



Steps in Faith 201

Break *through*

Resources

Are You Ready For The Next Step?

Steps in Faith 201 is the next step in a growing walk with God. Here is what you will experience in this next step on your spiritual journey:

Studies

There are four lessons in Steps in Faith 201. You will learn how the world got the way it is, how valuable you are to God, how vital the local church is for God's plan for your life and more about growing in your relationship with God.

You may want to do these studies as part of your personal time with God.

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

Each lesson has a relevant passage to add to your arsenal for spiritual battle—and forget about memorizing! Apply the “Forget Memorizing” assignment to the passage for each study, and you will be better prepared for spiritual battle.

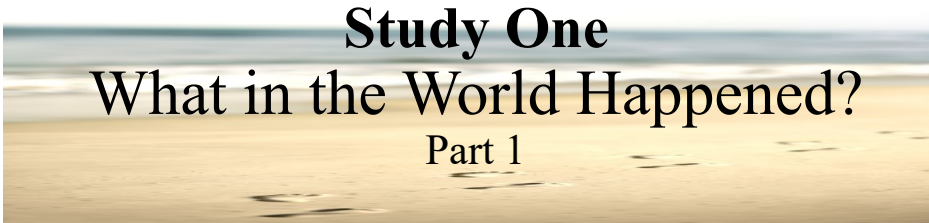
Iron Sharpening Iron

You will have a mentor who will walk this part of your journey with you. After you do your studies, you and your mentor will meet together to answer your questions and provide encouragement and accountability in your Steps in Faith. Ask your discipler your questions when you meet together weekly. Complete the “Iron Sharpening Iron” page at the end of each lesson as part of your encouragement in your walk with the Lord Jesus Christ, your service to Him and sharing Him with others.

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Study One

What in the World Happened?

Part 1

Hiding God's Word in My Heart: Psalm 139:14

*I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made:
marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.*

What Would You Say?

You went to the break room to get a snack from the vending machine and overheard a discussion between Corey and Shelly. They were talking about why the world was such a mess. One of them asks you what you think. What would you say?

I. Where Did It All Come From?

Open the Bible to Genesis 1-2 for God's account of how it all began.

What About the Universe?

Who created the universe?

Genesis 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

John 1:1-3 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.*

The same was in the beginning with God.

*All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that
was made.*

How long did it take to create the universe? Genesis 1:31-2:3

How did God define a day? Genesis 1:3, 4
(See 1:8, 13, 19, 23, 31)

What did Jesus claim about creation? Mark 10:6

What did Moses confirm about creation? Ex. 20:11

What did God think of all that He made?
Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31

How do you accept God's record of creation? Heb. 11:3

What About Science?

Hasn't science proven that the universe is the product of evolutionary processes? How does this fit with the Biblical record of creation?

Question #1 What is observational science?

- "The systematic knowledge of the physical or material world gained through observation and experimentation." (Dictionary.com)
- Which system of origins has been proven through observation and experimentation?
 Creationism Evolution Both Neither

Question #2 What is faith?

- Faith is "strong or unshakeable belief in something, especially without proof or evidence." (World English Dictionary at Dictionary.com)
- Which system of origins is accepted by faith?
 Creationism Evolution Both Neither

Which Pair of World View Eyeglasses Will You Wear?

Imagine two people looking at the same flower. One wears pink-tinted glasses while the other wears blue-tinted glasses. The facts of the flower are the same for both, but their interpretation of the facts differ based on their outlook or, as it is called, their worldview.

There are two different eyeglasses or worldviews that will determine how one sees life. The facts are the same, but the interpretation of the facts is different.

What are the two worldviews we are considering?

Creationism Evolution Both Neither

4 Questions Left Unanswered

1. *Where did it all come from?*

Scientific Field:

- Cosmogony—the origins of the cosmos or universe

Quandary:

- How did the universe go from nothing to inorganic (non-living) matter? Or, from nothing to something?

Evolution says...

"The question of how the large-scale structure of the universe could have come into being has been a major unsolved problem in cosmology."

James A. Trefil, *The Moment of Creation*, p. 43

Creationism says...

"In the beginning _____ created the heaven and the earth..." Gen. 1:1

2. *How did life come from non-living things?*

Scientific Field:

- Biogenesis—The principle that life originates from life and field of the origin of life

Quandary:

- Since the principle of biogenesis is that only life reproduces life, how did organic matter (living matter) arise from inorganic matter (non-living matter from which the evolutionist claims the evolutionary process began)?

Evolution says...

"More than 30 years of experimentation on the origin of life in the fields of chemical and molecular evolution have led to a better perception of the immensity of the problem of the origin of life on Earth rather than to its solution. At present all..."

discussions on principal theories and experiments in the field either end in a stalemate or in a confession of ignorance.”

Klaus Dose, *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, 13(4):348 (1988)

Creationism says... God is the origin of...

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| -----Gen. 1:11 | A. human life |
| -----Gen. 1:20 | B. plant life |
| -----Gen. 1:24 | C. land animal life |
| -----Gen. 1:26 | D. fish & bird life |

3. *Where are the transitional forms (intermediate forms or “missing links”) of one species evolving into another?*

- Scientific Fields:

Geology—The scientific study of the origin, history, structure, and composition of the earth

Paleontology—The study of life on earth based on the fossil record.

- Quandary:

If the theory of evolution were true and the layers of the earth are indicators of millions of years of sedimentation and evolution, would not one expect the fossil record to have evidence of these intermediate species?

