

MODULE 2 – SESSION 1

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

I. WHY DAILY PRAYER IS SO VITAL

- A. We were created to have fellowship with God. There was no other part of creation that was given the privilege that human beings were given; which is fellowship, dialogue, and communication with the Creator.

Rev 3:20 – ***"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."*** KJV

Jer 29:11-13 – ***"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. 12 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. 13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."*** KJV

- B. We are **commanded** to pray!

Eph 6:18 – ***"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"*** KJV

1 Tim 2:1 – ***"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;"*** KJV

Col 4:2 – ***"Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful."*** NIV

1 Thess 5:17 – ***"Be unceasing in prayer [praying perseveringly];"*** AMP

- C. God **answers** prayer.

James 5:16 – ***"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*** KJV

Jer 33:3 – ***"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."*** KJV

II. FIVE THINGS PRAYER WILL DO!

- A. Prayer gets your spirit **closer** to HIS!

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- When you pray, you are drawing close to God. When you get close to Him, you become more like Him.

James 4:8 – ***"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you."***

Phil 3:10 – ***"[For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers], and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [in spirit into His likeness even] to His death, [in the hope]"***
AMP

- "know" in Greek means to **perceive**, to be **aware**, to **understand**, being **intimate**.

B. Prayer changes your **attitude**.

- You cannot remain under the presence of God and harbor hatred, envy, strife, etc. He is love, and when you pray, that love affects your thoughts and actions.

C. Prayer affects the **enemy**.

- Your prayers have great impact on the kingdom of evil. By praying we have power over demons! Even the strongest demon must flee at the prayer of God's elect.
- In Daniel Chapter 10, this captive prince living in a strange land began to pray against the Prince of Persia. He prayed for 21 days, the Lord heard his prayer, and sent an angel to assist him. Daniel turned the fate of an entire nation. The power of the prayers of one child of God is awesome.

D. Prayer changes **heaven**. (II Kings 20:106)

- Hezekiah prayed and changed the mind of God. He was to die and his prayer added 15 years to his life. Your prayers affect the way God deals with you and those you pray for.

E. Prayer affects **others**.

- Your prayers touch the hearts of others. Your prayers cause God to move to the needs of others. Some of them don't pray for themselves and your prayer is the only thing that stands between them and the devil.

III. Here are 9 steps to guaranteed prayer success using the "Our Father Prayer" model in Matthew 6:9-13.

Luke 11:1 – ***"And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."*** KJV

Step #1 Matt 6:9 – ***"Our Father which art in heaven..."***

This acknowledges and establishes your relationship with God through praise. Get lost in praise; in a spirit of worship, lift Him up and you will get lifted up.

Ps 68:5 – ***"A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation."*** KJV

Ps 103:13 – ***"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him."*** KJV

James 1:17 – ***"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."*** KJV

Matt 7:11- ***"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"*** KJV

2 Cor 1:3-4 – ***"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."*** KJV

Rom 8:14-17 – ***"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."*** KJV

- **Develop a child-like attitude at this time in your prayer.**

Step #2 Matt 6:9 – ***"...Hallowed be thy name."*** KJV

Hallowed means holy and consecrated. This establishes His authority. Your faith is up at this point and you are ready for **warfare** and **intercession**.

Ps 20:7 – ***"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God."*** KJV

Ps 100:4 – ***"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name."*** KJV

Ps 103:1-2 – ***"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:"*** KJV

Prov 18:10 – ***"The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."*** KJV

Isa 9:6 – ***"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."*** KJV

Phil 2:9 – ***"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:"*** KJV

Step #3 Matt 6:10 – ***"Thy kingdom come..."*** KJV

This is not talking about the second coming, but manifesting His kingdom and Glory now!

Rom 14:17 – ***"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."*** KJV

Mark 9:1 – ***"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."*** KJV

1 Cor 4:20 – ***"For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."*** KJV

Begin binding and loosening and interceding for:

Church, Pastor and his family, church leadership, brothers and sisters by name, surrounding communities, district, nation, missionaries world-wide, contacts by name (people at work, family and friends), and backsliders.

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Step #4 Matt 6:10 – ***"...thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."***

Pray for His will to be done in your life, in your church and in the lives of your friends and lost souls.

