



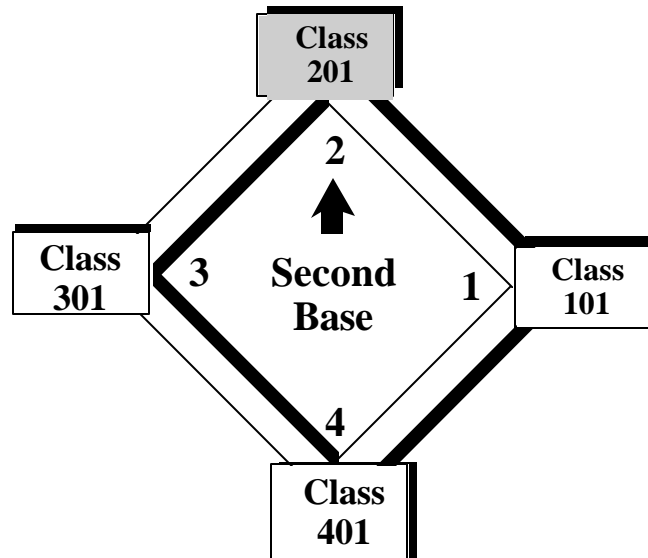
# **Developing Maturity**

*Maturity Seminar #201*

**Pastor Daren & First Lady Monnique  
Barron  
World Conquerors Church**

# Discovering Maturity

## SEMINAR #201



### SEMINAR OUTLINE

- SESSION ONE - Introduction: Spiritual Maturity and Habits**
- SESSION TWO - How to Get A "Grasp" On Your Bible**
- SESSION THREE - The Habit of A Daily Time With God**
- SESSION FOUR - The Habit of Prayer: Talking with God**
- SESSION FIVE - The Habit of Tithing: Giving Back to God**
- SESSION SIX - The Habit of Fellowship: Enjoying God's Family, and How To Start And Maintain Good Habits**

# **Session One**

## **Introduction – Spiritual Maturity and Habits**

***“Whoever ... does not simply listen and then forget, but puts it into practice - that person will be blessed in what he does.”***

**James 1:25 (GN)**

## WELCOME TO DEVELOPING MATURITY #201

### THE GOAL OF THIS SEMINAR:

...That I will \_\_\_\_\_ to the habits necessary for spiritual maturity.

*"Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy."* Romans 6:19 (NLT)

*"...that you may [as persons of ripe character and clear conviction] stand firm and mature [in spiritual growth], convinced and fully assured in everything willed by God."* Colossians 4:12b (AMP)

*"...we will no longer be immature like children...growing in every way more and more like Christ..."* Ephesians 4:14-15 (NLT)

### THE FOCUS OF THIS SEMINAR:

We will focus on the **Four Basic Habits** every Christian needs to develop in order to grow to spiritual maturity. This class will...

- Equip you with the **skills** you need to begin these habits.
- Explain the **tools** you need to continue these habits.

## WHAT IS SPIRITUAL MATURITY?

*"And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God; we shall become mature people, reaching to the very height of Christ's full stature."* Ephesians 4:13 (GN)

**Spiritual Maturity is** \_\_\_\_\_.

*"For from the very beginning God decided that those who came to him...**should become like his Son**..."* Romans 8:29 (LB; emphasis added)

## FACTS ABOUT SPIRITUAL MATURITY

### 1. IT'S NOT AUTOMATIC

*"You have been Christians for a long time now, and you ought to be teaching others, but instead ... you need someone to teach you...When a person is still living on milk, it shows he isn't very far along in the Christian life...He's still a baby Christian!"* Hebrews 5:12-13 (LB)

## 2. IT IS A PROCESS

*"Learn to be mature."* Proverbs 8:5 (GN; emphasis added)

*"...continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..."* 2 Peter 3:18 (GN; emphasis added)

## 3. IT TAKES DISCIPLINE

*"Spend your **time and energy** in training yourself for spiritual fitness."* 1 Timothy 4:7b (NLT; emphasis added)

*"Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness."* 1 Timothy 4:7b (New American Standard; emphasis added)

# FOUR HABITS OF A DISCIPLE

## HOW CAN I BECOME A DISCIPLE?

**Develop**\_\_\_\_\_.

*"...you have **put off the old self** with its **HABITS** and have put on the new self. This is the new being which God, its Creator, is constantly renewing in his own image, in order to bring you to a full knowledge of himself."* Colossians 3:9-10 (GN; emphasis added)

### 1. TIME WITH GOD'S WORD

*"If you **continue in My word**, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."* John 8:31-32 (New American Standard; emphasis added)

### 2. PRAYER

*"If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, then you will **ask for anything you wish**, and you shall have it...in this way you become my disciples."* John 15:7-8 (GN; emphasis added)

### 3. TITHING

*"none of you can be my disciple unless **you give up everything you have**."* Luke 14:33 (GN; emphasis added)

*"The purpose of tithing is to teach you to always **put God first** in your lives."* Deuteronomy 14:23 (LB; emphasis added)

