

# GROWING IN CHRIST

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Topics Included:

ASSURANCE

GROWTH

GOD'S WORD

PRAYER

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## **ASSURANCE OF SALVATION**

Welcome, friend, into the family of Jesus Christ!! Your decision to confess Christ as your Savior and Lord has brought you into a wonderful new life and relationship to God. Many things happened when you trusted Jesus Christ and told Him that as a sinner you needed Him for eternal salvation. We will first examine what happened to you at the moment of conversion then, we will see what the Bible has to say about assurance of salvation.

### **I. YOUR ETERNAL SALVATION**-- at the moment of salvation you were:

- 1. Justified.** This is a legal term meaning, "declare righteous" (Rom 3:24; 5:1). On the account books of heaven, where all your sins were recorded, God "imputed" (an accounting term meaning "to put") to your account the righteousness of Christ (Rom 4:20-25).
- 2. Given peace with God** (Rom 5:1). The result of justification is peace with God. Your conscience is cleared and the guilt is lifted because you know you have been reconciled to God (that is, you were once separated from God but the differences are settled -- II Cor 5:18-21).
- 3. Redeemed** (I Pet 1:18-19). This is the act of God whereby He paid the price of our sins: He purchased sinners through the death of Christ.
- 4. Given an inheritance.**
  - You are now complete in Christ, nothing more needs to be added to give you eternal life (Col 2:9-10).
  - You possess every spiritual blessing (Eph 1:3). Every gift the Holy Spirit gives, you have been given.
  - Assurance of eternal life (I Pet 1:4).
- 5. given a new position.** You are now a member of a holy and royal priesthood (I Pet 2:5,9); a citizen of heaven (Phil 3:20); a member in the family of God by birth (Jh 3:5) and by adoption (Gal 4:5).

Since you are now in the family of God many wonderful things are possible for you.

- a. You can begin to understand God's Word (I Cor 2:12,14).
- b. You can obtain strength to apply the Word to change selfish habit patterns (I Cor 10:13; Phil 4:13).
- c. You can experience joy in trials (James 1:2-4; Rom 8:28,29).
- d. You can have fellowship with other believers in the church of Christ (I Jh 1:7-9)

**II. YOUR ASSURANCE OF ETERNAL SALVATION** -- But how do you know that you really have eternal life? Let us see what the Scriptures say.

1. Read **I John 5:11,12**. God says, "The witness is this, that God has given us \_\_\_\_\_, and this life is in \_\_\_\_\_."

Note: The witness is **not** your **feelings!** Not a human's statement!  
God's Word is the witness!

2. According to **I John 5:12**, when a person receives Jesus Christ as Savior, what does he have? \_\_\_\_\_  
How long is this life? \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Circle the correct word: "These things have I written to you...that you may (think) (feel) (wish) (suppose) (hope) (know) that you have eternal life.

4. Read **I Peter 1:3-5**

a. What are three descriptions of your inheritance which is reserved in Heaven?

\_\_\_\_\_.

b. Who protects this inheritance? (v5) \_\_\_\_\_.

5. How confident in His keeping power may you be (**II Tim 1:12**)? According to **Philippians 1:6** why can we have this confidence? \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Our assurance of eternal life is beneficial in many ways, but its main purpose is to enable us to live and grow in the likeness of Christ (**Rom 8:28-29a**).

6. What characterizes those who possess eternal life? (**John 10:27,28**)

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Your eternal salvation is guaranteed by:

a. The Savior's **Word** (John 5:24).

b. The Savior's **Perseverance** (Phil 1:6).

c. The Savior's **Hand** (John 10:28-30).

d. The Savior's **Prayer** (John 17:15,24).

e. The Savior's **Love** (Romans 8:35, 37-39).

f. The Savior's **Seal** (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30).

g. The Savior's **Power** (II Tim 1:12; Jude 1:24; Rom 5:1-11; 8:31-39; 11:20;

Matt 7:23 Heb 13:5). It is God's power that keeps us saved.

\*\* If you are not in Christ, you have eternal death (Rev 20:14-15).

If you have received Christ you have eternal life.

8. Note four great truths from **John 5:24**.

\_\_\_\_\_

The Believer has **ALREADY** passed from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

9. What are some evidences of eternal life?

- a. I John 5:13 \_\_\_\_\_
- b. I John 3:14 \_\_\_\_\_
- c. I John 2:5 \_\_\_\_\_

Through a person, or your own thoughts, Satan may ask you, "Surely you don't believe you are going to Heaven simply because you believe a passage of Scripture like Rom 10:9 and confess to take the Lord Jesus Christ, do you?" "You don't feel saved do you?"

God wants you to avoid the tragic mistake of basing your life on your feelings. He wants you to begin basing your life on that which can never fail -- the eternal Word of God! Remember: **Faith is not based on the five senses, but faith is always acting on God's promises** (Heb 11:1-6 and Rom 4:20-21).

**GROWTH IN CHRIST**

A group of tourists visiting a picturesque village walked by an old man sitting beside a fence. In a rather patronizing way, one tourist asked, "Were any great men born in this village?"

The old man replied, "Nope, only babies."

A frothy question brought a profound answer. There are no instant heroes whether in this world or in the kingdom of God. No great Christians have ever been born. Maturity takes time, effort, and the power of God in our lives. The question we must address is "**How do Believers grow in righteousness?**"

In Godliness Through Discipline Jay Adams states: "There are only two kinds of life: the feeling motivated life of sin oriented toward self, and the commandment motivated life of holiness oriented toward godliness."

There are several basic things that you need to understand in order to grow toward godliness.

**I. You must understand your new position in Christ.**

1. According to Eph 2:1-3, what are 5 descriptions of your **life before** you became a Christian?

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2. According to Eph 2:4-6 what are 3 descriptions of your **life now** as a Believer?

