



Volume 2

DISCIPLESHIP &
Leadership

Training

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VOLUME 2

Discipleship and Leadership Training – Volume 2

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Authors: Gary Matsdorf, Larry Powers, Leslie Keegel, Jochen Geiselhart, Marius Kouame, Lee Schnabel, Yongnan Jeon Ahn, Arturo Andrade, Erik Jensen, Eric Lopez, Gary Matsdorf, Krzysztof Trochimiuk, Piet Brinksma, Jonathan Hall, and SWM

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Introduction

An Outreach of the Foursquare Global Council

DLT began in January 2016 as a response of the Foursquare Global Council to a thirty-five nation National Strategic Assessment conducted in 2015 by Dr. Daniel Brown. Under the leadership of the Global Education Coordinator and a global team of over 250 Foursquare leaders, DLT addresses the four top “concerns/areas of global improvement” the Assessment identified—

- o We need to get better at strategically discipling converts.
- o We need to get better at holistically training leaders for ministry.
- o We need to get better at defining and ministering the baptism with the Holy Spirit, including discipling those baptized on how Spirit baptism influences their transformational growth and their missional involvement in God’s kingdom.
- o We need to get better at defining in writing what Foursquare believes on key topics/issues raised by our global constituency, enabling a unified, collaborative global partnership.

The modules in this two-volume 2023 publication are DLT’s first efforts (2017-2023) at providing Foursquare’s global biblical and theological understanding of these topics. Written by a global team of Foursquare pastors, professors, and leaders the modules have proven valuable in addressing the Assessment’s fourth concern. More are planned.

In addition to content, the DLT modules reflect a specific methodology of presentation that enables them to be strategic in moving us toward the other three DLT goals as well. This DLT method, reflected in the various questions embedded throughout each module, is one of “self-discovery learning, incarnating and applying truth” (from the head to the heart to the hands)—be it through one-on-one discipling (mentoring) or in a small group discussion. Please see “The DLT Engine” that follows for further explanation.¹

The modules have been used and adapted to a variety of settings—personal mentoring; seminars; small group studies; and even Schools of Ministry classrooms. Regardless of the setting, the aim when using the DLT modules is transformational and incarnational discipleship through the biblical and theological content and DLT method. May they be a great help to you.

Gary Matsdorf
Global Education Coordinator
May 2023

¹ The DLT team, in conjunction with the Foursquare Global Council, asks that these modules NOT be presented “lecture/preaching style,” whereby the audience listens and leaves. Such violates the purpose and integrity of DLT.

Foundational Understanding

Gary Matsdorf

INTRODUCTION—

DLT (Discipleship and Leadership Training) is the Global Council's response to the four top findings of Foursquare's 2016 National Strategic Assessment—namely, the need to globally improve our efforts at **1)** “making disciples” (creating a global culture of discipleship); **2)** training leaders (including both character transformation and skill improvement); **3)** recovering an emphasis on Holy Spirit fullness and moving in Kingdom authority; and **4)** addressing “doctrinal drift” (endeavoring to produce materials that reflect what Foursquare believes globally on key issues and directing Foursquare leaders and disciples to resources where they can ascertain “what we believe” [i.e., what do the *Declaration of Faith* and *Global Distinctives* actually mean when exegeted?]).

At the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus formalized His gracious call by defining the fundamental task of the Church, often referred to as The Great Commission—**“Go and make disciples of all nations.”**

Because DLT's core is discipleship, we want to begin with a foundational understanding of discipleship.¹

JESUS' CALL TO MAKE DISCIPLES—

Jesus' ministry begins with His gracious call, **“Come, follow Me, and I will send you out to fish for people”** (Matthew 4:19). This life-long following, which includes personal transformation and involvement in His mission, will have “ups and downs,” as His followers give themselves to **[pressing] on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of [us]** (Philippians 3:12).

At the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus formalized His gracious call by defining the fundamental task of the Church, often referred to as The Great Commission—**“Go and make disciples² of all nations”**

¹ See attached “DLT Engine” for additional details.

² In 2020, the Global Council adopted the following working definition of a disciple. “A disciple is a believer in Christ who, together with others and by the power of the Holy Spirit, intentionally pursues Jesus, is being changed by Jesus and is actively engaged in the mission of Jesus to love God, make disciples, and love people.”

(Matthew 28:19).³ This process includes “**baptizing them...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you**” and concludes with the reassuring promise, “**And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age**” (Matthew 28:19-20).

One way of looking at discipleship is to see it as Jesus’ call to totally attach oneself to Him; to follow Him with the intent to direct one’s whole existence toward the will of God. “Jesus’ call clearly points to a lasting association; Jesus is not inviting them to a pleasant stroll along the seashore but inviting them to discipleship; there is the thought of personal attachment.”⁴ Disciples are life-long learners⁵ who grow increasingly accustomed to God and His priorities (Mark 12:29-31), who undergo personal change and transformation by the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:1-14), and who involve themselves in His mission (Ephesians 4:11-12).⁶

Viewed from the perspective of God’s ultimate intention for us, salvation is one divine act, the work of the Spirit in bringing us into full conformity with the likeness of Christ.

Disciples are motivated by God’s love (1 John 4:9) and empowered by His grace (1 Corinthians 15:10); in addition to doing **the [generalized] work of ministry** (Ephesians 4:12 [NRSV]), disciples express their commitment to Jesus in the way they love God and love people, including enemies (Mark 12:29-31; Matthew 5:44).

Matthew’s details regarding Jesus’ call of two sets of brothers give some interesting insight into discipleship (Matthew 4:18-22). He notes that when Peter and Andrew were called, **at once they left their nets and followed Him** (vs. 20). When James and John were called, **immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Him** (vs. 22). **And their father** is an important detail, in that it indicates that discipleship involves varied particulars; Jesus manages the specifics of our discipleship on an individual basis, yet always toward the same goal.

- *Following Jesus means togetherness with him and service to him while traveling on the Way...the goal of discipleship toward self is “become like Christ”...the process of becoming like Jesus brings the*

³ All Scripture, unless otherwise noted, is from the TNIV. This Commission is to result in Christian communities whose culture is that of disciple-making. Again, in 2020 the Global Council adopted this working definition of a culture of discipleship. “A culture of discipleship is a group of disciples who collectively, by the power of the Holy Spirit, intentionally commits to being devoted disciples who love God and love people, and to making mature and whole disciples who pursue Jesus, are being changed by Jesus and actively engage themselves in the mission of Jesus to love God, make disciples, and love people.”

⁴ Morris, Leon, *The Gospel According To Matthew—The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992, pg. 85.

⁵ The Greek word translated *disciple* in the New Testament derives from a verb meaning, “to learn.”

⁶ An element in this process is that of having a strong biblical foundation, built in part through education.

disciple into intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and, as such, is the goal of individual discipleship...the goal toward others is servanthood...authentic discipleship entails selfless servanthood...the goal of discipleship toward the world is the Great Commission...[believers] are to make disciples of all the nations (Matt. 28:16-20).⁷

AREAS INFLUENCED BY DISCIPLESHIP—

Some define the broad aspects of discipleship as “personal formation, life-skill formation and ministry formation.” Others define it in terms of transformation of a Christ-follower’s “head, heart and hands” or “knowing Christ, growing in Christ, serving Christ and influencing others for Christ.” Regardless of how one categorizes the aspects of discipleship, it is that of **present[ing] everyone fully mature in Christ** (Colossians 1:28), such that they reflect that maturity by influencing those around them for Christ and for the life of the kingdom of God. “Viewed from the perspective of God’s ultimate intention for us, salvation is one divine act, the work of the Spirit in bringing us into full conformity with the likeness of Christ.”⁸ This begins with oneself and one’s family (I Timothy 4:16; 3:4) and extends outward from there.

Before we look at some specific areas that discipleship influences, let’s define what Paul means by **present[ing] everyone mature in Christ** (Colossians 1:28). **Mature** translates a Greek word (*teleios*) that is difficult to render in a single word. “*Teleios* is the complete and undivided way in which a person, with all one’s positive and negative attributes, is oriented toward God or toward Christ.”⁹ Maturity then is a life-long goal towards which Christians aim, a goal that will be characterized by “positive and negative” personal attributes along the way. This goal is reached only by the inner empowering of the Spirit, not by rules, regulations or human effort. **The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...and against such things there is no law** (Galatians 5:22-23).

A sample of what the Bible says identifies a fully mature Christ-follower can be helpful in our strategic development of disciples. Maturity describes a believer who—

⁷ Wilkins, Michael, *Disciple, Discipleship in Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Elwell, Walter (Editor), Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1996, pp. 176-177.

⁸ Grenz, Stanley, *Theology For The Community Of God*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, pg. 433.

⁹ Moo, Douglas, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon—The Pillar New Testament Commentary Series*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2008, pg. 161.

- Understands¹⁰ love for God and for people (Mark 12:29-31).
- Understands salvation (Romans 5:1); the person of Jesus (Philippians 2:7-8; Colossians 1:15-16) and who they are in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17); understands the place of water baptism and has been water baptized (Matthew 28:19)
- Understands how to handle God’s Word (2 Timothy 2:15)
 - Understands how to die to sin so it doesn’t have dominion (Romans 6:1-14); understands the “old self/new self” and how to “put off/on” aspects of the two natures (Colossians 3:5-14); understands what’s morally important to God (Ephesians 4:1)
 - Understands how to walk in the Spirit (sanctification/fruit of the Spirit [Romans 8; Galatians 5:22-26]); what it means to be “Spirit-filled” (the importance of a prayer language; baptism with the Holy Spirit [Ephesians 5:18; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 14:15])
 - Knows their spiritual gifting and importance of serving Christ according to their gifting, passion and temperament (Romans 12:3-8; 2 Timothy 1:6; Psalm 139:14); involved in **works of service** (Ephesians 4:12)
- Understands the Church/participates in community (Acts 2:42-46; 4:32-35; Hebrews 10:24-25)
- Understands what it means to influence others for Christ; understands the importance of evangelism; has a global heart for people’s spiritual and practical needs (Matthew 25:34-46; 2 Peter 3:9)
- Understands basic Christian disciplines (stewardship/devotions [Matthew 25:14-30; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7; Psalm 119])
- Understands how to pray/fast and worship (Luke 18:1; Matthew 6:9-18; Colossians 3:15-17)
- Understands forgiveness and basic “peacemaking” principles (Romans 12:17-20); understands control of the tongue (James 3:3-12); understands bases of healthy relationships with others; is relationally intelligent (Romans 12:10)
- Understands how the devil and the demonic work; know how to resist him and deal with demonic influences/possession (Luke 10:1-20; Ephesians 6:10-17; James 4:7-8)
- Understands when they have a “besetting” issue in their life that requires extra (sometimes professional) help determining its origin/diagnosis and healing process (Luke 4:18-19); has access to resources within the church that guide them through healing/recovery
- Understands how to do life “by grace and not by works”—both “being with God” and “doing as a result of love for Him”; understands how to grow in Christ (Romans 1-8; 2 Peter 1:5-9)

Paul makes it clear in Ephesians 4 that the work of the ministry belongs to all believers and not a “professional priesthood.”

¹⁰ Finding a single verb to define these attributes is nearly impossible. Inherent in “understands” is the idea of having a biblical knowledge of the truth (head) that is then incarnated (heart) and is lived out in life (hands). Please do NOT interpret “understands” as only referencing intellectual knowledge.

- Understands how we're healed—physically, spiritually, emotionally (psychologically) and relationally (Luke 4:16-21)
- Is emotionally healthy¹¹.
- Understands the Bible's teaching on key life specifics (i.e., on marriage/being single [Deuteronomy 24:1-5; Matthew 19:3-12; I Corinthians 7:1-16]; gender identity [Genesis 1:27; 2:20-25]; employer and employee roles [Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-4:1]; parenting/parental responsibility in bringing kids to Christ [Deuteronomy 6:20-25; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20-21]; the place of government/the State and being a citizen [Romans 13:1-5; 1 Peter 2:13-17]; healthy submission to spiritual authority [Hebrews 13:17]; the role of women in the Church [Acts 18:24-26, Romans 16:1, 7], etc.)
- Is a discipler of others (Matthew 28:19-20)
- Understands God's "Grand Story" (Genesis 12:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20)
- Is a life-long learner (Colossians 1:9-10)

EQUIPPING DISCIPLES (Ephesians 4:7-16)—

Paul makes it clear in Ephesians 4 that the work of the ministry belongs to all believers and not a "professional priesthood." Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature (Ephesians 4:11-13). But such serving requires "equipping" to be most effective. Equip has the idea of making someone fit for a task.¹² It includes training them (including helping them define their spiritual gifting, personal temperament and passion) and dealing with any personal difficulties that would hinder performing the task. "God has created and designed us with a purpose in mind. We are 'wired' to care about some things more than others. We have been given spiritual gifts to competently accomplish ministry tasks. We have also been designed with a personal style... and given a passion."¹³

...All discipleship must go beyond knowledge to incarnating the truth and then to living it out...to having it show up in the day-to-day life of the disciple.

¹¹. "Emotional health concerns itself primarily with loving others well. It connects us to our interior life, making possible the seeing and treating of each individual as worthy of respect...self-awareness—knowing what is going on inside of us—is indispensable to emotional healthy and loving well...the extent to which we love and respect ourselves is the extent to which we will be able to love and respect others" (Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality, Updated Edition*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2017, pg. 215).

¹². "The verb has a range of meanings, such as 'to restore' or 'to outfit.' Outside the biblical text, the noun is used in medical writings to speak of setting bones, and this connotation could be operating in the background, given that Paul speaks of Christ's body in this verse" (Lynn H. Cohick, *The Letter to the Ephesians—The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2020, pg. 270).

¹³. Bugbee, Bruce, *What You Do Best In The Body of Christ*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1995, pg. 15.

The task for which the saints are equipped is that of works of service (vs. 12),¹⁴ a generic term referring to everything and anything needed to advance the gospel and bring the influence of the kingdom of God to lives and situations. When equipped saints perform works of service (ministry), it results in the body of Christ [being] built up (vs. 12). Paul goes on to state further that when every supporting ligament is equipped and each part does its work, it promotes the Church's growth (vs. 16). This entire process must continue until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (*i.e.*, until Christ returns [vs. 13]). When we are not fully equipped and involved in kingdom life, we are easily tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming (vs. 14).

THE "SO THAT" OF 2 TIMOTHY 3:17—

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, SO THAT all God's people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17, emphasis noted). We must not forget the SO THAT as we disciple believers, meaning that all discipleship must go beyond knowledge to incarnating the truth and then to living it out... to having it show up in the day-to-day life of the disciple. "God gave the Bible a mission: God speaks to us so we will be the kind of people he wants and will live the way he wants us to live...if we are committed to missional listening to God as we read the Bible, we will learn, we will be rebuked about our failures, we will be restored...and we will be righteous."¹⁵

¹⁴ Or **the work of ministry** (NRSV).

¹⁵ McKnight, Scot, *The Blue Parakeet*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2008, pp. 106, 111. "Ultimately, Paul's argument about Scripture's inspiration and usefulness is not an academic matter but a very practical one. In v. 17 he adds a statement that describes the chief purpose toward which his logic has been pressing all along—that the "person of God" might be capable, fully equipped for every good deed" (Philip Towner, *The Letters To Timothy and Titus—The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2006, pg. 592).

The DLT Engine

Gary Matsdorf

DLT (Discipleship and Leadership Training) is the Global Council’s response to the four top findings of the Global Council’s 2016 National Strategic Assessment—the need to globally improve our efforts at **1**) “making disciples” (creating a global culture of discipleship); **2**) training leaders (including both character transformation and skill improvement); **3**) recovering an emphasis on Holy Spirit fullness and moving in Kingdom authority; and **4**) addressing “doctrinal drift” (endeavoring to produce materials that reflect what Foursquare believes globally on key issues and directing Foursquare leaders and disciples to resources where they can ascertain “what we believe” [i.e., what do the *Declaration of Faith* and *Global Distinctives* actually mean when exegeted]).

There are two distinct aspects to DLT that must be separated in our understanding.

1. **THE THEOLOGY/PHILOSOPHY OF DLT**—DLT is first and foremost a theology and philosophy of making disciples. It is built on the theology of our Four-Stage methodology for fulfilling our missiology. We term this “the DLT Engine.” Whenever we think of DLT, we must think of the “engine”—“making disciples...creating a culture of discipleship and holistically training leaders.” This “engine” emphasizes that as we disciple all Christ-followers, we equip them in “head, heart and hands” to be ever maturing in Christ and giving themselves to kingdom *works of service* (Ephesians 4:12).

The DLT “Engine”—

- a. Emphasizes “character-based discipleship” which affirms the need for ongoing transformation into the image of Christ.
- b. Emphasizes that every Christ-follower has a story and is a leader in their own sphere of influence. Every Christ-follower can be a disciple-maker.
- c. Emphasizes “incarnational learning,” meaning that biblical knowledge and understanding are to show up in one’s life.
- d. Emphasizes that as people are discipled, we will identify those called to “vocational ministry” who will then be appropriately trained.
- e. Recognizes that discipling believers and training leaders are most effective when

presented through a combination of three *ongoing* venues—**formal discipleship and training** (classroom-type training), **non-formal discipleship and training** (conferences, seminars, conventions, church services, reading), and **informal discipleship and training** (mentoring, apprenticeship-type training, day-to-day life-based discipleship) *Discipleship and leadership training are only as effective as the practice of all three venues.*

2. **THE DLT MODULES (Courses)**—in order to address the NSA finding regarding “doctrinal drift,” and to provide content for making disciples and training leaders for nations where content is lacking, DLT has written ten modules. There is also a DLT global writing team which continues to write modules (following the methodology of the original FMI In-Service Leadership Training [ILT]).

The eleven modules to date (January 2023) are—

- *Foundational Understanding of Discipleship/The Four-Stage Missiology*
- *Developing Transformational Leaders/Disciple-Making Made Simple*
- *Hermeneutics*
- *Grace and Spiritual Formation*
- *Church Leadership (updated 2023)*
- *Holy Spirit Fullness (Baptism with the Holy Spirit)*
- *Kingdom of God*
- *Grace and Legalism*
- *Ecclesiology*
- *Family*
- *Evangelism and Global Missions*

In addition, churches/nations could add their own modules/courses, or use recognized Foursquare discipleship and leadership training materials, such as *Operation Solid Life*, *Doing What Jesus Did*, *The Journey...* with the hope that “the DLT Engine” would “drive” whatever discipleship or leadership content is used.

Kingdom of God

Larry Powers

I. Course Description:

The Kingdom of God is a study of the Old Testament and New Testament perspectives on the Kingdom of God. The goal is to understand what Jesus taught about the Kingdom as the foundation for an effective Spirit-empowered life and ministry. The approach is to let the Scriptures speak for themselves, focusing especially on the Gospels in light of their original setting.

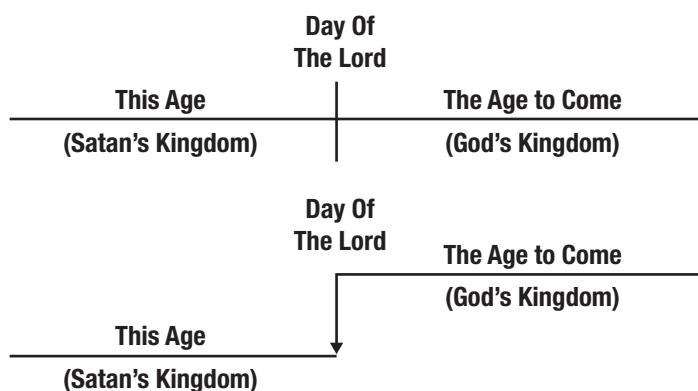
II. Course Objectives:

- A. To examine the teaching and development of the kingdom of God in the Old Testament as a background for the teaching and ministry of Jesus.
- B. To study the message and ministry of Jesus about the kingdom of God with a primary focus on the Synoptic Gospels.
- C. To develop an understanding of the kingdom of God as the foundation for an effective Spirit-empowered life and ministry.
- D. To see how the worldview of the kingdom of God is the basic theological framework of the entire New Testament.

III. Course Outline:

- o What was the central message of Jesus? (Matthew 4:17, 23; 9:35; Luke 4:43)
- o To understand Jesus we must know about the Kingdom of God.
 - A. The MEANING of the Kingdom
 1. The Background of the Kingdom
 - o What was the “Worldview” of the Jews in the days of Jesus?
 - o Eschatological Dualism - Two Ages: “This Age” / the “Age to Come”
(Matthew 12:32; Mark 10:29-30; Ephesians 1:21)
 - o To understand this “Worldview” you must go back into the Old Testament
 - o In the Old Testament God is the “King” (Psalm 47:1-2, 7-8; Psalm 145:13)
 - o God created man to have dominion over all He created (Genesis 1:26, 28)
 - o In sinning against God, man forfeited his dominion (Genesis 3), and this world became Satan’s domain (2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19)

- o But God promised that one day an “Anointed” Deliverer would come to destroy Satan and restore God’s Rulership (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 9:6-7; Zechariah 14:9)
- o This Age: Marked by Evil, Sickness, Death - Satan’s Domain
- o The Age To Come: Marked by Good, Health, Life - God’s Domain
- o The promised Deliverer would usher in God’s Kingdom at the “Day of the Lord” (Joel 1:15; 2:1; 2:30-32; Daniel 7:13-14)



More Information: *Kingdom of God* (Matsdorf) - “Creation of Humankind,” “The Fall of Humankind,” “Sin,” and “Satan”

2. The Definition of the Kingdom
 - o What does the “Kingdom of God” mean? God’s Rule
 - o English - *Kingdom* = “King’s Dominion or Domain”
 - o Hebrew - *Malkut* / Greek - *Basileia* = God’s royal reign, rule, or dominion over His realm of rule
 - o Are there two kingdoms? (Matthew 19:23-24)
- (Compare Matthew 13:31 and Mark 4:30-31)

More Information: *Kingdom of God* (Matsdorf) - “The Kingdom of God Defined”; and “Conclusions”

B. The MESSAGE of the Kingdom

1. The Preaching of the Kingdom

What was the message of John the Baptist and Jesus?

- o John (Matthew 3:1-3, 11:11-15) (Malachi 3:5-6)
- o Jesus (Matthew 4:17, 23; Luke 4:43)

2. The Purpose of the Kingdom

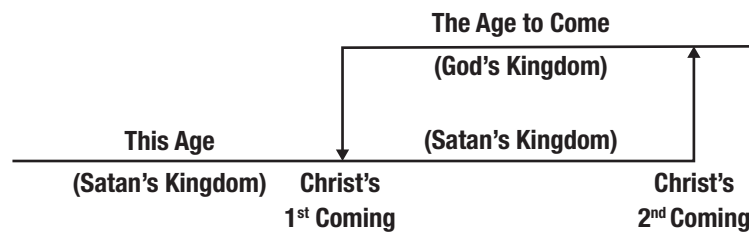
Why did Jesus come to bring God's kingdom?

Reconciliation / Restoration (Luke 15:1-3; 15:8-10; 15:11-31)

(Colossians 1:13-14)

3. The Paradox of the Kingdom

- o The Kingdom of God is Present (Luke 17:20-21; Matthew 21:31)
- o The Kingdom of God Future (Luke 19:11; 21:31; 22:16,18)
- o The Kingdom is "Now and Not Yet"
- o There is an Overlap of the Two Ages / The Presence of the Future



More Information: *Kingdom of God* (Matsdorf) - "The Purpose of the Kingdom of God;" "The Presence of the Kingdom;" and "The Kingdom Already... Not Yet"

C. The MYSTERY of the Kingdom

1. Five Truths / Eight Parables

- o What was the purpose of the parables? (Matthew 13:10-17)
- o How do we interpret the parables?
 - a. The Kingdom's Entry - It Depends of Man's Response
The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-10, 19-32)
 - b. The Kingdom's Effect - It Creates A Mixed Society
The Parable of the Tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43)
The Parable of the Dragnet (Matthew 13:47-50)
 - c. The Kingdom's End - Small Beginning / Great End
The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)
The Parable of the Leaven (Matthew 13:33)
 - d. The Kingdom's Excellence - It's Worth Everything To Enter It
The Parable of the Treasure (Matthew 13:44)
The Parable of the Pearl (Matthew 13:45-46)

- e. The Kingdom's Explanation - It Grows Supernaturally
 - The Parable of the Self-Growing Seed* (Mark 4:26-29)
 - The Teacher of the Kingdom* (Matthew 13:51-52)
 - More Information: *Kingdom of God* (Matsdorf) - "Eight Major Kingdom Parables"
- 2. The Kingdom and the Church
 - The Church is Not the Kingdom!*
 - a. The Kingdom Creates the Church (Matthew 16:18)
 - b. The Church Witnesses to the Kingdom (Matthew 16:15-18; 24:14)
 - c. The Church is the Instrument of the Kingdom (Matthew 10:8)
(Luke 10:17)
 - d. The Church is a Custodian of the Kingdom (Matthew 16:19;
Luke 11:52)
 - More Information: *Kingdom of God* (Matsdorf) - "Ambassadors of God's Kingdom."
- 3. The God of the Kingdom
 - a. The Seeking God (Luke 15)
 - b. The Inviting God (Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 14:15-24)
 - c. The Fatherly God (Matthew 6:9; 13:43; Luke 15:11-24)
 - d. The Judging God (Matthew 25:34, 41)
- 4. The King of the Kingdom
 - a. The "Son of David" - Matthew (Matthew 1:1; 20:31; Isaiah 9:6-7)
 - b. The "Suffering Servant" - Mark (Mark 10:45; Isaiah 42:1; 52:13)
 - c. The "Son of Man" - Luke (Luke 19:10; Daniel 7:13-14)
 - d. The "Son of God" - John (John 20:31)
- D. The MANDATE of the Kingdom
 - 1. Entering the Kingdom
 - a. We Must Have God's Righteousness (Matthew 5:20)
 - b. We Must Be Born Again (John 3:5)
 - c. We Must Repent and Believe (Mark 1:15)
 - d. We Must Give Up All to Follow Jesus (Matthew 16:24-26)
 - o A Radical Response (Matthew 11:12; Luke 16:16; Mark 9:43-47)
 - o A Resolute Response (Luke 9:57-62)
 - 2. Living in the Kingdom
 - a. Blessings and the Kingdom (Matthew 5:3-10)

- b. Provision and the Kingdom (Matthew 6:33)
- c. Forgiveness and the Kingdom (Matthew 6:12, 14-15; Matthew 18:21-35)
- d. Greatness and the Kingdom (Matthew 20:25-28) (John 13:1-17)
More Information: *Kingdom of God* (Matsdorf) – “Discipleship;” “Kingdom Ethics”

E. The MIGHT of the Kingdom

- 1. The Temptation of Jesus (Luke 4:1-13)
 - 2. The Announcement of Jesus (Luke 4:18-21) (1 John 3:8)
 - 3. The Exorcisms of Jesus (Luke 4:32-37, 41)
 - 4. The Healings of Jesus (Luke 4:38-41; Matthew 12:28-29)
- More Information: *Kingdom of God* (Matsdorf) - “Resistances to the Kingdom;” “Jesus’ Temptation”; “Jesus’ Exorcisms.”

F. The MISSION of the Kingdom

- 1. The Preaching / Power of the Kingdom (Matthew 10:7-8)
(Luke 10:1, 9, 17-19)
- 2. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; John 20:21)

G. The MINISTRY of the Kingdom

Kingdom Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) (Luke 11:1-10; Luke 18:1-5) (1 Corinthians 14:15)
More Information: *Kingdom of God* (Matsdorf) – “Ambassadors of God’s Kingdom;” “Kingdom Prayer;” “Shameless Audacity and Persistence in Prayer;” “The Lord’s Prayer”

H. The MINDSET of the Kingdom

- o Ladd - “Eschatological dualism is the substructure of redemptive history.”
- o Fee - “The basic theological framework of the entire New Testament is eschatological.”

o The two ages and their overlap is the “mindset” of the New Testament

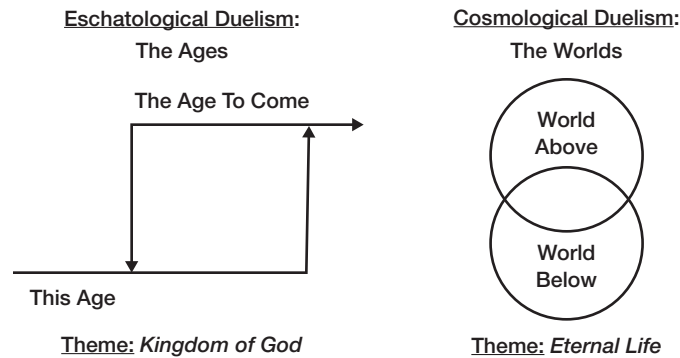
Synoptic Gospels: Two Ages (Eschatological Dualism) / Kingdom of God

Gospel of John: Kingdom of God - John 3:3, 5

Cosmological Dualism (Two Worlds) / Eternal Life

John 8:23; John 17:14-16

John 3:16; 20:31



Book of Acts:

The Kingdom of God / Eternal Life

An Eschatological Event = The Resurrection (Acts 2:31-32; 4:10)



An Eschatological Message = The Gospel (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 16:31)



An Eschatological Gift = The Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17; 2:38-39)



An Eschatological Community = The Church (Acts 2:46-47)

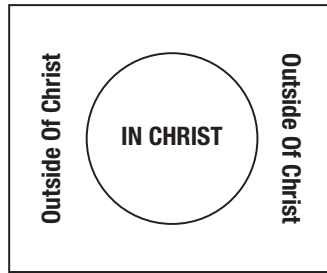
Epistles of Paul:

Two Ages / The Kingdom of God
(Ephesians 1:21) (1 Corinthians 4:20)

Two Worlds / Eternal Life
(Galatians 1:4) (Romans 6:23)

A Christological Dualism = In Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Christological Dualism:



Theme: Believers "In Christ"

Hebrews / General Epistles:

Two Ages / Kingdom	Two Worlds / Life
Hebrews 6:5; 9:26	Hebrews 9:23-24
James 2:5	James 1:17; 3:15-17
1 Peter 5:10	1 Peter 2:5
2 Peter 1:11	2 Peter 1:4
1 John 2:28; 3:2	1 John 2:15-17
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Revelation 11:15; 21:4-5	

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Kingdom of God

Gary Matsdorf

INTRODUCTION—

This module on the Kingdom of God is written for three purposes—1) to present a biblical and linguistic understanding of the meaning of “the kingdom of God” in Scripture; 2) to present key aspects of His kingdom, especially as taught by Jesus; and 3) to make personal and pastoral application of how Jesus intends His disciples to personally participate in His kingdom and minister its life to others. In order to most clearly understand these purposes, we must begin with God’s original plan for humankind (Genesis 1-2), and the effects of the Fall on that original plan (Genesis 3).

CREATION OF HUMANKIND (Genesis 1-2)—

The Bible opens by stating that **in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth** (Genesis 1:1). The capstone of His creation was the creation of human beings. Regarding the creation of Adam, we are told that **the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground** (Genesis 2:7); **formed** in the original Hebrew refers to artistic, inventive activity that requires skill and planning. Regarding Eve’s creation, Genesis states that **the Lord God made¹ a woman from the rib². He had taken out of the man** (Genesis 2:22); **made** in the original Hebrew “implies beauty, stability, and durability.”³ Thus, **male and female He created them** (Genesis 1:27).

As human beings, we were originally created to rule the world on God’s behalf, devoting ourselves to its welfare as His mediatorial agents.

Of all of creation, Adam and Eve were unique—**God said, “Let us make human beings in Our image, in Our likeness”** (Genesis 1:27). In other words, God gave human beings the ability and privilege of knowing, serving and loving Him—of displaying His attributes of reason, will and personality—and of showing the rest of creation what He is like as they fulfilled His command to **“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the**

¹. Or **creatively built**.

². Or **side**, indicating God took both flesh and bone.

³. Hamilton, Victor, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17—The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, October 1991 reprint, pg. 179.

In the Fall, the privilege of rulership over God's creation was forfeited to Satan, which is why John notes **the whole world is under the control of the evil one**.

sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Genesis 1:28).⁴ Genesis also notes that **God blessed them** (Genesis 1:28), meaning He gave Adam and Eve the promise that He would enable them to do what He asked, if they would obey.

A major key to understanding the Bible's teaching on the kingdom of God is the fact that the Lord created human beings **so that they may rule** over His creation (Genesis 1:26). As human beings, we were *originally* created to rule the world on God's behalf, devoting ourselves to its welfare as His mediatorial agents (*cf.* Psalm 72:12-14).

THE FALL OF HUMANKIND (Genesis 3)—

Everything changes beginning in Genesis 3. We have what is commonly termed, "The Fall of Humankind." The Fall stems from the only prohibition God gave Adam, who was told *not* to eat "**from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**" (Genesis 2:17). Eating of **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil** represented assuming one of God's roles by "seeking to gain for themselves the prerogative of determining what was good and what was evil."⁵ This is contrary to the trust relationship God wants with humankind, which was why Adam and Eve could not eat of it. If they did eat, they would **certainly die**.⁶ Their disobedience was prompted by the shrewdness of **the serpent** (Genesis 3:1), an unclean animal in the Jewish religious system that became an anti-God symbol in much of the Old Testament (see Leviticus 11). Centuries later, John informs us that behind **the serpent** was Satan himself, **the deceiver of the whole world** (Revelation 12:9).⁷

In the Fall, the privilege of rulership over God's creation was forfeited to Satan, which is why John notes **the whole world is under the control of the evil one** (I John 5:19). This is how Satan gained the authority over **all the kingdoms of the world** with which he has operated throughout history. He

⁴ The special nature of God's view of humankind is further seen in the fact that He fellowshiped and communicated with Adam and Eve directly (Genesis 3:8-11).

⁵ Hartley, John E., *Genesis—New International Biblical Commentary*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, January 2002 second printing, pg. 67.

⁶ The Bible later develops "**you will certainly die**" to mean both physical death and "relational death"—i.e., separation from God, disunity among fellow human beings and abuse of Creation.

⁷ Eve was the first to be deceived; **she took some [of the fruit] and ate it** (Genesis 3:6). **She also gave some to her husband...and he ate it** (Genesis 3:6). Although aware of Eve's role (*cf.* 1 Timothy 2:14), Paul states that it was Adam's disobedience that brought about the destructive consequences—**through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners** (Romans 5:19; see also Genesis 3:7).

self-acknowledged this authority to Jesus saying, **“I will give You all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me and I can give it to anyone I want to”** (Luke 4:6).

- *The original order of [humankind’s] environment on Earth must be distinguished from what it became following the impact of [humankind’s] fall, the curse, and the eventual deluge (Is. 45:18; Rom. 8:20; 2 Pet. 3:4-7)... the perfect will of God, as founding King of creation, is not manifest in the presence of death, disease, discord, and disaster any more than it is manifest in human sin. Our present world does not reflect the kingdom order He originally intended for [humankind’s] enjoyment on Earth, nor does it reflect God’s kingdom as it shall ultimately be experienced on this planet.*⁸

Following their failure, God endeavored to seek out Adam and Eve to help them with their dilemma (Genesis 3:8-9). (This is the beginning of the influence of the kingdom of God in the Earth.) However, their guilt prompted them to hide (Genesis 3:10). When God began questioning them (His intent was to bring redemption to the situation), they chose to deny personal responsibility and shift blame (Genesis 3:12-14). Adam even tried to blame God Himself—**“The woman You put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree...”** (vs. 12, emphasis mine). Denial is a characteristic of fallen humankind and one thing Jesus hates (Revelation 3:17).

As a result of the Fall, God addressed some major consequences Satan and humankind would face (Genesis 3:14-19). These consequences help further define the death spoken of in Genesis 3:3. There are three basic consequences listed —

- The serpent (Satan) was cursed; however, with the curse a promise was given humankind that he would be ultimately overthrown by the woman’s Offspring (Genesis 3:15). This verse is generally considered the Bible’s first promise of a coming Messiah, and references God’s blessing and hope in the midst of tragedy.⁹
- Because there is no direct God-given curse on the man or the woman, this is generally seen as God describing a consequence of the Fall, namely, suffering and sorrow in childbearing and in human relationships. The precise meaning of **“your desire will be for your husband”** (Genesis 3:16) is debated;¹⁰ what is agreed upon, however, is that a consequence of

⁸ Hayford, Jack W, *Spirit Filled Life Bible*, **Kingdom Dynamics on Genesis 1:31**, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1991, pg. 6.

⁹ Theologians often reference Genesis 3:15 as, The Protoevangelium (“the first Good News”).

¹⁰ There are various interpretive views of **“your desire will be for your husband.”** Among them are—1) it means that some wives will be tempted to dominate their husband; and 2) it means that some wives, because of their **desire** for their

the Fall is brokenness within all levels of relationships, beginning with marriage and the family.

- A man's fundamental roles as laborer and provider were marred; the ground was cursed and hence, work will be with great difficulty and a sense of futility (Genesis 3:17-19).

Sin is a generic term used to describe our condition of failing to do what God intends to be done or thought in any given situation.

Additionally, as the Story of the Bible unfolds, we learn that because fellowship between God and humankind was broken, all human beings are destined to eternity separated from God, unless they personally receive Jesus Christ (Revelation 20:15). Furthermore, this broken relationship manifests itself now in human beings *by nature* living lives **gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts** (Ephesians 2:3). Paul also alludes to Genesis 3:17-21 in

Romans 8, stating that **the creation was subjected to frustration...[and] bondage to decay** (Romans 8:20-21), which accounts in part for why so much of life often seems frustrating and futile.

husband, will find it difficult to leave a marriage even when the husband is domineering and abusive. See Hartley, John, *Genesis—New International Biblical Commentary*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 2000, pp. 69-70;

SIN—

Sin is a generic term used to describe our condition of failing to do what God intends to be done or thought in any given situation. Sin entered the human race with the Fall and our participation in it hinders us in life (see Deuteronomy 6:3). Because of our inherent sinful nature (flesh),¹¹ no human being is exempt from sinning—**all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God** (Romans 3:23).

Jesus' ministry substantially curbed Satan's power and influence.

As stated, sin manifests itself in both action and attitude (*cf.* Galatians 5:19-21A); it hurts God (Ephesians 4:30), leads to the dissolution of the soul (James 5:20) and injures both oneself (Romans 1:27) and others (Galatians 5:15). God sent Jesus so that **sin shall no longer be your master** (Romans 6:14).¹²

What drives sin is a desire to put “self” at the center of all of life; again, it is an intrinsic dynamic, which manifests itself in selfish acts and attitudes such as those defined in Galatians 5:19-21A. Sin does not want to be controlled by anyone, especially not by God. This is why Paul likens our battle with it to that of a war (Galatians 5:17).

SATAN—

Satan is a personal name derived from a Hebrew root meaning, *Adversary*. Apparently he was originally an angelic being known as **Lucifer** (Isaiah 14:12). Other biblical names are **Beelzebub** (possibly “lord prince” or “lord of the flies”), **Belial**, the enemy, the tempter, the prince of demons, the evil one and the god of this age. A generic title, which has come to be a proper name of sorts, is “Devil,” derived from a Greek root meaning, slanderer, deceiver, accuser or one who brings charges with hostile intent.

Though conservative scholars are divided as to how to best interpret Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:11-19 (see *apparently* above), many feel they give insight into Satan's fall. Addressed originally to the kings of Babylon and Tyre, the passages' long-range implications seemingly refer to Satan and his fall from heaven.¹³ He sinned by attempting to ascend to divine supremacy (Isaiah 14:13-14) and was cast down

¹¹ The Greek word is *sarx*.

¹² When one receives Jesus, their **old self [is] crucified with Him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with** (Romans 6:6). As a result, **sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace** (Romans 6:14). Paul does not mean we will never sin again (*cf.* 1 John 1:8); nor does he mean anything happens *per se* to our basic tendency to sin. There is still within us a sin force, which the Bible calls by various names—the flesh/sinful nature (*sarx*), ego, old self, old heart or the “I” of Romans 7:7-23. Our life in the kingdom of God in part entails learning how to be free from sin's mastery.

¹³ “In short, Ezekiel saw the work and activity of Satan, whom the king of Tyre was emulating in so many ways.” Feinberg,

by God from his exalted position among the angels (Ezekiel 28:15-17).¹⁴ 2 Peter 2:4 tells us that other angels were involved as well.¹⁵

Rather than annihilate him, God entered into battle with Satan on the pages of human history; this battle will not be over until the end of human history as we know it, at which time Satan will be **thrown into the lake of burning sulfur**¹⁶ (Revelation 20:10). He stands behind the scenes of life, angry with God's people and making war against us (Revelation 12). He allies with our inherent sinful nature through a wide variety of strategies **to steal and kill and destroy** (John 10:10).¹⁷

It is interesting to note that not much is said of Satan in the Old Testament. He is only directly mentioned three times (1 Chronicles 21:1; Job 1; Zechariah 3:1-2) and indirectly referenced in the Fall (Genesis 3:1). Not so on the pages of the New Testament. The pages of history just before Jesus' coming clearly show an increase in satanic influence in the world and Jesus encountered Satan nearly every day of His ministry. Even the Pharisees were involved in exorcisms (Matthew 12:27).¹⁸ This was obviously part of God's sovereign preparation for His Son's coming (Galatians 4:4).

Jesus' ministry substantially curbed Satan's power and influence (Matthew 12:22-31; Colossians 2:15).¹⁹ He can now be resisted (1 Peter 5:8-9) and his schemes can be detected (2 Corinthians 2:11). He will be further curbed at Jesus' Second Coming (Revelation 20:1-4), and then banished to eternity in hell following the Millennium.

Charles, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel*, Moody Press, Chicago, IL, 1972 printing, pg. 161.

¹⁴ The Bible is silent on the matter of how it was he found it in his heart to be so inclined. We know nothing about him from his fall to his appearance in the Garden to deceive Adam and Eve.

¹⁵ These fallen angels are referred to in the Bible as demons, evil spirits, elemental spirits and **the rulers... the authorities...powers of this dark world...and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms** (Ephesians 6:12).

¹⁶ This is another name for hell.

¹⁷ His more common strategies include blinding people to the truth of the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4); hurling all types of assaults at Christians to cause panic and fear (Ephesians 6:16); creating self-condemnation (1 John 3:18-22); luring us with temptation (1 Thessalonians 3:5); and snatching away from hearts the impact of the message of the kingdom of God (Mark 4:15).

¹⁸ The matter of how it is God empowered the erring Pharisees to perform exorcisms is not discussed. Again, it is merely assumed without explanation.

¹⁹ Hebrews 2:14-15 also addresses the matter of his being curbed with reference to scaring people about dying—**since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.**

THE KINGDOM OF GOD DEFINED—

The Hebrew word translated **kingdom** in our English Bibles (*malekut*) means royalty, royal power, reign or kingdom.²⁰ It is related to the verb *malak*, which means to reign as a king.

Malekut always emphasized Yahweh's royal reign or dominion over His realm of rule (Psalms 96:10-13; 145:11). To understand the kingdom of God in the Bible is to understand that God invades history and works among His people to accomplish His purposes. Following creation, God did not abandon Earth; He remains its Sovereign Ruler, intending that His rulership be exercised through authority delegated to humankind (Genesis 1:28). The Fall interrupted this original plan, but even with the Fall God did not abandon humankind. He chose to invade history and work (primarily through His people) to cause His purposes to reign over and against the purposes of Satan (Genesis 3:17).

God's sovereign rule embodied itself in the person of Jesus Christ, who ushered in His reign at a level unparalleled in human experience.

About 1950 BC, God chose to more centralize His reign; He called Abram and established the Hebrew peoples as the primary agents of His delegated rule on Earth (Genesis 12:1-3), though never abandoning His role as general Sovereign of Earth/the universe. Nearly 1000 years after delegating His reign uniquely through Abraham, God made King David the special promise of a Davidic ancestor, whose established kingdom would be forever (1 Chronicles 17:10B-15).

- *The significance of this message for biblical thought, Judaism, and Christianity can hardly be overestimated. From this time forward it will be impossible for the Messiah to be considered anything less than David's descendant, and when messianic thoughts are expressed, it will be most commonly in terms related to David and his family...It is in that light that the New Testament pictures Jesus as the son of David (cf. Matt. 1:1) and relates His birth in Bethlehem (Matt. 1:6). It is in that faith too that the church celebrates the rule of Jesus the Christ, whose kingdom will have no end.*²¹

During the inter-testamental period (*ca.* 430-6 BC), Israel heightened her expectation of God's reign coming to her through this promised Davidic Messiah. She looked eagerly for God to break into

²⁰ Brown, Francis, et al, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, UK, 1977 reprint, pg. 574.

²¹ Braun, Roddy, *1 Chronicles—Word Biblical Commentary*, Word Books, Publisher, Waco, TX, 1986, pg. 200.

human history in a new and dynamic, eschatological way—thoroughly judging evil, bringing about repentance and establishing an earthly, Davidic monarchy to overthrow Israel’s political enemies.

- *The prophets announced a day when men will live together in peace. God shall then **judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more** (Isaiah 2:4). Not only shall the problems of human society be solved, but the evils of man’s physical environment shall be no more...peace, safety, security—all this was promised for the happy future.²²*
- *The disciples had an ethnocentric focus on Israel’s military-political ascendancy that was far too small. It needed to be expanded to worldwide, even cosmic, dimensions. In order to coincide with the Father’s plan, their mental picture of the Messiah’s kingdom would have to be magnified far beyond the boundaries of their imagination.²³*

It was the centrality of the kingdom in Jesus’ ministry that prompted Matthew to summarize by stating that **Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom.**

Against the backdrop of this expectation, John the Baptist appeared proclaiming, “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near**” (Matthew 3:2). For John, the Messiah and the message of God’s kingdom (*basileia*) would be inseparably linked, even as promised to David. *Basileia* is the Greek equivalent of *malekut*. It is related to *basileuo*—to be king or to rule as king. *Basileia* therefore means kingship, royal power, royal rule or (in some instances) the territory ruled over by a king. “The expression ‘kingdom of God’ basically denotes the sovereign Lordship of God over His people or over the world which He had made.”²⁴

God’s sovereign rule embodied itself in the person of Jesus Christ, who ushered in His reign at a level unparalleled in human experience. This is why Gabriel informed Mary that “**...His kingdom will never end**” (Luke 1:33). “Jesus’ message is that in his own person and mission God

has invaded human history and has triumphed over evil, even though the final deliverance will occur only at the end of the age.”²⁵ *The final deliverance...at the end of the age* is key to understanding the

²² Ladd, George, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 2000 reprint, pg. 14.

²³ Johnson, Dennis, *The Message of Acts in the History of Redemption*, P & R Publishing, Phillipsburg, NJ, 1997, pg. 35.

²⁴ Richardson, Alan, *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, NY, 1977 printing, pg. 119.

²⁵ Ladd, George, *A Theology of the New Testament—Revised Edition*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand

kingdom of God in the ministry of Jesus; He radically modified the Old Testament time line of “the Day of the Lord,” teaching that it will come in phases. In other words, God’s kingdom is *both present and future*, with God’s people having to live within the tension of the “already...not yet” (the time between His resurrection until the post-millennial fullness of the Age to Come).²⁶

Examples of Jesus emphasizing the “already” presence of the kingdom include—**1)** His significant statement to the Pharisees in response to their query as to when the kingdom of God was coming (Luke 17:20)—“**The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is in your midst**” (Luke 17:20-21); and **2)** His response to the Pharisees’ calumny that He was an agent of Satan—“**...if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you**” (Matthew 12:28).

His “not yet” references to the kingdom’s future aspects include—**1)** His promise of a future kingly rulership to the Twelve—“**Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel**” (Matthew 19:28); and **2)** His promise to all His disciples that everyone who has sacrificed for Him and the gospel will “**receive a hundred times as much in this present age... and in the age to come eternal life**” (Mark 10:30).

It was the centrality of the kingdom in Jesus’ ministry that prompted Matthew to summarize by stating that **Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom** (Matthew 4:23).

CONCLUSIONS—

- In both testaments, the concept behind kingdom is divine reign. “The two testaments are organically linked to each other...and the bond that binds them together is the dynamic concept of the rule of God.”²⁷
- The kingdom of God is a comprehensive term for all that messianic salvation was prophesied to include.

Rapids, MI, 2000 reprint, pg. 65.

²⁶ The eschatological judgment for which Israel was looking at the time of Jesus’ appearance (“the Day of the Lord”) has been suspended in human history until the end of the Millennium. This is why Jesus’ quote of Isaiah 61:1-2A in Luke 4:18-19 stopped short of Isaiah 61:2B—**to proclaim the day of vengeance of our God**.

²⁷ Bright, John, *The Kingdom of God*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN, 1981, pp. 196-197.

- The gospels portray the kingdom of God as a new activity by God in the Person of Jesus Christ.
- This dynamic reign is both present and future (eschatological).
- The present/future reality of the kingdom of God creates an “already...not yet” tension that affects all facets of a believer’s life.
- The kingdom of God, of heaven, of the Lord, et al denote one and the same kingdom—the dynamic reign of Almighty God in and through His people in history.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- o How does this module define “the kingdom of God”?
- o Considering this definition, how might you “rephrase” Matthew 3:2?
- o What is the theological concept of “already/not yet” as it applies to the kingdom of God? Why is this concept vital for Christians to understand?
- o According to this module, is there a theological difference between “the kingdom of God” and “the kingdom of heaven”?

EIGHT MAJOR KINGDOM PARABLES—

- i. **The Parable of the Sower** (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23). In this parable, Jesus teaches that the kingdom message is met with varying levels of success in the human heart. It is neither accepted nor rejected *carte blanche*—nor does any individual’s heart always respond the same. This parable had significant impact in its historical setting. The Jews were awaiting a dynamic, apocalyptic kingdom to entirely destroy evil and all evil powers (see Daniel 2:44; 7:27; Acts 1:6). They had no conception of a servant-oriented kingdom coming to, as it were, quietly invade evil. They also had no conception of its success being dependent on human response. This parable also teaches the presence of the kingdom now (vs. 4).

The chief end of salvation is not only what “I receive,” but, “What I am able to become and then do for the Lord.”

- ii. **The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds** (Matthew 13:24-30). The teaching here is eschatological. The eschatological, consummated future kingdom (the Age to Come) will be different from the present dynamic of the kingdom in that it will not be surrounded by evil and it will come apocalyptically, rather than quietly. Furthermore, at this present time the sons of the kingdom and the sons of the evil one live side-by-side in a mixed society. The kingdom does not currently interrupt the basic nature of society, though the people of the kingdom can influence it.

