



CREW LIFE DISCIPLESHIP

LESSON 4

SPIRITUAL FORMATION UNDERSTANDING BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

Becoming More Like Jesus Christ



GROW



FISH



REPEAT

CREW LIFE — LESSON 4



Introduction

As we've journeyed through CREW LIFE Foundations, you've probably noticed that our goal has never been simply to fill our minds with information. Our goal is to help us become faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

Throughout these lessons, we've discovered that discipleship is more than attending church or gaining biblical knowledge. It is a lifelong journey of becoming more like Jesus Christ.

In Lesson 1, we discovered why God established His Church and our place within the Body of Christ. In Lesson 2, we learned how we enter God's Kingdom through the New Birth. In Lesson 3, we discovered that God desires not only for us to experience the New Birth but to continually transform us through His Word, His Spirit, and His Church.

Now we arrive at an important question:

How do we know what God expects from us as we continue to grow?

How do we distinguish between God's clear commands, biblical wisdom for everyday life, and the ministry expectations that help a local church faithfully serve together?

Throughout Scripture, God has provided everything we need to faithfully follow Him. He has not left us to navigate the Christian life by opinions, traditions, or personal preferences. Instead, He has given us His Word, the guidance of His Spirit, and the leadership of His Church to help us grow into mature disciples.

CREW LIFE Foundations is designed to answer one important question:

"What do I need to know to faithfully follow Jesus Christ?"

As we continue to grow, our questions begin to change. We no longer ask only, "What should I do?" We begin asking, "Why do we believe and practice what we do?" One of the purposes of CREW LIFE Advanced is to help answer those questions by exploring God's Word more deeply and equipping us to understand the biblical foundation for what we believe and practice.

Today, we begin laying that foundation by exploring three essential areas of biblical authority:

- * Biblical Commands — God's clear instructions for every believer.
- * Biblical Principles — God's wisdom applied to everyday life.
- * Ministry Standards — Serving together in unity.

When we understand the difference between these three areas, we are better equipped to grow in spiritual maturity, faithfully serve God's Kingdom, and become the disciples He has called us to be.

Lesson Objective

To understand the difference between biblical commands, biblical principles, and ministry standards, and learn how each helps us faithfully follow Jesus Christ and serve together in His Church.

Big Idea

God has given us His Word, His Spirit, and His Church to guide us into faithful discipleship, holy living, and joyful service.

Focus Scriptures

- 2 Timothy 3:16–17
- John 14:15
- Philippians 4:8
- Ephesians 4:11–12
- Hebrews 13:17
- Exodus 19:12–13

Lesson 4 Understanding Biblical Authority — God’s Clear Instructions for Every Believer

I. Biblical Commands

As faithful followers of Jesus Christ, we must understand that God’s Word is our final authority.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 plainly teaches: — “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Because all Scripture is inspired by God, it is the final authority for our faith and practice. God’s Word teaches us what is true, corrects us when we are wrong, and equips us to faithfully follow Jesus Christ.

Jesus said — “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” — John 14:15 (KJV)

Obedience is one of the clearest expressions of our love for God. We do not obey His commands to earn His love or secure our salvation. We obey because we already belong to Him and desire to honor Him.

While we all continue to grow in our understanding of Scripture, there are many truths that God has plainly revealed in His Word. These are biblical commands—God’s clear instructions for every believer.

When Scripture plainly commands something, our responsibility is not to debate it, redefine it, or decide whether we agree with it. Our responsibility is to believe it, trust it, and obey it.

When Scripture is not immediately clear to us, our response should never be to dismiss it. Instead, we should humbly study God's Word, pray for understanding, seek the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and allow God to reveal His truth as we continue to grow in Him.

II. Biblical Commands Concerning Salvation

Some biblical commands are foundational to salvation.

John 3:5 plainly teaches: — “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Jesus Himself declared that the New Birth is essential for entering the Kingdom of God. Before His death, burial, and resurrection, Jesus revealed what was necessary to enter God's Kingdom. His disciples would later understand and proclaim exactly how this New Birth would be experienced.