Evolution says...

“I will lay it on the line—there is not one such [transitional] fossil for which one could make a watertight argument.”

Colin Paterson, *Of Pandas and People*

“...[T]he number of intermediate varieties, which have formerly existed on the earth, [must] be truly enormous. Why then is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links? Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely graded organic chain; and this, perhaps, is the most obvious and gravest objection which can be urged against my theory... The geological record is extremely imperfect and this fact will to a large extent explain why we do not find intermediate varieties, connecting together all the extinct and existing forms of life by the finest graduated steps. He who rejects these views on the nature of the geological record, will rightly reject my whole theory.”

Charles Darwin cited in *Of Pandas and People*
The Truth Project, Session 5 Part 2

Creationism says...

Read Gen. 1:12, 21, 25, 27-28. Do the following describe the Biblical reason for absence of transitional life forms in the fossil record?

- Yes No God created various species rather than species transitioning into other species.
- Yes No God created species to reproduce within species.
- Yes No Each species can evolve into a higher species without transitional forms.
- Yes No Transitional life forms are a theory without Biblical or scientific evidence.

Think About It

Aren't all the variations of life forms a sign that life forms are changing? Yes. God allows for genetic variation and adaptation of life forms within species (so-called micro-evolution), but not for transitioning lower to higher life forms (macro-evolution). This reveals His wisdom and ingenuity to allow His creature to survive and thrive in His world.

4. *Everything is old, isn't it? It sure looks old, doesn't it?*

Scientific Fields:

- Cosmology—Study of the universe
- Geochronology—Study of the earth's age

Quandary:

- Don't you need billions of years for the expanse and intricacies of our universe and our planet to develop?

Evolution says...

The universe is 13.7 billion years old and the earth is 4.54 billion years old

Creationism says...

A case in point: Adam and Eve

Read Genesis 1:26-31 and 2:18-25 to learn about God's creation of Adam & Eve. If you were to describe Adam and Eve on day 7 of the creation week, which of the following words would best describe them.

- infants physically mature fully functioning
- partially developed needing further development
- embryonic pre or sub human

A cosmological principle:

God created Adam as a mature, fully functioning being with the appearance of age, so God created all of the universe as a mature, fully functioning universe with the appearance of age.

A considered application:

What questions would this truth answer in your mind or someone else's?

I Want To Learn More! For further research on Scientific Creationism you can go to the following resources:

- The Institute for Creation Research www.icr.org
- Answers in Genesis www.answersingenesis.org
- CreationWiki: The Encyclopedia of Creation Science www.creationwiki.org

What About Me?

What makes you unique from all that God created?

Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7

What does it mean to be created in the “image of God”?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| _____ 1. Intellect | A. Genesis 3:7-10 |
| _____ 2. Moral/God conscious | Romans 1:18-21 |
| _____ 3. Social needs | B. Genesis 2:18 |
| _____ 4. Volition (free will) | C. Genesis 2:15,19-20 |
| | D. Genesis 2:16-17;
Genesis 3:6 |

Why did God create you? Isaiah 43:7; Rev. 4:11

What does that mean for you?

You were created for a purpose! Life is full of meaning when you seek to fulfill the purpose for which God made you. That is why God has allowed you to be involved in this study—to allow you to find and fulfill the purpose for which God has made you. Venture on!

What Would You Say?

What about Corey and Shelley? At the end of the next lesson, you will give your response. For now, what has changed or been confirmed from what you first thought when you read about Corey and Shelley?

Iron Sharpening Iron

“As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” Proverbs 27:17

My Time With God: (circle one) 1-2 days 3-4 days 5-6 days

My Time With God’s People:

Sunday School/Small Group Morning Service
 Evening Service Mid-week Ministry Other _____

My Service to Others:

(This can be a formal or informal ministry. Be specific about time and ministry.)

Let me tell you about it! _____

My Sharing With Others:

1. Person(s) I am praying to share my faith with.

2. How I am doing on learning to tell my story?

3. Here is what I am doing in efforts to share my faith.

My Personal Growth:

Hiding God’s Word in My Heart: (Quote the Scripture memory assignment.)

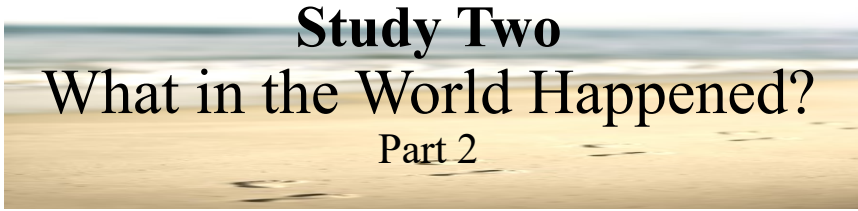
Sermon Notes & Application Yes No

Significant Scriptures, statements, or principles I have learned.

My Questions:

My Next Step:

(Discipler’s signature & date) (Next discipling meeting time, date, & place)



Study Two

What in the World Happened?

Part 2

Hiding God's Word in My Heart: Psalm 119:11

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

What Would You Say?

Remember when Corey and Shelly were talking about why the world was such a mess and one of them asked you what you thought? At the end of this study, you will give your response. So think it through as you study.

II. What In The World Happened?

When God created the world it was “very good” (Gen. 1:31) , but when you look at the world you see some things that are very good and many things that are very bad. What happened? Let's turn to Genesis and find God's record of what happened.

