

Foundations



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**Growing Strong on your
Journey with Christ**



Foundations

Welcome to Trinity Chapel's *Foundations* Class! Whether you have just started your journey with Jesus Christ or you simply want to become solid in your understanding of basic Biblical truth, this is the place for you. *Foundations* is a ten-week small group journey where you will learn the basics of living the Christian life alongside other people who are also hungry for truth.

To get the most out of the *Foundations* class you will want to do four things:

- 1) Commit to making all ten of the classes. Make up your mind that, as far as it depends on you, you will not miss one class.
- 2) Read through the lesson you are on each week before class. Be sure to look up all the verses in your Bible. If you do not have a Bible, let us know and we will gladly give you one.
- 3) Make friends with those in your class. You can encourage one another in your walk with Christ.
- 4) Don't be afraid to ask questions... that is the best way to learn, and learning is what this class is all about

We are excited about the journey we are about to take – so let's get started!

Foundations - Session One

WHO IS GOD?

*The two most important questions you will ever ask are:
What is God Like?
What does He think about me?*

1. God is the Beginning of All Things:

Acts 17:24 *Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwelling.*

- This scripture answers some of our most basic questions:
 - o He is the first cause of everything. Genesis 1:1 gives no explanation of God simply, "In the beginning, God..." God is not a created being; He has no beginning He has no end.
 - o He is the creator. He has made the earth, and all men upon the earth.
 - o He is a Spirit. He does not dwell in temples made with hands.
 - o He is sovereign. He gives life and breath to all things and he is Lord over His creation.

God is a Triune Being:

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let **us** make man in Our image, according to our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

- From the beginning the plurality of God was revealed. The Trinity is a great mystery we cannot comprehend with the natural mind. The scriptures teach that there is one God revealed as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

God the Father:

John 4:23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks

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- God reveals Himself, not only as a powerful and Sovereign God, but as a loving and approachable Father

God the Son:

John 1:1,14 ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

- Jesus was the expression of God in the earth. The Word took on flesh and lived among us. In theological terms this is called the incarnation.

God the Ho1y Spirit:

John 5:7 ⁷For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.

- The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. He inspired the scriptures, He convicts the world of sin, and He empowers Christians to live a Godly life.

2. God Knows Everything:

Psalms 147:5 Great *is* our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.

- God knows everything. The theological term for God’s knowledge is omniscience. Not only does He have all knowledge, He also knows each of us intimately.

Psalm 139:16“ O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. For *there is* not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before and laid Your hand upon me. *Such knowledge is* too wonderful for me. It is high, I cannot *attain* it.”

3. God is All Powerful:

Luke 1:37 “For with God nothing will be impossible”

- Theologians call this omnipotence. God’s power is seen throughout the scriptures:
 - o The children of Israel’s deliverance at the Red Sea.
 - o The incarnation of Christ.
 - o Redemption of man.
 - o His power is at work in His church.

4. God is Present Everywhere:

Psalms 139: 7-10 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?⁸ If I ascend into heaven, You *are* there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You *are there*. If I take the wings of the morning *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea even there your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.

- The theological term for God's presence is omnipresence. It means that God is never separated from His creation. Not only is God present everywhere in space He is present in relationships with us.

6. God's Character

- **God is holy.** As He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, because it is written, "*Be holy, for I am holy.*" 1 Peter 1 15:16
- **God is love.** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John. 3:16
- **God is eternal.** God has always existed; He has no beginning or end.
- **God is a spirit.** God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. John 4:23-24
- **God is a Father.** You have heard that it was said, '*You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.*' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?⁷ And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more *than others*? Do not even the tax collectors do so?⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect

7. Attributes of God: And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, ⁷keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.”

- This is called God’s self revelation of Him self. This is how He desires to be known.
 - Compassionate
 - Gracious
 - Slow to Anger
 - Merciful
 - Faithful
 - Forgiving

Foundations - Session Two

WHAT DOES GOD THINK ABOUT ME?

*The two most important questions you will ever ask are:
What is God Like?
What does He think about me?*

This session will cover the progression of beginning a relationship with God

- 1) Man is a sinner
- 2) Man is the object of God's Love
- 3) Man is forgiven through Christ's work on the cross
- 4) Man is the friend of God

1. Man is a Sinner.

Romans 3: 10-12 As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

- The original Greek word for sin means to miss the mark. In other words we all have gone outside of the boundaries or laws of God. We are totally helpless to save ourselves, and restore His image in us. There is nothing we can do to make myself righteous or restore that image.