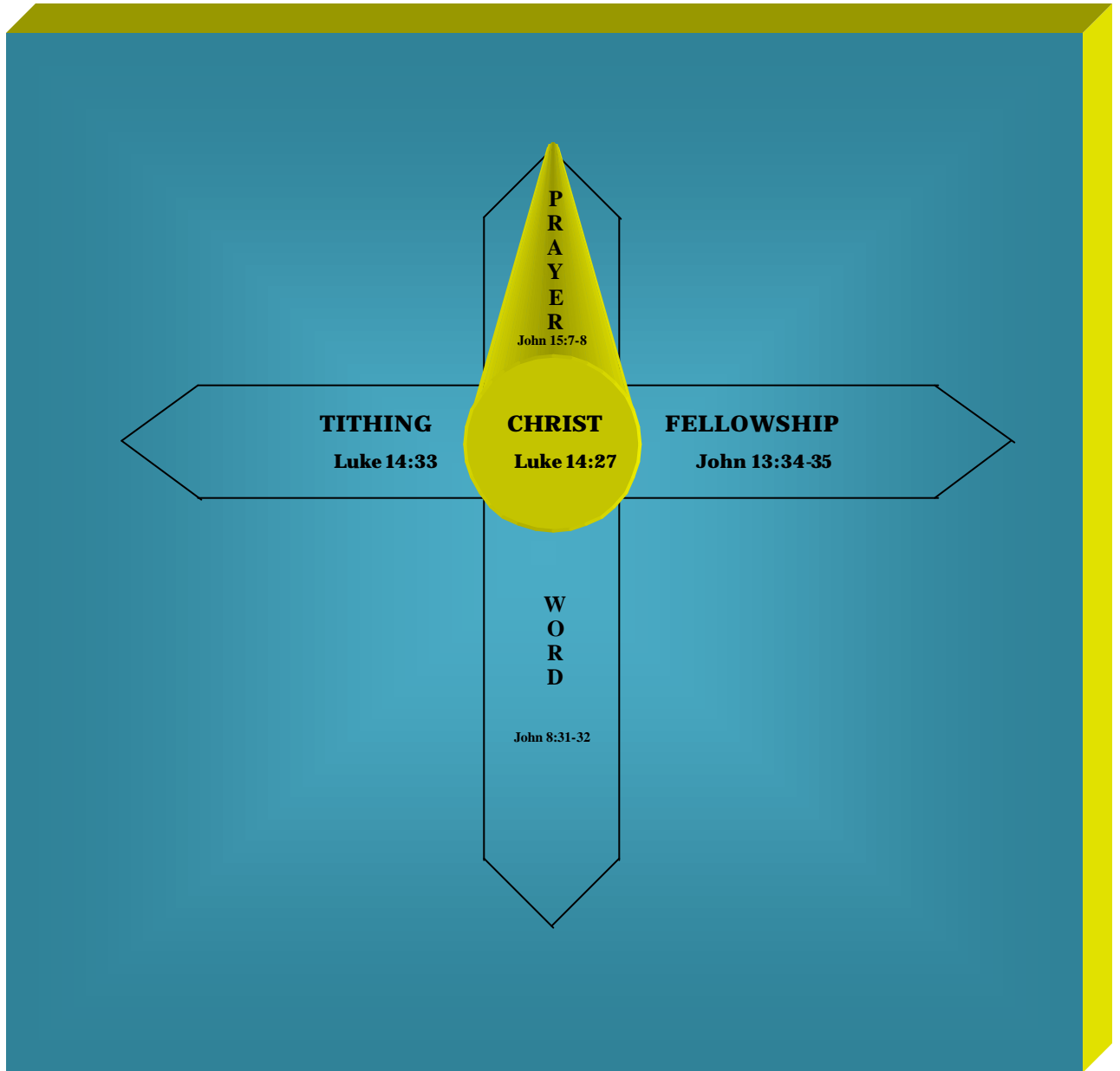
### 4. FELLOWSHIP

*"Love each other just as much as I love you. Your **strong love for each other** will prove to the world that you are my disciples."* John 13:34-35 (LB; emphasis added)

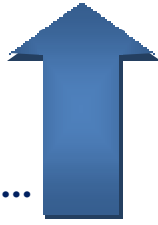
## **DEFINITIONS OF 'HABIT': (WEBSTER'S II DICTIONARY)**

- "A continual, often unconscious inclination to do a certain activity, acquired through frequent repetition."
- "An established disposition of the character."  
"Sow a thought, reap an act.  
Sow an act, reap a habit.  
Sow a habit, reap a character.  
Sow a character, reap a destiny."
- "A customary practice"

## THE DISCIPLE'S CROSS



**Prayer to God ...**



**Fellowship with each other...**



**Tithing to the Body of Christ (Church)...**



**Word to grow deeper...**



## **PRAYER OF COMMITMENT**

To affirm our commitment to maturing in our relationship with God:

**"Father, I realize that I was created to have fellowship with you. Thank you for making this privilege possible through Jesus' death. I know that daily fellowship with You is to be the most important thing in my life. I now want to commit myself to spending at least some time every day with you in a quiet time of Bible reading and prayer. I'm trusting in your strength to help me be consistent. In Jesus' name, Amen."**

# Session Two

## How to Get a “Grasp” On Your Bible

***"The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone."***

**2 Timothy 3:16-17 (LB)**

## SIX WAYS TO GET A GRASP ON YOUR BIBLE

- I. HEAR GOD'S WORD
- II. READ GOD'S WORD
- III. STUDY GOD'S WORD
- IV. MEMORIZE GOD'S WORD
- V. MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD
- VI. APPLY GOD'S WORD

### I. HOW TO HEAR GOD'S WORD

*"So then faith comes by **hearing**, and hearing by the word of God."* Romans 10:17 (NKJV; emphasis added)

#### Ways to Hear God's Word

- The Bible on CD
- Church services & studies
- Sermon CDs
- Radio/TV teachers

PROBLEM: We forget \_\_\_\_\_ % of what we hear after 72 hours.

### HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR HEARING

#### 1. Be ready and eager to hear God.

(Jesus) *"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"* Luke 8:8 (NKJV)

*"How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"* Psalm 119:103 (NKJV)

#### 2. Deal with attitudes that prevent hearing God (Luke 8:4-15)

*"Consider carefully how you listen..."* Luke 8:18 (NIV)

- **A Closed Mind:** Is fear, pride or bitterness preventing me from hearing God?
- **A Superficial Mind:** Am I really serious about wanting to hear God speak?
- **A Preoccupied Mind:** Am I too busy and concerned with other things to concentrate on what God has to say?