Way Back When Read Genesis 3:1-5 & Revelation 12:9-10

- **The Enemy—Satan**

Who is the Serpent?

What is Satan like?

Rev. 12:9,10

2 Cor. 11:14

2 Cor. 4:4

John 8:44

Gen. 3:1

What is Satan's strategy?

Compare Genesis 3:1,4 with Genesis 2:15-17 and explain the Devil's first attack by choosing the word that best describes Satan's strategy.

Did he Question Confirm Explain or Apply **God's Word?**

Read Genesis 3:2-5 very carefully. Did Eve accurately describe God's instructions according to Genesis 2:17?

Yes No

How did she misrepresent God's Word?

Did Satan accurately represent God's motive according to Genesis 3:4,5?

Yes No

This is another one of Satan's strategies. What is it?

Did he Question Confirm Explain or Apply **God's Goodness?**

Satan's strategy

As you have read about Satan's strategy, does this change your perspective of life? If so, how?

- **The Problem—Sin**

The Fact of Sin Genesis 3:6

Describe the first sin according to Genesis 3:6.

Why was it a sin? (compare Gen. 2:15-17)

What else does the Bible call sin?

1 John 3:4 _____

James 4:17 _____

The definition of sin

- **Sin** is missing the mark of what God says is right.
- **Transgression** is crossing a line that God says you should not cross, or not crossing a line that God says you should.
- **Iniquity** is sin that occurs by justifying the perversion of the truth of God.

The Awareness of Sin Genesis 3:7

When Adam and Eve sinned, what was their response?

Why did they respond this way?

Compare what Satan said about the consequences of disobeying God (Gen. 3:4-5) with what actually happened (Gen. 3:7).

Identify which of the following statements best describes Satan's lies and God's truth.

Disobedience brings man wisdom.

God's truth

Satan's lies

Disobedience brings separation from God.

God's truth

Satan's lies

The consequences of Sin Genesis 3:8-19

Summarize the consequences of sin as recorded in the passage...

- For the individual Gen. 3:8-11

- For the Serpent Gen. 3:14-15

- For Mankind Gen. 3:16-19

- For Creation Gen. 3:18-19

The consequences of sin

Adam and Eve took the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

You are going to learn what this sin brought into the world. Remember this:

Sin has consequences.

That Was THEN, This is NOW!

All that happened long ago; it doesn't affect me, does it? Let's see what God says.

According to Romans 5:12, what is true of "all" of us?

- All _____

- All _____

Read Psalm 51:5 and describe man's spiritual condition at birth.

What does Romans 6:23 say the wages of sin is?

Some people say, "Sure, I sin. We all do, but I'm not a really bad person—certainly not bad enough to be condemned by God." What would you say? (1 John 1:8, Isaiah 64:6, Romans 3:23, James 2:10)

What did God say would happen to Adam & Eve the day they disobeyed Him (Gen 2:17)?

Since Adam & Eve did not die physically, how did they die?

How did Adam and Eve die?

If God said that man would die if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then why did Adam and Eve not die then when they ate from the tree? They died spiritually, and eventually died physically. Physical and spiritual death is a result of sin that began at the Garden of Eden.

When you were born, you were born spiritually dead in trespasses and sin. You are on your way to being dead physically. That is a fact of life. Look all around you. Death is everywhere. There are cemeteries everywhere and there is a waiting list of people dying to get in.

Adam and Eve died spiritually. Did you notice their awareness of their nakedness and desire to hide from God? They used to have a daily walk with God, then suddenly they were shamefully aware when sin entered the world. Genesis 5:5 gives a record of Adam's death at the age of 930 years old. Death is a fact of life.

What Would You Say...According to God's Word

You went to the break room to get a snack from the vending machine and overheard a discussion between Corey and Shelly. They were talking about why the world was such a mess. One of them asks you what you think. What would you say according to God's Word?

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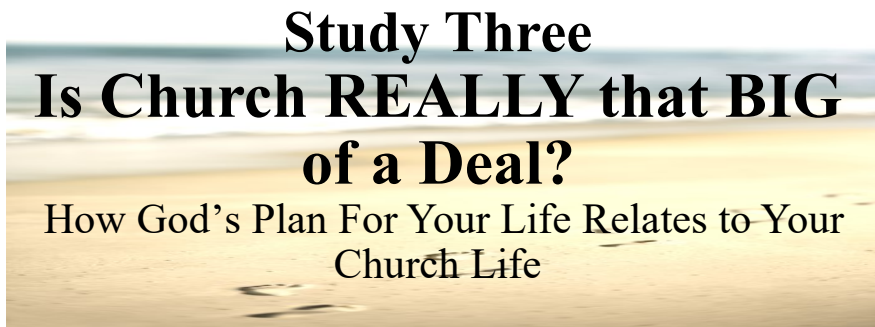
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My Questions:

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Study Three

Is Church REALLY that BIG of a Deal?

How God's Plan For Your Life Relates to Your Church Life

Hiding God's Word in My Heart: Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

What Have You Heard?

John and Dee were talking with their neighbors about going to church. Their neighbors had many reasons why church wasn't that big of a deal even though they professed to be born-again followers of Jesus Christ. They had reasons like...

- I don't need to go to church to worship God. I can worship at home or in nature just as well.
- I don't need to go to church, I can get the same thing on TV.
- God doesn't live in a building. I can praise Him anywhere.

What have you heard?

The church is not a building. It is a group of born-again, Scripturally baptized believers that have joined together with commonly held Biblical beliefs and goals. As you well know not all churches are the same or even believe the same things. Let's look at what the Bible says about church and how it relates to your life.

