

EIGHT STEPS to Becoming a **TRUE** CHRISTIAN

A MUST READ FOR ALL THE CHURCH, AND THOSE WHO
HAVE JUST BEEN BORN AGAIN IN THE FAITH OF CHRIST!



JEFFREY L. WHISTON

EIGHT STEPS TO BECOMING A TRUE CHRISTIAN

*A must-read for all the church and those who have just
been born again in the faith of Christ*

Jeffrey L. Whiston

DEDICATION

I want to give thanks to the Lord for this book, and for all the men and women whose influence has enriched my life. I especially thank Him for my wife Coco and my children Grace and Joshua, who have been a true blessing to my life and ministry.

We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn.

In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!

Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.

But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Hebrews 5:11-14

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Introduction

It is my wish that through this book, every believer may begin a stable and healthy new life, after making the best decision they will ever make in their lives-to receive Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

In my experience as a minister in different parts of the world, everywhere I go I have seen the same need in new believers who are beginning the walk of faith. Some begin it with joy. Others hear the word, but they don't understand it and it is snatched away from them. Others face worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth and the word is choked, giving place to discouragement, fear and rejection. It's due to these obstacles that the Bible also mentions that many Christians don't grow. However, there are those who hear it, understand the word and bear fruit, as the Parable of the Sower describes in Matthew 13:3-9; 18-23.

Which seed are you?

The seed that fell along the path

The seed that fell on rocky places

The seed that fell among thorns

The seed that fell in good soil

It is my desire that every person who reads this book will put into practice these eight steps toward becoming a true Christian, so they will reach full maturity in Christ. I encourage you to keep on reading until the end, and apply the principles, because your life will be transformed.

The Butterfly

Let me briefly share with you the life of a precious creature: the butterfly. From the time it is conceived until it reaches full development, it goes through stages that we can compare with humans in both the spiritual and natural senses.

The butterfly goes through four stages:

- The egg
- The caterpillar
- The chrysalis (cocoon)
- The butterfly

This cycle adapts to the different seasons.

First stage: The Egg

The egg represents the embryonic stage in which butterflies lay their eggs either individually or in groups on top of leaves. Unfortunately, few are actually born due to the countless dangers they face, including ants, spiders and other predators that feast upon the tiny eggs.

The same process happens in the spiritual.

There are several dangers that a “newly born” believer faces, that is, one who has just made the decision to give his or her life to Jesus Christ. The Bible mentions “the thief” in John 10:10—our enemy the devil, who comes to steal, kill and destroy. However, Christ says, “I have come that you may have life and live it abundantly.” It’s obvious that when someone has just been born in the spiritual sense, he needs the care of others who share his faith and who express love, patience and joy, which are the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Second Stage: The Larvae or Caterpillar

When a caterpillar is born, its body is divided into three parts:

The head-with the eyes and a great big jaw to eat plants with.

The thorax-with three pairs of feet.

The abdomen-with a kind of armor that is very important for its feeding and growth, to move on to the next stage.

During the growth process, the caterpillar changes its skin, fur and color about four to ten times during its life. In the same way, when we humans are born again spiritually, we too, develop abilities and characteristics, such as having eagle eyes, hunger for the word of God and taking ownership of God's armor. We also have feet in order to walk in the way of truth, and we must be willing to change our skin in order to resist the adversary on the evil day. In other words, our old life or nature -all of this is a process.

The Third Stage: The Chrysalis or Cocoon

A cocoon is just a soft, bland, lifeless mass until metamorphosis occurs, bringing on a total transformation. This process can last weeks or even months. In the spiritual dimension, your life experiences change through patience and self-control.

Fourth Stage: The Butterfly

The butterfly begins to leave its chrysalis. First its head ventures out, then its shrunken wings which soon extend majestically. Its food is nectar from flowers, and it can live anywhere from four weeks to a year, depending on how careful it is. As with every other living being, once a butterfly is born, it grows and reproduces.

The Monarch Butterfly

This butterfly species is admirable and travels thousands of miles, in the same way that Christians do.

North American butterflies from Mexico, the United States, and Canada, begin their trip southward, traveling 120 kilometers a day and gathering in small groups that fly at low heights while the sun is shining. Its mysterious instinct obstinately propels them toward a place in Michoacán, Mexico. We know that this mystery is of God's doing: "... being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1:6.

Chapter 1:

Being Born Again

Everything is new. A new life, a new creation. With Christ, everything is new. Psalms 96:1-2 says, “Sing unto the Lord a new song, all the Earth, sing to the Lord, bless His name, proclaim His salvation.”

Salvation from what? We might ask ourselves. Salvation from eternal death (Psalms 96:1-2). Jesus said, “Behold, I am making all things new” (Revelation 21:5) This gives us a new perspective of the value of human life.

*“His compassions never fail. They are new every morning;
Great is Your faithfulness.”*
(Lamentations 3:22-23)

But what does it mean to be “born again?” In Greek the term used for “being born” is *gennaó*, which means that God’s nature has been imparted to the new believer. In Greek the word used for “again” is *anoten*, which means “from above.”

This is the literal translation of John 3:3: “He who is not born again or does not receive the divine nature, cannot participate in God’s Kingdom.”

The new birth is not a reformation but a transformation. This transformation occurs “from the inside out.” The new birth isn’t a religion-it’s not meant to make a person religious. Jesus’s desire, since the first century until now is to change the life of people. He has been active in the miracle of transforming hearts. In His days there was a man named

Nicodemus, a sincere pharisee (priest), who was a member of the Sanhedrin—a strict sect that followed the law rigorously and was the highest ecclesiastical court of its time. Christ explained to him how to be born again, something Nicodemus couldn't do in his own strength (John 3:1-15).

The new birth is literally the impartation of the divine nature into the heart of man and his sinful life, making him a new creation. The apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.”

Why should man be born again?

- a) Because he can't see the Kingdom of God unless he has been born again.
- b) Because due to the nature of man's first birth, the second birth is necessary.
- c) Because without it, he wouldn't be happy.
- d) Because without the new birth, his spirit is dead.

However, the story of Christ transforming hearts is one heard throughout the centuries, and even during our own times. Many of those reading this book can testify that Jesus Christ has transformed them for the better. God reconciles us with Him, because He has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

A New Creation Produces New Transformation

The word says, “And do not be conformed to this world (our present time) but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...” (Romans 12:2).

