

Believers' Bible Class

Three lessons (over a period of 3 weeks) to prepare a candidate for water baptism. This class follows the one-to-one New Life in Christ follow-up material, and should lead on to the Disciple-makers class.

LESSON 1

THE LOCAL CHURCH

The Lord Jesus expects all born again Christians to come together for worship and teaching (*Hebrews 10: 25*). You cannot grow into spiritual maturity without interacting and sharing with fellow believers on a regular basis. Every Christian must have a spiritual home (*1 Corinthians 1:10*).

The early Church met for worship on Sundays (*Acts 20: 7*). They met for united corporate worship in the temple, and for teaching and fellowship from house to house (*Acts 2: 46; Romans 16: 5; 1 Corinthians 15: 19*).

THE HOUSE CHURCH

1. Spiritual Preparation
 - [a] Your Heart (*1 Peter 3:15*).
 - [b] Genuine Experience of Salvation (*1 John 1:3*).
 - [c] Desire for Fellowship (*Hebrews 10: 25*).
 - [d] Same mind, love and full accord (*Philippians 2: 2*).
 - [e] Jesus is there also (*Matthew 18: 20*)
 - [f] Agreement (*Matthew 18:19; Acts 12:5,7*).

2. What are the Hindrances to our following the Example of the Church of Jesus?
 - [a] Lack of Humility (*Philippians 2: 3; Romans 12: 3*).
 - [b] Death to selfish rights, reputation and respectability (*Philippians 2:4 - 8*) -
Diverse of people in Philippi
 - [c] Traditions of Men (*Colossians 2: 8*).

3. What are the Ministries Performed at the House Church?
 - [a] A place of prayer daily (*Acts 2: 4; 12: 12*).
 - [b] A place of Evangelism (*Acts 16:10 - 15; 5: 42*).
 - [c] A place of teaching (*Acts 28:31 - 32*).
 - [d] A place where spiritual gifts should be put into operation (*Acts 10: 44,46; 13:7 - 12*)
 - [e] A place of counselling (*Acts 18:24 - 26*)

4. What are the Benefits Derived by Belonging to a House Church?
 - [a] Experience of God's power through powerful prayer (*Acts 4: 23 - 31*).
 - [b] Effective Discipleship (*Acts 18: 24 - 28; 2 Timothy 1: 2; 2 Timothy 2: 2*).
 - [c] Steadfastness (*Acts 2:41 - 42*).

- [d] Leadership or Priesthood Quality (*1 Peter 2:5 - 10; Revelation 1: 6*).
- [e] Development of Spiritual Gifts in its exercise and operation (*1 Corinthians 2: 3 - 11*)

Conclusion

It is God's desire to build a people, an army (Princes and Princesses) who are active in the world, cooperating willingly to fellowship with Him and accomplishing His will of subduing the nations (the earth) to the rule and authority of God. Are you an actor or a spectator in God's assignment?
- Luke 14: 26 - 30.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

God has set in the Body of Christ leaders for the spiritual growth and caring of Christians, and for the ministry to the outside world. In Ephesians 4:11 - 16 we have a list of five ministries. Apostles, Prophets, Evangelist, Pastors and Teachers. All these have responsibilities for the build-big up of the church both universally and locally. Pastors and teachers have a specific caring ministry to the local church. All ministries have a three-fold function.

- (i) Perfecting of the saints
- (ii) Work of the ministry
- (iii) Building up the Body of Christ

Local church leaders are called overseers, (*Acts 20:28*). They have been put there by the Holy Spirit who gave them power and authority to rule the church. Their main responsibility is to feed the flock and protect them from spiritual errors.

Leadership of a local church are shared by two bodies of people: elders and deacons.

ELDERS

Group of men with the/spiritual oversight of the church (*Acts 20:17, 28*). One man has the over-all oversight: the senior pastor. In a large congregation there may be several other pastors, Area Pastors, who have the oversight of smaller sections of the church. These positions require the full-time attention of the elders, who would naturally expect their support from the church. Among the elders may be those who also have a pastoral gift, but do not feel called to a preaching ministry. Such will be called pastoral elders. They may or may not draw their living from the church. Then there are elders with the gifts of administration: to cover financial and secretarial matters. Others are wise and mature counsellors, whom the Holy Spirit has chosen for the smooth running of the church.

