

BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

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A Manual on Church Discipline

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Introduction

As church discipline is vital to the purity of the church, it is also an essential practice for the restoration of a church member who has swerved into sin followed by shame as the result of his or her wrongdoing. Church discipline is a process that a church engages to address sin in the lives of its members only with the desired purpose to restore and reconcile them into the church community and fellowship.

The problem is, it is misunderstood or ignored now and then where the integrity of the church becomes the primal concern over the redemption of the person from the shame and stained reputation.

While the church ought to maintain the values of the faith community and its witness to the world of being set apart, the goal of church discipline is to help individuals turn from their sin and be restored to a right relationship with God and with the church. It is not meant to be punitive, but rather restorative. Thus, it should focus on the redemption of the person from shame, restoration to the fellowship, reconciliation with his or her fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, and training and journeying that will teach and restore the person to the spiritual journey and life of ministry.

Although the principle of the priesthood of believers holds great significance, the importance of maintaining church discipline should not be overlooked. Undoubtedly, the church must uphold the sanctity and privacy of each Christian as they are regarded as royal priests of God.

Even when an individual sins, they are still deserving of the respect and privacy that the church ought to uphold. However, the priesthood of believers is not in contradiction to church discipline as the former pertains to the vertical or direct relationship between the person and God while the latter addresses the horizontal or communal relationship between the individual and other church members, to the person they have wronged and to the community of believers. Through the act of holding one another accountable and providing support in overcoming sin, church members demonstrate their deep care and concern for each other. This practice serves as a powerful example of the grace and forgiveness

exemplified by Christ, fostering growth in spiritual maturity and overall well-being within the community.

Biblical Basis to Church Discipline

Church discipline constitutes a biblical practice intended to aid believers within a local congregation in aligning their lives with God's will. Its purpose lies in addressing and correcting wrongdoing or sin within the church community as God desires for us to leave a life of sin (Jn.8:11), not conforming to the pattern of this world (Rom.12:2) and embracing to live holy and righteous lives for God is holy (1 Pet.1:14-15). The Scripture clearly states that followers of Christ are set apart from the world by being separated unto our God (2 Cor.6:14-18). Consequently, the church must maintain a clear separation from worldly passions and influences.

Within the local church, God has entrusted the elders to oversee its members (Heb.13:17) as part of their responsibility to uphold God's standards of holiness. This authority is not intended to inflict punishment or shame upon the members but rather to restore those who have sinned into a right relationship with God and the church. This is achieved by exemplifying the love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness of God which is based upon the provision of Jesus Christ. Amid Christian communities, everyone encounters difficulties, makes errors, and wrestles with sin. For this reason, Christians are encouraged to confess to one another and pray for one another (Jam.5:16), as well as admonish, encourage, help the weak, demonstrate patience with believers (1 Thess.5:14) build up one another (1 Thess.5:11), and speaking the truth in love (Eph.4:15).

While is true that a sinning member affects the purity and integrity of the church (1 Cor.5:7) yet the immediate dismissal of the individual who sinned does not reflect the forgiveness that everyone has received from God through Christ because we are also commanded to forgive (Matt.18:21-22). Thus, church discipline is a necessity for the church to process the confession, reconciliation, and restoration of the process and Jesus lays out the disciplinary procedure beginning with a one-on-one confrontation

between the sinning member and a fellow church member (Matt.18:15). If necessary, the confrontation may escalate to involve two or three additional witnesses (Matt.18:16), followed by a public confession to the entire congregation (Matt.18:17). Finally, if the sinning member remains unrepentant, the church may resort to excommunication (Matt.18:17) which serves as a drastic measure underscoring the seriousness of sins which defiles the church that should not be tolerated at all (1 Cor.5:1-2) and to deter others from sinning (1 Tim.5:20). However, the excommunication would be the most extreme scenario that Christians desire to avoid for a fellow church member.

Church discipline recognizes that individuals may deviate from the path of righteousness and need assistance to realign their lives with God's desire for righteousness living. Therefore, it is implemented within the church for restoration, carried out in a spirit of gentleness (Gal.6:1), facilitating the ministry of reconciliation to take place (2 Cor.5:18) and the reintegration of a person into the church and its ministry (Phil.18-19).

Preparation of the Church

Before engaging in church discipline, the church needs to have a clear understanding of its biblical responsibility and God-given authority, especially to the leaders in implementing the process of discipline. Church leaders, particularly the Pastor is entrusted to shepherd its members and at the same time church member are to submit to the leadership.

Through this established understanding of God's design for its church, the body will function well, and this includes the practice of discipline. It is also of good advantage when a sinning member has been involved already in discipleship or life group, accountability partners, discipleship leader or mentor that could pray for him and can journey with him in the process of restoration.

In this way, there will be no added difficulties when it comes to establishing the venue for a sinning member to be reconciled and restored. It is important to ensure that disciplinary actions are not

carried out in a random manner grounded in objective facts and evidence provided. After the causes of the discipline have been identified, it's crucial to create a strategy for talking to the implicated person or people about the problem. The nature of the violation, the expectations for the parties involved, and any consequences that will follow the violation should all be clearly described in this plan.

Additionally, it is crucial to make sure that the strategy is successfully conveyed to the relevant parties involved. Pastoral leadership, members of the church's leadership, and other congregation members may fall under this category. These people can offer insightful perspectives and wisdom on the matter at hand, as well as help establish and carry out a disciplinary strategy that works.

Finally, it is critical to handle church punishment with mercy, love, and compassion. While discipline is sometimes required, it should always be done to restore the individuals concerned to a healthy relationship with God and the church community. This may entail forgiving and supporting others in the framework of a loving community.

Creating church discipline process involves careful thinking, preparation, and execution, but done correctly, it may foster the health and unity of the church community.

Preparation of the Penitent and the selected public

Although if planned well, the process should go smooth and controlled by grace and mercy, forgiveness, acceptance, and love from the selected public, there may be times that some emotional expression can go beyond control. This can go both ways, either in the side of the penitent or the selected public.

The pastor or the lead mentor facilitator should provide coaching to the penitent. They must go through a simulation of “expression of disappointments coming from one or two. He should be coached to not react in defense or violence or uncontrolled behavior. He should humble himself in this process. The pastor can provide

some acceptable reactions and coping mechanisms to ease the overloading emotions that may result.

He can also do the same for the selected public. They must simulate control over possibility of “expressions of disappointments.” The pastor may provide some acceptable reactions and coping mechanisms to ease the overloading emotions that may result. If the pastor is incapable of creating coping mechanisms, a professional counsellor may be of help to the pastor on coping mechanism. This is an important piece of control before the uncontrollable happen.

Confession of Sin (Selected-Public)

Confess sin publicly to the appropriate group. If sin is public or has affected the broader church community, it may be appropriate to confess publicly to the appropriate group (such as a small group, ministry team, or entire congregation). The objective wisdom of leadership will dictate this. "Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." - James 5:16

Selective public confession of sin refers to the specific act of publicly confessing a particular sin to a select group of people within a church community. This type of confession is typically done when a sin has had a public impact or has affected a particular group of people, and the individual feels called to confess and seek forgiveness from those affected.

Selective public confession is different from general confession, which is a broader confession of sins that may be shared with a larger group or during a worship service. With selective public confession, the individual is intentionally choosing to confess a specific sin to a specific group of people to seek reconciliation and restoration and prayer for healing.

This type of confession can be a difficult and vulnerable experience, but it can also be a powerful way to bring about healing and restoration. Through this process, the individual is

taking responsibility for her actions, seeking forgiveness, and working towards repairing relationships that have been damaged.

