



# HEALTHY CHURCH LEADERSHIP

A Manual for Healthy Churches in Africa

What are the characteristics of a Healthy Church? How can the church in Africa today fulfill her mandate to win the world?

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*First Edition—2021*

# Healthy Church Leadership: Introduction

In 2018, the world shifted in a significant way. That was the first year in history when there were more believers in Sub-Saharan Africa than on any other continent on the planet. That year the heart of Christianity and the church truly shifted to Africa. This means that the future of the great commission and the rest of the world hearing the gospel is also centered here in Africa. Yet, most countries in Africa see themselves as the receivers of missionaries instead of as the “senders” of missionaries. This is due in large part to the health of the African church. African churches are full of zeal, excitement, and incredible potential. However, many of them are unhealthy and as a result, they are not stepping up and taking their place in history. While every Christian has a responsibility to serve in a healthy local church, this is especially important for those who are leaders in the local church. This is why we have developed this training.

Our desire is to see the church in Africa become healthy and vibrant in every one of the characteristics (or attributes) of a church as found in Scripture. Leaders who are adequately trained and rightly related to God will lead their churches to be healthy. Healthy churches, in turn, have the potential to turn things around in Africa and send African missionaries to the ends of the earth. This manual will help your local church learn how to examine itself in various areas of biblical health, and it will then offer solutions in how to leverage the things you are doing well and address the areas where you are struggling. There is no “perfect” church and every church can improve. Our prayer is that God will use this training manual to breathe new life back into your congregation and that as the church experiences better health in various areas, it will rise up and fulfill its destiny in the world.

I would like to say a special note of thanks to the Baptist Regional Convention of Nairobi and particularly the Nairobi West Association where the pilot for this training took place. Their graciousness and enthusiastic support were vital to helping us develop the first “Healthy Church Leadership Training.” The lessons in this manual were based on that pilot project and we hope to see this rolled out widely in Kenya and across the continent.

We are trusting God, together with you, that African churches will be mobilized to send African missionaries to the ends of the earth.

For His Glory,

Dr. Kevin W. Rodgers  
Baptist Mission of Kenya and Editor of this Volume

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## Instructions for Using This Manual

This manual is designed to be used at the local church level. It can be done at an associational level where leaders are coming together to study healthy churches or leaders can do this with their own congregation. It is helpful if everyone in the study has a copy of the manual and if they can speak openly about issues they see in their church. When we talk about “healthy churches” we mean churches as they were designed to function in the Bible. The Bible is the rule and standard for how the work of God is carried on and while this is designed for an African context, the Bible will be the standard by which the church is judged and the culture will be secondary to Scripture.

This manual is designed to be used in a week-by-week study since doing one characteristic per week is most helpful. Each characteristic has two lessons: there is a theological basis lesson and then there is a practical lesson, designed to help churches know how to carry out those functions in the African context.

### 3/3 Process

One method that is helpful to employ in these training sessions is called a three-thirds process (3/3). This means that you will divide your sessions into three sections.

***The first section is comprised of Worship, Accountability, and Vision-Casting.***

#### Worship

Take some time to sing a song or two, to share prayer requests and pray, and to get in the right mind for the coming lesson.

#### Accountability

At the end of each session, the members of the study should make commitments to address certain things or to complete certain tasks before the next meeting. At this time, in the beginning, members can share how they were faithful with the previous week's assignment.

#### Vision Casting

This is a time to share a story or a brief devotional thought that contributes to the vision of the healthy church study. Perhaps a testimony of how this study has helped so far or a vision casting teaching related to something that has already been learned can be used here to keep people excited about the teaching and the lessons.

***The second section is comprised of the New Lessons.***

In this section, you will cover the material in this week's lesson. You do not have to limit yourself to just the material presented in the two lessons for that characteristic, but you will want to be sure to at least cover the material in those two chapters and to teach it well.

***The third section is comprised of Practice and Setting Goals/Prayer.***

#### Practice

For some of the lessons, there will be skills that will be learned. For instance, there might be evangelism methods taught, principles of Bible interpretation, or other

practical skills. If there are some practical skills taught in the lessons, you should leave time in the session for people to practice with each other before they leave so they can do that with others outside of the Bible study.

#### Setting Goals and Prayer

Each week, after the two lessons have been taught and people have practiced the teaching, members of the study should set goals that they will be doing before the next meeting. For instance, on the lessons on biblical giving, perhaps the church would commit to keeping good records or individuals would commit to begin tithing. Maybe on the evangelism lessons, members would commit to coming back next week having shared the 3 circles presentation with someone who is lost. The results of these commitments will be shared the next week during the accountability time. Finally, after publicly making commitments to put into practice the lessons learned, people should pray that members will be faithful to keep the promises they are making.

Using this 3/3 process each session will instill in the members a sense of accountability to use what they have learned, and will also equip them to be able to teach these things to others. This process has been proven to create people who do what they say and who put into practice the things they have learned. This kind of thinking is very important for having healthy churches. In healthy churches, all the members fulfill their roles and do their part. Using the 3/3 process from the beginning will encourage that spirit to grow among those who are studying together with you in this healthy church leadership study.

# Healthy Churches and Biblical Church Membership

Dr. Kevin W. Rodgers

There are many different perspectives on the nature of a “church.” Sometimes people speak of the church as if it is a building. Other times they speak of the church as if it is a denomination. However, the Bible makes it clear that the church is actually a body of people who are united with certain characteristics. Look at the common definition of church that we will use in this study that is taken from the Baptist Faith & Message 2020 (BFM 2020).<sup>1</sup>

*A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by his laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.*

*The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.*

Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.

## Unique Baptist Perspectives of the Church

While Baptists share many doctrines in common with orthodox denominations and other evangelicals, we tend to be very different in our approach to the church. Our focus is on what is the most biblical perspective and not simply what works or what has been historically done by others. Notice that in this biblical definition of the church there are some very important aspects highlighted.

A New Testament church **of the Lord Jesus Christ** is an **autonomous local congregation** of **baptized believers, associated by covenant** in the faith and **fellowship of the gospel**; observing the **two ordinances** of Christ, **governed by his** laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his **word**, and seeking to **extend the gospel to the ends of the earth**. Each congregation operates under the **Lordship of Christ** through **democratic processes**. In such a congregation

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<sup>1</sup> The complete Baptist Faith and Message 2000 can be found at this link on the internet.  
<https://bfm.sbc.net/bfm2000/>

***each member is responsible and accountable*** to Christ as Lord. Its ***scriptural officers are pastors and deacons***. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the ***Body of Christ*** which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

If we break these down one by one it helps us to understand the nature of the church from a biblical perspective:

- Of the Lord Jesus: A true local church is a church that is under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He is the one who owns the church and it is under his authority. Sometimes people think they own the church, or even some pastors think they own the church, but the church is under the authority of Jesus and He is the one in control.
- Autonomous, local, congregation: This is one aspect that many people struggle with in Africa. They are used to seeing groups like Anglicans or Catholics that are controlled from the top down. However, this is not how the church functioned in the New Testament. Each local congregation had the authority to teach itself, govern itself and support itself. This is because Baptists believe scripturally that every believer has the Holy Spirit, every believer is a priest unto God and every believer is equal in the eyes of God and equally responsible. Churches do not need a bishop or a pope to control them from a head location. Instead, they can pray and seek the will of God for their own congregation. However, even though this is true, two other important issues go along with autonomy. Each local fellowship is ***accountable*** to the word of God and each local fellowship should be in ***cooperation*** with other like-minded churches. Accountability to the Bible and cooperation with others for the purpose of missions is what balances out autonomy and ensures that churches stay true to the Bible, to each other, and the mission of God. For a church to be healthy it needs all three aspects in balance: ***Autonomy, Accountability, and Cooperation for Missions***.
- Baptized believers: The church is made up of members who have been baptized by immersion after being born again. True churches do not baptize babies because baptism is for those who have repented of their sin and received Jesus as Lord and Savior. Entrance into the membership of the church is based on one's salvation experience and their baptism. Baptism is like the door of entrance into the membership of the church.
- Associated by Covenant, the fellowship of the gospel: Being a church means that a body of baptized believers have united together and covenanted with one another to be a church. A church is more than just a Bible study that tries to do things like a church. Instead, there is intentionality in being a church. There is a point where a



group of baptized believers who are worshipping and studying together, intentionally decide to become a church. This involves committing to each other as a body and willingly being accountable to one another. They are governed by the word of God and the fellowship of the gospel. It is for the propagation of the gospel that the church exists. We come together as a body for fellowship and growth, but we primarily come together as a church to spread the gospel in our local areas, and even further to the ends of the earth. The gospel is what binds the church together and it is what gives the church purpose under the Lordship of Christ.

- Ordinances: Healthy churches observe two ordinances: baptism by immersion in water and the Lord's Supper. These ordinances will be further explained later in this manual. However, it is important to note that the ordinances were not given to individuals but to the local church, and baptism and the Lord's Supper should happen under the authority of the local church. These ordinances point to the gospel of Jesus Christ and demonstrate his death, burial, and resurrection. By these ordinances, we identify with him and we remember his sacrifice for us.
- Governed by word: The word of God is what governs the church, not the rules of man, and everything the church is and does is determined by the word. The members of the church are gifted by the Holy Spirit and they are to exercise those gifts for the good of the body and the service of God. Church membership is a privilege and it demands each member do their part in the local church and for the spread of God's Kingdom through the great commission.
- The purpose is the extension of the gospel: As previously stated, the purpose of the church is to worship God, glorify him, and extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. While there are biblical leaders who lead the church, it is the responsibility of every member to participate in this extension of the gospel through evangelism, discipleship, and missions.
- Lordship of Christ, democratic process, the priesthood of believers: Jesus is the Lord of the church and He works through the individual members of the church to fulfill his purposes. Biblical leaders are appointed by the church members to lead, but those leaders operate as under-shepherds under the Chief Shepherd, who is Jesus. Since every member is born again and baptized by the Holy Spirit at salvation, each member can go directly to God in prayer and hear directly from God in prayer and through the Bible. Each member is a "priest" unto God and as such, they have not only the privilege of hearing from God, they also have the responsibility to serve him and act on his behalf. Thus, each member of the church has a vote in the direction of the church under the Lordship of Christ and in conjunction with those who are leading the church (elders/pastors). While everyday leadership issues are carried out by those appointed to leadership positions, they are elected by the body of members in a democratic process and can also be removed by them. Big decisions are made by the body of believers together as a team. Each member is to be

mutually accountable to one another and they should pray together and make decisions together as they are guided by those who have been called to serve in leadership roles.

- Two offices: There are two biblical offices in the local church. There is the office of **Pastor** (sometimes called elder or overseer) and there is the office of **Deacon**. These roles will be explored in more detail in later lessons in this manual, but there are a few important issues that should first be discussed. There are three words in the New Testament that describe the church leader: pastor (or shepherd referring to the work), elder (referring to the office), and overseer (or bishop, referring to his authority). The pastor is called by God to pastoral ministry, but they are called by the church for local service. When a man is called to the pastoral ministry and the church recognizes God's calling in his life, they should ordain him. Ordination is a local church function and not something that comes from an association or denomination, although they can help the local church carry this process out if necessary. In Baptist churches, pastors are not appointed to churches by governing bodies such as associations or denominations, but instead are called and installed as pastors by the local church members themselves. **Deacons** are the second office in the local church and the New Testament word simply means servant. They are to serve the ministry needs of church members and care for those who are hurting and in need. Their role is not one of authority, but instead, it is one of humility and service as they demonstrate the love of Jesus for the Saints of God in very tangible ways.
- There is also a universal aspect: While the vast majority of the references to the church in the Bible are referring to local, New Testament churches, there are a few occasions when the Scripture is referring to the worldwide body of Christ. This is the "worldwide church" made up of every believer from every period and from every place who will be around the throne in heaven. Those who are the "redeemed from all ages" are also sometimes referred to as the body of Christ and there is a sense in which each Christian is a part of a larger worldwide family. However, this larger worldwide family functions in local, biblical congregations. When we speak of healthy churches in this manual we are referring to those local congregations and their health.

# Church Circle Assessment Tool<sup>2</sup>

*Dr. Kevin W. Rodgers*

## INTRODUCTION

As we begin our study of healthy churches, it is good for you to evaluate the church of which you are a part. How healthy is your church? One of the best ways to determine both the characteristics of a healthy church and whether your church is healthy or not is through the “Church Circle Tool.” This tool illustrates for people what a church looks like and it also contains all of the components of a healthy church. Based on the Bible, we have discovered that there are 12 important characteristics of a healthy church. In no particular order these are:

- Biblical Evangelism
- Biblical Discipleship
- Biblical Membership
- Biblical Leadership (Pastors and Deacons)
- Biblical Preaching/Teaching
- Biblical Ordinances (Baptism/Lord’s Supper)
- Biblical Worship
- Biblical Fellowship
- Biblical Prayer
- Biblical Accountability and Discipline
- Biblical Giving
- Biblical Missions

These 12 characteristics are the 12 sections that we will cover in this manual (two lessons per characteristic). The difference in this manual, though, is that we will look at Biblical Baptism and Biblical Lord’s Supper as separate lessons. So, in reality, we will cover 13 topics - Biblical Membership and 12 characteristics.

The following is a lesson based on the church circle assessment tool.

### **Part One (1/3):<sup>3</sup>**

**Pastoral Care:** Ask if anyone has a special need or issue for which the group can pray? Pray for those who are being witnessed to or are concerned about. Ask different group members to pray for one another.

**Worship:** Sing a song or read a psalm.

**Accountability:** Ask them in pairs to share what their goal for this week was and how they accomplished it.

**Vision Casting: Are we more than they?**

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<sup>2</sup> This lesson is adapted from a training manual called “The Commands of Christ.” This is a resource provided by the organization, No Place Left.

<sup>3</sup> This lesson is demonstrating the 3/3 process we discussed in the introductory material.

Think about the small group of disciples Jesus left behind that He commanded to preach the gospel to all mankind.

- Are we more in number than they?
- Are we more educated than they?
- Do we have better technology than they?
- Better communication?
- Better transportation and road systems?
- Did they have the Bible like we do today?

So how is it in one generation, these 12 disciples managed to reach their world for Christ? They did not do it alone. They witnessed, disciplined, trained, and sent out others to do the work, and the ones they trained repeated the process. That is the only way we will be able to “preach the gospel to all mankind” in our lifetime. Will you commit to being an obedient disciple who disciplines others?

**Part Two (2/3):** The first group of Jesus’ followers gathered into a church in Acts 2:36-47. Read this story out loud. Then in pairs, ask them to write down a list on their paper of things that the people in the first church did. (Give them about ten minutes to work on this.) Then share answers with the large group. There are many ways to list these, but the 12 essential elements of being a church fall roughly into three easy-to-remember categories: **Covenant, Characteristics, and Caring Leaders.**

**1. Biblical Membership**—A church is a group of people who have made a **covenant** with Jesus in baptism and are committed to one another. They have an *identity* of being a church—they have chosen a name for their church. A church is not a building.

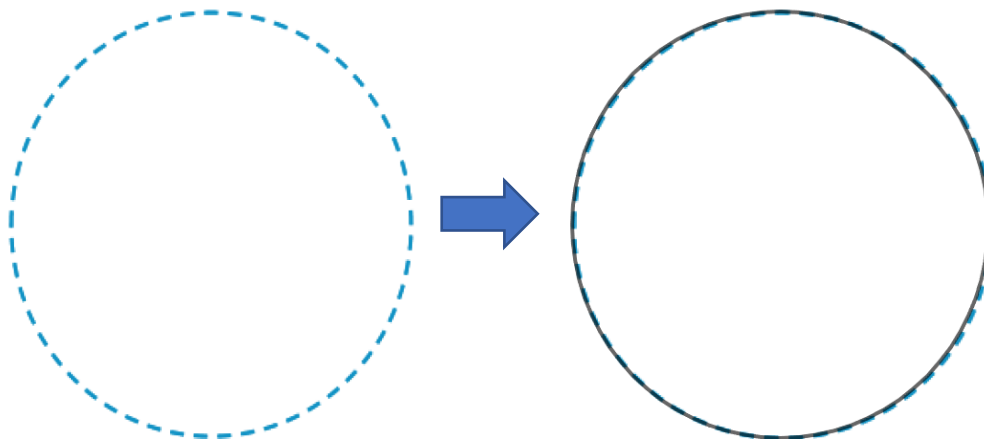
**2. Characteristics** – People in a church regularly do the basic things that churches do. Each church should have these basic elements. Each church may do these things differently in their culture or at different stages of maturity, but all the elements are essential for the health of the church.

- Biblical Baptism – people in the church have repented of their sin, put their faith in Jesus Christ alone, and followed him in believer’s baptism by immersion.
- Biblical Preaching and Teaching – they study the Word of God (e.g., Bible study, preaching, Bible stories) and seek to obey it.
- Biblical Discipleship – the early disciples followed the apostles teaching.
- Biblical Lord’s Supper or Communion – they observe the breaking of bread regularly to remember the Lord’s sacrifice for them.
- Biblical Love and Fellowship – members of the church demonstrate genuine love and care for one another.
- Biblical Giving – because of their love, church members give sacrificially to meet needs in the body and in the community, to help support their caring leaders, and to support the spread of the gospel. Members give their tithes and offerings.
- Biblical Prayer – speaking with God, praying with respect as to a father.
- Biblical Worship – worshiping God in praise (songs, words of praise, reading psalms out loud, etc.).

- Biblical Evangelism – sharing the gospel at home and abroad (fulfilling the Great Commission).
- Biblical Missions – while this is not specifically spelled out in the Acts 2 passage, the early church was spreading the gospel to other places and planting new churches.
- Biblical Accountability – This is also not spelled out in Acts 2, but other passages in Acts make it clear that the early church was accountable to each other and they practiced church discipline.
- Biblical Leadership – To continue to grow and remain healthy, churches should have at least one, but often several, male leaders from their culture qualified to shepherd them at that stage. Leaders should be mature and qualified for the stage of maturity the church is in. These are **caring leaders**.





**Drawing the Church Circle to determine the health of a church.**

Can you remember the 13 elements (membership plus 12 characteristics)? It helps to draw them in a “church circle.” As a group, on a blank paper, draw a dotted line representing your own church.

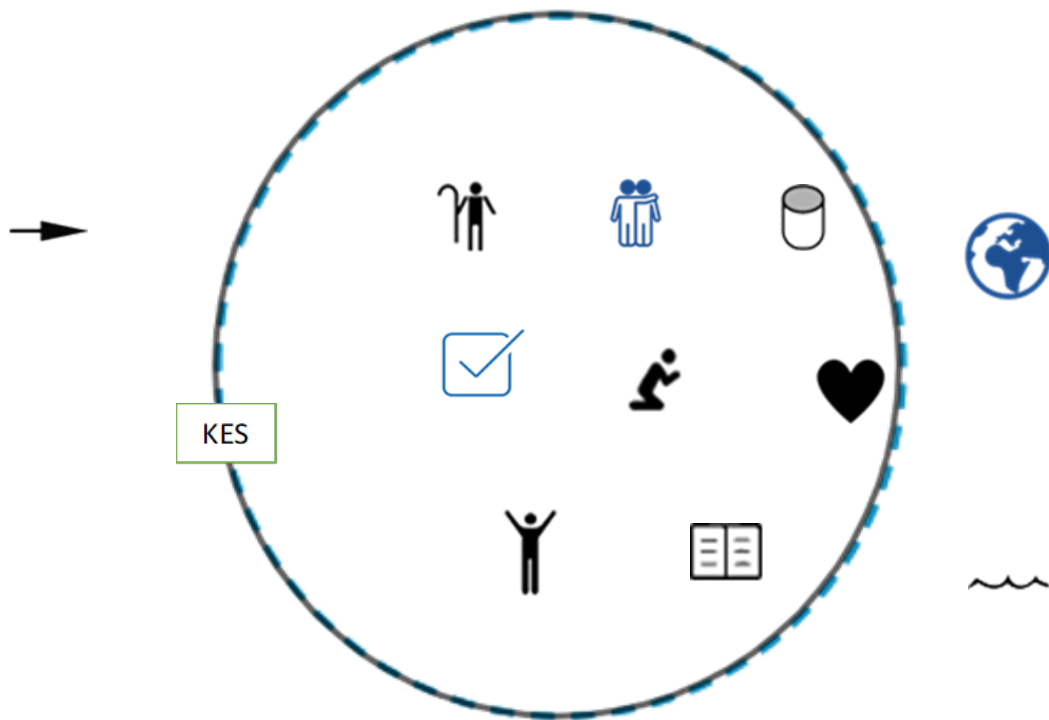


If your church has covenanted/committed to being a church, make the dotted line *solid*. Then put a symbol representing each of the remaining elements inside or outside the circle (you can change the icons to better suit your context). **If the group is regularly practicing the element itself, put it *inside*. If the group is not, or waits for an outsider to come do it, put it *outside* the circle. If there is some outside and some inside then put it on the line.**

Symbols:

- Covenant Membership: a solid line instead of a dotted line 
- Biblical Evangelism: an arrow, representing going to the lost 
- Biblical Discipleship: two people helping each other 
- Biblical Leadership (Pastors and Deacons): picture of a shepherd 

- Biblical Preaching/Teaching: picture of a Bible 
- Biblical Baptism: picture of water 
- Biblical Lord's Supper: cup or bread  
- Biblical Worship: person with upraised hands 
- Biblical Fellowship and Love: heart 
- Biblical Prayer: someone kneeling in prayer 
- Biblical Accountability and Discipline: check box or something else 
- Biblical Giving: KES, coins, or a gift box.   
- Biblical Missions: picture of the world 



In the example above, this church is healthy in some areas and those have been put in the circle. However, in baptism, evangelism, and missions they are falling short. In giving some is from the church but they are also dependent on outsiders which is unhealthy, so we put that on the line. Putting what you are doing well in the circle and where you are weak outside the circle, helps you to know where your church needs to focus to become more

healthy. In our lessons, we will learn that it is our responsibility to witness to the lost and lead them to Christ and to be baptized. But that is only the beginning. We also need to help new believers learn how to be obedient disciples who follow and fish and disciple others. As this continues, more and more groups and healthy churches will be started. Are you willing to commit to being a discipler of those you win to the LORD? Are you willing to help start new healthy churches that will continue to reach out and expand the Kingdom of God on earth?

**Part Three (3/3):**

**Practice:** Practice drawing and explaining the church circle to a partner and then let your partner do the same for you. Use your church as the model. Discuss the areas you think your church is weak and where it needs to get healthier. Do you have covenant membership? Which characteristics does your church need to focus on during this study?

**Set Goals:** Work with your church leadership to set goals for the aspects where your church needs to grow.

**Pray** for the body of believers to be united in Christ. Pray they will be able to achieve their goals this week.

Additional verses that might be helpful as questions arise:

NT pictures of the church: Acts 2, 1 Corinthians 1:2 (saints who call on Jesus' name, a specific group of believers as well as worldwide believers), Ephesians 2:8-10 (his workmanship created for good works), 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (God's dwelling place within the life of each believer!)

Where did church meet? Temple, synagogues, homes (Acts 2:46; 5:42; 10:25,29; 12:12; 16:40; Romans 16:3-5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 1:2)

Why do churches meet? Acts 2; Colossians 3; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 4:1-16. (Building up the body of Christ in love, to obtain maturity; grow up in him; unity; holiness; to see Christ.)

## A Survey of Baptism in Acts

*Dr. Kevin W. Rodgers*

### INTRODUCTION

Have each person do the following exercise on their own paper or do this for the entire group on a whiteboard. Read the passages listed in the chart below and fill in the information that is found in each passage. If the answer to the question is not clear in the text then just put, "don't know."

Scripture	Why was person baptized?	Who did the baptism?	How was baptism done?	Where was baptism?	How soon was baptism?
Acts 2:41					
Acts 8:6-13					
Acts 8:36-38					
Acts 9:18-19					
Acts 10:47-48					
Acts 16:13-15					
Acts 16:33					
Acts 18:8					

### APPLICATION

Discuss with the larger group the general principles that can be seen in the early church. What were the qualifications for someone to be baptized? What happened to them before baptism? Who usually performed the Baptism? What was the mode of baptism (was it sprinkling, pouring, under water, where)? How quickly were people baptized? Did the early church wait, did they have baptismal classes, did they do any kind of training?



# Theology of Baptism

Dr. Kevin W. Rodgers

Our **theology of baptism** needs to be informed by the **entirety of Scripture**. Many important, relevant passages are critical to our doctrine of baptism and a survey of Acts, in and of itself, is not sufficient to tell us all we need to know about baptism (example of Romans 6 and the true meaning of baptism). The Acts survey is a great place to start, but we must look at the whole Bible to fully understand the theology of baptism.

When we talk about the **practice of baptism**, this survey of Acts is extremely useful because it helps us see the patterns that are obvious in Scripture, and it helps us to know what should be *normative* in the church. There is a connection between church, membership, baptism, and the **church's stewardship** of ordinances. Baptism and the Lord's Supper were given to the local church and the church alone has the authority to baptize. Anyone in the church can do the baptism (it does not have to be the pastor) so long as the church authorizes them to baptize on the church's behalf. Typically, the church will choose their pastor or church leader to perform the baptism, but this is done under the church's authority, not on his own.

As with all things in Scripture, we must seek first to understand the **timeless truth** of a text and then prayerfully consider how we will **contextualize** it for our people. Context is extremely important and is something that you need to consider as you **gently lead** your people to a more biblical theology and practice of baptism.

## From the Acts Survey

- How soon should a new believer be baptized?
  - When someone confesses they believe in Jesus (and have repented of their sin) they should be baptized as soon as possible – sometimes immediately!
  - It is the first step of obedience a new believer takes, and it must be done with speed so the new believer will continue to obey God in other ways too.
  - There is nothing wrong with a baptismal or new believer's class to make sure the baptismal candidate has received Christ and understands the purpose of baptism, but it should not be something that takes very long. As soon as reasonably possible is a good rule of thumb.
  