2. Man is the Object of God's Love.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

- One of the most difficult things to accept is that God loves me just like I am. We think we have to work for or deserve what we receive. God's love cannot ever be earned by human effort. No matter what your past has been or what you feel right now God's love has been freely given. He did not begin to love you when you received Him into your life. He did not begin to love you when you were baptized. He does not love you because you come to church or to this class. In fact there has never been a time He didn't love you!
 - God is the initiator; we respond to His love.
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3. Man can be Forgiven through the Work of Jesus Christ

Colossians 2:13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

- The word all means *all* my sin—that I know of and don't know of has been forgiven for all time (in the past, the present, and even future sin). The forgiveness Christ gives us is radical. God placed the sin of the world—all sin past, present, and future—on the cross with Jesus. The power of sin over the life of a Christian died there with Christ. That act secured for us the certainty of salvation, forgiveness, and restoration with God. The issue of man's sin has been dealt with once for all.

4. Man is a Friend of God

John 15:5 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends.

- The book of Proverbs gives the qualities of a true friend:
 - A friend loves at all times.
 - A friend sticks closer than a brother.
 - He reproves and rebukes when he sees a need.
 - He is known by his good and faithful counsel.

Exodus 33:11 So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.

- Friendship is defined as one whom we love and esteem above others, to whom we impart our mind more familiarly than others. This is the intimate relationship God desires with man.
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Foundations - Session Three

JESUS CHRIST AND THE WORK OF THE CROSS

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness

Last week we saw the progression of forgiveness and becoming a friend of God. It is very important that we understand that none of this could have happened except for the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and His resurrection from the dead.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men,.

- As the result of one man's (Adam) sin all of us owe a spiritual debt that we cannot pay.

Colossians 2:14 (Jesus) wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

- In New Testament times there was an understood procedure for dealing with one's debt. When a person incurred a debt that he could not pay, the lender would write out the details of the debt and the debtor would sign the form. Then that list was posted on the doorpost of the debtor's house so that everyone could see that they were in debt. When the debt was paid, the lender would either wipe away the list or drive a nail through it to cancel out that certificate of debt. Essentially God took the certificate of debt we could not pay and cancelled it at the cross of Christ.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- God is not only a God of love, He is equally a God of justice. His love wanted to forgive, His justice demanded a penalty for sin. It was His love that sent Christ to the cross to pay that penalty and solve this dilemma of His love and justice.

John 14:6 ⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

- Jesus is sufficient for salvation. It is not Jesus plus something else (such as Bible reading, prayer, witnessing etc.). These things are important disciplines in the believer's life. However they do not earn favor or acceptance with God. Jesus is the only way to earn favor and acceptance with God.

- Many religions and cults believe that Jesus was a good man, a prophet, or teacher. They even acknowledge that He is one way to get to God. How could Jesus make such a bold statement that He was the only way?

1. Colossians 1: 14-20 ...In whom (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased *the Father* that in Him all the fullness should dwell, ²⁰and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

- Jesus is the image of the invisible God. The word image in the Greek is "eikon". We are familiar with the English form, icon. I have a Microsoft Word program on my computer. On my computer screen I have an icon, an image with MS on it. I can click on this icon and it takes me directly to the program. Jesus is the icon or image of God; He is the full expression of Father. Through Christ we can have a relationship with Father.

2. John 1: 1.14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Hebrews 2:17-18 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

- **The scriptures are clear. Jesus is God. He had to become a man so He could pay the penalty for mankind. Secondly, His humanity enables Him to sympathize with man's struggles and weaknesses.**

Foundations - Session Four

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The very presence of God to convict, comfort, guide and empower me to live free

Ephesians 3: 14-19 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; *that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

- The desire to be filled with the fullness of God characterizes the nature of the Christian journey. How did this amazing transformation take place? It is the work of the Holy Spirit.
- When speaking about the Holy Spirit Jesus always used the personal pronoun He or Him. The Holy Spirit is a person. He is the third person of the Trinity.

