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This material has been taught many times for new members at Cornerstone Baptist Church by their pastor. It is now available in print for the purpose of helping new Christians or Christians who desire to get grounded in the basics.

If you need help with additional copies, you may contact:

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is exactly what the title says, “Bible Basics.” You may read it and feel it is too shallow, too simple, or too basic. If so, then thank God for the teaching you have received and move on.

This material is based on the word of God, the AV-1611, King James Bible. The author studied the Bible for several years before getting some of these basics. It is his desire to help you earlier in your Christian walk so that your Bible Study will not be as “handicapped” as his was.

We suggest you look up every reference and study each lesson slowly. Even though the material is basic, it is also crucial to future studies. Take time to answer the questions and memorize the verses suggested.

If you are helped by this material, all praise and glory go to the Lord Jesus Christ.

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” Acts 17:11

BIBLE BASICS

NEW MEMBER (CHRISTIAN) ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION: The purpose of this class is to begin preparing you for Christian service. The goal is to teach you what this local church believes and why we believe it. More accurately stated, the goal is to teach you some of the Bible Basics which will help you to better serve your Lord.

Though there needs to be structure to the class, we will try to be flexible and allow time for questions and discussions, particularly at the end of class time.

This material was prepared with "new Christians" in mind, but will probably be helpful to many who have been saved for some time without being taught the "fundamentals of the faith." May God bless you as you seek to grow in your walk with Him.

*** Please read carefully, study, and pray over the following passages: 1Peter 3:15; 2Tim.2:15; Isa.28:9-10; Hebrews 5:12-14; 2Tim. 3:16-17; and Eph.4:11-15

BIBLE BASICS: We will begin our study by looking at some basic and fundamental, yet vital truths from the word of God. Then, Lord willing, we will look at some subjects that may be of special interest to you. You can remember these basics subjects by using each letter in the words **B-I-B-L-E F-A-C-T-S**.

B - Born Again

I - Independence

B - Bible Believing

L - Love for the Brethren

E - Eternal Security

F - Future Events

A - After Salvation

C - Communion

T - Tell the Good News

S - Stewardship

I - BORN AGAIN - The word of God teaches that man is a sinner (Rom.3:23). He is depraved (Rom.3:10-18). His throat, tongue, lips, mouth, feet, ways, and eyes are all evil and of course he has a wicked heart (Jer.17:9). In this, his natural condition, man would spend eternity separated from God in a burning fire called hell (Rom.6:23; Luke 16:19-31; Rev.20:11-15; Rev.21:8). In His infinite mercy, due to man's helpless and hopeless condition, God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die in our place, endure our pain, buy our pardon, and experience our penalty (Rom.5:8; John 3:16; 2Cor.5:21; 1Pe.2:18). It is because of what Jesus did at Calvary that we can be born again.

No one is born again automatically. While God desires for all to be saved (2Pe.3:9), He has chosen to leave our eternal destiny in our hands. God has offered the free gift of eternal life; it is up to each individual to receive the gift (John 1:12; Rom.10:13). Man has a free will. We are given the ability to choose. We can choose to either repent and believe or reject and perish. (See Josh.24:15; Matthew 23:37; John 12:48; among others).

In order to get to heaven, YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN!!! Study the following: John 1:11-13; Jn.3:1-8; 1Pe.1:22-23; 1Pe.2:1-2; 2Cor.5:17; Titus 3:5; and Gal.2:16.

You should pay close attention to John 3:1-8. In verse five, Jesus says you must be born of water and of the Spirit. The “water birth” is referring to your natural birth, which is clear in verse six, where it is explained as being born of the flesh. So it is clear that the first birth is being born of water, and the second birth is being born of the Spirit.

QUESTIONS:

(1) Jer.17:9 teaches that man has a wicked

(2) Luke 16 teaches that lost people spend eternity in a place called _____

(3) Does man have a choice in salvation?

(4) Name one passage that teaches you must be born again. _____

(5) What is the “water” birth of John 3?

