

CLASS #2 MATURITY

The goal of this class is for you to commit to basic habits of a disciple of Jesus Christ, specifically, Bible study, prayer, giving, and fellowship. The first two sections are to teach you how to have a quiet time with the Lord. To accomplish this we will talk about how to hear from God through the Bible and how to talk to God in prayer. Additionally, we will review two bible study methods designed to help you get more out of your time with the Bible. The third section talks about giving and the final section talks about the habit of fellowship.

Spending Quality Time in God's Word

Here are some ways to get the most out of your time in the Word of God. It is important to use all of them to have the most impact in your life.

1. Hear the Word of God Romans 10:17 (preaching and teaching from various media platforms)
2. Read the Word of God Revelation 1:3 (You can read through the entire bible in a year by reading 15 minutes a day)
3. Study the Word of God Acts 17:11 (taking notes and asking questions is a fundamental way to begin studying the Bible) See the two bible study methods in this section as well to aide your study)
4. Memorize the Word of God Psalm 119:11
5. Meditate on the Word of God Psalm 1:2-3
6. Apply the Word of God Matthew 5:13; James 1:22

The Bible as it was originally written had no chapter or verse divisions. In fact, it wasn't until A.D. 1228 that Bishop Stephen Langton added the chapter divisions. These were added to make the various sections of the Bible more accessible to the readers. Some of these divisions are arbitrary and interrupt the flow of a writer's message. Usually, however, they provide good breaking points that are helpful in Bible study. According to these divisions, there are 1,189 chapters in the Bible. If you studied one chapter each day, you could read through the Scriptures in just over three years. If you summarized two chapters a day, you could finish in about 20 months. This pace is certainly not recommended, because you could quickly get bored with the study method. Instead, select random chapters of Scripture that you want to study and use the summary method on those passages; or use a different method for variety.

Ten Easy Steps for Doing a Chapter Summary

Step One—Caption

Step Two—Contents

Step Three—Chief People

Step Four—Choice Verse

Step Five—Crucial Word(s)

Step Six—Challenges

Step Seven—Cross-References

Step Eight—Christ Seen

Step Nine—Central Lesson(s)

Step Ten—Conclusion

In preparing to fill in the study form for this method of Bible study, read through the chapter at least five times. You will find no better way to get acquainted with a chapter of the Bible than to read it over and over again. The more times you read a passage of Scripture, the more it will become alive to you. Many Christians miss the great insights of Scripture because they fail to read and reread its passages. The great Bible expositor G. Campbell Morgan was famous for his powerful, exciting sermons. When asked for the secret of his ability to communicate God's Word, he replied that he made it a habit to read a chapter or passage 30 or 40 times before he began working on it for a sermon. It is no wonder his sermons were exciting and meaningful.

Here are some tips on how to read a chapter of the Bible:

- Read it in a Bible without notes. If you try using this method by reading a Bible in which you have made notes, you will have the tendency to concentrate on the same ideas. Let God speak to you in a fresh way and give you new insights.
- Read it without stopping. During your first few readings, don't stop in the middle of a chapter, but read it from start to finish. Your goal is to feel the flow of the chapter, so don't be concerned with the details at the outset. Try to capture the central message and the writer's overall theme. • Read it in several different contemporary translations. This will give you additional insights as you see how each translator rendered the original writing. Make notes on the interesting differences you find.
- Read it aloud quietly to yourself. If you have a problem with concentration, this will help tremendously because you will be hearing yourself read. Many people have found that reading aloud helps them better focus their attention on the text. As you are rereading the chapter, begin looking for the following 10 specific things and write your answers on your Chapter Summary Form or on a blank piece of paper. You may fill in the 10 Cs in any order, saving Step Ten for the last step.

How to Pray

This section focuses on what is known as the “Model Prayer” that Jesus used to teach us how to pray according to Matthew 6:9-13

1. Praise—Adoration/Thanksgiving Psalm 100:2 (prayer should begin with praise to acknowledge God and end in praise to thank God in advance for how God will answer prayer)
2. Purpose—We pray to commit to do the will of God Romans 12: 1-2
3. Provision—Ask God to meet your needs Matthew 6:11, Philippians 4:8-9
4. Pardon—Ask God to forgive your sins 1John 1:9
5. People—Pray for others
6. Protection—Pray for protection and direction 1John 4:4

As you spend daily time with God in prayer and bible study there are at least two things you should do.

