

New Testament Themes

A Brief Study of Some of the Major Themes of the New Testament





NEW WINE

New Testament Themes:

Course Overview:

This course is designed to introduce you to some of the major themes of the New Testament. In it you will learn. . .

- The Difference between the Old and New Covenant
- Some of the Applications of the Saving work of the Cross
- What life as a son of God is about
- The three-fold nature of Man
- What the Bible says about heaven, hell and eternal judgment

Course Goals:

By the end of this course, we would like you to:

- Gain a good understanding of the major themes of the New Testament
- Begin to appropriate these great blessings into your own life by faith
- Think about how you will minister the gospel, in the Spirit of the New Covenant or in the Deadness of the Old.
- Begin to shape your ministry around the truths of the Cross and the New Covenant.

Follow-up Study:

To obtain full credit and benefit from this class, you must complete the following two assignments:

1. Read the follow-up reading on the website www.prepareinternational.org. You will find these articles listed under the course title – *New Testament Themes*.
2. Write a 3-5 page paper answering the two following questions:
What were the three most important things you learned in this course (list and describe them). How can these truths affect your life today? How can you use these great truths of the New Testament in the ministry?

Sources:

1. Teaching by Alan Vincent on Sonship & Eternal Life.
2. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem. (Topics: The Fall of Man, Justification, Adoption, & Sanctification)
3. *The Two Covenants* by Andrew Murray
4. *Our Covenant God* by Kay Arthur
5. *Son* by John Sheasby
6. *A Search for Significance* by Robert S. McGee
7. *Pack Your Bags, Jesus is Coming* by Dawson McAllister (Eternity Lesson)



Lesson #1: Jesus – The Man & His Message

Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man in one person and will be so forever!

The Humanity of Jesus—the Son of Man

Born of a virgin - Scripture clearly asserts that Jesus was conceived in the womb of His mother, Mary, by a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit and without a human father. *Luke 1:35*

Miraculous birth - but it also gave way to a constant murmuring probably surrounding his mother, and his own life. Mary was NOT married at the time of conception.

Born into a human body in a barn -Jesus was born just like any other human *Luke 2:7*

Why? Why did Jesus Christ choose to be born this way? He was totally approachable by small or great, high or low, rich or poor. No one is fearful of a little, poor baby born in a barn.

Grew as a boy: Luke 2:40, 52

He was probably a helper in His daddy's shop. A common man. He was so common that later in His hometown they couldn't believe that He could really be God's Messiah.

At twelve we see Him in the temple - Already awakening to His Father's business, but for the most part, 30 years are totally normal, very human, very unassuming.

He had a Human mind, soul, & emotions - In His ministry, His family is constantly there. He shows His love for His mom at the Cross. Two of His brothers became apostles – James & Jude. On the social side, He was always at parties & dinners, with both sinners & saints.



Reflection: Why did Jesus Christ come this way? What was God trying to say to us? Why did He not come in some glorious form?

A miracle Man – He was constantly performing miracles out of love and compassion. *“Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works?”*
Matthew 13:54

A tempted man: For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.
Hebrews 4:15



The bible says that Jesus was tempted in every way we are. Think of it! He felt the pressures you feel. He can fully understand the weight of temptation on our souls.

Jesus came to a people who were so far from God and so fearful of contact with God, that He came in total humility, He was totally approachable, very accessible to even the worst of sinners. He wants us to know we can come to Him.

Jesus is the Friend of Sinners. Everything in His manhood points to the powerful attraction, love and friendship He had toward sinners. Knowing Him in His humanity will fill us with the heart of a Friend of Sinners.

The Divinity of Jesus—the Son of God

Jesus as God & His eternal titles

Son of God - Jesus is called the Son of God about forty times in the New Testament

Word of God In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, Eternal Father

Isa 9.6

The Lamb of God – “. . .John saw Jesus coming. . .and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” Jn 1:29

The Baptizer in the Holy Spirit - “. . .this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ John 1:33

The Image of the Invisible God – “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.” Colossians 1:15

The Radiance of the Father’s glory and the exact representative of the Father’s Nature - Heb 1.3

Jesus was both fully God and yet a humble, normal man. He desired to reveal God in such an approachable way, an accessible way. God desires to be near us, and in the Man Christ Jesus, we can draw near to Him



Discussion: What should seeing Jesus in both His humanity and in His divinity do within the lives of a believer? Why is it important to see both clearly? What if you only see His humanity? What if you only see His divinity?



Christ Our Life

A final revelation of Jesus Christ in the New Testament is that Jesus Christ has and will become our life. Many followers of Jesus live lives of constant defeat because they are still living in the midst of their own life and power. Christ not only died to become our substitute in death, but He is alive today and will live His divine life within us becoming our substitute in life also as He was in death!

For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Col 3:3-4

Jesus taught this incredible truth the last night He was with His followers in John 13-17 and then Paul picks this thought up as a major theme of all of His writings using the term "in Christ." Jesus Christ will literally live His very life within us replacing our old sinful, faulty life with His own. He will become our: Life peace victory holiness power etc..

This is perhaps the most important lesson of the entire NT, that Jesus Christ has become our life. The real key is not to know this fact, but to know how to access His great life and riches in our lives everyday.

As believers in Jesus, we will live in one of two ways: a. Asking God for things to fill our lives and to help us OR b. Finding Jesus Christ to truly become our life within. The first way is not genuine Christianity, for in the heart of God, Christ is to be All and to be in All.

Jesus message is summarized in three thoughts:

- Love God with all of your heart & soul
- Love other people with real, practical love
- Give your life fully to Christ's kingdom work on earth



Application: Have you had the revelation of Jesus, the Friend of Sinners?

Have you discovered Christ to be your life? Are you learning to access this divine life on a daily basis?

Where are you at in the basic message of Jesus? Are you seeking to Love Him with all? Are you endeavoring to love others in reality? Have you made the decision to give your life to His work?



Lesson #2: The Fall of Man & the Cross



Reflection: When we use the term, *The Fall of Man*, what does it mean and how does it affect the world today?

The Fall of Man

Man was created in God's image and given dominion over the earth - *Genesis 1:26-28*

- God created man and said His creation was good
- Man's environment was perfect
- God gave man intelligence, conscience, and will power. He enabled Him to be ruler over all.
- God gave Him the power of free will, which lifted him above all other creation. It also gave him the power to choose disobedience.

The devil (in the form of a serpent) tempted man with the promise of independence and self-realization; man was deceived and disobeyed God. (*Genesis 3:5-7*) Eve ate the fruit and Adam with her and they, and everyone that has come from them has been plunged into sin and death ever since. ***This is called the Fall of Man.***

The Coming of the Curse

The fall of man opened the floodgates of sin, sorrow, sickness, hardship, and death.

- Adam and Eve lost innocence, saw their nakedness without God
- They hid from God in the fear that disobedience and sin brings
- They began to blame everyone but themselves
- The curse of hardship, suffering, and pain in life came upon Man
- Above all, they were banished from the Garden, the Presence of God, and the tree of Life

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned...For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners..." Romans 5:12, 19

When Adam sinned, God thought of all who would descend from Adam as sinners. Through this one act of disobedience, the whole human race was plunged into sin, hardships, sufferings, sicknesses and worst of all, separation from God's presence and life! We are under a curse and can't get out!

- Man is sinful by nature because of the Fall
- Man's mental, moral, and spiritual nature have been totally perverted by Adam's sin
- We have a natural bent toward sin, lust, hate, selfishness, etc.
- Sin is not something we do, it is what we are
- Because of all of this, man has made himself an enemy of God and deserves God's wrath



Discussion: How much preaching do you hear on the Cross today and what are the different benefits of God's saving power you have operating in your life?

THE POWER OF THE CROSS

There is not much preaching about the Cross today, but it is one of the central messages of the NT. In the message of the Cross, we find many powerful benefits and operations of salvation for our lives. The Apostle Paul said: *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”* 1 Cor 1:18

This message of the Cross has amazing power for the saving of people's lives to the uttermost, in every area, completely.

Definition of the Message of the Cross: The preaching & teaching of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and all the powerful benefits released into our lives through it.

Where this message is preached and is central, power is released, where it is not, the saving power of Christ is not apparent.

Some Examples of the saving works of the cross:

- Forgiveness
- Justification
- Righteousness
- Reconciliation
- Peace with God
- Redemption
- Sonship
- Freedom from Sin

“IT IS FINISHED” AT THE CROSS

Jesus' work was to destroy the work of the devil, break the power of the curse, and restore us to fellowship with God. This all occurred through the cross.

“And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins...The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that he might destroy the works of the devil...I came that they might have life and might have it abundantly.” 1 John 3:5, 8 & John 10:10

“It is finished.” John 19:30 - tetelestai—A marketplace word that means the business deal is totally paid, the transaction is over.