- *The separation of the wicked from the righteous will take place only at the harvest—the judgment. Then **all causes of sin and all evildoers** will be excluded from the kingdom of God and will suffer the divine judgment, while **the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.***²⁸

- i. **The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven** (Matthew 13:31-35). Here, Jesus teaches the contrasting magnitude of the present kingdom and the consummated kingdom. At present, the kingdom is relatively insignificant but it will be mighty in consummation (*cf.* 1 Corinthians 15:20-28). Its tiny beginning will have a great end, so that no rival sovereignty exists.²⁹

²⁸ Ladd, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

²⁹ A common misinterpretation of these parables is to emphasize the growing elements and see the central truth as the fact that the kingdom grows and will eventually permeate all of society. Nowhere in the New Testament is the kingdom said to grow. Its membership increases (Matthew 8:11), but the kingdom itself is never said to grow. The next phase of its dynamic release awaits the Parousia.

- *These parables are important. Over against the mighty numbers of the worshipers of heathen gods and even of the Jews who acknowledge the true God, those who proclaimed the kingdom were a tiny minority. Jesus teaches them not to be hypnotized by size. These tiny beginnings would grow into something greater by far than any of the religions found in the disciples' contemporary world.*³⁰
- i. **The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl** (Matthew 13:44-45). We learn here that the kingdom is invaluable. It is found primarily as one seeks it; it can be found now; and finding it is worth sacrificing anything anyone has.
 - ii. **The Parable of the Dragnet** (Matthew 13:47-52). In this parable, Jesus teaches that the invitation of the kingdom is to all humankind—not just to the Jewish people.
- Discipleship is Jesus' call to totally attach oneself to Him; to follow Him with the intent to direct one's whole existence toward the will of God.
- *The comparison of the kingdom of heaven to a fishing scene reminds us of the calling of the disciples to "fish for people" in 4:19...their net is cast over a wide cross-section of people, and while the message saves some, it will leave others unconvinced; those who have failed to respond to it are presumably among the "bad fish" of this parable.*³¹
- i. **The Parable of the Seed Growing by Itself** (Mark 4:26-29). This parable in Mark teaches that the kingdom is God's work. Its presence and working are supernatural; man is an agent in the kingdom, but its divine activity is solely God's.
- *Apart from sowing, the only human activity in this parable is waiting in faith, confident of a harvest to come (see Jas 5:7). The coming of the kingdom of God is likened to a process of growth but a process strangely independent of human activity. Despite inauspicious beginnings and the absence of human involvement, the seed contains within itself fruit-bearing potential.*³²

³⁰ Morris, Leon, *The Gospel According To Matthew—The Pillar New Testament Commentary Series*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992, pg. 351.

³¹ France, R.T., *The Gospel of Matthew—The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2007, pg. 542.

³² Edwards, James, *The Gospel According To Mark—The Pillar New Testament Commentary Series*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, pg. 143.

THE PURPOSE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD—

Let's begin by going back to a basic question, "What God is primarily up to in the salvation process?" We have established that Jesus brought the kingdom of God into human history in a new and unparallel manner. He wrestled with Satan and the kingdom of darkness, freeing humankind to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:19). Reconciliation is at the core of the kingdom message, because God knows that humankind finds its ultimate value *only* in terms of relationship to God (see Mark 12:28-34 and Luke 12:13-21). **But what are we to do *fundamentally* as a result of this restored relationship?**

The New Testament answer is found succinctly in Ephesians 1; it ties into God's original purpose in creating humankind (Isaiah 43:6-7). We were redeemed, **rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins** (Colossians 1:13-14), so as to live **for the praise of His glory** (Ephesians 1:12). The chief end of salvation is not only what "I receive," but, "What I am able to become and then do for the Lord." As redeemed children of the kingdom, we are able to magnify Him, exalt Him, praise Him, honor Him, be changed into His likeness and serve Him (see Isaiah 48:9-11; Romans 9:22-24, 11:36 and 15:7-13).

This is why at the heart of our walk with Jesus we must maintain a servant perspective (Luke 17:7-10), motivated by a response to His love. "As the one who is unimaginably supreme over us, he deserves our total loyalty and unstinting obedience."³³

DISCIPLESHIP—

Jesus' concept of discipleship reiterates this same truth. Discipleship is Jesus' call to totally attach oneself to Him; to follow Him with the intent to direct one's whole existence toward the will of God. Disciples are lifelong learners, who grow increasingly accustomed to God and His priorities; discipleship involves personal change—**be transformed by the renewing of your mind** (Romans 12:2). Simply put, "A disciple is someone who's being made different through relationship with Jesus."

Disciples are motivated by God's love (1 John 4:9); in addition to serving as noted above, disciples exhibit their discipleship by love for others (John 13:35) and by moral obedience (Psalm 119:101). Matthew's details regarding Jesus' call of two sets of brothers give an interesting insight into discipleship (Matthew 4:18-22). He notes that when Peter and Andrew were called, **at once they left their nets and followed Him** (vs. 20). When James and John were called, **immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Him** (vs. 22). **And their father** is an important detail in that it indicates

³³. Nolland, John, *Luke 9:21-18:34—Word Biblical Commentary*, Word Books, Publisher, Dallas, TX, 1993, pp. 842-843.

that discipleship involves varied particulars; Jesus manages the specifics of our discipleship on an individual basis.

One thing is common to discipleship, however. It is not easy, as noted by one of Jesus' more famous statements—**“Whoever wants to be My disciples must deny themselves and take up their cross³⁴ and follow Me”** (Matthew 16:24). This personal stretch and difficulty are balanced with the comforting reassurance that Christ will equip us for the challenges we face—**“Come, follow Me, and I will send you out to fish for people”** (Matthew 4:19, emphasis added).

As ambassadors and agents for His kingdom, we preach and teach truths regarding the kingdom and demonstrate its mighty works.

- *Following Jesus means togetherness with him and service to him while traveling on the Way...the goal of discipleship toward self is “become like Christ”...the process of becoming like Jesus brings the disciple into intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and, as such, is the goal of individual discipleship...the goal toward others is servanthood...authentic discipleship entails selfless servanthood...the goal of discipleship toward the world is the Great Commission...[believers] are to make disciples of all the nations (Matt. 28:16-20). To “make disciples” is to proclaim the gospel message among those who have not yet received forgiveness of sins.³⁵*

³⁴. “Taking up one’s cross does not mean assuming burdens. The cross is not a burden but an instrument of death. The taking of the cross means the death of self, of personal ambition and self-centered purpose” (George Ladd, *op. cit.*, pg. 130).

³⁵. Wilkins, Michael, *Disciple, Discipleship* in Elwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-177.

AMBASSADORS OF GOD'S KINGDOM—

Among the many privileges of following Jesus is that of being an ambassador or agent for His kingdom. Beginning with Abraham, God has always had a people through whom He ministers His rulership in the Earth to counter the effects of the Fall. Interestingly, Jesus began by calling the Twelve His **“little flock”** (Luke 12:32). This was an expression carried over from the Old Testament where Israel was termed **His flock** (Isaiah 40:11). In using the common designation of **flock**, Jesus showed continuity between Israel's charge to be God's ambassadors for His kingdom in the Earth and the Church's.

As ambassadors and agents for His kingdom, we preach and teach truths regarding the kingdom (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 28:30-31) **and** demonstrate its mighty works (Matthew 10:8; Luke 10:17; *cf.* Genesis 1:28). The Church both preaches and ministers through the delegated power and authority of the Holy Spirit,³⁶ the same Spirit, power and authority that worked through Jesus (Luke 5:17; Acts 1:1).

Jesus references believers as ambassadors of the kingdom, saying, **“I will build My Church, and the gates of death³⁷ will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven”** (Matthew 16:18-19).

- **The gates of death shall not overcome it** references two truths—**1)** the entire realm of evil will never be able to imprison or overthrow the Church (believers),³⁸ and **2)** the Church is to give itself to “rescuing people from the grip of Hades and opening up for them a future in the kingdom of heaven.”³⁹
- **The keys of the kingdom of heaven** references the authority and power given believers to be ambassadors and agents of God's rulership on the Earth. **Keys** finds its origin in Isaiah 22:20-22, where Eliakim became administrator of King David's palace and was given the keys (authoritative access) to the house of David.

³⁶ **Power** references great ability or might that is given to believers by the Holy Spirit to overcome all resistance (Acts 4:33) and to establish kingdom dominion in situations (1 Timothy 6:16). **Authority** references the right and privilege of acting in a delegated capacity (Mark 3:15).

³⁷ Or **the gates of Hades**.

³⁸ “The church as God's eschatological community will never die or come to an end—this despite the imminent death of its founder” (Donald Hagner, *Matthew 14-28—Word Biblical Commentary*, Word Books, Publisher, Dallas, TX, 1995, pg. 472).

³⁹ Nolland, John, *The Gospel of Matthew—The New International Greek Testament Commentary*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2005, pg. 675.

- **The Church exercises this delegated authority and power in part through “binding and loosing.”** A familiar rabbinic idiom, **binding and loosing** is Jesus’ way of saying what we are to do as agents of the kingdom with the power and authority given us, namely, we are to minister God’s rulership in all situations of life to counter the effects of the Fall. As noted above, we do this by proclaiming the Word **and** demonstrating the Spirit’s power. This is in part why Paul said, **my message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power** (1 Corinthians 2:4-5). For example, if someone is demonized, we “bind the demonic influence and loose God’s rulership” as we confront the demon and cast it out. If sin is mastering a Christian, we “bind the sin and loose God’s rulership” by teaching them the truths of Romans 5:20-6:14, and how to appropriate the promise that **sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace** (Romans 6:14).

Kingdom ethics are designed to present us with attitudes that characterize God, as exemplified in the fruit of the Spirit.

- *The biblical motif of the kingdom of God provides the essential theological framework for understanding the contemporary Pentecostal-charismatic phenomenon. The two basic characteristics that mark the age of the church—the witness of Jesus and the activity of the Holy Spirit—are hallmarks of Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity. They exemplify in a remarkable way that the kingdom is known by the dynamic activity of Christ in the church as it proclaims His name in the power of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁰*
- *In short, we are told by our Lord, “Whenever you determine to lay claim to the Father’s counsels as opposed to the adversary’s, you’ll find that earth can have what heaven has already decided on!” Binding is contracting with God. I am saying: “Father, what You have willed, I call forth upon earth!”⁴¹*

⁴⁰. Kuzmic, Peter, in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Burgess and McGee, Editors), Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1988, pg. 526.

⁴¹. Hayford, Jack, *Prayer Is Invading the Impossible*, Bridge-Logos Publishers, North Brunswick, NJ, 2000 reprint and revision, pp. 142-143.

KINGDOM ETHICS—

To appreciate the role of kingdom ethics, we must again remember what happened in the Fall. Among other dynamics, it brought into the DNA of humankind the sinful nature (*sarx*), which characterizes itself by toxic attitudes, as exemplified in Galatians 5:19-21A. Kingdom ethics are designed to present us with the contrasting attitudes that characterize God, as exemplified in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).⁴²

This concept finds its roots in the Old Testament. When God called Israel to Himself, He defined for her a unique ethic that would characterize her as His “**kingdom of priests**” (Exodus 19:6). The New Testament heightens this understanding, reminding us that believers are those who belong to **the Way** (Acts 9:2); they are to live, therefore, according to the *quality-of-life* Jesus defined (John 13:35).

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) is one of Jesus’ most concentrated teaching sections. Its purpose is to highlight key ethics *for those who have come under the personal reign of God* (Matthew 5:1).⁴³ Those outside the reign of the kingdom should hear and may even appreciate these ethics, but they are not fully capable of living them because they do not have the Spirit (Matthew 7:28). The Sermon also reminds us that Jesus taught an ethical continuity between the two covenants—“**Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them**” (Matthew 5:17).

Ethical areas addressed in the Sermon include—

- **The Beatitudes** (Matthew 5:3-12)—nine proverbial sayings, which give insight into key attitudes that bring fortune (fulfillment) or happiness (blessing) in life.
- The need for internal righteousness vs. a mere external adherence to humanly defined and often manipulated ethics (Matthew 5:17-20). Jesus’ teaching here includes learning to distinguish between the **tradition of the elders** and God’s true intent behind His moral code.

⁴². Because such ethics are the *fruit of the Spirit*, they are the ongoing transformational work of the Holy Spirit within believers following justification. Not even Christians can produce this level of life on their own. **And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit** (2 Corinthians 3:18).

⁴³. By this we mean that the Sermon’s principles and practices are clearly for Christians today. These are not ethics reserved only for a future Millennial kingdom. See also Footnote #42.

- The need to mend fractures and maintain loving relationships, including the correlation between the tenderness of our heart and healthy relationships (Matthew 5:21-26).
- The need for sexual restraint, including managing lust that feeds illicit sexual desires (Matthew 5:27-30).
- The need to understand God's view of marriage, divorce, and re-marriage and the regulations He has designed for divorce and re-marriage (Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-12).
- The need to be people whose word can be trusted and whose commitments are acted upon (Matthew 5:33-37). Three areas of commitment need to be especially managed—**1) Casual commitments**—off handed remarks which are well-intentioned but not followed through on; they devalue people and incrementally damage relationships; **2) Work place commitments**—promises made during the interview or pledged as part of the job, which do not get acted upon; and **3) Rash commitments**—promises made to God and His Church, or people, which are impetuous and forgotten.
- The need to distinguish between unfair or unbiblical judging of others (Matthew 7:1-5) and speaking the truth in love into fellow believers' lives, so as to address their sin and see them healed (James 5:19-20). When practicing the latter, kingdom people are to—
 - Examine themselves and their motives first (Matthew 7:5A).
 - Overlook the petty (Matthew 7:3).
 - Allow for diversity of practices/habits (Romans 14:1-2).
 - Desire to restore, rather than condemn or sanction (James 5:19-20)

THE PRESENCE OF THE KINGDOM—

During the inter-testamental period (the approximately 400 years from Malachi to John the Baptist) Israel's expectation of God's reign coming to her through the Messiah heightened, along with rabbinic interpretation that Messiah would be a mighty political Deliverer, as well as Deliverer from all ills. She looked eagerly for God to break into human history in a dynamic, eschatological way—judging evil, bringing about repentance and establishing an earthly, Davidic monarchy to overthrow all enemies of God's people.

- *The prophets announced a day when men will live together in peace. God shall then “judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:4). Not only shall the problems of human society be solved, but the evils of man's physical environment shall be no more...peace, safety, and security—all this was promised for the happy future.⁴⁴*

THE KINGDOM “ALREADY...NOT YET”—

Jesus Christ, under the power of the Holy Spirit, spent slightly over three years destroying the works of the devil by the reign of God.

Against the backdrop of this expectation, John the Baptist heralded the Messiah by proclaiming, “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near**” (Matthew 3:2). So far, all appeared to be going as expected by rabbinic teaching. “**A voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him’.**” (Mark 1:3) is surely referring to the arrival of **One like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven...He was given authority, glory and sovereign power...and His kingship is one that will never be destroyed** (Daniel 7:13-14)! They probably thought things like, “Good-bye, Rome! Good-bye, poverty! Good-bye, sickness and disease!”

The earliest days of Jesus' ministry seemingly fulfilled Israel's expectation that the kingdom of God had indeed come as anticipated. He began His Galilean tour **proclaiming the good news of God**. “**The time has come,**” He said. “**The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!**” (Mark 1:14-15). “**The kingdom of God has come near.**” The long-awaited **good news** (the gospel)⁴⁵ was now available to be received by repentance. **Jesus went throughout Galilee...proclaim-**

⁴⁴. Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, pg. 14.

⁴⁵. Please note that Jesus Himself clearly tells us that “to preach the good news/the gospel” is “to preach the kingdom of

ing the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people (Matthew 4:23); **news about Him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee** (Mark 1:28). “The name and message of Jesus Christ, of Jesus Christ Himself, are equated with the kingdom of God... for Jesus the invading kingdom of God has come into time and the world in His person, as expressed by John in the statement ‘the Word became flesh’” (John 1:14).⁴⁶

Jesus Christ, under the power of the Holy Spirit, spent slightly over three years destroying the works of the devil by the reign of God—**“the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor”** (Matthew 11:5). On occasion, He even passed this unparalleled kingdom rule and authority on to His followers to counter sin and disease (Luke 10:1-24). The impact? **“I [Jesus] saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven⁴⁷. [through your ministry]”** (Luke 10:18).

But wait! The evidence of Jesus’ ministry (as well as some of His teaching) did not support Israel’s original idea of the kingdom of God Messiah would bring. Only *one man* of the *many invalids* at Bethesda was healed (John 5:2-9). The lame man at the Beautiful Gate was still lame when Jesus was crucified (Acts 3:2). His own relative John, **when [he] heard in prison what the Messiah was doing...sent his disciples to ask Him, “Are you the One who was to come, or should we expect someone else?”** (Matthew 11:2). Jesus was even beginning to follow up His miracles by talking about commitment to Him as a Person—**“Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you”** (John 6:53). Many of His disciples were complaining and turning back (John 6:66, 69).

Furthermore, some of His teachings were beginning to seem contradictory. Not only was Jesus teaching and demonstrating the presence of God’s kingdom now **in this present age** (“...**the kingdom of God is in your midst**” [Luke 17:21]), but He was also teaching about it yet coming in consummation in **the age to come**—**“...no one who has left home...for Me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age...and in the age to come eternal life”** (Mark 10:29-30; see also Matthew 12:32; Luke 20:34-36). And what will bring this future consummation? He said it

God”; they are the same message, the Church’s ongoing commission (2 Timothy 4:2). This is why Paul summarized his ministry in Ephesus using kingdom terms. **“...none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again”** (Acts 20:25).

⁴⁶. Schmidt, Karl, *Basileia* in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Volume 1*, Gerhard Kittel (General Editor), William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1974 reprint, pg. 589. Schmidt goes on to say, “We can thus see why the apostolic and post-apostolic Church of the NT did not speak much of the ‘kingdom of God’ explicitly, but always emphasized it implicitly by its reference to the ‘Lord Jesus Christ.’ It is not true that it now substituted the Church for the kingdom as preached by Jesus of Nazareth. On the contrary, faith in the kingdom of God persists in the post-Easter experience of Christ.”

⁴⁷. Or **“lose his influence in lives and situations.”**

would be His Parousia (Return) (Matthew 24:3), and the resurrection of the dead; in other words, He did not intend to yet abolish death (Luke 20:34-36). Jesus' clear teaching—God's complete reign was going to be released into human history in stages. His death on the Cross fully purchased all that God's reign provides for body, soul, spirit, Earth and Creation, etc. However, all the provisions of the Cross are not yet completely released into current human experience, regardless of one's faith and authority in the Spirit. There is a waiting period between His provision for death to be swallowed up and its actual demise; there is a waiting period between His provision for every tear to be wiped away and their actual eradication; there is a waiting period between His provision for the full redemption of our bodies and their being changed, etc. We may wish that Jesus' ascension had released into human experience now everything that we know His death and resurrection purchased and make ultimately possible, but such is not the case.⁴⁸

Effects of the Fall continue in the Earth, and He allows them to continue until Jesus returns, regardless of our faith, the manifestations of the Spirit, or our authority in Christ.

This is the perspective the two men going to Emmaus undoubtedly felt when they said, **“We had hoped that [Jesus of Nazareth] was the One who was going to redeem Israel”** (Luke 24:21). It was not so much that they outright disbelieved; they were confused. Jesus came announcing the kingdom of God had come near (Mark 1:14-15). He cast out demons, worked miracles and healed diseases—all signs that the ultimate desire of God (the Age to Come) had come. Now, with His crucifixion, it seemed to have disappeared—gone nearly as quickly as it surfaced. They had an “all now or nothing” perspective of the kingdom of God and it all now seemed dashed.

It was not until God's later revelation, beginning with Peter in Acts 2, that the disciples realized what Jesus had taught about the kingdom of God coming into human experience in stages.

- *God's Kingdom means the divine conquest over His enemies, a conquest which is to be accomplished in three stages; and the first victory has already occurred. The power of the Kingdom of God has invaded the realm of Satan—the present evil Age. The activity of this power to deliver men from satanic rule was evidenced in the exorcism of demons. Thereby, Satan was bound; he was cast down from his position of power; his power was “destroyed.” The blessings of the Messianic Age are now available to those who embrace the Kingdom of God. We may already enjoy the blessings resulting from this initial defeat of Satan. Yes, the Kingdom of God has come near, it is already present.*

⁴⁸ Revelation 20 teaches yet another “intermediate stage”—that of the Millennium.

- *This does not mean that we now enjoy the fullness of God's blessings, or that all that is meant by the Kingdom of God has come to us...the Second Coming of Christ is absolutely essential for the fulfillment of consummation of God's redemptive work. Yet God has already accomplished the first great stage in His work of redemption. Satan is the god of This Age, yet the power of Satan has been broken that men may know the rule of God in their lives. The evil Age goes on, yet the powers of the Age to Come have been made available to men. To the human eye, the world appears little changed; the kingdom of Satan is unshaken. Yet the Kingdom of God has come among men; and those who receive it will be prepared to enter into the Kingdom of Glory when Christ comes to finish the good work he has already begun. This is the Gospel of the Kingdom.*⁴⁹.
- *...the early Christians came to realize that Jesus had not come to usher in the "final" end, but the "beginning" of the end, as it were. Thus they came to see that with Jesus' death and resurrection, and with the coming of the Spirit, the blessings and benefits of the future had already come. In a sense, therefore, the end had already come. But in another sense the end had not yet fully come. Thus it was "already," but "not yet."...the early believers, therefore...lived between the times—that is, between the "beginning" of the end and the "consummation" of the end..."already" they knew God's free and full forgiveness, but they had "not yet" been perfected (Phil 3:7-14). "Already" victory over death was theirs (1 Cor 3:22), "yet" they would still die (Phil 3:20-22). "Already" they had been justified and faced no condemnation (Rom 8:1), "yet" there was still to be a future judgment (2 Cor 5:10).*⁵⁰.

Fundamental to understanding our life in Christ, then, is understanding this "tension" between the "already...not yet." It often accounts for the unsettling and contradictory experience we sometimes feel; it also accounts for the seemingly mixed messages we sometimes sense coming from God.

- **[Already] having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the Cross (Colossians 2:15); [yet] your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8); we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan blocked our way (1 Thessalonians 2:18).**
- **[Already] sin shall no longer be your master (Romans 6:14); [yet] if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8).**

⁴⁹. Ladd, *A Theology*, pp. 59, 51.

⁵⁰. Fee, Gordon and Stuart, Douglas, *How To Read The Bible For All Its Worth—Fourth Edition*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 2014, pg. 152.

Therefore, in order to know which particular kingdom blessings are available to us, we must sort out that which has been released into the present and that which belongs to the future. There are divine time-constraints on the release of many of Christ's provisions; not only are some particulars on experiential hold until the Age to Come (*i.e.*, no death and no sorrow), but some provisions available now by the power and authority of the Spirit often come only in flashes, and not always according to the same pattern. Effects of the Fall continue in the Earth (Romans 8:20-21), and He allows them to continue until Jesus returns, again, regardless of our faith, the manifestations of the Spirit, or our authority in Christ.

All four Gospel writers make it very clear that the message that Jesus Christ ministered met with resistance.

We cannot therefore pull into consummate human experience now what God in His sovereignty has suspended until after the Parousia. We cannot "claim our rights" to the overriding of His sovereign, messianic plan for the two Ages. Again, this has nothing to do with God's will/heart, nor the provisions of the Cross;⁵¹ it has to do with His plan to send the Messiah back to complete the release of salvation. Within this overall messianic plan, God's sovereignty is a factor, and we need to admit He acts sovereignly, without a sense of compromise/failure or a sense of His being unfair. Let's not repeat the error in the Gar-

den by trying to outmaneuver the Sovereign. God is the only Sovereign, and He has reasons for touching our spirits/souls in this Age more than (not instead of) our physical bodies. **We wait for [consummate physical healing] patiently** (Romans 8:25B). Even Paul, under divine inspiration, could not fully comprehend the mystery of some of God's actions (Romans 9:6-33). Ultimately, he had to ask, **What if God...?**

- *It is the biblical teaching that we shall never experience the full blessings of God's Kingdom in This Age. There are those who have identified the Christian hope with a warless world or with a world completely subdued to God's will through the preaching of the Gospel. People who fix their hopes upon a Kingdom, which is to be consummated in This Age, are certain to be disillusioned. The perfected Kingdom of God belongs to The Age to Come. We shall never know the fullness of its blessings so long as This Evil Age lasts. There will be no world-wide conversion this side of the Coming of Christ. Therefore we ought not to be disillusioned by wars and rumors of wars, by evils and by hostility to the Gospel. And when God's people are called upon to pass through severe sufferings and tribulation, they should remember that God has not abandoned them, but that their sufferings are due to the fact that they no longer belong to This Age and therefore are the object of its hostility.⁵²*

⁵¹. This is why it is God's will to heal and why healing is definitely in the Atonement.

⁵². Ladd, *op. cit.*, pg. 39.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- What would Israel's general expectation have been when they heard John the Baptist's statement in Matthew 3:2?

- According to Matthew 11:5, what are some characteristics of the kingdom of God as Jesus understood and ministered it? How is this fundamentally different than Israel's understanding?

- According to John 6:53, the kingdom of God is not only about "receiving blessings and miracles" but also about what?

- Earlier we looked at the “already/not yet” aspect of the kingdom of God. Discuss again what this concept means and note some biblical examples of the kingdom “already” at work in lives and biblical examples of the kingdom “not yet” at work in lives.

- Why is the statement so vital for Christ-followers to understand? Therefore, to know which particular kingdom blessings are available to us, we must sort out that which has been released into the present and that which belongs to the future.

- Discuss what you consider to be as possible harm in Christ-followers’ lives if one teaches that the “not yet” aspects are available “already” if you just have enough faith or confess the right things.

RESISTANCES TO THE KINGDOM—

THE GOSPELS—

All four Gospel writers make it very clear that the message that Jesus Christ ministered met with resistance. A major source of that resistance is attributed directly to Satan (Luke 4:13), whom it was necessary for Jesus Christ to defeat in order to establish God's reign (*cf.* Matthew 12:22-32; Colossians 2:15). This is why Jesus had to start His public ministry in direct confrontation with Satan himself—**at once [after His baptism] the Spirit sent Him out into the wilderness, and He was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan** (Mark 1:12-13)—and why of all His recorded miracles, exorcisms are the most frequently repeated miracle.

- *A war is going on! Cosmic war! Jesus is the divine invader sent by God to shatter the strengths of Satan. In that light, the whole ministry of Jesus unrolls. Jesus has one purpose—to defeat Satan...[in so doing] Jesus attacks not only the person of the demons but also their works. [The statistical superiority of exorcisms] is evidence enough of their theological importance.*⁵³

JESUS' TEMPTATION—

As noted, Jesus' messianic ministry began with a direct confrontation with Satan. Mark uses the strongest term to define its necessity—**at once the Spirit sent Him out into the wilderness**⁵⁴...**being tempted**⁵⁵ **by Satan forty days**⁵⁶. (Mark 1:12). **Sent** (Greek, *ekballo*) means to “to drive or thrust out or to expel.”⁵⁷ Its sense of forcefulness is unmistakable. **Being tempted by Satan** is a purpose clause, showing God's purpose for the confrontation. “...instead of being cornered by the evil one, Jesus was led out to meet him. The initiative was on the side of the divine and not of the diabolical. It was in the divine purpose that Jesus was thus tempted.”⁵⁸

⁵³ Kallas, James, *The Real Satan*, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, Minneapolis, MN, 1975, pp. 60, 76.

⁵⁴ The region may have been the one where John the Baptist conducted his ministry. It also symbolically represented a place away from all human provision and support, where Israel failed many testings, and where the messianic mission was prophesied to originate (Isaiah 40:3).

⁵⁵ **Tempted** (Greek, *peirazo*) means “to explore, test, try...examine, prove or tempt. [It] describes the testing of the believer's loyalty, strength, opinions, disposition, condition, faith, patience, or character. *Peirazo* determines which way one is going and what one is made of” (Dick Mills, in *Spirit-Filled Life Bible*, Jack Hayford [General Editor], Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1991, pg. 1963).

⁵⁶ **Forty days** was a microcosm of Israel's forty years in the wilderness. It also recalled the experiences of Moses (Exodus 24:18) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:8, 15).

⁵⁷ This is the same word often used to describe an exorcism (*cf.* Mark 1:34, et al).

⁵⁸ Harrison, Everett, *A Short Life of Christ*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1977 printing,

Exorcisms took center stage in terms of Jesus' demonstration of the kingdom present. They were actual proof of His disruption of Satan's kingdom.

Reflecting on Luke's account of the Temptation (Luke 4:1-13), note the following—

- Jesus faced the enemy **full of the Holy Spirit** (vs. 1).
 - Satan tempted Jesus during the entire forty days (vs. 2), with three temptations spelled out in detail.
 - Satan came with uncontested authority relative to the world's systems (vs. 6). Jesus never questioned this; He only confronted it.
- Satan attacked Jesus' messianic mission based on his understanding of Jesus' person (vv. 3, 9). "**If you are the Son of God...**" is more accurately "**Since you are the Son of God...**"; Satan recognized and attacked Jesus' Sonship as the origin of His messianic mission.
- o *Satan was not inviting Jesus to doubt His sonship but to reflect on its meaning. Sonship of the living God, he suggested, surely means Jesus has the power and right to satisfy his own needs.*⁵⁹
- Satan's attacks were strategic—
- o **Turning stones to bread** (vs. 3) was an attempt to incite Jesus to dissatisfaction, impatience and self-will at a moment of physical weakness (vs. 2); it was also an attempt to get Him to act independent of His calling as a submitted Messiah-Son (John 5:19, 30A).
 - o **Granting the world's kingdoms** (vv. 6-7) was an attempt to incite Jesus to reach the ultimate end of His messianic mission (Revelation 21:1-8) through compromise, without the intervening sufferings and struggles of the Cross. Satan would later try this same tactic through Peter (Matthew 16:22-23).
 - *Satan's role in this situation does not relate specifically to Satan worship. The worship of Satan to which Jesus is enticed is the temptation to pursue His task in the ways of the world...to gain glory for Himself in this world by compromise with the forces that control it...and to become indebted to Satan in the manner that every successful man of the world is.*⁶⁰

pg. 83.

⁵⁹. Carson, D. A., *Matthew—The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Frank Gaebelin (General Editor), Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1984, pg. 112.

⁶⁰. Nolland, John, *Luke 1-9:20—Word Biblical Commentary*, Word Books, Publisher, Dallas, TX, 1989, pg. 180.

- o **Jumping safely from the Temple pinnacle** (vv. 9-10) was an attempt to incite Jesus to test God's love and faithfulness in a self-willed manner.

- Using the written Word from portions of Deuteronomy 6-8, Jesus emerged victoriously. This began Jesus' ministry of "binding or tying up Satan" (Matthew 12:29), culminating in His work on the Cross (Colossians 2:14-15). The incident in the wilderness, however, was not the end of the attempted resistance—**when the devil had finished all this tempting, he left Him until an opportune time** (vs. 13).⁶¹.

⁶¹. **An opportune time** continued relentlessly until Jesus' ultimate defeat of Satan on the Cross. These ongoing encounters included such tactics as demonic presence that Jesus confronted in demonized individuals, Peter's rebuke (Matthew 16:22-23) and Judas' betrayal (Luke 22:1-6).

JESUS' EXORCISMS—

As stated, exorcisms took center stage in terms of Jesus' demonstration of the kingdom present. They were actual proof of His disruption of Satan's kingdom (Matthew 12:25-28). The demons knew this and trembled (Mark 1:24), only to be rebuked and silenced (Mark 1:25).⁶²

- *[The English words **rebuked** and **be silent** are] unfortunately...mild translations of powerful Greek words. What the Greek text literally says is not simply that Jesus **rebuked** or chided the evil force, but that he lashed out. He literally attacked the evil force. And the word translated **be silent** literally says that he throttled or strangled or choked off the demonic forces.*⁶³
- *The silencing and expulsion of the demon is the proof of that judgment which Jesus has come to initiate. To have allowed the defensive utterance of the demon to go unrebuked would have been to compromise the purpose for which Jesus came into the world, to confront Satan and strip him of his power.*⁶⁴

Jesus' encounters with Satan disrupted Satan's kingdom. This disruption (a preview to Satan's eschatological defeat) is described in two fundamental terms: break and bind.

- **Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil**⁶⁵. (Hebrews 2:14). **Break** (Greek, *katargeo*) means to “make ineffective, to break the power of or to incapacitate.” It references the fact that Jesus broke Satan's power, especially with reference to his fear tactics concerning physical death (*cf.* Matthew 16:18; 2 Timothy 1:10). “The primary goal of the incarnation was the Son's participation in death, through which he nullified the devil's ability to enslave the children of God through the fear of death.”⁶⁶
- **Binding or tying up Satan** (Matthew 12:29).

⁶² Jesus' concession to the demons' request not **to go into the Abyss** (Luke 8:31) or **out of the area** (Mark 5:10) was based upon His understanding that it was not yet time for their ultimate banishment.

⁶³ Kallas, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-75.

⁶⁴ Lane, William, *The Gospel of Mark—The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1974, pg. 75.

⁶⁵ This is not saying that Satan has the power to take one's life—especially that of God's people. It is saying that he's the origin of the forces of death among humankind, forces which prior to Jesus were basically uncontested and which held people **in slavery by the fear of death** (Hebrews 2:15).

⁶⁶ Lane, William, *Hebrews 1-8—Word Biblical Commentary*, Word Books, Publisher, Dallas, TX, 1991, pg. 61.

- o *“Binding” is of course a metaphor and designates in some real sense a victory over Satan so that his power is curbed. Sometimes the metaphorical nature of the idiom is not recognized, and it is thought that the saying must mean that Satan is rendered completely powerless. However, Satan continues to be active... [one scholar] interprets the binding of Satan by his quaint idiom that he is bound, but with a long rope. Satan is not powerless, but his power has been broken... the decisive battle in a war may be won and the tide of battle turn before the gaining of a final victory. The whole mission of Jesus, including His words, deed, death, and resurrection constituted an initial defeat of satanic power that makes the final outcome and triumph of God’s Kingdom certain.*⁶⁷.

Jesus was clear in tying together the importance of prayer and seeing His kingdom advanced in the Earth.

The New Testament does not specify when the tying up began in Jesus’ ministry. Some feel it was at the Temptation; others say at the first exorcism. As noted above, Satan’s initial binding was sealed by Jesus’ death and resurrection (Colossians 2:15).

Jesus’ disruption was affirmed in the mission of the 70 (Luke 10:17-20). When they reported the results of their ministry—**“Lord, even the demons submit to us in Your name”** (vs. 17)—Jesus responded saying, **“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven”** (vs. 18).⁶⁸ Contextually, it seems best to see Jesus’ reference as “the successful mission of the seventy [giving] an evidence of the defeat of Satan.”⁶⁹ In other words, Satan “falls” every time someone is delivered from his dominion.

⁶⁷. Ladd, *op. cit.*, pg. 64. The “binding” of Satan is a clear example of the “already...not yet” nature of the kingdom of God. “The coming of the kingdom of God through the ministry of Jesus entails a fundamental defeat for Satan and his minions (see especially 1 John 3:8)...although the details of the parable of [Matthew 12:29] should not be allegorized, it is clear from the context that ‘the strong man’ stands for Beelzebul/Satan, and the plundering of his household (his binding)...but the main point is Christological: Jesus is stronger than the strong one (cf. Isa 53:12) and is hence able to raid his kingdom at will and deliver those who are oppressed in a variety of ways. In this basic sense the ministry of Jesus is the beginning of eschatological deliverance, the turning point of the ages” (Joel Green, *The Gospel of Luke—The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1997, pg. 419).

⁶⁸. Jesus’ reference to Satan falling like lightning is debated in biblical scholarship. Some feel it’s a reference to a primordial event; others refer it to an unnamed event in the life of Jesus Himself; still others see Jesus as speaking prophetically of Satan’s ultimate downfall. Our understanding follows that of Ladd above (footnote #69).

⁶⁹. Ladd, *loc. cit.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- o What “proof” did Jesus’ exorcisms provide in terms of what He taught about the kingdom of God?

- o Discuss why it is so important for Christ-followers to know the truth of Hebrews 2:14, including a proper understanding of the verb “break.”

- o Thoroughly discuss the above section on “binding Satan.” Is this interpretation different than the understanding you’ve had or heard preached? If so, how, and what do you think of the module’s understanding?

KINGDOM PRAYER—

Jesus was clear in tying together the importance of prayer and seeing His kingdom advanced in the Earth. Responding to the disciples' confusion as to why they could not deliver the mute and convulsing demoniac (Mark 9:14-29), Jesus concluded by saying, **“This kind can come out only by prayer”** (vs. 29); He reminded His disciples that effective kingdom ministry necessitates that believers **should always pray and not give up** (Luke 18:1); the Gospels record frequent occasions in which He Himself **often withdrew to lonely places and prayed** (Luke 5:16); and of course there is the first petition of The Lord's Prayer, **“Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”** (Matthew 6:10).

We have entitled this section, **Kingdom Prayer**. This designation is not intended to convey the fact there is only one proper way to pray; we must remember that prayer is first and foremost sharing one's heart with Father God (Exodus 32:7-14). Rather, the designation is to create a mind-set that ties together the release of restored rulership and prayer. Kingdom pray-ers realize they are partnering with God toward the realization of His reign on Earth. They exercise the privilege of releasing God's reign through prayer to change lives and situations (Isaiah 59:1). “We will determine whether God's goodness is released toward specific situations or whether the power of sin and Satan is permitted to prevail. Prayer is the determining factor. But the problem is that too few want to accept the fact that if we don't pray, he won't do anything.”⁷⁰

Kingdom prayer “wrestles” with God in prayer (Numbers 14:13-20); it is keenly aware of the connection between effective prayer and—**1**) sincerity of heart (Isaiah 29:13-14); **2**) obedience (Isaiah 1:12-17); **3**) love for fellow humans (Isaiah 58:1-12); and **4**) practicing justice toward others (Micah 3:1-4). Kingdom prayer is primarily directed to the Father, in Jesus' name (John 16:23). “To pray in His Name is to pray in the character of Christ, in His mind frame, that is, to pray as He Himself would pray in our situation.”⁷¹ Furthermore, kingdom prayer is guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26-27; Ephesians 6:18).

Effective kingdom prayer is prayed with the assurance that the prayer will be heard and answered—**“Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours”** (Mark 11:24, emphasis mine). Jesus was teaching Peter that Spirit-led prayer can be offered with such assurance it will be heard and responded to that one can view the answer as already here

⁷⁰ Hayford, Jack, *Prayer Is Invading The Impossible*, Bridge-Logos Publishers, North Brunswick, NJ, 2000 reprint, pg. 65. *He won't do anything* is perhaps an over-statement, but it does reflect the fact that God desires us to partner with Him in prayer for the advancement of the kingdom, a responsible partnering which we are most often disinclined to accept. John Wesley made a similar statement, “God does nothing except in response to believing prayer.”

⁷¹ Coleman, Robert, *The Mind of the Master*, Harold Shaw Publishers, Wheaton, IL, 2000 printing, pg. 47

when asked. “The man who bows his head before the hidden glory of God in the fullness of faith does so in the certainty that God can deal with every situation and any difficulty and that with him nothing is impossible (Mark 10:27).”⁷²

This assurance is not presumption; rather it is built on two biblical truths—**1**) an understanding of what the kingdom promises in this present Age,⁷³ and **2**) an understanding of the nature of God to release what is promised now.

- *God is the Father who loves his own more than an earthly father loves his son, and who therefore cannot permit their requests to be unavailing but gives them what they need. Ultimately, therefore, the reasons why a person who asks is certain of being heard, is the certainty, given by Jesus to his own, of God’s fatherly goodness and love. Implicit in these passages on prayer is a further certainty which runs through the whole Bible and under girds everything it says: the certainty that God is a living God who hears and sees, and who has a heart full of compassion.*⁷⁴

In conjunction with this understanding is the assurance of James 5:16B—**the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective**. This statement is part of a larger paragraph in which James gives us the assurance that Spirit-led prayer will accomplish the requests of the pray-er. He draws upon Elijah’s prayer over the elements as an example of the effectiveness of prayer (1 Kings 17-18). Note particularly 1 Kings 17:1—“**...there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word**” (emphasis mine). And why is prayer so powerful? Because God is powerful, and believers release His reign in situations through prayer. Pastor Jack Hayford notes, “Man is in charge on earth. If hell is allowed to take over, or if the flesh fumbles the ball, it’s man’s duty to call upon God for the remedy. If he doesn’t call—if prayer isn’t uttered—God has bound himself not to be involved.”⁷⁵

Among other things, kingdom pray-ers pray—**1**) for the salvation of unbelievers (1 Timothy 2:3-4); **2**) to bring the Holy Spirit’s influence and power into a person’s life and circumstances (Luke 11:13); **3**) to clarify direction in one’s life and ministry (Mark 1:35-39); **4**) to persevere amidst difficulty (2 Corinthians 1:11); **5**) for boldness to witness (Acts 4:31); and **6**) for spiritual power to withstand and overcome the evil one (Ephesians 6:18-20).

⁷² Lane, *op. cit.*, pg. 410.

⁷³ See above section, “The Kingdom Already...Not Yet.”

⁷⁴ Schonweiss, Hans, *Prayer in The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Volume 2*, Brown, Colin (General Editor), Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1979 printing, pg. 857.

⁷⁵ Hayford, *op. cit.*, pg. 67.

Shameless audacity—being determined, obstinate or resolute—is not an arrogant demanding of God, but an attitude that so recognizes one’s need that it is willing to unashamedly ask.

Kingdom pray-ers pray in both their native language and in “tongues”—**I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding** (1 Corinthians 14:15). Praying in tongues penetrates spiritual dimensions we cannot otherwise penetrate. “**I will pray with the S/spirit** means, as vv. 14 and 19 make certain, **I will pray in tongues**...such was Paul’s regular practice, and he was edified thereby even if his mind did not enter into such praying. The future tense used here (**I will** pray) must be understood as...expressing determination.”⁷⁶

Again, Jack Hayford says regarding hesitancy to pray—

- *Few things stifle prayer more than the fact that, too often, we don’t know what to pray for. We are hesitant to ask for something that we’re not sure we should have; to request God’s action when we feel we lack the facts; to pray, for fear that our request may run crosscurrent to God’s intended plan...when we are uncertain as to how boldly we may ask, we are saying, “I’m afraid to ask for this because I might confuse the Almighty. I may just force his hand to violate his own eternal purposes, and suddenly bring our world to a screeching halt when my mightiness of faith has secured an answer on earth which God didn’t really want to give.” It is as though we somehow think a cosmic accident might occur if we invade heaven with a request that would somehow slip through the machinery of providence without being checked out carefully. Somehow God would find himself awkwardly glancing toward earth wondering, “How did I ever let that happen? I must be more careful about my answers to prayer.”⁷⁷*

Regarding our hesitancy in prayer, we need to remember—

- How God responds to our prayers is His decision, not ours. Our responsibility, as Jesus commands, is to pray with shameless audacity (Luke 11:8-9). His will is often fully revealed only as we pray (2 Corinthians 12:9A).
- Nonetheless, our Spirit-led life of discipleship brings with it the privilege of asking “**whatever [we] wish, and it will be done for [us]**” (John 15:7).⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Fee, Gordon, *The First Epistle To The Corinthians—The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1987, pg. 670.

⁷⁷ Hayford, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

⁷⁸ This privilege is not to be abused by such things as assuming we can demand of God, or claiming certain things will happen by faith, if that being claimed is not clearly biblical (using sound historical-grammatical hermeneutics).

We must also remember that effective kingdom prayer is hindered—

- o If we pray for self-indulgence (James 4:2-3).
- o If we pray with a presumptuous attitude that seeks to impose our will on God or assumes our faith can manipulate Him to give us what we want (Luke 9:51-56).
- o If we pray from a heart that is secretly calculating disobedience (Psalm 66:18).
- o If we pray knowing we are harboring un-forgiveness (Matthew 6:11-12), or if we have not been treating people properly (1 Peter 3:7).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- o According to the definition of the kingdom of God in this module, what are we primarily praying when we pray Matthew 6:10?
- o What assurance is Mark 11:24 intended to bring to us when we pray? How has this scripture been “lived out” in your life? Have you seen any “abuses” of it? If so, explain.
- o Theologically, why is James 5:16B true?
- o Do you “pray with your spirit” (1 Corinthians 14:15)? If so, talk about this dimension of your prayer life and why it’s invaluable.

SHAMELESS AUDACITY AND PERSISTENCE IN PRAYER—

Following his version of The Lord’s Prayer, Luke records a parable (Luke 11:5-8) and an exhortation (Luke 11:9-13), which reiterate the importance of attitude and action in prayer.

- The parable calls us to an attitude willing to approach God—
 - o *[Jesus encourages] the praying of the Lord’s Prayer with confidence that God will, as we lay our needs before Him, respond positively to our requests. Friends come through for us despite inconvenience to themselves, and sometimes despite mixed motives for their goodness. How much more can we be confident that God will come through for us?*⁷⁹.
 - o This confident attitude is seen in the petitioner’s **shameless audacity**.⁸⁰ **Shameless audacity**—being determined, obstinate or resolute—is not an arrogant demanding of God, but an attitude that so recognizes one’s need that it is willing to unashamedly ask. It trusts that God **gives generously to all without finding fault** (James 1:5). As we pray with shameless audacity, we pray, **“Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”** (Matthew 6:10), and then give specific examples. To pray with shameless audacity is to confidently and boldly pray requests that align with God’s will, so much of which is clearly given in Scripture. For example,
 - “It is the will of God that my friends and relatives receive Jesus by the intervention of His powerful reign and sovereign authority. Let Your will be done (1 Timothy 2:3-4).”
 - “It is the will of God that I be transformed into the image of Christ. Let Your will be done (Romans 8:29).”
 - “It is the will of God that I walk in the Spirit in all that I do and think today. Let Your will be done (Galatians 5:16).”
 - “It is the will of God that sin no longer be my master. Let Your will be done (Romans 6:14).”

⁷⁹. Nolland, *op. cit.*, pg. 626.

⁸⁰. Or **importunity, impudence**.

- With this parable (Luke 11:5-8), Jesus strikes a death blow against hesitancy. We are to ask with unabashed forwardness; ask with shameless boldness.
- The exhortation (Luke 11:9-13) emphasizes the need for persistence. If we will keep asking, searching and knocking, **“the door will be opened”** (vs. 9). The importance of persistent, faith-filled determination is graphically portrayed in an event in ancient Israel during the ministry of the prophet Elisha and the reign of King Joash (2 Kings 13:14-19). King Joash was the thirteenth king of Israel; he ruled from 801-786 *BC*. **He did evil in the eyes of the Lord**, as had most of his ancestors back to Israel’s first post-civil war king, King Jeroboam I. Politically, Israel was suffering at the hands of the Syrians who had virtually destroyed Israel’s army under King Joash’s father, making it **like the dust at threshing time** (2 Kings 13:7). Israel’s suffering was the result of divine judgment, her repeated evil having caused **the Lord’s anger [to burn] against Israel, and for a long time He kept them under the power of Hazael king of Aram and Ben-Hadad his son** (2 Kings 13:3).
- King Joash respected Elisha (2 Kings 13:14-19), despite their different life-styles (vs. 14). He sought Elisha out on his deathbed; the Assyrians had just crippled Damascus, and he was hoping God would withdraw His anger toward Israel and allow her to move in and defeat Syria. King Joash lamented Israel’s current political situation (**“The chariots and horsemen of Israel!”** [vs. 14]); in response, **Elisha put his hands on the king’s hands** (vs. 16) to inform King Joash that out of His mercy and grace, God would be with Israel in battle. But first, King Joash must perform a symbolic act with arrows depicting his faith and determination in the upcoming battle (vv. 15-18). God’s will was definitive—**“The Lord’s arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Aram!”** (vs. 17)—**but**, the victory would be the result of God and King Joash working in partnership (vs. 18). Would King Joash have the faith, determination and stamina to believe God for complete victory or only partial victory? Unfortunately, King Joash’s determination was only partial; taking the symbolic arrows, **he struck three times and stopped** (vs. 18). Immediately, **the man of God was angry with him and said, “You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times”** (vs. 19). King Joash gave up too soon. Elisha’s anger was due to the fact that King Joash was taking a different stance than God. “The anger of Elisha is because of the king’s ‘lack of grit and determination’ and his tendency to think small.”⁸¹. “The extent of victory is limited by man’s failure to persevere, so firing arrows into the

⁸¹. Hobb, T. R., *2 Kings—Word Biblical Commentary*, Word Books, Publisher, Waco, TX, 1985, pg. 170.

ground only three times... meant that Joash himself would not obliterate the enemy. It was left to Jeroboam to gain control of them (14:25, 28).”⁸²

- Conclusion? Regular and effective kingdom prayer, prayed with shameless audacity and persistence, is vital to effective Christian living. The issue of our role and God’s sovereignty in matters is virtually impossible to harmonize. It is best to not put them in tension, but rather to allow them to work together (2 Peter 1:3-5). As we fulfill our responsibility in prayer—with shameless audacity and persistence—the results are up to the God of victory who promises to release His reign.

THE LORD’S PRAYER—

Both Matthew (6:9-13) and Luke (11:2-4) record The Lord’s Prayer. Luke presents it as a prayer to be memorized and repeated (vs. 2); Matthew presents it as a “model,” giving insight into important areas about which we should pray (vs. 9). As a model, Jesus notes six demarcations of effective kingdom prayer—**1**) praising God for who He is and for the benefits and promises of salvation (vs. 9); **2**) inviting God’s reign and priorities into situations (vs. 10); **3**) appropriating His spiritual and physical provision for each day (vs. 11); **4**) setting our will to have a right attitude toward everyone in our lives (vs. 12); **5**) preparing ourselves to be victorious against Satan’s schemes and temptations of the flesh (vs. 13); and **6**) concluding by focusing on thankful praise (vs. 13).

As we invite God’s reign into situations, we should remember to pray for—

- The harvest (Luke 10:2).
- Government leaders (1 Timothy 2:1).
- Our church and its leaders (Hebrews 13:17-18).
- Open doors for ministry (Colossians 4:3).
- Those who mistreat us (Luke 6:28).
- An increase of our love for God and others (Mark 12:29-31).

⁸² Wiseman, Donald, *1 & 2 Kings—Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 1993, pg. 242.

- The fullness of the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13) and development of His fruit (Galatians 5:22-23) in our lives.
- Political freedom to lead quiet and peaceable lives, so as to effectively minister the gospel (1 Timothy 2:2) in Holy Spirit fullness (1 Corinthians 2:4).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- Why is it important for us to have an attitude of “shameless audacity” in prayer if we are going to pray God’s reign into situations? How about “persistence”?