(6) Give the reference for “For whosoever shall call upon, the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

(7) Who said, “Ye must be born again”?

(8) Memorize John 3:16

II - INDEPENDENCE - Here, we want to mention two things. First, the independence of the church and then, the independence of the individual Christian.

(A) - Independence of or AUTONOMY of the Local Church. This can not be understood until the local church is defined in contrast to THE church. (Study Eph.5:25-27, 30-32; Col.1:18,24; 1Cor.12:13; and Acts 2:47)

There is no outside coercion of our church. We are self-governing, choosing our own pastor and deacons (1Tim.3:1-12). We are our own governing body with the sole earthly authority being the scriptures. With the Bible as our authority, we understand that the HEAD of our church is Jesus Christ (Col.1:18) and the leader, "under-shepherd, or "overseer" of this local congregation is the pastor (Acts 20:27-28; 1Thess.5:12-13; 1Tim.5:17-18; He.13:7,17; 1Peter 5:1-4).

(B) - Independence of or PRIESTHOOD of the Believer. Let it be understood first and foremost what we DO NOT mean. We do not

mean that Christians should isolate themselves or try to live independent of other believers. Christians need each other and need to fellowship with each other. One of the purposes of the local church is to provide a "setup" whereby God's people can get together and encourage, edify, and exhort one another.

So what do we mean? In the O.T., God's people depended on the priests to offer sacrifices for them, pray for them, and communicate to them the word of God. In other words, priests were like a "middle-man" or mediator between God and His people. However, IT IS NO LONGER THAT WAY!

The Bible says, "For there is one God, and ONE MEDIATOR between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1Tim.2:5). Hebrews 4:14-16 shows us that Jesus Christ did the work of the High Priest at Calvary. By shedding His blood ONCE, and FOR ALL, we can now, as priests (1Pe.2:5), go boldly into the throne room of His grace.

In the O.T., only the High Priest could go into the Holy of Holies (and even then, only once per year); but now, our High Priest, the

Lord Jesus Christ, is always in the Holy of Holies and we can go there THROUGH HIS BLOOD, any time we choose to!!! (see also Matt.27:51).

While we can enter into His presence BOLDLY, we should not go casually or flippantly for we are entering into the presence of the God who demands holiness of all who approach Him (1Pe.1:15-16). Of course, the only way to do this is to approach Him through His Son, the only perfect and holy one in the universe.

It is true that God uses His people to teach one another and He has called pastor-teachers to edify the saints while teaching and preaching the word of God. However, a person who knows Greek and Hebrew, and calls himself a scholar, priest, or theologian, and has a title such as "reverend," "master," "doctor," etc... has no more access to God than a born-again, spirit-filled farmer with an eighth grade education!

QUESTIONS:

(1) What is another word for “autonomy”?

(2) Who is the HEAD of the church?

(3) Who is the overseer in the local church?

(4) Who is the one mediator between God and men and where is the proof passage?

_____ & _____

(5) Does the pope, pastor, priest, or scholar have more access to God than other believers?

(6) Do we need earthly priests in order to get a message to God? _____

(7) We have access to the heavenly “holy of holies” through the _____ of Jesus Christ.

(8) Memorize 1Tim.2:5

III - BIBLE-BELIEVING - Psalm 12:6-7 and 2Tim.3:15-17 - It is at this point we must discuss the EXTREMELY IMPORTANT ISSUE of the WRITTEN WORD OF GOD. Jesus Christ is called the Word of God in the Gospel of John. But the Bible has much to say about the written word of God as well. For one quick example of the importance of the WRITTEN word of God, see 1Jn.5:13.