- How was baptism practiced in the book of Acts?
  - Baptism was done by immersing people completely in water (the Greek word for baptism is the word *baptidzo* and it literally means to put under the water). Sprinkling and pouring are not biblical modes of baptism because they do not demonstrate the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
  - Baptism was done in the name of Jesus. Matthew tells us in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The important thing to remember is that we are following Jesus in baptism when we are baptized.

- Where was a person baptized?
  - A person could be baptized anywhere there was enough water!
- Who baptized new believers?
  - In many cases, it appears that the person who led them to faith was the one who did the baptizing.
  - Believers who were present were sometimes asked to do the baptism.
  - Baptizing was *not limited* to the twelve apostles or other church leaders. (We do not know who Ananias was or if he was even a church leader. Philip was a deacon whom God used in a mighty way. We do not know who the men were who baptized the believers at Cornelius' house.)

### **A little deeper...**

- Baptism is immersion in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and it is only administered to those who give credible evidence that they are born-again believers in Jesus Christ. All believers are expected to be baptized. Greek word baptidzo or βαπτίζω means to immerse or put under the water. Immersion also symbolizes the gospel. It is only for believers and not for infants or those who have not yet repented.
- Baptism and incorporation into a local church should be automatic consequences of conversion (see Acts 2:41). It is both public and a commitment.
- Baptism is more symbolic than sacramental (ordinance is the word we typically use though it is not in the Bible). For something to be an ordinance it had to have been instituted by Christ and symbolic of the gospel. Only baptism and the Lord's Supper qualify. A sacrament is something that gives grace or some kind of special spiritual benefit to a person. People are not saved by water baptism. It is only an outward sign and testimony of the salvation they already have in Christ. This is why we use the term ordinance and not sacrament like other denominations do. Baptism does not forgive sin, only the blood of Jesus can cleanse from sin.
- The church is who the ordinances were given to (not to individuals), and since all believers are priests, any believer can baptize as long as they are authorized by the church. Historically, Baptist churches have authorized their pastors to perform this ordinance, but not based on their ordination, it was based on church authority.
- Baptism is an identification with Christ (Romans 6:3-4 and Colossians 2:12) and with his body the church.
- Since it is a command, submitting to baptism is a step of obedience. However, it is not to be taken lightly. Each church needs to find a space between "baptism as soon as possible" and "baptism when people understand what they are doing and why." Waiting to baptize someone for too long will actually hinder their spiritual growth and maturity because you are holding them back from obeying Jesus. Baptism is the first step of obedience in their spiritual journey and it should be done as soon as it is possible, once they have understood the meaning and purpose of baptism.

# The Lord's Supper

Rev. Daniel Lowry

## Begin with Group Discussion

- Have those present break into groups of 4-5 and assign them one of the following Scripture texts: Matt. 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-26, Luke 22:14-20, John 6:47-58, Acts 2:46 & 20:7, 1 Corinthians 10:15-17 & 11:17-34.
- Direct the groups to read the Scripture together, seeking to answer the following questions:
  - What does your Scripture say about the meaning or theology of the Lord's Supper?
  - What does your Scripture say about how the Lord's Supper was observed?
- Ask someone to take notes of each group's answer so that after every group has shared you can summarize what you have found in the Scriptures.

## Historical Debates Regarding the Lord's Supper:

Historically, there are two main debates about the Lord's Supper. First, is the taking of the Lord's Supper something that gains us grace from God as we do it, or is taking the Lord's Supper mainly to remember the grace that God has already provided us in Jesus Christ? (This is the sacrament vs. ordinance debate.) Second, from the early church people have debated the meaning of the words, "This is my body..." On one side of this debate is the idea that the words are literal – that the bread somehow mysteriously becomes the body of Christ. Others argue that Jesus meant these words symbolically – that the bread does not actually become his body somehow, but is a symbol of his body.

The primary question to ask in considering the debate of Sacrament vs. Ordinance is: Are we receiving something or remembering something? An **ordinance** is to remember and rejoice in grace received through Jesus. *According to Baptist beliefs, there are only two ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper.* What qualifies as an ordinance? A command (1) given by Jesus, (2) required of the church, and (3) is a means of displaying the gospel. A **sacrament** is to receive grace/merit for salvation through the ritual action, like the Lord's Supper. Many actions have been called sacraments: baptism, confession, even marriage. The idea is that doing these actions adds up as a necessary part of our salvation.

**Discussion Questions:** Do we receive grace from God by taking and eating, or through faith in Jesus? Is there any benefit for a non-Christian who takes the Lord's Supper?

The primary issue in the literal vs. symbolic debate is the phrase: "This is my body." One proponent of the literal interpretation is the Roman Catholic Church, which teaches that the bread actually/mysteriously becomes the flesh of Christ in a process called "transubstantiation." Baptists are proponents of the symbolic interpretation. Baptists believe that observing the Lord's Supper is for remembering Jesus's work and displaying faith in Jesus Christ.

**Baptist Faith and Message 2000:** "...[baptism] is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate his second coming."

## **Discussion Question: How does Jesus intend for us to understand the bread and wine?**

### **Theology of the Lord's Supper**

There is so much that could be discussed here, so let's focus on just a few issues of the theology of the Lord's Supper. First, we need to understand "the how and why" Jesus uses the Passover feast to institute the Lord's Supper. The Passover was intended by God to preserve the memory of when He saved Israel from Egypt. It was as if every year they were replaying the event of the Passover when the Lord passed over the houses of Israel that had lamb's blood on the door, and the people were finally freed. It is as if they are reminding themselves every year: "Without the lamb's blood, we die. Without the lamb's blood, God's judgment would strike us." Jesus simply adjusts the symbols to preserve the meaning of the new salvation event. Jesus is the Passover lamb. He is the one who saves us. Without his blood, God's judgment would strike us.

Second, we can see how the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper act as an anchor for us. An anchor holds a boat so it does not drift. In the same way, the ordinances hold us to the most important truths of our faith so that we do not drift away from them. When we observe these ordinances we look to the past, we look at the present, and we look to the future. How does the Lord's Supper make us look at the past? We see what God has done to provide salvation to us by sending His son Jesus to receive the punishment for our sin and be raised to life to show that judgment was completed (see Luke 22:19 and 1 Corinthians 11:24-26). How does the Lord's Supper make us look to the present? We are reminded that we are united with Jesus Christ and with one another by faith (see John 6:47-51 and 1 Corinthians 10:16-17). How does the Lord's Supper make us look to the future? We hold on to the promise that the Lord will return and bring His church to the marriage supper of the Lamb (see Luke 22:16 and Revelation 19:9).

### **The Practice of the Lord's Supper**

Now that we have discussed Scripture, history, and theology concerning the Lord's Supper, we need to be very practical. How do we obediently and faithfully observe this ordinance in the church?

First, how often should we observe the Lord's Supper together? There may not be one correct answer here. However, we should note that in the history of the church, the Lord's Supper has been central to Christian worship. Is it central in our churches? How often would we need to observe the Lord's Supper for it to function properly as an anchor holding us to our faith? The general guideline should be: observe the Lord's Supper regularly.

Next, what food and drink should we use? Do we have to use flat bread and wine like Jesus? Do we have to use the special wafers and juice sold in town? The guideline here should be: use whatever will allow you to observe the Supper regularly. If the wafers and juice from town are too expensive or too hard to get, use something else! God would be more pleased by us obediently observing the Lord's Supper with ugali and water than if we never observed the Lord's Supper because the wafers are too difficult to get.

Third, let's ask the question of "Who?" Who should serve the Lord's Supper? Typically and historically, the pastors/elders have led the church in this ordinance, often with deacons assisting them. It is probably wise to follow that model. Who should participate? Remember the *Baptist Faith and Message* statement above? Only baptized believers walking in faith with Christ and in fellowship with His people should participate in the Lord's Supper.

Lastly, what should our attitude be in observing the Lord's Supper? It should be both joyful and solemn. It is joyful because it is an act of worship in which we remember that God has saved us by the blood of His son! It is solemn because we should always examine ourselves in taking the Lord's Supper, as Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 11:27-31.

### **Changing How Your Church Observes the Lord's Supper**

As with many things in ministry, we need to approach change with patience and consistency. If your church is not observing the Lord's Supper faithfully, you need to patiently and consistently lead your church to grow in this area. This will have to include teaching on the Lord's Supper and helping your flock understand why it is necessary and good.

### **Closing Group Discussion: Application**

1. What is your plan to overcome obstacles to baptizing?
2. Do you have anyone in your church needing to be baptized? What is your plan to baptize them?
3. What will be your schedule for observing the Lord's Supper?
4. What elements will you use? Where will you get them? Who will prepare them?
5. Pastors: what is your plan to teach your people about the Lord's Supper?

# Private Worship

Rev. Billy Hardwick

## Begin with Group Discussion

What is Worship? (Allow for open discussion and answers from the group.)

## Definition

A healthy church offers to God worship that is acceptable to him according to his word, with reverence, awe, and joy. They sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs whose content is saturated with biblical truth. Their worship includes the public reading of Scripture, the testimonies of God's people, and prayer. As appropriate, they may also include corporate fasting. All of their worship aims to glorify God and edify his people.

- Worship is focusing on and responding to God.<sup>4</sup>
- Worship is an outward response to inward action.
- We were created for worship, therefore, we will either worship the creation or the Creator.

## Scripture

- "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (**1 Cor. 10:31**).
- "Glory in his holy name; Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad" (**1 Chron. 16:10**).
- "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; And deliver us and forgive our sins for Your name's sake" (**Ps. 79:9**).
- "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father" (**Col. 3:17**).
- "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (**John. 4:24**).

Because man's ability to worship as a group is directly impacted by how we worship privately, we must actively seek to worship Christ in all that we do. Our Monday through Saturday should be practice for our corporate worship experience on Sundays.

**Application** (These are personal questions that should be answered independently.)

- We will worship something. What are you worshipping?
- The quality of our public worship will be impacted by our private worship time. How much time are you spending daily with God?
- A response is necessary for genuine worship. Bible study is essential, prayer is essential, but what are some ways that you personally respond to God?

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<sup>4</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (NavPress, 1997), 86.

# Corporate Worship

*Dr. Kevin W. Rodgers*

## Principles of Corporate Worship

- **Object of Worship:** God-focused vs. People focused, Missional vs. Attractional, Ministry vs. Performance
- **Participants in Worship:** Leader, Worshipper, Recipient
- **Missing Ingredients in Worship:** Sacrifice and Preparation
- **Elements of Worship:** Holistic Approach
- **Uniqueness of Corporate Worship:** Body vs. Individual
- **Style of Worship:** Theologically consistent and Contextually Relevant

## The Object of Worship

***God is the one we are worshipping*** so our worship must be pleasing to him and it must be directed towards him. Our worship must be consistent with the Bible and not dictated by the desire of people. Many times, we think that our worship is supposed to attract people to God, but that is unbiblical. Jesus said people would know us by our love and unity (John 13:35, 17:20-23). We are known by our obedience (John 14:23-24). We are known by the fruit we bear (John 15:8-10). But, our worship was never designed to be “attractional” to others. In John 12:32-33, it is Jesus by his death who draws men unto him. Also, in John 6:44, it is the Spirit that draws men to God, not our worship.

- Lost people are not attracted by buildings, sound systems, or church programs.
- We do the mission and go to people Monday through Saturday; we worship God on Sunday.
- True worship is about him; it is not about growing in members or numbers.
- True worship is not about entertainment... not about singing or dancing to please people.
- True worship is ministry-oriented and not performance-oriented.

**Application** (These are personal questions that should be answered independently or among your fellow church members) :

- Why do we want the sound system to be loud, is it biblical?
- Why do we need instruments?
- Why do we photograph or video the service, and is it biblical?
- Why do we need uniforms or matching choir outfits?

## Participants in Worship

In our services, we have those who worship, those who lead the worshippers, and the ones who are the audience for worship. In performance-based churches, we mistakenly believe that God leads the worship team who does the worship and we receive the presentation as if we are watching a television program. In reality, the worship team/pastor/choir, etc. leads the worshippers who are themselves and the congregation, and then the one who receives the worship is God. He is an audience of one.

**Application** (These are personal questions that can be answered independently or together with your group members.)

- What does God see when He looks at your church service?
- Does God receive true worship from every member of the congregation?
- Can you worship silently in your heart or must worship be out loud?
- Where is God when we are worshipping... is He close or far away?
- What should be the attitude of our worship as we worship him?

### **Missing Ingredients in Worship**

Read Genesis 22:1-15, Hebrews 11:17-19, Romans 12:1

- Notice the preparation by Abraham. He took responsibility and he took it seriously.
- Notice the sacrifice by Abraham. He thought he would have to do the one thing he DID NOT WANT TO DO and he called it “worship.”

**Application** (These are personal questions that can be answered independently or with your fellow church members.)

- How are you sacrificing in your worship?
- Do you rise early and prepare yourself?
- What do you do Saturday night and Sunday morning?
- Is worship about you or God, your enjoyment or his honor?

### **Elements of Worship**

There are many things we do in our worship service which are all directed at the object of our worship, God—the Lord Jesus Christ. **Read Ephesians 5:18-21 and the context of “one another.”**

- Preaching and Teaching the word
- Singing and making music with your whole heart
- Giving thanks (and sacrificial giving)
- Mutual submission
- Even baptism and Lord’s supper should be worship

Everything that we do on Sunday morning is a part of worship - this is what is meant by **holistic in nature**. Our fellowship is worship, our prayer is worship, our singing is worship, our giving - even the announcements can be worship.

**Application** (These are personal questions that can be answered independently or with your fellow group members.)

- What is the difference between a worship song and a praise song?
- Do you worship when you give?
- Who is watching when you give, and should we give to be seen by others?
- Do you treat some parts lightly where you chat or let your mind wander instead of focusing on God and his glory in that part?



## **The Uniqueness of Corporate Worship: Body vs. Individual**

- Read 1 Corinthians 12:24-31. The body is made up of many parts. All are important and we worship as a body.
- Read 1 Corinthians 14:26-40. Our corporate worship is to be about...
  - Building others up and not myself (v. 26)
  - Not disorderly but done in order and peace (v. 33)
  - We are to observe the created order of leadership (vv. 34-35)
  - Do everything decently and in order (v. 40)
- Think of a body. It has two hands and two feet, but one mind and one mouth. When we worship corporately, we are worshipping as a body (which is what corporate means). How you worship alone in your prayer closet is going to look different from how you worship when you are together with the body of Christ.

**Application** (These are personal questions that can be answered independently or with your group.)

- How does corporate worship look different from individual worship?
- How many different songs can we sing at once or how many sermons should be preached at once?
- How are things disorderly at your church service and what needs to be done to bring order back?
- Should we seek emotional experiences in our corporate worship?

## **Style of Worship: Theological and Contextual**

African churches should worship in an African way, according to their context. However, they should always ask the questions: “Why do we do this particular thing?” “Where did this practice come from?” and, “Do we have chapter and verse to tell us if this is okay or not?”

- Sometimes we do things because of religious tradition but we do not understand the theological reasons.
- Sometimes we get practices from false churches or African Traditional Religion and bring them into the church without discernment.
- We have to test everything we do by the word. Just because you see it on TV or even in the west does not mean that this is the right thing to do.
  - Before you adopt a method of offering, study the theology of giving in the Bible.
  - Before you adopt an order of service, ask what are we focusing on and how does this please God.
  - Think about stewardship of time and resources in your worship.
  - Think about your best worship. In some places, choirs and drums can be more contextual and theological than keyboards and singers.
  - Think about pleasing God and not man, do not worry about the number that comes.

- Think about maximum participation of all members and not the performance of a few.
- Think about God standing beside you and looking into your heart. You can even worship in silence and it be real if your mind is fixed on him.
- Jesus is what makes your church great, not the preaching, pastor, singing, amount of money you have, kind of building you have, sound system, etc. (mega-churches are not the measuring stick, the Bible is)

# Private Prayer

Rev. Jason Milton

## What is prayer?

- Communication with God.
- A gift from God.
- An immense privilege.

## Why is prayer important?

- All Christians should be people of prayer who strive for holiness so that God can use us powerfully in his service.
- To hear God's voice, we must get as close to Jesus as possible...and stay there.
- The biblical model of prayer helps us do this. It puts us in communion with God.

## Prayer is NOT:

- Sporadic. Prayer should be as natural and ever-present as breathing.
- A way to earn merit.
- A duty to check off a religious activity list.
- A formula to manipulate God.
  - This is what pagans do. It is also a form of witchcraft.
  - It comes from a sense of entitlement as if God owes us something.

*Christian prayer is when God's true children naturally cry out to him when they are hurt, give thanks to him when overjoyed, and look to him when in need. Prayer demonstrates our belief that God is there to hear and answer those who come to him in faith.*

## Prayer is the means by which God...

- Forms us into the person he wants us to be.
- Speaks to us.
- Brings us into communion with him.
- Protects us.
- Reminds us of our need for him and his love for us.
- Brings us into the work he is doing.

*We will not always receive what we ask from God, even things that seem to align with his will. Praying according to God's will includes the need to pray in **faith**, with **patience**, in **obedience**, and in **submission** to God's greater wisdom (Luke 22:42; Rom. 8:28; 1 Pet. 4:19).*

## How to pray: Jesus' examples of and instructions for prayer

Group Activity: Divide the participants into five groups. Two groups will look at Jesus' instructions on prayer. The remaining groups will read through Jesus' examples of prayer. Assign the passages below. Ask each group to discuss and present the themes they noticed across their passages. Answers are listed at the end.

### *Jesus' Instructions:*

- Group 1:
  - Matt. 5:6-7; Luke 5:16
  - Matt. 6:7; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47
  - Mark 11:25
  - Matt. 5:44
- Group 2:
  - Matt. 24:20; Mark 13:18; Mark 14:38; Luke 22:40, 46
  - Matt. 21:22
  - Luke 18:1-8

### *Jesus' Examples*

- Group 3:
  - Pray privately
    - Matt. 14:23; 26:36, 44
    - Mark 1:35; 6:46; 14:32
    - Luke 9:28; 22:41
  - Pray for others
    - Matt. 19:13
    - Luke 6:28
- Group 4
  - Pray for big decisions
    - Luke 6:12-13; 22:44
- Group 5
  - Pray in submission to the Father's will
    - Matt. 26:39-42
    - Mark 14:35
    - Luke 22:42

### ***Answers to Jesus' Instructions on Prayer***

- Matthew
  - 5:44—Pray for those who persecute you
  - 5:6-7—Do not pray on street corners. Pray in private
  - 6:7—Do not pray with empty phrases
  - 6:9ff—Pray like this
  - 21:22—Pray in faith
  - 24:20—Pray you will not flee in winter
- Mark
  - 11:25—Forgive others
  - 12:40—Do not make long prayers just for show
  - 13:18—Pray that you will not flee in winter
  - 14:38—Pray that you do not fall into temptation
- Luke
  - 5:16—Jesus withdraws to desolate places to pray
  - 11:1ff—Pray like this
  - 18:1-8—Pray with persistence and faith
  - 20:47—Do not make prayers for show

- 22:40, 46—Pray that you do not fall into temptation

### **Answers to Examples of Jesus' prayers**

- Matthew
  - 14:23—Prayed by himself on the mountain
  - 19:13—Laid hands on children and prayed
  - 26:36—Prayed by himself with disciples off to the side
  - 26:39-42—Prayed asking Father to let the cup pass
  - 26:44—Left disciples and prayed
- Mark
  - 1:35—Prayed early morning by himself
  - 6:46—Went to a mountain to pray
  - 14:32—Left disciples and prayed by himself
  - 14:35—Prayed asking for the cup to pass but submit to God's will
- Luke
  - 6:12-13—Prayed all night before choosing his disciples
  - 6:28—Pray for enemies
  - 9:28—Went to a mountain to pray
  - 22:41—Withdrew and prayed
  - 22:42—Prayed earnestly but in submission to God's will
  - 22:44—Prayed extra hard before big decisions and events

### **The Christian Heart and Attitude Toward Prayer**

- Model prayer/the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13)
  - It is not a list of specific words to say or a speech.
  - It shows the heart and kinds of concerns we should bring to the Father.
- We can and should ask for things. If our hearts are right with God, we will ask for the "right" things.
  - John 14:13-14
    - Ask in Jesus' name and he will do it.
      - To ask in Jesus' name means to pray in a way consistent with his character and his will.
      - Effective prayer asks for and desires what Jesus delights in.
      - The context of John 14 focuses on obedience to and love for Jesus. If we love and obey him, our prayers and desires will be like his.
  - James 4:3: "You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions."
    - Not all prayers are pleasing to God. It is only those consistent with his will as revealed in Scripture that are pleasing to him.
    - Prayers that desire only self-centered passions or desires will not be granted.
    - Not all pleasures and passions are wrong—only pleasure that does not honor God or reflect Christlikeness.
- Our lack of holiness prevents our prayers from being heard
  - 1 Pet. 3:7: "Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, *so that your prayers may not be hindered.*"

## Practical tips for prayer

- The ACTS method—Adoration/Acknowledgment; Confession; Thanksgiving; Supplication
  - Pray according to each letter.
    - “A” – express adoration toward God. Acknowledge his holiness and perfection.
    - “C” – Confess your sin.
    - “T” – Thank God for specific things that he has done and/or promised to do.
    - “S” – Conclude with supplications. Ask God for things.
- Praying through Scripture
  - As you read your Bible, stop and pray through the passage. For example, if you are reading Psalm 23, stop and ask yourself, “Who do I know that needs to understand that God is the Good Shepherd? Who needs his/her soul refreshed?”
- Create prayer cards and lists of things to pray for.
- Prayer journals – Writing out your prayers can help you stay focused while praying.
- Liturgical prayers and prayer prompts – Books such as *Valley of Vision* can help you focus and formulate your prayers.
- Praying according to God’s will:
  - Pray in faith.
  - Pray with patience and persistence.
  - Pray in obedience
  - Pray In submission to God’s greater wisdom and will.

Use the Lord’s Prayer and John 14:13 to remind yourself of the heart we should have when asking for things.

1 John 5:15—Human experience testifies that Christians do not always receive all the things they ask from God, even things that seemingly accord with his revealed will. This verse must be understood in light of other passages of Scripture which show that praying according to God’s will include the need to pray in faith (Matt. 21:22; James 1:6), with patience (Luke 18:1–8), in obedience (Ps. 66:18; 1 Pet. 3:12), and in submission to God’s greater wisdom (Luke 22:42; Rom. 8:28; 1 Pet. 4:19).

# Corporate Prayer

*Dr. Kevin W. Rodgers*

- Orderly in Process (1 Cor. 14:26-40)
  - Everyone cannot do what they want to do (vv. 26-33).
  - There is an order to how services are handled, and this includes public prayer.
  - Everything is for building others up, not building up ourselves (v. 26).
  - God is a God of peace, not a God of disorder (v. 33).
  
- Unified at Heart: One body, One voice (1 Cor. 12:12-31)
  - When we are in our prayer closets, we are individuals, when we are in the service together on Sunday morning we are in the body. There is a difference.
  - A body has many parts but is one (Romans 12:4-8)
  - In corporate worship, we act as one body and so only one voice is heard at a time, but that voice represents the entire body. The current practice of everyone praying out loud at the same time is unbiblical for this reason. We are not gathered as individuals on Sunday morning, we are gathered together as a body. A body only has one mouth. We would not let multiple people preach at the same time, that would be confusing. We do not let different people sing different songs at the same time; we sing the same song together. The same is true with the corporate worship service. When someone is called upon to pray for something in the service (like the offering, message, etc.) that person is representing the body at that time. We listen to that person pray and we agree with them in prayer by saying “Amen!,” or other words of agreement.
  - There is nothing wrong with individual worship or prayer when alone, but in the body of Christ, we worship and pray as a body, not as individuals. If you must pray as an individual in the service for some reason you should pray silently in your heart so as not to disturb the person beside you.
  - The only example in the Bible of corporate prayer teaches that when believers came together they were not all praying different prayers. It means that someone prayed to represent them and that prayer is recorded for us in the text. If they were all praying at the same time then they would have all had to pray the exact same words, according to the text(Acts 4:23-31).<sup>5</sup>
  
- Respectful of God and others
  - Just like private prayer, we must remember we are praying to the King of Kings. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.
  - We can pray with power, but we must pray with respect and humility (1 Sam. 2:30).

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<sup>5</sup> For more explanation on this, see the book by Dr. Kevin Rodgers, *The Issue of Pentecostal Praying*, Self-Published. For a free electronic copy you can contact the author at [www.kevinrodgers.net](http://www.kevinrodgers.net).

- We want our prayers to be reverent and not to hinder someone around us.
- Powerful in Agreement
  - When we pray as a body, we have greater authority than as an individual.
  - We need to join with others in prayer and be able to say the “Amen!” to that prayer they are praying for the body. Amen means “I agree” or “let it be so!” (see Deut. 27:15-26 and how the Israelites received the law).
  - Paul says in 1 Cor. 14:16, that by our disorderly worship we can prevent others from saying the “Amen!” and thus hinder our prayers as a congregation.
  - There is power and authority in the church when they agree under the Lordship of Christ (Matt. 18:15-20). The context is church discipline and. We often focus on verse 20 and his presence. But notice in verse 19, that his power is manifested in our agreement together. We can do more together than we can do alone.
- Focus on God, World, and Body (what do we pray for)
  - In corporate worship, we pray and thank God as a body for who He is and what He has done and is doing.
  - In corporate worship, we pray for the lost, the unreached, and the world and commit ourselves to do whatever He calls us to do.
  - In corporate worship, we pray for the needs of the body, as a body, and ask God to minister to the body.

