



CFM - INTEGRAÇÃO
E CRESCIMENTO

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Educação Cristã



Primeira Igreja
Batista de Curitiba

The Disciple's Notebook

Following Jesus' Footsteps

2018

Curitiba



— ministério de —
Educação Cristã
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Answer the questions below without help or assistance so that your mentor may discover what you already know and what you don't know yet. Do your best, and don't worry if you don't know how to answer a question or are in doubt if the answer is correct or not.

1. Why do you wish to be baptized?

2. Share how you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

3. What is the Bible? How can we use it for our spiritual growth?

4. What is prayer?

5. Are you certain of your salvation? yes no

If yes, how are you sure?

6. Choose the correct answer: I should be afraid of death. I can lose my salvation. Salvation is forever. All are saved; after all, all are children of God.**7. When are you baptized in the Holy Spirit?** When I accept Jesus into my life. I still haven't. I will be when I am baptized in water.

- I still haven't. I will be when I seek God more.
- I never will. My church doesn't allow this type of thing.

8. What are gifts?

What is your gift?

How do you plan on using it?

9. Are you a saint? Explain.

- yes no

10. Do you consider it important to go to church? Why?

11. What is the Church? Who or by what is it formed?

12. Does baptism in water save us? Explain.

13. What is your marital status?

Why memorize the Word of God?

The strategy of memorization has increasingly been neglected lately. We have created many resources to retain information and have left aside the practice of memorizing, an important activity to keep our brain active.

The Bible gives us orientation regarding the need for “keeping the Word of God”. Jesus used this resource to overcome temptation in the desert. His example encourages us to keep His word alive in our minds and hearts. Memorizing verses is an excellent strategy for you to be strengthened in every moment and to contemplate how the word of God is effective in your daily life, helping you overcome challenges and become a faithful testimony of our Heavenly Father’s kindness.

During your discipleship you will be encouraged to memorize verses that relate to the subject that you will study. Take this task seriously and exercise your memory. Then, at the end of 12 weeks you will have memorized 12 portions of the word of God. With the help of your mentor, here you can register your progress.

May the Lord help you in this process and that you may have great experiences with this activity.

Challenges of Memorization

	DISCIPLE	DISCIPLER
Week 1: Jn 3.16		
Week 2: 2Tm 3.16		
Week 3: Mt 21.22		
Week 4: Eph 2.8-9		
Week 5: 1Pt 1.16		
Week 6: Heb 11.1		
Week 7: Jn 14.26		
Week 8: Mt 28.19-20a		
Week 9: 1Co 12.27		
Week 10: 1Pt 4.10		
Week 11: Ac 1.8		
Week 12: 1Co 10.23		

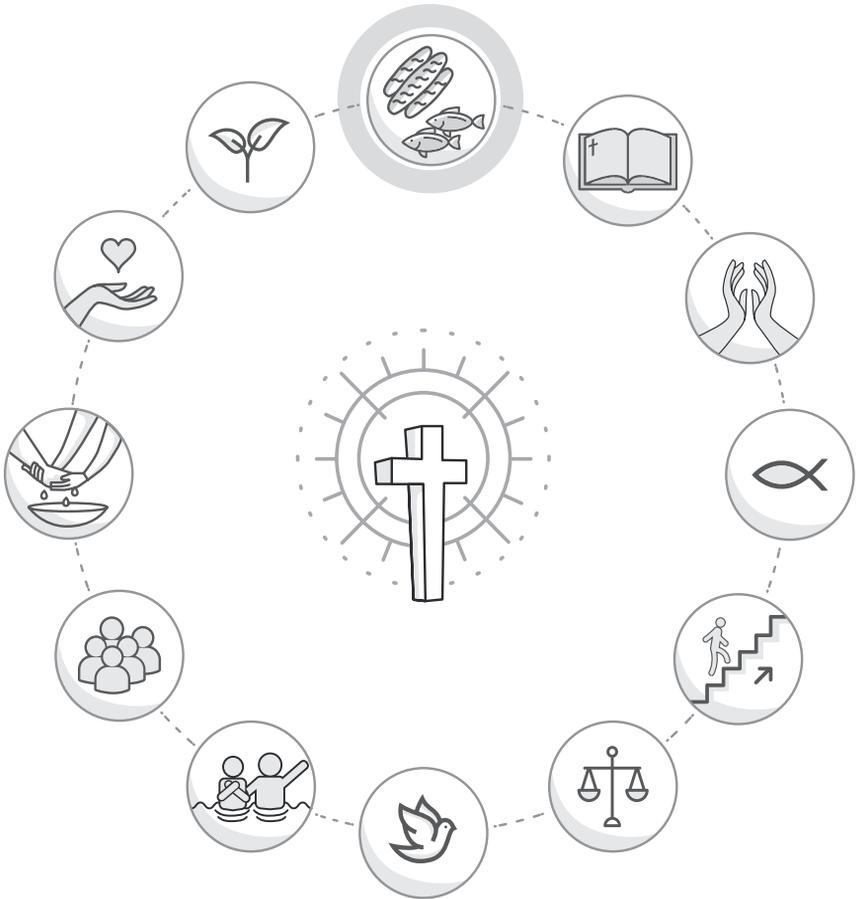
Get organized!

Write down the dates of your meetings with your discipler.

	DATE OF MEETING
Week 1 <i>Knowing Jesus</i>	
Week 2 <i>Bible: testament of God for men</i>	
Week 3 <i>Prayer</i>	
Week 4 <i>Salvation</i>	
Week 5 <i>Sanctification</i>	
Week 6 <i>Faith and Works</i>	
Week 7 <i>Holy Spirit</i>	
Week 8 <i>Baptism and the Lord's Supper: Commands of Jesus</i>	
Week 9 <i>Igreja e Vida em Células</i>	
Week 10 <i>Christian Stewardship</i>	
Week 11 <i>Evangelism: Personal Testimony</i>	
Week 12 <i>New Life in Christ: nonnegotiable values of the Christian Life</i>	

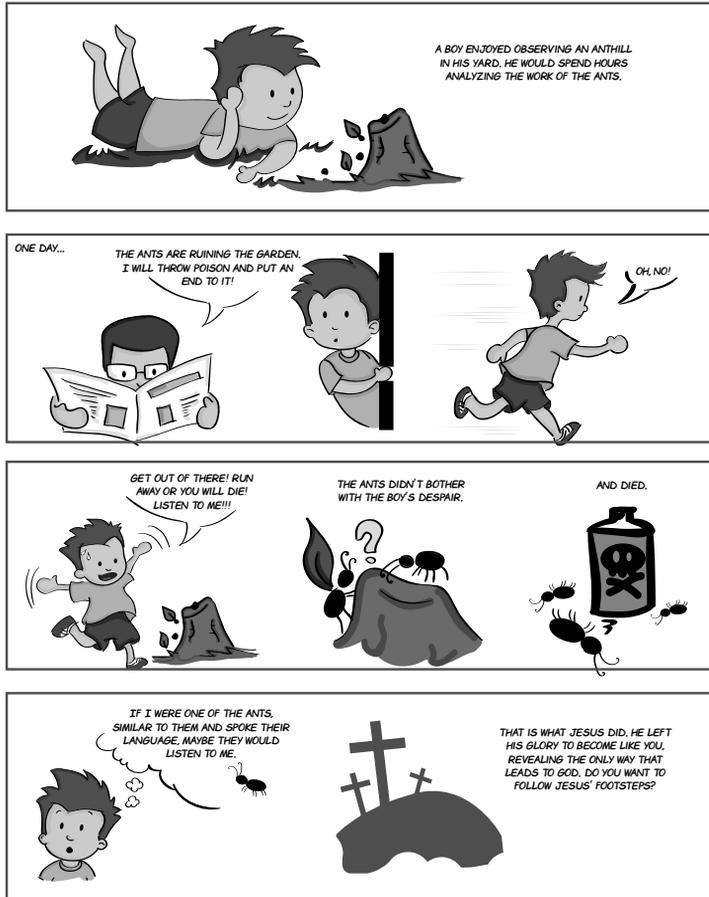
Week 1

Knowing Jesus



“For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” **John 3.16**

Who is Jesus?



“For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” **John 3.16**

You are beginning a process of growth that can be compared to a child. The same way that a child needs daily doses of food to grow healthy, you need to feed yourself every day with the truths that God has prepared for you life. For that to happen, you need discipline! Separate a time of your day to study this material, writing down your doubts and talking to your mentor in your weekly meeting. But remember: growth only happens when we receive our daily nourishment and not all at once! This process is divine: God doesn't want us to suffer indigestion!

Who is this Jesus to whom you gave your life to, trusting Him with your past, present and future?

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life”. **John 3.16**

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up John 3.16 in your Bible and write it here:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” **John 3.16**

Jesus always existed

Yesterday you observed a comic strip that illustrates the preoccupation Jesus had with all men. Today we will understand a little more about Jesus. Read the text below, that is registered in the book of John, chapter 1, verses 1 - 14, and highlight what you consider important:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made, without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning the light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

In this text, it is clear that Jesus was not created. Jesus always existed.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life". John 3.16

Now open to Genesis 1.1, the first book of your Bible. There it is written “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”. In this book, the word of God narrates the story of the world’s creation. The text of John declares the start of existence.

Ask a friend what concept he/she has of Jesus and write it here:

You learned that Jesus always existed

Check if this is really true, comparing with these other Bible verses:

John 17.5 – *“And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”*

Hebrews 1.1-2 – *“In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.”*

Colossians 1.16-17 – *“For by him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things are held together.”*

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” **John 3.16**

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's Word in your heart. Look up John 3.16 in your own Bible and highlight it. Write the verse on a paper and leave it in a visible place where you can read it many times during the day.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life". **John 3.16**

Jesus is God

See what is written in Colossians 1.15: *“He, the first Son, is the image of the invisible God, preeminent over all creation”*. Paul, author of the letter to the Colossians, says that Jesus is the invisible God, manifested in human form, also, visible.

Now, see what is written in the book of John 1.1: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”*. John affirms that Jesus is God. Observe that Jesus is called the **Word of God**. What did the apostle John want to say with this? John explains that life without Jesus doesn't make sense.

Read once again John 1.1-14 and check why:

- All things were made by Him. (v. 3)
- He is the light that shines through the darkness of the human heart. (v. 9)
- The world came into existence through Him. (v. 10)

The Word of God transformed itself into flesh and bone, in other words, into a human being. Think about what that represents!

What identifies or characterizes a person?

Mind, will, thoughts, desires, feelings, love, concepts, values...

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” **John 3.16**

Jesus is the Word that comes out of God’s mouth; he’s the mind, the will, the thoughts, desires, feelings, plans and projects of God. Jesus is the love of God that was transformed into a human (remember the story of the anthill?), receiving the didactic name of Jesus – the Son of God!

Why is he didactically named the Son of God?

This is the greatest expression of love that exists on Earth – love between parents and their children. This expression was used so that men might understand the bond that exists between Jesus and God: the love of God incarnated received the title of Son of God.

The Son is the continuation of the Father, the Son is the result of the Father’s love. In Colossians 1.13 it is written: *“he delivered us out of the power of darkness, and transferred us into the Kingdom of the Son of his love”*. Therefore, Jesus is God himself in the human form.

Jesus is God!

The Bible, which you will come to know better next week, is the Word of God. If it were possible to transform it into a person, this person would be Jesus (check John 17.14-20 and 1 John 5.7).

We are on our third day of work. This week you are getting to know Jesus. What has been most difficult for you in this process?

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life”. John 3.16

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Put the verse in the correct sequence and memorize:

have John For his eternal Son, whoever life. that not one world, 3.16
the shall but God only him loves and perish, so in gave believes he

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” **John 3.16**

Jesus is life

You are getting to know Jesus. The more time you dedicate to this study the better your relationship with Him will be, because in Jesus we find the true meaning of life!

The plan God has for our life is wonderful. He himself affirms it in Jeremiah 29.11: *“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

When you received Jesus, you took the only step possible so that God’s plans be fulfilled in your life: you received eternal life! Only those who have Jesus, the Eternal, God himself, have eternal life.

When Jesus came into your life, you were no longer a creature, but a child of God. Check what is written in the book of John 1.12: *“Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”*. To be born of flesh (sexual relationship between man and woman) in order to be a child of God is not enough; you need to be born of God!

In the book of John 3.3-7, Jesus confirms this truth:

“Jesus replied, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.’

‘How can someone be born when they are old?’ Nicodemus asked. ‘Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!’

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life”. John 3.16

Jesus answered, 'Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit! Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'you must be born again.'"

A birth through the cleansing of the Word (water) is necessary, where the Holy Spirit of God is received in the heart. That happened when you received Jesus as Lord and Savior of your life.

Read the texts:

John 10.30 – *"I and the Father are one."*

John 17.11-12 – *"I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled."*

What do these texts affirm?

Many things start to change when Jesus is part of our lives. Have you begun to notice this? How has your life changed?

- I feel peace in my life.
- My family relationships are improving each day.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life". **John 3.16**

- I am getting to know myself more.
- I feel free.
- I have improved my relationship with people around me.
- Others. Write them here: _____

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Complete the verse and memorize it:

For God ____ the _____, that he _____ his one
and _____ that whoever _____ in him shall not
_____, but _____ eternal _____. _____ 3.16

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life". **John 3.16**

How can I have quality of life?

Yesterday you listed a couple of aspects of your life that have started to change, since you received Jesus. Today we will ponder on what it means to have quality of life. Many people think that a life with quality is one that is fully enjoyed, even if it means letting go of important things such as family and health.

That is not the type of life Jesus desires for you. When He came into your life, Jesus put the Holy Spirit in you to abide in your heart. Therefore, your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit of God, who helps you in your weaknesses.

Check what this texts mentions in 1 Corinthians 3.16 and 17:

“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for God’s temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.”

Think about these verses in 1 Corinthians 3.22 and 23:

“All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future – all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.”

That is why, as child of God, your life must be abundant, demonstrating the fruit of the Holy Spirit that reflects in your attitudes. This fruit has characteristics that are revealed in your reactions in the midst of difficulties you face in your daily life.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3.16

Quality of life means to live according to God’s will, seeking to know Him through prayer and reading the Bible, which you will learn to use next week.

I can only have quality of life if I intensely seek it in its source:
Jesus.

Stop and think about: How has Jesus helped you achieve quality of life?

- Giving me more self control when I face difficult situations.
- Helping me see that people are more important than things.
- Helping me be honest with people.
- Showing me my mistakes so that I can correct them.
- Not allowing me to lie.
- Others: _____

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life”. **John 3.16**

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Try to write the Bible verse of the week you memorized.

Now, go to your Bible and check to see if you are right. If yes, congratulations!! If not, correct the verse and keep memorizing.



You have finished your first week. Don't forget to schedule a meeting with your mentor. Remember to arrive on time, ask any questions you might have and enjoy your time, because it is time spent with God as well.

Mentor: _____

Date of meeting: _____

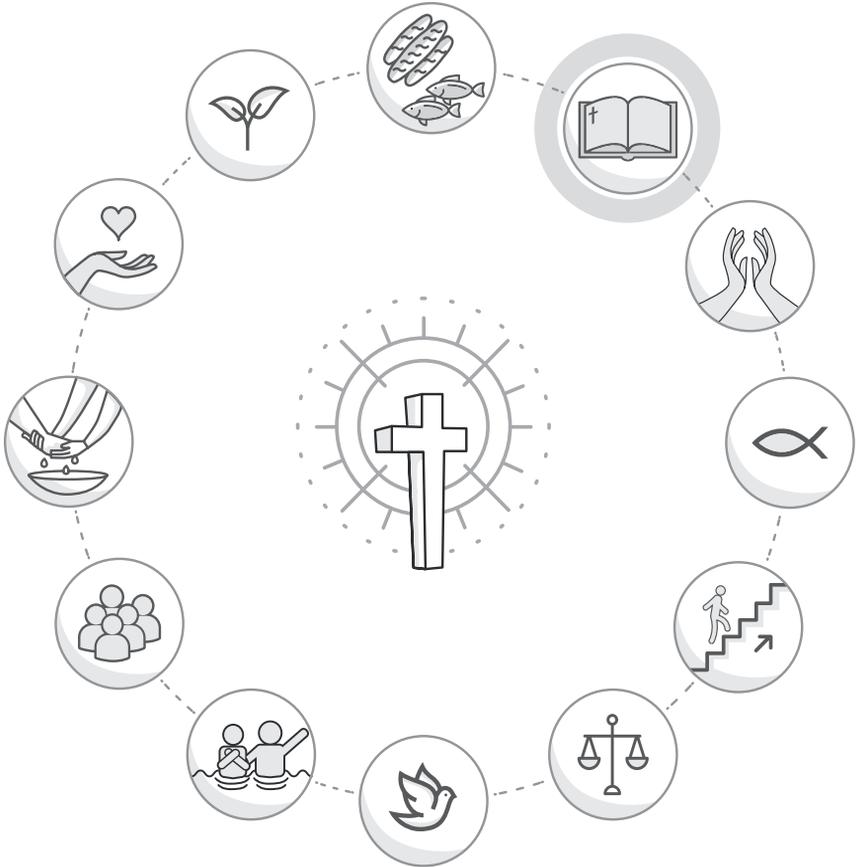
Time: _____

Mentor's signature: _____

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life". **John 3.16**

Week 2

Bible: Testament of God for Men



"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3.16

Bible: What book is this?

This week, you will get to know the Bible. It is important that you learn how to use it and learn God's teachings for your life. Are you ready? Let's go!

The Bible (which literally means "books"), was written by about 40 different people, in different times. None of them thought their writing would one day be a part of the Bible and there are no contradictions in its teachings. It is composed of a collection of 66 books. Open your Bible in the index and observe that there are two major divisions:

The **Old Testament (OT)**, with 39 books, narrates the origin of the world, sharing the story of how God made a pact with Israel. The writing was composed by the Hebrew community throughout their journey to the Promised Land. In the midst of this journey, the prophets' messages were also registered, exhorting the people to faithfulness and perseverance. It was the primary source of faith and spiritual tradition. That is why the apostles, the first Christians, and us, followers of Jesus today, accept the Old Testament as God's Word. But the Old Testament is not simply a historical narration: it is a metaphor of God's call to man from the beginning to the present.

The **New Testament (NT)**, with 27 books, it contains the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – which narrate the birth, life and death of Jesus, and a new pact between God and man. The book of Acts narrates the expansion of the Gospel into the world, starting from Jerusalem. The doctrinal epistles (letters) are precious messages that encourage and

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3.16

exhort, and finally, the book of Revelation specifically talks about what is yet to come.

The Word of God revealed was first given to the Jewish people. The books were organized in scrolls. Afterwards, the books were grouped into tomes, prior to the edited form as we know it today.

It was God who chose the people, the culture and the language that it would be written in. No one has the right to take away or add anything in addition to what God gave the original authors. This is so serious to God that there is a severe warning to anyone who tries to modify the text, adding or deleting any word. Whoever did this, or tries to do this, will pay for it, as written in Rev 22.18-19: *“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll”*.

How do I use the Bible?

Open your Bible to the first book, called Genesis. On the first page you will find a number standing out, which we call a chapter. Notice that the phrases are marked with small numbers, the verses. In the index you can find the names of all the books and their abbreviations. This information is important because we use these abbreviations to quote texts from the Bible. For example:

Jn 3.16 – we read John, chapter 3, verse 16;

2Tm 3.14-17 – we read second letter from Paul to Timothy, chapter 3, verses 14 to 17;

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3.16

Mk 28 – we read Mark chapter 28;

Rom 16.1,2 – we read Romans chapter 16, verses 1 and 2.

Start to practice, looking up these texts in your Bible: Rom 10.17; Isa 40.8; Gal 1.11 and 12. What is the main message in these texts?

God's Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up 2 Timothy 3.16 in your Bible and write it here:

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3.16

The library of God

The Bible is a complete library. It contains stories of adventure, romance, action, suspense... See how it is organized and complete the order, writing the name of each book. You can use the index of your Bible to help you.

OLD TESTAMENT										
LAWS	Genesis	Exodus							Deuteronomy	
HISTORY	Joshua		Ruth			1 Kings				
POETRY				Proverbs						
MAJOR PROPHETS	Isaiah				Lamentations		Ezekiel			
MINOR PROPHETS	Hosea		Amos			Jonah				
NEW TESTAMENT										
GOSPELS	Matthew			Mark			Luke		John	
CHURCH HISTORY					Acts					
PAUL'S LETTERS		1 Corinthians		Galatians		Philippians	Colossians			1 Timothy
GENERAL LETTERS				1 Peter				2 John		
PROPHECIES						Revelations				

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3.16

Did you know that if you read four chapters of the Bible each day, you will read the whole Bible in one year? At the end of this notebook, you will find a chart that can help you with your reading.

Why does the Bible exist?

- To reveal God to mankind.
- The message of the Bible is the message of God to mankind transmitted many times, and in many ways, being incarnated through Christ (Jn 1.1, 2, 14; Heb 1.1-2). It was written to give us a quality of life, connecting us once again with the Creator and to show us the way of salvation, presenting the Savior, Jesus, God and Lord.
- For our growth in communion, wisdom and power.

Below you will find important statements regarding the Bible. Confirm them, looking up the texts in your own Bible:

- It is the Word of God (Dt 28.1-2; 1 Thes 2.13).
- It is the revelation of God's will. In other words, it is God revealing himself to man (Ps 19.1-6; Rom 2.15; Heb 1.1-4).
- It is inspired by God. The Lord himself oriented men and made his revelation come to us without mistakes. God puts in the mind and heart of the prophet His eternal plan, His message, what He desires for all man to know. These prophecies announced verbally, within time, are registered in writing and will be fully complete in Christ, who is God's own revelation.
- It is complete (Rev 22.18-19), true (Jn 17.17) and alive (Heb 4.12).
- It changes a person's life and character (Heb 4.12).

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3.16

- ❑ For the non-believer, it is absurd, insane (1 Co 2.9-14). The Word of God was written for his children: only they accept his teachings. It was written for those who desire to live as God’s children.
- ❑ Jesus is the Word of God incarnated (Jn 1.1, 14).
- ❑ We will be judged by it one day (Jn 12.46-50; Jn 5.39-47). The people believed in the 10 commandments, the Law of Moses, but didn’t believe in the teachings of Jesus, who is superior to Moses. The law came to accuse sin; Jesus came to save the sinner.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God’s word in your heart. Look up 2 Timothy 3.16 in your own Bible and highlight it. Write the verse on a paper and leave it in a visible place where you can read it many times during the day.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3.16

How can I be sure that the Bible is God's Word?

What is the Word of God?

Today we have a couple of questions to answer: Why is the Bible considered the Word of God for the Christians? Wouldn't it just be a book written by man, like any other? What is so special about it?