This local congregation accepts and believes by faith that the word of God is inerrant and infallible IN EVERY WRITTEN WORD! We believe the Bible from Genesis through Revelation is exactly what God wanted to say without error or contradiction. (Ps.19:9; 119:140; and Prov.30:5)

Not only did God write the word of God through the human instrumentation of men, He also promised to preserve His word FOREVER! (Ps.12:6-7; Matt.24:35; and Isa.40:8). The reason we need to understand this issue is because the WORD OF GOD is necessary for:

salvation (1 Pet. 1:23)

spiritual growth (1Pe.2:2)

preaching (2Tim.4:2)

insight (Ps.19:8; 119:105, 130)
victory over sin (Ps.119:9-11)
bearing fruit (Jn.15:1-3)

Our church stands on the above facts and believes God has kept His promise to preserve His word. Today, the preserved word of God in the English language is the KING JAMES BIBLE. We teach this without apology based on a scriptural history of the word of God and faith in the promise of God! (For more details, tapes and other materials are available upon request.)

We will mention a truth worth remembering. Most all new versions of the Bible CLAIM to be written for the purpose of "updating" the King James Bible. They say the King James Bible is archaic and too hard to understand (THEY ARE WRONG!). Because of this false premise, there are now over 100 different English translations. You should know that they do not simply update the King James Bible. They add words, take away words, and even omit entire verses. (Read Deut.4:2; Prov.30:6; and Rev.22:18-19.) THEY ARE A TOOL OF SATAN to bring about a

famine for the word of God (Amos 8:11) and much of the time, the real purpose for the translations is to make money! The KJV of the Bible is the only Bible that is not copyrighted (2Tim.2:9). Other translations are copyrighted and therefore, the translators main interest is something other than spreading the word of God (Ph.3:19 and Titus 3:10-11). [This subject will be covered in greater detail during the New Members Class.]

QUESTIONS:

(1) Name one reason the Bible was written according to 1Jn.5:13.

(2) Has God preserved a perfect Bible?

(3) What is the perfect, preserved Bible in the English language? _____

(4) List two references that teach us not to add or take away from the Bible. _____ &

(5) Name one reference where God promised to preserve His word. _____

(6) Is the text of the King James Bible copyrighted? _____

(7) What is the real purpose behind so many different translations? _____

(8) Memorize Psalm 12:6-7

IV - LOVE FOR THE BRETHREN - So many churches have OVER-EMPHASIZED this point that we want to speak very clearly here. We understand the importance of loving our brother and sister in Christ (Jn.13:35; 15:12; 1Pe.1:22; and 1Jn.4:20). However, that does not mean we are to ignore their sins, heresy, false doctrines, etc... We are to strive to live peaceably with all men (Rom.12:18), but also to understand when there are disagreements over major issues, there should probably be a parting of the ways (Amos 3:3; Rom.16:17).

While the Bible teaches clearly that we should love the brethren, it also teaches clearly that there is a time for separation (1Tim.6:3-5), judgment (John 7:24), and even spiritual discipline (1Cor.5).

In these last days, we are told by liberals and others that we ought to lay aside our differences in order to get along with those who differ with us in doctrine. However, God never tells us to compromise the word of God in order to get along! We can love someone without agreeing with them, but that does not mean we can work side by side with them!

QUESTIONS:

(1) Which passages teaches that if you love God and hate your brother, you are a liar?

(2) Should we ignore false doctrine? _____

(3) What are we to do to those who cause divisions according to Romans 16:17?

(4) Should we ever withdraw from other believers? _____

(5) Should a Christian ever judge? _____

(6) Name one passage which teaches there is a time to practice church discipline.

(7) Does God ever expect us to compromise to get along with others? _____

(8) Memorize John 13:35

V - ETERNAL SECURITY - This particular doctrine has fallen under many different headings:

"Once saved, always saved"

"Perseverance of the Saints"

"Eternal Security"

Perhaps a more accurate title and certainly a more scriptural title would be PRESERVATION OF THE SAINTS." It is God who saves us (Eph.2:8-9; Rom.6:23; Ps.37:39) and because He does the saving, He will also PRESERVE our soul (2Tim.1:12). In other words, we not only trust God to save us, but we also trust him to keep us saved. Believing you can lose your salvation is dangerously close to teaching salvation by "good works."