#### Conclusion: Avoid Certain Pitfalls

- Allowing people who are demon-possessed to pray. This is one of the important reasons not to allow mass prayer with everyone praying out loud at the same time in the congregation. The leader of the service should call on people to pray in the service that they know are walking with God.
- Allowing people who are ungodly to pray publicly.
- Focusing on self instead of the body.
- Praying for show; praying in another language not your own because of pride.
- Praying the same words as a habit without thinking about them.
- Not agreeing with those who pray (We should pray like we do when we lay hands on the sick. This is a good model for corporate prayer; one person leads, and the rest agree with that person through the Amen or other words of agreement.)



# Personal Discipleship

Rev. Billy Hardwick

## Definition

Notice that it is the members of the church that invest in one another. This means that each individual member must be practicing the spiritual disciplines of the Christian life. Members of the church intentionally invest in one another's lives to grow to maturity in Jesus Christ. This discipleship is characterized by transformed hearts, minds, affections, wills, relationships, and purpose, all in keeping with the Word of God.

You cannot make disciples until you yourself are a disciple.

## Read the Following Passage: Matthew 28:18-20

"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all that I commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'"

This passage indicates that the individual believer must be a disciple that both learns and obeys the commands from the Word of God.

Below is a list of the Spiritual Disciplines as outlined in a classic book by Donald Whitney.<sup>6</sup>

## Spiritual Disciplines

1. *Bible Intake—Hear the word; Read the word; Study the word; Memorize the word; Apply the word.* Bible Intake requires that the recipient of the word of God must fully engage the text in many ways. One can hear the word -listen to it being read or even read it out loud. Also, the word must be read - many times it is good to read and reread a text multiple times to get the full meaning of the text. Scripture memorization causes the believer to internalize the word so that, as the Holy Spirit moves the believer in a conversation, they have access to the words that they have memorized. Finally, there is the application of the word of God. Below are some questions to ask of each text as it is studied.
  - a. What do we learn about God?
  - b. What do we learn about people?
  - c. Is there a sin to avoid?
  - d. Is there a promise to claim?
  - e. Is there an example to follow?
  - f. Is there a command to obey?<sup>7</sup>
2. *Prayer—Direct regular communication with a holy God who is our father:* Prayer is not a mystical moment in the believer's life. Prayer is a daily, multiple times a day,

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<sup>6</sup> Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> <https://noplaceleft.net/four-fields/>

conversation with our Heavenly Father. This conversation should be marked by some simple elements:

- a. Acknowledge God's holiness.
- b. Confess our sinfulness before him and that we need his help.
- c. Thanksgiving should be offered for his daily provision of grace in our everyday lives.
- d. Supplication should be offered for the spiritually and physical needs of ourselves and those God has placed in our lives.

3. Worship—Focusing on and responding to God: This topic has been dealt with in-depth in an earlier session. Our daily routine of spending time with God should lead us to worship him.

4. Evangelism—Presentation of the Good News of Jesus Christ that He came, died on the Cross for our sins, was buried and rose again on the third day for our victory over sin, death, and the grave: Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; John 20:21; Acts 1:8 Using these passages what do the Scriptures show us about evangelism? Break into groups and answer the following:

- a. Why should I share the gospel? (2 Corinthians 5:17-21) Read the text together and realize that two things have happened:
  - i. We have been given a new identity (new creation in Christ).
  - ii. We have a new job (we are ambassadors of Christ).
- b. What should I share?
  - i. My Personal Testimony (who I was before I met Jesus, how I met Jesus, what my life is like after meeting Jesus).
  - ii. Simple gospel presentation.
- c. When should I share? Often. Dedicate a time each week or each day that you will share your faith with someone.
- d. Who should I share with? Below is a listing of people groups to share with. Have the audience fill in the blanks beside these people groups of specific people they want to share with.
  - i. Friends\_\_\_\_\_ (A specific person in your group of friends that you do not know if they are saved.)
  - ii. Relatives\_\_\_\_\_ (A specific person in your family that you do not know if they are saved.)
  - iii. Acquaintances\_\_\_\_\_ (A specific person that you know but have not formed a relationship with; matatu driver, duka owner, etc.)
  - iv. Neighbors\_\_\_\_\_ (A specific person that lives near you that you do not know their salvation story.)
  - v. Strangers\_\_\_\_\_ (People you have not met yet.)

5. Serving—We are to follow Christ's example of being servant leaders: Philippians 2:5-11; John 13:13-16 Read the texts aloud. Discuss ways that a church leader should be a servant.

6. Stewardship—Giving of one's time, talent, and tithe for the glory of God: As leaders, there are three areas that we can demonstrate our stewardship of what God has given to us.
  - a. Time: How much time each day do we devote to God?
  - b. Spiritual Gifts: God has gifted every believer with spiritual gifts. How are you using those gifts to his glory each week?
  - c. Finances: The tithe is the starting point of our giving to God. A tithe is quite simply 10% of our income.
  - d. We must set the example.
  
7. Fasting—Voluntary abstinence from food for spiritual purposes:
  - a. Normal Fast—No food, but drink water
  - b. Partial Fast—Limited food
  - c. Absolute Fast—No food, No water
  - d. Supernatural Fast—No food or water for 40 days
  
8. Silence and Solitude—Get alone with God and listen to Him

Practical Outline for Disciple Making

1. Intentionality—Have a plan and execute the plan
2. Consistency—Meet a minimum of weekly
3. Accountability—Ask and answer honest questions
4. Reproducibility—Can the people we train, take the material and train others

# Corporate Discipleship and Sunday School

*Rev. Daniel Lowry*

**What is corporate discipleship:** Organizing the church to disciple members into maturity.

Let's consider Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:42-47, and Colossians 1:28-29. In Matthew 28 the primary command given by Jesus is to make disciples, teaching them to obey everything commanded. This means first that there are things that disciples need to know. It also means that we must help Christians learn to obey what they know. Knowledge and obedience are both requirements of making disciples. In Acts 2, when describing the new church, it says, "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." We see that the church took Jesus' words seriously. They were committed to learning the teaching of the apostles and living together in obedience. Paul writes in Colossians 1:28-29 that this is his goal: "[Jesus] is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end, I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me."

## **Evaluation questions:**

- Are you committed to bringing the people in your church to maturity?
- Is your church ministry organized to teach people to obey everything Jesus commanded?
- Are the Christians who gather in your church consistently growing in knowledge and obedience?

## **The Church as the Discipling Community**

Fundamental to the idea of discipleship is *learning*. One of the things at the core of what it means to be a church, therefore, is that it is a place of teaching. This must include both teaching to help people know AND teaching people to obey. So, HOW are you teaching people to know? Usually, this is done through sermons, Bible studies, and training. However, there MUST BE MORE THAN THIS. These are mostly passive knowledge exposure. It does not usually require anything more than listening. A very important question to answer is: HOW are you teaching people to obey? Typically, churches are not very intentional about this part of the great commission.

## **Sunday School as a discipleship structure**

Sunday School can be a structure to engage people to actively grow in their faith instead of only passively receiving. It can be a place to train and use leaders. It can even be a way to reach more people with the gospel and plant churches.

The basic elements of a healthy Sunday School discipleship program are: (1) teaching people to know God and know his word, (2) urging and expecting people to obey God, and (3) helping people love one another. These follow along with the great commission and what we see in Acts 2. However, even though these are simple elements, it can be surprisingly difficult to consistently make them a part of our church life. It is necessary to be very intentional about planning for this to happen, and training Sunday School leaders to do these things.

## A Clear Plan for Discipleship

How can you plan to systematically teach people to know more about God and his word through Sunday School? Historically, one of the most common ways the church has done this is by using what is called a catechism. A catechism is a list of questions, answers, and scripture verses that cover basic Christian doctrine and biblical knowledge. A catechism covers things like basic questions about salvation and faith, the Lord's prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Sermon on the Mount. It is a simple, effective way to pass on important teachings of our faith. It does not require literacy, and even very young children can learn this way. Over time, using a catechism steadily builds up the base of a disciple's knowledge of God and his word. One additional benefit of using a catechism is that it is easily reproducible. Parents can pass on to their children what they have learned in the catechism, and people can use the catechism to begin discipling those who they lead to faith. Here is an example of what catechism questions look like if you have never used one:

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Question 2: What is the main purpose of life?

Answer: The main purpose of our life is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:31; Psalm 16:11; 37:4; 73:25-26; Isaiah 43:7.  
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Using a catechism to teach is as simple as this: asking the question, memorizing the answer, and reading the Scriptures provided to know that this truth comes from God's Word. The example above comes from *A Baptist Catechism*,<sup>8</sup> which is a free resource provided by Desiring God Ministries. It is a very thorough catechism based on catechisms that have been used by the church throughout history. A second very good option for a catechism you can use for free is the *New City Catechism*.<sup>9</sup> The New City Catechism is only 52 questions, designed to have one question per week for a year. One of the benefits of the New City Catechism is that they have simplified answers for children, as well as songs to go with each question to help children learn more readily. If you do not currently have a systematic plan for teaching your church Christian doctrine, using a catechism is a very good place to start.

How can you urge and expect people to obey Christ's commands through Sunday School? Let's begin with a question for pastors: what have you publicly praised and honored in your church? For most, one of the only things we publicly praise is giving money. Why do we not do this with any other area of obedience? Why do we not publicly honor people who are regularly sharing the gospel, or obeying God in other clear ways? Secondly, accountability to obey Christ's commands is an important part of Sunday School discipleship. In a small group, Christians can ask one another week to week if they have been faithful to obey what they have learned and committed to. As people in a Sunday School group meet together regularly, they can hold each other accountable to personal devotional practices like reading the Bible and praying. They can hold each other accountable to disciple-making, asking whether they have been sharing their faith and

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<sup>8</sup> You can access or download a free copy of this catechism at <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-baptist-catechism>

<sup>9</sup> You can access it online at <http://newcitycatechism.com/>, and you can also download it for free for Apple and Android smartphones.

teaching the faith to their children. They can also help one another escape and avoid sin by lovingly rebuking those in the group who fall into sin. The point here is this: it is important to be intentional about helping people obey Jesus, and the pastor cannot usually do this alone. Sunday School can be used to disciple people into more obedience.

How can you help people love one another through Sunday School? Put simply, Christians need to build relationships with other Christians. Meeting together in groups provides an opportunity to do this. As people meet together, they form relationships of trust and love; they can meet each other's needs and minister together. In Acts 2, the church was committed to fellowship. We must provide the opportunity for this if we are going to faithfully make disciples.

In closing, below you will find an example Sunday School meeting which includes each of the elements discussed above, including how a catechism can be used during the meeting.

### ***Example Sunday School Meeting***

**Time of accountability: Begin by asking one another accountability questions, such as:**

- Evangelism:
  - Who did you share the gospel with in the past week? What opportunities did you miss to share? Who do you plan to share with this week?
- Personal spiritual disciplines:
  - Have you been consistent to read your Bible and pray each day? Share something from your Bible reading over the past week.

Pray after this discussion.

**Time of teaching: Using a catechism to teach**

- Begin by reviewing the question, answer, and scripture from the previous week. Repeat the answer together from memory.
- Introduce this week's question
  - Example: New City Catechism Question 30: ***"What is faith in Jesus Christ?"***
- Discussion – Invite people to answer the question on their own.
- Scripture verses – Read selected verses provided with the question in the catechism.
- Discuss again – Invite people to make a better answer to the question after considering what the scripture verses say about the topic.
- Give catechism answer
  - Example: New City Catechism: ***"Faith in Jesus Christ is acknowledging the truth of everything that God has revealed in his word, trusting in him, and also receiving and resting on him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel."*** (Children's option: *"Receiving and resting on him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel."*)
- Repeat together until it can be said without looking.

### **Sendoff: Conclusion**

- Commitments to share what was learned: ask members to share who they will tell about what they have learned. Will they teach it to their children?
- Make any ministry project plans – ask if there are needs that the group can meet in the name of Jesus; or make a plan for group evangelism.
- Commit to contacting any regular members who were not present to check on them. Do this before the next Sunday.
- Pray together in closing.

# Love and Fellowship in the Local Church

Dr. Kevin W. Rodgers

## INTRODUCTION

As believers, we know that we are supposed to love one another and fellowship is a hallmark of the local church. Members of the church love each other, encourage one another, and build each other up. They care for one another, serve one another, and bear each other's burdens. They are kind to one another and forgive each other. They teach, admonish, and exhort one another with the Word of God. They stir one another up to love and good works. They are involved in one another's lives and know each other well enough to be fruitfully involved in one another's discipleship.<sup>10</sup>

However, we also have a responsibility to love the world and be an example to the world.

- 1) As the Church, we are to love our neighbor (1 Thessalonians 2:1-8):
  - We love the world by sharing the gospel - v. 8 pleased to share the gospel
  - We love the world by sharing our lives - v. 8 pleased to share our lives
  
- 2) As the Church, we are to be an **example** of love and fellowship to the world. How do you know which church is the true church (more than just the right doctrine)?
  - By our love for each other - John 13:31-35
  - By the way we obey his word - John 14:23-24
  - By the fruit that we bear - John 15:8-10
  - By the unity in our midst - John 17:20-23

***The Bible says this is our glory***, not our buildings or performance (1 Cor. 13).

- 3) As the Church, we are to love each other and the world the way Jesus loves (John 13:34-35). How did Jesus love us?
  - He loved us unconditionally: We do not love "if" or "because," we just love (full stop!). Notice the context of this passage is the betrayal of Judas. We do not just love those who love us.
  - He loved us patiently: Notice the following context is Peter. Jesus was patient with him even though he ran away. He still forgave him and restored him in chapter 21.
  - He loves us publicly: Jesus told them he loved them. They did not have to guess. He showed it on the cross. He demonstrated love for all with **words** and **actions**.
  - He loves us sacrificially - John 15:13: He showed his love by laying down his life for us. Love and fellowship with each other and towards the world will cost us something.

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<sup>10</sup> Foundations v.2 (2018), International Mission Board Publication: 2018, p. 60.



- 4) As the Church, our fellowship and love touch those around us by what we do and say.
- The church should be sharing the gospel with all regardless of background.
  - The church should be ministering to the community in practical ways.
  - The church should be meeting human needs and helping with no expectation of return.
  - The church should be there for funerals, community crises, and leading by example.
  - We love because Jesus first loved us (1 John 4:19).

# Introduction to Biblical Accountability

*Dr. Jimmy Bledsoe*

## **MAIN IDEA**

In this lesson, we shall see from the Scriptures how members of the church ought to hold one another accountable for their obedience to the Word of God, and leaders of the church ought to watch over the flock that has been entrusted to them. When necessary, the church exercises discipline according to Scriptural instructions, always praying and laboring for restoration of the erring brother or sister.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1 Timothy 3:14-15, Paul expresses his reason for writing this first letter to Timothy and in doing so reveals three essential truths regarding the Church:

1. “I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:14-15).
2. The church is the household of God—the people whom he has called out and assembled together in his covenant.
3. The church is a pillar and buttress of the truth—that which was once for all delivered to the saints and for which the church should contend to protect and to preserve.

The church has a manner in which its members ought to behave—what Christians should do and what they should not do. However, many Christians make two typical mistakes when another Christian fails (i.e., sins). First, many believers wrongly assume that a Christian loses his/her salvation if he/she sins. Second, many believers avoid addressing sin in a biblically correct way. How many times have you heard Christians misquoting Jesus’ words from Matthew 7:1: “Judge not, that you be not judged”?

## ACTIVITY

Divide the participants into four groups. Say: “Many Christians react to other Christians who have been discovered to be in sin from their own cultural norms rather than by biblical cultural norms. In your group answer the following question: How do people in your context react when they discover a fellow Christian is in sin?” Allow the groups 5-10 minutes to discuss and then ask for a spokesperson from each group to give an example of how Christians typically react to others in sin.

Here are some examples:

- Some leave sin unaddressed rather than addressing it.
- Some use indirect communication to address an issue, going to a third party rather than confrontation with the person who has committed the offense.
- Some churches seek to punish others rather than to see them completely restored.
- Some offer prideful and critical condemnation rather than gracious and loving correction.
- Some allow leaders to live by a different standard rather than holding them to Christ’s standard.

## A Biblical Definition of Accountability

To be accountable means to be subject to the obligation to report, explain, or justify something. Because a person is *liable* for his/her actions, he/she is therefore *responsible* and *answerable* for them.

### Two questions:

1. Is a Christian obligated to report, explain, justify, or give an answer for his/her sins?
2. If so, to whom is a Christian obligated to report, explain, justify, or give an answer for his/her sins?

In order to rightly answer these questions, we must understand the biblical basis for accountability. Consider the following truths from Scripture:

1. God has sovereign majesty and authority because he brought everything into being and, therefore, he owns all things (Psalm 24:1-2; Psalm 83:18; Psalm 93:1-2; Psalm 97:1, 8-9; Psalm 115:1-3; Colossians 1:16-17; Jude 25; Revelation 4:11).
2. His design and purpose for all things is to use them to fill the earth with his glory—the weight of his significance and supremacy in all his attributes (Psalm 19:1; Psalm 97:6; Psalm 57:5, 11; (Psalm 72:18-19; Psalm 96:1-9; Isaiah 6:1-3; Isaiah 40:5).
3. God is holy—set apart from all else by his excellencies. Not only was his intent for all creation to display his glory, he also expects the people he redeems to reflect his holiness (Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 19:3-6; Leviticus 11:44-45; Deuteronomy 10:12-17; Deuteronomy 18:13; Psalm 97:10-12; Matthew 5:48; Romans 6:1-23; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:22-24; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 2 Peter 1:3-11).
4. God is just in his judgment against sin (Ecclesiastes 12:14; Psalm 96:10-13; Matthew 7:21-23; Matthew 16:27; Matthew 25:31-46; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 3:12-17; Galatians 6:7-8; Colossians 3:23-25; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12).
5. Everyone will stand before God and give an account for their lives (Matthew 7:21-23; 25:31-46; Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27).

## The Necessity of Accountability

### ACTIVITY: Four Biblical Case Studies

Give each group a case study from the Scriptures—Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-13); Cain (Genesis 4:1-12); David (2 Samuel 11-12; Psalm 51); and Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 4:32-5:11)—and ask them to answer the corresponding questions on their case study report form.

In the four biblical case studies, we can learn much about the necessity of accountability. Here are some important truths to note from each case study:

1. Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:1-13)

Verse 6 reveals three important truths concerning who is responsible for sin. Satan did not cause Eve to rebel—he merely tempted her by twisting what God had actually

said (vv. 1-5). Eve willfully rebelled, giving in to her desires (v. 6). Adam was with Eve and did not correct her—in fact, he willfully participated in the rebellion (v. 6).

Verses 7 and 8 reveal three immediate effects of Adam and Eve’s rebellion. First, they experienced guilt and shame, showing the death of their innocence. Second, they tried to cover their guilt by their works. Third, they hid from God, showing the death of their perfect relationship with God.

However, by asking the questions “Where are you?”, “Who told you that you were naked?”, and “Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” (verses 9-11), God shows he was holding Adam and Eve accountable for their actions. He also shows the kindness of his grace and mercy by calling the man and woman to confess their rebellion.

Yet, in verses 12 and 13 we see Adam and Eve’s refusal to accept responsibility for their actions. Adam tried to shift the responsibility onto the woman and then actually blames God (because God had given him the woman). Eve tried to shift the responsibility onto the serpent for deceiving her while failing to mention that she desired the fruit and what it could bring her.

## 2. Cain (Genesis 4:1-12)

Cain’s first failure was not offering to God an acceptable sacrifice (vv. 3-5). The Scripture does not communicate that God accepted Abel’s sacrifice or rejected Cain’s sacrifice because of how they offered their sacrifices. Rather, the Scripture notes only the type of sacrifice offered—Abel’s was a blood sacrifice; Cain’s was not. Apparently, Abel understood the law of sin and death which dictates *without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness of sins* (Hebrews 9:22). For this reason, the writer of Hebrews later wrote in 12:14—“By faith, Abel offered to God **a more acceptable sacrifice** than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts.”

God graciously warned Cain of the danger of allowing sin to go unchecked (vv. 6-7). God pointed out that if Cain would “do well” he would be accepted. To “do well” means to do that which pleases God. God stated that sin’s desire is to rule over a person, but that a person must rule over it. Cain ignored God’s warning and in a jealous rage, he killed his brother, Abel (v. 8).

By asking Cain “Where is Abel?” (v. 9) and “What have you done?” (v. 10), God reveals that Cain is accountable for his actions. He also shows the kindness of his grace and mercy by calling Cain to confess his rebellion.

Cain responds to God’s question by asking, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (v. 9). Cain’s response is disrespectful and disregards God’s authority and desire. The answer to Cain’s question is “Yes! Yes, you are your brother’s keeper.” God’s just judgment against Cain is harsh, yet it also revealed God’s mercy and grace in protecting Cain.

## 3. David (2 Samuel 11-12; Psalm 51)

In 2 Samuel 11, the Scripture recounts the following episode in the life of King David: Though it was the time when kings go out to battle, David sent his army, but he remained in Jerusalem. Late one afternoon, David went walking on the roof of the king’s house, and he saw from his roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very

beautiful. So David sent and inquired about the woman. Even though he was told that the woman was named Bathsheba, and was the wife of Uriah the Hittite, David ignored that fact and acted upon his lust, and proceeded to have sex with her. Bathsheba conceived a child. When David heard that she had become pregnant, he tried to cover up his adultery by bringing Uriah home from the battle that he might sleep with his wife. When Uriah refused to do so, David furthered his attempts to hide his sin by orchestrating Uriah's death on the field of battle. The focus for this discussion is on what happens next in 2 Samuel 12:1-13. Psalm 51 is David's prayer of repentance after being confronted by the prophet Nathan.

David knowingly put himself in compromising situations, being in the wrong place at the wrong time (2 Samuel 11). He stayed back when he should have led his men in battle. He was on his roof during the time when women typically would be bathing on their roofs. He likely was anticipating seeing nudity. David allowed himself to be lured and enticed by his own desire. He permitted that desire to give birth to sin, and sin when it was fully grown brought forth death (cf. James 1:14-15).

By sending the prophet Nathan to confront David, God showed that he does not allow sin to go unnoticed or unaddressed (2 Samuel 12:1-7). Nathan used a parable to help David see his sin and to communicate how God perceived David's sin (2 Samuel 12:7-9). David had ignored all the grace God had shown to him; David had despised God's Word, disregarding it with contempt; David had done what was evil in God's sight.

In his prayer of repentance, David confesses his sin using three terms (Psalm 51:1-2):

1. Transgression = rebellion
2. Iniquity = perversion, depravity
3. Sin = guiltiness for sinful actions

David realized that though his sin was physically against his own wife, Bathsheba (Uriah's wife), and Uriah, it was ultimately against God (v. 4). David recognized that his sinful actions originated from his fallen, sinful nature (v. 5). David's conviction of his rebellion against God also involved pleading with the Lord to cleanse him (vv. 6-9). God's discipline might be painful (washing with hyssop), but it leads to our good and his glory (vv. 10-19). God creates a new heart. God renews a right spirit. God does not revoke his covenant. God restores us into joyful fellowship. God uses imperfect servants to accomplish his purposes.

#### 4. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 4:32-5:11)

The early church is described as being helpful to one another. No one in the church was instructed or forced to sell personal property. Those who gave to the church did so willingly because the Spirit's enacting grace in their lives to meet other members' needs and to build up the church (4:32-37).

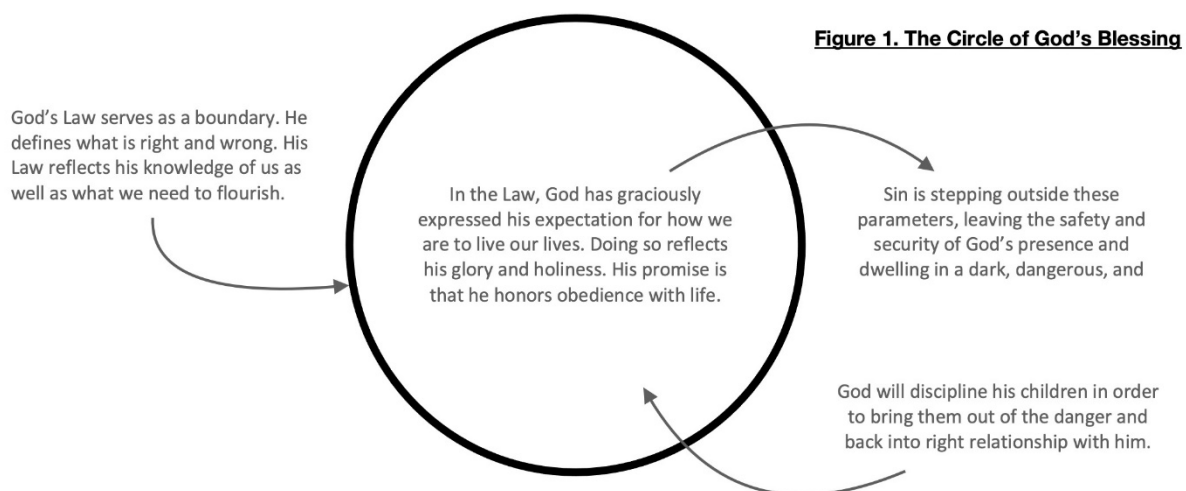
In Acts 5:1-10, we see how Ananias and Sapphira conspired about selling their property and lied about how much they sold it for. Why? The Scripture does not directly tell us, but Peter's response to their conspiracy gets to the heart of the problem:

1. Whether their conspiring in their hearts came from a desire to look good in the eyes of others or to somehow relate to God by works rather than grace through faith, it revealed that they were not under great grace as others had been described.
2. They lied to God and tested the Spirit by pretending to be generous givers while in reality, they were defrauding God.

The severity and immediacy of God’s judgment were to create a holy fear in the whole church (v. 11).

The Scripture does not inform how Peter became aware of the conspiracy or why he did not call either Ananias or Sapphira to repent. We can only conclude that God revealed the matter to Peter and that the Church has been given authority over membership and holding members accountable.

