The GAME of LIFE

Practice

201
How To Grow

WELCOME TO
THE GAME OF LIFE SERIES

"PRACTICE"

We're glad you've chosen to find out more about your walk with the Lord at ***Abundant Life Christian Fellowship.*** This book will show you the beginnings of a lifetime walk with Him.

Our Vision Statement is, ***"We Are Here To Set God's People Free!"***

Each book will repeat our key statements that make us church. We want you to come to a full understanding who we are as the people of God.

At Abundant Life, we believe when a person is set free they will desire to live in such a way that it will positively impact their world. Their hearts will yearn to do something with the Lord. They will discover their gifts and abilities to do and invest in things of eternal value.

Many times Jesus would take simple illustrations from His day and use them as spiritual pictures so others could understand great truths of God. So, we are using the game of hockey to quickly represent what we are about.

Hockey is a very popular Canadian sport. Almost everyone in Canada is aware that the object of the game is to put the puck in the opponent's net. This game works well to express to Canadians what they need to do to be a people set free to live to the glory of God.

Our strategy is simple...

The **LORD GOD IS THE OWNER** of the Team.
He enlists **PLAYERS** be on to His team
Players show up for **PRACTICE**
He gives them their **POSITION** on the Team
His players **PLAY** to win, which is to make disciples
All accomplished in and through His **POWER**
Winning is guided by proper **PRODECURE**

The Game Of Life

We believe the Lord wants us to be a TEAM, a congregation playing the Game of Life together, encouraging and strengthening each other in the Lord.

We also believe there are basics each person should know to really walk with the Lord. We have put these basics into short training classes.

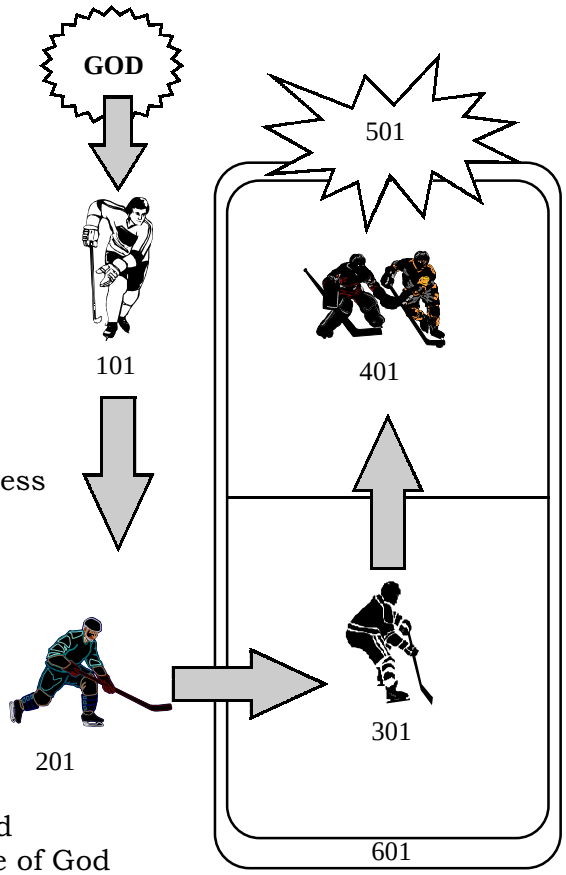
101 - **PLAYERS:** HOW TO BELONG
- **A -** Absolute Lordship
- **B -** Basic Beliefs
- **C -** Church's Vision

201 - **PRACTICE**: HOW TO GROW
- **F** - Faithful To The Lord
- **I** - Involved In Giving
- **T** - Tied Into A Small Group

301 - **POSITION**: HOW TO SERVE
- **C** - Congregational Unity
- **A** - Applying Your Gifts
- **L** - Loving A Ministry
- **L** - Leading Others To Greatness

401 - **PLAY**: HOW TO TELL
- **W** - Witnessing To Others
- **I** - Involved In Missions
- **N** - New Players to Mentor

501 - **POWER**: HOW TO HONOUR
- **A** - Awareness of the Power of God
- **W** - Worshipping with the People of God
- **E** - Experiencing the Presence of God



THE GAME OF LIFE

601 - **PROCEDURE:** HOW TO MANAGE
- **G** - General Overview
- **O** - Overall Team
- **A** - Answer the Question
- **L** - Leading Out

Our Core Values

The true foundation of any organization is its value system. Values are what one believes deep within. These truths drive a church and create the dynamic for a healthy or unhealthy congregation. Our church MUST live by God-centred values.

Abundant Life has agreed to live by God's values, values that unite us in a common vision. We desire health at the core of who we are.

These four values are the most important to us.

We remember them as the ***TREE* of Life!**

T—Truth Will Set Us Free.

We believe Truth brings freedom. Truth is a Person — His name is Jesus. For man to truly be set free he must come to Truth. We present this Truth in various ways such as preaching and teaching. The revelation of Christ is found in His Word. Scripture is practical for instruction in everyday life.

R—Relationships Are The Key

We believe the two greatest relationships are with God and people. We must have deep relationships with both. We connect to God with passion and honesty. We connect to others by being real and open. Christ-like attitudes toward others are extremely important.

E—Evangelism Is The Priority

We believe man is in great danger if he does not come to know Jesus Christ in an intimate way. Man is in spiritual darkness and lost without Christ. It is the church's responsibility to warn and encourage man to accept the truth of his condition, repent and live for God. Churches are God's means to reach the lost.

E—Empowerment Of The People

We believe every person who comes to God is given a spiritual gift so he may serve Him in love. Leaders equip followers in the ways of the Lord to do good works. Every believer should be having and doing a ministry of service to God. Spiritual leadership is critical to the church's health.

These values shape our thinking and actions. We desire to live them out at the core of who we are as a congregation.

KEY TRUTHS:

1. Every person has the potential to relate and communicate with the Lord
2. Every Christian should have a deep relationship with the Lord.
3. Every Christian can and will grow in Christ if we follow His instructions.
4. A Christian without a real relationship with God and people is in grave danger.

When a church becomes a real threat to the evil one it will be when God's people come to understand it is all about an intimate relationship with Him. It is about connecting with God, not for His power, not for His hand, but for His heart.

THE GOAL OF THIS CLASS:

...To show the importance of becoming spiritually FIT. This is accomplished by teaching you how to pray and read your Bible; how to live a life free from the love of possessions and how to connect with some friends in a LIFE or home group.

WHAT MAKES ABUNDANT LIFE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP A TEAM?

THREE RELATIONSHIPS BRING US TO MATURITY AS A TEAM:

Faithful To The Lord - Relationship with God

Involved In Giving - Relationship with Possessions

Tied Into A Small Group - Relationship with Others

And now,...