- What has been your experience in reciting the Lord’s Prayer in church services in response to Luke’s introduction that the Prayer should be memorized and repeated? Is this a regular practice in your private life?

- Why do you think it is important that believers understand the implications of the Lord’s Prayer as explained in Matthew’s introduction to the prayer? How would you personally disciple someone to incorporate these principles into their prayer life?

Grace and Legalism

Gary Matsdorf

I. Course Description:

This is a study and discussion of grace and legalism, known biblically as **living under grace** or **living under law**. It will examine the biblical definition of each of these concepts and then examine the implications of each with reference to various life-related matters, including freedom from sin's mastery, living in the Spirit and dealing with biblically **disputable matters** (Romans 14). It also includes a look at the correlation between legalism and the spirit of the Pharisee.

II. Course Objectives:

- A. To understand the scriptural foundations of **living under grace** and **living under law**.
- B. To give a definition of the terms grace and legalism.
- C. To examine some practical implications of grace vs. legalism as it applies to dealing with the sinful nature and obedience to Christ, to living in the Spirit and to handling **disputable matters** that arise between believers.
- D. To give definition to the New Testament term Pharisee, as well as examine how legalism manifests itself in contemporary Pharisaism (the spirit of the Pharisee).

III. Course Outline:

- A. Definition of Legalism (being under law [Romans 6:14]).
 1. Law is any external code that defines human conduct
 2. The nature of law makes it an authority (Romans 2:12)
 3. The nature of law invokes an internal claim
 4. The nature of law includes consequences if broken; theologically this is *condemnation*
 5. This does not make biblical law (standards) wrong (Romans 7:12, 14)—
 - a. **The law is holy**
 - b. **The commandment is righteous**
 - c. **The commandment is good**
 - d. **The law is spiritual**

6. God wants us out from under law because—
 - a. **The law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin** (Romans 7:14). We are not capable of keeping the law.
 - b. **The law is weakened by the sinful nature** (Romans 8:3). The law (external standards) cannot overpower the sinful nature.
 - c. **Apart from the law, sin was dead...but sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death** (Romans 7:8-11). External codes arouse the sinful nature and make it more rebellious (Romans 7:13; 1 Corinthians 15:56).
 7. The law was given to define God's standards (Romans 7:7)
 8. The law was given to show the need for Jesus and faith
- B. The spirit of the Pharisee.
1. The Pharisees epitomized legalism
 2. The Pharisees **were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched Him closely** (Mark 3:2); as legalists, they virtually lived to catch someone in an act of transgression so as to point it out to them
 3. Jesus termed legalists **hypocrites** (Mark 7:6-11)—believers who exhibit wicked and godless behavior with “a distinctly merit-based system of thought in which lay a disastrous self-deception” (D. Muller)
 4. Legalists are drawn to religious activity (Matthew 3:7) and tradition (Matthew 15:3-6)
 5. Legalists make quick and un-insightful religious judgments (Matthew 9:33-34)
 6. Legalists bind heavy religious burdens on people (Matthew 23:4)
- C. Definition of Grace (being under grace [Romans 6:14]).
1. God desires that grace reign (Romans 5:20-21)
 2. Grace transforms us into the image of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:9-10)
 3. Grace saves us (Ephesians 2:8)
 4. Grace teaches us to live godly lives (Titus 2:12)
 5. Grace comes from the fullness of Jesus' Person (John 1:16).
 6. Grace is unmerited (Romans 5:15; 11:5-6)
 7. Grace demonstrates that believers are favored by God (Luke 1:28; Hebrews 8:10)
 8. Grace means God intends only good for believers (Jeremiah 32:40-41)
 9. Grace is best defined as *the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ inexhaustibly meeting us at our point of need*

D. Grace and Freedom from Sin's Mastery (Romans 6:1-14).

1. God's heart is that we no longer live under sin's mastery (vs. 2)
2. Freedom from sin's mastery does not come by self-reformation; by fighting the sinful nature; or by coping with the sinful nature (see Colossians 2:23)
3. Freedom from sin's mastery—
 - a. Begins with biblical knowledge of key truths about Christ's death and resurrection and about our **old self [being] crucified with Him** (vv. 3, 6)
 - b. Involves learning to **count [ourselves] dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus** (vs. 11)
 - c. Involves **not let[ting] sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires** (vs. 12)
4. Involves **offer[ing] yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life** (vs. 13)

E. Grace and Living in the Spirit (Romans 8).

1. Jesus wants believers secure in their relationship with Him knowing that **there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...[and] the Spirit of God lives in you** (vv. 1, 9)
2. He wants us to know that **the righteous requirement of the law [is] fully met in us** in Christ (vs. 4)
3. Jesus' goals for us is that we **do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit** (vs. 4)
 - a. This references believers' *modus vivendi* or how they go about their life-style on a daily basis
 - b. Believers **who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires** (vs. 5); their attitudes are set in the direction of the Spirit
 - c. Believers **who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires** (vs. 5); though their justification remains steadfast, their attitudes reflect carnality rather than godliness. They are susceptible to legalism and as such their lives **cannot please God** at a practical level (vs. 8)

F. Practicing Grace When Encountering Disputable Matters (Romans 14).

1. **Disputable matters** are morally or doctrinally neutral matters (non-essentials)
2. Believers have different personal perspectives on **disputable matters**; Paul references two primary perspectives—that of **those whose faith is weak** (those who have very strong, often inflexible, convictions on **disputable matters**) and that of those **who are strong**

(those who also have personal convictions but are more flexible with respect to such matters [vs. 1]).

3. **The strong...must not treat [the weak] with contempt** (vs. 3); they are to avoid **quarreling** (vs. 1)
4. **The weak...must not judge [the strong]** (vs. 3); they must not hold their personal convictions as God's absolute conviction and demand others agree
5. Grace says—**let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister** (vs. 13); embrace alternate opinions and if the weaker have their conscience troubled by the stronger's behavior, then the stronger should voluntarily abstain from practice
6. Grace says—**make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification** (vs. 19)

Grace and Legalism

Gary Matsdorf

INTRODUCTION—

The battle between grace and legalism has been around for centuries, with God’s people having an on-going propensity toward legalism—

- Be it a carryover of religious backgrounds when coming to Christ that emphasize performance of rituals, acts of sacrifice and devotion, self-abasement, performing good deeds as the way of gaining approval, etc.
- Be it the superficial religious practices that Isaiah encountered (“**These people come near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me**” [Isaiah 29:13])¹.
- Be it Jesus’ clash with the Pharisees over the true intent of God’s Word vs. the interpretive “**tradition of the elders**” (“**Why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?**” [Matthew 15:3])
- Be it the Jerusalem Council’s **sharp dispute and debate** over the place of Mosaic custom and Gentile conversion (Acts 15:1-21)
- Be it Paul’s astonishment at the Galatians trading grace for legalism (**I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the One who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel** [Galatians 1:6])
- Be it Paul’s open opposition of Peter for his hypocritical, legalistic duplicity (Galatians 2:11-21).

In this module, we want to examine the concepts of grace and legalism, especially as understood and defined by Paul in Romans 6-8. We will define grace and legalism, and then examine various related biblical themes and implications, including grace for justification, grace for sanctification (including freedom from sin’s mastery [Romans 6:14]), grace and walking in the Spirit and how an understanding of grace is invaluable when handling the controversies surrounding **disputable matters** (Romans 14).

Law... in this respect therefore can best be defined as any external code that defines human conduct.

¹ All Scriptures, unless otherwise noted, are from the TNIV.

The nature of the topic of grace and legalism is at times very complex and complicated, but the results are invaluable. May Jesus clearly guide you as you undertake this important DLT module.

LEGALISM (Under Law)—

Legalism is a theological term that can be defined as “preoccupation with form at the expense of substance”² or that which “tells us we have fallen short. We have disappointed God. We must try harder and be better. Hope is running out; grace has nearly come to an end of its limits.”³ It has many aspects to it, but because it is not a biblical term, we must first define the actual biblical term for this concept.

Paul’s preferred term defining legalism is that of being **under law**⁴ (Romans 6:14 [NRSV]). **To be under law** is a very complex matter in Pauline thought, but one which must be understood if we are going to live the life in the Spirit that God intends.

- *Although the expression “to be under law” is used with nuances, it [fundamentally] denotes... that [humankind] lives, groans, has been put in chains as a prisoner, a slave... under the hostile, enslaving power of the law; a bondage from which only the regime of divine grace can deliver him (Rom. 7:14; 8:2; Gal. 4:5).*⁵

To understand Paul’s point of being under law, we must begin with a definition of law in Paul’s writings (Greek, *nomos*).

Firstly, his understanding can be broader than Torah (see Colossians 2:20-23). Law in this respect therefore can best be defined as *any external code that defines human conduct*.⁶ By this definition, we soon realize we encounter different laws daily. There are government laws at all levels. There are also

² Deasley, A. R. G., *Legalism in Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Elwell, Walter (Editor), Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1996, pg. 478. He goes on to note, “While it is now used metaphorically in all areas of human life, it appears to have had a theological origin in the seventeenth century, when Edward Fisher used it to designate ‘one who bringeth the Law into the case of Justification.’ No equivalent term existed in the biblical languages.”

³ Brown, Daniel, *Embracing Grace*, Authentic Publishers, Franklin, TN, 2013, pp. 16-17. Brown also notes, “*Legalism* majors in guilt and misguided sacrifice—urging its followers to evaluate their relationship with God on the basis of standards and scores for their performance...[it] condemns people for their deeds-in-the-flesh...[and] points out our insufficiency, instead of God’s all-sufficiency” (pg. 7).

⁴ Many translations include the definite article **under the law**, but because Paul’s emphases are often broader than Torah/the Mosaic Law, the anarthrous **under law** is best.

⁵ Ridderbos, Herman, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1977 printing, pg. 148.

⁶ The rules enumerated in Colossians 2:20-23 is an example of this definition of law that is broader than Torah. “The imposition of prohibitions from without can do nothing to create or develop new life within” (F.F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians—The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1984, pg. 126).

laws in the home, in the workplace and in the Church. Such laws do not even need to be written, all of us having met people’s “unwritten laws” at some point. The subtlest of laws are those that we put on ourselves. The very nature of law, therefore, makes it at once an authority, a standard of judgment—**all who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law** (Romans 2:12).⁷

Secondly, because one does not address human conduct without expecting a response, law at once puts upon us an *internal claim*. We must respond—either negatively or positively; we simply cannot ignore any law. To be under law, therefore, includes not only the definition of authoritative conduct, but also the corresponding claim on us.

Finally, when we talk about being under law, we must also include the *consequences* if we do not respond appropriately if we violate a law. In the theological realm, Paul terms this *condemnation*. Being under law then includes being—**1**) under a defined external code that is an authority over us; **2**) under the internal claim of response; and **3**) under consequences if broken.

The reason why the Law cannot make sinful people righteous is that it is an external code, whereas their sinful hearts need a transforming inward power. Rules never produce life.

Is there anything inherently wrong with any of this? Is there anything wrong with God defining what is right and wrong, wanting a proper response and meting out consequences if broken? No. God has a claim upon us and as such has a right to define our conduct—**“You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. Now if you obey Me fully and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession”** (Exodus 19:4-5).

It is important therefore to remember that the Mosaic Law was given out of relationship between Yahweh and His people, with the goals of love and blessing (Deuteronomy 8). This understanding undoubtedly influenced Paul who goes so far as to say—

- **the law is holy**—it is pure, wholesome and unpolluted (Romans 7:12);
- **the commandment is righteous**—it is entirely fair and equitable (Romans 7:12);

⁷ Although Paul’s reference to **the law** here is the Torah, the greater principle addressed still applies.

- **the commandment is good**—it is a positive thing to have God define how to best love Him and love people (Romans 7:12). God’s commandments lead us in a good direction;
- **the law is spiritual**—it comes from God, is untainted by the Fall of Adam and can only be practiced by the Spirit’s enablement (Romans 7:14).

We must never imagine, therefore, there is anything wrong with God defining human conduct.⁸

Why then the problem? Why does God want us out from under law (legalism)? Paul establishes three primary reasons—

1. **We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin** (Romans 7:14).
2. **The law [is] weakened by the sinful nature...** (Romans 8:3).
3. **Sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead. Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death** (Romans 7:8-11).

Let us now look in detail at each of these dynamics—

1. **We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin** (Romans 7:14). The problem is not God’s principles; the problem is that we are **unspiritual**.⁹ We are totally incapable of keeping God’s commandments as our *sarx*¹⁰. (flesh/sinful nature)

⁸. This is not always true with reference to humanly defined standards and codes, including some defined by the C/church (Colossians 2:20-23).

⁹. Literally, “fleshly” (Greek, *sarkinos*).

¹⁰. There is considerable theological debate as to the meaning of Paul’s ethical *sarx*. Ethical *sarx* in this module describes each human’s inherited (from the Fall) unregenerate or sinful nature which does not disappear or become less powerful when saved (Galatians 5:17). “It is at the core of our being...the center of our existence...[*sarx*] refers to the whole human person in our moral weakness, in our tendency to sin or rebel against God in every area of life” (Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, pg. 184). This view follows that of Augustine, the Latin Fathers, Martin Luther and John Calvin and in modern scholarship those of Cranfield, Dunn, Morris, Longenecker and Barrett. For alternate views, see Longenecker, Richard, *The Epistle to the Romans—The New International Greek Testament Commentary*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2016, pp. 650-660. This perspective also reflects the understanding of sanctification espoused by the British Keswick movement,

meets up with God's precepts. When our sinful nature meets the commandments, it says, "No way!" It rebels and keeps us in dominion to sin. "The condition of the human heart is such that no law could help it."¹¹ "Paul here is speaking of the control of all people by their inherited sinful nature."¹² Our personalities and appetites are slaves to sin and external codes do not free us.

2. **The law [is] weakened by the sinful nature...** (Romans 8:3).

In defining a second reason why we must come out from under law, Paul notes a limitation of law. It cannot overpower the sinful nature; it has no inherent energizing ability to curb the sinful nature—if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law (Galatians 3:21); **"Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!" ...indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence** (Colossians 2:21, 23). "The law is incapable of breaking the power of sin and conquering 'the flesh,' so that sin might no longer reign in the 'mortal body' (Rom. 6:12)."¹³ Paul reinforces this idea in Romans 7:6 by referring to the law as **old** and **written**. By **old**, he means it is insufficient to produce in us the righteousness Jesus demands—**by calling this covenant "new," He has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear** (Hebrews 8:13). By **written**, Paul means it is rule based and not relationship based and one cannot legislate behavior. "The reason why the Law cannot make sinful people righteous is that it is an external code, whereas their sinful hearts need a transforming inward power."¹⁴ Rules never produce life. Try loving God or another person because of rules and demands rather than out of heart-felt relationship. It creates

The law clearly defines what God desires for us in order to love Him and love people, so as to enjoy a blessed life. The precepts of the law provide gracious guidance for His people.

which reflects Foursquare's historic understanding since inception. "Keswick groups identify sanctification as a life-long process of progressive growth in grace that begins at conversion but is never fully completed...Christ [is] the foundation and the Holy Spirit [is] the agent of sanctification. The Spirit suppresses the power of the sinful nature, which nonetheless continues to exert its influence on the Christian life" (Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostal Theology: Living The Full Gospel*, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, New York, NY, 2017, pg. 71).

¹¹ Ladd, George, *A Theology of the New Testament—Revised Edition*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2000 reprint, pg. 550.

¹² Longenecker, *op. cit.*, pg. 662.

¹³ Ridderbos, *op. cit.*, pg. 143.

¹⁴ Ladd, *loc. cit.*

tension, discord, disappointment and guilt—for the letter¹⁵ kills, but the Spirit gives life (2 Corinthians 3:6).

3. **Sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting...for sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death** (Romans 7: 8, 11).¹⁶ Paul’s final reason for our need to be free from law is an outgrowth of his first concern. External codes arouse sin and make it all the more rebellious—the power of sin is the law (1 Corinthians 15:56). “The relationship of law to sin is that the former is what gives the latter its power.”¹⁷ It seems like external codes and rules are valuable in controlling behavior, but they do not have the power to transform a person inwardly; furthermore, rules often give the *sarx* (flesh/sinful nature) opportunity to all the more arise, deceive and put us in a death-like state. Let someone say to you, “You cannot” and we guarantee that your sinful nature will say, “I will.” We may even get more than we bargained for—**did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! Nevertheless, in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it used what is good to bring about my death, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful** (Romans 7:13, emphasis noted). Have you found this out yet?

- *The remarkable thing about the evidence of the insufficiency of the law furnished [in Romans 7] consists in that Paul now represents the law as a power that provokes and, as it were, calls forth sin. The law does not restrain sin, but causes it to awaken; it does not reduce sin, but rather makes it to increase (cf. Rom. 5:20...the sinful passions properly assert themselves only when they encounter the resistances of the law).*¹⁸

This entire system (represented in the concerns about law/legalism noted above) then is what we are to be free from—the system of looking to external codes lived by one’s own strength and effort (legalism) as the way to have a relationship with God and people. Paul does **not** mean that we are free from the precepts of God’s timeless commandments;¹⁹ he means we are free from striving for any “external body of laws to...effectively form...virtuous character within” (Galatians 5:23).²⁰

¹⁵. Or **written code**.

¹⁶. See below for an understanding of how this truth is also one reason why the law was given.

¹⁷. Fee, Gordon, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians—The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1987, pg. 806.

¹⁸. Ridderbos, *op. cit.*, pg. 144.

¹⁹. To believe that Christians are free from the precepts of God’s timeless commandments is known in ancient thinking as “antinomianism.” In contemporary 21st century thinking, it is sometimes referred to a “hyper-grace.” See www.gotquestions.org

²⁰. DeSilva, David, *The Letter to the Galatians—The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, William B. Eerd-

- *By fulfilling the promise given to Abraham, Christ has ended the age of the Law and inaugurated the age of Christ, which means freedom from bondage and the end of the Law for the believer. However, it is clear that inasmuch as Paul always regards the Law as holy and just and good, he never thinks of the Law as being abolished. It remains the expression of the will of God.*²¹

This brings us to our last concern with reference to law—Why the law (God’s standards)? The answer is three-fold—**1)** to clearly define sin, **2)** to clearly define how to love God and people so as to enjoy a blessed life, and **3)** to show the indispensability of the way of faith.

With reference to defining sin, we must remember that by way of original intent the law “provided Israel with a standard for obedience by which the covenant relationship must be preserved.”²² It did not *create* the covenant relationship (Romans 4:13-15). The role of the law in defining sin is spelled out in Romans 7:7—**I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “You shall not covet.”** Righteousness and holiness and how to worship God are not left to personal interpretation; He loves us too much to leave us in a moral fog.

It takes a long time to come out from under aspects of law. We naturally tend toward it; we gravitate to self-effort and an “I have to please” mentality.

Secondly, the law clearly defines what God desires for us in order to love Him and love people, so as to enjoy a blessed life (Deuteronomy 10:12-22). The precepts of the law provide gracious guidance for His people. “God required of man a wholehearted commitment in love, from which all other proper behavior stemmed.”²³

Thirdly, the law serves to show the indispensability of the way of faith. In this regard, it was given knowing it would be broken!! **The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase...once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death** (Romans 5:20; 7:9-10). The giving of the law then examples a greater biblical principle—in order to experience life, we must first experience death; we must come to an end of ourselves, seeing our dire need and the hopelessness, emptiness and death-like existence²⁴ that accompany trying to please God by our own efforts.

mans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2018, pg. 469. As Ladd notes, “The Law is no longer merely an external written code but an inward, life-giving power that produces righteousness” (George Ladd, *op. cit.*, pg. 546).

²¹ Ridderbos, *op. cit.*, pg. 553.

²² *Ibid.*, pg. 540.

²³ Craigie, P.C., *The Book of Deuteronomy—The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, August 1983 reprint, pg. 206.

²⁴ A person under the law is really in a death-like state for legalism breeds only death. Whenever we see misery and death-

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- “Legalism” is a theological term; the biblical term is “under law.” What is the module’s definition of “law”?

- What must we do when confronted by “law,” and what happens if we can’t keep any aspect of it?

- Is anything taught here on *sarx* new to you? If so, what? Does the module’s stance on our sinful nature align with your personal experience?

likeness in the life of a believer or in a congregation (*cf.* Galatians 5:13), we should suspect legalism.

-
- The entire realm of *external codes that define human conduct* is not intrinsically evil, especially when God Himself defines appropriate human conduct. To make sure we understand this, what four things does Paul say specifically about God's law in Romans 7:12-14? Talk about some implications of each of these four aspects of God's law in your life personally.
 - If the problem is not law itself (except in the cases of human laws that are contrary to Scripture or laws in Christendom that are legalistic), what are "the three problems" in terms of law and us as humans?
 - Take some significant time to understand and discuss details of each of these "three problems" and talk about how you've seen each one at work in your life personally.
 - What was God's three-fold purpose in giving us His law?

ARE YOU LIVING UNDER LAW?

In an unpublished manuscript entitled, *The Reign of Grace*, Foursquare pastor and theologian, Don Pickerill, lists four penetrating questions to help us understand if we are living under law—

- If you despair at ever experiencing all that God says can be experienced or feel that you will always be emotionally/psychologically weak where you are weak now, you are under law. You are evaluating either from the standpoint of what *you must do* to make things different, or you are relegating God's power as less than the weakness you face.
- If you overly stress life as a duty, placing duty/performance in life above relationship, you are living under law. Law manifests itself in a performance attitude, whereby you value yourself or others more for what you/they can do than for who you/they are. God's primary concern is that we be in right relationship with Him and others. Then, as a result of that relationship with Him, we do right things. We do not secure our relationship with Him through what we do; nor should we secure relationships with others based on what they do.
- If for you things *must be right*, you are under law. This does not mean that we do not want things done well, nor that we are not to strive for excellence. But there is a difference between wanting to do right and demanding things be right. The Pharisees demanded the right—to their undoing.
- If you have spiritual pride, “looking down your nose” at others and smugly deeming them less mature or less holy than you, you are under law. You judge yourself to be successful at measuring up to God's standards and have thus become boastful, proud and arrogant.

The Pharisees had “a distinctly merit-based system of thought in which lay a disastrous self-deception.”

In the same vein, Brown notes that when living under law four tenets often flood our thinking—

- *There is a limit to the number or the nature of sins covered by God's grace;*
- *By sinning too frequently or too grossly, you will transgress beyond the edge of its covering (likely, you already have);*

- *Once your sins exceed the allotted measure of God's grace, you "fall from grace";*
- *If you want to avoid "falling from grace," you must be more obedient and offer more sacrifice to God.²⁵*

It takes a long time to come out from under aspects of law (legalism). We naturally tend toward it; we gravitate to self-effort and an "I have to please" mentality. Finally, because aspects of legalism are very subtle, it is often difficult to see its influence in our lives. This is where we need grace—our only hope of freedom from legalism.

²⁵ Brown, *op. cit.*, pg. 17.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- Discuss each of Pickerill's and Brown's bullet points in terms of what you've experienced personally and seen in the lives of other Christ-followers.

THE SPIRIT OF THE PHARISEE—

Before we look at living “under grace,” let’s look at legalism at work in the Pharisees who clearly exemplified legalism; so much so, that the concept of “the spirit of the Pharisee” has become virtually synonymous with legalism. “Jesus reserved His harshest condemnations for the Pharisees, whose legalistic religion had strayed far from God’s intent and purpose. The Pharisees expected Jesus to agree with their low opinion of sinners and their high opinion of their own spirituality.”²⁶

The name *Pharisee* occurs over one hundred times in the New Testament. It literally means, “separated one”—a name derived from their zealous desire to preserve ceremonial law. They arose in Israel *ca.* 145 *BC* as a splinter group of the Hasidim, a pious Jewish sect who insisted on strictly observing the Jewish ritual laws at a time when many Jews were compromising under Roman and Hellenistic influence. The Pharisees were primarily “laymen” organized into brotherhoods, although there were some priests who were Pharisees. At the time of Jesus, the Pharisees operated most of the local synagogues and had the strongest voice on the Sanhedrin. Its opposing party, the Sadducees, controlled the Temple priesthood.²⁷

- *In Pharisaism Jesus met Israel as it strove for true faith and obedience to God, but which had become totally hardened in formalism and thus barred itself from precisely that for which it was searching—to please God. Jesus and the Pharisees are consequently depicted in Matthew, Mark, and John (with the exception of Nicodemus) as embittered opponents.*²⁸

Although Jesus did have a few positive interchanges with some Pharisees, His overall assessment was that they were **hypocrites**.²⁹ They had “a distinctly merit-based system of thought in which lay a disastrous self-deception.”³⁰ Jesus’ most concerted assessment of the Pharisees is recorded in Matthew 23. Here He acknowledged that many of their principles were valid—being in fact Moses’ principles (vv. 1-3). Yet, the Pharisees were greatly wanting at the practice level and were therefore not to be emulated in conduct (vs. 3).

Jesus’ specific accusations included the fact they—

²⁶ Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

²⁷ Among other differences, **the Sadducees** rejected “the tradition of the elders” (accepting only the Laws of the Pentateuch) and the idea of a resurrection.

²⁸ Muller, D., *Pharisee in Dictionary of New Testament Theology - Volume 2*, Brown, Colin (General Editor), Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1979 printing, pg. 812.

²⁹ **Hypocrite** in the New Testament is a regular expression for wicked and godless people. They were deemed such because they rejected the truth of God’s kingdom in Jesus Christ—not out of ignorance but out of willful blindness. Their hypocrisy involved deliberate pretense, with a clear knowledge of the truth (Mark 7:6-13).

³⁰ Muller, *op. cit.*, pg. 813.

- Were spiritually blind (Matthew 15:10-14).
- *The tragedy was that the Pharisees earnestly sought God, but, because a particular picture of God had hardened in their tradition, they decided against Jesus and thus against God.*³¹
- Practiced dead traditionalism (Luke 11:39), even preferring it to God's truth to the point of making God's Word void (Matthew 15:6; Mark 7:9-13).
- Were prejudice (Luke 7:39).
- Taught false doctrine (Matthew 16:12).
- Had a blasphemous attitude (Matthew 12:31-33).
- Tied heavy burdens on others, which they themselves did not practice (Matthew 23:4).
- Were full of religious pride (Matthew 23:5-7).
- Misguided people spiritually (Matthew 23:13-15).
- Twisted God's truth to meet their own needs (Matthew 23:16-22).
- Practiced God's truth selectively (Matthew 23:23-24).

The spirit of the Pharisee did not die out with the end of first century Judaism. It is still alive in the Church today infiltrating in subtle ways the hearts and minds of many of us. Here is a list of some of the *Characteristics of the Pharisee* which oppose grace—

- Pharisaism is drawn to religious activity (Matthew 3:7).
- It boasts in ancestral or national religious merit (Matthew 3:9).
- It associates only with those considered religiously and morally of the same vein (Matthew 9:11).

³¹. *Ibid.*

- It makes quick and often un-insightful religious judgments based on preconceived theological premises (Matthew 9:33-34).
- It focuses on religious traditions more than people's extenuating circumstances and expresses no flexibility in bending amoral religious traditions to meet people's needs (Matthew 12:1-8).
- It focuses on traditions more than people's healing (Matthew 12:9-14).
- It focuses on religious tradition more than God's Word (Matthew 15:3-6), often to the setting aside of God's Word for tradition's sake (Mark 7:8-13).
- It emphasizes outward appearance more than heart attitude (Matthew 15:7-9).
- It always tests (with a negative attitude) the workings of God (Matthew 16:1).
- It plans crafty plots aimed at trapping God's ministers (Matthew 22:15).
- It does not live up to the truths it knows (Matthew 23:3).
- It binds heavy religious burdens on people (Matthew 23:4).
- It interests itself in people's praise (Matthew 23:5).
- It glories in authoritative, hierarchical religious positions (Matthew 23:6, 8).
- It glories in attention (Mark 12:38).
- It has a way of preventing others from experiencing the things of God (Matthew 23:13).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- Why does this module use the Pharisees as a biblical example of legalistic, religious people?

- Discuss the bullet points under *Characteristics of the Pharisee*. Do you see yourself in any of them? Have you seen or felt it from other Christ-followers such that it negatively impacted you and your walk with Christ?

UNDER GRACE—

Paul's answer to legalism (living **under law**) is to live **under grace**, a privilege that is positionally ours *in Christ* from the moment of salvation that we must learn to *experience* in every facet of our lives (**you are not under the law, but under grace** [Romans 6:14]). Actualizing this privilege is more complex than it might seem; as with legalism, it begins with defining **grace**.

Grace is a familiar word in the Church—but one that is often under-appreciated. God's heart is that grace reign—**where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord** (Romans 5:20-21).

The Greek word for grace (*charis*) occurs more than 150 times in the New Testament. By way of some examples, *charis*—

- Comes to us in abundance and leads to living life as God intended—**how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace...reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!** (Romans 5:17).
- Transforms us and enables us to become all God wants us to become—I **am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect** (1 Corinthians 15:9-10). **It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age** (Titus 2:12).
- Saves/justifies us—**it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God** (Ephesians 2:8).
- Is the essence of Jesus' personhood—**out of His fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given** (John 1:16).³²

³² **Grace in place of grace already given** "is an unusual expression...clearly John intends to put some emphasis on the thought of grace. Probably he means that as one piece of divine grace (so to speak) recedes it is replaced by another. God's grace to his people is continuous and is never exhausted" (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According To John – Revised Edition—The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1995, pg. 98).

The most common definition of grace is “unmerited favor” or “undeserved blessing freely bestowed on many by God—a concept which is at the heart not only of Christian theology but also of all genuinely Christian experience.”³³ These are not bad definitions, and they help us understand the essence of *charis*.

- It is “unmerited” or “undeserved” in that it is a **gift** (Romans 5:15). We can only **receive God’s abundant provision of grace** (Romans 5:17, emphasis noted) by faith (Ephesians 2:8). As Paul reminded the Romans—**so too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace** (Romans 11:5-6).
- Grace is also “favor-based.” When Gabriel greeted Mary, he said, **“Greetings, you who are highly favored!”** (Luke 1:28). **“You who are highly favored!”** (Greek, *chaire*) derives from the same Greek root as *charis*. “Mary has been especially favoured by God...[with] no suggestion of any particular worthiness on the part of Mary herself.”³⁴ To be under grace is to realize we are favored by God; we are His friends, under His favor and not His judgment. He both loves and likes us, so much so that He is willing to say—**“I will be their God, and they will be My people”** (Hebrews 8:10).³⁵ Furthermore, favor cannot be separated biblically from goodness. To be under grace is to realize that God has designed only goodness for those whom He loves—**“I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them...I will rejoice in doing them good...with all My heart and soul”** (Jeremiah 32:40-41). “Israel’s loyalty to God is made possible by God’s loyalty to them. This is the first and most important ‘good’ that Yahweh can do for [us].”³⁶ God is pursuing us with goodness with all His being.³⁷ Even negative realities in life are part of His goodness, as He uses them to mature us—**we know that in all things**

³³ Hughes, P.E., *Grace in Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Elwell, Walter (General Editor), Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1999 printing, pg. 479.

³⁴ Marshall, I. Howard, *Commentary on Luke—The New International Greek Testament Commentary*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992 reprint, pg. 65.

³⁵ It is amazing how many believers struggle with really believing that they are God’s favorites, especially when they do something wrong. They cannot sort out godly conviction from self/demonic condemnation. To be under grace means God has no condemning charge against us and that we must not confuse discipline with a condemning charge. Our conduct (though it may be very carnal [1 Corinthians 3:1-4]) does not change His commitment to us. (This does not negate the possibility of apostasy based on changing one’s basic beliefs relative to Jesus [Colossians 1:21-23; James 5:19-20], but the Bible’s basic call is one of humble security in Jesus, not always anxious insecurity fueled by legalism.)

³⁶ Keown, Gerald, et al, *Jeremiah 26-52—Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 27*, Word Books, Publisher, Dallas, TX, 1995, pg. 161.

³⁷ The temptation that deceived Eve was allowing the enemy to convince her that God was withholding some good thing from her (Genesis 3:4-5). Many Christians today believe God is “out to settle some score with them.” James says the end result of this thinking is that **they are double-minded and unstable in all they do** (James 1:8).

God works for the good of those who love him... [and they are] predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:28-29).³⁸

Though “unmerited favor” does define *charis* to a great degree, it is too impersonal a definition. As stated above, John ties grace into Jesus—**out of His fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given** (John 1:16). Grace is not just some mystical concept, nor even a loving disposition coming from God. Because grace is inseparably linked to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ in John 1:16, it can be helpful to think of grace *as the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ inexhaustibly meeting us at our point of need*.

We cannot produce any righteousness by ourselves without God—either for justification or sanctification.

And that Person truly understands our need. **Therefore, since we have a great High Priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need** (Hebrews 4:14-16).

SUMMATION OF LIVING UNDER GRACE—

Jesus Christ inexhaustibly meeting us at our point of need is our only hope of experiencing the newness of life God promises (Romans 6:4). To be under grace, therefore, means—

- We live drawing our life from the Person of Jesus Christ, remembering that God has only grace for us.
- We realize we cannot produce any righteousness by ourselves without God—either for justification or sanctification.³⁹ We could never merit God’s favor, no matter how hard we might try. We are, in and of our historical self, powerless to do good. The only way we can do or become good is if God gives us a new heart by grace.
- We live in the freedom of knowing we are favored by God—even when life is difficult, or He has to discipline us (Hebrews 12:3-11). This means we cannot think of a one-on-one correlation between our conduct and His commitment to us. In other words, we cannot think that

³⁸ See also Genesis 50:20 and 2 Corinthians 4:16-17.

³⁹ This does not negate the biblical truth that as believers empowered by the Holy Spirit we have responsibilities as we partner with God in righteous living (Romans 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:22; James 2:14-19).

grace comes to us according to our conduct—if we are “bad,” then God and His grace get cut off for a while; if we are “good,” God and His grace come rushing back. Grace is always free; it never comes by way of a paycheck.

- We relate to other people and treat them *exactly* like God relates to us and treats us (see Galatians 5:22-23).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- What does “grace reigning” look like in your life personally (Romans 5:20-21)?
- Discuss what it means both theologically and personally that grace is both “un-merited” and “favor-based.”
- What do you think personally of the module’s definition of grace? Why? What is the primary biblical basis for this definition?

GRACE AND FREEDOM FROM SIN'S MASTERY—

As noted, living **under grace** does not free us from the Bible's moral claims...only the means of living out those moral claims. Again, note Titus—**the grace of God teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age** (Titus 2:12) and Paul's “reply to the preposterous argument,”⁴⁰ **shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means!** (Romans 6:1-2; *cf.* Romans 3:8).⁴¹ We must always resist antinomian or so-called hyper-grace teachings.

According to Romans 6, the basis of Paul's response that strongly rejects this inference—**by no means!** (vs. 2)—is that there has been a positional change, a realm transfer if you would—**we are those who have died to sin** (vs. 2). “He is referring to the death to sin that marks the beginning of the characteristic Christian life,”⁴² a positional separation from the ruling power of sin that must then become actualized by each individual—**do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires** (vs. 12).⁴³ This realm transfer makes drawing one's life from the old realm totally out of sync with who we now are—**how can we live in it any longer?** (vs. 2).⁴⁴

Before we study Paul's “pathway to actualized freedom under grace,” we need to examine three instinctively wrong approaches to dealing with sin's mastery...approaches that more often than not characterize the lives of believers living under law. We do so remembering again that sin is not just a few moral missteps; it is a powerful force (the sinful nature), a self-centeredness that manifests itself in seeing no need for God and in some way using people, at any cost. It has no respect for God or His ways (Romans 8:7). “One can define sin as man's willing-to-have-command-of-himself, wanting-to-be-as-God.”⁴⁵ Because of its deceptive nature, it does not even respect the person it is tempting (often so disguising itself the one being tempted is fooled).

⁴⁰ Bruce, F.F., *Romans—Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1990 reprint, pg. 128.

⁴¹ Paul himself postulates this question being asked—**what shall we say then?** (vs. 1)—based on what he knows could be a false inference of Romans 5:20—**where sin increased, grace increased all the more**. In effect, it is saying that sin is good for the gospel, so why not continue with sin as a life-style so as to give grace an opportunity to shine?! “I like committing crimes. God likes forgiving them. Really the world is admirably arranged” (W. H. Auden quoted in Moo, Douglas, *The Epistle To The Romans—The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1996, pg. 356).

⁴² Morris, Leon, *The Epistle To The Romans—The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1988, pg. 247. Note also Moo, “Death to sin is part and parcel of becoming a Christian” (Douglas Moo, *ibid.*, pg. 359).

⁴³ Comparing Romans 6:12 with Romans 6:14 shows that the imperative springs from the established indicative. The imperative does not establish the indicative.

⁴⁴ Or **how can we draw our life from the realm of sin anymore?**

⁴⁵ Ridderbos, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-106.

- *The principle of sin is not fundamentally some impulse, biological or psychological...but rather is a spiritual dynamic...that is immanently present within human nature. The operation and function of this spiritual dynamic are to enslave and condition the biological and psychological drives of human life in the service of sin.*⁴⁶

The first instinctive approach often taken to dealing with sin is that of **self-reformation**.⁴⁷ This approach begins with the premise that since we are Christians, we should “act better.” We examine ourselves, our motives, words, actions, attitudes and reactions, only to discover how far below God’s standards we are falling. So, we set out on a program of self-reformation endeavoring to improve the **self** (*sarx*).⁴⁸ When we have a sinful attitude, we repress it, thinking that in the repressing we are diminishing its power. We alter behavior, hold our tongue and clench our fists—but inside we are still “seething.”

You will never be able to successfully deal with (sin) without the enablement of the Spirit.

But self-reformation does not work, regardless of how much effort and energy we spend. Note three basic reasons it does not work—

1. The first reason self-reformation does not work can be understood by imagining sin as a very prolific fruit tree that is rooted in our life and bears fruit constantly. The self-reformation approach amounts to cutting off the fruit that appears on the branches, but never dealing with the root. If we relax at all from our “pruning,” we soon have a tree full of fruit!
2. The second reason self-reformation does not work is that it misunderstands the problem. The problem is not the fruit—the sinful words or deeds, nor even the evil desires, thoughts and attitudes that come to the surface of our souls. Our real problem is what empowers the fruit—a fallen core within humanity (flesh/sinful nature), which self-reformation is never able to affect.
3. The third reason self-reformation is futile can best be understood through an analogy. Picture a house with a dirt floor. Imagine what would happen if we decided that we were going to clean that floor. We could sweep and sweep and never really get the job done. And heaven forbid if we should ever try to scrub it! Yet, we scrub and scrub our behavior, des-

⁴⁶ Laymen, Fred, quoted in *The Believer’s Guide to Spiritual Warfare*, Thomas B. White, Servant Publications, Ann Harbor, MI, 1990, pg. 27.

⁴⁷ **Self-reformation** is used here in a limited sense of endeavoring to improve the *sarx*.

⁴⁸ It is important that we not confuse improving or reforming our life circumstances with reforming the *sarx*. Making healthy decisions that improve our life circumstance is part of living under grace (Ephesians 5:8-14).

perately hoping it will touch the inner core—all the while just making a bigger and bigger mess of things. “I liken this approach to that of scrubbing a dirt floor—the matter just gets muddier with effort.”⁴⁹ The answer to the dirt floor is a new “non-dirt” floor; likewise, the answer to our struggle with sin is a new self that becomes the dominating power within in—not self-reformation.

We are prime candidates to become Pharisees.

The second instinctive approach is that of **fighting sin**. Somewhat related to self-reformation, the approach of fighting sin is different in that it never expects to “clean up” the *sarx*, just defeat it. With self-reformation, we imagine that we can improve the essence of our sinful nature; with **fighting sin**, we meet our unredeemable sinful nature head on and endeavor to conquer it through will power. But because of the nature of that which we are trying to fight, fighting sin does not work. There is **indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting rigor of devotion and self-abasement and severity to the body, but they are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh** (Colossians 2:23 [RSV]). “It is the ‘I am going to try harder approach.’ I know I failed that time, but I am going to try again’.”⁵⁰

We all know this approach. We discern sin creeping up; we can feel the temptation or the arousal of the sinful nature. We start fighting—“I won’t do it; I won’t do it; I won’t do it...I’m sorry I did it; I’m sorry I did it...” We must come to realize that in and of ourselves we can no more master sin than we can master death. You may jog, eat right, never smoke...but you will still die. The same is true with sin; you will never be able to successfully deal with it without the enablement of the Spirit.

The third instinctive approach is that of **coping**. This most often follows on the heels of the first two approaches. Having tried self-reformation and fighting sin, only to meet with repeated failure, the next logical approach is to resign ourselves to our weaknesses and settle down to live the rest of our lives as we are now. Rather than expecting to experience any real freedom from sin’s dominion, we learn to “cope and hang on by our fingernails” until we go to be with Jesus.⁵¹ In coping, we also put pressure on those around us to live with/accept our sin. The major responsibility ultimately becomes theirs, not ours.

Apart from our inability to win the battle with sin, two additional tragedies might emerge if we try to deal with sin from one of these three perspectives—

⁴⁹ Pickerill, *op. cit.*, pg. 44.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pg. 45.

⁵¹ Coping, used here in its most negative aspects, is not to be confused with living with the enlightenment Paul discusses in Romans 7 that certain besetting struggles and dysfunction are part of this Age’s fallenness and will never be overcome in this life.

- Some begin to imagine themselves as being experts at self-reformation, fighting or coping and soon develop great spiritual pride. We imagine ourselves “expert at pruning our sinful nature,” and expect others to be just as “expert.” We think our lives are pretty well cleaned up and that we have our problems under control. Those who do not know us well may be impressed; those who do know us well rarely are. We are prime candidates to become Pharisees.
- Others (the vast majority) find themselves in frustration and despair—neither of which they dare allow to show “at church.” They live behind masks and slowly drift out of fellowship. The constant effort of dealing with sin from one of the false approaches has become too overwhelming; it is easier to just give up on God and get the monkey off our back.⁵²
 - *We feel confusion and guilt and pain. This can even make us a hypocrite, by the way, for we do not dare tell anybody what our inside systems are really like. So we go around feigning and play acting the entire Christian life. That is not life! It is nothing but a mass of misery and this is the reason many Christians are unhappy.*⁵³

⁵² Those who do not give up on God and/or the Church generally live at some level of constant depression.

⁵³ Pickerill, *op. cit.*, pg. 17.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- Christians are sometimes “afraid to teach grace” because they’re afraid it will lead to believers living unrighteous lives. How do Romans 6:1-2 and Titus 2:12 address this, and does it seem reasonable to say, “If you use grace as an excuse for unrighteous living, you do not understand biblical grace?”
- What is the essence of trying to deal with sin in our lives by “self-reformation” and why doesn’t it work?
- What is the essence of trying to deal with sin in our lives by “fighting sin” and why doesn’t it work?
- What is the essence of trying to deal with sin in our lives by “coping” and why doesn’t it work?
- Which of these approaches have you tried and how did it work out?

WHAT SHALL WE DO?

Jesus is clear, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). Such is the goal of living under grace, and most Christians want this abundant life. We have established that we do not have the ability to experience this full life without Jesus (grace), but does that mean we have no responsibility? That we do nothing? Though it can be “tricky” to understand and live out our responsibilities under grace without such becoming legalistic works, there is a part we play; these responsibilities must be grasped and appropriated without allowing such to become “works or legalism.”⁵⁴

In Romans 6:3-14, Paul gives a series of responsibilities⁵⁵ enjoined upon us if we want to walk in the freedom Christ has purchased. These same responsibilities can apply to experiencing grace in all areas of our lives.

1. **We must know.** Grace desires that we grasp Paul’s, “**Don’t you know?**” (vs. 3).⁵⁶ Paul expects believers to be informed and to grasp certain biblical truths, for experiencing freedom from sin’s mastery (or grace in general) is directly linked to the biblical truths we know to appropriate.⁵⁷ For example, when dealing with sin, we must know **that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus⁵⁸ were baptized into His death** (vs. 3).⁵⁹ We also are to know that **our old self was crucified with Him so that the body ruled by sin⁶⁰ might be done away with** (vs. 6). “**Done away with**...is to cause the body ruled by sin to ‘lose its power’ over us...so that we are no longer bound to sin, as if we were sin’s slaves, but are now free not to sin.”⁶¹ Finally, we are to know that though **we died with Christ** (vs. 8), we go on to live with Christ—**we believe that we will also live with Him** (vs. 8).

⁵⁴ The tension here is similar to that enigmatically expressed in Hebrews 4:11—**let us make every effort to enter (God’s) rest.**

⁵⁵ Once again, please remember this important truth as articulated by Ridderbos. “It is immediately clear that the imperative rests on the indicative and that this order is not reversible” (Herman Ridderbos, *op. cit.*, pg. 254.).

⁵⁶ **Or are you ignorant?**

⁵⁷ The two Greek words translated **know** in Romans 6:6, 9 (*ginosko, oida*) do not refer to experiential knowledge, but to accurately and precisely realizing relevant facts.

⁵⁸ **Baptized into Christ Jesus** references “the Roman Christians’ water baptism as their outward initiation into Christian existence...by the date of Romans, ‘baptize’ had become almost a technical expression for the rite of Christian initiation by water, and this is surely the meaning the Roman Christians would have given the word” (Douglas Moo, *loc. cit.*).

⁵⁹ **Baptized into His death** affirms “strongly that the justified are those united by faith to all that Christ means, and therefore antinomianism is impossible for them...God made him sin for us, and his death dealt decisively with sin, took it out of the way, paid its penalty, removed its sting, won the victory over it” (Leon Morris, *op. cit.*, pg. 247, 255).

⁶⁰ Note that the human body and its appetites are not sinful in and of themselves, but they are often “taken over” by the sinful nature in ways that are sinful.

⁶¹ Kruse, Colin, *Paul’s Letter To The Romans—The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2012, pp. 263-264.

Obviously, knowledge is not an end in itself and there is a worldly knowledge that seeks to boast, but this is not Paul's reference here. Hence, his prayer in Colossians 1:9-10—**we have not stopped praying for you...so that you may lead a life worthy of the Lord...growing in the knowledge of God.**

Having established several facts that Paul assumes we do and indeed must know with reference to our relationship in Christ to sin (vv. 1-10), he next lists further responsibility we have in the process of actualized freedom from sin's mastery. He does so with a series of imperatives.⁶²

2. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (vs. 11).

In the same way calls our attention back to vv. 8-10 and reminds us, "Don't be what you are not." In other words, by His grace we activate what we know to be true in terms of death to sin rather than being passive, or worse yet continuing not to confront sin in reality. "Faith means seeing things as Christ sees them and then acting on the vision...Christ's death and resurrection has altered their position, and they should live in accordance with the new reality."⁶³ A major key to understanding Paul here lies in grasping his use of the Greek verb translated **count**.⁶⁴ **Count** translates the Greek verb *logizomai* that "denotes not a pretending ('as if'), nor a mere ideal, but a deliberate and sober judgment on the basis of the gospel."⁶⁵ It comes from a root meaning "to put together, collect, harvest; [it] suggests a regulated perception and an acceptance of given facts."⁶⁶ It was used in mathematical settings meaning to calculate, evaluate or deliberate facts; to take a list of figures, add them up and derive a conclusion. *Logizomai* evolved to develop the nuance of taking known facts and pondering them, reflecting on them or meditating on them over and over in one's mind, ~~much like a cow chews its cud~~. Finally, *logizomai* has the idea of being convinced by what has been recognized. This is that "I get it!" phase, whereby we are absolutely convinced spiritually, emotionally and psychologically that all the truths relative to freedom from sin's mastery are true—*for me*—and that they work. "The sin of the unbeliever is the natural consequence of the fact that he is a slave to sin, whereas the sin of the believer is quite out of character."⁶⁷

⁶² These imperatives are Paul's first in Romans, having taken over five chapters to build understanding to which we respond. Again, although the specific at hand is experiencing grace for freedom from sin's mastery, the same principles apply to our responsibilities in experiencing grace in life in general.

⁶³ Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 256-257.

⁶⁴ The Greek verbal tense is present, indicating that this process of counting is a continuous life-long process. "Despite the assertions of vv. 2-11, sin's rule is not merely a possibility, but a reality to be resisted all the time" (James D.G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8—Word Biblical Commentary*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1988, pg. 336).

⁶⁵ Cranfield, C.E.B., *Romans—The International Critical Commentary*, T & T Clark Limited, Edinburg, Scotland, 1975, pg. 315.

⁶⁶ Eichler, *Logizomai* in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology – Volume 3*, Brown, Colin, (General Editor), Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1979 printing, pg. 822.

⁶⁷ Morris, *op. cit.*, pg. 259. "We count ourselves dead to sin in the sense that we are released from its tyranny as a result of

3. **Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body⁶⁸ so that you obey its evil desires** (vs. 12).⁶⁹ Paul is quite careful to introduce this prohibition with **therefore**. He is saying that because all the facts of Romans 6:1-11 are true⁷⁰ and we know them to be true deep inside, we can make a choice to confront sin's mastery every time it wants to dominate by calling upon Jesus to enable us by grace to die to its dominion. "In union with Christ we *have been made* dead to sin and alive to God; it remains for us to appropriate (v. 11) and apply (vv. 12-13) what God has done for us...[so] we must stop serving [sin] as if it were our rightful sovereign"⁷¹.
4. **But rather⁷² offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life** (vs. 13). Paul here presents not only the "positive" step we are to take, but infers it is a "proactive" step, as grace reminds us that we need to consistently ask God for spiritual fortitude against sin, especially against specific "besetting sins."⁷³ **Offer⁷⁴** (Greek, *paristemi*) has the idea of bringing yourself before someone who can help, of putting yourself at someone else's disposal. In this case, it is regularly and specifically putting yourself at Jesus' disposal.⁷⁵ We know what it is like to put ourselves at sin's disposal; Paul wants us to learn to do the same with reference to putting ourselves at Jesus' disposal by—praying, worshipping, asking for His help, filling our hearts with His Word, fellowshiping, seeking counseling, etc.⁷⁶

The outcome? **Sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace** (Romans 6:14).

what Christ has done" (Colin Kruse, *op. cit.*, pg. 267).

⁶⁸ **Your mortal body** denotes your entire being, especially in terms of your interaction with the world. "The battle is a spiritual one, but it is fought, and won or lost, in the daily decisions the believer makes about how to use his body" (Douglas Moo, *op. cit.*, pg. 383).

⁶⁹ **Evil desires** reference all that is contrary to God's will, including desires in our mind and will and what we often erroneously perceive to be our "needs." Note the further related prohibition—**do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness** (Romans 6:13). (The construction of the Greek that is translated **do not offer** infers the cessation of activity.)