### 3. Confess any sin in your life.

"... **Get rid of** all moral filth and humbly accept the Word..." James 1:21 (NIV; emphasis added)

### 4. Take notes on what you hear.

"We must pay more **careful attention**, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away." Hebrews 2:1 (NIV; emphasis added)

### Keep a Spiritual Notebook

### 5. Act on what you hear!

"Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says.**" James 1:22 (NIV; emphasis added)

"But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but **doing it**—he will be blessed in what he does." James 1:25 (NIV; emphasis added)

## II. HOW TO READ GOD'S WORD

"Happy is the one who **reads** this book ... and obey what is written in it!" Revelation 1:3 (GN; emphasis added)

How often should I read God's Word? \_\_\_\_\_

"He is to keep this book near him and **read from it all his life**, so that he will learn to honor the Lord and to obey faithfully everything that is commanded in it." Deuteronomy 17:19 (GN; emphasis added)

### SUGGESTIONS

- Read it systematically.
- Read it in different translations, such as New Living Translation, Amplified, New King James, or The Message.
- Read it aloud quietly to yourself.
- Underline or color code key verses.
- Choose a reading plan and stick with it.

If I read approximately \_\_\_\_ minutes a day, I can read through the Bible once a year.

### III. HOW TO STUDY GOD'S WORD

*"...for they received the message with great eagerness and **examined the Scriptures every day...**"* Acts 17:11 (NIV; emphasis added)

*"Be a good worker, one who... **correctly explains the word of truth.**"* 2 Timothy 2:15 (NLT; emphasis added)

The difference between reading and studying the Bible is that you \_\_\_\_\_ when you study.

The secret of effective Bible study is knowing how to \_\_\_\_\_.

## **SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR BIBLE STUDY**

### **STUDY BIBLES:**

- Suggested Personal Study Bible:  
**"Life Application Bible - NKJV" (Publisher: Tyndale)**
- Suggested Topical Study Bible:  
**"Thompson Chain Reference Bible – NIV" (Publisher: Kirkbride)**
- Suggested Background Study Bible:  
**"Zondervan NIV Study Bible" (Publisher: Zondervan)**
- Suggested Doctrine Study Bible:  
**"Disciples Study Bible - NIV" (Publisher: Holman Bible Publishers)**
- Suggested Study Bible:  
**"Dake Annotated Reference Bible" (Publisher: Dake Publishing)**

### **BIBLE HANDBOOKS:**

- **"Richard's Complete Bible Handbook" (Publisher: W Pub Group)**
- **"Halley's Bible Handbook" (Publisher: Zondervan)**
- **"Eerdmans Handbook to the Bible" (Publisher: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company (Eerdmans))**

### **OTHER IMPORTANT STUDY TOOLS:**

- **As many different translations as you can afford  
(These can be purchased in parallel editions)**
- **A complete concordance to match your translation**
- **A Bible on computer program such as "Logos", "Quickverse", or "PC Study Bible"**
- **Online tools, such as [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com),  
[www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com), or [www.crosswalk.org](http://www.crosswalk.org)**
- **"The New Bible Dictionary" (Eerdmans)**
- **"Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible" (Publisher: Baker Pub Group)**
- **"The New Bible Commentary" (Publisher: Eerdmans)**
- **"The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands" (Publisher: Moody Publishers)**

## IV. HOW TO MEMORIZE GOD'S WORD

*"...Guard my teachings as your most precious possession. Tie them on your fingers as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart."* Proverbs 7:2-3 (NLT)

### BENEFITS OF MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE:

**1. It helps me resist temptation.**

*"I have hidden your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."* Psalm 119:11 (NLT)

**2. It helps me make wise decisions.**

*"Your Word is a lamp to guide me and a light for my path."* Psalm 119:105 (GN)

**3. It strengthens me when I'm under stress.**

*"... Your promises to me are my hope. They give me strength in all my troubles; how they refresh and revive me!"* Psalm 119:49 -50(LB)

**4. It comforts me when I'm sad.**

*"Your words are what sustain me ... They bring joy to my sorrowing heart and delight me."* Jeremiah 15:16 (LB)

**5. It helps me witness to unbelievers.**

*"...Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have..."* 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

### WHEN TO MEMORIZE A VERSE:

- During your Quiet Time
- While Exercising
- While waiting (spare moments)
- At bedtime (Psalm 63:6)

### HOW TO MEMORIZE A VERSE:

1. Say the reference **before and after** the verse.
2. Read the verse aloud many times. Record it!
3. Write down the verse and erase a word one at a time.
4. Write out the verse on a flash card and display them in prominent places.
5. Carry some cards with you at all times for review.
6. Always memorize the verse word perfect.
7. Put the verse to music. Write a song!
12. Get a partner so you can check each other. Challenge your small group members.

## SCRIPTURE MEMORY COURSE

The following verses suggest a "balance" in Scripture Memory. The verses selected are key verses in understanding the foundations of the Christian Life and Christian Growth. Do not feel tied-down to this suggested list. This is only a tool to lead you in an understanding of the importance of memorizing "key" verses.