Selective public confession of sin should be done prayerfully and with guidance from trusted pastors or elders. It should be done with humility, honesty, and a desire for repentance, reconciliation, and restoration. The person who is going to confess may suggest the people he/she wants in the meeting for his confession. He trusts that these people care to listen to him, will forgive him and pray for his healing.

The selected people can be communicated privately before the meeting and should receive the confidential agenda. They must be committed to listen, forgive, and to pray for the erring one. They are the appropriate group of people within the church community who have been affected by the sin committed or the mentor and confidant of the person. Christian parents or immediately Christian family may not be a bad idea at all.

This group may vary depending on the nature of the sin and those who have been impacted by it. For example, if the sin was committed against a specific individual or group within the church (such as a church ministry or small group), then confessing to that individual or group may be appropriate. If the sin has had a broader impact on the church community, confessing to the entire congregation may be necessary.

In general, those who are involved in the process of selective public confession of sin in the church are the individual who sinned, those who were directly affected by the sin, and trusted pastors or elders who can provide guidance and support throughout the process.

The goal of this process is to bring about repentance, reconciliation, and restoration within the church community. It is a way to take responsibility for one's actions, seek forgiveness, and work towards repairing relationships that have been damaged.

Protection from Shame

The following suggestions may help to at least alleviate if not remove the possibility of shame.

Keep the process confidential. Confidentiality is crucial in protecting a person from unnecessary shame. Only those individuals who need to be involved in the process should be informed. This means that the details of the person's sin and the disciplinary measures taken should not be shared with others outside of the necessary group.

Show compassion and empathy. It's important to show compassion and empathy towards the person who is being disciplined. Remember that they are human and are likely struggling with feelings of shame and guilt. Offer support and encouragement throughout the process.

Focus on restoration. The goal of church discipline is restoration, not punishment or shame. Keep this in mind and communicate this to the person being disciplined. Let them know that disciplinary measures are being taken to help them grow and change for the better.

Maintain the person's dignity. Treat the person with respect and dignity throughout the process. Avoid shaming them or making them feel less than human. Remember that they are a beloved child of God and treat them accordingly.

Provide opportunities for growth and healing: Offer resources and support to the person being disciplined. This may include counseling, mentorship, or other forms of support. Encourage them to take advantage of these resources to help them grow and heal.

The process of church discipline can be difficult and sensitive. It's important to approach it with compassion, empathy, and a focus on restoration. By taking steps to protect the person from shame, we can help them navigate the process in a way that is healthy and productive.

“I Forgive you”

After the confidential selected-public confession is made those who are in the meeting should express what they feel about the sin but most importantly say “I forgive you,” after all we have been forgiven as well.

This statement brings healing and appropriation of grace and mercy in the process. The person will also receive the grace and mercy of the church.

A statement of forgiveness is powerful in bringing about a range of emotions and feelings in those who receive it. People, receiving forgiveness can feel like a huge weight has been lifted off their shoulders. It can bring a sense of relief, freedom, and peace. When someone is forgiven, it can also foster feelings of gratitude and appreciation toward the person who forgave them.

Forgiveness can also bring a sense of spiritual renewal. It is essential for spiritual growth and that can bring us closer to God or a higher power. It is a transformative experience that brings about a range of positive emotions and feelings.

For the church to give forgiveness to others means to extend grace and mercy to those who have sinned against them. Forgiveness is a central principle in many religious traditions and is often seen as an essential aspect of spiritual growth and healing.

It is demonstrating the love and compassion of God. It is an act of grace that acknowledges the humanity of the person who has sinned and offers them a chance for redemption and reconciliation. By forgiving others, the church is modeling the behavior of Jesus, who forgave even those who crucified him. It is a powerful act of love, grace, and compassion that can bring about healing and reconciliation.

However, it's important to note that forgiveness does not mean excusing or minimizing the harm that has been done. It is possible to forgive someone while also holding them accountable for their actions and working towards repairing the harm that has been caused.

Warning and Commitment to Confidentiality

There is still one very important part in this meeting. The pastor or facilitator should address the selected public to protect the erred member from malicious gossips. He must address the selected public with the thoughts or statements below: He may say,

1. A brother/sister has come to us to confess his sins because he trusts us with his life, privacy, reputation, and human dignity in this lowest moment of his life.
2. We must declare that we don't have the liberty to tell anyone about this private matter.
3. In case you hear a different version of the story told to us today, I give you the right to stop the gossip, by saying "I have heard the truth directly from the person himself, and what you are saying is not true. Please stop this false version. In case you want to know the truth, please go to the person directly and ask personally."

These and similar limits we put around the selected public will protect the erring person from more shame. This will create a safe moral Christian support for him.

The Prayer of admission of sin, sadness, and forgiveness and healing

The leader facilitator should close the meeting in prayer. Here is a suggested prayer.

Dear Forgiving Father,

We come before you with heavy hearts, admitting the ways we have fallen short and sinned against you and others. We feel the weight of our mistakes and the sorrow of our actions.

We ask for your forgiveness and healing touch to bring us wholeness. We pray for the courage to confess our sins, to admit our faults, and to seek forgiveness from those we have wronged.

We ask for your healing power to work in us, to renew our minds and hearts, and to transform us into the people you created us to

be. Help us to extend grace and forgiveness to others as we have received from you.

We pray for anyone who has been hurt by our actions, that you would comfort them and bring them healing. May our admissions of sin and expressions of sorrow lead to reconciliation and restoration of relationships.

We thank you for your mercy and forgiveness, and we pray that you would continue to work in us to bring about wholeness and healing in our lives and the lives of those around us.

In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

Restoration and Reconciliation

The primary Greek word for reconciliation is "*katallage*," derived from the root word "*katallasso*." The word carries the idea of a change in relationship or a restoration of fellowship between parties who were previously at odds or estranged. It signifies a movement from hostility or alienation to peace and harmony. In its essence, reconciliation involves the removal of enmity and the establishment of a renewed relationship. An important passage that sheds light on the exegetical meaning of reconciliation is found in 2 Corinthians 5:18-19: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation."

Reconciliation refers to the restoration of a broken relationship between God and humanity or between individuals. It involves the resolution of conflicts, forgiveness, and the reestablishment of peace and harmony. The foundation of reconciliation is found in God's redemptive work through Jesus Christ, who reconciled us to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). Reconciliation is a central theme in Scripture, highlighting God's desire to restore humanity to

Himself and to reconcile people with one another. It emphasizes forgiveness, grace, and the healing of brokenness.

Restoration, in the context of church discipline, refers to the process of bringing an individual back into a state of spiritual health, maturity, and alignment with God's will. It involves helping the person recognize their sin, repent, and experience renewal and transformation. Restoration seeks to rebuild and strengthen the person's relationship with God and with the church community. It includes addressing the consequences of sin, providing guidance and accountability, and supporting the person's growth in faith. Restoration aims to bring about wholeness, righteousness, and a renewed commitment to living according to God's Word.

The goal of reconciliation and restoration in church discipline can be summarized as follows:

Repentance and Transformation:

The primary goal of reconciliation and restoration in church discipline is to bring about repentance and transformation in the life of the individual involved. The aim is for the person to recognize their sin, turn away from it, and experience a genuine change of heart and behavior. The goal is not to shame or condemn the individual but to lead them to a place of true repentance that results in a transformed life.

Healing and Reconciliation:

Another goal is to bring about healing and reconciliation in broken relationships. Church discipline may involve conflicts and offenses between individuals within the church community. Reconciliation seeks to address these issues, foster forgiveness, and restore healthy relationships. The goal is to rebuild trust, promote love and unity, and create an environment where people can experience reconciliation and restoration with one another.

Spiritual Growth and Restoration:

Reconciliation and restoration aim to facilitate the spiritual growth and restoration of the individual. Through the process of discipline, the person is confronted with the consequences of their actions and

is allowed to seek forgiveness, receive godly counsel, and grow in their relationship with God. The goal is to see the person restored to a place of spiritual health, maturity, and active participation in the life of the church.