The word “transform” in Greek is “**metamorphosis**” which means: *a total change, transformation, persistence, another dimension in life, etc.*

It's like the butterfly in its third stage, the chrysalis. How the caterpillar can apparently die in order to give life to a marvelous butterfly, totally transformed by God's hand, is an

amazing fact. Humans were made in God's image and likeness in three aspects:

- a) The spirit (the real you).
- b) The soul (your emotions, mind and will).
- c) The body (your flesh and five senses).

Therefore, when you were born again, your spirit was also born as a new creation and that is when everything starts anew. The word "new" translated into Greek is "Zainos," which means *something that didn't exist previously*. In other words, you're a **new creation**. Everything is new, and your past has been erased. Now that you're in Christ, everything is possible. Philippians 4:13 tells us that everything is possible in Christ, who strengthens us.

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Note the fact that in Christ, the key is the Anointed One. The Anointed One removes the condemnation of the old life and can forgive even the worst of sins.

In Christ, the outcomes are new-songs, attitudes, ways, thought processes, dress. It's loving, forgiving, abandoning, renouncing and beginning again.

When we are in Christ, we receive the inheritance of His promises (Isaiah 42:9,10). "I am doing a new thing! I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more" (Isaiah 43:18, 19, 25).

"[He] will again have compassion on us; [He] will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:18,19).

The results of the new birth are:

- It makes the believer a child of God. He has the privilege of calling God "Father."
- You are a new creation and participant in the divine nature.

- God equips the new believer so that he can live in victory over sin and the world.
- The spirit of our mind is renewed.
- Now we are adopted by the Heavenly Father.

This phase of our salvation is rarely emphasized. The word for our adoption means “to place as a son (or daughter).” The believer, after having converted, is a child of God through the new birth, and begins to immediately advance in maturity as a child of God.

Once we come to know Christ as our Lord and personal Savior, our gratitude for the gift of His salvation should be demonstrated through our service, which we render to Him in all aspects of our life. Good works will happen naturally, in the same way that a good apple grows naturally from a good apple tree.

Welcome to God’s family.

REFLECTION: *What does “Be born again” mean?*

Memorize John 3:3

Group questions

Chapter 2: Water Baptism

Despite the many opinions regarding the methods one should be baptized in water, you should be baptized as soon as possible. God looks at our hearts and it's important to be baptized soon after your conversion.

There are four basic principles for baptism:

- It's an act of obedience.
- It's to follow Jesus' example, because even He was baptized by John the Baptist in order to fulfill the Scriptures.
- It's placing sin in remission and walking the new life.
- It's publicly announcing and testifying that you are a follower of Jesus, and willing to never go back to your old life.

The word *baptism* in Greek is “**Baptizó**” which mean **submerge, be totally covered in water, soaked.**

Take note of the fact that the New Testament never mentions baptizing children, nor does it mention being sprinkled on the head with water. There's an old tradition that tells us that if children are baptized, original sin will be removed from them. But there's nothing in the Bible that confirms this.

There are two points of view: 1. Water washes away all our sins, or 2. Jesus died on the cross for our original sins, forever.

So, if you have the belief your sin was washed away because you were baptized as a baby, I'm sorry, but this has no biblical validity. God's word says, "Repent and be baptized." Babies don't know how to repent.

Baptism in water is a mandate, it's obligatory, it's not a mere option. It's an external sign that something has happened inside. It's a seal. Imagine the seal of a king, a president or a government, which is considered very important. That's what water baptism is. It's a symbol, a sign, the identification of a true Christian believer, convinced that he has had his sins forgiven and is willing to pay the price to follow Christ until death.

The old word "IXOYE" or newer word "ICHTUS" mean "fish" in Greek.

This word was adopted by persecuted Christians in the first century, as a "symbol of Christ". It represented the following acrostic:

I	Jesus
X	Christ
O	God
Y	Son
Σ	Savior



Christians used the fish to identify themselves to fellow Christians during trials, persecution, hardships and more.

The image and the name of the fish can be often found on the walls of the Roman catacombs, on rings and the ground where Christians were found.

What does the word "Christian" mean?

Acts 11:26 tells us that disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. The Greek word for Christian is "**christiano or cristos**" which means "followers of Jesus."

This implies that once we accept Christ into our new lives, we reflect Him everywhere we go, be it at work, school, home, in public places, at church, etc. We are examples of Jesus to others.

Christian baptism also implies we are confessing Christ as Lord and Savior; it's our external identification with His death (Romans 6:3-13). The old life is buried, and a new life is resurrected.

Colossians 2:12 says, "...having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead."

Baptism is our duty:

- It is Jesus's mandate to the local church (Mark 16:16).
- The way to baptize in water: Submerge, totally cover with water.

Matthew 28:19 says, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them..." and Matthew 3:13-16, "...he went up out of the water...."

Water baptism is an example to follow:

- a) Jesus Christ was baptized.
Matthew 3:13-16
- b) John and his disciples.
Acts 19:3
- c) Jesus Christ's disciples.
Mark 10:39
- d) Paul at Ananias' home.
Acts 9:18
- e) The Ethiopian Eunuch with Philip.
Acts 8:37-38
- f) Cornelius and his house.
Acts 16:15
- g) Lydia and her family.
Acts 16:15

h) The jailer and his house.

Acts 16:33

“...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

REFLECTION: *What is water baptism?*

Memory verse: Matthew 28:19-20

Group questions:

Chapter 3: Be Faithful in Prayer

Prayer is one of the greatest privileges a new believer receives in life. When a believer prays, he is speaking directly and personally to his Heavenly Father. There is nothing that comes between you and your God.

This is how we define **prayer**: it's talking, calling out, speaking, and having a dialog with God. It is natural communication with the true living God.

We don't need to use special or fancy words in order to pray right, neither do we need to use a certain tone of voice. Neither should we simply repeat learned phrases or memorized prayers.

Prayer is direct communication with God. It is as if we have a direct phone line to Him. Romans 8:15 says, "And by him we cry, Abba" [Daddy]. Anyone who wants to be a victorious Christian should use the means that God has given us for that purpose. For example, the first thing you should do is begin a daily prayer habit. This is extremely important.

The man or woman who prays **daily** receives surprising benefits. Prayer is our means of obtaining things from God. An example is the promise Jesus gave: "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8).