Because of our fallenness, we are prone to wander from the God we claim to love. Therefore, accountability is essential in our lives until that day when sin is finally rid from us. Until then, we will continuously remain in the Circle of God’s Blessing (Figure 1).



### What the Bible says about Church Discipline

According to the author of Hebrews, God disciplines his people (12:1-14). Discipline is a positive thing. What’s more, God expects his people to discipline one another.

In his first letter to the church in Corinth, Paul addressed the matter of a member of the church who was committing sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 5:1-11). Members can be deeply deceived to think (1) they can be a Christian while deliberately and unrepentantly disobeying the Lord or (2) their sins are okay. In order to glorify God, however, members must be confronted with their sins and be shown the relationship between one’s faith claim and the way he or she is living.

Writing to the church at Thessalonica, Paul explains that when members are in sin—in this case, the sin of idleness—the church is to urge them in the Lord Jesus to obey the biblical instruction of the leaders of the church (2 Thessalonians 3:6-15). If they do not submit to biblical instructions, church members are to disassociate with them so that they might experience shame and repent, being received as a brother.

Galatians 6:1-2 makes clear that Christians are to restore a brother or sister caught in sin with gentleness. By bearing one another's burdens, Christians fulfill the "Great Commandment" of loving others as themselves.

In 1 Timothy 5:19-20, Paul reasons if church leaders are thought to be in sin there should be ample evidence and witnesses to support. When church leaders are caught in sin they are to be addressed decisively and rebuked publicly. Some sins disqualify one from serving as a church leader.

In Titus 3:9-11, Paul explains that members are to avoid fighting over things that are not all that important. When a member causes division, warn him two times. If he or she does not repent after the warnings, they reveal they are still under condemnation.

Perhaps the clearest depiction of church discipline is seen in Jesus' teaching block recorded in Matthew 18.

**ACTIVITY:** Consider four contemporary case studies. Give each group one of the following case studies and ask them to determine how the church should respond.

1. A youth pastor was invited to live in a house belonging to the church. Without communicating the reasons beyond "some difficulties in the church," the church council decided to withhold his salary for several months. The youth pastor did not have funds for purchasing food or making payments for a personal loan. One day the treasurer of the church gave the youth pastor a large sum of money and asked him to make payments for several electric meters associated with the church's property. The youth pastor took some of the money and used it to buy food and make a payment.
2. After 30 years of marriage, the wife of a leader in the church discovered that her husband had been secretly looking at pornography and for the last ten years had been committing adultery with another woman.
3. Two women in the church had a dispute over family matters. One of the women visited the local *mganga* to put a curse on the other woman. When other members of the church heard what happened, they learned that the woman also had other charms on her body and around her home.
4. A mzee in the church had struggled with drunkenness for many years before becoming born again. He was seen by members of the church to be making and selling a local brew. On a few occasions, the man appeared to be intoxicated.

### **Why the Church Must Practice Church Discipline<sup>11</sup>**

1. For the good of the person disciplined.
2. For the good of other Christians, as they see the danger of sin.
3. For the health of the church as a whole.
4. For the corporate witness of the church.
5. For the glory of God, as we reflect his holiness.

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<sup>11</sup> Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Crossway: Wheaton, IL, 2013), pp. 198-204

# Biblical Accountability—Church Discipline

Rev. Jason Milton

## INTRODUCTION

As mentioned in the previous lesson, 1 Timothy 3:14-15 reveals three essential truths for the Church:

1. The church is the household of God—the people whom he has called out and assembled in his covenant.
2. The church is a pillar and buttress of the truth—that which was once for all delivered to the saints and for which the church should protect and preserve.
3. The church has a manner in which its members ought to behave—what Christians *should* do and what they *should not* do.

Two typical mistakes made by Christians when another Christian sins:

1. Wrongly assuming that a Christian loses his/her salvation if he/she sins.
2. Not addressing sin in a biblically correct way.
  - a) Many Christians misinterpret Jesus' words from Matthew 7:1: "*Judge not, that you be not judged.*"
  - b) Many Christians react from their own cultural norms rather than by Christian cultural norms. For example:
    - (1) Leaving sin unaddressed rather than addressing it.
    - (2) Indirect communication rather than direct confrontation.
    - (3) Limited punitive action rather than complete restorative action.
    - (4) Prideful and critical condemnation rather than gracious and loving correction.
    - (5) Allowing leaders to live by a different standard rather than holding them to Christ's standard.
    - (6) Assuming every bad circumstance is because of sin in a person's life.
    - (7) Confusing condemnation of sin with the consequences of sin.

## Church Discipline as Instructed by Matthew 18

- Personal sin is devastating to the individual and the body; therefore, it must be taken seriously and dealt with immediately (vv. 1-10).
  - Pride is the root of sin, but humility is desired by God (vv. 1-4).
  - Personal sin can cause others to stumble (vv. 5-6).
  - Each believer must wage war against personal sin, removing that which causes the temptation (vv. 7-9).
  - God takes joy in sanctifying his children (v. 10).
- When a brother or sister in Christ is found to be in sin, we should go after them rather than abandon him/her (vv. 11-14).
  - The parable of the lost sheep is about going after a fellow member of the flock who has gone astray in sin.
  - The one in sin does not lose his place in the flock.



- God will be faithful to keep his sheep to the end.
- Matthew. 18:15-20 flows out of Matthew. 16:17-20.
  - In Matt. 16:17-20, Jesus establishes his church and says that he will build it. It will withstand even the gates of hell.
  - One of the ways that Jesus will build his church is through the people of his church. He gives them authority to act as his representatives on earth.
  - This leads to 18:15-20 where Jesus gives more specific instructions on the church's authority, role, and how its members are to live together.
  - Jesus lays out a process for how the church is to determine who is truly with them and who is against them.
  - When God's people follow the process outlined in 18:15-20, Christ himself will be with them as they make decisions and act.
  - Matt. 18:16 quotes Deut. 19:15. The latter passage is part of the OT law and states that one witness is not sufficient to convict someone of wrongdoing; two or three witnesses are required.
  - Matthew's quotation of this verse shows that the church's actions and decisions (described in 18:15-20) flow out of God's commandments to Israel.
  - This is more evidence that Jesus is reconstituting the new people of God as those who respond in faith to him.
  - These people (the church) are God's New Covenant people. They have the authority to remove people from their assembly, but they are subject to the same standards of testimony that Israel was.
- The mercy and grace of Jesus is a motivation for church discipline (vv. 21-35).
  - Sin has an honor/shame sense to it. We owe a debt as a result of our sin.
  - The parable of the unforgiving servant (18:21-35) captures this sense of debt.
  - Because we have been shown much mercy and grace, we are to extend much mercy and grace.
  - A lack of showing forgiveness reveals a heart that does not understand grace.

### Application

- What does this passage teach us about our fallen condition?
  - Both Matt. 16:17-20 and 18:15-20 allude—either directly or indirectly— to people's fallen condition.
  - In Matt. 16:17-20, Jesus says that his church is to bind and release things on earth with the authority of heaven.
  - This implies that the church will need to make judgment decisions.
  - Matt. 18:15-20 gives an example of such a decision. It specifically involves responding to a member of the church who is guilty of *unrepentant* sin.
  - Jesus lays out specific instructions on how to confront that brother with the goal of reconciliation.
  - Since the entire passage is about unrepentant sin and how that can eventually lead to excommunication, it is clear that our fallen condition can harden our hearts to sin even to the point of expulsion from Jesus' church.

- What does this passage teach us about our redemptive solution?
  - Jesus provides the redemptive solution in himself and his instructions.
  - He promises to be with his people as they seek reconciliation (Matt. 18:20).
  - To live as followers of Christ means to live in communion with one another.
  - Matt. 18:15-20 stresses the need for unity among the assembly of believers.
  - That unity is so important and powerful because Christ himself works through it.
  - He establishes the church and gives it his authority to act on his behalf.
  - Therefore, the church working together is one of the means by which Christ brings redemption.
  - The church helps individuals maintain communion with the resurrected Christ.
- What does this passage teach us about how we should respond and change (value formation)?
  - Matt. 18:15-20 gives specific instructions for church discipline and assigns the goal of reconciliation.
  - Believers should follow the letter and spirit of this passage.
  - Moreover, both 16:17-20 and 18:15-20 should convict Christians to love and respect the church more.
  - Christ himself established the church, and he has given it his authority to represent him on the earth until his return.
  - This is an enormous privilege and responsibility.
  - Often, Christians lose the awe of the establishment and purpose of the church.
  - They treat church more as a chore than as the living assembly and manifestation of Christ.
  - The threat of ex-communication implies that community within the church should be better than what is found outside the church.
    - If people do not feel a difference between being members of a church and not being a member, we are doing something wrong in our churches.
  - These two passages should move us to not only follow the instructions of 18:15-20 but also seek to live as the Jesus-ordained church—the people of God.
  - Moreover, we are a living church not because of us, but because our living Savior is present in all of us.
- Church discipline is not the only application of this text.
  - Importance of church membership: people of God are determined by the church, and not any other authority.
    - Those who do not live by love and mutual forgiveness, are not part of the church. They are put out of the church.
    - The bigger claim of this text is those who are living in contention with God's people are those who need to be put out.
    - The church is the arbiter of God's work in the world.

# Church Leadership: Two Offices

*Dr. Kevin W. Rodgers*

## INTRODUCTION

There are many types of leaders that are needed in the local church. We find that we have practical roles that must be carried out in the local church like a treasurer, secretary, women's chair, teachers, evangelists, etc. Some of these are found in the Bible, but most are not. This does not mean they are unimportant, but it does mean that we need to be sure and focus on the biblical categories before focusing on some of the other areas of leadership. This lesson will focus primarily on the two offices described in the New Testament: Pastors/Elders and Deacons.

## Some Important Pre-Understandings:

- 1) The New Testament must be understood in its chronological context. In other words, we see leadership evolving in the book of Acts and we see a transition take place. What we find in Timothy and Titus is more developed than what we find in Acts 2. Even in Acts, we see a progression where the church evolves from apostolic leadership to needing deacons and elders.
- 2) There are only **two biblical offices** in the New Testament, not three. The first office is the office of **Elder** (sometimes called Pastors or Overseers see Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-5, Phil. 1:1) These three words are referring to the same person in the church.
  - **Episkopos:** επισκοπος
    - Greek for Overseer
    - Sometimes translated bishop
    - Refers to the authority
  - **Presbyteros:** πρεσβυτερος
    - Greek for Elder
    - Refers to the Office
  - **Poimaino/Shepherd-Pastor:** ποιμαινω
    - Greek for "to shepherd"
    - Refers to the work

All three words above are referring to the same office of Elder/Pastor and same person or persons (if there is more than one pastor in the church).

The second office is the office of **Deacon:**

- **Diakonos:** διακονος
  - Greek for Deacon/Servant (Acts 6:1-7, 1 Timothy 3:8-13, Romans 16:1)

## Qualifications of Elders and Deacons: 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9

### 1) Pastors/Elders

- He must be the husband of one wife: literally a “one-woman man.” No polygamy, no adultery, no divorce, no putting other things before his wife. Not “married” to anything else but her and Christ.
- He must be able to manage his own family and have the respect of his children. Notice in 1 Tim. 3:4-5 how he manages his family and how he leads at home is the primary qualification for church leadership (also in Titus 1:6).
- **The Bible is clear that he must be a man.** It is not specified as a quality but notice the word “he” is repeated, and every reference is to a man (1 Tim. 3:1 “if any man...” v.2 “husband”). Also, the context follows 1 Tim. 2:9-15. The order of creation and the order in the family is the order followed in the local church. This does not prevent women from serving in other leadership roles, but **never as pastors.**
- He must be sober, self-controlled, and orderly.
- He must welcome strangers into his house and love all people.
- He must be able to teach. He has wisdom, understands the Bible, and can explain it to others and handle the word of God faithfully (also Titus 1:9).
- Not drunkard & violent... but gentle & peaceful.
- He must not love money. This does not mean he must be poor. The church should care for him, but the pastor should not be greedy or use the money of the church in the wrong way. He must be willing to live at the level of the rest of his members.
- He must be mature in the faith and not a recent convert or immature in Christ.
- He should be respected by people outside the church and inside the church. Your testimony to the public reflects on the bride of Christ and so as a Pastor, you must be above reproach (also Titus 1:7).

### 2) Deacons and Wives

- Just like elders, men of dignity, speaking the truth, not double-tongued, not addicted to wine or fond of money. The qualifications for deacons are spiritual ones, not men who are good at business or the things of the world (Acts 6:3).
- Husband of one wife. Again, this means a “one-woman man,” so,
  - Clearly, a man (not a woman) who has no polygamy, no adultery, no divorce, no putting other things before his wife. Not “married” to anything else but her and Christ.
- Deacons are men, but it is also a team role (husbands and wives/deacons and deaconesses).
  - Again, all the references are to men and husbands.
  - Vs. 11 can be translated as women or wives, (γυναικας/γυναικας from γυνη/γυνε in Greek) are to be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate and faithful.

- Either these are instructions for women deacons or more likely the wives of deacons because of the context, the separate qualifications, and the nature of the role.
- What about Phoebe? She was either a female deacon or, more likely, the wife of a deacon.
- Mature and not new converts. “Let them first be tested,” “holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience” (1 Tim. 3:10).
- Above reproach to outsiders (1 Tim. 3:10, 3:13).

### **Work of Elders and Deacons**

#### 1) Pastors/Elders (1 Peter 5:1-4)

- The Pastor/Shepherd cares for the sheep: “Shepherd the flock of God among you.”
  - He teaches/feeds the sheep – primary role (John 21:15-17).
  - He cares for the sheep.
  - He leads the sheep by example.
  - He guards the sheep.
  - He lives with the sheep and oversees them.
- He does it freely and with love: “not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God.”
  - He must be called by God.
  - He must be called by the church (not appointed by a higher power).
  - He serves no matter what the church does (includes sacrifice and patience).
  - The church cares for him no matter what he does (includes support, prayer, and discipline).
- Not lording over them but leading like a servant and example.
  - The elder has authority and the elder is under authority.
  - Shepherds drive goats but they lead sheep. Good pastors lead and good churches follow. Both must be in sync and this happens by mutual sacrifice, not one waiting for the other to change.
  - Pastors should be humble.

#### 2) Deacons and Wives

- They are servants as the name suggests but also workers in other areas. “Diakonos” literally means servants and in Acts 6 they waited on tables and served widows and orphans. However, Philip and Stephen (both from the original seven chosen to serve) were preachers and evangelists as well (Acts 7 and 8). This is an office and not a gifting.
- They should be serving in their gifting and according to the needs of the church.
- The church and pastoral leadership determine what work they are to do. Historically, they have helped with the Lord’s Supper, but they should be doing much more than that.

- They should help with the care of those in need. Think of the “widows and orphans” in Acts 6 and caring for families in the church and community today. Perhaps this is why it should be a team approach (husband and wife working together, he is the ordained deacon and she is his helpmate or deaconess).

# Principles of Spiritual Leadership

*Rev. Daniel Lowry*

## INTRODUCTION

The kind of leadership the world offers is very different from the kind of leadership Jesus demands. The world and Satan often teach us how leadership can bring power, authority, influence, and greatness. Satan can give us authority and make everything under us glorious. He offers miracles to prove the power of our leadership. He can show us how to prove ourselves as powerful leaders so everyone will know that God is with us. These are all things that Satan offers to Jesus in Luke 4:1-13. Jesus expects and offers something very different. Consider Luke 22:24-27:

Then they began to argue among themselves about who would be the greatest among them. Jesus told them, "In this world the kings and great men lord it over their people, yet they are called 'friends of the people.' But among you, it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table, of course. But not here! For I am among you as one who serves.

Jesus does not offer to teach you power and authority like the world, but servanthood. Jesus does not offer you influence and greatness, but humility. You see, from the very beginning, we followers of Jesus have had trouble with this. It is desperately difficult to get away from the ideas of worldly leadership. The apostles had trouble with it. We see in Luke 9 that they are arguing about who is the greatest. Jesus corrects them, but then again in Luke 22, they are at it again, arguing about who is the greatest.

According to Jesus, leadership will not mean the people will be impressed by your power. Leading like Jesus does not bring you honor and praise. As often as not, it will lead to you experiencing shame, weakness, difficulty, helplessness, and self-denial. The importance of spiritual leadership is not the responsibility to make sure the church succeeds by worldly standards. What is the burden of spiritual leadership? It is Hebrews 13:17, "Your leaders keep watch over you as men who must give account."

The goal today is not to help you become more powerful and successful leaders by the world's standards, or by Kenyan standards. The goal is to point you to faithfulness so that when you stand before the Almighty God of creation to give an account of your leadership, you will not be ashamed or swallowed up in judgment.

### **Principle 1: Humility and weakness, not power and greatness**

Not power and greatness: Consider the teachers of the law in Luke 20:45-47.

While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, "Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely."

The teachers wanted the best clothing, to be known as a holy man so people call out to them, the most important seats in the worship gathering, the place of honor at meals,

pray to impress people. Do you know any spiritual leaders who love things like this? Importance and greatness was the cultural value of their day AND it is now in our day. It is one of the strongest rebukes that Jesus gives to the Jewish spiritual leaders. Luke 20:46 describes these “great and powerful men.” Did you hear what Jesus says about them? He says, “Such men will be punished most severely” (Luke 20:47). Why? Because they have chosen to follow the way of leadership that Satan offers, instead of following Jesus in his kind of leadership.

Humility and weakness: Cross carrying

Luke 9:23 says, “If anyone would come after me, he must **deny himself** and take up his cross daily and follow me.” Any impulse to place yourself at the honored seat, to be seen as someone great, to impress people with your spirituality is not of Jesus. Deny it. If you are following the anointed one of God and sharing his ministry, it does not mean you will have extra privilege and honor. It means you will have to suffer as you walk with him.

**Exhortation:** If you have any hope for becoming someone great/important as a leader, please go somewhere besides the church. If you enjoy the control of pastoring your church, step away from leadership. If you get excited about compliments or get upset if people do not come, or if you feel that it is your right to expect the best seats and the places of honor, then please sit down and do not rise into leadership again until Jesus has taught you humility.

## **Principle 2: Trusting God’s Word, not myself nor my wisdom**

It is common for churches to expect a pastor to minister out of their own experience more than out of God’s wisdom. We cannot allow ourselves to think this way. Even if we have experience, we must trust the wisdom of God’s Word more than ourselves. Trust God’s Word. In John 12:49-50, Jesus says he does not speak on his own but only says what the Father has commanded him to say. We also must speak what God has spoken, not what we want to say or what people want us to say. James 3:1 warns us that those who preach and teach will be judged more harshly than others in the church. We must be very careful to teach God’s word and not our own ideas. Jer. 5:30-31 and 2 Tim. 4:3-4 shows us that what love to hear and want to hear is often not what is true or right. We must teach God.

Ezekiel 13:6 gives us an example of a self/worldly example:

Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their spirit and have seen nothing! ... Their visions are false and their divinations a lie. Even though the Lord has not sent them, they say, ‘The Lord declares,’ and expect him to fulfill their words. Have you not seen false visions and uttered lying divinations when you say, ‘The Lord declares,’ though I have not spoken?

Throughout history, there have been those who want to seem important and powerful, and so they begin speaking in God’s name and claiming power. Jeremiah 28 tells us of Hananiah who proclaims that God will break the bonds in a short time, and deliver the people from their oppression. It sounded good. People loved it. Do you know who hated it? God. Do you know what God did to Hananiah for proclaiming a promise that God had not given? Struck him down.



Carefully teaching God's Word is the ministry that bears fruit. It may not be the fruit you wanted to produce. It may not be the fruit others want you to produce. You might not even get to see the fruit. But it will be the fruit God desires to produce.

**Exhortation:** Ezekiel 37 and the valley of dry bones: Believe that God will do great things IF you are faithful to preach and teach the message that he has given us.

**Principle 3: Waiting/relying on Lord, not worldly methods and strategies**

Beware of Hagar strategies. Abraham and Sarah tried growing the family in a worldly way by getting Hagar pregnant. How did that turn out? Not well for Abraham or Sarah. Trying to lead through your own power, or impressing people, getting better sound systems and nicer buildings and better programs, instead of praying and waiting on the Lord – these are Hagar strategies. All Hagar strategies do, is produce Ishmaels. Maybe some of you have been busy making Ishmaels instead of waiting on the Lord to produce Isaac.

If we are honest, we all do this. It is not a question of IF, but HOW are you being worldly in your ministry? We need to be relying on the Lord in prayer, like the apostles. Acts 6:3-4 tells of the Apostles who refused to give up prayer for other ministries. They DEVOTED THEMSELVES to prayer and consistently urge others to do that elsewhere in scripture. They learned this from Jesus. Jesus, God of God and light of light, prayed. Dare we attempt to follow him without prayer?

**Exhortation:** Psalm 33:16-17 & 20:7:

*“No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength, it cannot save...Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.”* We trust in the Lord our God. Trust in the Lord and pray.

**Principle 4: Loving/serving the flock, not being served by or using them**

God has incredibly severe words for leaders who use his flock to elevate themselves (Ezekiel 34: 1-10).

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and tell them that this is what the Lord GOD says: ‘Woe to the shepherds of Israel, who only feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed their flock? You eat the fat, wear the wool, and butcher the fattened sheep, but you do not feed the flock. You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, bound up the injured, brought back the strays, or searched for the lost. Instead, you have ruled them with violence and cruelty...This is what the Lord GOD says: ‘Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will demand from them My flock and remove them from tending the flock so that they can no longer feed themselves. For I will deliver My flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them.

Jude 12 also warns leaders who lead the flock astray:

These people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. They are

wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

Pastors are called to shepherd the flock willingly, not pridefully, and not to elevate themselves. If you think you are called to lead, but you do not have a deep desire to serve people, and deep satisfaction in serving the flock of God, you are mistaken about your calling. Mark 10:42-44 tells us that Jesus himself did not come to be served, but to serve. You cannot be a leader in the church of Jesus if the same is not true of you.

**Exhortation:** In John 21, the resurrected Jesus asks Peter three times: “Do you love me?” Do you know how He wanted Peter to express and live out that love? Each time he asked the question, Jesus’s command was: “If you love me, then feed my sheep.” We are called upon to care for and serve the flock of God.

### **Closing**

What changes do you need to make to give up power and/or greatness? Do you have idols of wanting to be honored or recognized? Are there things you avoid doing because it could upset people? Do you trust God’s Word more than your own experience and wisdom? Are you regularly studying God’s Word? Is it in your schedule? Maybe you need to publicly repent to your flock for speaking when Jesus has not spoken.

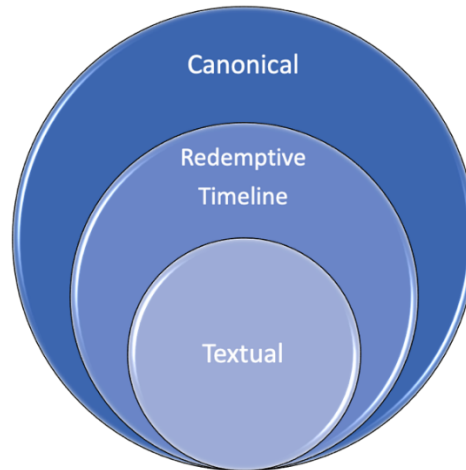
Do you wait upon the Lord? Do you have regularly scheduled times for prayer? What Hagar strategies have you been using need to repent of? Do you love and serve the flock? Who in your flock do you need to minister to personally?

Make an honest assessment: do you love God’s people? If not, consider stepping down from the pastoral ministry.

# Biblical Hermeneutics

Rev. Jason Milton

## A 3-Layered Approach to Interpreting Scripture



### Textual

Begin with the specific text and the immediate context. *What does this passage say?* Ask questions like who, what, where, when, why, and how. *What did this passage mean to its original audience?* Are there theological references and symbols? Also, be aware of cultural sayings. For example, what does Jesus mean when he says, “If anyone comes to me and does not **hate** his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26)? What did “hate” mean to Jesus’ audience and to the first readers of the Gospel of Luke?

### Redemptive Timeline

Scripture is a progressive revelation. Therefore, we must study texts in light of where they are located in God’s unfolding plan. What has happened up to this point in the overall story of the Bible? How do the parts of God’s plan fit into the whole? Texts do not come to us as standalone passages. They are embedded in a larger context of what has come **before** them in reference to God’s redemptive actions and plan.

### Canonical

Read texts in terms of what comes **after** them. Scripture is God’s Word and is a **unified revelation**. Texts must be understood in relation to the entire canon (i.e. all 66 books of the Bible).

After we have used the 3-layered approach, we can ask the following questions:

1. *What does this passage teach about God?* The Bible is fundamentally about **God**, not about people. Scripture talks about people, but it talks about them as the moral beings that God created.
2. *What does this passage tell us about people?* What do we learn about humanity’s fallen condition and need for salvation?

3. *How does this passage point to Jesus Christ? What do we learn about the redemption that only comes through Jesus?*
4. *What does this passage demand of me? We must first ask what the passage teaches about God. Then, we may ask how we should respond **in relation to what we just learned about God.***
5. *How does this passage change the way I relate to people?*
6. *How does this passage prompt me to pray?*

### **Christians Must Read the OT Differently than Others**

Luke 24:27 says,

Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures...He told them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

Every part of the OT points to the person and work of Christ. This does not mean, however, that every verse is exclusively about Jesus. The OT books are not simply stories to be read on their own. Seek to see how they point to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Typology, or type, is “a person, place, or event from the OT that anticipates or foreshadows someone or something in the NT, particularly the coming of Christ. The fulfillment is often referred to as the antitype.”<sup>12</sup>

### **Jesus Repeats Israel’s history—Examples from the Gospel of Matthew**

Matthew 2:1-12

Herod is a false king who orders the killing of others. The religious elite (2:4) do not recognize the Messiah, but the Gentile wise men do (2:2). Throughout Matthew (and all the Gospels), Israel rejects the Messiah. The plot of Matthew shows that this history of rejection is consistent with Israel’s entire history. Stephen makes this same point in his speech in Acts 7.