Protection of the Church and its Witness:

Another goal of reconciliation and restoration in church discipline is to protect the church and its witness. Unaddressed sin and unrepentant behavior can negatively impact the spiritual health and unity of the entire body. By engaging in the process of discipline and pursuing reconciliation, the church guards its integrity, upholds biblical standards, and preserves its witness to the world.

Reflecting God's Character:

Finally, the goal of reconciliation and restoration in church discipline is to reflect the character of God. God is a God of grace, mercy, forgiveness, and restoration. As the church engages in discipline with a redemptive and loving approach, it demonstrates God's heart for reconciliation and restoration. The goal is to show the world the transforming power of the Gospel and the love of Christ in action.

12 Steps Pathway for the Restoration of a church member

Here is a suggested 12-Step Program Pathway for the restoration of a church member who is undergoing church discipline. This program is supplemented by Bible Study Lessons and workshops to develop life-to-life discipleship.

Step 1: Confession and Repentance

The first step is for the person to confess their sin and repent before God and the church. This should involve acknowledging the specific sin and its impact on others, expressing genuine remorse, and making a commitment to turn away from the sin. Bible Lesson: Psalm 51

Step 2: Understanding the Consequences of Sin

This step is to gain a deeper understanding of the consequences of sin and the importance of living a holy and pure life. Bible Lesson: Romans 6:23, 1 Peter 1:14-16

Step 3: Forgiveness and Grace

The third step is to understand the forgiveness and grace that is available through Jesus Christ and to receive this forgiveness and grace. Bible Lesson: Ephesians 2:8-9, Colossians 1:13-14

Step 4: Restitution and Making Amends

This step is to make restitution and seek to make amends with those who have been impacted by the sin. Bible Lesson: Luke 19:1-10, Matthew 5:23-24

Step 5: Accountability and Support

The fifth step is to seek accountability and support from a trusted spiritual mentor or advisor who can help the person stay on track and avoid future sin. Bible Lesson: Galatians 6:1-2, James 5:16

Step 6: Renewing the Mind

This step is to renew the mind and focus on the things of God, rather than the things of the world. Bible Lesson: Romans 12:2, Philippians 4:8

Step 7: Overcoming Temptation

The seventh step is to learn how to overcome temptation and resist the devil. Bible Lesson: 1 Corinthians 10:13, James 4:7

Step 8: Humility and Servanthood

This step is to cultivate humility and a spirit of servanthood, putting the needs of others before one's own. Bible Lesson: Philippians 2:3-4, Mark 10:42-45

Step 9: Growing in Faith and Knowledge

The ninth step is to continue to grow in faith and knowledge, studying the Bible and seeking to deepen one's relationship with God. Bible Lesson: 2 Peter 3:18, Colossians 1:9-10

Step 10: Practicing Forgiveness

This step is to practice forgiveness towards others and seek to reconcile broken relationships. Bible Lesson: Matthew 6:14-15, Colossians 3:13

Step 11: Sharing the Gospel

The eleventh step is to share the gospel with others and help them to experience the forgiveness and grace that the person has received. Bible Lesson: Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8

Step 12: Living a Life of Obedience and Love

This last step is to live a life of obedience and love, seeking to honor God in all things and love others as Christ has loved us. Bible Lesson: John 14:15, 1 John 4:7-8

Reintegration to the church and ministries

Reintegration is not an immediate process, but it allows ample time for healing, personal growth, and the rebuilding of trust which are essential for a successful reintegration. By reintegrating members who underwent church discipline, the church embodies the redemptive power of Christ, fosters spiritual growth, and establishes a culture of grace and restoration.

The reintegration of a disciplined member is important because it reflects God's heart for restoration, supports spiritual growth, extends grace and forgiveness, builds a culture of restoration, and preserves the unity of the church. It requires patience and understanding from both the individual seeking restoration and the church community.

Depending on the seriousness of the offense and the individual's prior involvement in ministries, a careful reassessment of their roles and responsibilities may be needed. It is important to evaluate their readiness and suitability for specific ministries, taking into consideration their personal development and the potential impact on others as it offers an opportunity for individuals to experience healing, find their place within the community, and continue their journey of faith alongside fellow believers.

Following the 12-step Program is an essential process that leads to the reintegration of a church member. Even after a successful reintegration, continuous discipleship, mentoring, and spiritual

guidance remain because discipleship also helps the disciplined member grow in their faith and understanding of God's Word.

Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of spurring one another on towards love and good deeds, encouraging regular fellowship and accountability. With this, the church can celebrate the progress and milestones of the disciplined member, affirming their growth and expressing joy over their renewed commitment to God and the church.

A Closure Ceremony

It may be appropriate to have a closure of ceremonial prayer or reflection for the reintegration of the person. It will be a time to see how forgiveness and healing affected all. Some general guidelines could be useful.

It may be helpful to have a time of reconciliation, where the individuals who have been disciplined are allowed to publicly express their remorse and seek forgiveness from those they may have hurt. This could be done through a statement or a symbolic gesture, such as washing the feet of those affected.

After the individuals have expressed their remorse and sought forgiveness, it may be appropriate to have a time of restoration, where they are welcomed back into the community and ministry. This could involve a ceremony where they are formally reintegrated or re-ordained in special cases and allowed to publicly commit to living a life of integrity and accountability.

Throughout the ceremony, it is important to emphasize the values of forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration, and to focus on the healing and growth of the community. It may also be helpful to have a time of celebration and fellowship afterward, to further reinforce the message of reconciliation and unity.

Ultimately, the specifics of the ceremony will depend on the context and culture of the community and ministry involved and should be tailored to meet their specific needs and goals.

Have a time of reflection where the individuals who have been disciplined can share their journey, expressing their struggles, what they have learned, and how they have grown through the process. This can help to foster empathy and understanding among the community and ministry and provide a sense of closure for the individuals involved.

Invite a guest speaker or counselor to offer guidance and support for the individuals and community in moving forward. This can be especially helpful in addressing any lingering feelings of hurt, anger, or mistrust, and facilitating the process of healing and reconciliation.

Consider incorporating music, poetry, or other forms of art that speak to the themes of forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration. This can help to create a more emotionally resonant atmosphere and engage individuals on a deeper level.

Conclude the ceremony with a time of commitment, where all members of the community and ministry publicly pledge to uphold the values of integrity, accountability, and grace, and work towards a future of healing and growth.

Conclusion

The Bible teaches that church discipline is necessary for the health and purity of the church, but it is important as well for the life of a member who will go through the disciplinary process. The process of church discipline is an important aspect of many Christian denominations and is rooted in biblical principles. It serves to restore individuals who have strayed from the teachings and values

of the church community. It is rooted in love, guided by biblical principles, and seeks to bring the individual back into fellowship with God and the church. The process is often accompanied by prayer, counseling, and support from church leaders and members who are committed to helping the person grow spiritually and experience reconciliation.

The church consists of individuals who, as forgiven sinners, were formerly alienated from God but have been reconciled through the abundant grace, mercy, and love bestowed upon them. Through this divine intervention, we have received forgiveness and salvation from the wrath of God.

Therefore, we dare not fall into spiritual pride. Spiritual pride occurs when individuals begin to consider themselves as morally superior or elevated above others due to their association with the church or their own perceived righteousness.

However, this attitude contradicts the very essence of the church as a fellowship of forgiven sinners. Church discipline is a challenging practice for the church for it involves time and commitment and is often an emotionally painful process, as it involves confronting and addressing sinful behavior within the church community.

