verses, there might be one verse, or one story, that really touches you. One of the three questions has triggered something in your heart of one of your disciples’ hearts. Stop. Ask God to help you apply that particular verse or section to your life or to the person that you are discipling. Think about what happened in that verse and see what you or your church is going through that might be similar to that situation. Or, look and see what that verse is teaching you about the Father that you’ve never thought about before. Take your time. The Lord may be highlighting something from Scripture that can be applied to your life.
2. Confirm- The people you are discipling are obviously newer in the faith or newer to the Bible. Therefore confirming spiritual truths with other Scriptures might be more difficult. However, you want to make sure that what you have learned actually agrees with what the Bible says. After all, someone can take any verse out of Scripture and make it say just about anything they want. God will never tell you to do something that is in direct contrast with other parts of His Word. Study other parts of Scripture to make sure you are teaching sound doctrine. This step will become easier as your disciples have more time and experience in the Word.
3. Apply- As you’ve gotten your spiritual truth and confirmed it with Scripture, then you and your disciples can apply them to your life. If you are going to teach this principle, try to find examples and illustrations that are applicable to this truth. Your people will not learn unless they understand how this truth applies to them. You have to be able to teach your people how this truth that God has revealed affects you, them and the world that they live. If they understand how the truth affects them, then it will be easier for them to apply the truth.
4. Close with prayer- Always thank God for all He has shown you, and ask for His help as you show your people what you have learned.

You can use these ideas above to daily get spiritual truths from the Bible, and also use this pattern to disciple others. Using these ideas from a daily devotion time with the Father, you never have to rely on others’ pre-written Bible studies or sermons again. You will probably still use others’ Bible studies from time to time, but you will never HAVE TO RELY PRIMARILY on others’ studies for your church again. The only book that you will need to guide your church is the Bible. Let God teach you DAILY through His word, so that you can teach others. The beauty of this method is that you will NEVER run out of things to teach your disciples because you go through Scripture verse by verse, allowing God to give everyone spiritual truths.

1. **Teach Your People- What is a Church? (Optional study)**

If the evangelism has gone well and God has blessed you with enough fruit to begin to start a church, you will need to be able to explain what kind of church/churches that you want to start. In appendix number two is a Bible study that we have created based on Acts 1-13. This study can help you adequately teach the definition of a church and its particular purposes. It can also give you ideas of things you need to do ministerially through the church(es) that God is allowing you to start.

1. **Optional final step- (Steps to Remember in Starting a Church)**

Let us imagine that you have decided to form a church or a system of churches. What now? You will not always need to include this tenth step in your disicipleship process. However, these are some good ideas in how to plant a church.

1. Pastors/Elders

Let us imagine that God has blessed and you have new churches starting. You will need to find leaders to fill individual churches. Paul knew how important it was to find pastors and used Titus to find pastors/elders to lead the individual churches (Titus 1:5). What qualifications should you look for in a pastor? Take your people through I Timothy 3:1-7 in order to determine what kind of man they should be looking for. Remember a few things however:

-Never is it listed in Scripture for a man to be seminary trained or ordained in order to be a pastor (although there is nothing wrong with either of these strengths)

-No man fits all of these characteristics perfectly at all times. For example, no one is always blameless but we are all sinners. However, your pastor should not have anything in his life that is a repetitive, unrepentant sin that can bring shame to the church.

Note that this book is combining the office of pastor and elder as one. This is based on Acts 20:17, 28 which seems to imply that elder, shepherd and overseer are all the same office. However, there is much disagreement on this issue of whether the elder is a separate office so you must come to your own conclusion.

1. Purposes

Once a church gets started what is it supposed to do in order to be productive, Godly, and fulfill the purposes that God has designed for it? A church has many purposes but the overall purpose is to point the lost to salvation, the saved to growth in Christ, and to glorify God throughout. Therefore, how does one go about doing all of these purposes God has given us?

A great example of a church fulfilling its purposes can be found in Acts 2:41-47. As you take your team through Acts 2:41-47, note that the church fulfilled at least six purposes in the early stages of its existence: Evangelism/missions, discipleship, fellowship, worship, ministry and prayer. You can find all of these listed in Acts 2. As you take your team through Acts 2, you will also see other events that occurred and you must determine how you will apply those in your church. The key thing to remember however is that you should design ALL of your ministries in the church to be centered on those six purposes. If your church is busy doing something not found in those six items, you are busy doing something outside of your primary purpose.

1. Finances-

Nothing is as hard as the issue of finances in a church. If you do not have a lot of money in your church, do not worry, neither do most new churches. It is common to be financially broke in your church!

So how do you organize your finances?

1. Create a team of people that will be in charge of the offering. Do not leave the responsibility of the money in one man alone.
2. Take up your offering every Sunday (1 Corinthians 16;2)
3. The tithe is 10% (Matthew 23:23) but your church should learn the concept of sacrificial giving. The New Testament pattern is to give sacrificially and not to be bound to a 10% rule. For many of your church people, 10% may not be sufficient to be a true sacrifice. The purpose of tithing is to help your people depend on the Lord. (Luke 21:1-4)
4. Use your money for each of the six purposes listed in Acts 2. Allocate your money for those six ministry purposes. Include a seventh (not listed in Acts 2), called missions. Allocate money for reaching your Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth.
5. Begin to pay your pastor’s salary when possible. Determine the average pay of 10 of the families in church and give the pastor the average pay. If you have 10 families that tithe you have enough to support the salary of one pastor at the average salary of everyone.
6. Do not rush building a building. Only build if:
* you feel like God is leading you to in your cultural context
* only after you can meet the first five ideas in this section.
1. Three selfs- You don’t have to follow the “three-self” model for a church and still be a Bible based church, but it is a good idea to follow. What are the three selfs-
	* 1. Self-governing- Your goal is to start a church that does not depend on the decision making policies of any mother church. Of course, you can work together with the mother church, but you need to be able to make your own decisions as quickly as possible. In Acts 13:1-3 we see that the early church in Antioch made its own decisions to send missionaries without seeking help from any outside church. Just as a child will not mature unless one eventually allows it to make its own decisions, so will a new church stay immature if it does not have the opportunity to make its own decisions.
		2. Self-sustaining- Your church should seek to pay its own bills as soon as possible. Far too long have people depended on churches from the West or from capital cities in one’s own country to pay for its needs. From history we have learned that there is just not enough money to go around for that plan to work. How will you be self-sustaining?
			1. Avoid building buildings too quickly.
			2. Avoid paying too many people too quickly
			3. The more evangelism one does, the more people your church will bring in, the more tithers one has.
		3. Self-propagating- Your church should seek to plant new churches as quickly as possible. There is no greater way to grow the Kingdom of God then through starting more churches. Every time that a new church is planted in a new community an entire new world of people are reached. Why?
			1. New church starts have to work harder in outreach to survive.
			2. New church starts are placed in communities where there are less saved people.
			3. New church starts have an excitement that leads people to work harder.

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

**This section is all in bold. Why? Because we are going to put all of the first 40 pages together into one quick summary. Use this final page as a guide in how to navigate all the steps you have already learned.**

**So what will you do in order to evangelize, disciple, and plant a church?**

1. **Form your team- See pages 9-14. There are 11 ideas to follow in order to form your team.**
2. **Train your team- Within a week of forming your team, begin to use this book to train the first 11 topics. They are as follows:**

**-Model what you teach (Luke 10:1)**

**-The Holy Spirit (John 14-16)**

**-Prayer (Luke 11)**

**-The Bible and How to Use it (Hebrews 4:11-12)**

**-Evangelism-People of Peace and How to Find Them (Luke 10:1-6)**

**-Evangelism- Multiplication through who you know (Acts 16:31)**

**-Evangelism- Leading Home Groups**

**-Evangelism- Individual Evangelism**

**-Disicipleship- Long Term Groups**

**-Church Planting-What is the Church?**

**-Church Planting- Next Steps**

 **After you complete those 10 topics which should take you several months to several years of meeting to train your team, you can then choose any book of the Bible and start training the team FROM THE BIBLE ALONE by sharing Spiritual truths that you got from the Word, and helping your team to get their own Spiritual truths. Doing this, you will have enough material to disciple your team for years.. See sections 4 and 9 as a review of how to find spiritual truths and consequently lead others to do the same.**

1. **Send your team out (you go with them)- Our advice is that by the time you train your people in Evangelism-People of Peace and How to Find Them (Luke 10:1-6) they are ready to go out and begin ministering in evangelism and possibly church planting. Follow the following steps as they go out**
2. **Send the team out in pairs of two**
3. **Meet with them once a week and train them further. Also, respond to questions and doubts they might have as they are ministering to lost people.**
4. **After they have led their first individuals to Christ, have the new convert go to someone they know (Multiplication through who you know- Step 6 in the training). They will then offer to do a Bible study. One of the original team of two will split off from his team member and will begin to go with this new convert doing evangelism. In this way, you are constantly training a new generation. You will begin to not only add evangelists but multiply evangelists as each one reaches one!**
5. **As you feel led by God, start using the new coverts from these home groups to either grow your local church or start many churches in neighborhoods, towns or villages all around you.**

**God bless you in your endeavor!**

**Appendix 1**

How do I Witness to My Hindu friend?

Witnessing to Hindus can be a daunting task. A young man in our seminary went to the microphone in our chapel service and described how he witnessed to a Hindu. This young man had witnessed to a variety of individuals before; but when confronted with the possibility of witnessing to a Hindu, he said, “They have all of those gods.  I just felt . . . helpless.”

There are 958,695,903 Hindus in the world.[[4]](#footnote-4) To understand how to interact with Hindus, you must accept the fact that the foundational beliefs of the religion present formidable arguments against Christianity. After all, with 330,000,000 gods, their simple response can be, “How can we be wrong, if we accept that everyone is at least partially right?”

Yet, at the same time, Hindus are coming to Christ around the world. In India, a modern day revival is occurring. India's Christian church has grown and is getting larger. It now comprises more than 70 million members, according to Operation World. That makes it the eighth largest Christian population in the world, just behind the Philippines and Nigeria, bigger than Germany and Ethiopia, and twice the size of the United Kingdom.[[5]](#footnote-5)

**Global Religion?**

Is Hinduism a global religion? 950 million adherents certainly point to that fact. However, if one considers that 901 million are found in one nation alone, India, then the global reach of the religion seems much less prominent.[[6]](#footnote-6) However, in the United States alone, there are an estimated 1,334,000 Hindus, and the ideology of Hinduism has impacted the way of thinking of tens of millions of people in the West.

The universal and relativistic mindset of Hinduism has made its mark. “Hinduism is the most accommodating of all religions. In a world full of strife, the ‘accommodative’ spirit and the planks of universalism and relativism, as well as the other cultivated characteristics of modern Hinduism, become very attractive to so many diverse groups of people that the Hindus have truly come to see their faith as a relevant global religion.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

**Who is a Hindu?  How would you describe his beliefs today?**

Unlike Islam and Christianity, with a definite core set of beliefs, Hinduism is far more difficult to define.  In fact, even the name, Hinduism, is not entirely accurate.  The term “Hinduism” was created by Western scholars in an attempt to organize the multitude of religions in India under one banner.  A Hindu will have a different set of beliefs and practices depending on his geographic region in India.  If he’s not from India, his set of beliefs will vary depending on his teacher.  Consequently, it is difficult to pinpoint a Hindu’s beliefs exactly. This may seem contradictory to a Westerner, but in fact, in Hinduism contradiction does not mean error.

How then can we understand this belief system? Madasamy Thirumalai in his work, Sharing Your Faith With a Hindu, gives ten summary statements about Hindus that should help clear up the fog of the religion itself.[[8]](#footnote-8) The ten statements that you will read are from Thirumalai’s work, and I will add thoughts to the ten for clarification.

•       Hindus are primarily from India.

This fact has already been highlighted.  Numerically speaking, Hinduism is an Indian religion.  However, this point brings about a great truth. India, the land itself, is considered holy to Hindus.  If you are witnessing to a Hindu, most Hindus will feel a certain defensiveness about their faith in terms of NATIONALISM.  To be Indian is to be Hindu.[[9]](#footnote-9)  These two identities are inexorably linked.

•       Hindus worship idols, images, pictures, relics and other objects.

Some Hindus find salvation through knowledge, some through asceticism, but many Hindus find salvation through revering idols. Some of the idols and images can look quite gruesome to us.  You might see snakes and elephant heads and a variety of beasts interwoven into one supposed deity represented in the idol.  For the typical Westerner, images of these deities seem scary at best and nonsensical at worst.  However, these incongruent images have a purpose.  In realistic terms you can’t have a woman with four arms who is blueish in color (the goddess Lakshmi, wife of Vishnu who is also pictured in blue), and you can’t have a person with multiple heads (the god Brahma).  Since these types of physical attributes can’t happen in our world, the images are supposed to guide the viewer to understanding how unknowable and transcendent these deities are from us.

•       Hindus believe in rebirth and karma

Reincarnation is a key element in Hindu philosophy. The fact that every action of life has a consequence for good or for bad is known as karma.  You are on a continual cycle of birth and rebirth.  Your works-based life of karma will help you get off this cycle.  The term for leaving this perpetual cycle is *moksha.*

•       Hindus are pantheistic, polytheistic (actually henotheistic) and animistic practitioners of religion.

Hindus can be pantheistic which means they believe that everything is god.  They also believe in a polytheistic world. After all, if you can accept that the reality of 330,000,000 gods, that’s VERY polytheistic. However, their polytheism has a twist. Depending on who you ask, they can believe in polytheism (multiple gods) or monotheism (one god- Brahmin).  They actually believe that you can have both “isms” at the same time.  The one Supreme God can appear to different individuals as different gods (henotheism). Consequently, you cannot define Hinduism as simply polytheistic or monotheistic.

Finally, Hindus are animistic.  If you have read the chapter on animism, this should not come as a surprise. Just as animism has affected Christianity and Islam, it also has influenced Hinduism.

•       Hindus are usually governed by the social system of caste.

Although officially illegal to discriminate on the basis of caste in India today, this particular social order still plays a major role in Hindu thought.  (NEVER, EVER ask someone what caste they are from. This is highly offensive).   Your caste determines everything from your profession, marriage, to social etiquettes.

Hinduism contains four levels of caste.  These terms can be complicated to remember, and as a word of warning Hinduism has many subsets under these larger categories. However, a Hindu’s lot in life drastically changes depending on whether you are part of the:

•       Brahmins (Priests)

•       Kshatriya (Warriors)

•       Vaishyas (Business/Produce)

•       Shudras (Servants)

The first three castes are called “twice-born.” They have made progression on the road to “moksha” (liberation). The final sections of people below these castes are called the “untouchables.” This class of people does not form a caste. The untouchables are at the bottom of the social hierarchy.  These castes are also known as *varanas* which can mean “colors”.  Scholars think that the caste system may have been founded as sort of an implied racism. In terms of percentage the highest castes tend to be more light-skinned in color, which leads some credence to this idea.[[10]](#footnote-10)

As a Christian, you should be aware of two aspects of the caste system. First of all, a Hindu will deny the fact that the caste system involves systemic racism.  The caste system is simply one’s lot in life in terms of birth. For them, color is not a factor.  Secondly, to offer help to someone from a lower caste actually *hinders that person’s path to liberation*.

This second point is pivotal. Ultimately, a person surrendering his life to Christ, can be viewed as an aberrant elevation in a person’s lot in life. From the Hindu perspective, a person must fulfill his duty in this life in whatever situation he is in. If he doesn’t fulfill his duty as a lower caste member, he cannot progress.  Any decision that improves one’s lot in life will be vehemently fought against by friends and neighbors. Families will think they are protecting the person from making a decision that will undermine his progress to “moksha.” This is a serious difference in the value of the individual according to the Bible.  Christ elevates a person to being equal to all men (Galatians 3:28). This core truth is the antithesis of the caste system.

•       Hindus are known for their tolerance and acceptance of a wide variety of theological beliefs within their religion.