1. The Bible is the Word of God for its genuineness throughout history. First, it was written during 6000 years by about 40 different people. However, it maintains a thematic unity and a historical precision in revealing who God is and how God wants us to relate with him. The Bible keeps a cohesive doctrinal body.

There are testimonies of Bible usage by the Christians in transition from the first to second century of the Christian era (years 80-160), just as we read it today. After this time, many kings and emperors tried to destroy the Bible, burn the manuscripts and stop the people from accessing the Scriptures. However, they were unsuccessful. God himself preserved his Word throughout the years, because He is present in history.

2. The Bible is the Word of God by his inspiration. When we say that the Bible is inspired by God, we say it possesses a supernatural feature in its composition and content. It is a work of God's mind, although written by many people in different moments of history. Biblical writing presents a consistent system from Genesis to Revelation, demonstrating God's presence and influence for the writers to register exactly what God wanted to communicate to us.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3.16

The apostle Paul explains that *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”* (2 Tm 3.16,17). It is worth noticing that he mentions that “all” of scripture is inspired, that is, not only parts of it. We can hear God speaking to us in each portion of Scripture. It contains supernatural credibility to teach the truth, rebuke the sinner, correct him from mistakes and instruct each one of us to live as God desires. The result of a life according to God’s will is an eternal life.

3. The Bible is the Word of God with effect on the human soul. The Bible presents a superhuman intelligence with content directed to the human soul; that means that he who created Scripture also created the human soul, to know exactly what it needs and how to treat it through this Word. Therefore, people who seek God in this book have their lives transformed. In the Bible you can find comfort, wisdom, strength to overcome temptation, joy, direction and transformation of character. Do you want to be sure that the Bible is God’s word? Try it. Put the teachings into practice. Believe in it. Seek to know God, who reveals himself through the Bible, especially through the person of Jesus Christ. Are you ready?

The rewards of having a life focused on God’s Word

Jesus said that, as his disciples, we will be rewarded still in this life: *“(…) No one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields – along with persecutions – and in the age to come eternal life”* (Mark 10.29-30). In other words, serving God as he desires gives us spiritual benefits.

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3.16

For this life of obedience to God is essential to have a life focused in the Word of God. What are these benefits?

1. Personal holiness: as we get involved with God through His Word, we are sanctified by him. The psalmist said: *“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you”* (Psalm 119.11). Paul, in the New Testament, affirms that we experience God’s will when there is change of mentality, also, a renewal of our minds through Scripture: *“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will”* (Romans 12.2). Approach the Bible as much as possible. It is said that on the back cover of D.L. Moody’s Bible it was written: “either this book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book”.

2. True joy: knowing God by studying and meditating on His Word provides a different joy than the world offers. The Bible is clear that for the true Christian even trials of life are reasons for joy. *“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything”* (James 1.2-4).

The apostle Peter also spoke about joy from faith in Christ, even in difficulties: *“These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls”* (1 Pt 1.7-9).

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3.16

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Put the verse in the correct sequence and memorize it:

God-breathed 2 Timothy 3.16 rebuking, is teaching, and Scripture and training righteousness. in correcting, All for is useful

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." **2 Timothy 3.16**

Using well our “Instruction Manual”

We live in an extremely superstitious world and hear a lot of news about people who are slaves of horoscopes, fortune-tellers, gurus. The people of God need to be careful to not use the Bible as a divinatory method or amulet to keep away “bad things”. Some people leave the Bible open on Psalm 91, thinking that with this they are protected from any danger. Be careful! The Bible is a spiritual nourishment for the follower of Jesus Christ. It is the living Word of God that directly flows into your heart. However, this doesn’t happen in “automatic” mode. A sharp mind and an open heart are needed to read and meditate on God’s Scripture.

Observe these instructions when you use the Bible (look up the correspondent verses in your Bible):

- **Listen to the Word of God** – Lk 8.15; Rom 10.17
- **Read the Word of God** – Dt 17.19; Rev 1.3
- **Study the Word of God** – 2 Tm 2.15; Acts 17.11
- **Memorize the Word of God** – Ps 119.11; Ps 19.9
- **Meditate on the Word of God** – Ps 1
- **Practice the teachings of the Word of God** – Mt 7.24-27
- **Communicate to others the Word of God** – 2 Tm 2.2

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3.16

How to study the Bible

- Read a verse, observing its context – the verses that come before and after.
- Write it in your own words, thinking about what you learned with the verse.
- Highlight the most important words of the verse and understand its meaning.
- Relate what you read with your personal life, asking yourself the following questions:
 - a. What is the message of God for my life today?
 - b. Is there a commandment I need to obey?
 - c. Is there a promise for me?
 - d. Is there a warning for my life?

Start to develop the habit of writing down biblical passages that speak to your heart. Soon you will certainly be used by God to testify about what you have learned!

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.” 2 Timothy 3.16

Let's practice

Read the text that is in James 1.22-25 at least three times. Now, using the principles you've learned, answer:

What message of God does this text bring for my life today?

Is there a commandment that I need to obey? Which one?

Is there a promise for me? What is it?

Is there a warning for my life? What is it?

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3.16

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Complete the verse and memorize it:

All _____ is God-_____ and is useful for _____,
rebuking, _____, and _____ in _____.
2 Timothy _____.16

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3.16

Challenges for reading the Word of God

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 1

One of the greatest challenges for a Christian is to be disciplined: to separate a moment of his day to be with God, reading his Word and praying (you will learn more about prayer next week). It is interesting to notice that we always have time for everything we deem important. Sometimes we spend precious hours of our day watching television or doing things that don't really matter, and we don't have time for God. Discipline requires making decisions.

Life consists of knowing God and becoming an imitator of Jesus Christ. Only then you will have a full and blessed spiritual life. Dedicate yourself to God as a priority. Jesus himself said that all other things necessary will be given to us a well (Lk 12.29-31)!

How can I discipline myself for God?

- Read the Bible daily. This enables you to be a stronger disciple spiritually, ready to overcome temptation.
- Separate a specific time for this moment. Be firm, because many times you will be tempted to leave it for later on.
- Separate a defined place, where there are no interruptions.
- Read the Bible seeking God's message for you that day.
- Read with a pencil and paper in hand: there are many findings that need to be registered immediately.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3.16

This week you learned many things. You can see how your knowledge about the Word of God has increased each day. What decision do you want to make starting today, regarding God's Word?

The time has come for you to start your daily devotional: a time dedicated to God in reading the Bible and in prayer. If you follow our suggestion, by the end of the Disciple's Notebook you will have read the books of Mark and Acts, fundamental readings for someone who is taking the first steps in faith. Let the Word of God teach and transform you, following the principles you learned for reading the Bible. Your life will be very blessed with this practice.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." **2 Timothy 3.16**

Keep God's word in your heart. Try to write the Bible verse of the week you memorized.

Now, go to your Bible and check to see if you are right. If yes, congratulations!! If not, correct the verse and keep memorizing.



You have finished your second week. Don't forget to schedule a meeting with your mentor. Remember to arrive on time, ask any questions you might have and enjoy your time, because it is time spent with God as well.

Mentor: _____

Date of meeting: _____

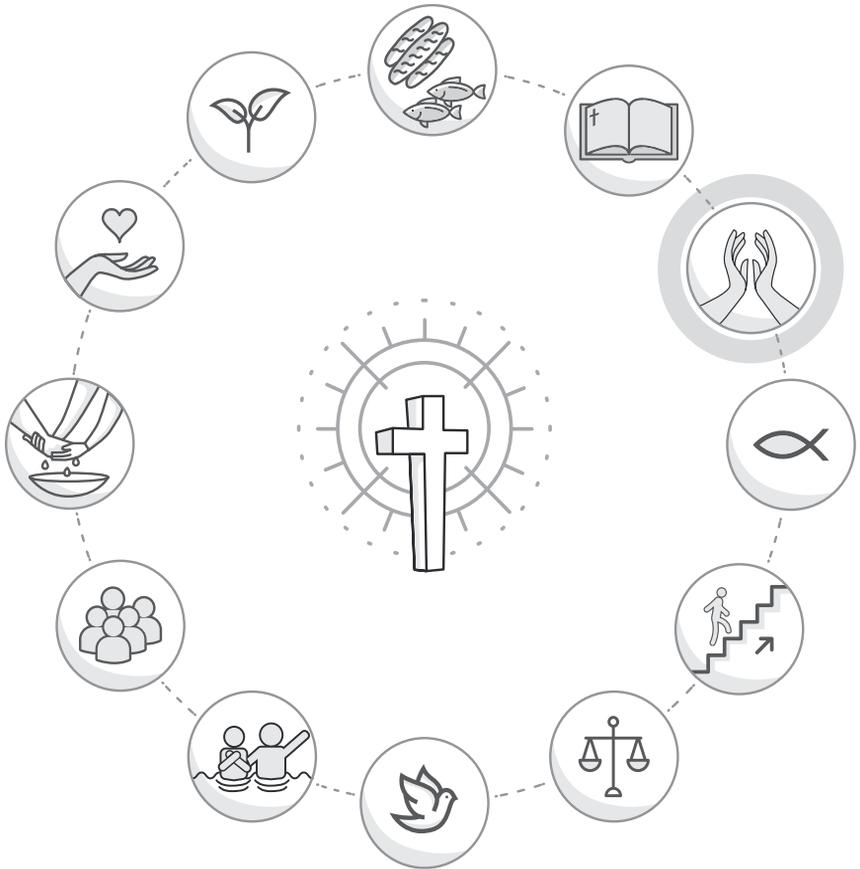
Time: _____

Mentor's signature: _____

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3.16

Week 3

Prayer



"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." **Matthew 21.22**

What is prayer, anyway?

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 2

Last week you had the opportunity of discovering a fundamental strategy for your spiritual growth: reading the Word of God – the Bible. This week, you will learn to practice another strategy – prayer.

To pray means to speak to Jesus, it is having a continuous fellowship with God. Children like to sing the song that says:

“God’s phone is prayer,

God’s phone is knees on the floor...”

And that’s just it! The means of communication between you and God is prayer. Read Mt 6.5-15. What lessons does Jesus teach about the correct way to pray?

1. Not to pray to man (v.5), seeking to call people’s attention instead of God’s. Praying to show off is not prayer.
2. Pray in secret (v.6) that is, become intimate with God.
3. Do not use vain repetitions (v.7). Prayer is not repetition. It means dialogue, conversation. Jesus had long moments of prayer.

The Bible says that every prayer should be done in Jesus’ name.
(Check Jn 16.23-24; 1 Tm 2.5; Jn 15.16; Jn 14.13; Jn 14.6 and Acts 4.12.)

“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.” Matthew 21.22

Is it really necessary to pray?

Jesus, the Son of God, felt the need to pray. He was God incarnated, but prayed a lot. Jesus' life of prayer was what mostly bothered the disciples, until they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray (Lk 11.1). God created man so that he would glorify Him and have fellowship with Him. Sin separated man from God. Jesus restored this fellowship, which takes place through prayer and is an act of faith. In Hebrew 11.6 we learn that we should pray with faith, believing. Without faith it is impossible to please God. That means you need to seek God in all circumstances in your life. Many Christians don't like to pray and because of that don't believe in prayer.

In the past weeks you began to practice prayer moments when you wrote something to God. How about starting a time of daily fellowship with God? You already know discipline is necessary, a lot of discipline. Ask God to give it to you. Start off separating 5 minutes each day to pray. Choose a calm place and let God speak to you. You will definitely have a lot to share with God. After, tell your mentor about your experience.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." Matthew 21.22

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up Matthew 21.22 in your Bible and write it here:

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." **Matthew 21.22**

Learning to pray with Jesus

Prayer takes practice. The so-called Lord's Prayer is a model that should be followed part by part and not a repeated mechanical prayer. Let's see what Jesus teaches us? Read Matthew 6.9-15.

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 3

1. **Our Father in Heaven (v.9a)** – to direct our prayer to the Father. Father in Aramaic is Abba, meaning dad (Mt 6.6). To pray is to become intimate with God.
2. **Hallowed be your name (v.9b)** – this means: Lord, sanctified be your name through my life. May everyone know through my life that the Lord is holy! God uses his disciples to sanctify His name here on Earth!
3. **Your kingdom come (v.10a)** – which means: Lord, may the values of your Kingdom take place in my life.
4. **Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven (v.10b)** – means: Lord may your will be fulfilled in my life through me. See also the text in 1 Jn 5.13-15.
5. **Give us today our daily bread (v.11)** – we learn that we can put all our material needs before God.
6. **And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors (v.12)** – here it emphasizes that the forgiveness of our sins which we receive are conditional based upon the fact that we forgive those who sinned against us (see verses 14 and 15)! We learn that we should separate some of our prayer time to ask God for forgiveness for our sins (read also 1 Jn 1.9).

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." Matthew 21.22

7. **And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (v.13a)** – from the Devil’s point of view temptation should defeat us, but from God’s point of view it strengthens us (Read Mt 26.41). Victory over temptation can only be found praying and watching. What is watching? It means to be alert, observing. There are people who find pleasure in temptation yet they want to overcome it through prayer. You need to be careful to avoid temptation by being watchful.
8. **For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen (v.13b)** – this means to recognize that everything (including your life and your personal will) belongs to the Lord. Strength and power are not in “our prayer”. The source of power is the Lord, and that is why (through the answer to our prayer) all glory should be given to Him.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God’s word in your heart. Look up Matthew 21.22 in your own Bible and highlight it. Write the verse on a paper and leave it in a visible place where you can read it many times during the day.

“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.” Matthew 21.22

Building my tent

A servant of God isn't born ready. He is built and forged by the Lord. We need to be transformed and that only He can do. To be a servant of God means to live new things with God every day. For that to happen we need time to spend in the presence of God in prayer – time of continuous fellowship. Have you tried that? How did it feel?

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 4

With Moses (read Ex 33.7-11) we learn that a few principles exist to help us build this intimate fellowship, which means knowing we can sit in the heavenly places with Jesus.

1. **Building a tent.** A tent is not a place, it is your heart. God wants to abide in it, and that is why it needs to be built His way. A covenant of exclusiveness with God, allowing Jesus to be the only door that takes us to the Father. If God is a priority in our lives, all other things will be added to us.
2. **Turn away from confusion.** As you read, the tent of God was far away from the camp. This is what should happen with our prayer time, because we can only come before a place of fellowship when we turn away from our daily struggles and seek Him with all our heart. If the tent is abandoned we cannot see nor hear the manifestation of God's power.

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." Matthew 21.22

3. **Let God work.** In the tent is where things happen: your Christian life should reflect a constant seeking of Jesus' presence and purpose. Only inside the tent – inside your heart – can God speak to you as a friend and his grace is powerfully manifested in your life.

How is your fellowship with God? Have you sought Him daily or is your tent empty? Don't allow the day-to-day pressures involve you. Separate a time to be with God and enjoy His presence in all you do.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Put the verse in the correct sequence and memorize it:

ask receive Matthew 21.22 in believe, prayer. will you If you for whatever you

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." **Matthew 21.22**

Prayers that God wants to hear (part 1)

This week you are being challenged to have an intimate relationship with God through prayer. How are you feeling? Have you been able to enjoy moments of fellowship daily? What has stopped you from having discipline in this area?

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 5

There are some types of prayers God wants to hear. Find them below:

Search me

Read Ps 139.23-24 and ask God to look to your life, and test your actions and intentions, and start to give you understanding about your motivation towards life.

Break me

Read Ps 51.17 and ask God to show you your sins. Many times sin numbs you and you cannot feel something is wrong in your actions and attitude. It slowly comes close, like in the story of the frog inside a pot of cold water. The water slowly heats, and without noticing, he is being cooked, because he can't feel the temperature rising. A broken heart is necessary for you to stay in the center of God's will. It is important we remember you cannot forge "brokenness". Nor is it only expressed through passionate and emotive manifestations. Brokenness is something God provides in us when, aware of our sin, we repent and trust in God for our transformation. Read 2 Co 7.14.

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." Matthew 21.22

Transform me

Read 2 Co 3.18. It's not enough to only be aware of sin. You need to ask God to transform you, seeking this transformation with an honest heart. Allowing God to work in this process is not easy. You will be tempted, by laziness or comfort, to continue as you are. If you act this way, you will never see transformation in your life, because God respects your will. To be transformed means to change your inner reality to a totally different one. You should desire for the beauty of Christ to be seen through your life.

What aspects of the beauty of Jesus are still not incorporated in your life? What do you need to change?

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." **Matthew 21.22**

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Complete the verse and memorize it:

If _____, you will _____ whatever you _____ for in _____. _____ 21.22

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." **Matthew 21.22**

Prayers that God wants to hear (part 2)

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 6

Relationship with God takes time. The more you spend time in His presence, the greater your fellowship with Him will be. Then, the Lord will be able to reveal his will and plans for your life.

Yesterday you learned to ask God to search you, break your heart and transform you. When you allow this transformation to happen, the fruit of the Holy Spirit of God (read Gal 5.22) will be manifested through you. The fruit of the Holy Spirit contains the same qualities found in the life of Jesus. We can compare it to an orange (fruit) that when opened you can see many wedges (aspects of the fruit). You will soon learn more about this.

But God goes further. There are two other prayers He would like to hear:

Fill me

With your Holy Spirit: read Eph 5.18 and ask God to give you a constant hunger of His power and grace, that you may live on earth looking up to heaven. And that you may be a cup that needs to be filled until it overflows with the Holy Spirit of God.

Use me

Read Isa 6.8 and ask God to use you in His work on earth. To be used means to completely depend on God, understanding you are an

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." Matthew 21.22

instrument in His hands, for the glory of His name. It means to be willing to pay the price of doing His will. It also means to be prepared to make disciples, and to be a disciple. Are you willing to do this?

Another week comes to an end. If you have taken this moment alone with God seriously you probably have something very special to share. Write it here and then share with your mentor.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.” **Matthew 21.22**

Keep God's word in your heart. Try to write the Bible verse of the week you memorized.

Now, go to your Bible and check to see if you are right. If yes, congratulations!! If not, correct the verse and keep memorizing.



You have finished your third week. Don't forget to schedule a meeting with your mentor. Remember to arrive on time, ask any questions you might have and enjoy your time, because it is time spent with God as well.

Mentor: _____

Date of meeting: _____

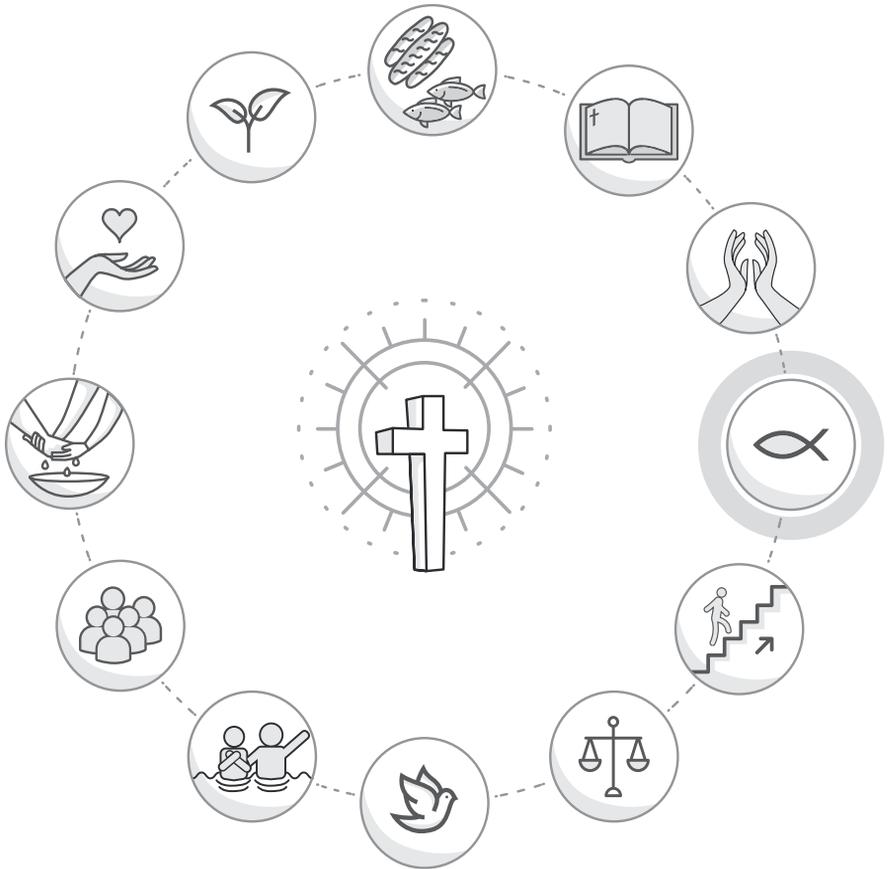
Time: _____

Mentor's signature: _____

"If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." **Matthew 21.22**

Week 4

Salvation



"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." **Ephesians 2.8,9**

We are sinners

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 7

Yesterday you observed many different levels of relationship with God and how they take you closer or further from His presence. This week you will learn about salvation. You must have heard the expression that a person who receives Jesus in his life has been “saved”.

But, saved from what?

Salvation is deliverance. First of all, we are saved from slavery of sin and the devil's influence. **Read Mt 1.21; Rom 3.23; Jn 8.31-36; 1 Jn 3.5-8.**

These verses confirm that Jesus came to undo the devil's works, whose main purpose is to take man far away from God. Jesus can free us from the slavery of sin that comes from the desires of the flesh.

Consequently, we are saved from the world, that is, from every evil work that is present in the world. The Bible affirms that the world is influenced by Satan, the opponent of God, enemy of people and promoter of Evil.

Jesus saves us from the Devil. See what is written in Heb 2.14 and 1 Jn 5.18. In Jn 17.13-20 Jesus is praying for those who are saved (including you) so that they are not influenced by the world and the evil one has no power over them. Have you allowed yourself to be influenced by the world? Do you listen to others who say Satan still has a hold on you? Through the death of Christ on the cross, the Devil has been defeated. Anyone who has been united with Christ through the cross, crucifying

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.” Ephesians 2.8,9

“self” to live with and for Christ, has already defeated the Devil. If you have “been saved”, your soul has been saved from Satan’s grip! (Read 1 Jn 2.14.)

In addition, we are saved from the law. Read Rom 10.4; Rom 8.2,3 and Gal 5.4. Obedience to the law (summed up in 10 commandments) doesn’t save a person from eternal condemnation. The law exists to point out sin, but justification comes through Jesus. Christ is the fulfillment of God’s law! The law gains new meaning in the light of God’s grace, revealed in Christ Jesus.

Finally, we are saved from eternal death and from hell. In Jn 8.51, Jesus affirms that you will never die, because death means separation from God.

Therefore, when you accept Jesus as your savior, you are saved from _____, from _____, _____, from _____ and from _____.