What was Jesus talking about when He said these words? What did He really finish there as He was shedding His blood for us?

The Bible says that “the wages of sin is death” and we owe this penalty to God for our sin and rebellion. Isaiah 53:5-10



In the cross we have a demonstration of how God punishes sin—God is showing Himself to be a righteous judge over all, and justice is being done in His universe. Jesus paid our entire penalty owed to God because of sin. He took our punishment through His death on the Cross, so that we could be set free from the curse. Through the Cross, Jesus brought us back into a relationship with God and crushed the power of sin and the devil to control us.

SALVATION THROUGH THE CROSS

Jesus purchased our freedom through His death on the Cross, but we must act in order to live in that freedom.

Conversion means . . . to turn from sin to Christ—it is our willing response to the call of Christ in which we repent of sins and place our trust in Him for salvation.



Bible Study: Read John 3.16; John 1.12; Eph 2.8-9; Acts 2.21; Acts 4.12; Acts 16.31; Romans 5.9-10

Saving faith is not just a belief in facts—it is a trust in Jesus Christ as a crucified sacrifice and a resurrected person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God—a trust that Jesus will save ME!

Faith does not work by itself—there must also be repentance. Repentance is a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.

When sincere faith and repentance initially occur in one's life, they bring about genuine conversion. However, faith and repentance are attitudes of the heart that must continue throughout a Christian's life.

Every day we should walk in repentance for sins that we have committed, and faith in Christ to provide for our needs and to empower us to live the Christian life.

What Happens when we receive Christ and are "Saved"?

- #1 Our Sins are forgiven and cast into a sea of forgetfulness.
- #2 We are born again – given new life – eternal life.
- #3 We are adopted into God's family
- #4 Our name is written in the Lamb's book of life and we have a heavenly home.



Application: What parts of the curse of the Fall of Man are still operating today? How much do you know of the message of the Cross and is it working powerfully in your life today?





Lesson #3: Justification – a New Position through the Cross

Introduction: As we begin to develop our lives and concepts of ministry, there are many things we could build our lives and ministries on, but only a couple are sure foundations for lasting fruit. The Apostle Paul after having failed in Athens to establish a strong work, next went to Corinth. In Athens, being a major center of knowledge, he had attempted to appeal to their intellects and had one of the finest sounding sermons of his career. The only problem was, it bore no recognizable fruit. By the time he came to Corinth, we see Paul saying, *"For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."* 1 Corinthians 2:2

Instead of worldly, fine sounding arguments to convince people to believe and follow Jesus, Paul went back to the source of power – Jesus Christ and his Cross! Later Paul writes, *"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."* 1 Corinthians 1:18

The message of the Cross was the central theme of all his preaching, teaching, and writing. It was the power source. In fact, the bible teaches that once this message begins to be grasped and believed, it releases great power in our lives for salvation.

Justification by Faith

450 years ago the revelation of the truth of justification by faith brought Martin Luther out of darkness and launched the Protestant Reformation.



Discussion: What was the situation in the church when Martin Luther began to preach the message of Justification by faith alone? Why was this message revolutionary?

Justification by faith is the cornerstone of our belief

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1

The Bible says that we have been justified through our faith in Jesus, but what does that mean and how will it help me today?

Justification

A legal courtroom term meaning to declare NOT GUILTY, TOTALLY INNOCENT in the eyes of the courts. It is the picture of having stood before God's High Court being charged with our sin and God has looked into your case and declared you NOT GUILTY, totally innocent in His eyes!





Justification is a legal declaration of God in which God...

1. . . .thinks of our sins as forgiven
2. . . .declares us to be absolutely righteous in His sight



Bible Study: Read Romans 3.21-26 & 5.1-2 and describe what God says about justification by faith.

The truth of the matter is that **we have stood before** God's great High Court, He has looked into our case and declared us absolutely innocent. God looks at me JUST AS IF I'D NEVER SINNED! ANYONE WHO PUTS FAITH IN JESUS IS JUSTIFIED! We have a completely changed position. We have gone from filthy sinners to righteous saints in His sight.

TWO SIDES OF JUSTIFICATION

FORGIVENESS

When God declared us justified, He declared that we have no penalty to pay for sin, including past, present, and future sins. We are absolutely forgiven. Although our sins were so great, in Jesus Christ, through His justifying work, we are totally forgiven. God sees no sin upon us. We are no longer guilty or condemned, but clean in His sight. The key is learning to believe what His word says in this area and not what our own minds or the devil tell us. Most Christians today live with such a guilt ridden, condemned conscience.

- *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1*
- *Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? Romans 8:33-34*

Forgiveness of sin—being declared not guilty before God—is just the first aspect of justification. We must move to knowing we have righteousness before God, God's own righteousness given to us as a free gift.

RIGHTEOUSNESS

Not only does God forgive our sins, He has gone a step further and declared us to be righteous in His sight through justification:

- *He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness. Isaiah 61:10*
- *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Romans 5:19*
- *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. II Corinthians 5:21*

God can declare us to be just because He gives Christ's own righteousness to us—God thinks of Christ's righteousness as belonging to us. He literally sees us as right in His sight as Jesus is. To be righteous in God's eyes is to be. . .

- Totally accepted & worthy
- Totally approved
- Totally attractive with Christ's own attractiveness



Justification is NOT based in any way on any goodness that we might have in ourselves. Our righteousness is worth nothing! (*Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:20*)

You see, justification comes to us entirely by God's Grace, not on account of anything we can do—it is a FREE GIFT! Because we are completely unable to earn favor with God, the only way we could be declared righteous is if God freely provides for us by grace, totally apart from our work. God did not have to do this; it was only because of His grace, that He did this.



Reflection: *To what degree do you truly walk in God's Forgiveness? Have you truly discovered that you are completely righteous in God's sight in Christ? How will this message touch your nation?*

Freedom from the Performance Trap

Because most Christians have not fully received the truth of justification by God's grace resulting in full forgiveness and a right standing before God, they are often caught in a performance trap – the trap of always trying to earn God's love and approval and always feeling like guilty, failures. It is like we are on a never ending treadmill of performance, the more we do, the worse we feel about ourselves. We see our lives going in cycles of trying hard, failing, trying hard, failing, trying hard failing and we never seem to perform well enough to please God. Many of us are caught up in trying to perform to earn right relationship with God, but it has already been provided as a gift of God's grace through justification.

There is great news! *"For if by the one man's offense, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life through the One, Christ Jesus."*
Romans 5.17

We can live in utter victory because we have been justified in Jesus Christ. But the key is we must learn to receive the abundance of His free grace and this wonderful gift of righteousness. As we do, our entire thinking about God and ourselves begins to be renewed and the old guilt ridden, performance mentality is broken and replaced by a righteousness mentality. Which mentality we live out of determines the victory we live in.



Application: Are you confident that God has declared you "not guilty" forever in His sight? What would persuade you that God has certainly justified you? Are you free from the performance trap?

We need to develop a guiltless conscience and a righteousness mentality. Declare daily: Because of Christ and His blood, I am totally clean in God's eyes, I am innocent. You see me as if I had never sinned. I am totally worthy



of every blessing of your Kingdom right now because You have made me worthy! I have a new position – I am a saint in His sight.

Lesson #4: Adoption- A New Relationship through the Cross

God gave us wonderful gifts

- In Christ's death, God has given us spiritual life to lift us out of the darkness and sin we live in
- In His death, He has justified us—He has totally removed our guilt and declared us legally righteous and worthy of all of His goodness. God could have just made us right in His sight and then left us on our own as subjects of a kingdom to live our lives as servants of the King.

#1 God did not stop there; He went a step further through the Cross. He adopted us as sons! He brought us into a wonderful relationship – a Father/son relationship.

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." John 1:12

#2 Our adoption as sons into the family of God all came through Christ's work on the Cross.

"In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith." Galatians 3:26

"God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children." Galatians 4:5

The full benefits and our inheritance of being part of God's family did not come in the old covenant, under the law. The New Testament teaches that as we trusted Christ as Savior and Lord, God adopted us into His family. His blood was the adoption price of our souls. God has come to the great orphanage of earth and paid a price, the life of His own beloved Son, so that we might all become sons.

#3 Adoption is an act of God where He makes us members of His family!

"His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave Him great pleasure." Ephesians 1:5

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Sonship

God sent forth Jesus to purchase our adoption as sons through His blood—we are NOW sons! God then sent forth His Spirit into our hearts to bring forth the reality of that sonship into our lives. Sonship is made real by the Holy Spirit.



Bible Study: What does Gal. 4.4-7 say about our adoption and the role of the Holy Spirit in that reality? What should be the end result of being filled with the Spirit?