### ***Live the New Life:***

Christ the Center	2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20
Obedience to Christ	Romans 12:1; John 14:21
The Word	2 Timothy 3:16; Joshua 1:8
Prayer	John 15:7; Philippians 4:6-7
Fellowship	Matthew 18:20; Hebrews 10:24
Witnessing	Matthew 4:19; Romans 1:16

### ***Proclaim Christ:***

All Have Sinned	Romans 3:23; Isaiah 53:6
Sin's Penalty	Romans 6:23; Hebrews 9:27
Christ Paid the Penalty	Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18
Salvation Not by Works	Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5
Must Receive Christ	John 1:12; Revelation 3:20
Assurance of Salvation	1 John 5:13; John 5:24

### ***Rely on God's Resources:***

His Spirit	1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 2:12
His Strength	Isaiah 41:10; Philippians 4:13
His Faithfulness	Lamentations 3:22; Numbers 23:19
His Peace	Isaiah 26:3; 1 Peter 5:7
His Provision	Romans 8:32; Philippians 4:19
His Help in Temptation	Hebrews 2:18; Psalms 119:9, 11

### ***Be Christ's Disciple:***

Put Christ First	Matthew 6:33; Luke 9:23
Separate from the World	1 John 2:15-16; Romans 12:2
Be Steadfast	1 Corinthians 15:58; Hebrews 12:3
Serve Others	Mark 10:45; 2 Corinthians 4:5
Give Generously	Proverbs 3:9-10; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7
Develop World Vision	Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19-20

### ***Grow in Christ likeness:***

Love	John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:18
Humility	Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Peter 5:5-6
Purity	Ephesians 5:3; 1 Peter 2:11
Honesty	Leviticus 19:11; Acts 24:16
Faith	Hebrews 11:6; Romans 4:20-21
Good Works	Galatians 6:9-10; Matthew 5:16

## V. HOW TO MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD

"(Those) who are always **meditating** on His Laws ... are like trees along a river bank bearing fruit ... they never wither and whatever they do prospers." Psalms 1:2-3 (LB; emphasis added)

Meditation is \_\_\_\_\_ about a Bible verse in order to discover how I can apply its truth to my own life.

### WHY MEDITATE ON SCRIPTURE?

#### 1. It is the key to becoming like Christ.

"...your life is shaped by your thoughts." Proverbs 4:23 (GN)

"...Be transformed by the **renewing** of your mind." Romans 12:2 (NIV; emphasis added)

"And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] **continued to behold [in the Word of God]** as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit." 2 Corinthians 3:18 (AMP; emphasis added)

#### 2. It is the key to answered prayer.

"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, **ask whatever you wish**, and it will be given you." John 15:7 (NIV; emphasis added)

#### 3. It is the key to successful living.

"... Meditate on (the Word) day and night, so you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." Joshua 1:8 (NIV)

### SIX WAYS TO MEDITATE ON A VERSE:

1. **Picture it!** Visualize the scene in your mind.
2. **Pronounce it!** Say the verse aloud, each time emphasizing a different word.
3. **Paraphrase it!** Rewrite the verse in your own words.
4. **Personalize it!** Replace the pronouns or people in the verse with your own name.
5. **Pray it!** Turn the verse into a prayer and say it back to God.

**6. Probe it!** Ask the following nine questions - is there any:

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## **VI. HOW TO APPLY GOD'S WORD**

*"Do not deceive yourselves by just listening to his word; instead, put it into practice."*  
James 1:22 (GN)

*"... Whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven."* Matthew 5:19 (NIV)

**1st ask: What did it mean to the original hearers?**

**2nd ask: What is the underlying timeless principle?**

**3rd ask: Where or how could I practice that principle?**

Write out a sentence that describes a project or action you will take to apply the truth.

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## FOUR MARKS OF A GOOD APPLICATION PROJECT

- **It's**
- **It's**
- **It's**
- **It's**

*"Now that you know these things - **do them!** That is the path of blessing!"* John 13:17  
(LB; emphasis added)

## PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

To affirm our commitment to maturing in our relationship with God:

**"Father, I realize that I was created to have fellowship with you. Thank you for making this privilege possible through Jesus' death. I know that daily fellowship with You is to be the most important thing in my life. I now want to commit myself to spending at least some time every day with you in a quiet time of Bible reading and prayer. I'm trusting in your strength to help me be consistent. In Jesus' name, Amen."**

# Session Three

## The Habit of Daily Time With God

*“But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.”*

**James 1:25 (NIV)**

## I. HOW TO HAVE A HAVE A QUIET TIME

**"A quiet time is a daily time I set aside to be alone with God to get to know Him through the Bible and prayer."**

### I. THE IMPORTANCE OF A DAILY QUIET TIME

Your time alone with God should be the top priority in your schedule for five reasons:

**1. We were \_\_\_\_\_ to have fellowship with God.**

*"So God created man in his own image ..." Genesis 1:27 (NIV).*

*"Look! I've been standing at the door and constantly knocking. If anyone ... opens the door, I will come in and fellowship with him and he with me." Revelation 3:20 (LB)*

**2. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ to make a relationship to God possible.**

*"God ... has invited you into this wonderful friendship with his Son, Christ our Lord." 1 Corinthians 1:9 (LB)*

**3. Personal time alone with God was Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_.**

*"Jesus **often** withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Luke 5:16 (NIV)*  
Also Mark 1:35 and Luke 22:39.

**4. Every person who has been effective in \_\_\_\_\_ for God developed this habit.**

Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, Paul, etc.

**5. You cannot be a \_\_\_\_\_ Christian without it!**

*"...Human beings cannot live on bread alone but need every word that God speaks." Matthew 4:4 (GN)*

*"... I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." Job 23:12 (NKJV)*

*"How shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed and keeping watch [on himself] according to Your word [conforming his life to it]." Psalm 119:9 (AMP)*

### II. THE PURPOSE OF A DAILY QUIET TIME

**1. TO GIVE \_\_\_\_\_ TO GOD.**

*"Give unto the Lord the glory due to His name; Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Psalm 29:2 (NKJV)*

*"(Hezekiah) was successful, because everything he did ... he did in **a spirit of complete loyalty and devotion** to his God." 2 Chronicles 31:21 (GN)*

- God deserves our devotion! (Revelation 4:11)
- God desires our devotion! (John 4:23)

## 2. TO GET \_\_\_\_\_ FROM GOD.

*"Show me the path where I should go, O Lord; point out the right road for me to walk. Lead me..." Psalm 25:4-5 (LB)*

### Two Things To Do In A Quiet Time

- **Consider your way:** *"Ponder the path of your feet and let all your ways be established." Proverb 4:26 (NKJV)*