Ps 40:8 – ***"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."*** KJV

Ps 143:10 – ***"Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."*** KJV

Matt 7:21 – ***"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."*** KJV

John 4:34 – ***"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."*** KJV

Step #5 Matt 6:11 – ***"Give us this day our daily bread."*** KJV

This is present tense. It needs to be prayed daily and needs to be prayed early. It doesn't make sense to pray for daily bread at 11:30 p.m. at night!

Ps 23:5 – ***"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."*** KJV

Phil 4:19 – ***"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."*** KJV

- Supply in the Greek means **Cram**, **Complete**.

Pray for better jobs, raises, and needs to be met. Be specific.

Phil 4:6 – ***"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."*** KJV

Step #6 Matt 6:12 – ***"And forgive us our debts..."*** KJV

Forgive us is past tense. This must be prayed each day so as to not walk in condemnation.

Rom 8:1 – ***"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."*** KJV

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Matt 6:14-15 – ***"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*** KJV

Mark 11:25 – ***"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."*** KJV

Step #7 Matt 6:13 – ***"And lead us not into temptation..."*** KJV

- This is future tense.
- Pray for areas of personal weaknesses and for weaknesses of those around you.

James 1:3 – ***"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."*** KJV

1 Cor 10:13 – ***"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."*** KJV

Step #8 Matt 6:13 – ***"...but deliver us from evil..."*** KJV

Pray to be delivered from the fiery darts and the schemes of the devil.

John 8:36 – ***"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."*** KJV

2 Cor 3:17 – ***"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."*** KJV

Gal 5:1 – ***"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."*** KJV

Step #9 Matt 6:13 – ***"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."*** KJV

You started your prayer with praise, now end your prayer with praise!

IV. OVERCOMING PROBLEMS IN PRAYER

A. The problem of discipline.

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1. Your first problem you will face the moment you wake up in the morning -- "Am I going to get out of bed"? The devil will always **exaggerate** how tired you are.

When the devil and your flesh team up together, you've got a combo that is trying to keep you from having a prayer life. Some suggestions.

- Go to bed on time.
- Get up and out of bed immediately. I have found that the battle is usually won or lost in the first few seconds.
- Be aware of prayer time robbers.
- Read and pray **aloud**. That keeps your concentration.
- Walk during your prayer time. You will never fall asleep while you're walking.

B. Problem of **dryness** and what may cause it.

1. Don't depend on your **feelings**. Sometimes you're going to feel like you're not getting anything out of your prayer time. Never judge your prayer by your feelings. Emotions come and go. Don't give up and quit praying because of your feelings.
2. Your **physical** condition. Maybe you're not getting enough rest. Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is go to bed.
3. **Disobedience** to God. Sin in your life. God is not going to show you something new until you've acted on what He's already shown you.

Isa 59:2 – "Listen! The LORD is not too weak to save you, and he is not becoming deaf. He can hear you when you call. 2 But there is a problem — your sins have cut you off from God. Because of your sin, he has turned away and will not listen anymore." NLT

4. Getting in a **rut**. Doing the same thing, the same way, at the same time. Not sharing insights with others. If you don't give out what God is giving to you, you're going to dry up spiritually.

C. The problem of **diligence**.

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1. Your greatest problem is going to be your struggle to stay **consistent**. Satan will probably fight you harder on this than anything else because he knows that connecting with God on a consistent basis is where the power is.

Psalms 132:3-5 – ***"Surely I will not enter my dwelling house or get into my bed--I will not permit my eyes to sleep or my eyelids to slumber, until I have found a place for the Lord, a habitation for the Mighty one of Jacob."***
(AMP)

Eph 6:18 – ***"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"***
KJV

- Here at Ilcda we have a program called **Connect 15+** which is simply connecting with God 15 minutes every morning before you start your day, and 15 minutes at the end of your day!
 - Be prepared for Satan's excuses. He'll think of anything and everything to keep you from praying. Be prepared for it, realize it, and plan to fight it.
2. What if I miss a Day? Don't get on a guilt trip. Don't give up.

Galatians 6:9 – ***"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart."*** (NKJV)

Helpful Suggestions!