Jesus comes as the new Moses, but they resist him. Israel did the same to Moses. Compare Moses and Christ: a hostile king orders the murder of children, so Moses flees and then returns to rescue his people. Jesus flees to Egypt and then returns to his people. Israel was led into the desert. Jesus was led into the desert wilderness to be tempted. Moses gives the law from Mount Sinai. Jesus gives the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus comes as a greater David, but the leaders of Israel resist him. They did the same to David.

Jesus teaches with a wisdom greater than Solomon, but many in Israel refuse him just as they did with the house of David.

Jesus is a prophet like Elisha, offering life to Israel, but many prefer Herod-Ahab; as they did in the time of Elisha.

Jesus is a prophet like Jeremiah, and like Jeremiah, is a suffering prophet.

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<sup>12</sup> Tremper Longman and Mark L. Strauss, *The Baker Compact Dictionary of Biblical Studies* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2018), 194.

By rejecting these servants, Israel was rejecting the Lord who sent them. Matthew’s Gospel presents the good news that the God of Israel refuses to let Israel’s rejection stand. When Israel has done her worst and demanded that her Messiah be nailed to a Roman cross, still God will not let Israel have the final say. He raises Jesus from the dead.

### Responding to Scripture and Applying God’s Word to Ethical Questions

We need to begin in creation and then think through how sin has distorted God’s order; think through the story of the Bible from the promises of the OT to the fulfillment of the NT; and discover how God’s redemptive promise will restore and transform the created order—a reality that has now been realized in Christ.

We can follow this basic pattern:<sup>13</sup>

1. Look to creation as our starting point.
2. Determine what the Law and the Prophets teach us about God’s original plan and purpose for his creation and people.
3. Examine how the Law and the Prophets show us how sin has corrupted and fractured God’s original plan and purpose.
4. Ask how Christ and the new covenant have shown us a glimpse of what the redeemed creation will look like.
5. All of the above leads us to discern what is right and good according to the will and character of God.

### Practice Exercises: Reading the OT through Christ

Read Genesis 3:1-24 and Matthew 4:1-11.

- Using the following table, fill out the Temptations, Responses to Temptations, and Results sections for Adam and Jesus. The table below is already filled out for the teacher. The participants should do this on their own.

Adam	Jesus
<i>Temptations</i>	
Tempting the body (v. 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit good for food and pleasing to the eye</li> </ul>	Tempting the body (Matt. 4:2-3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 days without food and hungry</li> <li>• Turn stone to become bread</li> </ul>
Appealing to pride (v. 5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You will be like God</li> </ul>	Appealing to pride (Matt. 4:8-9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showed him all the kingdoms of the world</li> <li>• Worship me and it will be yours</li> </ul>
Creating doubt (v. 1, 4-5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did God actually say...</li> </ul>	Creating doubt (Matt. 4:5-6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are the Son of God...</li> </ul>

<sup>13</sup> Adapted from Michael Hill, *The How and Why of Love: An Introduction to Evangelical Ethics* (Kingsford, N.S.W.: Matthias Media, 2002), 78 as cited in Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 955.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You will not surely die...</li> <li>● Eat of it and your eyes will be opened</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Throw yourself down...</li> </ul>
<i>Responses to temptations</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Misquoted God</li> <li>● Believed Satan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Quoted Scripture</li> <li>● Believed God</li> </ul>
<i>Results</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Curse on the serpent, curse on Eve, curse on Adam</li> <li>● God sent Adam out of the Garden</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Devil departed</li> </ul>

#### Consequences in light of all Scripture (canonical level)

- We must see consequences as the Bible describes them, not just as a story.
- Rom. 5:12-14 (Paul will finish his thought later)
  - Paul breaks off his comparison to speak about the sin of Adam.
  - V. 13 shows that the sin occurred before the Law. So, **all humanity** is implicated in Adam's sin.
- Vv. 15-17 gives us a hint of the comparison.
  - Compare "one/many" effects of Adam and Jesus.
- Vv. 18-21 – Now we understand the enormity of Adam's sin from a Christian perspective.
  - One man's disobedience led to "condemnation for all men."
  - V. 19 "one man's obedience..." gives us a much better understanding of Gen. 3:15.

#### Pointing to Christ

##### Gen. 3:15

- The rest of the Bible is about how this promise comes true.
- God also tells us how he will fix things.

##### Matt. 4:1-11

- Jesus repeats the history of God's people. This is a "fixing of Adam's fall" and also Israel's. Note the parallels with Deut. quotes and wilderness experience. Jesus does not simply *repeat* history and fulfill prophecy. He goes beyond and is infinitely more.
- God will renew everything through Jesus.

- 1 Cor. 15:42-49 shows the importance of reading the OT in light of Christ. We see how all of Scripture is one unified story centered on Jesus Christ.

### Practice Exercises—Ethics

1. Is bestiality a sin? Exod. 22:19 says “Whoever lies with an animal shall be put to death.” If it is a sin, why do we not put to death those who commit bestiality? Also, why do we sow our fields with two different seeds? Or why do we wear clothes made from two kinds of material? Lev. 19:19 forbids both of these. If we follow the commands about bestiality, why do we not follow the commands about seeds and clothing?

Apply our process:<sup>14</sup>

1. Begin in creation.
2. Consider how sin has corrupted God’s design.
3. Think through the entire Bible.
4. Determine how God’s promise to restore and transform creation through Christ.

We learn God’s plan for human sexuality in creation (Gen. 1:26-30; 2:15-25).<sup>15</sup> By creating humans as male and female, God designed human sexuality to function within the permanent, covenant relationship of heterosexual marriage (Matt. 19:4-9). Therefore, all misuse and corruption of human sexuality—including bestiality—are distortions of God’s intent for his creation. After the fall (Gen. 3), all sexual corruptions are introduced. It is true that in earlier stages of redemptive history, a non-standard/non-normative behavior is occasionally permitted (e.g., polygamy). When we view this issue against God’s creation order and in light of the Christ-Church relationship, however (as well through the teaching of Jesus Christ himself, Matt. 19:4-9), polygamy is never seen as God’s standard or as normative. That is why in the inauguration of the new covenant, polygamy is no longer acceptable. God’s creation standard is reaffirmed and must be lived out in the church.

While the Mosaic law explicitly forbids specific sexual distortions (Lev. 18:1-30), all its prohibitions simply unpack the “one flesh” ideal of creation.

Additionally, since the law-covenant is prophetic, it anticipates a greater righteousness to come. That is why the ethical demand of the new covenant is greater. The prophets also speak of a day when God will transform his people so that his new covenant people will become covenant keepers, not breakers (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:25-27). This is what Jesus addresses in his teaching on the kingdom in his sermon on the mount. In Christ’s coming and work, the new covenant has arrived. By the regenerating work of the Spirit, those who enter God’s kingdom are united to Christ and thus freed from Adam and the old era. In Christ, individuals and the church are the “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:8-10, 11-21). This is why we live out what it means to be God’s new creation even though we still live between the time of the first creation and

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<sup>14</sup> Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 945.

<sup>15</sup> This paragraph and the following one are directly dependent on Gentry and Wellum, 946–47. Not all quoted material appears in quotations.

the consummation of the new heavens and earth. Therefore, the New Testament calls the church to proper use of sexuality by grounding it both in creation and in who we are in Christ. This is also why God's moral demand on us today is greater—greater in restoring us to what we were created to be in the first place and in calling us to live now as God's new-creation people.

2. Apply our hermeneutical process to respond to the question, "Why is homosexuality a sin?" The verses mentioned in question #1 will help you. Also, read Eph. 5:28-33.
3. Apply our hermeneutical process to answer the question, "Is abortion permissible? What about infanticide and euthanasia/assisted suicide?"

We are created as God's image-bearers (Gen. 1:26-28). Therefore, human life is precious (cf. Gen. 9:6).<sup>16</sup> Sinful, inhumane treatment of others is a result of the fall. The law-covenant forbids and punishes strife, anger, murder, and other behaviors, but these rules are the outworking of who we are as God's created beings. Jesus teaches us that God's intent from the beginning was for his image-bearers to love God and their neighbors, which is what all of Scripture emphasizes (Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:34-40). In the new covenant age, the full intent of how we are to love as God's people is realized in a greater way. This is why Jesus stresses that it is not merely murder, adultery, or lying that are forbidden but our very hateful, self-gratifying heart and attitude toward each other (Matt. 5:21-48).

God demands that his people love him and one another. The law-covenant demanded this, but it also anticipated something more. In Christ, what the old covenant anticipated is now here. This is what led Paul to say that love *fulfills* the law (Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:14). A love that is governed by God's will and our renewal in Christ through the Spirit fulfills the law. We can now apply this understanding of humans and love to ethical issues such as abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia. While each issue involves other matters, a sanctity-of-life ethic is foundational to a Christian ethic and is consistent in *all of Scripture*.

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<sup>16</sup> The following is directly dependent on Gentry and Wellum, 947–48. Not all quoted material appears in quotations.



# Sermon Preparation

*Rev. Daniel Lowry*

## Pre-Preaching

If your preaching is to be faithful and effective for God's Kingdom, then you must rely on the Lord through prayer. You should never preach without praying first. Pray for your people. Pray that God would use his word to speak to them and minister to them.

## Steps for Sermon Writing

### 1. Choose a scripture *first*

You should never write or think up a sermon and then try to find a Bible verse to go with it. That is backward. Writing your sermon first and then finding a Bible verse to go with it means you are relying on your wisdom and ideas, and then asking God to support them. Instead, we should always start with a scripture text. The scripture is chosen before any sermon writing happens. Here are some options for how you can choose a scripture to study and then preach from:

- a. Take a whole book of the Bible and decide to preach all the way through it. Study until you have a grasp of the whole book, and break it down into preachable chunks. (This is a LONG term strategy for those who have regular preaching opportunities.)
- b. You can choose a scripture from a liturgy or catechism. If your church begins to use a catechism for discipleship, you can choose one of the scripture proofs from each question to study and preach on each week.
- c. You can choose a scripture based on the needs of your church in particular. However, be careful with this, because if this is the only way we ever choose what to preach on, we will never preach the whole counsel of God.
- d. You can choose a text from your own personal devotional reading of the Bible. Read through scripture until something grips your heart and feeds your soul. Study that text to write a sermon from it.
- e. Sometimes you are given guided topics or an assigned text. In that case, you simply study the text you are given, or texts that speak about the topic you were given.

### 2. Pray and meditate

Once you have chosen a scripture text, take time to pray and consider the text before beginning to think about what you will say in a sermon. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand the meaning of the scripture and keep you from error.

At this point, it is a good idea to write down or think of some possible points and applications to make in the sermon. You should hold these loosely, because you have not studied yet. These are just your first impressions. Sometimes they will be correct, but other times as you study deeply you will realize that the scripture text is saying something different than you thought at first.

### 3. Context: Check and correct

This is the time to remember your hermeneutical principles! If we are going to be faithful preachers of God's Word, we must learn to handle the Word of God rightly, as is commanded in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who need not be ashamed because he handles the word of truth rightly."

Check: Ask how your chosen text is connected to what is around it in the same book, to what the rest of the Bible says, etc. When you compare your text to what the rest of the Bible says, what do you learn? This is how you check your first impressions of the scripture.

Correct: The challenge now is to be honest enough with the scripture to change your mind. It is hard to give up a good sermon idea because it is not what the text actually teaches! Handling the word of truth rightly means we understand what God intended to teach in that scripture verse, and we limit ourselves to teaching what God intends. In fact, mature preaching is often measured as much by what is left out of a sermon than what is said in a sermon.

#### 4. Content: Focus the message

At this point, you should have a clear idea of what your chosen text is saying. Now you should try to summarize it in one or two main ideas. What is a simple statement that would help people understand what your text is teaching? This simple statement becomes the main point of your sermon. Remember that usually less is more. People will never remember a 12-point sermon, but can usually remember one or two main points that you explain and repeat. This is another opportunity to stop and ask yourself: "Am I faithfully communicating the author's purpose in writing this text? Am I handling this text rightly, and understanding it well?"

Now, AFTER doing all this work, only then should you check reliable commentaries. Do not begin your study with commentaries. Study God's Word for yourself, and use a commentary to check your understanding.

#### 5. Concern: Preach to YOUR flock

It is right and good for us to make sure we are preaching to our own people. If we know them and pray for them, we should know something about what they may need from the scripture text. Ask yourself: What will be my people's objections, confusions, or misunderstandings? Think about what people will need to hear in order to grasp that main point. What will be confusing to them? What will be difficult for them to accept? These are things you need to address to help them understand.

You can also consider things like: Where are they in their lives and walks of faith? What things need to be addressed in their lives or in the culture they live in? Help them see that God's Word is practical in addressing their real lives.

Lastly, ask yourself how you can help them understand the truth of the scripture in a concrete way. Is there a story in the Bible that illustrates the truth of your chosen text? Can you think of a story from the news, or a personal story that would help people understand the truth?

#### 6. Pray and edit

Once you have finished your study and have a clear idea of your sermon, it is a good thing to pray again. Check yourself again by asking: "Have I faithfully communicated God's meaning in this text?" Ask God to help you see anything that needs to be cut out. Ask yourself whether it is understandable by the people of your church.

Pray, and preach God's Word. Ask God to help you preach, to help people understand his word, and to use his word in their lives. Then preach with confidence that God will do his work.

### **Sermon Delivery**

There is less that needs to be said about how we actually preach a sermon. How you deliver a sermon is cultural and personal. There is a lot of room for differences in delivery.

So, let's consider a few general issues that should be addressed.

### **General principles of delivery**

- Aim for understanding

What helps people hear and understand what you are saying? Do not distract people from WHAT you are saying by HOW you say it. Also, invite feedback: the best way to grow as a preacher is to regularly ask people who will be honest with you. Allow people to tell you what was, or was not, helpful or understandable in your preaching.

- Resist the cultural ideas of "powerful" preaching.

What kind of sermons do we usually call "powerful?" Almost always, it has something to do with whether the preacher is loud and energetic. Powerful preaching is more than volume and energy! Powerful preaching is not just the ability to stir people up emotionally. What, then, is powerful preaching? Power in preaching comes when the Spirit does his work through the truth of God's Word. The word has to be understood rightly to be spiritually powerful. Powerful preaching happens when Jesus is exalted; when his word is opened so that the Spirit can use it to pierce people's hearts and minds. This does not usually happen if the preacher is shouting and trying to appear powerful.

Consider for a moment: how do you think Jesus sounded during the sermon on the mount? How do you think Peter's sermon at Pentecost sounded? Do you think they sounded like the many preachers who shout and speak "powerfully"? Probably not. They were not concerned with sounding powerful. They knew that true power comes with hearing and understanding the truth.

So then, brothers: do not perform. Preach! If people leave your church because you stop all the TV preacher tactics that is ok. Trust the Spirit to work through the mind and heart with his truth.

### **Post-Preaching**

1. Pray that God would use his word.
2. Make a habit of interacting with people and using the sermon to disciple them personally. You can ask questions like:
  - How did God speak to you through his word today?
  - How do you think God will use this word in your life?
3. Always be learning to communicate God's Word more faithfully and more clearly.

**May God bless the preaching of His Word.**

# Theology of Stewardship and Giving

Dr. Kevin W. Rodgers

## INTRODUCTION

The question we must ask ourselves is why do we give? The answer to that question will show you a lot about your theology of giving.

Biblically our giving should be predicated on two things: thankfulness (1 John 4:19 and 2 Corinthians 9:15) and theology of stewardship. This theology of stewardship helps us to think rightly about who we are and what we have in everything.

## Theology of Stewardship

**Stewardship means that being a steward is a blessing.** The Bible uses the term steward (οικονομος in Greek--wakili mwaminifu in Swahili) to describe someone who is not the owner but a manager of things (Luke 12:41-48, 16:1). Some people think that being a steward is like being a slave because you are always caring for someone else's things. However, being the steward of the king is a huge blessing and something to be respected.

**Stewardship means that God owns everything.** God owns everything, and we own nothing. He is the owner of all by creation and he is also our owner because He purchased us with His blood (1 Cor. 6:19-20, 1 Pet. 1:19). God allows us to use the things we have, but they came from him and they must be used for his glory and we must care for his things that are under our stewardship. (Stewardship/administration = oikonomia, uwakili.)

**Stewardship means we can actually have peace.** If God owns everything and I own nothing, then I do not have to worry about anything. I do not need to worry about money or where it will come from because I have no money. He has all the money, so if He thinks I need it, He will provide. God loves me and knows what I need. It is not on my shoulders but on His (Matt. 6:25-34). No one can steal *my* things because I own nothing.

**Stewardship means we will have to answer to God someday.** While you have no reason to worry, you are held accountable by God for the things he has given you. Being a steward means you are not the owner, God is; but, you are the caretaker and you will have to give an account for the things under your care (Matthew 25:14-30). We will all have to stand before the judgment seat of God (2 Cor. 5:10).

## Stewardship of Spiritual Things

By stewardship of "spiritual" things, I particularly mean stewardship of things that do not include money or material possessions. As God's stewards, we have been entrusted with many things and we must manage them well.

**Stewardship of Time:** God gave us life and He gave us a specific amount of time on this earth. Since He owns us and the life we live is His, we must use our time in ways that please Him. We should not *waste* time but *invest* time in our relationship with Him, in others, and in his kingdom. Keeping time honors him and others, but also patience and a lack of hurry honors Him as well by realizing He is lord of our time (John 7:6). Observing a Sabbath rest, daily times of worship and meditation, and keeping commitments are ways we demonstrate His lordship in our life.

**Stewardship of Talents:** God created us, and He gave each one of us talents. We are uniquely created to glorify Him with those talents and the personality we have from birth. If you can sing, you must sing. If you can preach or dance or cook or create things - whatever you do, you should do it for the glory of God (e.g., Bezalel, Oholiab in Exodus 31).

**Stewardship of Spiritual Gifts:** This is slightly different from talents. Talents are things that you have from birth and that connect with your personality and upbringing. Spiritual gifts are the gifts you receive when you are born again (Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12). The Bible makes it clear these gifts are under our control, so we must be faithful to use them. Having the gift and not using it well is poor stewardship (1 Peter 4:10-11).

**Stewardship of the Gospel:** The good news of Jesus Christ is a gift and blessing from God. As believers, we have been entrusted with this gift (1 Cor. 4:1-2). This means we have a responsibility to share the good news (1 Cor. 9:16) and also to handle the gospel rightly and accurately (2 Tim. 2:15). While some have a gift of evangelism or fulfill the office of evangelism, all have a stewardship of the gospel. That is why we must know the word well, interpret it correctly and share it with everyone we meet.

**Stewardship of Wisdom and Experience:** When we go through life, we learn many things and we must share those things with others to help them in their problems. The Bible says God gives wisdom to all who ask (James 1:5) and we must be good stewards of that wisdom and share it with others, but with humility (2 Cor. 1:3-5).

**Stewardship of our body:** Our bodies are not ours; they are a gift that comes from God and we must care for our bodies. If you mistreat your body, you are being a bad steward. Remember your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit and you must not sin with your body (1 Cor. 6:12-20). This concept of stewardship of the body is what leads to diet, exercise, healthcare, avoiding certain things and so many other daily aspects (e.g., we have a stewardship of our ears).

**Stewardship of our families:** Children are a gift from God. God owns our children, not us, and we are just their stewards. You must be careful to teach your children and to help them grow physically and spiritually. Our work is to receive them from Jesus, teach them to love him, and give them back to Him. How we raise them is an aspect of stewardship. This also applies to our marriage and extended families (1 Timothy 5:8). This work is not only physical but also spiritual.

**Stewardship of the Church:** God expects us to be good stewards of our membership towards the church. He also expects the church to be a good steward of its members. This is a two-way street: the church is the people and the church ministers to the people. This is an individual and a corporate stewardship involving physical and spiritual things. The church has a responsibility as a steward to:

- **Give to** missions and do the work of missions.
- **Care for** its members spiritually and at times physically.
- **Teach** and lead its members.
- Expect work, participation, and help **from** its members.
- Expect financial support **from** its members.

**Stewardship of Finances:** The Law of the Harvest in Malachi 3 teaches us to bring our tithe and offerings to God and see how he will bless us. Whatever you sow, you will also reap. Basically, there are two categories of financial giving: tithes and offering.

Tithes are the first ten percent of whatever you make. This is not just relegated to the OT law. It is an enduring principle that is seen throughout the Scriptures going back to creation, continued by Abraham with Melchizedek, and even promoted by Jesus in the NT (Matt. 23:23).

Offerings are whatever you give, and in whatever form you give them, above and beyond your tithe (whether to your local church or others in need or any other situation).

Whenever you give to God with the right heart, He gives back to you. This is not a way to get rich, but a simple principle of the harvest. Whatever you sow, that you will also reap; good or bad.

The Law of the Heart in 2 Corinthians 9 teaches us how to give: we must give with joy, not begrudgingly. We must give the first fruits not the leftovers. We must give God the very best and honor Him in that way. We give because God first gave to us His son, Jesus. Does your giving honor Jesus' gift?

The Law of Change teaches us that our giving changes things. Giving your tithes and offerings will change your life. We give as an act of worship to God. When we worship Him, He changes us for the better. Make your giving an act of worship!

Giving your tithes and offerings will change your church. Typically, we give our tithe to our church and offerings will go to our church and also to others. When we give to the church, the church prospers and when the church uses the money properly, God will bless that church to do more work for him. Remember you have a stewardship to give to the church and the church has a stewardship to use that money in kingdom work. When this is all done correctly, the church will change for the better.

Giving your tithes and offerings will change the world. When we give with a contrite heart God receives the glory. When we give God the glory, he promises to change the world. John 12:32 speaks to his manner of death and his glorification. When the church uses our money wisely on evangelism, missions, and community development, that money has the potential to change the world.

# Finances in the Local Church

*Rev. Billy Hardwick*

## **Definition: Biblical Giving**

Members of the church give freely of their resources for the support of those who teach the Word, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the advance of the gospel around the world. Healthy churches are financially self-sustaining or moving toward being financially self-sustaining. Experience has consistently shown that foreign financial subsidy damages the health of a church.

## **Illustration**

If a person is in the hospital connected to life support machines, are they healthy? If there is oxygen being forced into the patient's lungs, an IV providing medicines and blood, a machine helping the patient to have regular bodily functions, can we say that they are healthy? Of course, we would say that they are sick and most likely, borderline dying. This is true also with the church. If they are dependent upon outside machinery to keep it functioning, then can we say that it is healthy or just on life support?

## **Accountability**

The pastor and finance team must be aware of where every shilling goes. Churches should have a system of requisition forms and receipts that testify to where the money is going. This will require a two-signature system. Equally, checks must require two signatories. Finally, the church finances must be made available and fully transparent to all church members.

## **Tools Needed**

Requisition forms – These forms allow the person requesting the funds to give an account to both the financial officer and the pastor of the church as to how much is required for the job to be completed. With this approval, the funds are released to the requestor. The person returns with the receipts and any change from the released funds. These forms and receipts are stored for future audits.

Financial Database – Using software such as QuickBooks, Microsoft Excel, etc., help keep track of daily, weekly, monthly, and annual financial records. All financial transactions need to be tracked for transparency and understanding of how the church spends the money they receive. Regular utility payments, staff salaries, taxes, other bills, any petty cash transactions, and expenses should be recorded. Also, any sums of money that come into the church must be tracked and entered into the database. It is helpful to include dates, short details as to the purpose of the transaction, and the amount.

Two Signature Checks – Just like the requisition forms, this allows for accountability and structure. The signatories should be the financial officer and at least two other candidates (this may not have to be the pastor). There should be three or more potential signatories so that if there is an absence of any of these people the bill payments will not be held up.

## How should we manage challenging financial issues?

### Examples

Below are some examples and scenarios for discussion. Utilize the closing questions at the bottom of the page to fuel discussions.

Example 1: A church brings in 200,000 monthly and has already set aside 1,000,000 for the building fund. The church pays 100,000 monthly in salaries and another 100,000 in utilities. Finally, the church spends 50,000 on other facility costs. This leaves the church with a 50,000 monthly deficit. If this continues every month the church will have a 600,000 annual deficit.

Discuss: What are some ways to solve this problem?

Monthly Income:	200,000	Building Fund: 1,000,000
Salaries:	(100,000)	
Utilities:	(100,000)	
Facilities:	(50,000)	
Total Monthly +/-	<b>(50,000)</b>	

Example 2: A church has a monthly income of 500,000. The monthly salaries are 250,000, the utilities are 100,000, the facilities cost are 150,000 per month. The annual dues are due this month and are 100,000 and the church gives 200,000 towards missions (church plants, missionaries from the church that they have sent out, etc.) each month. This leaves the church with a deficit of 300,000 this month. Without extra annual expense, it will cause the church to be at a 2.4 million deficit for the year.

Discuss: What are some ways to solve this issue?

Monthly Income:	500,000	Building Fund: 1,000,000
Salaries:	(250,000)	
Utilities:	(100,000)	
Facilities:	(150,000)	
Annual Dues:	(100,000)	
Missions:	(200,000)	
Total Monthly +/-	<b>(300,000)</b>	

### Discussion Questions:

What do you do?

Should the church use the backlogged money in the building fund to pay expenses?

Should the church reduce the missions giving in the second scenario?

Should the church reduce staff/salaries?

How much should the pastor be aware of who gives how much?



# Biblical Theology of Evangelism

*Dr. Jimmy Bledsoe*

## INTRODUCTION

In considering biblical evangelism, we must begin where the Scriptures begin and focus on what the Scriptures keep in focus throughout—God and his purposes. In one sense the Bible is a story—it is God’s story. From the beginning we read how God is on a mission to accomplish his plans in the world.