You can see the power of faith according to what Jesus said in Mark 11:22-24: “‘Have faith in God,’ Jesus answered. ‘I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.’”

Prayer is God’s heartbeat; it is God’s divine language.

Prayer is the key to bind and loose, open and shut.

Psalms 34 verses 4 and 6 say, “I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles (and fears).”

The best way to be freed from fear is through prayer.

Prayer, or communion with God’s son and His heavenly Father, includes four things:

1. Worship
2. Thanksgiving
3. Confession
4. Petition

For example, prayer should be said in Jesus’ name. The Bible says, “I will do whatever you ask [the Father] in my name” (John 14:13).

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Prayer is pouring out our hearts before the Creator, and His answering by pouring out blessings.

What should our attitude be when we pray?

We should pray with both confidence and humility. “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

What do we do when we feel that our prayers aren't worthy before God?

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

He also gives us the following invitation: “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

Two ways of praying:

1. We should pray daily (personally):
 - a) The disciples said, “teach us how to pray” and Jesus taught them: The “Our Father” (Luke 11:1-4, Matthew 6:9-13)
 - b) To pray for our own needs: “For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened” (Luke 11:9-10).
2. We should pray for others:
 - a) To stand in the gap (Ezekiel 22:30).
 - b) “If two agree about anything...” (Matthew 18:18-20, Jeremiah 1:8-10).

A very important word of advice I want to give you is to make prayer **a daily habit**. Every day, we should bring every aspect of our life before the Father in prayer; your daily activities, finances, problems, your hopes, and your career. If you're faithful to do this every day, your life will develop according to what God wants for you.

If you are someone who desires God's presence, you won't be satisfied with merely following His footsteps. You will follow Him until you reach Him.

Don't forget, prayer has no limits-it crosses boundaries, continents, and space. It travels faster than light and goes

straight to God's throne. Prayer is the best postman in the world.

REFLECTION: *What does prayer mean to you?*

Memory verses: Mark 11:23-24

Group questions

Chapter 4: Be Faithful in God's Word

Why is the Bible considered to be the greatest book in the world? The answer is simple: Because it's God's Word! When we read it, we read a word that comes straight from God Himself! When the Bible speaks, God is speaking!

Since the Bible is God's Word, He gives us much more than simple information, He gives us life promises. And everyone who receives the Bible's message of the Gospel in faith, is promised the indescribable gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ, God's Son.

One of a new Christian's first responsibilities is to get a Bible to learn from and enjoy. It is spiritual food for the new believer; in the same way he feeds and dresses his physical body, he should feed and dress his spiritual body (Matthew 6:25-34).

Now in order to understand the Bible correctly, you should study it with the idea that God is speaking to your life through His holy word.

If you noticed, the title of this chapter is **Be Faithful in God's Word** daily. The word "faithful" means devout, loyal, close to, fulfilling, punctual, exact, constant, perseverant, committed, etc.

Wow! God wants us to be faithful to His word, in the same way that we are faithful in feeding and dressing our bodies.

What is the Bible?

The Bible is composed of sixty-six books, divided into two testaments (pacts): The Old and New Testaments. It was written by approximately forty different writers living in different places, all of them inspired throughout a period of 1,600 years.

The Old Testament has thirty-nine books and begins with the creation of the world through the return of the Israelites from the Babylonian exile.

The New Testament has twenty-seven books which cover Jesus Christ's birth through Revelation.

It is recommended that you read the New Testament from the beginning through the end, chapter by chapter; don't skip anything. It's a guide for your Christian life. It's recommended that you read at least three chapters a day.

The Bible represents a map with instructions and teaching, to provide a plan with a destiny for each of us in life. God's word is like a beacon or a lighthouse to guide us. Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."

The main sections of the Old and New Testaments are the following:

Old Testament (Thirty-nine books)

The Law or Pentateuch (5)

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

History Books (12)

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
I & II Samuel
I & II Kings
I & II Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

Poetic and Wisdom Books (5)

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

Major Prophets (5)

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel

Minor Prophets (12)

Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum

Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

The New Testament

The Gospels (4)

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John

History (1)

Acts

Paul's Epistles (13)

Romans
I & II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
I & II Thesalonians
I & II Timothy
Titus
Philemon

General Epistles (8)

Hebrews
James

I & II Peter
I, II & III John
Judah

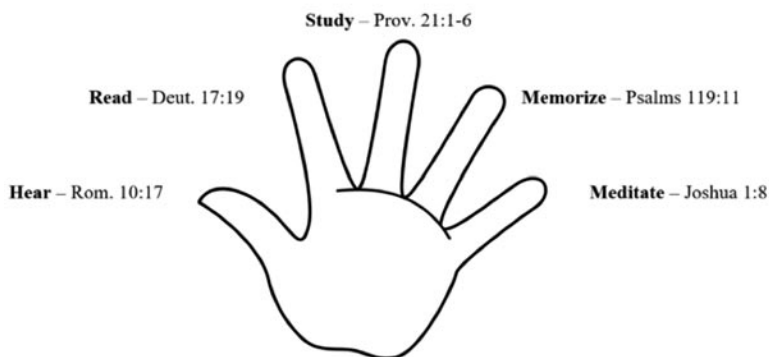
Prophecy (1)
Revelation

Why do we need the Bible? No one can live life fully without knowing God's true Word. "Man doesn't live by bread alone, but by every Word that comes from God's mouth" Matthew 4:4).

Where did the Bible come from?

The Bible is from God Himself. God chose many people so that they would write what He wanted them to write. All Scripture is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16). In other words, men spoke on God's behalf, through the quickening of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).

Let's review the following illustration of a hand, to help us understand God's Word.



It is recommended that when you read the Word, you do so with your spoken voice. Why? Because when you do it that way, you are speaking it, hearing it, confessing it and studying it all at one time. With this method, you are proclaiming and confessing life over your spirit, soul, mind and body with God's Word.

It's vital to recognize these important facts about the Bible:

1) The world recognizes its divinity.

- All thinkers place the Bible in a special class because they recognize its supernatural character.
- It has been translated into more languages and dialects than any other book and it is also the book that has been sold and circulated most in the world.
The wisest people on earth bow down before it in reverence.

2) We know it is a divine book due to the results

- Disobedience to the divine word leads to sin, suffering and pain.
- It is a book with historical facts.