As we learn to walk in the Spirit, we will come into the reality of our sonship in Christ. The Bible teaches us that the very Spirit of His Sonship now lives within us and He will cry out within us Abba Father. That is, He will bring about the reality of sonship that was in Jesus into our lives if we walk in faith and in the Holy Spirit. The relationship and privileges Jesus had by natural birth, the Holy Spirit will bring us into by adoption. What He was by nature, we become by grace.

The Privileges of Adoption

There are many benefits to being one of God's children and they all come through our new relationship with the Father:

#1 Our Relationship with the Father

- Speaking and relating to Him as a good and loving Father
- We relate to God not as a slave to master, but child to Father—this is the primary way we relate to Him -Romans 8:15-16
- He relates to us through love -Psalm 103:13-14
- He takes care of our needs & gives us good gifts -Matthew 6:32, 7.11
- Led by the Holy Spirit -Romans 8:14
- He disciplines us -Hebrews 12:5-6

#2 How We Relate to Our New Family

When we were adopted as sons of God, we not only have relationship with the Father, we also now have relationship with others in the family.

- Members of one family-We are referred to as brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the New Testament. The work of the church is family work and no competition should hinder our efforts.
- We should honor and love one-another, getting along out of reverence for Christ. Any time the children fight within a family, it grieves the heart of the Father. -Ephesians 4.25-5.2
- We should help and bear one-another's burdens as brothers and sisters in Christ. -Galatians 6.2

#3 Our Inheritance as Sons

All good fathers on earth, leave an inheritance to their sons. It is their desire to gain and acquire abundance and then pass it on to their sons. As sons of God, our heavenly Father has great wealth given to us in our inheritance from Him.

- *"Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."* Galatians 4:7
- *...heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.* Romans 8:17

These Scriptures tell me two important things about our sonship. . .Because we are now sons of God, we have been included in the great wealth He is leaving to His children – inheritance. The Bible goes on to tell us about the nature of that inheritance, it is the same inheritance God has given to Jesus Christ. We are now joint heirs or co-heirs together with Christ. WOW! That great inheritance He has destined for His Son, Father has now included each one of us to share in.

**About our inheritance:**

A. Inheritance is given to Mature Sons: God teaches us in His word that there are several level of sons. The Greek language has three or four different words to describe these levels of maturity. In the culture of the Bible, when a son reached the age of 30, he was declared a mature son (Hiuos – Gr) and therefore eligible for his share of the inheritance right then.

In most of our cultures, you receive your inheritance at the death of the Father, not so in the culture of the New Testament. That is why in the story of the Prodigal Son, the sons received there shares of the inheritance before the father ever died. It was their right as a son because they had become Hiuos – mature sons.

This word Hiuos, does not have any gender tied to it either. It is a word that can describe mature sons of both male and female kind. This inheritance we have in Christ is equally given to male and female sons today.

The real question is whether I am a mature son – a Hiuos.

"Think of it this way. If a father dies and leaves great wealth for his young children, those children are not much better off than slaves until they grow up, even though they actually own everything their father had. They have to obey their guardians until they reach whatever age their father set." Galatians 4:1-2

What is within our inheritance in Christ? The question comes up then, what are the amazing riches God has for in this great inheritance as sons?

A Covenant Relationship with God as your Father. Together with our relationship with the Father, we know have an eternal home with Him in heaven. We can know that a great portion of our inheritance comes to us in the eternal realm of heaven someday in the Father's house.

Abundant provision for your daily life and God's work. Many believers live with a "never have enough" or a "just enough" mentality and faith, but as sons, the Father has promised us abundant provision for all of our life and work. We must develop a "more than enough" mentality. (See 2 Cor 8.9; 9.8; & Gen 12.2-3)

Many children of God live in a constant state of lack. They don't know about the abundant life in the area of provision that God has for them as His children. This doesn't mean that we will all be rich, but what it does mean is that we can count on our Father to provide everything we need for our life with enough left over to bless others. We must break out of a poverty mentality.

A victorious life over sin is another portion of our inheritance. Many children of God live defeated Christian lives never claiming the power over sin that Jesus brings us. Within our inheritance, the riches of victory over all sin is our portion.

- "But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong." (1 John 1:9, NLT)



- "Sin is no longer your master, for you are no longer subject to the law, which enslaves you to sin. Instead, you are free by God's grace." (Romans 6:14, NLT)

The nations of the earth are our inheritance. God has destined Jesus Christ to possess the nations of the earth for Him and many of their people. His dream has always been to have a people from the earth for Himself. He has given Jesus this as a part of His inheritance:

- "The king proclaims the Lord's decree: "The Lord said to me, 'You are my son. Today I have become your Father. Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the ends of the earth as your possession.'" (Psalm 2:7-8, NLT)

Because we are co-heirs with Jesus Christ, this has also now become our inheritance too. God desires to use our lives to bring the nations of the earth into the Kingdom of God. We are destined for world changing, world capturing lives.

These are just a few of the wonderful blessings of our inheritance as sons and daughters



Lesson #5: Servant or Son

As we spend time learning about the rights and gifts of sonship, may you enter into the liberty, freedom, and pleasure of being a son and daughter of God. We pray that you will be set free of rejection, servitude, legalism, religion, performance, and the spirit of bondage. Many children of God around the world live their lives as slaves rather than sons of God. God desires us to live as sons and to bring many more into sonship as we minister the gospel of Grace. The entire book of Galatians was written to a group of people who had reduced themselves to slavery. Listen to what Paul has to say to them:

Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Galatians 4:7

Are You a Servant or Son?

#1 A servant does not abide in the house forever because his relationship to the master is task oriented. The son's relationship is permanent based on birth and is not dependent on performance.

Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." John 8:34-36

SERVANT - A servant is hired to serve—to perform duties given to him by the master. When he correctly does his work, he pleases the master and is rewarded. However, should he fail to do a good job, punishment would come.

This is a hopeless relationship that many Christians are bound in—believing that acceptance and approval by God is based on what they do, performance. These believers are frustrated because they will never be “good enough” to earn the Father's love and reward.

SON - A son's relationship to the father is based on birth, not performance. The son does his father's will because of their relationship, not out of a sense of duty. He is a faithful worker who will always do his best out of love for his father. There will be times when the father will become disappointed with the son because of behavior, but he remains the father and the son remains the son despite his performance. Once a son...always a son!

#2 A slave doesn't know his master's business, but a Son is told all things by the Father.

No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. John 15:15

SERVANT - A servant is never taken into the confidence of the master. He is just given orders or directions for his job. If he shared the intimate things of his heart, the master would destroy the formality needed to maintain authority



in the boss-worker relationship. The master only communicates what the servant needs to know and no more.

Many Christians are stuck in this communication trap—only finding out what God wants them to do. They don't expect God to reveal any of the "deep things" He thinks and feels—they don't feel worthy. They are always waiting for someone else to get the word of the Lord for them.

SON - In the covenant meal, the Old Testament called the bread the "showbread" or "the bread of His presence." This bread represents the face to face communion with God. On the road to Emmaus, the travelers saw Jesus revealed as the bread was broken. Through this New Covenant meal we as believers are also guaranteed the unveiling of the face of God. He wants to know us and we can know Him because we are no longer servants. Jesus even promised to reveal to us all that the Father spoke to Him AND to send the Holy Spirit to teach us all things. (John 16:13, 15)

#3 The servant's relationship with his master is governed by fear:

- fear of not measuring up to the master's expectations
- fear of not receiving the reward for his service
- fear of punishment should he fail to do the master's will
- fear that, should he not fully please the master, his services could be terminated

In contrast to the servant, the son lives in the security of perfect love, which casts out all fear. Romans 8:15-17

SERVANT - Through the spirit of bondage, Satan himself wants to keep us from recognizing and living in our inheritance as sons of God. He wants to keep us from that which Jesus bought on the cross. Satan wants to deceive us and distort the truth—he wants us to believe that we must work to be accepted but that we can never be good enough to please God. This is the whole plan of religion—bondage.

SON - Praise the Lord that as sons we have nothing to fear from our Master because of His perfect love for us! *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.* *1 John 4 :18*

Since Jesus took our punishment for sin, we have nothing to fear. As sons of God we are filled with His love and fear has no place in our hearts. Jesus paid our penalty and we are now His children—we may be disciplined, but always in love, not anger or hatred. If a Christian fears, we must come again to the understanding of our position in Jesus Christ. As His children we become so secure in our Father's love that we can rest on His promises of protection, provision, and His abiding presence.

#4 The servant works so as to earn a reward. A son, being an heir, possesses the father's wealth without earning it.

- *Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Galatians 4:7*
- *...heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Romans 8:17*



SERVANT - Servants work to get paid or to receive a reward from their master; however, the reward is never sure. Satan wants us to stay ignorant of our glorious inheritance in Christ—he wants us to continue to see ourselves as servants.

