Introduction

The purpose of this course is to help students understand some basic concepts and expectations regarding being a member of this church. To get the most of this course, students are urged to read the listed scriptures, answer the questions, and participate in the class discussions. It is important to **turn in the answers to the review questions,** so you can get credit for completing this course, which is a prerequisite for becoming an active member of this church. You also need to complete the two forms in the back of the book – **Membership Registration Form** and **Service Discovery Form.**

The Bible

(Key Verse II Timothy 3:16)

Read

2 Peter 1:21
21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 3:16
6 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

Proverbs 14:12
12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

Authoritative Truth

Notice in II Peter 1:21 that the prophecies, and all scripture for that matter, came from God through people. II Timothy 3:16 teaches that all scripture came from God or was God breathed; and therefore, it is profitable for knowing how to live right.

Proverbs 14:12 teaches that we cannot trust our own wisdom, because what seems right to us can end in death.

Read

Hebrews 11:6
6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Romans 10:17
17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Psalms 1:2
2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

2 Timothy 2:15
15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

1 Timothy 3:2
2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

2 Timothy 2:2
2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

James 2:17
17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Matthew 7:24-27
24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

Prayerfully Study and Obey

Hebrews 11:6 teaches that it takes faith to please God. Romans 10:17 talks about the importance of hearing the message of God's Word, in order to have faith in God. Personal (see "Effective Personal Bible Study") and church sponsored Bible studies are great ways to hear God's Word.

Psalms 1:2 and II Timothy 2:15 support the importance of individual studying of God's Word. I Timothy 3:2 and II Timothy 2:2 support the importance of the Pastor and others being involved in helping people understand how to live by God's Word.

James 2:17 teaches that if we don't have works of obedience then our faith is dead and not pleasing to God. Matthew 7:24-27 teaches the foolishness of hearing but not obeying God's Word, as well as the wisdom of hearing and obeying it.

In summary, *because the Bible is authoritative truth, every member is expected to prayerfully study and obey it.*

Review Questions:

1. What two scriptures support the idea that the Bible came to us from God through people?

_____

2. What scripture supports the idea that we cannot simply trust what seems right to us?

_____

3. Because the Bible is _____ truth, every member is expected to prayerfully _____ and _____ it.

Salvation

(Key Verse John 3:16)

Read

John 3:16

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, [f] that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 10:10

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

God Loves You and Wants to Bless Your Life

Notice that John 3:16 and 10:10 teaches that God loves everybody and wants to bless His people with abundant life. Even though we would like to have more than we have, we must admit that God's love for us is shown by such things as we are still alive, still have some health and strength, still have some family members and loved ones, and the list could go on.

Read

Romans 3:10, 23

10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Your Sin Separates You From the Blessings of God

John 3:16 talks about how people were going to perish because of the sins in their lives. Sin is anything contrary to God's will. Romans 3:10, 23 makes it clear that there are none who are righteous and that all have sinned. Just like a little or a great deal of poison in a glass will kill us, so too will a little or a great deal of sin separate us from the blessings of God.

Read

Romans 6:23

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 5:8

8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

2 Corinthians 5:21

21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Jesus' Death Satisfies Your Sin Debt

Romans 6:23 teaches that the wages of sin is death. And thank God that according to Romans 5:8, Jesus died for us, while we were yet sinners. We know that when John 3:16 says that God gave His Son that means He died for us, so we would not perish for our sins. II Corinthians 5:21 teaches this idea of substitution rather clearly. God made Jesus sin for us, so we can be made righteous through Him. Just like a cashier will accept a substitute payment for our groceries, God accepts Jesus death as payment for our sins.

Read

Romans 10:9-13

9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 11 As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Hebrews 12:6

6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."

You Must Accept Jesus as Your Savior by Faith

Romans 10:9-13 teaches us the importance of believing and confessing. *We must ask and trust God to save us because of Jesus' death for our sins, in order to be saved from the penalty of our sins, which is going to Hell.* Ephesians 2:8-9 makes it clear that we cannot work our way into being right with God. Our only hope is to exercise faith in Jesus' payment for us.

Hebrews 12:6 teaches that a great reason for a saved person to strive to live right is to prevent the punishment of God. However, we don't strive to live right in order to be saved or to stay saved. Just like our children are always our children, even when they act in an embarrassing way, so it is with the children of God. God chastises saved people when they do wrong, but He doesn't disown them.