However, it is essential for maintaining the overall health, purity, and spiritual well-being of the church. It helps safeguard the integrity of the church's witness, maintain unity, and prevent the spread of harmful influences that can negatively impact the body of believers. When church discipline is conducted by biblical principles and guidelines, it becomes a means of correction, restoration, reconciliation, and ultimately, reintegration into the church and its ministries.

Prayer

*Our loving and gracious Father, we come before you,
acknowledging your infinite power and abiding presence within
every church.*

We acknowledge that church discipline is a sensitive matter along with an emotional and painful process requiring discernment, righteousness, love, mercy, and grace. We humbly seek Your divine guidance as Your church navigates these challenging situations.

Lord, we understand that the purpose of church discipline is not to be punitive but restorative. Grant Your people the wisdom to discern when discipline is necessary and the courage to address sin in a manner that reflects Your truth and grace.

May our actions be guided by Your Word and the leading of Your Holy Spirit, aligning us with righteousness. Help Your churches approach the discipline process with wisdom and compassion, always seeking the restoration of individuals to a right relationship with You and the church community.

We pray for those who have experienced church discipline, praying for their healing, forgiveness, and restoration in You. Strengthen them to embrace the discipline process and grow in their relationship with You, knowing that Your love and mercy are ever-present.

We also pray for the pastors, leaders, and church members who will be involved in implementing church discipline. Grant them patience, wisdom, and empathy as they carry out this responsibility. May their actions be driven by Your love and a genuine desire for spiritual growth and restoration.

Finally, Lord, we entrust this manual into Your hands. May it be a valuable tool for churches as they navigate the practice of church discipline. May it be used to cultivate a culture of accountability, love, and spiritual growth within the body of Christ.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Bible Lessons and Discussion Guides

We offer the 12-Step Pathway to Restoration and Integration which is a beneficial material to allow the restoration process to take place.

This set of Bible lessons and discussion questions is designed to complete in 12 months with a once-a-week session. The co-journeyer or accountability partner who volunteered to journey with the person will have the sovereignty to improve these suggestions.

The church should select or appoint a committed person to journey with the erred member. He will need to commit to assisting and facilitating a life-to-life discussion of the lessons for up to 12 months to complete the 12 steps pathway, depending on the length of the decision process.

An alternative approach: One can volunteer to journey with the person. He or she must be one of those selected and trusted to whom the erred confessed his sins to.

These lessons correspond to and support the 12-Step Pathway to restoration and integration. Each step is followed by a simple prayer to aid the person to ask the Lord for the change and transformation needed.

Step 1: Confession and Repentance

Psalm 51 is a powerful and timeless Psalm of repentance and forgiveness. It was written by King David after he was confronted by the prophet Nathan for his sin with Bathsheba. This chapter provides valuable insights into the nature of sin, confession, and the mercy of God.

Lesson points that can be drawn from Psalm 51:

1. Acknowledge our sinfulness (Psalm 51:1-6) In the opening verses of this Psalm, David acknowledges his sinfulness and asks for God's mercy and forgiveness. He recognizes that his sin is against God and that he needs cleansing. This lesson point highlights the importance of recognizing our sinfulness and the need for repentance.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to acknowledge our sinfulness?
- What are some ways in which we can confess our sins to God?
- How does the recognition of our sinfulness affect our relationship with God?

2. Seek God's mercy and forgiveness (Psalm 51:1-2, 7-12) David pleads with God to have mercy on him and forgive him of his sins. He recognizes that only God can cleanse him and restore him to the right relationship. This lesson point emphasizes the importance of seeking God's mercy and forgiveness when we sin.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to seek God's mercy and forgiveness?
- What are some hindrances to seeking God's forgiveness?

- How does seeking God's mercy and forgiveness affect our relationship with Him?

3. Repentance involves a change of heart and actions (Psalm 51:10-13). David recognizes that true repentance involves a change of heart and actions. He asks God to create in him a clean heart and renew a right spirit within him. He also vows to teach transgressors God's ways and turn sinners back to God. This lesson point highlights the importance of not only confessing our sins but also making a conscious effort to turn away from them.

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to have a clean heart and a right spirit?
- How can we practically turn away from our sins and turn toward God?
- Why is it important to share God's ways with others?

4. God's forgiveness is abundant and unconditional (Psalm 51:1, 9-12) David pleads with God to have mercy on him and cleanse him from his sins. He recognizes that God's forgiveness is abundant and unconditional. This lesson point emphasizes the mercy and grace of God.

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean that God's forgiveness is abundant and unconditional?
- How does the knowledge of God's mercy and grace affect our relationship with Him?
- How can we extend God's forgiveness and grace to others?

5. Worship and praise God for His mercy and forgiveness (Psalm 51:14-19) David concludes this Psalm by declaring his desire to

offer sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to God. He recognizes that God desires a broken and contrite heart over outward religious acts. This lesson point highlights the importance of worship and praise in response to God's mercy and forgiveness.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to worship and praise God for His mercy and forgiveness?
- What are some ways in which we can express our gratitude to God?
- How can we cultivate a heart of worship and praise? In conclusion, Psalm 51 offers valuable lessons on the nature of sin, confession, and repentance.

A prayer

*Dear God,
I come to you today with a heavy heart, knowing that I have sinned and fallen short of your glory. I confess my wrongdoing and ask for your forgiveness.*

Lord, I acknowledge that I have done things that have hurt others and myself. I have said and done things that were not pleasing to you, and for that, I am truly sorry. I ask for your mercy and grace to wash over me and cleanse me from all unrighteousness.

Help me to turn away from my sins and to walk in the light of your truth. I pray for the strength and courage to resist temptation and to live a life that is pleasing to you. I ask that you guide me on the path of righteousness and help me to follow your will for my life.

Thank you, God, for your unfailing love and forgiveness. I know that through your Son, Jesus Christ, I have redemption and eternal life. May I always remember the sacrifice he made for me and live my life in a way that honors him.

In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.

Step 2: Understanding the Consequences of Sin

Romans 6:23 and 1 Peter 1:14-16 are two important verses that speak to the nature of sin, salvation, and holy living. Together, they offer valuable insights into what it means to live a life that is pleasing to God.

Here are five mini-lesson points that can be drawn from these two verses:

1. The wage of sin is death (Romans 6:23) Romans 6:23 reminds us that the ultimate penalty for sin is death. This includes not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is eternal separation from God. This lesson point highlights the seriousness of sin and the need for salvation.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is sin so serious?
- What are some examples of sin in our lives?
- How does the knowledge of the consequences of sin affect our relationship with God?

2. Salvation is a gift from God (Romans 6:23) Romans 6:23 also reminds us that salvation is a gift from God. We cannot earn our salvation through good works or religious acts. It is only by God's grace that we are saved. This lesson point emphasizes the importance of faith in Jesus Christ as the only way to salvation.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is salvation a gift from God?
- How does the knowledge of salvation being a gift affect the way we view our relationship with God?

- What is the role of faith in receiving salvation?

3. We are called to be holy (1 Peter 1:14-16) 1 Peter 1:14-16 reminds us that we are called to be holy in all we do. This means living a life that is set apart for God and His purposes. It involves both a commitment to avoiding sin and a commitment to pursuing righteousness. This lesson point emphasizes the importance of holy living.

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to be holy?

- What are some ways in which we can pursue holiness in our lives?

- How does holy living reflect our relationship with God?

4. Holiness requires discipline (1 Peter 1:14-16) 1 Peter 1:14-16 also reminds us that holy living requires discipline. We must be intentional about avoiding sin and pursuing righteousness. This involves making difficult choices and sometimes sacrificing our desires for the sake of obedience to God. This lesson point emphasizes the importance of discipline in our spiritual lives.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is discipline important in our spiritual lives?

- What are some examples of disciplines that help us pursue holiness?

- How does discipline affect our relationship with God?