To add Christ to their pantheon of gods is not very problematic for a Hindu. After all, if one believes in the possibility of millions of gods, then adding one more won’t be very difficult.  For example, to a Hindu, if Brahmin (the supreme God not the caste) can manifest as a variety of gods, why can’t he manifest as Jesus Christ?

•       Continuity, not change, dominates the concerns of Hindus.

In the United States the highest virtues in our national heritage are freedom, honesty, or independence.   For a Hindu, the highest virtue is duty.  Fulfilling one’s obligations to family and community is more important than individualistic virtues we might prioritize in the West.  Therefore, staying within your caste and believing as your parents did is critical for Hindus.

•       As in other religions, there exists a vast gulf between the elitist and folk religious forms and practices of Hinduism.

Unfortunately, when one hears the word “folk”, he often equates that idea with “hick” or “ignorant.”  Do not make that mistake with a folk Hindu—one who places great emphasis on the worship of idols and rituals.  With more than 1,000,000,000 people, India and Nepal have no shortage of extremely intelligent “folk” Hindus.

Practitioners of Hinduism, vary greatly in their religious values.  Some think that an intellectual study of the scriptures (called the Vedas) will help them attain moksha.  Others believe that ritualistic practices to idols will give them liberation. Ultimately, a certain amount of dialogue must occur to fully understand the Hindu’s preferred path to salvation.

 **Common Questions Concerning Hinduism[[11]](#footnote-11)**

*What Scriptures do they study?* (Get ready for a LOT of big words in this paragraph).

Only the Hindus that are approaching “liberation” thorugh the way of knowledge (see below) are likely to study their scriptures. There are two classes of Hindu scriptures: *shruti* and *smitri*. *Shruti* (“heard”) are considered inspired, and were heard by seers ages ago. They include four Vedas: *Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. Each Veda has a series of supplementary books called the *Brahmanas* and *Sutras* (each having a different name). Also included are the *Upanishads* which are the appendix to the Vedas. Typically only the priests know the Vedas however some Hindus will have actually read the Upanishads. The *Smitri* (“handed down”) do not have the same level of inspiration, but Hindus are more likely to know about them. They have the two main epics, the *Mahabharata* and *Puranas* (narratives of the gods). Within the Mahabharata is the *Bhagavad Gita*, which is a conversation between Krishna and Arjuna. The Bhagavad Gita is scripture of which they are most likely to be aware.

*Do I need to remember any of the 330 million gods?*

Each individual geographic region has specific gods on which they focus. As the reader, there are at least three supreme deities of which you should be aware.

1. Brahman- the creator god.  While there is no school of devotion specific to him, he is a regular fixture in many temples.

2. Shiva- the destroyer god and the god of reproduction. Shiva’s wife is Paryatti. Sometimes he is depicting as having affairs with Kali. The city of Calcutta was named after Kali.

3. Vishnu- He is the preserver god of the *dharma* (the way of the gods.)[[12]](#footnote-12)  Vishnu has returned many times through history in human or animal form. In the tenth manifestation of Vishnu, he will return as Kalki on a white horse.  Practitioners of Hare Krishna worship, Krishna, the eighth manifestation of Vishnu.

These are the three principal gods of Hindus.  For the Christian, we immediately see a parallel between this Trinitarian view of their high gods and our own view of the Trinity.  However, one should not stress this parallel.  After all, Brahmas can appear as many gods, so the view of their trinity is more henotheistic than monotheistic.

On the practical side, several other gods that Hindus are likely to revere are Ganeha, the elephant-headed remover of obstacles, Krishna, technically an avatar of Vishnu, but often worshipped as a god. Finally, among the common people is Lakshmi (for good fortune and wealth) and Sarasvati, the goddess of learning is important to students and teachers.

*How important is yoga?*

The idea of yoga has become a touchy subject.  In one sense, many Christians aren’t sure if they should practice yoga. On the other hand, since one-third of the people that I know have tried P90X (Notice I didn’t say one-third of my friends COMPLETED P90X), they’ve all tried their hand at yoga. Many Hindus complain that Christians have taken their spiritual practice and turned it into a simple exercise.

Christians need to understand that the purpose of yoga IS linked with Hindu belief.  It centers on the concept that we can clear our minds to try to join Brahmin through meditation.  Christians should be aware that yoga, at its core, is not something to be trifled with. Its purpose, by design, is to become one with a deity.

Can’t Christians use yoga for prayer? For yoga, the goal is to *empty* one’s mind. For Christians the purpose of meditation and prayer is to *fill* one’s mind with Scripture and hear from God. Of all the issues to be discussing with your Hindu friend, it is not important to stress this area of his belief initially. However, do not be fooled into believing that Yoga is ultimately harmless and has no spiritual aspect.

*How is one saved in Hinduism?*

There are three means to salvation in Hinduism:

1) *Karma marga*- the way of works- performing caste duties, rituals

2) *Gnana marga*- way of knowledge- using the intellect, studying Upanishads. In this form, some believe that man is comprised of the Atman, which is identical to Brahman (the impersonal god who is all around us.) Through discipline and mediation one can arrive to the realization of their Atman. Most Hindus will not be aware of this practice however, only those who are of the intellectual elite.

3) *Bhakti marga*- way of love and devotion to gods. Worship and praise takes precedence over rituals.[[13]](#footnote-13)

*In a nutshell what would you say about Hindus and their beliefs?*

Ultimately, if you run into a Hindu from South Asia, he more than likely will believe the following:

He or she would no doubt believe in karma and samsara, revere certain texts and certain deities (usually without naming a single text or deity as requisite), accept the obligation of satisfying his or her older ancestors and caste status within a social structure that most Hindus would recognize, demonstrate certain ascetic tendencies in the form of fasts and vows, and describe certain progress or intentions in living goals and pursuits toward an ultimate release (although for many the ideal of moksha is a remote target at the far end of an inevitable series of rebirths.)[[14]](#footnote-14)

To put that quote into simpler English, a Hindu will probably believe:

1)    There are consequences for his/her actions- *karma.*

2)    There is an endless cycle of rebirths- *samsara.*

3)    Duty in life is of the utmost importance and a Hindu must accept his station in life- *caste.*

4)    A certain amount of ascetism, or self denial, is a good thing for them.

5)    There is a system of reward for actions done here. Most will not think about their ultimate release from their cycle of rebirths because it is seemingly so far off.

**How to Share Your Faith with Your Hindu Friend**

How do you use this knowledge as a bridge to the gospel in sharing your faith? As with all the other chapters, there are four universal steps to beginning the process of sharing your faith with a Hindu. They are:

1. *Befriend them*
2. *Avoid the urge to* ***just*** *be their friend and never engage in a spiritual conversation.*
3. *Look for the Spiritual clues*
4. *Seize the initiative even if Spiritual clues do not present themselves*

For a detailed look at these four ideas, please refer to pages \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Once you have taken a few moments to review these four steps, then you are ready to examine different approaches to talk with your Hindu friend. Let us examine a few approaches you could use to speak to your Hindu friend.

The first set of approaches come from Anjan.[[15]](#footnote-15) Anjan is an Indian church planter who has seen several thousand Hindus come to Christ in the last five years. Did he lead all these nationals to Christ by himself? No, he taught fundamental principles of evangelism to a circle of men who then went out and trained others in evangelism (2 Timothy 2:2). He is an extremely competent evangelist who has agreed to help in the completion of this book. Anjan sent in two recent, actual conversations that he has had with Hindus. He has not sent theoretical ideas, but actual conversations that he used to share the gospel.

Note a few things about Anjan’s approach:

1. His approach is simple. Anjan is an Indian believer sharing how he bridged the gospel to his Hindu friends. This first conversation consists of nothing overly profound. He asks an introductory question, points out that we are sinners, and gives a solution. This approach is not much different from the Roman Road.
2. Anjan did not give a gospel appeal. You might NEED to give a gospel appeal at the end. See page \_\_\_\_\_\_?? to see how to lead someone in a gospel appeal for salvation.

**A Conversation between a Christian and Hindu.**

Christian: Can I ask you some spiritual questions?

Hindu: Yes.

Christian: How can I get to heaven?

Hindu: If you do your duties and do good to others and live a holy life you will do well.

Christian: After doing all these good things how do I know for sure? I want to do good but many times I do what I do not want.

Hindu: I just do not how one can be sure. This is what our religion says. Through KARMA (works) one can be redeemed from Samsara (world).

Christian: But our religion says, “No one is righteous but all have sinned and come short of glory of God.” (Romans 3) Therefore I inherit sin from my forefathers. But there is good news that, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

Hindu: How?

Christian: God promised a long time ago that He would send a Messiah , the holy and righteous one. God showed how he would come, where he would come, and for what he would come. God gave us all the details. At the fullness of time, the Messiah did come and offered Himself as the only holy and acceptable sacrifice on the cross of Calvary to God for all mankind once for all. Also, He rose from death and is still alive.

Hindu: How do I know that He has born my sins?

Christian: The Bible says, “We all have wandered away like sheep have gone astray, but the Lord has put on Him the punishment for all (including yours) the evil we (including you ) have done” (author’s paraphrase of Isaiah 53:6).

Therefore, Jesus Christ owns the salvation for all mankind.

Hindu: If it is so, what I have to do now?

Christian: First you try to recollect the sins you have committed. Then you confess to God and repent for those sins. Ask God to forgive you and invite Jesus into your heart and say that you will follow him day by day.

Hindu: Yes, I feel relieved much now; I thank God and you for helping me.

**(Anjan’s second approach)**

Note a few things:

1. Anjan described this as a follow-up visit. He stressed during the research for this book that gospel tracts are very productive among Hindus. You might need to consider buying some simple gospel tracts to give to your friends.
2. Note again Anjan’s simple approach. Often we try to overcomplicate the message. Instead, Anjan takes the person to the gospel as quickly as possible.
3. Remember, this is an actual conversation that occurred right before the book went to the publisher.

Hindu: I am very happy to read the tract you gave me last time. There is something I found positive about life and the love of God for me.

Christian: Thank you! Do you know there are many people that buy a “life insurance” policy to ensure their family’s lives after their death, but they lose their own life since their lives are not eternally secured. The Bible says, “One can gain the whole world but lose his own soul.” (Mark 8:36)

Hindu: You are very true. Please share more about this truth.

Christian: I mean there is a life on this earth to live which will end here. After this life there is an eternal life. If we are redeemed then we shall live in heaven eternally; if we are not redeemed, we are condemned eternally in hell. Our today decides tomorrow.

Hindu: How can I trust the Bible? Our religion is much older than Christianity.

Christian: One of the strongest proofs of the authenticity of the Bible is that whatever the Bible prophesied a long time ago has already been fulfilled. Some prophecies are yet to be fulfilled since we see things conforming to the present world. The Bible is full of prophesies; and since God only knows the future, hence the Bible is God’s word. Secondly, Christianity has its root in the Old Testament which starts with the beginning of the universe.

Hindu: OK, I agree. But why so much corruption in the Christian countries? Why is the Christian society so weak with families that are broken?

Christian: Christianity is not a religion which one can possess by physical birth, but by personal choice. Therefore, those who are born in Christian families do not necessarily become a Christian. Similarly those who attend the church do not necessarily become Christians.

Also the Christian faith is not a matter of a one day experience but a life-long experience. A person who grows spiritually day-by-day becomes a strong follower of Jesus. Those who don’t grow in Christ, their lives do not conform to the Bible and to the life of Jesus. Hence, there are plenty of good and bad examples of Christians.

Hindu: Let us meet again.

Christian: I want to pray for you and your family. Do you have any problem in your family that I can pray for?

Hindu: (He brought his mother) Please pray for my mother who has been suffering from back pain for several years.

Christian: (Prayer was offered and his mother got immediate relief. The Christians went away for that day. The next time when the Christian returned the following occurred).

Christian: Hello how are you!

Hindu: Oh, it is a miracle! We showed my mother to many doctors and even prayed to our gods many times but nothing happened. But now she has no back pain since you visited last and Jesus has healed her. We want to accept Jesus because he is the true God.

Editor’s note: Remember, be a person of prayer. Anjan’s second conversation is an exact recreation of a dialogue he had several weeks before completion of this book. God can use the miraculous to reveal Himself at any time—including to your Hindu friend.

**(Option 2)**

I asked “David S.”[[16]](#footnote-16), a veteran pastor who has served in India for more than 11 years, to describe his witnessing approach. Notice David’s brief, non-intimidating style. David looks for a person’s needs and then shows how Christ fulfills those needs. Also, note how many times David refers to the “One True God”. He is constantly pointing this polytheistic friend to God.

David said:

I always start a conversation with the topic of my friend’s family such as his mother, father, wife or children. I then continue the conversation inquiring about their needs. I keep the conversation going until I find someplace that isn’t going well in his life. For example, Indians value education. If their children are trying to get into college and a child is facing examination—that family is under stress. In truth, whatever their child is involved in that is difficult would be an area I’d stress. Other examples might involve:

1. People trying to conceive their first child or people trying to get a visa to come to (or stay in) America.
2. Health issues are highly important. There is actually an epidemic among Indian communities of diabetes and heart disease.

Whatever the stress in his/her life, I would ask, *“How are you feeling about it? Is it worrying you?”*

At this point, I let my friend respond.

Whatever his specific needs, I express my concern and say, *“I believe in the One True God because He really loves me. I will pray for you. The one true God knows your problem and knows about you.”* Then I say, *“Wow, I really am concerned. Would you mind if I pray with you right now?”* I would bow my head and clasp my hands in a posture of prayer. If my friend is a man I will put my hand on his shoulder and I would pray RIGHT THEN for that need.

With that prayer, I have ministered to my friend immediately. I then express concern again by saying, *“I know this is troublesome for you*.”

Then I think of a story in the Bible that would match his dilemma.

For example, if my friend and his wife cannot conceive, I pick the story of Hannah in the Bible to show God’s concern for people trying to conceive (1 Samuel 1 and 2). If my friend is suffering from mental frustration, I tell the story of the demoniac to show Christ’s concern for the anguished (Mark 5).

I then say to my friend, *“Your situation is just like the story of . . . . . .”* and I tell that story.

**If you are concerned about recalling the correct story, remind yourself that God will help you recall a story from Scripture. You don’t have to tell every detail, just what you can remember. (If you know your friend’s issues already, it might make you feel more comfortable to research and familiarize yourself with different stories in Scripture beforehand that might parallel your friend’s difficulties).**

If the conversation is still going well, I tell my friend, *“I had great favor from the one true God.”*

I then share my testimony. (I do this to attribute the blessing of the one true God to myself). I then tell my friend:

“*But all those blessings did not make me a true believer. Those were a kindness to me from the One True God. The kindness stemmed from listening to a Bible story from a pastor. I decided that I needed salvation, and I knew I needed to be forgiven for my sins. My father was very wise. My father being the spiritual man that he was encouraged me to give my life to Jesus, and that made me a true believer. Now I have a personal salvation. I made my decision for Christ not just for my family but because I knew it was true.”* (Editor’s note- Your testimony will obviously be different from David’s, but notice how David put his testimony in terms the Hindu could understand. He included his father and gave him due honor).

At this point, I might give my friend an opportunity to give his life to Christ, however, probably not. Why not? I wait, generally, because he is still going to have to deal with many issues such as idolatry and polytheism. You don’t want to rush the process.

Here are several key things David stresses for us to watch for:

1. When witnessing, don’t go so fast that they just add Jesus to their pantheon of gods. Don’t just throw everything at them at once. They’ve got a lot to process.
2. If you are dealing with a devout high class Brahman, he will say that your religion is Western but it is not for him. Talk about the Apostle Thomas in the first century. Tell him that Thomas came to India almost immediately and established the church right after Christ’s ministry. The Indian church is as old as any church in the world.
3. If you get a little farther along in witnessing to your friend, you should address the One True God and the issue of idolatry. Eventually you might want to say, “Suppose you are walking down the street, see your father, and then move aside to address another man as ‘father’. You do this while your actual father is watching. What if you even stoop down and touch the other man’s feet (a sign of respect). How would your father feel? In the same way, we do this to God the Father when we give honor to lesser gods.”