When Christians begin to discover their position as heirs, we will start to take dominion again and take back from the enemy all he has stolen from us. But many Christians have never realized the full benefits of their inheritance. What is keeping them from it? They have never experienced the joy of belonging in the Father’s house.

SON - Jesus, the Son of man, has inherited all things through His work on the cross. Now we as God’s children and because of the New Covenant become joint heirs with Him. We receive this inheritance, not because of anything we might do, but because of who He is and our relationship to Him.

Our inheritance is a gift from God!



Reflection: Do the following exercise – List five traits of a slave’s mentality or lifestyle you at times see in yourself. List five traits of a son’s mentality you see in yourself.

Slave

Son

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Why are you at times living like a slave?

The Prodigal Son – A Picture for Us Today Luke 15:11-32

Through the story of the Prodigal Son, Jesus taught us about what the Father was really like and what keeps us from experiencing His love and our full inheritance as sons. One of the boys loses his inheritance because of looking for his life in worldliness and the other loses his sonship through becoming a slave!



Bible Study: *Read Luke 15.11-32*

How does this story illustrate the principles of having a son or a slave mentality and lifestyle?



The Younger Brother – A Picture of worldliness

Luke 15:12-13 - The younger brother took his inheritance and left the “restrictive control” of his home to go do his own thing. However when he realized he had wasted all his inheritance, was now starving, and working on a pig farm, he was devastated. Back at his father’s house there was a freedom from lack even for the servants where there was food for all.

Now the son knows that things can never be the same—he could never return to his father’s house as a son because he had already taken his share of the inheritance. This meant that their father-son relationship was over, just as if he had died.

NO LONGER A SON, NOW A SERVANT

Luke 15:18-19 - The younger brother knew he couldn’t return as a son, but he decided it would be better to be a servant in this father’s house than die out in the far country. By his words, you can see that the son was ashamed of his behavior and sorry for his actions. He thought his father would take him back as a servant, but the son could not have known how the father would react out of his love for his son.

How many times do we as Christians fall into this same trap—choosing to sin and then thinking we will have to earn our Father God’s love back again just like a servant? This is moving from the spirit of adoption back into the spirit of bondage. And that breaks the heart of our loving Father. He waits for us to repent of sin and then return to our intimate relationship with Him.

The Father’s Response

Luke 15:20 - So what was taking place back home while the son was out throwing away his inheritance? The father had been watching and waiting for his son’s return. Finally his diligent watch was rewarded. When the father saw the sad figure of his son in the distance, he ran to him to welcome him back home. The son gave his plea to the father to allow him to come back not as a son, but as a servant.

But the father did something it is hard to believe—he wouldn’t even let him call himself a slave and welcomed the boy back as a SON! Out of his unconditional love and compassion, he was overjoyed to see his son return.

How much more does our Heavenly Father love us! *The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. Psalm 145:8*

Our Father is a good father who loves us more than we can imagine. He is not an earthly father that punishes and rejects his children. Our Father, full of compassion and mercy, receives us with joy and restores us to fellowship with Him. He then pours out the blessings of the New Covenant on us as his children.

COVENANT BLESSINGS

Luke 15:22-24 - The father did not expect his son to do ANYTHING to return to his relationship with his family. The father did it all! The son no longer had to live in squalor; he now received all that was due him as a beloved son. This is an awesome picture of our Father’s love for us where He unconditionally accepts us and changes us.



Let's look at what the Father has provided us:

- The Best Robe – The robe symbolized a change of identity and a clean appearance in the eyes of the Father and the eyes of the household. AS CHILDREN OF GOD, we are given the robes of righteousness, life and inheritance.
- The Ring of Authority- The signet ring of the father represented the authority—it carried the family seal. It was like the family charge card with the authority to carry out family business. If I was the father, I would have let him serve me a while and prove himself, but not this one! He immediately gave the son the right to use the family name and authority to get back into life and work.
- The Sandals of Honor- Symbols of the son's restored position. Slaves were not allowed to wear shoes as a symbol of their slavery. The father would not have his son walking around looking like some common slave. He restored him to the full rights of sonship immediately. These sandals were a sign to the son that he was not a servant, but a child of honor.

THE OLDER BROTHER – A slave's mentality

So what about the reaction of the older brother who received his inheritance, but stayed on the family place to work with his father.

Luke 15:25-30 - The older brother could not rejoice that his brother had returned. He was overwhelmed with what he saw as the unfairness of the situation. The saddest part of this story is that although the older brother had lived and worked with the father for years, he didn't know the father's true nature. Because of his anger, the older brother was blinded to the goodness in his father. He thought of his father as a severe master who was hard to please and did not reward good work or behavior. Here are some traits of the older brother. . .

- Jealous that father rewarded the younger purely by grace and didn't give him what he deserved.
- Focused on his own obedience to his father's every command – self-righteousness! When we rejoice more in our own works or commitment to God rather than God Himself as our Father and His gracious gifts to us.
- Lived like a poor servant. Although he had already been given his larger share of the inheritance as a free gift of sonship, he was apparently enjoying none of it because he was still trying to earn it be slavery.
- Above all he didn't know the father, he only knew the master!

Luke 15:31-32 - The father wanted to have the same relationship with his older son as he had with his younger. Many Christians stuck in a religious mindset are like the older brother, we can't believe the father ran to the son and welcomed him back with open arms. We look at this situation with an Old Covenant view of judgment; one that says the younger brother got what he deserved when he was broke, starving, and in a pigpen. Some Christians see God as a mean, cruel Father who withholds good things from His children. They see Him as nothing more than a Master who must be served and obeyed—they have a servant mentality. They don't understand their relationship to the Father as a son.

**The Bottom Line**

So what can we learn from this story? There are two things that will keep us from the Father and rob us from our inheritance. . .

- A life of worldliness – seeking our happiness and fulfillment in this world.
- A slavery mentality – thinking we will earn inheritance or God's good hand toward us by our many acts of righteousness or by our service.

We cannot earn what is ours by gift! As long as we try to earn it, God will never release His own Father love into our hearts or the great riches of our inheritance in Jesus Christ. There is only one way to possess both the true revelation of intimacy with the Father and all of the great riches of Christ Jesus –

Simple Childlike Faith!

It is not those who learn to do more, it is those who learn to receive that live in the great power of sonship in this life.



Application: Do you ever feel like a servant, working to please God with your service? How can receiving the spirit of adoption help you overcome this spirit of bondage?

Can you identify with one of the brothers in this story? Have you been like the younger brother who lived for himself in the world?

Maybe you identify with the older brother—full of religion, self righteousness, and death. Has the enemy blinded you to the goodness of God?

HOW SHOULD THIS MESSAGE OF SONSHIP FILL AND OVERFLOW IN YOUR MINISTRY?



Lesson #6: Sanctification

We have learned about our position in Christ through the Cross:

Justification - Christ's death has brought us total forgiveness, complete innocence, and Christ's own righteousness and worthiness in the eyes of God. A deep knowledge of being justified by faith will set me free from the performance trap and the power of guilt and condemnation.

Adoption - God's love and desire for intimacy with us has brought about Sonship. God has made us sons and given us full rights and all privileges. Knowing we are sons of God and that He fully accepts us and approves of us because of His Son sets us free from the religious servant mentality.

Justification and Adoption happen immediately when we receive Christ. We did nothing to bring it to pass except say yes to Jesus. These are gifts of God's grace, and the more we meditate on these truths of our new position in Christ, the more the Holy Spirit will change the very way we see God and ourselves.

Sanctification

Sanctification is a progressive work of God to free us from sin and conform us to be like Jesus. It takes place every day of our lives if we cooperate with Him.

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.
I Thessalonians
5:23-24

Sanctification brings true holiness into our lives—one of the greatest needs of Christians today. Holiness is not a suggestion; it is a command! Holiness is NOT a set of rules and regulations I follow. It is the living reality of Jesus Christ living in me! God desires to change us in every area of life to make us look and live like His Son by replacing our sinful, weak lives with the very life and presence of His Son within us. This is Biblical Sanctification.

This process is NOT God making Me better. It is God getting Me out of the way so that the victorious Son of God might live in me.

How Does the Process of Sanctification Take Place?

Sanctification is brought about by Christ's finished work at the cross and His present working in us through the Holy Spirit.

Christ's Work at the Cross

At the cross, Jesus has already sanctified our lives. It is a finished work!

And what God wants is for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time. For by that one offering He perfected forever all those whom He is making holy.
Hebrews 10:10, 14



Bible Study: What do the following verses tell us about the power of the Cross to deal with our old sinful man? Rom 6.1-14

Christ's death has already released a mighty power to put to death all in our lives that hinders Christ living there. Every part of our life, both good and evil has been slain in Him at the cross so that He, by His powerful Holy Spirit might literally come and dwell within us. True Christianity is not me trying harder, it is Jesus Christ becoming my all, my life, my love, my peace, my power in every facet of life. Just as Jesus was my substitute in death upon the cross, His cross also killed me, getting me out of the way so that He might be my substitute in life by His mighty Holy Spirit within.

