

## *Module 3*

# **Cultivating Godliness**



13. Practicing the One-Anothers
14. Committing to the Local Church
15. The Use of Time
16. Money and Possessions
17. Humility
18. Forgiveness

## **Session 13**

### **Practicing The One-Anothers**

*“Now no man is a Christian who does not love Christians. He, who being in the church, is not of its heart and soul, is but an intruder in the family.”*

-- Charles Spurgeon

*“Christians, you are to love one another, not because of the gain which you get from one another, but rather because of the good which you can do to one another.”*

-- Charles Spurgeon

*“The real test of a saint is not one's willingness to preach the gospel, but one's willingness to do something like washing the disciples' feet - that is, being willing to do those things that seem unimportant in human estimation but count as everything to God.”*

-- Oswald Chambers

#### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the vital aspects of the Christian life is living out our mutual ministry to one another within the body of Christ. The Reformers referred to this doctrine as “The Priesthood of All Believers.” They meant by this, that ministry to others is not the sole responsibility only of the “ordained clergy.” Rather, every Christian is responsible to minister to others the grace he/she has been given by Christ.

#### **BIBLE STUDY**

**1. What is our responsibility toward others within the church? Give a short example of how you might live this “one-another” out in your life.**

- Romans 12:10a \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Romans 12:10b \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Romans 12:16 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Romans 13:8 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Romans 14:19 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Romans 15:7 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Romans 15:14 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Romans 16:16 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 1 Cor. 12:25 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Gal. 5:13 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Eph. 4:2 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Eph. 4:32 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Eph. 5:21 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Phil. 2:3 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Col. 3:13 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 1 Thess. 4:18 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 1 Thess. 5:11 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 1 Thess. 5:13 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 1 Thess. 5:15 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Hebrews 10:24 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- James 5:16 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 1 Peter 4:9 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 1 Peter 4:10 \_\_\_\_\_  
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- 1 Peter 5:5 \_\_\_\_\_  
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**2. What must your involvement in the local church be like in order for you to obey these commands? Will it require just a casual relationship or a strong commitment?** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. What does each of the following Scriptures teach as to how we must *not* relate to one another?**

- Romans 14:13 \_\_\_\_\_
- Galatians 5:26 \_\_\_\_\_
- Col. 3:9 \_\_\_\_\_
- James 4:11 \_\_\_\_\_
- James 5:9 \_\_\_\_\_

What do all of these Scriptures teach us about the reality of what relating to one another in the body of Christ will be like? \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Analyze the various New Testament commands you listed under Question #1 above. Which of these commands are you actively pursuing obedience to?**

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**5. Which of those commands are you currently ignoring or neglecting in your life?**

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**6. What decision will you make today to begin to actively these commands?**

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### **STEPS TO TAKE**

1. Discuss with your discipling partner any steps you need to take to be fully committed to the local church and obey the one-anothers.
2. Recite Galatians 5:16 and Ephesians 5:18 to your discipling partner.
3. Recite some of the other verses you have memorized to your discipling partner.

## **SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION**

**John 13:34-35**, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Additional Scripture you may want to memorize: Heb. 3:13; Gal. 5:13.

## **BEFORE YOUR NEXT SESSION**

1. Memorize John 13:34-35. Work on these verses until you can repeat them perfectly. Remember to recite the reference as well as the content of the verse.
2. Read through your next study and answer the questions. If you have questions or become confused, write your questions down so that you can discuss them with your discipling partner at your next session.
3. Spend some time each day reading the Scriptures and talking to God about what you have read. Also seek to study a portion of the Scriptures each week. If you are having a difficult time deciding what portion of Scripture to read, study, and meditate on, get some ideas from your discipling partner.
4. Decide today to make serving the brothers and sisters in your local church a priority in your life and then seek to implement that commitment in some specific ways this week.