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3. How should we view ourselves as Christians?

II Cor 5:17 \_\_\_\_\_  
Rom 6:11 \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* Romans chapter 6 teaches that we are no longer under the power of sin nevertheless sinless perfection cannot be obtained in this life. The reason for this being that **we still live in the "flesh" or "body" that houses the principle of sin (Rom 6:12 - 7:25). While our inward nature has been changed and is dead to sin,** our body is still alive to sin until it is changed at the resurrection (I Cor 15:42-44). *Since the Believer still battles with sin it is important that we understand the nature of temptation.*

**II. You must understand the nature of temptation.**

1. Read the following passages and note the three sources of temptation.

James 1:13,14 \_\_\_\_\_

I John 2:15-16 \_\_\_\_\_

I Pet 5:8; II Cor 11:13,14 \_\_\_\_\_

2. How did Jesus overcome temptation? (Matt 4:2-11)

\_\_\_\_\_

Do we have this same resource for overcoming temptation? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Note 4 ways in which God's Word is useful for overcoming sinful habits  
(II Tim 3:16,17).

a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is God's promise in I Cor 10:13? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**III. You must understand God's purposes for the believer  
in this life**

\*\* While there are many purposes for the Believer --  
there are 3 primary ones and even these overlap.

1. What is God's purpose for the Believer in Rom 8:28,29? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is God's purpose for the Believer in II Cor 5:9? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is God's purpose for the Believer in I Cor 10:31? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*It is important that we understand what God's purposes are for us otherwise our priorities in life will be wrong;  
we will misinterpret what God is attempting to accomplish in our lives. When we understand these things, what  
will our goal be according to Matt 6:33? \_\_\_\_\_

**IV. You must understand that God expects obedience.**

1. What does God desire of us in **Rom 12:1,2**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. According to **Rom 6:12, 13** what must we do if we are to be obedient to God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. In order to grow in Christ, what 3 things does **Eph 4:22-24** tell us to do?  
a. \_\_\_\_\_  
b. \_\_\_\_\_  
c. \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* The "put-off, put-on" dynamic is found consistently throughout the Bible. Growth will not take place by simply putting off something. For example, if you decide to stop a bad habit but do nothing to replace that habit -- growth will not take place and you will soon return to your former way of living. You must replace sinful ways of living with godly ways of living.

4. List side-by-side several sinful habits and what those habits should be replaced with in **Eph 4:25-32**.

Put Off

Put On

5. How can we obtain the *power and the desire* to obey God's Word?

- a. Gal 5:16 \_\_\_\_\_
- b. John 15:7,8 \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Heb 11:6 \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Phil 4:13 \_\_\_\_\_

6. What will be the result of living such a life? (Gal 5:22,23)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion:**

God does not expect us to be perfect -- He expects us to be **growing**. This worksheet gives some of the biblical principles that you must understand if you are to grow in godliness; however, growth will also require discipline. There will be no growth in your Christian life unless you discipline yourself to study the Scriptures, spend time in prayer, make time for quality fellowship, learn to worship God, and learn how to become dependent upon the Holy Spirit. In future lessons we will study these basic disciplines.

**PROVISION THROUGH GOD'S WORD**

When a person becomes a child of God he now has the Holy Spirit living within him -- the Holy Spirit will enable that person to have the power to live the Christian life. Nevertheless God's Spirit does not act independent of God's Word. In order to overcome sinful habits, grow in godliness, and obtain guidance for everyday living, we must read and act upon God's Word in faith. Whenever God requires anything of His children, He always provides instruction and power to meet those requirements through His Holy Word.

**I. THE IMPORTANCE OF GOD'S WORD**

1. We must understand what the Bible is and what it can do in our lives.

a. Approximately thirty-nine men of God wrote the Scriptures under special inspiration over a period of 1500 years. Who specifically inspired these men (II Tim 3:16)?

\_\_\_\_\_

b. The word "inspired" means "God-breathed". Although God used men as His instruments who is the author of the Scriptures (II Pet 1:19, 20, 21)? \_\_\_\_\_

c. Read II Tim 3:15-17.

What is the most important thing the Scriptures teach us (v15)? \_\_\_\_\_

Because the Scriptures are God-breathed they are profitable for \_\_\_\_\_

for \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ and for \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (v16).

What does God's Word enable us to do (v17)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

d. From the following verses, note the *attitudes* we should have toward the Word of God.

Psalm 119:35 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 119:42 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 119:62 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 119:117 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 119:164 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 119:167 \_\_\_\_\_

2. We must understand the importance of obeying God's Word.

a. What will prove our love for Christ (John 14:15, 21, 23)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. Read John 15:4-10 and list 3 requirements that are necessary for bringing forth fruit.

#1 \_\_\_\_\_

#2 \_\_\_\_\_

#3 \_\_\_\_\_

c. According to Gal 5:22,23 what is the "fruit" of the Spirit?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

d. What is commanded in James 1:22? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



e. When we show a willful desire for obedience, God enables us to obey. Read examples of this in Mark 3:1-5 and Luke 17:12-14.