Question: What is God seeking to accomplish in the world?

1. God is seeking to fill the earth with his glory (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 19:1; Genesis 1:27, 28; Isaiah 6:3,8; Psalm 96:1-9).
2. God is creating for himself a unique people who reflect his character and glory in the world (Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:3-6; Isaiah 43:1-7, 15; Jeremiah 31:31-34; John 4:23; Revelation 7:9).

## Objective

In this session, students will be able to define “evangelism” biblically, explain who should do evangelism and why, and identify the core message of evangelism.

## What is “Evangelism?”

At its most foundational level, “evangelism” is the communication of a message – the good news that God has acted for the salvation of the world in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus.<sup>17</sup>

Evangelism announces that salvation has come. The Greek word for “gospel,” *euangelion*, means “good news,” and the verb for “evangelize,” *euangelizo*, literally means “bring or announce good news.” This term is used more than 130 times in various forms in the New Testament (consider Luke 2:10-11 as an example).

Evangelizing is proclaiming the gospel, the good news. It is a work of verbally communicating God’s message of grace and mercy to sinners. An evangelist is a believer who testifies to Jesus by communicating the good news to others.

## Who should do evangelism?

Jesus called to himself 12 men whom he called apostles (Luke 6:13-16). The word “apostle” means “one who is sent.” Jesus sent these men to carry out specific tasks for the sake of his kingdom (Luke 9:1-6). Although these men saw miracles take place, their primary task was preaching the gospel (Luke 9:6). Each of the Gospels includes at least one reference to the main task Jesus gave them – to make disciples through the preaching of the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 13:10; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-49 [cf. Acts 1:8]; John 20:21-23).

God sovereignly used these apostles to establish the church through their faithful preaching of the gospel. The Holy Spirit inspired several of these men, carrying them along

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<sup>17</sup> Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol . 2, [Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1976], p. 111

to produce the written revelation of God in the New Testament which defines the gospel precisely and gives application of it in the lives of believers.

***Question: If Jesus gave this ministry to the apostles, does it apply to Christians today?***

In Luke 10:1-12 Jesus sent out 72 other followers beyond the Twelve. In verse 9 the text says that Jesus sent them to heal the sick and to proclaim the Kingdom of God has come near. Today, many Christians focus their attention on power – miracles, signs and wonders, deliverance ministries, and the like. Many pastors will quickly point to isolated verses wherein Jesus gave those whom he sent out the ability to see miraculous things take place (Luke 10:9; Mark 16:17-18). Yet, when we look carefully at the words of Jesus in each case, we can see clearly that the main task Jesus gave was to proclaim the gospel. Jesus even rebuked the 72 who returned with the report that they had seen people delivered from evil spirits, saying they should not rejoice in such a miracle but, instead, they should rejoice in the sovereign work of God in saving them (Luke 10:20). What's more, in the book of Acts, the giving of power in the coming of the Holy Spirit is directly tied to the main task Jesus left his disciples – bearing witness of him in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. The miraculous signs that followed the ministries of the apostles in Acts always happened in connection with the proclamation of the gospel, particularly in a place for the first time.

This does not mean, however, that the task of evangelism was only given to the Twelve apostles. In Acts, we see other believers testifying to the good news of Jesus, including the congregation (Acts 2:42-47) and deacons (6:1-7). In Ephesians 4:11-16, Paul communicates how God gifted the church with leadership roles to equip the members of a local congregation to carry out various ministries. Some of those roles mentioned served the church for a special time and no longer continue. Hebrews 1:1-4 explains that God spoke in the past through prophets but now has revealed himself fully in His Son, Jesus Christ. Yet, other roles mentioned in the text clearly continue today. Namely, the preacher-teacher and evangelists. For this reason, he urges a pastor named Timothy to preach the word and to do the work of an evangelist (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

In his letters to churches, Paul does not mention ministries of signs and wonders but focuses much attention on the gospel. He reminds believers of the gospel he proclaimed to them (Romans 1:1-17; 1 Corinthians 15:1-5; Colossians 1:24-29) and encourages them to partner in proclaiming the gospel (2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Philippians 1:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:3-8). Therefore, it is apparent that the main task Jesus Christ has extended to his church – to all believers everywhere – is the joyous responsibility of proclaiming the gospel. That is evangelism.

**Why should we evangelize?**

Believers should proclaim the gospel because Jesus has given them this primary task until he returns. Thus, it would be an act of disobedience not to evangelize. In addition to obedience to the commands of the Lord Jesus, there are three other practical, effective reasons:

1. We should do evangelism because it is the way in which God ordained his faith to be extended to unbelieving sinners that they might call upon the name of the Lord and be saved (Romans 10:13-17).

2. We should do evangelism because we have been entrusted with the message of reconciliation and given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).
3. When we withhold sharing the gospel, we deny sinners the opportunity to be forgiven of their sin (John 20:23).

As Paul wrote to the Roman church, the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16-17). The Holy Spirit is the one who convicts of sin and judgement and converts the sinner through regeneration. It is God who causes sinners to be born again (1 Peter 1:3ff). We are his workmanship of grace (Ephesians 2:8-10). It is important to note that we are called to proclaim the gospel and trust God to do his work of sovereign grace.

### **What is the Message of the Gospel?**

We live in a day when many seek to reduce evangelism to a quick and easy presentation that often culminates in an “easy believism.” In the New Testament accounts of those who proclaimed the gospel, we can see a common pattern in the message that was proclaimed. It was a simple message – Christ crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23-30). This pattern of the content of the message proclaimed is referred to as the *kerygma*.

### **Question: What should be said when doing evangelism?**

The famous Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon identified three core doctrines of evangelism as seen in the Scriptures:

1. Ruin (Gen. 3:14-15): This is what man has done. “How did man get in this miserable condition?” Spurgeon asks.
2. Redemption (Rom. 3:21-26): This is what God has done. This is the good news that trumps the bad news.
3. Regeneration (John 3:1-8): This is what God must do in sinners to enable them to call upon the name of the Lord.

In addition, Alan Thompson notes five characteristics of apostolic evangelistic preaching. These five features serve as good models for all types of evangelism:<sup>18</sup>

1. **God-centered.** The sermons in Acts begin with God. They announce the good news of what God has promised, what God has done, and what God will do. The preaching is not centered around the felt-needs of the audience, but around the mighty acts of God in history. The emphasis is on God’s initiative and how we are accountable to him.
2. **Audience-conscious.** While the preaching begins with God, it is not ignorant of those to whom the sermon is delivered. We see throughout Acts evidence of audience adaptation and sensitivity to what the audience already knows or does not know. The sermons do not unfold as canned messages with a series of doctrinal propositions. The preaching is deeply theological, but not at the expense of

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<sup>18</sup> Alan Thompson, *The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus*, [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011], 90-99.

communicating that theology in a way that is understandable. The core content stays the same, but the starting point and type of final appeal may change.

3. **Christ-focused.** Though God is often portrayed as the main actor in history, the preaching in Acts is relentlessly focused on Christ. The sermons highlight the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. They also explain the theological significance of these events. Christ is proclaimed as the climax of redemptive history and the good news for today's sinners.
4. **Response-oriented.** The preaching in Acts is not response-driven. That is, we never see messages crafted or delivered in such a way as to manipulate a desired response. But, the preaching always called for a response. This is often the difference between faithful teaching and anointed preaching. The apostles not only taught about God and Christ, they peppered their preaching with promises and warnings. Specifically, they called people to faith in Christ and repentance for the forgiveness of sin.
5. **Boldness.** The noun form of "boldness" is used five times in Acts and the verb form is used seven times (out of a total of nine in the New Testament). If there was one distinctive characteristic of apostolic proclamation it was boldness. In the context of much hostility, the apostles were often granted unique freedom to preach Christ with exceptional clarity.

With these characteristics in mind, it is essential for the Christian to know the substance of the message of reconciliation, as Paul called it. The following outline provides elements that should be present in all methods of evangelism:

1. God's purpose for humanity is for his glory (Psalm 19:1; Genesis 1:27, 28; Isaiah 6:3,8; Psalm 96:1-9; Isaiah 43:1-7, 15).
2. Our problem of sin and its consequences
  - a. All humans are fallen because they are guilty of sin – through Adam sin entered the human race (this is called "original sin").
  - b. God is just and he punishes sin (Romans 6:23).
  - c. The extent of sinfulness renders humans helpless and hopeless (Romans 1:18–3:18; Ephesians 2:1-4).
  - d. Herein lies the problem: "How can sinners come to God who is perfect and holy?"
  - e. The guilt of the offender, that is, the sinner, must be dealt with before we can answer the question of how a sinful human being can have a relationship with a perfect God.
3. God's Solution – A Substitute
  - a. Only God can deal with man's sin, and he does so by a legal process called "substitution" – someone who is innocent takes the place of someone who is guilty and is punished instead of them.
  - b. In the Law, God provided a foreshadowing of substitution, this is what the system of substitution (sacrifices) has to teach us:
    - i. God is angry at sin and must punish it.
    - ii. The sinner offers a substitute in place of himself.

- iii. God’s anger is directed towards the substitute, instead of the sinner.
  - iv. The substitute is killed in place of the sinner.
  - v. God views the sinner as being as perfect as the substitute he offered.
  - vi. The sinner is at peace with God, accepted completely by him, and enjoys his approval and love.
- c. Jesus Christ came into the world to be a substitute for sinners; he not only died for sinners, but he also lived a perfect life for sinners. This perfect life and death of Jesus belongs to everyone who believes in him, and it is enough to cover their sin, without exception.
- i. He lived the life we never could. In Jeremiah 23:5-6, Jesus is prophesied as being called “The LORD our righteousness” – that he, who was without sin, would be our righteousness.
  - ii. He died the death that we all should.
    - a. We most fully see Jesus as the substitute in his suffering and on the cross (Isaiah 53:3-6).
    - b. At the cross, Jesus felt the full weight of our sin, and the full expression of God’s wrath against that sin, paying the full price for our sin – his life (Romans 3:21-26).
  - iii. Jesus is the only substitute that completely satisfies God.
4. The Result: God’s Righteousness for Unrighteous People
- a. Everyone who believes (literally, “faiths”) receives righteousness from God (Gen 15:3; Rom 1:17; 3:22; 4:5; 2 Cor 5:21; Col 1:13-14).
  - b. The moment a sinner believes (literally, “faiths”)—presents Jesus as his/her substitute by agreeing that He alone is the substitute God accepts – all his/her guilt passes over to Jesus, and all Jesus’ righteousness passes over to the sinner (Rom 1:17; 3:22; 4:5; 2 Cor 5:21).
  - c. This transfer of righteousness is complete and eternal with God looking at us as having Jesus’ righteousness and treating us accordingly.
5. We must be found in Jesus by faith and repentance.
- a. 2 Corinthians 5:17
  - b. Ephesians 1:3-14

This truly is Good News! Pray now and ask God to bring to your mind the names of three people who are lost with whom you may share the gospel. Write those names below. Pray for God to prepare them to hear the gospel and for the Spirit to give you an opportunity to share the gospel with boldness and clarity. Commit to testify to Jesus with these three people this month.

# Practical Methods of Evangelism

Dr. Kevin W. Rodgers

## Beginning Spiritual Conversations

Evangelism is something that anyone can do. You do not have to have a “gift” of evangelism to share the gospel and you do not have to be in the office of “evangelist” to share the gospel. As we have learned, every Christian is responsible to understand the gospel and to share it with lost people often. Yet many of our church members never share their faith. Why is this? It could be that they do not know they should, but more likely they are afraid. They fear what people will think of them or they fear that people will reject their message. In the end, when we are sharing God’s message, it is God that people are rejecting, yet there are ways that we can make things easier. One is to have good bridges to the gospel.

## Bridges to the Gospel

A bridge is a tool that helps you cross over from everyday normal conversation with friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors to the gospel presentation. Two bridges that have often been used are the 15-second testimony and the FIRE acrostic.

1. **15 Second testimony:** Your testimony is the story of how you came to know Jesus as your personal savior. This usually takes much longer than 15 seconds because you are telling the story of what your life was like before you met Jesus, how you heard and understood the gospel message, and how your life is different now that you have a relationship with Jesus. This is also a useful tool for evangelism. **With the 15 second testimony, though, we are simply talking about a bridge for how to get to the gospel.**

Step 1: Describe your life in two words/phrases before following Jesus.

Step 2: Describe your life in two words/phrases afterward.

Step 3: Drop those words, in a casual conversational way, into the following testimony:

There was a time in my life when I was \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
Then I was forgiven by Jesus and chose to follow him. My life changed. Now, I  
am \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Best of all, I have a friendship with  
God. Do you have a story like that?

*Sometimes I (Kevin) will say something like, “There was a time in my life when I had **no peace** and **no purpose** in life, but then someone told me about how I could know Jesus in a personal way, and I was saved. Now, Jesus **gives me peace every day**, and I have **new purpose** in life.” Has anything like this ever happened to you?*

Do you see how I just picked two things and inserted them into a 15-second testimony? You can do that with any testimony and it helps you move from a normal conversation to a spiritual one. It is important to end the 15-second testimony with a question, “Has anything like this happened to you?” If they say yes, then you can say,

“tell me about that.” Then they can share with you and you can see if they are truly saved. If they are, then cast a vision with them to share the gospel with others. If they are not saved, then share the gospel with them. If they say, “No, that has not happened to me,” then you respond with, “Let me share with you how your life can change too,” and you move into your gospel presentation.

2. Another bridge tool that is helpful is the **FIRE** acrostic. Fire stands for *Family, Interests, Religious background, Evangelistic presentation*. Basically, the idea is to start talking with someone you meet and ask them about their **family** background, where they come from, etc. In short, you are just striking up a conversation and getting to know someone. In the African context, we have to be careful about getting too personal too fast, as this looks suspicious, but over a few minutes, you can begin to learn a few things about a person. Then, you shift to **interests**. This could include work, hobbies, books they read, or whatever. In short, you are moving the conversation to more and more personal things as you talk. At some point, you will want to move the conversation to spiritual things, and in our context, it is simple to ask, “Do you go to church somewhere?” or “Where do you pray?” Most people in Africa will claim some **religious affiliation**, so this is a good way to move the conversation toward spiritual things while finding out what kinds of issues you might face in the evangelistic presentation. If they say, “I pray at the mosque, or I am Roman Catholic, or whatever,” you now have information about their preconceived ideas of spiritual things, while you have just been basically having a light conversation that turns to spiritual things. It is important at this point to then ask a question about their church/religion. This will bridge to the gospel.
  - A) If they say, “I don’t have a church/religion” then you can say, “Oh, I can understand that. I go to a Baptist church, but the most important thing is to know Jesus. Can I quickly share with you how to have a relationship with him?” Then you can go into the gospel.
  - B) If they say, “I go to such and such church or mosque or whatever,” then you can say, “That is wonderful. What does your church (mosque, etc.) teach about how your sin can be forgiven and how you can have a relationship with God?” Then, whatever they say, you will follow up with, “Can I tell you what the Bible says about how to know God?” and then bridge to the gospel.

These two tools are just simple ways of turning a conversation from everyday talk to entry into a gospel conversation. Now, we want to share with you two practical methods of evangelism. There are many good ways, but **these two have been proven to work successfully** in many places in Africa.

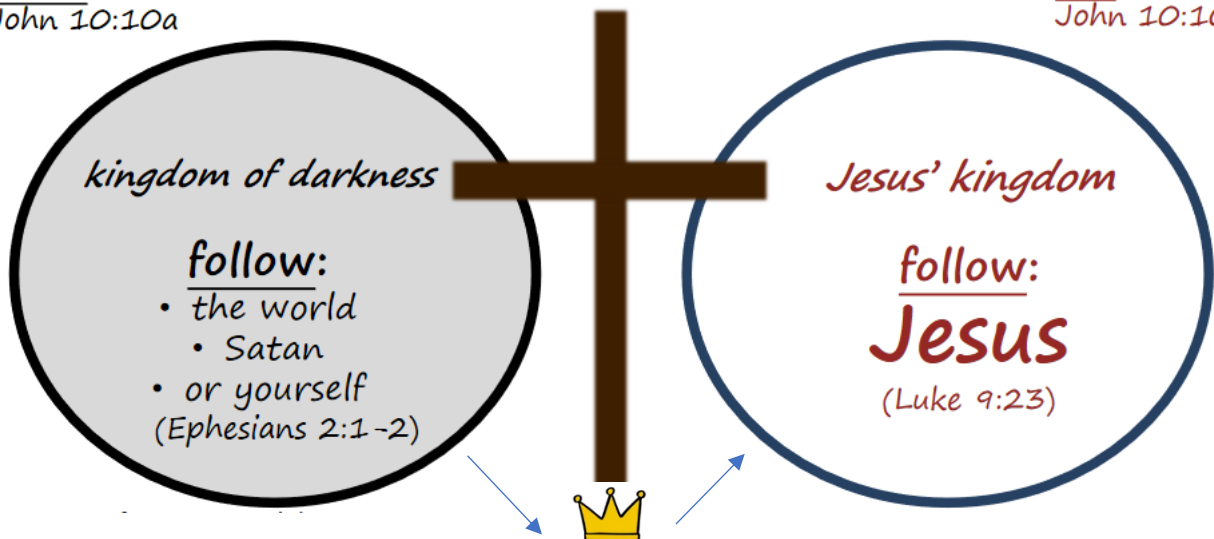
## Two Kingdoms<sup>19</sup>

The Two Kingdoms illustration outlines a simple explanation of the gospel ("good news") that Jesus preached during His earthly ministry. It is imperative that we understand both the message of the gospel of the kingdom, as well as our responsibility to proclaim the gospel.

*"for he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves"*  
- Colossians 1:13 -

Death  
John 10:10a

Life  
John 10:10b



### How to Share the Two Kingdoms Story

- **Begin by drawing the circle on the left.** We are all born into a world that has been broken. In the beginning, God created everything on the earth and he even created Adam and Eve to live in a perfect world of his love. Adam and Eve were supposed to live in the Kingdom of Light with God. But, because of their choice to disobey God, they were kicked out of the Kingdom of Light and forced into another kingdom called the Kingdom of Darkness.
- **Describe the Kingdom of Darkness.** It is a place that is ruled by Satan and in this kingdom, you are encouraged to follow the world, or Satan, or yourself. It is a place of problems and pain and many people try to escape their situation through money, success, family, religion, etc. But, none of these things can remove you from the Kingdom of Darkness.
- **Now draw the circle on the right.** God's plan from the beginning was for humanity to live in the Kingdom of Light. In this kingdom, Jesus is Lord and ruler. It is a kingdom of peace and freedom from the slavery of sin. The citizens of this kingdom follow Jesus as king and they try to live like him.
- **Now compare the two kingdoms.** In the Kingdom of Light, you experience love, but in the Kingdom of Darkness there is only hate. In the Kingdom of Light, there is

<sup>19</sup> Some of this was adapted from Lesotho, see <https://glorifyingsteps.com/2016/01/19/the-two-kingdoms/> and the picture was adapted from [https://cdn.website-editor.net/f70b24970e7a4ecfad8ce338cf652cc2/files/uploaded/2kingdoms\\_lewisnavs.pdf](https://cdn.website-editor.net/f70b24970e7a4ecfad8ce338cf652cc2/files/uploaded/2kingdoms_lewisnavs.pdf).

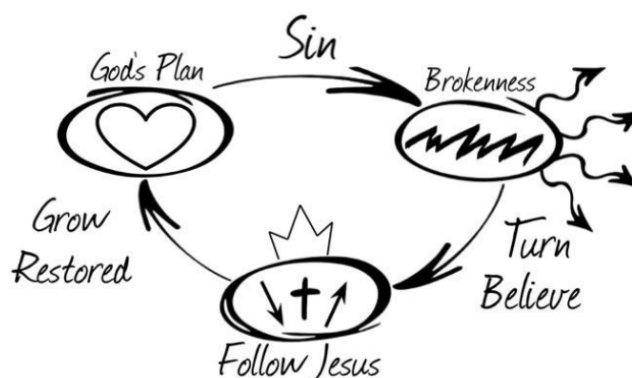


freedom, but in the Kingdom of Darkness you live in slavery. In the Kingdom of Light, you are filled with peace, but in the Kingdom of Darkness you feel anger. In the Kingdom of Light, you know the power of God, but in the Kingdom of Darkness, fear is everywhere. Lastly, in the Kingdom of Light there is life, and in the Kingdom of Darkness there is death.

- **Now make the presentation personal.** Ask the person, “Which kingdom do you think you are in right now?” “Which kingdom would you like to live in?” No matter what the answer to the first question, if they answer to the second question “I want to be in the Kingdom of Light,” then you tell them the good news.
- **Draw the cross between the two circles.** The good news is God had a rescue plan all along. He sent his only son, Jesus, to bring us back into the Kingdom of Light. Jesus came to Earth and lived a life without sin (*draw the arrow coming down*). He lived an obedient life, never falling for the lies that come from the Kingdom of Darkness. He told people that he was God. This made some happy, but others very mad. The religious rulers of the day were upset by the things Jesus was saying, so they had Jesus beaten and crucified. They buried him, but he rose on the third day showing his victory over sin, death, and hell (*draw the arrow going up*). He could have stopped the punishment because he truly was God, but he willingly went to die on the cross for each of our sins. If we repent of our sin and trust only in him, he will become our king (*draw the crown*). We will be forgiven and can once again be a part of the Kingdom of Light.
- **Close with this:** “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’” (John 14:6). If we desire to be a part of the Kingdom of Light, it must be through faith in Jesus Christ only. When we place our faith and trust in Jesus only, the Bible says we are rescued from darkness and transferred to the Kingdom of Light. We traded our hatred for love, our slavery for freedom, our anger for peace, our fear for the power of God, and our death for life. Would you like to receive Jesus today and move from the Kingdom of Darkness to the Kingdom of Light?
- **Let them respond.** If they are ready, then let them pray a prayer of repentance and faith to be born again. If they are not ready, then pray for them and look for another time to talk more with them and help them understand the gospel.

## Three Circles<sup>20</sup>

Another popular method around the world is called the three circles. It is similar to the Two Kingdoms presentation but has a few more aspects to it. You can begin with brokenness or you can begin with God's plan. I have found it most helpful in Africa to start with God's plan and the story of Creation and then adapt the three circles presentation to include vision casting as well. Below is the process that is being used among Baptist Churches in Nairobi, Kenya.

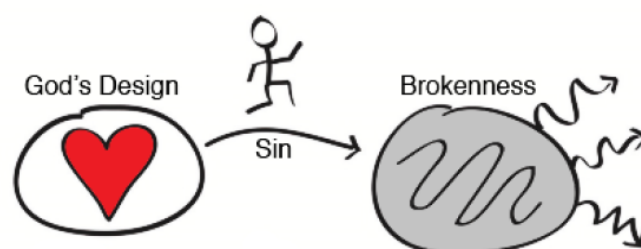


### How to Share the 3 Circles Evangelism Presentation

- **First draw the circle of God's design.** Brokenness was not God's original design! God's design was perfect, like himself, with no brokenness present. In the beginning, God created a perfect world and that world was a world of love with no sin and no problems. God created Adam and Eve, and he put them in the garden to love him and have fellowship with him. However, the devil (in the form of a serpent) entered the garden and tempted Adam and Eve and they disobeyed God and fell into sin. The entire world became broken and Adam and Eve were chased from the garden into this broken world we have today.



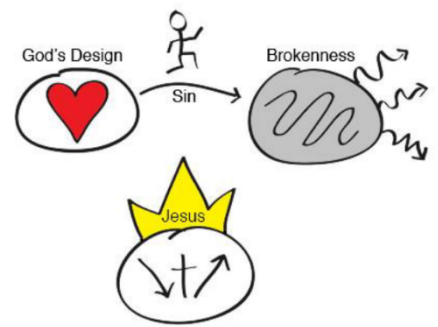
- **Draw the second circle of the broken world.** Now, draw a second circle with lines symbolizing that it is cracked and broken. Then draw an arrow from the perfect world to the broken world that symbolizes how mankind was removed from God's design by sin and now we are all born into a broken world. This broken world is characterized by sin and strife and brokenness. Also, draw some squiggly arrows from the broken world to show how people often try to escape from this world of pain and problems. Sometimes people use money, or alcohol or drugs, or other things to escape from their problems, but like a rubber band, they are just pulled right back into the broken world. Other squiggly arrows can represent money, family, fame, religion, etc. These are all means that people use to try and fix their lives, but every time those just pull them right back into more brokenness.



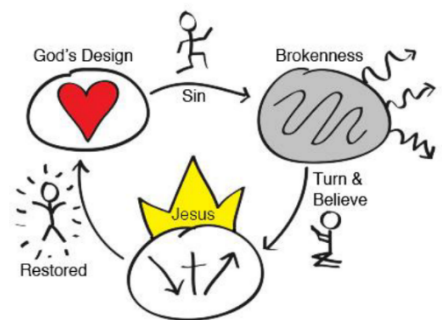
<sup>20</sup> Three Circles was originally developed by Pastor Jimmy Scroggins of 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church in West Palm Beach, Florida.

- **At this point ask the person to share which circle represents their life.** If they say they are living in the perfect world, then ask them how they got there. Perhaps they are already a believer, but many times you will find out that they do not understand the gospel well and you can move to the third circle. If they say that their life looks more like the broken world, then ask them which world they want to be in. When they say they would prefer to be in the perfect world, then you can introduce them to the third circle.