- ❑ **Salvation is free.** You don’t need to do anything to be saved – just believe that Jesus can save you. No act or work, no matter how important, can give you salvation. It is offered graciously, as a gift. And gifts we never deserve, we just receive them.
- ❑ **Salvation is personal.** Accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior is a decision you need to make on your own: nobody can assume this commitment on
- ❑ **Salvation is forever. It is real.** God doesn’t want you to doubt this reality. The Bible was written not only for you to believe in the Son of God, but that you may be certain of salvation, as written in 1 Jn 5.13.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.” Ephesians 2.8,9

Besides being saved from the slavery of sin, we are saved from this world, which is under evil influence. We are saved from eternal death, receiving eternal life from Jesus.

Ultimately, a Christian doesn't die. That is why we do not need to fear death. Paul makes fun of death and of hell! (Read Rom 6.23.) In Jn 5.21-24 Jesus guarantees that whoever listens to his Word and believes in God who sent him, has eternal life and won't be judged, but passed from death to life!

It is important that you understand this truth, and not rely on dramatic feelings, crying or anything of the sort, even though emotion is part of our relationship with God. Your security should be rooted in God's faithfulness when you live according to the teaching found in Scripture.

The Lord Jesus promises, and fulfills his promises. Jesus never lied!

Sin which separated us from God is nailed with Christ on the cross. You are reconciled with God. He is no longer a stranger, but he's your Father.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2.8,9

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up Ephesians 2.8,9 in your Bible and write it here:

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." **Ephesians 2.8,9**

What is God's role in my salvation?

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 8

What happens when Jesus comes into our lives?

Salvation is a gift from God. When Jesus comes to live in our hearts we become aware that:

- God loves us and has a wonderful plan for each of us.
- Our sin separates us from God.
- Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins.

When we take this step of faith and give our lives to Jesus we receive four of the most important gifts of all:

- Forgiveness from our sin.
- New life in this life: abundant, blessed, with new direction of thought and attitudes that will result in fulfillment and joy.
- The light of Jesus. The obscurity that resulted in social darkness (ruined relationships), emotional darkness (fear, traumas, negative self-image) and spiritual darkness (torment, oppression, possession) was defeated.
- Eternal life with Jesus.

The Holy Spirit, whom you will come to know better throughout this walk and will be explained in more detail in week 7, confirms to our spirit that we are saved (Rom 8.16).

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2.8,9

However, it is good to be aware: accepting Jesus as your personal Savior doesn't mean you are free from conflicts and struggles. Jesus advises that our enemy will try to do everything to take us away from God's way. That is why it is possible that you might face opposition like mockery from friends and financial needs (Mt 7.14). We might face struggles and sometimes be disappointed because our new life has its ups and downs. But one thing is sure: the joy of eternal salvation and the certainty of victory in Christ renews our strength, courage and mood each day, to enable us to continue our walk with God.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up Ephesians 2.8,9 in your own Bible and highlight it. Write the verse on a paper and leave it in a visible place where you can read it many times during the day.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." **Ephesians 2.8,9**

What is my role in this process?

Salvation must be practiced. In John 14.23 it is written: "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 9

What does this mean?

When we allow Jesus to come into our lives, we take on a commitment with Him: to live according to his will. Being saved means to let go of our past life and assume a new identity as a son of God. We begin to live under a different authority for our life; the Bible is the instruction manual that God has provided for us.

Have you tried to use a new sound system, without reading the manual? You certainly took longer to discover each function, and maybe even ruined the sound system, right? The same thing happens when we don't spend time seeking God's will through his Word. That is why it is important that you have discipline and are radical about separating a time daily to read the Bible and pray. Salvation means life and living takes practice.

Salvation should be proclaimed

What do you normally do when you find out that something very good is about to happen? You probably share it with friends, because you want

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2.8,9

them to rejoice with you. Knowing Jesus and receiving His power is wonderful and contagious. The process of salvation is so impressive that we cannot stay silent., That is the principle of testifying and the result of God's love at work in the hearts of those who accept salvation. Our attitude can only be this: *"As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard"* (Acts 4.20).

Salvation is for everyone

God does not discriminate against certain people. His desire is that all are part of his plan of salvation. However, repentance of sin is needed (leading to a change of life) and faith in Christ Jesus as well. Read Jn 14.6.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." **Ephesians 2.8,9**

Keep God's word in your heart. Put the verse in the correct sequence and memorize it:

Ephesians 2.8,9 works, that boast. one so gift God – it of is can For
grace yourselves, not the by faith – not through and no is been have
from is by it saved, this you

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.” **Ephesians 2.8,9**

How do I deal with the issue of sin?

The text you find in John 8 tells about an encounter between Jesus and an adulterous woman. Read the whole text before you begin today's study.

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 10

Jesus will use this episode and the discussion with the Pharisees to teach us lessons about the mercy he brought to us from God. What lessons are these?

1. We are all sinners.
2. We can hide our sins from everyone except ourselves and from our Lord.
3. The fact we have more experience in life and maybe more practical wisdom doesn't free us from sin and foolishness.
4. We cannot deal with our own conscience alone.
5. Even though we are all sinners we cannot conform to sin that surrounds us. That is why after Jesus offered forgiveness of the woman's sins in the text, he commanded a change in her life: "Go, and sin no more".

How do I deal with sin?

- Sin is like a disease in a person's soul.
- Sin, many times, is an addiction.
- Sin is the fruit of our own selfish desires.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." **Ephesians 2.8,9**

We all need light to illumine our path. We can use the analogy of sin being akin to a traffic accident in the middle of the road--one that can be avoided if we know the way around it. To do so, we need to have a clear understanding of the values of King Jesus (Jn 8.12). Only Jesus can forgive our sins. Therefore we need to believe he is Savior and the only one capable of forgiving, restoring, and saving. Without him there is no forgiveness.

Believing and obeying Christ are the two sides of the same coin, the “coin” of faith (Matthew 7.24-27), because it is the internalization of God’s truth that frees us from slavery of sin (John 8.32).

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God’s word in your heart. Complete the verse and memorize it:

For it is by _____ you have been _____, through _____ – and this is not from _____, it is the _____ gift of God – not by _____, so that no one can _____. Ephesians 2. _____

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.” Ephesians 2.8,9

Jesus explains how the power of God frees us

Jesus explains what happens, and how the power of God frees us:

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 11

- The blindness from the father of lies is healed. Many of us believe that we cannot change the way we are. In fact, some people believe they were made that way, which is why they have given up of any hope for transformation. But when the light of Jesus comes into our lives, we have a perspective of heaven and of our possibilities in Christ Jesus (2 Co 10). The blindness is removed and we clearly see the truth.
- The chains of things that enslave us are broken (Lk 11). Our nature of the flesh is confronted by a new grafted and spiritual nature, which comes from the presence of the Holy Spirit of God, in us (Rom 8.5-9).
- The self-destructive guilt is taken away because Jesus puts in us his forgiveness, his peace and starts a new life, transforming the “trash” of our experiences (2 Co 5.17-21). It is the power of the Son of God that guarantees our freedom and this practical faith leads us to eternal life with God (Jn 11.25-27).

If you still haven't experienced this freedom, today you have this opportunity of a new life, born of the restoring forgiveness and full of God's mercy. It is your opportunity to let go of what is past and start a new abundant life of grace that is available only through Jesus, as a result of his sacrifice on the cross on your behalf.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.” Ephesians 2.8,9

You need to confess your sin and accept the reality of your own weakness. You should accept God's forgiveness, and know that if He has forgiven you, you can forgive yourself. Be determined to pursue obedience to Christ from this point forward and grow in your resemblance to Him.

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16.33

This week you learned that salvation means new life. How has this new life been demonstrated in your daily walk?

What areas of your life do you need to achieve victory?

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2.8,9

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Try to write the Bible verse of the week you memorized.

Now, go to your Bible and check to see if you are right. If yes, congratulations!! If not, correct the verse and keep memorizing.



You have finished your fourth week. Don't forget to schedule a meeting with your mentor. Remember to arrive on time, ask any questions you might have and enjoy your time, because it is time spent with God as well.

Mentor: _____

Date of meeting: _____

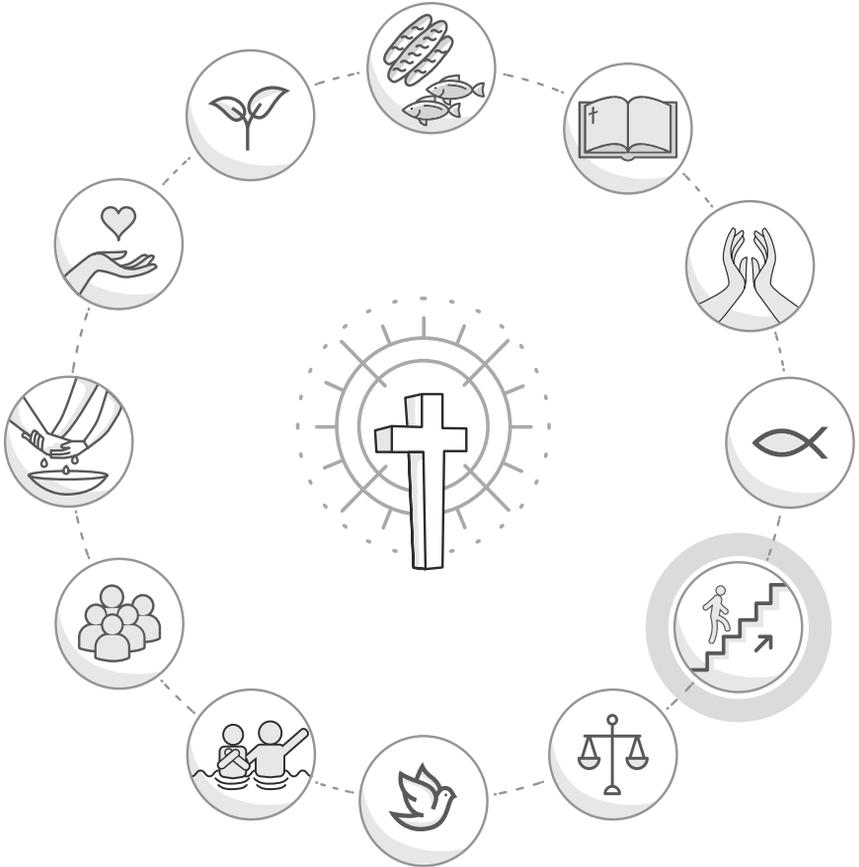
Time: _____

Mentor's signature: _____

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." **Ephesians 2.8,9**

Week 5

Sanctification



"For it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" 1 Peter 1.16

Sanctification is a process

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 12

The same way you need to take one step at a time to go up a floor, sanctification is a road in which a Christian will walk his whole life here on earth, and it ends with death, where he will receive a new body.

What's the difference between conversion and sanctification?

Conversion happens when, in a specific moment of our lives, we recognize that we are sinners and only through Jesus we can be saved. We then surrender to Him and ask Him to be our Lord and Savior. We decide to change our way of living and begin a new walk, similar to a new birth. We are now a spiritual baby who needs to be fed daily by God's Word and keep watch in prayer.

Sanctification is a daily process of spiritual growth, and it starts with conversion. It is a continuous and progressive work of the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life. Therefore, the work of salvation isn't finalized with conversion.

The Bible teaches that to be a saint is an order from God, not an invitation, because:

- A Christian receives salvation, but needs to develop it (Ph 2.12).
- "Without holiness, no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12.14).
- Scripture tells us: "Be holy, because I am holy" (1 Pe 1.16).

"For it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" 1 Peter 1.16

Do you want to be holy? Read Exodus 19.1-2 and 1 Peter 1.16.

Think about how your life is. If you'd like, write here what needs to be changed and take it to God in prayer.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up 1 Peter 1.16 in your Bible and write it here:

"For it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" **1 Peter 1.16**

What does it mean to be holy?

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 13

The word holy means separated. In this case, separated for exclusive use of God; dedicated, consecrated, sanctified to the Lord.

In God's Word we find that every person who is converted is called holy.

In the Old Testament (read Ex 19.5-6) and in the New Testament (read 1 Pe 2.9), the church is called Holy Nation. When you received Jesus as your Savior, you received the privilege of being part of God's Holiness (read Heb 12.10). In Scripture, every person who is converted is called holy!

The goal for each Christian is to seek to be holy as God is holy.

One very important step in the process of sanctification is to allow for the Holy Spirit to control your life, as you learned last week.

To be holy is to resemble Christ, to walk as He walked, act as He acted, to be a testimony of God's love around the world. We need to learn with Jesus, who saw, felt and acted in the midst of difficulties of his time.

To seek sanctification means to keep in mind two purposes:

- Seek to know God, building a spiritual life committed to the teachings of His Word.
- Seek to testify, showing through your life the presence of Jesus. For that, you need to dedicate yourself to living in a way that glorifies

"For it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" 1 Peter 1.16

God. This “worthy life” doesn’t show itself only in church, but in every moment during the day. How is your daily walk coming along?

Do you want to walk, behave, be like Christ? For this you have to dedicate yourself to a dignified life in the presence of God. This dignified life is not only shown in the church, but in every moment of your day. How is your daily walk in this direction?

Pray to God and ask him to give you strength in your walk. Write to God what you feel in your heart.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Keep God’s word in your heart. Look up Ephesians 2.8-9 in your own Bible and highlight it. Write the verse on a paper and leave it in a visible place where you can read it many times during the day.

“For it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’” **1 Peter 1.16**

How and why are we sanctified?

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 14

Jesus Christ sanctified his people through the blood he shed on the cross (read 1 Co 1.2 and Heb 13.12). When you, by faith, gave your life to Jesus, His blood on the cross became enough to change your life and you were washed (forgiven) of your sins (read Rev 1.5). The same way justification by the blood of Jesus took away your condemnation or the penalty of your sin, sanctification frees you from the power of sin.

Jesus is the standard of a holy life (read Rom 8.29). It is through the process of sanctification that you are being recreated or made new to reflect the life of Christ in you.

You will never achieve this goal on your own because your old nature continues to try to lead you to sin. You need to allow God, through the work of the Holy Spirit, to take over each area of your life, using His Work as an instrument.

The Word of God is planted in the heart and the Holy Spirit transforms that Word into life. Much like planting a seed, we sow, water and nurture it...but he who gives life to the plant is God. The Spirit by the Word of God planted in our hearts, leads us to repentance of our sins, and consequently, we are sanctified (read Jn 17.13-20, especially verse 17).

What does this affirmation mean to you?

"For it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" 1 Peter 1.16

Sanctification is a process that results in moral and spiritual transformation. When one is converted, the factory of sin (the apostle Paul calls it the body of sin) starts to become inactive. In sanctification sins are destroyed (read Rom 6.6-22) and you reflect the glory of God (read 1 Jn 3.2-10).

How has this process been in your daily life? Write situations you have lived in the past few days, where you have demonstrated the change in your way of living and thank God for that!

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Put the verse in the correct sequence and memorize it:

am because written: 1.16 'Be For 1Peter is holy, it I holy.'

"For it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" **1 Peter 1.16**

I am in the world, but not of the world

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 15

As soon as you began having a true encounter with Jesus, accepting Him as your Savior, you begin to have a desire to live according to God's will.

What is your world like? Is it like this one?

The world is full of impurities, iniquities, temptations, because the prince of this world is the Devil: the world is under his power (read 1 Jn 5.19). In the book of John, Jesus told his disciples that the prince of this world is coming and has nothing in common with Him. This prince is the Devil and has already been defeated and judged through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

When you struggle with temptation that the world offers, remember these words of Jesus, written in Jn 16.33: *"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*

Jesus knew we would need to confront the things of the world. That is why he asked the Father to give us strength to reject evil (read Jesus' prayer in Jn 17.6-24, especially verse 15). He knew it wouldn't be easy, that is why he set the Holy Spirit in us that advises when we are not in the center of God's will. He knew we could sin again and that's why he teaches us to ask for forgiveness and to seek him in prayer. He knew that sanctification occurs daily, and we must rely on the knowledge of Scripture and the power of God (read Mt 22.29).

"For it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" 1 Peter 1.16

Anyone who is a friend of the world becomes enemy of God (read Ja 4.4). Jesus loves you, but hates sin. Jesus wants to see you happy, at peace with yourself and with others. Have you been an instrument of peace? How have you treated the people you love most? Have you demonstrated God's love?

Write and share your feelings with your mentor.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Complete the verse and memorize it:

For it _____: Be _____, for I _____ . 1 _____ 1.16

“For it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’” 1 Peter 1.16

Resources needed for my sanctification

Today's devotional:
Mark ch. 16

If you wish to live a process of true sanctification you need to use these resources that God gives you:

Read the Bible

Invest time and dedication to studying God's Word. Put what you have learned into practice (read Ps 119.11 and 105).

Prayer

God speaks to you through the Bible, and through prayer when you speak to God, establishing an important dialogue for your growth (read 1 Tess 5.17).

Dwelling of the Holy Spirit

Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit (read 1 Co 6.11 and Rom 8.14). God ordains us to be full of the Spirit: Eph 5.18-21.

Consequently, you will:

- Become disciplined in your walk with God;
- Grow spiritually;
- Have the ability to serve and be guided by the Holy Spirit;
- Live out the fullness of the Spirit and joy of the Lord.

"For it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" 1 Peter 1.16

As you saw this week, the Word of God is planted in your heart and the Holy Spirit transforms this Word into life. This also requires your effort! Jesus did everything for you and the Holy Spirit is available to help, by the Word of God. You, like all Christians, need a lot of prayer, but also willingness and commitment in this battle against your sins.

You need to study the word of God, pray and fight against sin. The Holy Spirit will help you overcome it.

You are in the process of sanctification. How has reading the Bible and prayer helped you?

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

“For it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’” 1 Peter 1.16

Keep God's word in your heart. Try to write the Bible verse of the week you memorized.

Now, go to your Bible and check to see if you are right. If yes, congratulations!! If not, correct the verse and keep memorizing.



You have finished your fifth week. Don't forget to schedule a meeting with your mentor. Remember to arrive on time, ask any questions you might have and enjoy your time, because it is time spent with God as well.

Mentor: _____

Date of meeting: _____

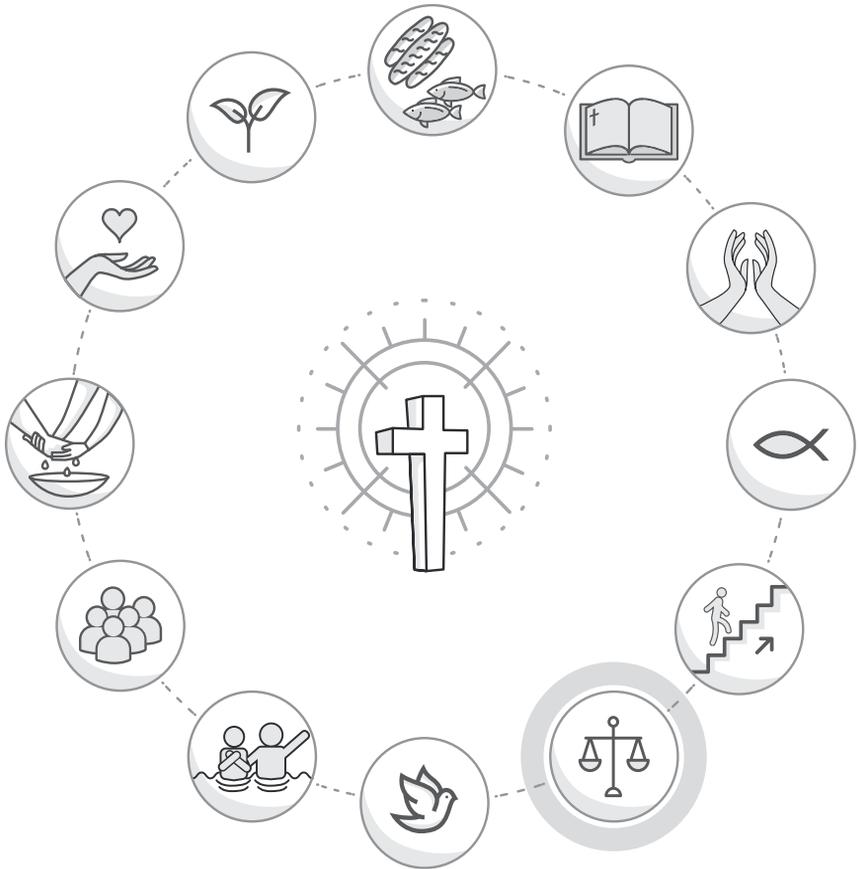
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"For it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" 1 Peter 1.16

Week 6

Faith and Works



“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Hebrews 11.1

What is faith?

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 1

The Word of God, in Heb 11.1, affirms that faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. The whole chapter of Hebrews 11 refers to men that lived by faith. Read it and discover examples of lives that were transformed by the Word of God. Having faith means to believe in the impossible.

Faith is a gift from God (read Eph 2.8). Only by faith you can please God, be obedient, submissive and loving. Without faith it is impossible to please God (read Heb 11.6).

The Bible affirms that the only way to receive salvation is through faith, believing in Jesus Christ. Many Bible passages say “your faith has healed you” (read Mt 9.22; Mk 5.34; Mk 10.52; Lk 8.48). And even more: salvation is for free, it is a free gift from God, a present given by God and received through faith, without deserving it.

Always bear in mind that:

- Faith is not superstition.
- Faith is not fanaticism.

In the world today, just as in the time of Jesus, many people believe they have faith because they act uncontrollably, swept away by emotions. Faith cannot establish itself upon something unstable such as emotions, which falters according to circumstances in our lives.

“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Hebrews 11.1

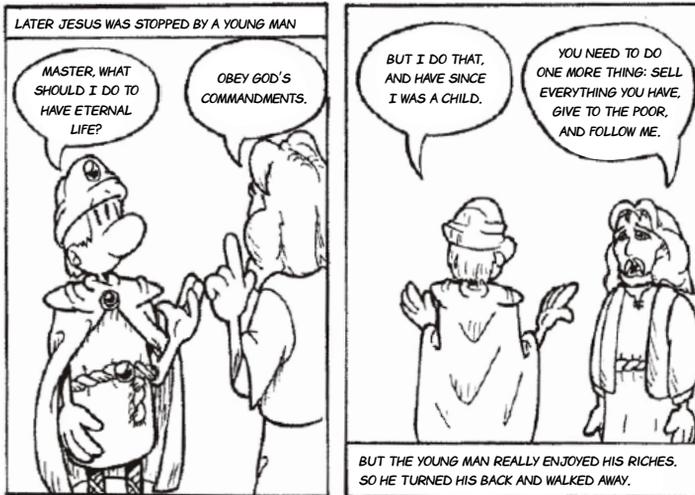
Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up Hebrews 11.1 in your Bible and write it here:

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Hebrews 11.1

Faith and works derive from salvation



Jesus didn't only want the young rich man to sell everything he had and distribute it. Actually, Jesus mostly wanted to show where the man's heart was: on visible and material things! He wasn't willing to live by faith if needed! If he answered: "Yes Lord, I will do so", Jesus might have said: "you don't need to, your faith has saved you", as Jesus said to the others. This man did no harm to anyone, he did good things, but wasn't willing to live by faith – faith in Jesus! The same can be said of the salvation that we receive from God. We deserve death and hell, but by faith in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross in our place, we receive salvation! The instrument is faith! What about good works?