The Holy Spirit and the New Birth .

John 3:3-6 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit

- If we are to enter the Kingdom of God, Jesus clearly states that we must be born again or born from above. The “water” in verse 5 may refer to physical birth but many interpret to mean baptism. However you interpret it Jesus meaning is clear. Being born once or baptized does not secure salvation. A Spiritual birth is necessary. This new birth is the result of God’s divine influence upon our heart and the renewing, transforming power of the Holy Spirit in ones life.

The Holy Spirit is the comforter.

Nehemiah 1: 1-3, 2:11-12 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. It came to pass in the month of Chislev, *in* the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel, that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to me, “The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province *are* there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem *is* also broken down, and its gates *are* burned with fire.” So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days. Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; nor was there any animal with me, except the one on which I rode.

- Nehemiah’s name means “comforter of Jehovah”. He is a type or picture of the Holy Spirit. Our lives are broken and in ruins. Like Nehemiah the Holy Spirit sees our brokenness and devises a way to bring restoration even when we are unaware of His presence.

John 14:16

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.

- The word helper means comforter, one to come along side to your aide, guide, or advocate.

The Holy Spirit is Our Teacher.

John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

John 16:13-15 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.

- The ministry of the Holy Spirit is Christ oriented. He always exalts Christ. He reminds us of the Word of God and gives us understanding of spiritual things.

The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin.

John 16:8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

- He helps us to see ourselves just as we really are. He reveals our sin and shortcomings. He does not condemn. Condemnation is you are no good never will be. Conviction never leaves us hopeless; it always points us to the cross.

The Holy Spirit indwells the believer.

John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—¹⁷the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

- All Christians have the Holy Spirit in them. Anyone who does not have the Holy Spirit within is not a Christian.

The Holy Spirit Fills the Believer.

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

- . All Christians have been baptized into the Body of Christ and have the Spirit dwelling within. Yet Paul still instructs us further to filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.

- The term “be filled” can correctly be translated “be being filled”. Clearly the Spirit filled condition does not stop with a single experienced but has to be maintained by continuously being filled. However the Scriptures make a distinction between being baptized into the Body of Christ and being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 19:1-6 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.” Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” When they

heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

- In Acts chapter 2 we see the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise in to His disciples (believers) in Luke 24.

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

- The Baptism of the Holy Spirit empowers the believer to serve God, live free from sin and to witness for Christ.

Foundations - Session Five

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORD OF GOD

Ancient words, ever true, changing me and changing you

The Bible is Inspired by God

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

- The Bible is the Word of God. The word inspiration means “God breathed”. The scriptures are not the result of man’s opinion, inspiration, or education they are the actual utterance of God. 2 Peter 1:21 describes the process of how men penned the words of God. The reference here is to prophecy (spoken word) but whether the word was written or spoken God gave it the same way. “.... Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (literally, being borne along).

The Bible is Accurate

Psalm 19:7 The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;

- The Word of God is perfect (without error) in its accuracy and sure in its truthfulness. We understand what the words perfect and sure mean to us practically (restoration of our soul and making the simple wise) however theologians definition of those words give us valuable insight into the trustworthiness of the scriptures.
 - Inerrant (perfect) means that in the original copies of each manuscript there was no error. Even literary critics who claim no faith in the truth of the Bible, attest to its being the most completely reliable of any book transmitted from
 - Antiquity, in terms of its actually remaining unchanged and dependably accurate.
 - Infallible (sure) refers to the fact that the Bible is unfailing as an absolutely trustworthy guide for our belief in God and Christian behavior.
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The Bible Produces Regeneration

1 Peter 1:23 Having been born again, not of corruptible (perishable) seed but incorruptible (imperishable), through the word of God which lives and abides forever... In the beginning it was God's spoken word that created physical life in man. In the same manner it is His written word that produces a new birth (spiritual) in man.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also *effectively* works in you who believe.

- The word effectively comes from the Greek words "in" and "work". Essentially this means that God's word has power within it to produce regeneration in the life of one who receives it as from God and not from man.

The Bible Causes Us to Grow

Deuteronomy 8:3 So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every *word* that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

- Manna was the food God provided for the children of Israel. They received just enough food to last for one day. The scripture compares daily bread (that sustains physical life) to the word of God. The implication is that the word of God is nourishment to our spiritual man just like bread is nourishment to our physical man. Our bodies need physical nourishment daily; our spirit needs spiritual nourishment daily.

