



Improving Homes & Lives

New Member's Handbook

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General Church Information

Church address: 400 East Palmer Street Compton, CA. 90221

Telephone: (424) 785-8823

Corporate Prayer Line: (605) 475-5900 Access Code: 5827019#

Website: www.crossingministry.com

Join us on Facebook @ Crossing Ministries

Subscribe to our You Tube Channel: Crossing Ministries, Compton CA

Appointments: For counseling appointments, baby dedications, funeral services, church facility usage, spiritual guidance, hospital visits, any comments, concerns, or other needs, please feel free to contact the administrative offices.

Pastors: Bishop Kendall Davis, Pastor Makisha Davis

Affiliation: United Christian Communion

Schedule of Services

Sundays

8:30am – Discipleship Class

8:30am – New Members Class beginning 2nd Sunday of even numbered months (Feb-Apr-Jun-Aug-Oct-Dec)

9:30am – Worship Service

3:30pm – First Sundays Communion Services

Tuesdays

5:30pm – Corporate Prayer (in Sanctuary)

7:00pm – Bible Study

Thursdays

6:30pm – School of Ministry

Fridays

7:00pm – Power of Worship (Praise Team) Rehearsal

7:00pm – Ladies in Waiting (Singles – Third Friday)

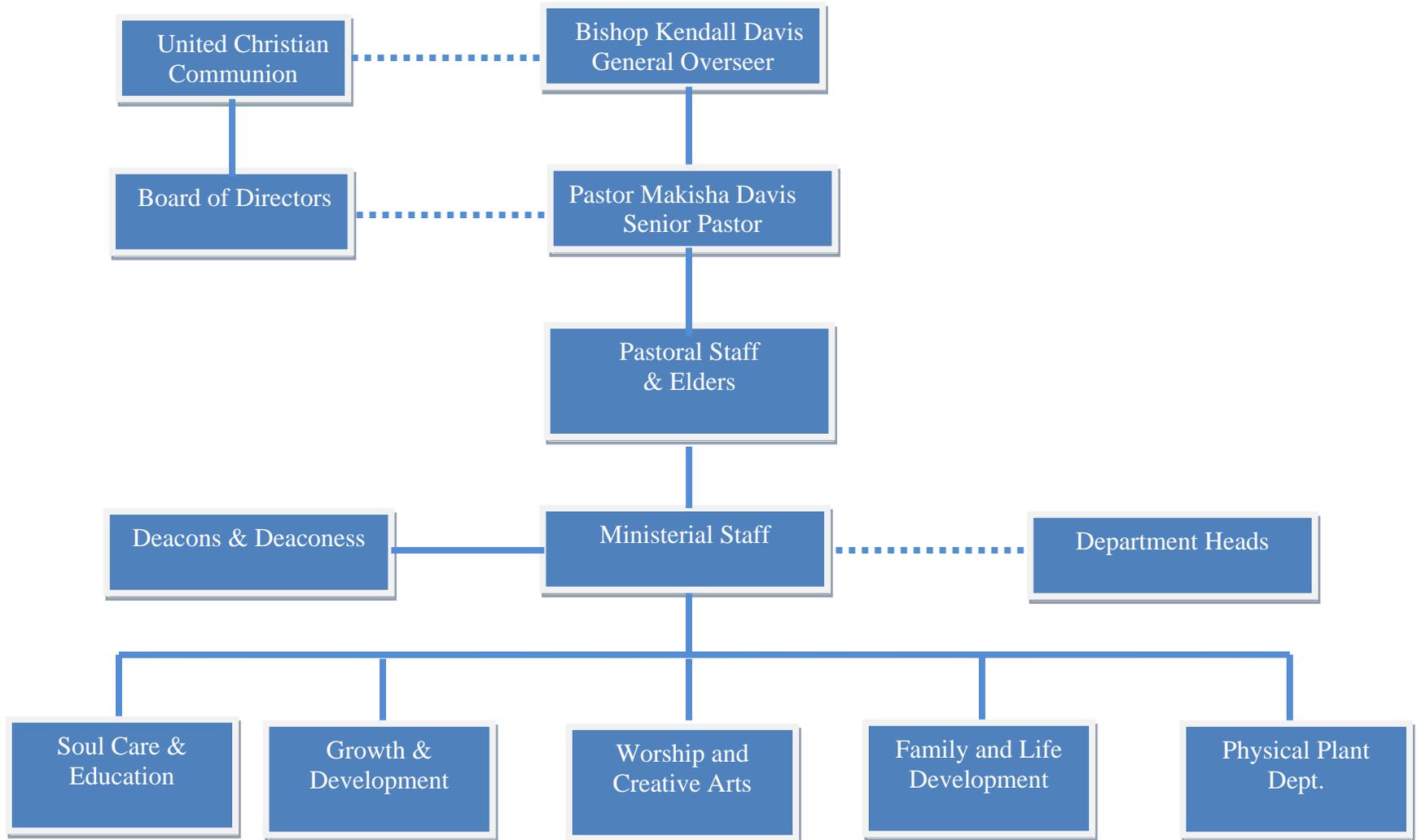
Saturday

7:00am – Intercessors Prayer Line

5:30pm – Daughters of His Majesty (Women's Ministry – First Saturday)

5:30pm – Kings Table (Men's Ministry – Third Saturday)

Our Leadership Structure



Our Ministries

Kids4Christ focuses on bringing our children closer to Jesus Christ. Their goal is to create children of faith who will stand firm in their generation, children of righteousness who will show the character of Christ and children of destiny who know they are sons and daughters of our great king.

Daughter's of His Majesty is a ministry for the total woman. Touching every aspect of womanhood in order to see Christ formed within His Daughters. DOHM is committed to operating and functioning as a teaching fellowship for all daughters seeing them become daughters of deliverance, dignity and destiny

The Kings Table is a place where men of significance gather in praise, worship and testimonies of triumph. The Kings Table's focus is on dealing with real issue that cannot be dealt with outside of the confines of safety and encouragement.

Becoming One consist of teams of marriage advocates are here to assist you with relationship issues. They host regular marriage growth seminars, provide spiritual guidance for troubled relationships and pre-marital sessions for those seeking to get married.

Incense of Prayer similar to how the priest would burn incense on the altar in the temple representing the prayer of the people. The Incense of Prayer has a burning desire to come before the Lord in His house of prayer. They serve as intercessors for those in need, prayer partners for those needing someone to touch and agree and encourage practical action after we pray.

The C.A.R.E Team are not just ushers. For us CARE stands for Creating A Reverent Environment. They are the front line prayer warriors interceding as people enter the church. They make sure that there are no disturbances or distractions that would hinder the worship experience and a friendly guide to help the flow of service.

Power of Worship leads us in the praise and worship of our God. They stand before God ministering as we participate in corporate worship that pleases God.

The Sound of the Gospel Media Ministry is dedicated to enhancement of the hearing of the Gospel. Members participate in the worship services by controlling sound, recording services for broadcast and video. CDs are \$5/each. Sermon series and bulk orders are sold at a discounted rate

Cross-View Video Ministry record services for live-streaming and sharing. Cross-view is an integral part of the mission of Crossing to get the word out of the four walls of the church to a place where it can bear fruit all over the world.

From our Pastors'

We thank you for making the Crossing Connection. It is our desire that your time with us be fruitful. We believe that ministry is a living encounter with God and invite you to experience church God's way. At Crossing there are many opportunities to connect. We welcome you to explore all that Crossing has to offer. Our exciting ministry events will edify as well as encourage you.