...Let's Play the *GAME OF LIFE!*

FAITHFUL TO THE LORD: RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

The events in Matthew 28 took place at the end of our Lord's 40-day post-resurrection ministry to His disciples. In this 40-day period, five times it is recorded—in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts—that the Lord commissioned the disciples to disciple the nations.

This passage in Matthew 28:18-20 records one of these incidents:

And Jesus came and said to them,
"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you;
and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

Historically, we know that within a period of a few weeks they saw at least 5,000 come into relationship with their Lord. Within 35 years they had planted churches in every major center in the Roman Empire. They went out believing it could be accomplished, and in the Name and the authority of Jesus Christ they conquered the world. A little, insignificant group literally changed the course of the world.

To follow involves a cross, and a cross means cutting off our own goals and purposes, the things for which we live in the flesh, and settling once and for all the issue in our life, Jesus Christ is going to be Lord, and we are going to serve Him.

Jesus says we must renounce all we have; it is the things that own us that God is talking about. The things we have that possess our heart and come before our allegiance to Jesus Christ. Every possession must be brought under His authority and rule.

Are we willing to follow and are we willing to be made willing to set everything aside? That is the key question. Are we willing to truly be His disciple? The word disciple means a learner. To be a disciple of Jesus is to learn Jesus' ways.

At Abundant Life we are seeking to present every saint mature in Christ to the glory of God the Father.

2 Tim 3:17 ...that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Maturity is not perfection.
Maturity is not simply knowledge.
Maturity is not simply activity.

Maturity is: being totally dependent upon Christ and living that out on a day-to-day basis. It is a healthy, living relationship with God.

And our goal is not only maturity in terms of the individual, but maturity in community. Working and loving together.

Maturity takes personal discipline.

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, of self-discipline. 2 Tim. 1:7

...disciple yourself for the purpose of godliness... 1 Tim. 4:7

What are some key truths we should know to mature?

The Bible says, *"'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.' "* Job 28:28

So, let's start here. **Who Is The LORD?**

Imagine a do-it-yourself "god-making kit." Included in the kit is everything you need to create your very own god. After you finish making him, you'll have to live with him, worship him and obey him.

What kind of god would you create? One that is soft and kind or one so big it would have to live out beyond the stars. We smile at this concept of creating our own god but many people become involved in their own god-making.

People have thought up gods that looked like people, birds, animals and snakes. This religious zoo begins in the minds of people who reject the True God of creation. Wrong thinking about God leads to wrong living before God. William Temple warned, *"If your conception of God is radically false, then the more devout you are, the worse it will be for you."*

Wrong thinking about God leads to wrong living before God.

The God we want to worship is the God who has revealed Himself through His Son, Jesus and the holy scriptures. The Word of God is the key to understanding who God is because it is God's revelation of Himself to the world.

2 Tim 3:16-17

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

If you respect someone, what are some things you do or think when you meet that person?_____
_____.

Proverbs 1:7 will be your Scripture to memorize today. "*The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."* Commit this verse to memory and apply it in your life as you begin to dwell on the things of God.

You will begin to respect God more and more as you look at who He really is. God is absolutely perfect in all His ways. He is totally sovereign or in control, heading all people to a certain and sure destination.

Heb 9:27
And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...

God's sovereignty always seems to raise some questions. Have you ever asked, "Why does a Sovereign God allow evil, pain and death to exist in the world? **Why does He allow bad things to happen?**"

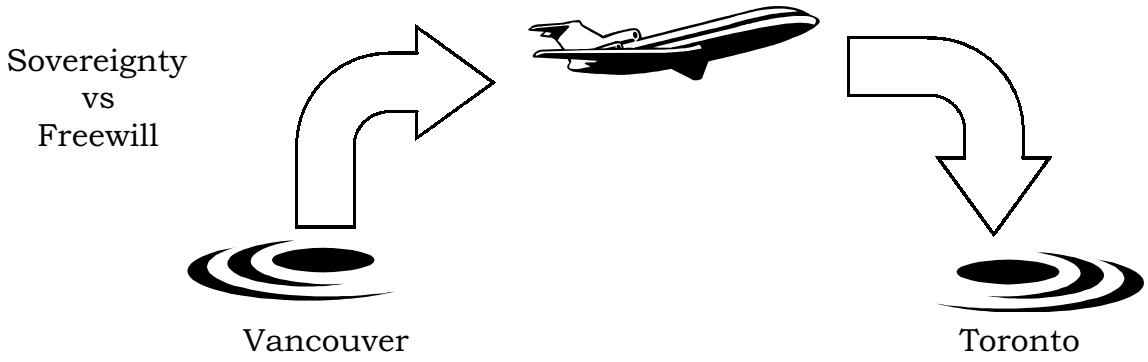
No one really knows the answer to these questions because God has chosen not to fully reveal His plans to us. We know He does allow evil to exist in restricted areas of His creation. But evil is like a fugitive trapped in a building; his actions are limited and his time will run out. God has told us there is a day coming when there will be no pain or death.

1 Corinthians 15:24-26

Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

Another question raised by the sovereignty of God is, “If God rules the universe, how can men and women exercise free choice? Aren’t we mere puppets who act when the great Director pulls the strings?”

The Bible clearly states God is absolute Sovereign AND we are also responsible for our choices.



A jumbo jet flies from Vancouver to Toronto. Its destination and flight plan are determined. Let this represent God's Sovereignty. On board the aircraft are 300 passengers who exercise limited freedom, how they pass their time is largely up to them. They can read a book, watch a movie, stroll the aisles, talk or sleep. Yet, at the same time, the plane is carrying all of them to Toronto. Let this represent man’s limited free choice.

God has decreed we should make moral choices. We fulfill God’s decree whenever we decide between ungodly and godly decisions. Our freedom, like the passengers on the airplane, is limited, but determination and choice do co-exist.

Perhaps the world’s deepest quarrel with God’s sovereignty is it does not want a Sovereign God. The world does not like a God who cannot be told what to do. Yet for a Christian this teaching is such a blessing. We serve a God who cannot be tricked or bought off. He will see all things and events to justice and righteousness.

Isaiah wrote about the sovereignty of God in Isaiah.

Read these verses Isaiah 40:12-17:

How big is God? (vv 12) _____.

Who has directed or counseled God? (vv 13 - 14) _____

How mighty are all the nations before God? (vv 15, 17) _____ _____.

How much would we have to sacrifice to have God notice? (vv 16) _____.

Who is like or equal with God? (vv 25) _____

Who made the stars? (vv 26) _____

How does He know and keep them all in place? (vv 26) _____ _____.