## II. HOW TO USE GOD'S WORD

-- There are several ways in which we can develop a deeper understanding of God's Word and through the application of Scripture develop lives that glorify and please God:

1. Listen to the Word of God as it is being taught.

a. Read Eph 4:11-16. What obligation does God give to pastor-teachers and evangelists today? \_\_\_\_\_

b. Timothy was a pastor in the early church. What instructions does Paul give to him? (II Tim 4:1,2) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Reading the studying God's Word.

a. By reading God's Word we can obtain an over-all knowledge of the Bible. A few minutes each day reading and underlining can greatly aid in our knowledge of the Scriptures. You may want to make it your goal to read through the Bible in a year. In order to do so you would have to read 3 chapters a day and 5 on Sunday.

b. After we have an understanding of the overview of the Bible we need to begin a more detailed study of God's Word. Note the content of the following verses:

Heb 5:12-14 \_\_\_\_\_

I Pet 2:2,3 \_\_\_\_\_

II Tim 2:15 \_\_\_\_\_

c. We must study in order to "handle accurately" the Word of God. As a study we should apply some basic principles of interpretation:

1) We must interpret the Bible as we would any other literature. This is known as "normal" interpretation. We do not try to read into, allegorize, spiritualize, or explain away what we read. Rather we **take the words of Scripture at face value** trusting that God is communicating what He wants to communicate.

2) **Keep Scripture in its context.** The words surrounding a passage will almost always throw much light upon its meaning.

3) **Scripture interprets Scripture.** The Bible does not contradict itself; therefore, an interpretation of a passage must agree with the teachings of the rest of the Word of God. When a passage is difficult to understand a basic rule is that obscure passages must give way to clear passages.

4) **The Bible has only one meaning in one passage.** A passage does not mean one thing to one person and another thing to someone else. The question is not, "What does this passage mean to me?" but "What did God intend for it to mean?" It is the purpose of Bible study to discern this meaning.

3. Meditating on and applying God's Word.

-- We can meditate on the Scriptures by memorizing (Psalm 119:9, 11), by praying over what we have read, or carefully and quietly considering its impact. Whatever method we use the ultimate purpose is to apply God's truth

to our lives.

a. What does God promise if we delight in His commandments ? (Psalm 1:1-3)

\_\_\_\_\_

b. What four actions are mentioned in Psalm 119:15, 16 ?

(1) \_\_\_\_\_ (3) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) \_\_\_\_\_ (4) \_\_\_\_\_

c. What is the commandment in Colossians 3:16 ? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

d. What are some principles in James 1:22-25 ? \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*Meditation:** Transforming God's Word from head knowledge to concrete applications by enumerating and initiating steps for putting off old habits and putting on Biblical patterns toward conformity to Jesus Christ.

Use this chart as a guide for Bible study, meditation, and application of the Word.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Passage being Studied: James 1:22-25**

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**Observation**

**Interpretation**

**Application**

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\_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*As we study God's Word we should do so in order to discover and apply truth to our lives for God's glory. We should not go looking for an emotional lift, or some great experience that will immediately change our lives. The Word of God is not a magic wand that when read will erase all of our problems -- rather it is God's instructions given to us to teach us how to live life. If we go to God's Word for an "upper" or "zap" we will grow weary of reading the Scriptures when these things don't happen consistently. But when we go to the Word to learn how to live life God's way we are coming to a well that never runs dry.**

**PRAYER**

When it comes to prayer many of us can identify with Thomas Edison's statement when he said, "We don't know the millionth part of one percent about anything. We don't know what water is. We don't know what light is. We don't know what heat is. We have a lot of hypotheses about these things, but that is all. But we do not let our ignorance about these things deprive us of their use."

There is much about prayer that we do not understand and will not understand in this life, however, we must not allow this to rob us of the blessing and privilege of prayer. It is true that to some extent prayer will remain a mystery to us; yet at the same time, Scripture gives us much information on this subject.

**I. PARTS OF PRAYER**

--God speaks to us through His Word; we speak to Him in prayer. While prayer is simply conversation with God; nevertheless, even the disciples felt so inadequate in this area that they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray (Matt 11:1). There are several parts to prayer:

**1. Praise**

a. Jesus taught His disciples to begin prayers with "Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name" (Matt 6:9). As we come to God in prayer we need to recognize and praise Him for His divine attributes.

b. The best way to learn how to praise God is by reading the Psalms. The church has long recognized that the Psalms were given to us not so much for instruction on how to live but in order to teach us how to pray.

c. The following Psalms are especially helpful in this way: 8, 19, 24, 29, 33, 47, 65, 77, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99, 104, 111, 113, 114, 115, 139, 147, 150, and 158. As you begin your prayer time you may want to pray one of these Psalms to God.

d. Another helpful thing to do is read books on the attributes of God. For example: The Knowledge of the Holy by A.W. Tozer; The God You Can Know by Dan DeHaan; The Attributes of God by A.W. Pink; and for the really hardy reader you might want to wade through The Existence and Attributes of God by Charnock.

**2. Thanksgiving**

a. Read I Thess 5:18. What should we be thankful for? \_\_\_\_\_

b. According to Eph 5:20, how often should we give thanks to God? \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Confession**

a. What are we to confess? \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* Confession means to agree with God that our actions or attitudes are sin and to ask His forgiveness for them. (I John 1:9)

b. Describe David's attitude in Psalm 139:23, 24 \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Requests

- a. What does Ephesians 6:18 emphasize? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What does Philippians 4:6,7 tell us to do? \_\_\_\_\_
- 

### II. HINDRANCES TO PRAYER

#### 1. Sin

- a. When will the Lord not hear us (Ps 66:18) ? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. What can hinder our prayers according to I Peter 3:7 ? \_\_\_\_\_
- 

#### 2. Wrong motives

- a. What is one wrong motive as described in James 4:3 ? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. We need to look to Christ for an example. Read Matthew 26:39 & 42 and describe the attitude we should have as we pray.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - c. What does God promise to supply in Philippians 4:19 ?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 

#### 3. Lack of faith

- a. What is Christ's promise to us in Matthew 7:7,8 ? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. According to James 1:6,7 what is necessary as we pray? \_\_\_\_\_
- 

#### 4. Wrong priorities

- a. What should be our attitude toward prayer (I Thess 5:17) ? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. How does Matthew 6:33 help us here ? \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**5. Sleepiness:** Walk or sit in such a way that sleep is not easy.