DEACONS:

Men responsible for the day-to-day running of the church. They would care for the basic needs of the congregation, such as needs for love and attention, accommodation, employment, entanglement with the law, etc. They will look after the structure of the church and keep an inventory of all properties. Any area of material well-being of the people of God falls under their domain. They too need to be men of faith and the Holy Spirit, so they see the miracles of God in their work, like Philip and Stephen (*Acts 6: 1 - 5*).

DEACONESSES

God has an important place for women also in the leadership of the church. They must, however, be under the authority of the pastor. This delegated authority is symbolized in the wearing of a head-cover by women when praying or ministering in church.

Deaconesses combine the duties of elders and deacons in having spiritual as well as material responsibilities in the church. In most cases they would exercise their ministries with particular attention to women. (1 Timothy 3:8 - 11; Romans 16: 1 - 4).

YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE LEADERS

1. Support the work of the church with your money (I Corinthians 9: 14). Well paid ministers will be free from financial worries and able to devote their full time and energy for the work of the ministry (Galatians 6: 6).

Tithes: 10% of all you earn belongs to God. So honour the Lord with your substance, and He will richly bless you. Actually it is what you give over and above 10% that counts as a gift to God. The Tithe is rightfully His.

Proof that God has truly touched your heart is that he has also touched your pocket (*Malachi 3:10 - 12*). Early Christians brought their gifts to God every Sunday as well as on other occasions they met together (*1 Corinthians 16: 1 - 2*). Your tithes can be brought in the envelopes provided to your house fellowship (*Proverbs 3: 9, 10; 2 Corinthians 9: 6 - 12*).

2. Observe their godly lives and follow their example of faith (*Hebrews 13: 17*).
3. Pray for them. Love and care for them. (*Colossians 4: 3 - 4*).

LESSON 2

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

[i] The Conflict with Sin?

- (a) What is Sin?
 - (i) It is falling short of the glory of God [*Rom: 3: 23*]
 - (ii) It is lawlessness [*1 John 3:4*]
 - (iii) All wrongdoing is sin [*1 John 5: 17*]
 - (iv) It is failing to do what you know to be right [*James 4: 17*]
 - (v) It is when a person does not believe in Christ [*John 16: 8, 9*].
- (b) Man is a sinner by nature [*Mark 7: 20 - 21*]
- (c) Man is a sinner by choice [*John 3: 19*]
 - (d) Through the death of Christ on the cross, all who truly repent of their sin, and accept Jesus Christ as Saviour are blessed in two ways.

- Freedom from the Penalty of Sin - *Rom. 5: 8 - 9*

This gives us:

- (a) Peace with God [*Romans 5: 1*]
- (b) No condemnation before God [*Romans 8: 1*]
- (c) Forgiveness [*Acts 20: 43*]
- (d) Eternal life [*John 6: 47*]
- (e) Justification [right standing with God] [*1 Corinthians 6: 11*]

- Freedom from the Power of Sin

By the operation of the Holy Spirit in our lives God has made provisions for dealing with the root of sin in our nature and the fruit of sin in our lives. Although the believer's guilt of sin has been dealt with by the death of Christ, the power of sin has to be continually dealt with through the application and appropriation of the resurrection life of Christ. (*Galatians 2: 20; Romans 6: 17 - 18*).

If fellowship is broken between you and fellow Christians, do this:

- (a) When you are the offender (*Matthew 5:23-24*)
- (b) When you are the offended (*Matthew 18:15*).

In some cases Restitution may be required. For instance, if damage has been done to another's property, repair should be made. If property was stolen or destroyed, repayment or replacement, These steps show true repentance (*Luke 19:8*).

[ii] The Lordship of Christ

By dying on the cross Lord Jesus paid the price for us. We are no longer our own. We are under a new Master. [*1 Corinthians 6: 19 - 20*]. A person is only truly saved when he makes Christ Lord.

HOLY COMMUNION

Matthew 26:26 - 29

The Passover in Israel was a Type (*Exodus 22: 12 - 14*). In delivering Israel Out of Egypt God had to pass judgment on the Egyptians. On a fateful night the angel of death passed throughout the land of Egypt, killing the first born in every home.

The Israelites were instructed by God to “take a *lamb... kill it... take the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses... and eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleaven bread*’ (*Exodus 12: 3,6 - 8*). The meal celebrating their redemption, was called “the Lord’s Passover” [*Exodus 12:11*].