When you see God as the Scriptures reveal Him, what do you think about Him? _____

When we look at the Scriptures we see that God is an awesome God. He is bigger than the whole creation! No one has counseled God about anything. By Himself He sets forth the foundation of the universe. Even all the nations are insignificant before Him. If everyone got together to fight against God, He would still win because of His greatness.

There is no one His equal in power and might. He is Almighty God! It is out of this power He creates and holds all things together. He is the Sovereign God!

He Is Creator!

Every blade of grass, every drop of water, every flower and shrub, every planet and star, every person and angel, was once a thought in the mind of God. When we come to realize that God is our Creator it gives us a sense of purpose and responsibility.

God creates man when He says in Genesis 1:26 - 27, *"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."*

Now when God created man, He created him for a purpose. What is the purpose of man? Why were you made?

_____
_____

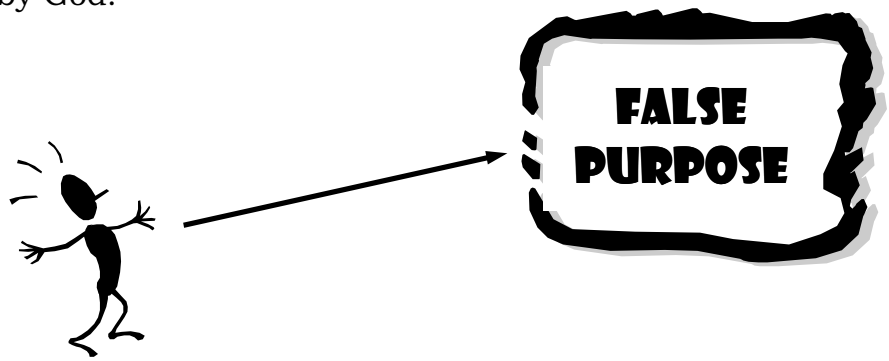
The answer is found in 1 Corinthians 10:31!

1 Corinthians 10:31!

"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,
do all to the glory of God."

What is the purpose of man? To live to the glory of God!

When we do not understand this simple but profound truth of God our whole life gets out of balance. We begin to experience events not desired for us by God.

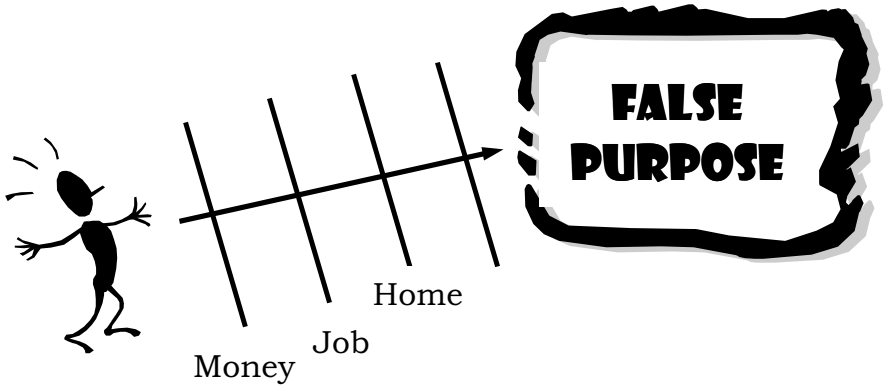


Person heading towards what they believe to
be their main purpose for living.

Remember if you live for the wrong purpose in life you are setting yourself up to be frustrated and angry in life.

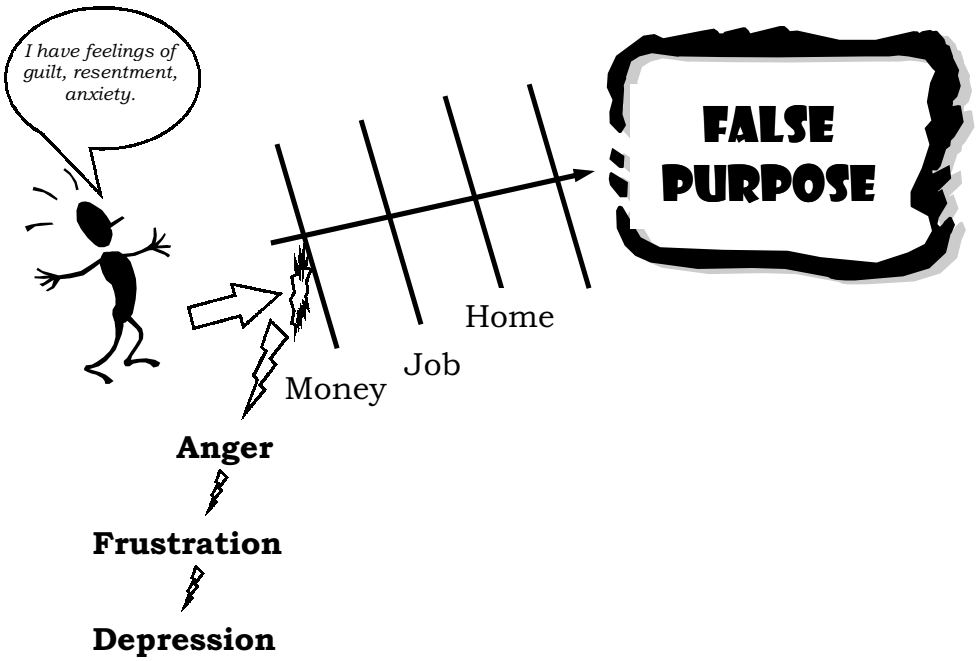
If being a good father or mother is your main purpose for living, ask yourself what could stop you from reaching your purpose?

No money? No job? No home? No marriage? No children?



These are ***roadblocks.*** Each time you experience a roadblock in the path to your purpose you will experience frustration and anger. If you continue and it looks like you will never reach your purpose, this can lead to depression and even suicide!

The more intense you pursue your false purpose the greater the anger and frustration. Emptiness is at the end.



Anger comes from having something block my purpose. It is in direct path to my "perceived" happiness. It's based on pride. It's you saying you know the right way for you instead of trusting that God will open the way to do His will in and through you.

Frustration comes after I attempt to bring down this roadblock and it isn't working. You know you've hit this stage when you have a "throwing-up-of-the-hands" in despair attitude.

Depression comes when it looks like the roadblock will remain. I can not seem to get around this roadblock to reach my purpose.

What this does to our emotions is exhausting. It can become so extreme our body begins to shut down. We experience bleeding ulcers, headaches, stomach problems, etc. You were not created to live this way. If we insist in going into this false purpose living, we should not blame God for our condition of anger, frustration and depression.