⁷⁰ Note also the reiterated promise in Romans 6:14.

⁷¹ Moo, *op. cit.*, pp. 380, 384.

⁷² Greek *alla*, indicating a strong contrast.

⁷³ This must not be confused with the false approach of fighting sin noted above. Quite the contrary. It is building ourselves up in the most holy faith (Jude 20) which then results in experiencing God's mastery over the flesh/sinful nature.

⁷⁴ The Greek verbal tense (aorist) likely denotes decisiveness, "a wholehearted and total commitment" (Leon Morris, *op. cit.*, pg. 258).

⁷⁵ See Pickerill, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-53 for additional insight into the process of offering yourself to God, as seen in the Old Testament ordination of the priests.

⁷⁶ It is crucial that we remember that offering does not involve our old self (sinful nature). The old self cannot yield to God. Only our new self can be yielded to God. It is also this new self that must be strengthened by the Spirit, so that it is strong enough to prompt us to yield (see Romans 12:1-2).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- We will never be sinless, but Romans 6:14 promises we can be free from sin’s mastery. Freedom comes by partnering with God. According to Romans 6:1-14, what are our four responsibilities?
- Discuss the technical implications of the Greek word translated “count” (Romans 6:11). What does “count” look like in your life and how would you disciple believers to make the implications part of their life?
- What are some practical ways in which you can “offer yourself to God” to be fortified to deal with sin?

GRACE AND LIVING IN THE SPIRIT—

The matter of living (walking) in the Spirit is addressed in Romans 8, whose focus is the Spirit’s ministry in assuring us that our relationship with God is secure and settled by grace through faith. Paul begins by noting **there is now no condemnation** (vs. 1) and concludes by noting that nothing **in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord** (vs. 39).

Therefore, there is now⁷⁷. no condemnation⁷⁸. (vs. 1) clearly shows that God does not pronounce His judgment of wrath against **those who are in Christ Jesus** (vs. 1). In addition, the authority and influence of the Spirit appropriating Christ’s work has freed us and enables us to defeat sin’s mastery—**through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death** (vs. 2)—something **the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the sinful nature** (vs. 3). Paul also states the purpose of **God...sending His own Son...[to condemn] sin in human flesh** (vs. 3), namely—**in order that the righteous requirement of the law⁷⁹. might be fully met in us** (vs. 4). “In Him we in our measure begin to live the kind of life that God would have us live...able to attain a standard we could never reach in our own strength.”⁸⁰ “The fulfillment of the Law’s requirement in believers is not achieved because they are continuously careful to observe its many stipulations. Rather, it is fulfilled in them as they live, not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”⁸¹

Those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

And what specifically do we need grace to reveal to us? It is the liberating fact that as Christ-followers, we are those **who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit⁸²** (vs. 4). We must let this penetrate our hearts, for it has the potential to create an entirely different mindset with reference to God’s empowerment against sin’s mastery.

- *Since believers are no longer “in the flesh” but “in the Spirit,” they should no longer live “according*

⁷⁷ **Now** emphasizes that believers are free from both God’s current wrath and His eschatological wrath.

⁷⁸ Though God does not condemn us, we often live with a sense of condemnation as our conscience, others or the devil bring an offense to our attention with fear of punishment and no sense of forgiveness; it is a vague sense of failure and instills fear.

⁷⁹ “Believers fulfill the law in the sense that they do have a real faith in God (which is the law’s basic demand), in the sense that their lives are definitely turned in the direction of obedience, that they do sincerely desire to obey and are earnestly striving to advance ever nearer to perfection” (C.E.B. Cranfield, *op. cit.*, pg. 384). Paul also means that the Spirit enables us to actually experience and reflect God’s righteousness in our lives (*cf.* Romans 3:21-22). This includes, among other things, the ability to love and serve God and others with all our being (Mark 12:28-34).

⁸⁰ Morris, *op. cit.*, pg. 304.

⁸¹ Kruse, *op. cit.*, pg. 329.

⁸² That is **in accordance with all the Spirit represents**. “The reference to Christian behavior in this phrase shows that Paul does not separate the ‘fulfillment’ of the law from the lifestyle of Christians” (Douglas Moo, *op. cit.*, pg. 485).

to the flesh” but “according to the Spirit” (Romans 8:4f, 12 f). They have exchanged their unregenerate outlook (“the mind of the flesh”) for that which is proper to the children of God (“the mind of the Spirit”); it is their duty henceforth to “make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires” (Romans 8:5-7; 13:14)...the Spirit is the sanctifying agency in the lives of believers: he wages perpetual warfare against the flesh, but he is more powerful than the flesh, and can put the flesh progressively out of action in those lives which are yielded to his control.⁸³

Bruce is describing what Paul refers to as **living⁸⁴...according to the Spirit** (vs. 4)—the believer’s *modus vivendi* or life level.⁸⁵ When we talk about **living according to the Spirit** then, we are talking about how we go about our life-style on a daily basis⁸⁶—a life-style that is to be within the realm of the Spirit, clearly recognizing that He is also its Source.⁸⁷ “It is clear that Paul conceives of the Spirit as a new indwelling power that manifests itself in conduct. The new life is the gift of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:6; Gal. 6:25), and this life evidences itself in the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ (Gal. 5:20), which Paul interprets in terms of Christian virtues.”⁸⁸ “The Christian is not a man who adds a number of good deeds to his life, he is a man who has received the gift of a new life which then grows and develops.”⁸⁹

Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

Those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds⁹⁰ set on what the Spirit desires (vs. 5) gives us a basic truth we must practice if we are going to **live in accordance with the Spirit** on a daily basis—namely, fundamental to living according to the Spirit is setting our attitudes in the direction of the Spirit...fully embracing His life and perspectives. This is not a static (positional) state but a fluctuating condition, the opposite also being possible for a believer—

those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires (vs. 5). Having your mind set on what the Spirit desires comes through study and meditation of His Word and through prayer, as we come to Him and say—

⁸³ Bruce, F.F., *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1999 reprint, pp. 206, 210.

⁸⁴ Or **walking**.

⁸⁵ “To ‘walk according to the Spirit,’ is to live under the control, and according to the values, of the ‘new age,’ created and dominated by God’s Spirit as his eschatological gift” (Douglas Moo, *op. cit.*, pg. 485).

⁸⁶ “The word translated ‘walk/live’ in Romans 8:4 is *peripateo*, which literally means to walk around. It has to do with one going about his daily business” (Don Pickerill, *op. cit.*, pg. 83).

⁸⁷ Let’s remember that to walk in the Spirit is the same as to live in Christ Jesus. **Fixing our eyes on to Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of faith** (Hebrews 12:2) is a reminder that we must never separate a walk in the Spirit from the Person of Jesus Christ, whose earthly life perfectly modeled this life-style for us.

⁸⁸ Ladd, *op. cit.*, pg. 562.

⁸⁹ Lloyd-Jones, D.M., *Expository Sermons on 2 Peter*, The Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, PA, 1999 reprint, pg. 229.

⁹⁰ Mind refers to our inner attitudes.

- *I am Yours, Lord. Reflect Yourself in my thoughts and inner attitudes. Help me to know Your Word and Your thoughts, that I might think like You think. Let me draw today on the powers of the new self within. Let me remember the truths I know, that I might practice them. Let me think and act like what I truly am—a child of God, whose life is hidden in Christ.*

The result of each mind-set is also stated—**the mind controlled by the sinful nature is death**,⁹¹ **but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace** (vs. 6). Regarding **life and peace**, Pickerill notes some crucial outcomes of grace reigning in our lives.

- *A walk in the Spirit makes people glad they are alive. Life comes to make sense, to be worthwhile, and to be lived at the level it was meant to be lived. Why is this the case? The answer is simple. Life is no longer lived from the standpoint of striving and struggling. Our spirits are not disquieted because we realize that Jesus has done everything. Suddenly we say, “What do we have to ‘sweat’ about? For what have we been laboring all this time? It is not doing us any good.” So, we cease the struggle, yield to the Spirit, and in come peace, inner quietness, trust, and a knowledge that all is well in the Lord Jesus. A natural consequence of this is that we cease to upset everybody around us. We cease demanding and enter into peaceful relationships with other people. Does this make a difference? Indeed it does. It changes our daily lifestyle. Freedom prevails in all we do with God, ourselves and others.⁹²*

Furthermore, Paul reminds us how self-serving the sinful nature is—**the sinful mind is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God** (vv. 7-8).

Paul next reminds us of the only Source of freedom from mastery by the sinful nature—**you are not controlled by the sinful nature but are in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you** (vs. 9)⁹³—and reminds us of our status as believers and some benefits that brings—**though your body is subject to death because of sin,⁹⁴ the Spirit gives life because of righteousness⁹⁵...[and] life to your mortal bodies⁹⁶** (vv. 10-11).

⁹¹ It is observed that a mind set on the sinful nature is often not detected until “death-dynamics” become evident in one’s life or the life of a church.

⁹² Pickerill, *op. cit.*, pg. 87.

⁹³ **If** here is best understood as “since” or “because.” “The Spirit is not an occasional visitor; he takes up residence in God’s people” (Leon Morris, *op. cit.*, pg. 308).

⁹⁴ We die physically as one consequence of sin.

⁹⁵ **Righteousness** here references our justification and the subsequent sanctified life that should follow.

⁹⁶ **Life to your mortal bodies** references our future immortal, physical bodies.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- What does the Bible mean by “walking or living according to the Spirit”?

- How does Paul describe Christ-followers in Romans 8:4? If truly grasped, how could this truth help someone truly believe they can live according to the Spirit?

- What does “the righteous requirement of the law” look like in your life personally and what aspects of it would you want disciples you influence to grasp and live?

PRACTICING GRACE WHEN ENCOUNTERING DISPUTABLE MATTERS—

Romans 14 deals with how living under grace or under law affects a believer's response to differences of perspective on “non-essentials,” which Paul terms **disputable matters** (vs. 1).⁹⁷ He does so by contrasting the perspective of **those whose faith is weak** (vs. 1) with those **who are strong** (Romans 15:1). Though not stated here, it is to be observed that those living under grace are usually able to follow Paul's thinking and exhortation, while those living under law are less likely to do so, usually demanding their perspective be shared by all.

In giving direction, Paul begins by stating the main goal—**the strong...must not treat [the weak] with contempt**, and the weak **must not judge** the strong (vs. 3). Notes Morris—

- *The apostle sides with neither the weak nor the strong; clearly he thought that unity was more important than holding either position. The situation is not like that in Galatians where he contended vigorously against legalists; here both groups were evidently clear about the centrality of justification by faith; it was the way that was put into practice that was at stake...Paul gives us advice as to how we are to live with others who love the Lord but who do not see what we are doing as the ideal way of living out the Christian faith.*⁹⁸

The biblical principles in Romans 14 are taught by addressing some particular cultural **disputable matters** encountered in the Roman church. The first is that of differences of perspective over food matters—**one person's faith allows them to eat everything, but another person, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables** (vs. 2).⁹⁹ Believers bring habits and ways of thinking to salvation and less mature/legalistic believers often cannot discern when something is relative or even irrelevant to God, so they cannot let it go. The initial exhortation to the strong is **accept**¹⁰⁰. **[them] without quarreling**¹⁰¹. **over disputable matters** (vs. 1), which Paul will expand in vs. 3 in asking both parties to stop criticizing—**the one who eats everything must not treat with contempt**¹⁰². **the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not**

Jesus is fully capable of helping each individual make determinant decisions.

⁹⁷ These are morally neutral matters; therefore, the first thing that must be discerned is whether the matter is in fact biblically neutral and not a moral absolute. The same principle would apply to discerning between neutral doctrines (such as the timing of the Rapture, water baptism by sprinkling or immersion, frequency of Communion, etc.) and cardinal dogmas of the faith.

⁹⁸ Morris, *op. cit.*, pg. 475, 477.

⁹⁹ “They perhaps eat only vegetables because of vegetarian principles, but more probably in order to avoid eating the flesh of animals that had been sacrificed to pagan deities or not properly slaughtered according to Jewish law” (F. F. Bruce, *Romans*, pg. 231).

¹⁰⁰ **Accept** means to take into friendship; to not make one feel barely tolerated.

¹⁰¹ Or **without starting an argument**.

judge¹⁰³. **the one who does** (vs. 3). Why not be such a critic in neutral matters? Because **God has accepted that person** (vs. 3) and He alone is their Master; He alone determines if they have sinned in such matters (vs. 4).

The second specific addressed is that of **some consider[ing] one day more sacred than another... [while] others consider every day alike** (vs. 5). “Pinning down the exact nature of this disagreement over ‘days’ is difficult since Paul does not elaborate.”¹⁰⁴ Be that as it may, Paul’s point is that **everyone should be fully convinced in their own mind** (vs. 5); in other words, each should have their own personal convictions but such personal convictions should not be used to intimidate others or be demanded of others within the Christian community, which legalists often do. “Here clearly implied is Paul’s firm recognition that Christians will disagree with one another on important issues, and yet each can be convinced of the rightness of their position.”¹⁰⁵ Lest this become a “moral free for all” and lines blur between the biblically morally (doctrinally) neutral and the biblically morally (doctrinally) restricted, Paul notes—**those who regard one day as special do so to the Lord. Those who eat meat do so to the Lord** (vs. 6). In other words, Paul assumes that each has rightly discerned the matter at hand to be morally (doctrinally) neutral to God, so it is simply a matter of personal perspective and not His absolute perspective.

He closes the paragraph by noting that the Christian is not a law unto themselves, nor should they “play Holy Spirit” for another—**for we do not live to ourselves alone and we do not die to ourselves alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord** (vv. 7-8). In such matters, you cannot claim freedom for yourself and not allow freedom for another. “If the strong should not try to force the weak into a frightening liberty where guidelines are far less clearly drawn, neither should the weak seek to restrict the strong within the limits of their own more tightly defined liberty.”¹⁰⁶ **For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that He might be the Lord of both the dead and the living** (vs. 9) reminds us that as Lord over all, Jesus is fully capable of helping each individual make determinant decisions in such matters.

The clear conclusion? **You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat your brother or sister with contempt?** (vs. 10). No one is to make slighting or condemning remarks of another believer, nor cast doubt on the spiritual devotion of any member of the spiritual family simply for having different convictions with regard to such matters. Again, it is because judgment in

¹⁰². Or **have a disdainful, condescending attitude** (priding yourself on your “enlightened perspective”).

¹⁰³. Or **must not hold out your personal standards of piety as God’s only standards**.

¹⁰⁴. Moo, *op. cit.*, pg. 842.

¹⁰⁵. Dunn, *op. cit.*, pg. 814.

¹⁰⁶. *Ibid.*

these matters belongs to God alone—for we will all stand before God’s judgment seat (14:10)—the One before whom **we will all give an account of ourselves** (vs. 12).

“Paul, having asserted as plainly as possible the freedom of a Christian, now goes on to show how on occasion that freedom may, and should, be limited—but limited voluntarily.”¹⁰⁷ He begins with an exhortation to both the strong and the weak—**therefore**¹⁰⁸ **let us stop passing judgment on one another** (vs. 13)—but then goes on to address the strong—**instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister** (vs. 13); he addresses the strong knowing it is easier for them to change their practice because of their greater scope of understanding and maturity. He notes that the most important principle at stake is not practicing what the strong have perfect liberty to practice, but giving consideration to the effect of certain behaviors on less mature believers. He then states the fundamental principle in all this—**nothing is unclean in itself**.¹⁰⁹ **But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean** (vs. 14)—that is, even if some people can *intellectually* grasp that a certain matter is not unclean to God (He’s neutral), they “cannot always ‘existentially’ grasp such truth—particularly when it runs so counter to a long and strongly held tradition basic to their own identity.”¹¹⁰

...Paul is also concerned that we not condemn ourselves because others have a different perspective...

Paul next explains what is behind not putting a stumbling block or obstacle in a fellow believer’s way, namely, love cares more about the spiritual integrity of a weaker brother or sister than about exercising personal liberties the weaker just cannot get past—**if your brother or sister is distressed**¹¹¹ **because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy**¹¹² **your brother or sister for whom Christ died** (vs. 15). Furthermore, even unbelievers can be negatively affected if they see some members not caring for the feelings and perspectives of others within the Church—**therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil** (vs. 16). Besides, it is not one expressing their personal freedoms that attests to the presence of God’s kingdom; rather, the kingdom’s presence is attested by **righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit** (vs. 17) and it is the reflection and pursuit in one’s life of these attributes that is **pleasing to God and receives human approval** (vs. 18). “The person in question, being pleasing to God, has survived the test and should be approved by

¹⁰⁷ Bruce, *op. cit.*, pg. 233.

¹⁰⁸ **Therefore** indicates the exhortation is based on what Paul has just said about each giving account to God.

¹⁰⁹ This references the fact that either no food is inherently unclean or that no food is ritually defiled since Christ changed the dietary laws (Mark 7:1-14; Acts 10:9-15).

¹¹⁰ Morris, *op. cit.*, pg. 853

¹¹¹ Or **deeply hurt**. Paul is likely intimating that more than just seeing the strong participate in such activity, the strong are encouraging the weak to do so themselves. Hence the distress.

¹¹² Or **cause spiritual grief and self-condemnation**. Some commentators see it as even stronger—**causing spiritual ruin**.

his fellows, believers and unbelievers alike.”¹¹³.

Paul then gives an exhortation as a result of this understanding—**let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace**¹¹⁴. **and to mutual edification**¹¹⁵. (vs. 19)—and calls the strong to maintain big picture perspective—**do not destroy**¹¹⁶. **the work of God**¹¹⁷. **for the sake of food** (vs. 20). So that the weak (legalists) do not think “they are right,” Paul reiterates that indeed **all food is clean** (vs. 20), but that is not the defining issue; it is the impact of the liberties of the strong on the weak—**but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine**¹¹⁸. **or do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall** (vv. 20-21).¹¹⁹. “In human relationships absolute rules are dangerous, since any principle governing human conduct must take account of the circumstances in specific instances...over against the ruling that all is clean, Paul lays out the principle of self-restricted liberty.”¹²⁰.

The last paragraph of Romans 14 shifts to a final personal application—**so whatever you**¹²¹. **believe about these things keep between yourself and God** (vs. 22). Paul wants us to keep personal convictions and liberties as private as possible, avoiding parading them before others; he is also concerned that we not condemn ourselves because others have a different perspective than we (whom legalists would like to condemn)—**blessed are those who do not condemn themselves by what they approve** (vs. 22). “The balance was a difficult one to maintain between Christian liberty and love, and Paul must have been conscious of how easily the full range of liberty can lapse into legalism at one end, just as easily as it can lapse into licentiousness at the other.”¹²².

Finally, the weak are not to be compelled to violate their conscience or participate in what they do not personally embrace—**those who have doubts are condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin** (vs. 23). “The apostle is condemning conduct that springs from motives like selfishness or greed or fear.”¹²³.

¹¹³. Morris, *op. cit.*, pg. 489.

¹¹⁴. This is peace with one another.

¹¹⁵. **Edification** references building people up; helping them rather than criticizing or despising them.

¹¹⁶. Or **do not negatively affect** by irresponsibly exercising liberties.

¹¹⁷. **The work of God** references what God is doing in the life of weaker Christ-followers.

¹¹⁸. It is unknown as to why Paul brings in the matter of drinking wine.

¹¹⁹. This verse clearly shows that the strong are not being asked to abstain completely from their liberties but rather to take account of their “watching audience” and above all, to not encourage the weaker to violate their convictions by participating.

¹²⁰. Dunn, *op. cit.*, pg. 833.

¹²¹. **You** is singular and emphatic in the Greek text.

¹²². Dunn, *op. cit.*, pg. 833.

¹²³. Morris, *op. cit.*, pg. 492.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- It is vital that we understand what biblically constitutes a “disputable matter.” How is it defined? Give some examples in your culture of “disputable matters.” What would clearly NOT be a disputable matter (either ethically or doctrinally) according to the Bible?

- How does Paul define “those faith is weak” and “the strong”? Is it the same as “mature and immature” or is it more complicated?

- What is Paul’s exhortation to the two different perspectives (Romans 14:3)? What difference do you think it would make in your Christian community if people followed these exhortations?

- Read Romans 14:13-18. What does this paragraph say to the Christian who says, “My personal freedom and choice is what really matters in life?”

- What does “do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food” (Romans 14:20) mean to you personally when it comes to living out a “disputable matter” freedom you may have that your overall Christian community does not?

CONCLUSION—

Undoubtedly, much more could be said regarding legalism. For example, we did not examine legalism in Galatians wherein Paul notes that legalism has a bewitching effect on believers (Galatians 3:1) and that **it is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery** (Galatians 5:1). But we trust that what has been delineated will begin great discussions around the grace and legalism, leading to ever an ever increasing reign of grace in believers' lives.

Holy Spirit Fullness - OUTLINE

Gary Matsdorf (Part 1) & Leslie Keegel (Part 2)

I. Course Description:

This is a study of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology), with an emphasis on Pentecostal pneumatology. It covers basic aspects of His Person and nature, how we as Pentecostals must present the distinctive aspects of our pneumatology, the meaning of the baptism with the Holy Spirit and a personal prayer language (tongues), a brief explanation of each of the 1 Corinthians 12 manifestations of the Spirit and how to be used in these manifestations, and some pastoral exhortations to reach all these goals in the life of every Foursquare believer.

II. Course Objectives:

- A. To understand and discuss the nature and Person of the Holy Spirit.
- B. To understand and discuss how His ministry differs between the two Testaments.
- C. To understand and discuss His basic ministries in the New Testament, including in the life of Jesus.
- D. To understand and discuss how we want the fullness of the Spirit practiced in the life of every Foursquare believer.
- E. To understand and discuss differences of understanding on the baptism with the Holy Spirit within both Pentecostalism at large and Foursquare, especially as it pertains to the baptism and “tongues.”
- F. To discuss and understand the importance of a “personal prayer language” (“tongues”).
- G. To give a brief understanding of each of the nine manifestations of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12.
- H. To understand and discuss how to be used in the manifestations of the Spirit.
- I. To understand and discuss how the leadership of every Foursquare church might teach and practice Holy Spirit fullness and ministry.

III. Course Outline:

- A. Basics of pneumatology.
 1. The significance of the name **Holy Spirit** which describes Him as invincible, loving, faithful, forgiving, just, trustworthy, empowering and somewhat incomprehensible (Psalm 98:1-3; John 16:7-11; 3:8; Luke 5:21; 1 Peter 1:15-16)
 2. The Spirit's primary ministry in the Old Testament, namely, active in creation and empowering individuals to fulfill a specific ministry assignment (Genesis 41:38; Numbers 11:17-29; Exodus 31:3; 1 Kings 18:12)
 3. The Spirit's primary ministries in the New Testament, including empowering Jesus for ministry, exorcising demons, working miracles, empowering the Church to carry on Jesus' ministry, drawing people to Jesus, justifying sinners and sanctifying believers (Luke 4:14; Matthew 12:28; Acts 10:38; 15:28; John 14:15-21; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Romans 15:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6)

- B. The baptism with the Holy Spirit.
 1. Our burden in Foursquare is to present a clear understanding of the believer's relationship with the Spirit and how an understanding of the baptism with the Holy Spirit varies among Pentecostals and within Foursquare
 2. We must discuss, "How much doctrinal variation is allowed within Foursquare relative to the baptism with the Holy Spirit?"
 3. One Foursquare understanding of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is presented, including how Paul uses the phrase differently than Luke

- C. The manifestations of the Spirit.
 1. Definition and importance of a "personal prayer language/speaking in tongues" (Acts 10:46, 19:1-7; 1 Corinthians 13:1; 14:15)
 2. A brief understanding of each of the 12 manifestations of the Spirit
 3. Basic principles for being used in the manifestations of the Spirit, including having a concern for hurting people, valuing the manifestations of the Spirit and realizing God works through both process and miracle

- D. Practical exhortations on bringing understanding and practice of Holy Spirit fullness to every Foursquare church.
 1. Teach regularly and clearly on Holy Spirit fullness and the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18; Luke 4:1; Joel 2:28-29; Acts 1:5, 8; 2:1-13)

2. Teach regularly and clearly on how to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit and pray for disciples to receive the baptism (John 7:37-39; Luke 11:9-13)
3. Teach and demonstrate regularly how to move in kingdom power and authority in the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:1-20; 1 Corinthians 12:8-13)
4. We must be careful to not become cynical toward the manifestations of the Spirit nor to *put out the Spirit's fire* (2 Thessalonians 5:19) in lives and churches.

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Holy Spirit Fullness

Gary Matsdorf (Part 1)¹ & Leslie Keegel (Part 2)

PART 1 (Gary Matsdorf)—

We want to begin with a simple overview of the Person and ministry of the Holy Spirit. *Pneumatology* is the technical name for teachings relating to the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Christian Trinity (Matthew 28:19).² The Holy Spirit is a Person,³ not a force; in actuality, He's the Perfect Person because He is God (Acts 5:3-4). "As God, the Holy Spirit possesses the attributes of deity."⁴

The Holy Spirit
is always on the
move in our
lives...

¹ Although this paper is presented under two names, it reflects not only their personal research but in-depth discussions with key Foursquare leaders in the United States, including discussions in the 1970s with Don Pickerill and Sam Middlebrook and in 2014-15 with representatives of the Foursquare National Church Office (US) and faculty members of three Foursquare US colleges—Life Pacific University, New Hope Christian College and The King's University. It was also reviewed and updated in 2021 by the Foursquare Global Doctrine Committee. It therefore represents collaborative global Foursquare conclusions.

² **Trinity** is not a biblical term; it is a theological term (said to have first been used by Tertullian [early 3rd century]) meaning, "God eternally exists as three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and each Person is fully God, and yet there is but one God" (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, pg. 226). "In order to understand the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Trinity, we must endeavor to at least in part comprehend the Trinity itself. In the nature of the one God, there are three eternal distinctions which are represented to us under the figure of 'persons,' and these three are equal" (Ron Williams, *Systematic Theology II*, LIFE Bible College Syllabus, LIFE Pacific College, San Dimas, CA, 1991, pg. 6).

³ Again Williams, "When we simply state, 'Three persons in One essence,' we must be careful to understand that the word 'person' is only an approximation or representation of a being that has intellect, sensibility and will. In regards to the Trinity, it is used to explain the relationship between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the very names, 'Father,' 'Son,' and 'Holy Spirit' refer to the function which they perform in relating to mankind and redemption, rather than a biological relationship. Thus, the word 'Person' can never be applied in the same manner as we would refer to the person of Paul, Peter or John" (*Loc. cit.*). Note also McGrath, "The Christian vision of God defies simple ways of representation... the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is the church's intellectual response to this weighty vision of God, representing both an attempt to be faithful to the biblical witness to God on the one hand, and to do justice to the church's experience and knowledge of God on the other. The Trinity has always been a difficult notion, and is often ridiculed as nonsensical. The doctrine weaves together the leading elements of the Christian knowledge of God as creator, redeemer, and sanctifier into a coherent whole. The traditional Trinitarian language—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is drawn from the New Testament, and expresses the fundamentally personal understanding of God that lies behind the doctrine. The formula 'one substance, three persons,' often used in theological textbooks, attempts to express the basic idea that Christians only worship one God—but that this one God is revealed as Father, Son and Spirit" (Alister McGrath, *Theology: The Basic Readings*, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester, West Sussex, UK, 2012, pg. 128).

⁴ McRoberts, Kerry, *The Holy Trinity* in Horton, Stanley (Editor), *Systematic Theology—Revised Edition*, Logion Press, Springfield, MO, 1998, pg. 151. Says the 7th century Eleventh Council of Toledo, "We believe that the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, is God, one and equal with God the Father and God the Son, of one substance and of one nature" (quoted in McGrath, *op. cit.*, pg. 134).

Of the many biblical names given the Spirit, **Holy Spirit** is His most popular New Testament name.⁵ By **Holy**, the Bible means He always acts in accordance with God's standards and nature. **Holy** also implies the Spirit is invincible, loving and faithful (Psalm 98:1-3); He is forgiving, equitable, just and can be trusted because He always does the right thing (John 16:7-11); finally, it implies He extends to us forgiveness (Luke 5:21) and wholeness (I Peter 1:15-16).

By **Spirit**, the Bible means He⁶ is immaterial and therefore invisible. In both Hebrew and Greek, *spirit/Spirit* derives from a word that also means *wind*.⁷ This word picture suggests that the Holy Spirit is always on the move in our lives, sometimes in incomprehensible ways (John 3:8), as He moves us toward the goal of becoming **mature in Christ** (Colossians 1:28). "The work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church."⁸

In the Old Testament, the Spirit appears as Yahweh's Agent—

- Of revelation (Genesis 41:38).
- Of empowering certain leaders for specific tasks (Numbers 11:16-17).
- Of equipping certain individuals with special gifting (Exodus 31:3; 35:31).⁹
- Of inspiring and empowering the prophets (1 Kings 18:12).

As noted, the Holy Spirit's ministry is present from the earliest pages of Scripture (Genesis 1:2); however, His role in the lives of people in the Old Testament is *basically* limited to coming *upon* people for a limited period of time to perform specific tasks (*i.e.*, David [1 Samuel 16:13])¹⁰ or, on *rare* occasion,

⁵ In the Old Testament, He is most frequently known as **the Spirit of Yahweh**.

⁶ "Tradition's occasional habit of naming the Spirit of God in maternal and feminine terms is a welcome means for correcting one-sidedly masculine discourse. According to the biblical promises, the role of the Spirit involves activities more usually associated with maternity and femininity in general: inspiring, helping, supporting, enveloping, bringing to birth" (Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World, Volume 4: Spirit and Salvation*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2016, pg. 192).

⁷ Because in the Old Testament the Spirit does not emerge as a clearly defined personality, but more as God's "life-force," the NRSV will frequently translate **the spirit of the Lord** where the TNIV translates, **the Spirit of the Lord** (*i.e.*, 1 Kings 18:12). Because the meaning of the Hebrew noun *ruach* (like the Greek, *pneuma*) can also mean "wind," note the NRSV—**a wind from God swept over the face of the waters** (Genesis 1:2)—as compared to **the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters** (TNIV).

⁸ Grudem, *op. cit.*, pg. 634.

⁹ This is often seen as a close analogue to the New Testament provision of spiritual gifting. The Spirit is also said to have been present to empower for rebuilding the Temple (Haggai 2:5; Zechariah 4:6).

¹⁰ King David's famous—**do not take Your Holy Spirit from me** (Psalm 51:11)—is best understood as a request that Yahweh's Spirit not be withdrawn in terms of equipping him for kingship. It is not to be interpreted in terms of withdrawing

to dwelling *in* someone (*i.e.*, Joshua [Numbers 27:18]).¹¹ It is this limited scope that prompted Joel to prophesy in 825 BC that the Christian messianic age would be distinctly different in that God **will pour out [His] Spirit on all people** (Joel 2:28-29).¹²

- *The Old Testament thus concludes self-consciously open-ended, anticipating a new era in which the Spirit will work among a greater number of individuals and different kinds of people to create a more faithful community of men and women serving God. Apparently they will also be more mightily empowered. The fulfillment of these promises in the New Testament conforms to the prophecy of the Old Testament.*¹³

This new outpouring of the Spirit began with Jesus’ reception of Him at His water baptism (Matthew 3:16) and was fully inaugurated on the Day of Pentecost with the birth of the Church (Acts 2:1-4, 16-21). The Spirit emerges in the New Testament to dominate the theology and experience of the apostles and biblical writers. “One reads Paul poorly who does not recognize that for him the presence of the Spirit, as an experienced and living reality, was the crucial matter for Christian life, from beginning to end.”¹⁴ To be a Christian is to know Christ—personally and intimately. Such knowing comes to us by the Person of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵

By way of just a small sampling, in the New Testament the Holy Spirit—

- Empowers Jesus for ministry (Luke 4:14).
- Exorcises demons (Matthew 12:28).¹⁶

When one thinks of what is distinctive about Pentecostal theology, usually included is an understanding of Spirit baptism as an empowerment for ministry distinct from regeneration or initiation in Christ.

Him as an indwelling Person, as He would be withdrawn from the life of a New Testament apostate.

¹¹ For an excellent discussion of the Holy Spirit at work *in* Old Testament saints, see Grudem, *op. cit.*, pp. 637 and 770-771.

¹² Both Isaiah and Ezekiel also help develop this theme. “Notice that the promise is not a change of activity or of the quality of the activity of the Spirit of God. A change in the quantity or scope of the activity is prophesied” (Mark McLean, *The Holy Spirit* in Horton, *op. cit.*, pg. 383).

¹³ Blomberg, Craig, *Holy Spirit* in Elwell, Walter (Editor), *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 2000 printing, pg. 345.

¹⁴ Fee, Gordon, *Paul, the Spirit and the People of God*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1997 printing, pg. XIII.

¹⁵ Paul makes the presence of the Spirit the constituting characteristic of being a Christian (Romans 8:9). He also presents Him as **a deposit** (2 Corinthians 1:22) and **seal** (Ephesians 1:13)—promises of more to come, a partial installment of guaranteed future blessings given to a “marked and claimed people.” “The Spirit becomes the way God himself is now present on planet earth...the gift of the outpoured Spirit meant that the messianic age had already arrived” (Gordon Fee, *ibid.*, pp. 15, 54). Therefore, Jesus teaches that the Holy Spirit is the preeminent good gift for which we can pray (Luke 11:13).

¹⁶ “Because Jesus’ signs and wonders most directly reveal God’s Spirit at work, attribution of them to Satan puts one in jeopardy of committing an unforgivable sin (the ‘blasphemy against the Spirit’ [Matt. 12:31])—probably equivalent to per-

- Works miracles (Acts 10:38).
- Empowers the Church to carry on Jesus' ministry of the kingdom of God (Acts 1:8).
- Is the Advocate who remains in us forever—helping us keep Jesus' teachings and commandments (John 14:15-21) and revealing truth to us throughout our walk with Jesus (John 16:12-15).
- Testifies to unbelievers who Jesus is (John 15:26-16:4), draws people to Jesus (1 Thessalonians 1:5-6) and convicts sinners of their offenses (John 16:5-11).
- Guides and instructs for choosing church leaders (Acts 13:1-4) and for making difficult theological decisions (Acts 15:28).
- Releases His manifestations for ministry (1 Corinthians 12:4-11).
- Enables us to participate in all the benefits of grace (2 Corinthians 13:13).
- Draws people to Jesus (1 Thessalonians 1:5-6).
- Justifies (1 Corinthians 6:11) and sanctifies (Romans 15:16).¹⁷
- Corporately indwells the Church to make her holy (1 Corinthians 3:16).
- Enables believers to declare the fundamental soteriological confession of Jesus' lordship (1 Corinthians 12:3).
- *A biblical theology of the Spirit is difficult to epitomize. He sovereignly acts as He chooses...the Spirit is the transcendent, omnipresent spiritual and localizable presence of God's personality and power, living in and divinely empowering all of God's true people in diverse and incomplete ways that foreshadow their complete, future renewal at the end of the age.*¹⁸

sistent and unrepentant rejection of Christ" (Craig Blomberg, *op. cit.*, pg. 346).

¹⁷. "Rather than give them Christian rules to live by Paul gives them the Spirit" (Gordon Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. 106).

¹⁸. Blomberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 347-348.

OUR BURDEN IN FOURSQUARE —

It is the opinion of those contributing to this material that our academic and pastoral burden in 21st century Foursquare regarding the baptism with the Holy Spirit is **1)** that we present a clear understanding of the complexities of New Testament evidence relative to the believer's relationship to/with the Holy Spirit; **2)** that we give as fair an analysis as possible of New Testament terminology variables with reference to the BWHS;¹⁹ **3)** that we do our best to wrestle biblically with the doctrinal complexities relative to the subject; **4)** that we understand how classical Pentecostal theology and charismatic theology might differ on some specifics relative to the BWHS;²⁰ and **5)** that we unashamedly maintain our distinction of being a people who “pray in tongues” and move in Holy Spirit power and authority.

- *If the church is going to be effective in our postmodern world, we need to stop paying mere lip service to the Spirit and to recapture Paul's perspective: the Spirit as the experienced, empowering return of God's own personal presence in and among us, who enables us to live as a radically eschatological people in the present world while we await the consummation. All the rest, including fruit and gifts (that is, ethical life and charismatic utterances in worship), serve to that end.*²¹
- *When one thinks of what is distinctive about Pentecostal theology, usually included is an understanding of Spirit baptism as an empowerment for ministry distinct from regeneration or initiation in Christ. Most Pentecostals view this as a revival or renewal experience in the Christian life and link it to involvement in the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, especially speaking in tongues and divine healing.*²²

¹⁹ BWHS will appear frequently throughout this paper as an abbreviation for “the baptism with the Holy Spirit.”

²⁰ “In classical Pentecostal tradition, this experience [of tongues] is expected, and is doctrinally expressed in the words, ‘The initial physical evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is speaking with other tongues’...[charismatics] place less emphasis on the importance of tongues as the evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit...these focus more on all the gifts...with deepened participation in worship...also seen as a fundamental indication of being baptized in the Spirit, with the continual exercise of tongue-speaking as a part of the believer's private devotional expression” (Gary Kinnaman, *Notes on Acts 2:4 in Spirit Filled Life Bible*, Jack Hayford [General Editor], Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1991, pg. 1625). Those who allow for this more charismatic perspective within Foursquare does not mean they minimize encouraging all believers to seek a “private prayer language/tongues” as part of their journey with the Holy Spirit. Also note Macchia's observation about diversity of understanding *within Pentecostal theology* (including within Foursquare globally) and how further reflection is needed. “I agree with Simon Chan that Pentecostals are not in agreement over all of their distinctives but that ‘what comes through over and over again in their discussions and writings is a certain kind of spiritual experience of an intense, direct, and overwhelming nature centering on the person of Christ which they schematize as “baptism in the Holy Spirit”’...there is no doubt that in this century Spirit baptism will need to be defined more broadly than it has among most classical Pentecostals if it is to continue to function as central to Pentecostal theology” (Frank Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2006, pp. 20, 26).

²¹ Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. XV.

²² Macchia, *op. cit.*, pg. 20.

OUR BOUNDARIES WITHIN FOURSQUARE—

Although pneumatology is very important to Pentecostals, there is not and never has been a universal understanding among Pentecostals at certain points of doctrine. This same dynamic characterizes 21st C Foursquarism. “Basic disagreement exists among Pentecostal groups over issues of the relationship of Spirit baptism to initial faith in Christ, water baptism, and speaking in tongues.”²³ There will, therefore, be some diversity on points of doctrine even within Foursquare and we must embrace this diversity...within general Pentecostal pneumatological boundaries. It is important, however, that we hold steadfastly to a pneumatology that emphasizes a daily, passionate relationship with the Holy Spirit; that

God’s heart is not only that we have the Holy Spirit, but that we be filled with the Spirit.

we state clearly the difference between Paul’s and Luke’s pneumatological terminology with reference to Holy Spirit baptism; that we state clearly the belief in the reality of a personal prayer language (tongues) for all believers,²⁴ while not equating such with *necessarily* being “baptized with the Holy Spirit”;²⁵ that we recognize that when referring to the BWHS the **terms** “subsequent” or “second work” are preferred by some within Foursquare while not others, although this is clearly a distinct experience from salvation; and that we show that Luke presents tongues as frequently present when one is Spirit baptized and that Paul assumes the manifestation of personal tongues (a prayer language) in the life of believers.

- *We believe that God’s Word urges every believer to seek Jesus as the “Baptizer with the Holy Spirit” and to be open to “speaking with tongues as the Spirit gives utterance” (Acts 2:4), not merely as a requirement to verify one’s experience or spiritual worth, but as a grace intended to be a regular part of our daily “walk” in the Spirit. Therefore, we are not passive concerning the subject of ministering the fullness of the Holy Spirit or in teaching the desirability of speaking with tongues. To us, these bring a dimension intended for every believer as a daily resource in Christ (1 Co. 14:18). However, if the subject is approached as a dogma in which tongues is required as a proof, something of its beauty is lost and the focus of attention is misdirected.*²⁶

²³ *Ibid.*, pg. 34. Macchia also notes that “the work of the Holy Spirit cannot be compartmentalized or separated out into neat theological categories” (pg. 18).

²⁴ “For Paul, speaking in tongues is part of the Christian experience” (Yongnan Jeon Ahn, *Interpretation of Tongues and Prophecy in 1 Corinthians 12-14*, Deo Publishing, Dorset, UK, 2013, pg. 146). Ahn goes on to note the importance of Macchia’s observation that we should see tongues “as a ‘prodigium’—the mystery of ‘sacramental announcing’ of God’s presence” (*loc. cit.*).

²⁵ We say *not necessarily* because “tongues as the initial physical evidence” of the BWHS still characterizes the biblical understanding of many in Foursquare, but not everyone (particularly in the Western world). This study endeavors to acknowledge both perspectives within Foursquare without favoring one over the other.

²⁶ *The Baptism of the Holy Spirit*, ICFG Positional Paper, Los Angeles, CA, 2002, pg. 4.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- Summarize what this section is saying theologically on the topic of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Is the perspective that Paul and Luke describe the baptism with the Holy Spirit using different terms and from different theological perspectives new to you?

- Does this summation agree with what you personally have taught? What about Foursquare within your nation?

- What is your personal perspective on allowing for diversity within Foursquare on “finer points of this doctrine”?

PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY ON THE BAPTISM OF²⁷ THE HOLY SPIRIT—

As already noted above, there is diversity of understanding among Pentecostals on aspects of the doctrine of the BWHS (including within Foursquare), let alone among Pentecostals and charismatics. I herein present **one** Foursquare understanding that recognizably represents influence from charismatic theology.

Holy Spirit baptism has fundamentally to do with an immersion, with an abundant endowment of the Holy Spirit in our lives for character development and for the needed power and authority to evangelize and to minister kingdom life.

When one is “**born again...of the Spirit**” (John 3:3, 8), **the Spirit of God lives in [them]** (Romans 8:9). The Spirit’s indwelling is both immediate and complete (1 John 4:15) and defines what it means to “be saved/born again.” However, the simultaneous inner presence of the *sinful nature* (Romans 7:18) and the outer influences of the *world* and *the devil* (1 John 5:19) constantly blunt the Spirit’s *practical* influence in our lives; we oftentimes fail to **keep in step with the Spirit** (Galatians 5:25; see also 1 Corinthians 3:1). Therefore, God’s heart is not only that we *have* the Holy Spirit, but that we **be filled with the Spirit**²⁸. (Ephesians 5:18). God desires us to have a vibrant relationship with Him through the Person of the Holy Spirit, “so totally given over to the Spirit that the life and deeds of the Spirit are as obvious in their case as the effects of too much wine are obvious in the other.”²⁹ Ephe-

sians 5-6 remind us that such Spirit fullness is wise; keeps us sensitive to avoid debaucheries; enhances worship and community involvement; increases gratitude; and makes us better people relationally. Galatians 5:22-23 reminds us that Holy Spirit fullness develops character; it also enhances ministry—through His gifts (Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11) and His manifestations (1 Corinthians 12:4-11).³⁰

Luke opens Acts by stating—**in my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach...** (Acts 1:1 [italics mine]). The clear implication is that Acts records what Jesus *continued* (and continues) to do through a Holy Spirit empowered Church. The Spirit’s enabling for ministry comes primarily through His gifts and manifestations in our lives; everyone has at least one spiritual **gift**³¹. (Romans 12:3) and can be used in any **manifestation**³². (1 Corinthians 12:11). Paul would

²⁷ Or **with**.

²⁸ Or **live under the Spirit’s influence**. Although classical Pentecostals often use **Spirit-filled** and **Spirit baptized** interchangeably, Paul is not referencing the baptism with the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 5:18.

²⁹ Fee, Gordon, *God’s Empowering Presence*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994, pg. 721.

³⁰ The practical and pastoral implications for walking in the Spirit daily are beyond the scope of this module. This topic is covered in the DLT module, “Grace and Legalism.”

³¹ **Gifts** are “permanent” and intricately intertwined with who we are as individuals (Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11 et al); His **manifestations**, however, are the result of the Holy Spirit “flashing” or “coming upon” us for a specific moment of ministry (1 Corinthians 12:11; Acts 4:8).

³² **Manifestation** translates a Greek word (*phanerosis*) meaning a disclosure, announcement, or flash. The Spirit’s manifes-

define these manifestations as the result of the Spirit-filled life; Luke would define them as the result of being Spirit baptized—a baptism he records as beginning with an initiatory experience, repeated on numerous occasions and imparted through a number of means.³³

“Wait for the gift My Father promised...you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit...[and] you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you” (Acts 1:4-5, 8). Jesus, knowing the power of the Holy Spirit in His own life and never thinking of moving in ministry apart from the Spirit’s life and power (Luke 4:1 *ff*), wants the same immersion into the Spirit’s life for His Church. In Acts 1, He termed it **baptized with the Holy Spirit**.

The phrase **baptized with**³⁴ **the Holy Spirit** appears seven times in the New Testament. The concept appears first in a context indicating that Jesus, like John the Baptist, is a baptizer; the Holy Spirit, like water, is the substance (Matthew 3:11). Holy Spirit baptism then has fundamentally to do with an immersion, with an abundant endowment of the Holy Spirit in our lives for character development and for the needed power and authority to evangelize and to minister kingdom life. “The purpose of this ‘baptism’ is to provide spiritual power for living (Jude 20), serving (Ephesians 6:18) and bearing witness to Christ (Acts 1:8).”³⁵

We need both Paul and Luke, therefore, to fill out the understanding of the phrase **baptized with/in the Holy Spirit** for us; they use it in two different and yet complementary ways.³⁶

tations in 1 Corinthians 12 therefore “on occasion flash forth from any believer as needed” (1 Corinthians 12:11), **for the common good** (1 Corinthians 12:7).

³³ Luke, who is interested in documenting these manifestations in Acts, will use such phrases as **they received the Holy Spirit** (Acts 8:17) and **the Holy Spirit came on all** (Acts 10:44) to describe post-conversion encounters with Him. Hence, the dynamic of the Holy Spirit as He displays one of His *manifestations* is very similar to the Old Testament pneumatology of the Holy Spirit coming upon a person for a limited period for specific ministry. “Spirit baptism is somewhat ambiguous as a metaphor and fluid in its meaning throughout the New Testament, because it is an eschatological metaphor that depicts the various ways in which we participate through the Spirit in the rich blessings of Christ located in heavenly places (Eph. 1:3, 12)” (Frank Macchia, *op. cit.*, pg. 87). See also Stronstad, Roger, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke—Second Edition*, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, MI, 2012.

³⁴ There is no essential difference between **with** or **in** as it appears in this phrase; the Greek phrase *baptizein en* may be translated either way.

³⁵ ICFG Position Paper, pg. 3. Of these purposes, classical Pentecostals have historically emphasized the missiological aspect of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. “Pentecostals have long affirmed that the purpose of the Pentecostal gift is to empower believers so they might be effective witnesses. This missiological understanding of Spirit-baptism, rooted in the Pentecost account of Acts 1-2, gives important definition to the experience. In contrast to introverted (for instance ‘purifying’) or vague (‘powerful’ or ‘charismatic’) descriptions of Spirit-baptism (in the Lukan sense), Pentecostals have articulated a clear purpose: power for mission” (Robert Menzies, *Luke and the Spirit: A Reply to James Dunn in Journal of Pentecostal Theology – Issue 4*, Church of God School of Theology, Cleveland, TN, 1994, pp. 137-138).

³⁶ There is no exegetical basis for the oft-heard argument that Luke’s understanding of this phrase must be interpreted through Paul’s one use of it—as if Paul were the primary theologian. See Stronstad, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-14 and Dunn, J. D. G., *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, SCM Press, London, England, 1970, pg. 39 for a fuller discussion of this issue.

- Paul uses the phrase only once—in a soteriological sense to metaphorically describe our common conversion experience, the activity of the Holy Spirit in making us one body (saving us)—**for by³⁷ one Spirit we were all baptized into one body³⁸** (1 Corinthians 12:13 [RSV]).³⁹ From this initial conversion encounter with the Holy Spirit, Paul teaches a life that is influenced daily by Holy Spirit fullness (Ephesians 5:18).⁴⁰ “...as far as the apostle Paul was concerned, *baptism in the Holy Spirit occurred at conversion...*[and refers] to the activity of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the Christian life when he gives us new spiritual life (in regeneration).”⁴¹ “In the Pauline sense, the baptism with the Holy Spirit describes our initial Christian experience, which he would see as followed by subsequent fillings...at conversion the pilot light goes on; our job is to light all the burners, to be **aglow with the Spirit** (Romans 12:11 [RSV]).”⁴²
- Luke, emphasizing Jesus’ connection of the Holy Spirit and witness, uses the phrase to describe subsequent power encounters with the Holy Spirit rather than our initial salvation experience (Acts 4:8)—encounters which most often have a dramatic initial starting point in believers’ lives (Acts 19:1-7).⁴³ Each time the Spirit uses us for dynamic ministry or in a manifestation of the Spirit, Luke would see it as a further filling, receiving, coming upon or falling upon of the Holy Spirit. “Unlike Paul, who frequently speaks of the soteriological dimension of the Spirit’s work, Luke *consistently* portrays the Spirit as the source of power for service...Luke describes the gift of the Spirit *exclusively* in charismatic terms.”⁴⁴ “The

³⁷. Or **with** or **in**.

³⁸. Or **for in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body** (NRSV); **for we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body** (TNIV).

³⁹. See Fee, Gordon, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians—The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1987, pp. 605-606, for exegetical support behind the NRSV (whereby the Holy Spirit is the element into which we are baptized, rather than the Agent doing the baptism [as implied by the more common English translation *for by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...* {RSV, et al}]). “Nowhere else does this dative with ‘baptize’ imply agency...but always refers to the element ‘in which’ one is baptized” (Gordon Fee, *loc. cit.*). Fee also notes, “Most likely...Paul is referring to their common experience of conversion, and he does so in terms of its most crucial ingredient, the receiving of the Spirit” (*op. cit.*, pg. 605).

⁴⁰. See Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. 604 and McDonnell, Killian and Montague, George, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN, 1994 Revised Edition, pp. 42-46, for alternate views on the place of water baptism in this salvific Spirit baptism.

⁴¹. Grudem, *op. cit.*, pg. 768.