3) The Word will outlive the universe

- It has resisted the brutal attacks of its enemies.

4) The Word feeds our spirit.

- Because when we study it, it increases our faith, since faith comes from hearing, and hearing God's Word (Romans 10:17).

(5) God's Word is the Sword of the Spirit

- The armor in Ephesians 6:10-18: Every suit of armor includes parts that protect and attack. The sword is different from the other parts because it's there to

attack. A sword that is always kept put away in its holder serves no purpose.

REFLECTION: *What does the Word mean to you?*

Memory verse: 2 Timothy 3:16.

Group questions

Chapter 5: Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Now we have arrived at the powerful experience that was responsible for the miraculous growth of the Christian church during the first years until today, and which has been the principal cause of dynamic revival that has moved the entire world.

In this chapter I want to explain the reasons for the Holy Spirit and its manifestations.

Many suppose that the Holy Spirit is a kind of ghost, a dove, a second act of grace or second blessing, etc. It has been believed that it has different forms, but the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. It's not a thing or an influence. ***It's a person.***

A person has different ways of manifesting himself. God's Word says in John 14:16, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor..." which means He is your counselor, helper, intercessor, advocate, strengthener, companion, teacher, "...to be with you forever."

The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit has always been with the Father and the Son, from the beginning of creation. All three form the Trinity: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Many can get confused about receiving the Holy Spirit and becoming born again. The difference is that when *one experiences the fullness or the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the evidence is speaking in unknown tongues* (1 Corinthians 12:10 and 14:2).

Hebrews 6:12 mentions the doctrine of the baptisms (plural). There are several baptisms; baptism in Christ in salvation, baptism in water, baptism of the Holy Spirit, baptism of fire, etc.

What is The Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a definitive experience that comes **after** salvation (or the new birth). It is a promise and gift of the Father and Son, given to every believer through the Holy Spirit, with power.

The initial evidence is speaking in other tongues with power, so that the Holy Spirit can intercede for us, so that we will have victory over temptations-sinful tendencies that come against every believer.

The baptism leads us to truth and fills us with power so that we can become effective witnesses of the great saving truths of the gospel.

Where did the phrase “baptism of the Holy Spirit” come from?

- Matthew 3:11, “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”
- Acts 1:5, “You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Why is it important to speak in tongues?

Because it’s necessary to receive the full gospel and understand the purpose and need through God’s eyes. Seeing His panorama is a glorious experience and a satisfaction that edifies and enriches the believer for the rest of his life.

Important reasons:

Acts 1:8 says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.”

1. In order to serve.
2. Power for spiritual battles.
3. Power for witnessing.
4. Power for healing and casting out demons.

5. It gives us passion for the lost.
6. It gives us faith, courage, strength and a deeper prayer life.

Speaking in tongues also brings us rest and refreshing (Isaiah 28:11-12). It helps us to understand the spiritual life (John 16:15). It helps us to talk with God and guides us to all truth (John 16:13). We are edified by it (1 Corinthians 14:4, 14), and reminded of the Holy Spirit's presence (John 14:16-17). It keeps us free from worldly contamination (2 Corinthians 6:14-18, 7:1). It helps us to trust and stimulates our faith.

How to Receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

We should know that **we have the right or promise** from the Father to receive the gift or baptism of the Holy Spirit. Where we see the gifts mentioned in the Bible, it is the eighth gift and **is a free gift from God**. Everyone who truly wants it, who hungers and thirsts for it, will be able to receive it.

First: The seeker must be born again.

John 14:16 and 17 clearly states that those who haven't been born again don't know God: "The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him".

Second: The seeker must want more of God.

"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." Here He was referring to the Holy Spirit, and that those who believed in Him. By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified (John 7:37-39).

Third: The seeker must ask.

“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”

“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him”
(Luke 11:9-13).

Tips for Receiving:

When you ask for the fullness of the Holy Spirit, ask in the same way as when you received Jesus-through faith, accepting God's Word.

If you've been born again, all you need to do is invite Him to come in. God is ready and willing to give you the Holy Spirit when you ask for it. The Holy Spirit came to the world from the beginning and is still here. He is here with you at this very moment. He is more ready to fill you, than you are to receive Him.

The Holy Spirit is always present, always ready to move, because He wants you to be a powerful witness of Jesus Christ. However, it's a voluntary act-in order to receive the Holy Spirit, it's necessary for you to have the same desire that you had when you were born again. However, if you don't want Him, He will not force you-He's a gentleman.

Receiving the Holy Spirit requires that you have a humble heart for God. I advise that you remain open and willing before God. Give Him your spirit, soul, mind, tongue, etc. Tell Him: “Here I am! I ask you to come live inside me, and I know that you will, because your word says that you will give the Holy Spirit to all those who ask for it. So now I am asking, **Fill me with the baptism of the Holy Spirit.**”

Remember that it doesn't come because of how you feel, you will receive it because of your simple faith.

When you have received the Holy Spirit, something extraordinary will take place: you will be able to speak in other tongues, for Acts 2:4 states, "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues."

Evidences of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

When you speak in tongues, you're "praying in the Spirit." In the same way that Spanish or English is the voice of your mind, praying in tongues is the voice of your spirit.

Speaking in tongues is your spirit speaking mysteries to God, so no man can understand what you're saying. In 1 Corinthians 14:2, Paul said, "For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit."

I suggest that you read chapters one through twenty in the book of Acts, , to give you a better idea of what the work of the Holy Spirit is, and where it shows seven evidences of this baptism when it came, fell, descended and poured out over His people.

References:

1. Acts 1:8: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you."
2. Acts 2:4: All of them received other tongues (120 Christians, including Mary, Jesus' mother and His brothers. Acts 1:14).
3. Acts 2:38-39: "And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."
4. Acts 8:17: "Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit."

5. Acts 9:17: “The apostle Paul received the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and he said, ‘I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you’” (1 Corinthians 14:18).
6. Acts 10:44-46: “For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.”
7. Acts 19:6: “When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.”

Note: The baptism of the Holy Spirit is for today, for all those who ask for it. Sadly, some say that the gift or baptism was only for two thousand years ago, and that it isn't for today. However, Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8, Ephesians 2:20).

The truth is that living without the baptism of the Holy Spirit is like having a car without gasoline or oil.