We are a growing church holding to traditional values with a contemporary flair. We are just friendly people who love God and you. We are more than a church. We are a family comprised of all nations worshipping God before His throne. Crossing is a place that you can call "HOME". If you have questions, feel free to ask our staff. We will meet with you, talk to you, pray for you and share the love God has for you.

At Crossing we are "*Improving Homes and Lives*" one person at a time. It is our Mission that wherever you may be in your walk with Christ that you move forward crossing to the next level. We want to see God transformed your life and see you become all that He wants you to be. We exist to minister to your destiny and see you maximize your God given potential in His kingdom. We are confident you are going to love your time here and that the Lord will speak to you while you are with us.

We invite you to take a deeper look at Crossing. There are several ministries available to meet your needs. As you explore Crossing you will find a treasure trove of love, acceptance and the peace of God. We challenge you to make the Crossing Connection and discover a place for you

With Love, Blessing and Favor

Bishop Kendall and Pastor Makisha Davis

Being a Member

Being a church member means you have first joined the body of Christ by believing the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Without Jesus church isn't anything more than a social club. Secondly you have elected to join in with our congregation and function in unity with us and the greater body of Christ. Many have opted to lean on their own understanding and operating independently which sadly makes us nonfunctional parts of the body of Christ. While praying for unity in the body of Christ some separate themselves and do things their own way. This is not the Fathers will for His church. We are confident of greater things for you.

Is Membership Important

Yes, you bet it is. Membership means being connected. You are connected by entering a covenant relationship with the church. As you get to know others within the church you should have a deepening sense of belonging. You are here for a reason. You have been strategically placed here by God as it says in 1 Corinthians 12:18 *“But now God has set the members, each one of them in the body, according as it has pleased him”*. We believe God is pleased with your choice, and will work to see His purpose fulfilled in your life and that of any family and loved ones who may have joined with you.

Now that you are here it is important that you get involved. You are more than just a member; you are now our family. Some place their feet in the water a little at a time slowly waiting for the temperature to adjust to before fully getting in. However jumping straight in is the best way to get to know your new family. Attending Sunday service, bible study and the different fellowships that we offer gives you the opportunity to do just that. We look forward to being your church for a long time.

CROSSING NEW MEMBERS HANDBOOK

My Responsibilities as a Member

1. Attend service regularly – The scriptures inform us this is first so that we can stir up love and good works in each other (Hebrews 10:24-25), Secondly so we can be equipped for our individual purpose, build unity & and grow spiritually (Ephesians 4:11-13). The basic minimum for every believer in both the Old and New Testaments was to attend service at least weekly (Exodus 20:8-10 & Acts 20:7), however the more you attend the greater opportunity for growth.
2. Support the testimony of the church serving with others. You can receive salvation without coming into the church. However you cannot be obedient to God's will for your life outside the church. This is seen in the 59 New Testament "One Another" verses. 30% of these commands deal with loving one another, 30% deals with our unity, 15% addresses being humble. The remaining 25% of the one another verses are about how we treat each other
3. Grow the church by inviting those without a church family to connect with us. It has been said that the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) plus the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) makes a Great Church. Because we love God and love people we are to invite them to share in that love by belonging to a local body of Christ.
4. Support the church by regularly giving. Faithfulness is not about perfection as some would make it. It is about consistency. Our money reveals where our heart truly is (Matthew 6:21). Giving is simply an issue of trusting God, by doing so God gives back into your life (2 Corinthians 9:10-11).

Our Logo



Our logo is a Cross with a crown of thorns on top and a light coming from behind it. Before the cross is flowing water with the motto “Improving Homes and Lives”, standing as a foundation. If you take a look our logo is reflective of our altar. Take a look at the front of the church and you will see a Cross with a crown of thorns mounted and a light coming from behind it as in the logo. This sits before our baptismal pool that is covered by a removable stage. All this stands before the foundation of the pulpit where the word of God is preached in order to “Improve homes and Lives”.

Our Purpose: The Motto

Purpose is why you exist. It is the foundation of all that you are and intend to be. The foundational motto found in our logo is “Improving Homes and Lives”. This represents the end result of our purpose. Our purpose is to:

*“Conforming ourselves and helping others to
Conform to the image of God”*

Our Mission: The Crown

The crown of thorns in our logo represents the hardship and sweat of our labor. We accomplish this through our Mission. Our mission at Crossing Ministries is:

“Serving God by Serving His People”.

Our Standard: The Cross

It is important that as a church we set a standard for how we deal with others. It doesn’t matter who people are and what they have done they need Jesus. The cross in the logo represents that standard. While we bear our own cross it is important to keep in mind how we are to bear it. Therefore we have set a standard of conduct so that we each will maintain the integrity that Jesus had upon the cross. For our ministry CROSS is an acronym that stands for:

Compassion ~ Respect ~ Open ~ Sincere ~ Support

CROSSING NEW MEMBERS HANDBOOK

Our Vision: Crossing

Maybe you heard us say “Who Are We! Crossing”. The name of our church is not actually Crossing Ministries. It is simply “Crossing”. Our name is in our logo to represent the vision that God has given our church.

- +Crossing is a nondenominational, multicultural, community based ministry. Where God’s people from all backgrounds, cultures and ethnic diversities can freely worship Him in an environment of love and acceptance.
- +Crossing is a spiritual Hospital where people who have been injured by the trials of life can find healing in Christ. And will again become productive members of the body of Christ.
- +Crossing is a vehicle used by God in making His people over-comers. To bring people from a place of death to life; sickness to health; from darkness to light; defeat to victory; bondage to freedom...
- +Crossing is a training ground where God’s people are equipped for their individual ministries and sent out into the world. From this we will see hundreds of ministries spring forth.
- +Crossing is a community resource. We will provide affordable housing to the elderly, community outreach centers, educational guidance and resources to our community.
- +Crossing is a church planting organization. That as we see the call to pastor on individual ministers. We will foster that call and support them prayerfully and financially sending them out at the Lord’s beckoning.

Our Values: The Light

The light behind the Cross in the logo represents our core values. Jesus who is the light of the world called us to be lights also.

We light the way by maintaining these core values:

- +We do not promote ourselves, but Jesus before everything as the one who is the way, the truth and the life.
- +We must be the first partakers keeping our own relationship with God first and only from that can minister to others.
- +We have faith in trials, share faith in confusion and speak faith to encourage the world
- +We chose to do what is right not what is popular. Showing love, mercy and forgiveness placing all else in God’s hands
- +We strive for excellence in ministry pleasing God through organization, action and deeds

CROSSING NEW MEMBERS HANDBOOK

Our Beliefs: The Water

The water flowing through the Cross in our logo represents the word of God that washes us and provides spiritual nourishment for our daily lives. It flows through the cross testifying of how the word directs of towards Jesus (John 5:39). It is important to understand the beliefs of the church, which are grounded in the historical understanding of the word of God itself.

About the Bible: We believe that the entire Holy Bible, Old and New Testaments, is the only inspired, infallible, authoritative revelation of God to man. (II Tim. 3: 16-17; II Pet.1:21)

About God: We believe in the One true living GOD, eternally existent in three “persons”: THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT- having precisely the same nature, attributes, and perfections, indivisible, inseparable. (Matt.28: 19-19; Mark 12:29; John 1:14; Acts 5:3-4; Heb.1:1-3)

About Salvation: We believe that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and not of works, and Jesus Christ is the only way, truth, and Life, and there is no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved (Gen.1:26-27; 3:1-24; 5:3; Ps.51:5; Rom.3:23; 5:12; Isa.53; Jn.10:28; 14:6; Eph.2:8-9; II Pet.1-10; I Jn.5:13; Jude 20-25).