Consider your way (Proverbs 4:26) Commit your day (Psalm 37:5)

Here is a template to help you begin a routine to help you spend time with God starting with 15 minutes.

Relax (1 minute) take a deep breath, get your heart prepared to be with God.

Read (4 minutes)

Reflect (4 minutes) think about how God wants you to apply what you read.

Record (2 minutes) write down your applications.

Request (4 minutes) this is your time to pray as God leads.

Giving/Tithing

In reference to giving meditate consider , 2Corinthians 8:7, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

Why God wants me to give:

- Giving makes me like God John 3:16
- Giving draws me closer to God Matthew 6:21
- Giving strengthens my faith Proverbs 3:5;9-10; Luke 6:58
- Giving blesses me in return Proverbs 22:9;11:25

What the Bible teaches about tithing

Tithe means ***“tenth part”***

To tithe means to give the **first ten percent** of my income/financial increase to God.

An offering is anything I give in addition to my tithe.

Why tithe?

God commands it Leviticus 27:30

Jesus commends it Matthew 23:23

Giving tithes/offerings reminds me everything I have was given to me by God. Deuteronomy 14:23

Giving tithes and offerings expresses my gratefulness to God. Deuteronomy 16:17

What should I tithe? The first tenth of my income/increase not the leftovers.

Where should I tithe? My church home.

When should I tithe?

When I receive income/increase (on that day set it aside for worship on Sunday or pay electronically)

How should you give?:The attitude of giving

- Give willingly 2Corinthians 8:12
- Give cheerfully 2Corinthians 9:7
- Give sacrificially 2Corinthians 8:3-4
- Give expectantly 2Corinthians 9:6

What is the key? Give yourself first 2Corinthians 8:5

Fellowship

As a church family we need to consistently grow larger and smaller at the same time. According to Acts 5:42 the early church met in large groups (temple courts) and in small groups (house to house). Jesus taught large groups (the multitudes) but he had a small group (the twelve disciples/Apostles) he went through life with. As disciples we commit to Christ and have a commitment to each other.

On Sundays we meet as a large group to celebrate Jesus Christ together. In order to grow strong as disciples however, we need to get to know each other and do life together so being committed to a discipleship group (ministry) is important. Why?

We are obligated to serve other Christians. 1Peter 4:10

There is power in praying together and Christ is present. Matthew 18:19-20

We need accountability to grow. Proverbs 27:17

Through involvement with other Christians in a group you are able to accomplish purposes of the church and every disciple. This is how?

Purpose of Discipleship Groups

A discipleship group at New Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist Church is any ministry of the church because our goal is to make disciples, regardless of any other task a ministry has that primary function. More than working together at church or just having our names on the church roster, we want people to be disciples of Jesus Christ by walking together through life.

Discipleship Groups will accomplish the following according to Acts 2:42-47

Membership v.42,46

Maturity v.42

Magnification(worship) v. 42,47

Ministry v.45

Mission v.47

The plan of each Discipleship Group

Beyond any other primary task a group (ministry) may have (choir/sing, usher, deacon, etc..) each group should at a minimum meet **MONTHLY**.

Each group should set aside time to:

CONNECT—Have an icebreaker/time to catch up on what's happening with each other, to help learn about each other .

WORSHIP—Have devotion or listen/watch a worship song or two.

STUDY THE WORD OF GOD—(Sunday school book, sermon based discussion, other curriculum)

SHARE—Prayer requests and praise reports

The president/leader, etc can assign individuals or have officers plan and be responsible for each area. For example you can assign a person to maintain a record of prayer request/praise reports for the **SHARE** time or if you have a chaplain they can lead the portion and a secretary can keep the record.

In addition someone needs to be assigned the following roles if no one is currently responsible in the group:

SOCIAL—Each group should plan a fun activity (have lunch after church, go bowling, etc..) quarterly or at least every six months.

SERVICE —Each group should plan a service project at least quarterly (every six months at a minimum) visit shut in members, support churchwide projects, create one on your own, etc..

Each group should also maintain a list of people you are introducing to Christ and inviting to join your group/church (Of course groups like deacons, associate ministers, etc.. can't invite others to join their group but should be inviting people to church and introducing people to Christ).

In conclusion of this section remember Jesus formed the first discipleship group and we are simply following HIS model and not a man made strategy. Mark 3:14 says, “And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,…” Jesus called his disciples to be with him through daily life and not just the duty of their ministry assignment.