## ***Session 14***

### **Committing To The Local Church**

*“You are no lover of Christ if you do not love His children. As soon as ever the heart is given to the Master of the house, it is given to the children of the house. Love Christ and you will soon love all that love Him...*

*I am told that Christians do not love each other. I am very sorry if that be true, but I rather doubt it, for I suspect that those who do not love each other are not Christians...*

*Will you follow the wicked policy of separating your own personal interests from those of your Redeemer and his church? If so your ship is wrecked before it leaves the harbour. You are no child of God if this principle holds the mastery over you. Your salvation lies not in your separation from Christ and his church, but in your union with them. Over the sea of life there is no passing in safety but in the vessel which carries your Lord and his disciples...*

*If I had never joined a church till I had found one that was perfect, I should never have joined one at all; and the moment I did join it, if I had found one, I should have spoiled it, for it would not have been a perfect church after I had become a member of it. Still, imperfect as it is, it is the dearest place on earth to us.*

-- Charles Spurgeon

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In this session, we are going to examine the Biblical teaching on commitment to a local church. Although it is common for believers to “float” around between various churches and never make a serious commitment to any of them, this is not what we find in Scripture. Obedience to the Biblical teaching about commitment to a local church includes submitting to spiritual leaders, restoring those who fall into sin, and supporting the mission of the church.

## BIBLE STUDY

### Submitting To Spiritual Leaders

#### 1. Read 1 Thess. 5:12-13.

- What are the responsibilities of the leaders of the church mentioned in this passage?

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- What are the responsibilities of the members of the church mentioned in this passage?

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#### 2. Read Hebrews 13:7,17

- What are the responsibilities of the leaders of the church mentioned in these verses?

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- What are the responsibilities of the members of the church mentioned in these verses?

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- Why are the members of the church to obey and submit to their leaders?

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### Restoring Believers Who Have Fallen Into Sin

#### 1. Read Matthew 18:15-17.

- When are we to get involved in restoring a believer who has fallen into sin? (Compare Gal. 6:1). \_\_\_\_\_

- What is the first step to restoring them? \_\_\_\_\_

- If he/she listens to you, what happens? \_\_\_\_\_

- If he/she does not listen to you, what is the next step? \_\_\_\_\_

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- Why is it important to have two or three witnesses at this step?

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- If he/she does not listen to the two or three witnesses, what is to happen?

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- What must the church do? \_\_\_\_\_

- If he/she does not listen to the church, what must the church do?

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- In the 1st century, how would a Jew treat a Gentile and a tax collector?

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**2. Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-13.**

- What was the problem in the church at Corinth that needed to be dealt with (vs. 1)? \_\_\_\_\_

- How had the church responded to this problem (vs. 2)?

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- What will happen if the open practicing of sin is not dealt with in the church (vs.6)? \_\_\_\_\_

- What are some sins that a professing Christian must be disciplined for (vs.11)?

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- What was Paul's solution to the problem (vs. 9-13)?

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**3. Read Romans 16:17 and Titus 3:10.**

- How must the church respond to a person who causes divisions in the church and will not repent? \_\_\_\_\_

## **Supporting The Mission Of The Church**

**1. Read Mt. 28:18-20.**

- According to Jesus Christ, what is the mission of the church?

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- How should you be involved in accomplishing that mission?

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## **STEPS TO TAKE**

1. Have you made a commitment to a specific local church where you can live out the New Testament commands to submit to spiritual leaders, restore fallen believers, and support the mission of the church by becoming a member of that church? If not, discuss with your discipling partner how you can make that commitment.
2. Discuss with your discipling partner how you can submit to and support the leader(s) of your local church, even when you disagree with a decision they have made.
3. Is there a professing Christian in your church that is living in unrepentant sin? If so, discuss with your discipling partner how you should respond.
4. Discuss with your discipling partner how you are doing at supporting the mission of your local church financially and at being involved in its evangelistic outreaches.
5. Recite John 13:34-35 to your discipling partner. Recite a few of your other verses.

## **SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION**

**Hebrews 13:17**, “Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

Additional Scripture you may want to memorize: Mt. 18:15-17.

## **BEFORE YOUR NEXT SESSION**

1. Memorize Heb. 13:17. Work on this verse until you can repeat it perfectly. Remember to recite the reference as well as the content of the verse.
2. Read through your next study and answer the questions. If you have questions or become confused, write your questions down so that you can discuss them with your discipling partner at your next session.
3. Practice the spiritual disciplines of reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on Scripture, as well as prayer.

4. If you have not done so, contact the Pastor(s) of your local church this week to find out how you can make a commitment to your local church.