5. Holiness is a process (1 Peter 1:14-16) 1 Peter 1:14-16 reminds us that holiness is a process. It is not something that we achieve overnight, but rather something that we grow into overtime. This

lesson point emphasizes the importance of patience and perseverance in our spiritual lives.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to understand that holiness is a process?
- What are some ways in which we can grow in holiness over time?
- How does the process of holiness reflect our relationship with God?

Practical Applications:

- Identify areas of sin in your life and commit to avoiding them. - Set aside time each day for prayer, Bible study, and spiritual disciplines.
- Surround yourself with a Christian community and accountability.
- Practice forgiveness and extend grace to others.
- Pursue opportunities to serve and love others in the name.

A Prayer

*Dear God,
Holy Lord God and my Heavenly Father, I come before you today to ask for your guidance and wisdom in understanding the consequences of sin. Help me to see the impact that my actions have on myself and others.*

Lord, I know that sin has far-reaching consequences that go beyond the immediate moment. Help me to understand the ripple effects of my choices and actions, and to be mindful of the impact they can have on the world around me.

Forgive me for the times when I have turned away from you and chosen to follow my desires. Help me to remember that sin separates me from you and that it can lead to destruction and pain. Give me a heart that is sensitive to your leading and a mind that is focused on your truth. Help me to resist temptation and to choose what is right, even when it is difficult.

*Thank you, God, for your love and grace. Help me to live my life in a way that reflects your goodness and mercy to those around me.
In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.*

Step 3: Forgiveness and Grace

Ephesians 2:8-10 and Colossians 1:13-14

"Lesson Overview: In this lesson, we'll explore the concepts of grace and redemption as presented in Ephesians 2:8-10 and Colossians 1:13-14. We'll discuss how these passages teach us about God's love and mercy towards us and the implications of this for our lives as Christians.

Lesson Points:

1. Salvation is a gift of God's grace (Ephesians 2:8-9) - In these verses, Paul emphasizes that salvation is not something we can earn or achieve through our efforts but is a gift from God that we receive by faith.

Discussion questions:

-What does it mean to receive salvation as a gift?

-How does this change the way we view our relationship with God?

2. We are saved for good works (Ephesians 2:10) - After emphasizing that salvation is a gift, Paul goes on to say that we are "created in Christ Jesus for good works." In other words, our salvation is not just about being saved from sin and death, but also about being saved for a purpose - to serve and glorify God through our actions.

Discussion questions:

-What are some examples of "good works" that we are called to do as Christians?

-How does the knowledge that we are saved for a purpose change our perspective on our daily lives?

3. We have been transferred into the kingdom of God (Colossians 1:13) - In Colossians 1:13, Paul writes that God "has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son." This means that when we become Christians, we are no longer under the power of sin and death but have been brought into a new realm of life and light.

Discussion questions:

-How does this image of being transferred from one kingdom to another help us understand our new identity as Christians?

-What are some of the implications of being part of God's kingdom rather than of the world?

4. We have been redeemed through Jesus' blood (Colossians 1:14) - In Colossians 1:14, Paul says that in Jesus "we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." This means that through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we have been bought back from our slavery to sin and given a new life of freedom and forgiveness.

Discussion questions:

-What does it mean to be redeemed?

-How does the knowledge that we have been forgiven through Jesus' blood impact our relationship with God and with others?

5. Our salvation is a cause for gratitude and praise (Ephesians 2:8-9, Colossians 1:12) - Both Ephesians 2:8-9 and Colossians 1:12 emphasize the importance of giving thanks to God for our salvation. This is because we recognize that it is not something we could have achieved on our own but is a gift of God's love and mercy.

Discussion questions:

-How can we cultivate an attitude of gratitude for our salvation?

-What are some ways we can express our gratitude to God in our daily lives?

A Prayer

*My Father in heaven,
I know that I have sinned and fallen short of your glory, but I trust
in your love and mercy to forgive me.*

*Lord, help me to forgive others as you have forgiven me. Give me a
heart that is willing to let go of bitterness and resentment, and to
extend grace and kindness to those who have wronged me.*

*Help me to remember that forgiveness is not about excusing the
wrong that has been done, but about releasing the hold that it has
on my heart and allowing your healing to take place.*

*Thank you, God, for your infinite grace and mercy. Help me to
receive the forgiveness that you offer freely and to extend it to
others in my life.*

*May your love shine through me, and may I be a vessel of your
forgiveness and grace to those around me.
In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.*

Step 4: Restitution and Making Amends

Luke 19:1-10 and Matthew 5:23-24 are two important passages that speak to the nature of reconciliation and forgiveness.

Together, they offer valuable insights into what it means to love and serve others.

Here are five mini-lesson points that can be drawn from these two passages:

1. Jesus seeks out the lost (Luke 19:1-10) Luke 19:1-10 tells the story of Zacchaeus, a tax collector who was despised by his fellow Jews. Despite his reputation, Jesus sought him out and showed him love and acceptance. This lesson point emphasizes the importance of seeking out and loving those who are lost and marginalized.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important for us to seek out and love those who are lost and marginalized?
- Who are some people in our own lives who may feel lost or marginalized?
- How can we show love and acceptance to those who are different from us?

2. We must seek reconciliation with others (Matthew 5:23-24) Matthew 5:23-24 reminds us that we must seek reconciliation with others before we can worship God. This means making things right with those we have wronged before we can approach God in prayer. This lesson point emphasizes the importance of seeking reconciliation and forgiveness in our relationships with others.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is reconciliation important in our relationships with others?
- What are some obstacles to seeking reconciliation with others?
- How can we take practical steps to seek reconciliation with those we have wronged?

3. We must be willing to repent (Luke 19:1-10) When Zacchaeus encountered Jesus, he repented of his sins and committed to making things right with those he had wronged. This lesson point emphasizes the importance of repentance in our spiritual lives.

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to repent of our sins?
- Why is repentance important in our relationship with God?
- What are some practical steps we can take to repent of our sins?

4. Forgiveness is essential (Matthew 5:23-24) Matthew 5:23-24 emphasizes the importance of forgiveness in our relationships with others. We cannot worship God if we are holding grudges or refusing to forgive others. This lesson point emphasizes the importance of forgiveness in our spiritual lives.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is forgiveness important in our relationship with God?
- What are some obstacles to forgiveness?
- How can we take practical steps to forgive others who have wronged us?

5. Service is an act of love (Luke 19:1-10) When Zacchaeus encountered Jesus, he committed to giving half of his possessions to the poor and making restitution to those he had wronged. This lesson point emphasizes the importance of service as an act of love. Discussion Questions:

- Why is service an act of love?
- What are some practical ways we can show love to others through service?
- How does service reflect our relationship with God?

Practical Applications:

- Seek out and love those who are lost or marginalized in our communities.
 - Make things right with those we have wronged by seeking reconciliation and forgiveness.
 - Repent of our sins and commit to living a life that is pleasing to God. –
- Forgive those who have wronged us and extend grace and mercy to others.
- Serve others in the name of Jesus, reflecting His love and compassion for all people.

A Prayer

Dear Father,

I come before you today humbled and contrite, knowing that I have sinned and caused harm to others. I ask for your forgiveness and guidance in making amends and restitution.

Lord, I recognize that my actions have consequences and that I have a responsibility to make things right with those I have wronged. Help me to have the humility and courage to take responsibility for my actions, and to seek forgiveness from those whom I have hurt.

Guide me in finding ways to make amends for the wrong that I have done. Help me to listen to the needs of those I have wronged, and to seek to make things right in a way that honors you and promotes healing and reconciliation.

Give me the strength to follow through on my commitments to make amends, even when it is difficult or uncomfortable. And help me to trust in your grace and forgiveness as I seek to make things right.