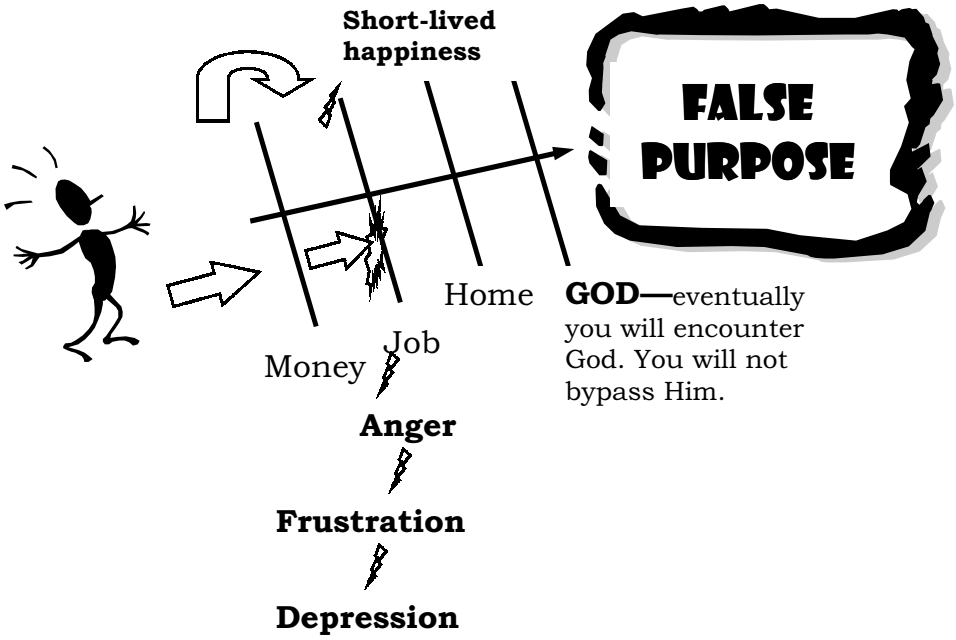
Guilt comes from believing that what God provides is not enough and then you go out of God's will to secure what He has not provided.

Resentment comes from believing my needs are threatened by something which God allowed to happen to me.

Anxiety is the fear something I need will not be provided.

Even if a person lives on this earth in a false state of happiness eventually they will stand before a holy God. Heb 9:27 *And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...*

Sometimes we can jump over our roadblocks. Maybe by getting a raise in pay or receiving an inheritance but this happiness is short-lived because another roadblock in coming soon.



Only a Christian who knows his needs are sustained in Christ can be content in every circumstance. Our distinguishing mark should be love, joy and peace.

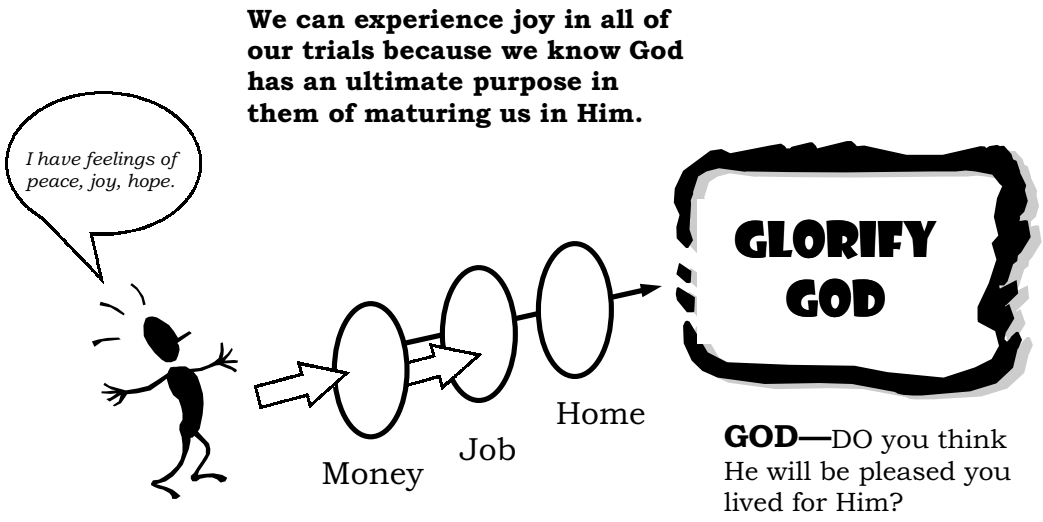
So how do we glorify God?

In Jeremiah 9:23 - 24 it says, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight." says the LORD.

Our Creator God wants us to bring honour and glory to Him by listening and doing what He wants to accomplish in our lives. He wants us to adore and love Him as we care for this earth, and the people and animals upon it. You and I were made to have a relationship with God!

If we live for the purpose of bringing glory to Him, than there is nothing to stop us from fulfilling our purpose. Sometimes it may be hard to keep focus on fulfilling our purpose but it not impossible to live for the glory of God no matter what we are going through.

A mature Christian's view of life and how to live it.



Can you still live to the glory of God even if you have no money?
Yes! It may be more difficult but it can be done.
Can you still live to the glory of God even if you have no job?
Yes! This also might be difficult but it can be done.
Can you still live to the glory of God even if you have no home?
Yes!
Can you still live to the glory of God even if you have no marriage?
Yes!
Can you still live to the glory of God even if you have no children?
Yes!

You see there is nothing to come into your life experience which will not allow you to live to the glory of God, if you desire to do it. Nothing!

You and I were made to glorify our Creator, the Sovereign God of the Universe! This and this alone is our purpose and our destiny. As we learn to put our full trust in our Sovereign God we experience the love of God, His joy in all circumstances and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding.

To live this life of a dependent relationship in God we must speak to Him continually. We must always be seeking His mind and heart on the matter so we do not do things or make decisions independent of Him and His glory.

The two key ways God guides you is through His Word and prayer. Reading the Scriptures keep our fleshly thoughts for making decisions that glorify ourselves instead of God. And prayer moves us into the throne room of God to understand His will and mind. Prayer is a conversation between man and God, not a monologue but a conversation.

You are about to experience some very exciting times.

Your spiritual strength depends on getting to know the Lord of spirits. Each of us needs a time to pull away from the cares and distractions of the world to hear the Lord. This is how He guides us along the way. This time is known as a person's "Quiet Time". A time where you can get together alone with God. As you do this, you will be pleased with the results.

Since a daily Quiet Time is all-important because it is your regular contact with your Source of spiritual life, Jesus Christ Himself, the Evil One is going to try to do all he can to stop you from being serious about this time.

If you are going to win this battle say so, out loud, right now! *"By the power of Christ working in me, I commit myself to spend time with God in a Quiet Time each day."*

WHY DO WE NEED TO SPEND DAILY QUIET TIME WITH THE LORD?