About Baptism: We believe in water baptism by immersion after a profession of faith in Jesus Christ at an age of accountability (Matt.28:19; Acts 2:41; 8:26-39).

About the Eucharist: We believe that we are to celebrate the Eucharist (Communion) as a church body and that the Lord is present much in the same way he is present when we worship (Lu.22:14-30; I Cor.11:18-34).

About Holiness: We believe in the Spirit-filled life whereby the believer manifests the fruit of the Holy Spirit by constant yielding to His indwelling presence and obedience to the Word of God. The Holy Spirit empowers believers for ministry and the Gifts of the Spirit are distributed to every believer by his sovereign prerogative for the benefit of all (Matt.3:11; Mk.16:16-18; Jn.7:37-39; Acts 1:8; 2:4; I Cor.12-14; Eph.5:18; I Tim.4:14; II Tim.1:6).

About our Mission: In Global evangelization of the unsaved (Matt.28:18-20; Mk.16:14-19; Acts 1:8)

About Eternal Destiny: We believe in a literal heaven and life everlasting for all true believers (Jn.14:1-3 1Thes.4:13-18 Rev.21-22) and also the everlasting punishment of the unrepentant in the lake of fire (Luke 16:19-31; Rev.20:11-15).

About Unity: We believe in Christian tolerance to all denominations of the Historic Christian faith and in essentials-unity, in non-essentials-liberty, in all things- Charity (Eph.4:1-6).

The Crossing History

Crossing began August 11th 2002 as a result of a vision given by God to Leon D. Ralph. Bishop Ralph was the founder of the Interdenominational Church of God (ICOG) of America and had not pastored a local congregation in over 20 years. At the age of 70, Bishop Ralph opened the local congregation which initially was called the Interdenominational Church of God of L.A. (or ICOGLA). On May 19th 2004 we incorporated as Crossing.

While fighting Leukemia in 2005 Bishop Ralph appointed Elder Kendall Davis as interim pastor. Along with his wife Elder Makisha Davis, Elder Davis had been a member of Crossing since 2004. Both having been members of a previous church within the ICOG of America. Our founder was called home to glory February 2006 and passed the mantle of the church to the new pastors Kendall & Makisha Davis. In 2011 Crossing attended the final convocation of the ICOG of America which was the beginning stages of its closing. However Crossing found a home in the newly formed United Christian Communion (UCC), to which Pastor Kendall Davis was elevated to the office of Bishop in April 2013.

Crossing Ministry is nondenominational, and we remain an affiliate church in good standing within the UCC. The UCC is a convergence ministry. Convergence seeks to blend the essential elements of Christian faith represented historically in three major streams of thought and practice: Apostolic, Evangelical and Charismatic. By Apostolic we do not mean denominationally but the original teachings of the apostles. Evangelical by reflecting fidelity to Scripture. Charismatic in that we embrace the Spirit-filled life and the graces and gifts of the Spirit. Our objective is to promote balance in each local church to enhance their ability to make the Kingdom of God visible

A Brief look at Convergence

We use the convergence of the 3 primary streams of the historic Christian church to foster unity and to manifest Christ in His fullness within the experience of the contemporary church. The convergence of 3 primary streams of the church restores its emphasis on the authority of Scripture and the apostolic witness, the importance the Christian practice of worship, and the power of the Holy Spirit for Kingdom life and service. The 3 streams we are:

Apostolic – in a classical evangelical sense; the word “evangelical” derives from the term euangélion (Gk. εὐαγγέλιον), which refers to the glad tidings of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God. This refers to the message the Apostles preached; hence “Apostolic, which in the contemporary context carries to idea of the need for personal conversion (born again), the absolute authority of the Bible, holiness of life, and the Kingdom mandate of evangelism.

Reformed – in the sense that we embrace Sacramental and Liturgical elements of doctrine and worship, but only as they were reformed to reflect fidelity to Scripture. We embrace the Sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Eucharist in concert with Liturgy to guide worship and the importance of the Episcopal office for leadership and unity.

Charismatic – in the classical sense as the presence, power, graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the first Church Pentecost and renewed during the Pentecostal renewal of the Azusa Street revival. We embrace the Spirit-filled life and the graces and gifts of the Spirit for leading a Christian life and effective Christian Leadership.

We believe that the convergence of these 3 streams into one mighty river will revive, refresh, and refocus the Church to manifest Christ’s Kingdom and make Him known! Think of it as simply taking the best of each of those streams and making them a model in our church.

The Word, Prayer and the Practice of the Holy Spirit

[Living Righteous]

The question we want to ask is “Are you saved”? Some here may want to immediately answer in the affirmative. Others based upon either their emotional state or recent challenges in their walk may question their salvation. There could still be those present who have not yet accepted the free gift of God’s salvation. If that is you; here is your opportunity! We want to see you saved and will take a moment to time to explain the gospel and extend you the opportunity to come to Christ according to His word.

Now that we have addressed the main issue we want you to know that the Christian Life was never meant to be as complex as some have made it out to be. The reason why our Christian walk may become strenuous is that we have strayed from a simple relationship by faith and have fallen into religious practice. There is nothing wrong with having true and undefiled religion because it manifest good works that come from a life cleansed by God (James 1:27). And that is what the Lord has done for you. He has cleansed your life by giving you positional righteous. After this many turn to religious practice as a mean to stay righteous. You may say that well cleansing me is the work of the Holy Spirit. Yes that is true; however you have some culpability to do your part in the matter.

The Process of Salvation

While receiving salvation is a one-time event; salvation itself is a lifelong process. In fact you are saved, you are being saved and you will one day be saved. Sounds confusing? Well really it is very simple. Just think of it as; God is saving you from three (3) different things. These things are often referred to as the penalty, practice and the presence of sin:

- **Penalty – God saves us from the judgment to come:** 1 Thessalonians 1; 9-10 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.
- **Practice – God saves us from the corruption of our flesh:** Romans 7:23-25 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.
- **Presence – God saves us from our fallen state:** Philippians 3:30-21 For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself.

CROSSING NEW MEMBERS HANDBOOK

I. THE PAST TENSE OF SALVATION

We have been saved from the PENALTY of sin.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

2 Timothy 1:8-9 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began

Titus 3:4-5 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit

II. THE PRESENT TENSE OF SALVATION

We are being saved from the POWER of sin.

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Philippians 2:12-13 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.

III. THE FUTURE TENSE OF SALVATION

We will be saved from the presence of sin

Romans 5:8-9 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him

1 Corinthians 5:4-5 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus

1 Peter 1:3-5 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Right now each of us is in the sanctification stage of our salvation, which should be our focus for the rest of our lives. If we want to stay clean and be ready for the Lord we have to apply the things to our lives that keep us clean. As Jesus told Peter “Those who have taken a bath only needs to wash his feet, their whole body is clean, and you are clean but not all of you” (John 13:10). Christ has cleansed your whole body but you have to watch your walk. Your feet must be regularly cleansed as you live life on this earth. Let us review some ways that you can keep your walk clean with God.

1 Timothy 4:4-5 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of *the word of God and prayer*

The Word of God and Sanctification

The word of God strengthens us, renews our mind and gives us the wherewithal to resist the allurements of sin. Through the word our faith is strengthened. This allows us to believe so we can endure in areas where we are morally challenged. (John 17:17, Ephesians 5:26).