1 Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word that you may grow thereby.

- The word of God produces maturity.

Timothy 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Foundations - Session Six

PRAYER IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER

Prayer is simply a lifestyle of conversing with God

The Prayer of Consecration or Submission

Matthew 26:36-39 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*."

- Jesus was in extreme sorrow and agony. In the scriptures the word cup was used to signify blessing and joy (Ps. 23:5) or sorrow, terror, or death (Jeremiah 25:15). The cup Jesus was referring to was God's judgment against sin which would result in His death on the cross. Jesus' words in v.39, "if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless, not as I will but as You will" reveal His surrender of His will. He consecrated His will to His Father.

The Prayer of Faith

1 John 5: 14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

- Unlike the prayer of consecration this is a prayer we pray when we know what God's will is in any given situation. When we ask for something that God has promised we can expect that He will answer that prayer. This is not something you think God spoke to you or some erroneous desire that is not in line with the scriptures.

The Prayer of Agreement

Matthew 18:19 Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.

- The word “agree” means to harmonize. A metaphor we would understand is one of a number of musical instruments set to the same key playing the same tune. This scripture refers to perfect agreement of hearts, desires, wishes, and voices of two or more persons praying to God.

The Prayer of Personal Edification

Jude: 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.

- Believers were admonished to edify (build up) themselves through different kinds of prayer.
 - o Praying in our own language as prompted by the Holy Spirit. Rm.8:15
 - o Praying with groanings that cannot be uttered. Rm. 8:26
 - o Praying in an unknown tongue. 1 Cor. 14:4

The Prayer of Supplication

Ephesians 6:18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints

- The subject in Ephesians 13-17 is warfare. Paul describes the armor for the Christian in battle. According to historians it was customary for Greek armies to offer prayers for success to their gods before they went to war. In this scripture Paul tells believers how to be successful in battle. Always be in a spirit of prayer. In every season in every situation we must be ready to engage in prayer and in any method of prayer.

Prayer that Brings Peace

Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

- Paul is saying don't give place to anxiety or worry. Instead take your concerns to God. The word supplication carries the idea of continuing in earnest prayer until the peace of God replaces our unrest. Prayer, thanksgiving and peace are closely connected.

The Prayer of Intercession

1 Timothy 2:1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men.

- The words supplications, prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks are used here as though they have different meanings. Adam Clark's Commentary on the NT defines these words.
 - **Supplications**— Prayers for averting evils of every kind.
 - **Prayers**— Prayers for obtaining the good things, spiritual and temporal, which ourselves need.
 - **Intercessions**— Prayers in behalf of others.
 - **Giving of thanks**— Praises to God, as the parent of all good, for all the blessings which we and others have received.

Ezekiel 22:30 So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. God had spoken that Israel would be judged for her sin. However, He looked for a man among them who would stand in the gap before Him. A gap is a break or breach, in this context it was a gap between sinful man and a Holy God. Standing in the gap is a Biblical picture of intercession, standing before God on the behalf of someone else.

Foundations - Session Seven

CONCLUDING YOUR PAST (ROMANS 5-8)

*Only Jesus Christ offers a chance to wipe the slate clean and start fresh –
every day*

Romans 5:20-21.... But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- This scripture summarizes the work of Christ. Grace triumphs over sin and death unto eternal life. Eternal life refers to life that never ends. It is infinite. If you take an infinite number and subtract 100,000.00 from it what is the answer? The answer is the number you began with. The word infinite means that when you take away from it there is no less than when you began. The songwriter of Amazing Grace says it well, “When we’ve been there ten thousand years.....we’ve no less days to sing God’s praise than when we first begun.” Those who are born again will spend eternity in the presence of God.
- In Romans 5 Paul explains how it is possible for man to receive eternal life. It is called in theological terms justification by faith. Simply stated it means man is condemned in Adam since his sin is credited to us. We are in Adam. Man is justified (made righteous) in Christ because His righteousness is credited to us. We are placed in Christ. Our righteousness comes through faith in Christ alone; our righteous works do not make us righteous.
- Perhaps Paul knew that the gospel of justification by faith in Christ alone would be challenged and some would try to pervert the truth and use it as an excuse for continuing in sin! In the next chapter he explains what the Christian life should look like.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!