## ***Session 15***

### **The Use Of Time**

*“Time is precious because:*

- 1) A happy or miserable eternity depends on the good or ill improvement of it;*
- 2) It is very short. The scarcity of any commodity occasions men to set a higher value upon it. Time is so short, and the work which we have to do in it is so great, that we have none of it to spare. The work which we have to do to prepare for eternity, must be done in time, or it never can be done.*
- 3) We are uncertain of its continuance;*
- 4) When it is past, it can't be recovered.”*

-- Jonathan Edwards

*“I desire to have both heaven and hell ever in my eye, while I stand on this isthmus of life, between two boundless oceans.”*

-- John Wesley

*“Heaven will pay for any loss we may suffer to gain it; but nothing can pay for the loss of heaven.”*

-- Richard Baxter

*“The great weight of eternity hangs upon the small wire of time.”*

--Thomas Brooks

### **INTRODUCTION**

There are few things more important for someone who wants his life to count for eternity, than a disciplined use of his time. Jonathan Edwards was absolutely right, “Time is so short, and the work we have to do in it is so great, that we have none of it to spare.” If you are going to mature into a godly and faithful disciple, you must learn to discipline your use of time for the glory of God.

## BIBLE STUDY

### 1. Read Ephesians 5:15-17.

- What does God call us to do with our time (vs.16)?  
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- What will we be characterized by if we do this (vs.15)?  
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- What is making the most of our time equated with in verse 17?  
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### 2. Read James 4:14.

- What does James compare our lives to?  
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- When we are unsure how long we will have something (our spouse, job, home, etc.) how do we value it?  
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### 3. Read 1 Peter 1:17

- How does Peter describe the length of our lives?  
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- How are we to live out the length of our lives?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Jonathan Edwards wrote, "Time is precious because a happy or miserable eternity depends on the improvement of it." Do you agree or disagree with that statement? Why?  
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### 4. There are many things that, if we lose, we may still get back (house, job, fortune, etc.). Is that true with our time? How should that affect our estimation of time?

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### 5. Read Psalm 90:10-12.

- How does the Psalmist describe the length of our lives (vs.10)?  
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- Does the Psalmist view this as a long or short time? What in the text leads you to that conclusion?  
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- What should we do in light of the brevity of life (vs.12)?  
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- When a commodity of something is scarce (rubies, gold, diamonds, food, etc.) how does our valuation of it change?
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- How then should we value the time we have upon this earth?
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**6. Read 1 Cor. 6:19-20.**

- Who do we belong to? Why?
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- Therefore, how must we live in light of that truth?
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- What does this passage have to say about how we should use our time?
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**7. Read John 9:4-5.**

- What did Jesus mean by “as long as it is day”? What did He mean by “night is coming”? Compare vs.5.
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- What did Jesus say He and His disciples must do in light of the fact that night is coming when no one can work?
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- What significance does the word “must” have in this sentence?
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**8. Read 1 Cor. 15:58.**

- In light of the fact that we are hastening toward eternity (1 Cor.15:51-57), how then should we spend our time (vs.58)?
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**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Judging by the way you spend your time, how valuable do you really believe your time on earth is?
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2. If you were planning a trip through the desert on a camel, and only had a limited amount of water you could take on the trip, and didn't know if it would run out before you made it to your destination, how would you value that water? How does that illustration apply to how we should value and invest our time?
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3. What would you think of someone who every morning took a \$20 bill out of his wallet, struck a match, and burned it up? What should we think of ourselves when we deliberately squander away precious time that God has given us?
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4. How do you think people now in hell consider the time they squandered on earth? How much would they be willing to give to get that time back?
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5. Read 2 Cor. 5:10. Do you believe we will have to give an account to God for how we used our time? Why or why not? Compare Mt. 12:36-37.
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## **STEPS TO TAKE**

1. Identify the biggest time time wasters in your life. Discuss with your discipling partner how you can begin to use your time in a way that glorifies God. Ask your discipling partner to ask you how you are doing with this next week.
2. If you resist the temptation to waste your time on unimportant and inconsequential things, you will find that you have a lot more time in your day. Discuss with your discipling partner what kinds of things you can spend your time on that will glorify God.
3. Recite Hebrews 13:17 to your discipling partner. Recite a few of your other verses.

## **SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION**

**1 Corinthians 15:58**, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”

Additional Scripture you may want to memorize: Ephesians 5:15-17.

## **BEFORE YOUR NEXT SESSION**

1. Memorize 1 Cor. 15:58. Work on this verse until you can repeat it perfectly. Remember to recite the reference as well as the content of the verse.
2. Read through your next study and answer the questions. If you have questions or become confused, write your questions down so that you can discuss them with your discipling partner at your next session.
3. Practice the spiritual disciplines of reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on Scripture, as well as prayer.
4. Each day jot down on a piece of paper the most important things you need to do for that day and place each of them in their true order of importance. Then set about accomplishing each one in order. Resist the temptation to do something else, until these things are completed. If you don't complete all of them, just transfer the uncompleted tasks to tomorrow's list. Try this for the next week.