For the word to sanctify us we must do more than just learn what it says. As Psalm 119:9-16 says the word keeps us pure not when it is in our mind but when it is in our hearts. When scriptures mention the heart in such a context it is talking about the seat of our emotions. The very fiber of who we are. Meaning that the word sanctifies us when we make it such an important part of our lives it affects our decision making process. Let us review how this happens

Psalm 119

Verse 9 – By putting the word into action. Taking heed deals with listening with the intention to obey what you heard. Your intentions dictate your direction.

Verse 10 – By not withholding portions of your life. Wholeheartedly: giving yourself over to the process. Withhold nothing back from your past hurts to your present dreams

Verse 11 – By putting a valuation on the word (Hiding them) Treat the word like an important treasure. That you put up safely because you refuse to lose it.

Verse 12 – By receiving them as revelation for your life (taught by God: knowing not just what they say but what they mean. Scripture says in all our getting get understanding (Proverbs 4:7)

Verse 13 – Speak the word. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God ways. As you share the word it becomes ingrained inside of you.

Verse 14 – The word of God is rich. Exalt God's word as a better way of life. Making the word the source of your world view.

Verse 15 – 2 Timothy 3:16 reveals four areas of applying the word. Doctrine (acceptable teaching), reproof (clear thinking), rebuke (correct thinking) and training in righteousness (right practice). When you engage scripture think about how you can live it out.

Verse 16 – Make what the word says a priority in your life. When trials come do not place the word to the side. Delight in following what it says.

Prayer and Sanctification

Throughout your entire Christian walk you will hear people repeatedly admonishing you to begin your day with the word of God and prayer. The reason why is because if we want to live righteously we need the things that sanctify us constantly practiced in our lives. Prayer puts us back in position with God. When we confess we are asking God to align ourselves back with him. This allows us to become both His foot soldier and His child. There are various ways that the Lord uses prayer to sanctify you. Listed below are a few.

Intercession

Intercession is the act of standing in the gap between an individual and God and doing for them what they can't or won't do for themselves. Intercession is to change that person's position putting them in the path for God to work in their life. Intercession can place another person in a position of forgiveness, healing or favor (Read: Mark 2:1-12)

Confession

Scripturally to confess means to come into agreement with what God says about your sins. It is not just admitting you have done wrong but recognition that God has always been right. The purpose of confession is not just admitting. God hear us to forgive us and removes the guilt of our actions giving us a chance to be right with Him. We hear ourselves so we know what we should be doing in response (Read: 1 John 1:8-9)

Repentance

Repentance goes beyond confession. Confession allows forgiveness of past acts. Repentance prevents future offenses to God. Repentance is a change of mind. It is a turning of direction of one who was moving away from God to again turn toward God. We communicate our desire to repent but it has to be followed up with action. We are given the promise if we draw near to God he will draw near to us (James 4:8). James explains that this drawing near is a cleansing of our actions and heart ridding ourselves of any divided loyalties we may have. If we truly repent we humble ourselves before God and seek His mercy (Read: Luke 18:9-14).

Instruction

In prayer you are not just speaking to God, he is speaking back to you. He gives us instructions on where we are at and what we are to do in our situations. If we are to live righteously we are to follow God's instructions is part of our obedience to Him (Read: John 10:3-4)

Impartation

When you pray there is an impartation of God grace into your spirit. God hears you and connects with you. Faith filled words are lifted up to the Lord and the favor of God comes not only in the form of preparing, positioning and cleansing seen above; but there is also a strengthening that we receive. God both imparts the strength to conquer challenges (Read: Luke 22:42-43) and to restore your strength after you have gone through the challenge (Read: Luke 4:11)

2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we must always thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God has chosen you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth

The Holy Spirit and Sanctification

Salvation is both through faith and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. After you have done all that you can do to act right, live right, think right and do right you come to the realization that it can only be accomplished with the assistance of a helper. God has given the Holy Spirit to us as that helper. He helps us in all matters spiritual. Meaning He does the things for us that we cannot do for ourselves. The apostle Paul said it best himself when he said: *1 Corinthians 15:10* but by the grace (the unmerited favor and blessing) of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not [found to be] for nothing (fruitless and without effect). In fact, I worked harder than all of them [the apostles], though it was not really I, but the grace (the unmerited favor and blessing) of God which was with me.

Sanctification is a work of surrender. Paul did all that he could in the flesh to get right before God. Everything after that was performed merely by submitting himself and cooperating with the work of grace through the Holy Spirit. The real labor was God and Paul allowed God access into the recesses of his soul in order for His work to be done.

The Holy Spirit works in our sanctification:

By changing our hearts and minds

John 16:8 “And when he comes, he will correct the world concerning sin and concerning righteousness and concerning judgment

By allowing us not to live according to the flesh

Romans 8:13 for if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live

By setting us apart for God's use

1 Corinthians 6:11 And some of you used to be like this. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

By producing spiritual fruit in our lives

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

By transforming us into the Image of God

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Life, Death and the Power of the Cross **[Living Victorious]**

When we encounter victors there is normally a point of time we think that the victory happened. Whether it was a race, a fight, an achievement or a score; there is a moment of victory. We too have moments of victory. The greatest victory moment you had thus far is receiving salvation. Well that victory isn't over. We must reach the finish line and one day stand before God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ to be judged. Mistakes will have been made, promises will have been broken and shortcomings will be evident. This thing will not matter at the Great throne of God however they will matter in the presence of Jesus.

2 Judgments

We have not one but 2 judgments that believers will face. The first is the great white throne judgment (Revelations 20:11-15) where books will be opened that contain records of everyone's deeds, whether good or evil. This is the time of the separation of the sheep and the goats (mentioned in Matthew 25:31-45). Another book, called the "book of life" will be opened (20:12). This book that announces who will inherit eternal life.

The second judgment is at the judgment (Bema) seat of Christ (Romans 14:10-12, 2 Corinthians 5:10). Though we will give an account of our actions during our Christian lives here this judgment is not about defending ourselves before God. It is judgment is not to determine ones faithfulness God knows that already; but it is a judgment to distribute ones rewards.

Things we may be judged on:

- How faithfully we have served Christ (1 Corinthians 9:4-27, 2 Timothy 2:5).
- How well we obeyed the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)
- How victorious we were over sin (Romans 6:1-4)
- How well we controlled our tongues (James 3:1-9).

Rewards we will receive:

- 1) The Imperishable Crown – (1 Corinthians 9:24-25). Those who ardently practice spiritual discipline
- 2) The Crown of Rejoicing – (1 Thessalonians 2:19) Those who win souls to the Lord
- 3) The Crown of Righteousness – (2 Timothy 4:8). Those who have loved His return
- 4) The Crown of Glory – (1 Peter 5:4) For those who have correctly led the flock of God
- 5) The Crown of Life – (Revelation 2:10) Those who have suffered even to the point of martyrdom

2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith

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If you want a victorious Christian life then you have to be in it to win it. When the apostle Paul was near the end of his life he compared the Christian life to that of a fighter, a runner and a soldier. The victorious life is seen in the aspect of one who fights the good fight against adversity, runs according to the prescribed manner finishing their course and keeps the faith which in the Greek means to guard it as an armed soldier would guard their post. Let's take a look at these:

Fighting the Good Fight

There are 3 levels in which spiritual warfare is fought. That is the personal level (2 Corinthians 10:4-5) where the enemy fights against your mind, the corporate level where he fights against the church in society (Matthew 16:18) and the kingdom level where war is waged in heavenly places (Revelation 12:7). While these are deep subjects we want keep it practical and give you a few tidbits on our personal struggles

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing rises up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ”.

