

Discipleship Level II

Vessels of Honor Growing in Holiness



*Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm,
sealed with the inscription:
"The Lord knows those who are his,"
and "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord
must turn away from wickedness."
In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver,
but also of wood and clay;
some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble.
If a man cleanses himself from the latter,
he will be an instrument of for noble purposes,
made holy,
useful to the Master
and prepared to do any good work.
Flee the evil desires of youth,
and pursue righteousness,
faith, love and peace,
along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."*

(2 Timothy 2:19-22)

Level II
Vessels of Honor
Growing in Holiness

“In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. Flee the evil desires of youth....”

2 Timothy 2:20-21

“Avoid every kind of evil. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and He will do it!”

1 Thessalonians 5:22-24

Overall Goal: *That we would understand and better cooperate with the process of the Spirit’s sanctifying and transforming work in our lives, helping us become more and more like Jesus.*

Introduction: Vessels of Honor

- *The difference between “justification” and “sanctification.”*

Lesson #1 – The Call to Holiness

- **Part #1: The Importance of Holiness: No Playing with God!** *That we would understand the gravity and urgency of the call of holiness to every believer. Using texts from Paul’s letters to the churches, we show the mortal danger of hypocrisy and double-lives for the professing believer.*
- **Part #2: Called to shine! Holiness is Happiness!** *We balance this challenge with the Biblical view of holiness as a joyful state of life for the believer, making us more winsome, humble and tolerant of others. (vs. the legalistic, Pharisaical model).*
- **Part #3: What would Jesus do?** *Here we present Jesus as the ultimate model of holiness, in all the nitty gritty of daily life.*

Lesson #2 – A New Way of Life – Change by the Power of the Spirit



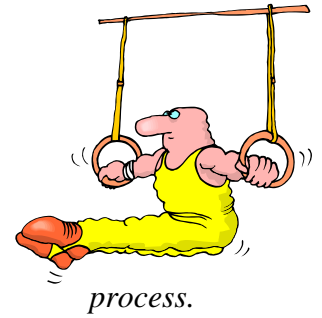
- **Part #1: True change is impossible by human effort.** Here we attempt to prevent a human-effort, legalistic approach to personal change.
- **Part #2: The Spirit – Flesh Struggle.** We explain the context of sin as stemming from the essentially sinful human nature, and the manner of change as only through the empowering work of the Spirit in the life of the believer.
 - Romans 6-8
 - Galatians 5:16-26
- **Part #3: Renouncing the old man and embracing the new.** We engage in a prophetic exercise of renouncing the sinful qualities of our old way of life and prophetically visualizing ourselves as controlled by the Spirit in these particular areas. Colossians 3:1-17; Ephesians 4:17-5:7

Lesson #3 – A New Way of Thinking – The Renewal of the Mind



- **Part #1: The Mind as a Battlefield.** We seek to show the connection between thoughts and actions.
- **Part #2: Mental Strongholds - Lies we Believe and Embrace.** We seek to show examples of how false thought patterns actually become spiritual “inroads” for demonic influence in our lives.
- **Part #3: Deceitful Desires and Sinful Behaviors.** Most sin is the result of desires (concupiscence), which promise what they cannot fulfill. We seek to show the process of how these desires, based on incorrect beliefs, translate into sinful actions and eventually patterns of behavior.
- **Part #4: We can say “no” to deceitful desires!** Here we affirm the power we have in Christ to identify false beliefs and desires that promise what they cannot fulfill, and renounce them!
- **Part #5: How to demolish a stronghold by correcting false beliefs.** Through specific examples we seek to guide the student in the exercise of identifying false beliefs behind some sinful behavior in his life, and then renouncing these beliefs, visualizing a different course of action.

Lesson #4 – Training in Godliness



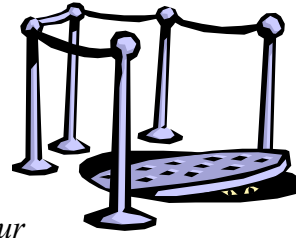
- **The need for discipline.** While holiness is the work of the Spirit and developed in a context of grace, we are not passive in the Paul “beat his body” to “make it his slave.” We must cultivate certain disciplines if we are serious about keeping in step with the Spirit.
- **Human Effort and Divine Power:** We discuss how the two are not mutually contradictory.
- **The importance of mentors, trainers and examples in the Christian life.** We discuss the meaning and importance of mentoring, and seek to help the disciple to identify possible figures of positive influence in his own life.