Holy Spirit's Daily Work

The Holy Spirit and our cooperation with Him day by day is what works out this holy life of Christ in a real way.



Bible Study: What do the following verses tell us about the Holy Spirit's role in sanctification? 1 Pet. 1.2; 2 Thess 2.13; Rom 8.12-14

The Holy Spirit makes real Christ's death in us so that His life might also dwell there. He is the powerful administrator and conveyor of all that Christ has accomplished and all that He is today. Therefore it is the work of Christ on His Cross and the current work of the Holy Spirit that brings true holiness into our daily lives.

Romans 6-8 describes in detail this powerful work of the Cross of Jesus and the Holy Spirit in our lives to complete this work of sanctification. It would be critical to study it in detail first to come to faith for your own life and then help others in this journey in Christ. Here are a few of the major concepts:

- #1 When you were baptized into Jesus Christ, you were baptized into His death and the power of sin has been completely broken in your life. Not only was sin broken there, but you died with Him there also. All your goodness and best efforts to live for God perished with Him at the cross. (Rom. 6.1-8)
- #2 You must see this fact and believe it and receive it by faith in order for this saving work to be done in you. In fact, once you enter into it, you should live a life free from the control of sin. (Rom. 6.9-14)
- #3 Before this actually comes to full reality, there very likely will be a mighty battle that you will go through to the point of despair. (Rom. 7)
- #4 As you see the truth and enter into faith, the power of the Holy Spirit will be released to bring it into reality. Thus the Holy Spirit ministers to you the freedom of the Cross and then brings the resurrection life of



Jesus Christ to dwell and work in you. Christ truly becomes your life.
(Rom. 8.1-16)

- #5 Result: you are conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. (Rom. 8.29)

WORKING TOGETHER—God and Us

In this process of sanctification, both God and we have a part to play.

God's Part - *Now may the God of peace make you holy (sanctify) in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until that day when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. 1 Thessalonians 5:23*

God will do it!

- Causing us to want to do His will
- Giving us the power to do His will
- Convicting us of sin
- Giving us power over sin and the devil
- Filling us with the fruit of the Spirit
- Filling us with the very life of Jesus. In fact Jesus Himself begins to become our life.
- Giving us His own divine life, nature, and holiness as a free gift

Our Part: Dearest friends, you were always so careful to follow my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away you must be even more careful to put into action God's saving work in your lives, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey Him and the power to do what pleases Him. Phil. 2:12-13

God has given us great promises, we must exercise our faith in God that He will do it. We must also surrender and yield to Christ and His work in our souls.

Our Practical Steps in our Sanctification

- Yielding and walking in repentance daily —make a decision to yield your whole life and heart to God
- Devote yourself to prayer and communion - seeking God daily to receive the promises of God as your reality.
- Consistent in fellowship with other Christians allowing them to speak into your life God and His will
- Renewing your mind through the Word daily
- A radical application of faith in these powerful promises of God!

All these steps have something very important in common—DAILY! Sanctification is a process that must take place daily and it is worked out as we see Christ Jesus Himself becoming our very life!

Be Careful of the Extremes

Passive Sanctification: Many people think that God is going to do it all, therefore their life is filled with apathy and laziness. The popular phrase of "let go and let God" is often used to fuel this lazy attitude toward sanctification. Spiritual laziness is a great sin in the church today.



Works Sanctification: Many believe that holiness comes from man's striving after God and it is not filled with faith in God's power and working. This type stresses only our role and becomes religious, legalistic, and self-righteous.

Biblical Sanctification: We must grow in both aggressive faith in God's working together with our active seeking, striving, and living in the disciplines of the faith. This and this alone produces lasting transformation in our lives.



Application:

When you first came to Christ, did you see a clear change? A break from sin and love of sin?

Are you growing in sanctification and holiness? Is God changing you at the deepest points of life? If not, why not?

Do see the Power of the Cross at working putting "you" to death so that Christ might become your life?

Have you seen these truths by the Spirit of God and are you accessing them by faith?

*How would you begin to minister God's sanctifying work to either new or older believers?

This is NOT just a lesson. You must do something with the truth of God's word! What do you need to cut out of your life right now? What do you need to begin to do to work out the salvation of your soul with God?



Lesson #7: Sanctification & Man's Three-Part Nature

As God works within us, He seeks to see us transformed in every area of our life. God's work of sanctification should transform the entire man: spirit, mind, emotions, will, and body.

- **MIND**—God desires that our entire mindset be transformed to work together with Him thinking His very thoughts and maintaining His ways of thinking.
- **EMOTIONS**—Our growth in holiness should renew our emotions and make us absolutely whole emotionally. Many people are controlled by their emotions, but it is God's will that they come under our control through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **WILL**—Above all, the power of Christ must change our wills that we joyfully do the will of God.

Three Part Beings

When God created us He created us in His image. God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit also formed us into a three part being. Many followers of Jesus have never understood how they were designed by God and therefore struggle in participating with Him in the daily work of sanctification.

"...may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5.23



Discussion: ***Describe the difference between the spirit, soul, and body and how they work together and how they must be made to work with God.***

Spirit – God first created us with a spirit. Our spirit is the deepest part of our lives and is created to interact with Him in the spiritual world. Until a person is born again, his spirit is dead and has no living contact with God. When we are saved, the Holy Spirit gives life to our spirit and we become a person alive with God's own life capable of relating to and working together with Him.

Not knowing about our spirit, many believers focus only on their soulish realm and never develop their spirit. Because of this, they may have a strong consistent life, but never consistently hear His voice, move in the power of God or supernatural living for these come out of our spirit where His Spirit dwells.

Soul – The second part of man the Bible calls the soul. The soul itself has three parts also, our mind, emotions, and will. When we are born again, our spirit is brought to life but our soul still must be saved. This is the primary



work of sanctification – the saving of the soul. The Bible speaks of . . . "receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls." (1 Peter 1:9) God promises in our lives to save us to the uttermost (Hebrews 7.25) through Jesus. That is, He will totally renew our mind to think like Him, transform our will to fully love and follow Him, and form our emotions to be strong and stable, but at the same time full of compassion and mercy.

Body – The last part of man is our earthly tent, our body. In the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, He promises to save and work within our body in several ways:

- Physical healing
- New habits which benefit our bodies
- Give spiritual life to our mortal bodies
- Resurrect and give us glorious bodies at the end of the age.

Learning to Live in the Spirit as Opposed to the Flesh

One of the great lessons in the ongoing life of sanctification is learning to walk in and live in the Spirit and not in the flesh. Most believers today think living in the flesh is only carrying out fleshly sins, but it is far more than that. We must come to understand that all natural life is of the flesh! Living in the flesh includes all of the following:

- Living and being controlled by fleshly desires such as the lust of the body or of the eyes.
- Living under the control of my natural senses – sensory living
- Living under the bondage of the fleshly mind – mentally connecting with God and the world around you only
- Trusting in my own natural ability to follow and please God



Bible Study: *What can you learn from the following passages about living in the flesh or living in the Spirit? Eph. 2.3 Gal. 5.13-25 Rom. 8.5-13*

To live in and walk in the Spirit is to have deeply developed my Spirit man, living in touch with and under the control and power of the Holy Spirit moment by moment in my life. To do this we must develop in several major areas: a) a developed spirit man, b) a mind that can work together with the spirit man, c) emotions that are brought under the control of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit Man, Our Mind & Emotion

Western Christians as a whole are pigmies in the spirit man and overgrown in the logical mind realm. We have been brainwashed into thinking that the mind and knowledge and learning is the secret to everything, even spiritual life. Because of this we have a very secular worldview and don't interact with the spirit realm well. The result is we live a secularized version of faith with little or no power for power ebbs out of the spirit man for that is where the Holy Spirit dwells. Africans, Asians, Latin Americans are often just the opposite. They come from cultures where the spirit world and interacting with it are natural. Faith flows much more freely in these cultures. The supernatural is normal.



The real goal is to develop our spirit man and then to have a mind that can work together with the Spirit of God in our human spirit.

Developing the Spirit Man = Coming to know the indwelling Spirit more and more in your life and learning to cooperate with Him at all times.

- Acknowledging His presence often within your spirit – Practicing the Presence of God.
- Come to know the Holy Spirit as a Person
- Always having an ear tuned in to His voice & maintaining that living connection moment by moment. (With His word comes power)
- Being around and learning from those who have developed their spirit man and interact by faith with the spirit realm often.
- Stepping out in faith far beyond normal limits as He speaks.
- Praying in tongues much.
- Learning to depend upon the Holy Spirit in childlike faith daily!