*"In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths." Proverb 3:6 (NKJV)*

- **Commit your day:** *"Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust Him to help you do it and He will." Psalm 37:5 (LB)*

## 3. TO GAIN \_\_\_\_\_ IN GOD.

*"Delight yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4 (NKJV)*

*"... (God's) presence fills me with joy and brings me pleasure forever." Psalm 16:11 (GN)*

**FACT: The better I get to know Christ, the more \_\_\_\_\_.**

*The objective of your Quiet Time is not to study **about** Christ, but to actually spend time with him!*

## 4. TO GROW \_\_\_\_\_ LIKE GOD.

*"By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him...because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature..." 2 Peter 1:3-4 (NLT)*

*"When the council saw the boldness of Peter and John ... they were amazed and realized **what being with Jesus had done for them!**" Acts 4:13 (LB; emphasis added)*

### HOW TO BEGIN A DAILY QUIET TIME

#### 1. SELECT A SPECIFIC TIME.

The best time to have a quiet time is when I am \_\_\_\_\_!

**Reasons for considering an early morning quiet time:**

- **The example of Bible characters.**  
(Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Hannah, Job, Hezekiah, David, Daniel, Jesus, etc.)
- **It seems logical to begin the day with it.**  
"The best time to tune your instrument is before you play the concert, not after!"
- **It demonstrates that meeting with God is your first priority. You give Him the first part of your day.**
- **You are likely to be more rested, your mind is less cluttered, and it's often the quietest time!**

What ever time you set, \_\_\_\_\_.

**HOW LONG SHOULD A QUIET TIME BE: (3 Guidelines)**

- Start with 15 minutes and **let it grow.**
- Don't watch the clock!
- Emphasize quality, not quantity!

**2. CHOOSE A SPECIAL PLACE.**

*"Jesus left the city and went, **as he usually did**, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples went with him. When he arrived at the place, he said to them, "Pray..."*  
Luke 22:39 (GN; emphasis added)

**The Important Factor:**

*"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a **solitary place**, where he prayed."* Mark 1:35 (NIV; emphasis added)

**3. GATHER THE RESOURCES YOU'LL NEED.**

1. A Bible - with readable print.
2. A Notebook - to write down what the Lord speaks about to you, and to keep your prayer list.
3. A Songbook - if you want to sing.

**4. BEGIN WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDES**

- \_\_\_\_\_  
*"Be still, and know that I am God."* Psalm 46:10 (NIV)
- \_\_\_\_\_  
*"Open my eyes that I might see wonderful things in your law."*  
Psalm 119:18 (NIV)

- \_\_\_\_\_  
 "...be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God and with what he requires of you, and he will provide you with all these other things."  
 Matthew 6:33 (GN)

## 5. FOLLOW A SIMPLE PLAN

### "FIFTEEN MINUTES WITH GOD" (A Plan To Get You Started)

1. \_\_\_\_\_. **(1 Minute)**  
 Be still and quiet! Slow down! Prepare your heart. Take a few deep breaths and wait on God.
2. \_\_\_\_\_. **(4 Minutes)**  
 See the section on "How To Read God's Word".  
  
 Begin reading where you left off the day before. Read until you feel God has told you something. Then stop and think about it.
3. \_\_\_\_\_. **(4 Minutes)**  
 See the section on "How To Meditate on God's Word".  
  
 Think about what the passage means to your life. Write down your thoughts. Part of reflecting is *memorizing* verses that speak to you in a special way. See the section on: "How To Memorize God's Word".
4. \_\_\_\_\_. **(2 Minutes)**  
 See the section on "How To Apply God's Word".  
  
 Write out a personal application statement that is practical, passable, and measurable.  
  
*"Thoughts disentangle themselves when they pass through the lips and the fingertips."*
5. \_\_\_\_\_. **(4 Minutes)**  
 See the section on "The Habit of Prayer". Conclude our Quiet Time by talking to God about what He has shown you and making your requests from your prayer list.

### **III. HOW TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEMS WITH YOUR QUIET TIME**

#### **1. THE PROBLEM OF DISCIPLINE**

Your first problem in establishing a quiet time will face you the moment you wake each morning: Am I going to get out of bed? (*"The Battle of the Blankets"*)

##### **Suggestions**

1. Go to bed \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Get up \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Be aware of quiet time \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Fall asleep thinking \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **2. THE PROBLEM OF DISTRACTIONS**

Satan will try to use anything to get your mind to wander during a quiet time.

##### **Suggestions:**

1. Get out of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Get thoroughly \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Read and pray \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ during your prayer time.
5. Keep a \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **3. THE PROBLEM OF DRYNESS**

Sometimes you will feel like you're not getting anything out of your quiet time. (*"The Battle of the Blahs"*)

**Never judge your quiet time by your \_\_\_\_\_.**

##### **Possible Causes of Spiritual Dryness**

1. Your physical condition.
2. Disobedience to God.
3. Rushing your quiet time.
4. Getting in a rut.
5. Not sharing insights with others.

#### 4. THE PROBLEM OF DILIGENCE

Your greatest problem will be your struggle to stay consistent. I find Satan fights nothing harder than my quiet time.

#### Suggestions:

1. Make a covenant or vow to God.
2. Schedule it on your daily calendar.
3. Be prepared for Satan's excuses.
4. Leave your Bible open at night to the passage for the next day!

#### What if I miss a day?

Don't \_\_\_\_\_.

Don't \_\_\_\_\_.

Don't \_\_\_\_\_.