Lesson #5 – Self Examination



- **The importance of introspection and self awareness,** (without falling into self-absorption!)
- **What does it mean to “walk in the light”?** Based on the call of 1 John 1, we present the concept of transparency and honesty with God, others, and ourselves.
- **The Four quadrants of “light” – or self-awareness. (Adapted from Jihari’s Window)**
 - Our public side
 - Our blind side
 - Our private side
 - Our unknown self
- **Ways of entering into the light**
 - Courageous action instead of procrastination
 - Accepting correction from others
 - Confession to our brothers
 - Revelation of the Holy Spirit
- **How to identify frontier areas of growth**
- **How to make prophetic plans for personal change** – Without encouraging a type of “new year’s resolution” approach, we do seek to help the participant make specific, achievable plans to cooperate with the Spirit in the process of personal change.

Lesson #6 – Overcoming Temptation

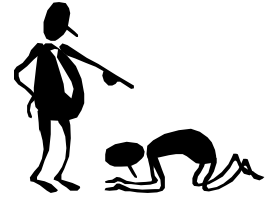


- **Danger Zones:** How to identify “danger zones” in the process of temptation and implement cautionary measures. We all have “triggers” which accompany our besetting sinful behaviors or attitudes. As we identify these contexts for sin, we can go about short-circuiting the process of temptation-desire-sin-bondage.
- **Satanic schemes in temptation.** Looking at various examples of “sins” in the Bible, we seek to become more aware of Satan’s schemes and techniques.
- **Strategies for overcoming** – We suggest concrete ways of cultivating a strong life in the Spirit and dealing with Satan’s lies and overcoming his temptations.

Lesson #7 – Forgiveness - Freedom from Bitterness



- **Why forgive?** We show the Biblical teaching about the grave consequences of harboring resentment and unforgiveness in our hearts.
- **Definitions: What Forgiveness is and is not!** Here we try to clear up the misconceptions one could have about forgiveness and present a realistic, Biblical definition.
- **How to forgive?** We offer a prayer to be used as a guide.



Lesson #8 – Breaking Generational and Spiritual Bondage

- **What is a “Generational Bondage”?** We present the reality that certain besetting sins or problems can and do pass from generation to generation.
- **How does it happen?** How do problems, sins, and even demons pass from one generation to another? We discuss the mechanisms of this transference.
- **How to identify and break generational bondage?** We guide the participant in the process of personal inventory, considering the positive and negative inheritance they carry. We present a prayer to be used as a model for “confessing the sins of the fathers.”



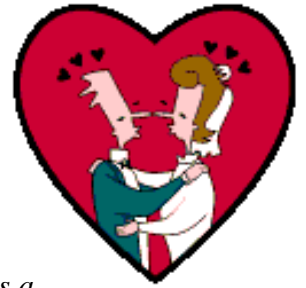
- ***What is “spiritual bondage”?*** We present the reality that Christians often carry demonic influences in their lives.
- ***How do we get contaminated?*** We seek to unmask the ways that involvement in certain activities or attitudes may have allowed demonic contamination in our lives.
- ***How to get free?*** We offer a guide for personal inventory, confession, and renunciation of those practices which have led to our contamination.
- ***Qualifier: We don’t live in paranoia or fear!*** Based on Paul’s willingness to eat meat sacrificed to idols, we seek to prevent a hyper-spiritual paranoia and fear of demonic contamination.



Lesson #9 – A New Way of Speaking

- ***The importance of words as the barometer of our spiritual health and maturity.***
- ***Words of Life*** – encouragement, thanksgiving, praise, counsel wisdom...etc. .
- ***Words of Death*** – Complaining, slander, lies, immorality, gossip...etc.
- ***No “stuffing”*** -- How to express complaints to God and others in appropriate ways. We don’t advocate suffering in silence, but following Biblical models for expressing complaints and concerns to the appropriate people, in appropriate ways.
- ***Silence and Discretion:*** Two disciplines of Spiritual maturity
- ***The role of “positive confession”:*** While we do encourage people to use affirmations of faith and avoid negativity, we do not espouse the need to speak in falsely positive ways in the name of “confessions of faith.” Christians can be honest about difficulties and profess faith at the same time.