**6. Interruptions:** Have a special time and place for prayer everyday. Try to choose a place where you will encounter as few people as possible, when phone calls will be a minimum, where the noise level will be low. Ask your family to help you in your desire to meet with God.

**7. Wandering thoughts:** Pray out loud -- this will aid in your concentration. Keep paper and pen handy to jot down things that come to your mind that may cause you to lose your train of thought (e.g. phone call that you will need to make or things you must do today).

### III. PUBLIC PRAYER

1. Do not pray to impress others (Matthew 6:5-8).

2. Public prayers in the Bible are usually short and of general concern to the group. Be considerate of others.

3. Men are to be leaders in public prayers (I Tim 2:8).

## **CONCLUSION**

"The world seeks better methods while God is seeking better men and women of prayer."

--E.M. Bounds

"If we begin with God the enemy will dwindle, but if we begin with the enemy we will never reach God." --  
Scroggie

"I have lived to thank God that all my prayers have not been answered." --Jean Ingelow

"When God grants our prayers, it is because He loves us. When He does not, it is also because He loves us." --O.  
Hallesby

"Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power  
that works within us, to Him be the glory..."

--Ephesians 3:20-21

**DEALING WITH SIN IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE**

God expects the Believer to grow in the likeness of Christ. Growth, not perfection, is His expectation. As long as we are in these bodies we will have to deal with sinful thought patterns, actions and habits; therefore, it is essential to our growth in Christ that we learn the way God has provided for us: to clear our conscience, to stay in proper fellowship with God, and to continue to grow.

Our old way of handling sin must change. As unsaved people we handled sin the way Adam and Eve did: we hide, we run, we blameshift, we cover over sin so that God and others cannot see it. We must put off this old pattern and put on God's way of dealing with sin.

**I. THE SERIOUSNESS OF SIN**

1. List the results of sin as found in the following passages:

Psalms 32:3,4 \_\_\_\_\_

Psalms 38:2-10 \_\_\_\_\_

I John 2:11 \_\_\_\_\_

James 4:1-3 (note what we become when sin controls us) \_\_\_\_\_

2. What did David expect to happen after his sin was dealt with properly? Ps 51:12,13

\_\_\_\_\_

**II. DEALING WITH SIN GOD'S WAY**

When we sin we can handle it the way Adam and Eve handled theirs or we can handle it as the Scriptures teach. There are several elements involved in dealing with sin God's way:

**1. Confession:**

a. According to I Jn 1:9, what is the Believer to do when the light of God's Word shows him that he has sinned \_\_\_\_\_

b. The word "confess" means "to say the same thing" or "to agree with God about my sin." What did David call it in Psalm 51:1-4? \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Repentance:**

a. Not all sorrow over sin accomplishes God's purposes. What does II Cor 7:10 have to say about this?

\_\_\_\_\_

b. Why would a person be sorry about their sins but not genuinely repentant?

\_\_\_\_\_

c. The word "repent" simply means "to change direction" or to "turn around and go the opposite way." So repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of action concerning sin, self and God.

**3. CHANGE:**

a. What relationship does repentance have to our actions in the following passages?

Matthew 3:8 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 26:20 \_\_\_\_\_

b. According to Eph 4:22-24 what has to happen for this change to take place?

\_\_\_\_\_

**III. DEALING WITH SIN AGAINST PEOPLE**

How are we to handle it when we have not only sinned against God but against another person as well. Scripture teaches that not only are we to confess and repent of our sin to God but we must also do the following with the one we sinned against:

**1. Repent**

a. If we are to receive forgiveness from another what must we do? Luke 17:3

\_\_\_\_\_

b. When should we do this? Matt 5:22,23 \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Restitution**

a. This should be a natural reaction on the part of any truly repentant Believer. Note Zaccheus' attitude in Luke 19:8 \_\_\_\_\_

b. What does Philemon 18 and 19 say?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**BAPTISM AND THE CHURCH****I. BAPTISM**

Our Lord commanded His church to make disciples and baptize them. It is quite clear that the early church understood His teaching and obeyed it. Since baptism is our Savior's imperative, and was faithfully practiced by the New Testament church, it behooves every believer to carefully study and heed Christ's teaching on baptism.

1. **Who** should be baptized?

a. According to Matthew 28:19,20 who is to be baptized?

b. Who did the Apostles baptize? Acts 8:35-38 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 16:30-34 \_\_\_\_\_

c. Were infants ever baptized in the New Testament? \_\_\_\_\_

If so jot down the Scriptural reference \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Why** should a Believer be baptized?

a. Obedience to God's Word. Christ commanded baptism (Matt 28:18,19) and it was practiced in the New Testament church.

b. Identification with Jesus Christ.

--In the clothing industry of that day a piece of cloth would be immersed or dipped or "baptized" into a vat of dye thus "identifying with" the color of that dye. When we are baptized, we are identifying with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. It is a testimony to the world and before God that we have died to sin and have risen with Christ to newness of life. (read Rom 6:13-16).

3. **How** should a Believer be baptized?

a. The Greek word for "baptize" means to "dip or immerse." The word was never translated into English in our Bibles but rather transliterated because of fear of the established church. When the KJV was written the church was already practicing unbiblical modes of baptism; therefore, the translators feared if they used the word "immerse" their translation would be rejected. Of course, our modern versions have done the same thing for the same reason.

b. Which mode of baptism fits the thought of the following passages: sprinkling, pouring, or immersion?