**It takes \_\_\_\_\_ weeks for you to become familiar with a new task. Then it takes another \_\_\_\_\_ weeks before it becomes a comfortable habit.**

*"Let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up." Galatians 6:9 (LB)*

#### PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

To affirm our commitment to maturing in our relationship with God:

**"Father, I realize that I was created to have fellowship with you. Thank you for making this privilege possible through Jesus' death. I know that daily fellowship with You is to be the most important thing in my life. I now want to commit myself to spending at least some time every day with you in a quiet time of Bible reading and prayer. I'm trusting in your strength to help me be consistent. In Jesus' name, Amen."**

# **Session Four**

## **The Habit of Prayer: Talking with God**

*“Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times.”*

**Romans 12:12 (GN)**

## HOW TO REVITALIZE YOUR PRAYER LIFE

### I. APPROACH PRAYER WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE. (Matthew 6:5-8)

· **BE** \_\_\_\_\_

*"When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men." (vs. 5; NIV)*

Don't try to _____
Don't try to _____

· **BE** \_\_\_\_\_

*"But when you pray go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." (vs. 6; NIV)*

· **BE** \_\_\_\_\_

*"Don't recite the same prayer over and over as the heathen do, who think prayers are answered only by repeating them again and again. Remember, your Father knows exactly what you need before you ask Him!" (vs. 7-8; LB)*

### II. USE THE MODEL JESUS GAVE US

*"This, then, is **HOW** you should pray ..." Matthew 6:9-15 (NIV; emphasis added)*

#### THE SIX PARTS OF PRAYER

##### 1. PRAISE: I BEGIN BY \_\_\_\_\_

*"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name..." (vs. 9)*

##### TWO KINDS OF PRAISE:

- "ADORATION"- Praising God for *who he is*.
- "THANKSGIVING"- Praising God for *what he has done*.

*"**Enter** into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise. Be **thankful** to him, and **bless his name**." Psalm 100:4 (NKJV; emphasis added)*

## HOW TO PRAISE GOD:

1st: As you read your Bible, make a list of God's character qualities that you discover and then review them when you pray.

Examples:

God is patient	Numbers 14:18
God is merciful	Numbers 14:18
God is forgiving	Numbers 14:18
God knows everything	Jeremiah 29:11
God is loving	1 John 4:8

**KEY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **is the basis for our boldness in making requests in prayer. God answers the prayers that acknowledge who he is!**

2nd: Remind yourself and affirm the promises God has made that are contained in the meaning of his names.

3rd: Make a list of all that you are thankful for and review them when you pray.

**2. PURPOSE: I COMMIT MYSELF** \_\_\_\_\_.

*"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven ..."* (vs. 10)

Pray for God's will to be done ... in my family ... my church ... my ministry ... my job ... my future ... my city ... the nation ... the world.

*"Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer."* Romans 12:1 (GN)

**3. PROVISION: I ASK GOD TO** \_\_\_\_\_.

*"Give us today our **daily** bread ..."* (vs. 11; emphasis added)

**What needs can I pray about?** \_\_\_\_\_

*"God will supply **all** your needs from his riches in glory because of what Christ Jesus has done for us."* Philippians 4:19 (LB; emphasis added)

*"Since God did not spare even his own Son for us but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?"* Romans 8:32 (NLT)

*"You do not have because you do not ask God"* James 4:2 (NIV)

**THE KEY:** \_\_\_\_\_

Write down your requests, with a promise you are claiming from the Bible, and expect an answer!

*"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done." Philippians 4:6 (NLT)*

**4. PARDON: I ASK GOD TO \_\_\_\_\_.**

*"Forgive us our debts ..." (vs. 12)*

**Four Steps to Forgiveness**

**1. Ask the Holy Spirit to \_\_\_\_\_ every sin.**

*"Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover my thoughts. Find out if there is any evil in me..." Psalms 139:23-24 (GN)*

**2. Confess each sin \_\_\_\_\_.**

*"You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up; then God will show mercy to you." Proverb 28:13 (GN)*

**3. Make \_\_\_\_\_ to others when necessary.**

*"When you remember your brother has something against you ... go at once to make peace with him, then come back and offer your gift to God. Matthew 5:23-24 (GN)*

**4. By faith, \_\_\_\_\_ God's forgiveness.**

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

**5. PEOPLE: I PRAY FOR \_\_\_\_\_**

*"... as we also have forgiven our debtors." (vs. 12)*

*"I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them." 1 Timothy 2:1 (NLT)*

If you want to know how to pray for others...study:

Ephesians 1:15-19, Colossians 1:3-12, 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3, 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

Make a prayer list of people you want to pray for. You might pray for different people on different days of the week.

**6. PROTECTION: I ASK FOR \_\_\_\_\_**

*"And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one."(vs. 13)*

Believers face a spiritual battle everyday. Satan wants to defeat you through temptation and fear. By praying for protection, you will have the confidence to face every situation during the day.

*"...the Spirit who is in you is more powerful than the spirit who is in those who belong to the world." 1 John 4:4 (GN)*

## **PRAYER OF COMMITMENT**

To affirm our commitment to maturing in our relationship with God:

**"Father, I realize that I was created to have fellowship with you. Thank you for making this privilege possible through Jesus' death. I know that daily fellowship with You is to be the most important thing in my life. I now want to commit myself to spending at least some time every day with you in a quiet time of Bible reading and prayer. I'm trusting in your strength to help me be consistent. In Jesus' name, Amen."**

## **Session Five**

# **The Habit of Tithing: Honoring God With My Giving**

***"On the first day of each week, set aside some of what you have earned and give it as an offering. The amount depends on how much the Lord has helped you earn."***

**1 Corinthians 16:2 (LB)**

## I. HOW MY GIVING REVEALS MY SPIRITUAL MATURITY

*"...just as you excel in everything else... in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness... see that you also **excel in the grace of giving.**" 2 Corinthians 8:7 (NIV; emphasis added)*

### WHY GOD WANTS ME TO GIVE (7 Benefits to My Life)

#### 1. GIVING MAKES ME \_\_\_\_\_

*"For God so **loved** the world that **He gave** his only Son ..." John 3:16 (NLT; emphasis added)*