Lesson #10 – Sanctified Sexuality



- ***God invented sex!*** We seek to establish a Biblical ethic of sexuality as a good creation of God, meant to be used in accordance with his purpose.
- ***The spirituality of sexuality*** – We seek to show the unique way that a sexual relationship affects the spirituality and emotions of people, for good or evil.
- ***Sexual distortions.*** We clearly define areas of sexual sin, including fornication, homosexuality, pornography...etc.
- ***God's mercy on sexual brokenness.*** Mercy is an important theme in this chapter: That the church is meant to be a place of healing and not condemnation for those that seek restoration.
- ***Biblical counsel for singles*** – holy courtship and friendship. Chastity.
- ***Counsel for Married people*** – *perhaps in complicated situations* (married to an unbeliever...etc.)
- ***Counsel for couples who are co-habiting.***

We can shine as vessels of honor! The Process of Sanctification

Overall Goal: *That we would understand and better cooperate with the process of the Spirit sanctifying and transforming our lives, helping us to become more and more like Jesus in our thoughts, words and actions.*



We are called to be “Vessels of Honor” in God’s kitchen cabinet!

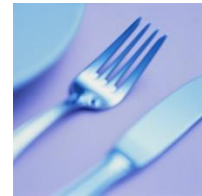


Read 2 Timothy 2:19-22

Think about your own kitchen. Some cabinets have fine china, while others contain paper plates and styrofoam cups. Likewise in the house of God; our internal condition impacts our degree of usefulness in God’s design. In order to become a useful implement in God’s hand, set aside for honorable and sublime purposes, holiness is not optional.

And us? Have we settled for a sub-standard “brand” of Christianity?

- *Do you behave differently when not in church?*
- *Can your family members see the change God has made in your life?*
- *Can your friends and co-workers tell you are a believer?*
- *What do you do with your free time?*
- *Are there difficult habits you can’t seem to kick?*
- *Do you continue to struggle with destructive emotional patterns, such as depression or anxiety?*
- *How do you speak? Do you find yourself complaining often? Do you gossip? Criticize? Bend the truth?*
- *Do negative family patterns repeat themselves in your life?*
- *Do you tend to hold a grudge or seek to “get even” with those who have done you wrong?*
- *Do you live in purity? Are you honoring God with your body?*



***Our Goal: To become more and more like Jesus.
To be “Vessels of honor”!***

What is “Sanctification”?

Definition – *The process of becoming more and more like Jesus in our thoughts, attitudes, actions, and words, through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.*



To be more like Jesus – *in my thoughts.*
To be more like Jesus – *in my daily activities*
To be more like Jesus – *in my attitudes.*
To be more like Jesus – *in my words.*
To be more like Jesus – *at work.*
To be more like Jesus – *at home.*
To be more like Jesus – *in traffic.*
To be more like Jesus – *under pressure.*
To be more like Jesus – *in my relationships*
To be more like Jesus – *when no one is watching!*

To think like Jesus!
To speak like Jesus!
To act like Jesus!

A life-long process! Salvation in its fullness!!

There is a difference between “sanctification” and “justification”!

Justification – **The beginning of salvation!**

Being “justified” means being declared “just” or “innocent” by the Lord as a Sovereign Judge. At the moment we receive Jesus as savior we are forgiven on the basis of his blood, which was shed in our place. Legally, we are reckoned to be “just” or innocent, as if we had never sinned. As such, we are accepted as children of God.

Sanctification – **Transformation!**

The process whereby the believer becomes more and more holy – more and more like Jesus – by the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us.

Example – **The Thief on the cross** (Luke 23:39-43) was justified for believing in Jesus, but did not live to be sanctified by the Spirit’s transformative work in his life.

<i>Justification</i>	<i>Sanctification</i>
1. God declares us “not-guilty”	1. God enables us to stop doing that which made us “guilty” in the first place.
2. We are saved from the punishment of sin	2. We are saved from the power of sin
3. An instantaneous, divine declaration that results in a changed eternity	3. An ongoing process that changes our lifestyle on earth
4. Happens in an instant	4. A life-long process
5. Is the same for all who believe	5. Some grow more than others
6. The work of God, appropriated by faith	6. The work of God, appropriated by faith

Review: Justification

Justification – Being declared “innocent” before a Holy God by our faith in Jesus Christ. We are saved from the legal consequences of our sin.

Review of Level I, Lesson #1 – Salvation

The Question!

If you were to die today, and the Lord were to ask you,

“Why should I let you into my heaven?”

What would your answer be?