We cannot fight using weapons of the flesh because on a personal level spiritual warfare is fought in the mind. You must be able to recognize that each of us has erected fortresses (personal walls and barriers) that rise up against the knowledge of God which is true instruction of who God is and how we can overcome. Barriers are things that keep you from going the places you want or need to go to. Therefore we use divinely powerful weapons to destroy these fortresses. What are our weapons you may ask? Well we are glad you want to know.

There are 3 protective devices paired with 3 weapons mentioned in the description of the armor of God. We will mention each of the weapons in their proper section. The first weapon we want to mention is referenced last in the list. That is the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. A sword is an offensive and defensive weapon. You use it to both block your enemies attack and then to strike at him. The sword is paired with the belt on which it rest. Just as He is the Spirit of truth to use is weapon it must rest on the truth. You have to know that the word is true to tear down the barriers and things that exalt itself against the knowledge of God. If you are going to fight this is the weapon you need. There are several ways to wield your weapon. We will list a few:

Ephesians 6:13-19 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints:

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WEILDING THE WORD	BENEFIT	VERSE
Applying the word	Keeps one from sin	Psalms 119:9-11
Confessing the word over your life	Increases ones hope	Jeremiah 29:11
Declaring the word when challenged to conform	Resists demonic ideas	Matthew 4:4-10
Hearing the word	Increases faith	Romans 10:17
Meditating on the word	Renews the mind	Romans 12:1-2
Praising God using the word	Changes the attitude	1 Samuel 16:23
Praying the word of God	Breaks demonic strongholds	Luke 10:17
Preaching the word to others	Our part in saving souls	Psalms 19:7
Studying the word	Brings knowledge and approves one before God	2 Timothy 2;15
Worshipping God according to the word	Impart divine presence and grace	John 4:24

Finishing the Course

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God

The next thing the Christian walk is compared to is a race and the weapons of choice are your shoes. The Roman shoes had spikes going into the ground to give traction and to finish off an enemy who was on the ground. The greaves (piece of armor that protected the shin) prevented strikes from crippling their walk. The shoes of the gospel are paired with the breastplate. It is the accepting of the gospel what makes us right before God. In a foot race they ran barefooted and bare-chest meaning we must have a righteous heart as we run this race. A right heart protects you and keeps one running rightly.

In any race if you run you must run according to the rules or else you will find yourself disqualified. The Christian race is more similar to a marathon than a sprint. It is a long race over time. It takes both discipline and endurance to reach the finish line. The main thing is that though others may get there ahead of you; everyone who finishes the race is a winner. In order to finish we must lay down encumbrances, entanglements and endure while looking to the finish line which is Jesus Christ.

Encumbrances

An encumbrance is something that weights or slows a runner down. These things are not sin but they do slow down Christian growth. We will quickly list just a few things that can encumber or slow down your growth.

1. ***Ungodly relationships*** - 1 Corinthians 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

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2. **Lack of Faith** - James 1:7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,
3. **Lack of Commitment** – Luke 14:17 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple
4. **Complacency** – Zephaniah 1:12 "It will come about at that time That I will search Jerusalem with lamps, And I will punish the men Who are stagnant in spirit, Who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good or evil!'"

Entanglements

Unlike encumbrances that slow you down entanglement are sins that tie you up and keep you from moving forward. Sin dwells in our mortal flesh (Romans 6:12) and comes out as acts of the flesh. Left unchecked sin will totally derail your walk with God. The 3 faults that manifested in Eves act (good for food, a delight to the eyes, and desirable to make *one* wise – Genesis 3:6) are still the same faults that we carry with us today.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

The 3 (lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and pride of life) are what we call root or cardinal sins. All acts of the flesh are manifestations of them. Many people try rigorously to rid themselves of their entanglement to sin by tackling the symptoms. The causes are the big three. If you want to run the race you lay aside the sin by dealing with the causes. Let's look at what happens if we take list in Galatians 5:19-21 regarding the works of the flesh and compare them to the root sins.

- Lust of the Flesh – immorality, impurity, sensuality, drunkenness, carousing
- Lust of the Eyes – Idolatry, jealousy, envying
- Sinful Pride of Life – sorcery, enmities, strife, outburst of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

Any fault you can think of from greed, selfishness, arrogance, adultery, fornication, lies, homosexuality, drug abuse, violence and the like stem from these 3 categories which are our passions, possessions and pride. These are the entanglements that must be laid aside in order to keep from getting bound up as we run our race.

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Endurance

The once you have rid yourself of the things that are slowing you down from running the race and you have disentangled yourself by living a disciplined life avoiding the traps on the way. All there is left to do is to never give up. Through every discouragement, every downfall and every defeat you must never quit. If you truly wish to endure you will find strength in looking to Jesus. He is the goal. No matter what you have went through it is not worse than what He went through for you. Endure on your race and you will win.

Keeping the Faith

The final thing out walk is compared to one who guards his faith as a soldier would guard their post. And the weapon of choice is the shield of faith. With the shield you defend against sword, spears and arrows. It is also used to strike and push enemies away from you so you can strike with you sword. The shield of faith is paired with the helmet of salvation. We must be ever vigilant to protect of minds as we use our faith. To guard your faith means not only that you have to be alert to attacks. You also have to keep your post. There is a deep connection to being grounded in faith and being planted.

- ***Psalms 92:13*** Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.
- ***Isaiah 60:21*** Thy people also *shall be* all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified
- ***John 15:4*** Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
- ***Hebrews 10:25*** Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

If you are not abiding in Christ you won't accomplish anything on your Christian journey. In like manner those who don't man their post by staying connected and remaining faithful in their church will have additional challenges to keeping their faith. We will discuss the responsibilities of every believer in their church in another lesson, but as a soldier for Christ know that you are never to fall off of your post.

Soldiers fight in the name of their king. When the enemy attacks their post they have full authority of the kingdom to protect their post. Not only do wield the written word of God we wield in using the authority of the living word of God Jesus Christ. In His blood and through His name we have authority to wield the word of God to fight off the enemy. When you are in deep personal conflict use your faith and declare the name and blood of Jesus over the situation,

The power of Jesus name is found in

1. Securing salvation (Acts 4:12)
2. Authority over all life (Philippians 2:9-11)
3. Answering prayers (John 14:13)
4. Power to heal (Acts 4:30)
5. Subjecting Spirits (Luke 10:17)

What does the Blood of Jesus Do?

1. It is the means by which Jesus purchased the church (Acts 20:28).
2. It justifies us and saves us from wrath (Rom. 5:9).
3. It brings those who were far away from God near to Him (Eph. 2:13).
4. It brings peace and reconciliation to God (Col. 1:20).
5. It cleanses our conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. 9:14)
6. It is the means by which we enter the most holy place with boldness (Heb. 10:19).
7. It makes us complete for every good work (Heb. 13:20-21, NKJV).
8. It cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7).
9. It is the means by which Jesus washes us (Rev. 1:5; 7:14).
10. It is the means by which we overcome the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:11).

Apply these things to your life. Review this lesson over and over if you have to. The principles found in these past two lessons will help you no ply it to your life. You can live victorious in Christ. These things will help you deal with issues in your life and should be used throughout your life in Christ. We are believing for you and with you for a time of growth and conquering. You can be more than a conqueror in Christ Jesus.