Thank you, God, for your unending love and grace. Help me to reflect your goodness and mercy to those around me, and to live a life that is pleasing to you. In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.

Step 5: Accountability and Support

Galatians 6:1-2 and James 5:16 provide guidelines for Christian living and how to support one another in our faith journey. In these verses, we are reminded of the importance of bearing one another's burdens and confessing our sins to one another. This lesson will explore these verses in-depth and provide practical applications for our lives.

Lesson Points:

1. Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2) In Galatians 6:2, Paul instructs us to bear one another's burdens. The word "burden" in Greek refers to a heavy load or weight that is difficult to carry alone. As Christians, we are called to support and encourage one another, especially when we are going through difficult times. This can be achieved through prayer, offering practical help, or just being a listening ear.

Discussion Questions

- Why is it important to bear one another's burdens?
- How can we practically support and encourage one another?

Practical application: Identify someone in your church or community who may be struggling with a burden and offer to help them in any way you can.

2. Restore those who have fallen (Galatians 6:1). In Galatians 6:1, Paul instructs us to restore those who have fallen. This refers to helping our brothers and sisters who are struggling with sin or have fallen away from their faith. Our role is not to judge or condemn them, but to lovingly guide them back to the right path.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to restore those who have fallen?
- How can we approach someone who has fallen away from their faith?

Practical application: Think of someone you know who may have fallen away from their faith and reach out to them to see how you can help them.

3. Confess your sins to one another (James 5:16) In James 5:16, we are instructed to confess our sins to one another. This does not mean that we need to confess every sin we commit to everyone we know, but rather, to confess our sins to a trusted Christian friend or mentor who can provide us with support and guidance.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to confess our sins to one another?
- How can we find a trusted Christian friend or mentor to confess our sins to?

Practical application: Identify a trusted Christian friend or mentor and make time to confess your sins to them.

4. Pray for one another (James 5:16) In James 5:16, we are told to pray for one another. When we pray for one another, we are not only asking God to intervene in their lives, but we are also showing our love and support for them.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to pray for one another?
- How can we pray for one another effectively?

Practical application: Identify someone in your church or community who may need prayer and commit to praying for them regularly.

A Prayer

*Dear heavenly Father,
I come before you today seeking accountability and support in my walk with you. I know that I am not meant to walk this journey alone, and I ask for your guidance in finding the right people to support me.*

Lord, I recognize that I am prone to weakness and temptation, and I need others to help keep me accountable and on the right path. Please bring people into my life who will encourage me, challenge me, and hold me accountable in love.

Help me to be open and vulnerable with those around me, and to seek help when I need it. And help me to be a source of encouragement and support to others who are on the same journey.

Thank you for the gift of community and the support of fellow believers. Help me to lean on them when I am weak, and to offer my support to them in their times of need.

And above all, help me to trust in your guidance and love as I seek to live a life that honors you.

In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.

Step 6: Renewing the Mind

Romans 12:2 and Philippians 4:8 guide how we should think and live as Christians. In these verses, we are reminded to renew our minds and focus on things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. This lesson will explore these verses in-depth and provide practical applications for our lives.

Lesson Points:

1. Do not conform to the pattern of this world (Romans 12:2) In Romans 12:2, Paul instructs us not to conform to the pattern of this world. This means that as Christians, we should not live according to the values and standards of the world, but rather, we should live according to God's values and standards.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some ways that the world's values and standards differ from God's values and standards?
- How can we avoid conforming to the pattern of this world?

Practical application: Identify an area in your life where you may be conforming to the pattern of this world and make a conscious effort to align your thoughts and actions with God's values and standards.

2. Renew your mind (Romans 12:2). In Romans 12:2, Paul instructs us to renew our minds. This means that we should continually transform our thinking to align with God's truth and reject the lies and deception of the world.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to renew our minds?
- How can we renew our minds daily?

Practical application: Commit to spending time each day reading and meditating on God's Word to renew your mind.

3. Focus on things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8) In Philippians 4:8, Paul instructs us to focus on things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. This means that we should guard our minds and focus on things that honor God and bring us closer to Him.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to focus on things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy?
- How can we guard our minds and focus on these things?

Practical application: Identify something in your life that is not true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy and make a conscious effort to replace it with something that is.

4. Practice what you have learned (Philippians 4:9) In Philippians 4:9, Paul instructs us to practice what we have learned. This means that we should not only learn God's truth, but we should also apply it to our lives and put it into practice.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important to practice what we have learned?
- How can we apply God's truth to our lives and put it into practice?

Practical application: Identify something you have learned from God's Word and plan to apply it to your life in a practical way.

A Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

I am asking for your help in renewing my mind. I recognize that my thoughts and attitudes can often be negative, critical, or unproductive, and I ask for your help in changing them.

Lord, I ask that you transform my mind with the power of your Holy Spirit. Help me to think more positively, to have a more hopeful outlook, and to focus on the good things in my life.

Please help me to let go of any negative thought patterns or limiting beliefs that are holding me back. Replace them with thoughts that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy.

I know that transformation is a process, and I ask for your patience and guidance as I work to renew my mind. Help me to be disciplined in my thought life, and to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Thank you, Lord, for your love and grace. I trust in your power to transform my mind and to help me become the person you created me to be.

In your name, I pray, Amen.

Step 7: Overcoming Temptation

1 Corinthians 10:13 says: "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." James 4:7 says: "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." These two verses offer powerful insights into how we can overcome temptation and live a life that is pleasing to God.

1. Temptation is universal but not insurmountable.

Explanation: Temptation is something that every person experiences, regardless of their background or circumstances. However, as Christians, we can take comfort in knowing that God is faithful, and He will always provide a way out of temptation.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some common temptations that people face today?
- How has God helped you overcome temptation in your own life?

2. God's faithfulness is the key to resisting temptation.

Explanation: God's faithfulness is what enables us to resist temptation. When we trust in Him and rely on His strength, we can overcome even the strongest temptations.

Discussion Questions:

- How can we cultivate a deeper sense of trust in God's faithfulness in our own lives?
- What are some practical steps we can take to rely more on God's strength than our own?

3. We must be willing to submit to God.

Explanation: Submitting to God is an essential aspect of resisting temptation. When we surrender our will to Him, we open ourselves

up to His power and guidance, which helps us overcome temptation.

Discussion Questions:

- How can we cultivate a mindset of submission to God in our daily lives?

- What are some practical ways we can remind ourselves to surrender our will to His?

4. Resisting temptation requires active resistance.

Explanation: While God provides the strength and guidance, we need to resist temptation, we must also take an active role in resisting it. This means making intentional choices to avoid situations that might lead us into temptation.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some practical steps we can take to actively resist temptation in our daily lives?

- How can we hold ourselves accountable for these choices?

5. The devil is real but powerless against God's strength.

Explanation: James 4:7 reminds us that the devil is real and that he actively seeks to lead us into temptation. However, we can take comfort in knowing that when we resist him and submit to God, he is powerless against God's strength.

Discussion Questions:

- How can we recognize when the devil is tempting us?

- What are some practical ways we can resist him and submit to God's strength?

Practical applications:

Pray for God's strength and guidance in resisting temptation.

Seek accountability from a trusted Christian friend or mentor.

Avoid situations that might lead you into temptation.

Memorize and meditate on 1 Corinthians 10:13 and James 4:7.

Be intentional about submitting to God's will in all areas of your life.

A Prayer

Dear Lord of mercy, my heavenly Father,

I come before you today asking for your help in overcoming temptations. I know that I am weak and prone to sin, but I trust in your strength and grace to help me resist temptation.

Lord, I ask that you give me the wisdom to recognize temptation when it comes, and the strength to resist it. Help me to be vigilant, and to guard my heart and mind against the things that would lead me astray.