Having a Mind that can work with the Spirit & spirit man

One of the keys to developing and living in the Spirit is having a mind that can work together with the Holy Spirit as we develop our own spirit man. We must renew our mind through the Word daily under the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Our minds are often a negative factor in the Holy Spirit working in our lives.

- Renew to a positive attitude and be ruthless with all negative.
- Renew to a mindset of miracles and supernatural
- Renew to a mindset of success & abundance
- Renew to a mindset of love and servanthood (Philippians 2.3-9)
- A mindset of absolute reliance upon the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8.5-8)



Bible Study: *Read John 6.1-12 and describe the difference in the thinking of Phillip and Andrew? How did one man's thinking block the miraculous and the other lose it?*

Bringing our Emotions under the control of God's Word

One last area we must mention is the emotions. Many of God's children live by their feelings. We must learn to bring our emotions under the control of God's word. Very often we will not FEEL like we think we should but our feelings must not be listened to.

The great English Apostle Smith Wigglesworth was once asked, "Smith, how do you feel today?" To which he replied, "I don't know. I never ask myself how I feel!" He had truly learned a secret – to bring his emotions under the truth and power of God's word.

Feelings come and feelings go, my feelings are deceiving. I live upon the word of God for none else is worth believing.



Application: *Are you currently living in the flesh or in the Spirit?*

What do you need to do to renew your mind and develop your spirit man?



How can you use these truths to change this nation through powerful ministry?

Lesson #8: The Two Covenants



Reflection: What do you know of the Covenants of God?
Which Covenants are in operation today for us?

The animals had been slain—cut in half down the spine. Their bright blood stained the stones, the dirt, the grass, vying with sprinklets of wildflowers in their display of color. A covenant was being cut.

- **Robe:** The two men stood opposite one another. Each removed his own robes and handed them to the other, then clothed himself in his covenant brother's garments. I am putting on you...and you me. We are one.
- **Belt:** Then they handed each other their belts and picking up their weapons from the ground, each handed the other his sword, his bow. By this action they understood... Your enemies are now mine...and mine yours.
- **The Walk of Blood:** In a figure-eight path, both walked through the pieces of flesh lying opposite one another. It was a walk of death. I am dying to my independent living...and to my rights.
- **The Oath:** They swore by an oath as they pointed first to heaven—God, do so to me...What we did to these slain animals if I break this covenant!
- **The Mark:** Then each made a cut on his wrist, and with a handclasp the two men mingled their blood. It is agreed: We—once two—have now become one. Each reached down and scooped up dirt mingled with small stones and rubbed this abrasive into the cut in his wrist. Wherever I am, when I lift my hand and see the scar, I will remember I have a covenant partner.
- **The Reading of the Assets:** In turn each recited what he owned and what he owed; from this day forward they would share all their resources. What is mine is your...what is your is mine.
- **The Covenant Meal:** They sat down to partake of a covenant meal. One broke bread and placed it in his covenant partner's mouth; then the other did the same. They sealed it with a drink of good wine. You are eating me, and I you.
- **The Memorial:** Finally a memorial was set up—a pile of stone, a planted tree, a written contract—as a testimony of the covenant they had made.

Now I call you Friend—my Friend who sticks closer than a brother. (excerpt taken from *Our Covenant God* by Kay Arthur, pg. 49-50)

This is the root of covenant—a pledge to death, cut in blood, born in love. The Bible speaks of covenant over and over throughout its pages. In fact, it is



divided into two sections which we call THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT. The use of the word testament is a translation of the word COVENANT, therefore, the bible is really the story of two different covenants God and man have shared throughout the ages. Every follower of Jesus is living under one of these two and as a result is walking in victory or defeat.

Covenant: A solemn agreement or promise made between two parties and guaranteed with the shedding of blood which defines a relationship closer than blood itself.

It is the most binding and solemn promise two parties can make. In biblical days, men did not make covenant unless they were totally sure they would perform it.

The God of Covenant

Why did God choose to use this concept of covenant when He began to walk with man and how can understanding the covenant nature of God help us today?

God is a God of covenant - The Bible teaches us that God is a covenant keeping God, that is His nature is absolutely unchanging and He would never think of violating His promises to us or His word. He chose the most powerful concept on earth to try to show us that He was absolutely trustworthy, faithful, and that we could count on Him.

Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments. Deuteronomy 7:9

God wanted to convince us of His faithfulness to us - God entered into covenant with man not to bind Himself, but to prove to us the unchangeableness of His nature and word. The covenant gives us the utmost assurance that God will keep His word. It is the springboard for a living and abundant faith in our hearts.

In entering into covenant with us, God's one object is to draw us to Himself, to make us completely dependent upon Him, and bring us into our rightful place so that He can fill us with His faith, love, and blessings.

Why two covenants—Old and New?



Bible Study: Read Gal. 4.21-31. What does Paul tell us about two covenants living in one house? What does that have to do with us today? What is the theme of Galatians?

In God's dealing with man, it pleased Him that there be two covenants—two ways that God would work with Man and Man could walk with God. It is vital that we understand their relation to each other so that we may walk with God.



Two Ways God Deals With Man

In all the interactions between God and man, there are two parties. Each must have the opportunity to prove themselves in the Covenant.

In the **OLD or FIRST COVENANT**, man had the opportunity given him to prove what He could do. This covenant was dependent on man's performance and obedience in his own willpower and strength and ended in man proving his unfaithfulness and failure.

In the **NEW OR SECOND COVENANT**, God proves what He can do with man when He is trusted to do ALL the work. This was an everlasting covenant because God Himself keeps it and ensures our keeping it.

The two covenants represent two stages of God's education of man and of man's seeking after God. They represent for us today, two ways we might approach and attempt to walk with God.

Understanding the Old Covenant

The basic principle of the OC is that God gives His expectations of Man (law & commands) and Man must keep all of them. If he does, then God will be his God and he will belong to God. If he does, God will bless him and he will walk with God. Vice versa, if he can't, then the man has problems with God. What did the OC way of approaching God do? The Old Covenant...

- Awakened man's desire
- Deepened the sense of dependence on God
- Convinced him of his sin and impotence
- Prepared him to feel the need of the salvation of Christ

So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and °He wrote them on two tablets of stone.
Deuteronomy 4.13

*Now it shall come to pass, if you **diligently obey** the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully **all His commandments** which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God. Deuteronomy 28:1-2*

But why the Law?

The Law took men into its training and tried to make the best of them with its external rules. God gave the Law to convince man of his sin, to convince him of His need of Another both to save him and give him power to walk with God. The OC was given so that man would realize he could never fulfill the covenant. The Law awakened man to his need of a New and Better Covenant and a true redemption. (See *Galatians 3:23-25*) The whole of the Old Covenant was a school of grace to prepare for the fullness of grace and truth in Christ Jesus.

The Work of the Old Covenant

The Old Covenant completes its objective only as it brings men to a sense of their utter sinfulness and their hopelessness of delivering themselves. As long as they have not learned this, no offer of the New Covenant life can lay



hold of them. As long as an intense longing for deliverance from sinning has not been realized, men will naturally fall back into the power of the law and the flesh. The life in the spirit of bondage appears to make more allowance for sin, because obedience is declared to be impossible.

Revelations from the Covenants

In the Old Testament (under the Old Covenant) there were men in whom the powers of the coming redemption worked mightily. They had a revelation of the coming Christ and of the life and liberty of the New Covenant. Abraham was a man who related to God by faith, not by works of the law. David had a powerful revelation of the New Covenant and the Cross and therefore formed the Tabernacle of David which was outlawed under the OC.

However, in the New Testament there were men in whom the spirit of the Old still made itself manifest. Their lives showed how possible it is within the New Covenant era to still be held fast in the bondage of the Old. The books of Galatians, Colossians, and many other writings of Paul seek to break the OC mentality that drifts back into the church. Jesus himself said, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees...Don't put New Wine in an old wine skin. . ." and many other things warning His followers that what He was doing was a totally new thing and to be careful not to go back to OC living or thinking.

The Example of the Galatians

Galatians 4:21-31 teaches us that the Galatians had become entangled with a yoke of bondage, and were not standing fast in the freedom of Christ. Instead of living in the New Covenant, in the liberty that the Holy Spirit gives, their whole walk proved that, though Christians, they were of the Old Covenant, which brings people under bondage.

The Galatians had wandered away, fallen from the grace of God, from the walk of sanctifying grace. They had come under the spirit of bondage again. So it is in the Church today where there can be found two kinds of Christians.

1. Many Christians are still caught up in a religious system—bondage to the Old Covenant, the Law. They are content with living a life half in the flesh and half in the spirit, half works and half grace.
2. Other Christians have come to a true revelation of freedom and are seeking with their whole heart to know the deliverance from sin and the abiding full power of God's presence through a faith life with Jesus Christ.