**(Option 3)**

Jayakar Danam, minister with His Sanctuary Ministries in India, which has planted 23 churches in India, agreed to share a typical conversation one might have with a Hindu. Jayakar currently studies in the United States and does an excellent job of bridging the West to the East in his approach.

Note a few items about Jayakar’s approach:

1. Jayakar, as well as Anjan, does not overcomplicate the message.
2. Jayakar actually states that being interested in a god is positive. Jayakar says, “It is better to believe in some god than no god at all.” For Jayakar this mindset can give the Christian a common ground with the Hindu.
3. Jayakar’s section in this book is not an exact conversation that he has had recently. Instead, this is a step-by-step guide for the reader to copy as they witness.

Jayakar said:

You have to see a Hindu like any other person with whom you would share your faith. Assess him. Look at his facial expression. If you determine that he is open and friendly at the moment, you may ask him, *“What made you come to America?”*

Then take a moment to introduce yourself. I do not tell them I’m a Christian because that might be offensive so early on. If you are uncomfortable talking about his religion from the onset, ask him some issues about Indian culture. He will be very open to tell about his heritage. Some things are very important in Indian culture. Dance is very important. Food is very important because each state in India has its own specific foods. He will be proud to discuss his food. This might lead the conversation to their religion since it is such a part of the Indian heritage.

If not, over time, you can switch to the topic of religion by saying, *“I have heard that Indians are very traditional in the area of religion and that their religion is very ancient. What are your religious beliefs?* You let him respond and typically he will be enthusiastic to respond. No matter what caste he is from, he will take pride in the fact that he is a Hindu.

Then ask, “*What makes you believe in your particular god?”*

This is VERY important. When he describes his particular god, you can learn what that Hindu is seeking to be fulfilled. Why? Each individual god in Hinduism supposedly meets a particular need of a person. This is one of the reasons why he worships that god. (At a later time in the witness, we will then contrast this god with the one perfect God.)

You may then say, *“I am glad you believe in something. I appreciate that you are (smart, sensitive, etc) enough to believe in a god. Many people do not believe in a god in this world.”*

I then ask, “*What is the attribute of your god that you like the most?”* After he responds, ask him, *“What do you think a god should be like?”* He will typically say that he should be “holy or all-powerful.” At this point, tell him you appreciate what he is saying.

Ask him, *“Of all the gods that you see worshipped, do you see all the attributes that you would like in any of these gods?”* This question will be hard to hear, but truth can be painful. The Christian is now ready to show the difference between his god and the Eternal God.

I tell my friend briefly that I believe in a perfect God in all His attributes. Because He is perfect, he can deal with our sin. I have to tell my friend what sin is. For a Hindu, sin is to murder, steal or kill. I explain to him that sin is actually an act against the Holy God.

I discuss that in life there is constant frustration with trying to know Truth. If there really is a perfect God, it is difficult to see Him. I explain how we are shrouded from the truth. I read Romans 3:23 to show that we are all sinners and we have failed.

I then give my testimony. Even though I was raised in a Christian home in India, I was still very sinful. However, the perfect God changed me. When I discuss with my friend what God did for me, this helps show him that the perfect God is REAL to me.

At this point, I discuss Jeremiah 17:9, which tells us that our “heart is deceitful above all things.” Our heart keeps us from seeing the truth. I tell him there is a deficit in our hearts that keeps us from knowing the truth. Even some times as Christians we are deceived. For example, a Hindu believes in reincarnation and that we can do things to make ourselves better in the next life. Christians do the *same* things some times. We think we can do many things to PLEASE God and make things better for ourselves. In a sense, we think by our work we can better ourselves. In fact, the Bible says the opposite. We are supposed to have faith in Him and let Him work through us to better us. In fact, without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

(We have just shown the parallel between reincarnation and believing we have to work to please God. We are trying to show the Hindu that we are sinners just like he is. We all can be deceived. I might even use Galatians 3:28 here.)

I tell my friend that because God is Holy, we cannot stand before Him in our sinful nature. We are separated from God. Our minds are captivated by the things of human nature. Sin has separated us from the glory of God. I tell my friend that “glory” should not make us think of the *brightness of a metal in an idol*, but the actual holiness of God.

Even though we can’t stand in God’s presence, He still loves us. Just as a father loves his child even when he has done wrong, God still loves us. He knows we will do wrong. God gave us the free will to choose to be holy like Him or to do wrong. However, there is still a gap between God and us. Our sin has separated us from God (remind him of the definition of sin).

Then I quote John 3:16. I describe who Christ is (born of a virgin in a non-sexual way, died on a cross, rose from the grave). I tell my friend that the resurrection has power for our lives. Many people think this resurrection is foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18). However, no god in any religion in the world today can claim to have died and come back, only Christ. Christ died and rose again so that we could be made right with God. When Christ died on the cross, He provided a bridge between God and man if we believe on Him. He took the punishment for sin on the cross. If we believe, we can be reconciled to God.

I then tell him, *“I stand before you being reconciled to God because of my belief in Him. If you give your life to Him, He can change you inside (Galatians 2:21). It doesn’t mean you will avoid sin, but you will have salvation. Upon death, you will resurrect from the grave and not reincarnate from the grave.”*

I can lead him in a prayer and say, “Today you can choose life or death.” (Deuteronomy 30:19) Today, if you were to die, what is your hope? My hope is that I will live again and live with God. I have to share this gospel with you because of the joy within me.

Finally, I can give the invitation. I will ask him if he wants the privilege of knowing the one true God. I might read Psalm 139 which says:

O Lord, You have searched me and known *me.*
2 You know my sitting down and my rising up;
You understand my thought afar off.
3 You comprehend my path and my lying down,
And are acquainted with all my ways.
4 For *there is* not a word on my tongue,
*But* behold, O Lord, You know it altogether.
5 You have hedged me behind and before,
And laid Your hand upon me.
6 *Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot *attain* it.

7 Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence?
8 If I ascend into heaven, You *are* there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You *are there.*
9 *If* I take the wings of the morning,
*And* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me.
11 If I say, “Surely the darkness shall fall on me,”
Even the night shall be light about me;
12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You,
But the night shines as the day;
The darkness and the light *are* both alike *to You.*

13 For You formed my inward parts;
You covered me in my mother’s womb.
14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made;
Marvelous are Your works,
And *that* my soul knows very well.
15 My frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,
*And* skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.
And in Your book they all were written,
The days fashioned for me,
When *as yet there were* none of them.

17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!
18 *If* I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand;
When I awake, I am still with You.

19 Oh, that You would slay the wicked, O God!
Depart from me, therefore, you bloodthirsty men.
20 For they speak against You wickedly;
Your enemies take *Your name* in vain.
21 Do I not hate them, O Lord, who hate You?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?
22 I hate them with perfect hatred;
I count them my enemies.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
24 And see if *there is any* wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

Then I offer to lead him in a sinner’s prayer, or I give him a tract or Bible. I tell him that if he is not ready, then he should pray that the one true God will reveal Himself. I believe God truly will.

Jayakar gave a few additional points. You may or may not choose to use them.

1. When discussing idols- Ask the Hindu, “If you have a child, do you want your child to be in the image of the idol you worship?” The idols are often very scary. God created us to be in His good image.
2. When discussing tradition- Somewhere in your forefather’s time, they have gone astray from the one true God. They began to worship other gods. Probably, you follow your god because your parents did and you are secretly afraid. You have fear in your heart for idols. Don’t let fear get in the way of your intellect.
3. When discussing idols (2)- Does a potter, when molding a pot, allow the clay to tell him what to do? Yet that occurs in India. Someone makes the idols, but they become the god. Do you think the idol is more than wood and stone? Even in the marketplace in India they are called idols. They represent gods that are not all powerful, let me tell you about the one powerful God.
4. Scripture tells us that no one has seen God at any time. Poets, authors and artists have done a good job trying to describe Him as powerful and that no one can imagine Him. Unfortunately people believe in images of the true God rather than the God Himself. The Bible says we should worship Him in Spirit and Truth (John 4:24).

**(option 4)**

Dr. John Charping spent six years in the country of Nepal as a missionary. He and his family have ministered to hundreds and hundreds of Hindus through the years. Charping takes a “storying” approach to sharing his faith with Hindus.[[17]](#footnote-17) As you review his approach note the following:

1. Charping has given you a plan that you can read aloud in one setting, or a seven step-guideline that you can follow to take the process more slowly.
2. Charping’s approach centers on retelling the story of Scripture. Note, however, he bridges concepts that are critical to a Hindu into the Christian message.
3. The focus on this approach is Karma (result of actions of this life) and dharma (one’s role in this present life). Note how Charping points out the fruitlessness of trying to affect one’s Karma by dutifully fulfilling all of one’s roles in life.

Charping said:

The following is one approach to sharing the gospel with a person from a Hindu background. The intent is to build a versatile framework that a person may utilize to effectively share the gospel.

Within Hinduism, Brahma is the creator god. Hindus believe that after creating the world, Brahma removed himself from any active role in the lives of humankind. At birth, an impersonal fate imposes the previous life’s *karma* on the present life, which in turn determines the present life’s *dharma*. In Hinduism, the blessings and cursings of this life are the result of *karma*. *Karma* is the effect of actions made in a previous life. *Dharma* is one’s role in this present life, and adherence or defiance to this role will result in merit in the next life to come. In other words, submission to the *dharma* of one life becomes the basis of the *karma* in the next.

 On a global level, Hinduism attempts to make peace with the universe through the stabilizing forces of *karma* and *dharma*. On a practical level, Hindus are more likely to be concerned about struggles such as crop failure, infrequency of catching fish or game, sickness, infertility, and death. Their attention turns to appeasing local demons, spirits, and ancestors.

Hindus must understand that their present standing is not the result of their karma, but the consequence of the fall of Adam and Eve. They must understand that their present actions, their *dharma*, will not afford them a better future, but rather solidify their own judgment. They must recognize that continual observance of rituals can neither atone for our actions, nor address the root issue of our sin condition.

 Sharing the gospel with a Hindu begins with establishing the character and activity of God. The conversation should include discussion on the sinfulness of humankind and the origin of humankind’s fallen condition. The exchange should demonstrate the person and work of Christ Who is not only triumphant over those things that daily plague a person (i.e. demons, disease, death, and nature), but Who is ultimately triumphant over our main problem, sin.

 Many preachers use three points to make the one point in their message. Many times these points can be developed further to create greater depth in the message. For the sake of simplicity and mnemonic value, our gospel presentation contains seven points that can be developed further as needed. The seven points of our gospel presentation include: The Creation, The Curse, The Conscience, The Calendar, The Cross, The Christ, and The Coming.[[18]](#footnote-18)

**The Creation**

 The Most High God of the universe has revealed Himself in the Bible. He begins by declaring Himself the Creator of all things (Gen. 1:1). In revealing His acts of creation, we discover that God created humankind unique from all forms of life. The first man and woman were called Adam and Eve. God created them in His image so that they might be in a relationship with Him and be in a position of honor and authority over all creation (Gen. 1:26).

**The Curse**

As Creator, the Most High God of the Bible requires His creation to be subject to Himself. Holiness is His most distinctive characteristic. God is wise and loving, and His instruction to humankind is the highest wisdom. When He created Adam and Eve, He placed them in the Garden of Eden and allowed Adam to eat freely from any tree of the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He warned Adam that he would die if he ate from that tree (Gen. 2:17).

One day, Satan spoke through a snake to tempt Eve to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He deceived her and convinced her that eating from the tree would make her wise like God and not cause her death. Eve considered what Satan told her and decided to eat from the tree. Both Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

In that moment, Adam and Eve died spiritually. Their innocence was gone, and they attempted to cover their shame and nakedness by making clothes from fig leaves. Afraid, they hid themselves from God. When God confronted Adam, he blamed Eve for his choice of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When God questioned Eve, she blamed the snake for her choice (Gen. 3:1-13).

God did two things in reaction to Adam and Eve’s disobedience. First, He promised that He would send a Deliverer to humankind. He prophesied that though Satan would attack the Deliverer, He would ultimately crush Satan’s head (Gen. 3:15). Secondly, God cursed His created world and the bodies of humankind. God intended the curse to be a constant reminder of the broken relationship between God and humankind and of our need of God in every detail of life. The curse is a daily reminder that nothing in creation can function according to design without proper relationship to God (Rom. 8:20-23). The judgment of God on Adam and Eve is the reason for the pain and suffering in this present life, not *karma*.

**The Conscience**

 Most Hindus do not have access to God’s law given in the Bible. Nonetheless, God has made the conscience to function like the law (Rom. 2:13-14; Gal. 3:24). The message of the curse communicates the fact that something is wrong between the Creator and His creation, but the message of the conscience is more personal. The message of the conscience pricks the heart of a person to want to be and do what is right and honorable. The conscience has such power over a person that he or she is willing to go to great lengths to either appease, or excuse his conscience.

In Hinduism, “sin” is better understood as the effects of *karma* and one’s faithfulness or unfaithfulness to his *dharma*. Hindus do not understand the root condition of depravity. Hindus consider sin to be the result of an individual’s actions, and not the expression of a universal sin condition.

The seeking out of the services of a Hindu priest is a continual reminder that something is wrong in the conscience. Every sacrifice offered, every prayer made, and every offering given is a daily reminder that the conscience is disturbed. The daily trips to the temple and annual observances of specific Hindu holidays are a constant reminder that neither last year, nor the last ten years, nor an entire lifetime has been sufficient to bring lasting peace to the conscience. The concept of reincarnation simply acknowledges the fact that one lifetime is not long enough to be good enough. God uses the guilty conscience to silence any argument used to justify a person without Christ (Rom. 3:19-23).

**The Calendar**

 History is moving in a specific direction, wielded by Someone great. Hindus approach history fatalistically, believing the direction and control of history are ultimately out of their hands. They consider the supernatural forces of *karma* and *dharma* to be the driving forces behind history.[[19]](#footnote-19) To believe that history has a direction and meaning is to believe that Someone or something is directing it. The message of the calendar speaks of the love and providence of God and His orchestration of the events of life. His providence demonstrates His mercy, but it also leads us to an encounter with God (2 Peter 3:9). The reason why you are sharing the gospel with a person from a Hindu background is the goodness and providence of God to lead him to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

**The Cross**

 Ignorant of the righteousness that God demands, Hindus have sincerely strived, but failed to obtain peace (Rom. 10:2-4). As prophesized, God sent His Son as the Deliverer of humankind. He became a man so that He might redeem humankind who is spiritually dead in trespasses and sin (Gal. 4:4-5; Eph. 2:1-3). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, bore the wrath of God as the sin offering for the sin of humankind (2 Cor. 5:21).

Whoever turns from worshipping and serving idols to place their faith in Christ can have peace with God (1 Thess. 1:9-10; Rom. 5:1-2). On the cross, Jesus Christ completely and irrevocably satisfied all of the righteous demands of God —past, present, and future (John 19:30).

**The Christ**

When a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ, God forgives his sins, past, present, and future, and credits that individual with the righteousness of Christ. Having the righteousness of Christ imputed to a believer allows God to consider that person as if he or she had always believed and obeyed like Christ. Salvation not only includes being justified by Christ, but also being indwelled by Spirit of Christ.

At the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit comes to take up residence in the believer (Rom. 5:10). As a believer yields to the indwelling Spirit, God is able to express His life in and through the life of that believer (Rom. 6:11-13). He becomes the believer’s life source (Col. 3:3-4; Rom. 5:10).

Previously, a person from a Hindu background was under the oppression of demonic activity. The fear of appeasing local spirits, demons, and ancestors surrounded his life. But now in Christ, he does not have a “spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (2 Tim. 1:7) He has Someone resident in him who is greater than any person or thing in the world (1 John 4:4). By the Spirit of the Christ, a believer has all that is necessary for living a godly life (2 Peter 1:3-4).

**The Coming**

 History is going in a direction and approaching a climax. Jesus Christ is coming again. The first time He came not to condemn the people of the world, but to die on the cross to provide salvation (John 3:17). His second coming will be to judge all peoples who presently stand in condemnation because of their unbelief (John 3:18-20). The intent of His mercy and patience is to provide an opportunity of repentance and faith before His return because His return will be at an unexpected time (2 Peter 3:9-10).