John 3:23; Acts 8:36-39; Col 2:12 \_\_\_\_\_

c. The mode of baptism is to be immersion as proven by the meaning of the word, the symbolism behind the act, and the practice of the early church.

**II. THE CHURCH**

--God's care for you does not stop after you are saved. Part of His plan for your growth and conformity to Christ's image is accomplished through the functions of the local church. A scriptural, local New Testament church is God's plan for every believer, and we are admonished to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together for reasons of indifference (Heb 10:25).

--Nowhere in the New Testament is there a believer who does not become involved in a local assembly. According to the pastoral epistles of Timothy and Titus, these assemblies were to be organized well. We need to understand the importance of what God says regarding New Testament churches.



--The term "church" is derived from the Greek word "ecclesia", which means "called-out ones" (Acts 15:14).

### 1. The universal church

a. The church in this sense consists of the entire body of believers from the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) until the Rapture (I Thess 4:16,17). Every person who is saved is a part of this body.

b. As believers, each of us are members of what (I Cor 12:12, 13)?

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### 2. The local church

a. The primary usage of the term "church" in the NT refers to local churches. Ninety out of 111 times the word is used in this way. It is a true church if it is established according to the Word of God.

b. The local church is a body of baptized Believers convening together to carry out the commission given by its Head, Jesus Christ.

c. The Bible never refers to a local church as being part of any larger earthly organization. Although men may refer to "the church that is in America," speaking of many churches, the Bible does not. Instead, we read "to the seven churches which are in Asia..." (Rev 1:4, 11, 20). God's plan for this age involves His work being carried on through local, self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating churches.

### 3. Scriptural characteristics of the local church

a. Jesus Christ is its Foundation (I Cor 3:11).

b. Jesus Christ is its head. What do we learn about Christ's headship over the church in Ephesians 5:23?

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c. The purpose of the local church. The Scriptures teach several purposes:

1) to glorify God. In what ways can we glorify God? (I Pet 2:9-12)

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2) to evangelize (Matt 28: 19, 20)

3) to edify and equip (Eph 4:11-16)

v.11, 12 --What are the purposes of the church as found here

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v.14 -- What will this prevent? \_\_\_\_\_

vv15,16 -- What is our goal? \_\_\_\_\_

II Tim 3:15-17 -- What is needed to accomplish this goal? \_\_\_\_\_

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Heb 10: 24,25 -- What should we be trying to do when we come together?

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### 4. Additional characteristics of the church

a. It has rolls (Acts 2:41,47).

b. It transacts business.

--Matthias chosen (Acts 1).

--Deacons chosen (Acts 6).

--Missionaries sent (Acts 11:22; 13:1-4).

- Gifts given to missionaries (I Cor 16:2, 3).
- Practices discipline with the goal of restoring Believers (II Cor 5).  
In this process members can be excluded or restored (II Cor 2:6-8).
- It is given commissions, ordinances and pastoral epistles for order  
(the next lesson will cover these).

**THE CHURCH**

**Organization and Membership**

**I. ORGANIZATION**

1. Head

- a. The **Head** of the Church (local and universal) is Jesus Christ (Eph 5:22-24)
- b. In John 16:12-14 we learn that our Lord, as Head of the church, is currently directing the church's activities through the leadership of the \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Read Eph 6:17. The Holy Spirit uses the sword of the Spirit, which is the \_\_\_\_\_, to guide His church.

2. Officers

a. **Elders.** Throughout the NT we find several terms used for the same office. These include: shepherd, overseer, bishop, and pastor. These are not separate offices but different terms or titles that help describe the same office.

- Elder means: \_\_\_\_\_
- Overseer means: \_\_\_\_\_
- Bishop means: \_\_\_\_\_
- Shepherd means: \_\_\_\_\_
- Pastor-Teacher means: \_\_\_\_\_

1) What are the qualifications for an elder (I Tim 3:1-7)?

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2) What are the responsibilities of an elder?

- Acts 20:28, 31 \_\_\_\_\_
  - I Pet 5:1-3 \_\_\_\_\_
  - Heb 13:17 \_\_\_\_\_
  - Eph 4:11-16 \_\_\_\_\_
  - I Tim 5:17 (note that not all elders teach) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

**b. Deacons**

1) "Deacon" means "servant". In Acts 6:1-7 we have the appointing of what many believe to be the first deacons of the church. What was their responsibility?

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**c. Other officers**

The local church is free under guidance of the Word of God to choose other officers as needed but there were no other offices found in the NT with the possible exception of deaconness. But most Bible students do not believe that this was an official office in the NT.

## II. MEMBERSHIP

1. What occurred **after** people were saved (Acts 2:41)? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Note the events that preceded membership in the local church:

Conviction

Repentance and Faith

Baptism

Membership

3. In Acts 2:41 we find that immediately after their salvation and baptism, Believers were "added to" or became members of the local church in Jerusalem. In the NT we never find a Believer that was not a member of a church, committed to a local body, and under the authority of the elders of that church. It is God's will that every Christian be under the preaching, teaching, care and warmth of a local church body in order to grow spiritually.

4. *The difference between attending and joining* a local church include the following:

**Commitment** -- When you join a church you are making a statement of commitment. You are declaring that you will be loyal to a local body, that you are dedicated to the needs and ministries of that congregation. This could be comparable to the commitment of marriage versus just dating.

**Authority** -- When you join a church you come under the authority of the leadership of that church. You are in essence, allowing the shepherds of the church to watch over you for your spiritual good (Heb 13:17). Until you have joined a church you have given no elders the authority to shepherd you.

**Ministry** -- I Cor 12 speaks not to the universal church but to the local church at Corinth. A body cannot function if it is uncertain who its members are. The concept of the "body" implies the need for membership.