Consider This As You Study the Scriptures

- A healthy, biblically-based church life will transform your whole life.
- Active membership and involvement in a local church is part of God's plan for you.

God's Plan of the Local Church

Jesus gave His disciples what is called The Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28:18-20.

- Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

¹⁹ *Go ye therefore, and teach [disciples of] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

²⁰ *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

Biblical Investigation When those whom the Lord Jesus Christ taught fulfilled His Commission, what was the result in Jerusalem?

- Acts 2:41-42, 46-47

⁴¹ *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

⁴² *And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

⁴⁶ *And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,*

⁴⁷ *Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the **church** daily such as should be saved.*

Biblical Conclusion Based on the Scriptural testimony of the believers in Jerusalem, what was the record of what was established in Jerusalem?

Biblical Corroboration Is this the plan carried out in the early history of the followers of Jesus as evidenced by the Biblical record? Or, as the gospel spread, what was established in other cities?

- Acts 8:1 After the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts

*And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the **church** which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.*

- Acts 9:31 After the conversion of Saul

³¹ Then had the **churches** rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

- Acts 11:22 After the gospel spread to different people in different places the exciting news got back to Jerusalem

²² Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the **church** which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

²³ Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

- Acts 15:1-4, 22 There was a question of doctrine and of Biblical practice. So, other believers asked the believers at Jerusalem for help about what to do.

And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

² When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

³ And being brought on their way by the **church**, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

⁴ And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the **church**, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

After a decision was made about the issue a recommendation was made and letters sent to communicate their recommendation.

²² Then pleased it the apostles and elders with the whole **church**, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas

- Acts 15:40-41 Paul begins another missionary journey

⁴⁰ And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

⁴¹ And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the **churches**.

- Acts 16:5 Paul's missionary journey continues

⁵ *And so were the **churches** established in the faith, and increased in number daily.*

- The Epistles

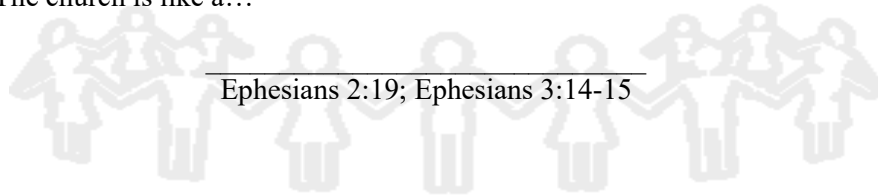
The next nine New Testament books after Acts (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and 1 and 2 Thessalonians are letters written to local churches. The three epistles following these are written to local church leaders (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus). Thus, twelve of the New Testament epistles specifically deal with the doctrine, organization, operation, life and relationships within the **local church**. (Adapted and expanded from *Continue* by Paul Chappell, pp. 181-183).

Biblical Confirmation What does the Bible confirm to be God's plan for fulfilling the Great Commission?

God's Pictures of the Local Church

A picture is worth a thousand words. What are three of the pictures God uses to describe the local church?

The church is like a...



As you think about this picture and the Scriptures, what does this tell you about the local church?

The church is like a...

Ephesians 2:20-22

What is Jesus building?

Matthew 16:18 I will build my _____

How is Jesus building it?

1 Peter 2:5-6 Living _____

Whose house is it?

Ephesians 2:22 A habitation of _____

Permanent
Foundation

Ephesians 2:20
Jesus Christ...the chief

1 Timothy 3:15
The pillar & ground of the

Temporary & Transitional Foundation: Apostles & Prophets Ephesians 2:20

What is God doing in the World?

God is building His house—adding stones, growing stones, and placing stones for His will to be done and for His glory! You are part of what God is doing in the world.

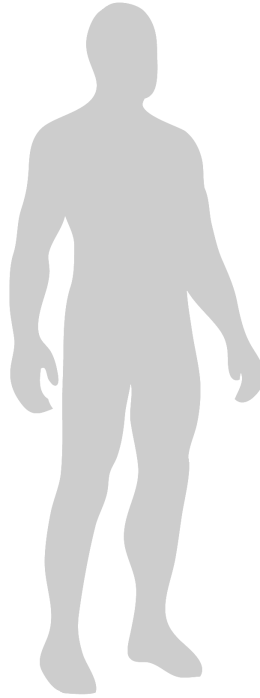
What is your attitude toward being part of what God is doing in a biblically-based local church?

- Highly important to me I want to “step it up”
 This is my Bible conviction I am open to God’s will

The church is like a...

Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 12:11-18

Who is the Head of the Body?
Ephesians 1:22-23
Colossians 1:18



Who are the members
of the Body?
1 Corinthians 12:11-18

True or False?

- T or F As God designed parts as members of a physical body, God designs believers to be parts in a local church of believers.
- T or F Everybody in the church ought to be exactly the same.
- T or F God wants every member of the body to appreciate and cooperate with other members of the body.
- T or F As the parts of a body work together to fulfill the purpose of the body, the church should work together for the benefit of one another and God's purposes.
- T or F The body should decide what it wants to do without following the direction of the head.
- T or F The body is divided when the unique members appreciate the contribution of one another.

God's Passion for the Local Church **Ephesians 5:25; Acts 20:28**

- What words in these passages describe the Lord's passion for His church?

- What words in these passages describe the price the Lord paid for His church?

What's Love Got To Do With It?