 Jesus Christ is the only way to God, He defines reality, and He is the life source of a believer’s life (John 14:6). Therefore, salvation is found only in Christ (Acts 4:12; Matt. 1:21). Even a strict adherence to one’s *dharma* is insufficient for a right standing before God because it is an attempt at righteousness that is established by the works of an individual instead of by faith in Christ (Rom. 10:2-4; Phil. 3:4-9). On that Day of Judgment, only a believer who has trusted in Christ can have confidence because he stands in the righteousness of Christ (1 John 4:17-18).

 Communicating the gospel to a person of a Hindu background may take multiple conversations. These seven points are useful for both a presentation of the gospel, and for knowing key talking points for discussing the gospel. Remember that a precise articulation of a method of sharing the gospel is not what gives a presentation power. Rather, a powerful witness occurs when an individual, full of the Holy Spirit, places his complete confidence in the Holy Spirit to convict. Even the apostle Paul, who had a method of sharing the gospel, placed his confidence on the Holy Spirit to convict and save the lost (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

***Questions/Issues a Hindu Might Have***

Again, like the Buddhists, a Hindu might not ask about your faith. Hindus can be very private about their religion. Many of these questions will have overlap with the questions a Buddhist might ask.

1. Why can’t I be a Hindu and a Christian at the same time?

Your response- Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father but by me.” John 14:6

To follow Christ requires a total commitment to Him as a person. One cannot be a follower of Christ and of another form of salvation at the same time. Christ is the one who sets the standards of how He is to be followed—not us.

1. Can you not believe in reincarnation? It certainly seems like there is a cycle to life with the seasons of the year and the cycle of life and death. Reincarnation just seems logical.

Your response- Christians do not believe in reincarnation but in the idea of a resurrection. We believe that upon our death our spirit will either be with God if we have given our lives to Christ, or be separated from Him if we have rejected His Son. We believe that God will give us a glorified, better body when He comes back to judge us all. The Bible teaches that we have one chance at this life (Hebrews 9:27), and then we will face judgment. However, for those who have given their lives to Christ, judgment is not something to dread but something to look forward to.

1. I think the idea of only following Jesus Christ is intolerant.

Your response- People recognize a difference between something being intolerant and something being TRUE. Christ did not teach intolerance. He taught us to love our neighbors and to treat one another with respect. However, He also told us that the foundation for this love and respect comes through Him. He is the basis of all Truth.

1. You say that Christ came to free all men but there is still so much sadness in this world.

Your response- Christ always spoke plainly to his followers about the realities of this world. He let us know that this world is broken with the reality of sin. The evil which men do is real and damaging to our lives. Evil and suffering are not in our imagination, but they are real. You and I have both experienced true pain in this world at some point. If you haven’t yet, you will. No matter how much we meditate or do good deeds, it doesn’t take away from the fact of the true pain in the world. Christ promises to give us an abundant life in this world (John 10:10), but He also promises true relief from pain when we get to experience Him for all eternity.

1. I do not believe we are all evil; we are born good.

Your response- Have you had children yet? Do you teach a child to lie or be rebellious? Children inherently know how to do WRONG and must be taught how to do right. How do they know to do wrong? They know because they have been born with a sin nature. God allows us to be born into sin because he wants us to have two glorious gifts. The first of these gifts is freedom. This is the freedom to choose to love Him or not. God does not force anyone to love Him. He wants your unconditional love and commitment. That only comes by giving us the freedom to choose to commit to Him. The second gift He wants us to have is the gift of grace. Only when we realize how far short we have come to his perfection can we truly appreciate the GIFT it is to know Him. We know Him in our sin because He first loved us.

1. The religion you describe seems to be one in which, under the guise of grace, you can do anything you want.

Your response- By no means can we do whatever we want. Giving our lives to Christ is an act of submission to Him. In other words, we have the freedom to sin, but we choose to try to live upright lives because of what He has done for us. We choose to do right because we love Him and desire to live in obedience to His will, not because we are afraid of what He will do.

1. It is my duty to fulfill my obligations in life to my family. I cannot necessarily change religions and forego my duties.

Your response- One of God’s core commandments is to honor our father and mother (Exodus 20:12). Christ also scolded men when they talked about doing good but forgot to take care of their parents (Mark 7:9-12). However, God also wants us to follow His plan for our lives. If we follow His plan, He will bless us eternally, and this gives us an opportunity to bless others as well. What better way to give our parents the honor they deserve than to share with them the truth of how to know the one true God?

God bless you in your attempt to witness to your Hindu friend.

**APPENDIX 2**

**What is a church?**

**By Dr. Jeff Brawner**

**Purpose of this study:**

This study is designed to help show a group of believers how God both began and grew His church after the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. These lessons will also help show the reader the key characteristics and purposes of the New Testament church. At the conclusion of the study, our hope is that a group of believers can apply these principles in order to become at least one healthy New Testament church.

This study is part of the Pioneer Evangelism series and was designed to be a church planting follow up to the evangelistic and discipleship Bible studies called “Good News of Jesus” and “Beginning a New Life in Christ.”

**How to use this study:**

1. This study is to be used with a group of people in which many have already made a decision for Christ. The leader is going to try to help these believers form at least one church in his city. If many in the group have not made a decision for Christ, they can be taken through a Pioneer Evangelism evangelistic Bible study such as “Good News of Jesus” by Christy Brawner or “Good News for you” by Charles Brock. If available, it is also always helpful to take new converts through a discipleship Bible study such as “Beginning a New Life in Christ” by Christy Brawner or “Six Truth for New Believers” by Wade Akins. This will help them get grounded in some basic principles of the faith.
2. First, gather a group of people together to study “What is a Church?” There is no set number of people that can participate in this study. Begin every study with a time of fellowship and conversation. Remember that the church is a place to form a family. Families need to laugh, cry, and pray together. Start each lesson with this time of group conversation so that they can form friendships with those people they don’t already know.
3. After the conversation, take a few minutes to pray for each others’ needs, thank the Lord for who He is and what He has done, and pray for the future of this church you are about to start. After prayer, take time to sing a few songs of praise and give testimonies of what God is doing in your lives. Maybe even begin to practice tithing to the church. We will discuss these issues specifically later in the study. These practices will begin to form a model for your future worship services.
4. Begin the first lesson reading the narrative of the story. The leader may read the story or he/she may allow the participants to each read a paragraph. The leader may also retell the story in his own words to make it more understandable. After the first week, there will be revision questions about the narratives from the week before.
5. Take the group through the oral questions. The purpose of the questions is to help reinforce to the group step by step what happened in those chapters in the Bible.
6. Read through the spiritual truths. Spiritual truths are important characteristics we can learn about God, ourselves, and His church from Scripture. Allow the members of the group to express their thoughts on each spiritual truth. Your church will be making important decisions about who it is as a body during these next few weeks. Guide them to look at the Bible chapters listed during the week so they can reflect more on what they have learned.
7. Close each group with prayer taking time to reflect on what you have learned. Urge each person to go home and read that chapter in the Bible. It is the Bible that will be the basis of our understanding of the church.
8. Of course, last but not least, begin to apply what you have learned to plant more churches for His kingdom!

Acts 1-12

Lesson 1- The Holy Spirit is Promised (God’s Promise for us today)- Acts 1

Lesson 2- The Church begins (fellowship and worship)- Acts 2

Lesson 3- The church’s ministry expands (ministry)- Acts 3-4

Lesson 4- The church is attacked from within (discipleship)- Acts 4-5

Lesson 5- The church is attacked from the outside (persecution)- Acts 6-7

Lesson 6- The church’s leaders spread the word (baptism and Lord’s supper)- Acts 8

Lesson 7- The church’s great missionary is saved (evangelism)- Acts 9

Lesson 8- The church gets a vision for the world (missions)- Acts 10-13

# The Holy Spirit is Promised

# Lesson 1- Acts Chapter 1

Key verse- “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (NKJV)

 One of Christ’s followers named Luke was guided by the Holy Spirit to write the book of Acts. Luke tells the readers that in his first book (the Gospel of Luke) he discussed all that Christ had done up until the moment He ascended into heaven. After Jesus was crucified, He rose from the grave and for forty days He appeared to the apostles. During this time, he explained many things about God’s kingdom. Jesus told them to wait for the Father’s Promise for them. That Promise was the Holy Spirit. Christ told them that “John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

 The disciples wanted to know if this was the time that Jesus would do great things for their country of Israel. Christ answered that it wasn’t for them to know the answer to that question. Instead, they should wait for the Holy Spirit, so that they could be “witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

 After Christ said those things he was taken up into heaven by a cloud. As the disciples looked on, two angels came and asked them why where they looking into heaven. They told them that someday Christ would return here to earth in the same way that He went to heaven.

 Then all of the disciples: Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James “the less”, Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James went to the upper room in Jerusalem where they were staying. There the disciples prayed with one another. Jesus’ brothers were also there as well as many women- including His mother Mary.

 Then the Apostle Peter stood up and began to speak to the group about the need to replace Judas Iscariot. Peter told them how Judas was once part of their group, but how he had betrayed Christ and committed suicide shortly thereafter. As he hung himself his body fell onto the ground below tearing open his body. The field where this suicide occurred was called the “Field of Blood” until that day.

 Peter then discussed how they needed to replace Judas. They needed to find a man who had been with them since the beginning of John the Baptist’s ministry until Christ’s resurrection. They decided that two men, Matthias and Barsabas qualified to be apostles. They all prayed for God to show them who should be chosen. They then cast lots and Matthias was chosen to became one of the apostles.

Oral questions:

1. What person wrote the book of Acts? Who guided him?
2. How many days did Christ appear to His disciples after He rose from the grave?
3. Who is God’s promise for us?
4. Where are we to be witnesses? (Christ listed 4 places)
5. How did Christ go back to heaven? How will be return?
6. Who met in the upper room?
7. Who betrayed Jesus? How did the betrayer die?
8. Who replaced Judas?

Spiritual truths:

1. **God has sent the Holy Spirit for us today. (Acts 1:5)**

 Christ came to Earth as a sacrifice for our sins. He died on the cross and three days later rose from the grave. He is alive today and is at the right hand of the Father as an advocate for us. (I John 2:2) Christ promised that after He left the world, He would send the Holy Spirit for us today. Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is one Person of the Trinity of God. There is God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit. All Three are one and the same, but all three are also separate with different purposes, ministries and beings. The Bible teaches us that the Holy Spirit has various ministries for the church. He is the one who testifies (or tells) of God. He is our Helper and Counselor. He also shows the world their sin, need for righteousness and of judgment. He gives us as believers such wonderful things as true love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. He also renews us spiritually, gives us assurance of our salvation, and gives spiritual gifts to do ministry. This study will discuss the ministry of spiritual gifts in the next lesson.

 As you begin to discuss the process of beginning your church, remember that you will need a lot of wisdom to begin this process. Ask the Father to let the Holy Spirit be your guide in all that you do and say. After all, He sent Him to us for just that purpose.

1. **The first purpose of the church is prayer (Acts 1:14)**

After the disciples saw their Lord taken up into heaven they did not split up or run away and panic. They stayed together, waited, and prayed. They started their ministry in the correct way. They wanted to talk to God and learn what to do next. They certainly already had been praying during Christ’s ministry (Luke 11:2). Now they were putting prayer into practice as they awaited the Holy Spirit. PRAYER is the first purpose of the church that this study will examine

 Prayer is our way to communicate with the Father through Jesus Christ (I Tim 2:5). Many people have said that the Bible is God’s way of talking to us, but that prayer is our way of talking back to God. In earlier Pioneer Evangelism studies you may have learned five things to do in prayer:

 Ask- Ask God to help you in your daily needs.

 Thank- Thank God for all that He has done for you or for others.

 Praise- Give God the glory for all that HE IS.

 Seek Forgiveness- Ask God to forgive you for your daily sins

 Supplicate- Take time in asking God about the needs of others.

 For those of you have already come to Christ, these aspects of prayer should be part of your daily prayer life. However, as you begin to look at forming a church, you will not only pray individually, but you will pray as a group. There is special power in group, or corporate prayer. As Christ said, “when two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). Note that when Christ taught his disciple to pray, He taught them to pray as a group. After all, he started the Lord’s Prayer with the words “**Our** Father in heaven,” (Matthew 6:9) instead of “**My** Father who is in heaven!” Instead of thinking individually about the Father, he wanted them to focus on how He relates to the group.

Think about how you as a group can come together for prayer. When can you meet? What are specific needs you can pray for? Take some time at the end of this lesson for intense prayer for yourselves and for others. Prayer should be an integral part of all the other purposes we discuss in the following lessons: fellowship, worship, ministry, discipleship, evangelism and missions.

1. **It is important to always look for new leadership (Acts 1:26)**

Judas was one of the disciples. In fact, he was probably one of the more respected disciples during Christ’s ministry among his peers. After all, he was the disciple that was in charge of the ministry’s money. (John 12:6). You wouldn’t put someone in charge of your money without having a degree of respect for that person. Losing Judas was probably a painful loss.

 One of the most important aspects of a New Testament church is the job of finding new leadership. After Judas betrayed Christ, it was important to find someone to fill his leadership role. As your church develops you will find the need to have new leaders- someone may move away, you might want to plant a new church, your church might grow and you need leaders in new areas. Begin to pray now for God to show you who will be the people that He will raise up to have various positions of leadership in your church.

 On a side note, observe that the disciples allowed prayer to guide them in their decision. In this story you see that they also used “lots” in the decision. This is not an endorsement in the Bible to gamble. This was the last time that “lots” were used in helping to make a decision. After the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, the disciples never used lots again.

 In the next lesson, we will see how the Holy Spirit began his ministry, and how that brought the era of the church to the world.

**The Church Begins**

**Lesson 2- Acts Chapter 2**

Acts 2:38- Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

 Acts 2:38 (NKJV)

Review questions:

1. How many days did Jesus appear to his disciples after His resurrection?
2. Who did Jesus promise would come after Him?
3. How did Christ return to heaven?
4. Where did the disciples go and what did they do after Christ returned to heaven?
5. What did Judas do after he betrayed Christ?
6. Who was chosen to replace Judas?

The disciples were still gathered together in the upper room when the day of Pentecost finally came. Pentecost was a great feast that the Jewish people celebrated every year, a celebration of the first fruits of the harvest. On this day, while the disciples and followers of Christ had all come together, Christ’s Promise came.

Suddenly they heard a sound from heaven. It was like the sound of a great and mighty wind. What appeared to be tongues of flame fell on everyone individually in the house. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit guided them.

Devout Jews from all over the known world were in the city of Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost. When they heard the great sound they came to where the followers of Christ were. People were confused because everyone could understand what the believers were saying in their own native language. They wondered how these men from Galilee (or northern Israel) could possibly speak in the languages of countries such as Egypt, Libya, Italy, Mesopotamia and many other countries and cities around the world? Many were amazed as they heard these men and women giving wonderful praises to the Lord. Others, however, truly doubted what was going on and assumed that the disciples were drunk.

Peter and the other disciples stood up and began to preach to the people who were listening. He told them that the men speaking foreign languages were not drunk. Put simply, everyone was seeing the fulfillment of the promise given in the book of Joel. This was the Promise of the Holy Spirit.

Peter told them many things about Christ. He said that the crowd had previously crucified Jesus Christ, an innocent man. A Man who had proven who He was by doing many miracles. However, God resurrected Christ from the grave because death has no power over Him. He talked about how one of the Jews greatest kings and prophets, David, had spoken about Christ’s resurrection. He said that now Christ is at the right hand of God, and he has sent the Holy Spirit for all to see and hear. Peter finished by saying that all of Israel should know that Jesus is Lord and Christ.