## **Session 16**

### **Money and Possessions**

*“Money never stays with me. It would burn me if it did. I throw it out of my hands as soon as possible, lest it should find its way into my heart.”*

-- John Wesley

*“God can have our money and not have our hearts, but He cannot have our hearts without having our money.”*

-- R. Kent Hughes

*“The less I spent on myself and the more I gave to others, the fuller of happiness and blessing did my soul become.”*

-- Hudson Taylor

*“God prospers us, not to raise our standard of living, but our standard of giving.”*

-- Randy Alcorn

*“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.”*

-- Jim Elliott

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Sixteen of the thirty-eight parables of Jesus deal with money. One out of ten verses in the New Testament deals with that subject. Scripture offers about five hundred verses on prayer, fewer than five hundred on faith, and over two thousand on money. In fact, 15% of everything Jesus said relates to the topic of money and possessions - more than His teaching on heaven and hell combined! Obedience to Jesus Christ demands that we learn to use our money and possessions according to His will in a way that glorifies Him.

#### **BIBLE STUDY**

##### **1. Read Luke 19:1-10.**

- What did Jesus see in Zacheus' life that made him say "Today salvation has come to this house" (vs.8-9)? In other words, what was the outward observable evidence of Zacheus' salvation?
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**2. Read Luke 18:18-25.**

- Did this rich young ruler obey Jesus' command to sell all and follow him? Do you think he was saved? What was the outward evidence that he was not saved?
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**3. Read Luke 3:9-14.**

- What does Jesus say we must bring forth in order to escape judgment (vs.9)?  
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- What three groups of people does Jesus address in vs.10-14?  
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- What do all His instructions about the fruit they must bring forth have in common?  
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**4. Read Mt. 25:14-30.**

- Jesus speaks about three different slaves. Who do they represent?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Whose possessions were they to use? What ramifications does that have for our lives? \_\_\_\_\_
- What does the Master do when he comes back (vs.19)? How does that apply to us? \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Read Mt. 6:19-21.**

- According to Jesus, why shouldn't we store up for ourselves treasures on earth?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Imagine you are living at the end of the Civil War and are living in the South, even though you are a Northerner. You plan to move home as soon as the war is over. While in the South you have accumulated lots of Confederate currency. However, you know for a fact that the North is going to win the war and the end is imminent. What would you do with your Confederate money? Why? Would it be smart or stupid to store up Confederate money? How does that apply to our lives?

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- What does Jesus command us to do in vs.20?
  - What significance does the little phrase “for yourselves” in vs.20 have?
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According to Jesus Christ, we can't take our wealth with us, but we can send it on ahead. Anything we try to hang on to here will be lost, but all that we put into God's hands will be ours for eternity. If we give instead of keep, if we invest in the eternal instead of in the temporal, we store up treasures in heaven that will never stop paying dividends. Whatever treasures we store up on earth will be left behind when we leave. Whatever treasures we store up in heaven will be waiting for us when we arrive.

Suppose I offered you one thousand dollars today to spend however you wanted, or offered you ten million dollars one year from now and that amount every after that, what would you choose? Only a fool would take the thousand dollars today. When we grab on to something that will last only a moment, forgoing something far more valuable that we could enjoy later for much longer, we are not just making the wrong decision. We are making a foolish decision. (Adapted from *The Treasure Principle*, Randy Alcorn).

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between an owner and a steward? Consult a dictionary.  

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2. When you make spending decisions, do you think like an owner, or like God's money manager?  

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3. Before making spending decisions, do you remind yourself that it is God's money, and ask Him if this is how He wants His money spent?  

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4. He who lays up treasures in heaven looks forward to eternity; he's moving daily toward his treasures. To him death is gain. He who spends his life moving away from his treasures has reason to despair. He who spends his life moving toward his

treasures has reason to rejoice. Are you despairing or rejoicing?

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### **STEPS TO TAKE**

1. Talk with your discipling partner about how you are currently using your money and possessions, and how much you are currently giving to others and for the work of God. Discuss how you can be a more faithful steward, lay up more treasures for yourself in heaven, and experience more joy from giving.
2. Recite 1 Cor. 15:58 to your discipling partner.