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 2

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Hebrews 11.1

It is important that we practice good works, but we should do so because we have been saved, and not to be saved (read Eph 2.9). Good works cannot buy salvation. If that were possible, Jesus Christ wouldn't need to have come to the world and died the way he did, nor have to pay the price of humanity's sins as he did (read 1Co 15.3; 1Pe2.24; Is 53.4-6). All we would need to do is behave, and heaven would be ours; Christ would have died in vain.

The situation here isn't an opposition between faith and works, but between a living faith and a dead faith! James (read Ja 2.14-26) never affirms that good works can save. He affirms that real, living faith manifests itself through works (read Eph 2.10). Therefore, faith and works are a result of salvation, they are integrated aspects. You cannot have faith and not put it into practice!

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up Hebrews 11.1 in your own Bible and highlight it. Write the verse on a paper and leave it in a visible place where you can read it many times during the day.

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Hebrews 11.1

See to believe or believe to see?

Pay attention to this story, which explains what it means to live by faith.

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 3

A man stretched a steel cable between two waterfalls in the Niagara and said to everyone: "Who believes I can walk across this steel cable, taking a wheelbarrow?" Everyone shouted: "I believe, I believe..." He then asks: "Who believes I can walk across this cable, taking a wheelbarrow with someone sitting inside?" Many answered "I believe!" So he invites them: "Who would like to sit in it?" and no one responded, until a little boy said "I'll go!" The man walked across the cable, taking a wheelbarrow with the boy inside. When they arrived on the other side everyone applauded, relieved. Someone from the crowd asked the little boy: "How did you have the courage to trust this man?" And the boy answered: "He's my dad!"

A child of God is one who can live by faith. A child of God is one who knows Him yet doesn't fear, nor shows any lack of trust. Because *"God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?"* (Num. 23.19).

To live by faith does not mean to take a step in the dark. On the contrary, it means to take a step to the light, which is Jesus. Do you believe God can take better care of your problems than you can? Do you want to live by faith? Have the courage to hand everything over to Jesus. In Mt 17.20b it is written: *"Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you*

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Hebrews 11.1

can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there', and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." Do you believe God is the god of impossible that can move mountains, especially the mountain of problems that we have to climb every day?

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Put the verse in the correct sequence and memorize it:

what assurance faith confidence Hebrews about Now we and hope in for whatdo 11.1 see. we not is

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Hebrews 11.1

Faith and Science

Many incredible stories exist in the Bible. Have you ever heard of people who walk on water without sinking? And of the sea opening so that people can walk through? What about the sun stopping for a whole day? How about a man that is swallowed by a huge fish and stayed there three days without dying? Can science explain that? Many wonders that happened in the past and still happen today science cannot explain.

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 4

Faith in Christ, as in the Bible, does not intend to solve all the mysteries in the Universe (read Dt 29.29), but to solve the issue of our relationship with God and with each other. The Bible is not a scientific book (that deals with human science). It is a book that talks about a God who loves the world He created, and loves the sinful man to whom he sent Jesus (God/man), to die for his sins.

The Bible was written in a pre-scientific period, but already stated facts that were later on proved by scientific methods, such as the fossil discovery in places and conditions that can only be explained by an event similar to the flood – sudden, violent and covering all the earth.

As scientific knowledge advances, more confirmations of biblical truths appear. Many people deny biblical faith, stating that it is contrary to science, simply denying the Bible, without even spending time studying about its feasibility. They reject it from the scientific point of view, with no reasonable criteria.

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Hebrews 11.1

But pay close attention to this: your faith is based on a true and intelligent book that was given to you from God. To believe is also to think and meditate on the things God has done. You need to believe in the Word of God to see His wonders and understand the reasons of your faith. Learn to study the Word of God in a more profound, intelligent way the rest of your life.

Only knowing the Word of God can protect you from doubts and false teachings.

That is why you shouldn't stop reading Scripture every day. Don't just read, but also study, meditate and pray for knowledge and wisdom (read Acts 17.11).

If we analyze the lives of many important men in the Bible we can see they were scientists, which means, they were more prepared than the people of each place they lived (read Acts 7.22, which mentions Moses; Dan 1.11, which talks about Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; and Acts 22.3, about Paul). All of them were faithful to God and never ashamed because of their faith. Besides, their intellectual preparation was used to glorify the Lord.

A Christian scientist can and should be a blessing in his field of work. The important thing is to dedicate everything you do for the glory of God.

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Hebrews 11.1

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Complete the verse and memorize it:

Now _____ is _____ in what we _____
for and _____ about what _____ do not _____.
_____ 11.1

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." **Hebrews 11.1**

Jesus is the Lord of your life

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 5

This week you studied about faith and works. Now is the moment to analyze how you have been developing spiritually, seeking to take steps of faith, aligning yourself with Christ's reign in your life.

**What do you need to do in order for your faith to increase daily?
Put this before God and ask for His help.**

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Hebrews 11.1

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Try to write the Bible verse of the week you memorized.

Now, go to your Bible and check to see if you are right. If yes, congratulations!! If not, correct the verse and keep memorizing.



You have finished your sixth week. Don't forget to schedule a meeting with your mentor. Remember to arrive on time, ask any questions you might have and enjoy your time, because it is time spent with God as well.

Mentor: _____

Date of meeting: _____

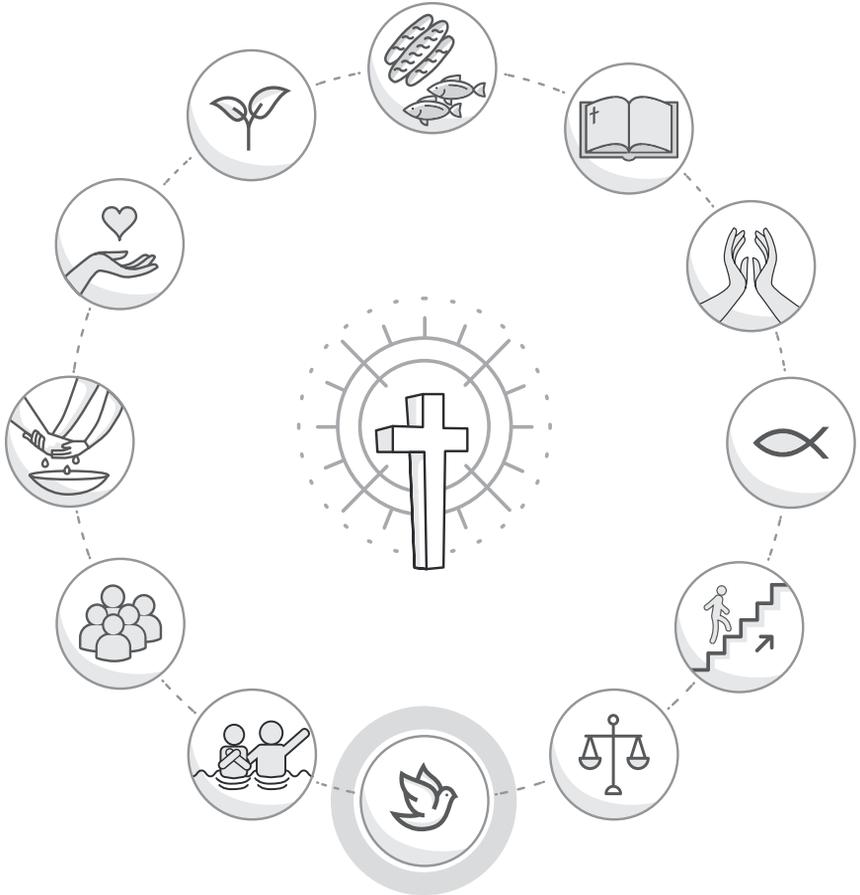
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Mentor's signature: _____

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Hebrews 11.1

Week 7

Holy Spirit



"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

John 14.26

Who is the Holy Spirit?

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 11

This week you will discover more about who the Holy Spirit is. In every page of the Bible we find God, present through the Holy Spirit. It couldn't be any other way, because Scripture was developed by the same Spirit (read Gen 1.2).

The Holy Spirit isn't energy nor a principle, but the third person of Divine Trinity, composed of God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit (read Mt 3.16-17). The three people think and feel the same way and speak the same language. They are completely synchronized. Yet, each one has some unique characteristics:

- **God the Father** – Creator and Sustainer (even though the Son and Holy Spirit take part in the creation).
- **God the Son** – Savior (even though the Father and Holy Spirit also participate of salvation).
- **God the Holy Spirit** – Worker, he who does the work of God in our lives also abides in those who are saved (the Father and Son are also participants of this work). Read Jn 16.7-13!

Therefore:

1. The Holy Spirit is a person, who possesses characteristics of a personality because he:

- Teaches (read Jn 14.26).

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

John 14.26

- ❑ Intercedes for you (read Rom 8.26-27).
- ❑ Has feelings (read Eph 4.30).
- ❑ Guides the children of God (read Acts 16.7).
- ❑ Convinces the world (read Jn 16.8).

2. The Holy Spirit is God because he:

- ❑ Is equal to God (read Mt 28.19 and 2 Co 13.13).
- ❑ Is presented as the Spirit of God (read Ez 36.27 and Gen 1.2).
- ❑ Is also called the Spirit of Christ (read Acts 16.6-7).
- ❑ Is a Divine person that, along with the Father and Son, form the Divine essence called God.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

John 14.26

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up John 14.26 in your Bible and write it here:

"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

John 14.26

How does the Holy Spirit work in my life?

The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to direct the life of God's servant. That is why in the Bible it says he is counselor, teacher (read Jn 14.26) and guide (read Rom 8.14).

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 12

He abides in the heart of those who give their lives to Jesus (read Rom 8.9). He who receives Jesus receives the Holy Spirit. It is God himself, in the person of the Holy Spirit, inside of you! The Holy Spirit is not received later on, after your personal alliance with Jesus, but at the same moment. That is why we do not agree, as some people teach, that baptism of the Holy Spirit is subsequent to conversion.

It is as if God decided to buy a couple of houses here on earth. God bought the houses (which are us), the price of the house was paid with the blood of Jesus (that was the price) and the Holy Spirit lives in these houses, that it, in us (read 1 Co 3.16).

The Holy Spirit gives us certainty of salvation (read Rom 8.16). Certainty that you are no longer only a creature, but son or daughter of God. He also helps you in your weaknesses (read Rom 8.26).

Well then, if you are the temple of the Holy Spirit, that means that since the moment you received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit started abiding in your heart.

In Jn 14.16 it is written that the Holy Spirit abides in us forever, as a fulfillment of Jesus' promise made before he died, resurrected and went to

"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

John 14.26

heaven: *“God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear”* (Acts 2.32-33).

Can you remember a situation you lived in these past few weeks where the Holy Spirit of God was manifested in your life? Write it here and share with your mentor.

Pray to God and ask Him to give you strength in your walk. Write to God what is in your heart:

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

John 14.26

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up John 14.26 in your own Bible and highlight it. Write the verse on a paper and leave it in a visible place where you can read it many times during the day.

"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

John 14.26

Baptism in the Holy Spirit: what is it and when do we receive it?

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 13

Yesterday you learned that the Holy Spirit dwells in you forever. This first experience of receiving the Holy Spirit is called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In other words, you were submerged in God and are part of his Kingdom. The baptism of the Holy Spirit marks your new birth. It seals us and is God's pledge of our salvation, the guarantee that we belong to Christ (Acts 19.1-2; Rom 8.9; Eph 1.13-14).

There are a couple different viewpoints regarding when a person receives the Holy Spirit, and how it is evident in one's life. Maybe you have heard of them. What do you think? When do we receive him?

At the moment of your conversion, or when you accepted Jesus as your personal savior, you were baptized in the Holy Spirit and this happens only once in your life. Baptism or receiving the Holy Spirit means the same thing in Greek (New Testament language).

Don't take my word for it. Let's check in the Bible.

- **Acts 2.38-41** says that 3,000 souls, after they believed, received the Holy Spirit.
- **Eph 1.13** affirms that after hearing the Gospel and believing, they were sealed with the Holy Spirit.
- **1 Co 12.12-13** reveals we are sealed like a letter to the Lord.

"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

John 14.26

Therefore, there are no other types of baptisms of the Holy Spirit! In Eph 4.4-5 it is written that *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”*

Our concept of baptism is described in Acts 2.37-47, when 3,000 people converted at Pentecost after Peter’s sermon, receiving the Holy Spirit when they believed.

Unusual situations, registered in Acts, serve to authenticate before the apostles and the Church that the Samaritans, gentiles and followers of John the Baptist were also a part of the Body of Christ, which until then was inadmissible (read Acts 11.17-18).

Many believe that speaking in tongues is evidence that one is has been baptized by the Holy Spirit. However, if we seek orientation in God’s Word, we will come to the conclusion that there is an error in this statement.

The gift of speaking in tongues is a gift of the Holy Spirit. If it’s a gift, it is not for all. The Bible says that the Spirit *“distributes them to each one, just as he determines”* (read 1 Co 12.11). The person who has this gift should use it as the Word of God teaches (read 1 Co 14.27-32). Speaking in tongues is not evidence that one is consecrated, nor that he has been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Paul made this clear in Rom 8.9 teaching that without the Spirit of God in us – the baptism of the Holy Spirit – salvation was not applied in us; and taught us in 1 Co 12.13 that this baptism is what makes us Christians, under the same experience. It should not be a reason of division among Christians, but of oneness, even in the midst of a diversity of people and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

John 14.26

Do you wish to be filled by the Holy Spirit?

Dedicate yourself with discipline in walking honestly in the presence of God, through prayer, reading and meditating on the Bible, practicing the teachings you receive, making a difference in this world. In this way, your life will evidently show the fruit of the Holy Spirit which is described in Gal 5.22-23 *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*

Time to evaluate! You have been challenged to set aside a time with God, praying and reading the Bible. Have you been able to take this seriously? What has stopped you?

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

John 14.26

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Put the verse in the correct sequence and memorize it:

Advocate, remind Holy whom will But the you. everything things and of the send name, Spirit John 14.26 teach you I said Father will in the all my you have to will

"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

John 14.26

Manifestations of the Holy Spirit

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 14

Yesterday we talked about one of the aspects that characterize the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life: the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Today we will approach the practical consequence of this baptism in your life: the fruit of the Spirit. Read Gal. 5.22-23 and observe the manifestations of this fruit, which are nine characteristics.

The fruit of the Holy Spirit can be compared to an orange, which has many wedges. Each wedge can be studied independently, but overall is part of the same fruit.

The fruit of the Spirit, through its wedges, brings deep changes to one's life:

1. In your interior life, the fruit of the Spirit promotes love, joy and peace. Love doesn't simply mean affection, but something deeper, that moves us in God's direction.
2. In your exterior life, the fruit of the Spirit manifests itself through the practice of patience, tenderness and kindness. Patience is the ability of withstanding aggression without seeking revenge. It means to contend with impulsive people without being irritated; it means staying calm in the midst of insults and slander.
3. In your attitudes, the fruit of the Spirit expresses faithfulness, humbleness and self-control.

We struggle with our human nature. Practicing God's Word and its truths is very difficult, because we live in a selfish world, where people only seek

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John 14.26

each other when they need a favor. Even with the best of intentions we can't fulfill what we planned, isn't that right? But don't be discouraged! Paul, the apostle, also had these same feelings and wrote about how he felt in Rom 7.21-25:

“So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.”

Only the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life can give you victory over every situation, because nothing can separate you from the love of Christ! We need to live a life according to the life in the Spirit (Gal 5.16-26).

Read Rom 8.31-39.

1. What has been your greatest struggle in the past few days?

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

John 14.26

2. What promise does the Bible give us in the midst of difficulties?

In 1 Co 13.13 we read that the most important thing is love. How about practicing that? Try demonstrating love for people in practical ways this week (phone calls, notes, hugs, listening with attention, helping with something, encouraging; be creative).

Write down your experience of loving intentionally.

What you did you do?	How did you feel?	How did people react?

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

John 14.26

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Complete the verse and memorize it:

"But the _____, the _____, whom the _____ will _____ in my name, will _____ you all _____ and will _____ you of _____. I have _____ to you." _____ 14.26

"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

John 14.26

Gifts in service to God

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 15

This week you learned that when you receive Jesus Christ, by faith, you have been sealed with the Holy Spirit. The presence of the Holy Spirit, who besides enabling you to live a Christian life in holiness (manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit), also grants you special gifts so that you can serve with quality.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are special abilities of grace from God among his people, to manifest the glory and ownership of Christ, generating oneness amid the people for the uplifting of the church, and through it, fulfill the purpose of the Lord for all on earth.

The Bible teaches that:

- Every servant of the Lord has at least one spiritual gift (read Rom 8.9).
- No person obtains all gifts. Because of this, we need each other, so that the church's needs be met (read 1 Co 12.29,30). The motto for the body of Christ is cooperation.
- The gifts are distributed by the Holy Spirit as he determines (read 1 Co 12.11). It is the same Spirit that equally works in everyone.

"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

John 14.26

Gifts are for:

- ❑ The development of specific projects (ministries).
- ❑ Uplifting of the church and evangelism.
- ❑ Glorifying God alone.

The disciple of Christ is a servant. To be a servant means to continuously take steps of faith, consecrating to God your fears, your gifts and talents, your family, your belongings. It means to learn to live in a way that experiences new things with God each day because there is no servant without a mission. You have a special talent that God desires to use. Are you willing to offer it in service to Him? Then pray to God at this moment and deliver everything in His hands.

Have you been blessed by God's love? Share this with a friend. Here are a few tips:

- ❑ Be courageous – do not be afraid;
- ❑ Be humble – be careful not to consider yourself a hero, but instead focus on Jesus;
- ❑ Be truthful – don't make things up;
- ❑ Be wise – don't share unnecessary details about your past which don't glorify God;
- ❑ Be practical – your testimony should be useful to those who listen;
- ❑ Be brief – a brief testimony causes impact, a long one is often hard to follow and may be boring.
- ❑ Be visionary – vision keeps us focused on God's dreams.

"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

John 14.26

If love us what matters most to God (read 1 Co 13.13), then the best gift is the one that blesses our neighbor most. The same God works all in all – we should use our talents and gifts for the glory of our Father, blessing other.

When is it most difficult to be a follower of Jesus?

How can you use your gift to cooperate with the church? Talk to your mentor about this.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

John 14.26

Keep God's word in your heart. Try to write the Bible verse of the week you memorized.

Now, go to your Bible and check to see if you are right. If yes, congratulations!! If not, correct the verse and keep memorizing.



You have finished your seventh week. Don't forget to schedule a meeting with your mentor. Remember to arrive on time, ask any questions you might have and enjoy your time, because it is time spent with God as well.

Mentor: _____

Date of meeting: _____

Time: _____

Mentor's signature: _____

"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

John 14.26

Week 8

Baptism and Lord's Supper: Commands of Jesus



"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." **Matthew 28.19-20a**

Jesus values baptism

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 16

This is the time when your commitment to Jesus will be tested. This will be a week focused on your commitment to God.

We are going to study about the baptism and the Lord's Supper – marks of the new life in Christ. The dictionary defines “mark” as a sign, a symbol. In our case these Christian symbols represent great spiritual truths. A mark can also mean a visible impression. The Christian mark indicates a new life, reminding us of something that has changed in our lives: a personal encounter with the Savior Jesus. Reminder: marks are only symbols of what God has already done and will still do for us.

That is why baptism – first, and foremost – should be celebrated with joy! This symbol, aside from confirming a radical change brought about by God in your life, marks the beginning of an eternal spiritual journey.

The work baptism means “immersion”. Essentially, it is a command to be immersed in water. Every person who gives his or her life to Jesus must make this personal decision as to when they will be baptized.

Baptism is a command established by Jesus. He himself demonstrated this to us through his own example (Mt 3.15). He authorized his disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Mt 28.18,19). Therefore, baptism is a biblical teaching, just as it is a command of Christ. His basic teaching is the same throughout the Bible: after one believes, he should be baptized. Baptism is a conscious and rational

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Matthew 28.19-20a

practice. That is why we don't baptize babies. They are taken to church to be presented (so the church family can rejoice in their birth and pray for the child and his family) and not baptized (Lk 2.21-23).

Our Lord and Master was baptized in the waters of the river Jordan, setting and example to be followed. For that reason every Christian should also be baptized as Jesus was.

Jesus' baptism is described in all four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). Let's take a look at the passage found in Mt 3.13-16:

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.' Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him."

What does Baptism represent in our lives?

Many people are baptized simply as a tradition or because of the insistence of others. We already studied the importance of baptism, and what it represents for a Christian.

With that, the question remains: Are you going to be baptized confident of what you are doing and of the change that it represents in your life? Or will you simply do it as an obligation? What does baptism symbolize in your life? Does it represent the death of the "old man" with the seal of the Holy Spirit or just an meaningless gesture?

Everything we mention in this Notebook should be kept in your heart and mind, including everything about baptism. Think about what you

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Matthew 28.19-20a

have studied. Meditate upon God's Word. May God give you a strong mind in Christ so that you don't neglect faith and never forget the meaning of this beautiful and precious symbol.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up Matthew 28.19-20a in your Bible and write it here:

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." **Matthew 28.19-20a**

Baptism is a symbol of commitment

There are people who believe that when they are baptized they are free from sin, from hell and the devil, and therefore, won't sin any longer. That is not true! Salvation is through by Jesus Christ, the "living water". The waters from baptism do not wash our inner self. That's why baptism is a symbol and a commandment. When you are immersed in water you are symbolically saying "I died to sin, to my old life". When you rise from the waters you affirm "I am born again, to a new life" (read Col. 2.12). It is a public confession of what has already happened in your heart.

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 17

When a person is baptized he publically affirms his faith in Christ, assuming a commitment of serving Him faithfully and completely. Baptism is a sign, a mark in a Christian's life. It is a "watershed", symbolizing the death of "the old man" and birth of a "new man"!

Baptism and commitment with Christ and with his doctrine

"Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit." (John 3.5)

Jesus used the symbol of baptism (immersion in water) to show us he does the same with those who seek Him in spirit and in truth.