When Peter finished speaking, many people had great spiritual conviction, and they asked the disciples what they should do. Peter replied, “Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

After Peter preached a little longer, three thousand people gladly received what he had to say and were added to the church. Then all of the new converts came together with the apostles. They studied about the Lord and fellowshipped as they ate and prayed. Then the apostles (disciples) did many miracles. Everyone who believed in Christ came together and shared all of their possessions. They continued to worship together in the Jewish temple, and they ate together in each other’s homes. These new believers did these things with true gladness and with simple faith. They praised God and gained respect among their countrymen. God grew the church daily as more people came to know Jesus Christ.

Oral Questions:

1. The Jewish people come to Jerusalem to celebrate a feast. What was the name of that feast?
2. What happened to the disciples of Jesus on the day of Pentecost?
3. What did the Jewish people from all over the world think when they heard the disciples speak their languages?
4. Who spoke to all of the people who had gathered around?
5. How many people gave their lives to Jesus after Peter’s sermon?
6. Describe what the early church was like after these new believers entered the church?

Spiritual truths

1. **A new era begins (Acts 2:1-4)**

On the day of Pentecost, God sent the Holy Spirit to the followers of Jesus. He did this in a great and miraculous way that showed all those around that the Holy Spirit’s ministry to the church had begun. The Holy Spirit has worked for all eternity, but His ministry for the *church* began on this day. God showed devout Jews from all over the world that a new day had come.

When someone gives his life to Christ, the Bible teaches that he receives the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). As we learned in last week’s lesson, the Holy Spirit has many ministries for new believers, but one of those ministries is giving each believer in the church SPIRITUAL GIFTS. These gifts are tools that God uses through us to help glorify Him and to build His church. We can study many of these tools in Romans 12 as well as in I Corinthians 12. The Spirit gives us such gifts as preaching, teaching, faith, giving, and leadership, as well as others listed in Scripture. From the very beginning of your new church, each member should look to see what his strongest gift or gifts are. The Bible does not limit you to just practicing one gift. You might find that there are several gifts in which you excel. When determining your gift look to see where you feel most comfortable, and the most joy, in helping the church. This will probably be a process of trial and error, but one of the keys to a healthy church is that all believers become active in the body of Christ.

One gift that has been difficult for many churches to understand is the gift of tongues. On the day of Pentecost, ALL of God’s believers were miraculously given the ability to speak in languages from all over the world. Pentecost was a slightly different experience than what many churches view as the outpouring of the gift of tongues. We learn in Scripture that no one gift is given to all believers all of the time. (I Corinthians 12:4-11). Yet, in this instance we see that our Lord gave this ability to speak in other languages to all of the believers. It was a sign to the world around them that a new day had come for the Jews. For a study on this same outpouring of the Spirit for the Samaritans (mixed blooded Jews) see Acts 8. For a study on how this same sign was given for the Gentiles see Acts 10. Finally, for a study on how this same sign was given to Old Testament believers, or followers of John the Baptist, see Acts 19.

Two thousand years later, there is still much theological debate about the gift of tongues. Some churches teach that this gift stopped after the time of the disciples, other churches teach that this gift is still active today. There is also great debate as to whether the languages in the Bible were actual spoken languages of man, while others believe ‘tongues’ means an angelic language that we can’t understand without an interpreter. You and your church are going to have to prayerfully consider what you believe Scripture teaches on this subject, but at the same time, understand that other good churches in your area might not hold the same view as you. This should certainly not be a point of division in your church.

2. **There will always be doubters (Acts 2:13)**

Even with all that happened at Pentecost, many men immediately assumed that the disciples were drunk and what was happening must be false. Your church will always face people that doubt what you do and maybe even mock or persecute you. Have you faced doubters or mockers of your faith yet?

3. **The second and third purposes of the church is FELLOWSHIP and WORSHIP (Acts 2:40-47)**

 As we study the church, we will look at its seven core purposes. Everything you do, should be centered around trying to meet one of the specific purposes. This will help your keep its focus on its most important tasks. Remember a good church has a balance of ALL SEVEN purposes. In this study these purposes are not placed in any order of importance. All are important.

The second purpose is FELLOWSHIP. As the Bible describes the early church, we can see that the church did things with ‘gladness of heart’ and that they gained respect among the people in Jerusalem. We can see that they ate together. They worshiped together. They also shared their time, money and possessions. They were a family.

The Bible tells us that once you have given your life to Christ that you now have entered into the family of God. The church is called the ‘bride of Christ’ (Rev. 22:17), and he loves you. You are part of a family of people whose basis of life is Christ. You should make a commitment to come together in prayer and spend time together in fellowship with one another. The joy that you share with one another is real and contagious. As others see the joy among you it will help them desire to experience the love of Christ in their own lives. Now that you are a believer, you never have to feel alone again. Even if you are the only believer in your home, you now have a family in Christ that can give you the love and support you need.

How can you practice fellowship together? The Bible gives us several examples. We have already mentioned eating together. What better way is there to relax with friends than by cooking and eating a meal together (the cleaning up part might not be as fun!). Certainly coming together to **worship** is another way to have fellowship.

 A key aspect of fellowship is also having FUN. I know many churches that never go out and simply relax with one another. Their fellowship is always centered around ministry. However, fellowship should be a time to show the world your joy in one another. Go play soccer, have a picnic, do something you can enjoy together as a family.

If you are in a country in which you simply cannot meet together openly for fun, learn to fellowship more discreetly. How? If you cannot come together as a group for fellowship, come together as individuals. Two or three can come together discreetly in order to have fellowship and uplift one another.

 Now that we have discussed fellowship, let us look at the purpose of WORSHIP. In reading Acts 2, one gets the sense that worship played a key role in the early church’s daily lives. You see the new believers coming together and praising the Father for all that He had done in their lives. (Acts 2:47) You can see this pattern of prayer and worship throughout Acts. After Jesus ascended into heaven the disciples gathered together to pray (Acts 1:14). Although the Scripture only discusses the aspect of prayer in this verse, we can learn from other verses that they were busy praising God as well. The book of Luke tells us that, “and they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.” (Luke 24:52,53) Why were they praising God? Their leader, the Lord Jesus, who had died, not only rose again, but literally ascended into heaven. They probably had a mix of emotions at this time. They probably were in awe at the power of God. They probably had extreme joy in the fact that 40 days earlier they thought that all was lost, but now they realized that all was gained. Their natural desire would be to praise and worship God for all that was happening around them.

 In all of these instances of true worship, one can see a definite pattern- the Bible consistently mentions the unity of the believers (Acts 1:14, 2:1, 4:24). As your group of believers begins to experiment with forms of worship, remember that true worship comes when you can be unified. It is very, very hard to worship our Lord when you are mad at the person sitting next to you!

 Worship is simply God’s way of allowing us to give Him the honor he deserves. The Bible tells us that God longs to be praised. EVERYTHING we should do should be an act of worship. Giving, preaching, teaching, studying, evangelizing all should be based in worship. However, even though worship can be a very individual experience, there should definitely be a time of corporate worship.

 How should be you begin your corporate worship. You possibly have already started worshiping as a group. If you have been following the books of Pioneer Evangelism, you were already asked to put some aspects of worship, such as singing, into your studies. May we suggest however, that there is no better time to begin a specific time of worship as a group then today.

 This study is not designed to give you a step by step format for a worship service, but may we suggest that you include prayer, praise through singing, testimonies, giving, the ordinances, or maybe even a question and answer time as part of your worship service. We typically only think of singing as worship, but ALL of the above mentioned acts are worship. There are many other ways you can worship the Lord. Design your worship service around your reality and what would help your people give praise to the Father. In Brazil, the believers like to sing, sing and sing. In the United States of America, believers seem to have a little less singing but more preaching. In Africa, the believers like to dance in honor of the Lord. Include these items above, or other ideas, as you see fit. Make the worship service the length of time that your people will enjoy. Make the order of events in a manner that your church would like. You have to decide what works best for your culture. Please remember to worship in unity and in order allowing the Bible to be your guide in all you do.

In the next lesson, we will look at how the church continued to expand through the work of simple men looking to minister for the Lord Jesus.

**The Church’s Ministry Expands**

**Lesson 3- Acts Chapters 3 and 4**

``Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.

 Acts 3:6

Review Questions:

1. Who did Jesus promise would come after Him?
2. What happened on the day of Pentecost?
3. Did everyone believe what was happening on Pentecost?
4. How many people came to Christ after Peter’s sermon?
5. Describe some things the church did after they gave their lives to Christ.

Peter and John went up to the temple to pray at about three in the afternoon. There was a lame man that sat at the temple gate everyday. He saw Peter and John and asked for a donation. Peter and John commanded him to look at them and then they said, “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” They helped the man stand up and immediately the strength returned in his feet and ankles. The formerly lame man jumped and walked and praised the Lord. All the people in the area were amazed because they knew that this newly cured man always sat daily at the gate.

All the people ran to them, and Peter began to talk to the crowd. Peter told them to stop admiring him and John. Peter said that it wasn’t them but Christ who had healed the man. The lame man was cured because he had faith in Christ’s name.

Peter then told them that the crowds had crucified Christ in ignorance, but now was the time to repent of their sins. He said, “repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”

As Peter and John were speaking, the priests and other religious leaders came to them. They were upset at the fact that Peter was teaching the people about Christ’s resurrection. They took Peter and John and put them in prison. Even so, many people believed and on that day the number of people in the church grew to five thousand.

Peter and John were sent to the religious leaders to be judged by them. The leaders asked by what power or what name they were doing their miracles. Peter replied that they helped the lame man become well by the power of Jesus Christ. Peter told them that, “nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven, given among man by which we must be saved.”

The religious leaders could see that Peter and John were simple, uneducated men, and they were amazed at what they were saying. The religious leaders met together and decided that they could not deny that a miracle had been done, but they decided to command Peter and John to no longer speak about Jesus to others.

Peter and John replied that they had to obey the Lord and not simply obey the commands of men. The priests then threatened Peter and John, but they couldn’t punish them because all of the people were glorifying God for what had happened. After this, Peter and John were released.

The two men went back to the other believers and told them all that had happened. Everyone began to praise God for all that He had done. The church prayed to God and asked Him for boldness in preaching the Word, as well as for more healings and miracles to occur. The Bible says they were then filled with the Spirit and spoke the Word of God with boldness.

Questions:

1. What two disciples went to the temple to pray?
2. What did the lame man want, and what did he receive instead?
3. Were the religious leaders happy about what had happened?
4. What did the religious leaders tell Peter and John they had to do? Did Peter and John obey?
5. Where did Peter and John go after they were released?
6. What did everyone do after Peter and John returned, and what did they pray for specifically?

Spiritual truths:

1. **Silver and gold have I none . . . . (Acts 3:6)**

Most people around the world would like to have a lot of money. In like manner, most churches would certainly like to have a lot of money in order to do more ministry. However, from the very beginning of the church we find that most believers, even the leaders, were not wealthy people. Peter and John were two of the key leaders of the early church, but they were not walking around that day with much money.

The truth is, most churches throughout all of Christian history have not been wealthy. Perhaps your church is not a wealthy church either, God still wants to use you in a mighty way. He will use you in the same way he has used your brothers in Christ around the world for close to 2000 years. Do not be ashamed or embarrassed with your finances. God will use what He has given you to grow His kingdom.

On the other hand, if God has blessed you with money, praise the Lord for that blessing. However, note that Peter and John knew that the true need for the lame man was not only to be healed, but to have faith in the Lord. (Acts 3:16) Use your money wisely for the kingdom in order to help others have “faith in His name”.

1. **Peter and John were going to pray but they stopped to help to MINISTER to the hurting man. (Acts 3:4)**

The fourth purpose of the church is MINISTRY. In other words, the church is to reach out to other not only to help their spiritual needs, but also their physical and emotional needs. Peter and John were headed to the church to pray. We have already learned that prayer should be the basis of all our ministries because we need the Spirit’s guidance in all things. The two disciples were doing exactly what they should have been doing right then. However, Peter and John were able to stop while going to do this important task (pray) to let the Lord guide them to do something completely different. God wanted them to help that man physically and spiritually.

God has designed the church to be His means to help a hurting world. It is not only the government’s job to support the needy. It is our job as a church to help those around us. Why must we do this? Did you see what happened to the man after he was healed. He PRAISED God. All the people around saw this happen. When you reach out to others in Christ, the world will see Christ’s love through you and He will get the praise because of your obedient action.

How can your church reach out to a hurting world in order to meet physical and emotional needs? Can you buy food for a hungry family? Can you teach adults how to read so that they can find employment? Can you visit those who are sick or elderly? As a church, we need to stop and pray and ask God to show us how we can help a hurting world.

The church is not only to minister to the WORLD, but they are also to minister to those WITHIN the church. As we saw in the last chapter, from the very beginning the church sought to meet the needs of their brothers and sisters in Christ. (Acts 2:45) Is there anyone in your fellowship that might have physical, financial or emotional needs right now. Pray and seek out how you can meet those needs.

This purpose of ministry is for all of the church. The Bible shows us that God has specifically endowed some believers with spiritual gifts for ministry (Romans 12:7). However, all believers should participate in the purpose of ministry.

Do not forget, we have found that the best time to start ministering to others is at the BEGINNING of the church, not after the church becomes large and more mature. If you create the habit early, it will stay with you throughout the ministry of the church, and God will bless.

1. **The leaders perceived that Peter and John were uneducated men. (Acts 4:13)**

God uses simple people who have proper hearts of humility to grow His church. Peter and John were simple fishermen that Christ had chosen. However, they allowed the Spirit to guide them in their work. Consequently, they did miraculous things, preached incredible messages, and saw thousands come to Christ. However, do not forget, that Peter and John recognized the amazing things that were happening were not by their power, but by Christ’s. When the people wanted to honor them they assured the crowd that it was not by their power but by the Lord’s. (Acts 3:12)

God wants to use you as well. Most of us are just simple people. We are not famous. We are not powerful, but we do want to be servants of God. In fact, God tells us that he purposely chooses the simple people of the world to accomplish His purposes. (See 1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

In the next lesson we will look at how sin began to creep into the church and how the Lord dealt with this issue.

# The Church is attacked from within

**Lesson 4- Acts Chapters 4 and 5**

Key verse: 3 “But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?” Acts 5:3

Review Questions:

1. What happened on the day of Pentecost?
2. What did the crowds do after Peter’s sermon?
3. What did the Bible say the early church did together after so many people converted?
4. What two disciples went to pray in the temple?
5. Who did they heal and what happened?
6. What was the religious leaders’ reaction?
7. How did Peter and John reply?

The church was in complete unity. Everyone who was part of the church shared all that they had. The apostles were spending their time proclaiming to the world the resurrection of Christ. Many who owned homes or land would sell their property and give the proceeds to the apostles and to the church. For example, one man named Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement) sold his land and gave it to the church.

However, there was a couple named Ananias and Sapphira. They also sold their land and gave it to the apostles, but they were not honest in disclosing the cost of the land. Ananias told the leaders of the church that he was donating all of the proceeds to the church, but instead, they kept part of the money for themselves. Peter confronted Ananias. He asked him why he had lied to the Holy Spirit and kept the money for himself. After he heard these words from Peter, Ananias died.

Three hours later Sapphira, his wife, arrived. Peter asked her how much were the proceeds from the sale of the land. She also lied about the price. Peter told her that she would die like her husband for what she had done. Immediately she fell at his feet and died. Then the church buried her and great fear fell upon all of the church.

The apostles kept doing many “signs and wonders among the people”, and the church continued to grow. Many people came to be healed by the apostles and Peter. The masses even tried to get Peter’s shadow to fall on them in the hope that they would be healed. The people of Jerusalem held the church in very high regard.

Once again the high priest put the apostles in prison, but at night an angel of the Lord freed them and told them to go back to the temple to preach. The next morning the priests wanted to have the apostles brought to them from the prison, but when the officers went to get them, they found that they were already gone. They learned that the apostles were at the temple preaching. The authorities went and peacefully brought the apostles back to them (they were afraid to bring them back forcefully because of all the people that were around). They asked the apostles why were they still preaching about Christ after they had been told not to do so. The authorities told the apostles that they had “filled all of Jerusalem with your doctrine.” Peter and the other apostles replied that they had to obey God. They had to preach about Jesus Christ for the repentance of sins.