⁴². Pickerill, Donald, unpublished manuscript on 1 Corinthians 12. “The second half of baptism is when the Holy Spirit, living in your spirit, flows *out* to baptize, soak, drench, overwhelm your soul (psychological nature, including your emotions, will, intellect, subconscious) and your body, and bring them to new life, freedom, joy and peace in and through the Lord Jesus. Then He can flow out into the world from you to bring love, peace, joy, and healing to other people” (Dennis Bennett, *How To Pray for the Release of the Holy Spirit*, Bridge-Logos Publishers, Gainesville, FL, 2001 reprint, pg. 5).

⁴³. This experience with the Holy Spirit may develop gradually or develop through a subsequent, crisis experience. Most classical Pentecostals see it as being “subsequent and dramatic”; Charismatics tend to have a more gradual or “organic” view. For a fuller discussion, see Williams, J. R., *Baptism In The Holy Spirit in Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Burgess, Stanley and McGee, Gary (General Editors), Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1988, pp. 41-43.

⁴⁴. Menzies, *op. cit.*, pg. 117.

Spirit who is totally present now totally claims the person.”⁴⁵. “...we were ‘baptized with the Holy Spirit’ when we became Christians, but we find ourselves wanting to more fully experience the release of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives in order to become more effectual Christians.”⁴⁶. “Luke is found to have a charismatic rather than a soteriological theology of the Holy Spirit. This charismatic theology of the Spirit is no less valid for disciples in the twentieth century than it was for disciples in the first century.”⁴⁷.

A unique element in our life with the Spirit is the matter of a “personal prayer language/praying in tongues.”

- *It has often been observed that Paul is more interested in the interior work of the Spirit, assuring believers, transforming their lives, and so on; whereas Luke is more interested in the broader picture of the coming of the Spirit on the Church, his external manifestations in prophecy and tongues, and his direction of the Christian mission.*⁴⁸.
- *If you read Luke by himself, and listen to him, it seems rather clear that the outpouring of the Spirit he has in mind is not brought into relation to salvation [initiation/incorporation], as it is in Paul, but in relation to service and witness. Therefore, Luke does not tie the coming of the Spirit to the salvation event.*⁴⁹.

⁴⁵. Williams, *op. cit.*, pg. 41.

⁴⁶. Bradford, Brick in Burgess and McGee, *op. cit.*, pg. 43.

⁴⁷. Stronstad, *op. cit.*, pg. 14.

⁴⁸. Green, Michael, *I Believe In The Holy Spirit*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992 reprint, pg. 162. “Although Luke accents the participation in Spirit baptism that flows from faith, especially as visibly demonstrated, Paul focuses attention on the act of Spirit baptism that leads to the attachment to Christ by faith” (Frank Macchia, *op. cit.*, pg. 87).

⁴⁹. Pinnock, Clark quoted in Stronstad, *op. cit.*, pg. 12.

A PERSONAL PRAYER LANGUAGE (SPEAKING IN TONGUES)—

A unique element in our life with the Spirit is the matter of a “personal prayer language/praying in tongues”.⁵⁰ Both Paul and Luke describe this reality. Luke details the release of this special manifestation from the standpoint of its *inception* in a person’s walk with Jesus—an inception that is recorded as both concurrent with initial salvation (Acts 10) and (more frequently) subsequent to it (Acts 19:1-7).⁵¹ Paul, on the other hand, details private tongues from the standpoint of their *ongoing, daily practice* in our Spirit-filled lives (1 Corinthians 14), never addressing the timing of their appearance relative to one’s conversion.

All believers are encouraged to cultivate a kingdom lifestyle that includes not only the Spirit’s transformation, but ministry in the power and authority of the Holy Spirit.

In addition to the issue of subsequence is the often asked and somewhat controversial matter within Pentecostal and charismatic circles—“Because of the Lucan accounts, can we assume that tongues is *the* initial sign of the baptism with the Holy Spirit?” “Nearly all classical Pentecostal groups adhere to the doctrine that speaking in tongues certifies the personal experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.”⁵² Whereas this is true historically among most Pentecostals, from an exegetical perspective this matter will never be settled to everyone’s satisfaction—either within the Church at large or within Pentecostal (Foursquare) and charismatic circles.⁵³ It is exegetically clear, however, that “personal/devo-

⁵⁰ “Glossolalia may be practiced as a private, prayer language (1 Cor. 14:18-19); it is not clear if Paul would consider this the same gift as public speaking in tongues” (Craig Blomberg, *Holy Spirit, Gifts of* in Elwell, *op. cit.*, pg. 350). In my understanding, it would appear that public and private “tongues” is the same manifestation but that there are unique aspects of this manifestation that are not true of the others—namely, both a public and private dimension (contrast 1 Corinthians 14:4-5, 15 with 12:10-11, 29-30). “God uses this speaking in tongues in two different ways, and it’s very important to see the difference. One is what we may call the ‘prayer language,’ and the other is the ‘gift of tongues.’ One of the main reasons more Christians don’t accept speaking in tongues is that they don’t understand this difference...Paul has a lot to say about speaking in tongues in First Corinthians 12, 13, and 14, and all the way through these chapters he is moving back and forth between these two kinds of speaking in tongues. Unless you see the difference between them you will wonder how Paul can say in First Corinthians 12:30: ‘All don’t speak in tongues, do they?’ (AP), and then in First Corinthians 14:5 say, ‘I want you all to speak in tongues’ (RSV)” (Dennis Bennett, *op. cit.*, pg. 19). “Since edification or **building up** remains a central issue, Paul applies the term alike to the individualism of the use of tongues and the community effects of prophecy as a fundamental contrast...furthermore, the more positive aspect of tongues used in private devotion should not be overlooked” (Anthony Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians—The New International Greek Testament Commentary*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2000, pp. 1094, 1096).

⁵¹ A subsequent experience with the Holy Spirit was the primary experience accompanying the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the 20th century; this common experience among many early 20th century Pentecostals, coupled with the influence of Wesley’s subsequent work of entire sanctification (known as the baptism with the Holy Spirit) led to the understanding of Spirit baptism being a subsequent experience among most classical Pentecostals. See Spittler, R. P., *Glossolalia* in Burgess and McGee, *op. cit.*, pp. 338-339. Despite terminology concerns by some, the baptism with the Holy Spirit within Foursquare references a post-conversion experience.

⁵² Spittler, *op. cit.*, pg. 338.

⁵³ See Hayford, Jack, *The Beauty of Spiritual Language*, Word Publishing, Dallas, TX, 1992 for a fuller understanding of the issues surrounding the various perspectives.

tional tongues” occurs frequently as a Lucan sign (Acts 10:45-46; 19:6) and that Paul’s apparent *assumption* is that this reality—termed **angelic tongues** (1 Corinthians 13:1)—can be part of *every* believer’s Spirit-filled life (1 Corinthians 14:15).⁵⁴

The Global Council, therefore, encourages that—

- All people seek a personal, saving relationship with Jesus Christ, coming to Him to be born again/justified by grace through faith.
- All believers, following salvation, ask God in prayer daily to fill them with the Spirit and transform them into the image of Christ, so as to live a “Spirit-filled” (Spirit-influenced) life on a day-to-day basis.
- All believers, after salvation, seek Jesus to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit, including the release of a “personal prayer language/speaking in tongues.”
- All believers use their prayer language (tongues) daily for the purposes of enhanced prayer and worship.⁵⁵
- All believers cultivate a kingdom lifestyle that includes not only the Spirit’s transformation/unbridled influence, but ministry in the power and authority of the Holy Spirit; this includes asking God daily to fill them afresh with the Spirit’s power to work and witness for Jesus with an openness to being used in the 1 Corinthians 12 manifestations. “Despite the diversity of viewpoints concerning the specifics of the doctrine of Spirit baptism, the vast majority of Pentecostals agree that it is profoundly charismatic, especially with regard

It is the belief among Pentecostals and most charismatics that the nine manifestations of the Spirit as listed in 1 Corinthians 12 are unique from other biblically named spiritual gifts.

⁵⁴ Other New Testament signs of being baptized with the Holy Spirit (most emphasized by charismatics) include—committed love for Jesus/people (1 John 4:16B, 20); spiritual power to witness for Christ (Acts 1:8); enhanced participation in worship (1 Corinthians 14:15); and ministry in any of the nine manifestations of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8-10), especially prophetic speech (Acts 2:17-18).

⁵⁵ Additional benefits of a prayer language include enabling us to know how to pray when we do not understand how to pray; enabling us to resist the enemy most effectively (Ephesians 6:18); and helping “train our tongue in righteousness” (James 3:1-12). “Even though early Pentecostals viewed tongues as *xenolalia* (speaking an unlearned foreign language), the belief in them as an in-depth prayer language came to dominate the Pentecostal understanding of tongues. Pentecostal scholars Fee and Macchia place an emphasis on the dimension of ‘deep and agonizing groans of human weakness’ experienced in tongues” (Yongnan Jeon Ahn, *op. cit.*, pg. 164).

to the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and is centered on the person of Christ as victor over all that opposes the accomplishment of God's will in the world."⁵⁶

THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (1 Corinthians 12)—

It is the belief among Pentecostals and most charismatics that the nine manifestations of the Spirit as listed in 1 Corinthians 12 are unique from other biblically named spiritual gifts, in that they do not come to believers permanently but are available to any believer on an "as needed" ministry basis.⁵⁷ Although Paul does term them **gifts** (1 Corinthians 12:31), he also terms them **manifestations** (1 Corinthians 12:7). Maintaining this distinction of naming is helpful in understanding their uniqueness in terms of the Holy Spirit using us for ministry and "prevents us from confusing our foundational ministry in life and service for God with our purposeful quest for an openness to His Holy Spirit's full resources and power for service and ministry."⁵⁸ These nine unique displays of power and grace are manifested **for the common good** (1 Corinthians 12:7)⁵⁹ and Paul's charge to the C/church is—**eagerly desire**⁶⁰ **spiritual gifts** (1 Corinthians 14:1; see also vs. 12).⁶¹

⁵⁶ Macchia, *op. cit.*, pg. 37.

⁵⁷ The fact that **the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good** (1 Corinthians 12:7 [emphasis mine]) means that these workings manifest the power and presence of the Spirit in public. They are public manifestations. "Each 'gift' is a 'manifestation,' a disclosure of the Spirit's activity in their midst" (Gordon Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. 589). Non-Pentecostals who maintain the continued operation of these gifts today do not maintain this distinction and add these gifts to Paul's other *ad hoc* lists of gifts given permanently. See Ciampa, Roy and Rosner, Brian, *The First Letter to the Corinthians—The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, pg. 573 for a discussion of this perspective. As MacArthur notes, cessationism theology has a different perspective altogether. "A thorough examination will yield the truth that spiritual gifts fill two major purposes: the permanent gifts edify the church and the temporary gifts are signs to confirm the Word of God. God will continue to give the permanent gifts to believers for the duration of the church age, and those gifts are to be ministered by His people at all times in the life of the church. Those gifts include first the speaking or verbal gifts—prophecy, knowledge, wisdom, teaching, and exhortation, and, second, the serving or nonverbal gifts—leadership, helps, giving, mercy, faith, and discernment. The temporary sign gifts were limited to the apostolic age and therefore ceased after that time. Those gifts included miracles, healing, languages, and the interpretation of languages. The purpose of temporary sign gifts was to authenticate the apostolic message as the Word of God, until the time when the Scriptures, His written Word, was completed and became self-authenticating" (John MacArthur, Jr., *1 Corinthians—The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Moody Press, Chicago, IL, 1984, pp. 297-298).

⁵⁸ Walker, Paul, *Holy Spirit Gifts and Power* in Hayford [*Spirit Filled Life Bible*], pg. 2023.

⁵⁹ **For the common good** (Greek, *pros to sumpheron*) means "for the common advantage" or "for the building up of the community as a whole." This is perhaps why Paul inserts 1 Corinthians 13 and his exposition of love between his two sections discussing the nature and practice of the Spirit's manifestations. Although one can minister the Spirit's manifestations without depth of character or the evidence of the fruit of the Spirit (especially love), Paul would undoubtedly shun such a thought.

⁶⁰ Or **strive for** (NRSV). "**Eagerly desire** permits a corporate concern for the well-being of *the community*, i.e., that these gifts may operate in the church, which is Paul's horizon of concern" (Anthony Thiselton, *op. cit.*, pg. 1082). "Because gifts are incarnational, human responsibility comes into play...the call is to every believer to live his full potential with the coming of the Lord in view" (David Lim, *Spiritual Gifts: A Fresh Look*, Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, MO, 1991, pg. 187).

⁶¹ This is in keeping with Paul's earlier comment to the Corinthians—**we were all given the one Spirit to drink** (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Understanding into the nature and operation of these manifestations is not automatic among God's people—**now about the gifts of the Spirit,⁶² brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed⁶³** (1 Corinthians 12:1). Each of us likely has assumptions regarding spiritual matters, especially with reference to the definition and use of the manifestations of the Spirit. Rarely do we come to Christ without some theological or practical focal point. Unfortunately, our experiential or preferred practice often forms our doctrinal understanding of how to operate in the manifestations of the Spirit. This was the problem at Corinth. They had their pagan rituals as models for “spiritual matters, including manifestations”; these in turn formed the basis of their model for a “truly ‘spiritual’ meeting.” Their hearts were right and their manifestations were of the Spirit, but their motive and method were similar to those of frenzied heathen.

- *The pagan background of the Corinthians gave them one definition of being “spiritual”; Paul had another. Their focal point was their pagan rituals in which they **were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak** (12:2); Paul’s focal point is the truth that **“Jesus is Lord”** (12:3) and that all manifestations of the Holy Spirit are subject to self-control (14:28-32). Pagan worship was very frenzied. The Greek words translated “led astray” (12:2) are intensive, suggesting times in ecstatic heathen worship when a person is believed to be possessed by a supernatural force. The New Testament would see this as demonic ravishing (cf. 1 Cor. 10:20). Realizing that demonic or fleshly forces can in part imitate true manifestations of the Spirit, Paul calls in 1 Corinthians 12-14 for analyzation of their Christian enthusiasm in worship.⁶⁴*

Any categorizing of the 1 Corinthians 12 manifestations presents difficulties, but it is often customary to place them in three related categories—

1. **Manifestations of enlightenment**—a message of wisdom; a message of knowledge; and distinguishing between spirits. These manifestations show how the Holy Spirit spontaneously uses the human mind to provide supernatural illumination, direction and spiritual safety for the body of Christ.

⁶². “The TNIV translation *gifts of the Spirit* may be getting just a bit ahead of Paul’s thought at this point. Literally he says, ‘Now I do not want you to be ignorant concerning spiritual things’...hence, Paul probably has in mind in 12:1-3 knowing the difference between acting under the power of God’s Spirit and acting under the influence of other spiritual powers... by the time we get to the next appearance of this word in 14:1 it may well be that Paul could expect his readers to know that the spiritual things he has in mind are spiritual gifts, but that is not yet clear in 12:1” (Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner, *op. cit.*, pg. 561).

⁶³. “In terms of informing them, Paul almost certainly does not intend to give new information, but an additional slant, or corrective, to their understanding of ‘the things of the Spirit’” (Gordon Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. 576).

⁶⁴. Matsdorf, Gary, *People of the Spirit: Gifts, Fruit & Fullness of the Holy Spirit*, Hayford, Jack (Executive Editor), Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1993, pg. 34.

2. **Manifestations of energy**—faith; gifts of healing; and miraculous powers. These manifestations show how the Holy Spirit spontaneously uses the human will to provide power, healing and deliverance to the body of Christ.
3. **Manifestations of edification**—prophecy; speaking in different kinds of tongues; and the interpretation of tongues. These manifestations show how the Holy Spirit spontaneously uses the human heart and voice to provide learning, inspiration, encouragement, comfort and enhanced worship to the body of Christ.

We now begin a basic exposé of each of the nine manifestations. “To illustrate the thesis of v. 7 Paul proceeds to offer a sizable list of ways in which the Spirit is manifested in the Christian assembly.”⁶⁵ “The role of the Spirit in bestowing the manifestations is stressed especially at the beginning and end of the list (vv. 8-9, 11)”⁶⁶.

A MESSAGE OF WISDOM—

A **message**⁶⁷ of **wisdom** (1 Corinthians 12:8) is a spontaneously revealed thought (which is then articulated), whose content is wisdom. “A ‘message of wisdom’ is most likely the ability to give guidance for dealing with challenging circumstances in a way that is consistent with Christ’s stress on self-sacrifice for the well-being of the other.”⁶⁸ Wisdom is close to God’s heart (Proverbs 4:7); it involves knowing God’s will and ways in life (Ephesians 5:15-16), dealing shrewdly with facts, making sound judgments and living out those decisions (Matthew 11:19). Wise living is successful living, “an evaluation of realities in the light of God’s grace and the cross of Christ.”⁶⁹

General wisdom is available to all believers (James 1:5-8), as is leadership wisdom for those who lead (James 3:13-18). A **message of wisdom** differs in that it is a specific case in which the Holy Spirit spontaneously makes available practical insight and direction in a situation; such direction and insight would not be known in any other way except by spontaneous revelation by God’s living Spirit and must always align with biblical truth. It is the Spirit Himself making His mind known to a yielded human mind; the human vessel need not be highly intellectual in the natural (see 1 Corinthians 1:18-31).

⁶⁵ Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. 590.

⁶⁶ Ciampa and Rosner, *op. cit.*, pg. 572.

⁶⁷ **Message** translates the Greek word, *logos*. See **the utterance of wisdom** (NRSV); **the word of wisdom** (NKJV).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 574.

⁶⁹ Thiselton, *op. cit.*, pg. 939.

An example from Jesus' life would be His response (“**Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s**”) to the foiled trap by the Pharisees and Herodians regarding paying taxes to the Emperor (Matthew 22:15-22).

A MESSAGE OF KNOWLEDGE—

A **message**⁷⁰ of **knowledge** (1 Corinthians 12:8) is very similar.⁷¹ Knowledge too is close to God’s heart (Proverbs 1:7). Knowledge deals with the facts in situations, especially facts regarding God and His ways; it deals with both enlightenment regarding things otherwise hidden and with reflective inquiry (Philippians 1:9).

A **message of knowledge** is not knowledge gained through natural learning—either by experience or by intellectual brilliance; 1 Corinthians 13:2 and 14:6 link it closely with understanding **mysteries**—truths about God and His kingdom known only through divine revelation. A **message of knowledge** then is a spontaneous supernatural insight or revelation of facts made known by the Spirit for a specific, given situation (which is then articulated).⁷² “Some have suggested that Paul here has in mind a supernatural endowment of knowledge, factual information that could not otherwise have been known without the Spirit’s aid.”⁷³

An example from Jesus' life would be His knowing that the Samaritan woman had had five husbands, and that she was now living with another man who “**is not your husband**” (John 4:17B-18).⁷⁴

Healers are given varied gifts at varied times for varied tasks.

FAITH—

At first, it seems strange that **faith** would be listed as a special manifestation of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:9). But **faith** (Greek, *pistis*) is used variously throughout the New Testament, indicating that it has

⁷⁰ Or **utterance/word**.

⁷¹ The precise difference between biblical wisdom and knowledge is not perfectly clear. Yet, they are distinguished by the Spirit for He gives one a **message of wisdom** and another a **message of knowledge**. “In a general sense, wisdom seems to be the way facts are used or the decisions one makes with information, while knowledge would be the more concrete and specific facts themselves” (Don Pickerill, *The Utterance of Knowledge*, unpublished notes). “The relationship or distinction between a message of wisdom and a message of knowledge is unclear. Our tendency is to think of wisdom as a more practical thing that has to do with the way one deals with challenging circumstances...knowledge is taken to be more abstract and less practically oriented” (Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner, *op. cit.*, pg. 575).

⁷² See Daniel 2:28-30 for an Old Testament example of this same dynamic at work.

⁷³ Fee, *op. cit.*, pp. 592-593. He continues noting, “But since here it is a descriptive genitive with the word *logos*, others see it as referring to something more akin to inspired teaching, perhaps related to receiving Christian insight into the meaning of Scripture.”

⁷⁴ See also Peter’s knowledge of Ananias and Sapphira’s plot (Acts 5:1-11).

a wide variety of meanings and applications.⁷⁵ *Pistis* can mean a body of truth believed (1 Timothy 1:18-20); basic trust in God for salvation (Ephesians 2:8); a character trait of stability and steadfastness (Galatians 5:22); or dynamic power, as the Holy Spirit enables one to spontaneously grasp and release the power contained in the promises of God (1 Corinthians 12:9).

The manifestation of **faith**, then, is this last use of *pistis*—a release of God’s powerful promises into specific situations, producing visibly miraculous results (Matthew 17:20). It is an agency for action—“a special endowment of faith for a special service.”⁷⁶ With an inner heart-felt, revealed assurance (Mark 9:23), it supernaturally and emphatically believes that God’s promises are true and vocalizes those promises in specific situations. “What Paul has in mind here is the special gift of supernatural faith that can ‘move mountains,’ mentioned again in 13:2. It probably refers to a supernatural conviction that God will reveal his power or mercy in a special way in a specific instance.”⁷⁷ In essence, it is the Spirit spontaneously giving one the special ability to cry out with deep confidence—“**Ah, Sovereign Lord, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for You**” (Jeremiah 32:17).

An example from Jesus’ life would likely be His curing of the demon-possessed boy who could not be cured by the disciples because of their little faith (Matthew 17:14-20).⁷⁸

GIFTS OF HEALING—

The manifestation of **gifts of healing** (1 Corinthians 12:9) is literally, **gifts of healings**.⁷⁹ The Bible attaches great importance to the human body and the matter of healing. Biblical anthropology presents us as “body-persons”; sickness is deemed the result of sin and is associated with Satan (Luke 13:16; John 5:14; James 5:15). God is presented as humankind’s Healer (Exodus 15:26), and within us is a virtual healing impulse as we instinctively fight against disease and sickness.

Two technical observations merit attention before defining the essence of this manifestation. First, **gifts** translates the Greek word, *charismata*—

⁷⁵ The core meaning of *pistis* is conviction, confidence, trust, belief or reliance.

⁷⁶ Bruce, F. F., quoted in Thiselton, *op. cit.*, pg. 945.

⁷⁷ Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. 593.

⁷⁸ It is sometimes difficult to discern the manifestation of **faith** from that of **miraculous powers** or even **gifts of healing**. “The reference to faith here should probably be understood to refer to miracle-working faith...in other words, faith in an almighty and sovereign God entails an understanding that he is capable of intervening in the most dramatic or supernatural (or even more subtle and mundane) ways” (Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner, *op. cit.*, pp. 577-578).

⁷⁹ Some scholars translate this gift—**various kinds of healings**.

- *Probably this language reflects two things: a) the use of charisma itself suggests that the “manifestation” is given not to the person who is healed, but to the person God uses for the healing of another; and b) the plural charismata probably suggests not a permanent “gift,” as it were, but that each occurrence is a “gift” in its own right.⁸⁰*

Lim agrees noting, “It is incorrect to say anyone *has* the gifts of healings. One can be a channel of gifts, but not the possessor.”⁸¹ *Charismata* has a further implication. “Since the singular already denotes more than singularity of instance, the plural becomes a device for carrying the notion of *more than one kind* of what the word in question conveys...hence, healers are given varied gifts at varied times for varied tasks.”⁸²

Those who prophesy speak to people for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.

The second technical observation has to do with the plural, **healings**. This same truth of “more than one kind” applies to the implications of **healings** as well; that is, the healing of all kinds of diseases and infirmities are apparently in mind—physical, psychosomatic, emotional, or mental—as well as various ways in which this manifestation operates.⁸³

- *Notice that this particular gift of the Spirit is put in the plural as “gifts of healings.” No one knows for sure why this is so. Perhaps we have a clue from the natural world, for healing is a very vast and broad subject. It is not uncommon for a doctor to specialize in one branch of medicine or even major on select areas of the human body. Man can be sick physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Jesus ministered to “all manner of diseases and infirmities.” He healed the handicapped, such as the blind and deaf. He healed mental and spiritual problems. He healed the broken hearted. In other words, Jesus brought health and wholeness to the entire man. The Holy Spirit gives certain of these healing “allotments” to various members of the body*

⁸⁰ Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. 594.

⁸¹ Lim, David, *Charismata...A Fresh Look*, Western Pentecostal Bible College Publication, Clayburn, B.C., Canada, pg. 39.

⁸² Thiselton, *op. cit.*, pg. 946. Some Pentecostals see in this understanding justification for certain individuals being used regularly for miraculous healing of cancer, while others are used more for healing of diabetes, etc.

⁸³ Note, for example, the various ways Jesus healed blindness (Matthew 9:29; 12:22; Mark 8:22-26; 10:52; John 9:1-7). Some scholars feel that though Paul is talking of a miraculous manifestation, the fact that he says **gifts of healings** may also intimate that the release of this manifestation through one individual to another may release either instantaneous or gradual healing. “The plural, which implies **various kinds of healings**, should also be given its full scope. The **kinds** may appear to include sudden or gradual, physical, psychosomatic, or mental, the use of medication or more ‘direct’ divine agency, and variations which are not to be subsumed in advance under some stereotypical pattern of expectation. From within the Pentecostal tradition, even if W. R. Jones perceives these nine gifts of vv. 8-10 to be hallmarks of Pentecostal doctrine, nevertheless Donald Gee declared that **kinds of healings** should ‘not preclude,’ what he called ‘the merciful and manifold work of medical healing’” (Anthony Thiselton, *ibid.*, pg. 948). Carson disagrees noting, “There can be little doubt that Paul understands these healings to be as miraculous as those of the Lord Jesus Himself” (D. A. Carson quoted in Ciampa and Rosner, *op. cit.*, pg. 579).

*of Christ, for it is His task to continue the ministry of Christ in the earth (John 16:14-15; Acts 1:2, 8).*⁸⁴

The manifestation of **gifts of healing**, then, is the spontaneous release of God's power for healing.⁸⁵ An example from Jesus' life would be the many healings He did throughout Galilee (Matthew 4:23).

MIRACULOUS POWERS—

The manifestation of **miraculous powers**⁸⁶ (Greek, *dunameon* [1 Corinthians 12:10]) is the spontaneous display of God's strength to confront any number of situations. "This manifestation most likely... covers a broad range of supernatural events that ordinary parlance would call miraculous."⁸⁷

Because *dunamis* is associated with the kingdom of God, **miraculous powers** release God's reign into situations, as when the woman with the issue of blood was healed and Mark notes that **at once Jesus realized that *dunamis* had gone out from Him** (Mark 5:30). The release of this manifestation, then, results in His power—casting out demons (Luke 4:36); healing the sick (Luke 5:17);⁸⁸ bringing about intense evangelism (Acts 4:33); demonstrating extraordinary manifestations (Acts 19:11-12), etc.⁸⁹ "In this epistle **miraculous powers**...characteristically designates what is *effective* against any obstacle or constraint."⁹⁰

An example from Jesus' life would be His many exorcisms or His raising the dead.

⁸⁴ Pickerill, Don, *Gifts of Healing*, unpublished notes. "That *gifts of healing*...is mentioned in the plural...suggests that each healing may be understood to be a separate gift from God. Paul 'does not refer to the power to heal all diseases but to instances of actual healing'" (Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner, *op. cit.*, pg. 578).

⁸⁵ The manifestation of **gifts of healing** is not the only way people are healed in the Bible. For example, there is the "prayer of faith of the elders of the church" (James 5:14-15); prayer in general (Mark 9:29); medication (2 Kings 20:7); and emotional/spiritual healing through loving acceptance by fellow believers (2 Corinthians 2:5-11).

⁸⁶ Or **the working of miracles** (NRSV). **The working** translates a Greek verb (*energemata*) which means something activated by God to bring about a certain result (see 1 Corinthians 12:6—**there are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work** [emphasis mine]).

⁸⁷ Fee, *op. cit.*, pp. 594-595.

⁸⁸ Some scholars do not include miraculous healings as a manifestation of **miraculous powers** because Paul lists it as a separate manifestation.

⁸⁹ All of these are associated with the word *dunamis*. Matthew 11:20 generically refers to these workings as **deeds of power** (NRSV). Calvin also included Paul's bringing judicial blindness on Elymas (Acts 13:11) and Peter's juridical speech leading to the death of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) as examples of this manifestation.

⁹⁰ Karl Barth, quoted in Thiselton, *op. cit.*, pg. 952. "Miracles, such as those that were experienced at the exodus and through Elijah and Elisha, were also expected at the time of the new exodus when God's presence would be fully restored to his people and would manifest itself in great power" (Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner, *op. cit.*, pg. 580).

PROPHECY—

The manifestation of **prophecy** (1 Corinthians 12:10) occupies considerable space in Paul’s instruction in 1 Corinthians 12-14. It is a very diverse gift, appearing in all the Pauline gift lists (but with considerable differences of nuance). The comments here will be limited to the manifestation of **prophecy**.⁹¹

The manifestation of **prophecy** (1 Corinthians 12:10) is the speaking forth in a corporate setting (or church service)⁹² of a revelation or insight⁹³ that the Spirit spontaneously reveals to one. “Prophecy here consisted of spontaneous, Spirit-inspired, intelligible messages, orally delivered in the gathered assembly, intended for the edification or encouragement of the people.”⁹⁴

A prophetic word reveals “God’s heart for the moment,” relative to His assessment of matters at hand; His “seal of approval”; His encouragement; His direction; His call for repentance; etc.⁹⁵ It is always given in a language the listeners understand.

Paul’s instruction is that we **eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy** (1 Corinthians 14:1). His singling out of **prophecy** has to do with its many corporate benefits—

- **Those who prophesy speak to people for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort** (1 Corinthians 14:3).
- The manifestation of **prophecy** instructs⁹⁶ believers and enables them to learn⁹⁷ (1 Corinthians 14:19, 31).

⁹¹ For a fuller understanding of prophecy in other Pauline gift lists, see Matsdorf, Gary, *op. cit.* or Matsdorf, Gary, *Spiritual Gifts Overview*, unpublished syllabus, New Hope Christian College, Eugene, OR, 2003.

⁹² This does not preclude prophetic words to individuals, but Paul’s concern in 1 Corinthians is corporate settings (which may have been as small as a home group).

⁹³ Note 1 Corinthians 14:30. The revelation or insight precedes the vocalizing.

⁹⁴ Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. 595. By extension, many scholars also feel it refers to spontaneous Spirit-inspired preaching or teaching. “Spontaneous” (which has to do more with “unplanned” than “on the spot”) does not preclude the person having had a sense prior to the meeting, or even receiving the specific prophetic word prior to the corporate gathering but held until the church meets.

⁹⁵ “**Prophecy**, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, combines pastoral insight into the needs of persons, communities, and situations with the ability to address these with a God-given utterance or longer discourse...leading to challenge or comfort, judgment, or consolation, but ultimately building up the addressees” (Anthony Thiselton, *op. cit.*, pg. 964).

⁹⁶ Paul does not state the content of the instruction. **Instruct** (Greek, *katecheo*) refers to instructing one in general religious matters.

⁹⁷ Greek, *manthano*—to receive instruction.

- The manifestation of **prophecy** has the potential⁹⁸ to convict unbelievers, call them to account,⁹⁹ and disclose **the secrets of their hearts**,¹⁰⁰ causing them to **fall down and worship God, exclaiming, “God is really among you!”** (1 Corinthians 14:24-25). “The word of the prophet, spoken by the Holy Spirit, would reveal the unbeliever and would rebuke him and admonish him to be converted.”¹⁰¹

Regarding the regulation of the manifestation of **prophecy** in corporate settings—

- As many as feel activated by the Holy Spirit can successively prophesy **when you come together** (1 Corinthians 14:26),¹⁰² but there should be no more than three prophetic manifestations before **the others**¹⁰³. **weigh carefully**¹⁰⁴. **what is said**¹⁰⁵. (1 Corinthians 14:29).¹⁰⁶ It is important to remember that as vessels of the manifestations of the Spirit, our perception and understanding is always provisional and incomplete because of human fallibility and limitations.
- The one activated must realize they can “hold” the word and are not under any “spiritual compulsion” to blurt it out (1 Corinthians 14:32).

⁹⁸. “Note that Paul does not mean to say that all these effects are wrought every time an unbeliever casually strays into a meeting where someone is prophesying” (F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians—The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1972 printing, pg. 333).

⁹⁹. “One of the sure signs of the presence of God in the believing community is this deep plowing work of the Spirit” (Gordon Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. 687). A comparison of this verse with 1 Corinthians 14:3 shows the multi-dimensional function and content of prophetic words.

¹⁰⁰. “These may be the particular sins of that particular person. But it is also possible that the unbeliever recognizes his own image in the general picture of the sinner and thus is converted (converts himself to God), which would mean that the things hidden in his soul were only revealed to himself and not to the whole church” (F. W. Grosheide, *op. cit.*, pg. 332).

¹⁰¹. Grosheide, *loc. cit.*

¹⁰². Note Paul’s assumption of inclusive potential—**...if everyone is prophesying** (1 Corinthians 14:24) and **you can all prophesy in turn...** (1 Corinthians 14:31).

¹⁰³. **The others** refers principally to the recognized leaders of the congregation, in conjunction with other prophetically inclined persons (if they are not part of the leadership).

¹⁰⁴. **Weigh carefully** (Greek, *diakrinetosan*) has the idea of thinking over or sifting through. “**The others** are to distinguish between i) prophetic speech which is God-given and coheres with the gospel of Christ and the pastoral situation and ii) speech which is merely self-generated rhetoric reflecting the speaker’s disguised self-interests, self-deceptions, or errors” (Anthony Thiselton, *op. cit.*, pg. 1140). Ciampa and Rosner believe that the following “gift of *distinguishing between spirits* is most likely that of weighing or evaluating the origin, authority, and application of a prophetic message” (Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner, *op. cit.*, pg. 582; Fee also takes this stance [see Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. 596]. Leaders must therefore make decisions relative to the prophetic content and its appropriateness, applicability, and timing within the overall direction of the church service. The “weighing” also includes calling the congregation to a response.

¹⁰⁵. “Since the prophecy must be weighed, it would put a great burden on the others if a prophecy began with the words, ‘I, the Lord, say unto thee’” (Don Pickerill, *The Gift of Prophecy*, unpublished notes).

¹⁰⁶. See Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. 693 for the exegetical basis of this understanding.

- The one speaking must maintain a sensitivity as to when the Holy Spirit is finished, so as to stop speaking “when the Spirit is done revealing,” rather than continuing “out of one’s own unction or selfishness” (1 Corinthians 14:30).¹⁰⁷
- The manifestation must be delivered in a peaceful,¹⁰⁸ **orderly**¹⁰⁹ and **fitting**¹¹⁰ manner (1 Corinthians 14:33, 40).

An example of the manifestation of **prophecy** in Jesus’ life is difficult to identify because He operated in the *office of prophet* (John 6:14); therefore, His prophetic words were likely the result of His office, as opposed to a manifestation of the Spirit (Matthew 24:2; Luke 21:20).

DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN SPIRITS¹¹¹.—

The first thing to note about the manifestation of **distinguishing between spirits** (1 Corinthians 12:10) is that **spirits** is plural; we are not talking about discerning a person’s “spirit” (attitude/motive).¹¹² God (John 4:24), angels (Hebrews 1:14), humankind (Romans 8:16), Satan (Ephesians 2:2) and demons (Mark 1:27) are all spirit beings, and it is not always readily evident as to “who” is behind a given activity. We must know what “spirit” is behind every doctrine and ministry that circulates in the Church, the world and individual people’s lives.¹¹³

- *These spirits need to be discerned, for man does not exist in a spiritual vacuum. He can be and is influenced by the spiritual world. Man can be filled with the Spirit of God or he can be possessed by evil spirits. To insure the safety of believers and to be able to know the source and the*

¹⁰⁷. “In such a case the first prophet must keep silent, obviously because God Himself gives a new revelation at the very moment the other prophet is speaking” (F. W. Grosheide, *op. cit.*, pg. 338).

¹⁰⁸. Peaceful refers to monitored delivery, so as not to cause disturbance within the congregation.

¹⁰⁹. **Orderly** refers to that which offers communal benefit.

¹¹⁰. **Fitting** means being reputable by honoring social decorum and local church protocol.

¹¹¹. Or **the discerning of spirits** (NRSV).

¹¹². The spiritual ability to “discern” the nature or state of a person’s spirit would be the work of the gift of insight or mercy (Romans 12:6, 8) and the ability to “discern” motive the work of the gift of insight (Romans 12:6) or a prophet (Ephesians 4:11).

¹¹³. “African neo-Pentecostals believe that there is a world of spirits and that through bad spirits, one can be negatively affected physically or spiritually. The way to bring healing is not to consult ancestors as African independent churches did, but rather to take their concerns to Jesus Christ and his Spirit through prayers. On the one hand, the fact that they recognize the African past of spiritual experiences shows continuation of the recognition of African traditional religion and worldview. On the other hand, their putting the African spiritual world under the power of Christ demonstrates discontinuity from dependence on other powers” (Faith Lugazia, *Towards An African Inculturation Pneumatology*, Digital Commons @ Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, 2010, pg. 45).

*value of things happening in the spiritual realm, the Holy Spirit gives the Church the ability to distinguish between spirits.*¹¹⁴

Of particular concern is discerning satanic activity. Notes Grudem, “It’s the ability to recognize the influence of the Holy Spirit or of demonic spirits in a person.”¹¹⁵ Satan is interested in deceit through counterfeit—including counterfeit miracles (Acts 19:13-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:9); false teaching (2 Corinthians 11:12-15); false prophecy (1 John 4:1); and a general spirit of opposition to the things of Christ (1 John 2:18). **Distinguishing between spirits** is God giving a believer definitive insight in a particular situation as to the “spirit” behind a teaching or action, even if the person speaking is speaking truth (see Acts 16:16-18).

Examples from Jesus’ life would be His awareness of the unspoken malice of the Pharisees and Herodians (Matthew 22:18), whereby **Jesus knew in His spirit** what **some teachers of the law were thinking in their hearts** about His granting forgiveness of sin (Mark 2:6-12).

SPEAKING IN DIFFERENT KINDS OF TONGUES¹¹⁶. AND THE INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES—

These are companion manifestations, so they will be handled together. The manifestation of **different kinds of tongues** (1 Corinthians 12:10) is either the spontaneous public speaking of an unknown, linguistically unintelligible, Spirit-inspired language which transcends the mind’s comprehension (1 Corinthians 12:7; 13:1; 14:2), or the spontaneous, supernatural public speaking of a known language which is simply unknown to the speaker (Acts 2:4).¹¹⁷ The manifestation of **the interpretation of tongues** (1 Corinthians 12:10) is the supernatural public rendering of the essence of public tongues in the language of the listening audience,¹¹⁸ **so that the church may be edified** (1 Corinthians 14:5). Both manifestations are subject to the control of the one whom the Spirit uses; the speaker is neither in “ecstasy” nor “seized” (1 Corinthians 14:27-28).

¹¹⁴. Pickerill, Don, *The Ability to Distinguish Between Spirits*, unpublished notes. See Ciampa, Roy and Rosner, Brian, *op. cit.*, pg. 582 for diverse understandings of the nature of this manifestation.

¹¹⁵. Grudem, Wayne quoted in Ciampa, Roy and Rosner, Brian, *loc. cit.*

¹¹⁶. “Of all the gifts that God has given to mankind, one of the most confusing has to be the gift of tongues. One-fifth of all adults deny that the gift even exists; another fifth have no idea what to believe about the gift of tongues...this issue is one that divides the body of Christ as much as any other” (*Charisma Magazine*, December, 1995).

¹¹⁷. This two-fold dimension is not uniformly agreed upon by scholars. Bruce, for example, includes both dimensions, Fee only the former (see Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. 598).

¹¹⁸. The Greek word translated **interpretation** (*hermeneia*) “denotes the power to put something into articulate speech, not to interpret or to translate” (Anthony Thiselton, *op. cit.*, pg. 976).

The content of public tongues is that of praise or prayer; it is a God-ward gift (1 Corinthians 14:16-17).¹¹⁹ When interpreted, it has equal value to a public prophetic word (1 Corinthians 14:5), but not equal content or purpose.

- *Although it is quite common in Pentecostal groups to refer to a “message in tongues,” there seems to be no evidence in Paul for such terminology. The tongues-speaker is not addressing fellow believers but God (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:13-14, 28), meaning therefore that Paul understands the phenomenon basically to be prayer and praise.*¹²⁰
- *It is distinctly affirmed that when the twin gifts of tongues and interpretation were exercised in proper order in the church, they equaled the gift of prophecy...[but] it should always be born in mind that the revealed purposes of the gift of tongues are chiefly devotional, and we do well to emphasize the fact. The normal spiritual gift for a “message” is the gift of prophecy.*¹²¹

Being used in the manifestations of the Spirit...begins with a passion to be used in these ways.

When one senses in a corporate gathering that the Spirit desires to activate the manifestation of a tongue, they should first be certain that **there is...an interpreter** present (1 Corinthians 14:28).¹²² If they are not certain such a person is present (or they do not sense they have the interpretation as

¹¹⁹ Paul’s pastoral instruction—**if anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret** (1 Corinthians 14:27)—is very difficult to interpret. Likely it means three things—1) there should be **two—or at the most three** tongues in a given service; 2) no two people should speak out the manifestation of tongues at the same time, but rather **one at a time**; and 3) it is OK for **the interpretation of tongues** to wait until all the speakers have spoken and then have **an interpreter** offer up a “collective” rendering of the praise/prayer given. (See Fee, *op. cit.*, pp. 691-692 for alternate understandings.)

¹²⁰ Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. 656.

¹²¹ Gee, Donald, *Concerning Spiritual Gifts*, Radiant Books, Springfield, MO, 1980 reprint, pg. 76. Also note Thiselton—“the notion of interpreting glossolalia as a ‘message’ of prophecy addressed *to the congregation* owes more to pietist traditions than to exegesis of this epistle” (Anthony Thiselton, *op. cit.*, pg. 1118), and Ciampa and Rosner—“All the evidence of chapter 14 seems to be consistent with the understanding of tongues as discourse directed toward God” (Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner, *op. cit.*, pg. 586).

¹²² This does not mean that “there was...a group in Corinth known as ‘the interpreters of tongues’; the language of 14:5, plus the exhortation of v. 13, tells against such a possibility” (Gordon Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. 692). It simply means that the one being activated knows that someone is present who has been used before in the manifestation of **the interpretation of tongues**. (NOTE: this says “reams” about being an anchored part of a congregation before “blurting out” and gives pastoral direction to protocol for visitors.)

¹²³ Note 1 Corinthians 14:13—**those who speak in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say**. This is not a requirement before one gives a public tongue (see vv. 27-28); it is, rather, an encouragement.

well)¹²³.—**the speaker should be quiet in church; let them speak to themselves and to God** (1 Corinthians 14:28).¹²⁴.

The Bible does not record an incident of Jesus speaking in tongues.

¹²³. Note 1 Corinthians 14:13—**those who speak in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say**. This is not a requirement before one gives a public tongue (see vv. 27-28); it is, rather, an encouragement.

¹²⁴. Paul reinforces the importance of this in 1 Corinthians 14:20-23, where he notes that tongues without interpretation have a negative impact on **unbelievers**; perceiving that **you are out of your mind** (vs. 23), they deem the work of the Spirit as madness, being unable to be brought to faith and therefore destined for divine judgment (vs. 22). (This is one reason why Paul's divergence to expound *agape* in the middle of his teaching on manifestations [1 Corinthians 13]. Not everything a believer has the liberty to practice is necessarily expedient to practice "in church.") None of this means, however, Paul absolutely forbids tongues in public gatherings where unbelievers are present. **Do not forbid speaking in tongues** (1 Corinthians 14:39) means "Paul will not allow anyone to take the preceding correction as prohibition. Tongues are permissible in the assembly when accompanied by interpretation and may be experienced as much as one wishes in private" (Gordon Fee, *op. cit.*, pg. 712). See above for the unique ongoing dimension of the manifestation of **tongues** at the personal level.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- In your opinion, why does Paul begin the section on the manifestations of the Spirit by stating that all believers should be informed about these manifestations (1 Corinthians 12:1)?

- What does Paul's admonition that we should *eagerly desire spiritual gifts* (1 Corinthians 14:1) mean to you personally? How would you disciple someone to eagerly desire them?

- Take time to discuss the definition of each of the nine manifestations to understand what they are. Was anything theologically new to you?

BEING USED IN THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SPIRIT—

Being used in the manifestations of the Spirit...which flow from a community of people declaring **“Jesus is Lord”...by the Holy Spirit** (1 Corinthians 12:3)...begins with a passion to be used in these ways. It requires concern for hurting people and a valuing of the manifestations’ unique place in ministering the kingdom of God (God’s “Promise-Plan”).

Cook notes—

- *The Church is a divine community in which the very Spirit of Jesus lives. It is clear for all to see that the presence and ministry of Jesus is among us! This is not a showcase to be observed and wondered at. It is a resident reality that walks into everyday life through the Church, “which is His Body.” Remember, the Church of Jesus, His prophetic community, is on the planet as it falls apart...there is a message of wisdom that brings insight to confused people...there is a knowing word that releases the helpless from the paralysis of indecision. There is faith for the hopeless and healing for the suffering.*^{125.}

To see these manifestations in our lives we must stay anchored to Jesus (John 15:1-15); regularly live under the Spirit’s influence (Ephesians 5:18); have compassionate concern for people and their needs, realizing they are sometimes met only by the “Spirit’s dynamic intervention” (1 Corinthians 12:7); express a passion to the Spirit to be used (1 Corinthians 14:1); make ourselves available to be used by asking the Spirit to use us (1 Corinthians 14:39); and understand the manifestations and ways of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:1). “More gifts are not manifested today because we fail to recognize the nature of spiritual manifestations and their importance in the church...the genius of the NT church was not in its leadership but in the vitality and ministry gifts of every believer.”^{126.}

We must be careful to not become cynical toward the manifestations of the Spirit nor to put out the Spirit’s fire in lives and churches.

THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE SPIRIT AND CHURCH PROTOCOL—

Although Paul’s concern at Corinth was the use of the manifestations “in church,” we see them at work in Acts outside church services (*i.e.*, Acts 5:3-4). We want to be used in the manifestations of the Spirit, therefore, in the counseling chambers, in the church lobby, in hospital rooms, etc. When they are part

^{125.} Cook, Jerry, *The Holy Spirit—So... What’s The Big Deal?* CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, North Charleston, SC, 2013, pp. 50-51.

^{126.} Lim, *Spiritual Gifts*, pg. 46.

of a public church service, however, we must observe not only standard biblical protocol (1 Corinthians 14) but the protocol of the particular local church.

Protocol refers to how a local church's leadership senses the Lord would have His manifestations facilitated in that church setting. It is an outgrowth of their responsibility to **weigh carefully** the manifestations considering God's overall commission.

- *As I travel to various nations and work with a spectrum of churches and organizations, I find that not only do they follow biblical guidelines for prophesying, but they also each have a culture of their own. You'll hear them make comments such as, "Here at First Church of the Desert, we have these guidelines for our services...". Nothing is wrong with such distinctions. Each church needs to be true to the vision God has given it, and this means handling prophecy in individual ways.¹²⁷*

¹²⁷. Jacobs, Cindy, *The Voice of God*, Regal Books, Ventura, CA, 1995, pg. 162.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- Is being an instrument through whom these manifestations flow important to you? Why or why not?

- What do you think of the concept that churches have different protocols for the public demonstration of the manifestations of the Spirit? If you are a first-time guest and don't know the church's protocol, what would you do if you felt you had a "tongue" or "prophecy"?

PART 2 (Leslie Keegel)—

We now want to address how the leadership of every Foursquare church might bring an understanding and practice of Holy Spirit fullness and ministry into the discipleship and leadership training processes of their respective local church.¹²⁸

1. Teach regularly and clearly on Holy Spirit fullness and the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

- Being “filled with the Spirit” is living under His influence in every aspect of our lives (Ephesians 5:18; Luke 4:1A; Galatians 3:16; 5:18, 25).
 - o This cultivates His fruit (Galatians 5:22-24) and spiritual maturity (Colossians 1:28).
 - o This enables us to be led by the Spirit (Luke 4:1B).
 - o Holy Spirit fullness sensitizes us to being careful not to **grieve the Holy Spirit of God** by uttering corrupt words or acting in anger or sinful behavior (Ephesians 4:30).
- Being “baptized with the Holy Spirit” is for power to minister, pray and worship in accordance with these scriptures.
 - o Joel 2:28-29
 - o Luke 24:49
 - o Acts 1:5, 8
 - o Lessons from the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13)
 - o The experience in Samaria (Acts 8:14-19)
 - o Paul’s personal experience (Acts 9:17-18)
 - o Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48)
 - o Peter’s recollection of the experience with Cornelius (Acts 11:16)
 - o Paul’s experience in Ephesus (Acts 19:2-6)
 - o Jesus chose to minister totally depending on **the power of the Spirit** (Luke 4:14; 10:21). At the very beginning of His ministry, Jesus read His “mission statement” from Isaiah; He starts by saying, **“The Spirit of the Lord is on Me”** (Luke 4:18). What a difference it would make in our lives as disciples and leaders if our ministry mission statement started in a similar fashion—a declaration of our utmost dependence on the Holy Spirit.

¹²⁸. Part 2 is presented in brief outline form to enable ease of engagement with the material to emphasize and encourage praxis.

2. **Teach regularly and clearly on how to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit and pray for disciples to receive.**
 - Believe the Father's promise (Joel 2:28-29)
 - Thirst after this experience (John 7:37)
 - Believe it is for you and be baptized (John 7:38-39)
 - Ask and receive (Luke 11:9-13)
3. **Teach and demonstrate regularly how to move in kingdom power and authority in the Holy Spirit.**
 - Teach and demonstrate that all disciples are “custodians of the kingdom of God” and God's grand plan of salvation (Luke 10:1-20).
 - Teach (mentor) and demonstrate how all disciples can move in the manifestations of the Spirit both in our public worship services and in our day-to-day lives (1 Corinthians 12:8-13). Emphasize the importance of the manifestation of prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:3), including the fact that it is important to **weigh [prophetic words] carefully** (1 Corinthians 14:29), but we must **not treat prophecies with contempt** (1 Thessalonians 5:20).
 - Encourage disciples to pray in tongues for **their [personal] strengthening, encouragement and comfort** (1 Corinthians 14:3).
 - Remember that the spiritual health of a congregation correlates with each equipped disciple doing **works of service** (Ephesians 4:12) and functioning in both their spiritual gifting (Romans 12:3-8) and in the manifestations of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:26-33).
4. **We must be careful to not become cynical toward the manifestations of the Spirit nor to *put out the Spirit's fire* (1 Thessalonians 5:19) in lives and churches.**

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Church Leadership - OUTLINE

Jochen Geiselhart with Marius Kouame and Lee Schnabel

I. Course Description:

This is a study and discussion of key aspects of Church Leadership, including its biblical foundations; an overview of Ephesians 4; key character attributes of Church leaders; the definition and importance of “Servant Leadership”; leaders’ authority in the Church; important Church leadership tasks and traits; and the need for Church leaders to practice self-care.