Spending daily time with God in His Word and prayer is not just a good idea - it is vital to growing as a Christian. God has given us many good reasons for spending daily time in the Word and prayer:

1. To Know God.

"I don't want your sacrifices; I want your love. I don't want your offerings; I want you to know Me!" Hosea 6:6

2. For Daily Nourishment

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Matt. 4:4

"Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the Word, that by it you may grow in respect to your salvation." 1 Peter 2:2

3. For Daily Victory

"How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your Word... I have stored up your Word that I might not sin against You." Psalms 119:9,11

4. For Daily Guidance

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

Biblical Examples of Quiet Times with the Lord God

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

Abraham: "now Abraham arose early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before the Lord." (Genesis 19:27)

David: "In the morning, O Lord, YOU will hear my voice; in the morning I will order my prayer to You and early watch." (Psalm 5:3)

Here are some suggestions for starting your Quiet Time:

1. HAVE A SPECIFIC TIME AND PLACE FOR IT.

It's important to have a regular place to meet your Lord but DON'T GUILT YOURSELF! This is suppose to be like meeting a friend. You could meet the Lord at a desk, a table, or even the side of your bed will do. It is very important that you schedule at least ten to fifteen minutes for your Quiet Time. If it is possible, schedule your Quiet Time at the start of your day. Your day will be different because you met Christ first! The key here is to find a time and commit to it.

2. BE CONSISTENT.

A hit-and-miss pattern is an indication you are developing new habits and disciplines. Stick with it! If this happens to you, ask a friend to motivate you by calling on you or asking you about your Quiet Time. Go to bed on time!

3. HAVE A BIBLE AND A PENCIL HANDY.

Believe God will talk with you in your Quiet Time. Be prepared to listen and obey. Have your Bible so you can see His mind. If you are systematically reading, start at the Book of James, then the Gospel of John, Mark, Acts, Ephesians, Philippians and Romans. Later, you will learn how to do personal Bible study.

4. BEGIN WITH PRAYER.

Before you do anything offer a short prayer to God asking Him to open your heart to Christ, offering Him the right to teach, to discipline, or to direct you as you study. Tell Him of your love for Him.

5. RELATE TO WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED.

Before you stop, decide how you can specifically live out the truth you have learned in your Quiet Time. These practical expressions of truths grasped will make a very down-to-earth Christian out of you!

Read of the safety of a person's life who stayed on God.

Psalm 1

1 Blessed is the man
who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked
or stand in the way of sinners
or sit in the seat of mockers.
2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
and on his law he meditated day and night.
3 He is like a tree planted by steams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.
4 Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff that the wind blows away.
5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous,
6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

HABIT OF PRAYER

Prayer is a vital part of an effective Quiet Time. The Scriptures and prayer are like the "wings" of Quiet Time: you won't really get off the ground unless they are both attached to your time!

Remember the purpose of our time is to hear the Lord and deepen our relationship with Him. The key to any relationship is communication. In our relationship with the Lord, He speaks to us through His Word and we speak to Him through prayer.

The way to understand prayer is the same as understanding how to swim. You can not just read about it or watch others do it you must do it yourself. As you have your quiet time on a regular basis you will come to enjoy it more and more.

LET'S HAVE TODAY'S QUIET TIME, RIGHT NOW...

PRAY: *"Father, You alone are God. You are our Creator. You have made us for a purpose to glorify You. Lord, my desire is to bring glory to Your Name. Please now open up my mind and heart to Your truth. Thank You for loving me. I love You. Please reveal to me what You would have me learn today. In Jesus' name. Amen"*

Pick up your Bible and read the verses for today.

1 John 3:1 - 3: "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure."

As you read the Bible, God's Word, you're getting spiritual nourishment. But are you "digesting" what you read? One way to help you "digest" the thoughts in Scripture verses is to ask God what He wants to tell you through these verses. Try doing this now, with the verses you have just read, shut your eyes and silently ask God to tell you what He wants you to know about Himself or His ways. Now open your eyes and write down what you believe He said to you in your mind.

"Father, what do You want to say to me through this passage of scripture?"_____
_____
_____.

Remember, God will say things which are positive and encouraging to your growth. When He does have to say something stern about a sin or a false way you are letting into your life He will be specific. He will not say that you are no good or bad in a general sense. The Holy Spirit will pinpoint for you the change He is about to make in you if you are willing to obey Him.

Let me write down what I believe He told me as I did this.

"Alan, you are My child. I love you. I am pleased you have chosen a time to purify yourself. I am a Holy God. Be honest with Me when you speak with Me. Tell me the things which are real to you, open up your heart before Me. Alan remember, I am the Father and you are the child. I am responsible for you. You do not have to strive to succeed, rest in Me for My Name is Victory. I will keep you secure."

Can you see the joy of talking with God? Did He speak to you about similar things?

In your Quiet Time you will begin to learn that prayer is not so much a discipline as a communication between two beings who care for each other. Love must always communicate to the one who is loved. God will communicate with you because He loves you very much.

Now in what ways can you live out the truths of what you're being told? Can you see the difference this will make in your attitudes? In your actions?

Now ask God, What He wants you to do today in light of this scripture? Some examples of what He might ask:

He may give you a name of someone who could use a visit or encouragement.

He may ask you to go right a wrong, to apologize to someone who you hurt or who you know is having a difficult time with you.

The secret to this second part is simple. Obey Him!

Learn to obey God quickly. If He asks you to call on someone, or write a note or letter do these things quickly. As you learn to obey in the little things He'll give you more opportunities to glorify Him.

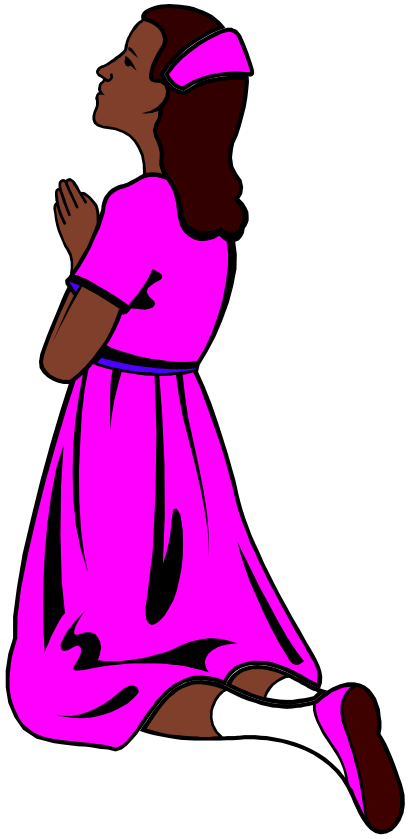
You will find every day is an adventure with God. He is constantly speaking with His children and guiding them into all truth as He brings you into alignment with His heart and His ways. While this is happening in you He also begins to work it out through you. Your family and friends will soon begin to see a major transformation in the priorities of your life.