Please give me the courage to say no to temptation, even when it is difficult or unpopular. Help me to remember that sin always has consequences, and that obedience to you is always the better choice.

Thank you, God, for your promise that you will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able. Help me to trust in your provision and to rely on your strength to overcome every temptation that comes my way.

I pray that you will help me to walk in freedom and victory. that comes from following you. May I be a witness to others of your power to transform lives and overcome sin

In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.

Step 8: Humility and Servanthood

Lesson Texts: Philippians 2:3-4 and Mark 10:42-45

Lesson Objective: To understand the importance of humility and servanthood in the Christian life, and to encourage practical application of these principles in our daily lives.

Lesson Points:

1. Put others first (Philippians 2:3) In Philippians 2:3, Paul writes, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves." This verse speaks to the importance of putting others first and considering their needs and interests above our own.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think it's important to put others first?
- What are some practical ways we can value others above ourselves?

Practical application:

Challenge students to identify one person in their life who they can intentionally serve and put first this week.

Encourage them to consider the needs and interests of that person and look for ways to bless them.

2. Serve others (Mark 10:43-44) In Mark 10:43-44, Jesus says, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all." This passage emphasizes the importance of serving others, even if it means putting our desires and ambitions aside.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Jesus emphasizes the importance of serving others?

- What are some practical ways we can serve others in our daily lives?

Practical application:

Encourage students to identify one practical way they can serve someone in their community this week. This could be as simple as picking up litter in their neighborhood or volunteering at a local charity.

3. Have a humble attitude (Philippians 2:3-4) Paul writes in Philippians 2:3-4, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your interests but each of you to the interests of the others." This passage emphasizes the importance of having a humble attitude and putting others before ourselves.

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to have a humble attitude?
- How can we cultivate a humble attitude in our daily lives?

Practical application:

Encourage students to practice humility by intentionally seeking out opportunities to serve others and put their needs before their own.

Encourage them to pray for God's help in cultivating a humble heart.

4. Follow Jesus' example (Mark 10:45) In Mark 10:45, Jesus says, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." This verse emphasizes the example that Jesus set for us in his life and ministry, as someone who humbly served others and ultimately gave his life for us.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think it's important for us to follow Jesus' example of servanthood?
- What are some practical ways we can follow Jesus' example in our daily lives?

A Prayer

Dear Father,

Cultivate a spirit of humility and servanthood in me. I know that these are qualities that you value, and I want to reflect them in my life.

Lord, help me to see others as you see them, and to value them above myself. Give me a heart that is willing to serve others, even when it is inconvenient or uncomfortable.

Please help me to let go of my pride and selfishness, and to be open to learning from others. Help me to recognize and appreciate the gifts and talents of those around me, and to support and encourage them in their journeys.

May my life reflect your love and grace, and may I be a servant to others as you were a servant to us. Help me to follow your example of humility and servanthood, and to seek to make a difference in the lives of those around me.

Thank you, God, for your love and grace. Help me to walk in humility and servanthood, and to glorify you in all that I do.

In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.

Step 9: Growing in Faith and Knowledge

Lesson Title: Growing in our Faith.

Lesson Texts: 2 Peter 3:18 and Colossians 1:9-10

Lesson Objective: To understand the importance of growing in our faith and to encourage the practical application of the principles found in these passages in our daily lives.

Lesson Points:

1. Grow in knowledge (Colossians 1:9) In Colossians 1:9, Paul writes, "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives." This verse speaks to the importance of growing in knowledge and understanding of God's will.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important for us to grow in knowledge and understanding of God's will?
- How can we seek to grow in knowledge and understanding of God's will?

Practical application: Encourage students to spend time in prayer and Bible study, asking God to give them wisdom and understanding as they seek to grow in the knowledge of his will.

2. Live a life worthy of the Lord (Colossians 1:10). In Colossians 1:10, Paul writes, "so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God." This verse emphasizes the importance of living a life that is pleasing to God and bearing fruit in every good work.

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to live a life worthy of the Lord?

- How can we bear fruit in every good work?

Practical application:

Encourage students to identify one area of their life where they can seek to live more fully for the Lord and to take practical steps to bear fruit in that area.

3. Be diligent in our faith (2 Peter 3:18). In 2 Peter 3:18, Peter writes, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen." This verse speaks to the importance of being diligent in our faith and seeking to grow in grace and knowledge.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important for us to be diligent in our faith?
- How can we seek to grow in grace and knowledge?

Practical application: Encourage students to make a commitment to daily Bible study and prayer, and to seek out opportunities to learn from other believers and grow in their faith.

4. Seek God's wisdom and understanding (Colossians 1:9). In Colossians 1:9, Paul writes, "We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives." This verse emphasizes the importance of seeking God's wisdom and understanding as we seek to grow in our faith.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important for us to seek God's wisdom and understanding as we grow in our faith?
- How can we seek God's wisdom and understanding in our daily lives?

Practical application: Encourage students to spend time in prayer, asking God to give them wisdom and understanding as they seek to grow in their faith.

A Prayer

Dear Father, who is in heaven,

Help in growing in faith and knowledge. I want to deepen my relationship with you and to understand your ways more fully.

Lord, I ask that you give me a hunger for your Word and a thirst for your presence. Help me to make time for prayer, Bible study, and worship, and to seek your guidance and wisdom in all things.

Please open my mind and heart to receive the truth of your Word, and to apply it to my life in practical ways. Help me to grow in the knowledge of who you are and what you have done for me.

May my faith be strengthened, and may I be a witness to others of your love and grace. Help me to live a life that is pleasing to you, and to seek to bring glory to your name in all that I do.

Thank you, God, for your infinite wisdom and grace. Help me to grow in faith and knowledge, and to trust in your guidance and provision for my life.

In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.

Step 10: Practicing Forgiveness

Lesson Title: Forgiveness and Love

Lesson Texts: Matthew 6:14-15 and Colossians 3:13

Lesson Objective: To understand the importance of forgiveness and love in the Christian life, and to encourage practical application of these principles in our daily lives.

Lesson Points: 1. Forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15) In Matthew 6:14-15, Jesus says, "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." This passage speaks to the importance of forgiving others as we seek forgiveness from God.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important for us to forgive others?
- What are some practical challenges to forgiving others?

Practical application: Encourage students to identify one person in their life who they need to forgive, and to take practical steps to extend forgiveness to that person.

2. Bear with one another (Colossians 3:13) In Colossians 3:13, Paul writes, "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." This verse emphasizes the importance of bearing with one another and forgiving one another, just as the Lord forgave us.

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to "bear with one another"?
- How can we extend forgiveness to others, even when it's difficult? Practical application: Encourage students to intentionally seek out opportunities to extend grace and forgiveness to those who have wronged them.

3. Seek reconciliation (Matthew 6:14-15) In Matthew 6:14-15, Jesus speaks to the importance of seeking reconciliation with others as we seek forgiveness from God.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important for us to seek reconciliation with others?
- What are some practical challenges to seeking reconciliation with others?

Practical application: Encourage students to identify one broken relationship in their life and to take practical steps towards reconciliation, such as reaching out to the other person to apologize and seek forgiveness.

4. Love one another (Colossians 3:13) In Colossians 3:13, Paul emphasizes the importance of love in our relationships with others.

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to love one another?
- How can we cultivate a spirit of love in our relationships with others?

Practical application: Encourage students to intentionally seek out opportunities to show love to others, whether through acts of kindness or words of encouragement.

5. Let go of bitterness (Colossians 3:13) In Colossians 3:13, Paul writes, "Forgive as the Lord forgave you." This verse speaks to the importance of letting go of bitterness and resentment towards others.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it important for us to let go of bitterness towards others?
- What are some practical challenges to letting go of bitterness?