Baptism is an excellent symbol to illustrate the work that the Holy Spirit works in us. Jesus, when he "immerses" us in His Spirit, He grants us a new nature, which comes directly from Him. As scripture reminds us:

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Matthew 28.19-20a

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Gal 2.20)

Jesus pours the Holy Spirit over us, sealing our lives. When we allow His own Spirit to abide in us, He reminds us we are His children by adoption, and as a kind Father, He will never forsake us!

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorifies. What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8.29-31)

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Pray and ask God to give you strength in your walk with Him. Write to God what you feel in your heart:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up Matthew 28.19-20a in your own Bible and highlight it. Write the verse on a paper and leave it in a visible place where you can read it many times during the day.

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Matthew 28.19-20a

What does baptism represent in my life?

- I repent from my sins and surrendered my life, with faith, to Jesus.
- My old life is dead and I have been born to a new life in Christ (Rom. 6.1-12).
- I am one with Christ; I am saved.
- I am a participant of heavenly blessings.
- I am publically confessing what happened in my heart: my conversion.
- It is the practice in which the disciples in Christ are received as the church, which is his body.
- I am not alone in this journey of faith.

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 18

Who can be baptized?

He who has repented of his sins and put his faith in Christ, as his one and only Savior and Lord of his life can be baptized. In other words, you need to believe in the Lord Jesus and in his Word (read Acts 2.41 and Acts 8.34-39).

If you have Jesus in your heart, and believe that He is your Lord and Savior, nothing stops you from being baptized and taking part as a member of a local church. Is that your desire? Speak to your mentor about it. If you are still not sure, pray for God to speak to your heart. Because God's will is that you – a new creature in Christ – be baptized.

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." **Matthew 28.19-20a**

Dealing with crisis after baptism

One of the many problems that new Christians face is thinking the Christian life will be a “bed of roses”. Jesus promised us eternal life, but not absence of problems while we are still in this world.

A Christian also deals with daily struggles. Tribulations, fear, and anxiety are common occurrences in the lives of every human being. The difference is that those who are in Christ have the certainty of victory not only “here” and “now”, but also in eternity. As Jesus said, “...*In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*” Jn 16.33

You have taken the first step of faith when you decided to follow Christ and the second step is to confirm that through baptism. The Holy Spirit already abides in your heart. Now, stay strong. Battles will come. You will definitely face crises in the days, weeks, months and even years to come. But, God is All-Powerful and will fulfill his promise to us: “*And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age*” (Mt 28.20).

Is there anything stopping you from being involved as a baptized member of your church? Write it down here and later talk to your mentor about it.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Matthew 28.19-20a

“When the Creator of the sea is in the boat with me, I don’t need to fear the tide.” What does this phrase mean to you?

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God’s word in your heart. Put the verse in the correct sequence and memorize it:

baptizing of nations, and Father go them everything Holy teaching obey
I to name and of all make Son the Therefor you. and of the commanded
disciples in Matthew 28.19-20a Spirit, have them the of the and have

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” **Matthew 28.19-20a**

The memorial of the Lord's Supper

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 19

Today we will study about the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. This subject is intimately connected to the ordinance of baptism and celebration of Easter, Christ's resurrection. The Lord's Supper, like baptism, is a mark of the Christian life, and observed by all born again believers. Easter, is a corporate celebration for the church body to acknowledge and celebrate that Jesus freed us from darkness and sin, through his death on the cross on our behalf and His resurrection from the dead three days later. It is the assurance of "His beloved Son's Kingdom" (Col. 1.13). The churches traditionally celebrate the Lord's Supper monthly, or sometimes quarterly.

What is the nature of the elements of the Lord's Supper? Some people believe that the bread and the cup, elements distributed during the Lord's Supper – or Eucharist – truly become the body and blood of Jesus. However, this is not what happens. The bread continues to be bread, and the cup –holding grape juice – continues to be juice. Jesus requested that we celebrate this moment as a memorial of his sacrifice on the cross for us (Lk 22.14-20):

"And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me'. In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you'." Lk 22.19,20

"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." 1 Co 11.26

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Matthew 28.19-20a

When we celebrate the supper, we remember the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The same sacrifice that seals the New Alliance. Now we can contact the Father directly through Jesus, not needing to obey all the rituals and orders of the Law of Moses, as we read in the Old Testament.

That is why a Christian takes joy in participating in the Lord's Supper. We know that it is a symbol of the sacrifice of Christ and a sign of a new alliance with God in Christ Jesus, our Lord!

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Complete the verse and memorize it:

"_____ go and _____ disciples of all _____,
 _____ them in the name of the _____ and of the
 _____ and of the _____, and _____ them
 to _____ everything I have _____ you." Mt 28.19-20a

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." **Matthew 28.19-20a**

Participating in the Lord's Supper

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 20

Carefully read the following text from the Bible:

“So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter! [...] So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. [...] So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together. Anyone who is hungry should eat something at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment. And when I come I will give further directions.” (1 Co 11.20-22, 27-29, 33-34)

The apostle Paul was very angry with the Christians in Corinth because they had not understood the meaning of the Lord's Supper. They treated the supper as an ordinary “community lunch” or a regular fellowship. No! That is not the meaning of the Lord's Supper, as we see in the text above.

Maybe you, as I, have never seen anyone drunk during the Lord's Supper, probably because we don't use wine, but rather grape juice. But, this is not the only conclusion we should come to when applying Paul's words. The

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Matthew 28.19-20a

apostle clearly states: *“Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup”*.

When you celebrate the Lord's Supper it is important for you to keep in mind the value of what you are doing. You are not merely eating or drinking, but remembering the sacrifice of Christ and announcing it until He returns!

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Try to write the Bible verse of the week you memorized.

Now, go to your Bible and check to see if you are right. If yes, congratulations!! If not, correct the verse and keep memorizing.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” **Matthew 28.19-20a**



You have finished your eighth week. Don't forget to schedule a meeting with your mentor. Remember to arrive on time, ask any questions you might have and enjoy your time, because it is time spent with God as well.

Mentor: _____

Date of meeting: _____

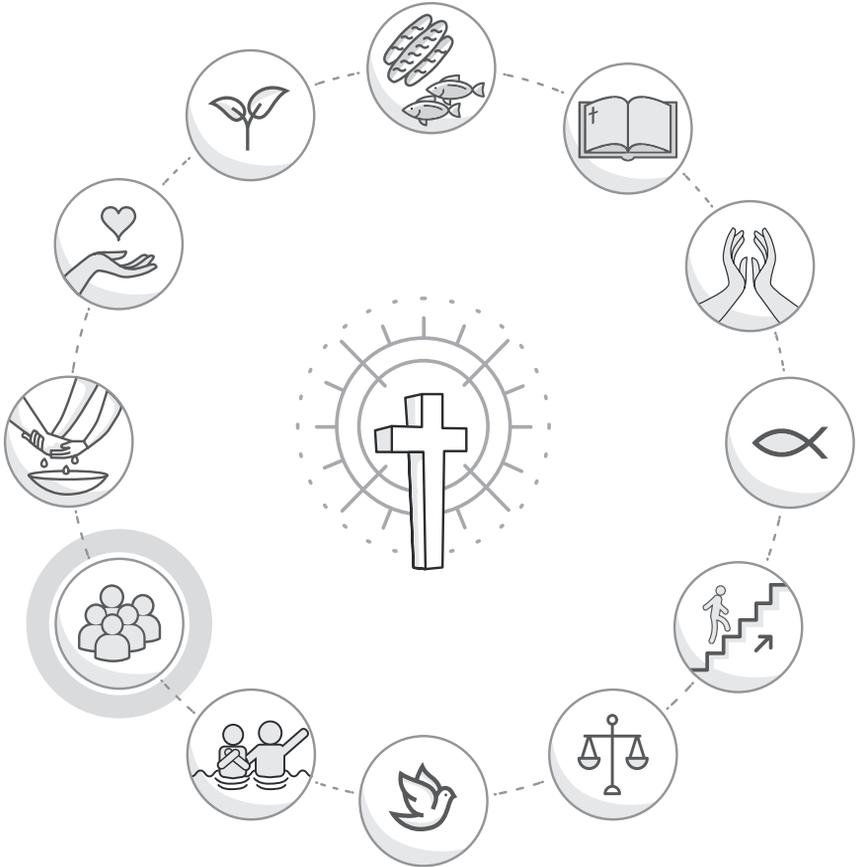
Time: _____

Mentor's signature: _____

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." **Matthew 28.19-20a**

Week 9

The Church and Life in Small Groups



"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

1 Corinthians 12.27

What is the church?

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 16

Congratulations! You are in your last couple of weeks of discipleship! In the past weeks, you have felt God's power and your life has shown many signs of transformation, hasn't it?

Some people around you have probably mentioned you are different, before you weren't like this, and they may question what is happening to you.

This happens because the Holy Spirit is doing a tremendous work and will continue to do so if you allow him to. Surrender to God, daily, every area of your life (relationships, family, future, etc.) and trust him. Pray for your life, for your mentor's life, so that together you may grow spiritually. If you have any doubts, take it to your mentor. He is your friend and has prayed for you. But don't forget that people are human and have flaws. That's why you should put your trust only in Jesus, because He is the only one who won't let you down, and stay by your side unconditionally. Remember, discipleship means to follow Jesus all your life, learning with him and imitating him, in every aspect of your life.

During the next few weeks you will learn another aspect of the Christian life: life in community, that is, the church. The term church means summoned people (by Christ, of course). This word is used in two aspects:

- **Universal Church:** involves all who are saved by Jesus Christ, in all the churches of Christ throughout the world.

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."
1 Corinthians 12.27

- **Local Church:** involves all who are born again, or converted to Jesus Christ and congregate in a local church, submitting themselves to the gospel of Christ, becoming a member through baptism.

The local church is not part of a big puzzle – the Universal church – but an expression of its fullness in the defined history and geography. Baptism is a symbol of the disciple through the death and resurrection of Jesus and identification with his followers.

The Bible has many comparisons to explain what a Church is. Here are two of them:

1. Building

(Read 1 Peter 2.4,5) It is clear in this text that a Church is a living organism, a spiritual building. We are a Church! The Church is not a temple. The temple is the place where the Church meets, the place that accommodates the Church (which is us). The Bible says in Acts 17.24 that God does not live in temples built by human hands. God lives in hearts (read Heb. 3.6). The temple is called the “house of prayer” by Jesus (read Mt. 21.13; Mark 11.17). You must construct, take care of and watch over the temple, but much more than that, take care of your spirit!

2. Body of Christ

The Church is also called the Body of Christ: He is the head and we are the members (read Eph. 1.22-23; 5.22-32). Therefore, you are a member of the body (read 1 Co 12.27).

Imagine how the body works. The same is true with the Church: each one must be integrated to the body and not out of it, apart from the body.

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

1 Corinthians 12.27

Every member of the body, both the human body and of Christ's body of believers, are important, useful and indispensable. Just as the head (through the brain) commands all of the body, Jesus Christ is the one who commands the Body of Christ (the Church). It is not the pastors and leaders that command, but Jesus through them.

Read the texts in 1 Co 11.18 and 3 Jn 1.9-10 and answer: If the church is the people of God, can you say it is perfect? Why?

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up 1 Corinthians 12.27 in your Bible and write it here:

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."
1 Corinthians 12.27

Why should I go to church?

Some people consider themselves Christian (belong to an invisible church), but don't actually want to participate of a local church, because they think they have a good relationship with God and don't think they need to go to church to grow spiritually. Do you agree with this? What does the Word of God teach us?

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 17

When you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior you were born in the family of God and became a part of the Body of Christ, the people of God (read Eph. 2.19-22). Nowhere in the New Testament does it encourage individualism, where a Christian doesn't participate in a local church and is apart from fellowship. In 1 Pe 2.9 we are called a chosen people and royal priesthood, words that involve a group of people. In Hebrews 10.25 it is written:

“Do not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

If a person doesn't participate regularly in church events he risks being an ember removed from the fire, which is soon put out with the winds and storms of life.

Why should I be an active participant in a local church?

- You need to worship God (read 1 Pe 2.5; Rom. 12.1; Heb. 13.15 and 1 Co 14.15). You need to have fellowship with other brothers and sister, and to be strengthened in faith (read Fil. 1.5).

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”
1 Corinthians 12.27

- You need to serve, through prayer, gifts and testimony (read Col. 4.2a; Phil. 2.4; and Eph. 3.10).
- When you start congregating at a local church you begin to be a part of a group of people who are seeking an intense relationship with God. In this way, the church can be compared to a hospital. A church is a place where people find wholesome healing for their spiritual lives.

Jesus said in Mark 2.17, *“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”*

Therefore, we find problems in the church, because it is composed of human beings, flawed and not perfect. The local church is a big hospital. It is the environment that restores the sick, making them like Christ. (2 Co 3.18).

That is why your faith should be completely grounded in Christ, and not on dependent upon other people. It is very possible that people will disappoint you. Only Jesus is perfect. Trust him and seek to live in communion, learning to be *“humble and gentle, patient, bearing with one another in love”* (Eph. 4.2). Therefore, be sure of this: salvation is individual, but the Christian life is in community.

How can you cooperate in the Church?

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

1 Corinthians 12.27

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Pray and ask God to give you strength in your walk with Him. Write to God what you feel in your heart:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up 1 Corinthians 12:27 in your own Bible and highlight it. Write the verse on a paper and leave it in a visible place where you can read it many times during the day.

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

1 Corinthians 12:27

The Church's Mission

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 18

In Matthew 28.19-20 Jesus said, “*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” This is the greatest responsibility the Church of Jesus has.

That is our mission. That is why the Church's purpose is to help people seek an intimate relationship with God, to love and serve one another and make Jesus known in all nations, through the power of the Holy Spirit. In this way we work to grow in four directions:

- **Upward:** challenging each member to relate with God, experiencing the values expressed in his Word.
- **Outward:** demonstrating the need of reaching people through our testimony.
- **Forward:** promoting leadership and discipleship training.
- **Inward:** promoting moments of communion, uplifting, and affinity among God's people.

To reach this purpose we have a couple of strategies:

1. Join together with others in collective church services, where all of God's people participate and praise the Lord. These celebrations are planned to promote edification of the Body of Christ, being

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”
1 Corinthians 12.27

challenged to live a life transformed through commitment of practicing the values expressed in the Word of God.

2. Participate of weekly meetings in small groups, where we can experience life in community. Here each member is a minister of God and each house a temple. The people and needs of the community become relevant. Each member is called to be involved, both to evangelism and constant multiplication.
3. Be involved in projects of the ministries of the church, putting to use your gifts and talents. Be effective in God’s work; be part of a ministry and exercise your capacity to serve.

To serve with excellence in these areas you need to expand your knowledge of God’s will for you life, practicing the teachings expressed in the Bible. That is why it is crucial to be part of weekly meetings and teachings. It is there where we study the Word of God and seek a Christian education relevant for our time. We focus on subjects, experiences and reflections that strengthen our worldview about faith, and consequently, guide us to a way of life according to Jesus’ standards.

Continue your walk, enjoying each learning opportunity through the studies and classes of the Teaching Series, offered at PIB’s Sunday School and other training opportunities.

Do you already participate in a small group? Have these meetings made a difference in your life? Why? Share your ideas with your mentor.

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”
1 Corinthians 12.27

Are you a regular participant in the church services? How have these moments helped you in your intimate relationship with God? Share your ideas with your mentor.

Are you actively involved in a ministry? How does this participation help you serve the Lord with your gifts and talents?

If you answered no to any of the questions above, what has hindered your involvement with your church? Talk to your mentor about it.

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”
1 Corinthians 12.27

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Put the verse in the correct sequence and memorize it:

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

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

1 Corinthians 12.27

Participating in the Lord's Supper

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 19

The book of Acts shows us the growth of the early church, where “ministry” began in the homes of believers. (Acts 2.42-47):

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere heart, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

For a church to be healthy it needs to grow in four directions:

- ❑ **Upward:** communion with God.
- ❑ **Inward:** communion with brothers and sisters.
- ❑ **Forward:** improvement of leadership and discipleship.
- ❑ **Outward:** the great commission.

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”
1 Corinthians 12.27

Read the texts below and write in your own words what it means to you:

Growing Upward - Ephesians 2.21; Ephesians 4.15-16; Colossians 1.10; Colossians 2.19; 2 Peter 3.18.

Growing Inward – Acts 2.42; Philippians 2.1-8; Ephesians 4.31-32.

Growing Forward – Ephesians 4.11-13; 1 Timothy 4.16; 2 Timothy 1.13; 2 Timothy 3.16-17; Titus 2.7.

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”
1 Corinthians 12.27

Growing Outward – Matthew 28.18-20; John 3.16; Matthew 18.14; Acts 1.8.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Complete the verse and memorize it:

"Now _____ are the _____ of _____, and _____ one of you is a _____ of it." 1 _____ 12. _____

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."
1 Corinthians 12.27

Why participate of a small group?

After recognizing what we want to be and do as a church, it becomes easier to understand why small groups have been our greatest motivation. This tool meets the greater vision of the church and allows each member to have the opportunity to serve in the Body of Christ, as Jesus himself desires. Read the texts below and notice the difference between the church today and the early church.

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 20

The Early Church

They lived life in community. They met daily to pray in the temple and in each house, they ate together and remembered the stories and teachings of Jesus (Acts 2.42 – 47).

The Church Today

Some churches present themselves as an institution with strong emphasis on tradition, where many activities are offered, usually by a certain number of people, under the guidance of a religious leader or pastor. Each local church develops its own culture regarding activities and performance. We cannot affirm that one is correct and the other wrong. What matters is that the members live in unity, sharing the same work philosophy, which doesn't concern doctrine, and that the church accomplishes the mission Jesus appointed for her.

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

1 Corinthians 12.27

The church in small groups is a vision that pursues restoring the balance (which existed in the early church) between life in the temple (celebration) and life in the homes (communion).

Observe Acts chapter 2, and you will see that if we desire to have a healthy life with God, we need 3 types of development:

1. Regularly participation in church services (celebration – temple).
2. Active participation and service in and through a small group (communion – homes).
3. Participation in one or more ministries of the local church (service – world).

Therefore, being part of a small group is not only participating in local church ministry; it is much more than that. It is a healthy lifestyle that is being nurtured, in pursuit of a more intimate relationship with God.

Evaluating:

Have you taken your engagement with God and the church seriously? Mark the decisions you would like to make today and present them to God, along with your mentor.

- I need to rethink my concept of the church.
- I need to restore the balance between life in the temple and life in the home.
- I participate in church services regularly.
- I actively participate in a small group.
- I participate in a ministry of the local church.

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”
1 Corinthians 12.27

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Try to write the Bible verse of the week you memorized.

Now, go to your Bible and check to see if you are right. If yes, congratulations!! If not, correct the verse and keep memorizing.



You have finished your ninth week. Don't forget to schedule a meeting with your mentor. Remember to arrive on time, ask any questions you might have and enjoy your time, because it is time spent with God as well.

Mentor: _____

Date of meeting: _____

Time: _____

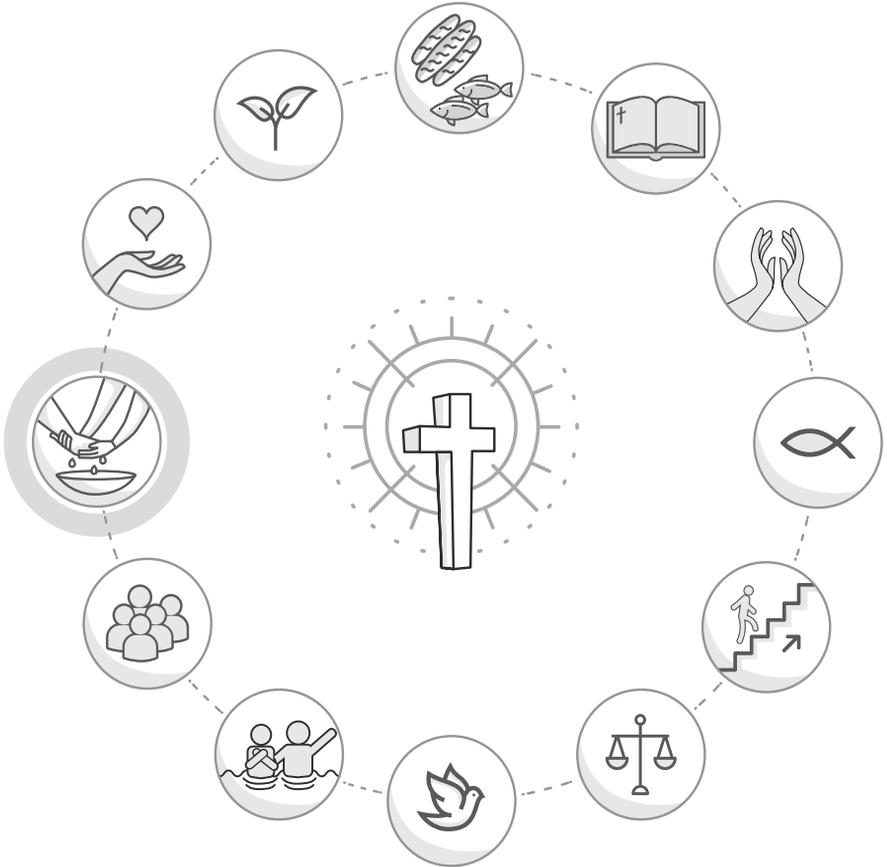
Mentor's signature: _____

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

1 Corinthians 12.27

Week 10

Christian Stewardship



“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” **1 Peter 4.10**

What does it mean to be a steward of God?

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 21

Christian stewardship is the biblical teaching that recognizes God as Lord and Owner of all things. The Bible says that, *“the earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it”* (Ps 24.1). For this reason, stewardship implies in the use, under divine orientation, of the life that the Lord gave you: time, people, belongings, and everything else. After all, you didn’t only receive life (natural and biologic) but also the gift of eternal life. Also, you have received the gift of being a partner of God in the development of a better world.

To be a Christian means to have great responsibilities, about who you are and what you do. When you obey the biblical teaching of stewardship you apply it to your personal belongings, regular financial earnings, professional recognition, etc.

Steward is the same thing as administrator. A true steward, or butler, was someone who took care of the master’s house. He was the most privileged among the house employees and felt honored about it due to the high amount of trust given to him. The same is with the Christian: someone who administrates God’s belongings. It is the person in charge of cooperating with the plan given to him by someone with authority over him.

This is what God desires of each person: *“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms”* (1 Pe 4.10). In other words, you are a steward of God’s grace on earth. And you should remember that: *“from him and through him and*

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” 1 Peter 4.10

for him are all things.” (Rom 11.36). While you live on earth, God wants you to be a good steward of his own kingdom.

Let’s see what the Bible teaches about Christian stewardship and write in the lines below what you think:

Genesis 1.1 – *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”.*

It’s the first verse in the Bible and it reveals that the creator prioritizes his creation. If you create something, be in at work or a hobby, who does it belong to? Therefore, if the entire world was created by God, even your life, then we belong to God.