When we love the Lord Jesus Christ we love what He loves. God's desire for you is to love Him with all your heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37). That is, with all your being. As you grow in your love relationship with Him, you will continue to grow in love for the church He loves. Remember, when we love the Lord Jesus Christ we love what He loves. Jesus "loved the church and gave Himself for it." So should we!

God's Pattern for the Local Church **Acts 2:41-47**

This passage describes the birth of the Lord's church. Many people were visiting Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish feast of Pentecost. The Lord sent the Holy Spirit to empower the Apostles to preach the gospel to those assembled and worked in the hearts of the hearers so they responded to the message and were saved by faith in Jesus Christ. From these believers, the church began. At the beginning God established a pattern for His local church. Match the pattern with the description:

Worship, Evangelism, Fellowship, Teaching, Prayer

- _____ Sharing the gospel message *"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized...and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."* Acts 2:41, 47 Jesus gave what is called the Great Commission in Acts 1:8 calling his church to take the gospel locally, regionally and globally - a job too big for just one person!
- _____ Explaining Biblical Truth *"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine"* Acts 2:42
- _____ Sharing lives together *"and fellowship and in breaking of bread...And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meal with gladness and singleness of heart."* Acts 2:42, 46
- _____ Asking for God's will to be done *"and in prayers"* Acts 2:42
- _____ Expressing praise and submission to the Lord *"Praising God"* 2:47

What about Signs and Sharing?

This account contains a record of signs and sharing. Are those God's pattern for His church to follow?

Signs

"And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles (2:43)."

Remember signs were foundational as the church developed and the Scriptures were being written (Ephesians 2:20) and confirmational to authenticate revelation from God (Jesus in Acts 2:22 and the apostles in 2 Corinthians 12:12 and Hebrews 2:3-4). Since the Word of God is God's complete revelation, signs are not needed today.

What about Signs and Sharing?

Sharing

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need (2:42)."

Remember the social dynamic of the feast of Pentecost. Many out of town guests (Acts 2:5-12 lists 18 language and people groups) had been saved far away from home and had not anticipated or prepared for staying in Jerusalem. So the local people took them in as the church formed.

This was the immediate pattern (4:32-37) but stopped when God disciplined hypocrisy by killing Ananias and Saphira (Acts 5:1-16) and when persecution led to the scattering of the church (Acts 5:17-8:4). This practice was not repeated.

Does God's church share today? Yes. Meals for others at times of need, helping with financial needs, benevolence needs and in many other ways, believers share. But, God does not endorse a welfare system. Rather, God endorses a workfare system. He told the church in Thessalonica *"if any would not work, neither should he eat (3:10)."*

My Participation in the Local Church

What relationship does God want me to have with a local church?

- **Be an "Obeyer"!**

If ye love me, keep my commandments...He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. John 14:15, 21

How would you describe how love and obedience are connected?

Be a Member!

How has God described the relationship of believers within the local church in the following passages?

- Ephesians 5:25, 29-30
- Romans 12:5
- 1 Corinthians 12:12, 18, 20, 25-27

Whose idea is a membership relationship anyway?

Be a Builder!

Look up the following passages that describe some of the many wonderful ways God builds His church and His church builds one another!

- John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:11; 1 John 4:11
- Romans 12:10
- Romans 14:19
- Ephesians 3:16
- Ephesians 4:1-3
- Ephesians 4:32
- Galatians 6:1-2
- Hebrews 3:13
- Hebrews 10:23-25
- 1 Peter 4:9-10

Agree or Disagree?

The priority of the local church is one of the first and most important tests a believer will face. Agree? Disagree?

Why?



You Need the Church and the Church Needs You!

A newly born-again Christian went to visit his Pastor. As they sat in front of his roaring coal fire talking, the young believer asked the Pastor why he should go to church. The Pastor sat in silence for a while and then bent down and took a coal out of the fire with some tongs. He placed the burning coal on the hearth by itself and watched it. In a short time, the coal cooled and turned into a dull gray cinder. He then picked it up and placed it back on the fire. Within seconds it burned bright yet again. "I think you have answered my question."

What Would You Say?

If you were talking to John and Dee's neighbors about church, what would you say?

Iron Sharpening Iron

“As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” Proverbs 27:17

My Time With God: (circle one) 1-2 days 3-4 days 5-6 days

My Time With God’s People:

- Sunday School/Small Group Morning Service
 Evening Service Mid-week Ministry Other _____

My Service to Others:

(This can be a formal or informal ministry. Be specific about time and ministry.)

Let me tell you about it! _____

My Sharing With Others:

1. Person(s) I am praying to share my faith with.

2. How I am doing on learning to tell my story?

3. Here is what I am doing in efforts to share my faith.

My Personal Growth:

Hiding God’s Word in My Heart: (Quote the Scripture memory assignment.)

Sermon Notes & Application Yes No

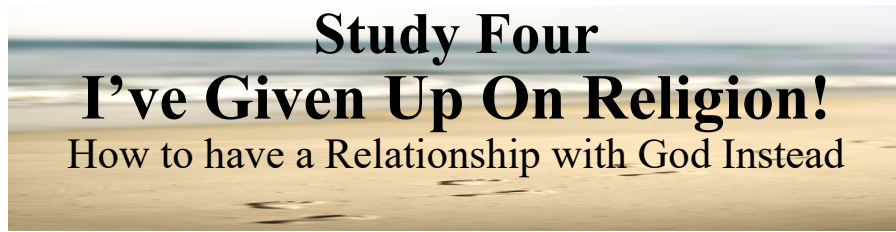
Significant Scriptures, statements, or principles I have learned.