- o Great books on prayer that can be ordered through Christian Bookstores:

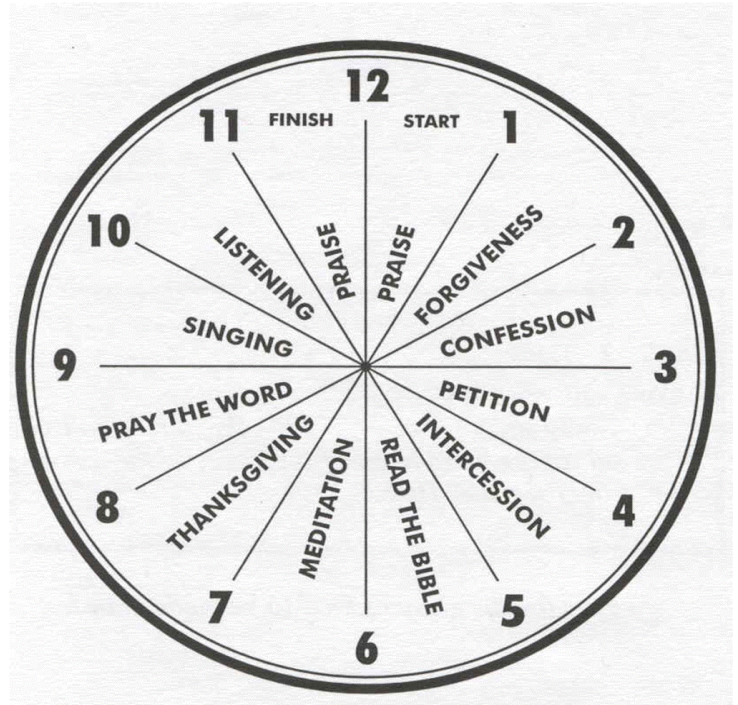
When Ye Pray by Joy Haney

Prayer by Verbal Bean

The Four Dimensions of Prayer by Tony Bailey

Nautical Hour by Tony Bailey

Prayer Wheel



1. **PRAISE:** Psalm 22:3; 63:3
Hebrews 13:15 - Begin all prayer with praise. Praise esteems God for greatness and virtue.
2. **FORGIVENESS:** Matthew 6:14-15
Nothing blocks your spiritual progress more fatally than an unforgiving spirit. Forgiveness is a complete pouring out of any feeling that might develop against anyone during the day.
3. **CONFESSION:** Psalm 139:23-24
Psalm 66:18 -If you hide sin in your heart God will not hear you. Rid yourself of sin and you will clear the road for POWER PRAYER.
4. **PETITION:** James 4:2-3; Matthew 6:9-13 -This aspect of prayer deals with our personal needs.
5. **INTERCESSION:** I Timothy 2:1-2; Matthew 9:37-38 -Intercession is prayer for others.
6. **READ THE BIBLE:** II Timothy 3:16 -Read the Bible during prayer. The Word is enlightening to the eyes (Psalm 19:8)
7. **MEDITATION:** Psalm 1:1-2; Psalm 77:12 -Take time to “think on these things.” God will open your understanding.
8. **THANKSGIVING:** Philippians 4:6 -Spend special time thanking God aloud for His provision and goodness to you.
9. **PRAY THE WORD:** Personally apply, out loud, the precepts of the Bible.
10. **SINGING:** Psalm 100:2; Ephesians 5:19 -Singing refreshes the soul, Try singing in the Spirit.
11. **LISTENING:** I Kings 19:11-12 -Prayer is not all talking to God. Prayer is also listening.

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12. PRAISE: Matthew 6:13 -Conclude every prayer with praise.

Module 2 – Session 2
Christian Maturity

Eph. 4:15 – ***"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"*** KJV

I. WHY IS FELLOWSHIP SO IMPORTANT TO MY GROWTH?

A. I BELONG IN GOD'S FAMILY WITH OTHER **BELIEVERS**.

1. Galatians 6:10 - ***"...Let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."*** (NASB) We need to be focusing on how can we **assist** one another, how can we **relate** to one another in that special kind of way as brothers and sisters, especially those who are believers.
2. Ephesians 2:19 - ***"You are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God."*** (NKJV) You belong in the same household.
3. Romans 12:5 - ***"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another."*** (NKJV)

B. I NEED **ENCOURAGEMENT** TO HELP ME GROW SPIRITUALLY.

1. I need support to grow spiritually. You cannot grow and be healthy alone. We need each other. Hebrews 10:24 - ***"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works."*** (NKJV)