The religious leaders became very angry and wanted to kill them. However, one of their leaders named Gamaliel persuaded them not to do so. He reminded his peers that there had been other men who had tried to change things in Israel to no avail. He told them that “if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it- lest you even be found to fight against God.”

The leaders agreed with Gamaliel. They had the apostles released but not after having them beaten. The apostles were once again commanded not to preach in Christ’s name. So the apostles left and rejoiced that they were able to suffer in Christ’s name. They went back and daily taught and preached in the temple, as well as in people’s homes, about Jesus Christ.

Questions:

1. Who were Ananias and Saphira?
2. What happened to them after they lied to the apostles?
3. Why did many people come to see the apostles?
4. What did the religious leaders do to the apostles?
5. How did they get out of prison?
6. What did the religious leader Gamaliel say about the church?
7. What did the apostles do after they had been released from prison?

Spiritual truths:

1. **The church people gave to one another (Acts 4:32-37)**

 At the start of the early church, it is obvious that the believers had great love for one another. They showed that love through giving. In fact, they started to sell their belongings in order to give to their brothers in need.

God does not need our money. He already owns everything. However, he does use the money that we give for His purposes. As your church starts, you will want to begin ministering to others who have special needs both inside and outside the church. Do not be afraid to start talking about the need to give tithes and offerings in order for your church to function. Giving a tithe (or 10% of your earnings) and an offering (above and beyond that 10%) are acts of worship. These gifts give honor to the Lord and publically show that all that you possess is His. The principle of giving dates back to the beginning of Biblical history in the Old Testament. (See Malachi 3:6-12, Hebrews 7:2) In fact, the day of Pentecost, or the day that the Holy Spirit began His ministry in the church, was during the festival of first fruits. That was a time when Isreaelites were to share their first bounty from their crops. God chose to start the church during the time that the Jewish people celebrated this sacrificial giving.

Your leader shouldn’t be ashamed to talk to his brothers and sisters in Christ about giving money to the church. All of the church members should be honored to give their tithe to the church. Have you discussed the issues of tithes and offerings with your fellow believers? Have you decided who or what group will be in charge of the money? Remember some people have been specifically given the spiritual gift of administration. Pray and seek out who will be in charge of organizing the money and what your church will do with those tithes and offerings.

Another important note, remember that Scripture teaches us that your leader is deserving of a salary (1 Corinthians 9). If your pastor/leader is working to guide, teach and protect you, it is your duty to make sure that he and his family are taken care of. Have you discussed taking care of your leader financially? Have you thought about the expenses he might already have had in leading the church? Have you thought about how many hours he spends in leading, studying, and evangelizing in order to guide the church? Maybe you cannot support your leader full time in the ministry. He might need to take on another job at least part time. This is also Biblical. After all, at times the apostle Paul had two jobs (Acts 18:3). He was a tentmaker as well as a missionary! However, you and your church should prayerfully decide what to do about financially taking care of your pastor. Even if you can only pay your leader a token amount at first, paying your leader is a sign of honor and respect for his work. It is a sign that the church considers their pastor worth of his wages.

**2. Truth and integrity matter in the church.** **(Acts 5:1-12)**

The truth mattered so much to the Lord in His early church that He actually killed Ananias and Sapphira for lying about the price of the land they donated to the church.. Let us remember it wasn’t the sale of the land that got them in trouble. It was the fact that they lessened their integrity and lied to the church about the cost of the land. God obviously doesn’t always kill believers when they lie, or probably all of us would have been killed a long time ago! However, these deaths showed the believers at the time, as well as believers thousands of years later, that the church must be composed of people with integrity to one another and to the Lord.

Maybe God is going to take your small group of believers and make you into a large church. Maybe your church will grow and multiply into other churches. Although those results would be wonderful, none of those things are as important as being believers of integrity. The world is watching you and you can minister to the world by who you ARE more than by what you DO.

3**. Do signs and wonders exist today?** **(Acts 5:12)**

Time and time again we see in the book of Acts how the Apostles did signs and wonders. God chose to do wonderful miracles through them. Does God still work through believers today?

First of all, God has the power to ALWAYS heal and ALWAYS do miracles. However, he hasn’t chosen to always perform miracles in all situations throughout history. As we look at Scripture, we can learn that God basically did a majority of His miracles in a few periods of time. In the Old Testament it was during the time of Moses and the time of Elijah. In the New Testament it was during the life of Jesus and the early, early church. God uses miracles at special times and under special circumstance to reveal Himself.

It seems that in the beginning God used miracles through Christ and the church leaders to establish the credibility of the church. He did send us the Holy Spirit, who can show us on a day-to-day basis what God, does naturally and supernaturally in the world around us. When and if God chooses to do miracles today is for Him to decide. When they occur, we can be glad to have experienced them, but we do not have to base our faith on miraculous moments. Our faith is based on Christ.

If you take time to reflect as a group, you might begin to remember some miraculous moments in your own lives. Perhaps times when God performed acts of protection or acts of love without you even realizing it at the time. Thank the Lord for these moments that have already happened in your lives.

1. **Discipleship is the third purpose of the church**. **(Acts 5:42)**

 This study has already looked at two of the purposes of the church- fellowship and ministry. In this lesson we see that the early church took very seriously the idea of DISCIPLISHIP. We see that DAILY they met in the temple as well as in their homes to study about Christ. (Acts 5:42) At the time the believers didn’t have the New Testament that we have today, but they did have the Old Testament as well as the witness of the disciples. God gave you and I the complete Bible- both the Old and the New Testament. As a believer in Christ it is so important that you come to know God through His Word. Both the New and Old Testament are important to understanding who God is and what He wants to do in your life.

We have already learned that prayer should be present in all we do in ministry. In like manner the Bible is the guide that God gave us to know Him and His will. The Lord can choose to reveal himself and His will for your church in many ways. He might reveal His will through dreams, through the testimony of other believers, or through nature. However, He TYPICALLY reveals who He is and His will for your life through Scripture. The Bible must be the guide in your understanding of the Father and in your understanding of how your church should follow His will.

God wrote the Scriptures so that we can learn about Him. In 2 Timothy 3:16 we learn that, “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction of righteousness.” The Bible has four main purposes.

The Scripture is to:

1. Teach us about Him
2. To rebuke us when we have done wrong
3. To correct us and point us in the right way
4. To show us how to live a Godly and righteous life.

Your church needs to take very seriously the idea of the study of God’s word. Your leader will need to learn God’s word. The last study of this lesson series will teach you how to gain spiritual truths from God’s Word. It will be of the utmost importance that everyone learn how to study His word in order to gain spiritual insights. For the leader, this practice will be key as he leads you in worship week after week.

Every member of the church has responsibilities in the area of discipleship. First of all, you need to begin to DISCIPLE YOURSELF by meditating on the Word of God (Psalms 119:11) My suggestion is that you take 15 minutes a day to study the Word of God by yourself at home. Depending on the day, you might take much more than fifteen minutes; however, fifteen minutes is a good goal for new believers as they try to learn more about Him. If you want to learn even more about how to have a quiet time with the Lord. See the second Bible study in the Pioneer Evangelism series, “Beginning a New Life in Christ”. If you do not have that study, you can use lesson nine in this series to learn how to gain insights from God’s word.

Your second task in the area of discipleship is DISCIPLING OTHERS. Your pastor should be trying to disciple you, but at the same time, as you grow in the faith, you should try to disciple others. Why? As your church grows, your pastor will be limited in just how many people he can spend time with. It is the job of the church to help your pastor in the process of growing new converts in the faith by discipling them. Only when you, as a church, can commit to discipling others, will your church as a whole begin to multiply (I Timothy 2:2). There are those in the church who God has gifted spiritually for this ministry of discipleship. Pray that God shows you specifically who should be involved in this very important ministry.

 Some people think that discipleship is only teaching. This isn’t true. Remember, discipleship isn’t only studying the Word of God. It is spending TIME with new believers and teaching them by allowing them to observe you. Christ spent years eating, sleeping, working and laughing with his disciples. All the while He was teaching them the Truth. God can use you to be involved in the same process in the lives of new disciples. New believers should have someone with whom they can pray, study the Bible, play and minister together.

In the next lesson, we will see how the persecution in the church increased and how the early church responded to the problems.

**The Church is attacked from the outside**

**Lesson 5- Acts 6 and 7**

Key verse:

“Lord do not charge them with this sin.”

 Acts 7:60

Review questions:

1. What happened on Pentecost?
2. What did Peter do after the crowd questioned what happened? What was the response of the people after he spoke?
3. Who went to the temple to pray? What happened there?
4. What was the response of the Jewish leaders?
5. In the beginning how did the church meet each others financial needs?
6. What happened shortly after the church began to share all things? Who are Ananias and Sapphira?
7. What did the church do daily in the temple and from house to house?

As the church grew there began to be some complaints among the believers. Some of the “Hellenists” or Jewish people that lived outside of Israel didn’t feel like their widows were getting their share of the church’s daily distribution of food. This problem was brought to the disciples. The disciples decided that they would appoint seven wise and honorable men to meet this need. The apostles said they appointed the seven men to this task in order to “give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” One of the seven men was named Stephen. He was called a man “full of faith and the Holy Spirit.”

Then the Word of God spread and the number of disciples multiplied. Even many of the religious leaders were coming to faith in Christ.

Stephen did great signs and wonders in his ministry. Many of the Jews from outside Jerusalem began to debate Stephen, but they were not able to defeat him. So they created a conspiracy against him in order to say that he had said things against Moses and God. As they accused him of these things, all on the council noted that the face of Stephen looked like the “face of an angel.”

Stephen then was asked if these charges were true. In his answer he gave a brief history of Israel. He talked about how the father of the Israelites, Abraham, was called to leave his homeland to establish his family in a new land. The Jewish homeland of that day. He went on to tell how God promised Abraham a son in order to be the heir to all that land. God gave him Isaac as the heir. Isaac had a son named Jacob. Jacob had twelve sons which became the twelve tribes of Israel. He talked about how the sons sold their brother, Joseph, to slavetraders heading to Egypt,. God made Joseph one of the great leaders under Pharaoah. God then used Joseph to save his brothers from a famine.

Stephen went on to talk about how the Jews grew in power in Egypt, and how God had raised up Moses to be their leader. Moses had killed a man when he was forty years old in defense of a fellow Jew. He then fled to the wilderness and God met him in a burning bush. From the bush, He told Moses what He wanted him to do. Moses then began to lead the people. However, it wasn’t long before they began to rebel. The Israelites created an idol in the wilderness and then God “gave them up” to worship the sun, moon and stars. Stephen then began to talk about the tabernacle the Jews used in the wilderness for the worship of God. He talked about how the Jews possessed the land under Joshua and then flourished under David. Finally, Solomon built a temple for God, but God didn’t “dwell in temples made with hands.”

Having said all of this Stephen scolded the Jewish leaders. He told them that they had always rejected the Jewish prophets all through their history, and now they had rejected and killed Jesus. When he said that, the people became very angry. Stephen gazed into heaven and had a vision of Jesus standing in heaven at the right hand of the Father. Stephen then proclaimed to everyone around what he saw. At this the Jews took him outside the city and stoned him. A young man named Saul held the people’s coats as they killed Stephen. Stephen’s last words were, “Lord do not charge them with this sin.” After this, he died.

Oral questions:

1. What was the specific problem in the church in these chapters?
2. How did the apostles fix the problem?
3. What was the job of the seven men?
4. How did Stephen defend himself when he was accused by the Jews of saying things against Moses and God?
5. What happened after Stephen’s defense?
6. What were Stephen’s final words before he died?

Spiritual truths:

1. **People will get their feelings hurt in church** **(Acts 6:1)**

In the last lesson we saw that sin had crept into the church. In this lesson we see that one group of people felt like they weren’t being treated properly in the church. As a church, it will be very important that you realize that different people have different types of feelings and needs. However, one of your utmost tasks as a church is to stay unified. God wants your church to be in strong fellowship with one another in order to have unity. The last prayer of Christ recorded in Scripture before the cross was in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 17). What do you think he prayed for- evangelism, many believers, the Word of God to spread ?. . No! He prayed for unity among the believers. Guard your church against any types of divisions and be aware when someone isn’t feeling right about what the church is doing. Do not just discount his or her complaints. The apostles didn’t ignore the complaints of the Hellenists. They decided that the people had a legitimate enough complaint, and they met their needs.

1. **Share responsibilities (Acts 6:2-4)**

 The apostles did not have time to fufill their ministry and meet the needs of the widows. Therefore they delegated this task to seven Godly men. God is going to raise up Godly men besides your pastor who can be leaders in the church. As you pick your leaders, your first task shouldn’t be to think about what they are going to DO, you should think about who they ARE. In other words, are these men of honor and character that can be servant leaders alongside your pastor.

 Many churches call these leaders DEACONS. Good deacons take on a servant role in order to help the church, the Kingdom, and their pastor. The Bible gives a list in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 of some of the characteristics of a good deacon. For example, among other things, deacons should be serious on important matters, not be hypocritical, not drink too much, and not be greedy for money. They are to be men of experience that have been tested in life. There also is a list of requirements for their wives. To be a deacon is an honor because the church recognizes the chosen men as persons of character. It is a priviedge to be asked to be a part of a life of service.

3. **God uses the Old Testament as well as the New (Acts 7:2-50)**

Stephen gave a long response to a simple question. They asked him if he had said things against Moses and the Law. Stephen responded discussing Moses, Abraham, the Temple, Joshua and other Old Testament figures. If you are a new believer or a new church, you may not know many things about the Old Testament yet. However, you can be assured that there are many stories in the Old Testament that teach us WHO God is and what He is like. Begin to read and study the Old Testament, and this will open a whole new world of knowledge about the Lord for you.

4. **God doesn’t dwell in temples (Acts 7:48)**

 Throughout the Old Testament there were the tabernacle and temples. These were places where Israel could meet God. Israel took great pride in these places. These temples and the tabernacle were good things, but God is NOT like us. He does not need shelter to live. Those meeting places were good for the Israelites but they weren’t mandatory for God to be present. The Bible is filled with examples of God interacting with man outside of any building. For example met with Jacob in the wilderness (Genesis 28), Moses in a bush (Exodus3), and the Apostle Paul on a road (Acts 9).

As you begin your church, you might have the desire to have a church building. In many countries around the world that might be impossible. However, if you do want a church building, pray to make sure that is the will of God for your people. Remember that when we build a building, we are not building it for the Lord to have shelter. He is not bound by space. We are building a meeting place for ourselves: a place for study, recreation, fellowship and worship.

Of course, most new churches do not have the money to build a church building. Many new churches find it better to never build at all. Others choose to save up money and build at a later time. If you simply do not have the money to own or rent a building, there are certainly other places to meet. The Bible tells us that the church met in homes (Acts 16:40, 17:5,6; 18:7), in schools (Acts 19:9) and also publically and from house to house (Acts 20:20). Pray for the Lord to show you in what venue you are to meet.

1. **Persecution is real and your response is critical (Acts 7:60)**

Stephen was a man who was filled with the Holy Spirit. He was a good, Godly man. However, he was not immune to persecution. In the end Stephen was a martyr for the faith. In many, many places around the world Godly believers in Christ face persecution as a church for their faith. Christ himself warned us that we will face trouble in this world. (Matthew 6:34) If this is your case, hold fast to the understanding that the sufferings we face here, pale in comparison to the glories we will have in heaven. (Ephesians 1:18). God can also use persecution to lead others to him. Stephen’s response of love and forgiveness to those who hated him, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin,” obviously had an effect on Saul. Saul later became known as the Apostle Paul and became one of the greatest apostles and church planters who ever lived.

In the next lesson we will look at how the church spread to different types of people and different lands. We will study how the early church’s actions can be applied to your church today.

**Lesson 6- Acts Chapter 8**

Key verses: “. . . What hinders me from being baptized? Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart you may.”