Acts 2:38 plainly teaches: — “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter proclaimed the fulfillment of what Jesus had taught. Through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, he explained how people respond to the Gospel by experiencing the New Birth through repentance, baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and the infilling of the Holy Ghost. This is not a denominational tradition or a church preference; it is God's revealed plan of salvation found in His Word.

(I) Biblical Commands for Christian Living

God's commands do not end with salvation. They continue to guide the daily life of every disciple.

John 13:34 — “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”

Jesus commands His followers to love one another. Christian love is more than an emotion; it is a decision to reflect the character of Christ in the way we treat others.

Hebrews 10:25 — “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another...”

God commands believers to gather together with the Church. Spiritual growth was never intended to happen in isolation. God uses His Church to encourage, strengthen, and mature His people.

1 Peter 1:15–16 — “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

God calls every believer to pursue a holy life. Holiness is not reserved for pastors or ministry leaders.

Hebrews 12:14 — “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”

Holiness is God’s desire for every disciple because His people are called to reflect His character. It is not about earning God’s favor, but about living a life that honors Him and is continually being transformed into the image of Jesus Christ.

At Angler Church, we believe one simple but life-changing truth: If God’s Word plainly teaches it, we believe it without **COMPROMISE** and obey it.

That is the foundation of biblical discipleship. Before we ask what culture says... Before we ask what tradition says... Before we ask what our personal preference says... We first ask: “What does God’s Word plainly teach?”

When we begin there, we build our lives upon a foundation that will never change.

CREW DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think people sometimes struggle to obey God’s commands even when Scripture plainly teaches them?
2. How does knowing that we obey God’s commands because we love Him—not to earn His love—change the way we view obedience?

II. Biblical Principles — God’s Wisdom Applied to Everyday Life

Not every question we face in life is answered by a DIRECT COMMAND of Scripture. While God has given us many clear instructions to obey, He has also given us biblical principles that teach us how to think, discern, and make decisions that honor Him.

These principles also encourage us to STUDY God’s Word MORE deeply, PRAY for WISDOM, and SEEK the guidance of the Holy Ghost as we faithfully apply His truth to our lives.

Biblical principles reveal God’s heart, character, and wisdom. They provide direction in areas where Scripture may not specifically mention a modern situation, but clearly establishes the values by which God’s people should live.

As faithful followers of Jesus Christ, we do not ask only, is THERE A COMMAND? We also ask, “What biblical principles should guide my decisions so that I may live a life of holiness, honor the Lord, and be pleasing in His sight?”

This is where our relationship with God's Word and the leading of the Holy Spirit become so important. [The Holy Spirit never CONTRADICTS the Word of God. Instead, It helps us understand it,](#)

1. deeper,
2. apply it to our lives,
3. receive conviction when correction is needed, and
4. live an empowered life according to God's will.

[\(1\) Biblical Principles for Christian Living](#)

God's Word teaches us to guard what influences our hearts and minds.

[Philippians 4:8](#) — “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

While Paul is not giving a list of approved books, songs, or forms of entertainment, he is giving us a biblical principle. Whatever we allow to continually fill our minds should be true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and worthy of praise. This principle helps us evaluate everything we allow before our eyes and ears.

[Romans 12:2](#) — “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...”

God calls His people to live differently from the world around them. Rather than allowing culture to shape our thinking and values, we are to allow God's Word to renew our minds and transform our lives. This principle influences every area of Christian living.

[Psalm 101:3](#) — “I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes...”

David understood that what we continually place before our eyes affects our hearts. This principle encourages us to make wise and holy choices concerning the media, entertainment, and influences we allow into our lives.

[\(2\) Applying Biblical Principles](#)

One of the beautiful truths about God's Word is that it is timeless. While the Bible does not specifically mention every modern issue we face today, it gives us principles that guide us in making godly decisions.