You will begin to become a person who is gentle and lowly of heart. Seeking to please God not your flesh and its ways. You will desire to see that God's Name is honoured above all else.

Prayer Principles:

1. God initiates prayer.
We tend to think it is we who start the prayer cycle. God does - He loves us and longs to have entrance and access to our lives.

2. Prayer is love responding to love.
This is your time to spend with your Creator. Do not boast and brag about your prayer life. Be humble. Seek to be real and honest for no other reason than to know and experience God.



3. Prayer is open to anyone:
It is intensively personal, even when in a church congregation. God desires all people to know Him.

4. We pray best in an attitude of Gratitude:
"Prayer... consists simply in telling God day by day in what ways we feel that we are helpless." Hallesby

5. God is not interested in "fast food" fellowship.
Like a good meal, He wants intimate time to visit, communicate and express love.

HOW TO STUDY HIS WORD

The way to study the Scriptures and apply them to life is something every Christian should know. The Word of God will be your guide throughout your life. It is very important for you to know the basics of Bible study.

The five basic ways to understand the Word of God can be illustrated by using the five fingers on your hand. Place your hand on this page and trace an outline around it. Let each finger on your hand help you remember how to study the Word of God.

Trace the outline of your hand

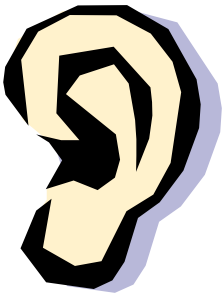
The HEART of Knowing The Word of God

For us to receive a new mind with new thoughts we are going to have to go through these five basics of studying and applying the Word of God.

The acrostic, HEART is used for your easy remembrance to apply the Scriptures that will move your heart in obedience to the Lord.

1. H—Hear The Word

This is the first way that we can receive the word. We do not need to be scholars. We may not even know how to read but someone can speak the words of truth to us.



a. What kind of heart will best hear and use the Word? (Luke. 8:15)_____

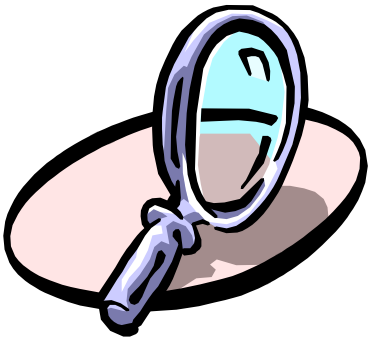
a. b. Whom did Jesus say would be blessed? (Luke. 11:28) _____

c. What did the people of God do once they heard the Scriptures being taught to them? (Acts 17:11-12

_____

_____

2. E—Examine The Word



Examining and reading the word is critical to our growth. When we get out of the Word of God, when trials come, we often end up on the bottom of the heap. We become defeated by life. But as we spend consistent time in the Bible we keep focused and ready to face the difficulty of life.

a. Why should you read the Bible according to Deut. 6:4-9? _____ _____.

b. What does Galatians 1:9 tell us about the gospel we have received? _____

A daily reading program which will take you systematically through the Bible is something many Christians use as a regular part of the daily devotional time. You can pick up daily reading outlines in the church.

3. A—Analyze The Word

a. How does Proverbs 2:4 indicate we should study the Word?

_____

b. What should be our goal in studying the Bible? (2 Timothy 2:15)

To analyze something, you take your time looking at it and studying it. It is more like careful reading. Slowing down and seeing what each chapter, verse or word is saying. This helps you remember the passage.

4. R—Remember The Word.

a. Why should we memorize the Bible? (Psalm 119:9, 11) _____

_____

b. How did Jesus overcome Satan's temptations? (Matthew 4:4, 7,10)

_____

_____

c. In Colossians 3:16, what do you think "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly" means? _____

_____.

Did You Know:

After 24 hours you may accurately remember…
5% of what you hear.
15% of what you read.
35% of what you study.
57% of what you see and hear.
But you can remember 100% of what you memorize.

You must have a memory plan and follow it.

1. Read aloud the verse 10 times a day to imprint it in your mind. 5 times in the morning, and 5 times in the evening just before retiring.
2. Visualize the verse(s). Look closely at the verse in the Bible so you will get a visual picture of it in your mind.
3. Repeat this procedure 7 days.
4. If you can't seem to retain the verse then write it out on a piece of paper.
5. Each time before reading the verse(s) repeat the book, chapter and verse so you will know the location of the text.
6. Meet with a partner for review and encouragement.

5. T—Think Through The Word

Meditating on or thinking about the Word of God is prayerful reflection with a view to understand and apply what you have discovered. It is the process of conforming your mind and will to the things of God.

Asking these four questions will help you know and apply the Scriptures to your LIFE after you read a passage.

Is there a... L - Lie that is exposed?
I - Inner attitude that needs to change?
F - Faith promise to hold on to?
E - Example for me to follow?

What are the promises to those who continually meditate on the Word of God? (Psalm 1:2 - 3; Joshua 1:8)

"The Scriptures were not given to increase our knowledge but to change our lives."
Dwight L. Moody

6. APPLY THE WORD

Read Luke 6:46 - 49

Getting the Word of God into our hearts is essential, but we don't really abide in the Word until we have applied it into our lives. Up to this point it is just head knowledge not heart knowledge.

1. See how the verse applied to the people in its culture and setting.
2. Seek to apply it in a practical manner where you live.
3. Share your finding with others, to encourage them to apply the Scriptures in their lives.

INVOLVED IN GIVING: RELATIONSHIP WITH POSSESSIONS

SUCCESSFUL STEWARDSHIP FROM GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

"Success is much more than a matter of achieving the right things; it is also a matter of being the right person." ----Howard Whitman

Taken from a tract entitled "Is This Success?"

"In 1923 a group of the world's most successful financiers met in a hotel in Chicago.

Collectively, these tycoons controlled more wealth than was in the United States Treasury, and for years newspapers and magazines printed their success stories and urged young people to follow their examples. Here is the rest of the story:

Charles Schwab - the president of the largest independent steel company -- lived on borrowed money the last five years of his life and died penniless.
Richard Whitney - the president of the New York Stock Exchange -- served time in Sing Sing.
Albert Fall - the member of the President's Cabinet -- was pardoned from prison so he could die at home.
Jesse Livermore - the greatest bear on Wall Street -- committed suicide.
Leon Fraser - the president of the Bank of International Settlement -- committed suicide.
Ivar Krueger - the head of the world's greatest monopoly -- committed suicide.

Surely this is not success!"