- Scholars disagree concerning who is asking the question here. Some believe Paul knew the question would come up so he addressed it. Others believe this was a question being asked by a new believer who didn't understand the importance of living a godly life if righteousness came by grace alone.

Romans 6:2-4 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

- Paul explains how justification works in our life. First he says no way to continuing in sin. If we are to understand what he means we need to clarify some of his terms:
 1. Dead to sin: This phrase was common to audience Paul was addressing. To die to a thing or person is to have nothing to do with it or him; it is to be totally separated from them. On the other hand to live to something was to be devoted to it. The thing or person loved was a principal part of their life. The implication is the Christian is to be separated from sin; it should not be a ruling principal in the life of the believer.
 2. Baptized into His (Christ's) death: As Jesus Christ in His crucifixion died completely, so that no spark of life remained in His body, so those who profess His religion should be so completely separated and saved from sin, that they have no more connection with it, nor any more influence from it, than a dead man has with or from his departed spirit. *Adam Clarke's Commentary*
 3. Buried with Him through baptism into death: This baptism represents our death to sin and resurrection of a new life in God.

Romans 6: 5-10 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God.

Again we need to understand some terms:

1. Our old man: Our pre-conversion life, what we were before becoming Christians under the unrestrained dominion of sin.
2. Body of Sin: This does not refer to just our physical bodies but includes our emotions, will, mind, body-everything about us that is dominated by sin's power.
3. Done away with: This means that the power sin has held over our lives is made inoperative, defeated, or deprived of power; it does not mean that sin's power totally destroyed.

Romans 6: 11-14 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

- Verses 1-10 explain why freedom from the dominion of sin is possible. The remainder of the chapter explains what we must do if we are to experience this freedom in our own personal life.
- Paul says we must reckon ourselves dead to sin. The actual meaning of the word reckon is to consider, or take into account.
- Do not let sin reign in your body.
- Do not present (submit) your members (all aspects of our life) as instruments of unrighteousness (sin).

- Do present (submit) yourself to God as alive from the dead.
- Do (submit) your members (all aspects of our life) as instruments of righteousness to God.
- A common misconception is that the believer has two natures. The scriptures do not teach this. We do not have a sin nature and a godly nature. We have one nature. Before conversion it was under the dominion of sin. Our members served unrighteousness. We were in bondage to sin. Now the believer has a choice. Sin no longer has dominion over him. We choose to yield our members to the flesh (unrighteousness) or to God (righteousness). This is the conflict we experience.

Romans 7:1-4 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

- Paul is simply explaining that before God’s grace was given all of mankind was under the law. With the law came bondage. The law gave instruction for righteous living but man had no power to fulfill its demands.
- He uses the analogy of marriage. Once we were married to the law but now we are married to another. I have been released from the bondage of the law to produce fruit of righteousness.

Romans 7: 19-24 For the good that I will *to do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not *to do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

1 Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ

- Both Romans 15-24 and 1 Cor. 3:1 describe man's condition in Adam. I want to do good, but I can't. I don't want to do evil but I do. I, my, me is mentioned 33 times.
- With my mind I serve God, with my body I serve sin. God does not leave us in this carnal immature state.

Romans 7: 25-8:9 I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

- This is the description of the believer's life in Christ. Notice in 7:24 Paul says, "Who will deliver me?" not what. Christ is our deliverer. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. The real issue is am I in Adam or in Christ?
- The choice is ours: Set your mind on the things of the flesh or the things of the Spirit.

Romans 8:37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Foundations - Session Eight

WATER BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

Through the sacraments we follow the Lord and remember his death

Matthew 28: 18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen.

First we need to understand why baptism is important.

- Water baptism and the Lord's Supper are called sacraments or ordinances. That simply means that Christ ordained them to be an on going practice in the church.
- The scripture teaches that being a disciple (follower of Christ) includes being baptized.
- Baptism is an act of obedience.