If you believe your salvations depends on your ability to maintain a certain level of lifestyle, you are simply saying that your salvation depends on you and not God!

Some people believe you can "fall from grace" and use Galatians 5:4 to teach this false doctrine. Galatians 5:4 is talking to people who are trying to be justified by the law, therefore

they are not saved to begin with! When you try to get saved by the law, you are taking yourself out of the realm of “salvation by grace.”

Many people who believe you can lose your salvation go to passages which do appear to contradict our doctrine, **IF YOU DO NOT RIGHTLY DIVIDE THE WORD OF GOD!!!** (2Tim.2:15). We will discuss those passages in the class. They are passages which apply doctrinally to the Tribulation, and not to this age of grace in which we live.

For passages which support and clearly teach security of the believer, study Rom.8:35-39; John 10:25-30; Eph.4:30; John 6:37; John 3:16; 1John 5:13; and then from another angle, we will discuss Matt.7:21-23; 1Cor.3:11-15 and 1Cor.5:1-5. (Notice in 1Cor.3:11-15 that the person being judged is still saved even though some of his works were no good and were burned up. This is a good example of a saved person being saved in spite of bad works!)

Perhaps we should note at this point that Christians will one day be judged at the Judgment seat of Christ. However, this judgment

is not to determine if we are saved or not, but rather to determine our eternal rewards.

TAKE NOTICE! Security of the believer does not mean that a child of God can live like a child of the devil and get away with it! A true child of God will be punished for his sin! You may simply have your heart convicted by the Holy Spirit or if you refuse to get right with God, you may be judged with sickness, suffering, sorrow, along with losing your joy, your assurance, and possibly even your life! (See He.12:6-11; 1Cor.11:29-32; 1Cor.3:16-17; Rev.3:19)

QUESTIONS:

(1) Who is responsible for saving you?

(2) Who is responsible for preserving your soul?

(3) Teaching that you can lose your salvation implies salvation is by _____, which is false doctrine.

(4) When passages “appear” to contradict true doctrine, we must

(5) List two passages which support or teach “security of the believer.”

(6) Does God ever punish His children?

(7) Why are Christians judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ?

(8) Memorize Eph.4:30

VI - Future Events - This will be a bit more difficult subject to cover in detail. For the purpose of this class, we will list the future events here and then discuss with scripture during the class.

Notice in Revelation 1:3 that God promises to bless those who read the book of Revelation. Prophecy is important for many reasons. In particular, it lets you know how things are going to end up! Prophecy also motivates the Christian to keep himself pure (1Jn.3:3). It gives us a sure hope in this wicked world (Titus 2:13).

People who refuse to study prophecy are refusing to study a major portion of the word of God. The Bible is a book of prophecy, therefore every Christian should be interested in prophecy!

Following is a list of the major events of prophecy, in the order they will take place. Details will be given during class. The next big event to occur on God's "calendar" is the rapture of the church!!!

(1)The Rapture - 1Thess.4; 1Cor.15:49-55;
This is when the Lord comes to get the church

and we go up to meet him in the air, leaving the lost behind.

(The Judgment Seat of Christ FOR THE SAVED [Rom.14:10; 1Cor.3:11-15; and 2Cor.5:10] probably takes place at this time, while the lost are going through the Tribulation on the earth.)

(2) The Tribulation - Rev.5-18; Matt.24

(3) The Revelation - Rev.19; Matt.24; Zech.14 (This is at the end of the Tribulation when the Lord comes all the way to the earth, unlike the Rapture, when we go up to meet him in the air.

(4) The Millennium - Rev.20; Isa.11:6-10;

(5) The Battle of Gog and Magog - Rev.20; Ezekiel 38-39

(6) The Great White Throne Judgment - Rev.20 - This is the judgment for the lost and those saved during the Tribulation.