In summary, the four statements in the plan of salvation are (1) God loves you and wants to bless your lives; (2) Your sin separates you from the blessings of God; (3) Jesus' death satisfies your sin debt; and (4) You must accept Jesus as your savior by faith. If you believe this then the following prayer of acceptance can be helpful:

"God I believe that Jesus died and paid for my sins. Please save me from going to Hell because Jesus' death for my sins. Help me to live right. In Jesus' name, amen."

Every member is expected to make an informed confession of accepting Jesus Christ as his/her personal savior by faith.

Review Questions:

1. What is the key verse and four statements that help us understand salvation? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. To be saved, one needs to _____ and _____ God to save him/her because of _____ death for his/her sins.

3. When saved people sin, God may punish them, but they don't lose their salvation.

True or False

4. Every member is expected to make an _____ _____ of accepting Jesus Christ as his/her personal savior by _____.

Discipleship

(Key Verse Luke 9:23)

Read

Luke 9:23

23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Luke 11:28

28 He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

Hebrews 12:6

6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."

Decision

Notice that Luke 9:23 starts with an "if" clause, which means we have to make a decision. We should decide to be *a disciple or follower of Christ* because Luke 11:28 teaches that there are blessings for those who obey God's Word. Hebrews 12:6 teaches that there is punishment for those who don't obey God's Word. We should be so thankful to God for what He has already done for us that we decide to be disciples. However, two clear scriptural reasons to decide to follow Christ are to be blessed and to prevent punishment.

Read

Titus 2:12

12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

Proverbs 14:12

12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

Denial of Self

Titus 2:12 teaches that we have to grow to be able to say "no" to worldly lusts. Proverbs 14:12 teaches that what seems right to us cannot be trusted. In fact, it may end in death. Denial of self means to tell ourselves "no," when we are going contrary to God's will.

Read

Matthew 5:10-16

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.
14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Ephesians 6:10-12
10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Daily Dedication

Matthew 5:10-16 teaches that a disciple must have daily dedication, because there is subject to be daily persecution. God expects us to fight through the decay and be the salt of the Earth and fight through the darkness to be the light of the world. Ephesians 6:10-12 teaches that we are like soldiers who are to endure hardships. Daily dedication is about having ongoing commitment to following Jesus.

Read

2 Timothy 3:16
16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

2 Timothy 2:15
15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

Ephesians 2:10
10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Acts 1:8
8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

John 1:40-42
40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). 42 And he

brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).

1 Corinthians 14:12, 26
12 So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.

26 What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.

John 13:34-35
34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

1 Peter 4:8
8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Malachi 3:8-10
8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?'
"In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse — the whole nation of you — because you are robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

1 Corinthians 16:2
2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

Divine Directions

II Timothy 3:16 teaches that the Bible is the best thing that we have to know God and His will for our lives. II Timothy 2:15 urges us to do our best in presenting ourselves as workmen who correctly handle the Word of God. It should be obvious that we will have to give ourselves to studying God's Word, in order to handle it correctly.

Ephesians 2:10 teaches that every believer has a pre-assigned good work or service to do for the Lord. Acts 1:8 and John 1:40-42 supports all believers serving as witnesses to especially their loved ones. I Corinthians 14:12, 26 supports all believers serving by giving effort to worshipping God in a fashion that is edifying to others. John 13:34-35 and I Peter 4:8 support all believers serving by giving serious effort to demonstrating love for other members in the body of Christ.

Malachi 3:8-10 and I Corinthians 16:2 teaches the importance of giving to God's church as God has given to us (see "Study, Serve, and Give").

In summary, every member should understand that a disciple is a follower of Christ. The four "Ds" of discipleship are (1) decision, (2) denial of self, (3) daily dedication, and (4) divine directions. *Every member is expected to be familiar with "Discipleship" and strive to at least study, serve, and give.*

Review Questions

1. A disciple is a _____ of Jesus Christ, and the key verse is _____.
2. The four "Ds" of discipleship are _____
_____
3. Even though there are many divine directions to follow, every member is expected to be strive to at least _____, _____, and _____.

God's Local Church

Read

Acts 20:28-29
28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Matthew 28:19-20
19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Hebrews 11:6
6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

1. Mission. Notice that in Acts 20:28 that the church belongs to God, especially since He bought it with His blood. Matthew 28:19-20 supports the idea that *the mission of God's church is evangelize and edify God's way.* Baptism is for people who have recently accepted Christ as their savior or who have been evangelized. *To evangelize means to help people get saved.* Teaching people to observe the commands of God is edification. *To edify means to help people grow in the Lord. God's way is according to biblical principles.* Hebrews 11:6 reminds us that without faith (i.e., hearing and obeying – Rom. 10:17; Jm. 2:17), we cannot please God. Thus, *the mission of God's church is to evangelize and edify God's way.* (see "Baptism and the Lord's Supper/Communion")

Read

Jeremiah 3:15
15 Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.