For example, the Bible never directly says, “Do not smoke tobacco,” “Do not vape,” or “Do not use marijuana.” Those products did not exist in the same form during biblical times. However, Scripture gives us principles that help us evaluate these choices.

[1 Corinthians 6:19–20](#) — “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

Paul teaches the principle that our bodies [BELONG](#) to God and are to be used for His glory. As faithful followers of Jesus Christ, we should ask ourselves:

- Does this honor God?
- Does this glorify God in my body?
- Does this help me become more like Christ?

These questions help us faithfully apply biblical principles to modern situations the Bible does not specifically name.

Biblical principles require more than simply following rules. They require a [HEART](#) that desires to please God.

As we grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ, study His Word, and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, it teaches us how to faithfully apply His truth to everyday life.

At Angler Church, we believe this simple principle: Biblical commands teach us what God has said. [Biblical principles teach us how to faithfully apply what God has said to everyday life.](#)

That is why discipleship is more than learning information. It is learning to think biblically.

Before we ask, “Can I?” We should first ask, “What biblical principles should guide my decision?” When we learn to ask that question, we begin to grow in wisdom, spiritual maturity, and Christlikeness.

[CREW DISCUSSION](#)

1. [Can you think of a situation where the Bible doesn’t specifically mention something, but biblical principles still helped you make a godly decision?](#)
2. [Why is it important to ask, “What biblical principles should guide my decision?” instead of simply asking, “Can I?”](#)

[III. Ministry Standards — Serving Together in Unity](#)

As we grow in our walk with Jesus Christ, many of us will discover that God is calling us to [SERVE](#) in His Kingdom. The Bible teaches that every believer has a place in the Body of Christ and has been given gifts to serve others. [INSERT](#)

While salvation is available to every believer through faith and obedience to the Gospel, serving in ministry also [carries responsibility.](#)

God has established spiritual leadership within the local church.

1. shepherd His people,
2. protect sound doctrine, and
3. equip believers for the work of the ministry.

As pastors lead the church, they may establish ministry standards that help protect God's people, preserve the testimony of the local church, and strengthen the unity of the Body of Christ.

These standards are not intended to replace Scripture or add to God's Word. Rather, they provide clear expectations for those who serve in ministry so that God's work may be carried out with order, excellence, and unity.

God's Design for Spiritual Leadership — God has always worked through spiritual leadership.

Ephesians 4:11-12 — “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

God gives spiritual leaders to His Church to equip believers, strengthen the Body of Christ, and prepare God's people for ministry. Spiritual leadership exists to

1. serve,
2. teach,
3. protect, and
4. help believers grow into spiritual maturity.

Hebrews 13:17 — “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account...”

Pastors have the responsibility of watching over the spiritual well-being of God's people and will one day give an account to God for their leadership. Likewise, believers are called to respond with honor, trust, and willing submission as they serve together in the Kingdom of God.

III. Ministry Standards in Practice

Most of us understand standards because we experience them every day. Every workplace has expectations.

- A police officer wears a uniform.
- A firefighter follows safety protocols.
- A pilot completes a pre-flight checklist.
- A nurse follows sanitation procedures.

An employer establishes standards, not to make someone's job difficult, but to protect people, maintain excellence, and accomplish the mission of the organization.

Why should we be surprised that God's Church should also have standards for those who serve His Kingdom?

God's desire is not simply for His Church to [APPEAR](#) successful in the eyes of people, but to faithfully accomplish His mission and be [PLEASING](#) in His sight.

Some ministry standards promote excellence. Some create consistency. Some preserve the testimony of the Church.

Some protect the unity of the Body. And some provide spiritual protection.

[\(I\) Spiritual Guardrails](#)

Like guardrails along a mountain road, they are not there to keep us from enjoying the journey—they are there to keep us from dangers we may not always see. Healthy spiritual boundaries [SPIRITUAL BOUNDARIES](#) help keep us on the path God has called us to walk.