Prayer to receive the Holy Spirit

I want to pray with you so that you will receive the baptism, gift or fullness of the Holy Spirit. Let's pray as follows:

Heavenly Father, I'm a believer, I'm your child and you're my Father. Jesus is my Lord. I believe with all my heart that your Word is truth when it says that if I ask, I will receive the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, in the name of Jesus Christ, my Lord, I ask that you fill me with your baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ, baptize me with the Holy Spirit. I believe in your Word and I receive it. I thank you and believe that the Holy Spirit is in me now. I accept it by faith.

Now, Holy Spirit, rise within me as I worship my God. I expect to speak other tongues as you give me the words I am to speak.

Put it into practice. Begin to praise God and thank Him for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. As you do this, you are

going to feel within your spirit that certain unknown words and syllables are coming forth.

Even though you don't understand them, say the words by faith. Don't speak Spanish, English or your native language. It's not possible to speak two tongues at one time. Allow the language of the Holy Spirit to flow naturally. Speak the syllables that are on your lips-you may begin to make sounds like a newborn baby.

Remember, you must use your tongue and your voice; God will support you and won't force you. If the evidence of speaking in other tongues has been demonstrated, then you have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Congratulations!

REFLECTION: *What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?*

Memory verse: Acts 1:8

Group questions

Chapter 6:

The Local Church and Its Leadership

I thank God because He has a plan for the local church, with a destiny and vision for God's people.

Many still haven't understood the true meaning of the local church and its leadership.

The word "church" has several meanings today. It is used to refer to a building, a cathedral, a congregation, a denomination, or Christianity in general. But the New Testament doesn't refer to these things. So, what is the local church?

The local church should be composed only of renewed members. In other words, people who have been born again (John 3:3), who fulfill Christ's will, and who form part of the body, assembly, congregation or local church.

The word **church** in Greek is *ekklesia*, which means "to call out of" and it is mentioned fifty-eight times in the New Testament. It is represented as a room, a house, a matrix, a stable or firm place. It's a place where we can find teaching and love, a word of encouragement, hope, peace, and faith, as well as healing, friendship, protection, guidance, counsel and direction in life.

The church calls us to be different from others (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). We are to be salt of the earth in such a way that our light shines before men.

Usually, the local church is a congregation that is organized to worship God, observe the Gospel's ordinances and practice God's commandments.

The word church is mentioned for the first time in reference to the confession that Peter made when he called Jesus the Christ.

Matthew 16:18-19 says, "And I tell you that **you are Peter...**". The Greek word for Peter is *petros*, which mean a *fragment of rock*, and the word *Rock* is *petra* and it refers to Jesus Christ, who is a giant rock, the "cornerstone".

"...and on this rock **I will build my church** (*called out of*) and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. **I will give you** (every member of God's church) the **keys of the kingdom of heaven.**"

It's interesting that the first time that "church" is mentioned, Jesus is teaching us to take authority over the enemy and to overcome.

Where did the local church begin?

In the primitive church, "the local church," we find the first fruits (Christians) establishing order with their conduct. The scriptures tell us in Acts 2:40-47 that we should be saved, baptized, persevering in doctrine, and having fellowship with others in the breaking of bread (celebration of the Last Supper) and in prayer.

"...praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (vs. 47).

The word *communion* in Greek is *koinonia*, which means "to share, unity, a close association, participation, a society, a fellowship, helpful contribution, brethren."

Koinonia is a unity produced by the Holy Spirit. In this environment, the individual keeps close relationships and

fellowship with the rest of Christian society. Koinonia produces a solid unity between the believers and Jesus Christ, as well as with one another.

That is why it is so important to congregate in the local church and to be in communion, as well as to obey His mandates as expressed in Hebrews 10:23-25:

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching (vs. 25).”

What kind of church should I seek?

It's important to mention that perfect churches don't exist. But it should be a church full of life that both gives to and receives the community.

There are certain characteristics, or requirements, one should consider when choosing a church:

1. The church should have the Holy Scriptures, the Bible, as its sole foundation, taking into account that “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).
2. The church should believe in and preach the new birth.
3. The church should allow expression in its praise and worship music (Psalm 95:1, 3)
4. The church should move freely in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:8-10).
5. The church should have an emphasis on love and interest in children and Sunday School (Luke 18:16).
6. The church should focus on youth, because where there is youth, there is life (1 Timothy 4:12).

7. The church should be involved in winning and discipling souls for God's Kingdom (Matthew 28:18, 19).

I've found a church

Once I've found a local church where I feel comfortable and that fulfills these reference points, what do I do next?

The answer is simple: Get involved! The Bible tells us that the local church is the body of Christ and that we are its members. So, as members, we must work together and join forces to build up the body (1 Corinthians 12:12-26).

The leadership

From the beginning, in Genesis through Revelation, we see the need for leadership and its divine purposes.

Duties that God has assigned:

The leaders should have integrity; they are people who have authority over a group and determine the direction, according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They are to be equipped, instructed and competent as ministers of God.

The Bible teaches us that since the primitive church in Jesus' times, God placed apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in the church.

What for? "...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:11-16).

We should appreciate the leadership of the Church

"Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other" (1 Thessalonians 5:12,13).

The Bible also says that God placed pastors in order to look after His flock-to feed and pastor the sheep. It teaches us to: “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Hebrews 13:17).

We see the importance of respecting, appreciating, obeying, honoring, loving, praying for and even doing battle in favor of our leaders.

However, we should take the following into account:

- Faithfulness is fighting until the very end for that which, or in whom, we have believed or with whom we have made a commitment. Your pastors or leaders don't need the church to judge them or criticize them, but rather to lift them up in prayer.
- When God shows us something about one of His servants, it's not for us to knock them down with comments or criticism, but it's so that we will secretly pray and intercede on their behalf before God.
- Pastors are imperfect human beings who make mistakes and who need our prayers, wisdom and compassion. No pastor can develop a church totally on his own.

The pastor needs a group of dedicated and local people to help fulfill the work of the ministry and the vision that God has given him.

If you're looking for a perfect church or perfect leaders, **I'm sorry to tell you that these don't exist**, but you will find people who, despite their imperfections, will love you and will pray for you, since they are accountable to God for you. Support your leader, be a blessing, and be a part of the solution, not part of the problem.

God's Word says, "One thing I ask of the Lord. this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple" (Psalms 27:4).