1 Timothy 3:1-7
3 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, [a] he desires a noble task. 2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. 7 He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

1 Peter 5:1-4

5 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings
and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God's flock
that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you
are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; 3 not
lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the
Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Numbers 18:21

21 "I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work
they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting.

1 Timothy 5:17-18

17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor,
especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, "Do
not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his
wages."

1 Corinthian 9:7-14

7 Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat
of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? 8 Do I say this merely
from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? 9 For it is written in
the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." b Is it about
oxen that God is concerned? 10 Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was
written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought
to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. 11 If we have sown spiritual seed among
you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? 12 If others have this right of
support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?

But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than
hinder the gospel of Christ. 13 Don't you know that those who work in the temple get
their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on
the altar? 14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the
gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

Matthew 10:40-42

40 "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who
sent me. 41 Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a
prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous
man will receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold
water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will
certainly not lose his reward."

2. Pastor. Notice that Jeremiah 3:15 teaches that God will send Pastors/shepherds after His own heart to feed and lead His people with knowledge and understanding. I Timothy 3:1-7 gives a list of things to look for in those who are being considered for the office of Pastor. They need to be disciples of Christ or people with strong Christian character and have the skills needed to feed and lead the church. I Peter 5:1-4 supports the idea that *the Pastor's job is to feed and lead the church. Feeding means helping people understand and live by the Word of God (e.g., preaching, teaching, training, etc.). Leading means lifting a vision and managing the affairs related to carrying out the vision (e.g., developing written goals, plans, and budgets; building consensus; appointing helpers; etc).*

Numbers 18:21 and I Timothy 5:17-18 support the idea that *the Pastor's compensation is to grow as the church's revenue grows.* All of the tithes in Numbers was given to the clergy of the day. That meant if it was a great deal of money then the clergy received a great deal. If it was a small amount then they received a small amount. This system was put in place by God. In I Timothy 5:17-18, the system continues with ideas like "double honor" and do not "muzzle (i.e., cap)," as long as the work is getting done and there is crop to eat. (I Corinthians 9:7-14 and Matthew 10:40-42 are additional scriptures in this area. The first supports a relationship between working and receiving. The second supports the blessings attached to being a blessing to the person of God.)

Read

1 Peter 2:2
2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

Hebrews 13:17
17 Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Acts 5:29, 38-39
29 Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!

38 Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. 39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

3. Members. I Peter 2:2 supports the idea that *every member is to grow in faith.* A great way to grow in faith is to study and obey the Bible. Hebrews 13:17 supports the idea that *every member is to follow pastoral leadership.* God sends Pastors to feed and lead. The members are to grow by what they are being fed and to follow the one God has sent to lead. Acts 5:29, 38-39 supports the

idea that members should follow pastoral leadership, as long as it doesn't contradict the Word of God. When the Pastor is leading the church contrary to God's Word then the church ought to follow God rather than a person. However, when the Pastor is not leading the church contrary to God's Word but is simply leading her contrary to tradition or popular opinion then the church should obey God's Word (i.e., follow pastoral leadership) trusting that what is of God will stand and what is not of God will fall. *Members are to grow in faith and follow Pastoral leadership.*

Read

Exodus 18:25-26
25 He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people,
officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 26 They served as judges for the
people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they
decided themselves.

Acts 6:1-6
6 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews
among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being
overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the
disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the
word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers, choose seven men from among
you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this
responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of
the word."
5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith
and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas
from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who
prayed and laid their hands on them.

1 Timothy 3:8-13
8 Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much
wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. 9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of
the faith with a clear conscience. 10 They must first be tested; and then if there is
nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.
11 In the same way, their wives b are to be women worthy of respect, not
malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.
12 A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children
and his household well. 13 Those who have served well gain an excellent standing
and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 4:1
4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you
have received.