II. Course Objectives:

- A. To understand the biblical foundations upon which Church leadership rests.
- B. To recognize key biblical character attributes of Church leaders.
- C. To grasp clear insight into Servant Leadership principles.
- D. To discuss and define attributes of Church leaders’ authority, including its source and the importance of both exercising authority and being under authority.
- E. To discuss key universal tasks and traits of Church leaders.
- F. To discuss the importance of Church leaders making disciples, regardless of their specific ministry calling and tasks.
- G. To discuss basic aspects of Church leaders’ “self-care.”

III. Course Outline:

A. Biblical Foundations.

1. Ephesians 4:11 ministries.
 - a. All five of these gifts function in the Church today.
 - b. These five-fold ministries reinforce the importance of team ministry and diversity of function in the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
 - c. These ministries are primarily given **to equip His people for works of service** (Ephesians 4:11-13).
 - d. **The apostles** are both the “authoritative foundational apostles of the Church” (Ephesians 2:19-20), and those in the ongoing office of apostle who are globally focused with a passion to bring the gospel to unreached people groups (Romans 16:7), such as **Andronicus and Junia**.
 - e. **The prophets** are both the “authoritative foundational prophets of the Church” (Ephesians 2:19-20), and those in the ongoing office of prophet who

- aim to hear the Spirit and seek God's will for every situation (Acts 13:1), such as those in the church at Antioch.
- f. **The evangelists** are those such as Philip who spiritually strategize how to best reach unbelievers for Christ (Acts 21:8); miracles often accompany their evangelistic ministry (Acts 8:6).
 - g. **The pastors** are those such as the group whom Paul addresses in Ephesus who desire to see believers spiritually healthy, encouraged, and safe (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2).
 - h. **Teachers** are those such as Priscilla and Aquila who desire believers to have a **thorough knowledge of the Scriptures** (Acts 18:24-26).
2. Biblical qualifications for Church leaders.
 - a. Paul is very clear—Church leaders **must be...** (Titus 1:6) held to certain standards and qualifications.
 - a. Personal Qualifications (1 Timothy 3:2-3; Titus 1:6-8).
 - b. Family Qualifications (1 Timothy 3:2-3).
 - c. Social and Relational Qualifications (1 Timothy 3:2, 7).
 - d. Spiritual Qualifications (1 Timothy 3:2, 6, 9).
 3. Additional key character attributes of Church leaders.
 - a. Being Christ-like (John 14:19; Philippians 2:5-11).
 - b. Having a positive attitude (Philippians 4:4, 9).
 - c. Being transparent and integrous (1 Corinthians 11:1; 2 Corinthians 6:4-10; Philippians 4:11-12; 2 Timothy 3:10-11).
 - d. Being teachable (Philippians 3:12-16).
 - e. Having people's respect and prioritizing relationships (1 Timothy 3:2, 4, 7).
 4. Biblical examples of leadership influence.
 - a. **Abigail**—leadership resolving conflict (1 Samuel 25:14-35).
 - b. **Tabitha**—leadership taking care of and serving others (Acts 9:36-41)
 - c. **Barnabas**—leadership mentoring and developing future leaders (Acts 4:36-37; 9:27; 11:25-26).

- d. Paul—leadership planting churches and evangelizing unreached people groups (Acts 20:34-35; 26:16; 28:3; Romans 1:1,11-12; 1 Corinthians 9:19; 2 Corinthians 12:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10).**

B. Ministry Application.

1. Understanding servant leadership.
 - a. Servant leadership serves the Lord, models vulnerability, and focuses on others (Matthew 28:20; Luke 22:26).
 - b. Servant leadership models Jesus' example (Matthew 28:20; John 13:15; Philipians 2:5-11; 1 Peter 2:21).
 - c. Servant leadership does not lord authority over others or model itself after the world's leadership (Matthew 20:20-28).
 - d. Servant leadership is not abusive or self-focused (Jude 12; 3 John 9).
2. Servant leadership and authority.
 - a. Church leaders' authority is God-given (Numbers 27:20; Luke 7:1-10; 1 Corinthians 4:1; 1 Peter 5:2-4).
 - b. Church leaders' authority must also be recognized by people (1 Timothy 3:10).
 - c. Church leaders both have authority and must actively remain under authority (John 5:19).

A. Important Ministry Tasks of Church Leaders.

1. Church leaders carry out certain universal tasks and exemplify universal traits regardless of specific calling.
 - a. Church leaders are to do ministry well (1 Timothy 5:17).
 - b. Church leaders are to actively involve themselves in disciple-making (Matthew 28:16-20).
 - c. Church leaders mentor the next generation of leaders (Deuteronomy 31:7-8; Joshua 1:1 2 Timothy 2:2).
 - d. Church leaders lead by being an example (1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Timothy 4:12; Hebrews 13:7).
 - e. Church leaders help facilitate vision (Nehemiah).¹

¹ See the accompanying DLT manuscript by the same name for specific information on how Nehemiah facilitated vision and oversaw projects.

- f. Church leaders must develop communication skills, especially those responsible for preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17).
 - g. Church leaders must be willing to learn how to lead in uncertain times (Ephesians 5:16-17; James 1:12).
 - h. Church leaders must be well-informed (1 Chronicles 12:32).
 - i. Church leaders must understand and practice conflict resolution (Philippians 4:2-3).
2. Miscellaneous aspects of making disciples and training leaders.
 - a. Church leaders disciple believers and train leaders to understand the call of God (Matthew 25:14-30; John 15:5-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
 - b. The focus of disciple-making and training leaders is obedience to Christ (Matthew 7:21-29, 28:19-20; Titus 2:15; Hebrews 5:11-6:3).
 - c. Church leaders develop leaders in the context of team ministry (Mark 6:7; Acts 8:14, 13:1-3; Ephesians 4:11, Philippians 1:1).
 - d. Church leaders keep the Bible as the primary lens/source for doing all of life (Matthew 5:17-20; 2 Timothy 3:14-17).
 - e. Church leaders teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine (Titus 2:1; 2 Timothy 1:13-14).

A. Church Leaders and Self-Care.

1. Paul addresses Church leaders' self-care when he tells Timothy—**watch your life closely...stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses** (1 Timothy 4:16, 5:23).
 - a. Church leaders must learn to rest (Exodus 20:8-10; Mark 1:35).
 - b. Church leaders must manage their “emotional health” (Ephesians 5:2).²
 - c. Church leaders value accountability (1 Corinthians 10:12; Ephesians 5:21).
 - d. Church leaders must be careful to balance family life and ministry (1 Corinthians 7:33-34A).

² See the DLT module, *Grace and Spiritual Formation*, for more information on the concept of “emotional health.”

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Church Leadership

Jochen Geiselhart with Marius Kouame and Lee Schnabel³.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE—

All churches need leadership—whether it is a longstanding church or a newly planted congregation. Appointing leaders was one of the first things Paul did after starting a new church (Acts 14:23). As soon as people start to live and share life together in any sociological grouping, they need recognized leadership to help clarify the group’s connecting values, help members come to decisions, solve conflict, encourage, cast vision, instruct, care for, etc. There is also the need to make clear who belongs to the group and how people enter or leave it. Each of the biblical metaphors that references the Church (a flock, a temple, an army, a household, etc.) speaks of a distinct group that needs a clear understanding of its purpose, as well as of its identity.⁴

The purpose of this module is to give an overview of key aspects of biblical leadership. Among other values, its intent is 1) to serve as a theological grid for understanding biblical leadership in a day and age when Church leaders often lead more like “the world” than like Christ, 2) to address Church leaders’ propensity to abuse their God-given authority and 3) to provide a “self-assessment” tool for Church leaders to evaluate their personal lives and their leadership.

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS—

Ephesians 4:11 ministries—Ephesians 4:11 lists five gifts given by Christ Himself **to equip His people for works of service**; they are **the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers**.⁵ These gifts (which here are the persons themselves) are frequently referred to as “The Five-Fold Ministry Gifts.”⁶ Foursquare believes that all five of these gifts (persons) function today within the global

³. This 2021 manuscript is an update and expansion of a DLT Outline on *Church Leadership* which was written in 2016 by Jochen Geiselhart, Marius Kouame and Lee Schnabel.

⁴. Both purpose and identity are crucial for a strong local church life. In defining purpose and identity, leaders must combine what the Bible says is to characterize all local churches (such as participating in the Great Commission [Matthew 28:16-20]) with particulars that can vary (such as what form of church government will be followed).

⁵. All Scripture is from the TNIV unless otherwise noted.

⁶. Some scholars, citing a technicality of the original Greek, see only four gifts—**the pastors and teachers** being identical (“pastors who teach”). These scholars speak of “The Four-Fold Ministry Gifts.” Generally speaking, Foursquare acknowledges five gifts (persons) in Ephesians 4:11.

Church,⁷ with the members of every Foursquare church being equipped locally by at least one of the gifts. These are obviously not the only spiritual gifts, callings and ministries in which Church leaders' function,⁸ but they are highlighted here because of their "equipping" purpose.

- **These ministries reinforce the importance of team ministry, and diversity of function in the Church** (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). 1 Corinthians 12, using imagery from the human body, gives us an analogy of how the body of Christ functions, including how leaders should function in team ministry; the imagery emphasizes diversity leading toward a common unity (goal)—**now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it** (vs. 27). The five-fold gifts in Ephesians 4:11 model this principle by noting that Christ's people need the input of all five gifts to be best equipped. Only Jesus embodied all five gifts. This is why church leadership must be team-based in order for every church to have a full orbbed model of equipping.⁹
- **These ministries are primarily given for the purpose of equipping His people for works of service** (or "for the work of ministry" [Ephesians 4:12-13]). **Works of service** refers to anything disciples do to advance Christ, His influence and His kingdom on Earth. This reinforces the "priesthood of all believers," meaning that ministry is to be carried out by all Christ-followers, not just by a professional clergy. To best do so, the five-fold ministries need to **equip His people. Equip** "has a range of meanings, such as 'to restore' or 'to outfit.'" Outside the biblical text, the noun is used in medical writings to speak of setting bones.¹⁰
- **The apostles.**¹¹ Paul's reference is likely to both the "authoritative foundational apostles of the Church" (the Twelve and himself [Ephesians 2:19-20]), and those in the ongoing office of apostle (such as **Andronicus and Junia** [Romans 16:7]). The latter office continues today. Apostles are "divinely commissioned missionaries and planters of churches,"¹² who are gen-

⁷ Although recognizing all five gifts in the Church today, most of Foursquare does not use the *title* "apostle," "prophet," or "teacher," preferring "pastor" or "minister," even for those functioning in these offices.

⁸ See also Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:28-30; 1 Peter 4:10-11.

⁹ "We believe that it will take *all five* of the gifts of Jesus to the church—the apostolic, the prophetic, the evangelistic, the shepherding, and the teaching capacities—operating in their fullness in the Body of Christ, to carry out our mandate. We need the APEST to fulfill the Great Commission and command of Jesus" (Alan Hirsch and Jessie Cruickshank, *5Q*, 100movements.com, 2018, pg. 127).

¹⁰ Cohick, Lynn, *The Letter to the Ephesians—The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2020, pg. 270.

¹¹ Foursquare asserts that both men and women can be called to all five of these positions.

¹² Lincoln, Andrew, *Ephesians—Word Biblical Commentary*, Word Books, Publisher, Waco, TX, 1990, pg. 249. "Apostles are church planters, innovators, entrepreneurs, cross-cultural designers, regional networkers, cultural architects" (Alan Hirsch and Jessie Cruickshank, *op. cit.*, pg. 51).

erally highly visionary, entrepreneurial, risk-taking, culturally sensitive and globally focused leaders with a passion to bring the gospel to unreached people groups (Romans 15:19-20; 1 Corinthians 3:10).¹³ It is important for those who have been given this ongoing apostolic position to remember that their authority does not parallel that of the original Twelve. It is a limited authority whose insights and decisions are to be submitted to other leaders with whom they minister. They are not above correction nor are they “infallible.”

- **The prophets.** Like the apostles, Paul’s reference is likely to the “authoritative foundational prophets of the Church,” (Ephesians 2:19-20; possibly Agabus [Acts 11:27-28]), and those in the ongoing office of prophet (**in the church at Antioch there were prophets** [Acts 13:1]). The latter office continues today. Prophets are “specialists in mediating divine revelation,”¹⁴ who aim to hear the Spirit and seek God’s will for every situation.¹⁵ Their thoughts and heart are always seeking and disclosing God’s insight for the moment (*cf.* 1 Corinthians 14:19). As with **the apostles, the prophets** have limited authority and insight, and their words are to be submitted to other leaders for consideration.¹⁶
- **The evangelists.** **Philip the evangelist** (Acts 21:8) is the only named evangelist in the New Testament. Timothy is charged to **do the work of an evangelist**, but it’s from his office as pastor (2 Timothy 4:5). Evangelists see the lost world, and spiritually strategize how to best reach unbelievers for Christ. However, because part of the evangelist’s ministry is **to equip His people for works of service** (Ephesians 4:12), they also keep the basic message of the gospel before the Church, modeling, training and encouraging believers to influence people for Christ wherever they find themselves. The manifestations of the Spirit often accompany evangelists—when the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said (Acts 8:6). Once evangelists lead people to the Lord, they are to establish them through to water baptism (Acts 8:12, 38).
- **The pastors** (or, “the shepherds”). Modeling their ministry after Christ, **the Good Shepherd** (John 10:11), pastors exercise “leadership through nurture, care, and guidance.”¹⁷ They de-

¹³. Several of the foundational apostles also wrote portions of the New Testament.

¹⁴. Lincoln, *loc cit.*

¹⁵. Their prophetic messages are primarily forth-telling (reinforcing God’s written Word), although on occasion the Spirit may give them fore-telling insight.

¹⁶. Prophecy/prophet is complex biblically because it defines the Old Testament classical prophets, the New Testament founding prophets, those in the ongoing prophetic office, the Romans 12:6 gift of **prophesying** and the Spirit’s manifestation of **prophecy** (1 Corinthians 12:10). Although the distinctions of these five uses is crucial to understand and distinguish, it is beyond the scope of this module to address these distinctions.

¹⁷. *Ibid.*

sire to see believers spiritually healthy, encouraged, strong in the Lord and safe from all evil—**be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be** (1 Peter 5:2); **keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God** (Acts 20:28). In the New Testament, pastor is often used interchangeably with bishop, which defines the responsibility of taking charge or giving oversight; it is also often used interchangeably with elder, which defines the character of the pastor’s person—a mature, experienced, servant-leader example.

- **And teachers.** Aligned closely with **the pastors**, it has been said that “all pastors must teach, and all teachers must have a pastor’s heart” (see 1 Timothy 4:11). Although they are not specifically called teachers, **Priscilla and Aquila** displayed attributes of Ephesians 4:11 teachers when they **invited [Apollos] to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately** (Acts 18:26). Teachers study the Bible in great depth and with great precision, desiring to have **a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures** (Acts 18:24); they have a passion to find ways to accurately pass on the Bible’s truths, so that God’s Word becomes incarnational and believers live obedient, transformed lives—**all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all God’s people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work** (2 Timothy 3:17).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- o What was new to you biblically in this section, or if not new, what stood out to you the most in terms of biblical truth?

- o Do you see all these ministries working together in your context? If not, which are missing? Why do you think they're missing?

- o How does your specific Foursquare culture understand "apostles" and "prophets"? Are these ministries recognized and affirmed? Do you use them as titles like we use "pastor" as a title?

Church leaders must have “characteristics or qualities that evoke admiration or delight, so [they are] held in high regard.

Biblical qualifications for Church leaders—1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9 list basic biblical qualifications for elders (leaders) in the C/church. A study of these qualifications shows that Paul took these specific attributes very seriously (**an elder must be...** [Titus 1:6]), and that the qualifications focus more on character than skill or expertise.

The qualifications can be divided into four categories—

- **Personal Qualifications**—leaders must **be self-controlled, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not a lover of money** (1 Timothy 3:2-3); leaders must not be **overbearing...quick-tempered...violent [or] pursuing dishonest gain...[they must] love what is good, [be] upright, holy and disciplined** (Titus 1:6-8).
- **Family Qualifications**—leaders must be **faithful to [their spouse], manage [their] own family well and see that [their] children obey [them],¹⁸ and [they] must do so in a manner worthy of full respect** (1 Timothy 3:2-3). It is important to remember that a person does not have to be married or have children to be a Church leader. Paul is addressing the situation at Ephesus where apparently all the leaders were married with children.
- **Social and Relational Qualifications**—leaders are **to be above reproach, hospitable, [and] have a good reputation with outsiders** (1 Timothy 3:2, 7).
- **Spiritual Qualifications**—leaders **must not be a recent convert, [and must] keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience** (1 Timothy 3:6, 9). In many cases, they must also be **able to teach** (1 Timothy 3:2).

Additional key character attributes of Church leaders include¹⁹—

- **BEING CHRIST-LIKE**—servant leaders know the importance of reflecting the character of Jesus, just as He reflected the Father’s— **“Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father”** (John 14:9). Philippians 2:5-11 also describes Jesus’ character which servant leaders are to reflect. Servant leaders align their goals, means to those goals (such as how they plan and strategize), and the ways in which they pursue

¹⁸. **Obey** them applies to children still living at home under the parent’s (leader’s) authority and supervision. The matter of a leader’s children is further clarified in Titus 1:6—a [leader] **whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.**

¹⁹. See also the DLT module, *Grace and Spiritual Formation*.

those goals (such as regular communication that shows love and respect) to the goals, means and ways of Jesus. **Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters** (Colossians 3:23). Furthermore, just as Jesus sought to get away and pray to the Father (Luke 5:16), prayer ought to be central to leaders' lives (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). In that individual leaders and their churches belong to God, they, both individually and together, ought to seek His face in prayer for how He would have them be a light to one another and our communities.

- **HAVING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE**—having a positive attitude and being full of faith and confidence are important aspects of a servant leader's heart. The apostle Paul, while imprisoned, wrote to the Philippians urging them to **rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!** (Philippians 4:4). Leaders reflecting this positive attitude is sometimes more important than their giving words of knowledge, encouragement, etc.; a positive attitude helps people follow. This was undoubtedly Paul's experience—**whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you** (Philippians 4:9). This doesn't preclude the reality of struggles and inner turmoil; nor does it mean that leaders can "positively think themselves into all realities they envision." Instead, leaders acknowledge the reality of obstacles, struggles, and challenges, but understand and engage them in light of God's will, purpose, and ability to help them overcome, either through deliverance or perseverance.
- **BEING TRANSPARENT AND INTEGRIOUS**—healthy leaders strive to live an open²⁰ and exemplary life. We see this in Paul, who was very open about the general struggles and challenges he faced (2 Corinthians 6:4-10). He spoke of selfishly motivated preachers who wished to **stir up trouble** for him (Philippians 1:17), and of

True biblical authority... is never to be seized or self-proclaimed, nor exercised by force, pressure, or manipulative authoritarianism like "the kings of the Gentiles."

²⁰ The specifics which leaders share publicly about their lives must be filtered through wisdom. While being openly transparent about many things common to believers in general (getting frustrated, getting angry, being impatient, working too much, etc.), it is not wise to share highly personal and potentially explosive specifics (such as a struggle with pornography, being attracted to someone other than your spouse, etc.). These must be shared privately to trusted leaders and counselors to whom the leader is accountable, and who can help determine if they need to be made public.

those who slandered him (2 Corinthians 10:10); both of these situations were undoubtedly difficult for him personally. He also spoke of having to learn **to be content whatever the circumstance** by going through times of **need** and of **plenty** (Philippians 4:11-12). Closely related to transparency is that of integrity, meaning that leaders' words are confirmed by their deeds and lifestyle. Leaders must not be duplicitous, so that they can be an example to those whom they lead (2 Timothy 3:10-11; 1 Corinthians 11:1).

- **BEING TEACHABLE**—as stated above, servant leaders know how to both lead and follow. An important aspect of following is being teachable in every area of life, as well as being pro-active in learning and growing as a person. **Disciple** translates a Greek word that means, “learner.” Leaders should be the greatest examples in the Church of what it means to be a life-long learner, including learning by acknowledging their mistakes.²¹ **Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me** (Philippians 3:12).²²
- **HAVING PEOPLE’S RESPECT AND PRIORITIZING RELATIONSHIPS**—in listing the qualifications of leaders, Paul notes they must be **respectable...must manage [their] own family well...[and] have a good reputation with outsiders** (1 Timothy 3:2, 4, 7). Biblical leadership is grounded in healthy relationships, with family, with friends, with co-workers and with members of the broader community.²³ Who leaders are at these levels is part of the Christlikeness which the Holy

²¹ Proverbs is clear—**let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance** (Proverbs 1:5, emphasis added). Similarly, Paul told Timothy to **devote [himself] to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching** (1 Timothy 4:13, emphasis added). “Timothy should cultivate this practice, which naturally implies his own personal reading and reflection” (Robert Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus—The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2018, pg. 249). Leaders should read regularly, seek ongoing training and development, talk with other leaders, and give time to personal reflection.

²² It is commonly accepted that when looking for those to train for Church leadership ministry, we want people who are “faithful, available and teachable.” *Faithfulness* is a very important characteristic of a servant leader (1 Corinthians 4:2). As we look for the next generation of leaders to train for Church leadership, we should look for those who have a clear understanding of loyalty and have proven themselves faithful in word and deed. *Availability* is also important for leaders’ personal lives must have enough time to allow for involvement in the kingdom of God without violating one’s family/relationships, one’s career (if bi-vocational), or one’s self. Finally, being *teachable* means they are open to not only encouragement, but to also reprimand if necessary. Paul terms such, **reliable people** (2 Timothy 2:2)” (Jochen Geiselhart).

²³ “We as leaders may have good intentions, but offering our families, our relationships and our own souls on ‘the altar of ministry’ is neither the will of the Lord, nor will it bear substantive spiritual fruit. Our family, relationships and self-care are important areas of spiritual leadership and should be given priority. There may be short, periodic seasons in which living a balanced life is challenging because of ministry demands, but this should never become a lifestyle. Rather, the lifestyle should be that of giving our family, our relationships and our own personal selves great attention, time and care” (Jochen Geiselhart).

Spirit develops in leaders. Church leaders must have “characteristics or qualities that evoke admiration or delight, so [they are] held in high regard...[show] the Father’s love...in the real, daily, private life [of home]...[and remember that] the church has a public reputation to uphold.”²⁴

²⁴ Yarbrough, *op. cit.*, pg. 202.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- o How are the four categories of qualifications from Timothy and Titus used specifically in your Foursquare setting when selecting someone to be in a position of leadership?

- o Five additional key character attributes are also listed. Talk about one or two of them that you find most important, sharing your personal thoughts, how these attributes “show up in your life” and why these are so important to you.

Because a major foundation for leadership is that of authority, it is crucial that Church leaders understand biblical authority and exercise it within biblical parameters. Biblical authority is a multi-layered concept. It can be an ability or a right to determine, command, or lead. Biblical authority can be inherited, earned, or given as an extension of someone else's authority (or even that of an institution). True biblical authority is given because of trust in a person's judgement, skill, faithfulness, gifting and calling. It is never to be seized or self-proclaimed (i.e., **Diotrephes** [3 John 9]), nor exercised by force, pressure, or manipulative authoritarianism like **"the kings of the Gentiles"** (Luke 22:25).

Before we conclude the Biblical Foundations sections, let's look at some biblical examples of leadership and how certain leaders used their leadership influence.

- **Abigail**, Nabal's wife, is an example of a biblical leader modeling how to resolve conflict (1 Samuel 25:14-35). Finding herself and her family in a very difficult situation when King David sought revenge on Nabal's household because he **"paid [David] back evil for good"** (vv. 14-22), she humbly implemented a courageous, practical and well-articulated pathway to conflict resolution (vv. 23-31). It defused the situation (vv. 32-35), with King David saying, **"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me"** (vs. 32). In this, she becomes a model of how biblical leaders can best address difficult situations that involve a lot of anger and other emotions.
- **Tabitha** (or Dorcas) is an example of a biblical leader taking care of and serving others (Acts 9:36-41). Luke notes that **she was always doing good and helping the poor** (vs. 36). Because of this, part of her legacy when she died was **all the widows [showed Peter] the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them** (vs. 39).
- **Barnabas** is an example of a biblical leader mentoring others and developing and releasing future leaders, even when others did not believe in some in whom he saw potential (Acts 9:27; 11:25-26; 15:36-41).
- **Paul** is an example of a biblical leader with a passion to plant new churches and open new people groups to as many as possible (Acts 14:23; 26:15-18; Romans 1:1; 15:23-24; 1 Corinthians 9:18-19;²⁵ 2 Corinthians 12:15). Having assessed his ministry in Greece and

Foursquare adheres to what is commonly termed, "Servant Leadership." This is leadership that serves the Lord by submitting to Him and focusing on others, rather than on oneself.

²⁵ These verses also emphasize Paul's humility in leading by emphasizing his heart to **not misuse my rights as a preacher**

Turkey as complete because **there is no more place for me to work in these regions**, he desired to **go to Spain** (Romans 15:23-24).

of the gospel (vs. 18) and his willingness to make himself **a slave to everyone** (vs. 19).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- How would you summarize the information above on “biblical authority”? Overall, do you see “healthy” or “unhealthy” leadership authority in your Foursquare culture?

- Which of the biblical examples of how leaders used their authority in a positive way resonates most with you and why?

- What would you say to an “up and coming leader” regarding Paul’s statements in I Corinthians 9:18-19?

MINISTRY APPLICATION—

Let's begin with "Servant Leadership." Foursquare adheres to what is commonly termed, "Servant Leadership."²⁶ This is leadership that serves the Lord by submitting to Him and focusing on others, rather than on oneself.²⁷ "The leadership about which Jesus speaks is of a radically different kind from leadership offered by the world. It is a servant leadership...in which the leader is a vulnerable servant who needs the people as much as they need their leader."²⁸

Servant leadership is seen in Jesus' earthly ministry.²⁹ He stated regarding Himself that **"the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve"** (Matthew 28:20). Two examples in which Jesus modeled servant leadership despite opposition from the world (including the religious world) was by eating with **tax collectors and sinners** (Luke 5:27-32), and by washing His disciples' feet (John 13:1-11). Paul, as one who desired to emulate Jesus and follow Peter's admonition to **follow in His steps** (1 Peter 2:21), referred to himself as **a servant of Christ Jesus** (Romans 1:1). He also cited Jesus' servant leadership example when calling believers to **have the same attitude of mind Christ Jesus had** (Philippians 2:5-11).

Though the Pharisees and many religious leaders stumbled over Jesus' servant leadership, His humility and meekness were seen by others. For example, on the occasion when He was accused **by the chief priests and elders...Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor** (Matthew 27:11-14).

When His disciples discussed who might be the first among them, He admonished them by saying that their leadership is not to be like the leadership of this world (Luke 22:24-26). Instead, **"The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves"** (Luke 22:26; see also Matthew 20:20-28). Jesus sees servant leadership as obligatory, and the only way to lead in His kingdom; it is diametrically opposed to how the world leads. Worldly leadership often fo-

²⁶ This term first appeared in *Servant Leadership: A Journey Into The Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, Greenleaf, R.K., Paulist Press, New York, NY, 1977.

²⁷ The New Testament offers various approaches to Church government. Foursquare's general global practice of church government is that of modified-Episcopal. This approach particularly necessitates the importance of servant leadership because of the high-level of autonomy given lead pastors. Pastors are appointed to their position from outside the local church and have full authority to lead the congregation. In most nations, Foursquare local churches are required to have a Church Board, but the authority of the Board is often limited to financial decisions, and most Boards "do what the lead pastor asks." Having such a powerful position requires a humble servant attitude, which is one reason this DLT module is so important.

²⁸ Nouwen, Henri, *In the Name of Jesus*, The Crossroad Publishing Company, Chestnut Ridge, NY, 1989, pp. 62-63.

²⁹ For additional insight into Jesus' servant leadership, see Blanchard, Ken and Hodges, Phil, *Lead Like Jesus*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, 2005.

cuses on gaining titles, position, celebrity status and consolidating power and authority out of fear or desire to dominate others. **“Not so with you”** (Matthew 20:26) Jesus told the Twelve, emphasizing we cannot model kingdom leadership after the world’s patterns.³⁰ True servant leaders lay down their lives for others, rather than use others for their benefit (John 10:11; Ezekiel 34:1-10). The right motives and the right attitude are crucial with respect to servant leadership.

Because we have a great example of servant leadership in Jesus, we should constantly ask ourselves if we are following His example. **“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you”** (John 13:15).

One final remark regarding Jesus’ statement to His disciples describing the leadership of the world –**“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them”** (Matthew 20:25). Leadership in the world easily becomes abusive in one way or another; one of the many benefits of servant leadership is that it helps prevent spiritual abuse in the Church. We love to think that we as leaders will never lead like **“the Gentiles”** because we are Christ-followers, but such is not the case. As leaders who still have a sinful nature that often rules more dominantly than the Spirit, the temptation for leaders to misuse their power, privileges and position is ever present.

Unfortunately, we see such abuse of power throughout the Bible, despite God’s warning in both testaments not to lead in such a fashion (Ezekiel 34:1-10; Matthew 20:20-28). Prominent examples in the Old Testament are King Saul (1 Samuel 22:11-19) and King Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:6-11), but even King David, a man after God’s own heart, failed on occasion by misusing his position and power (2 Samuel 11). In the New Testament, both Jude and John reference abusive leaders—**shepherds who feed only themselves** (Jude 12), and **Diotrephes, who loves to be first** (3 John 9). Concentrating on the servant leadership role model of Jesus and following Him in all aspects of leadership can help leaders from succumbing to abuse of their position.

Having discussed biblical authority in general above, let’s now look at servant leadership and authority. Servant leadership does not nullify the need for a leader to have authority; as with any community, exercising authority is necessary for Church leaders to carry out their responsibilities and to gain the respect of those whom they lead. This is seen in God’s command to Moses, **“Give [Joshua] some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him”** (Numbers 27:20). But, as noted

Spiritual authority is rooted in Christ... and the primary purpose for being given authority is to minister the truths of the kingdom of God in people’s lives.

³⁰ This same principle is seen in the Old Testament when God defined how the kings of Israel must be different than Gentile kings (Deuteronomy 17:14-20).

in the negative example of Diotrephes above, servant leaders can never assume or take leadership (authority) for themselves. It has to be given—ultimately by God (Exodus 3:10), but also through a recognized structure of which the leader is a part (1 Timothy 3:10; 5:22). The Roman centurion references this principle at work even in the secular world (Luke 7:8; see also Romans 13:1), a reference that in part contributed to Jesus being **amazed at him** and saying, **“I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel”** (Luke 7:9). “When Jesus hears this deduction from the character of military discipline to the nature of his own authority under God, he expresses surprise at the centurion.”³¹

Paul notes the connection between leaders’ God-given authority **as servants of Christ** and their being **entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed** (1 Corinthians 4:1). This reminds leaders that spiritual authority is rooted in Christ (to whom **“all authority in heaven and on earth has been given”** [Matthew 28:18]), and that the primary purpose for being given authority is to minister the truths of the kingdom of God in people’s lives (Matthew 13:11-17). Peter reiterates this when addressing a group of elders—**be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them...not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock** (1 Peter 5:2-3). Authority as leaders in the Church is given to leaders for the benefit of **the flock**, and not to make themselves special, significant, or famous.

Servant leaders must also remember that their authority is not “their property”; it is a trust, given by God to enable them to serve on His behalf. As such, He has the right to correct leaders if they misuse their authority, a correction that often comes through those in authority over them and may include removal from their position (1 Samuel 13:13-14).

In concluding this section, let’s highlight three final important aspects of authority—

1. Leaders’ authority that comes from God must be recognized and acknowledged by people. As noted above, Paul emphasizes the importance of this “human acknowledgment” when putting leaders in places of leadership (authority) saying—**[deacons] must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons** (1 Timothy 3:10). As for those whom they lead, when they see the calling of God in a leaders’ lives, and the God-given authority attached to it (which is recognized by those who commissioned them to ministry), people will most often willingly embrace and follow their leadership. We

³¹. Marshall, I. Howard, *Commentary on Luke—New International Greek Testament Commentary*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992 reprint, pg. 282.

must remember that leaders' authority is given by God but accepted and recognized by people.³²

2. John Maxwell, an American author and pastor, writes that there are four aspects of authority that must be remembered.³³

- o Firstly, one's "position" in an organization brings with it a level of authority found in a title, a place in the organization and people or areas one is delegated to lead.
- o But position alone is never enough; it also needs the second level of authority which is "competence" to fulfill the task. Competence obviously refers to expertise (knowledge, ability, skills) in the leader's field, but it also references social skills and communication skills.
- o The third level is "dedication" to the people they're leading. In terms of leadership in the Church, people will always recognize if leaders are *using* them or if they are *shepherding* them. When leaders take care of congregants and do everything to support them and lift them up, they will earn their honest respect and submission.
- o The last and highest level of authority comes out of a deep knowledge of Christ and the Holy Spirit working change in leaders' lives. Those who are mature in Christ and desire to be recognized as true spiritual leaders will have godly character that manifests itself in their communication and in deeds displaying the fruit of the Spirit. Therefore, servant leaders are challenged to realize that their hidden spiritual life will always be more important to their spiritual authority than any position.

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3. Finally, we acknowledge that those who exercise authority must also be under authority. They must both lead and follow, and experience shows that many Church leaders do not

³² Human culture often determines how Church leaders exercise their authority, and how Christians follow authority. Two resources are helpful in understanding the relationship between culture and exercising authority—*Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business—Fourth Edition* by Trompenaars, Fons and Hampden-Turner, Charles, McGraw-Hill Books, New York, NY, 2020, and *Culture, Leadership and Organizations* by Robert J. House, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2004.

³³ Maxwell, John, *Becoming a Person of Influence: How to Positively Impact the Lives of Others*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1997.

follow well. Even Jesus both led and followed—**“Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what He sees His Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does”** (John 5:19).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- o How does this module define “servant leadership”?
- o What are some specific ways in which Jesus modeled servant leadership?
- o Based on your personal experience and observation, how do you think we do as Foursquare leaders in NOT leading like “the leaders of the Gentiles” (Matthew 20:25)? Why?
- o What does “being under someone’s authority in the church” look like specifically for you as a church leader?

Moving now to some important ministry tasks of biblical leaders, of paramount importance is that of making disciples and training leaders, a never-ending cycle of multiplication. Leaders must never become complacent, nor lose vision for the future. **The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others** (2 Timothy 2:2).

In addition, let's sample some additional universal tasks Church leaders carry out and traits they are to exemplify, regardless of specific calling (1 Timothy 5:17). In doing so, we again remind Church leaders that their leadership comes from Christ Himself (Acts 9:15; Ephesians 4:11); they are an intentional part of His team. In response, they are to demonstrate total dependence on Jesus, and remember that they cannot do anything lasting without Him (John 15:5).

- **Church leaders are to do ministry well** (1 Timothy 5:17). Paul is quite specific—**the elders who direct the affairs of the church *well* are worthy of double honor** (emphasis added), indicating that it is possible to *not* do ministry well. Quality is important in the kingdom of God, especially among leaders.
- **Church leaders are to actively involve themselves in disciple-making** (Matthew 28:16-20). Regardless of the specific ministry to which God calls one as a leader (Ephesians 2:10; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 5:17), all Church leaders must lead the way in personally making disciples.
- **Church leaders mentor the next generation of leaders** (Deuteronomy 31:7-8; Joshua 1:1; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 2:6-8).³⁴ It is a pattern throughout the Bible, as well as throughout much of history, that one generation of leaders trains the next.³⁵ Those with experience (longevity) in ministry are particularly called to invest in training, empowering *and* releasing the next generation of leaders in a strategic, meaningful, intentional and loving way, eventually “passing the baton rather than holding on to it forever.”³⁶ It is similar to the parental

³⁴. Disciple-making and mentoring of the next generation of leaders are best accomplished through a combination of settings—one-on-one, small groups, classes, seminars, church services, etc. No one venue is effective on its own. DLT refers to these as **formal**, **non-formal** and **informal** discipling and training. Jesus and the Twelve shared “the ideal” for discipling and training, that of doing life together (Matthew 4:19-20). The early Jerusalem Church also experienced this to a large degree (Acts 2:46).

³⁵. Barnabas briefly acted as a mentor and sponsor of Paul before Paul was fully embraced by the other apostles (Acts 9:26-30). Barnabas also sponsored Mark after the **sharp disagreement** he and Paul had over Mark's involvement in their missionary efforts (Acts 15:36-41).

³⁶. “What do we mean when we say, ‘strategic and intentional’? Basically, it means that leaders should have a visionary, God-directed, long-term view of their ministry, and a well-thought-out plan for attaining it. Such strategy is built on what God's done in the past, with the intention of passing it along to the next generation” (Jochen Geiselhart).

training addressed in Deuteronomy 6:4-6, or the **older women [urging] the younger women** noted in Titus 2:4-5. Moses and Joshua modeled this, as noted by the seamless transition of leadership when Moses died, and by Joshua being termed **Moses' aide** (Joshua 1:1-6).³⁷

- **Church leaders lead by being an example** (1 Corinthians 11:1; I Timothy 4:12; Hebrews 13:7). Disciples are made and future leaders are shaped primarily by the example of current Church leaders; everything in the kingdom of God is built on relationship and trust.³⁸ Hence, Paul's exhortation to Pastor Timothy to **set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity** (1 Timothy 4:12). That example is founded on emulating Jesus in everything: devotion to God, teaching, lifestyle, communication, how to treat others, etc. **Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ** (1 Corinthians 11:1).
- **Church leaders help facilitate vision.** Although the specifics in which individual Church leaders will be involved in facilitating vision varies depending on culture and the size/giftings of the team with whom they minister, all leaders will likely be involved to some degree in facilitating vision (including specific projects). Nehemiah gives great insight into how to do this well.
 - **Understand God's intent and purpose for the project** (Nehemiah 2:12).
 - **Assess the situation and the available resources** (Nehemiah 2:13-18; Nehemiah 3).
 - **Devise a plan to accomplish the project** (Nehemiah 2:7-9).
 - **Set clear, measurable and realistic goals** (Nehemiah 2:17).
 - **Assemble a team and motivate them** (Nehemiah 2:17B-18).

³⁷ **Aide** (minister or official) translates a Hebrew word describing "honorable service to which one is called, or which is undertaken voluntarily" on behalf of another (M.H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua—The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1983 reprint, pg. 57). Joshua was a type of apprentice.

³⁸ As with authority and team ministry discussed above, culture often affects how Christian leaders do ministry relationally. There are cultures which are more relationship than task-oriented, and others which value individual success and achievement (tasks) more than relationship. Again, we must strive in this area as well to live kingdom culture.

- **Organize necessary procedures and delegate responsibilities** (Nehemiah 7:1-3).³⁹
 - **Stay focused on the task, regardless of opposition** (Nehemiah 6:1-4).
 - **Communicate clearly and often** (Nehemiah 4:21-23).
 - **Evaluate the task regularly** (Nehemiah 4:13-14).
 - **Celebrate progress** (Nehemiah 8:9-10).
- **Church leaders must develop communication skills, especially those leaders responsible for preaching and teaching** (1 Timothy 5:17). A major assumption of the New Testament is that unbelievers most often hear the gospel orally communicated (Romans 10:14-15), and that believers are most often taught truth orally (1 Timothy 4:6). Hence, Paul's admonition in 1 Timothy 5:17 that it be done **well**, referring to both content and delivery. "Preaching and teaching the Word of God is an important task for Church leaders (Matthew 10:7; 28:19-20; Acts 8:35; 1 Timothy 3:2). It is a way to help people understand the will of God for their lives, as well as a way to help them become obedient to it. Therefore, it is always helpful to have an intentional plan of what we are going to preach and teach, so that we may lead people systematically in the right direction" (Jochen Geiselhart).
 - **Church leaders must be willing to learn how to lead in uncertain times.** We live in an ever increasingly difficult and challenging world, characterized by volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous situations. Leaders need to understand how to lead in these times, and how to help people navigate through difficult and challenging situations. In doing so, leaders remind people that though the world is difficult, challenging and rapidly changing, **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever** (Hebrews 13:8). They also teach believers the importance of **making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil** (Ephesians 5:16), and that even in difficulty, we can **understand what the Lord's will is** (Ephesians 5:17). Finally, they help people see the need to develop a strong personal spirituality that stays strong during difficulty (James 1:12).

³⁹ A major challenge for many Church leaders is learning to delegate. The reasons for this are multitudinous and varied, but every effective leader must learn to delegate, remembering Jethro's words to Moses when he saw that Moses was leading alone—"What you are doing is not good...the work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone" (Exodus 18:13-27).

- **Church leaders must be well-informed** and understand current cultural issues, including knowing how to navigate those that are controversial or not biblical (1 Chronicles 12:32). They must also be learners and thinkers who reflect on leadership and biblical truth from a broad, all-Church, multi-century perspective and not a narrow conformist view (2 Timothy 2:7).
- **Church leaders must understand and practice conflict resolution** (Philippians 4:2-3).⁴⁰ Paul's word in Philippians 4 to his **true companion to help these women [Euodia...Syntyche] to be of the same mind in the Lord** addresses a reality that all Church leaders will encounter—conflict. This subject is probably one of the most dreaded and neglected aspects of a leader's life, even though conflict is a part of life. Leaders need to learn to biblically address conflict, following Jesus' basic instruction in Matthew 18:15-17. This includes giving the conflict and all parties involved full attention, with a heart of peace-making. Conflict is also a great opportunity to disciple people in terms of both the biblical pattern for resolving conflict, and the Bible's emphasis that believers **live in harmony with one another** (Romans 12:16; see also Matthew 5:23-26; 18:21-35).⁴¹

Church leaders disciple believers and train leaders to understand the call of God.

⁴⁰. For additional help with conflict resolution, see Noble, P. Brian, *The Path of a Peacemaker*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 2019 or Elmer, Duane, *Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry*, InterVarsity Press, Downer's Grove, IL, 1993.

⁴¹. See also the information on Abigail above.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—

- o Take time to discuss each bullet point in the “Universal Tasks” section above and have each leader discuss how the various aspects are reflected in their life and ministry.

Circling back to the important universal task of leaders making disciples and training leaders noted above, let's look at some additional aspects involved in both.

- **Church leaders disciple believers and train leaders to understand the call of God.** Everything begins with the call of God,⁴² and the mission He gives to every disciple personally. Most specifics of His call apply to all Christ-followers—the Great Commission, growing in Christlikeness, doing **works of service** (Ephesians 4:12), etc. Other aspects of His call are specific to individuals (1 Corinthians 12:12-31). In both regards, God desires that leaders respond to His call, faithfully giving themselves to advancing His kingdom with fruitfulness (Genesis 1:28; Matthew 25:14-30; John 15:5-8; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2). Leaders' disciple-making and training of future leaders should challenge them to understand both God's general and specific call on their lives, as well as help them be accountable to respond to it.
- **The focus of disciple-making and training leaders is obedience to Christ** (Matthew 7:21-29, 28:19-20; Titus 2:15; Hebrews 5:11-6:3). Part of the Christlikeness that is to characterize servant leaders (indeed, all disciples) is that of obedience to Christ. Therefore, leaders must also mentor disciples and upcoming leaders toward obedience to Christ's commands in the Word, and to His specific words to them as individuals. The question, "What did Jesus tell you to do, and are you doing it?" is a good question to ask when discipling believers toward obedience.
- **Church leaders develop future leaders in the context of team ministry** (Mark 6:7; Acts 8:14, 13:1-3; Ephesians 4:11; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5). God Himself is THE example of "team ministry." The Trinity is a team of three distinct Persons carrying out Their individual "roles" in total unity (1 Corinthians 12:4-5).⁴³ When leaders are trained and mentored by a team, they are more well-rounded; when they are trained and mentored to be part of team ministry, they reflect inter-dependence, and those to whom they minister get a more well-rounded un-

“Self-care” refers to leaders paying attention to their physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual health.

⁴². God's call refers to His eternal plan for all of humankind, namely, that we each be in relationship with Jesus and give our lives to His purposes.

⁴³. These verses raise "the issue of 'the one and the many' with the understanding that although God is one, he is reflected in a tremendous diversity of ways" (Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians—The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, pg. 567). Team ministry affords opportunity to reflect this same diversity, yet oneness. **NOTE:** this practice is often a challenge in cultures which stress individuality; it is often less of a challenge in more collective cultures which emphasize team, family, or tribe (clan). Regardless of one's culture, our challenge as Christ-followers is to follow kingdom culture.

derstanding of the gospel (see 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Ephesians 4:11-13). Team ministry also affords leaders opportunity to **not think of [themselves] more highly than [they] ought, but rather think of [themselves] with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of [them]** (Romans 12:3); to **honor one another above [themselves]** (Romans 12:10); to learn to be **like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind** (Philippians 2:2); to value ethnic diversity, male and female and multi-generational inclusiveness, and interdependence among team members (1 Corinthians 12:12-31); and to invite diverse perspectives into team conversations and conclusions (Proverbs 14:15; 15:22).

- **Church leaders keep the Bible as the primary lens/source for doing all of life** (Matthew 5:17-20; 2 Timothy 3:14-17). Whereas we always want to read and interpret the Bible “with the Great Tradition”⁴⁴ and consult multiple authors, Church leaders must remember that the Bible is the *only* God-breathed book for making disciples and training Church leaders. It must remain primary. Not only can the Bible be trusted, but above all other resources it is **useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all God’s people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work** (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- **Church leaders teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine** (Titus 2:1; 2 Timothy 1:13). Closely aligned with keeping the Bible as the primary source is the fact that making disciples and training leaders involves helping to reshape their thinking in accordance with the Bible. This is what Paul means by **sound doctrine**, or, as he put it to Timothy, **the good deposit** (2 Timothy 1:14). **Sound doctrine (the good deposit)** references biblical truth, which is healthy, based on input from one **who correctly handles the Word of truth** (2 Timothy 2:15). (This would largely, but not exclusively, be correctly handled truth taught by Church leaders.) The value of sound doctrine is seen in the charge to Timothy to **guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us** (1 Timothy 1:14). The Greek word (*laiei*) translated **teach** (Titus 2:1) can be translated “speak.” It involves formal teaching, but it is much broader, including what today we would call both modeling and discipling (mentoring). “Pastoral leaders ‘speak’ a great deal in ways that would not normally be called teaching...it applies to leaders’ prayers, personal interaction with others, and indeed all verbal expression.”⁴⁵

⁴⁴. “The Great Tradition is how the church everywhere has always read the Bible...we may learn to read the Bible for ourselves, but we must be responsible to what the church has always believed. We can reduce the Great Tradition to the Nicene Creed, the Apostles’ Creed, and the importance of justification by faith from the Reformation. These creeds point us toward the non-negotiables of the faith; they point us to what God has led the church to see as its most important doctrines” (Scot McKnight, *The Blue Parakeet—2nd Edition*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2018, pg. 37).

⁴⁵. Yarbrough, *op. cit.*, pg. 507.

CHURCH LEADERS AND SELF-CARE—

An important aspect of Church leadership that is becoming increasingly emphasized and practiced globally in the 21st C is that of “self-care”—leaders paying attention to their physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual health. **Watch your life closely...stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses** (1 Timothy 4:16; 5:23) were Paul’s words to Timothy on matters of self-care. “It is part of the duty of a good minister to take reasonable care of his

Church leaders must be careful to balance family life and ministry.

health in order that he may render effective service.”⁴⁶ Leaders need to take care of themselves; their lives and their lifestyle have a strong impact not only on themselves as individuals, but on their family and the people they lead. Therefore, Paul’s statement to Timothy (**watch your life⁴⁷ and doctrine closely. Persevere in them...**) concludes by saying—**because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers** (1 Timothy 4:16).⁴⁸

- **Church leaders must learn to rest.** God commands His people to rest by honoring the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-10). Although there is debate as to what a “Sabbath rest” means specifically for Christians, it is clear that God wants leaders to take time for themselves that includes “not working or ministering,” and *intentionally* giving themselves to something other than work/ministry, to that which refreshes them physically, emotionally, psychologically and mentally. Church leaders must remember that “God is awake even when they are asleep,” and not be afraid to get away despite ongoing need (Mark 1:35).
- **Church leaders must manage their “emotional health.”⁴⁹** Emotional health concerns itself with such things as “naming, recognizing and managing our own feelings; initiating and maintaining close and meaningful relationships; breaking free from self-destructive patterns; and accurately self-assessing our strengths, limits and weaknesses and freely sharing them with others...it is loving others well...and it impacts our image of God, our hearing of God’s voice and our discernment of his will.”⁵⁰ It acknowledges that leaders are not only

⁴⁶. Barrett, C.K., *The Pastoral Epistles in the New English Bible*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, England, 1963, pg. 81.

⁴⁷. It is important that leaders watch all aspects of their lives, even those “small” areas like disposition, motive, ego, pride, weight, voice-tone, how they act at home, etc., as well as the “bigger” areas like abusing power, inappropriate sexual conduct, addiction, and handling of money (especially the ministry’s).

⁴⁸. **Save** is best understood to emphasize perseverance and growth in one’s salvation. Paul is emphasizing the impact of Timothy’s life choices on both himself and his congregation.

⁴⁹. The concept of “emotional health” has gained emphasis in much of the Church world since the mid-1980s. Of recent date, it has gained emphasis through the writings of an American pastor, Peter Scazzero, and an American Christian therapist, Henry Cloud. DLT recommends any of their books if they are available to you.

⁵⁰. Scazzero, Peter, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality—Updated Edition*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2017, pp. 212-215.

- “physical and spiritual beings,” but “emotional and social beings” as well.⁵¹ Emotional health is a vital component in fulfilling Paul’s exhortation to **walk in the way of love** (Ephesians 5:2).⁵² Experience shows that people’s emotional health is often tied into their upbringing (their “family of origin”), and may require professional Christian counseling, in conjunction with Christian disciplines, to become healthy.⁵³
- **Church leaders value accountability**—accountability is another area which helps leaders live godly lives. As noted earlier, leaders must learn to both lead and to follow. Being accountable is part of following and means to willingly submit to spiritual authority which will help them to accept a voice of encouragement, correction and exhortation in their lives. Paul warned us, **be careful that you don’t fall** (1 Corinthians 10:12), and accountability helps with not falling. Accountability also helps leaders see “blind-spots” in their lives and leadership that they might not otherwise see. **SPECIAL NOTE**—because all authority in the kingdom of God must be willingly accepted, no one can force leaders to be accountable. They must value it “from the inside out.” Also, an accountability structure is of no value if the accountability is not “real.” Many leaders have been part of “accountability groups,” only to be found secretly violating the dynamics of the accountability. Finally, leaders know that they cannot be accountable to the whole world. They must willingly select those to whom they’re accountable and learn to filter the input of “everyone’s opinion” through those selected individuals.
 - **Church leaders must be careful to balance family life and ministry.** This is particularly true if the leader is married and has children (1 Corinthians 7:33-34A).⁵⁴

⁵¹. “Ignoring any aspect of who we are as men and women made in God’s image always results in destructive consequences—in our relationship with God, with others, and with ourselves” (Peter Scazzero, *ibid.*, pg. 20).