"I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord'" (Psalms 122:1).

"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!" (Psalms 133:1).

"Praise the Lord, all you servants of the Lord who minister by night in the house of the Lord" (Psalms 134:1).

"If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord Almighty, they will have no rain" (Zechariah 14:17).

REFLECTION: *The church and its leadership are our protection.*

Memory verse: 1 Timothy 5:17

Group questions

Chapter 7: Be Faithful in Tithes and Offerings

Giving is part of God's nature, and this nature is established in every believer. In other words, God wants us to know the importance of giving.

Tithing and giving offerings are part of the new believer's life. Unfortunately, God's purpose for humanity has often been misunderstood.

To begin with, we need to know what the job of a *steward* is. A steward is literally the keeper of another person's interests. A steward isn't the owner of anything, but he carefully keeps, protects and increases the goods of the person whom he is serving.

It's true that we are stewards of our time, talents, strength, family and abilities, as well as of our money. But our faithfulness in tithing is really the main proof or test of our stewardship, and God wants to see our heart's attitude. The sinful nature resists giving, and it wants money mainly for self-promoting or other self-serving purposes.

How long ago was the plan for tithing established?

Tithing is as old as God's Holy Day, and as old as the church. *All three things began at the same time.* His church didn't begin in the New Testament or Pentecost, as many people believe. The truth is that it began from the time God created Adam and Eve. God placed them in the garden and

made them stewards of Eden. He allowed them access to everything there. Let's consider the following points:

1. God reserved a tree for Himself (the tithe).

It's important to note that even though Adam and Eve had dominion over this tree, they couldn't partake of its fruit because the tree belonged to God. When they disobeyed and partook of that which God had reserved for Himself, He threw them out of the garden. God has never renounced His rights, because He has declared "All the earth is Mine."

2. God has reserved one of the seven days as His (the tithe).

3. God has given the tenth of His people's money, for the growth of His Kingdom.

Wherever people keep with God's system, giving a seventh of their time and a tenth of their wages, you will see a prosperous church that is growing, a treasury with money, and the blessings of God pouring out on this church, because He is pleased.

Upon keeping one of these seven days, we will see that during the other six days we will be guided by the Lord, because when we sanctify one day, the other six are blessed by Him.

In the same way, when we are faithful with our offerings and tithes, He will guide us regarding what we should do with what is left over.

Now that we clearly understand what a steward is, and how the tithing plan began, the next question is: *What are tithes and offerings?*

The tithe is the tenth part of all the income we receive.

An offering is what we Give God on a voluntary basis, for any reason.

In other words, an offering is any amount we give above the tithe. Why do offerings and tithes exist? Because it's God's

perfect plan for supporting and spreading His Kingdom throughout all the Earth.

For example: Does God need our money? **No**. He owns all the silver and gold, He is the Creator of everything, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. So no, He doesn't need our money. But, as I said before, it is His plan to spread His Kingdom, but more than that, He wants to see the **attitude within our heart**.

What does “**attitude**” mean? It is a disposition, appearance, state of mind, how we feel about something, a point of view, or behavior.

In Deuteronomy 8:18, God gives us the following promise, “...it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.”

But if you carefully read all of Deuteronomy 8, you will find that the attitude-humility and integrity-are the key for Him to confirm the covenant that He promised. Verse 18 shows that these characteristics are important in order to have riches, blessings, biblical prosperity, health, wellbeing, and so on.

Common Questions Regarding Tithes and Offerings

- 1. Whom do they belong to?** The Word says: “A tithe of everything...belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD” (Leviticus 27:30). Never forget that God is the owner of everything (Psalm 24:1, 50:10-12, Haggai 2:8).
- 2. Why should we give?** Because God tells us to. “Be sure to set aside a tenth of all...” (Deuteronomy 14:22). He wants to see our hearts.
- 3. Where should we give our tithe?** Where God has placed you, in other words, your local church. “Bring

the whole tithe into the storehouse...,” the place where grain is stored, a deposit, a place where spiritual food is received, “...that there may be food in my house. (Malachi 3:10 and Deuteronomy 12:13).

4. **How much of the tithe shall I bring?** “Bring the whole tithe” (Malachi 3:10).
5. **Can I give it wherever I want?** No, “Be careful not to sacrifice your burnt offerings anywhere you please” (Deuteronomy 12:13).

“Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always” (Deuteronomy 14:23). It’s important to emphasize that tithes don’t go to our relatives in need, or to television ministries, or special evangelism or missions ministries, etc. The tithe goes to the storehouse (the local church). On the other hand, your offerings can go to these special causes or ministries, if you so wish.

6. **What happens if one doesn’t pay the tithe?** There’s no blessing, nor the benefit of having the gates of heaven opened for them. “Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How did we rob you?’ In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me” (Malachi 3:8-9).

God’s Word doesn’t say that we have robbed the church, but rather He says, “You rob me.” This explains why the devourer comes and why so many people battle with illness, medical bills, poverty, family crises and unemployment.

He says, “The whole nation of you... are robbing

me,” and this is why some nations are cursed when they deny the Almighty God. The consequences are hunger, lack, earthquakes, bad weather, plagues of insects that eat their fruit, etc. (Malachi 3:8-11).

7. What benefits do tithing bring? As the Word says in Malachi, tithing brings supernatural blessing, and the floodgates of heaven open in our favor. “Then I will rebuke the devourer (Satan) for you,” (Malachi 3: 11).

8. Is money a curse? Of course not! It’s a blessing if we use it for God’s glory. 1 Timothy 6:10 says, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.” When money becomes our greatest desire, and it is dearer to us than fulfilling God’s will, then it becomes a sin or a curse.

Matthew 6:24 says, “No one can serve two masters.” Take note this clearly states that you cannot serve God and wealth at the same time.

When you work so many extra hours just to make more money, to the degree that it leaves you with no time to place God and His work as your first priority in life, then money has become your god and this will keep you from living a life that pleases God.

9. Is it true that Jesus and the apostles ended tithing?

This is hard to believe, since one in every six verses in the New Testament refers to money or avarice. A tenth of the Lord’s parables also have to do with money.

10. What did Jesus say about tithing? We should tithe and he gave an example, the widow who gave her two mites, or coins. This pleased God, because she gave everything she had (Luke 21:2). Jesus, on the other hand, reproached the attitude of the Pharisees, who were very meticulous with tithes, while they were

careless regarding righteousness and mercy. He said that it was right to pay tithes, but that they should have the same zeal when it came to showing love and mercy (Luke 11:42).