**Discipline** -- Matt 18:15-20 says that an unrepentant sinner who is a Believer must be disciplined by the church. Which church? Obviously, the one of which the person are a member. Some may not join a church just for this reason, after all, who wants to be disciplined. However, we must remember that this is one of God's tools to keep His children living for Him. Also, without this tool many problems between Believers cannot be resolved.

**Care** -- In I Tim 5:3-10 Paul instructs Timothy on the care of widows in the local church at Ephesus. Here we find the widows who met certain qualifications were to be added to a list (v9) for apparent financial aid. The widows on the list obviously were members of the church at Ephesus not of neighboring churches. The local church has a special obligation to care for its members but it must know who its members are.

**I. THE PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

1. **The Holy Spirit is a Person** as proven by the fact that He possesses the attributes of personality.

**Intellect** (I Cor 2:10,11)

**Emotion** (Eph 4:30)

**Will** (I Cor 12:11)

2. **The Holy Spirit is God** as proven by:

a. **His titles**: --what is He called in the following passages?

Matt 1:20 \_\_\_\_\_

Matt 3:16 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 1:35 \_\_\_\_\_

b. **His attributes** --what does He possess that proves He is God?

I Cor 2:11,12 \_\_\_\_\_

Ps 139:7 \_\_\_\_\_

Job 33:4 \_\_\_\_\_

I John 5:7 \_\_\_\_\_

Lk 11:13 \_\_\_\_\_

c. **His actions** -- what does He do that only God can do?

Gen 1:2 \_\_\_\_\_

II Pet 1:21 \_\_\_\_\_

Jn 3:6 \_\_\_\_\_

Rom 8:26 \_\_\_\_\_

**II. THE CHANGING MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The ministry of the Holy Spirit today is **not** as it was in the OT nor during the transition period between the Old and New Testaments.

1. In the OT **all** Believers were **not** indwelt and sealed by the Holy Spirit. He (the Holy Spirit) moved upon certain ones for special tasks. Read the following passages and note how God gave them power in order to accomplish His will.

Judges 14:5, 6, 19 \_\_\_\_\_

I Sam 16:12-14 \_\_\_\_\_

II Chron 24:18-20 \_\_\_\_\_

2. The transition period encompassed the time between the OT and the NT. (This period of time is recorded mostly in the book of Acts.)

a. What did Jesus promise in Acts 1:4,5? \_\_\_\_\_

b. What was Jesus saying in John 14:16, 17? \_\_\_\_\_

c. God delayed sending the Holy Spirit until the Day of Pentecost. According to Acts 2:4-9, what happened

at this time among the Jews?

- 
- d. In Acts 8:14-17 the Samaritans receive the gospel but not the Holy Spirit until the Apostles come.
  - e. In Acts 10:44,45 the Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit.
  - f. In Acts 19:1-6 a group of OT saints receive the Holy Spirit.

3. Today **all Believers** receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion.

What does Rom 8:9 say? \_\_\_\_\_

### III. THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. What is the Holy Spirit's **relationship to the Scriptures**? II Tim 3:16-17

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the Holy Spirit's **relationship to man** according to John 14:16-17?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What ministries does the Holy Spirit perform in **relationship to our salvation**?

Titus 3:5 \_\_\_\_\_

I Cor 6:19 \_\_\_\_\_

I Cor 12:13 \_\_\_\_\_

Eph 1:13,14 \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Other ministries** of the Holy Spirit.

Eph 5:8 \_\_\_\_\_ To be "filled by" means to be "controlled by".

John 16:12-15 \_\_\_\_\_ What does the Holy Spirit use to illumine and  
guide us (I Cor 2:9-14) \_\_\_\_\_

Rom 8:26 \_\_\_\_\_

Gal 5:22-24 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 1:8 \_\_\_\_\_

### IV. SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. The Holy Spirit gives the Believers gifts. These are defined as a "God-given ability for service."

2. When does a Believer receive His gifts (I Cor 12:7, 18)? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Who decides what gifts a Believer receives (I Cor 12:11, 18)? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why has God given different gifts (I Cor 12:24, 25)? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Lists of the various spiritual gifts are found in I Cor 12

Rom 12:6-8

Eph 4:11

I Pet 4:10,11

6. How to find your spiritual gifts

- Know the Biblical gifts.
- Serve where you can. In this way you will begin to discover where you are useful.
- Get council of wise, mature Christians.
- Develop your gifts.

**GETTING ALONG WITH GOD'S PEOPLE**

Christ told His disciples: "By this (your love for one another) shall all men know that you are my disciples" (John 13:34,35). In Eph 4:16 Paul describes a healthy church as one in which every member is meeting needs and, as a result, the body is not only healthy, but also increasing. Heb 10:24 commands Believers to stimulate one another to love and good works. There are numerous passages in the New Testament exhorting Believers to love and care for "one another".

This love and care for one another is not to cease when a Believer does wrong. In Gal 6:1 Paul tells the Believer living for God to "restore" a Believer who is "overtaken in a fault". Scripture has much to say about this process.

**I. PERSONAL PREPARATION**

1. As we examine ourselves, we may recognize that we have offended someone. We are talking here about a **genuine offense or sin**. It is possible that someone is angry at us or even hates us yet we have not wronged them. Such a case is not being discussed in Matt 5:23,24. If before we worship God everyone has to be pleased with us then neither Jesus nor the Apostles would have ever worshipped.
2. But when we have wronged another, what are we commanded to do in **Matt 5:23-24**?