Proverbs 3.9-10 – *“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.”*

The wise writer of the book of proverbs, inspired by God, knew very well that when we are conscious that everything we have comes from God and apply stewardship with what we receive from God, we will experience spiritual and material consequences coming from God himself.

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” **1 Peter 4.10**

1 Chronicles 29.14 – *“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.”*

The context is very similar to our worship services to God. David was in a service to God and during the moment of tithes and offerings something special happened: people brought their personal belongings to dedicate to the Lord, that is, to give to God. It was something spontaneous and given freely that David, who was leading the service, recognized it was something more than necessary than God’s purpose set in his heart (to construct a temple for worship). He teaches that stewardship is just giving to the Lord what he himself has given us.

Malachi 3.8-10 – *“Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’ In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – your whole nation – because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into 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 there will not be room enough to store it.”*

This text is very important to understand biblical stewardship: God doesn’t need money or material things; he is the perfect Spirit. He is loving and merciful with everyone, especially the needy. Just as in the past, also today the representatives of God’s people, responsible for the administration of His house, are an instrument so that the blessings may come upon the needy and fulfill the purpose on earth. This is where the divine rebuke of

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” **1 Peter 4.10**

Malachi, the prophet, comes in: withholding tithes means to steal from God because it keeps God’s blessings from reaching the people who are the target of His great purpose, through his people. Certainly, a good steward brings his tithes to God’s house, which today is represented by the local church where the Christian congregates to fulfill his personal and communitarian mission.

Romans 12.8 – “[...] *if it is giving, then give generously* [...]”.

Paul affirms that one of the spiritual gifts God concedes the church is the gift of contribution. Every gift should be put into practice by the church. As for contribution, it should be exercised with generosity and love. Contributing is a consequence in the Christian life. The church, as the body of Christ, needs contribution from all its members to fulfill its mission.

You, as a steward and administrator of God on earth, definitely have a gratifying work ahead. God trusted you with both temporary and eternal things. Be grateful to God, as his servant, for this special trust

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” **1 Peter 4.10**

and love. Remember, as Jesus' disciple you must not run away from your responsibilities. That is why the next few days we will study more about Christian stewardship in your integrity, your priorities and also material and financial belongings, which involve your life. After all, you are a steward. May you be a faithful one!

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up 1 Peter 4.10 in your Bible and write it here:

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." **1 Peter 4.10**

Your integrity

We are studying about Christian stewardship. Yesterday we saw that this teaching shows that everything belongs to God, from natural and eternal things – even the temporary ones – to spiritual and eternal things. Today we will study stewardship applied to your character. The Bible mentions this subject a lot, which we call integrity. Integrity is the teaching of stewardship related to Christian character and involves how you make your decisions and behave.

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 22

Integrity is a Latin word and means “wholeness”. That is, integrity, which involves a full vision without division nor two meanings, without two words nor second intentions, but true and honest character of Jesus’ disciple.

King David is a biblical example of integrity: *“As for you, if you walk before me faithfully with integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will fulfill my promise...”* (1 Kings 9.4). However, there was another kind, called Amaziah, who apparently served the Lord but had a divided heart: *“Amaziah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, but not wholeheartedly”* (2 Chronicles 25.2). In other words, in David we see the center of his emotions, loyalty, affection, actions, without division – directed to God in integrity. In Amaziah we see someone who only lives by appearances.

Christian faith is the fruit of love and grace that constrains our hearts: Jesus loves us as we are. Many times we don’t value the transformations that this faith can cause directly in our character.

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” **1 Peter 4.10**

As a Christian, you should not and must not live dubiously, but should live in an integrated manner. If your nature is different, then the fruits of this new nature should be different. Christian life isn't only contemplation but practical actions and values that need to be internalized and lived daily.

Here are a few considerations about integrity

Good intention is not a synonym of good action. On the contrary, sometimes good intentions represent values that do not come from God, but of the human deceitful heart: *"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? 'I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve'"* (Jeremiah 17.9-10). The integrity of God's servant is not built based on common sense, but on God's character. Otherwise you will lose your integrity.

Participating of God's work doesn't mean knowing God's nature. Our acts express our nature. It is clear we are likely to make mistakes, but they should not be part of our nature. For example, not dividing food with someone is different than being selfish. Of course sin is not approved by God, but not always does the mistake say something about our nature, unless it is constant. The Bible says that the true Christian doesn't sin regularly (1 John 5.18), because his nature is renewed. Do you wish to know if your acts express the nature of Christ in you? Jesus said that people are recognized by the fruits their lives produce (Matthew 7.17-20). A person who follows Christ has the Holy Spirit abiding in them. Therefore, the fruits of His presence in you will reflect in a life of constant transformation.

To God, the ends never justify nor sanctify the means. It's no use to have holy aims and purposes. The construction process of these purposes needs

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." **1 Peter 4.10**

to reflect God's holiness and God's will. In other words, it doesn't matter where you want to go, but how you get there.

God reveals sin to maintain the purity of his work. That means you cannot hide your sins and problems from God, because you belong to him, and he will definitely treat those sins and problems. Each day that goes by you will learn that God admonishes the children he loves, and thrashes those he desires to transform and use as his references on earth. An integrate life is an example of Christian stewardship for every generation of Christians to follow.

There are three areas where your integrity will be tested: money, sex and power. They are temptation areas that affect any servant of God, one way or another. Be alert!

Daniel is another example of integrity. Read the first six chapter of the book of Daniel and answer:

Where did Daniel's integrity begin? (Dan. 6.10, 21, 22)

What evidence of integrity do you see in his professional life? (Dan. 5.10-12; 6.3)

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." **1 Peter 4.10**

Up to what point was Daniel willing to keep his integrity? (Dan. 6.5, 10)

Who noticed Daniel's integrity? (Dan. 5.11-12; 6.4, 23-24)

When we understand that biblical doctrine of stewardship doesn't only mention belongings or money, contributing financially becomes easier, because this indicates only one portion of stewardship in your life. Stewardship is a practical evidence of character and Christian testimony, of a faithful life to God.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." **1 Peter 4.10**

Pray and ask God to give you strength in your walk with Him. Write to God what you feel in your heart:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up 1 Peter 4.10 in your own Bible and highlight it. Write the verse on a paper and leave it in a visible place where you can read it many times during the day.

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." **1 Peter 4.10**

Your priorities

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 23

We live in a time in which having and doing are more important than being. The post-modern world offers a success methodology for each problem, an alternative of achievement for each desire, and a manual to fulfill our dreams. It is a logic culture, with cause and effect. For each situation you find a specific answer, or a method to follow. In other words, every relationship can be decoded and follow a method. If so, then everything can be manipulated, constructed and modified until it looks the way society considers important.

The superficiality in relationships, summed with individualism and lack of deep values is a consequence of this post-modern life philosophy. People live virtually: each one creates a stage in his mind, where the main actor is himself.

But the real world is not so: people are sinners and need to be reconstructed by God. There is no magic form that leads someone to success in any area of their lives. On the opposite side of the cultural wave is God's way. Consequently, the lifestyle of His children needs to be different from the lifestyle of the non-Christian. In God's kingdom his citizens must have priorities and make decisions based on the principles and values of the Bible. Jesus said: *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well"* (Matthew 6.33).

Unfortunately in the religious and ecclesiastic world we find echoes of this philosophy of gain and acquisitions at the expense of values and

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." **1 Peter 4.10**

principles of life. Religions not always preach the doctrine of stewardship as it is represented in the Bible.

That is how the preachers of the so-called “prosperity theology” think and work, using biblical texts as methods of financial gain or material acquirements. They interpret the texts in a way that he who obeys, or falls into the trap of prosperity theology, will receive proportionally in exchange of his “investment”. In God’s kingdom it’s different. There are blessings and prosperity, yes, but not exclusively financial neither always related to material profit. The difference is in the heart’s intention and in the biblical interpretation.

Who or what is in first place in your life? Is it money? Is it desire of possessions? Of power? What should the Christian’s priorities be?

First

His relationship with God. Put your relationship with God in first place, always. He is your Creator, your Sustainer, Savior, Deliverer, Lord and King. To Him be all the honor, glory and praise!

Second

People are more important than things. People are gifts of God for our lives, because through them we can grow and identify ourselves as human beings. Some of them are easily categorized: family, friends and brothers in Christ. People will always be worth more than things, structures or methods.

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” **1 Peter 4.10**

Third

Biblical values. Handle your priorities based on clear biblical values. Deliver them to God and seek these principles in His Word, the Bible. But remember, principles are standards, not magic forms.

The main challenge of Christian stewardship is, without a doubt, the responsibility we have with people that surround us. Many times we, as Christians, run down people around us because our priorities are out of order. Even our use of our possessions would be different if we considered others, instead of focusing on things and ourselves.

Stop what you are doing now and pray to God for a moment thinking what are your priorities. Remember they should be established based on your meaningful relationships, being God the first on the list.

In the chart below, write in the middle column what your priorities actually are, and fill out the following column, asking God to organize your life. Think about the people who are part of the items in the chart. See if a certain priority will set people apart from God or from you. Think of alternatives to solve your difficulties in living God's will.

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." **1 Peter 4.10**

<i>Priorities of a christian</i>	<i>How do you demonstrate this priority?</i>	<i>What can you do to adjust this priority in your life?</i>
Relationship with God		
Marriage and Family		
Children		
Student life and/or Professional		
Community life and Church		

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” **1 Peter 4.10**

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Pray and ask God to give you strength in your walk with Him. Write to God what you feel in your heart:

Keep God's word in your heart. Put the verse in the correct sequence and memorize it:

serve of use gift you have others, stewards grace various Each whatever to forms. you 1 Peter 4.10 as should its received God's of faithful in

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." **1 Peter 4.10**

Your finances (part 1)

This week we are studying about Christian stewardship. That is why it is important that we talk about finances. This subject, even though it mentions material belongings, is intimately linked to your spiritual life. The way you deal with your finances and belongings serves as a thermometer of your spiritual life. After all, you can easily be tempted to manage your belongings as owners and not stewards.

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 24

Luther, German reformer of the past, said a person needs to have three conversions: the first one is in the heart; the second in the mind; and the third in his pocket. For some, this third one is the most difficult. The lesson today is based on the article of Karlis Krukliis: Bible, Finances and Family.

Bible, Finances and Family

Modern society has transformed our control of finances at home one of the most complex areas we administrate. Credit cards, fundings, extremely attractive commercials induce us, many times, to an uncontrolled budget. Statistics show that thousands of divorces happen every year due to severe financial dilemmas or divergences between the couple on how to administrate finances at home.

However, many times we forget that God has left us an excellent financial manual that is never obsolete, no matter what the exchange rate, interest or inflation. This manual is the Bible. There are 2,350 verses of precious teachings about finances.

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." **1 Peter 4.10**

The Bible teaches us that money itself is not evil, it is just a mean of exchange. Love of money is the root of all evil: “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with much grief” (1 Tim. 6.10). In other words, our personal character and spiritual maturity can be seen simply in how we deal with money.

Jesus said: *“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money”* (Matthew 6.24). He teaches us that money can become idolatry. Many people think that money is just a mean of interchange, as if it were neutral. Others believe that it is a blessing or a curse, where those who have money despise those who don't. And vice-versa. However, money is not neutral. Neither is it a blessing or a curse, as if it had a mystical power of happiness. The secret is in how you use it.

You can use money for both evil as for good. The power is in your hands. God gave you resources so that you administrate in the best way possible. You should use money in favor of God's kingdom.

You should definitely read brother Karlis Krukli's article again, meditating and praying that God help you be a faithful steward. Even after doing this lesson go back into the article and increase your knowledge.

How to use your money well

Advice about finances (extracted from the book Money, Sex and Power in the Christian perspective of Richard Foster):

- Don't compare your financial life with others.
- Have a friend or counselor for accountability in this area in your life.

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.” **1 Peter 4.10**

- Remember of the Lords tithing, in first place (we will talk more about this in the next lesson).
- Cultivate an inner attitude of thankfulness for what you have.
- Besides tithing, give spontaneous offers for God's work.
- Listen to what the Bible has to say about stewardship.
- Administrate your money well, establishing a budget control of your bills.
- Value people in first place.
- Be careful not to treat people as if they were possessions.
- Before thinking of comfort, consider character.

Principles for financial administration

- Differentiate need from desire.
- Be grateful to God for the simple things.
- Consider your financial life an opportunity to serve God and people.
- Don't love money. Love God.
- Think and negotiate before closing deals. This will avoid purchasing by impulse, and consequently, debts and extensive installments.
- Spend only what is available in your budget. Avoid using credit card and overdraft.
- Don't waste.
- Be careful with loans. Always seek plenty of advice before starting a loan.

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." **1 Peter 4.10**

- Pay your bill in time. That shows good testimony.
- Be the best professional you can be, for the honor and glory of God.

The Bible also teaches us that if we pray with faith for anything that is also God's will, we will receive it. But it is important we remember that the will and ways of the Lord are not always the same as ours. So when we hand over our finance control to God, we also need to accept His guiding.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Complete the verse and memorize it:

"Each of you _____ whatever _____ you have received to _____ others, as faithful _____ of God's _____ in its various forms." 1 _____ 4.10

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." **1 Peter 4.10**

Your finances (part 2)

Today we will talk about the teaching of tithes and offerings to the Lord. How do you think God's work is maintained? The pastors, missionaries, the needy, construction and maintenance of the worship temples, and the people of God?

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 25

The church, besides being the Body of Christ, is also an organization. Today, churches need financial resources to maintain themselves and attend its demands. May the churches' demands always focus on the kingdom of God!

Read these basic texts that talk about tithes and offerings. Look them up in your Bible, underline them and memorize as well.

Lev. 27.30-32; Mal. 3.7-12; 1 Co. 16.1-2; 2 Co. 9.6-7,12.

So what is this tithes and offerings all about? You have to pay to be a member of a church or to receive God's blessings? No! Of course not. Is it biblical to give tithes and offerings? Yes! See below why.

What is tithing?

Tithing means the tenth part of everything we receive and that should be returned to the Lord. We belong to the Lord and everything we have comes from him. Therefore, Jesus alerts in Luke 18.11-14 that

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Christianity does not come down to tithing, because this does not justify anyone! The Pharisees gave their tithes, but it did not please the Lord. They thought that, in tithing, they could consider themselves faithful. Little did they know that it was their obligation, *“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 5.20).

Returning to the Lord the tenth part of everything He has given us is a matter of faith and faithfulness, and it is for God’s children to trust and follow.

Regardless, some people claim that tithing is a valid practice only in the Old Testament, before and during the Mosaic Law. But it is current and valid. Jesus emphasized that the most important thing is the heart’s attitude in Matthew 23.23. In Matthew 5.17 Jesus said that he did not come to end the law of Moses or the prophets’ teachings – the Old Testament – but he came to give complete meaning. It is probable that Jesus had already discussed this topic, otherwise he would mention it again and give new guidelines.

The teaching of tithing must be understood entirely through the Bible, which is inspired by God. There is a risk in choosing only the verses that interest you and despise biblical doctrine, which goes way beyond one or two separate verses. The Bible interprets the Bible itself and that is why we should accept and practice the teaching of tithing.

What are offerings?

In 1 Corinthians 16.1-2 we find the early Christians (which are our role models, because they learned directly from Jesus and his apostles) collected offerings to help others. It is with the money of the Christians that God’s

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” **1 Peter 4.10**

cause on earth is maintained. Giving tithes is a duty and privilege of the Christians, but the benefits that come from it extend to both Christians and non-Christians.

In 2 Corinthians 9.6-7,12 we see how offerings should be consecrated to God: spontaneously, voluntarily and individually. With joy and not a heavy heart, because God loves a joyful giver. A good steward of God's grace on this Earth participated of tithing and offering. To expand your knowledge and information regarding this topic, we recommend the book *Faith and Finances in God's Kingdom*, of Loren Cunningham.

In biblical teaching about stewardship we learn that living with Jesus means to commit with his people and a local church. Our commitment should be complete, not partial.

The church that Jesus left here on earth should be a living testimony of hope, faith and love. Your main question should be: what can I do for the Church and the lost? There is certainly a lot you can do through your life, even through tithing and offering.

Put your yearnings before the Lord and talk to your mentor so that, together, you can amend your difficulties that keep you from taking on a commitment with your church.

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." **1 Peter 4.10**

What stops you from living out the teaching regarding tithes and offerings?

Are you faithful in tithing? Why?

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” **1 Peter 4.10**

Keep God's word in your heart. Try to write the Bible verse of the week you memorized.

Now, go to your Bible and check to see if you are right. If yes, congratulations!! If not, correct the verse and keep memorizing.



You have finished your tenth week. Don't forget to schedule a meeting with your mentor. Remember to arrive on time, ask any questions you might have and enjoy your time, because it is time spent with God as well.

Mentor: _____

Date of meeting: _____

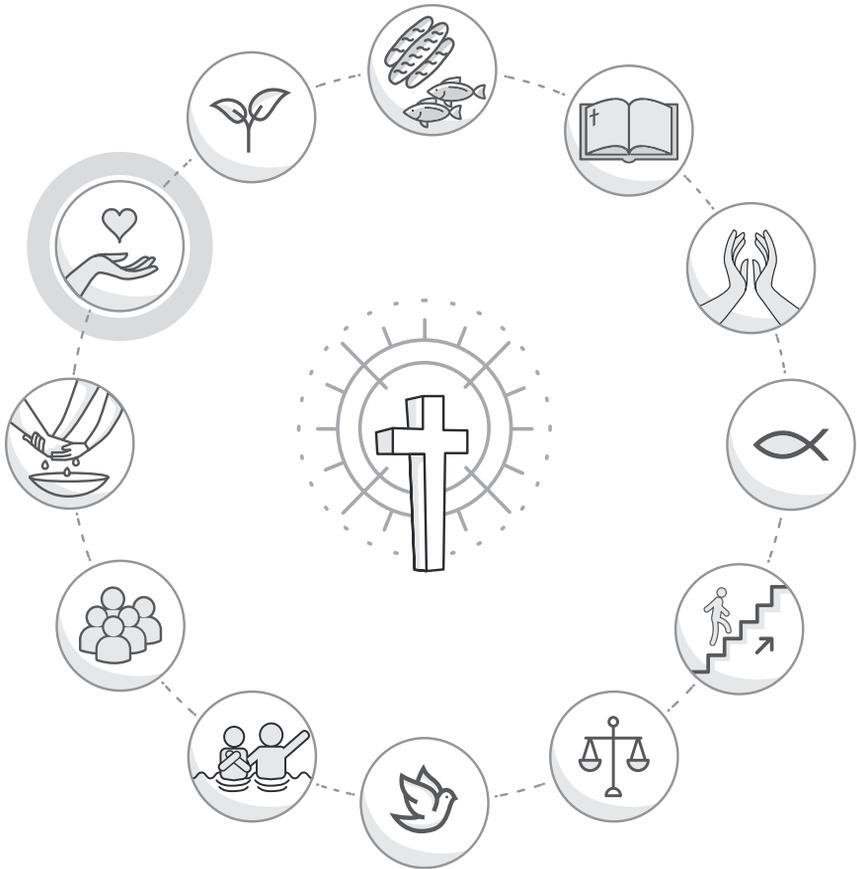
Time: _____

Mentor's signature: _____

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." **1 Peter 4.10**

Week 11

Evangelism: personal testimony



"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." **Acts 1.8**

Now it's my turn

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 26

You have been walking with your mentor and together have shared moments of spiritual growth and communion. You have probably talked to him about those around you, who also are in need of God's love.

Most of us have about 8 to 12 people we relate to significantly.

The time has come to invest in these lives, demonstrating that you care about them, and begin a process of evangelism, where you will be fulfilling God's purpose for you: make disciples. Therefore, now it's your turn to be a testimony! Read 1 Peter 2.9 and Luke 24.46-49.

These texts present your specific task, as a follower of Jesus Christ, of announcing the powerful works of God, who called you from darkness to his wonderful light, testifying of His sufferings and resurrection and affirming that all men are forgiven when they repent from their sins.

A witness is someone who possesses evidence and can share what they have lived from the moment Jesus came into their lives. Along with your mentor, who now becomes your partner in this mission, you will be dedicating time to help others to have a relationship with the living Christ.

The first step for that to happen is to pray for the lost. Using the chart below, create a prayer list identifying the spiritual needs of each person that you would like to take to Jesus. Pray for these struggles, calling out to God for these people to be free.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1.8

Fortresses that keep people from seeing God

- Obsession for work or studies.
- Addiction to pornography.
- Addiction to drugs, sports or other activities.
- Doubt of Christianity, due to past experiences.
- Anger for being fooled or hurt.
- Fear of being poor.
- Feelings of inferiority.
- Excessive activities, keeping them from stopping to analyze things deep down.

Can you remember any other fortresses that show in your friends' lives? Write it here:

Think about people you relate to (family, friends, neighbors or colleagues) that need the love of Jesus, which you and your mentor have been praying for. What fortresses are present in their lives? Write down the names and fortresses.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1.8

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up Acts 1.8 in your Bible and write it here:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." **Acts 1.8**

Sharing my testimony

Most Christians are reached through the testimony of a friend or family. This information shows us that we should be prepared to share our experience of conversion to people around us.

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 27

Who is responsible for your conversion to Christ?

Your testimony can be about two areas:

- Events that led you to your conversion.
- Situations since your conversion that have shown you God's love and protection.

Read Acts 20 and 22. Paul's testimony is an example that can help you write the events that led to your conversion.

Now, write your own testimony

My life before becoming a Christian was like this:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1.8

What made me notice I needed Jesus:

Details of my decision for Christ:

To me, being a Christian means:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” **Acts 1.8**

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Pray and ask God to give you strength in your walk with Him. Write to God what you feel in your heart:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up Acts 1.8 in your own Bible and highlight it. Write the verse on a paper and leave it in a visible place where you can read it many times during the day.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." **Acts 1.8**

Why doesn't everyone evangelize?

Today's devotional:
Acts of the Apostles ch. 28

One common experience is school. Basically, everyone goes to school, at least they should. One of the student's greatest fears is failing a school year. Have you ever been through that? It is definitely not the best feeling.

However, if you have already failed once in your life, either you failed because you didn't take the school year seriously, or because you couldn't adapt and learn what was being taught.

"Failure" is not a pleasant word, neither is it a good experience (even though at times failing in an area in your life will bring you maturity).

We, as Christians, become likely of failure when we don't evangelize. Jesus ordered us to preach to every creature in all the world: "*He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.'*" (Mark 16.15). Have you done that? Have you at least prepared yourself for this task? Jesus also called us to "fish" for people: "*[...] from now on you will fish for people*" (Luke 5.10). Are you a fisher or an observer?