⁵². For additional insight into Ephesians 5:2 and emotional health, see DLT module, *Grace and Spiritual Formation*.

⁵³. “The blessings and sins of our families going back two to three generations profoundly impact who we are today. Discipleship requires putting off the sinful patterns of our family of origin and relearning how to do life God’s way in God’s family” (Peter Scazzero, *op. cit.*, pg. 73).

⁵⁴. See the DLT module *Family* for a fuller development of this important aspect of self-care.

Evangelism and Global Missions

Yongnan Jeon Ahn, Arturo Andrade, Erik Jensen,
Eric Lopez, Gary Matsdorf and Krzysztof Trochimiuk

I. Course Description:

Global changes are evident and affect cultures throughout the earth. However, the human heart's basic need of God remains the same. Jesus' mandate in response to this basic human need, **“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation”** (Mark 16:15),¹ is still valid despite the changes that are happening in our current world. This module presents the foundations of the call to evangelism and global missions, so as to inspire Foursquare to move forward in the development of our call to reach everyone with the basic gospel (salvation) message.²

II. Course Objectives:

- A. To understand the basic definition of evangelism and global missions.
- B. To understand Foursquare's first cardinal doctrine, “Jesus Christ, the Savior,” and His self-understanding that **“the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost”** (Luke 19:10).
- C. To understand Foursquare's *National Church Development—Four Stages*, with an emphasis on Stage 1.
- D. To understand evangelism and global missions in the Old Testament.
- E. To understand Jesus' commission to evangelism and global missions (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-16).
- F. To understand evangelism and global missions in Acts.
- G. To understand evangelism and global missions in the Epistles of Paul and Peter.
- H. To understand the relationship between global missions and human culture.
- I. To understand some of the historic and current challenges in advancing global missions.

¹ All Scripture, unless otherwise noted, is from the TNIV.

² Although the Bible presents “preaching the basic gospel message (*kerygma*)” within the bigger picture of the gospel of the kingdom, discipleship and meeting the holistic needs of people, this module will emphasize the call to “preach the gospel message, so that people can be born again or converted,” and how that passion impacts Foursquare's theology of global missions. The writers are aware of the potential misunderstanding that could arise with this limited emphasis within a revivalist theology-centered movement such as Foursquare but feel that it is nonetheless important and that the total understanding of the theology and philosophy of DLT will prevent this. Therefore, as we study this module, we would do well to remember the words of noted Pentecostal scholar Gordon Fee, “Too long the church has understood ‘conversion’ as having only to do with the beginning point...[but] in the long run, only disciples are converts” (Gordon Fee, *Paul, the Spirit and the People of God*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1977 Second Printing, pg. 75).

- J. To understand evangelism and global missions in the broader context of reaching the unreached; and, in that context, to expand our understanding of the scope of who the unreached (UPGs) are.
- K. To understand the broader scope of those who are called and equipped by the Holy Spirit to engage in evangelism and global missions, which can include the very young and the very old by sovereign design.

III. Foursquare Statement of Faith #21:

- **Evangelism:** We believe that the church's primary responsibility is taking the gospel to the entire world and making disciples (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19-20).³

IV. Foursquare Global Distinctive #6:

- **SHARED MISSION:** We will focus our mission and ministry efforts on multiplying disciples, leaders, churches and national movements. Holding to God's passion for the lost, we will seek a movement of evangelism, mercy ministries, contextualized church planting and mobilizing indigenous believers in ministry among all peoples.⁴

V. Course Outline:

A. THE BASIC DEFINITION OF EVANGELISM AND GLOBAL MISSIONS—

- **Evangelism**—"the proclamation of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ with a view to bringing about the reconciliation of the sinner to God the Father through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit"⁵. (see Titus 3:4-7) **AND** Christian's "sacrificial ministry to people in need. Outreach, therefore, entails service...to serve the world in his name...(for) our Lord did not describe his task as proclamation in isolation but as proclamation in the context of service."⁶ **Every Christ-follower** has the privilege and

³. "Soul winning is the one big business of the church upon earth...therefore every weight and hindrance which would tend to quench the flame or hamper the efficiency of world-wide evangelism should be cut off and cast away as unworthy of the church, detrimental to the most sacred cause of Christ and contrary to the great commission by our Lord" (Aimee Semple McPherson, Foursquare Declaration of Faith, Article XXI, quoted in *The Foursquare Gospel*, Cox, Raymond [Compiler], Foursquare Publications, Los Angeles, CA, 1969, pg. 293).

⁴. As of the writing of this module, the Global Council is strategically carrying out this distinctive through an emphasis on Muslim strategies, opening new nations and city transformation ministries.

⁵. Weber, T.P., *Evangelism in Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Elwell, Walter (Editor), Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1984, pg. 384. The Lausanne Covenant (1974) further states, "Evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God" (*loc. cit.*).

⁶. Grenz, Stanley, *Theology for the Community of God*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, pp. 506-507. "The Kingdom of God is concerned not only with people's souls but with the salvation of the whole person" (George Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2000 Revised Edition, pg. 74).

responsibility to be involved in influencing others for Christ (evangelism). Sharing Christ is part of the **works of service** for which believers are equipped (Ephesians 4:11-12), and a major aspect of being a **royal priesthood** (1 Peter 2:9).⁷

- **Global Missions**—the Church’s response to Christ’s commission that we proclaim and serve the entire world with the heart, diligence and action Jesus discusses in the parables of Luke 15.⁸
 - “Evangelism should be intentional and strategic; should be inclusive of all people;⁹ should be holistic, focusing on making fully devoted disciples of the Lord; should be Spirit-empowered and Spirit-led; should be motivated by love; should be presented in a multi-faceted way; should be creative and adaptive; should be urgent; should be opportune; and should be supported by prayer.”¹⁰

- **Further Definitions**—
 - Because it is very important that all Christ-followers become involved in evangelism and global missions, three terms are often used today to help believers gain a clearer focus of how they can participate.
 - **REGULAR EVANGELISM**—this is ministry/evangelism (influencing people for Christ) within one’s own culture.
 - **REGULAR MISSION**—this is ministry/evangelism in a culture different than one’s own (cross-cultural ministry), but among peoples and people groups who have already heard the gospel.
 - **FRONTIER MISSIONS**—this is cross-cultural ministry/evangelism to yet unreached people groups. This entails someone *intentionally* crossing cultural, language and religious barriers to influence others for Christ.

⁷. “Regardless of one’s vocation or profession, all believers are called to see and use their vocations as a means to touch, influence, and to bring salt and light to all areas of society” (Jonathan Hall).

⁸. “Like a father who longs for the return of his lost son, a woman who searches diligently for a lost coin, and a shepherd who leaves the rest of his flock to find a lost sheep, God loves sinners and actively seeks their salvation” (T.P. Webber, *op. cit.*, pg. 382).

⁹. It is important to remember that **all people** includes those with ethnic and cultural differences from one’s own, the disabled, and all marginalized persons. We must, therefore, put away any hesitancy to love and influence people because of socio-economic status, gender, disability, alternative lifestyles, etc. (James 2:1).

¹⁰. *Foursquare License Interview Process*—Foursquare United States, May 2009 update, Section 21. The purpose of evangelism and global missions is often thought to be three-fold: 1) toward God (He desires that all creation worship Him); 2) for people (He desires to redeem all creation so as to bring redemptive blessing to everyone); and 3) against evil (God will ultimately overcome all evil and evil powers in order to liberate all creation).

B. FOURSQUARE’S FIRST CARDINAL DOCTRINE¹¹.—• **Jesus Christ the Savior—**

- John 10:9; 14:6; Acts 4:12—“Jesus Christ is the *only* Saviour offering any genuine hope to lost mankind...and salvation represents the greatest project God ever initiated.”¹²
- Christ is the fulfillment of “**the whole will of God**” (Acts 20:27), which begins with the cultural mandate in Genesis 1:27 and God’s first promise in Genesis 3:15.
- “**The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost**” (Luke 19:10).
 - Based on imagery from Ezekiel 34, Jesus describes His heart and mission as including that of seeking and saving lost people. “The story of Zacchaeus... ends not with Zacchaeus seeking Jesus but in Jesus seeking *him*.”¹³ Jesus reiterates this same truth when calling Himself **the good shepherd** (John 10:11).
 - In context, “**lost**” refers most directly to socio-religious outcasts in Jesus’ day (**tax collectors and sinners**), such as Zacchaeus. In a broader sense, however, it references all persons outside of a personal relationship with Jesus (Ephesians 2:3) who are “lost spiritually” and must be “**born again**” (John 3:3).
- “**The Spirit of the Lord is on Me**” begins Jesus’ “messianic mission statement” that clearly encompasses holistic evangelism—healing; good news to the disadvantaged; participation in the salvation He offers; participation in life as God intends it; deliverance, etc. (Luke 4:16-21).¹⁴

¹¹. Some within Foursquare prefer the phrase, “The first and foremost phase of the Foursquare Gospel” (Raymond Cox).

¹². Cox, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70. A question that is often asked is, “What about the eternal destiny of people who have never heard the basic gospel message?” We know God’s heart for everyone (**God our Savior...wants all people to be saved** [1 Timothy 2:4]), but the Bible does not address the “people who have never heard” issue directly. In debating it, scholars have never agreed on an answer throughout Church history and Foursquare does not have an official, global answer to the question. One response that is often given within Foursquare, however, is that God meets people at their point of understanding, and from there works in their hearts to the eventual point of eternal salvation (see Acts 17:26-28). The bases for this are **1**) God saw something in Abram’s heart which Genesis does not explain, but which was enough for Yahweh to call him **from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan** (Genesis 11:31) and subsequently become **the father of all who believe** (Romans 4:11); and **2**) God can meet people whose knowledge of Him is limited, but whose hearts are open to seeking Him, to reaching out to Him and to repenting, and bring them to salvation (Psalm 19:1-6; Acts 17:27; Romans 1:18-20). It is also noted that Foursquare’s *Statement of Faith* on “Hell” references those who **reject Christ as Savior** as those who experience eternal lostness. (See also Footnote #29 on “The Doctrine of Natural Theology.”)

¹³. Edwards, James, R., *The Gospel According to Mark—The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2002, pg. 533.

¹⁴. “The effect of the eight-line quotation from Isaiah 61 is to assert that the Servant, with whom Jesus self-identifies, has been anointed by the Spirit and sent to proclaim the evangelical, forgiving, and liberating *word* of God. The first word of the gospel is thus not a moral command or obligation to work harder and do more, but a proclamation of what God in grace has already done for the world in Jesus Christ. It is *good news!*” (James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke—The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, pg. 137).

C. FOURSQUARE'S NATIONAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT—FOUR STAGES¹⁵.—

- The National Church Development understanding defines Foursquare's basic global missiology. It is a proven strategy for how to effectively open a nation/people group, and see it developed into a sending nation that makes disciples and plants churches nationally and cross-culturally.¹⁶
- **Stage One: Initiate-Evangelize**—“the goal of Stage 1 is to make responsible, reproducing disciples who continue to follow Christ. The task is twofold: communicating the gospel and beginning the church.”¹⁷
 - **Stage One** is built on the importance of *finding the lost* (Luke 15) and then *winning the lost* (Matthew 4:19; John 4:39-42).
- **Stage Two: Nurture-Strengthen**—“the goal of Stage 2 is to make responsible, reproducing leaders...developing godly character and releasing fruitful ministry, a modeling and mentoring process.”¹⁸
- **Stage Three: Expand-Multiply**—“the goal of Stage 3 is the making of responsible, reproducing congregations...empowering the church to be released and grow, and sponsoring the church to multiply and expand.”¹⁹
- **Stage Four: Send-Extend**—“the goal of Stage 4 is to make responsible, reproducing missionary-sending churches...a world-focused national movement that sends and supports both home (national) and foreign (international) missionaries...networking to reach cultural groups within our region and country and partnering to reach cultural groups in others regions and countries.”²⁰

¹⁵ For further development of these concepts, see Amstutz, John, *Disciples of all Nations—Revised Edition*, Editorial RENUEVO, Fresno, CA, 2013.

¹⁶ For understanding as to how these same missiological precepts apply to each local Foursquare church and each disciple within that church, see Appendix—“Four Stage Churches and Disciples/Leaders.”

¹⁷ Amstutz, *op. cit.*, pg. 37.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 51.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pg. 63.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION—

- Read Ezekiel 34:1-6 and share what the Lord emphasizes to you personally.

- What do you personally see as the “goal” or purpose of evangelism?

- Because serving people’s needs and sharing the gospel are often intertwined, share two or three ways in which you have personally found serving people’s needs opens them up to opportunities to share Christ. How does this align with Jesus’ understanding in Luke 4:16-21?

D. EVANGELISM AND GLOBAL MISSIONS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT—

- The Old Testament shows how God’s people (Israel) are to be about the vision and mission of God. It does so largely by telling the Story of God’s initial (pre-Christ) steps toward restoring that which was lost in the Fall of humankind (Genesis 3). As His image-bearers,²¹ Yahweh uses people, most specifically Israel in the Old Testament who was called to be His ambassador of evangelism and global missions; this calling included offering all people entrance into His rulership and plan of salvation, a plan whereby **“all peoples on earth will be blessed”** (Genesis 12:3).
- **The Beginning—God’s vision for creation started and interrupted (Genesis 1-11)—**
 - o Humankind is to reflect God’s presence and activity by fruitfulness, multiplication, and stewardship (Genesis 1:28). This is often termed “humankind’s rulership” over creation.
 - o Humankind transgressed through temptation and sin, and with it came consequences of death, conflict, discord, less fruitfulness, punishment, etc. (Genesis 3). Evangelism and global missions are carried out against this backdrop, with the aim of bringing restoration.
 - o God’s vision which is restarted through Noah and sealed with a covenant promise²² (Genesis 8:7-17) marks the second major event of the foundational primordial events in Genesis 1-11 that show God’s heart for evangelism, restoration and global mission.
 - o God’s vision progressed, but humanity desired its own way by attempting to make a name for itself (rather than for Yahweh) and by failing to fill the earth (Genesis 10-11). This led to another major judgment, followed by the formidable start of God’s plan of evangelism and global mission through a chosen people (Genesis 12).²³

²¹ “Humanity as the **‘image...likeness’** of God (Genesis 1:26-27; see also Genesis 5:1, 9:6) connotes that humanity represents God’s presence and activity in the Earth, especially towards one another. The two terms generally convey that which reflects, resembles or represents something or someone else to others” (Eric Lopez).

²² Remembering aspects of a biblical covenant helps bring focus to our motive, tone and means of evangelism. “There are many kinds of promises in the Bible—agreements and alliances made between people, between God and people, and even between God and creation. These could be fulfilled either by meeting some conditions or through promises made without any conditions. While aspects of covenants in the Bible are reflected in other cultures of the time, God’s covenants focused on establishing personal faithful relationship with individuals and people such that He gives His name, promises His presence, and changes the status of the recipients, so as to indicate they are His treasured possession. Thus, they will inherit the blessings and responsibilities of this new relationship. The establishing of the covenant is sometimes reflected in a change of someone’s name (Abramà Abraham, Sarai à Sarah, Jacob à Israel), and often includes significant ceremonies or rituals in which God commits Himself to a person or people and they respond. The establishing of a covenant is always a gift that God graciously gives. While some covenants are established such that most of the expectations are for God to fulfill, many covenants have expectations for human beings to remain faithful to the relationship, and consequences for not remaining so. In all of this, God always remains faithful to His promises and covenants” (Eric Lopez).

²³ “A new progress in the divine revelation begins with Genesis 12. In this new era, there is to be a succession of individuals

- **God’s Story of Evangelism and Global Mission Develops from Abraham to Malachi (Genesis 12-Malachi)—**
 - Yahweh’s purpose and promise for humankind was given to Abraham—**“I will make you into a great nation...and all peoples on earth will be blessed²⁴ through you”** (Genesis 12:2-3). This marks the beginning of God creating a people (Israel and then the Church) to be kingdom ambassadors of His plan for evangelism and global mission.²⁵
 - Yahweh called Israel to be His **“firstborn son”** (Exodus 4:22) and commissioned the people to carry out His plan of evangelism and global missions as His **“treasured possession...a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”²⁶**.²⁷ (Exodus 19:5-6).
 - Against the backdrop of the repeated failure of His **“firstborn son”** (Israel), God began to prophetically reveal the need for a **“one and only Son,”** the Messianic Suffering Servant, who would lead God’s Story of evangelism and global missions to its intended goal (Isaiah 52:13-53:12, et al).²⁸

who now serve as God’s appointed means of extending his word of blessing to all humanity” (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Promise-Plan of God*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2008, pg. 52).

²⁴. “The term ‘blessing’ (Hebrew, *bārak*) is used numerous times in the Old Testament. The highest blessing is covenant relationship with Yahweh and includes His presence and promises, as well as responsibilities. All other kinds of blessings are based on this covenant relationship with Yahweh. God not only gives His presence and dwells among His people, but they belong to Him. Being part of God’s people in the Old Testament included promises of other kinds of blessings such as land, fruitfulness, wealth, prestige, and peace, but the sole pursuit of these could become a distraction and lead to idolatry as seen in the lives of Saul, Solomon, Gideon, Samson, and Jeroboam. In these cases, God’s blessing and promises were given, but they became obsessed with the accumulation of wealth and power, and exploited others, rather than remembering the primary blessing of God’s presence and the responsibilities of God’s people. To be blessed by God by being in covenant relationship with Him means not just enjoying God’s presence and promises (prosperity), but like Abraham, becoming a blessing to other human beings and other nations by proclaiming the Lord’s name and giving Him glory, so that others might come to ‘know’ the Lord” (Eric Lopez).

²⁵. Paul emphasizes this connection in Galatians noting, **Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you”** (Galatians 3:8).

²⁶. Peter later applies these terms to members of Christ’s Church (1 Peter 2:9).

²⁷. “In the history of the patriarchs and matriarchs, God made promises of blessing to individuals who will become nations in order to bless nations. In Exodus, God in His faithfulness establishes a people or nation as *His* people, Israel. They belong to Him and He will dwell among them. They are a nation and people dedicated to Him: a treasured possession, nation of priests, and holy nation. Therefore, they live among the other nations, but they live distinctly, according to God’s ways and display God’s presence and activity” (Eric Lopez).

²⁸. Regarding the future intent of God’s Story (**“the whole will of God”** [Acts 20:27]), Lopez notes, “Isaiah, one of the latter prophets, shows us a picture of what God intends for human beings and for the heavens and the earth. After yet future judgement and a clearing away of wickedness comes a restoration of human beings, including their relationships, and a renewed heaven and earth. The nations and languages continue but submit themselves to the Lord. Nations bring their worship and fruitfulness to the city of the Lord (Isaiah 60). There is once again peace, harmony, fruitfulness and communion, as the Lord dwells among human beings and all relationships amongst human beings and creation are set right again (Isaiah 65).”

“The Lord promised a time would come when His people would be led by a Figure who would be a king, a priest, a servant (Isaiah 52:13-53:12); He would be fully devoted to God’s vision for His people and the nations, and willing to suffer on their behalf; He would also establish a new covenant that would entail giving God’s people a new heart and His Spirit would be poured out on all flesh” (Eric Lopez).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION—

- Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12 and share what the Lord emphasizes to you personally.

- What was Israel's place in the earliest development of God's plan of evangelism and global missions? What was His intention in Genesis 12:3?

- What do you personally think should be the "bare essentials" shared with someone when evangelizing? Biblically, do you think the gospel allows someone to "receive Christ as their personal Savior" without also committing to "follow Him for a lifetime?"

- Share a time when you had more of a heart for someone to come to Christ than that person had for receiving Christ. What did you do?

E. THE GREAT COMMISSION (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-16²⁹)—

- Jesus clearly extended the good news of the kingdom of God (Matthew 3:2; 4:17) beyond **“the lost sheep of Israel”** (Matthew 10:6) to all of humanity, thus marking the Church’s mission as global.³⁰
- The Great Commission is to be motivated by God’s love for the entire world, and begins with bringing people to a personal, saving relationship with Jesus (John 3:16-17).³¹
- Such conversion, however, is not to be seen as separated from the entire scope of discipleship that entails both proclamation and demonstration of the complete kingdom message (Luke 4:14-22; Acts 20:27; 1 Corinthians 2:4-5; James 1:27, et al).³² “The commission is expressed not in terms of the means, to proclaim the good news, but of the end, to ‘make disciples’.”³³
 - o Jesus emphasized the importance of preaching the simple salvation message (“... **preach the gospel**” [Mark 16:15]), and gave the two specifics upon which strategic discipleship is built once a person is born-again—**“baptizing them...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”** (Matthew 28:19-20).³⁴
 - o Throughout Scripture we have further descriptions of the specifics the teaching is to cover—growing in biblical knowledge, in character development and transformation, and in general/specific ministry skill development; learning one’s spiritual gifts and how to use them; becoming part of a community of believers; doing good to all people, etc. Within Foursquare, one specific which is considered

²⁹. Though abbreviated, this is generally agreed to be the Marcan version of the Great Commission with an emphasis on evangelistic proclamation of the basic gospel (salvation) message. **All creation** is synonymous with Matthew’s **all nations** (Matthew 28:19), both of which are to be understood as “all humanity.” “The gospel is of universal import: the disciples are sent ‘into all the world,’ and the gospel is ordained for ‘all creation’...the ‘all’ is emphatic...it’s for *all* creation” (James Edwards, *op. cit.*, pg. 506).

³⁰. “Jesus’ final words in [Matthew] are often referred to as ‘the Great Commission,’ and scholars have pointed out how closely this scene resembles...the commissioning narratives which occur throughout the OT where God’s often reluctant and inadequate servants are sent out to fulfill his purpose with the assurance of his empowering and his presence to go with them...Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah” (R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew—The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2007, pg. 1109).

³¹. A theological question that is often asked when it comes to leading people to salvation in Jesus Christ is, “Does Romans 1:18-20 mean that someone can be ‘saved’ by observing nature without knowing the basic truths of the gospel?” This is “The Doctrine of Natural Theology.” In Foursquare, the “best” answer to this question is probably, “The majority of scholars, even those who discern a ‘natural theology’ of some sort in 1:19-20, emphasize that it was not Paul’s purpose to provide one, nor that he thought such knowledge would be saving, but rather they insist that he employed it to highlight human culpability—that human beings ‘are without excuse’” (Colin Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans—The Pillar New Testament Commentary*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2012, pg. 95).

³². See Footnote #2 above.

³³. France, *op. cit.*, pg. 1115.

³⁴. The original Greek construction of **baptizing...teaching** implies either command or means (“by baptizing...by teaching”). Furthermore, baptism is a single act to be followed by a lifetime of teaching.

important very early in the discipleship process is that of teaching about and ministering the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

F. EVANGELISM AND GLOBAL MISSIONS IN ACTS—

- “The Book of Acts teaches us how the good news of Jesus Christ is advanced in Jerusalem, all Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth through the power of the Holy Spirit” (Sarah Ahn).
- **In Jerusalem** (Acts 1-7)—the disciples moved in kingdom power and authority. Jesus was proclaimed as Messiah, and the people were called to repentance and to water baptism. Thousands were added to the Church by grace through faith. Luke describes the life of the new Spirit-filled community as characterized by—
 - Genuine repentance (Acts 2:37; 4:4).
 - Water baptism (Acts 2:41).
 - Sharing possessions and helping the poor (Acts 2:45; 4:32-36).
 - Devotion **to the apostles’ teaching** (Acts 2:42).
 - Devotion **to fellowship** (*koinonia*) and **to the breaking of bread and to prayer** (Acts 2:42, 46).
 - Believers **praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people** (Acts 2:46-47; 4:24-31).
 - Believers **filled with the Holy Spirit** (Acts 4:31; 6:10) and **great power** (Acts 4:33).
- **In all Judea and Samaria** (Acts 8-12)—the gospel spreads beyond Jerusalem because of the Jerusalem church’s “intense persecution after Stephen’s martyrdom” (Sarah Ahn).
 - Persecution often accompanies evangelism and the practice of global missions (Acts 8:1).
 - Our call as Christians to involvement in global missions means that we must be willing to cross ethnic and cultural barriers (Acts 8). **Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went** (Acts 8:4).
 - Many Samaritans were baptized in water and received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:12, 36-38; 10:44-48).
 - The Spirit led God’s people to preach the gospel to unexpected individuals—Philip to an Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40); Ananias to Paul (Acts 9:10-19); and Peter to Cornelius’ household (Acts 10). It was the beginning of the breaking of social and cultural barriers in preparation for the gospel being taken **to the ends of the earth**.


- o Evangelism involves sharing the gospel with both **the crowds** (Acts 8:6) and with individuals (Acts 8:26-40).
- **To the ends of the earth** (Acts 13-28)—the spread of evangelism **to the ends of the earth** began with a prophetic word, as **the church at Antioch [was] worshipping the Lord and fasting** (Acts 13:1-3). **Barnabas and Saul...[were] sent on their way by the Holy Spirit... to Seleucia...[and] to Cyprus** (Acts 13:4). “Guidance of the Spirit is crucial in carrying the Great Commission across boundaries” (Sarah Ahn).
 - o While evangelizing, Saul received a vision to take the gospel to **Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them** (Acts 16:6-10).
 - o Evangelism and global missions continued **to Philippi...Thessalonica... Berea... Athens...Corinth...Ephesus...[and] Rome** (Acts 16-28).
 - o These earliest efforts were founded on relational evangelism that saw the conversion of multi-ethnic families and households (Acts 16:15, 31-34; 18:8) and members of different social classes (Acts 17:4, 12).
 - o Further describing the life-style the gospel created as it spread **to the ends of the earth**, Luke notes that though it entailed aspects specific to Gentiles, the life-style was similar to that of Jerusalem—believers were **filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit** (Acts 13:52); they encouraged and strengthened each other (Acts 15:32, 41; 20:37-38); **the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor** (Acts 19:17); and Gentiles abandoned idolatry (Acts 19:19).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION—

- Read Matthew 28:16-20 and share what the Lord emphasizes to you personally.

- According to Acts, how did the gospel eventually reach “the ends of the earth” and what were some significant factors in its spread from Jerusalem?

- How many of the seven characteristics Luke lists of the early Church do you see actively part of your church today? Which are most lacking?

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- Acts 8 makes it clear that the early Church spread amidst intense persecution. Do you see such persecution in your daily world? How does knowing the correlation between persecution and evangelism affect your personal perspective regarding evangelism in today's world...especially among refugees and those who are suffering intensely?

 - What does "to the ends of the earth" mean to you personally? Do you think geography or people groups?

G. EVANGELISM AND GLOBAL MISSIONS IN THE EPISTLES OF PAUL AND PETER—

- Paul’s letters, born largely out of his mission to Diaspora Jews and to Gentiles, teach us that the gospel is for all humankind. “Paul teaches that God intends to save all people by grace through faith as revealed in Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16, 5:18, 10:13; Colossians 1:23; Titus 2:11)” (Sarah Ahn).
- Paul’s understanding that **the gospel...[is] first to the Jew, then to the Gentile** (Romans 1:16, 2:9-10) teaches that evangelism and global missions include the call to share Jesus with one’s own family members, people group, city, and nation, as well as beyond.
- Paul teaches that taking the gospel **to the ends of the earth** does *not* mean taking one’s cultural or religious practices and packaging them with the truth of the gospel, thus requiring that culture to adopt your specific practices in order to be a Christian. **We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles know that a person is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ** (Galatians 2:15-16).
 - This requires a great awareness of what’s termed, “contextualization.” “Contextualization is a process by which people are able to express their faith in familiar cultural terms without the necessity of converting to another culture.”³⁵
 - When contextualizing, we do not compromise on the fundamental core beliefs of Christianity, such as the deity of Christ, or the timeless biblical ethics, such as refraining from sexual immorality.
 - Church practices, however, such as wedding traditions, how holidays are celebrated, what Christians should wear to church, styles of worship, etc. are culturally determined and one culture must not import its practices on another.³⁶
- In Peter, we see the importance of individual Christians graciously sharing the gospel within their daily life sphere with those who are interested—**always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect** (1 Peter 3:15).³⁷
- Peter presents evangelism and global missions within the framework of willingly accepting suffering and insults **as a Christian** (1 Peter 4:14, 16), while continuing **to do good** (1 Peter 4:19). “Peter emphasizes the importance of good deeds in the life of a disciple living in a pagan society. Amid persecution, hardships, and sufferings, their good deeds confirm their calling as God’s people and open doors for evangelism” (Sarah Ahn).

³⁵ Kraft, Charles,

³⁶ American author George Patterson notes that another way to assess this is to distinguish between New Testament commands (which are timeless and transcultural), New Testament practices (which can be adopted but are not commanded, such as agape feasts in homes), and church/culture traditions (such as Hebrews 13:8 displayed in Foursquare churches). See Patterson, George and Scoggins, Richard, *All Nations and Church Planting Multiplication Guide*, William Carey Publishing, Pasadena, CA, 2015.

³⁷ This same idea would be included in Paul’s statement that believers are equipped **for works of service** (Ephesians 4:12).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION—

- As Christians whose passion it is to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, our personal, cultural and religious experiences become part of how we evangelize. Knowing this, how do we prepare to bring the gospel to those of differing cultural identities without imposing our own practices and culture? If you are not part of a Western culture, do you see influences of Western Christianity in your Christian culture? If so, please talk about it.

- Read 1 Peter 3:15. In your personal experience, do you see these two values (always be prepared to give an answer...with gentleness and respect) demonstrated among believers today, and how do you personally practice 1 Peter 3:15?

- Jesus' Great Commission is never directly mentioned in Paul's or Peter's letters. Do you, however, see references to the Great Commission using other language or commands? If so, please list some.

H. GLOBAL MISSIONS AND HUMAN CULTURE—

- “The spread of the gospel is both geographical and cultural. It is to be preached ‘in all the world’ as a witness ‘to all nations’...in the Book of Acts the expansion of the gospel was not only geographical but also cultural as it spread from Jerusalem throughout Palestine and beyond...the preaching of the gospel tended to spread along cultural lines.”³⁸
- Evangelism and global missions necessitate awareness of human culture—
 - o We must discern and address whenever we note that human culture violates biblical kingdom culture in terms of an understanding of God and Jesus, morality, values, relationships, stewardship, priorities, social justice, etc. (1 Corinthians 6:7-11).³⁹
 - We must discern and address whenever human culture is simply that—human culture that is neither right nor wrong from God’s perspective, but very important to those in that culture (Romans 14). This discernment must be based upon sound biblical understanding rather than cultural preference (Galatians 4:11-21).⁴⁰ This also requires great humility and mutual accountability because we can easily be blind to the infringement of human culture.
 - We must avoid “non-contextualization” which is failing to contextualize the Gospel to the local context, resulting in the Gospel being viewed as foreign.
 - o We must discern and implement what works within a given culture in terms of how the gospel is shared. Whereas all evangelism and global missions must be based in relationship (**we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well** [1 Thessalonians 2:8]), effective approaches to evangelizing vary from culture to culture.⁴¹ One approach to evangelism commonly practiced

³⁸ Amstutz, *op. cit.*, pg. 90. “The Church in its pursuit of evangelism and global missions addresses people in their unique environment and recognizes they speak different languages and experience a distinct history and culture. Fulfilling the Great Commission, then, should allow for a certain degree of contextualization and individualistic approach, as long as it does not compromise key biblical beliefs and values” (Krzysztof Trochimiuk). Many Christians have also found it helpful to think in terms of major cultural areas of influence that mold our thinking (family, education, media, government, the arts, etc.); in addition to asking God for wisdom and direction, we should employ research and critical thinking in terms of learning how to best share Jesus within these culturally influential areas.

³⁹ For example, independence is a high cultural value in America; biblical culture values inter-dependence and unity—**make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind** (Philippians 2:2).

⁴⁰ This involves two steps: 1) “critical contextualization,” whereby believers carefully evaluate traditions and practices against the truth of Scripture and determine which traditions and practices need to be completely rejected and which ones can be practiced without violating Scripture; and 2) diligent exegetical practices when determining the truth of Scripture with an awareness of how one’s culture might be affecting exegetical conclusions.

⁴¹ For example, in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, Paul begins by saying, “**People of Israel and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors...**” and goes on to cite several Old Testament examples (Acts 13:16-41); when addressing the people of Athens in the meeting of the Areopagus, however, he quoted the Cretan philosopher Epimenides and the Cilician Stoic philosopher Aratus and applied the quotes to God (Acts 17:22-31). Both approaches were culturally sensitive as to what would best work to get the audiences’ attention to hear the gospel. See

within Foursquare is asking God that the manifestations of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) accompany proclamation and personal testimony (**our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction** [1 Thessalonians 1:5]).

- o We must discern and address how to best reach people with the gospel who are apathetic toward religion or feel all religions are the same.
- o We must discern and address how to best evangelize a culture steeped in overt demonic activity, such as witchcraft, shamanism, animism, etc. A first step of discipleship in such cultures will likely include new believers renouncing and repenting of previous cultic practices and will often necessitate deliverance from demonic possession or influence (oppression).
- o We must discern and address how to best evangelize a culture anchored in non-Christian based religions.⁴²
- Evangelism and global missions anchored in relationship includes not only sharing one's life with others, but effectively modeling a daily lifestyle that reflects biblical culture to those immersed in human anti-biblical culture.⁴³

I. HISTORIC AND CURRENT CHALLENGES IN ADVANCING GLOBAL MISSIONS—

- “It is important to be aware that we will encounter challenges in our evangelistic efforts whose purposes are to try to hamper the spread of the gospel. From a general perspective, there are two major forces against which the Church has to battle—**1)** Satan and demonic forces that are in stark opposition to anything that has to do with the gospel/kingdom of God (1 Peter 3:8; John 10:10; Ephesians 6:12; Luke 4:13), and **2)** the state of humankind after the Fall, affecting the culture, morals and values of society (1 Timothy 1:8-11)” (Krzysztof Trochimiuk).⁴⁴

also the Evangelism and Global Missions Addendum, “Dynamics and Strategies of the Great Commission.” “The most important strategy is not to listen to everything everyone else has done or test out all the strategies and methods discussed in the Church today, however good they may be. Rather, seek God for answers in your specific situation. He will lead you in your search to reach, touch and change your surroundings with the message of Christ” (Erik Jensen).

⁴² Although Foursquare generally recognizes the Roman Catholic Church as Christian, we are aware that several Roman Catholic practices are different from or even disavowed by Protestants/Foursquare. Thus, evangelizing in some cultures highly influenced by Roman Catholicism also calls for unique discerning and addressing how to best evangelize.

⁴³ “Believers must maintain their testimony in every place in society, and thus present the gospel naturally and authentically. Every believer immersed in their community effectively shows others God, and in modeling biblical principles confront a culture that needs God and His Word” (Arturo Andrade).

⁴⁴ “This second category of opposition may be either pre-meditated (such as intentional opposition to the gospel), or ‘congenital’ (related to the imperfections and sinful nature of people [**through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners** {Romans 5:19}; see also Genesis 3:7; Romans 3:10-12]. Both pre-meditated and congenital opposition are visible in the socio-political, educational, entertainment, moral and philosophical constructs prevalent in today's world. It is important to remember that the event of the Fall was inspired by Satan, and he is still a major force influencing the world's thought patterns with evil counsel, temptations, instigation of division and conflict, blinding of people's eyes to the

- As we evangelize and engage in expanding global missions, we must—
 - **Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour** (1 Peter 5:8).
 - **Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes** (Ephesians 6:11).
 - **Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests** (Ephesians 6:18).⁴⁵ Foursquare highly encourages the development of a cadre of prayer partners who commit themselves to pray for specific evangelistic outreaches, and for individuals commissioned to evangelistic endeavors.
 - Remember that we have been sent out **“like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves”** (Matthew 10:16).
 - Remember that our evangelistic efforts will meet with varying levels of success in people's hearts (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23), and that many **will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths** (2 Timothy 4:4).
 - People are apathetic toward spiritual matters (Mark 4:10-12).⁴⁶
 - People are too pre-occupied with busyness and the routines of daily life to give attention to the gospel message (Matthew 13:20-22).
 - 21st century people have a general disregard for a single worldview, especially the Bible's (1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Timothy 4:3). They also often feel that Christianity is incongruous with science.

truth, etc. (1 John 5:19), but humankind's inherent sinful nature also fuels and influences society in the form of prejudice, people-group conflicts, gender-based abuses, cultural divisions, civil wars, racial antagonism, apathy, complacency, etc.” (Krzysztof Trochimiuk). There are also the less sinister and yet real challenges of language barriers and limited resources.

⁴⁵ Prayer should include praying for believers to share their faith and be an influence in unbelievers' lives. “Christians are often afraid or hesitant to share the gospel with others. It can bring about accusations and rejection from people, often in the form of ridicule or verbal attack, both of which create hesitancy. Some Christians also feel like sharing Jesus or being involved in global missions is for ‘pastors and evangelists.’ ‘Lay people’ need the Spirit to convince them that they too have the privilege of somehow participating in the Great Commission, be it through personally sharing their story with unbelievers whom they know, through praying for global missions, through financially giving to evangelistic efforts, etc.” (Krzysztof Trochimiuk).

⁴⁶ “Today's era of social media and the deluge of information available through the internet desensitize people and numb the capacity to empathize or build strong and meaningful relationships like never before” (Krzysztof Trochimiuk).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION—

- How do you personally “discern” what God is saying with reference to the above list, and what measures do you have in place to help sort out your personal and cultural perspectives from true spiritual discernment and solid biblical exegesis?

- How does cultural influence affect how people share the gospel/evangelize in your nation? What are some cultural hurdles in your nation that make it challenging to evangelize?

- List from your own experience distinct challenges that you have faced when sharing the gospel and how you overcame these specific challenges. How much have you found that fear hinders people sharing Jesus?

ADDENDUM

“Dynamics and Strategies of the Great Commission”

Erik Jensen

The purpose of this Addendum is to introduce the topic of Bible-based apologetics coupled with Spirit-empowered dynamics and strategies for sharing the good news about Jesus. The matter of apologetics varies from culture-to-culture, so this is merely an attempt to begin discussion on the topic.

Introduction—

As noted above, evangelism and global missions necessitate awareness of human culture. In Acts, the gospel was always presented in a way that made sense to the people addressed. Today, especially in Western culture, we often use the word “relevant” to emphasize our desire to make the gospel understandable to people. Whereas this is both wise and very valuable, we must not associate “relevant” with removing or diluting any truth the Bible associates with the gospel; furthermore, “relevant” cannot be confused with “not causing offense.” Humankind will often take offense at the gospel message regardless of how it’s presented, **for the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing** (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Proclamation of the Word of God and apologetic presentations—

We firmly believe that **faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ** (Romans 10:17). Though today’s frame of reference is very different culturally from the days of the scriptures, there are still common unchanging factors that we want people to hear regarding the gospel message. For example, people are still sinners and need salvation through Christ alone, and the truth that Jesus is not a life improvement, but a life changer. We go from sinner to saint. Evangelism and global missions are built on the truth that the scriptures and the Holy Spirit are partners in showing people that they are sinners and that the only remedy from their sin and sinfulness is Jesus Christ.

Having said that, we also recognize that people often find themselves somewhere on a “scale” in regard to belief in Christ. Some people are at minus 10, and others are getting close to conversion at point 0. We must keep this in mind as we evangelize. Furthermore, because of life’s unpredictability and

challenges, there are often many different obstacles people encounter on their way to faith in Christ. The **foolishness** of which Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians can erect emotional, relational, intellectual, cultural, etc. hurdles. Our evangelistic efforts must endeavor the best we can to help them overcome their doubts and hesitations.

The following list suggests some hints on how you can help people with their obstacles—

0. Listen to what they actually say; as the saying goes, “Try to ‘walk in their shoes’” and non-defensively see their point of view.
1. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Sometimes their obstacle is a superficial excuse, not the real problem.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit how you should respond. Sometimes it’s not the clever answer that makes the difference, but a person who cares.

The Word of God can be applied and proclaimed in many ways—to both individuals and groups. My urgent appeal is to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as to what kind of sharing opportunity you have before you, and who the person is whom you’re addressing; we must also avoid the trap that evangelism only happens in crusades or church services. Jesus is our model of how to balance between individual meetings with people and public proclamations and teachings. He was always listening to His Father before He spoke (John 5:19, 8:28).

Some key apologetic arguments for the 21st century that might be considered—

Publications on the subject of apologetics are appearing every day. They can be useful tools to strengthen and equip believers to defend their faith in today’s turmoil of worldviews. People who are outside the church, particularly in the Western world, are often mired in many misunderstandings regarding the Christian faith. Apologetics can work from numerous angles to help us **be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have** (1 Peter 3:15).

- **The historicity of Jesus, His death and resurrection.** 1 Corinthians 15:1-6 details Jesus’ death and resurrection. For those who can read English, authors such as William Lane Craig, Gary R. Habermas and Michael R. Licona make it clear that the death and resurrection of Jesus is an historic fact. The wonderful testimony of Nabeel Qureshi in his book, *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus*, illustrates this point beautifully.

- **Scientific discoveries that support creation by a Personal intelligence.** Roman 1:19-20 says that **God’s invisible attributes have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made** since creation; this passage references both His eternal power and divine nature. Scripture and many scientists speak the same language here. For example, some areas in nature that clearly point in the direction of a Creator include—
 - **DNA.** It is like a computer program that operates on a four-digit programmed code. A program has its origin in a programmer. The programmed code in the DNA has to be in place from the very beginning. Computers operate on a programmed binary code of 0 and 1 that has to be correct from the start. If you get a virus or something wrong with the code, the computer malfunctions. What do you think happens with the DNA code when there is an error in the code? This points in the direction of God, who **in the beginning...created the heavens and the earth** (Genesis 1:1).
 - **The fine-tuned universe** is balancing on several hundred constants in nature. They are so finely tuned to each other that if only one of them fails our universe would collapse. Eric Metaxas in his book, *Miracles*, (again, in English) quotes astronomer Dr. Hugh Ross in regard to how precise the balance for the expansion speed was from the start. “It would be like a billion pencils all simultaneously positioned upright on their sharpened points on a smooth glass surface with no vertical supports.”
 - **The anthropic principle** is about how it is possible for humans (Greek, *anthropos*) to live life on planet earth and nowhere else in the universe. How it is that the size of Earth and the distance to the sun and moon are perfectly aligned for the Earth to be habitable (Isaiah 45:18).

Additional truths and strategies to remember in reaching people with the gospel—

- **Personal testimony.** There is something simple, but also very convincing, about a personal testimony. It’s black and white, before and after. Not only have you experienced it, but it’s observable to those with whom you’re sharing and shifts the focus off “theological or philosophical argument” to personal transformation. A testimony is like the conclusion of the former blind man in John 9:25 who said, “**Whether He is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind, but now I see!**”

- **The Word of God.** We must remember the power of the Bible (Hebrews 4:12-13), and the fact that it is not inferior to science. It is probably the most tested book in the world. It has been taken apart by critics of all sorts, endeavoring to prove it wrong. Skeptics have all tried to undermine the Bible, but through it all the Bible stands and proves itself true every day. The Bible speaks about subjects that science can only dream about, and has so much to say about our life on this planet, as well as the life beyond. Some people with whom we share do not want us to use the Bible in our discussion. But we must not renege, for it is a totally irrational request. It would be as if we would ask them to not use their reason in the argument. Instead, we should insist to use Scripture since this is the foundation of our belief—an historic, scientific, tested and proven document which is better than any other document in the world.
- **Prayer and the Holy Spirit.** People without God are spiritually blind (2 Corinthians 4:4), and God alone knows how to reach those with whom we share. We must pray, therefore, and ask the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of those listening, remembering that “**no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws them**” (John 6:44).⁴⁷ Sadly, parts of the Western world have lost an understanding of the spiritual world and the importance of prayer in overcoming obstacles and releasing the power of the Spirit (Luke 5:17). The rational thinking that has helped the Western world move forward to a very prosperous life has also robbed many of insight into the spiritual world. God has given a different venue than human rational thinking by which He operates, FAITH. (See 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.) Be courageous, therefore, and ask the Holy Spirit how you can pray for the person with whom you’re talking, and be graciously daring to ask them how you can pray for them right then and there.
- **Good works.** Paul wrote, **Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people** (Galatians 6:10). In this same vein, Jesus uses two images that should characterize His followers—they are to be **salt and light** (Matthew 5:13-14). Both salt and light have some common denominators—they are small in the beginning but have a transformative influence; and they need to be in contact with their surroundings to have any function. In the same vein as Galatians 6:10, Titus 3:14 reminds us that Christians **must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives.**

⁴⁷. See also Colossian 4:2-3.

ADDENDUM

“Four Stage Churches and Disciples/Leaders”

Gary Matsdorf

Foursquare’s *National Church Development—Four Stages* is said to reflect our global missiology. This is true but it actually reflects much more. It summarizes and reflects our global missiology, ecclesiology and disciple-making theologies and it does so at three levels—a country’s national church stages, the local church stages and the individual disciple/leader’s stages. This Addendum will briefly define Foursquare’s missiology, ecclesiology and disciple-making theologies and then present the “Four Stages” of a local church and of an individual disciple/leader.

DISCIPLESHIP—

Discipleship describes the strategic processes of developing a convert to Christ into a growing and ever maturing Christ-follower (Ephesians 4:7-16), whose entire life is dedicated **1**) to following God’s will (Matthew 4:18-20), **2**) to being conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:28-30), **3**) to being a disciple-maker (Matthew 28:16-20) and **4**) to doing Kingdom **works of service** (Ephesians 4:12). Discipleship is life-long (Philippians 3:12), wholistic (head, heart and hands [Colossians 1:28]), and accomplished through relationship with Jesus and others (John 15:4; Proverbs 27:17). It is marked by the key markers of knowing Christ, becoming like Christ, serving Christ and extending Christ to others. Effective disciple-making necessitates formal (going to school), non-formal (seminars) and informal (personal mentoring) training and discipling approaches.

ECCLESIOLOGY—

Ecclesiology is the formal theological term for the “doctrine of the C/church”—the universal body of Christ (Colossians 1:24) which finds expression in each local assembly (Revelation 1:19-20). The Church exists **1**) to preach the gospel so as to see people come to Christ (Mark 16:15), **2**) to **equip His people for works of service** (Ephesians 4:11; see Matthew 28:16-20), and **3**) to **do good to all people** (Galatians 6:10). Church services are important (1 Corinthians 14:19), but our ecclesiastical understanding sees “church” as broader than “church services.” Effective church life must also be lived outside services in community (Acts 2:42-47). Ecclesiology builds on discipleship in that the health of a local church depends on the health and maturity of its individual members (1 Corinthians 12:27). A local church is marked by the key markers of initiating evangelism among the lost, nurturing and strengthening (equipping) disciples, deploying disciples to serve the Lord according to their gifting and passion, and extending itself in cross-cultural ministry.

MISSIOLOGY—

Missiology is also a formal theological term, defining the expansion of the C/church in its global mission. This expansion is often defined denominationally, as with the global mission of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. In very simplistic terms, missiology reflects the efforts of local churches to collectively fulfill the Church's three-fold mission (see above). Therefore, a healthy missiology necessitates a collection of healthy local churches (which again necessitates healthy disciples within the churches). Foursquare's basic missiology is built around its structure of National Church movements (again, built on individual churches and disciples). A National Church movement is marked by the key markers of initiating evangelism to make responsible, reproducing disciples, of nurturing and strengthening disciples so as to produce responsible, reproducing leaders, of expanding and multiplying so as to make responsible, reproducing congregations and of sending and extending so as to make responsible, reproducing missionary sending churches.

ADDENDUM
“Urban Ministries and City Transformation”

Piet Brinksma

The purpose of this Addendum is to introduce the topic of the mission of God and of His Church in the specific context of the city (a metropolis). I will briefly explore ten key concepts and pre-conditions for impacting and reaching our cities (communities) with the blessing and the message of the kingdom of God.

Introduction and Key #1—

God is on a mission in this world and has a Church which He involves in that mission. God’s missional engagement in the world is holistic in nature, meaning that it is not simply to “save human beings” (restore the broken relationship with God through a personal born-again relationship with Jesus Christ), as important as that is; His mission also includes bringing healing and restoration to the pain and brokenness caused by the Fall (Genesis 3), and filling this world with His glory (Habakkuk 2:14). In other words, He desires that the earth be filled with cities (lives) under the reign of His kingdom and its ordered priorities/dynamics (Matthew 6:10). The Church as an instrument of this mission must, therefore, effectively disciple people and plant churches with the expectation that the community (cities/lives) will be blessed and changed by God’s mission (Matthew 5:13-16).

Key #2: “Place” matters to God—

In order for the Foursquare Church to understand its calling in the city, the recovery of what is called “a theology of place” is key. Throughout the Bible, from the creation narrative to the picture of a city **coming down out of heaven from God** (Revelation 21), the blessing of “place”⁴⁸ and “being placed there by God” are significant. This moves against the postmodern trend of indifference to place and requires a deconstruction of the “myth of individualism and living above place.”⁴⁹ Realizing that God places a person, a ministry, or a local church in a certain “place” invites them to embrace that “place,” and be engaged with it as a significant element of their ministry assignment. It is important for churches

⁴⁸. “Place” refers here to the geographical location where one abides and with which one interacts that then forms part of one’s identity and emotional attachment.

⁴⁹. Sparks, P., Soerens, T. and Freisen, D., *The New Parish: How Neighborhood Churches Are Transforming Mission, Discipleship and Community*, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, Kindle Electronic Edition, 2014, pg. 163.

and individual disciples to realize that they are in a specific “place” by God’s design in order to love, bless and represent the kingdom of Christ.