My Questions:

My Next Step:

_____ (Discipler’s signature & date)

_____ (Next discipling meeting time, date, & place)



Study Four

I've Given Up On Religion!

How to have a Relationship with God Instead

Hiding God's Word in My Heart: Colossians 1:10

*That ye might **walk** worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.*

What Would You Say?

Heather, Hannah, and Megan were talking about some of their church-going co-workers. With the discussion of hypocrisy and “issues” they had seen, Heather proclaimed, “I don’t know about you ladies, but if that’s all your religion does for you, I’m glad I’ve given up on religion.” **What would you say?**

What Is the Problem with Religion?

Isaiah 29:13

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.

How did God answer the question?

Mark 7:1-9

- Who came to Jesus? v. 1

Who are the Scribes and Pharisees?

The scribes were Jewish teachers who taught and copied Jewish writings—primarily based on years and years and layers and layers of man-made traditions based on the Word of God.

The Pharisees were religious men who lived by the man-made traditions with great emphasis on outward conformity to the exclusion of a heart for God and Scriptural truth.

These groups were influential in Jewish life and religion in Jesus' day, and their approach to Judaism is still evidenced in modern Rabbinic Judaism.

- What did the Lord's disciples do? 1-2
- What was the reason the scribes and Pharisees had a problem with the disciples? 3-5
- What did Jesus say was the real problem? 6-7
- Is the Scripture Jesus quoted familiar? Why?
- What was the result of the scribes and Pharisees religion? 8-9

How did Jesus answer the question?

Can you think of examples of what makes religion a problem today and why?

How Does God Describe a Relationship with Him?

1. As a _____ **with God** Genesis 5:22, Genesis 6:9

And Enoch _____ with God... Genesis 5:22

These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah _____ with God. Genesis 6:9

As you think of this description, what does it mean to you?

What do the following Scriptures tell you about a walk with God?

- 2 John 6
- 1 John 1:7
- 2 Corinthians 5:7
- Galatians 5:16
- Colossians 2:6-7

As you examine your life in light of this Scriptural truth, what is God showing you about your relationship with Him?

2. As a _____ **Matthew 6:9, 18:14; Romans 8:14**

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our _____ which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Matthew 6:9

Even so it is not the will of your _____ which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. Matthew 18:14

How do we obtain this relationship?

- John 1:11-12
- Galatians 3:26

As a perfect Heavenly Father, what does God do for His children?

- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

What does He do for us? Why?

- Romans 8:14-15

What does He do for us by the Holy Spirit (v. 14)?

What bondage does this relationship liberate us from (v. 15)?

What is Adoption?

In the ancient world adoption did not focus on the placement of a child in a family, but the rite of passage from childhood to adulthood when the child took the rights and responsibilities of being a “grown up.”

How does this apply to your relationship with God?

When is a child of God “adopted”?

Abba, Father!

In the Hebrew language one of the first words a child learns is Abba. It means, Father.

Does our language have an equivalent expression?

What does this indicate about our relationship with God?

- Hebrews 12:5-10

What two facts does this passage tell you about God as our Father? 5-6

What does God's chastening prove? 7-8

Why does God chasten us? 9-10

How is God's correction different from the correction of even the best human father?

What is the result of God's chastening when we learn from it? 10-11

3. As a _____ James 2:23

And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the _____ of God. James 2:23

- John 15:12-15

¹² *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

¹³ *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his _____.* ¹⁴ *Ye are my _____ if ye do whatsoever I command you.* ¹⁵ *Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you _____; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

- Review John 15:12-15 again. Match how Jesus described our relationship with Him to the elements of a healthy relationship?

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| _____ 1. John 15:12-13 | A. Open Communication |
| _____ 2. John 15:14 | B. Sacrifice |
| _____ 3. John 15:15 | C. Obedience |

God Wants a Relationship with You!

His Word describes our relationship with Him as a walk with Him, as that of a Father and child and that of a friend. Many think it is hard to build a relationship with someone you do not see. However it is not seeing the other person that makes a good relationship but the traits or characteristics of the relationship that creates the bond. A relationship with God is similar.

A strong relationship is a two way street. Both parties must participate.

God is doing more than His fair share.

We are the ones that limit our relationship with God.

Key Traits of a Relationship with God

The Key Traits: Truthfulness and honesty
Obedient action
Communication
Faithfulness
Personally knowing each other
Love

Study the Bible: Match the key traits of a relationship with God listed here with the appropriate Scripture.

Apply the Bible: At times in your spiritual growth you will come to crisis points where you have to believe God and take obedient action by faith. The crisis of belief applications will help you take the next step in your journey with God.

1. _____ Psalm 119:128; Eph. 4:25; Deut. 32:4

Crisis of Belief Application

- I will truthfully share my thoughts with God the next time _____.
- I will share my true motives with God and myself when I _____.
- I will share my true feelings with God for _____.

2. _____ Psalm 89:1; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 4:2

Crisis of Belief Application

- I will show God He can depend on me by _____.
- I will faithfully stand up for God the next time I _____.
- I will be faithful to God for _____.

3. _____ . 1 John 4:19

Crisis of Belief Application

- I love God enough to submit to His authority in _____.
- I love God enough to give Him my time for _____.
- I love God enough to give Him my talents to _____.
- I love God enough to give Him _____ money.
- I love God enough to give Him _____ life.