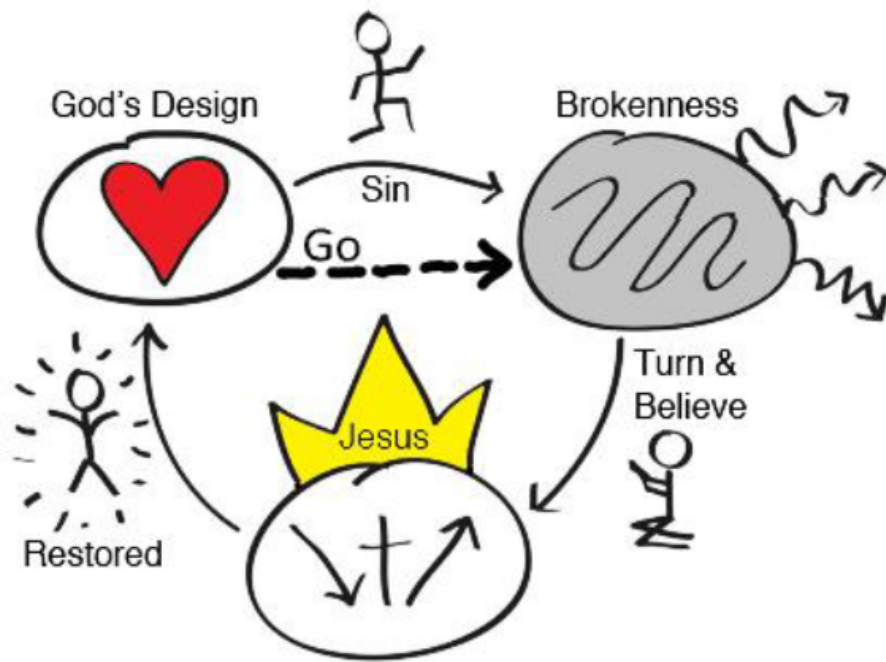
- **Draw the third circle below the other two.** There is only one way to get from brokenness and sin back into a perfect relationship with God, and that is to come by Jesus Christ. Jesus is the king, the Son of God, and the one who came down to earth (*arrow coming down*), died on the cross, and then rose again on the third day (*an arrow going up*). By his resurrection, he proved that he was God, who came in the flesh and that he has conquered death and paid the price for all of our sin. He is the only way to get back to God’s perfect design for our lives.



- **Now draw a line from brokenness to Jesus and from Jesus back to God’s design.** If a person will repent of their sin and place their faith in Jesus for salvation, then Jesus will save them and change them. Once Jesus saves us, He changes us and we begin to grow in him. Restored also means that after being saved, we should begin to “follow him” and “grow in our relationship with him.” Jesus made it clear in John 14:6, “[He] is the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through [him].” It is possible to move from this world of brokenness, sin, and pain back into God’s design for our lives. His design is that we love him and experience a deep abiding relationship with him.



- **Now ask if they would like to repent, believe, and receive Jesus.** Allow them to pray a prayer of repentance and faith so that they too can come through Jesus to escape brokenness and abide in him.
- **(Cast vision with the new convert) The beautiful thing is that God wants us to take this message to the world.** While Jesus came to this earth, died, and rose again to save and change those who repent and believe, he also wants us to follow him and fish for him (Mark 1:17). Once we have been saved, we now have a relationship with God and we abide (live) in him. However, we still have work to do in the broken world. Jesus sends us back into brokenness to share the message of salvation with other lost people, so they too can repent, believe, and be born again. (*Draw the line and write “Go”*). Even though we are still here in a world that is broken, we can live in God’s design for our lives. Yet, we must be faithful to not leave others in brokenness but help them find Jesus by sharing this very same message with them.



# Biblical Missions – The Church Planting Churches

Dr. Jimmy Bledsoe

## INTRODUCTION

In the lesson on biblical evangelism, we considered the twofold mission of God as 1) filling the earth with his glory, and 2) reconciling sinners to himself and transforming them to reflect His character and glory in the world. The church is the result of this sovereign grace. The church has been given the task of proclaiming the good news that God has acted for the salvation of the world through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and calling sinners to repentance and faith in Jesus that they may be saved. This is the mission of God and his church.

### Question: What is missions?

**ACTIVITY:** Divide students into pairs and allot five minutes to come up with what they think is a good definition of “missions.” Allow students to share their definitions.

“Mission” implies two things to most people: 1) being sent and 2) being given a task. When sent on a mission, one is sent to do something, not everything, but rather he/she is given a particular assignment. The English word “mission” comes from the Latin verb *mittere* which corresponds to the Greek verb *apostellein*—to be sent—which occurs 137 times in the New Testament.

### Question: Who are sent?

Sent ones refers to those who have been sent with a message; the message of the Good news of Jesus Christ. You cannot have a sent one without a sender. Churches typically reach into local areas and plant churches around them. Then they also send out the sent-ones to go to far places to start churches where there are no churches. This involves entry and evangelism, but it also involves discipleship, forming churches and training leaders.

In Matthew 16:13-20, Jesus said he has given his followers the “keys of the kingdom.” What are these keys? Some say Jesus gave believers access to the treasure room of heaven which unlocks the door to prosperity. However, the context surrounding this reference made by Jesus destroys the possibility that Jesus had health, wealth, and happiness in mind. Rather, when Jesus referred to the keys of the kingdom he was talking with his disciples about who people say he is. Specifically Peter declared Jesus as the Christ, In response, Jesus commends Peter for uttering the declaration of faith that serves as the rock upon which Jesus builds his church. It is then that he refers to the keys of the kingdom. In short, the context demands that the keys to the kingdom is the gospel message. Jesus hands Peter and the apostles the keys of the kingdom to bind and loose on earth what is bound and loosed in heaven. As we saw in the lesson on biblical evangelism, this responsibility is extended to the church as a whole.

**Question: What are those who are sent, sent to do?** Using the framework of Acts 1:8 as the church’s chief responsibility, Ralph Winter<sup>21</sup> identifies four levels of evangelism. The E in

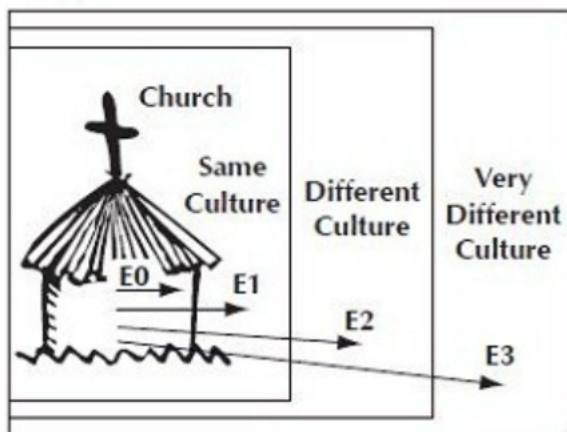
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<sup>21</sup> Ralph Winter and Bruce A. Koch, “Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge,” *IJFM* 19:4 Winter (2002): 15-25.

each level refers to “evangelism” and the number next to it denotes the distance from the evangelizer’s culture, religious beliefs, and location.

1. **E-0** — Proclaiming the gospel with persons of the very same ethnolinguistic group.
2. **E-1** — Proclaiming the gospel with persons of a similar ethnolinguistic group (affinity, culture).
3. **E-2** — Proclaiming the gospel with persons of a somewhat different ethnolinguistic group whereby the person proclaiming the gospel must cross a cultural and/or geographical boundary. There may be some familiarity between the cultures.
4. **E-3** — Proclaiming the gospel with persons of a totally different ethnolinguistic group. The cross-cultural differences between the receiving and sending cultures and worldviews are striking.

### E-Scale



Simply put, evangelism is proclaiming the gospel to anyone everywhere. **Missions typically refers to doing that cross-culturally.**

### Question: At which level on the scale do we normally think of as doing missions?

Typically, evangelism that requires the evangelizer to cross a geographical, linguistic, or cultural boundary is defined as missions.

Keep in mind, biblical evangelism involves calling people to faith in Jesus and repentance from sin to Him as Lord. Those whom God draws to himself he calls out to be saved. That is the definition of church in the New Testament – those who have been called out by God. Therefore, we must conclude that biblical evangelism results in church.

### Church Planting

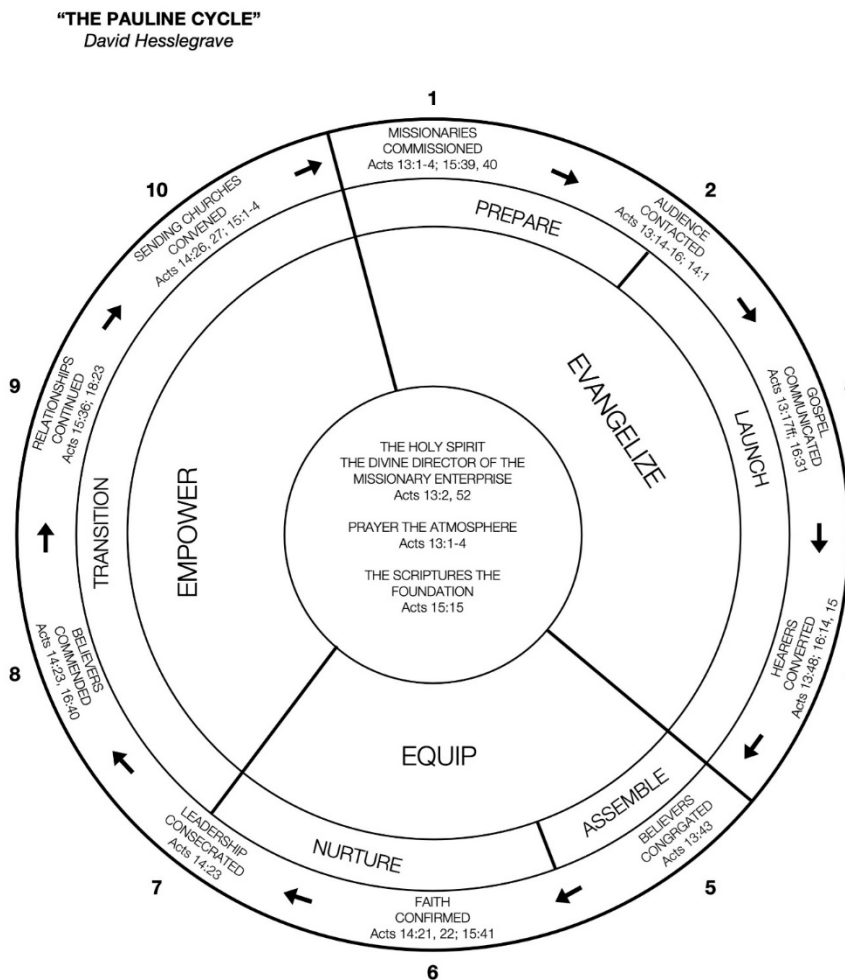
To borrow from agriculture, the church is responsible to plant churches. Church planting is the effort to bring men and women to faith in Christ and incorporate them into growing, reproducing Christian fellowships. What does that look like? David Hesselgrave offers a practical summary of the church planting task based on Paul’s ministry as seen in the New Testament (see “The Pauline Cycle” below).<sup>22</sup> In addition to the Pauline cycle, another framework for church planting that emphasizes churches planting churches as well

<sup>22</sup> David Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000)

as sent ones planting churches (called the Father’s Heart and the Field) will be detailed in the next chapter.

The New Testament teaches us that the church has been authorized to preach a message of reconciliation and then to gather those whom the Holy Spirit convicts and converts into new or existing churches. Thus, churches plant churches.

**ACTIVITY:** Divide participants into small groups. If multiple churches are represented, group participants by their churches, if possible. Instruct the groups to identify a place near them where a gospel-preaching church does not exist. Have each group discuss practical ways to implement the first four steps in the Pauline Cycle in the place they identified.



## MISSIOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul declares that he sought to become all things to all people for the sake of the gospel. This is what we might refer to as “**accommodation.**” In the mission of proclaiming the gospel and gathering new believers into churches, we must humble ourselves and not demand our rights in order not to hinder the gospel (vv. 1-18).

Accommodation means we adapt our lives and the way we communicate to people, in such a way that they hear the gospel and might respond. But, as Paul makes clear, we do so without compromising the Scriptures or our testimony (vv. 19-23).

It is likewise important that we should be concerned about **indigenization** in the missionary task. In *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*,<sup>23</sup> Paul Heibert defines “indigenization” as the “translatability” of the Christian faith into the forms and symbols of the particular cultures of the world. It involves churches of the world wrestling with infusing traditional cultural and social practices with new Christian meaning. For example, patterns of worship and music, initiation, marriage, and funeral rites, even of church structure and leadership could be adapted or transformed by the gospel. Indigenous churches reflect the cultural distinctives of their ethnolinguistic group – they fit naturally into their environment (and do not merely reflect Western patterns).

A third principle with which we ought to concern ourselves is **contextualization**. Contextualization is when the church, through the Holy Spirit and in accordance with the Scriptures, challenges, incorporates, and transforms elements of the culture in order to bring them under the lordship of Christ. The goal of contextualization is twofold:

1. For the gospel to be Good News as it provides answers for a particular people living in a particular place at a particular time.
2. For the cultural gifts of a people to become the medium of expressing worship and obedience.

We must be careful, however, as the risk of contextualization is for the culture of a people to dominate the focus and that God’s revelation through the Bible is diminished. But we can overcome the risk of contextualization if we study the Scriptures in light of what is in the biblical text and always subject culture to the God of culture.

### Why does missions still exist?

In his book *Let the Nations Be Glad*,<sup>24</sup> John Piper declares that missions exists because worship does not. God is passionately committed to the fame of his name and that he be worshipped by all the peoples of the world (Psalm 96:3; Isaiah 12:4; Romans 15:9; Romans 9:17).

Worship of God is both the goal and the fuel of missions. Piper states, “Missions is our way of saying: the joy of knowing Christ is not a private or tribal, or national or ethnic privilege. It is for all. And that’s why we go. Because we have tasted the joy of worshiping Jesus, and we want all the families of the earth included.”

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<sup>23</sup> Paul Heibert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1986).

<sup>24</sup> John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad!: The Supremacy of God in Missions*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).



ACTIVITY: Give each group a bulletin that identifies and describes an unreached and unengaged people group in the world. Have the groups spend five minutes praying for God to reveal himself to that people group, to send out workers to proclaim the gospel among them, and to establish his church in their midst.

# How Churches Can Start Churches: A Practical Process

*Dr. Kevin W. Rodgers*

While God wants His church to be involved in church planting all over the world in cooperation with other churches, He also wants His church to be involved in planting churches right in their location as well. One extremely beneficial method is called “Churches Planting Churches” which was written by Jack Redford and then used widely in Kenya by Clay Coursey.<sup>25</sup> This is a simple process (very practical) that helps a local church know how to plant other local churches. Below is the simple outline for this process. This lesson is not about the theology of missions and how missions is done; that is the next lesson. This lesson is a practical approach dealing with the modalities of an entire church starting another church.

- **Select the New Work Committee:**
  - Their Qualifications:
    - This committee is made up of 3 to 5 people who are committed to church planting
    - The committee members can be men or women but they have to be committed church members
    - They should be respected, Godly people. They are people who show love and kindness to others
    - They should be people who are holy and who love missions, and they should be able to work together with others
    - They should be available to travel and available to survey new places.
  - Their Work:
    - To understand the work of planting churches: They should help the church think deeply about missions and church planting. They should be trained in missions and should be the ones who help the members of the church see lost people with the eyes of Christ. This committee will do surveys and keep the church informed of needs in other areas and continually cast a vision for planting new churches.
    - This committee will find other areas to start churches: They must do research and survey new places. They will want to know how many people live in those areas, what tribe they are, which churches are already there, what problems people are facing, what obstacles will be faced to plant churches, and if there are any persons of peace already there wanting to help with open doors for church planting.
    - This committee will guide in how to begin the work: For example, should the mother church go and do a revival there, or start a bible study, or show the Jesus film, or do door to door evangelism, or some kind of community development project to open doors.
    - They will be the people who stand between the mother church and the new church, being their advocates, bringing reports back to the church leadership, and making sure the work is progressing and a high priority among all the members:

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<sup>25</sup> Jack Redford, *Planting New Churches* (Nashville: Baptist Sunday School Board, 1979).

- **Select areas for Planting New Churches:** There are many things to consider when selecting a new place to begin planting a new church.
  - Distance: You need to think about the distance between the old and new work.
    - This includes the distance between the people and the church: In Africa, people are walking everywhere and you need to plant churches that are close to where the people live you are trying to reach. Start the new work among large population areas and not more than 2-3 kilometers you're your target people.
    - This includes the distance between the new church and other good churches: If there is another biblical, evangelical church nearby, consider planting where there is no gospel-preaching church among the people you are trying to reach.
    - This includes the distance between the new church and bad churches: If you are planting in a village with only false churches around, then this is a place that needs a new church but be prepared for opposition and persecution.
  - Person of Peace: (See Luke 10:1-11) Many times God will prepare a person first before you even get to the new place. You should be looking for that person who will be the mediator between you and the people, and who God will use to open doors for your presence in the new place where you are planting a church. Sometimes your church might have members already living in that area who can be the people of peace, but sometimes you will find a God-prepared person you never met as church members go there for survey and evangelism.
  - Allow the Church to decide: Even though the committee is leading in praying and going and surveying, the ultimate decision for where to plant a new work should be up to the church body. Let the people join the committee in seeing the place, praying for the place, doing evangelism in the place, and getting an idea for where to start. You want the entire church to buy into the vision.
  - Follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit: As you survey, you will find lots of good places to start. Let God guide you on where to start and when. You will want to start churches in all the places, but let God's Spirit be directing all things at all times.
  
- **Prepare your church to be involved in the new church planting effort:**
  - Through Preaching: The pastor should be preaching about missions and church planting, as well as preaching about evangelism and the lostness of the world. He prepares his church to do the work of church planting from his pulpit. As he preaches the word he should be casting vision and preparing the members to serve.
  - Through Praying: Your church should be praying for the will of God to be done and praying that people will help with the work. The whole church should be praying for the right place to start, for open doors, and for God to plant many churches through their efforts.
  - Through Teaching: Members should be learning about church planting and evangelism through the teaching programs of the church. They need to learn about their responsibility as a believer and member, and how the whole church is to be involved. They should be learning about missions and how God is at work in the world.
  - Through Sacrifice: Your members must be committed to God and the work of starting new churches. They have to know that this will require a sacrifice of their time, their efforts, and their finances. However, they need to be fully committed.

- **Prepare the new place for church planting:**
  - Recognize that perceived problems can be opportunities: It might look like there are reasons to avoid a place or problems that you will face like witchcraft or other religions. However, these can be opportunities for God to bring light into the darkness. When you go to a new place you should understand what you are facing but don't run away just because you see a problem. Perhaps there are issues in the village that your church can help with. This could create an open door for ministry.
  - Know the new place well: Do surveys, interviews, evangelism, and multiple trips to get an idea of what needs to be done in the new place.
  - Start relationships with people in the new place: Instead of coming in like a stranger, getting to know the people and learning their culture and language will help your church be received in a better way. Go there many times and show the people how much you love them before you start thinking of meeting places or bible studies. Look for that person of peace and be prepared to do the hard work. This is a long-distance race and not a sprint.
  - Find ways for your church to help the people: Sometimes, doing a community project in a new place before planting a church will help open doors. Sometimes this is not necessary.
  
- **Start working with the new group of believers:**
  - In the next lesson, you will learn about Entry, Evangelism, Discipleship, and Healthy Church Formation: However, once you have been led to the right place to start a new church, you should begin with biblical evangelism. As people are coming to Christ, you should baptize them in that location and form them into bible studies. Those Bible studies will become the new church
  - Your evangelism should be biblical and appropriate to the culture: There are many options for evangelism covered in this manual.
  - You should start with bible study to help them grow as Christians: This is called discipleship and will help them to begin to walk with God.
  - You should later begin a bible study that helps them understand how a church functions: This manual can be helpful for this but will help them understand the functions of a church.
  
- **Solve the logistics and financial issues:**
  - Teach the new group to think about finances in the beginning: This might sound unspiritual, but finances are one of the things that bring problems later. Helping them understand biblical finances, in the beginning, will ensure a healthy church.
    - Teach them about stewardship: (See the lessons in this manual)
    - Teach them about budgets:
    - Teach them about tithes and offerings:
  - Teach the new group about leadership roles: They need to understand about someday having Deacons and Elders. Teach them to pay their pastors and to honor those who teach them the word of God.
  - Teach them the things they need to prepare for as a new church: This includes giving to missions and doing church planting themselves. It includes covering expenses for the church, investing in bibles, hymn books, and other needed things for worship. Teach them to love and care for each other both physically and spiritually.

- **Prepare the Meeting place:** Many churches will not start other churches because they fear the problems related to plots and buildings. This can be easier in the village but even those things can be challenging at times. There are some things you need to be aware of before you begin these things.
  - The church is not a building: The church is a group of baptized believers (as we shared in the first lesson) so these groups can meet anywhere. It is good in the beginning to have new churches think about meeting in homes, school buildings, or other places that they can use for little or no money.
  - The meeting place is the responsibility of the new church: There is no biblical requirement that the mother church buy/lease land for the new church or provide their building. God is the one who provides for His people and He does that through the membership of the new church. There is nothing wrong with the mother church helping the new church, but you must be very careful not to create dependency in the new church. They need to learn to stand on their own as soon as possible. This includes paying their pastor, providing for their meeting place, and building their own building if they ever decide to do that.
  - New churches need to be watched over, but they need to be autonomous: If you remember our early teaching on the church, you will remember that a true church is self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. This means that true churches reproduce themselves. As the new group begins to meet you will want to walk with them through the process of choosing leaders, having a place to meet, and governing themselves. This takes time, but eventually, they should be able to stand on their own and be a sister church to the church that planted them, and then begin to plant other churches themselves. One thing that is helpful in this process is MAWL (Model, Assist, Watch, and Leave). In the beginning, you want to Model for the new church start, and then assist them. This could be sending leaders to help them on Sundays, once they move from being a bible study in the week to becoming a church. After they are running on their own, you will want to watch for a while and eventually leave. (or be in an associational relationship with them)
  
- **Dedicate the New Church:**
  - Help the New Church think about Covenant Membership: You will want to walk through the process with them of what it means to be a true church and how the church functions and how people become members.
  - Be sure to let the new church stand on its own as soon as it is possible: Many people make a mistake in church planting by trying to control things for too long. You are not opening more branches of your church, you are planting new churches that will have a life of their own and govern themselves. We need to help in the beginning when they need help, but we also need to let them stand and be mature when they are ready.
  - One good way to do this is to have a celebration: After you help the church think about their statement of faith, and even possibly their constitution, you will want to take your entire church there (as many as possible) to have a celebration ceremony and dedicate them as a new church. This will help them to feel grown and will also help them to begin to stand on their own. You will continue to relate to them and love them, but they will begin to be shoulder-to-shoulder partners with you in the Kingdom and church planting. Eventually, they will plant other churches too, as your church moves on to other areas and plants more churches.

# The Father's Heart and the Field

*Dr. Kevin W. Rodgers*

## INTRODUCTION

As we consider the process of missions, it is important to note that everyone has a role to play in God's Great Commission to the church (Matthew 28:16-20). Jesus told the early church in the book of Acts, "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The book of Acts continues that story and shows how the Lord used individuals and churches to spread the gospel throughout the known world and plant churches in every region. This process of church planting is still being carried out today as the church across the world (even in Africa) continues spreading the gospel and planting churches to the ends of the earth. We call this process, "The Missionary Task," and the missionary task has six components: Entry, Evangelism, Discipleship, Healthy Church Formation, Leadership Development, and Exiting to Partnership in other fields. The purpose of this lesson is to give you a visual representation of the missionary task that can help you know several things.

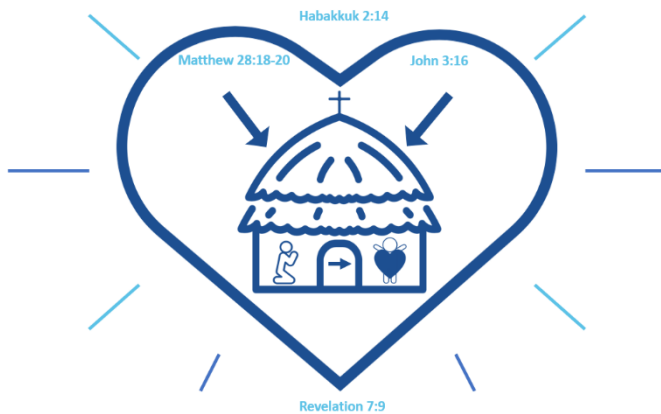
1. It helps you and your church understand God's plan for reaching the world and your part in the plan.
2. It helps you know what always comes next. Once you are doing something you always know what needs to be done next in the process.
3. It helps you understand how to develop tools that can be used in various parts of the process and which can be most effective in your own context.
4. It helps you see your role as an individual believer and as a church leader/member in the missions task and it gives you a vision for what God can do through committed, ordinary people.
5. It gives you something that is simple and easily transferrable to others.

We call this visual representation the Father's Heart and the Field. We begin with the Father's Heart and what his will is for our lives. His desire and his will are what is most important, so if we are going to behave rightly as a church, we must fulfill his plans and desires. Our missions programs in the church should revolve around his will and not ours. The Field<sup>26</sup> shows the process by which God manifests his will and desires in the world. While other models are called the four fields (or five fields) we simply call it the field, because it is all God's field with various components and various stages of growth happening. We want to be careful not to confuse someone and make them think that they are only doing one thing at a time in the field. While there are steps, or stages, in the missions process, it can sometimes be messy and you might be doing evangelism in one part of God's field, discipleship in another part and then leadership development in another part ALL AT THE SAME TIME. It is true that one thing follows the next for a church or individuals, but it also happens simultaneously sometimes and so thinking of "a field" with multiple missions activities happening at once is more helpful. Instead of thinking in lines, we want to think in cycles.

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<sup>26</sup> This is an adaptation of The Four Fields developed by Nathan Shenk in South Asia.

## The Father's Heart



**The Father's Heart is for his glory.** Habakkuk 2:14 says "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." God's chief desire is for his glory to fill the earth and for all mankind to glorify and honor him. We often think that the purpose of missions is to save the lost. This is one important reason we do missions. However, it is not the primary reason.