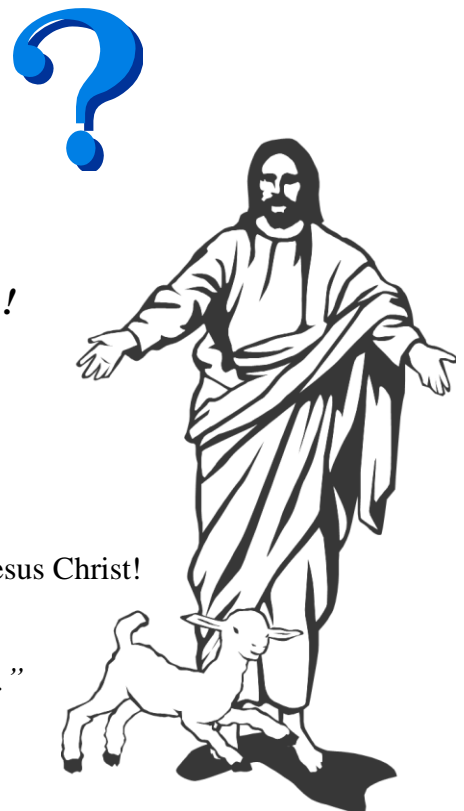
True Christianity: A personal relationship with Jesus!

Not – merely attending church!

- Praying at night
- Being a “good person”
- Being baptized as a child

Being a Christian means enjoying a personal relationship with Jesus Christ!

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”
John 17:3





True Christianity: A New Birth To have New Life – We must be “Born Again”!

Being religious is not enough!! No one is “born” a Christian!

In John 3:1-6 we read a fascinating dialog between the Lord Jesus Christ and a religious leader named Nicodemus. He was a devoutly religious man who expressed sincere interest in Jesus. But Jesus made it very clear that being “good” or “religious” is not sufficient before God!

What does it mean to be “Born Again”?



1. Receive a New Heart!

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” Ezekiel 36:26

2. Experience a spiritual awakening

“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of a human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” John 1:12-13

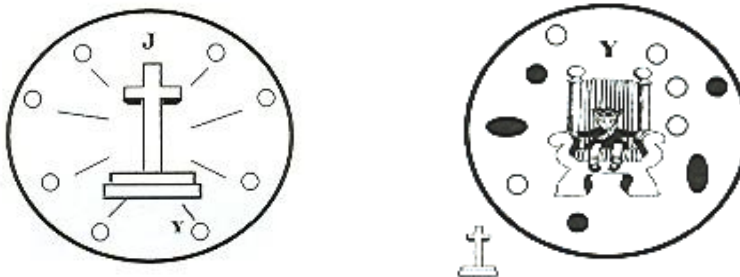
3. Experience a total life-transformation!

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” 2 Corinthians 5:17

True Christianity: A New King!!

Who is truly on the throne of your life?¹

When Jesus is at the core of our lives, all else falls into place. However, when we try to govern our own lives as we see fit, we end up making a mess of things!



Discussion Question: what does it mean, in your opinion, to let Jesus be on the throne of your life instead of yourself?

¹ Material drawn from “The Four Spiritual Laws.” Bill Bright; Campus Crusade for Christ.

Salvation from Sin and Death

We all share the same problem!!

There is a basic problem which all humanity shares, which separates us from God and causes destruction and pain in the world. It is a moral problem. We have all failed before God's moral law which determines the essence of right and wrong in the universe. God is the origin of this moral law, and all people in all nations experience its consequences. Violating this moral law is called "sin."

Man is Sinful

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

Sin, at its heart, is selfishness – putting ourselves first – before God and others.

But I'm such a "nice" person?!!

What do we say to the one who says, "But I'm a good person. I haven't killed anyone or stolen. Why does the Bible say that I'm a "sinner?"

Sin manifests itself in Attitudes, Words and Actions

- Imagine if every word spoken in your life were caught on tape
- Imagine if every action were televised for all to see
- Imagine if every thought were visible on a screen, mounted on your forehead



Who would not be ashamed before others and a perfect God?

Sin has consequences - "We reap what we sow"

How many of us know from personal experience that we suffer the consequences of our actions?

- Broken relationships
- Pain and emotional bitterness
- Loneliness and anguish
- Shame



Sin results in spiritual death

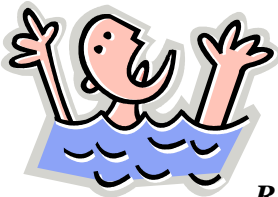
In society, if a person breaks a law, there are legal consequences – judgment and punishment. The moral law is no different. When we break the law of God, we experience separation between God and ourselves. God is a completely holy and just being, and cannot, by nature, be in relationship with people who are contaminated by the stain of sin. As fire and hay cannot coexist, the holy nature of God cannot coexist with sinful humanity. The Bible calls this separation between God and humanity a spiritual "death."