Today we will consider a couple of possible excuses people give to not obey Christ and evangelize. Escape from these excuses! If you are caught in any of them, at any point in your life, recover your purpose as a Christian: testify the Word and the power of Jesus Christ.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1.8

1st Excuse

“I don’t understand their language” or “I don’t know their culture”. The language, for many people, is a great barrier. This is a specific calling and if God summons you, He also offers the means of learning the language.

2nd Excuse

“Evangelizing is illegal and unethical” or “someone else can do the job”. In some places, speaking of Christ, or mentioning a different religion than the official is illegal. We need to announce the Word of Christ that brings hope, salvation and eternal life for people around the whole world. Of course we cannot do this alone. That is why local churches send missionaries to preach. But you are also a missionary! You can be a missionary in three simultaneous ways: 1. Preparing and going to a missionary field: the field starts in your family, your job and goes around the world! 2. Be an intercessor of missionary work. 3. Contributing financially for suitable and faithful missionary projects. Shall we? What will you do to spread the Gospel?

3rd Excuse

“I have more urgent things to do” or “I don’t have time left”. We have a lot to do during our week: take care of family, work, make plans for the weekend and vacation, organize finances, study, shop, return phone calls, cook, clean the house, etc. You probably do all this and even more. Our great challenge, however, is to put God in first place.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” **Acts 1.8**

4th Excuse

“Evangelizing can affect my work, family and finances.” Still, you can testify of Christ in being a good professional. What saddens God’s heart is when we fear losing our reputation because of sharing the Gospel. “But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven” (Mat. 10.33).

5th Excuse

“I don’t know any non-Christians”. The Bible orders us not to identify ourselves with the world, in the sense of living the world values. But it is clear in the Bible that we are the “salt of the earth” and “light of the world”, that is, we are saved to make a difference in the lives of those who don’t know God.

Stop a moment in your reading and pray to God. Ask God if you have given excuses to not evangelize. If so, then confess this sin to him in prayer. Then, answer the questions below:

What common excuses do you hear other Christians give for not evangelizing?

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” **Acts 1.8**

What common excuses do you give yourself (or once did) to not evangelize immediately?

Below you will find 12 steps that can help you overcome this difficulty, freeing yourself from excuses to not evangelize. We ask that you analyze each one and consider them targets to take Jesus to people more intensely. Talk to your mentor about how you can take on this challenge.

1. Pray for God to give you audacity to evangelize and pray for people He puts before you.
2. Plan actions to reach these people. Remember that love drives out fear (1 John 4:18) and is the best way to approach people. That is why you shouldn't create traps to evangelize, but as God to guide you in finding the best moment to speak of Jesus' love.
3. Accept that evangelism is your responsibility, not others'.
4. Understand what the Gospel and evangelism is.
5. Be faithful in your loyalty with the Lord and his glory.
6. Demonstrate the love of Jesus for people at all times.
7. Prepare yourself to evangelize using your own testimony, but also through the growth in God's Word and relationship with people different from you.
8. Join the Lord's purpose and know his will! We know God more when we connect with Him, in his work, making his name known.
9. Love people, even though you are not loved by them.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1.8

10. Fear God, and not people.
11. Stop giving excuses and not taking on your responsibility of evangelizing, contributing with missions and being an intercessor of God's work in your city and the world.
12. Consider everything God has done, is doing, and will do for you. Isn't he worthy of being glorified through your testimony, evangelism and preaching?

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Pray and ask God to give you strength in your walk with Him. Write to God what you feel in your heart:

Keep God's word in your heart. Put the verse in the correct sequence and memorize it:

Receive when you Spirit you; witnesses Jerusalem, Samaria, all in will
 But the power comes you my Holy and the ends will earth. Be on in and
 Judea and to and of Acts 1.8 the

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." **Acts 1.8**

Important concepts to evangelize

If you are aware that you cannot give excuses to not evangelize, now you need to learn and experience concepts and important values for the task of evangelism.

Today's devotional:
Romans ch. 1 and 2

Gospel

What is the Gospel? This question may seem obvious. But the success of our evangelism depends on the assertiveness of this answer. It begins with the fact that Christianity is the good news of God for human beings. In fact, the best news that the world has heard. The apostles of Jesus memorized the affirmation that Jesus is the Savior of mankind through the "Gospel", or literally, *evangelion*, in Greek. "Gospel" means, literally, good news.

The good news begins when we realize and admit that things are not going well for us. And that, besides God being love, he is righteous in fulfilling his decrees. Things don't go well for humanity because we are all sinners (Romans 3 and 6), we need to be made new to God (1 Corinthians 15) and without Christ we are dead in our transgressions and offenses against God, that is, in sin (Ephesians 2). Observe how serious the word "sin" is, considering the Bible has at least 8 synonyms for this matter:

- Miss the target or mark.
- Annul or trespass the line.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1.8

- Disobedience to a voice.
- Fall when you should stand.
- Ignorance about something you should know.
- Underestimate something that should be exalted.
- Not observe the Law.
- Conflict in the harmony of the universe.

These eight concepts are taken from the patterns that God ordained in the New Testament. We miss the target, ignore God's Law, fall into sin, disobey God's voice, we are ignorant to God's revelation, we underestimate His glory and holiness, we don't observe the Lord's commandments and we conflict with the harmony of the heavenly Father's creation.

God's good news enters the context of the sinner under divine punishment, which the Bible calls God's wrath and hell. It is then that God is called Judge, but also Love. He is merciful and righteous in his character, all at once. Jesus wants to be our friend, and mostly our personal Savior. The sacrifice of Jesus was substitutive. He died the death that belonged to us, becoming an offense to God and sealed a new pact between God and humanity. The good news is also about a new lifestyle God desires for those who receive Jesus as their Savior; but beyond that, it is necessary that He becomes the Lord of your whole life, through Christ.

Evangelism

One of the Baptist missionaries from the 19th Century, Lottie Moon, said that "Definitely, there can't exist any greater joy than saving lives".

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1.8

The pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in the US, John Piper (2003), encourages us for the work of world evangelism for three reasons:

- a. Christ has sheep outside the stall.
- b. Christ desires to reunite these lost sheep.
- c. The sheep that hear his voice will certainly come to Him.

“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!’” (Romans 10.14, 15)

Evangelism, therefore, is the responsibility of every Christian in Christ, who was born again and seeks to do God’s will. To evangelize is to make visible the Gospel of the invisible God. As the preacher Martin Lloyd Jones put it, “evangelism eminently depends on the quality of the Christian life which is known and enjoyed in the church”. In other words, the more you grow spiritually in your local church, the more evangelistic you should become. Is that so in your life?

John Bunyan (2008), author of the famous Christian book “The Pilgrim’s Progress”, taught that evangelizing basically consists in sharing our story, what God has done in us. God doesn’t only use sermons to bring people to Christ. He uses people’s stories, those who have had an encounter with Him; people who have been “touched” by his love and become a new creature. That is why I challenge you to think a moment about the many opportunities God has given you to evangelize. We need to understand what it means, and that we are all called to clearly express the Gospel, in both words and attitudes. Our evangelism must

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1.8

be: honest, balanced, urgent, joyful, faithful to the Bible, in prayer, clear, provoking, a reflection and not a religious demand.

Repentance

Repentance is the first step required by anyone who approaches God. It is the core message of the Gospel. Repentance is the main message of the Gospel because:

- Sin has taken over people.
- Ignoring the Scriptures keeps people further from God.
- A moral and ethnic absence exists in our world today, which is getting worse.

Jesus first put the word repentance in the Gospel context: *“The time has come, he said. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”* (Mark 1.15)

Repentance does not consist on a simple change of sinful practice to morally healthy attitudes, even though it is included. In its essence, repentance is a change of mind that transforms our lives. The apostles proclaimed: “Repent!” (Check: Acts 2.38; 3.19; 5.31; 17.30). To repent means a lot more than lamenting or feeling sorry for your sins. It means to grieve for your mistakes and not repeating them! Fake repentance is nothing more than intense upset emotions regarding your sins. When we really repent we set aside our sins; we repent not only of the evidences of our sins, but of the root of those sins in our hearts. Waren Wiersbe (2006, p. 535) says, “repentance implies in recognizing that God’s words are true, and because of that, transforms our way of dealing with our sins and with the Savior himself”.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1.8

Seven principles of repentance

1. It is a gift of God.
2. It is not a one-time event, but a constant attitude.
3. It doesn't mean to simply abandon what you do, but abandon what you are.
4. True repentance is for God, not a preservation of yourself.
5. Repentance deals with the fruit and roots of sin.
6. It is not secret, but open and public, which can be evident in your words and attitudes.
7. Someone who truly repents can have both good and bad consequences in life, due to the change of his mindset and conversion.

It is important to mention that repentance is not the same as conversion. Conversion withholds repentance and faith in Christ. When you repent of your sins, you need to put your faith in Jesus. This means a change of direction in your life. Repentance must be very clear for those who have recently become a Christian.

Balanced evangelism introduces to the sinner both repentance and faith. We know that God is enduring and longsuffering with sinners, but one day his patience will come to an end. That is why true testimony include sometimes bad news that torment the sinner if there is no repentance and faith, leading to conversion.

Meditate on this phrase: "The best defense to Christian life is one that is transformed". Best wishes on evangelism this week and for life!

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." **Acts 1.8**

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Complete the verse and memorize it:

"But you will receive _____ when the Holy _____ comes on you; and you will be my _____ in Jerusalem, and in all _____ and _____, and to the _____ of the earth."
_____ 1.8

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." **Acts 1.8**

How to evangelize

There are three tools that help us in the task of evangelism. Today we want you to know it: the Engel Scale, the pyramid of reaction and evangelism through personal relationships, influence, and friendships.

Today's devotional:
Romans ch. 3 and 4

1. The Engel Scale

This scale serves to help the disciple of Christ easily understand: God's work in evangelism, his own work as a disciple of Jesus, and the response the person who is being evangelized can have (represented by the 3 columns). For every part God has, there is a part for the disciple, who will evangelize and cooperate with God according to the level of response of the non-Christian.

For example, you are evangelizing someone who can be identified in the scale as -10, "does not know the existence of a supreme being". For him to get to the level of a new creature there is a cultivating of his heart that needs to be done. This may take years. Your evangelistic action in terms of life investment and techniques depend on the person's response. For each level of his response it is very important for you to be involved with God through prayer for this person. Only God can break the chains that the devil has set in his life to keep him from God. When a person leaves a level and moves on to another, it is due a miracle of the Lord!

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1.8

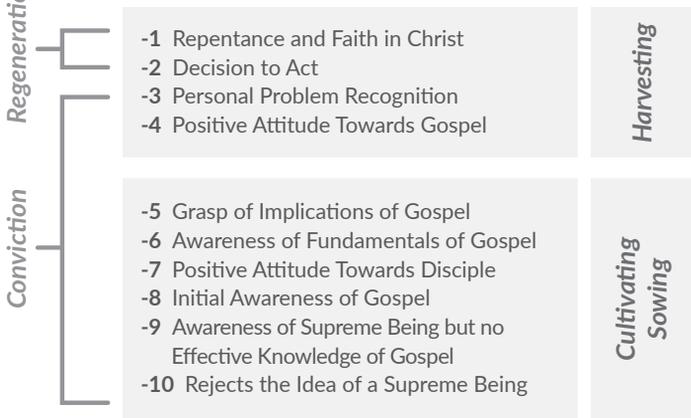
Stages of Spiritual Decisions

Matthew 28.18-20

▲ Eternity



★ New Creature



God's role

Person's Response

Communicator's
Role

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1.8

2. Evangelism through Friendships

Jesus was very clear in teaching that the disciples should look for a “man of peace” to begin preaching the Gospel to all. This can be found in Luke 10.1-12. Verses 5 and 6 of this chapter teach us that: *“When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you.”*

A “man of peace” is someone who is searching for “peace”. He is a non-Christian type A, according to our Reaction Pyramid. And according to the Engel Scale, he would be a level -7 person, who doesn’t recognize the Gospel, but has a positive attitude towards the disciple. This person is open to hear you! Maybe he’s not open to other Christians, or to read the Bible. But he listens to you.

In Luke 10.1-7 we find four suggestions to find a “man of peace” and begin evangelism through friendship.

First:

Go! Nothing will happen to you unless you walk in someone’s direction. Don’t wait. Walk towards the person. Normally, the “man of peace” is near you. Maybe someone in your family that admires you, or a work colleague, a street salesperson that likes to stop and talk to you.

Second:

Identify your oikos. Oikos is the Greek work used in the Bible to describe a house or someone’s common circle of relationships. Who are the people that are in your oikos, that is, in your circle of relationships with non-Christians?

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1.8

Let's begin now! Write in the following lines the names of 10 people you know that are in your oikos and pray for them. Analyze each case and ask God to help you start evangelizing them.

Third:

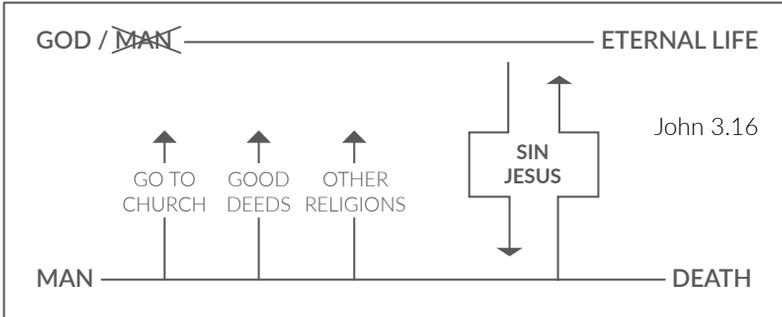
Be this person's friend. If you already are, even better! A tip to be prepared to testify to this person is through dialogue. It is better than handing him/her a pamphlet. Ask questions, share experiences, take advantages of difficult times to pray with and for the person. Most importantly, at the right time where the Holy Spirit will reveal to you, share your personal testimony:

- a. Tell the person how your life was before coming to know Jesus Christ.
- b. Explain how you realized that Christ loved you.
- c. Share how Jesus became your Lord and Savior.
- d. Mention evidences of your encounter with Christ, that is, what he changed in your life and continues to change daily.

Fourth:

Share the salvation plan. You can use the John 3.16 method. It's very easy. Pay close attention on how to draw the following diagram when you evangelize someone, and share your testimony.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." **Acts 1.8**



Step 1: Write GOD and say God has created all things and also has created us.

Step 2: Write MAN. God has created man to have fellowship with Him.

Step 3: Write ETERNAL LIFE. God wants this relationship to be eternal. For this reason, God has created us so that we would live forever and be with Him eternally.

Step 4: Write SIN. God has not created robots. He gave us freedom to agree or not with His leadership for our lives. Individually, each of us has made the same choice. Anything we do that is contrary to God’s will is a sin.

Step 5: Draw an X on the word man and write MAN on the lower part of the paper. The consequences of our choices are serious. Our option in rejecting God’s leading will cause us to spend life without His presence and we will also spend eternity without Him.

Step 6: DEATH. The line of death represents our daily life being lived far from God’s plan. The pain we feel and the worldly pain are the consequences we face for rejecting God’s leading.

Step 7: Draw the 3 small arrows. When we know something is wrong we try to turn back to God without giving our lives to Him. However, this does not work out, because we stubbornly keep wanting to control our lives.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1.8

Step 8: On the left side draw a cross. As human beings could not ascend to God, He decided to descend to humanity. For this reason, Jesus came to us.

Step 9: We need to make a decision. Will we accept the forgiveness God has offered us when He paid the price for our sins dying on the cross, or will we continue to live independently?

Step 10: Draw the right side of a cross. When Jesus died on the cross, He took our sins on Him. Show that the word SIN is now on the cross. Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus returned to His Father. However, we are still separated from God!

Step 11: Write John 3.16 on the diagram.

Step 12: Cross out your name. I understood this truth and gave my life to Christ.

Step 13: How about you? Did you make this decision? Do you want to take it now?

Step 14: No matter what the answer was, pray with the person.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” **Acts 1.8**

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Try to write the Bible verse of the week you memorized.

Now, go to your Bible and check to see if you are right. If yes, congratulations!! If not, correct the verse and keep memorizing.



You have finished your eleventh week. Don't forget to schedule a meeting with your mentor. Remember to arrive on time, ask any questions you might have and enjoy your time, because it is time spent with God as well.

Mentor: _____

Date of meeting: _____

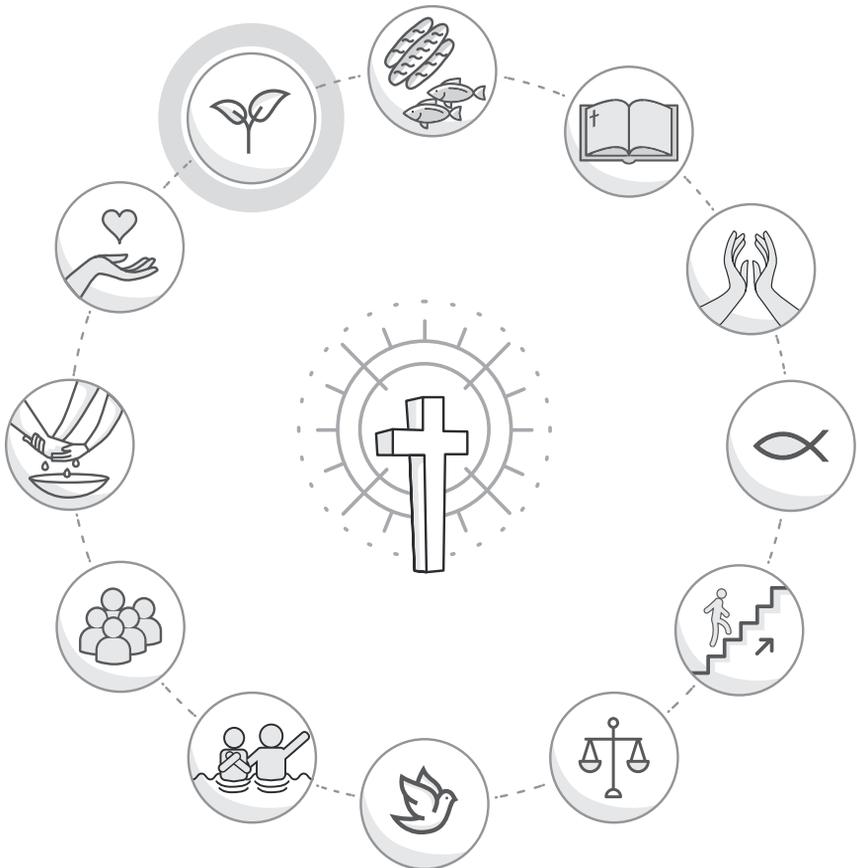
Time: _____

Mentor's signature: _____

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” **Acts 1.8**

Week 12

New Life in Christ: Nonnegotiable Values of the Christian Life



"I have the right to do anything, you say - but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything - but not everything is constructive."

1 Corinthians 10.23

Marriage and family

Today's devotional:
Romans ch. 5 and 6

Mankind is considered one of the most fragile creatures in nature. When born, he is completely dependent of care, nutrition, protection which is proportioned by others. His fragility and dependence are not only a biological matter. It also involves intellectual and emotional dependence.

It's as if when a baby is taken out of the uterus it needs a larger uterus to continue developing. A type of center where it receives love and moral shaping, learning between right and wrong.

Family was established by God to be the foundation of society. It was the first divine institution. It begins with marriage of man and woman. Genesis 2.24 says: *"That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh."*

What comes to mind when you think of marriage? A couple of types of union nowadays are considered family entities, but not marriage itself. Stable union, for example, is a way of guaranteeing the right of both man and woman in marriage, but cannot be considered a marriage, because it doesn't guarantee every right. The laws in our country try to facilitate the change of stable union into marriage. That helps us understand that before the law stable union is not marriage. Other forms of union that aren't registered by law can't be considered marriage.

Why? Because the marriage that the Bible defends needs to be registered by the laws of the country. Romans 13.1-7 argues that we need to follow the authorities constituted in our nation. In doing so, we understand that

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marriage needs to be fully governed by the laws that defend it, to guarantee its development and welfare of family. Besides, marriage is a commitment for life, unlike other types of union that can have an unexpected end.

Regarding baptism, it cannot be done when a couple is living together or in a stable union without being married, because we understand that they first need to correct their situation before God and the laws of our country. God has a complete blessing in marriage for those who walk towards this important decision.

Marriage being constituted, the couple needs to understand that the harmony between them will provide for their children a healthy place of development. In a time where the concept of family is related to the word crisis, Christian families need to take a stand and make their homes a piece of heaven. The foundation of family needs to be love. And we can only have perfect love when we receive it from God. That's why the love of God is the root for families to grow. When that happens, we start to understand what the role and purpose of family really is.

If you wish to grow more, our church offers a couple of courses about family. Talk to your mentor to help you discover the learning structure the church offers.

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

"I have the right to do anything, you say – but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything – but not everything is constructive."

1 Corinthians 10.23

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Look up 1 Corinthians 10.23 in your Bible and write it here:

"I have the right to do anything, you say - but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything - but not everything is constructive."

1 Corinthians 10.23

Sexuality (part 1)

What is the purpose of two lessons about sexuality? The idea isn't to scare you, much less cause embarrassment between you and your mentor. As a church, we have the commitment in bringing a biblical answer regarding this subject, with no offense, but only to present biblical truth. These two lessons also don't mention everything about sexuality, but will bring a clear positioning of God's will for you.

Today's devotional:
Romans ch. 7 to 10

Characteristics of our time

As we begin this lesson it is important we analyze our reality, which has popularly been called post-modern. Nowadays, we have been living certain characteristics in the world regarding sexuality which deviate from God's word.

One of these characteristics is individuality. Man has not prioritized God as the center of his life anymore. He then discovers he can do whatever he wants. Another characteristic is the absence of absolute truths. Truth has become relevant to the individual. Whatever he determines as true for his life is what he will follow. This also affects his sexuality. Besides that, today's humanity seeks hedonism, a philosophy which believes the search for pleasure is life's greatest purpose.

This path justifies sexuality as being a manifestation of words of love, of its own rights and freedom. If this were true, we would risk agreeing with a rapist's argument, where he justifies his actions for love. Or even

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1 Corinthians 10.23

a pedophile couldn't be accused of sexual violence, because he has the right to express his sexual preferences. Or yet someone could justify walking naked on the streets to manifest his freedom, forgetting that it is an indecent outrage. Not even the laws in our country affirm we can do whatever we want with our body. If we had such freedom, why would laws even exist?

The Bible says we should not conform to the pattern of this world. Romans 12.2 states: *“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

What are the consequences?