### **SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION**

**Matthew 6:19-21**, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Additional Scripture you may want to memorize: 2 Cor. 9:6-7.

### **BEFORE YOUR NEXT SESSION**

1. Memorize Mt. 6:19-21. Work on this verse until you can repeat it perfectly. Remember to recite the reference as well as the content of the verse.
2. Read through your next study and answer the questions. If you have questions or become confused, write your questions down so that you can discuss them with your discipling partner at your next session.
3. Continue to develop the spiritual disciplines of reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on Scripture, as well as prayer.
4. Come up with a written plan on how you will faithfully use your money and possessions for God’s glory.

Some of the material for this session was adapted from *The Treasure Principle*, Randy Alcorn, 2001, Multnomah Publishers.

## **Session 17**

### **Humility**

*“Humility is not thinking less of yourself. It is thinking of yourself less.”*

-- Anonymous

*“There are but two objects that I have ever desired for these forty years to behold; the one is my own vileness; and the other is, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ: and I have always thought that they should be viewed together; just as Aaron confessed all the sins of all Israel whilst he put them on the head of the scapegoat. . . Repentance is in every view so desirable, so necessary, so suited to honor God, that I seek that above all. The tender heart, the broken and contrite spirit, are to me far above all the joys that I could ever hope for in this vale of tears. I long to be in my proper place, my hand on my mouth, and my mouth in the dust. . . . I feel this to be safe ground. Here I cannot err. . . . I am sure that whatever God may despise . . . He will not despise the broken and contrite heart.”*

-- Charles Simeon

*“The best definition of humility I ever heard was this: to think rightly of ourselves. When you are half an inch above the ground, you are that half-inch too high. Your place is to be nothing.”*

-- Charles Spurgeon

### **INTRODUCTION**

Of all the graces, humility is one of the most attractive. A proud, arrogant person drives people away, while a humble servant of Christ attracts others. As you grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ, it is imperative that you also grow in humility. Having a spirit of humility is the opposite of having a spirit of self-importance. Humility enables a disciple to have a teachable spirit. If you are going to follow Christ, you must be humble. Otherwise, your pride will make you unteachable, and you will never learn from Christ and others.

## BIBLE STUDY

### 1. Look up the definition of “humility” in a dictionary. What does it mean?

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### 2. Read Mt. 20:20-28.

- Why were the 10 indignant with James and John (20:24)?  

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- What did Jesus say was the usual way the world operates regarding authority?  

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- In contrast to that, how is the church supposed to function?  

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- What kind of example did Jesus Christ set for us (20:28)? How did He demonstrate humility?  

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### 3. Read Phil. 2:3-11.

- What is humility the opposite of (vs.3)?  

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- What does humility look like when it is exercised in the church (vs.3-4)?  

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- How did Jesus manifest humility (vs.5-8)?  

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- How did God respond to Jesus’ amazing display of humility (vs.9-11)?  

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### 4. Read James 4:6-10.

- What is God’s response to the proud?  

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- What is God’s response to the humble?  

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- How should we manifest humility in relation to God (vs.7)?  

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- What will God do if we humble ourselves before Him? (vs.10)  

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**5. Read James 1:21.**

- According to this verse, how are we to exercise humility?

- What do you think that looks like?

**6. Read the following passages and jot down what you learn about how we are to exercise humility:**

- Rom.12:3 \_\_\_\_\_
- Ps. 115:1 \_\_\_\_\_
- John 13:1-5; 12-17 \_\_\_\_\_
- Romans 7:18 \_\_\_\_\_

Humility is a beautiful character quality. It is wrought in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Just as Jesus was humble in heart (Mt. 11:29), so too are all of His followers. This humility manifests itself in unselfishness, considering the needs of others, giving up our personal “rights”, serving others, submitting to God and His Word, and ascribing all the good in our lives to God. However, our problem is that we are naturally proud and selfish. We may want to be humble, but all too often find that we are really proud. How can we change from being proud and selfish to being humble and unselfish?

**7. Read the following Scriptures and jot down how we can begin to manifest humility in our lives.**

- Is. 6:1-5 \_\_\_\_\_
- Luke 18:9-14 \_\_\_\_\_
- Prov. 28:13 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Cor. 3:18 \_\_\_\_\_

**STEPS TO TAKE**

1. Take some time to consider your life and pinpoint one or two areas of pride. Confess these to your discipling partner. Commit to pray for one another in this area.
2. Memorize Phil. 2:3-5. This week when you find yourself slipping back into responding in pride instead of humility, recite that verse to yourself, and turn it into prayer to God.