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10,12 - ***"...Two are better off than one ... for if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken."*** (NKJV)

C. I NEED **ACCOUNTABILITY** TO HELP ME GROW SPIRITUALLY.

Hebrews 3:13 – ***"but exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."*** (NKJV)

Galatians 6:1-2 - ***"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ"*** (NKJV)

D. THERE IS GREAT **POWER** WHEN PEOPLE PRAY TOGETHER.

Matthew 18:18-19 - ***"Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven."*** (NKJV)

E. I AM **OBLIGATED** TO EVERY OTHER CHRISTIAN.

1. Why? I Peter 4:10 - ***"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."*** (NKJV) One of the most important things you want to understand about your gifts is that they are a special endowment that God gives to every single person who comes to God. Those gifts are for the purpose of you and I ministering to other believers.
2. There are nearly 60 "one another" commands in the New Testament that you cannot obey unless you are faithful to a local church! Here are just a few:

Serve one another	Galatians 5:13
Accept one another	Romans 15:7
Forgive one another	Colossians 3:13
Greet one another	Romans 16:16
Bear one another's burdens	Galatians 6:2
Be devoted to one another	Romans 12:10
Honor one another	Romans 12:10
Teach one another	Romans 15:14
Submit to one another	Ephesians 5:21
Encourage one another	I Thessalonians 5:11

II. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF SMALL GROUPS SUCH AS CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT, LIFE CLASSES, AND LIFE GROUPS?

Acts 2:42-47 - ***"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."*** (NKJV)

- A. Bible Study. (vs 42) - **"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine..."** The first thing we notice about small groups is Bible study. When we read the scripture we're devoting ourselves to the Apostles' teaching because that is the Apostles' teaching. We study principles from God's Word.
- B. Fellowship. (vs 42) - **"...and fellowship..."** Someone said the definition of fellowship was two fellows in a ship, rowing together. Fellowship is a coming together in one mind, one purpose, the purpose of bringing honor to Jesus Christ and serving one another.
- C. Communion. (vs 42) - **"...in the breaking of bread..."** This portion can refer to two different things: the breaking of bread during fellowship and sharing a meal together, and secondly, communion, or taking the Lord's Supper. We have taken communion both in our Celebration services and in our small group meetings.
- D. Prayer. (vs 42) - **"...and in prayers"**. Praying for one another. We pray over and share specific needs that each member of the group may have. Small groups ensure that our prayer requests are heard and prayed for by others.
- E. Meeting each other's needs. (vs 43-45) Supporting one another is so important. There has been so many times in the small groups that people help when someone had a need.
- F. Social. (vs 46) - **"...they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart"** Eating is a social event and it was something they did a lot of in the NT. Having people into our homes, eating together, relating in a home setting, having friends over, playing some games together and just getting to know each other – it's great!
- G. Worship. (vs 47) - **"Praising God and having favor with all the people."** They were praising God, singing together.
- H. Evangelism. (vs 47) - **"And the Lord added to the church daily..."** We endeavor to touch people's lives for God through outreach and vision efforts of our groups. We want to build bridges to the unsaved of our community.

III. ATTITUDES OF MATURITY

- A. Real Christianity is about **life change**, not about **religion**. A life that is transforming into the likeness of Christ indicates that a real change has taken place in a believer's life. In addition to glorifying God, we testify to others around us.

- It's all about becoming more like Jesus!

Rom 8:28-29 – ***"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."*** KJV

- B. Growing in maturity is essential in maintaining the salvation of a believer.

Hebrews 12:14 – ***"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:"*** (NKJV)

Hebrews 12:14 – ***"Strive to live in peace with everybody and pursue that consecration and holiness without which no one will [ever] see the Lord."*** (AMP)

I Peter 1:15-16 – ***"but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*** (NKJV)

- C. Maturity involves both **separation** and **dedication**.

II Corinthians 6:17-18 – Therefore ***"Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you." I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty."*** (NKJV)

II Corinthians 7:1 – ***"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."*** (NKJV)

Romans 12:1 – ***"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."*** (NKJV)

- D. We are motivated to live obedient lives not merely by **rules**, but by our **love** for God.

I John 2:3-5 - ***"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, I know Him, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him."*** (NKJV)

- E. Our righteous works are not the **means** by which we receive salvation, but the **result** of us receiving salvation!