- A distorted vision about sexuality, with many ways it can be demonstrated. A humanity that has been sinking continuously in sexual sin. Regarding today's sexuality and its expressions, the list of words related to it is very long, such as adultery, LGBT, inbreeding, among others. What other words have you heard? Talk to your mentor about it.
- The vulgarization of sensuality and sex, ruining families through adultery, and weakening the concept of marriage, supporting divorce.
- A speech where Christians are considered biased and homophobic. Christians are ridiculed in defending their vision. However, when ridiculed, they also suffer prejudice.

What is the “reason” for all this?

When man is the measurement of all things, hardly will he find the way of truth. *“For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come*

“I have the right to do anything, you say – but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything – but not everything is constructive.”

1 Corinthians 10.23

– *sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person*” (Mark 7.21-23).

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God’s word in your heart. Look up 1 Corinthians 10.23 in your own Bible and highlight it. Write the verse on a paper and leave it in a visible place where you can read it many times during the day.

“I have the right to do anything, you say – but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything – but not everything is constructive.”

1 Corinthians 10.23

Sexuality (part 2)

Today's devotional:
Romans ch. 11 to 12

But does the Bible talk about sex? Yes!

- The Old Testament uses an expression “cohabited with her”, as a synonym of sexual intercourse (Gen. 4.1, Gen. 29.23, Gen. 38.16, Lev. 15.18, Num. 31.17, Deut. 22.13, Judg. 16.1, Ruth 4.13, among others).
- In the Law of Moses sexual intercourse was prohibited during the time of menstruation and births.
- The Bible registers sexual sins of many individuals such as David, Lot and the prostitution of the prophet Hosea's wife.
- God, through Solomon, urges us to be careful with an adulterous woman, extolling the physical relationship in marriage (Prov. 5).
- Songs of Songs poetically talks about intimacies between a couple. It was probably written to describe marital love and physical relationship in marriage.
- In the New Testament, Jesus openly talks about subjects regarding sexuality and the danger of living this experience outside marriage.

With these references in mind, we can clearly see that the Word of God has a lot to say about sex. Because the Bible mentions it, you can ask yourself the following:

“I have the right to do anything, you say – but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything – but not everything is constructive.”

1 Corinthians 10.23

What is sex, according to the Bible?

In the Word of God we find the foundation to the expression of sex in a healthy and blessed way. Our basic texts are Genesis 1.26-28 and 2.15-25. Reading these passages, what do we find?

- Sex was created by God to celebrate the end of loneliness. Genesis 2.18 says, *“It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”* This happens through marriage and it is through sexual intercourse that man and woman become one and celebrate together the end of loneliness.
- God is the author of sex, not the Devil. Our enemy has distorted true sexuality, but didn’t create it, as some people think. Genesis 1.27-28 says, *“So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’”* God created it! It is not humanity that creates its own sexuality.
- God determined the principle of heterosexuality. Genesis 1.27 says *“[...]male and female he created them”*. God didn’t give another man to Adam but a woman. God doesn’t wish that a man has sexual intimacy with another man. Nor a woman with another woman. God created man for woman, and vice-versa.
- God established monogamy as His will. Genesis 2.24 says, *“That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.”* The text doesn’t say women, but only woman, meaning singular. One woman for one man, until death does part.
- Sex is pure and natural. The Bible says that our God is holy, pure and separated. Therefore, sex was created by God and should be lived

“I have the right to do anything, you say – but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything – but not everything is constructive.”

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as something pure. Many people believe sex is impure or dirty. It shouldn't be experienced as something forced, painful or violent.

We see that God established patterns for human sexuality. He also reveals what is outside this pattern. This means God says **no** to some things. The Word of God, the Holy Bible, our only rule of faith and practice, says no:

1. Sexual intercourse/relations outside of marriage (1 Cor. 6.18, 1 Cor. 7.2-5, Heb. 13.4).
2. Sexual intercourse/relations with a member of the family (Lev. 18.6-18).
3. Sexual intercourse/relations between people of the same gender (Rom. 1.26-27, 1 Cor. 6.9-10).
4. Sexual intercourse/relations with animals (Ex. 22.19, Lev. 20.13-16).
5. Permissiveness of sexual fantasies with someone who isn't your spouse (Mat. 5.27-28, Ex. 20.17).

When we see God's patterns for our sexuality, it is important we think about our own life. How is your sexuality? We cannot hide from God! Come before your Lord!

If you are struggling with one of the items mentioned in this lesson, talk to your mentor or a pastor so that you can live God's blessing in such an important area of your life.

According to Strobel (2001, p.226) the reason God put sexual limits for us "wasn't to end our joy of living, but to lovingly protect us from iniquity, because we mean a lot to Him.

God understands the moral destruction people can suffer when they are involved with someone outside of marriage. He understands the

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1 Corinthians 10.23

loneliness people can feel when intimacy is followed by abandonment. He understands the guilt and shame that can afflict people after sexual encounters, which for a quick moment are warm but soon become cold. He understands the risk of sexually transmitted diseases. He understands when pregnancy occurs, and so often, the father leaves the mother, who is given entirely the responsibility of raising a child. And God also knows that the child who grows up with only the father or mother suffers in every area: emotionally, intellectually, in his behavior, financially and even physically.

This is one of the reasons God put limits for our sexuality: to avoid that we hurt ourselves. His orientation is motivated by his great love and care with mankind's welfare.”

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

Pray and ask God to give you strength in your walk with Him. Write to God what you feel in your heart:

“I have the right to do anything, you say – but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything – but not everything is constructive.”

1 Corinthians 10.23

Keep God's word in your heart. Put the verse in the correct sequence and memorize it:

say - constructive. not I the right have do not everything anything,
is but to beneficial. I do is 1 Corinthians 10.23 you right have to
everything anything- the

"I have the right to do anything, you say - but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything - but not everything is constructive."

1 Corinthians 10.23

Addictions (part 1)

In Biblical times, there weren't many substances and drinks developed as there are today. There were no elaborate drugs such as cocaine, amphetamines, and crack, among others. Nor industrialized cigarettes as we see today. Even so, the Bible alerts us about what the addictions can do to people's lives and the dangers they represent for families.

Today's devotional:
Romans ch. 13 and 14

What is an addiction?

Addiction comes from the Latin word "vitium", which means "flaw" or "defect". It is a repetitive habit that degenerates or causes damage to the addict and those around him. Addiction is also characterized by the lack of control or domain over the substance consumed. In this case, it is characterized as substance dependency: alcohol, drugs or cigarettes.

Alcohol Beverages

It is statistically proved that in our country most car accidents with death involved is a consequence of drunk drivers. Considering only this, we can already agree that drinking causes much disaster. However, we believe that alcohol beverages are harmful to a person's life for two reasons:

1. Exaggerated consumption of alcohol changes people's consciousness, leading them to bad decisions. The consumer can be led to attitudes he won't remember after, such as sexual relations.

"I have the right to do anything, you say – but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything – but not everything is constructive."

1 Corinthians 10.23

2. Continuous use of alcohol can cause dependency, bringing so many problems, both financially as in relationships, ruining families. In the book of Proverbs drinking is shown as attractive, at first, but in the end is disastrous and devastating.

“Wine is a mocker and a beer brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise” (Prov. 20.1).

“Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper” (Prov. 23.31-32).

As Christians we are abstainers, that is, we don't have alcoholic drinks, because we understand that we don't need it to have a fulfilled life in Jesus Christ.

The Bible also ordains that we be filled with the Holy Spirit, and not slaves of wine/drinks (Eph. 5.18).

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

“I have the right to do anything, you say – but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything – but not everything is constructive.”

1 Corinthians 10.23

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God’s word in your heart. Complete the verse and memorize it:

“I have the _____ to do _____, you say – but not _____ is _____. I have the right to do _____ – but not everything is _____.” 1 Corinthians 10.____

“I have the right to do anything, you say – but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything – but not everything is constructive.”

1 Corinthians 10.23

Addictions (part 2)

Today's devotional:
Romans ch. 15 to 16

Drugs and Cigarettes

Even though the word “drugs” is not mentioned as we know it today, the biblical prescriptions about alcohol usage also serve for these two cases. Any substance that changes and affects our consciousness are condemned by the Bible. There is a constant danger for those who use them, because each one has a collateral effect of its own and drastically changes the organism.

There is also a social consequence to drugs. For those who are addicted, the desperation to buy the drug causes a financial problem for the whole family. Dominated by addiction, many destroy their families financially, stealing objects from their own house, selling goods and many times committing crime to afford the addiction. Many families are also victims of violence of the addict, in most cases leading to physical aggression, and in some extreme cases, to murder.

Regarding cigarettes, the harm is also evident. Data from the World Health Organization show that death due to cigarette use has already reached 4.9 million people each year, which are about 10 thousand deaths every day. If these numbers continue, in 2030 they will rise to 10 million deaths per year. The WHO also shows that cigarettes are the main preventable death cause in the world.

The addiction of drinking, drugs and cigarettes can cause diseases which lead to death: cirrhosis for those who drink, overdose for those who use drugs, and lung cancer for those who smoke.

“I have the right to do anything, you say – but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything – but not everything is constructive.”

1 Corinthians 10.23

One of the Ten Commandments in the Bible declares we shall not kill (Ex. 20.13). We believe this also refers to ourselves. I should not use substances that lead to my own death.

How do I stop?

Addiction is like a governor or lord in the dependent's life. The first thing to do, to abandon the addiction, is to allow Jesus Christ to be our Lord instead.

Paul, in Galatians 2.20, says, *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

The Church doesn't baptize people who are in the process of release of addictions; because we understand Christ needs to first be absolute Lord of our lives, without being dominated by anything else.

The hope we find in deliverance from addictions is that the Lord changes our lives! Allow Christ to be the center of your life, and have faith that He can completely free you. *"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed"* (John 8.36).

Write down your doubts and talk to your mentor.

"I have the right to do anything, you say – but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything – but not everything is constructive."

1 Corinthians 10.23

Speak to God. Write down here what you want to say to Him at this moment:

Keep God's word in your heart. Try to write the Bible verse of the week you memorized.

Now, go to your Bible and check to see if you are right. If yes, congratulations!! If not, correct the verse and keep memorizing.



You have finished your twelfth week. Don't forget to schedule a meeting with your mentor. Remember to arrive on time, ask any questions you might have and enjoy your time, because it is time spent with God as well.

Mentor: _____

Date of meeting: _____

Time: _____

Mentor's signature: _____

"I have the right to do anything, you say - but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything - but not everything is constructive."

1 Corinthians 10.23

We have come to an end of this first part of the basic teaching course.

But, pay attention...

You are just starting a journey with God. Your conversion isn't the end point, but rather, the beginning of your discipleship. These were your first steps and we pray that God continues to transform you, His disciple, into a genuine Christian, someone worthy of taking on the name of Jesus Christ, and becoming a reflection of His glory.

You may be asking, "What are my next steps?"

1. Follow the basic teachings in the Church Studies. For more information about this Study contact the Christian Education Ministry or speak directly to your mentor.
2. Separate one day for a spiritual retreat, called Fellowship Retreat. This is part of the overall vision of our faith community and your membership to this local church. Speak to your mentor about this event.
3. If you are preparing yourself for baptism, speak to your mentor about the dates of your public profession of faith, baptism, and how to prepare for such an important day of your Christian walk.
4. Are you already part of a small group? If not yet, there is no time like the present! Contact the small group ministry of your church or personally talk to your mentor about finding a small group near you.

5. Try to participate in one of the many ministries of the local church and put into practice your gifts and talents. You can check with your mentor concerning the opportunities you have to serve. Your mentor can help you learn about opportunities available through the Volunteer Ministry Center.

Christian life is practical, that's why Jesus invites us to be servants and serve with joy. Are you willing? May the Lord bless you and keep you in everything you do. May we continue our walk together until the Lord Jesus returns.



Daily Bible Reading Guide

This is your annual register of daily Bible reading

Read four chapters each day, and write it on your list below.
In one year you will have read the whole Bible.

OLD TESTAMENT

BOOKS	CHAPTERS																			
Genesis	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50										
Exodus	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Leviticus	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27													
Numbers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36				
Deuteronomy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34						
Joshua	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24																
Judges	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21																			
Ruth	1	2	3	4																
1 Samuel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31									
2 Samuel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24																
1 Kings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22																		
2 Kings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25															
1 Chronicles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29											
2 Chronicles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36				
Ezra	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
Nehemiah	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13							
Esther	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10										
Job	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
	41	42																		

Appendix

OLD TESTAMENT

BOOKS	CHAPTERS																			
Psalms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
	121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135	136	137	138	139	140
141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150											
Proverbs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31									
Ecclesiastes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12								
Song of Songs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8												
Isaiah	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66															
Jeremiah	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52								
Lamentations	1	2	3	4	5															
Ezekiel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48												
Daniel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12								
Hosea	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14						
Joel	1	2	3																	
Amos	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9											
Obadiah	1																			
Jonah	1	2	3	4																
Micah	1	2	3	4	5	6	7													
Nahum	1	2	3																	
Habakkuk	1	2	3																	
Zephaniah	1	2	3																	
Haggai	1	2																		
Zechariah	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14						
Malachi	1	2	3	4																

NEW TESTAMENT

BOOKS	CHAPTERS																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Matthew	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28												
Mark	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16				
Luke	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24																
John	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21																			
Acts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28												
Romans	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16				
1 Corinthians	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16				
2 Corinthians	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13							
Galatians	1	2	3	4	5	6														
Ephesians	1	2	3	4	5	6														
Philippians	1	2	3	4																
Colossians	1	2	3	4																
1 Thessalonians	1	2	3	4	5															
2 Thessalonians	1	2	3																	
1 Timothy	1	2	3	4	5	6														
2 Timothy	1	2	3	4																
Titus	1	2	3																	
Philemon	1																			
Hebrews	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13							
James	1	2	3	4	5															
1 Peter	1	2	3	4	5															
2 Peter	1	2	3																	
1 John	1	2	3	4	5															
2 John	1																			
3 John	1																			
Jude	1																			
Revelation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22																		

A note to the mentor

What should your greatest task be in the process of discipleship?

A lot of Prayer

Dedicate some time daily to pray specifically for you disciple and his life. Continuously pray for God to give you:

Love for your disciple

1 John 4.19-21 – *“We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.”*

John 13.34-35 – *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

Acts 2.44, 46-47 – *“All the believers were together and had everything in common. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”*

Humbleness to admit you don't know everything

Submitting to God, understanding that you are a mere instrument in His hands and that if you aren't being guided by Him he cannot fulfill the Lord's purpose for both you and your disciple's life. Be alert and pray without ceasing!

Ephesians 4.2-4 – *“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called.”*

Philippians 2.3-4 – *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”*

Wisdom to face difficulties

May God help you in every moment with attitudes and words that reveal His will.

Luke 7.8 – *“For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and that one, ‘Come,’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”*

2 Chronicles 1.10 – *“Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?”*

2 Corinthians 1.12-14 – *“Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God's grace. For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand.”*

Knowledge to see beyond appearances

May God enable you to judge and see beyond appearances, looking to people's thoughts and purposes of their hearts.

Hebrews 4.12-13 – *“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”*

Hebrews 5.14 – *“But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”*

Attention: discipleship is commitment

Discipleship is a learning process through a personal relationship where the disciple comes to know God, learning the foundations of Christian faith.

The discipleship process encompasses two dimensions that compliment each other: knowledge and experience. It is important to know that knowledge itself does not lead to change. Daily challenges are necessary, which will take the disciple to practice them, until it becomes a habit in his life.

The mentor's responsibility is fundamental, because he answers the disciple's questions, tracks his attendance and helps him in his learning process. He's the one who shows the way until the other can walk on his own. A mentor is someone who “takes care of his brother”.

Using The Disciple's Notebook

This material for discipleship was prepared for people who are starting their walk in faith and have little or no biblical knowledge. That is why it needs to be simple and present a little information each day, motivating the disciple to seek God more and more, putting into practice what he is learning. The book is composed of weekly topics, which are arranged in five small daily activities. The idea is to create a habit of separating time for God, through reading the Word and through prayer.

The mentor should weekly review the five activities of the week before, avoiding words or attitudes of demanding it be done. The idea is to create a place of trust and mutual support, which can promote spiritual growth, answers to doubts and a friendly relationship. In this aspect, the words of Jesus, which are found in the Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 11, verses 29 and 30 clearly state: *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

It is always good to remember that God blesses His people. That's why your prayer and relationship with your disciple are fundamental for this material to reach its purpose.

Expected time for individual discipleship: **12 to 13 weeks.**

Expected time for group discipleship: **16 weeks.**

Weekly topics

- **Week 0** – First meeting
- **Week 1** – Knowing Jesus
- **Week 2** – Bible: testament of God for man
- **Week 3** – Prayer
- **Week 4** – Salvation
- **Week 5** – Sanctification
- **Week 6** – Faith and Works
- **Week 7** – Holy Spirit
- **Week 8** – Baptism and the Lord's Supper: Commands of Jesus
- **Week 9** – Church and Life in Small Groups
- **Week 10** – Christian Stewardship
- **Week 11** – Evangelism and Personal Testimony
- **Week 12** – New Life in Christ: Nonnegotiable Values of Christian Life

Suggestions for each meeting

First meeting – week 0

- Promote an informal meeting to talk about the disciple's motivations and needs.
- Schedule the best day, time, and place for your weekly meetings.
- Hand out the material, explaining how each meeting works, challenging the person to separate time daily to complete each activity.
- If he still doesn't have a Bible and you are able to buy one, give him this gift, and write him a dedication.
- Pray.

Script for Next Meetings

Time: one hour per week. You can use the following suggestion:

- 1. Getting to know each other.** (15 minutes.)
- 2. Prayer.** (5 minutes)
- 3. Answer your disciple's questions.** (20 minutes)
- 4. Confirming values.** (20 minutes)
- 5. Praying together.** (10 minutes)

The process of becoming a mentor

The Learning Series of PIB was planned to provide spiritual, doctrinal and leadership growth for each mentor, and also to provide tools to carry out their ministry with dedication, joy and competence.

Participate in mentor's trainings.

These trainings talk about important subjects for the development process of discipleship. Check the schedule in the church's agenda and participate of the next event.

Increase your knowledge.

To increase your knowledge you can use the references that motivated this project. You can find them at the end of this Disciple's Notebook.

Take part of CFM – Centro de Formação Ministerial (Ministry Development Center).

Contact: (41) 3091-4330 / cfm@pibcuritiba.org.br

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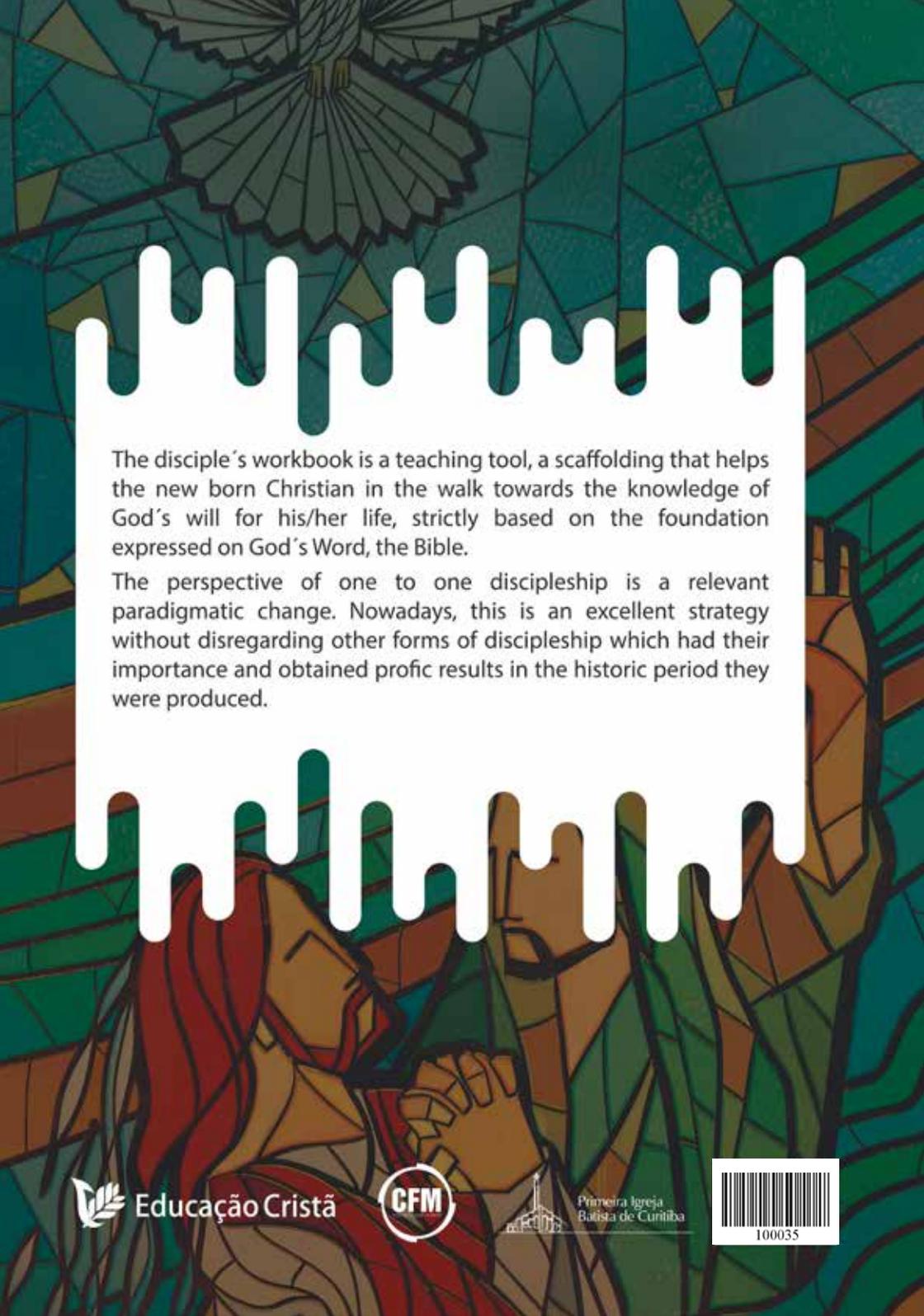
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The background is a colorful stained glass design. At the top, a dove with its wings spread is depicted in shades of grey and blue. Below it, two hands are shown in profile, one in red and one in brown, appearing to be in prayer or a gesture of blessing. The entire scene is set against a mosaic of green, blue, and brown geometric shapes.

The disciple's workbook is a teaching tool, a scaffolding that helps the new born Christian in the walk towards the knowledge of God's will for his/her life, strictly based on the foundation expressed on God's Word, the Bible.

The perspective of one to one discipleship is a relevant paradigmatic change. Nowadays, this is an excellent strategy without disregarding other forms of discipleship which had their importance and obtained profic results in the historic period they were produced.