What Success is NOT according to God:

1. Success is not material satisfaction: Mark 8:36
2. Success is not selfishness.
3. Success is not life without problems: John 16:33
4. Success is not ego-mania: Gal 6:3
5. Success is not self-confidence: Phil 4:13
6. Success is not climbing the organizational ladder by walking over people.
7. Success is not pleasing everybody: Luke 6:26
8. Success is not being a carbon copy.

What is Spiritual Success?

1. Success involves being right with God.
2. Success involves possessing a winning attitude to life.
3. Success involves being able to accept yourself.
4. Success involves knowing you're making an eternal significance.
5. Success involves doing good works.
6. Success involves investing in other people.
7. Success involves doing the will of God.

Success is being in deep relationship with God and doing His will.

The purpose of money and finances?

What's the world's view

security luxury
pleasure independence

What's God's view?

Philippians 4:19 - to meet our needs & demonstrate His provision
1 Timothy 6:17 - to enjoy God's blessings
2 Corinthians 4:14 - to share with others
Matthew 6:19-21 - to invest in eternity

TITHE: BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF GIVING

Why Does God Want Me To Give?

1. Giving makes me more like Jesus

For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life for many. Mark 10:45

2. Giving draws me closer to the Lord.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
Matt. 6:21

3. Giving is an investment in eternity.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth..... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Matt. 6:19-20

4. Giving is an antidote for materialism.

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 1 Timothy 6:17-18

5. Giving results in God giving to me.

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Luke 6:38

6. Giving allows us to invest in the lives of others.

For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and the to us in keeping with God's will. 2 Cor. 8:3-5

7. Giving results in joy for the giver.

Then the people rejoiced because they has offered so willingly, for they made their offering to the LORD with a whole heart, and King David also rejoiced greatly.
1 Chronicles 29:9

HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?

OLD TESTAMENT GUIDELINES

Malachi 3:8-10
Will a man rob God? Yet you rob Me. But you ask 'How do we rob you?' In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse-the whole nation of you-because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe in to the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. "Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

There are 2 primary terms used in the Old Testament relating to giving:

Tithe -- is giving 10% of my income to the Lord.

Offering -- is any amount I give to the Lord in addition to my tithe.

There are about 30 references to "tithing" to the Lord in the Old Testament. God's instruction to His people were very clear:

A tithe everything for the land ["everything you produce"], whether grain of everything from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD. Leviticus 27:30

Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your field's produce each year. Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, ***so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always.*** Deuteronomy 14:22-23, these verses come from the Old Testament law given to Moses.

But even before the Law, Abraham gave a tithe (10%) to the Lord.
(Genesis 14:20 & Hebrew 7:2-4)

NEW TESTAMENT GUIDELINES

In the New Testament, there are very few references to the tithe (Matthew 23:23, Luke 18:12, and Hebrews 7:2-8). Jesus never directly told His disciples to tithe, although He did commend the Pharisees for tithing (one of the few things they did right!) There is no reference to tithing in any of Paul's letters or in any of the other New Testament books.

Instead of emphasizing **how much to give**, New Testament teaching stresses **how to give** - that is, the heart attitude the Lord wants us to have. Consider the attitudes mentioned in these 2 passages:

On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up...
1 Cor. 16:2

And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. 5 And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord & then to us in keeping with God's will... 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though his poverty might becomes rich. 2 Cor. 8:1-5,9

i. We should give generously and sacrificially. (v. 2-3)

ii. We should take the initiative in giving without waiting. (v. 3-4)

iii. We should give according to God's will for us. (v. 5)

iv. We should give the way God gave to us. (v. 9)

Remember this:

Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver... 11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. 12 This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. 13 Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. 2 Cor. 9:6-7, 11-13

i. We should give generously. (v. 6, 11, 13)

ii. We should give freely and cheerfully. (v. 7)]

iii. We should give to help people and to honour God. (v.11-13)

Application:

The historical guideline of Scripture is 10%.

As disciples, we should see 10% as a starting point..

Following Christ's example means giving generously and sacrificially.

We need to be committed to giving as much as we can, not just as much as we have to.

"Giving is the opposite of shopping; with shopping you go for the best deal, with giving you go for the greatest cost and sacrifice."

PROMISES TO GOOD STEWARDS

God has given many promises in His Word to serve as encouragement to us to give generously:

Key Bible Words:

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

Proverbs 11:24-25
One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.

Proverbs 22:9
A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor.

Proverbs 28:27
He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.

Ecclesiastes 11:1
Cast your bread upon the water, for after many days you will find it again.

Malachi 3:9-10
You are under a curse-the whole nation of you because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe in to the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. "Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

Matthew 6:19-21
Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Luke 6:38
Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Some of us can say, “I obey Him, I serve Him, I worship Him, and I fear Him. But we cannot say that we love Him.” To become a true giver we must come to the point of saying, “I love Him with all my heart.”

A lot of things compete for our love and attention.

Listen to a song by George Beverly Shea:

I’d rather have Jesus than silver or gold,
I’d rather be His than have riches untold;
I’d rather have Jesus than houses or lands,
I’d rather be led by His nail-pierced hand.

I’d rather have Jesus than men’s applause,
I’d rather be faithful to His dear cause,
I’d rather have Jesus than world-wide fame,
I’d rather be true to His holy name.

He’s fairer than lilies of rarest bloom,
He’s sweeter than honey from out the comb;
He’s all that my hungering spirit needs,
I’d rather have Jesus and let Him lead.

Refrain: Than to be the king of a vast domain
Or be held in sin’s dread sway;
I’d rather have Jesus than anything
This world affords today.

So you may receive a financial break on your end of the year taxes, Abundant Life gives each giver a number. All you would have to do is write your number on an envelope with your tithe or offering inside and we will know to issue you a tax receipt at the end of the year.

TIED INTO A SMALL GROUP: RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

"Let us not give up the habit meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage each other." Hebrews 10:25

Why Is It So Important To belong to a small group?

1. I need to belong to some family of believers.

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

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

In Christ, we who are many form one Body, and each member belongs to all the others! Romans 12:5

2. I need encouragement to grow spiritually.

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

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up...
1 Thessalonians 5:11

3. I need accountability to grow spiritually.

People learn from one another just as iron sharpens iron.
(Good News) Proverbs 27:17

Therefore, encourage one another... lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitful of sin. Hebrew 3:13

4. There is great power when believers pray together.

Whenever two of you agree about anything you pray for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. (Good News) Matthew 18:19

5. Christ is present when we fellowship together.

For wherever to people have come together in my name, I am there, right among them! (Philips) Matthew 18:20

6. Fellowship is dynamic with unity.

[Jesus prayed] that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in Me I am in you. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that you have sent Me. John 17:21

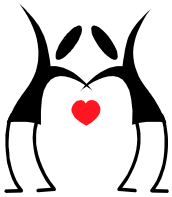
7. You have significant contributions to make to other believers.