We cannot reach God by our own efforts!

- By being a “good person”
- By doing “nice things”
- By religious activities

We cannot earn our salvation!!

Comparison: It is like trying to swim to Puerto Rico!



Trying to “earn our own salvation” by being a good person or being religious is like trying to swim all the way from Florida to Puerto Rico. Some may swim farther than others, but all end up as “fish food”!

Result: Fear of Death

“For the wages of sin is death...” Romans 6:23

We all need a *Savior* to solve our sin-problem and make us acceptable before a Holy and Perfect God.

God Solves our Problem!

Jesus died in our place! He paid the punishment for our Sin!



*“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this:
While we were still sinners,
Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8*

Jesus is the only way to God

Jesus said, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me.*” John 14:6

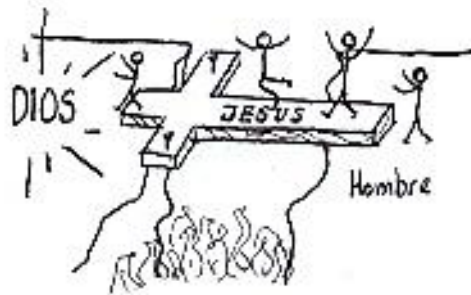




Illustration of the Judge

Imagine that a young man is condemned for committing a certain crime. The judge, being a fair and honest judge, could not overlook this infraction of the law. The punishment required by law is a serious fine - \$100,000. In spite of this young man's being totally repentant for what he had done, he had no money to pay the fine, and stood in danger of being jailed for his failure to pay. Then the judge did something completely unexpected. He removed his judicial robe, came down from his seat of judgment, and stood in the place of the young man, before the court. Taking his checkbook out of his vest pocket, he paid the full amount for the young man. The judge did this because the guilty boy was his own son, and he loved him. Yet it was necessary to condemn the young man and pay the fine in order to fulfill the requirements of the law. Who would not accept that another pay such a penalty in one's place?

That is what our God has done. He is a just judge but at the same time a loving father. As a judge, he sees our sin and says, *"You are guilty. You have sinned against the moral law of the universe and deserve death. But I love you, and therefore, I will pay this punishment in your place."* As a father, he lowered himself, taking off his robe of divine majesty, and became human. He took our place of condemnation and paid for our sins, dying in our place on the cross.²

Jesus conquered death and sin! He rose from the dead!

Wow! Christians believe that...



"Christ died for our sins... was buried, and... rose on the third day... appeared to Peter, and then to the twelve. Afterwards he appeared to more than five hundred..." 1 Corinthians 15:3-6

Jesus is alive! And because of this, we can know him personally! Every other religious leader and philosopher died, but Jesus' tomb is empty! Therefore, he can transmit his life to us. The life of Jesus is contagious! Abundant life!

² Paraphrased and adapted from More than a Carpenter. Josh McDowell.

Our part – Receive Jesus by faith

The Bible promises...

“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” John 1:12



The Bible teaches...

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves – it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one may boast.”
Ephesians 2:8-9*

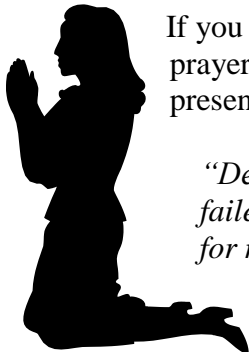
What does it mean to have “faith”? (Illustration of the trapeze artist)



It is important to Receive Christ Publicly (get in the wheelbarrow)

“That if you confess with your mouth ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” Romans 10:9-10

A Personal Invitation



If you want to accept Jesus as Lord, we invite you to repeat the following simple prayer. The exact words are not as important as the attitude of your heart, but we present this prayer as a model to be followed.

“Dear God, thank you that you love me. I admit that I am a sinner and have failed in so many ways. I ask for your forgiveness today. I believe that Jesus died for me on the cross and rose again. I receive Christ as my Lord and Savior. I give you my life today. I want to be your son/daughter, and follow you the rest of my life. Thank you for forgiving my sin. Thank you for entering my life today. Amen.”