Ephesians 2:8-10 - ***"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."*** (NKJV)

Titus 3:5-8 - ***"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us ... and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works."*** (KJV)

- We don't get good to get God, we get God to get good!

- F. There are different levels of maturity in God's family, and each member is loved at their present stage.

Romans 15:1-2 - ***"We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification."*** (NKJV)

Matthew 18:6 - ***"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea."*** (NKJV)

- G. The more mature I become in my lifestyle, the more God can use me.

II Timothy 2:19-21 - ***"Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: The Lord knows those who are His, and, Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work."*** (NKJV)

IV. Areas of Maturity

A. ATTITUDE

Galatians 5:19-21, Ephesians 4:31-32 – ***"Let all bitterness and indignation and wrath (passion, rage, bad temper) and resentment (anger, animosity) and quarreling (brawling, clamor, contention) and slander (evil-speaking, abusive or blasphemous language) be banished from you, with all malice (spite, ill will, or baseness of any kind). And become useful and helpful and kind to one another, tenderhearted (compassionate, understanding, loving-hearted), forgiving one another [readily and freely], as God in Christ forgave you."*** (AMP)

We must put away all evil attitudes including hatred, wrath, **jealousy**, bitterness, **pride**, prejudice, vengeance, discord and **rebellion**.

The fruit of the Spirit listed in Gal. 5:22 (kindness, love, patience, self-control, etc.) must manifest itself in our attitudes. We must learn to forgive, to be **obedient** to authority, to be thankful, not to let anything offend us, and not to be a busybody in the lives of others.

B. THOUGHT

Proverbs 23:7, Matthew 15:18-20, II Corinthians 10:5, Philippians 4:8 – ***"Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy -- meditate on these things."*** (NKJV)

Eph 6:16 – ***"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."*** KJV

We are what we think and we become what we allow our minds to dwell upon. Evil thoughts defile us. We must think on true, pure and noble things, while casting out thoughts that stem from evil lusts and attitudes. We are to take captive every thought in obedience to Christ.

2 Cor 10:4-5 – ***"(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"*** KJV

C. SIGHT

Psalms 101:3 – ***"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me."*** (KJV)

Psalms 119:37 – ***"Divert my eyes from toys and trinkets, invigorate me on the pilgrim way."*** (MES)

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Matt 6:22-23 - ***"Your eye is a lamp for your body. A pure eye lets sunshine into your soul."*** NLT

1. Example: Lot

2 Peter 2:7 - ***"And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:"*** KJV

2. Example: Adam & Eve

Gen 3:6 - ***"When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it."*** NIV

3. We must guard our eyes as the **gate** of the **soul** and the primary source of input for the mind. We should choose reading material with care so that we do not **saturate** our minds with vulgarity, sensuality and sin. Because of the violence, illicit sex, sinfulness, bad language and vanity that **dominate** television, movies and the internet, we must carefully control or eliminate what we watch and limit our exposure to these things.

D. SPEECH

James 1:26 - ***"If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless."*** (NIV)

We should avoid **gossiping**, backbiting, slander, causing division, swearing by an oath/vow, complaining, taking the Lord's name in vain, **criticizing**, cursing, lying, idle words and suggestive or **filthy speech**.

E. BODY

I Corinthians 3:16-17 - ***"Do you not discern and understand that you [the whole church at Corinth] are God's temple (His sanctuary), and that God's Spirit has His permanent dwelling in you [to be at home in you, collectively as a church and also individually]? If anyone does hurt to God's temple or corrupts it [with false doctrines] or destroys it, God will do hurt to him and bring him to the corruption of death and destroy him. For the temple of God is holy (sacred to Him) and that [temple] you [the believing church and its individual believers] are."*** AMP

1 Cor 6:19-20 - ***"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are***

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bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. KJV

Since the body is the **temple** of the Holy Ghost, we avoid anything that would harm or defile the body, including anything that would cause intoxication or addiction. In light of the biblically described evils of alcoholic beverages, we must **abstain** from them.

In view of the overwhelming evidence that tobacco and non-medicinal drug use is defiling, harmful, and addictive, we must not use them.

