

Discipleship Of The Heart Phase I



Blue Ridge Bible Church: Discipleship of the Heart

Table Of Contents

Week One:	The Proven Love Of God
Week Two:	The Scope Of God's Love
Week Three:	Learning To Love
Week Four:	Loving Others
Week Five:	My Identity In Christ
Week Six:	Completely Righteous Forever
Week Seven:	Spiritual Fruit
Week Eight:	True Humility
Week Nine:	Grace Life
Week Ten:	Walking By Faith
Week Eleven:	Keeping A Pure Heart
Week Twelve:	Spiritual Responses Of A Disciplined Heart
Week Thirteen:	Spiritual Responses Of A Disciplined Heart
Week Fourteen:	Spiritually Gifted Ministry
Week Fifteen:	Serving Your Family
Week Sixteen:	Small Group Fellowship
Week Seventeen:	God's Heart For The Lost
Week Eighteen:	Sharing The Gospel
Week Nineteen:	Sharing Your Story
Week Twenty:	Discipling Others

Overview Of Ministry

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2:1-2)

Discipleship Goals:

To equip/train people to live in the grace of Jesus Christ. *“be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”*

To use the Biblical strategy of life-on-life or small group discipleship (no more than three) to accomplish the first goal. *“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things which you have heard from me...”* We seek to help people grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

To have these people become equippers and train others who will then do the same thing, so that the Kingdom of God will grow through the multiplication of disciples. *“these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.”*

What Makes Discipleship Of The Heart Unique:

Most discipleship books, curriculums and programs can be boiled down in the following sentence. ***If you do _____ then you are a growing disciple of Jesus.***

The blank may be filled in with Bible study, evangelism, prayer, memory, church, ministry....or some other basic discipline. The idea communicated in these discipleship programs is that discipleship is something that you do. The problem is that without meaning to, we can become modern day Pharisees or self-deceived hypocrites...like Jesus talked about when He said *“these people draw near me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.”* When you study the religious people in the Bible, you will discover that they were highly motivated, deeply moral, sincerely seeking to live out their faith. Yet, Jesus reserved His most scathing rebukes for them. In spite of this, many modern-day discipling programs still appeal to doing the right steps, the formulas, or the disciplines and believing that faithful adherence to these activities will make you a growing disciple.

We believe that this presupposition is incorrect. You *are* a disciple. And as a disciple, it is up to your Master, Jesus Christ, to disciple you. You belong to Him. We believe that true discipleship occurs as people allow the Holy Spirit to work in their heart and lives. As we walk in faith and in total trust to the transforming power of God, then He will mold us into the image of His Son. For the next 20 weeks, the focus will be your heart.

The goal of **Discipleship of the Heart, Phase I** is to help you keep your heart in the loving arms of Jesus Christ, and to train you to listen to and respond by faith to the Holy Spirit.

Expectations Of Participants

- To set aside one hour a week for six months for equipping and training.
- To be adequately prepared, both spiritually and intellectually, for the meeting time.
- To have all assignments fulfilled before the meeting time.
- To be personally implementing the truth that is shared.
- To pray daily for the person discipling you.
- To be available for personal ministry as opportunities present themselves.
- To multiply and continue the discipleship process, providing that the leader and staff sense that you are spiritually ready to become a leader of others.

Discipleship Of The Heart is the basic discipleship material of Blue Ridge Bible Church. It is our goal that every adult is given multiple opportunities to participate in it. It will cover the basics of Christian growth and maturity. This basic course, **Phase I** is supplemented by **Phase II** designed to continue emerging leaders to a deeper level of discipleship and **Phase III**, designed to prepare leaders, men and women to defend and teach our faith. The hope of the elders of Blue Ridge is that God will use this course in your life so that you abide in Christ and in His love. May the Holy Spirit lead and direct you!

Week One—The Proven Love Of God

Introduction: When you watch or go to a court proceeding, what is the role of evidence? What do the courts do with it? God has called us to a celestial court in order to prove, beyond a doubt and with a preponderance of evidence, that He LOVES US!

1. Read 1 John 4:9-11 and answer the following questions.
 - a. How has God revealed His love for you?

 - b. What is God referring to as evidence for His love when He states, “In this is love...”?