3. How long should you wait before you deal with the one you offended? \_\_\_\_\_  
What if you "know" that they will reject you? What if you don't think that this is the right time?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**III. HOW TO DEAL WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS SINNED AGAINST US**

Note the steps taken in **Matthew 18:15-17**

1. First **determine if this is sin** (read **Gal 6:1**).  
The passages are **not** talking about personal preferences, differences of opinion or conviction but of definite sin.
2. "**Go**". We do not wait for them to come to us -- rather we are to go to them.  
It is much easier sometimes just to ignore the person or "write them off" but love says "go" (notice the context in Matt 18:12-14).
3. "**Convince**". To tell or show him his fault is a strong word meaning to "convict or convince". Why is it so important that we convince people of their sin rather than simply letting them go their way?

If Gen 3:8-13 is any indication of possible response, *what reactions must we be prepared to deal with* when we confront people with their sins? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

According to Matt 18:15 should this person be approached in front of others?  
If not, then how is he to be approached? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the **goal** of the following verses?

Matt 18:15 \_\_\_\_\_



Gal 6:1 \_\_\_\_\_

James 5:20 \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Small group confrontation** (18:16).

If the previous step fails, then we do not simply walk away. We must approach the person this time with a small group of two or three. Why is this step necessary?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. **Confrontation from the church** (18:17a).

6. **Church discipline** (18:17b).

What is the **goal** of church discipline (**I Cor 5:5**)? \_\_\_\_\_

This final step is a last resort and no time-table is given to us as to when it must take place. If progress is being made or if the person is not going into deeper sin or influencing others in a negative way then there is no need to rush to step #6, but it should not be ignored either.

In Matt 18:18, 19 we are being told that when this final step has been taken by the church it has already been taken in Heaven. In other words, **we are to be in agreement with God**. God has recognized their unrepentant sin and so should we.

Such a person is to be treated as a "pagan". **The goal is still to restore**. We are to continue to be friendly and kind. However, he is not to be recognized as a brother in Christ. If for instance, he is a family member you may eat with him as a family member, but not as a fellow believer. See **I Cor 5:11**. The goal is restoration which demands that we take God's side and do things God's way. God calls Believers who are in sin to repent -- so should we.

#### IV. THE SUBJECT OF FORGIVENESS

1. **Forgiveness is not a feeling it is a promise.**

When we forgive we have promised to no longer hold a wrong against someone. We are in essence promising never to bring up the offense to the offender, to others, or to ourselves again.

2. According to **Lk 17:3-4** who are we to forgive? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is it not possible to forgive an unrepentant person? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How do we know if the person is *sincere* in his repentance? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What does Jesus say about the person who *refuses to forgive* in **Matt 18:21-35**? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How are we to treat a person who *will not repent* of wrongs done to us?

(see **Rom 12:14, 17-21**) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### CONCLUSION

1. Who taught this method of dealing with offenses against one another? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you agree with Him? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you practice what He taught? \_\_\_\_\_

2. When a person comes to *share a problem with you about someone else*, how should you tell them to handle it according to Matt 18:15? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Be sure to inform him that you will check with him soon to inquire if he has handled the problem Biblically. If he went to the offender and did not get the problem resolved, encourage him to *take at least two godly people* with him and go back to the offender.

**BIBLICAL LOVE**

The frustrated wife tells the counselor that she is divorcing her husband because she does not love him any more. The young couple fight constantly and have nothing in common but they are going to get married because they are in love. There is much fuzziness about love in our culture today and since it plays such an important role in our world as well as our Christian lives and churches it is vital that we know what Scripture has to say on the subject.

**I. THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVE**

1. What *commandment* did Christ give to His disciples the night before He went to the cross (**John 13:34, 35**)?

\_\_\_\_\_

Obedience to this command would produce what results? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How is the love that demonstrates Christ-likeness produced in our lives (**Gal 5:22**)?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. In relation to all other virtues and actions, how highly does God rate love?

See **I Cor 13:1-3,13** \_\_\_\_\_

**II. WHAT IS BIBLICAL LOVE?**

1. Note the characteristics of love as found in I Cor 13:4-8a.

Do these characteristics put more emphasis on actions or feelings? \_\_\_\_\_

2. If one word could be used to describe love, what would it be according to Jn 3:16? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the emphasis here on actions or feelings? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Where is the emphasis in I Jn 3:17-18? \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Can love be taught?** (See I Thess 4:9 and Titus 2:4) \_\_\_\_\_

Biblically, what should we tell the wife in the opening illustration? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. To love is a command from God (**Matt 22:36-40**).

Can we command our emotions? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the emphasis here on actions or emotions? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Who is the supreme example of love? (See **Eph 5:25**) \_\_\_\_\_

7. The Greek word "Agape" which is translated love in these passages speaks of a self-sacrificing love. It does not have reference to emotions or feelings.

Love is a command to be obeyed -- not an option  
not an accident  
not a feeling to be generated first.

### III. WHO ARE WE TO LOVE

- Matt 22:36, 37 \_\_\_\_\_
  - Luke 10:29-37 \_\_\_\_\_
  - John 13:34-35 \_\_\_\_\_
  - Titus 2:4 \_\_\_\_\_
  - Eph 5:25 \_\_\_\_\_
  - Matt 5:44 \_\_\_\_\_
- (see Rom 12:14, 17-21)

### IV. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO "WALK IN LOVE"?

1. Love God and His Word (Jn 14:21; 15:10; and I Jn 5:3).
2. Put others ahead of yourself (Phip 2:3-4; Rom 12:20-21).
3. Perform loving deeds and actions as well as speak kind words ( I Jn 3:18).
4. Be a giver (Acts 20:35; Jn 3:16).
5. Be a forgiver and one who asks forgiveness (Eph 4:32).
6. Appreciate the love given to you by Christ (Rom 8:35-39).
7. Overcome selfishness and its emptiness (Gal 5:19-23).
8. Etc.