(7) Eternity Begins w\ New Heavens, New Earth, and New Jerusalem (Rev.21-22; 2Pe.3:7-13; Isa.66:22)

There will be much more scripture given during the class. The above are the major events in the order they will occur. We will fill in other events during the class; such things as Armageddon, Marriage of the Lamb; Abomination of Desolation, etc...

This material is for "New Christians" primarily and we must be careful not to get the "meat" before the "milk." However, it is helpful as you study the Bible to know certain "outlines" such as the one above. For example, if you make Matt.24 the rapture, you have some serious problems. If you read the church into Rev.6, you have some equally serious problems. Again and again, we must remind you of the importance to **RIGHTLY DIVIDE THE WORD OF GOD!!!**

QUESTIONS:

(1) Should we study the book of Revelation?

(2) Name one purpose of studying prophecy and give a scripture reference.

(3) What's the next "big event" to take place in the study of prophecy? _____

(4) What are we doing while the Tribulation takes place on the earth? _____

(5) Which event has the Lord coming all the way to the earth? _____

(6) Which judgment is for the lost people?

(7) List one reference for the rapture.

(8) Memorize 1 Thess.4:16

VII - AFTER SALVATION - Water Baptism (Matt.3:16 and Acts 8:36-38)

One of the first steps of obedience for the new Christian is to be baptized. Water baptism IS NOT a part of salvation, but rather is an outward symbol of something that has already taken place, namely: Dying to self, receiving new life in Christ, and thereby raised "from the dead" to walk IN CHRIST.

We want to emphasize the term "Believer's Baptism." Baptism is not for infants nor for unbelievers. Infant baptism is unscriptural! We also emphasize baptism by IMMERSION. As a picture of the believer being "buried with Christ" (Rom.6), the water should completely cover the believer! A man is buried by being completely covered with dirt.

Baptism is one of two ordinances of the N.T. Church, the other being the Lord's Supper. An ordinance is a religious rite ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ. It is important to remember that an ordinance is an outward symbol to be observed in obedience to a divine mandate in the word of God.

Ordinances are NOT sacraments! A sacrament is a means and channel of saving grace. (Some make Baptism and the Lord's Supper a channel of saving grace, which of course is not scriptural!) The ordinances are symbols, not sacraments.

Baptism is a picture, much like the ones in your home. A picture is not the real person, but it makes you think of the real person. Baptism is not the real death, burial, and resurrection, but does picture those events in the life of Christ and in the life of the believer (Rom.6:1-6).

Another example of water baptism could be the wedding ring. The ring doesn't actually seal the marriage, but it does send a message to the world that you are married. Baptism says to those present that you are dying to self (divorcing the law), and that you are resurrected by the Holy Spirit (marrying Jesus Christ). See Romans 7:1-5.

The act of baptism is public and is one of the first steps of obedience for the new Christian. It therefore involves a personal obligation on the part of the believer to promote the cause of Christ as a member of His body, the church.

The “one baptism” of Eph.4:4 is the baptism of the Holy Spirit which puts every true believer in the body of Christ (1Cor.12:13). The Holy Spirit places you in the church, the body of Christ, immediately upon your salvation (Eph.1:13 and Rom.8:9).

QUESTIONS:

(1) Is water baptism essential for salvation?

(2) Should babies be baptized? _____

(3) Is “sprinkling” just as scriptural as immersion? _____

(4) What are the two ordinances of the New Testament church? _____ and _____

(5) Is baptism a sacrament? _____

(6) What is the “one baptism” of Eph.4:4?

(7) Does every true believer have the Holy Spirit? _____

(8) Memorize 1Cor.12:13

VIII - Communion - The Lord's Supper - See 1Cor.10:16 Again, observing the Lord's Supper is a symbolic act representing something that has already taken place, namely: the believer has received Jesus Christ and has been forgiven by trusting in the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

As with Baptism, the Lord's Supper is for believers and has no part in salvation.