 Acts 8:36b-37

Review questions:

1. What happened on Pentecost? Did all of their countrymen believe?
2. Describe the church after so many converted on the day of Pentecost?
3. Who did Peter and John heal at the temple? What was the reaction of the priests?
4. Who were Ananias and Sapphira?
5. Who was Stephen and how did he die?
6. What are three purposes of the church?
7. How does God generally reveal himself and His will to us today?

Saul consented to the death of Stephen. During that time the church began to come under attack. The believers were scattered all over Judea and Galilee- except for the apostles who were able to stay in Jerusalem. Saul began to attack the church entering every home and taking the believers to prison.

Those that were scattered began to spread the Word of Christ. One of the seven men appointed by the apostles, Philip, went to the city of Samaria and began to preach the Gospel to the inhabitants there. Many came to Christ, many demons were exorcised, and many people were healed. There was great joy in the city.

There was a man in that ciy who practiced sorcery called Simon. Being a sorcerer, he had astonished the city with his tricks. However, as the city began to turn to Christ, Simon also believed and was baptized. He was amazed at the signs and miracles that were happening through Phillip.

The apostles heard that the Samaritans had turned to Christ. Peter and John came to examine what was happening. They wanted to lay hands on the new believers so that they too could receive the Holy Spirit. As of yet, none of these people had received the Spirit. Simon was intrigued by the fact that the apostles could do this. He offered money to have this same power of giving the Holy Spirit. Peter told him his money could die with him. Peter rebuked him and told him to repent of this desire. After Peter said this, Simon asked him to pray that nothing bad would happen to him.

Peter and John preached the Word of the Lord, they went back to Jerusalem preaching in many other villages of the Samaritans along the way..

Then an angel appeared to Phillip and told him to go to a desert road to meet a man from Ethiopia. This man was a person of influence, a eunuch who worked for the queen of Ethiopia. He was in charge of all of her treasury. He had come to Jerualem to worship. While returning home, he was reading the book of Isaiah. The angel told Philip to overtake the chariot.

Philip asked the man if he understood what he was reading. The Ethiopian replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me.” So Philip began to explain this passage as well as explain the story of Christ to him. The Ethiopian then asked, “See, here is water, what hinders me from being baptized?” To which Philip replied, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” The Ethiopian then affirmed that he believed and commanded the chariot to stop. Philip went down to the water and baptized him. As they came up out of the water, Philip was taken away by the Spirit of the Lord to another city called Azotus and from there he went preaching from village to village until he finally arrived in Caesarea.

Review questions:

1. Who began to attack the church?
2. Who was dispersed around the country and what believers stayed in Jerusalem?
3. Where did Philip go to spread the gospel? What was the response of the people?
4. Why did Peter and John go to Samaria?
5. What did Simon want to buy?
6. Who did God lead Philip to witness to in the desert?
7. What did the Ethiopian eunuch do after he heard the message of Christ?

Spiritual truths:

1. **Reach out to the unloved (Acts 8:5)**

 Philip was a Jew. For the Jewish people it was very difficult to work with the Samaritans. The Samaritans were not pure blooded Jews, but had mixed with Gentiles (non-Jews) in their lives and in their religious practices. The Jews looked down upon the Samaritans and didn’t want to have anything to do with them. However, through the love of Christ and the power of the Spirit, Philip went out to tell the Samaritans about Christ. He overcame prejudice in order to lead the Samaritans to faith. Whether you are reading this story in Africa, South America, North America or Asia, all of us know people with whom we have a difficult time getting along with. Maybe it’s people from a nearby town or village. Maybe they are a different tribe of people or different ethnic background than you. In every case, God wants you to share with them. This is an important idea in EVANGELISM. We will be discussing this principle of evangelism in later lessons. However, at this time, think about if there are any people that you as a group would have difficulty sharing the love of Christ with. If you don’t feel sufficient love to tell them about Christ now, ask God to give you that love.

1. **Your disciples can disappoint you** **(Acts 8:9-25)**

Philip helped an influential man named Simon make a decision for Christ. Many debate whether Simon actually “believed” or not. However, there is probably no debate that Philip THOUGHT this man had believed. As Peter and John started to do wonderful things in Samaria, it became obvious that Simon was concerned with the wrong things and wanted to buy “power” from Peter and John. Certainly as you begin to share Christ with others, the people you lead to Christ will make mistakes (Christ’s disciples certainly did). Some people you share with and begin to disciple may surprise you and not even be true converts. However, that is not an excuse to stop evangelizing. Simon’s mistake certainly didn’t cause Philip to stop. Remember that after Samaria Philip helped evangelize the Ethiopian Eunuch and went on to minister to various other cities all the way to Caesarea.

1. **Christ did not only go to the “west”** **(Acts 8:26-40)**

Many people feel as if Christianity is basically a “western” (European and American) religion. However, after God began to spread the good news of Christ to Israel the first recorded place that the gospel went was AFRICA. After all, the Ethiopian eunuch was an influential man in Northern Africa. More than likely the Gospel spread in various directions at this time, but it is interesting that God included Africa in the Bible as the first recorded direction of the spread of the gospel. To follow Christ is NOT a white man’s, or “western man’s” religion. Christ builds His church in all nations.

1. **God gave us two ordinances as a church**. **(Acts 8:38)**

 In this study we have learned that the power of the Church comes from the Holy Spirit. We have learned that the basis of our ministry is prayer. We have learned that the church should be vigilent in the study of Scipture because that is how God generally reveals His will to us. We have already discussed five of the purposes of your new church- prayer, worship, fellowship, ministry, and discipleship.

However, God also gave two ordinances for every church, in every country, in every century to practiced. God has commanded every group of believers to practice BAPTISM and THE LORD’S SUPPER.

**Baptism-** Philip evangelized the Ethiopian eunuch. He told the Ethiopian that if he believed in Christ as the Son of God he could be baptized. The Ethiopian believed and was baptized immediately. Baptism is a sign of our decision to give our lives to Christ. It is not a necessary part of salvation (I Corinthians 1:17), but is a necessary act of obedience after we give our lives to Christ. When a believer is taken and placed under the water (in a pool, in a lake, in the ocean, in a baptistry) and then is raised up again, this symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:1-6). This also symbolizes that person’s death and burial to his old sin nature and his resurrection to walk in new life with Christ.

You as a church should begin practicing baptism. When? Now is as good a time as any! If you have members of your fellowship that have come to Christ, but have not been baptized, then they need to be baptized! In fact, the Bible seems to show that baptism happened very quickly after conversion (Acts 9:38, Acts 2:38-41). Some churches feel as if there should be a class before taking someone to be baptized in order to make sure the person is certain of his decision. Your church needs to decide what your process will be before someone will be baptized. Be careful not to ADD stipulations that are not in Scripture. The only prerequisite to baptism is that someone has repented and given his or her heart to Jesus.

 Who can baptize? We see that the disciples baptized (John 4:1-2), Philip the evangelist baptized (Acts 9:38), and “certain disciples” baptized (Acts 9:10). Your church needs to decide who you will authorize to baptize. Baptism is done under the authority of the church. However, note that Philip was not the “pastor” he was simply an evangelist that had been appointed by the church. There is no indication that only pastors could baptize in Scripture.

 **The Lord’s Supper-** This is the second ordinance that Christ commanded us as a church to do. The Lord’s supper is simply a way for the church to remember Christ’s death on the cross for our sins. It is the partaking of the bread and wine in order to symbolize the body and blood of Christ. There is never ANY indication in Scripture that the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Christ as some churches around the world teach. There is never any indication that you must partake of the Lord’s supper in order to recieve grace for salvation as some churches teach. After all, if we must constantly receive grace for salvation week after week then Christ’s death on the cross wasn’t sufficient for us! (Hebrews 7:27). His one time death on the Cross provides sufficient forgiveness and grace for our lives. We don’t need to receive grace from any other action or ceremony.

If you would like to see how Christ did the Lord’s supper, you can read the following passages in Scripture (I Corinthians 11:17-26, Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19,20). These can help you decide how your church will partake of the bread and wine in order to remember our Lord’s death. In the coming weeks, celebrate together the Lord’s supper. Read Christ’s example again in Matthew, Mark, Luke or I Corinthians. Find the bread and wine (or juice if necessary) and advise all of the believers to be prepared. Remember to read Paul’s advice in I Corinthians 11:27-34. Prepare yourself spiritually before drinking the wine and eating the bread. Confess your sins to the Father so that you can qremember His Son’s sacrifice with the right attitude and the right spirit. Notice that it is only the believers or “brethren” (Acts 11:33) that partake of the supper.

 Periodically, remember to celebrate the Lord’s Supper together as a church. Discuss, as a church, how often you want to do this.

 The next study will look at two of the great leaders of the early church. The lesson will examine how they applied the sixth purpose of the church in their lives.

**The Church’s Great Missionary is Saved**

**Lesson 7- Acts Chapter 9**

Key verse- “Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.”

 Acts 9:20

Review Questions:

1. How did Christ return to heaven?
2. What happened on Pentecost?
3. Who went to the temple to pray? What happened there?
4. What are four purposes of the church?
5. What was Ananias and Sapphira’s sin?
6. What happened to Stephen?
7. Who held the coats at Stephen’s death?
8. Who evangelized the Samaritans? Why was this so difficult?
9. How did the Ethiopian eunuch come to Christ?

Saul continued to persecute the church. He sought permission from the high priest to go to Damascus to put the followers of “The Way” into prison. On his way to Damascus, he saw a great light. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, “Saul, Saul why are you persecuting Me?” Saul asked who was speaking, and the Lord replied that it was Jesus. Saul, trembling, asked the Lord, “Lord, what do you want me to do?” The Lord Jesus told him to go to the city and wait. The men who were traveling with Saul heard the voice but didn’t understand it. Saul arose from the ground, but he could not see. His traveling companions helped guide Saul to the city. There Saul waited for three days. For those days he could not see, and he also didn’t eat or drink.

Meanwhile God spoke to a man named Ananias. He told Ananias to go to a street called “Straight”. He was to find Saul, who was praying, and help him regain his sight. Ananias did not want to go. He had heard a lot about Saul and what he had done to the Christians. God assured Ananias that he should go because God’s purpose for Saul was to take the Gospel to the Gentiles, kings, as well as the children of Israel. However, God wanted to show Saul how he had to suffer for the kingdom first. Ananias obeyed the Lord and arrived at the house where Saul was staying. He laid his hands on Saul so that he could regain his sight. Immediately it was as if scales fell of his eyes and he could see again. He arose and was baptized. After this Saul ate some food to regain his strength and spent some time with the believers in Damascus.

Immediately Saul went out and began to preach Christ in the Jewish synagogues. Everyone was amazed because they knew what Saul had done in the past to the church. God began to use Saul to show many people that Jesus is the Christ. Soon the Jews began to plot to kill Saul, so the disciples in Damascus had to help Saul escape by lowering him from a large basket down the wall of the city.

Saul then wanted to go greet the disciples in Jerusalem, but they were afraid of him. So Barnabas brought him to Jerusalem and spoke on Saul’s behalf to the apostles. Saul went to the disciples and related the story of his conversion on the road to Damascus, and how he had preached boldly in that city.

So Saul stayed at Jerusalem and continued to preach the word, but soon the Jews sought to kill him. Saul went back to Caesarea and then to Tarsus. Then the churches began to grow and prosper.

The ministry of Peter continued during this time. As he was going through Israel he helped cure a paralyzed man so that he could walk again. He also helped a good disciple named Dorcas. Dorcas had been a kind person who had done many deeds of charity. She had died, and her friends sent for Peter to see how he could help. Peter arrived and told Dorcas to “arise”. She rose from the dead and soon many in that town believed in the Lord. After this event, Peter spent some more time in the city of Joppa in the home of Simon the tanner.

Oral Questions:

1. Who was Saul?
2. What city was he going to in order to persecute the believers?
3. What happened on the road to Damascus?
4. Who came to help Saul see again?
5. What did Saul do after he regained his sight?
6. Did the believers in Jerusalem want to meet with Saul?
7. The Lord healed two people through Peter in this story, who were they?

 Spiritual truths-

1. **Some of the hardest people become some of the greatest leaders in the church (Acts 9:1-19)**

 Sometimes it is easy to look at certain types of people and think that they would never come to Christ. After all, let us examine Saul. He was a devout Jew. He was trained in all of the right schools in Judaism. He was a great persecutor of Christians. He threw many Christians in jail. He even watched his fellow religious leaders as they killed the first martyr for Jesus- Stephen. How could such a man ever come to Christ? However, Christ had a plan for Saul’s life. He revealed himself to Saul on the road, and Saul (who later became known as the Apostle Paul) converted.

There are people in your city that seem very far away from converting, but do not give up hope, God might have a great plan for them yet. A missionary once told me, “I look for those tough people to the gospel; they might make the next Apostle Paul.” When evangelizing, your church should FIRST seek out those people who seem to be the most open to the gospel, but at the same time pray that God will also show you those men and women that seem so, so far away from the Gospel. It might be that “tough person”- a tribal leader, or business woman, or intellect at the university, that might become a bold witness for the Gospel.

2. **EVANGELISM- the sixth purpose of the church. (Acts 9:20-43)**

 We have looked at prayer, worship, fellowship, ministry, and discipleship. Today this study will look at EVANGELISM. A great pastor named Rick Warren once said that all of the other purposes of the church we will do for all eternity. We will worship the Lord in heaven. We will be in fellowship with other believers. We will minister in heaven. We will grow in your understanding of the Father (billions and billions of years in heaven will give you plenty of time to learn more about Him!) However, we can’t evangelize there. We cannot tell others about Jesus. In heaven, it will be too late to share Christ with people.

The church’s task of evangelism is of immense importance. Your evangelistic heart as a church will help define what type of church you will be. It will help form you into a church that is either inward focused on your own needs, or a church that constantly reaches out and focuses on the spiritual needs of those around it. Evangelism can also be the most DIFFICULT of the purposes. For example all of the other purposes of the church can be done among fellow believers. You can have fellowship with one another, disciple together, worship together, and minister to one another (as well as to the world). However evangelism is ALWAYS done with the lost and that can be difficult. To do evangelism correctly, believers have to open themselves up, form friendships, and risk sharing what Christ has done for them with people that might not want to hear what you have to say. All of that can be a very intimidating experience. For this reason, many churches forsake this purpose.

 However, the church in Acts didn’t stop fullfilling the purpose of evangelism. In this chapter, two of their leaders, Peter and Saul were out spreading the Gospel. In fact, Saul began to preach Christ IMMEDIATELY after he had converted and regained his strength. (Acts 9:20). Peter was out traveling around Israel and through his actions he was able to spread the gospel so that entire cities heard of Christ. (Acts 9:35, 42) Evangelism started with the leaders of the church!

However, not just the leaders, but all believers are called to share as well. In last week’s lesson we already saw how Philip shared his faith. In lesson two we studied that after Pentecost, the church grew DAILY (2:47) and we see that the people prepared themselves through the Spirit to preach the word boldly (Acts 4:31) The church’s daily witness spread like wildfire around the world, until finally it made it to your home today!

Your church should be built on the premise that you will be an evangelistically minded church. From the very beginning you should strive to evangelize the lost in order to begin the process of making disciples for the Kingdom.

 How should you evangelize others? There are many ways to share your faith. If you are participating in this study, you might already have used one of the other studies of the Pioneer Evangelism series such as “The Good News of Christ” or “Beginning a New Life with Christ”. These studies are EXCELLENT if you would like to help someone study the Bible in order to share Christ with them. They guide you step by step in how you can lead someone through a seven to eight lesson study of God’s Word. If you do not have these studies, or any other type of solid evangelistic Bible study material, here are two other simple ways to evangelize others.

The first method is by sharing your “testimony.” A testimony is simply a brief conversation about how Christ changed your life. When I share my testimony, I like to divide my tesimony in three parts- 1) my life before Christ 2) how I gave my life to Christ 3) my life with Christ now. I take a minute or two for each part and explain how my life was slowly changed by Christ. After I have done this, I like to share with that person how they can give their life to Christ as well.