4. _____ Psalm 139:1-2; 2 Peter 1:3-4

Crisis of Belief Application

- I will look for the _____ of God.
- I will study God's Word _____.
- I will learn how to _____ from others who know God.

5. _____ Hebrews 1:1-2; Jeremiah 29:13

What are ways God communicates to me?

Crisis of Belief Application

- I talk with God as I think about _____.
- I will pray to God _____.
- I will sing to God _____.
- I will worship God _____.
- I will _____ God in my interactions with _____.

6. _____ 1 John 3:18; John 14:15

Crisis of Belief Application

- I will show others my relationship with God by the way I _____.
- I will show my relationship to God by getting involved in church _____.
- I will act on my relationship with God by giving _____.
- I will obey God by _____.
- I will trust God when _____.

Can Two Walk Together Except They Be Agreed?

This is the question the prophet Amos asked (Amos 3:3). It is a good question to ask about your relationship with God. Which of the following statements best reflects your attitude(s) about your relationship with God?

- As God has shown me His truth, I have followed Him in the past.
- As God is showing me His truth, I am following Him.
- I have a specific area I do not yet understand what God wants for me.
- I have an area(s) I am struggling to agree with God about and act obediently.
- I agree with God that when He shows me the truth I will follow Him.

What Would You Say?

Based on what you have learned, what would you say to Heather, Hannah and Megan?

Iron Sharpening Iron

“As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” Proverbs 27:17

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My Personal Growth:

Hiding God’s Word in My Heart: (Quote the Scripture memory assignment.)

Sermon Notes & Application Yes No

Significant Scriptures, statements, or principles I have learned.

My Questions:

My Next Step:

(Discipler’s signature & date) (Next discipling meeting time, date, & place)

Hiding God's Word in My Heart

Forget Memorizing & Scripture Assignments

Forget Memorizing?

Don't think of this as memorizing. Think of this as getting familiar with your weapons of spiritual warfare. These verses are “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17)” to arm you in the fight. You don't have to have every word exactly right; you need to have the truth of it readily available. Here is how!

Write It!

You may copy the verse on cards or on paper many times to seal it in your mind, but eventually you will want to write the verse on a card. Whether a business card size or 3 x 5 card size—card it!

Rehearse It!

Don't worry about memorizing the verse—just rehearse the verse. Keep your card with you. Rehearse it throughout the day—getting dressed for the day, throughout the day, before you eat, as it comes to your mind, before you go to bed, sharing it with a friend. The verse will eventually become embedded in your mind. It doesn't matter whether you memorize it—just rehearse it!

Review It!

Do you ever forget? We all do. So, keep your cards in a single place. As you walk with God He will bring verses into your life that will empower you in spiritual warfare. Then, periodically review.

Scripture Assignments

Study One

Psalm 139:14

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

Study Two

Psalm 119:11

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Study Three

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Study Four

Colossians 1:10

That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Appendix 1

Geologic Evidences for the Genesis Flood

Andrew A. Snelling, Ph.D.

September 18, 2007 Excerpted for Steps of Faith 201 by Brent Baughman June 2011

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v2/n4/geologic-evidences-part-one>

Why is it that many people, including many Christians, can't see the geologic evidence for the Genesis Flood? It is usually because they have bought into the evolutionary idea that "the present is the key to the past." They are convinced that, because today's geological processes are so slow, the rock strata and the earth's rock layers took millions of years to form.

Why is it that many people can't see the geologic evidence for the Genesis Flood? Because many have bought into the evolutionary idea that "the present is the key to the past."

However, if the Genesis Flood really occurred, what evidence would we look for? We read in Genesis 7 and 8 that "the fountains of the great deep" were broken up and poured out water from inside the earth for 150 days (5 months). Plus it rained torrentially and globally for 40 days and nights ("the floodgates [or windows of heaven] were opened"). No wonder all the high hills and the mountains were covered, meaning the earth was covered by a global ocean ("the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished," 2 Peter 3:6). All air-breathing life on the land was swept away and perished.

So what evidence would we look for? Wouldn't we expect to find billions of dead plants and animals buried and fossilized in sand, mud, and lime that were deposited rapidly by water in rock layers all over the earth? Of course! That's exactly what we find. Indeed, based on the description of the Flood in Genesis 7-8, there are six main geologic evidences that testify to the Genesis Flood.*

Six Evidences for the Genesis Flood

Evidence #1 – Fossils of sea creatures high above sea level due to the ocean waters having flooded over the continents.

We find fossils of sea creatures in rock layers that cover all the continents. For example, most of the rock layers in the walls of Grand Canyon (more than a mile above sea level) contain marine fossils. Fossilized shellfish are even found in the Himalayas.

Evidence #2 – Rapid burial of plants and animals.

We find extensive fossil "graveyards" and exquisitely preserved fossils. For example, billions of nautiloid fossils are found in a layer within the Redwall Limestone of Grand Canyon. This layer was deposited catastrophically by a massive flow of sediment (mostly lime sand). The chalk and coal beds of Europe and the United States, and the fish, ichthyosaurs, insects, and other fossils all around the world, testify of catastrophic destruction and burial.

Evidence #3 – Rapidly deposited sediment layers spread across vast areas.