Giving and Living [A Living Sacrifice]

After Jesus had given the signs of His return in Matthew chapter 24 He speaks of 3 relationships that one is to act responsibly in. The first is that of a Steward (Matthew 24:42-51). The second is that of virgins preparing themselves for a wedding (Matthew 25:1-13). The third and final relationship is that of a servant doing the masters bidding (Matthew 25:14-29). After that Christ speaks of judgment. These are the three basic sacrificial relationships in relation to Christ and the focus of our study.

Virgins Prepared for the Wedding The church is the bride of Christ. We await his return and our marriage supper (Revelation 19:7-10). In response to Christ sacrifice for His bride we are to be living sacrifices (Romans 12:1). This happens through the 3 phases which are betrothal, preparation and consummation.

The Betrothal

The betrothal is what we call an engagement and was as legally binding as a marriage itself. We see that in how though Joseph was betrothed to Mary he would have had to legally give her a writ of divorce to end the engagement (Matthew 1:19). During the betrothal period the marriage covenant was made and the bride price was paid. Christ paid the price with His blood to enter into a covenant of marriage with his bride the church. As discussed in lesson 1 this is our justification phase where we are legally declared to be the righteous bride. Though we are called the bride it is because we have already entered our betrothal phase:

- *2 Corinthians 11:12* For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ.
- *Hosea 2:19* I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion

The Preparation

During the preparation phase the espoused bride is to undergo regular washings in water and oils to soften her skin and to cleanse her. She would enter a time of teaching by the older women to prepare herself on how to act as a bride. Her engaged husband would return to his father's house and build a room for them and wait until the Father said it was time to go get His bride. This is our period of sanctification and thought there are many scriptures that describe this but we will only list a few.

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- ***Ephesians 5:26-27*** so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.
- ***John 14:2-3*** "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you."If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

The Consummation

The final stage is the consummation. It is here that the bridegroom comes to get the bride to take her home with Him. Trumpets are blown to announce His coming and He takes the bride who has been preparing herself to go. They enter the bridal chamber for 7 days then come forward to attend the marriage supper. This is our time of glorification where our covenant is sealed and we will be with the God forever.

- ***Matthew 24:31*** And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.
- ***1 Thessalonians 4:16-17*** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

The issue the virgins had is that not all of them were ready when the bridegroom came. A sacrificial life is a prepared life. Just as the priest would prepare the sacrifice by cleansing and even anointing it before presenting it, God want to prepare you for Christ return.

The Servant Doing His Masters Will

Matthew 25:21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

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This parable is not just about the one unjust servant. It is about the two servants who did what was right according to his ability. The word servant in the text is Doulos which means a bond servant. He is a servant that has willingly attached himself into the house he served. This servant has no ownership rights of his own but the word is used with the highest dignity in the New Testament. A doulos is not only the type of servant the God rewards it is the servant that God avenges. A doulos was in fact more than just a servant. They were considered as sons in the house. Here are a few examples of its use:

- **Philippians 2:6-7** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men
- **Philemon 1:16** Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?
- **Revelation 22:6** And he said to me, “These words are faithful and true”; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place.

4 Types of Servants There are 4 Greek words used in the New Testament that are translated as servant. Let’s take a brief look at each:

Servant	Service is in Relation to	Scripture
Doulos	Bond Servant – Serves the master and all things connected to the masters house	Mentioned 126 times verse like Philippians, Titus and James (1:1)
Diakonos	Deacon – Serves in doing a specific work and is connected to accomplishing a job task	Mentioned 29 times verses Mark 9:35, Romans 13:4
Huperetas	Minister – Serves in connection to a location and is connected to achieving a vision	Mentioned 20 times verses like Acts 1:5, 1 Corinthians 4:1
Lietourgos	Priest – Serves at their own expense and is connected to making sacrifice	Mentioned 5 times verses like Philippians 2:25, Hebrews 1:7

The Diakonos

The word diakonos is often translated as deacon and means one who works diligently to accomplish a work. The term is a combination of dia/through and konis/dust. It literally means with dust and refers to one who diligently labors to the point where they make haste to finish their task and when they walk at a fast pace dust kicks up in the air. In Old Testament time’s people who could not pay debts would sell their services for 7 years and work as diakonos in someone home afterward they would go free. We see these as people who have a sense to do something in ministry.

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The Huperetas

The word huperetas is often translated as minister and means someone who gets you to where you need to go. The term is a combination of hypo/under and eresso/rower (as in a crewman). Many captured combatants and criminals were pressed into service as underrowers on a ship. When there was no wind they would be under the deck rowing the boat. They often took abuse in order that the shipmaster could get the people on board where they were going. Today many do this by praying for the church and encouraging members to follow the vision of the church.

The Leitourgios

The word leitourgios is normally used in relation to a priest or public servant and originally meant one who serves at their own expense. The term is a combination of leitos/ belonging to the people and ergon/work. They literally worked by sacrificing for the benefit of others. The priest and Levites were born into public service. Often they did what they did out a sense of commitment and not from a sincere conviction. This would those who gave of their financial resources. Today many see giving as their way of service.

Deuteronomy 15:16-17 It shall come about if he says to you, 'I will not go out from you,' because he loves you and your household, since he fares well with you; then you shall take an awl and pierce it through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also you shall do likewise to your maidservant

The Doulos

Unlike the others doulos is not a compound word. It simply means one that belongs to another. A doulos is what we call a bond servant. They consist of men and women who are not forced into servitude by debt, loss or genealogy. They are the servant that refuses to leave the masters home. They are the ones who believe that the Lord is good enough not to leave and are literally nailed to the house. Christ showed he was a doulos by his being nailed to the cross. Literally if you are not a doulos you do not belong to God. It is noticeable that the doulos is mentioned over twice as much as the other 3 types of servants combined. The reason being is that the other 3 are starting points for service and the doulos is the end point of service. Since the diaskonos, huperetas and leitoutgos should all eventually become doulos. You may be working for God, working toward vision and even giving to the church but if your heart is not attached to God and your local church then you aren't the type of servant that God yet desires you to be. Every servant of God is to be attached to the house of God, which means you are to be an active part of a local church in which many other bondservants serve by working, giving and promoting the God given vision of the church.

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The Steward Serving Faithfully in the House

Matthew 24:45-47 Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.

A steward is a doulos who has been given authority to manage the affairs of the house. The Hebrew word we translate as steward literally means “Man over the House”. As citizens of the Kingdom of God we have been given a stewardship over all that our Lord has entrusted us. God requires faithfulness from all of His servants. Whatever God sets you over you are to ensure that you steward correctly. There are certain things that we must know if we are to be good stewards.

The two great principles of stewardship are first that nothing belongs to you and secondly you are still to handle the household well. A steward is not the owner but one who carries a trust. As a servant of God you do not even own yourselves. We are God Stewards over everything we have and we are. Let’s look at what scripture says.

- Steward ourselves – 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 “You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies”
- Steward all He gives us – Matthew 25:21 “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ ”
- Steward our Gifts – 1 Peter 4:10 As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.
- Steward our time – Ephesians 5:15-17 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

It is important for us to steward our homes. If you don’t budget a good practice is to pay all your bills as soon as you get paid so you won’t pilfer from it. Then to just live off the rest. It is simple and it works. You must also account for your giving in God house also. The simplest procedure is to treat it like every other bill you have. You know the amount to give and pay it regularly. Because we are on different levels of knowledge because of this we will discuss in short the biblical principle of tithing.