11. Was the tithing plan given under the Mosaic law?

No, it was given under Levitical law, before the law was given to Moses. Christ didn't come to end the law, but rather to fulfill it. Did you know that the tithe and offering are a divine design revealed to Moses, as God's will for His people, not only as a way to support the priesthood, but also as a way of recognizing God as the giver of their harvest?

There are some people who think that the tithe was only for the Old Testament, and not for the New Testament. However, a long time before the law was given to Moses on Mount Sinai, Abraham understood that he was nothing more than a steward of everything he had. For that reason, he gave a tithe to Melchizedec, a priest of the most High God (Hebrews 7:1-9).

If we are tempted to believe that the tithe was only an Old Testament custom that has nothing to do with our present-day experience, let's consider the following facts:

- Abraham practiced it more than 400 years before God gave the Law.
- Abraham was not only justified by faith, but rather he demonstrated his faith with his works, and he paid his tithes to God's priest.
- A law that came 400 years later cannot invalidate the righteousness that came before it.

A question-if you were God, **what system would you use to provide for your people? Tithes and offerings, of course.**

The fact is, God leaves no question unanswered!

How much of the tithe? The whole tithe.
Where? The storehouse.
Why? Let there be food in the house.
When? The first day of the week.

Offerings

1. What's the difference between tithes and offerings?

The difference is that our tithes are paid to God, whereas our offerings are given to God (Matthew 23:23).

Offering is what we voluntarily give to God, for any reason.

2. When, to whom and in what proportion should they be given? “On the first day of every week, (regularly) each one of you (everyone) should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up” (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

We should take note that the offerings were: a) systematic on the first day of the week, and b) in proportion to how much God had prospered them.

New Testament churches paid salaries to their ministers (elders) and provided help to the poor and widows.

These church needs required offerings that were systematic and proportional to the income of each church member. There is no system for offering that is superior to the tithe for fulfilling God's plan.

3. What are the first fruits? It's the first part of the profit received from the harvest, the first of all things, which one should give to God (Numbers 8:13).

4. What are vows? Faith promises and other offerings, given for building a church, etc.

So, the question is: Who wants to give a voluntary offering to God today? (1 Chronicles 29:5-9).

- 5. What is biblical prosperity?** Prosperity in Hebrew is, to surpass, receive the necessary provision, benefit, advance.

Prosperity in Greek means: Have success, successfully reach a goal, have a prosperous workday, have victory in life.

- 6. Who doesn't want to be prospered!**

John 3:2 says, "Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers."

God's promises to those who give:

Abundance - 2 Corinthians 9:8, Proverbs 11:24.

Overabundance - Deuteronomy 28:11-12.

Give and it shall be given to you. Luke 6:38

Generosity - 2 Corinthians, Chapters 8 and 9.

Joy - 2 Corinthians 9:7.

Testimonies of some famous tithers:

- J.C. Penney, owner of the department stores that bear his name.
- Mr. Kraft, owner of the Kraft cheese company, began tithing when he was selling milk and cheese in a hand driven cart on the streets of New York. He ended up being a magnate.
- A. A. Hyde, owner of the "Mentholatum" company.
- Mr. Heinz of the 57 products put out by Heinz, and the company that manufactures "Kerr" jars.
- William Colgate, of Colgate toothpaste and shaving cream, began tithing when he was a youth. First, he tithed one tenth, then two tenths, then three, four and eventually fifty percent of his income. By then he

made enough to live comfortably for the rest of his life, thanks to all the earnings that God had provided him with.

- John D. Rockefeller, the most notable financial expert in the world, began tithing when he was just eight years old. During that time he was very poor, but as we all know, he ended up being one of the wealthiest men in the world.

REFLECTION: *God wants to bless us.*

Memory verse: 2 Corinthians 8:9

Group questions

Chapter 8: A True Worshipper

The Bible tells us the story about a Samaritan woman who had a conversation with Jesus regarding her personal life, alongside a well.

One of the phrases that Jesus mentioned while he spoke with her was: “But **an hour is coming, and now is**, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers.

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23- 24). He refers to “true worshippers.” This implies that there are also false worshippers who can interpret worship in a wrong manner.

Who is a Worshipper?

He is a person who has a relationship with God, who gives Him honor and worship, for who He is.

“Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created” (Revelation 4:11). If we read Psalms 95:17, we will see the difference between ***praise*** and ***worship***.

“Praise”

Enlarge, exalt, magnify with great joy, dance, clapping, etc.

“Worship”

Honor, serve, kneel, lift hands, be quiet before Him, spiritual songs, etc.

What's the difference between the two?

In my opinion, it's very similar to the Tabernacle in the Old Testament, which had three parts or sections:

First: "The atrium." Praise with clapping, dancing, shouts of joy, and more.

Second: "The Holy Place." Praise that is a little calmer and more serene, but isn't worship just yet.

Third: "The Holy of Holies." Worship, lifted hands, kneeling or bowing, brokenness, being quiet before Him, speaking in heavenly tongues, and more.

During the Old Testament times, worshippers couldn't go into the Holy Place, they could only stay in the outside court of the Tabernacle. Only the High Priest could go into the Holy of Holies, and that was just once a year, in order to make a blood sacrifice for the redemption of the sins of the people. The other priests could only be in the Holy Place, but they could never go beyond the veil where the Holy of Holies was.

But guess what? Today everything is different, Jesus Christ's redemption has been fulfilled, the veil has been torn from top to bottom, and God has totally opened all access to Him. Today, the priests, the worshippers (we) have the freedom to go into the Holy of Holies on a daily basis to worship without reservation, fear or limitations (Hebrews 4:16).

Psalms 115:1-8 shows us that as we continue to worship, we will become more and more like He whom we worship. His attributes or characteristics will be transferred to us, and we will be a product of that which we worship, and it will be transferred to coming generations.

What about musical influences?

Our body reacts to stimuli, according to the melody we listen to. You can know the condition of a nation or of an

individual by his song. Our singing is a clear expression of our emotional state.

It has been scientifically proven that musical notes produce life. My question is, what kind of life?

During the times of the restoration of Nehemiah, the singers had a very particular importance. While the people rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem by families, there was a group of singers designated exclusively for singing.