Romans 6: 3-4 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

- When the scripture says we have been baptized into Christ and baptized into His death it means that I have been united with Christ so that His death for the penalty of sin became my death (I have received forgiveness, the penalty has been paid) so that His life became my life. How can something like this happen? By faith! The scriptures simply say "Of God you are in Christ." 1 Corinthians 1:30
- Because of our union with Christ we are not the same person we were before salvation; that old self died (in Christ). Physical death is no longer the horrible thing it would have been had Christ not died for us. "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 1 Corinthians 15:55

- Baptism is an outward expression that symbolizes what has happened inwardly when we are born again. Baptism does not produce the new birth. It expresses that a new birth has occurred. We could compare it to a wedding ring. The ring is symbolic of the union of the newly wed couple. The wedding band is round, signifying that there is no end to their marriage relationship. It is traditional to say “With this ring I thee wed.” We know that the ring is not what seals the marriage. It simply expresses outwardly the inward heart covenant that has been entered into. So it is with baptism.
- Since baptism is an expression of our faith it is for believers only.

Acts 8: 36-38 And the eunuch said, “See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

It is important to understand that although baptism is symbolic it is more than just a symbol. At the very outset of our Christian journey before we understand the doctrinal issues regarding what has happened to us Christ asks for an act of faith. Our obedience then becomes a means of grace through which we experience more of the blessedness of God in our life.

John 3: 23 Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized.

- The word baptism in Greek means dip or immerse. The terms *went down into the water and there was much water there* support the idea that the early church baptized by immersion.
- Although some denominations baptize by sprinkling the scriptures describe the act of baptism as burial and rising from the dead; the Biblical model of baptism is immersion.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

1 Corinthians 11: 23-26 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

- Jesus' words "This is my body" does not mean that his physical body is somehow in the bread or His blood in the cup; they are representative of His death and resurrection. Just as baptism outwardly testifies of an inner experience of salvation our participation in the Lord's Supper is a confession of our faith in the work of Christ.

John 6:35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

- "This is my body" means, as you eat this bread and drink this cup allow the remembrance of who I am and what I have done for you awaken faith in you and bring you to a deeper relationship with Me. The Lord's Supper should never be an empty ritual. It was instituted by Christ to feed us spiritually. He is the bread of heaven and as we partake of Him we are nourished satisfied in Him.

1 Corinthians 11: 27-28 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

- In this chapter Paul is rebuking the Corinthian church for their selfish and inconsiderate conduct when they come to church. His comments pertaining to drinking of the cup and eating the bread in an unworthy manner are directly related to their behavior. The implication for them as well as us is before we partake of the Lord's Supper we need to examine our relationships with others in the church.

Foundations - Session Nine

RELATIONSHIPS WITH BELIEVERS

I cannot live the Christian life without being in fellowship with others

In the past weeks we have seen how God deals with each of personally. Every one has sinned; we all are guilty. We have to individually repent and believe. No one can do this for us; it is a personal decision and action. God's work in our life is very personal and individualistic. However the faith that connects us to Christ connects us to other believers in Christ, the church.

In the language of the New Testament the word that has been translated church actually means assembly. The building we meet in is not the church. The church is a community of believers. The true church is invisible. Much like water baptism and the Lord's Supper the church we see is an outward expression of an inner transformation in the hearts of those assembled.

Ephesians 4:11-12 And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the *work of ministry*, for the edifying (or building up) of the body of Christ.

- This is a Biblical blueprint. It describes how the church must work in order to fulfill the purpose of God. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers have been given to the church to equip or enable the saints or believers to do the work of the ministry. The role of your pastor is not to do the work of the ministry; his role is to equip you to do it!
- The New Testament describes personal ministry among Christians:
 - Exhort one another (encourage) Hebrews 3:12-13
 - Stir up one another to love and good works Hebrews 10:24
 - Assemble with other believers Hebrews 10:25
 - Bear one another's burdens Galatians 6:2
 - Confess your sins to one another James 5:16

Obviously if these things are going to happen we have to be in a setting or environment for them to take place. It is your responsibility to take advantage of small intimate groups where you can begin to experience these kinds of relationships. The scriptures use many metaphors or images to tell us how this ministry comes forth.

Romans 12: 4-5 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, *being* many, one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

- This scripture compares the church (the body of Christ) to the human body.
- The words *individually members* of one another simply means we are connected to one another just like the parts of our human body are connected. Did you ever cut your finger and feel faint or sick at your stomach? Or almost have a wreck, slam on the brakes and avoid the accident but you feel tingling in your stomach and your legs are weak? Why did that happen? Because your whole body is connected. When one member is affected or suffers your whole body responds to what is happening.