### V. WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES IF WE DO NOT WALK IN LOVE?

1. **Problems** with others.  
Note that the deeds of the flesh in Gal 5:19-21 could be summed up as selfishness.
2. **Problems** with God.  
What does I Jn 4:7-11 teach? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. **Problems** with self.  
Fear (I Jn 4:18)  
Wrong values (I Jn 2:15-17).

### VI. WHAT ARE SOME HINDRANCES TO WALKING IN LOVE/

1. **Separation from God.**  
Since God is the source of love, one must be united to Him thru salvation (I Jn 4:7-10).
2. **Adherence to false views of love.**  
Fads concerning love will come and go. Only God's definition and description of love is correct.
3. **Selfishness.**  
True love will demand much of us and may give little in return. True love means we must risk being taken advantage of and hurt. True love means living for others. All of these things run contrary to our fleshly desire to

live for self.

4. **Dependency upon self.**

What does **John 15:5** tell us? \_\_\_\_\_

If love is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22), how does one get it? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**BIBLICAL SEPARATION**

Both the Old and New Testaments are full of warnings and instructions concerning those who claim to be Believers but have fallen away from the faith and now seek to drag others with them. Today the attitude even within the church is "live and let live." It seems to bother us very little that many denominations, organizations, and individuals that claim to be followers of Christ, deny vital truths such as inspiration of Scripture, salvation by faith alone, the virgin birth, the deity and/or resurrection of Christ, etc. As long as someone claims to be a Christian we accept them with open arms, no questions asked. But to do so implies that much of the Bible was written for nothing -- that somehow God is not "really" concerned about apostates. So it is extremely important that we understand what the Bible says about apostasy.

**I. DEFINITION OF APOSTASY**

1. Apostasy consists of an unbelieving and self-willed movement away from God (Heb 3:12). It speaks of the serious situation of becoming separated from the living God after a previous turning towards Him, by falling away from the faith (Dictionary of New Testament Theology Vol 1).
2. Of course few apostates, either today or in Biblical times, would admit that they have turned from God. Therefore, it is imperative that we never separate God from His Word. This was Satan's great lie in the Garden of Eden. He never denied the existence of God -- rather he convinced Eve that God did not mean what He said.
3. When a person or organization falls away from the *clear* teachings of the Word of God they have fallen away from God *no matter how loudly they protest*. Therefore, apostasy is the act of a *professed* Christian who rejects the fundamental truths taught in God's Word. Especially in mind are doctrines concerning the Godhead, deity of Christ, death and resurrection of Christ, salvation by faith, inspiration of Scripture, the return of Christ, eternal life and other doctrines that are the very backbone of our faith. Good and godly people may differ on some secondary issues but to deny the fundamentals is apostasy.

**II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF APOSTATES**

1. According to **II Tim 3:5**, will apostates appear spiritual in outward appearance?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (See II Cor 11:12-15)
2. Who motivates the apostates? (See I Tim 4:1) \_\_\_\_\_
3. How are apostates described in **I Tim 4:2**? \_\_\_\_\_
4. The ultimate and final apostasy on earth will occur during the Tribulation.  
 Read II Thess 2:2-12. What reasons are given as to why the world will believe the Antichrist's lies?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. What are 5 characteristics of apostates found in **II Pet 2:10**?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
6. What do they promise in II Pet 2:19? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What do they deliver? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Note the word-pictures found in **Jude 12**. Briefly summarize the description given.  
 \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Read II Tim 4:1-5. Unsaved people, who have no spiritual discernment, will hail Satan's teachers (I Cor 11:13-15) as great religious leaders while the preachers of truth, God's ministers, will be despised and viewed as being uncooperative, divisive and unloving. Satan's preachers accommodate themselves to the tastes of unregenerated hearers and are thus much more popular.

### III. WHEN DOES A CHURCH BODY BECOME APOSTATE?

1. A body does not become apostate at the time:

- They remove the gospel from their official creed or confession. It has occurred long before this.
- They continue to preach the gospel. It must be remembered that apostates are liars (II Pet 2:3). They can become **masters at twisting the meaning of words** so that it sounds like the gospel but it is not. A good example is Robert Schuller's book, The New Reformation.

2. A body is apostate at the time:

- Its' leaders deny the basic tenants of the Christian faith.
- Official periodicals and media presentations promote views contrary to the clear teachings of Scripture.
- Official schools of the body employ faculty members and/or utilize visiting speakers who teach views that are at variance with essential doctrines.
- No effort is being made by the leadership or the majority of its constituency to remove the apostates within the body.

### IV. HOW SHOULD THE BELIEVER HANDLE APOSTASY?

1. Briefly summarize the commands given in the following verses:

Rom 16:17 \_\_\_\_\_

II Cor 6:14-18 \_\_\_\_\_

Gal 1:8,9 \_\_\_\_\_

II Jn 10, 11 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 19:8,9 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 20: 28-32 \_\_\_\_\_

Based upon these passages should a Believer stay in an apostate body and fight the apostasy?

\_\_\_\_\_

What should they do? \_\_\_\_\_

2. To keep from being deceived by apostates what are we to do?

II Tim 3:13-4:2 \_\_\_\_\_

I Tim 4:1-6 \_\_\_\_\_

## CONCLUSION

Pickering writes: "Separation, both personal and ecclesiastical, is grounded in the nature of God. God is the great separatist. He is absolutely separated from all evil and error. Do His people error in emulating Him?"

Yet as David Hunt warns in The Seduction of Christianity page 3. It is "in" now to not challenge one another's teachings on the basis of Scripture. He says, "There is a new push for 'unity' based not upon sound doctrine but upon the pledge not to question the Biblical accuracy of one another's teachings."

-- May we never fall into this trap.