3. Seek to discover a situation in which you can serve others and put them before yourself. Discuss this with your discipling partner. Commit to implementing that idea this week.
2. Recite Mt. 6:19-21 to your discipling partner.

## **SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION**

**Philippians 2:3-5**, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.”

Additional Scripture you may want to memorize: James 4:10.

## **BEFORE YOUR NEXT SESSION**

1. Memorize Phil. 2:3-5. Work on this verse until you can repeat it perfectly. Remember to recite the reference as well as the content of the verse.
2. Read through your next study and answer the questions. If you have questions or become confused, write your questions down so that you can discuss them with your discipling partner at your next session.
3. Continue to develop the spiritual disciplines of reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on Scripture, as well as prayer.

## **Session 18**

### **Forgiveness**

*“To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.”*

-- C. S. Lewis

*“Whenever I see myself before God and realize something of what my blessed Lord has done for me at Calvary, I am ready to forgive anybody anything. I cannot withhold it. I do not even want to withhold it.”*

-- Martyn Lloyd-Jones

*“No prayers can be heard which do not come from a forgiving heart.”*

-- J. C. Ryle

*“You are nothing better than deceitful hypocrites if you harbor in your minds a single unforgiving thought. There are some sins which may be in the heart, and yet you may be saved. But you cannot be saved unless you are forgiving. If we do not choose to forgive, we choose to be damned.”*

-- Charles Spurgeon

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is absolutely essential that followers of Christ forgive those who sin against them. The basic idea of forgiveness is “to release a debt.” In other words, if we consider all the evil actions of those who wrong us as a debt they owe us, to forgive them is to cancel that debt, so they are released from ever having to pay us back.

### **BIBLE STUDY**

#### **1. Read Matthew 6:9-15.**

- How does Jesus teach us we are to pray for our own forgiveness (vs.12)?
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- What does Jesus mean in verses 14-15? Is Jesus teaching that a person will obtain salvation if they forgive others? Consult Eph. 2:8-9 and Titus 3:4-7.

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- How important is it for us to forgive others, according to Jesus?

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**2. Read Matthew 18:21-35.**

- How often must we forgive someone who sins against us? What did Jesus mean by saying “up to seventy times seven”?

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- Who does the servant who owed 10,000 talents represent in this parable (vs.24)?

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- Who does the slave who owed the servant 100 denarii represent?

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- What is the point of this parable (vs.32-35)?

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- What should you meditate on the next time you need to forgive someone?

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**3. Read Ephesians 4:30 - 5:2.**

- According to vs. 32, what should you consider when you know you need to forgive someone?

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- What evil fruits are likely to be in your life, if you refuse to forgive others (vs.31)?

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- What will a spirit of unforgiveness in your life do to the Holy Spirit who dwells in you (vs.30)?

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**PRACTICAL QUESTIONS TO PONDER**

1. Do you think that we are only obligated to forgive those who apologize to us or repent, because God only forgives those who repent (Rom.2:5)? Or do you believe we

should forgive all who wrong us? Why do you believe the way you do?

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2. Does God’s command for us to forgive us mean we must forget that it ever happened, or trust the person to the same extent in the future? For example, if a family relative had been sexually abusing your small child, though you must forgive him, would you trust that family member to be alone with your child? Give reasons for why you believe as you do.

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### **STEPS TO TAKE**

1. Take some time to think and pray about whether there is anyone that has done harm to you that you have not forgiven. If so, confess these situations to your discipling partner. Pray together, releasing that person from any debt to you before God.
2. Memorize Eph. 4:32.
3. Recite Phil. 2:3-5 to your discipling partner.

### **SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION**

**Ephesians 4:32** “Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

Additional Scripture you may want to memorize: Matthew 6:14-15.

### **BEFORE YOUR NEXT SESSION**

1. Memorize Eph. 4:32. Work on this verse until you can repeat it perfectly. Remember to recite the reference as well as the content of the verse.

2. Read through your next study and answer the questions. If you have questions or become confused, write your questions down so that you can discuss them with your discipling partner at your next session.
3. Continue to cultivate the spiritual disciplines of reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on Scripture, as well as prayer. Seek to do these disciplines as a means to enjoy and delight in God, not as raw duties to be endured. Look at these studies as a way for you to develop your loving, obedient relationship with God.