Romans 12:6-8 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; or ministry, *let us use it* in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

- When God's grace comes into our life it produces different effects. God's grace will produce serving in someone's life while it will motivate someone else to teach or to give liberally. Seven gifts of grace are listed here.
 1. Prophecy or Perceiver- One who sees things and speaks for God (correction)
 2. Serving- Practical acts of service
 3. Teaching- To explain or instruct
 4. Exhortation- Encourage
 5. Giving- Share material things
 6. Leader or Administration- Leadership
 7. Mercy- Compassion
-
-
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- One or more of these gifts operate in all of our lives. When all of these gifts work together in unison the ministry of God comes forth within the assembly. The key to true ministry is "*let us use them*" (that is the gift God has put within you).

Romans 12-21 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also *is* Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they *were* all one member, where *would* the body *be*? But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”

- Every member of the body of Christ is necessary. We all need each other; every member is different and has a unique function. If all we have in the assembly is givers and perceivers (arms and eyes) we are incomplete we will not experience true ministry. God uses the gifts in our lives to nurture and build each other up. Constantly comparing ourselves to others and desiring to be like them or trying to make them like us is the same as my feet trying to function like my hands. Life would become hard and unproductive. God uses these gifts of grace to make church life productive.

Romans 15: 5-7 Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

- If you don't know this already you will soon find out it would be easier to serve God without having to deal with all the other believers so are so different from you. Why can't we just be connected to God and relate only to Him? Why do we have to relate to and depend on other believers? Why is body ministry necessary? Because a group of believers learning how to love each other in the power of the Gospel bring more glory to God than one believer relating to God alone.
- The key phrase as it relates to life in the community of believers is *receive one another*. The word receive means “to take to one's self.” While we were still sinners God took hold of us. His acceptance of us released grace into our lives, grace that led to repentance and the new birth. As believers in community our act of receiving one another releases grace that transforms life.

Foundations - Session Ten

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO WITH WHAT HE HAS GIVEN ME?

A steward is someone who is out in charge of what belongs to someone else

Rom 14:11-12 It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'" So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

There is a theme throughout the Bible of being responsible for what we have been given. Daniel Webster said. *"My greatest thought is my accountability to God."*

Think about what God says:

Luke 12:48b From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Luke 16:10-12 Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?

From God's perspective, it is a matter of **trust** toward us
From our perspective, it is a matter of **stewardship**

The point is this: As a Christian, I am not my own – my stuff is not mine. God owns it all – He gives some of it to me to faithfully steward **for His purposes**. This mindset is so **counter culture** in our independent, self-realized, American dream, right to own private property, consumer-driven, he-who-dies-with-the-biggest-toys-wins world. But this is the way it is with us, as followers of Jesus Christ.

You may be thinking, Maybe you are thinking, "Well, I really don't have that much to be steward over". You might be surprised if you take a moment to think about it.

Things that I can be a steward over:

Time, Money (tithing, giving, helping those in need), Possessions (using them for God, sharing them), Spouse (am I loving/respecting as I ought to?), Children (am I raising them in the fear and admonition of the Lord?), Relationship/friendships, Burden/calling, Thoughts, Words, Actions, Spiritual Gifts, Employment, Employees, Witness for Christ, Position of influence, Vote, Talent/Skill, Estate, Knowledge (of scripture, of ethics (doing what is right)), Word of prophecy, Body (temple care/sexual purity), Trial/suffering, Hands/Feet, Care of the earth

"The Judgment seat... tells us that there are degrees in that future blessedness proportioned to present faithfulness." -- Alexander Maclaren,

We have truly been given much to watch over and use for God's purposes. Let's just consider a few of these topics: TIME, TALENT, TREASURE, TEMPLE, STORY

My Time

Ephesians 5:15-17 Be careful, then, how you live - not as unwise, but as wise, making the most of every opportunity (redeeming the time) because the days are evil.

Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Psalm 90:12 Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Time is the great leveler – Everyone has the same amount. It is what we do with what we are given that makes our life a success or a failure.