F. SEX

I Corinthians 6:9-10 – ***"Do you not know that the unrighteous and the wrongdoers will not inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived (misled): neither the impure and immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who participate in homosexuality, nor cheats (swindlers and thieves), nor greedy graspers, nor drunkards, nor foulmouthed revilers and slanderers, nor extortioners and robbers will inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God."*** (AMP)

The Bible condemns all sexual relationships and activity outside of marriage between one man and one woman, and opposes lustful thoughts and actions.

G. HONESTY

Mark 10:19 – ***"You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'"*** (NIV)

Christians must reject all forms of dishonesty. This would include lying, stealing, defrauding, refusal to pay debts, extortion, bribery, and all types of cheating.

H. ENTERTAINMENT

I Thessalonians 5:22 – ***"Abstain from evil [shrink from it and keep aloof from it] in whatever form or whatever kind it may be."*** (AMP)

1 Thess 5:22 – ***"Abstain from all appearance of evil."*** KJV

Because of the sinfulness of the world today, we must carefully and maturely regulate our music, sports, activities and amusements.

V. FIVE THINGS YOU NEED TO BE A MATURE CHRISTIAN.

A. DESIRE

If you start half-heartedly, you'll **never succeed**. Whether you think you CAN or you think you CAN'T, you're right!

1 Peter 2:2 – ***"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:"*** KJV

B. DECISIVENESS

Don't procrastinate. It's much easier to break a bad habit today than it will be later! "Tomorrow" just **never** comes.

Ecclesiastes 11:4 – ***"He who observes the wind [and waits for all conditions to be favorable] will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap."*** (AMP)

Phil 3:13-14 – ***"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."*** KJV

C. DECLARATION

The power of a promise is awesome, particularly if you have a friend hold you accountable to keep it!

Psalms 76:11- ***"Make vows to the LORD your God, and pay them; Let all who are around Him bring presents to Him who ought to be feared."*** (NKJV)

D. DETERMINATION

Never be swayed by the devil's temptation to return to your old habits "just this once." The act of yielding to **temptation weakens** your will and reinforces your **lack** of self-control. It takes 3 weeks to become comfortable with a new habit (doing it daily) and another 3 weeks for it to become a permanent part of your life.

E. DEPENDENCE ON GOD

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Rely on God's power to help you establish your new habits. Satan will do all he can to tempt you, cause you to **slip**, or discourage you from developing habits that will help you grow spiritually. Pray for God's help!

Philippians 2:13 – ***"...for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure."*** (NKJV)

Col 1:28-29 – ***"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: 29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."*** KJV

John 15:5-6 – ***"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."*** NIV

Module 201 – Session 3
Giving

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Bible is a book about **giving**.

1. The Bible talks more about giving than it does about heaven or hell.
2. Jesus talked more about giving than almost any other subject.
3. Over half of His parables have to do with **money**.
4. There are more promises in the Bible related to giving than any other subject.

I Corinthians 16:2 – ***"On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come."*** (NKJV)

I Corinthians 16:2 – ***"On the first [day] of each week, let each one of you [personally] put aside something and save it up as he has prospered [in proportion to what he is given], so that no collections will need to be taken after I come."*** (AMP)

II. WHY GOD WANTS ME TO GIVE!

II Corinthians 8:7 – ***"But just as you excel in everything--in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us--see that you also excel in this grace of giving."*** (NIV)

II Corinthians 8:7 – ***"Now as you abound and excel and are at the front in everything--in faith, in expressing yourselves, in knowledge, in all zeal, and in your love for us--[see to it that you come to the front now and] abound and excel in this gracious work [of almsgiving] also."*** (AMP)

A. Giving Draws Me **Closer** To God.

1. Matthew 6:21- ***"...where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*** (NKJV)

2. Wherever we put our money shows our **priorities**. The question then becomes, where do you want your heart to be? Wherever you want your heart to be, that's where you need to put your money.

B. Giving Is the Antidote To **Materialism**.

I Timothy 6:17-19 – ***"Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."*** (NKJV)

1. What is materialism? It's "**get**." What is the opposite of getting? **Giving**. The only way I can know if I'm having victory over materialism is: am I willing to part with what I've got?
2. He says God gives us **"richly all things to enjoy"**. God has blessed you. But **true living** comes from giving. We make a living by what we get, but we make a **life** by what we give.

D. Giving **Strengthens** My Faith.

Proverbs 3:5, 9 – ***"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase..."*** (NKJV)

1. Faith is like a muscle. God uses finances to test your faith. God says that the way we prove our trust, the way we demonstrate our faith, is by giving the first part of our income back to Him.