4. Officers. Exodus 18:25-26 supports the idea that *the officers (i.e., leaders, cabinet members, etc.) are to assist the Pastor as qualified appointed members.* Notice that Moses chose able men to help him in caring for the people of God. In Acts 6:1-6, the Apostles laid their hands on and appointed the seven helpers. The helpers were to do what the Apostles were otherwise doing. In I Timothy 3:8-13, we see a list of things to look for in Deacons. Essentially, they are to have the discipleship or Christian character and competence to serve as a senior officer in the church. Since all members are expected to study, serve, and give, as a demonstration of their discipleship, obviously all officers would be expected to do the same at a higher level. All officers must be able to get along with the people (e.g., loving flexibility, etc.) and the Pastor (e.g., strive for excellence, handle disagreements at lowest level, etc.). Ephesians 4:1 talks about walking worthy of the vocation or living up to the standards of the office that one sits in. *Officers are to assist the Pastor as qualified appointed members.*

Read

Hebrews 10:24-25
24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

1 John 1:5-7
5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

2 Thessalonians 3:10, 14-15
10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. 15 Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

1 Corinthians 5:6-7, 12-13
6 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? 7 Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast — as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

12 What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? 13 God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."

Matthew 18:15-17

15 "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. 16 But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

2 Corinthians 2:5-11

5 If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent — not to put it too severely. 6 The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. 7 Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. 9 The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. 10 If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven — if there was anything to forgive — I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, 11 in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

5. Christian Fellowship. Hebrews 10:24-25 and I John 1:5-7 support the idea that every *member should strive to live by the Word of God.* As we strive to live by the Word and our church family members urge each other to do the same, we can expect to have Christian fellowship with one another. Christian fellowship is important because it provides the encouragement and support we need to keep working on our discipleship, which leads to our living blessed lives. Living by the Word includes loving one another (i.e., long suffering kindness), forgiving one another, and fighting the temptation to be self centered.

II Thessalonians 3:10, 14-15; I Corinthians 5:6-7, 12-13; Matthew 18:15-17 support the idea of *the progressive discipline of those who don't live by the Word.* Just like the privilege of eating is tied to the duty of working, the privileges of membership are tied to the duties of membership. When duties are not perform then privileges are subject to be taken away. Notice how this principle is applied in II Thessalonians 3:14-15. Those who don't perform the duty of obeying the Word of God are denied the privilege of being treated as a member in good standing. They are not kicked out, but they are under warning.

However, in I Corinthians 5:6-7, 12-13, we see a more serious offence. A man is having sex with his father's wife. Here the discipline is not a strong warning but excommunication (i.e., being put out of the church). And in Matthew 18:15-17, we see the idea of trying to solve offenses at a one-to-one level or with a very small group, but if necessary, willful offense will lead to the offender being excommunicated.

It should be noted that the church's zeal to restore fellowship with those who repent should be greater than her zeal to excommunicate. A person stays out as long as it takes for him/her to repent and start doing his/her duties again. It is believed (by some Bible scholars) that the man who was kicked out in I Corinthians 5 was received back in II Corinthians 2:5-11, after the man repented.

In summary, (1) The mission of God's church is to evangelize and edify God's way (see Mt. 28:19-20). (2) The Pastor is to feed and lead the church (see I Pet. 5:1-4). (3) The members are to grow in faith and follow pastoral leadership (see I Pet. 2:2; Heb. 13:17). (4) The officers are to assist the Pastor as qualified appointed members (see Acts 6:1-6). (5) Christian fellowship calls for every member living by the Word and the progressive discipline of those who do not (see I Jn. 1:6-7; I Cor. 5:6-7). *Every member is expected to be familiar with "God's Local Church" and strive to live by its biblical principles.*

Review questions

1. What are the five statements with key verses for "God's Local Church"? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Every member is expected to be _____ with "God's Local Church" and strive to live up to its _____ principles.

Conclusion

It is our hope that you have a clearer understanding of some important concepts and expectations that we have for our members. You need to do the following:

1. Turn in a copy of your answers to the review questions. If you have challenges writing, let the teacher know, and we will work on finding another way for you to demonstrate that you understand the material.
2. Turn in your completed "Membership Registration Form." The Pastor needs to sign this in order for you to become an active member of this church.
3. Turn in your completed "Skills Inventory Form." This information will be used to help you find your place of service in this church.

Please don't hesitate to call the church with your questions and comments.

Appendix

Effective Personal Bible Study

Before your daily study, find a quiet place to ask God to help you understand and obey His Word (i.e., 1st prayer). Your Bible, study tools, paper, and pen should be handy.