#### 2. GIVING DRAWS ME \_\_\_\_\_

*"Where your treasure is, there your heart is also." Matthew 6:21 (NIV)*

#### 3. GIVING IS THE ANTIDOTE TO \_\_\_\_\_

*"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to... **be generous and willing to share.** In this way... they may take hold of the life that is truly life." 1Timothy 6:17-19 (NIV; emphasis added)*

#### 4. GIVING STRENGTHENS \_\_\_\_\_

*"**Trust in the Lord** with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the **firstfruits** of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing..." Proverbs 3:5, 9-10 (NIV; emphasis added)*

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

#### 5. GIVING IS AN INVESTMENT \_\_\_\_\_

*"... Give happily to those in need, and always be ready to share whatever God has given you. By doing this, you will be storing up real treasure for yourselves in heaven - it is the only safe investment for eternity." 1 Timothy 6:18-19 (LB)*

#### 6. GIVING BLESSES ME \_\_\_\_\_

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

*"**A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.**" Proverbs 11:25 (NIV)*

*"Good will come to him who is generous ..." Psalm 112:5 (NIV)*

#### 7. GIVING \_\_\_\_\_

*(Jesus) "There is more happiness in giving than in receiving." Acts 20:35 (GN)*

## WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT TITHING

### WHAT IS TITHING?

"Tithe" means "a \_\_\_\_\_ part"

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A "TITHE" AND AN "OFFERING"?

- A "tithe" is giving the \_\_\_\_\_ of my income.
- An "offering" is anything I give \_\_\_\_\_ my tithe.

### WHY SHOULD I TITHE? (8 REASONS FROM GOD'S WORD)

**1. Because God \_\_\_\_\_.**

*"A tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain or fruit, belongs to the LORD and must be set apart to him as holy."* Leviticus 27:30 (NLT)

**2. Because Jesus \_\_\_\_\_.**

*"...You should tithe, yes, but you should not leave undone the more important things."* Matthew 23:23 (NLT)

**3. Tithing demonstrates that God has \_\_\_\_\_.**

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

**4. Tithing reminds me that \_\_\_\_\_ was given to me by God!**

*"...remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth..."* Deuteronomy 8:18 (NIV)

**5. Tithing expresses my \_\_\_\_\_**

*"How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?"* Psalm 116:12 (NIV)

*"Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you."* Deuteronomy 16:17 (NIV)

**6. God says that refusing to tithe is \_\_\_\_\_ from Him!**

*(God says) "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings." Bring the **whole** tithe into the storehouse..."* Malachi 3:8, 10 (NIV; emphasis added)

**7. Tithing gives God a chance to prove \_\_\_\_\_ and wants to bless you!**

*"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. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty." Malachi 3:10-11 (NIV; emphasis added)*

**8. Tithing proves that I \_\_\_\_\_.**

(Jesus) "If you love me, you will obey what I command." John 14:15 (NIV)

"... I want you to be leaders also in the spirit of cheerful giving ... This is one way to prove that your love is real, that it goes beyond mere words." 2 Corinthians 8:7b - 8 (LB)

**WHAT SHOULD I TITHE?**

The \_\_\_\_\_ part of what I earn, not the \_\_\_\_\_.

"Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the **firstfruits** of all your crops..." Proverbs 3:9-10 (NIV; emphasis added)

**WHERE SHOULD I GIVE MY TITHE?**

**WHERE I \_\_\_\_\_**

"Bring **the full amount** of your tithes to the Temple..." Malachi 3:10 (GN; emphasis added)

**WHEN SHOULD I TITHE? \_\_\_\_\_**

"On the first day of every week, set aside some of what you have earned and give it as an offering. The amount depends on how much the Lord has helped you earn." 1 Corinthians 16:2 (LB)

**How To Remember**

- Keep a Ledger Book
- Use weekly envelopes
- Teach your children to tithe

**GIVING WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDES**

• **GIVE \_\_\_\_\_.**

"For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have." 2 Corinthians 8:12 (NIV)

"Each man should give **what he has decided in his heart to give**, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV)

• **GIVE \_\_\_\_\_.**

"... for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV)

• **GIVE \_\_\_\_\_.**

"...they gave as much as they were able, and even **beyond their ability**. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service ..." 2 Corinthians 8:3-4 (NIV; emphasis added)

· **GIVE** \_\_\_\_\_ ·

*"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and whoever sows generously will reap generously." 2 Corinthians 9:6 (NIV)*

### **THE KEY TO GIVING**

***"...THEY FIRST GAVE THEMSELVES TO THE LORD..."*** 2 Corinthians 8:5  
(NKJV; emphasis added)

### **A COMMITMENT PRAYER**

"Father, I know you love me and want what's best for me. I recognize that all I have, or will ever have, comes from you. I am more interested in pleasing you than in having more possessions. I want you to have first place in my life and I am willing to begin tithing as you have commanded. Out of gratitude for all you've done for me, and in expectation that you will continue to provide for me, I commit myself to returning at least the first 10% of all I earn back to you. I want to begin investing for eternity. Help me to remain faithful to this commitment. In Jesus' name, Amen."