God has given you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other... 1 Peter 4:10

THE "ONE ANOTHERS" OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. "Be at peace with each other" (Mark 9:50)
2. "Wash one another's feet" (John 13:14)
3. "Love one another..." (John 13:34)
4. "Love one another" (John 13:34)
5. "Love one another" (John 13:35)
6. "Love each other" (John 15:12)
7. "Love each other" (John 15:12)
8. "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love" (Romans 12:10)
9. "Honour one another above yourselves" (Romans 12:10)
10. "Live in harmony with one another" (Romans 12:16)
11. "Love one another" (Romans 15:14)
12. "Stop passing judgment on one another" (Romans 14:13)
13. "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you" (Rom. 15:7)
14. "Instruct one another" (Romans 15:14)
15. "Greet one another with a holy kiss (Romans 16:16)
16. "When you come together to eat, wait for each other" (1 Cor. 11:33)
17. "Have equal concern for each other" (1 Cor. 12:25)
18. "Greet one another with a holy kiss" (1 Cor. 16:20)
19. "Greet one another with a holy kiss" (2 Cor. 13:12)
20. "Serve one another in love" (Galatians 5:13)
21. "If you keep on biting and devouring each other... you will be destroyed by each other. (Galatians 5:15)
22. "Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other." (Galatians 5:26)
23. "Carry each other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2)
24. "Be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2)
25. "Be kind and compassionate to one another" (Ephesians 4:32)
26. "Forgiving each other" (Ephesians 4:32)

27. "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" (Ephesians 5:19)
28. "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21)
29. "In humility consider others better than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3)
30. "Do not lie to each other" (Colossians 3:9)
31. "Bear with each other" (Colossians 3:13)
32. "Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another" (Colossians 3:13)
33. "Teach... (one another)" (Colossians 3:16)
34. "Admonish one another" (Colossians 3:16)
35. "Make your love increase and overflow for each other" (1 Thess 3:12)
36. "Love each other" (1 Thessalonians 4:9)
37. "Encourage each other" (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
38. "Encourage one another" (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
39. "Build each other up" (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
40. "Encourage one another daily" (Hebrews 3:13)
41. "Spur one another on toward love and a good deeds" (Heb. 10:24)
42. "Encourage one another" (Hebrews 10:25)
43. "Do not slander one another" (James 4:11)
44. "Don't grumble against each other" (James 5:9)
45. "Confess your sins to each other" (James 5:16)
46. "Pray for each other (James 5:16)
47. "Love one another deeply, for the heart" (1 Peter 1:22)
48. "Live in harmony with one another" (1 Peter 3:8)
49. "Love each other deeply" (1 Peter 4:8)
50. "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling" (1 Peter 4:9)
51. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve the other" (1 Peter 4:10)
52. "Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another" (1 Peter 5:5)
53. "Greet one another with a kiss of love" (1 Peter 5:14)
54. "Love one another" (1 John 3:11)
55. "Love one another" (1 John 3:23)
56. "Love one another" (1 John 4:7)
57. "Love one another" (1 John 4:11-12)
58. "Love one another" (2 John 5)



"Twenty-one of the fifty-eight, or fully one third,
call for Christians to love!"

Making Application:

1. Plug into a Bible Study class. Choosing the class that's right for you:

2. Participate in a L.I.F.E. group.

What is a LIFE Group?

As the church body grows larger in its corpaorate worship times we also want the church body to grow small and more intimate with people attending a small group. These groups are called LIFE groups. LIFE stands for the Lord's Invitation For Encouragement. We desire to have a small group where you could be cared for in a real way.

This complete program is called LIFE FORCE. FORCE stands for the variety of groups we want to offer.

F—Focus Groups

These groups are any group where a specific program of study is used to help a certain people group or need in the congregation. For example "REAL MEN" is a men only group designed around building men of integrity. EXPERIENCING GOD is a group meeting around the book of the same name for a 13 week period.

O—Opportunity Groups

These groups take our daily activity and turn them into opportunities for ministry. The variety of this type of group is vast and could include, Volley Ball Life Groups, Mechanics on Mission, Handy Helpers, God's Gym, etc.

R—Recovery Groups

These groups are groups with a specific plan to assist people in finding freedom from different difficulties in life. For example Divorce Care, Stop Smoking, etc.

C—Community Groups

These groups are very open and inviting. This type of group is the most common where a group of people come together on a regular basis to care and love on each other throughout the year. They welcome new people into the group until it gets large enough to multiply into another similar group.

E—Evangelism Groups

These groups are designed to present the gospel message to the unchurched or unbeliever.

Each of these groups are encouraged to be open if possible to the people the Lord brings to Abundant Life. Each of us need to have a group of people we call friends who will hold us accountable in our walk with God. You will richly bless your life by being involved in LIFE FORCE.

Since our community groups are the most common, below is an outline of how they are normally conducted. Each group varies some but all the community groups are open to new people.

General Format of
COMMUNITY L.I.F.E. GROUPS

		Suggested Time Frame
Before.....	Introduction of guests Icebreaker activity/fellowship Make needed announcements	10 min.
Look Up.....	**Worship**	15 min.
	-sharing praises -singing -reading Psalms -thanksgiving to God -testimonies of answered prayer	
Look In.....	**Word**	40 min.
	-LIFE Responder Questions or... -Bible lesson with application -ask L.I.F.E Questions -prayer for application to our life -caring for needs -leadership - direction of church	
Look Out.....	**Witness**	10 min.
	-pray for friends, relatives, neighbors who don't know Christ -pray for the people you want to invite to your small group -collect offering for the furtherance of the ministry	

After..... Informal conversation; consideration for the Host/Hostess' hospitality.

Building Three Relationships

The foremost relationship is with your Father God. Get to know and trust Him. Next become serious about your stewardship. Use the resources you have been entrusted with responsibly. And last, connect deeply with a few people who will build you up in your faith.

I will set a time aside so I will take my prayer time with the Lord very seriously.

I will give at least the tithe (10%) of my income back to the Lord to show Him and me that I am serious about Christianity.

I will join a LIFE group where I will have my needs met as I also meet the needs of others.

If you have answered YES to these questions, you're ready! Call the office 250-492-0131 or speak to the leader of your class to let someone else know you have made these commitments.

Thanks for being apart of the...

T*ogether* ***E****xperiencing* ***A*** ***M****inistry*

WHAT NOW?

You now go to the third stage, Class 301 **The POSITION.**

We believe each person has special gifts and abilities given to them by the Lord to use in His service. It is up to each of us to find the position where we can be most effective in of work of the Lord.

Are you now ready to move to Class 301, "The POSITION"?

Contact the church office to find class times or if you have any questions. (250)492-0131