During the study, ask, "What does the passage say?," "What does the passage mean?," and "What does the passage mean to me?" In answering the first question, which is a question of observation, paraphrase or put in your own words what the passage says. In answering the second question, which is a question of interpretation, study tools such as the Ryrie Study Bible (i.e., a Bible with outlines, footnotes, and other study resources), Living Bible (i.e., a paraphrase version of the Bible), commentary (i.e., a book of comments on the Bible), and concordance (i.e., an index of words in the Bible) may be helpful. In answering the third question, which is a question of application, it is important to be honest with yourself, even when the text means you are wrong.

After the study and during the study, keep notes of the answers to the three study questions. Ask God to help you remain mindful of and obedient to what you have studied (i.e., 2nd prayer).

Ten minutes of study each day, until you grow to 20 or more minutes a day, is better than one hour of study every now and then. Using the Sunday School and/or Wednesday Bible studies material is suggested for daily reading.

Study, Serve, and Give

The Pastor wants every member registered in a Bible study, a ministry group, and committed to tithing as soon as possible. Follow-up workers will diligently encourage members to study, serve, and give (see Heb. 10:24-25). Feel free to contact your Pastor with any concerns you may have.

Every member needs to strive to be a regular student in a Bible study (e.g., Sunday School, Wednesday Bible Study, etc.), in addition to daily home study (see II Tim. 2:15; Ps. 1:2-3). Please register (i.e., just sign in) in at least one of the study groups as soon as possible.

Every member has a service or a ministry to perform (see Eph. 2:10; Tit. 2:14). Find something for your hands to do. If what you believe God would have you to do is not available here, contact your Pastor or designated person about possibly starting a new ministry. Choirs, ushers, and the traditional church ministries are important, but please be sensitive to God's leading you in other areas as well. If you need help finding your place of service, please call your Pastor's office.

Every believer should serve by inviting and trying to bring loved ones to church and Christ (see Acts 1:8; Jn. 1:40-42). Every believer should serve by striving to worship God in ways that edify or build up others (see I Cor. 14:12, 26). Every believer should serve by striving to demonstrate love towards the rest of the church family (see Jn. 13:34-35; I Pet. 4:8).

Tithing is giving 10% of your gross income to the support of God's work at the church (e.g., if you make $350/wk., you need to pay $35/wk. tithes). God wants His people to pay their tithes and give their offerings (i.e., what you want to give over the tithe) because the church yet needs financial support, as it did during the Old Testament. Christian giving is an expression of thanks for God's goodness. It will lead to you being blessed. And it will prevent some punishment in your life (see Mal. 3:8-10; Matt. 5:17-18; I Cor. 16:2; II Cor. 9:6). Every member should strive to tithe and give a generous offering. Please use the envelopes (i.e., taxes and accountability).

Three reasons for having the tithers to stand are (1) to let their light shine before people, so that God can be glorified (see Mt. 5:14-16). Those who do it for their own glory have their reward (see Mt. 6:1). (2) They stand to "spur" those who sit and "rob God" to join us in being a tithing church (see Heb. 10:24-25; Mal. 3:8-10; II Thess. 3:14-15). And (3) they stand in obedience to their Pastor's instructions (see Heb. 13:17). Please help us be a tithing church as soon as possible, by being a standing tither and helping others do the same.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper/Communion

As Baptist Christians, we believe and strongly request that every member should be baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost/Spirit, by immersion, after the acceptance of Jesus as his/her Savior by faith. Infant baptism, baptism by sprinkling, baptism in Jesus' name only, and baptism before accepting Christ are not in accord with the Baptist faith. We believe water baptism pictures the saved person's death, burial, and resurrection with Jesus Christ (see Matt. 28:19-20; Rom. 6:3-10). Spiritual baptism is thought to be the act of the Holy Spirit placing saved people in the body of Christ/universal church at salvation (see I Cor. 12:13).

As Baptist Christians, we believe and strongly request that every member should partake in the Lord's Supper. We understand the bread to represent Jesus' body and the fruit of the vine to represent Jesus' shed blood, all for the remission (i.e., forgiveness) of humanity's sins (see Mt. 26:26-29; Mk. 14:22-25; Lk. 22:20-21). Only saved people who understand the significance of the Lord's Supper ceremony and preferably those who are working on their discipleship, as an active member of a Bible oriented church, should partake in the Lord's Supper ceremony (see I Cor. 11:23-30). Baptism and the Lord's Supper/Communion are the two ordinances (i.e., rituals we do in obedience to God, not a ritual with a necessary blessing attached - sacrament) of the Baptist Church.

Membership Orientation Review Questions

In order to receive the **certificate of completion** for this course, please complete the following questions and turn them in, as instructed.