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Tithing - Tithing is giving based on covenant. Gen 28:20-22 reads *“Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then **the LORD shall be my God**. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely **give a tenth to You**”* tithing is covenant or required giving which says Jehovah is our God.

- Leviticus 27:30 And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's. It is holy to the LORD.
- Leviticus 27:32 And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD.
- Hebrews 7:5 indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law,

Tithing as a System of Taxation - When the king was placed under a covenant by a stronger king, the lesser king gave a set tribute that the stronger king imposed on him. God has set his tribute at one tenth (tithe). The tithe became a method of taxation for the strong King (God) who would provide the support the Steward needed. In the Old Testament there was a marriage of the Priesthood and the State. The Judges were the religious and social leaders of their day. That is correct the priesthood was the government. There was not a change in the government system until the people rejected God as being their King. *1 Samuel 8:6-7 Then they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.*

Duties of the Levites

- **Serve God - Deuteronomy 10:8** At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister and to pronounce blessings in his name...
- **Declare Law and Judge Disputes - Deuteronomy 17:9-10** Go to the priests, who are Levites, and to the judge who is in office at that time. Inquire of them and they will give you the verdict. 10 You must act according to the decisions they give you at the place the LORD will choose.
- **Worship Life of the People - 1 Chronicles 25:6** All these men were under the supervision of their fathers for the music of the temple of the LORD, with cymbals, lyres and harps, for the ministry at the house of God.
- **Lead their Educational System - 2 Chronicles 17:9** They taught throughout Judah, taking with them the Book of the Law of the LORD; they went around to all the towns of Judah and taught the people.
- **Royal Bodyguards - 2 Chronicles 23:7** The Levites are to station themselves around the king, each man with his weapons in his hand. Anyone who enters the temple must be put to death. Stay close to the king wherever he goes."
- **Revenue and Welfare System - 2 Chronicles 31:14** Kore son of Imnah the Levite, keeper of the East Gate, was in charge of the freewill offerings given to God, distributing the contributions made to the LORD and also the consecrated gifts.

Amount of the 3 Old Testament Tithe

1. Support of the Priesthood

The **First tithe** we see in scripture is the tithe that God ordained to provide for ministry. *Numbers 18:21 "I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting.*

2. Support of Celebrations ordained by God

The **Second tithe** was not given to the Levites. Instead it would be eaten. This tithe was to provide for the 3 mandatory and the 4 non-mandatory feasts that the Israelites would have each year. *Deuteronomy 14:23 Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always.*

3. Support of the Welfare System (for widows and aliens)

The Third Tithe was an additional tithe taken every 3 years in support of the widows who could not work and the resident aliens (people who were fleeing slavery or famine in their homeland as in the book of Ruth chapter 1). *Deuteronomy 14:28-29 At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, 29 so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.* History tells us that wars would also be supported for by taking money from the storehouse to buy food and supplies for the troops.

Offered as a Dedicated Steward

2 Corinthians 8:3-5 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will.

Tithing is a good starting point to learn how to give but true New Testament giving come from a heart that is led by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will never lead you to break the word of God, so there can be no excuse why someone with income doesn't attempt to give. Giving is a matter of trust. As a steward do you trust that the master gave you what you need to live off of? He does give to each according to their ability. Saying you can't afford to give is joining in with the wicked servant, whose master wasn't upset that he didn't earn. He was upset that the steward didn't even try.

Finding Your Purpose Within the Church [Life in the Church]

In order to truly live a fulfilled life one must live it with a sense of purpose. Many people who profess to know Christ will tell you that they do not need to go to church to be saved. As we learned in lesson 1: Salvation is only the first step us becoming true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who think that being saved is the end all to it all have deluded themselves by excluding the discipleship process and all its responsibilities from their lives. God has purpose for your life and we want to help you to find it. As we grow and life goes on our purposes can change. However though we are to grow in our church our life in the church for the most part remains constant. Meaning our responsibilities within the church

Ephesians 4:15-16 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Being a Functioning Member

Just as the church universal (the entire body of Christ) fits together and is held together by what each joint (part or location) supplies the local church is fit and held together by what each individual member does. You are not to just be a member of the church. You are to be a functioning member. We are only as strong and as united as our working parts are. God has placed you here to be a working part, which causes growth within the congregation. The reason why being a functioning member is important is because Christ is our head. He directs the traffic and we are to build His church up in His love.

What does a Functioning Church Member Do?

1. Regularly attend services – Hebrews 10:24-25
2. Pray for the leaders and other in the Church – 1 Timothy 2:1-3
3. Consistently give towards Ministry – 2 Corinthians 9:7
4. Submit to the leaders and delegated authorities in your life – Hebrews 13:17
5. Think and speak in an uplifting manner about your church – Philippians 4:8
6. Treat others with dignity and respect - Matthew 7:12
7. Participate, appreciate and work well with others – 1 Corinthians 12:24-25

In order to function you have to stay connected. You are a branch on a tree and you have been grafted into a local church body. Some grafted in branches never function properly. Which means they either weren't grafted in correctly or they are just dead branches? Functioning branches bear fruit.

CROSSING NEW MEMBERS HANDBOOK

Genesis 11:6 The LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them

Being a Unifying Church Member

No verse describes the power of unity in such a way as God describes unity during the building of the tower of Babel fiasco. Even though they were in opposition to God’s plan the Lord spoke that if they would continue in unity that they could accomplish anything. This is why the devil fights so hard to divide the church. If he can destroy our unity he can destroy our work. The rallying call of the Reformation stated “In essentials unity, in nonessentials liberty but in all things charity (love)”. This means that there must be a consensus around what is essential. We do not compromise on the essentials. However unity does not require unison. There are things that are not essential that we can merely agree to disagree on. However whether we agree or disagree it is our job to love.



That deals with unity with other churches but the reason why people aren’t unified within their own church is normally due to lack of connecting to others and from personality issues. The bible is clear that offenses will happen (Luke 17:1). However offenses do not have to cause one to break fellowship. Anything that has been broken, God can repair. However it is important that we do our part.

Things You Can Do To Help Unify The Church

1. Not holding your thoughts in when you have been offended – Matthew 18:15
2. Forgiving those who have offended you – Matthew 6:14-15
3. Refusing to Gossip about others – 1 Thessalonians 4:11
4. Tell people when they are acting divisive – Titus 3:10-11
5. Encourage others within the Church – Hebrews 3:13
6. Making the effort to reach out to others – Proverbs 18:24

CROSSING NEW MEMBERS HANDBOOK

Being a Satisfied Church Member

No church is perfect. Every church is full of imperfect people. Someone once said, “if you find the perfect church don’t join it. You will mess it up”. Well we aren’t perfect but we are a project that is in the making. God is working on you and on your church. The reason why you can delight in your church is that in its totality it is a work of God. You should want to be a part of what God is doing. A good member is a content member. You may not like how everything is but that the point. It isn’t about you. It’s about God.

You have to know that you are here because God has led you here. He desires you to be satisfied where he has led you. He leads you to green pastures and besides the still waters but you have to know how discover the richness in what God has given to you. There should be some sense of pride in belonging to the church. We may not be the church for others but God has chosen us at this time to be the church for you.

Psalms 23:1-3 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake.