Luke 16:11 – ***"If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"*** (KJV)

Luke 6:38 – ***"Give and it will be given to you. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."*** (NKJV)

2. God says, "I dare you! Let's see how much you want me to bless your life. You give a cup, you get a cup of blessing. You pull up a dump truck, you get a dump truck's worth. The measure you use is the measure you're going to get."
3. Know why a lot of people don't give? They just don't **believe**!

E. Giving Is An Investment For **Eternity**.

I Timothy 6:18-19 – ***"Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."*** (NKJV)

Matthew 6:19-20 – ***"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:"*** (KJV)

F. Giving **Blesses** Us In Return.

Proverbs 22:9 – ***"A generous man will himself be blessed..."*** (NIV)

Proverbs 11:25 – ***"The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself."*** (NKJV)

Proverbs 19:17 – ***"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again."*** (KJV)

G. Giving Makes Me **Happy**.

1. Jesus said, Acts 20:35 - ***"It is more blessed to give than to receive."*** (NIV)
2. Carl Menniger, one of the top psychiatrists in the nation said, "Giving is a criterion of mental **health**. Generous people are rarely mentally ill." The healthier you are, the more unafraid you are to give away. The more you hold things in and are afraid to give away, that's an indication that there's fear in your life.

III. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT TITHING?

- A. What is tithing? Tithe means a **tenth** part. It's a word that God uses all through scripture. In the Bible, God tells us that we're to give the first ten percent of all we earn back to God.
- B. Giving **less** than ten percent is not tithing. Giving a tithe is giving ten percent of my income and all my increases.
- C. What's the difference between a tithe and an offering? Tithe is giving ten percent of my income. An offering is anything I give in addition to my tithe.

IV. WHY SHOULD I TITHE?

A. God **commands** it.

Leviticus 27:30 – ***"A tenth of all you produce is the Lord's and it is holy."*** (GNB)

Leviticus 27:30 – ***"A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD."*** (NIV)

Malachi 3:10 – ***"Bring all the tithes (the whole tenth of your income) into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now by it, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."*** AMP

- God could have said give ninety percent. But He just said ten. Simply because He says it, we ought to obey it. But He does give us other reasons.

B. Tithing demonstrates that God has **first place** in my life.

Deuteronomy 14:23 – ***"The purpose of tithing is to teach you to always put God in first place in your life."*** (TLB)

- I can say God is first place in my life, but there are two things you can look at that will tell you what is really first place; the way I use my **money** and the way I use my **time**.

C. Tithing reminds me that everything was given to me by God.

Deuteronomy 8:18 – ***"And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day."*** (NKJV)

D. Tithing expresses my **gratitude** to God for the blessings He's bestowed upon me.

Psalms 116:12 – ***"What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me?"*** (KJV) The answer?

Deut 16:17 – ***"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee."*** KJV

Deuteronomy 16:17 – ***"No one is to show up in the Presence of God empty-handed, each man must bring as much as he can manage, giving generously in response to the blessings of God, your God."*** (MES)

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E. God says that refusing to tithe is **stealing** from Him.

1. That's pretty strong but that's exactly what He says.

Mal 3:8-9 – ***"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. 9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation."*** KJV

Malachi 3:8-10 – ***"Begin by being honest. Do honest people rob God? But you rob me day after day. You ask, 'How have we robbed you?' 'The tithe and the offering – that's how! And now you're under a curse – the whole lot of you – because you're robbing me. Bring your full tithe to the Temple treasury so there will be ample provisions in my Temple. Test me in this and see if I don't open up heaven itself to you and pour out blessings beyond your wildest dreams.'" (MES)***

2. When I spend my tithing money on anything besides my tithes, I'm robbing God.

F. Tithing gives God a chance to prove He **exists** and wants to **bless** you.

Mal 3:10- ***"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."*** KJV

Malachi 3:10 – ***"Bring your full tithe to the Temple treasury so there will be ample provisions in my Temple. Test me in this and see if I don't open up heaven itself to you and pour out blessings beyond your wildest dreams."*** (MES)

1. This is one of the most amazing promises in the Bible. God actually offers you a challenge and He says I dare you. Start tithing and watch what happens. He not only makes a promise to bless you with more, but He promises to protect what you already have.