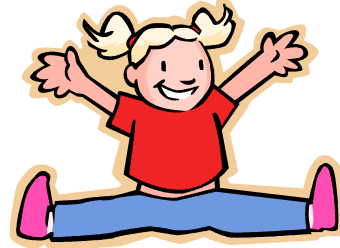
If you have repeated this prayer sincerely, then this verse applies to you, which says...

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” 2 Corinthians 5:17

Congratulations! You have begun a new life today!

In Christ you have...

- New life
- Eternal life
- Forgiveness of Sin
- A Father-Child relationship with God
- A new heart
- A new name written in heaven
- New spiritual perception



Conclusion: The most important answer in any life

If you were to die today, and the Lord were to ask you,

“Why should I let you into my heaven?”

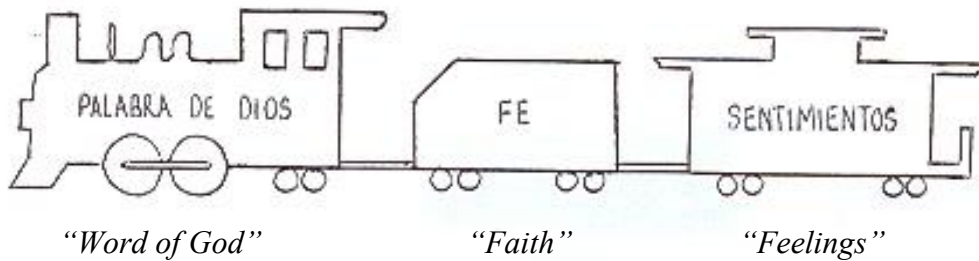
What would your answer be?

Our Answer: *I have done absolutely nothing to deserve salvation. I know I am a sinner. But I have trusted in Jesus to save me. He died and paid the price for my sin. I have received him as my Lord and Savior, and I know I am forgiven because of what he did for me on the cross!*

Some Questions

What happens if I don't feel so different after accepting Christ?

Our faith is based on the promises of the Word of God and not our feelings! We live by faith (trust) in the faithfulness of God and his Word, regardless of how we “feel” on a given day!



The train can operate with or without the caboose. It would be useless to attempt to push a train with the caboose. In the same way, as Christians we do not depend on emotions or feelings, but rather we put our faith in the faithfulness of God and the promises of his word.

Now what? What do I do after accepting Christ?

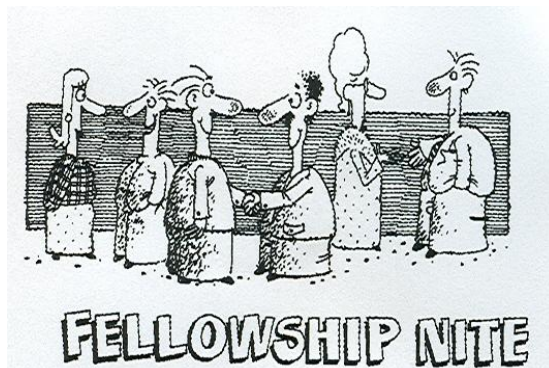
1. Participate in Church!

2. Pray and Read the Bible

- Find a quiet place without interruptions to be alone for a few minutes every day

3. Share what has happened to you!

- You don't have to be an “expert” to share your experiences!
- Friends and family will be curious!



Review Questions

Jesus said, “*I have come that they might have _____, and have it _____.*”

True Christianity is not being religious or merely a “nice person” but rather it is _____.

What does it mean to be “born again”?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What is the problem which we all share? _____.

How do we answer the person who says the following?

“But I’m a nice person. I don’t kill anyone. I’m good to all. Why does the Bible say that I’m a “sinner?”

¿What is the primary result of human sin? _____

_____.

¿What are the mistaken ways that people use to earn their salvation?

1. _____
2. _____

¿How did God solve the human problem? _____

_____.

*“Jesus said, I am the _____, and the _____, and the _____;
No one comes to the Father except through me.” - Juan 14:6*

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this, while we were still sinners...

_____.” Romans 5:8

Summarize the story of the judge and his son _____

_____.

¿What is *our part* in the salvation process? _____
_____.

¿What does it mean to have faith? _____

_____.

Without copying word for word the prayer in the lesson, write your own prayer to accept Jesus and be saved. _____

_____.

*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a _____;
the old has gone, the new has come! - 2 Corinthians 5:17*

If we compare the Christian life to a train, which car represents our “feelings”?

If you were to die today and God were to ask you, “*Why should I allow you to enter my heaven?*” What would you say?

After accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior, what do we do next in order to grow?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____