Jesus Christ is called the “Bread of life” (John 6:35) and as our High Priest (He.4:14), He shed His own blood as an atonement for our sin (He.9:11-12 and Col.1:14). Without His shed blood, we could not be forgiven no matter how many times we took the Lord’s supper! (He.9:22)

The bread symbolizes the body of our Lord and the juice represents His blood. By partaking of these elements, the partakers are saying publicly that they have received His sacrifice as their salvation and have been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb.(1Cor.11:23-26; Hebrews 10:12). There is no saving power in the elements used during the Lord’s supper. They are not mystically changed into anything other than what they already are - symbols. Pay close

attention to the Lord's comments, which concern the "elements" of the Lord's supper, in John 6:63.

The best "symbol" for the blood of Jesus Christ is grape juice, not any alcoholic beverage! The Lord used fresh grape juice which is evident from comparing scripture with scripture. See Matt.26:29 with Isa.65:8. The best symbol for the body of the Lord is some form of "unleavened bread" (1Cor.5:8).

There is an ongoing debate among many concerning how the Lord's Supper is to be administered as well as who is able to partake. The two primary teachings are called "Open Communion" and "Closed Communion."

Since both terms are foreign to the word of God and are more of a denominational teaching, we prefer to emphasize personal responsibility as it is taught in 1Cor.11:28, "But let a man EXAMINE HIMSELF, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Communion is for believers who have been born again into the family of God. Only God and the individual knows his\her heart and therefore the local

church must be very careful about overstepping their bounds! (It is our personal conviction that any child of God who has trusted Jesus Christ and Him alone for their salvation, is as much a child of God as anyone else. We therefore welcome them to join us in observing the Lord's Supper if they so desire. We do not call this "open communion" but rather being silent where the scripture is silent.)

At the same time, any Christian should respect the teachings of a particular local church and not violate their wishes in this matter. It makes little sense to intentionally go against the teachings of the local church and create bitterness, disunity, and animosity among the brethren. If you strongly disagree with the church and can't worship as you believe, consider another church!

QUESTIONS:

(1) Is the observance of the Lord's Supper essential for salvation? _____

(2) Is it scriptural for unsaved children to partake of the Lord's supper? _____

(3) Do the elements of the Lord's Supper have any saving power? _____

(4) What is the best symbol we can use for the shed blood of Jesus Christ? _____

(5) What is the best symbol for His body?

(6) Give one verse that teaches the necessity of a blood atonement. _____

(7) According to 1Cor.11:28, who is to examine the believer before communion? _____

(8) Memorize Colossians 1:14

IX - Tell the Good News - Baptists and all true Bible Believers are evangelistic in nature. Once a person is saved, he should naturally want to tell others the good news of Jesus Christ's salvation. (See Mark 5:20; Acts 4:20)

Every believer is to be a soul winner (Prov.11:30) and a faithful witness (Acts 1:8) of the Lord Jesus Christ. Scripture teaches us to "go and tell" what God has done for us, but even "common sense" mandates that a child of God will want to share **THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT OF HIS LIFE!**

There are many ways to present the gospel to someone. One of the most popular ways is called the "Roman Road." This method uses verses from the book of Romans, in particular, 3:10; 3:23; 5:8; 6:23; 10:9-10; 10:13. During class time we will discuss how you can mark your Bible so that it will help you in witnessing.

I strongly encourage you to **NEVER** lead someone in a "repeated prayer." If the Holy Spirit of God is dealing with someone about salvation, and that person is serious about being saved, he or she should be able to pray in their own words the best way they know how. It is

certainly right for you to “guide” them through scriptures (Acts 8:31- 35) and try to answer their questions, but allow them to pour their own heart out to God! (Romans 10:9-13)

No matter how you choose to witness, you should always pray and ask God for help and guidance as you try to lead others to Christ. Some have become so "programmed" to a "formula" that they leave no room for the Holy Spirit to lead and instruct. You must strive to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit of God as you try to do ETERNAL AND SPIRITUAL WORK!