Practical application:

Encourage students to identify any areas of bitterness or resentment in their life, and to take practical steps towards forgiveness and reconciliation.

Encourage them to pray for God's help in letting go of bitterness and extending forgiveness to others.

A Prayer

*Dear Lord of mercy and grace,
I come before you today asking for your help in practicing forgiveness. I know that forgiveness is a key part of living a life that reflects your love and grace, but it can be difficult at times.*

Lord, I ask that you give me the strength and wisdom to forgive those who have wronged me. Help me to let go of bitterness, resentment, and anger, and to extend grace and kindness to those who have hurt me.

Please help me to remember that forgiveness is not about excusing the wrong that has been done, but about releasing the hold that it has on my heart and allowing your healing to take place.

May I be a living example of your love and grace and may my forgiveness of others be a testimony to your power to transform lives.

Thank you, God, for your infinite love and mercy. Help me to reflect your goodness and forgiveness to those around me, and to live a life that is pleasing to you.

In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.

Step 11: Sharing the Gospel (personal testimony of the Gospel of forgiveness and church)

Lesson Title: The Great Commission

Bible Verses: Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8

Introduction: Jesus gave his disciples a command to go and make disciples of all nations. This command is popularly known as the Great Commission. The Great Commission is not only for the disciples but also for every believer. As we study Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8, we will learn what the Great Commission means, its significance, and how we can apply it in our lives.

Lesson Points:

1. The Authority of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18) Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. This means that He has power over everything, and nothing is beyond His control. His authority is not limited to a specific region or nation, but it extends to every corner of the world. By acknowledging Jesus' authority, we recognize that He is Lord over our lives, and we submit to His will.

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean for Jesus to have all authority in heaven and on earth? - How does acknowledging Jesus' authority impact our daily lives?
- What are some practical ways we can submit to Jesus' authority?

2. The Command to Make Disciples (Matthew 28:19) Jesus commanded His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations. Making disciples involves sharing the gospel, teaching new believers, and helping them grow in their faith. The Great Commission is not just about converting people; it's about making disciples who will follow Jesus for a lifetime.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is making disciples important?

- How can we effectively share the gospel with others?
- What are some practical ways we can disciple new believers?

3. The Promise of Jesus' Presence (Matthew 28:20) Jesus promised to be with His disciples always, even to the end of the age. This promise is not just for the disciples but for every believer. Jesus' presence gives us comfort, guidance, and strength as we fulfill the Great Commission.

Discussion Questions:

- How does Jesus' presence impact our ability to fulfill the Great Commission?
- How can we experience the presence of Jesus in our daily lives?
- What are some practical ways we can rely on Jesus' presence as we make disciples?

4. The Power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) Before Jesus' ascension, He told His disciples that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them. This power would enable them to be witnesses for Jesus in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. The Holy Spirit is essential for fulfilling the Great Commission because He empowers us to share the gospel boldly and effectively.

Discussion Questions:

- How does the Holy Spirit empower us to fulfill the Great Commission?
- How can we receive the power of the Holy Spirit?
- What are some practical ways we can rely on the Holy Spirit's power as we make disciples?

5. The Scope of the Great Commission (Acts 1:8) The Great Commission is not limited to a specific region or nation. Jesus commanded His disciples to make disciples of all nations. This means that the Great Commission is a global mission that involves

reaching people from different cultures, languages, and backgrounds.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it essential to reach people from different nations and cultures?
- How can we effectively reach people from different nations and cultures?
- What are some practical ways we can support missions and evangelism?

A Prayer

*Father in Heaven,
Help me in sharing the gospel through my testimony and the church's graces. I want to be a faithful witness to your love and grace and to share the good news of Jesus Christ with those around me.*

Lord, I ask that you help me to be bold and courageous in sharing my story of how you have worked in my life. Help me to be transparent and vulnerable, and to share both my successes and my struggles, so that others may see your transforming power at work in me.

Please help me to use the gifts and graces that you have given me to serve others and to build up your church. May I be a living example of your love and grace, and may others be drawn to you through my words and actions.

May the church be a community of grace and love, where all are welcome, and all are valued. Help us to live out our faith in practical ways, and to be a light to those around us.

*Thank you, God, for your love and grace. Help me to share it with others, and to bring glory to your name in all that I do.
In Jesus' name, I pray, Amen.*

Step 12: Living a Life of Obedience and Love

Bible Verses: John 14:15 and 1 John 4:7-8

Introduction: Jesus commands us to love Him and keep His commandments. Love and obedience are interconnected, and we cannot have one without the other. In 1 John 4:7-8, we learn that God is love, and those who love know God. As we study John 14:15 and 1 John 4:7-8, we will learn what it means to love God, how love and obedience are related, and how we can apply these principles in our lives.

Lesson Points:

1. Love is a Commandment (John 14:15) Jesus commands us to love Him and keep His commandments. Love is not just a feeling or an emotion; it is an action that requires obedience. Loving God means obeying His commands and living according to His will.

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean to love God?
- How can we show our love for God through obedience?
- What are some practical ways we can obey God's commandments?

2. God is Love (1 John 4:7-8) God's character is love, and He demonstrated His love by sending His Son to die for us. Knowing God means knowing His love and experiencing His love in our lives. God's love is unconditional, sacrificial, and transformative.

Discussion Questions:

- How does knowing God's love impact our lives?
- How can we experience God's love in our daily lives?
- What are some practical ways we can demonstrate God's love to others?

3. Love and Obedience are Connected (1 John 4:7-8). Those who love know God, and those who know God obey His commands. Love and obedience are two sides of the same coin. We cannot say we love God but refuse to obey Him.

Discussion Questions:

- How does obedience demonstrate our love for God?
- Why is it impossible to love God without obeying Him?
- What are some practical ways we can cultivate obedience in our lives?

4. Love Casts Out Fear (1 John 4:18). When we experience God's love, we no longer have to fear judgment or punishment. God's perfect love casts out all fear, and it gives us the confidence to approach Him with boldness.

Discussion Questions:

- How does love to cast out fear?
- Why is it important to overcome fear in our relationship with God?
- What are some practical ways we can overcome fear with love?

5. Love is a Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) Love is not something we can manufacture on our own. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, and it flows from our relationship with God. As we abide in Christ and allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, we will bear the fruit of love. Discussion Questions:

- How can we cultivate the fruit of love in our lives?
- What are some practical ways we can abide in Christ and allow the Holy Spirit to work in us?
- What are some ways we can recognize the fruit of love in others?

Practical Applications:

- Make a conscious effort to obey God's commands out of love for Him.
- Reflect on God's love and how it has impacted your life.
- Seek ways to demonstrate God's love to those around you.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you in bearing this fruit.

A Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

I come before you today asking for your help in living a life of obedience and love. I want to follow your commands and to love others as you have loved me.

Lord, help me to be obedient to your will and to trust in your guidance for my life. Help me to seek your kingdom above all else, and to live a life that is pleasing to you.

Please help me to love others as you have loved me, with a love that is sacrificial and unconditional. Help me to be patient, kind, and gentle, and to treat others with the respect and dignity that they deserve.

May my life reflect your love and grace, and may others be drawn to you through my words and actions. Help me to be a witness to your goodness and faithfulness, and to share the good news of Jesus Christ with those around me.

Thank you, God, for your love and grace. Help me to live a life of obedience and love, and to bring glory to your name in all that I do. In your name, I pray, Amen.

Baptist Theological Colle

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Theodore Fontabla

A Manual on Church Discipline



This booklet serves for churches seeking to understand and implement effective and restorative practices of church discipline. It provides an overview of the biblical foundations, purpose, processes, and step by step program of doing church discipline. It emphasizes the significance of restoration and reconciliation as the main objectives of church discipline, aiming to help church members turn away from their sins and be reconciled within the loving community of believers.