[Exodus 19:12–13](#) - "...thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death..."

Before God descended upon Mount Sinai, He instructed Moses to establish boundaries around the mountain. God determined that there should be boundaries, but He entrusted Moses, as the spiritual leader of Israel, with the responsibility of establishing them and communicating them to the people.

These boundaries were not given because God wanted to keep His people away from Him. They were given because He loved His people enough to protect them.

The boundary was not [PUNISHMENT](#). The boundary was protection.

Without those boundaries, the people would have approached God's holy presence in an unholy manner and suffered the consequences. [The boundary preserved life.](#)

In the same way, God has entrusted spiritual leaders with the responsibility of establishing healthy ministry standards within the local church. These standards are not designed to control God's people or keep them from Him. Rather, they serve as spiritual guardrails that help protect God's people, preserve the testimony of His Church, and keep us on the path of spiritual growth, faithful service, and Kingdom effectiveness.

[Biblical unity is not built on everyone agreeing about every issue.](#)

Biblical unity is built on humble hearts that are submitted to Jesus Christ and committed to serving His Kingdom together. Agreement is not the foundation of biblical unity. Submission is.

Submission does not require us to abandon our convictions or stop thinking for ourselves. Rather, it is the willingness to place the mission of God's Kingdom above our personal preferences. Mature disciples understand that they do not have to agree on every non-essential matter to faithfully serve together.

At Angler Church, we don't have to agree on everything to be unified in serving the Kingdom of God.

The issue is not my preference. The issue is not whether I would have done it differently. The issue is not getting my own way.

The issue is my willingness to joyfully serve Jesus Christ, honor spiritual leadership, and place the mission of God's Kingdom above my personal preferences. When we do that, we reflect the heart of Christ, strengthen the unity of His Church, and become faithful servants in His Kingdom.

Crew Notes

1. If God's Word plainly teaches it, we believe it without _____ and obey it.
2. Not every question we face in life is answered by a direct _____ of Scripture.
3. These principles also encourage us to _____ God's Word more deeply, _____ for wisdom, and _____ the guidance of the Holy Ghost.
4. As faithful followers of Jesus Christ, we do not ask only, "Is there a _____?"
5. The Holy Spirit never _____ the Word of God. Instead, He helps us understand it.
6. Paul teaches the principle that our bodies _____ to God and are to be used for His glory.
7. Biblical principles require more than simply following rules. They require a _____ that desires to please God.
8. As we grow in our walk with Jesus Christ, many of us will discover that God is calling us to _____ in His Kingdom.
9. God's desire is not simply for His Church to _____ successful in the eyes of people, but to faithfully accomplish His mission and be _____ in His sight.
10. Healthy spiritual _____ help keep us on the path God has called us to walk.
11. The boundary was not _____. The boundary was protection.

Crew Life Culture

As we've walked through this lesson, you've probably noticed something important. God has not left us to figure out the Christian life on our own. Instead, He has given us a clear framework for spiritual growth.

God speaks through His Word. His commands reveal His truth. God guides us through His Spirit. His Spirit helps us understand His Word, faithfully apply it to everyday life, and empowers us to live according to His will.

God grows us through His Church. He has established spiritual leadership to equip, protect, and prepare His people for faithful service. These three work together.

None replaces the other. None competes with the other. Together, they form a strong biblical foundation for every disciple.

When we submit ourselves to God's Word...Follow the leading of His Spirit...And faithfully serve within His Church...We position ourselves to become everything God has called us to be.

That is the heart of biblical discipleship. That is how faithful followers of Jesus Christ are formed. And that is the culture of CREW LIFE.

CREW DISCUSSION

1. How did the illustration of guardrails help you better understand the purpose of ministry standards?
2. Why do you think healthy organizations—including the Church—need standards for those who serve?
3. How can joyful submission strengthen the unity, testimony, and effectiveness of the local church even when we have different personal preferences?