When possible, it is normally good to develop rapport with someone before hitting them "cold turkey" with the gospel. However, there are times when you must take advantage of the only opportunity you will ever have with some individuals. Redeem the time!

Do not assume a person is saved just because they "go to church." If they are not 100% certain of where they are going to spend eternity, present them with BIBLE FACTS on salvation and leave the rest to God!

Not everyone will be responsive. If you come across a "hard case" who refuses to listen

and does not want to hear what you have to say, BE COURTEOUS, OFFER A TRACT IF LED TO DO SO, AND GO ON YOUR WAY! (Mark 6:11).

If you have the privilege of leading someone to Christ, be sure to get their name and address and help them get in a local Bible-believing church.

QUESTIONS:

(1) Should a new Christian want to tell others about his or her salvation? _____

(2) According to Prov.11:30, “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is _____.”

(3) Acts 1:8 says ye shall be _____ .

(4) Name one popular way of presenting the gospel to a lost sinner. _____

(5) If a person goes to church on a regular basis, should you assume he is saved?_____

(6) Should you try and force someone to be saved?_____

(7) What is one of the things you should help a new Christian to do?

(8) Memorize Romans 10:13

X - Stewardship - When most people think of stewardship, they immediately think of money. While we will focus on that particular subject, we should at least mention the importance of stewardship in every area of the Christian life.

1Cor.4:1-2 says, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and STEWARDS of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." So we are to be FAITHFUL STEWARDS! In this passage, we are to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God. Most people never think of the word of God when they think of stewardship, and many have even altered the word of God or exchanged the word of God for a lie, not realizing the terrible consequences of being such a poor steward!

Are you a faithful steward of your TIME? TALENTS? BODY? CHILDREN? POSSESSIONS? You see, there are many things that come under this heading, but now we will discuss the most obvious.

When it comes to monetary giving, the clear

standard that is set forth early in the word of God is the "TITHE." The word itself means "tenth" and therefore Bible Believers know their giving is to include a minimum of one tenth of their income. There are various methods of giving and typical questions concerning "how to tithe" which we will discuss during the class. For the written part of this material, our emphasis is that the TITHE is still the scriptural standard for giving, but it is the minimum one should give, and is only a starting point in giving.

Some argue that the tithe was only in effect under the law. However, that is not scripturally true. The tithe was appropriate BEFORE THE LAW (Gen.14:20; 28:22) as well as under the law (Lev.27:30; Mal.3:10). So the standard is set and there is no reason to believe we should do less under grace than those under law!

The reason some argue about the tithe is because they have the wrong attitude about giving to begin with. God is not only interested in the amount given, but the attitude with which it was given, "for God loveth a cheerful

giver" (2Cor.9:7) and "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). When you realize these truths, you will have little trouble accepting the tithe as a beginning point in your giving.

It is important to note the place of giving in the New Testament. The primary place of your giving should be your local church. (See 1Cor.16:1-2 along with Eph.3:21). The church is the body of Christ (Col.1:18, 24) and the local church is the physical representative of Jesus Christ on this earth. It is through the local church that Jesus Christ has chosen to carry out His ministry until His return (Eph.4:11-15). Therefore, when we give through the local church instead of giving directly to someone else, Jesus Christ gets the glory instead of us!

New Testament giving is discussed in 2Cor.8-9 and 1Cor.16 among other places. We will discuss in class the tithe, missions giving, and offerings from these passages. You should grow spiritually to the point of enjoying giving in all three areas and to realize the joy of storing up treasures in heaven!

QUESTIONS:

(1) Other than money, name two things we are go be stewards of. _____

(2) Should a Christian tithe? _____

(3) Should a Christian give more than the tithe?

(4) God is not only interested in the amount given, but the _____ with which it is given.

(5) Other than tithing, what other types of giving should we be involved in? _____

(6) What is the primary place of giving?

(7) What is the purpose of giving through the local church instead of directly to someone?

(8) Memorize 1Cor.4:2