Things That Will Bring You Satisfaction In The Church

1. Worship God enthusiastically – John 4:24
2. Invite your family and friends to church – Joshua 24:15
3. Be grateful for the church – 1 Thessalonians 5:18
4. Not being concerned about who gets the credit – 1 Corinthians 10:31
5. Do not make the church to be about your preferences – Colossians 3:17
6. If you have a passion for a certain ministry tell a leader – 1 Corinthians 14:40
7. Participating in outreaches and ministry events – Acts 15:35

Effectiveness Evangelism [A Living Epistle]

As we begin to embark upon a new Evangelism adventure, the main part of Evangelism we will be discussing is, “How to be a Living Epistle”. This is, Lifestyle Evangelism. Lifestyle Evangelism is an evangelism strategy that focuses on living a holy, winsome life among unbelievers with the goal of attracting people to the message of Jesus Christ. Lifestyle evangelism has been popular since the 1990s, and many Christians have sought to share their faith through their lifestyle in addition to their verbal testimony. In contrast with other methods such as tracts, crusades, and media-based outreach, popular in the mid-twentieth century, lifestyle evangelism focuses on building relationships with one person at a time. Critics claim that lifestyle evangelism is insufficient or that it ignores the Bible’s command to share the gospel verbally. Doing good works is not enough; we must speak the truth. However, lifestyle evangelism can and should do both. There are many examples in Scripture of those who both lived out their faith and verbally shared their faith.

The importance of sharing the gospel of Christ with those who are lost cannot be over-emphasized. Jesus wants everyone to hear the good news of salvation (**Mk 16:15-16**), and has provided the gospel as God's power to save all who believe it (**Ro 1:16-17**). But what is the most effective way to reach people today? The Institute for American Church Growth asked over 10,000 peoples this question: "**What was responsible for your coming to Christ and this church?**" Their replies were:

- I had a special need - 3%
- I just walked in - 3%
- I liked the minister - 6%
- I visited there - 1%
- I liked the Bible classes - 5%
- I attended a gospel meeting - 0.5%
- I liked the programs - 3%
- **A friend or relative invited me – 79%**

Theme Scripture:

- **2 Corinthians 3:2-3**, “**You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;** ³ **clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us**, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart”.

What was Paul saying about the way in which God wants to use His people to influence the lives of other? We must not underestimate both our intentional and unintentional influences on those around us. The Christian’s life is to be like a letter sent from Jesus Christ to the world. From a heart that is renewed by divine grace, this letter will demonstrate the power of the gospel to transform lives and thereby will witness for the Lord.

3 tactics for being a Living Epistle

I. Being a Silent Sermon

How would you have recognized the followers of Jesus back in the first century? You could recognize the priest and the Pharisees by the way they dress. Likewise, you would recognize a fisherman, a peasant, or a roman soldier by their clothes. But, again, how would you recognize a Christian?

- John 13:35 “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

According to Jesus, what is this one special way his followers are identified? What does that mean in practical terms? Jesus said that if we love one another, others will know that we are His disciples. How will they know because love in action will convince them? The love we have for Jesus and for fellow believers will determine how we respond to God's will and, in turn, how we treat one another. Furthermore, the love and concern that we have for those outside of God's fold will determine how we treat them too. This is the sermon that they will see and observe, and it speaks louder than anything you could ever say. Many parents have noticed that very early in life their children develop an internal “hypocrisy detector” that becomes enhanced and fine-tuned as they grow older. We must be aware, therefore, that many of the people we associate with, and witness to, also have a highly developed ability to recognize the difference between a genuine spiritual experience and a mere profession of spirituality.

II. Having Compassion for People

Each day we all fleetingly brush pass people we don't know. We passed them on the street, sit near them in the restaurant, and wait with them in the line. Sometimes we even acknowledge their presence with a nod or smile as we move past them. Although we can never personally contact each person we see each day, God's desire is for all these people to accept him into their lives. For someone, somewhere, we can be a part of God's plan to save him or her.

- Matthew 9:36-38 “But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

What was Jesus saying, and how do those words apply to the field in your immediate area? The multitude that Jesus saw on this occasion was trouble and distress. The people were so downcast that they had all but given up on any remnants of a religious experience they had left. Those whom God had placed in charge of the spiritual warfare of his people had neglected their duty. Consequently the people were scattered and disheartened. Jesus had compassion for them because He knew that they needed a spiritual Shepherd.

III. Walking in Their shoes

Here's an important point: rather than providing what we think people need, we must learn to recognize what they see as important priorities. What are they concerned about? What are their problems? What do they feel that they need?

- 1 Corinthians 9:20-22 “ and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; 22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men that I might by all means save some”.

What do these verses tell us about Paul approach to different people and his desire to identify with their needs and concerns? What can we take from this for ourselves in our attempts to reach out to those around us?

Without compromising on matters of principle, the apostle Paul was willing to go anywhere and do anything he could to be in a better position to convince people of the truth of the Gospel. In other words, he was willing to walk in their shoes and an attempt to understand them and to determine the best way to reach them for Jesus Christ.

The point is that often we try to provide what we think people need. Yet, we should seek first to understand what they see as their needs. To walk in the shoes of another means that we attempt to understand life and all its intricacies and issues from their perspective; it is to try to understand their hurts and joys. In other words, to meet them where they are. Of course, this is what Jesus did. His earthly life was one of identifying with those He came to save. He can understand our struggles and pain because He experienced the same. He had great disappointments, endured false accusations, rejection, and unfair punishment. He was “God with us” in the fullest sense of entering into our lives. Furthermore, because he entered into our experiences, we can meet people where they are. And as we read through the gospel we discover that Jesus did not have just one method of evangelism and witnesses.

Though Jesus was God, he lived and walked the earth as regular man. However, He understood the importance of the kingdom of God. So much so, that He made it His primary subject. That’s all He cared about and spoke about. Jesus didn’t care about man’s boundaries, beliefs, or traditions. All He cared about was reconciling a relationship that had been broken from the beginning. He understood that in order for this mission to be completed, He was going to have to go places others would not go, as well as touch those who no one else would touch.

Very Important Key to being A Living Epistle

- Widening your friendship circle
 - Proverbs 18:24 “A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother”.
 - Hebrews 13:2 “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels”.

Both friendly & hospitable are essential when widening your friendship circle. But sometimes we can miss the mark as believers, because we are admonished not to get too close to the world from which we have been saved from. I believe we should build meaningful relationships outside of the fellowship. Though we should avoid unholy influences, there is a degree to which such isolation detracts our ability to reach people with the gospel message.

- Read John 17:11-19

We are all born into this world. While we are here, God also has work for us to do in it. Just as with his first disciples, Jesus has sent us into the world to introduce whomever we can to Him and the promise of salvation that He offers all humanity. The challenge for each one of us is to intentionally expand our personal mission field. This may mean adjusting our lifestyle in order to rub shoulders with more unchurched people. This is not to say that we compromise principles, convictions, and values, but, rather, that we look for opportunities where we can, in clear conscience, interact with others in a way that will allow us to become both friends and, as a result, channels of God's truth. Often we excel in sending out invitations for the people to come to us. Yet, Jesus actually told us to go to them. Thus, we need to ask ourselves if we have withdrawn too much from the world and therefore have lost some of our evangelistic effectiveness. Look at yourself: do you tend to be insular, too remote from the world? Or, perhaps, are you too cozy with the world? How can you better learn to be in the world (and thus witness to others) and yet not be “of it”?

The Word of God on being a living Epistle

- Colossians 4: 2-6 “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; 3 meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, 4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.5 Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one”.
- Timothy 4:16 “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.
- Ephesians 4:1-3 “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- Romans 1:16 “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek”.
- Matthew 5:13-16 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.14 “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven”.

Whether we acknowledge it or not, all believers preach a message by the example of their lives