In the New Covenant, Jesus is the “*Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world*” [*John 1: 29*].

Do this in Remembrance of Me. (Luke 22:19, 1 Corinthians 11:26).

As the Israelites gratefully celebrated the Passover, constantly calling to mind their great deliverance from Egypt, so the Christian in the Lord’s Supper is declaring and proclaiming His saving relationship to the redemptive act of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are to do it “till he come”.

PRACTICE OF THE EARLY CHURCH

1. They broke bread whenever they met together (*Acts 2: 42, 46*).
2. Every Sunday believers broke bread. Sunday was the day of Christ’s resurrection (*Luke 24: 1*), and the day when He ‘broke’ bread with the Emmaus travellers (*Luke 24: 31; Acts 20: 7*).

LESSON 3

THE BIBLE

The Bible is the Word of God. (II Timothy 3:16). God inspired holy men to write it down (II Peter 1: 20, 21). It is where we find the entire revealed will of God. Any prophecy or vision that departs from the spirit of Bible should be rejected.

The Word of God stands sure forever (Proverbs 30: 5);

1 Peter 1: 24 - 25). The Bible itself is a library of books. It was written by about 40 men, who wrote over a period of about 1,500 years and in 3 languages - Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. Yet the Bible is a well organized unity with one great theme and central Figure - Jesus Christ. All of this would be impossible unless the Bible has one Supreme Author - The Holy Spirit.

It's Value II Timothy 3:16

- (i) Give us what to believe and do.
- (ii) Corrects our errors
- (iii) Instructs us how to change our ways (*II Sam. 12: 7*)
- (iv) Gives guidelines on how to live (*John 14:1*)

God's Word gives us:

- (i) Light (*Psalms 119: 105*)
- (ii) Cleansing (*John 14:1*)
- (iii) Delight (*Jeremiah 15:16*)
- (iv) Peace (*Psalms 119: 165*) - Peter's example.
- (v) Answers (*Psalms 119: 42*) David, (*I Samuel 17:42 - 56*).

THE TWO COVENANTS

The **Old Testament** is God's former agreement with men. An account of God's dealing with men from creation until about 4,000 years before the coming of Christ.

It was written that we might learn from the past and have hope for the future (*Romans 15:4*). It contains 39 books:

History	(17 books)	Rise and fall of the Hebrew nation.
Poetry	(5 books)	Israel's literature in poetry and song.
Prophecy	(17 books)	God's warning and promises to the nation.

The New Testament is God's present agreement with men. It reveals Jesus Christ. In it we find the life of Christ, the beginning of Christianity, the way of salvation, instruction for Christian living and God's plan for the future.

It contains 27 books:

Gospel	(4 books)	The story of Jesus and the work He did to redeem mankind.
Acts	(1 book)	The beginning of His Church and reign among all nations His

Letters (21 books) His teachings and principles.
Revelations (1 book) His glory and His universal judgement and control promised.

5 ways to receive blessings from God's Word:

1. Hear it [Luke 8:15]
2. Read it [Deuteronomy 17: 19]
3. Study it [2 Timothy 2: 15]
4. Memorize it [Proverbs 7: 3]
5. Meditate on it [Psalm 1:2 - 3]

LESSON 4

WATER BAPTISM

The Three Baptisms

- (i) Into the Body of Christ
- (ii) In Water
- (iii) In the Holy Spirit

- Baptism into the Body of Christ

This baptism is synonymous with the experience of conversion (*1 Corinthians 12: 12 - 13*). It is the work of the Holy Spirit, who grants the new Christian into the mystical Body of Christ.

- Baptism in Water

As soon as a person has been saved, he should follow the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and obey His teaching regarding water baptism. Water is used as a symbol of the death to sin, the burial of the past and old nature (*Matthew 28:19 - 20; 3: 13 - 17; Acts 22: 16*).

Once you are baptized by full immersion in water, symbolically you are no longer the old person Satan held under his power. You are a new person over whom he has no right. Baptism is a witness to that fact before the public (*Colossians 2: 12*).

Symbolically you rise out of the water in newness of life having publicly testified to the world that from now on you live for Christ. (*Romans 6: 3 - 4*).

- Baptism in the Holy Spirit (*Acts 2: 38*)

Peter said to the people that once a person becomes a Christian, and publicly testifies to the reality of it in water baptism, he should expect to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is the experience that links a Christian up to the power of God.