Christians who are caught up in this spirit of bondage must come to a real knowledge of the power of sin, of their entire and utter failure to cast it out, or to work in themselves what is good. Until they have learned this, they cannot possibly enter fully into the blessing of the New Covenant. It is when a man sees that, as little as he could raise himself from the dead, can he make or keep his own soul alive, that he becomes capable of appreciating the New Covenant promise, and is made willing to wait on God to do all in him.



Application: Do you feel there is still somewhat of the Old Covenant spirit of bondage in you? It is time to let the Old Covenant finish its work in you. Accept its teaching, that all your efforts are failures.

Confess now before God as His redeemed child, that you feel completely inadequate to do and be what He asks of you. Ask God for a revelation of the New Covenant and to give you strength and the help of the Holy Spirit to do what is well-pleasing to God.



Lesson #9: The New Covenant



Bible Study: Read Jeremiah 31:31-34. What does it tell us about the old and new covenant?

Through the whole of the Old Covenant there were always two problems: man’s heart was not right with God and nothing he could do could make it right. Man’s heart is self centered at its core and always longs for self and fleshly sin.

In the New Covenant the solution is provided. Its central promise is a heart delighting in God’s law, capable of knowing and fellowshiping with Him.

A Comparison of the Old and New

Old Covenant Living	New Covenant Living
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

So how are you living your life? In the power of the New Covenant or the bondage of the old? Is your life characterized by glorious victory or endless defeat?

We have a glorious Savior and a wonderful new way of living with God called the New Covenant. Within it, everything that we cannot do for ourselves, God has promised to do for us and in us. Jesus saves to the Uttermost those who draw near to God through Him! Hallelujah!

Fourfold Blessing of the New Covenant

1. The Promise of a Transformed Mind and a New heart: “I will put My law in their minds, and write it in their hearts.”

When the Old Covenant with the law graven on stone had done its work in revealing what we are really like, the New Covenant would give in its place the life of obedience and true holiness of heart. This is the whole of the Covenant—the heart being put right and fitted to know God. We find two promises here:

A. Put His laws into our minds . . .one of the basic problems in our lives is our thinking. Our minds are set against loving and doing the will of God and they don’t help us at all in living with or for Him. Instead of minds that work together with God, our thinking works against Him. God has promised to work within our minds, renewing our minds by placing His law within. Most Christians have never taken God at His word for the renewal of the mind. Because of that, we still live in much of the old, fleshly thinking patterns and



our lives change only in the fact that we don't do some of the more obvious sins of the world. In the New Covenant, we are promised minds that have been 're-wired' to think like God thinks! (See Romans 12.2)

B. Write it upon our hearts. . . .Jeremiah says that the heart is deceitfully wicked and who can know it. That is so true of our lives today. No matter how hard we try to serve and follow God, we find deep within us at the core of our being a nature that serves only itself and is bound by sin. God has promised to come to our hearts and change the very makeup of the core of our being. He will write upon our hearts the love of God and true holiness and purity. He will cause our deepest parts to long for Him and to love people. In Matthew 22.37-41, we find Jesus summarizing everything the Law of God calls for: Love God with every ounce of your being, and love your neighbors with true compassion and mercy. Imagine God so re-working your heart that your natural disposition was to passionately love God and compassionately love those God places around you. That is the first promise of the NC. He will take out that old sin-loving heart and put a true God and other loving heart in its place. What a Savior we have.

2. The Promise of a Secure Relationship: "And I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

In the Old Covenant, the people of God were never on secure ground. Their relationship with God was totally dependent upon their ability to perform the commands of the Law. God said, "If you can keep my laws- all of them- then I will be your God and you will be My people." It sounded great at first, God would accept me if I could totally obey Him, but when people began to try to keep the law and began to fail, they realized they were on shaky ground. They could never be secure because they could never fully obey!

It is not so in the New Covenant. There are no If you can, then I will. There is only a definite statement: You are Mine and I am yours! What a great security we can know in the reality of Jesus and His New Covenant. Not only that, but within this promise lies the thought that I have full right to lay claim upon God – that is, to ask and believe of Him to do all for me because I am His and He mine. Most Christians don't believe this or ever live this way.

Three Key Statements:

- What God is for any man, God will be for me.
- What God would give to others, He will give to me.
- What God would do for any other, He will do for me.

This is the very highest experience of the everlasting Covenant—relationship with Father God! It is only when His people begin to understand how He has unconditionally accepted them and given Himself to them that true freedom in Christ begins to come. We have a secure relationship with God on our good days and on our bad ones. Praise the Lord.

3. The Promise of Knowing Him intimately: "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."



Under the Old Covenant, only a few people ever really got to know God or experience Him in any real way. In fact, most of the people were either terrified of Him or had no interest at all.

Individual personal fellowship with God is the wonderful privilege of every member of the New Covenant people. Each one will know the Lord in this life and for all eternity. As Jesus knew the Father, the child of God will receive by the Holy Spirit that revelation which will make God to him the One he knows best, because he loves Him most and lives in Him. The Holy Spirit will open the Word of God to us and be our teacher. Jesus said in John 17.3, *“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”*

4. The Promise of Complete Forgiveness and Cleansing: “For I will forgive their iniquities, and I will remember their sin no more.”

This blessing is the reason for all the proceeding blessings. Because the blood of the New Covenant was of such infinite worth, and its Mediator, Jesus Christ, of such Divine power, there is promised in it such a blotting out of sin that God cannot remember it.

This is the promise of a life free from a sin-filled conscience. Most believers today are always troubled with guilt and condemnation, but according to this promise, we can know a life of complete freedom from this problem. We can live under a heaven that is absolutely forgiving and absolutely in love with us. We don't have to be guilty or condemned any more. God has absolutely dealt with our sins in Christ.

The Bible says of our sin. . .

- He has removed them from us as far as the east is from the west
- He has cast them into a sea of forgetfulness
- He has blotted them out of His sight
- He has fully paid for them and they are gone

The Blood of the Covenant

How was this New Covenant opened up for us all? How did God make such a radical shift in the way He operates with man?

“For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Matthew 26:28

Almost all covenants in the Bible times were sealed and ratified by the act of shedding innocent blood. The blood of the sacrifice given was the ratifying power of the covenant.

God has opened for us the wonderful life in the New Covenant, a whole new way of approaching God, walking with Him, and living in victory as He does all for me through the ratifying power of His Son's blood. It was Jesus' death on the cross which inaugurated the New Covenant between God and man.

The Role of Faith & the Holy Spirit

The New Covenant has no power to give and to bless except as it is ministered by the Holy Spirit and it is by faith that the Holy Spirit begins to



work and manifests these promises in our lives. It is only by a God-given faith that we can appropriate these God-given promises. And it is only by a God-given teaching and inward revelation that we can see their meaning, so as to believe them. When God teaches us the meaning of His promises in a heart yielded to His Holy Spirit, then alone we can believe and receive them in a power that makes them a reality in our life.

- The Spirit works in lesser or greater degree, as He is neglected and grieved, or yielded to and trusted. Let us honor Him, and give Him His place as the Spirit of the New Covenant, by expecting and accepting all He waits to do for us.
- His coming from heaven was the proof that the Mediator of the Covenant was on the throne of glory, and could now make us partakers of the heavenly life
- He is the only teacher of what the Covenant means: dwelling in our heart, He gives the thought and the desire for what God has prepared for us
- He is the Spirit of faith, who enables us to believe the blessing and power in which the New Covenant works, and to claim it as our own
- He is the Spirit of grace and of power, by whom the obedience of the Covenant and the fellowship with God can be maintained without interruption
- He Himself is the Possessor and the Bearer and the Communicator of all the Covenant promises and the Revealer and the Glorifier of Jesus.



Application: Have you rejected the Old Covenant life-style and mentality and had your mind totally renewed into New Covenant thinking?

Are you aggressively accessing and claiming the promises of the New Covenant daily by faith?

Are you operating as a minister of the Old Covenant or the New? Many if not most ministers today are in bondage to Old Covenant thinking and bring all they minister to down with them.



Lesson #10: Eternity

Eternity is not talked about widely in the world or the church today. However, it was a constant theme in the New Testament and the great hope of the lives of early Christians.

Death

Death of an unbeliever—The Bible teaches that immediately upon death, the unbeliever's soul goes into torment. (See Luke 16.19-31)

Death of a believer—Death is not a punishment for the Christian. It is the outcome of living in a fallen world. Everything dies because of the results of the fall. It should be a privilege, a joy, a blessed hope for those who have lived for Christ.



Bible Study: Read Rev 14.13 & 2 Cor 5.8. What happens at the death of a believer?

When a believer dies physically, what happens to their soul and spirit? The body ceases to function, but his spirit and soul immediately go to be with the Lord.