The greatest use of time is to spend it on something that will outlast you. Yet, in our culture there is nothing we squander so thoughtlessly as time. Life should be measured in days, not years. If we are wise with our days, we will have successful years. Wasted days are wasted destinies.

How am I spending my time? Am I spending my time on something that will outlast me?

My Talent

What do I bring to the places God has put me? What is my unique perspective? What talents or strengths has God given me to steward? Am I faithfully using them?

1 Peter 4:9-11 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with *the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.*

Every one of us is unique – you are the only one who can bring your gifts to the family, the team, the church, the job.

Romans 12:3-8 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

My Treasure

Acts 4:32-35 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need

**Do I honestly view my money and my possessions as belonging to God?
Is all I have at His disposal?**

Planning – I will spend my money with or without a plan. I can only spend my money once. I must think about the choices I have and prioritize my spending.

A plan for my money:

- 1) Give it (tithe, and give beyond your tithe)
- 2) Save for future (Invest)
- 3) Pay off debt
- 4) Pay taxes
- 5) Fund your lifestyle

J. D. Rockefeller said, 'I never would have been able to tithe the first million dollars I ever made if I had not tithed my first salary, which was \$1.50 per week.'

“Have an Open Hand - The idea of holding money with an open hand might seem to violate common sense. We feel that if we don't hold on tightly to our money and our relationships, they will slip away. I'm not saying literally hold your money with an open hand – it represents our attitude toward money. When you give, you open yourself up. You allow the dollars to leave and the freedom to enter.” Dave Ramsay

Give Beyond Money – If you don't have money to give. You can also:

- * Go to your local homeless shelter and serve food. Then sit at the table and eat with the men and women you have served. (compassion ministry)
- * Go to a nursing home and read to the elderly for an afternoon.
- * Help someone change a tire.

It is easy to find people with real problems when you simply look. When you give of yourself, you can't help but be lifted up and energized to fight your own problems.

My Temple

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

We have to be convinced that physical health is spiritual

“Our bodies are, in one sense, sophisticated energy machines. If we properly care for the engine and load the appropriate fuel, our machine will operate reliably... the stronger the body’s reserves, the better able the body will be to resist the ravages of stress... maximum body strength and efficiency depend upon three factors: **nutrition, exercise and sleep.**” Richard Swenson, *Margin*

We are not my own, for we are bought at a price – My body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Do I keep myself pure sexually? Do I smoke? Do I drink excessively? Do I use illegal drugs? Do I frequent all-you-can-eat buffets?

Our motivation to pay attention to our health can be because it helps us look better, feel better and have better self-esteem. But the real motivation is that we are a temple of the Holy Spirit - it is for the glory of God. We have a mandate to steward God’s creation – that includes our own bodies.

Wellness program

1) Proper Nutrition (proper weight), 2) Proper Exercise, 3) Proper rest

Food is a powerful force in our life. We don’t just eat food, we *love* food. Every piece of food we put into our mouths has a consequence, good or bad. You may think more about what kind of fuel to put in our cars than what we eat.

The answer is to simply make better choices:

- **What** The foods that should be the rule have become the exception (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats,) and vice versa (pizza, doughnuts)
- **How Much** - Watch portions

Exercise

Collective (including everything) 30 minutes most days a week – decreases risk from most diseases 58% and can add 6 years to my life

Find what you like (run, walk, bike, swim, racquetball, etc.)

Integrate your faith into the discipline of exercise (prayer walk, listen to audio recordings of scripture, worship)

My Story

Each of us came to know Christ because someone cared enough to share the gospel, befriend us or invite us to church. God gives us the awesome opportunity to work together with Him to bring hope and eternal life to others. Consider these scriptures:

Acts 1:8 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.

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

Your story is a great story

- Your story is uniquely yours. Nobody can deny your testimony
- Your two most powerful tools: The presence and power of the Holy Spirit and your story
- My story is:
 - o What I was then, what I am now
 - o Where would I be without Jesus?

When you tell your story, you do not have all the answers. You do not have to know fancy religious words. You simply have to tell your story

How to better tell your story:

- 1) Prepare: write out your story and practice telling it
- 2) Look for opportunities
- 3) Realize you are planting a seed and leave the rest to God

Look around and be aware of opportunities to share your faith

- Open your heart
- Open your ears
- Open your mouth!