# **Session Six**

## **The Habit of Fellowship: Participating in God's Family, and How to Start and Maintain Good Habits**

***"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another..."***

**Hebrews 10:25 (GN)**

## WHY IS FELLOWSHIP SO IMPORTANT?

### 1. I \_\_\_\_\_ IN GOD'S FAMILY WITH OTHER BELIEVERS.

"...let us do good to all people, especially to those who **belong to the family of believers**." Galatians 6:10 (NIV; emphasis added)

"You are a member of God's very own family ... and **you belong** in God's household with every other Christian." Ephesians 2:19 (LB; emphasis added)

"so in Christ, we who are many form one body, and each member **belongs** to all the others!" Romans 12:5 (NIV; emphasis added)

"The Christian who is not committed to a group of other believers for praying, sharing, and serving, so that he is known, as he knows others, is not an obedient Christian. He is not in the will of God. However vocal he may be in his theology, he is not obeying the Lord." Dr. Ray Ortland

### 2. I NEED \_\_\_\_\_ TO GROW SPIRITUALLY.

"Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good." Hebrews 10:24 (GN)

"Two are better off than one ... If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one to help him ... Two people can resist an attack that would defeat one person alone. A rope made of three cords is hard to break." Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12 (GN)

### 3. I NEED \_\_\_\_\_ TO GROW SPIRITUALLY.

"People learn from one another, just as iron sharpens iron." Proverbs 27:17 (GN)

"...encourage one another daily...so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness." Hebrews 3:13 (NIV)

"Brothers, if someone is trapped in some sin, you who are spiritual should **restore** him gently ... Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:1-2 (NIV; emphasis added)

### 4. CHRIST IS \_\_\_\_\_ WHEN WE FELLOWSHIP TOGETHER.

"For where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them." Matthew 18:20 (GN)

### 5. THERE IS \_\_\_\_\_ WHEN PEOPLE PRAY TOGETHER.

"...whenever two of you on earth agree about anything you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven." Matthew 18:19 (GN)

### 6. FELLOWSHIP IS A \_\_\_\_\_ TO THE WORLD.

(Jesus) "My prayer for all of them is that they will be one, just as you and I are one, Father -- that just as you are in me and I am in you, so they will be in us, and the world will believe you sent me." John 17:21 (NLT)

**7. I AM \_\_\_\_\_ TO EVERY OTHER CHRISTIAN.**  
"God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another." 1 Peter 4:10 (NLT)

## **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF OUR SMALL GROUPS? ACTS 2:42-47 (NLT)**

**1.** \_\_\_\_\_  
"All of the believers **DEVOTED THEMSELVES** to the apostle's teaching..." (v. 42)

**2.** \_\_\_\_\_  
"...and to fellowship ..." (v. 42)

**3.** \_\_\_\_\_  
"... and to sharing in meals ..." (v. 42)

**4.** \_\_\_\_\_  
"... and to prayer ..." (v. 42)

"OUR FATHER ... give US ... OUR daily bread ... forgive US OUR debts ... as WE forgive OUR debtors ...do not lead US into temptation ... deliver US ..." Matthew 6:9-13 (NKJV)

**5.** \_\_\_\_\_  
"... shared everything they had..." (v. 44)

"... you shared with me the fellowship of giving and receiving." Philippians 4:15 (Ph)

**6.** \_\_\_\_\_  
"...shared their meals with great joy and generosity..." (v. 46)

"Get into the habit of inviting guests home for dinner or if they need lodging, for the night." Romans 12:13 (LB)

**7.** \_\_\_\_\_  
"... praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people." (v. 47)

**8.** \_\_\_\_\_  
"And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved." (v. 47)

## HOW TO START AND MAINTAIN GOOD HABITS

### STEP ONE: \_\_\_\_\_

You must start with a strong desire. You must be internally motivated. External motivations don't last. If you start only half-heartedly, you will never make it to the success point.

### STEP TWO: \_\_\_\_\_

Begin right now! Don't wait. Don't procrastinate. You don't slide into a new habit. "One of these days" never arrives. You must have a starting point. It's easier to break a bad habit today than it will be tomorrow!

*"If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done."* Ecclesiastes 11:4 (LB)

### STEP THREE: \_\_\_\_\_

Announce your intentions publicly. Make a covenant or resolution. The power of a vow is awesome. It is particularly powerful if you put your commitment in writing.

*"Make vows to the Lord your God and keep them..."* Psalm 76:11 (NLT)

### STEP FOUR: \_\_\_\_\_

Never allow an exception until the new habit is securely rooted in your life. Each lapse will be fatal. A single slip unwinds many turns at first. Continuity and success at the start is essential. Never be swayed by "just this once". The act of yielding weakens the will and reinforces your lack of self-control. It takes 3 weeks to become comfortable with a new habit and it takes another 3 to 4 weeks (doing it daily) for it to become a part of your life.

**IT TAKES \_\_\_\_\_ REPETITIONS TO LEARN SOMETHING!**

### STEP FIVE: \_\_\_\_\_

Whenever you feel the slightest urge or prompting to practice this new habit - DO IT THEN! Don't wait. Seize every opportunity to reinforce your habit. Those feelings will not last, so whenever you feel inclined to perform your new habit, do so!

### STEP SIX: \_\_\_\_\_

Get a partner who will support you and encourage you. Find someone who is willing to hold you accountable and check up on you especially in the early days before the habit is firmly rooted in your life.

*"Let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities."* Hebrews 10:24 (AMP)

*"Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up."* Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (GN)

**STEP SEVEN:** \_\_\_\_\_

Rely on God's power to help you establish the habit. Remember, Satan does not want you to develop habits that help you grow spiritually and make you like Christ so he will do all he can to tempt you, cause you to slip, or discourage you. Pray!

*"For the Spirit that God has given us does not make us timid; instead, his Spirit fills us with power, love, and **self-control**."* 2 Timothy 1:7 (GN; emphasis added)

*"For God is working in you, giving you the **desire to obey him and the power** to do what pleases him."* Philippians 2:13 (NLT; emphasis added)

### **PRAYER OF COMMITMENT**

To affirm our commitment to maturing in our relationship with God:

**"Father, I realize that I was created to have fellowship with you. Thank you for making this privilege possible through Jesus' death. I know that daily fellowship with You is to be the most important thing in my life. I now want to commit myself to spending at least some time every day with you in a quiet time of Bible reading and prayer. I'm trusting in your strength to help me be consistent. In Jesus' name, Amen."**