We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:8

The Resurrection

The Bible teaches that there will be a day in which all that have died will be physically raised from the dead. Their bodies will come out of the grave, be reunited with their souls to move into their eternal destiny.

Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice and shall come forth; those who did the good (deeds) to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil (deeds) to a resurrection of judgment. John 5:28-29

Most Christians will die and their souls will go to be with the Lord as their bodies are buried and decay. At Christ's Second Coming, He will raise our bodies and reunite them with our souls. *1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*

We will be made like Him in the resurrection! (*Philippians 3:20-21*) At His coming, Jesus will exert His mighty power upon our physical bodies and transform them into the likeness of His glorious body.

The Resurrection of the Dead is one of the greatest hopes of our lives. We need to let this truth settle into our hearts. It is not just a fine sounding idea. It is our eternal reality in Jesus Christ.



Bible Study: Study these scriptures on the resurrection. How should we view this event? What should this understanding do for our daily lives? John 5:29; 1 Cor 15; 1 Thess 4:16-18; Phil. 3:20-31; Acts 23:6

The Judgment

Jesus will judge all men at the end of this world.

And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment. Hebrews 9:27

For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son. John 5:22

The Unbelievers: The Great White Throne Judgment

The unbeliever will experience a resurrection of judgment. (*Revelation 20:11-15 & John 5:29*) It will be terrifying:

John saw a mass of humanity standing before the great throne. Some will be the famous people of history, some will be nameless. Two sets of books will be opened:

- One set of books will be a record of everything ever done by each person—every sin, every thought, every word, every motive, every wicked action.
- The other book will be the Book of Life. The bottom line: if your name was not there, you were sent to the lake of fire.

This will be the most terrifying day in all of history. There will be weeping, gnashing of teeth, screaming of terror and torment. It will be the most awesome and fearful day in the history of creation.



Bible Study: *Hebrews 10:26, 27, 31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Matthew 25:41, 46*

What will be the fate of the unbelieving? What will be their penalty if they refuse Christ or never know Him?

For those who do not receive Christ, the punishment is everlasting HELL—a place of eternal fire and eternal punishment!

Luke 16:19-31 tells us more about hell

- People go to punishment at death
- People will be conscious and fully aware at how awful their suffering is
- There is no escape, it is eternal
- It is so awful, people will want to warn others

Jesus spoke more about the judgment of sinners and hell than any other topic. 13% of all recorded words of Jesus were about judgment and hell.



Over half of His parables dealt with God's judgment. Jesus does not want any to perish and go to eternal damnation in hell!

The Believers: The Judgment Seat of Christ

Christians are judged for their works in the body but they will go to heaven. We will not be judged for our sins or for our place in eternity. The Bible is clear that we have been forgiven and that eternity with God is a gift, not something we earn.

We will be judged for our works—how we lived our lives in Christ.



Bible Study: *John 5:24; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15*

The foundation of our eternity with God is Jesus. It is how we build upon Him with our lives that determine our reward or loss on that day. It is the quality of our works, either good or bad, that Christ will look at on that day. Things like:

- Did you spend your life for earthly things or for Jesus? Your time, money, thoughts, words.
- Do you look like Jesus or the world?
- Did you live for His Kingdom and its work or for this world?

Christians whose life work was eternal will receive an eternal reward from Christ. Christians whose life was worldly and who did not live for the eternal will lose everything but their soul. They will have no reward in heaven.

Eternal Rewards

- **The Crown of Life:** It is given to those who are faithful, who don't give in to temptation, who love Christ deeply. (James 1:12)
- **The Crown of Glory:** It is given to faithful shepherds of God's flock—those who lay down their lives for His people. (1 Peter 5:2-3)
- **The Crown of Righteousness:** It is given to those who finish the will of God in their lives and live holy and pure looking for and longing for the return of Christ. (2 Timothy 4:7-8)
- **The Crown of Rejoicing:** It is given to those who win souls into Christ's kingdom. This is often called the Soul Winner's Crown. (1 Thess. 2:19)
- **The Incorruptible Crown:** It is given to those who discipline their lives for godliness. (1 Cor. 9:25)

Jesus longs to bestow these and many other wonderful rewards upon His servants at that judgment seat. Many of us are living our lives like we will not give an account to Christ. It is better to prepare for this time now, because we cannot change things when we stand before Him.



Heaven—Our Eternal Home

After the moment of judgment, Christ will wipe away every tear and we will begin eternity with Him! Jesus has been in Heaven for two thousand years preparing a place for us that will be beyond our wildest dreams. Jesus longs to come for us and to bring us to His dwelling place. *John 14:2-3*

In heaven, everything will be new! *Revelation 21:1*

God will destroy the current heaven and earth by fire and He will create a new one for eternity. The Father and the Son will actually live among us *Revelation 21:3*

God will see that we are fully at peace, fully satisfied, totally fulfilled *Revelation 21:4*

In His presence there will be total joy and pleasure *Psalms 16:11*

It will be a place of continual worship and adoration *Revelation 4:8*

It will be a place where for eternity, the Father pours out His love, kindness, and grace upon us in Jesus *Ephesians 2:7*



Application: What should we do with this knowledge of eternity? Do you know unbelievers that might experience judgment and have to spend eternity in hell? What can you do to help them?

We should meditate on eternity, dream of it, and let it get deep into our spirits. Our home in heaven is one of the greatest realities of all of creation. Take hope, God loves you far beyond your greatest dreams and He has a plan for your eternity that nothing in you could ever imagine or dream.

We should also fully live our lives now for His glory, knowing that we will be judged some day for how we spend our daily lives.

Appendix of Scripture Study

1. God the Father: Describe what you can learn from the Scriptures about God being our Father and how we are to relate to Him as Sons.

- ✓ Matt. 6.9, Matt. 7.11, Luke 11.13, Luke 15.11-end, Rom 8.15, James 1.17, 1 John 3.1

2. Write out the name of the Holy Spirit given in each of these verses and then how knowing Him in this regard might affect your life.

- ✓ Matt. 1.20, 3.16, 10.20,12.18, Mark 1.10, Luke 4.18, John 14.17, Acts 16.7, Rom 8.2, 8.9, 8.15, 1 Cor. 2.12, 2 Tim 1.7, Heb. 9.14, 10.29, 1John 5.7

3. The Cross – In your own words, what do the following verses teach us about the cross. At the end, give a brief description of the finished work of Christ on the cross.

- ✓ Matthew 10.38, Luke 9.23
- ✓ 1 Corinthians 1.17-18
- ✓ Galatians 6.14
- ✓ Ephesians 2.16
- ✓ Philippians 3.18
- ✓ Colossians 1.20
- ✓ Colossians 2.14

4. Read Romans 3 – 8 and list all the workings of salvation and new life promised in these passages. There are over twenty.

5. The Blood of the Christ - What do the following verses tell us about the blood of Christ?

- ✓ Matthew 26.28
- ✓ John 6.53-56
- ✓ Romans 3.25, 5.9
- ✓ Ephesians 1.7 & Colossians 1.14
- ✓ Colossians 1.20
- ✓ Hebrews 9.12-14
- ✓ Hebrews 10.29
- ✓ 1 John 1.7
- ✓ Revelations 5.9
- ✓ Revelations 12.11

6. Justification-Describe in detail what the following verses tell us about justification & righteousness in Jesus Christ?

- ✓ Romans 3.20-26
- ✓ Romans 4.25, 5.1,2,
- ✓ Romans 5.16-18
- ✓ 2 Corinthians 5.21

New Testament Themes

- ✓ Matthew 5.6
- ✓ Romans 4.3, 5.21
- ✓ Colossians 1.12, Ephesians 1.6

7. **Lesson 6 & 7 – Adoption & Sonship:** From the following verses, what does the Bible tell us about our adoption and sonship?

- ✓ John 1.12, 1 John 3.1-3
- ✓ Romans 8.14-17
- ✓ Galatians 4.1-7
- ✓ Ephesians 1.5-6

8. **The Two Covenant**

- ✓ What do the following two verses tell us about God being a God of Covenant? Deuteronomy 7.9, Hebrews 6.13-18
- ✓ Describe how man was to relate to God in the Old Covenant. Deuteronomy 4.13 & Deut. 28.1-2
- ✓ What do the following verses tell us about the renewing of our minds? Romans 12.2, Ephesians 4.17, Ephesians 4.221-24, 2 Corinthians 10.3-5.
- ✓ What are the promises of God transforming our hearts through the power of the New Covenant? Ezekiel 36.26-27, Deuteronomy 30.6.
- ✓ What is the essence of the law of God that He promises to write within the very inner workings of our life? See Matthew 22.37-41
- ✓ What do the following verses promise us or teach us about the potential of knowing Jesus Christ and the Father in a real way? John 17.3, John 14.21, 23, 2 Peter 1.2-3, Ephesians 3.17-20