Malachi 3:11 - ***"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the LORD of hosts..."*** (NKJV)

2. God says, Test me. Prove me...Tithe. Of all the areas He could have chosen as a test, why did He choose finances? Because we spend most of our lives revolving around money. Making it, earning it, saving it, giving it, sharing it, and spending it.

G. Tithing proves that I really **love** God.

1. Jesus said, John 14:15 - ***"If you love me, keep my commandments."*** (NKJV) And it is clearly commanded all the way through scripture. Some people say tithing is Old Testament law. No, it's not. It's an Old Testament principle.
2. In fact, tithing was established before the law was given. The law was established with Moses. God established tithing from the very first. Abraham gave tithes 400 years before Moses was born. It's not part of Jewish law; it is a life principle before the Jewish nation even became Israel.
 - Jacob tithed. Genesis 28:22 - ***"And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."*** (KJV)
 - Abraham tithed. Hebrews 7:4 - ***"Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils."*** (KJV)

V. WHERE SHOULD I TITHE?

Malachi 3:10 - ***"Bring your whole tithe to My Storehouse ..."***

- I should tithe where I **worship**. In the Old Testament, the place of worship was called the Temple. In the New Testament it was called the synagogue or the church.

VI. WHEN SHOULD I TITHE?

I Corinthians 16:2 - ***"On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come."*** (NKJV)

- A. What is the first day of every week? **Sunday**. What do you do on Sunday? You go to the place of worship. That's when you're to give. You're to give at the place of worship.

VII. HOW SHOULD I TITHE?

- A. We're to give **willingly**. God is more interested in my attitude than the amount. He doesn't look at the amount you give; He looks at the amount you have left over, in proportion to what you gave.

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II Corinthians 9:6-7 – ***"[Remember] this: he who sows sparingly and grudgingly will also reap sparingly and grudgingly, and he who sows generously [that blessings may come to someone] will also reap generously and with blessings. Let each one [give] as he has made up his own mind and purposed in his heart, not reluctantly or sorrowfully or under compulsion, for God loves (He takes pleasure in, prizes above other things, and is unwilling to abandon or to do without) a cheerful (joyous, "prompt to do it") giver [whose heart is in his giving]."*** (AMP)

B. ***"As you purpose in your heart"*** does not mean if you don't want to, don't give. It means the purpose in your heart should be to give cheerfully, not grudgingly, willingly, not reluctantly.

C. Give **joyfully**. ***"God loves a cheerful giver."***

Bumper sticker:

"God loveth a cheerful giver but He also accepteth from a grouch."

- The Greek word for "cheerful" is the word from which we get our word ***"hilarious"***. If you can't tithe cheerfully, what you need to work on is your **attitude**.

D. Give **generously**.

2 Cor 8:1-4 – ***"Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; 2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. 3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; 4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."*** KJV

II Corinthians 8:1-4 – ***"Now friends, I want to report on the surprising and generous ways in which God is working in the churches in Macedonia province. Fierce troubles came down on the people of those churches, pushing them to the very limit. The trial exposed their true colors: They were incredibly happy, though desperately poor. The pressure triggered something totally unexpected: an outpouring of pure and generous gifts. I was there and saw it for myself. They gave offerings of whatever they could-far more than they could afford!-pleading for the privilege of helping out in the relief of poor Christians."*** (MES)

- They gave beyond their ability. This is the first financial principle of giving a tithe. People ask, "What if I can't afford to tithe?" I say,

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"You can't afford not to." If you want God's blessing on your finances, you need to tithe.

E. Give **expectantly**.

II Corinthians 9:6 – ***"[Remember] this: he who sows sparingly and grudgingly will also reap sparingly and grudgingly, and he who sows generously [that blessings may come to someone] will also reap generously and with blessings."*** (AMP)

II Corinthians 9:6 – ***"Remember: A Stingy planter gets a stingy crop; a lavish planter gets a lavish crop. I want each of you to take plenty of time to think it over, and make up your own mind what you will give. That will protect you against sob stories and armtwisting. God loves it when the giver delights in the giving."*** (MES)

F. The key to giving ...

II Corinthians 8:5 - ***"They first gave themselves to the Lord."*** (NKJV)

- If God owns me, He's going to own my wallet. I need to first give myself to the Lord.