Bible Review Questions:

1. What two scriptures support the idea that the Bible came to us from God through people? _____
2. What scripture supports the idea that we cannot simply trust what seems right to us? _____
3. Because the Bible is _____ truth, every member is expected to prayerfully _____ and _____ it.

Salvation Review Questions:

1. What is the key verse and four statements that help us understand salvation? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. To be saved, one needs to _____ and _____ God to save him/her because of _____ death for his/her sins.
3. When saved people sin, God may punish them, but they don't lose their salvation. True or False
4. Every member is expected to make an _____ _____ of accepting Jesus Christ as his/her personal savior by _____.

Discipleship Review Questions

1. A disciple is a _____ of Jesus Christ, and the key verse is _____.
2. The four "D"s of discipleship are _____

_____

3. Even though there are many divine directions to follow, every member is expected to strive to at least _____, _____, and _____.

Church Review Questions

1. What are the five statements with key verses for "God's Local Church"? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Every member is expected to be _____ with "God's Local Church" and strive to live up to its _____ principles.

Service Discovery Form

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____ **Date:** _____

(Please complete this form and turn it into the designated person or the church's office. Place a check mark next to all of the items that you are willing and able to do. Everyone has something that he or she can do [see I Pet. 4:10; Eph. 2:10])

I. People Groups

- Working with children (12 and under)
- Working with youth (12-18)
- Working with young adults (19-35ish)
- Working with crucial linkers (35-45 ish)
- Working with men
- Working with women
- Working with seniors
- Working with singles
- Working with married couples
- Working with newer members
- Working with distressed members (e.g., sickness, bereavement, crisis, counseling, etc.)
- Other _____

II. Availability

- Mornings
- Afternoons
- Evenings
- Weekdays (list them _____ _____)
- Weekends
- Year long programs
- 3 months or less projects
- Independent research and advisement
- Other _____

III. Areas of Interest

- Manger of a group
- Manger of a project
- Group secretary – taking minutes, completing reports, drafting letters, etc.
- Teaching adults and public speaking
- Teaching young people and public speaking
- Making reminder, follow-up, checking-in, and getting acquainted phone calls
- Mentoring young people
- General helper with young people
- General helper with adult activities – picnic, Christmas fellowship, etc.
- Taking pictures
- Video taping
- Exercising
- Arts and crafts
- Record keeping and bookkeeping
- Proofreading and editing
- Clerical work – clerk typing, answering phone, running copies, folding bulletins, reception work, maintaining a bulletin board, etc.
- Internet Webmaster work
- Computer inputting, troubleshooting, word processing, database, etc.
- Church beautification – flowers, art, etc.
- Janitorial work – spring cleaning, filter changes, etc.
- Car and van maintenance
- Passing out literature and gathering information in the community
- Visiting and serving troubled members – sick, bereaved, etc.
- First Aid
- Liaison between church and other agencies
- Singing
- Ushering
- Musical directing
- Musician (Instruments _____)
- Counting money
- Property and business affairs – maintenance projects, reviewing insurances, procedures, professionals, etc.
- Van driver
- Kitchen worker - preparing refreshments, cooking, etc.
- Sound room technician – recording, mixing board, etc.
- Community work – voter registration, committee work on behalf of the church, petition drives, tutoring, etc.
- Personal financial management
- Tutoring
- Prison ministry
- Sign language
- Nursing
- Deacon
- Trustee
- Preacher
- Other _____

(REB 5/09)

MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM

(This form is for those committing to being active members of this church. New members, reinstated members, and those that recently turned 12 years old are to complete this form.)

Part One

Name _____ Date _____

Phone _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Names and phone numbers for three people you know in this church _____

_____

_____

Part Two

1. A. Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior by faith? _____
   B. Have you been baptized by immersion, in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit? _____
   C. Do you believe the Bible is authoritative truth? _____
   D. Are you willing to follow the rules of this church? _____
   E. Are you committed to working on your discipleship (i.e., study, serve, and give)? _____

2. A. Which Bible Study are you registered in? _____
   B. Have you completed the Service Discovery Form? _____
   C. Which ministry group are you registered in? _____

3. Are you a registered voter? _____

Part Three

Signature of understanding and agreement by the candidate:

_____

Signature of the Teacher – showing the candidate's completion of the Membership Orientation Course, issuance of giving envelopes (#_____), and assigning of a follow-up worker (Name and Phone _____

_____): _____

Signature of the Pastor – showing the official right hand of fellowship:

_____