This way they lifted and strengthened the peoples' spirits, and they connected with the Holy Spirit. Music can produce different emotional states due to its influence.

Music is composed of rhythm, melody and harmony:

Rhythm: It makes our body react to movements. These can be slight standing movements, the way we sing, or cause us to dance.

Harmony: It links our feelings to our soul and can produce joy or tears.

Melody: It links directly to our spirit and it feeds on the words.

We need to pay attention!

For example, what happens when a song is in a different language than my own? God designed us perfectly, we have a conscious, a subconscious and unconscious. This surprising translator sends translated words to our mind without our ability to perceive it; but we react visibly, doing what our subconscious translated.

For this reason, we must be careful. Music and lyrics have such an influence, that they can incite love, the sexual act, pornography, suicide, divorce, excesses, drugs, and more.

Music and instruments are also used to influence the worship service and idols.

“Therefore at that time, when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery, bagpipe and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshiped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up” (Daniel 3:7).

But Daniel and his friends did NOT bow down to the statue. Why? Because they knew to Whom they should truly give honor and worship.

Where did music begin?

This event happened in heaven, in heavenly places, which involved God and one of His principal angels.

The Bible tells us that Lucifer was a “perfect and beautiful cherubim” who was gifted with certain musical characteristics such as drums and flutes. It can be said that he was the musical director in Heaven.

Many theologians declare that every time he moved from one place to another, he produced music. However, we’re given a clear image of his totally evil nature and his words that were based on envy and hate toward God, something he projected onto all humankind.

Not a whole lot of time passed before humans began to know music. Genesis 4:21 says, “...Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute.”

Humans began to notice that they could make sounds with their bodies, such as rhythmically clapping their hands, and that with their voices they could produce music. They began to notice that indeterminate sounds produce “noise” whereas determinate sounds produced “music.” Then instruments came along.

The fact is that neither God nor Satan have changed since the Garden of Eden. God continues to be the Creator and

sovereign while Satan continues to thirst for the worship of others.

There are many ways we can express our praise and worship to God.

Here we have at least twelve forms:

1. Our mouths
2. Our hands
3. Songs
4. Instruments
5. Dancing
6. Standing
7. Bowing
8. Kneeling
9. Clapping
10. Sitting
11. With joy and laughter
12. With shouts of joy

Hebrews 13:15 says, “Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name.”

Psalms speak of:

- In reverence will I bow down toward your holy temple (Psalm 5:7).
- “And all the families of the nations will bow down before him” (Psalm 22:27) Jewish families learned to worship and praise the living God and to not bow down before false Gods.
- “Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness....” (Psalm 29:2).
- “All the earth bows down to you: they sing praise to you,” (Psalms 66:4).

Why?

Here are some references regarding praising and worshipping God according to the Holy Scriptures in the local church.

- a) **Why do we sing with joy and worship God?** Psalms 95:1 and 2, “Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD....”
- b) **Why do we lift our hands?** Psalms 134:2, “Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the LORD.”
- c) **Why do we clap?** Psalms 47:1 “Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.”
- d) **Why do we use musical instruments?** Psalms 150:3-4: “Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute....”
- e) **Why do we dance before the Lord?** Psalms 30:11, “You turned my wailing into dancing....”
- f) **Why do we stand on our feet when singing?** 2 Chronicles 20:19, “Then some Levites from the Kohathites and Korahites stood up and praised the LORD, the God of Israel, with very loud voice.”

What is true worship?

1. **True worship brings revelation from God and His presence.**

The Holy Spirit guides Barnabas and Saul (Paul) to fulfill their appointed task (Acts 13:2).

2. **True worship brings strength.**

“The joy of the LORD is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10), and Psalms 8:2, “From the lips of children and

infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger.”

3. True worship brings deliverance.

In 2 Chronicles 20:1-30 we read that when there is reverence and praise songs to God there is victory over our enemies (v 22). We have a perfect example in Acts 16:25-26 when Paul and Silas were in jail.

4. True worship brings emotional, mental, physical and spiritual healing.

1 Samuel 16:14-23 tells us that “David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.”

The kind of music we listen to has great influence over us. Psalms 71:23, “My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you—I, whom you have redeemed.” Psalms 9:2, “I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.”

True worship is communion Spirit to spirit. From the depths of man (his spirit) comes forth the desire to worship God. It’s important to remember that we are spirit above all. The soul is secondary, and our bodies are only temporary.

Be careful regarding what you sing, because simply singing and playing instruments doesn’t make us **WORSHIPPERS**. We must embrace all of God’s truth and then we are automatically worshipping.

REFLECTION: *What is a true worshipper?*

Memory verse: John 4:24.

Group questions

Prayer for Salvation

Now it's your opportunity to invite Jesus Christ into your heart. It's what was shared at the beginning of this book. Do you remember the process of the butterfly and Nicodemus and the new birth? That will be the same process for accepting God's forgiveness.

To help you with this, I invite you to sincerely pray the following prayer, or you can say your own prayer, with content as follows:

Dear God, I confess that I am a sinner and that I need your forgiveness. I truly repent of all my sins and I humbly ask that you forgive me and cleanse me. I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross in my place and that he was resurrected for my salvation. In faith I accept the gift of eternal life and with your help I promise to serve you as long as I live. I pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

The Bible says that all of those who receive Jesus and believe in His name, are given the right to become children of God.

That is a life-giving promise! **Welcome to God's family!**

This book will help you learn the biblical principles of the Christian life. You can apply these steps in any culture, teaching, study, home group or just your everyday walk of life. In my experience as a minister, these steps are a great tool for the local church and a priority for new believers in the faith of Christ.



Jeffrey L. Whiston has more than thirty-nine years of experience as a lecturer, director, pastor, missionary, pioneer, strategist, consultant, founder, networker and church planter in Spain, Mexico and the United States.

Jeff has ministered in many countries throughout the world and has a heart to see humanity saved for the cause of Christ. Leaving his career and studies at the Cordon Bleu Culinary School in Paris, France to become a chef, he was saved, trained and did his schooling for six years in Spain, resulting in pioneering churches throughout Spain, Mexico and the United States. Author of several books that are in different languages, Chaplain for the minor baseball team Houston Astros, Today Jeff and his wife Coco pastor two churches in Austin, Texas.



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