One can easily see that “place” can be anywhere—a metropolis/city; a rural small town; a village; a country; a continent, etc. All are important. So why the focus on cities (metropolises/urban centers) in this Addendum? It makes sense to target cities because God loves people, and most people live in urban centers with the urbanization of the world rapidly increasing.⁵⁰ Furthermore, we find several of our main missiological targets in urban areas—

- They have the highest concentration of young people.
- is where we can influence the most people in every sphere of life.
- The populations of cities are multi-cultural. For example, 800 languages are spoken in New York city and Amsterdam is populated by 185 different nationalities, including unreached or difficult to reach people groups.
- Cities have high concentrations of the poor and the oppressed.
- In cities, we find all the major sectors that influence society—various religious institutions, family units, major educational institutions, government headquarters, media, arts and entertainment centers, trend-setting businesses, etc.
- Economic and marketplace influences are concentrated in cities: 100 cities in the world are centers for 30% of the world economy and approximately 60-70% of all economic development (jobs) in the next few decades will be in cities.

Cities are magnets drawing resources, people, ideas, creativity and work from their respective nations and regions. They then become transmitters of culture (the arts, innovation, science, music, post-modernity, etc.), including financial, political, and religious influences. One can virtually predict what will happen in the coming decades in a nation or region by looking at what is happening in its main cities.

Key #3: We are called to be His *ekklesia* in our city/community—

Jesus introduces the concept of His Church (*ekklesia*) in Matthew 16:13-20. Following Peter’s confession that Jesus is **the Messiah, the Son of the living God** (vs. 16), Jesus proclaims that His *ekklesia*

⁵⁰. As of 2010, 50% of the world’s population lives in urban areas. In 1990, it was only 40%. It is projected that six out of every ten people will live in a city by 2030, and seven out of every ten people will live in a city by 2050.

will be built on Peter's confession as representative of the Twelve, and **the gates of death will not overcome it** (vs. 18). In other words, His *ekklesia* shall not be overcome by any force of darkness, including the false gods of this world. This invincible *ekklesia* has a mission in keeping with the original meaning of the Greek word used in Matthew 16.

“Church” in Matthew 16 translates the Greek word, *ekklesia*—an assembly of Christ-followers.⁵¹ We do not know exactly why Matthew translated Jesus' Aramaic using *ekklesia* rather than the Greek word for the Temple or the synagogue, but many believe it is because the Roman concept of *ekklesia* is a more accurate picture of the mission of the Church as Jesus intended it to be than that of the Temple or synagogue. From the first-century use of the word *ekklesia*, one can derive that the mission of the Church includes being a community of Jesus-followers who bring the life and values of the kingdom of God into all spheres of life in a city. This is in line with the High Priest's perspective on the early apostles, **“You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching”** (Acts 5:28). Christ's *ekklesia* “injects the yeast of the Kingdom into society, so that first people, then cities and eventually nations, would be disciplined (colonized).”⁵²

Key #4: UNITY: The whole Church is needed to reach the whole city—

Most of the references to the *church* in the New Testament are connected to a city or region, rather than to a single congregation such as, “The First Foursquare Church of Echo Park.” It is safe to assume that there were several meeting places (congregations/house churches) in any given area church addressed in the New Testament, but they are addressed collectively as one church. For example, when Jesus addressed the churches in **Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea** (Revelation 2-3), He addressed the entire “city church” in each city with specific words of correction and encouragement. There are many individual ministries and congregations in a city, but God's *ekklesia* in the city has a *collective* responsibility which is to be shared by all the individual congregations, ministries, and believers there.

⁴⁷ Reimer points out that *ekklesia* is a term from the ancient cities of the Greek and Roman empires referring to a group of citizens who were called out to discuss and decide about the well-being of the *polis* (city). “Their decisions had ultimate consequences for the life in the city” (J. Reimer, *Die Welt Umarmen*, Francke Buchhandlung GmbH, Winnweiler, Germany, 2014, p. 44). Silvano studied the original meaning of *ekklesia* and reports his findings to be in line with Reimer's. “Ekklesia was the ruling assembly of the Athenian democracy...subsequently, the Romans assimilated the concept and used Ekklesia as the vehicle for colonizing new territories. Their version consisted of a group of faithful subjects deputized by the emperor to ensure that his will was done in their region. In other words, people of the day understood Ekklesia to mean both the institution and the system by which territories were impregnated with the style and customs of Rome” (Ed Silvano, *Ekklesia*, Chosen Books, Bloomington, MN, 2017, pg. 9).

⁵² Silvano, *op. cit.*, pg. 15.

The first reason for united collaboration is the prayer of the Lord Jesus expressed in John 17 that His followers should be one: **“I pray...that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me”** (John 17:21-22). This text makes clear that unity is important for the testimony of the Church in the culture of a city.

A second reason is that together there is a more complete expression of Christ—**from Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work** (Ephesians 4:16).

Key #5: Shape a contextualized kingdom mission—

In order to work together in a relevant way as believers in a given city/community, it is important to shape a missional and theological framework and language that are contextualized for the reality of each particular locale. This means we must embrace the holistic understanding of the mission of the kingdom (see Key #1) and connect that with the culture and realities of each city to which we're called.

This first requires a posture of learning to understand our city—its culture, history, high-points, pain, brokenness, worldview, and realities that helped shape it. Jesus observed the crowds and cities *before* He engaged in ministry, and the result was compassion that led to ministry—**when Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them and healed their sick** (Matthew 14:14). To effectively minister incarnationally, we too must observe and learn, praying for love and compassion for our cities.

This requires that we be committed to and immersed in the city where we live rather than trying to minister from a distance as an outsider. This process of being immersed in and of researching our city will not only give the insight and compassion that are necessary but will also often give us strategic relationships with key persons who will accelerate our impact in our city. The gospel is good news, but it takes insight and prayerful work to understand what the brokenness and the pain of the culture are, and how the gospel message can bring a joyful relevant answer. It will provide us with redemptive entry points and ministry styles that penetrate the heart and soul of the city's citizens.

Key #6: PRAYER FOR THE CITY: Serving as priests for the community—

The ministry of prayer for our city is central to the calling of the Church, as it was in the Old Testament (see Jeremiah 29). Paul emphasizes the priority of intercession for everyone, especially the leaders of

society, in order that God's people **may live peaceful and quiet lives**, and that **all people [may] be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth** (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

Peter depicts the calling of prayer for the community as a central theme of the Church, stating, **[we] are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that [we] may declare the praises of Him who called [us] out of darkness into His wonderful light** (1 Peter 2:9). Paas confirms that this ministry is one of the central callings of the Church as believers live amid a secular context. "The metaphor of priests defines the missional character of the Church as a two-way dynamic: the Church represents the world before God and she represents God for the world."⁵³

Key #7: DISCIPLE MAKING AND CHURCH PLANTING: To make disciples of people from all nations and plant relevant churches—

A central calling of the Church is to make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus modeled this ministry, and it is also a main theme of the Book of Acts. The Foursquare Global Council's Discipleship and Leadership Training ministry places a strong emphasis on discipleship and creating a Foursquare global culture of discipleship. It is important, therefore, to present disciple-making as both central and reproductive (disciples who make disciples) as we minister in cities; this necessitates building relationships with the various non-churched groups (subcultures) in one's city and helping people to become disciples and disciple-makers of Jesus in their context.⁵⁴

KEY #8: Equip believers to be kingdom leaders and ambassadors in all spheres of society—

This element of the calling of the Church in the city focuses on equipping believers to be agents of change in their city. In Key #2 above, we clearly established that the role of the ministry of the Church should be to all areas of city life. This means that the equipping of **His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up** (Ephesian 4:12) includes preparing His people for ministry in all spheres of city life.⁵⁵

⁵³ Paas, S., *Vreemdelingen en priesters: Christelijke missie in een postchristelijke omgeving*, Boekencentrum Academic, Utrecht, Netherlands, 2015 Kindle Edition, loc. 3126 of 5361.

⁵⁴ Some valuable books in English on disciple-making include: Cole, Neil, *Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 2010; Trousdale, Jerry, *Miraculous Movements*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, 2012; Hull, Bill & Sobels, Ben, *The Discipleship Gospel*, HIM Publications, 2018; and Watson, David & Watson, Paul, *Contagious Disciple Making*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN, 2014.

⁵⁵ The idea of serving the interest of all spheres of the culture from a kingdom of God perspective is sometimes referred to as "the seven mountains strategy," a term coined by Bill Bright (*Campus Crusade for Christ*) and Loren Cunningham (*YWAM*):

This requires not only a solid kingdom theology but a solid theology of work and business as well; we must have an integrated spiritual and ministry vision, void of dualisms: ministry (**works of service**) includes marketplace ministry, and it includes all believers ministering. Such equipping can include concepts like “business as mission,” and encouraging Christ-followers to find creative ways to integrate business models and kingdom mission.

It is also important that all believers are equipped in understanding their calling, spiritual gifts, and talents, and how to minister their spiritual gifts in a marketplace setting. The 1 Corinthians 12 manifestations of the Spirit, such as **a message of wisdom...a message of knowledge...gifts of healing... [and] prophecy**, are also effective in the marketplace as signs of the kingdom’s presence; this is seen repeatedly in the Book of Acts.

Johnson adds an important warning that this is not about taking control of the city but of serving it. “The effort by many believers to simply obtain positions of leadership is putting the cart before the horse. Servanthood remains our strong suit, and through service we can bring the benefits of His world into the reach of the common man.”⁵⁶

KEY# 9: Being a community of faith with the neighborhood: A model and agent of shalom—

Key #9 in understanding the Church’s calling to a city is the realization that believers are to model the life of the kingdom and be agents of shalom for their neighborhoods. As discussed above, because of what the early church in the Book of Acts modeled before all Jerusalem, they **enjoy[ed] the favor of all the people** (Acts 2:47). This text implies that the neighborhood (Jerusalem) could witness the life of this community of faith and that it was impacted by what it witnessed. “The missional core of the nature of the Church includes the assumed intention of the transformation of the world in which the Church exists. The review of the relevant New Testament scriptures confirms this assumption.”⁵⁷

Important to this process are “the postures of listening, discerning and acting together” with one goal—a faithful presence in one’s neighborhood. When all three postures are present within a community, each individual Christ-follower functions as a local expression of the family of God, and is an active participant in God’s family business, the renewal of all things.

⁵⁶ Wallnau, Lance & Johnson, Bill, *Invading Babylon: The 7 Mountain Mandate*, Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., Shippensburg, PA, Kindle Edition, 2013, loc. 195 of 1712. For additional insight into how the Church can provide a kingdom ministry context and training for all believers to become strongly engaged in ministry in the marketplace, see Silvano, *op. cit.*

⁵⁷ Reimer, *op. cit.*, pg. 105.

KEY #10: Serving with relevant ministries for increased shalom in the city—

The final key to implementing the missional emphases of this Addendum is remembering that numerous and various ministries are needed for the shalom of a city. Because the mission of God includes His ongoing engagement in bringing healing and redemption to the pain, brokenness, and lostness of people, no one person or ministry/church can do it all. Jesus demonstrated this, ministering as He could out of compassion for people whose needs He observed (see Matthew 14:14), and then commissioning His Church collectively to do the same. “Every part of the Church is outward facing, expecting the presence of non-believers...to minister in word and deed, helping to meet the spiritual and physical needs of the poor as well as those who live and work in cultural centers”⁵⁸.

Every church and ministry in the city has unique gifts and callings that can be connected to the various felt needs, brokenness, and spiritual lostness of people in the community, bringing healing, restoration and salvation.

- **Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If you speak, you should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If you serve, you should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen** (1 Peter 4:10-11).

The Foursquare Church’s Urban DNA and Heritage—

In 1918, the Lord gave a vision to the founder of the Foursquare Church, Aimee Semple McPherson, to plant a church close to the heart of a major urban center, Los Angeles. She could have gone to many different places and might have been more comfortable in a rural area like the region where she grew up in Canada. Yet, the Foursquare church family, with over 100,000 churches globally today, was birthed in a major city. We might attempt to summarize some aspects of our Foursquare urban heritage as:

- **The power of the Holy Spirit.** From the very beginning, our founder prioritized the presence, movement, and power of the Holy Spirit. The Foursquare movement was from its very beginning dependent on the supernatural touch and healing of God in the city.
- **Creativity and the arts.** Our founder and the first Foursquare church, Angelus Temple, consistently used the arts as a tremendous tool for outreach and communication of the gospel.

⁵⁸. Keller, Timothy, *Center Church*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2012 Epub, loc. 401 of 11994.

Music, bands, choirs, dramatized sermons, animals, motorcycles, cars, and parades were all used to clearly communicate the message of salvation.

- **Strategic perspective of the city.** In Foursquare’s early planning stage, a view of public transportation, neighborhoods, and the trolley lines were elements discussed in deciding where churches would be planted in the city.
- **Diversity.** From the beginning, multiple languages were engaged, with crusades conducted in and churches planted across various languages and cultures. Our founder helped initiate multiple Hispanic congregations in an intentional multicultural approach.
- **A holistic theology and sensitivity to poverty.** From the beginning, the Foursquare church ministered to the felt needs of Los Angeles, giving out over 1.5 million meals to those in need and poverty in the 1920s and 1930s. There was not only an acknowledgment of the need but a great effort to address it by serving, feeding, and loving the poor and needy.
- **Discipleship and training.** Shortly after Angelus Temple’s opening, an urban training institute (LIFE Bible College) was established that developed leaders amid an urban environment. Church planters and missionaries were sent around the world from this church and institute.
- **Innovation, excellence, and risk.** Our founder, her leadership team, and Angelus Temple were innovative in much of what they did, including the use of varied media and radio. They were willing to be seen as radical or liberal in their pursuit of excellence and innovative ways to “reach the lost at all cost.”

ADDENDUM

“Business As Mission and A Theology of ‘Work’”

Jonathan Hall

A biblical understanding of work and calling—

We customarily discuss the importance of the Book of Genesis by emphasizing its foundational place in biblical theology and the forming of a biblical worldview. Yet amazingly, in these theological discussions, we rarely (if ever) hear of a key revelation in Genesis—how the sovereign Lord of lords initially choose to reveal Himself.

Genesis begins by telling us something about God. It’s not a description of His nature or a hymn to His glory. Rather, the first thing Scripture reveals about God is His activity: God created, ordered, and initiated the heavens and the earth. Where once there was nothing, now there is something. Indeed, now there is everything. Scripture starts with a “bang,” and among the first things we learn about God is that He worked. He made something and exercised His creative, visionary, entrepreneurial and ordering power. Throughout Genesis 1-2, we see God engrossed in the shaping (work) of creation.

Let me reiterate this often-overlooked truth. The first chapter of the Bible, and our first encounter with God, reveals Him as a worker. The spectacular first chapter is a WORK WEEK! Yes, God’s way of working is unique, but God WORKS. And, as we see repeatedly in the text, God loves and enjoys the good work He does (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). He could have avoided working. He could have complained about it. He could have rested first. He could have increased the weekend and shortened the work week. Yet, work He did. And He enjoyed it! His pleasure, approval and affirmation permeate the six days. We clearly see in His introduction to us and His creation of us the beautiful and uniquely biblical combination of work and worship, joy and productivity, relationship, and order. I risk stating the radical thought that our God had fun; He even enjoyed His work. And I pray we would learn to do the same.

Throughout the Old Testament, the Hebrew word commonly used for work is *avodah*. **The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it** (Genesis 2:15). The two Hebrew words used in this verse, *avodah* (**work**) and *shamar* (**take care of**) are rich terms that encompass work, worship, service and keeping His commandments, respectively. Work done according

to God's purpose has an unmistakable holiness about it. The biblical concept of work is connected to worshipping God, to serving others and His creation. The implications of work as service and worship are significant.

We see this in the Flood narrative as well. Genesis 5:29 says, **Lamech named him Noah and said, "He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed."** Noah's narrative assigns a deep layer of intense value to work and reveals more about work's purpose.

Two additional and important concepts related to the Genesis account that concern the topic of this Addendum are that of stewardship and rest. Paul Stevens defines biblical stewardship as "...that rich idea that we do not own anything but have been trusted with its care and development."⁵⁹ It can be seen in Genesis 1:28—**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."** Work, stewardship and rest are strongly interconnected in the creation account of Genesis 1-2. Van Duzer notes, "The Sabbath rhythms were built into the fabric of creation; God, as Creator, had rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2-3). Post-Fall, these natural rhythms were disrupted, but God's intent did not change. The harmony and rhythm between work and rest are protected through the implementation of the Sabbath commandment. Literally, the Hebrew verb 'šabāt' means 'to cease, desist' or 'put to an end'."⁶⁰

We reside in an amazing universe, the result of God's first work week in the first chapter of the Bible. He could have done it all in one day and rested six. He could have worked three and rested four or stretched it out over say twenty days. Yet in His infinite wisdom, He established a six-day work week, with a celebration for work done and the wonderful rhythm of the Sabbath. At the end of His fruitful work week, **God saw all that He had made, and it was very good** (Genesis 1:31).

Genesis 2 continues this theme by revealing that God planted a garden in His perfect and good creation, a garden that needed to be sustained and cared for through the labor of humankind. **The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it** (Genesis 2:15). Tim Keller notes, "The book of Genesis leaves us with a striking truth—work was part of paradise."⁶¹

⁵⁹ Stevens, R. Paul, *Work Matters: Lessons from Scripture*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2012, pg. 19.

⁶⁰ Van Duzer, Jeff, *Why Business Matters to God*, IVP Academic, Downers Grove, IL, 2010, pg. 71.

⁶¹ Keller, Timothy, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work*, Penguin Books, New York, NY, 2012, pg. 22.

Creation, stewardship, innovation (and one might say, entrepreneurship) are all part of the beginning as our Father exemplified creativity, order, projects, and innovation in His initial revelation to us.

Jesus also addresses the matter of “work” in John 5:17. **“My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I too am working.”** Not only do we have the pattern established in Genesis, but we have the sovereign Lord Himself informing us while walking on earth that He and His Father are ALWAYS at work and presenting His spiritual and supernatural ministry as WORK! The Bible establishes a perspective of work that is different from our Western dichotomized approach, and we hope this short Addendum will serve as an introduction to this wonderful topic, so that we can see the evangelistic importance of the workplace and the work we do.

As we grow in our understanding of the kingdom of God, and our ambassadorial role to express the *imago dei* on Earth (even through our work), it is crucial that we see the importance of the Bible’s perspective regarding “calling.” It is a calling which is much less about a specific occupation or vocation, and much more about our identity in Christ, our vertical and horizontal relationships and His overarching invitation to align ourselves with and flourish in His purposes for us. Work, worship and service (*avodah*) are integral parts of this alignment, and one of the most wonderful ways to both personally flourish and to demonstrate His kingdom to others as part of the ministry of global missions.

Integrating all of life—

The same philosophies that minimized the importance of the material realm, including work, also created a worldview that compartmentalizes the sacred and secular. “On this side of the Fall, and especially in our culture, most of the world lives in a sacred-secular dichotomy. That is, certain parts of life are seen as ‘sacred’ (God, church, prayer, the Ten Commandments), and everything else is considered ‘secular.’ For most people, work—especially work in the business world—fits into that ‘secular’ category. It’s something they assume God doesn’t care about, and certainly a realm that oughtn’t be concerned with God.”⁶²

This division is so deeply ingrained in current Western culture that it takes renewal, a spiritual process that transforms the mind, for most believers to accept Monday as a “holy day” and to see the Holy Spirit at work through them outside the walls of the church so as to be an influence for Christ (evangelism). May we as Foursquare disciples help all believers to truly see themselves as “called

⁶² Bakke, Raymond, Hendricks, William, and Smith, Bradley, *Joy at Work: Bible Study Companion*, PVG Publishers, Seattle, WA, 2005, pg. 28.

ministers and missionaries,” and their work as integral to the kingdom and as worship to the King (Ephesians 4:7-16).

Disciples taking kingdom peace (*shalom*) into all areas of society—

There are multiple ways we might perceive the contemporary Church; in doing so, it is easy to forget that the core function and responsibility of the Church is not to generate sophisticated events or programs but the simple act of reproducing healthy disciples and servants of the King who influence and represent the kingdom of God in all spheres of society. Jesus’ instructions are quite clear: **Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. 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”** (Matthew 28:18-20). As kingdom ambassadors are prepared and sent by the Church into all walks of life, they become channels of the *shalom* of God, bringing God’s peace, redemption, restoration, and spiritual flourishing to the most varied contexts imaginable.

Therefore, we might say that in its simplest form one of our key roles as disciples in the *missio dei* (mission of God) is to live and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit such that as empowered disciples we transform lives in every arena of life and among every people group (evangelism and global mission). As this occurs, we see that communities of faith (churches) are not simply places for gathering, entertainment, or fellowship, but living and organic bodies which equip and empower disciples to serve, influence and transform all realms of life (family, education, arts, government, business, etc.). Jesus desires His disciples engaged with others, and “work” is one place where this can happen.

Work impacted by the Fall and Greek philosophy—

The Fall introduced brokenness to relationships: with God, self, others, and creation. The distortion of these relationships has an impact on work itself, how work is perceived, the fruitfulness of work, the joy of work, and the place of work in global missions. The degradation of human identity was an initial effect of the Fall, bringing shame and fear to the human soul (Genesis 3:10). As relationship with God and self was altered, other relationships were also damaged, including the family relationships. Finally, work itself was altered by the Fall: **To Adam He said, “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow, you will eat your food”** (Genesis 3:17-19). Work became connected with difficulty and hardship.

In addition, a very important aspect in the development of Western thought and perspective on the matter of work is the Greek understanding that developed through philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. Their whole approach was one that saw work and labor as negative, a hindrance to personal growth and flourishing, and something that should be done by slaves and the un-enlightened. Leisure and contemplation were seen as appropriate to leaders and nobility. It should come as no surprise then that most Western approaches to work today are negative, seek to avoid it, and see it as a necessary evil to be done as least as possible every week. In other words, to decrease effort and labor and to increase leisure has become a major aim of life, even if there is much evidence that doing so will not necessarily produce joy or satisfaction.

Another sad result of the enormous “work is bad” fallacy is the glorification and prioritization of retirement, a time in which one will avoid labor and engage in “noble” leisure. These unbiblical perspectives continue to have an enormous impact on Western thought and economies and impede the influence disciples can have through their “work world” (evangelism).

Business with a mission—

Key questions disciples must answer about work include, “What does the kingdom of God look like as expressed in the marketplace? Are there ways businesses can be used for kingdom advancement? What might be the biblical purpose of business?” Hopefully, you will continue to pursue answers beyond this short document, but if it is true that businesses and organizations have a role in God’s plan and mission in this world, it is crucial to understand the biblical purpose of business.

Dennis Bakke sees three driving purposes for business: service to society, economic health, and ethical values. These should drive a company in equal measure. Author Bill Droel lays out the Roman Catholic ideas about the purpose of work and business:

- To contribute to God’s on-going creation and redemption.
- To manufacture goods and deliver services that are needed in the community, thus helping society to thrive.
- To contribute to personal development, and through self-discovery to help people learn more about God. Because God is a relational Trinity, Catholic social thought says personal development involves solidarity with one’s co-workers.

- To put money in the pocket of workers and in the portfolio of investors (some of whom might also be workers), thus providing for families now and in the future.⁶³

The picture that emerges from these Christian thinkers is that the purpose for business can be far more holistic and missional than most might expect. These purposes differ significantly with the major ideas that have driven the Western business world for many years. However, there is a significant change in the post-modern culture, namely, that a focus on financial gain and shareholders' value is destructive. Thankfully, we are gaining traction in terms of seeing more social and environmental values in business and organizations; this provides tremendous opportunities for Christian entrepreneurs to join and practice a biblical worldview in the context of work and business. Practices like social entrepreneurship and business as mission should be encouraged amongst believers. Could it be that it is only now that the business world is recognizing that God established these bases centuries ago? Perhaps had we, as Christian businesspeople, practiced a “theology of work,” the world today would be a far better place.

Biblical principles for business and entrepreneurship—

God enjoys His creation. His initial satisfaction is indicated by His repeated appraisal of it as **very good** (Genesis 1:31). He walked daily in the Garden and met with Adam and Eve as a sign of His pleasure in His creation. His love for His creation is evident in that He continues to creatively sustain all things. Understanding who God is leads us to a deeper understanding of who we are. God is continually active in creation, working to bring goodness, enjoying the fruit of His labor and sharing it with others. Created in God's image, humanity is also capable of creating, unashamedly enjoying, and sharing the fruit of our labors with others. Man is to co-labor with God in this work as seen in the initial commandments given to Adam and Eve—**“Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it”** (Genesis 1:28).

There is an implicit invitation to enjoy the creation as well as a responsibility for creation's care and well-being. We are to care for God's creation as beneficent overseers. Adam and Eve were to be involved in the added value processes that create wealth! The biblical idea of stewardship not only encompasses the care of creation, but the responsibility of personal stewardship of both talents and wealth as well. Again, this understanding can greatly enhance the cause of global missions.

Business provides an opportunity for those talented in enterprise to use their gifts in service to others. In its capacity to provide employment, business sustains not only those who establish enterprises, but

⁶³. Droel, Bill, cited in Stevens, R. Paul, *Doing God's Business: Meaning and Motivation for the Marketplace*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2006, pg. 26.

also those who are employed or benefit from the goods and/or services provided. Business enables needs to be met and this consequently blesses others. Business and work in accordance with biblical principles of stewardship offer numerous opportunities to glorify God. So, what might be some of the biblical principles that characterize a “theology of work” that God had in mind when He made enterprise part of His design for human society? They include—

- We are to be stewards of God’s creation and all He places in our hands: Genesis 1:28, 2:15, 19-20; Leviticus 25:2-7; Psalm 8:6.
- Provision for human society and multiplication of resources is designed by God to come primarily through dignified work. God is creative and pleased with His work and we are made in His image to also be creative: Genesis 2:1-3; Deuteronomy 28:1-13; Joshua 5: 11-12; Psalm 128:1-2.
- Material provision is good and important for our daily life and the healthy functioning of communities. However, they are not sufficient to fully satisfy us as humans: Deuteronomy 8; 1 Kings 4:25; Psalms 62:10; Proverbs 23:4-5; Ecclesiastes 5:10-20; Zechariah 3:10; Matthew 4:4, 6:33; Mark 8:36.
- Business creates opportunities for meaningful work and creativity that are essential for human dignity and a peaceful society: Genesis 2:2-3; Ephesians 6:5-9; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12.
- Entrepreneurship, wealth creation and wise management of resources is affirmed and celebrated among men and women: Genesis 41:46-49; Proverbs 31:10-31; Matthew 25:14-30.
- We should care for the poor and needy and support the work of the Church out of the abundance of economic activity. We are to be generous: Deuteronomy 15:4-10; Proverbs 31:18-20; Leviticus 19:9-10; Acts 20:33-35, Ephesians 4:28; 1 Corinthians 9:10-14; James 2:14-17.
- We are to be intentional about the task of making disciples of all nations: Matthew 22:36-40; 25:34-36; 28:19-20.
- We are God’s image-bearers in the world and our chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. We are to be salt and light in the world and are called to be witnesses for the

gospel in any daily situation: Genesis 1:26-27; Psalm 86:8-13; Matthew 5:1-16; Colossians 4:5-6; 1 Peter 3:15.

- God’s kingdom is present to impact all of creation—the physical, social and spiritual: Isaiah 9:1-7; Luke 4:18-19; Romans 8:19-22.
- “Tent-making” and “full-time ministry” is useful language in today’s world, but these are not biblical terms, and they can create a counter-productive mind-set among believers. Most biblical leaders served and impacted multiple areas of society, such as government or the marketplace, and lived an integrated life of complete surrender and service. The Bible is clear that Christ is King, and we are just as “anointed” Monday through Friday as we are on Sunday!
- Proverbs 31 provides one of the clearest pictures of biblical freedom and integration of work and worship (*avodah*) in a flourishing leader who was entrepreneurial, innovative and a great steward of an integrated life.
- A few more biblical examples of those whose lives demonstrated work and worship would be Abraham (a traveling herdsman and merchant), Joseph (a government official), Moses (a sheep-herder in Midian), Deborah (a judge in Canaan), Gideon (a farmer, military leader, judge, and civil leader), Daniel (a senior civil servant in Persia), Nehemiah (a government official, city-planner, and builder), and Paul (a tentmaker, evangelist, and apologist).

BAM in history—

There are also many historical examples of Christians doing business in such a way that people and societies have been transformed and God glorified. During its first 400 years, the Church grew to become a major influence in the world, thanks in part to people who lived their faith in the marketplace. For example, Lydia was a businesswoman who lived out her faith by sharing the Good News (Acts 16.15). We can also learn from mission pioneers like the Nestorians who conducted business along the Silk Road, the Quakers who impacted society through business ventures and the Moravian entrepreneurs who had a far-reaching impact on their society.

BAM and the city—

As we understand the enormous demographic change from rural to urban living in which we currently find ourselves, we also begin to understand that most business, employment, and wealth are generated in global cities. From under 16% of the global population living in cities in 1900 to over 55% in 2022, urbanization is one of the greatest social changes in human history. As we study ways to plant churches and make disciples in cities, business and work become ever more prevalent and relevant arenas for the next generation's passion for evangelism and global missions.

ADDENDUM
“Contextualization and the Great Commission”

SWM

The Goal of the Great Commission—

The goal of the Great Commission is NOT to make disciples *in* all nations (people groups). According to Matthew 28:19, it is to make disciples *of* all nations. The distinction is significant. If the goal is to make disciples *in* all nations, we can declare mission accomplished as soon as we plant one or more churches in a people group. Our focus as cross-cultural church planters would then be on how many disciples we win to Christ or how many churches we plant. If, however, our goal is to make disciples *of* all nations, our focus is not on how many disciples we directly win to Christ or the number of churches we plant but helping initiate a disciple-making and church-planting movement that will eventually transform an entire people group. Our main concern is not whether we see a large number of first-generation followers of Christ, but if there will be third and fourth generation disciples. We must aim for disciples who will make disciples, whose disciples will make disciples. The same must be said for the churches we plant.

Levels of Contextualization—

Besides the failure to intentionally raise disciple-makers and church-planting churches, another factor which can hamper spontaneous disciple and church planting movements is the failure of providing healthy contextualization (allowing the church to fit the context). John Travis, a worker in the Muslim world, developed a contextualized spectrum scale (C1-C6) to describe various levels of contextualization. Each increase in the letter shows a greater adaptation to the local culture or former religious background of the new believers.

- **C-1—Traditional church structure using local Christian language.** This reflects Western churches in practices and styles. For example, worship songs are often from the outside and translated to the local language.
- **C-2—Traditional church structures and forms using local-oriented vocabulary.** For example, in a Muslim context you may use the Muslim words for Jesus and God.

- **C-3—Contextualized church structure.** The arts, culture and language are reflected in the worship and ecclesiology of the church. For example, worship songs are usually locally produced and played on local instruments.
- **C-4** is the same as C-3 and utilizes biblically acceptable rituals and ceremonies from the people's former religion. For example, in a Muslim context, the gathering place may have prayer rugs instead of pews, and worshipers may remove their shoes and ceremonially wash their hands before praying.
- **C-5—C-4 guidelines to ecclesiology are followed.** However, there is an allowance for converts to continue in former places of worship as a discrete witness for Christ. For example, terms like, "Jesus Muslims, Hindus, etc..." "Jesus Mosque, Temple" and "Messianic Mosque" are utilized. This style of worship and witness is controversial and rejected by many as being too syncretistic.
- **C-6—Clusters of secret believers totally within Islam/Hinduism Buddhism, etc.** Such believers have little, if any, contact with other Christians.

Dangers of Extremes—

Different people are comfortable with different levels of contextualization. Many believe you are risking endangering the integrity of the gospel if you go beyond C-3. Others are comfortable going as far as C-4. Few are comfortable with C-5 and C-6. Christian anthropologist Paul Hiebert describes one unhealthy approach to contextualization as total rejection of contextualization and the denial of existing customs. He argues that the results of this are either the gospel is seen as foreign and thus rejected or new believers take existing customs underground, resulting in syncretism (polluting the gospel with things that are fundamentally opposed to the gospel).

Phil Parshall gives the following illustration how this unhealthy contextualization may play out in a Muslim context. He says that the core gospel beliefs cannot be compromised to accommodate culture. Among these are the authority of the Bible, Christ as God, and salvation in Jesus. However, surrounding these core beliefs are such things as wedding and funeral customs, the use of Western names, using pictures of Jesus, eating pork, styles of worship, etc. None of these things is core to the gospel and carry the danger of making the gospel look foreign to those whom we want to influence. I know of a Malay Muslim who came to faith in Jesus. His pastor questioned the sincerity of his faith and demanded that he eat pork to prove he was a true believer. For Malays, pigs are considered dirty animals. Christians should be free to either eat pork or refrain from doing so. The conclusion of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:19 was that they should not make it difficult for Gentiles to join the church by forcing Jewish

customs on them. If someone rejects the gospel it should be because they refuse what is essential to the gospel, not because they do not want to adopt a certain culture.

There is an opposite danger in what Paul Hiebert calls, “Uncritical Contextualization.” He describes this as undiscerning acceptance of existing customs that leads to syncretism. Tim Keller, in his book, the *Centered Church*, argues that the church must both fit the culture and be counter-cultural at the same time. He also points out that every culture is challenged with its own idols. American Korean theologian Soong-Chan Rah, in his book, *The Next Evangelism*, describes how the Western church has, at times, failed to be counter-cultural. He cites how hyper-consumerism, materialism and individualism are often part of Western Christians’ values.

Paul Hiebert advocates for a middle ground, which he calls, “Critical Contextualization,” comprising the following four steps. 1) Gather information about the existing custom; 2) study relevant Bible teaching; 3) evaluate the existing customs in light of biblical teaching; and 4) create new contextualized practices.

Tools to help us examine customs in light of Scripture—

George Patterson suggests that, in determining if a particular practice should be adopted by all churches in all contexts, we should evaluate it by the following three levels.

- **Level One: New Testament Commands.** These are direct commands in the New Testament that should be obeyed by all believers regardless of culture or context. For example, the command to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, for children to obey their parents, and for believers to not commit adultery.
- **Level Two: New Testament practices, not commanded.** These are practices recorded in the New Testament that are not necessarily commanded for all believers at all times; they should not be forbidden as they were practiced by the early church but again, they are not obligatory. These may include such things as meeting in homes instead of dedicated church buildings.
- **Level Three: Church Traditions.** These are agreed-upon traditions of how we do life together that are not directly found in the New Testament but do not go against any biblical teaching. Examples might be holding Sunday school or celebrating the Lord’s Supper on the first Sunday of the month. For Foursquare, it might be displaying Hebrew 13:8. It is legitimate for a church or a denomination to agree to establish such traditions in how they

do life together, but they should not condemn or look down on other churches or denominations with different traditions.

Form and meaning—

Another helpful tool is to distinguish between form and meaning. Form is the outward visible act or custom. Meaning is the significance we attach to that form. Shaking hands is an outward form with the attached meaning of friendship or agreement. Most controversial forms are innocent in themselves; the significance lies in the meaning we attach to them. Furthermore, the exact form can have opposite meanings from culture to culture. For instance, in ancient Jewish culture, the form of beatings one's chest had the attached meaning of humility and repentance. In other cultures, the same form has the attached meaning of pride. So, if Jewish believers want to teach believers to show humility in prayer, it might be counter-productive to instruct believers in certain cultures to beat their chest in prayer. They should attempt to discover what form in that culture carries the meaning of humility.

In the church at Corinth, there was a form of women covering their heads in prayer. Those to whom Paul wrote were not only familiar with the form but knew the meaning behind the form. However, to force all believers in all cultures to adopt this cultural form is legalism if it has no meaning in their culture attached to it. Instead, we should strive to discover the meaning attached to this form and create a new form that carries the same meaning.

In some circumstance, it may be possible to adapt a form from a believer's pre-Christian life and give it a new meaning. However, for some, the form and meaning are so closely attached it is impossible on an emotional or spiritual level to separate the form and meaning. For instance, Muslims pray with their forehead touching the ground. Could Muslim background believers keep this same form, but recognize that they are praying to God the Father of Jesus who saves us by faith? Or would they have their minds drawn back to the Muslim understanding that they can only approach God as slaves and not as children of God? Often, these are questions only the insiders of the culture can answer for themselves, guided by Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

Forms and meaning not only differ from culture to culture but sometimes from generation to generation. I know of a circumstance where believers used drums in their pre-Christian worship to the gods. New believers from this background decided that their emotional and spiritual connection to drums was too strong, so they wisely decided not to include drums in Christian worship. However, the third and fourth generation believers (the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the original believers) never took part in pagan worship. Therefore, there was no connection between the form of

drums and the meaning of pagan worship in their hearts and minds. For those generations, there may be no negative spiritual issue for them to use drums in the church.

To the glory of God—

In planting churches across cultures, we must first recognize that our culture is not superior to the one among which we are ministering. Secondly, it is not our assignment to enculturate them to our culture, but to see the church planted in their culture. Cultures are like human beings—they reflect God’s image and glory but are tainted by sin. We must approach other cultures with humility and the desire that the beauty of that culture will be brought in worship to God. What a glorious symphony of beauty it will be on that day when God is praised in thousands of languages and the musical styles and art forms of all the peoples of the earth.

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ADDENDUM
“Unreached People Groups”

Erik Jensen

In this article, I will introduce you to a missions’ strategy for reaching unreached people groups (UPGs). I will attempt to define some of the key words and definitions that will help your thinking and put your heart on fire for the unreached people groups in the world.

Foursquare history and our DNA for unreached people groups—

Aimee Semple McPherson and her husband Robert arrived in Hong Kong on June 1, 1910, to minister among unreached people groups in China. In one regard their decision to go was simple—there were millions of unreached Chinese. On the other hand, it was very difficult—a different language, culture, traditions, and religion.

They soon paid the price many other pioneer missionaries faced, death. Robert passed away just seven months after their mission started from malaria and dysentery. Shortly after founding the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, Sister McPherson sent missionaries to unreached people groups in Latin America and Africa. We owe much to the pioneers of Foursquare missions who fanned the flame and broke barriers to reach the people who had no access to the name of Jesus.

A short history of the development of unreached people groups—

In 1910, the same year the McPhersons arrived in Hong Kong, missions’ leaders gathered in Edinburgh, Scotland, to unite missions’ leaders for world missions and finish the task of global evangelizing. It was a strategy meeting focusing on the unfinished task, “Reaching the world in a generation.”⁶⁴ According to Lausanne ‘74, it was “the most historic conference on evangelism and missions of the century.”⁶⁵ Two streams came out of it—“the Evangelical and the Ecumenical streams of the modern

⁶⁴ *Evangelical and Frontier Mission: Perspectives on the Global Progress of the Gospel*, Snodderly, Beth and Moreau, A. Scott (Editors), Regnum Books International, Oxford, UK, 2011, pg. 213.

⁶⁵ *Edinburgh 2010: Witnessing to Christ Today, Volume II*, Balia, Daryl and Kim, Kirsteen, Regnum Books International, Oxford, UK, 2010, pg. 199.

missionary movement.”⁶⁶ This was a great start with ongoing fruitfulness, but the mission is not complete.

In Berlin in 1966, global missions’ strategists gathered for the first time since Edinburg in 1910. Among the many important issues from this conference was the introduction of computers to monitor and register missions’ progress in different areas. Through technology, the first list of unreached people groups called, “Unreached Peoples’ Directory,” was developed and a booklet published for the Lausanne Conference in 1974 containing 413 unreached people groups. Lausanne ‘74 made another significant move due to Ralph D. Winter’s presentation,⁶⁷ “The highest Priority: Cross-Cultural Evangelism.”⁶⁸ Through his presentation, he became one of the main architects behind people group thinking. His Lausanne ‘74 presentation introduced the term, “unreached people groups.” From 1983 until his death in 2009, Winter continued to refine his definition; other missiologists also contributed to the evolution of definitions for “unreached peoples.”

Two different definitions of the task at hand have developed since Lausanne ‘74. Dave Datema terms them, “The Lausanne Tradition,” led by Fuller Theological Seminary’s School of Mission and Theology and MARC (a subgroup of World Vision), and “The Edinburg Tradition” led by C. Peter Wagner. The difference of understanding revolves around whether the phrase “unreached peoples” serves the cause in the best way, or if it should be connected to an “existing indigenous church planting movement.”

“Unreached people groups” thinking is also faced with the challenge of determining when a people group is “reached.” Should the reached level be defined by the presence of an “indigenous church planting movement” or a percentage of Christians in the people group? The initial thinking focused on percentage, and initially, 20% was the percentage for categorizing a people as “reached,” but that percentage has changed through the years.

In 1981, Wagner and Edward Dayton published the *Unreached Peoples ‘81* book. Interestingly, the number of unreached people groups was growing every year.⁶⁹ The increasing numbers is an indication of better technology, better science for gathering data and different opinions as to how to define a UPG.

The evolving process of defining UPGs has also taken on a new feature since it was first introduced. Today, there are differentiations to note how far the progress had gone within a given people group.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pg. 202.

⁶⁷ Fickett, Harold, *The Ralph D. Winter Story*, William Carey Publishing, Pasadena, CA, 2013, pg. 1.

⁶⁸ Winter, Ralph D., *The Highest Priority: Cross-Cultural Evangelism*, Lausanne Movement, 1974.

⁶⁹ The first list from 1974 included 413 UPGs; the books that came out annually starting in 1979—666 UPGs; 1980—1982 UPGs; 1981—2914 UPGs; 1982—3265 UPGs; 1983—3690 UPGs; 1984—3815 UPGs.

Hidden people	No known Christians within the group.
Initially reached	Less than 1%, but some Christians.
Minimally reached	1-10% Christian.
Possibly reached	10-20% Christian.
Reached	20% or more practicing Christians.

In 1982, the Lausanne and Edinburg traditions agreed on a definition of “unreached peoples” through a series of meetings that concluded in Chicago. The definition? “A people group among which is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group without outside (cross-cultural) assistance.”

In the 1980s and 90s, the “AD2000 and Beyond” movement fanned the flame of missions’ work and reaching unreached people groups. The magnetic target of the approaching millennium gave rise to the slogan, “A church for every people by the year 2000.” It was a time when the flames of missions burned brightly, and many helpful initiatives surfaced. David Barrett published his *World Christian Encyclopedia* and gave further insight into modern religious demography and research on people groups. During the Lausanne conference in Manila, Philippines, in 1989, the leader of “AD2000 and Beyond,” Luis Bush, built on Winter’s earlier definition and identified the geographical region where the majority of the unreached people groups was located. He termed it, “the 10/40 window,” representing the 10-to-40-degree latitudinal areas on the globe.

In the aftermath of the “Global Consultation on World Evangelization” in South Korea in 1995, another important organization came to assist the mission field. This group is known as “Joshua Project.” They began by serving the whole Church under “AD2000 and Beyond,” but, since 2006 it has been connected to the “U. S. Center for World Mission” (today, “Frontier Ventures”). At a gathering in Singapore in 2002, Winter and missions’ organizations with a deep interest for “unreached people groups” initiated an extensive gathering of data, definitions, and categorization of peoples.⁷⁰ Shortly before his death in 2009, Winter sharpened his definition in his chapter, “Finishing the Task: The Unreached People Challenge,” in the book, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*.⁷¹ His definition changed “indigenous community of believing Christians” to “a viable indigenous church planting movement.”

⁷⁰ Higgins in Snodderly and Moreau, *op. cit.*, pg. 213.

⁷¹ *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, Winter, Ralph D. and Hawthorne, Steve (Editors), William Carey Publishing, Pasadena, CA, 2009, pp. 531-546.

The full definition supported by many organizations today is—*a people group among which is no viable indigenous church planting movement with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group without outside (cross-cultural) assistance.*

“Joshua Project” has subsequently developed a simplified version of the above, but with the same ingredients—*unreached groups lack enough followers of Christ and resources to evangelize their own people.*

“Joshua Project” worked closely with Winter; their goal was to give a strategic way of engaging in reaching the unreached people groups in the world. Let’s take a closer look at the elements involved.

Unreached and reached peoples—

- It should be obvious that when someone has never heard the name of Jesus, they are considered unreached. No one is available to tell them about Jesus. Reached or unreached is therefore first about availability of the gospel. We consider a people group unreached when they have no availability to the gospel.
- The second issue is about who can reach UPGs. Winter defines three areas for purposes of evangelism: E-1, E-2 and E-3. E-1 is one’s Jerusalem and Judea. E-2 is one’s Samaria and E-3 is “the ends of the earth.” E-2 and E-3 have elements of crossing culture, language, and geographical barriers. Most of the time we need to do E-2 or E-3 outreaches to get to where the “unreached people groups” are located. In Romans 15:20-21, we read that Paul was searching out areas where the gospel had not been preached. We should learn from Paul and search for the people who have never heard the gospel.
- The third element in ministry to UPGs is defining “the tipping point”—when a people transition from unreached to reached. Determining this transition is not exact science, but there are strategic tools to direct missions’ efforts to where the need is obvious. According to “Joshua Project,” the tipping point is when the UPG has “enough followers of Christ to evangelize their own people.” Historically, missions’ organizations have agreed that “the tipping point” is the presence of at least 20% of evangelical Christians within the UPG.

In today’s world, the Great Commission has become global, meaning that it used to be “from the West to the rest,” but today it is “from anywhere to everywhere.” Take my personal journey. For many years, I have been privileged to serve the house church movement in China and their missions’ vision, “Back to Jerusalem”—bringing the gospel from China to the Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist people who live “between” China and Jerusalem.” At times it is very messy because the Chinese believers are making

some of the same mistakes that the West made throughout the history of missions; nonetheless, Jesus' heart is obviously reflected in their active involvement in the Great Commission. The whole Church for the whole world.

Unengaged UPGs—

Due to the challenge of determining when a group is reached another definition has surfaced, “Unengaged UPGs” (UUPGs). A UUPG is a people group with no known active church planting underway.

People groups—

Another topic that is germane to this conversation is the Bible's general definition of people groups as found in Revelation 5:9 and Revelation 7:9.

- **And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because You were slain, and with Your blood You purchased for God members of every tribe and language and people and nation”** (Revelation 5:9).
- **After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb** (Revelation 7:9).

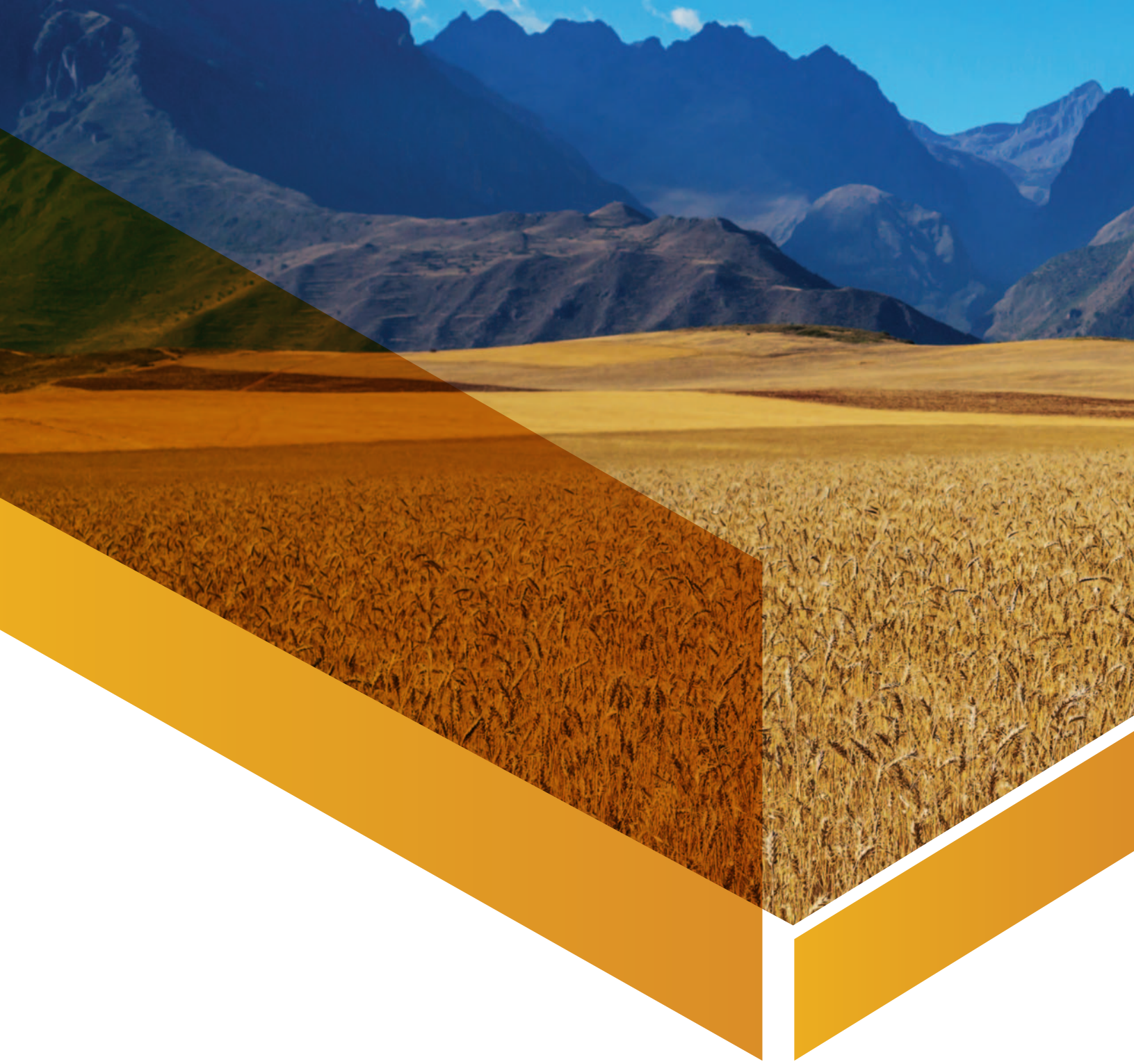
The word **every** signifies that God wants human beings from every people group at the throne. The fact that each verse lists four distinct designations underlines the importance of every ethnicity.

Since Lausanne '74, ethnologists and missions' strategists have been discussing “closure”—how close we are to “finishing the task” of preaching the gospel of the kingdom **“in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come”** (Matthew 24:14)? No one knows the answer to that question, but this is clear—the Church is called to keep at it and today's Church provides many resources and strategies to effectively evangelize UPGs—“across the street and around the world.” Again...the whole Church for the whole world.

Conclusion—

All people are important to God. Jesus died for all human beings in every culture and every age. Our focus on UPGs does not mean we don't have a heart of “lost reached peoples.” It is simply a strategy to prioritize how Foursquare spends its time, money, energy, and resources to reach the many who've

never heard the gospel even once. Foursquare has the opportunity to target its missions' efforts and strategically focus on peoples who are untouched by others. The enemy would want to stop Foursquare's efforts, but Jesus will triumph and Foursquare will move forward, carried along by the prayers of committed pray-ers.



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