We find rock layers that can be traced all the way across continents – even between continents – and physical features in those strata indicate they were deposited rapidly. For example, the Tapeats Sandstone and Redwall Limestone of Grand Canyon can be traced across the

entire United States, up into Canada, and even across the Atlantic Ocean to England. The chalk beds of England (the white cliffs of Dover) can be traced across Europe into the Middle East and are also found in the Midwest of the United States and in Western Australia. Inclined (sloping) layers within the Coconino Sandstone of Grand Canyon are testimony to 10,000 cubic miles of sand being deposited by huge water currents within days.

Evidence #4 – Sediment transported long distances.

We find that the sediments in those widespread, rapidly deposited rock layers had to be eroded from distant sources and carried long distances by fast-moving water. For example, the sand for the Coconino Sandstone of Grand Canyon (Arizona) had to be eroded and transported from the northern portion of what is now the United States and Canada. Furthermore, water current indicators (such as ripple marks) preserved in rock layers show that for “300 million years” water currents were consistently flowing from northeast to southwest across all of North and South America, which, of course, is only possible over weeks during a global flood.

Evidence #5 – Rapid or no erosion between strata.

We find evidence of rapid erosion, or even of no erosion, between rock layers. Flat, knife-edge boundaries between rock layers indicate continuous deposition of one layer after another, with no time for erosion. For example, there is no evidence of any “missing” millions of years (of erosion) in the flat boundary between two well-known layers of Grand Canyon – the Coconino Sandstone and the Hermit Formation. Another impressive example of flat boundaries at Grand Canyon is the Redwall Limestone and the strata beneath it.

Evidence #6 – Many strata laid down in rapid succession.

Rocks do not normally bend; they break because they are hard and brittle. But in many places we find whole sequences of strata that were bent without fracturing, indicating that all the rock layers were rapidly deposited and folded while still wet and pliable before final hardening. For example, the Tapeats Sandstone in Grand Canyon is folded at a right angle (90°) without evidence of breaking. Yet this folding could only have occurred after the rest of the layers had been deposited, supposedly over “480 million years,” while the Tapeats Sandstone remained wet and pliable.

Conclusion

Jesus Christ our Creator (John 1:1–3; Colossians 1:16–17), who is the Truth and would never tell us a lie, said that during the “days of Noah” (Matthew 24:37; Luke 17:26–27) “Noah entered the Ark” and “the Flood came and took them all away” (Matthew 24:38–39). He spoke of these events as real, literal history, describing a global Flood that destroyed all land life not on the Ark.

Therefore, we must believe what Christ told us, rather than the ideas of fallible scientists who weren’t there to see what happened in the earth’s past. Thus we shouldn’t be surprised when the geologic evidence in God’s world (rightly understood by asking the right questions) agrees exactly with God’s Word, affirmed by Jesus Christ.

* I want to acknowledge that these geologic evidences have been elaborated on by my colleague Dr. Steve Austin at the Institute for Creation Research in his book *Grand Canyon: Monument to Catastrophe*, pages 51–52 (Institute for Creation Research, Santee, California, 1994).

Appendix 2 God's Practice for His Local Church

In the New Testament there are common practices that shape the polity (standard operating procedure) of New Testament based churches.

Biblical Authority: When the Bible speaks, God speaks. The Bible is the Word of God and is to be the guide and foundation of our faith and practice.

- *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.* 2 Timothy 3:16
- *Thy word is truth.* John 17:17

Autonomy of the local church: Jesus is the head of the church and each local congregation is to be responsible to Him in its governance rather than an outside hierarchical structure. The church is the final authority in questions of doctrine (Acts 15), elects its own officers (Acts 6:1-7; 14:23), sends out missionaries (Acts 13:1-4), and is the final authority in church restoration and discipline (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 3:14-15).

- *And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.* Colossians 1:18

Priesthood of believers: As the Old Testament priest represented the people to God and God to the people, through Jesus Christ believers have direct access to God.

- *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.* 1 Peter 2:9
- *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.* 1 Timothy 2:5-6

Two ordinances in the local church: Believer's baptism and the Lord's supper - These are ordinances - not sacraments. They have no part in one's salvation, but are pictures of what Jesus has done for believers. They are to be practiced by the church.

- *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Matthew 28:19
- *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.* Romans 6:3-5
- *For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:
And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.
After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new*

*testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he
come.* 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Individual soul liberty: God has given each person a will, and each person is responsible for the decisions he makes—whether to receive or reject Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior or in matters of personal conduct.

- *For to will is present with me.* Romans 7:17
- *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* Romans 10:13
- *So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.* Romans 14:12

Saved church membership: As at the beginning of the church, only those who personally confessed the Lordship of Jesus Christ, identified with the church's doctrinal truth, and demonstrated obedience to the Lord were part of the church.

- *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.* Acts 2:41, 47

Two offices in the church: Pastors (also described with the terms bishop and elder) and deacons are the only offices mentioned in the New Testament. These men have specific qualifications and roles within the church. (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 6:1-7; Hebrews 13:7, 17)

- *Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.* Philippians 1:1

Separation: This involves governmental separation (so that the church should not be a state-run organization but should operate freely without governmental interference - Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-4), personal separation in individual choices (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 10:29-33), and separation in association with or endorsement of false teaching (2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Romans 16:17-19).

- *For it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.* 1 Peter 1:16
- *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?* 2 Corinthians 6:14
- *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them.* Romans 16:17
- *We ought to obey God rather than men.* Acts 5:29

*Adapted by Brent Baughman from Les Frazier's lectures "Baptist Distinctives," Kevin Bauder's *Baptist Distinctives and New Testament Church Order*, and Paul Chappell's *Continue: A Biblical Journey in Personal Discipleship*.