The primary reason we do missions is to bring glory and honor to God. When a lost person gives their life to Jesus, they begin to worship him and live for him. This brings him glory and brings their life into balance. The ultimate vision in heaven is for every tribe, tongue, and nation to surround the throne of God giving him worship and honor (Revelation 7:9). Reaching the lost for Christ, planting churches, and expanding the Kingdom of God across the globe brings glory to God, so our first point to remember is that **the Father's Heart is for His glory** (symbolized by lines going out from the heart).

The way the **Father spreads his glory across the world is through bringing people to Himself.** Since he loves the whole world (John 3:16), He desires to save the lost and He has given His church the great commission (Matt 28:18-20) to bring the world to Christ. **God spreads His glory across the world through the local church** (symbolized by an African-looking church building in the middle). The plan of God to bring the world to Himself is through local churches who are planting other churches. **God does work through individuals**, but those individuals should always be connected to, and a part of a local church. Sometimes those churches plant other churches in their own "Jerusalem" and "Judea" and sometimes those churches send "sent out ones" (missionaries) to go and plant other churches that will plant more churches in "Samaria" and the "ends of the earth." So, whether it is by missionaries who are sent out or the local church itself, every church should be manifesting the glory of God by planting new churches. Do you see that these individuals have certain characteristics? You can see that they are people who **pray** (symbolized by the person on their knees), they are people who **abide in Christ** (symbolized by the person with a big heart), and they are people who **go to their neighbors** with the gospel (symbolized by the arrow at the door).

Churches are the means by which God spreads His glory throughout the world. They are made up of true believers who abide in Christ, pray, worship and share with the lost. Those church members are on mission in their day-to-day lives bringing people to Christ and they are focused on planting more churches. Sometimes churches plant other churches or sometimes churches send out people to go to distant places and begin planting churches that will plant other churches. However, God's heart is for his glory, manifested by local churches as they go near and far, spreading the good news and expanding the Kingdom of God.



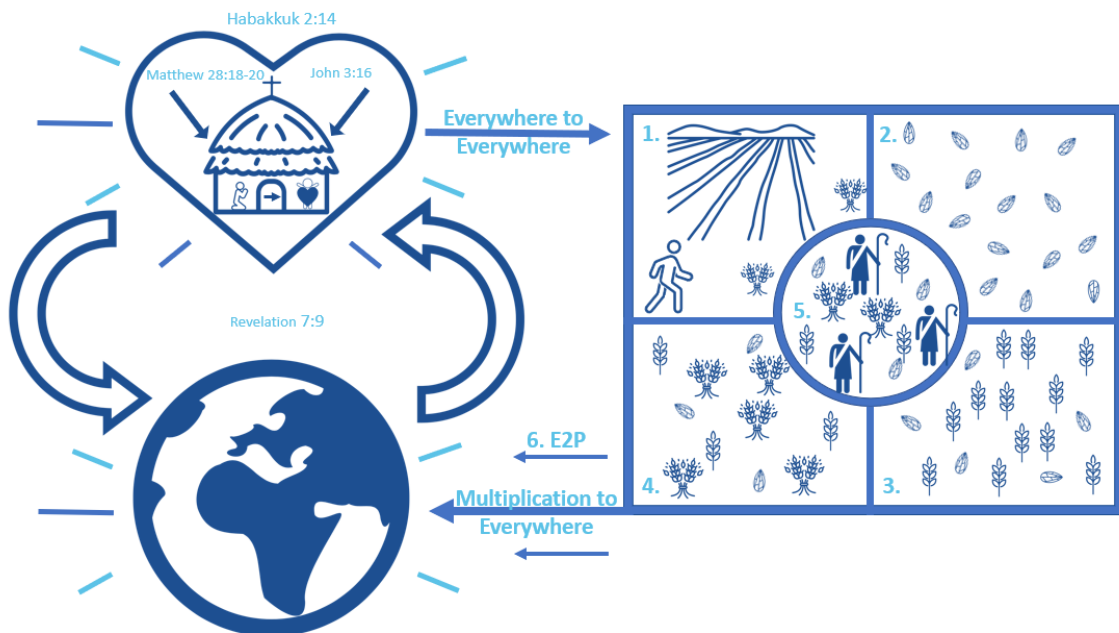
As churches fulfill the great commission and take the gospel to the world (symbolized by the curved arrows) then God’s glory is manifested in the world as well. God’s heart is for his glory and He glorifies himself by reaching the world through the church and “filling the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.”

This process is vital and happens on the local level as a church goes to the next village over to start another church, and it happens on a global level as churches come together to send missionaries to unreached places to share the gospel of Jesus and start new churches. This is the ultimate plan and purpose of God.

However, it is important to understand the detailed process by

which these churches are planted and reproduce themselves. We call this process “The Field” (or some versions say “The Four Fields”). This is shown in the picture below, and we will now begin to break down this process step by step.

Notice how the cycle is reproducible. The Father’s Heart is for churches to go from everywhere to everywhere manifesting the Father’s glory by spreading the gospel and planting churches. These churches then multiply to everywhere and the cycle continues until the whole earth has heard.

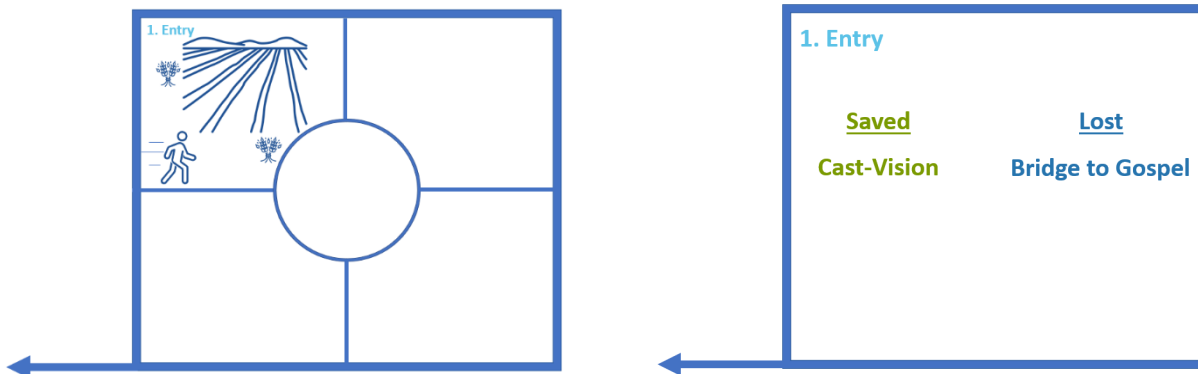




## The Field

Now, let's break down the field process to each of its component parts. **Field One is called Biblical Entry.**

In this field (or first section), the sower goes in and sows seed. This is the process

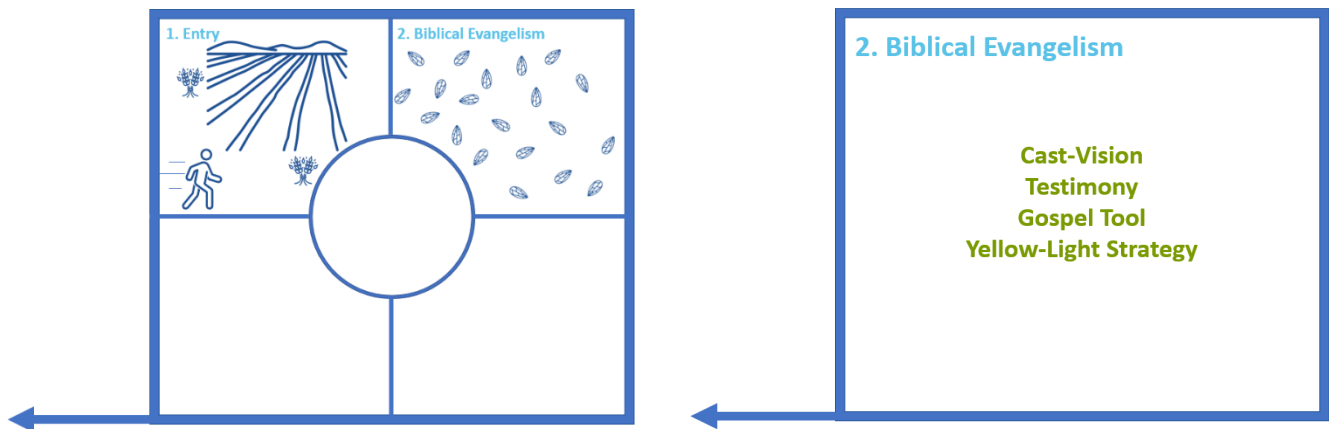


where we enter a new mission field and we begin meeting people in order to share the gospel with them. Our vision is to see new churches planted and it begins with building relationships and sharing the gospel with every lost person we meet.

Think of Jesus' words in Mark 1:17. He told Peter, "Follow me, and I will make you a fisher of men." Like Peter, our purpose is to follow Jesus and to also fish for him. When we enter into a new field we will meet two kinds of people: saved and lost. Those are the only two kinds of people in the world. So, our strategy should account for both types of people. When you meet a lost person you have a bridge to help you get into a gospel conversation with them (we discussed this in the evangelism chapter) and if they are saved then you should cast vision to them for how they can follow and fish as well. You want everyone in the place where you have entered, to be a part of God's mission. Either they are lost and will need to be saved or they are saved and can be invited to join with you in God's mission of planting churches in that new location. Of course, some lost people will not respond to the gospel and some saved people will not want to be on mission with you, but the church or individual, who is planting new churches should always be on the lookout for where God is at work.

In entry, we know that God goes before us and he is already there preparing the harvest for us. We must enter the field with gospel conversations and expect God to work. We look for his handiwork and try to find ways in the new community to overcome barriers to the gospel and to build bridges to reach people. Sometimes preparing the entry field for "gospel seed sowing" requires work ahead of time. Perhaps you will have to learn a new language or learn the culture of the people before you can effectively reach them with the gospel. Perhaps there are certain human needs or problems that your church can solve, which will build trust in the new field and open the minds and hearts of the people to your message. It is a good practice in entry to prayer walk around that new place and see where God is at work and ask him to give you wisdom about what to do and how to do it. Whenever a farmer goes to plant the seed, he must first prepare the field and prepare himself for the work. Entry involves all of these aspects as we look towards the next step of biblical evangelism.

**Field Two is called Biblical Evangelism.** After we enter the field and find a lost person we seek to bridge towards the gospel. This requires us to share with them a gospel presentation that is effective and biblical.



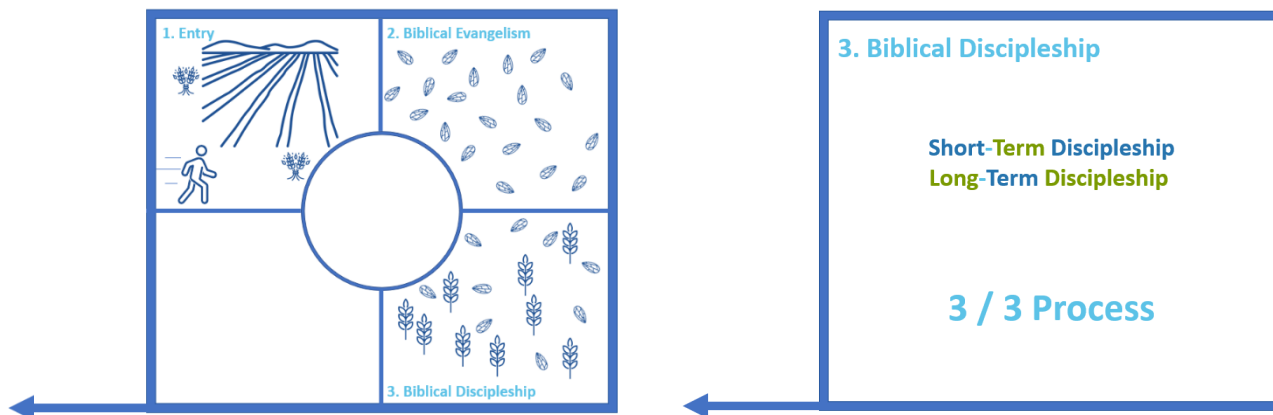
Sometimes those bridges can be a vision casting tool, something that leads to a spiritual conversation, or even your own testimony. Once you have turned the conversation towards spiritual things you can share a gospel message with the lost person.

It is best to have a single gospel tool that works best in your new field. While it is good to try many evangelism methods to see what works best in your new field, landing on one that works best is a good idea. The reason for this is that once you share the gospel with someone and they come to Christ, you should immediately teach them how to also share their faith using the same tool. A simple, effective gospel presentation that is reproducible, will be best to share because you are not simply reaching an individual; you are reaching someone who will be a future church member and join you on your mission to plant more and more churches in the new field. We want to reach people who will reach others.

In addition to effective bridges and gospel tools, we should also have effective “yellow light” strategies (think of a street robot and the different colored lights). God has already prepared people for the harvest, but we do not know who they are until we share the gospel with them. For some, we will get a “red light,” a “no.” A red light means stop. These people are not interested or may even be belligerent. We pray for them and encourage them and then move on. A “green light” is when someone is saying “yes” or “go ahead.” They are open to the gospel or they share your vision for multiplying churches. With this person you want to see that they are baptized, begin discipling them, and begin training them to join you in the mission. But what about a yellow light?

This is a person who is not yet ready, but they are open and just need more time or need to learn more in order to be ready to be saved. We do not want to overlook these people but have a strategy for helping them too. Sometimes you can cast your vision, or you may be led by the Holy Spirit to share a different kind of gospel presentation. One of the most effective methods is to ask them if they would be interested in coming to a small group Bible study. Many times, these people will not come to church, but they might study the Bible with you one on one. This will allow them to get more opportunities to overcome the issue that is preventing them from saying yes.

**The third field or section is Biblical Discipleship.** Once you have prepared the field, sown the seed, and begun to harvest new believers, you now will want to have a plan for helping them to grow in their faith. It is best to do this by forming a small group Bible study with the new believers.



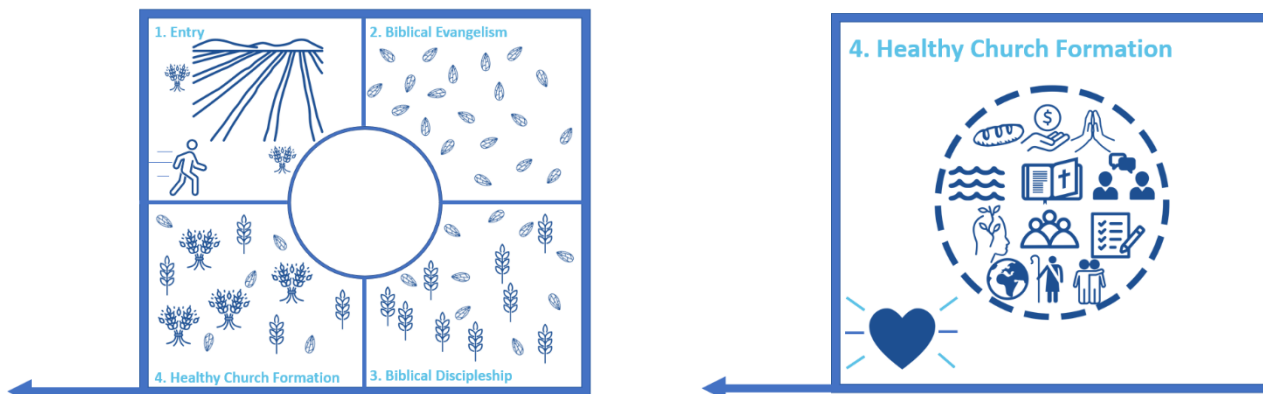
In Biblical Discipleship, you want to have strategies for new believers in short-term discipleship and then also for mature believers in long-term discipleship. It is important to have a set of lessons or stories for oral learners. These lessons will include all of the things that new believers need to know about following Christ.<sup>27</sup> These things should include baptism, prayer, evangelism, love, giving, discipleship, and the importance of church.

Long-term discipleship can be a Bible study curriculum, a set of lessons, or a set of stories (for oral learners), that helps the small group transition from being a Bible study to becoming church. Sometimes groups will study verse by verse through Acts or they will do a set of lessons that last for several months. Short-term discipleship is training for new believers in the first ten weeks. Long-term discipleship can last for months and months until the group becomes a church.

Of course, you will want to do all of your teaching and training in the 3/3 process as described in the introduction of this manual. This process emphasizes participation and accountability. It sets up the group to be dedicated and committed and also helps the group be active in both following and fishing for Jesus. This ethos will carry over into the new church when they begin to meet as a church and not just a Bible study. It is an ethos or attitude that should characterize the new church and other churches that they plant. Putting the right kind of thinking into the DNA of a new church is crucial to determining what kind of church they will be going forward.

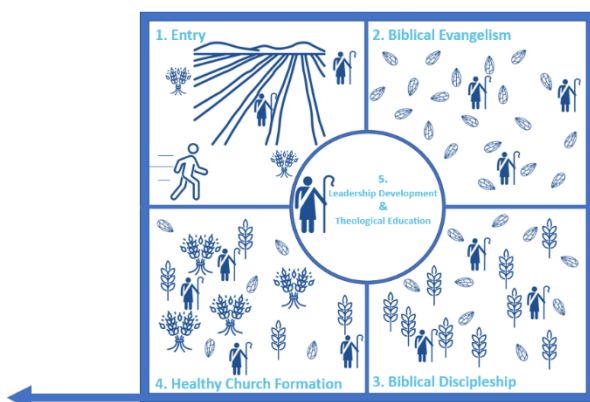
<sup>27</sup> You may contact the author for materials for new believers. One of the resources we have used is “The Commands of Christ” found online at [http://noplaceleft.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/3fe2a5\\_e3fcf1252871418ca19a1d3e41d0fa90.pdf](http://noplaceleft.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/3fe2a5_e3fcf1252871418ca19a1d3e41d0fa90.pdf).

**The Fourth Field or Section is Healthy Church Formation.** This is where the believers who are studying together as a group begin to transition and see themselves as a church.



In this field, we focus on church formation and becoming a healthy church. We will not revisit the church circle diagram, but you can review that lesson at the beginning of this manual and see what it means to be a church, what it means to have covenant membership, and the 12 characteristics of a healthy church. As you disciple the new group and they begin to see themselves as a church, it is important to train them in this manual so they grow strong.

**The Fifth Field or Section is Leadership Development and Theological Education**

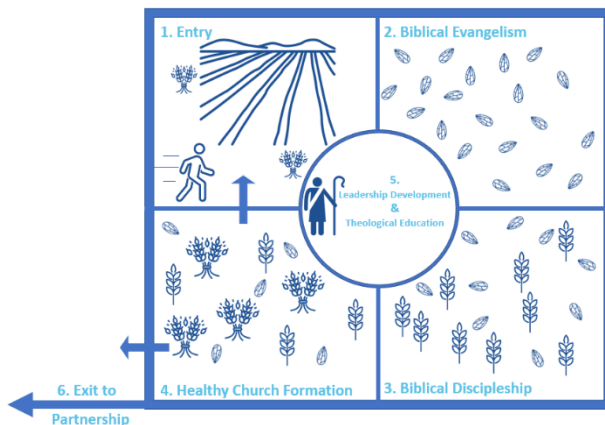


As churches are formed, leaders need to be developed and trained. This is not just the job of the seminary, but even the church planter or the mother church should be involved in training and developing effective leaders. Often, the leader for the new church is one of the new members. He will need to be disciplined, mentored, and developed. Of course, God is the one who calls the pastor to the new church and the church must recognize and affirm that calling. However, as

they move in that direction, the church planter or mother church will want to work very hard to help develop the new leader to lead well. Theological education is a very important component of this, and every pastor should seek to be taught and learn how to preach, teach, and lead well. This is crucial for a new church. There are multiple ways that pastors and church leaders can be trained, from local Bible schools to formal seminary education. Here in Kenya, there are specific teams who are devoted to that task and who would be glad to help you get more training if it is needed.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> You may contact the authors of this manual to ask about some of the opportunities for theological education that are offered here in Kenya at various Baptist seminaries and local Bible schools.

## The Sixth Section is Exiting to Partnership



If you will notice the arrows, they point to a continuous process. New believers should be sowing seed and doing evangelism even as they grow. When healthy churches are forming, they are still developing leaders, entering new fields, and discipling new believers. We call this the Father's heart and "The Field" because instead of thinking of four separate fields, it is actually a single field with many different activities happening at the same time. Of

course, you must enter first before doing evangelism, you need to have believers first before discipling them, etc., so there is a sense in which this is linear. Yet, there is also a sense where this is cyclical. New churches should not wait until they are fully established to begin planting new churches, just like new believers do not wait until they are fully mature to start doing evangelism. Obedience to reproduction is a part of the growing process, so you cannot truly be following unless you are also fishing; churches cannot truly be growing unless they are planting new churches.

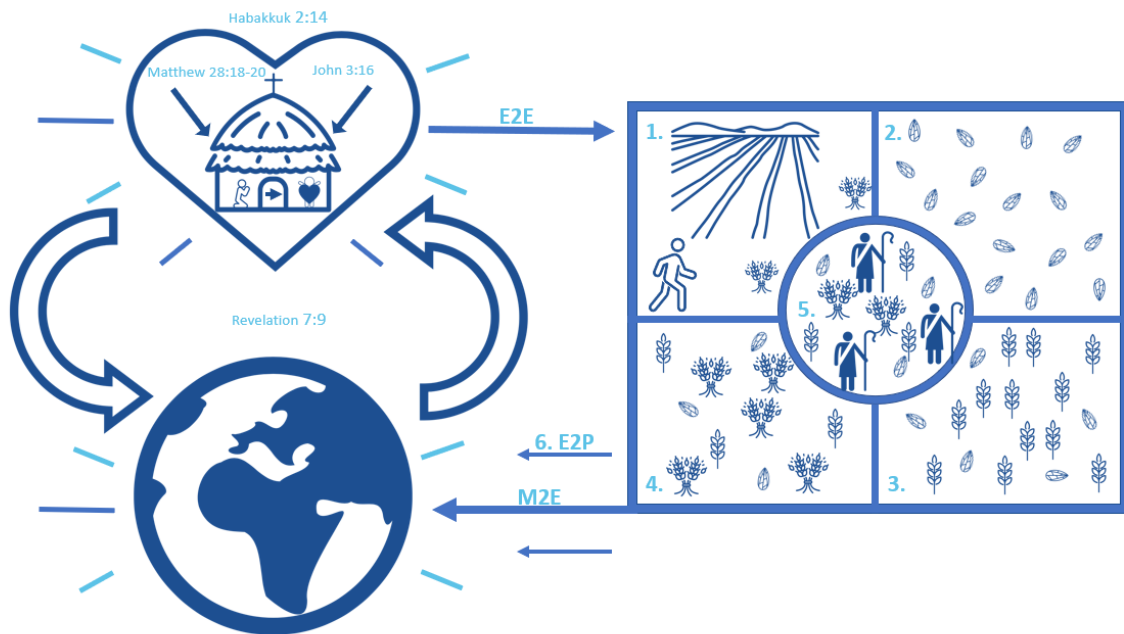
Therefore, we have three arrows in the picture. One is the healthy church going right back into the same field and continuing to make disciples, form new churches, etc., in their own location. A smaller arrow represents them going to another nearby field and beginning the process all over again of entry, evangelism, discipleship, healthy church formation, leadership development, and exit. The longer arrow is what we call exit to partnership. In short, when your church, or a church planter, goes into a field and establishes a church with capable leaders, it needs to teach that new work to continue doing what it has observed. It is not that one church is the mother and the other are just branches. No, each new church needs to be planting new churches in partnership with the church that planted it. When a missionary plants a new church, he does not stay there always helping that one church. He also does not break his relationship with the first church. Instead, he moves to a new field and the church he planted begins work in another field. Now you have two planting instead of just one. Every church planted should plant more; every person in the church should be working to help the church's missions program and every missionary sent out should be continuously planting churches that will send out missionaries and also plant more churches. This is how the Kingdom of God spreads and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord fills the earth. Our goal is not to add some new churches. Our goal is the multiplication of churches from everywhere to everywhere.

### Final Overview

This is the overall picture that shows how we achieve the Father's main desire of seeing his glory spread throughout the whole earth. He works through individuals and their local churches to enter new fields, share the gospel with the lost, disciple new converts, form healthy churches, and train leaders for those new churches. These new churches and the individuals in these churches who pray, abide in him, and go to the lost continue this

cycle from field to field and from person to person until the entire earth is covered with healthy churches who are manifesting the glory of God around the world.

This is God's will for you as described in the Bible, and this is God's will for your local church. What do you need to do differently, and what does your church need to change in order to join in this missionary task?



# Healthy Church Leadership: Conclusion

There are many other aspects that could have been included in this training manual. Our hope is that it will be the basis for training church leaders to assess the health of their churches and then make needed changes. However, this is not the end; just a good place to start. Once your church is moving towards greater health, you must continue to always be learning and growing in your biblical knowledge so that you can lead well and ensure that your church will become all God wants it to be.

Jesus is the Chief Shepherd and the one who owns the church. Pastors and church leaders are simply those who serve him to help carry out His will in, and through, his bride. The church is the bride of Christ, and like most husbands, he cares deeply for her and desires that she be stainless, without spot or wrinkle (Ephesians 5:27). This means that we have a duty to ensure that the church is healthy and functioning according to His will. This also means that the church has the responsibility to reproduce, plant more congregations, and send missionaries to the ends of the earth. It is time for the African church to rise up and be all that Jesus wants her to be and to take the gospel to the farthest reaches of this globe. May God grant this vision to be fulfilled in our lifetime, and may we rejoice at the blessing of being able to be a part of His great plan and work in the African church.

Pressing On,

Dr. Kevin W. Rodgers  
Baptist Mission of Kenya and Editor of this Volume