We are called to be witnesses. Indeed a person who has truly experienced Christ cannot keep quiet about it. He will want to share it. [*Mark 5: 18 - 20; John 4: 28 - 30*].

Salvation through Jesus is God's gift to a sinful world (*John 3: 16*). The baptism of the Spirit is Christ's gift to the Christian. It is the power to demonstrate by a holy life and effective witness that Jesus is alive today and is active in our lives (*Acts 1:8*).

Seek the Lord, and you shall find. There is no special time or place where a seeker can receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. You simply ask in faith and Jesus will give you. The sign that the Holy Spirit has come to fill your body is that you will speak in tongues (a supernaturally inspired language you have never learnt before). You don't have to wait till after your water baptism. Now is as good a time as any.

Lesson 5

EPILOGUE

To gain the full benefits of both Water Baptism (a cutting away from the past) and the baptism of the Spirit (empowering for service), every Christian must be clear in three areas.

1. Restitution - Luke 19: 6 - 8
Once Zacchaeus received Jesus joyfully, the next step was to repay all the money he had wrongfully accumulated. That shows that he was truly changed. You should also show similar sign of repentance.
2. Renunciation - Philippians 3: 7 - 11
Give up all worldly friends, activities etc. that may lead you in sin. Let nothing stand in your way of being available to the Lord 100%. If you were ever involved in the occult - renounce your past association. Then ask for prayer to set you free. Maybe you took part in fetish ceremonies, had markings on your body, used charms, attended by fortune tellers, or had been a member of a cult, such as the celestials, you should be set free.
3. Dedication - II Corinthians 5: 14 - 15
You are no longer your own property. Christ is your new master. He has a claim on your time, possession and energy. He has given his all for you; now he demands your total dedication to Him. Great wealth of blessings awaits the Christian who surrenders his all to Jesus our Lord. [*Matthew 19: 27 - 30*].

Lesson 6

WITNESSING FOR CHRIST

When you witness, it is essential to pray for guidance before hand. Guidance to approach the right person. Guidance to say the right words that would meet the need of the contact.

Follow some pattern of witnessing so that you will not be side-tracked. The aim in personal evangelism is to lead a seeking soul to a point of commitment. So do not jump from one topic to another or try to answer all his questions. In fact, some questions are aimed to distract you from pressing home the claims of Christ. A tract (such as we ye supplied) is helpful in witnessing.

There are 4 basic steps in leading someone to Christ.

Step One: God's Plan - Peace and Life

Start with the good news of God's plan for every person. We are all important to God. He has a plan for each person. He wants us to live in peace: with Him, with our fellow men, and with ourselves. He also want us to enjoy true life. Life in reality cannot be lived apart from God. Only He gives eternal life (*Hebrews 12:14; John 10:10*).

Step Two: Man's Problem - Separation

Sin has separated man from God so that he cannot come close to God. Man in his futile effort has attempted to bridge this gap between him and God. Religion, Good works, Morality, Philosophy, are among self's efforts to reach God; but man's original sin through Adam cannot be removed by human effort. There is only one remedy for this separation.

Step Three: God's Remedy - The Cross

Jesus Christ is the only answer to this problem of separation. When he died on the cross and rose again from the grave, he paid the penalty for our sin and bridged the gap. Jesus is the only Way to God. There is no other way. Through Him, man can now have his sins forgiven and the way to approach God is opened to us.

Step Four: Man's Response – Receive Christ

God has provided the only way, but man must make the choice. We must all come to the place where we are willing to admit "I am a sinner". Then we must be willing to repent and turn from our sins. When we do, we become a child of God.

The Invitation

If you feel the person is responding positively, invite him to say the sinner's prayer.

1. He must admit his need (I am a sinner).
2. He must be willing to turn from sin (Repent)
3. He must believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose again for his sin.
4. He must through prayer, invite Jesus Christ to come to him and control his life (receive Him as Lord and Saviour).

Then follow up with New Life with Christ.

TESTIMONIES

Each member of the class should now be given the opportunity to tell how they became Christians.

Guideline in sharing testimonies:

- What you were before
- How you met Jesus
- Changes you now see in your life - All in 5 minutes. Conversely you could elect to end

each class over three weeks with some testimonies, so they won't be jammed at the

conclusion of the course.