Take a minute and practice sharing these three parts. Remember, keep this brief (5 minutes) and keep it simple. Let the Holy Spirit guide.

The second method is called the Roman Road. These are six verses that you can use to share your faith in just a few minutes and show WHY someone can come to Christ. The verses are as follows:

1. I John 5:13- This verse shows that God’s Word was written to show you how to have salvation.
2. Romans 3:23- This verse shows that we are all sinners.
3. Romans 6:23- This verse shows God’s punishment for sin.
4. Romans 5:8- This verse shows that God sent Christ died for us.
5. Romans 10:9-10- These verses show what we have to do to accept Christ- believe, and call Christ as Lord (make a commitment)
6. Romans 10:13- This verse shows that anyone can come to Him.

As a church take, 10-30 minutes and read through these verses- talking about how you can explain each verse to your friends.

Please remember that when you evangelize, you shouldn’t be worried that you will say exactly the right thing. The Bible promises us that the Holy Spirit will guide us in what to say. (Luke 12:12, John 14:26, 16:13), God simply has chosen to use you as the instrument that delivers the Good News to that particular person. If you help evangelize a lost world, you will be part of a team of people that have helped spread the love of Christ from the time of His resurrection until now.

 In the last lesson, we will see how the Gentiles finally began to be reached for Christ and what that means for you today.

**The church gets a vision for the world**

**Lesson 8- Acts Chapters 10-12**

Key verses: “Then Peter opened his mouth and said, “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality, But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

 Acts 10:34,35

Review questions:

1. What happened on Pentecost?
2. Describe how the early church met and acted toward one another.
3. What happened when Peter and John went to pray at the temple?
4. Why did Ananias and Sapphira die?
5. How did the apostles deal with the problem of feeding the widows?
6. How did Stephen treat those who were stoning him?
7. Where was the eunuch who Philip evangelized from?
8. What are the five purposes of the church?
9. What should be the basis of our ministry?
10. What should we study to find who God is and what His will is for our lives?

There was a man named Cornelius who was a leader in the Roman army. He was a devout man who prayed to God always and was very good to the Jewish people. One day at three o’clock in the afternoon, an angel appeared to Cornelius while he was praying. The angel told him that his prayers had been answered and that he should call for Peter, who was in Joppa, to come to him.

So Cornelius sent some trusted men to go find Peter. The next day Peter was praying about 12:00 in the afternoon. He became very hungry, and as he was waiting for the food he fell into a trance. He had a vision that heaven opened up and a sheet, bound at the four corners, was lowered from heaven. The sheet was filled with all kinds of animals- both clean and unclean according to Jewish law. A voice then told him to kill and eat the animals. Peter told the Lord that he couldn’t do that because he couldn’t eat the unclean animals. The Lord told him that what He had cleansed Peter could not call unholy. This all happened three times.

Peter was still thinking about the meaning of the vision when Cornelius’ men arrived at the door. They asked for Peter, and he came down to greet them. They told Peter that an angel instructed Cornelius to summon him. Peter invited them in to stay the night. The next day they went away to Cornelius.

So the next day Peter, some fellow Jews, and Cornelius’ servants arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius had invited his relatives and his close friends to be with him. They were at his house waiting for Peter. When Peter arrived Cornelius began to bow down and worship him. Peter told Cornelius to get up because, after all, Peter was only just a man like Cornelius . Peter then told him that as a Jew he wasn’t allowed to go to someone of another country, but God showed him that he couldn’t call any man ‘unclean”.

Peter began to preach about Christ. He said that all of the apostles were commanded to preach about the forgiveness of sins for those who believe in Christ. As he was saying this the Holy Spirit fell on the home. All of the Jews that traveled with Peter were amazed that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit in the same manner that they had received the Spirit. Peter commanded that the household be baptized. Then Peter and his companions stayed there for a few more days.

Now some of the Jewish believers in Jerusalem were very angry because Peter because had eaten with the Gentiles. Peter explained all that had happened. He told them about how the Lord had sent the vision of the animals in the sheet and then how he was summoned to Cornelius’ house. He told how he began to preach the Gospel and then how the Holy Spirit came on the new Gentile believers. He told about how he remembered the words of Jesus Christ when he taught them about the Holy Spirit. Peter said that if God had chosen to give the same gift to the Gentiles that had given to the Jews, how could he fight against God? When the Jews heard this, they glorified God that He had given the Gentiles “repentance to life.”

After Stephen’s martyrdom, many of the followers of Christ went to neighoring countries sharing Christ with the Jewish people. Some of them went to a city called Antioch in Syria and began to witness to the Greeks. Many people in that city came to Christ. The believers in Jerusalem heard about this and sent Barnabas to confirm what was going on. Barnabas took Saul and they went to Antioch. They taught the believers in Antioch for an entire year and the disciples were first called “Christians” in Antioch. Then a prophet came up from Jerusalem and proclaimed that there would be a great famine. So the disciples in Antioch decided to send money to the church in Judea back with Saul and Barnabas to help during this time.

After this, Herod, the King of Palestine (or the area of Israel) began to persecute the church. He killed James the brother of John by the sword and then decided to put Peter in prison. He did all of this in order to please the Jews. So the church prayed for Peter. In the middle of the night, before he was to be brought to the Jews an angel of the Lord came and freed him from the prison. Peter thought he was seeing a vision and didn’t realize that all that was happening was truly real until after he was free. Peter went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark. A young girl answered the door but she got so excited when she saw Peter that she forgot to let him in. Peter kept knocking. When the believers answered, he motioned for them to keep quiet and told them to tell the other disciples that he was free. He soon left for another location. Finally he went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there.

Herod was very angry about Peter’s escape and had the prison guards killed. Later Herod was facing a problem with some neighboring cities. He negotiated a peace with them and during a celebration ceremony Herod began to speak and the people praised him as a god. The angel of the Lord struck him down because he did not give the glory to God, but took the praise for himself. Herod was then eaten by worms.

Even among these trials, the Word of God multiplied. Saul and Barnabas went back to Antioch from Jerusalem. The church of Antioch, with much prayer and fasting, appointed Saul and Barnabas to go on a missionary journey.

Review questions:

1. Who was Cornelius?
2. What vision did God give to Peter?
3. Why did Peter have a difficult time going to visit Cornelius?
4. What happened when Peter arrived at Cornelius’ house and preached the Gospel?
5. What happened when the Jews in Jerusalem heard about this?
6. Where were people first called ‘Christians’?
7. Who was the first of the twelve apostles to be martyred?
8. How did Peter get freed from prison?
9. How and why did King Herod die?

Spiritual truths:

1. **As your church spreads- be prepared to expect resistance** **(Acts 11:3)**

 You have already learned in this study to expect persecution from the world. Did you also know that you can expect resistance from fellow believers? For example, some church members may want to keep the church “small” so that it will feel more like a family. Some church members may not want to reach out to certain types of people. Other churches in your area (if you are in a country with other churches) may not want you to plant churches in their same neighborhood or town. As you expand, you can constantly face resistance! However, never forget that the church in Acts continually expanded in spite of all this. Our Father is patiently waiting because He wants all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). We have a mandate to spread farther and farther in order that all men can hear and make a sincere decision to accept or reject our Savior. When the resistance comes, continually remind yourself and others that God wants all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. (I Timothy 2:3,4)

1. **As your church spreads- be prepared to help other churches** (Acts 11:27-30)

The church started in Jerusalem. The Lord spread the believers first all over Judea and Samaria and then to the surrounding countries. Shortly thereafter, due to a severe drought, the newer churches in the surrounding countries helped the mother church in Jerusalem financially. They shared what they had becaused they LOVED their brothers in Christ.

We must do the same thing 2000 years later. As your church grows, be prepared to help other churches in three ways: financially (monetary offerings of love when needed), physically (a new church might need workers as they try to become established), and spiritually. How can you help spiritually? One of the great joys in the ministry is being able to pass on things that you have learned to younger believers and newer churches. You can help new churches in your area with training and guidance. There is great joy in training others and then watching THEM go out and reap a harvest for the Kingdom.

1. **As your church spreads- be prepared to go to other cultures, countries or peoples.** (Acts 10:34 and Acts 13:3)

It is the assumption of this study that you are completing these lessons in the hopes of starting a church. Maybe you just have a small group of people- 2, 5, or 12 people meeting and praying about the future. Maybe you have many groups already meeting. Maybe you have an established church but you are trying to help your church have a bigger vision of the Kingdom of God. Whatever your situation, from the very beginning you should be thinking about how your church is going to grow and reproduce through MISSIONS. God has called us to spread His name in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the Earth (Acts 1:8). In other words, He wants you to start with your town and at the same time have a vision of how you can minister in neighboring towns, other states, and around the world. God took Peter and showed him that it was His will that Peter not only witness to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. To whom will God tell your church to minister? What group of people that live near you are part of God’s plan for you to reach?

God took Saul and Barnabas and began a ministry that spread the gospel during their lifetimes all of the way to Rome (Acts 27:16-30), and possibly even to Spain (Romans 15:24). As we close out this study, we see the church doing Christ’s final commandment. The church shifts to the Gentiles and begins to spread around the world. The church in Antioch sends Saul (or Paul) and Barnabas on their first of four missionary journeys.

 From the actions of these early disciples the church spread far beyond the borders of Jersualem. It spread until it reached your country and your home. Praise God that he brought the truth to your ears. Praise God that he brought your group of believers together. Whether your group is small or large, rich or poor, God wants to use you as a church. After all, if you are following His will by basing your ministries on prayer and Scripture, practicing the ordinances, and following the seven purposes of the church: prayer, fellowship, worship, ministry, discipleship, evangelism and missions, your group of believers will make a fine, healthy church. Ask God to show you where your CHURCH is to go next, to bring others the same joy you now have in Him.

All honor and praise be to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**What next?**

**Lesson 9**

As you closed out this study, you may be wondering, “What should I do next?” You might be cocerned as to how you are going to teach your people now that the programmed studies are done? After all, in some cases your church may have started from the very beginning of the Pioneer Evangelism series. You may have used pre-written Bible studies for possibly the past 23 weeks. In other words, that is almost half a year of studies that were already prepared for you by someone else. So what should you do now?

One of the goals of these lessons was to help you to grow in your understanding of the Scriptures. You might have studied Matthew or John in the evangelistic and discipleship studies. Now you have looked at the first section of the book of Acts. Our hope is that you now have a basic understanding of those books, and that you have begun to grow to love the study of Scripture.

In these Bible studies we hope you have noticed that God gives many Spiritual truths to us through His Word. For 23 lessons, you have been getting Spiritual truths written by other people, now we hope to help you find your own spiritual truths from His word. If you are like most churches around the world, you will not have the resources to keep going out and finding prepared Bible studies. You need to gain your own insights and own truths from your Bible. God wants to reveal Himself to YOU through His Word.

You can find spiritual truths anywhere in the Bible as you meditate on His Word. As you begin to study His Word for spiritual truths or insights, our suggestion today is that you try to study the rest of the book of Acts. Why Acts? We have been studying this book in depth, and it only seems logical to complete the study we have started.

 Let us begin with chapter thirteen. There are several truths to be learned in chapter thirteen, but how do you get the spiritual truths?

1. Begin with prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth to you. After all, we have already learned that it is He that reveals all Truth.
2. When you finish praying, begin to read Acts chapter 13. It is a good idea to read at least several chapters before thirteen and several chapters after to get a good idea of the context of the situation.
3. Meditate on what you are reading. Don’t just read this passage quickly. You can easily finish this passage in five minutes. However, you are trying to allow God to speak to you about what is going on in His Word.
4. Let the Lord speak to you before you speak to others. Spiritual truths need to be personal. They need to be ideas that can be applied to your own life or to the life of the church body. Don’t read a passage waiting for the Lord to tell you something about someone else. Let Him touch your life first and then you will be able to teach with more passion to others. When you meditate on a verse and it really touches your heart, this might be the Holy Spirit trying to teach you.
5. As you meditate on the verses, there might be one verse, or one story, that really touches you. For some reason, this verse will simply stand out to you. You might have read the passage 20 times, but today you need to dwell more on that one verse. In this study, beside every spiritual truth you can see the chapter and verse where we got a spiritual truth. Those verses touched our hearts. However, you might reread those chapters and catch spiritual truths in other verses that are specific to your life.
6. Stop. Ask God to help you apply that particular verse or section to your life. Think about what happened in that verse and see what you or your church is going through that might be similar to that situation. Or, look and see what that verse is teaching you about the Father that you’ve never thought about before. Take your time. There is no rule that you need to finish all of Acts 13. There might be enough truths in that passage for your church to study for several weeks. I personally found further truths for my life in Acts 13:44 and Acts 13:51. God might have totally different spiritual truths for you.
7. Confirm- If you are newer in the faith or newer to the Bible, confirming your spiritual truth with other Scriptures might be more difficult. However, you want to make sure that what you have learned actually agrees with what the Bible says. After all, someone can take any verse out of Scripture and make it say just about ANYTHING. God will never tell you to do something that is in direct contrast with His Word. Study other parts of Scripture to make sure you are teaching sound doctrine. This will become easier as you have more time in the Word.
8. Apply- As you’ve gotten your spiritual truth and confirmed with Scripture, then you can apply it to your people’s hearts as well as your own. Try to find examples and illustrations that are applicable to this truth. Your people will not learn unless they understand how this truth applies to them.
9. Close with prayer- Always thank God for all that He has shown you, and ask for His help as you show your people what you have learned.

NEVER FORGET TO ASK HIM TO HELP YOU TO TRAIN OTHERS TO DO THE SAME THING IN THEIR LIVES. Remember God wants you to raise up more leaders for His kingdom. There will be many men and women in your church that you can train to study Scripture so that THEY can teach others.

You can use these ideas above to daily get spiritual truths from the Bible. Using these ideas received from a daily devotion time with the Father, you never have to rely on others’ Bible studies again. You will probably still use Bible studies from time to time, but you will never HAVE to have others’ studies for your church again. The only book that you will have to have to guide your church is the Bible. Let him teach you DAILY, so that you can teach others.

May God bless you as you begin your church or maybe even as you begin MANY churches. May they be well rounded churches that are guided by the Spirit, based on the Bible and prayer, practice the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and fulfill the seven purposes of the church- prayer, fellowship, worship, ministry, discipleship and evangelism and missions.

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1. 2 Peter 3:9. All Biblical quotations will be taken from the NKJV [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Akins does an excellent job of breaking down those two steps. He places them in three sequential steps so this book will modify his approach somewhat. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. You notice that not all of those are listed in Luke 11:1-4. In the end, the pattern he gave us was not about a rote plan, but a general idea of how to spend time with God. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Mandryk, Jason *Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation*, Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 2010, 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [*http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/july/indiagrassroots.html?start=2*](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/july/indiagrassroots.html?start=2). Todd Johnson, director of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's Center for the Study of Global Christianity, placed the number slightly lower at 58 million. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Mandryk, Operation World, 407. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Thirumalai, Madasamy. *Sharing Your Faith with a Hindu*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2002, 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Thirumalai’s work is a wonderful asset and should be in every believer’s library.  If you are looking for a far more in-depth study of Hinduism, please consult this work. This work also includes many Bible verses you can use in sharing your faith. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Of course, for the Indian Jains, Sikhs, Muslims and Christians that also reside in India they might have some issues with that belief. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Hexham, Irving. *Understanding World Religions: An Interdisciplinary Approach*. Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2011, 139. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Special thanks to Winfried Corduan and his insights in this section. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Corduan, *Neighboring Faiths*, 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Thirmulai, *How to Share Your Faith with a Hindu*, 57-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Earhart, Byron, *Religious Traditions of the World*, San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1983, 725. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Anjan’s full name is being withheld for security reasons. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Interview with David S. Email. (March 2012). Due to security reasons, David’s full name is not given. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Charping, John. Email interview, February 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The following points are adapted from John Charping, *The Glory Story: Seeing God’s Eternal Purpose*, 2012. Used by permission. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. The concept of time in Hinduism is cyclical compared to the linear concept of time in western thought. Even within a cyclical concept of time, time is moving in a direction. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)