2. When we read that God has proven His love for us by sending Jesus into the world...how does that prove anything?

3. What did it cost God to love and prove His love for us? Read Philippians 2:5-11 and 1 Peter 1:17-19.

4. Read Romans 8:31-39.
 - a. List seven “witnesses” that might bring a charge against God’s elect in order to separate us from His love, (His loved ones), found in verse 35.

 - b. What is the verdict after these witnesses testify, in verse 37?

 - c. List 10 things that might try, but fail, to separate us from the love of God.

 - d. Where is this mighty love found?

5. Based upon these passages, what will make Jesus stop loving you? What made Him start loving you? What will change His love for you? How much does He love you?

Spiritually responding to God's proven love for you:

- Do you really believe that God loves YOU so much that He gave His Son for YOU? Do you ever feel like God doesn't love you? What makes you feel that way? How can you fight the feelings by faith?
- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- A standard response for many people would be to seek to know God better and love Him more. How is this accomplished?
- What can you do this week to deepen your own walk with Christ in light of this love of His for you?

Before Next Week:

- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and discuss how to love each other with this type of love. Take your spouse through all future lessons in order to grow together.
- Evaluate the manner in which you have viewed the love of God. Have you seen it as totally proven, or on trial (circumstances dictate your "feeling" loved)?
- Be ready to discuss how knowing God's love is an established fact can revolutionize your life.

Week Two—The Scope Of God's Love

Introduction: How big is big? How large is the ocean compared to a drop of water? How large is the ocean compared to our Solar System? How large is earth compared to the Galaxy? How big is the universe? Did you know that God's love for you is bigger than big? It is greater than the universe, and transcends time itself!

1. Read John 15:9. How much does God love YOU?

2. Read and meditate on John 17:22-26.
 - a. How much does God love YOU?

 - b. When did the Father begin to love Jesus? When did He begin to love us?

 - c. What is the message that we have for the world?

3. In Ephesians 1:3-6 we see that we have been chosen in the Beloved and it was in love that we were chosen. When did this happen? When were we loved and chosen?

4. If God loved me before the world was born, what have I done to earn His love? Therefore what can I do to forfeit His love?

5. How can we know the love of God found in Christ according to Ephesians 3:17-19?

6. What does Ephesians 3:19 say about the love of God?

Spiritually responding to the infinite love of God:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- As you begin to comprehend this infinite love all placed squarely on you for all eternity, what happens inside of you? How does this make you feel and what type of response to this love can you make?
- God's love for you transcends both time and space, and it was proven in the limitless, eternal, and infinite sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary. How can knowing the scope of God's love impact your life today?
- What can you do this week to deepen your own walk with Christ in light of this love of His for you?

Before Next Week:

- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and discuss how big God's love is. Together try to imagine the greatness of it.
- Meditate on Ephesians 3:17-19 and be ready to share any insights that the Holy Spirit gives you.

Week Three—Learning To Love

Introduction: If we really understand the depth of God’s love for us, we will love others in a different way than the world loves. Perhaps it will be a different way than anyone—even our own families—have love us.

1. Defining Love.
 - a. Look up the word “love” in your dictionary. What is it defined as?

 - b. How is love pictured in culture?

 - c. How important is love to you? Try and actually put words to this question.

 - d. Read Mark 12:28-31 and answer this question: What words sums up the most important thing that you can ever do?

 - e. Read 1 Timothy 1:5. What is the goal of the church’s teaching ministry?

 - f. List four people that you know Scripture commands you to love.

2. Learning To Love
 - a. Read 1 John 4:8, 16...what does this say about love?

 - b. Having read the two passages in “Defining Love”, what do you think the primary **purpose** of your life is in God’s design?

- c. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. God gives us a list of abilities, spiritual gifts, knowledge, faith, generosity, and commitment. But in this list, something is listed as the top **priority**, what is it?

- d. It has been said that “Love is invisible, but always evident.” Based on what you see in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 do you agree with this statement? What does this passage teach that love does?

- e. If love is so important, then how can we love each other? Read 1 John 4:7; Galatians 5:22-23; John 15:5. Where does true love come from?

3. Putting The Lesson Together.

- **In order to truly love, I must make sure that I spend quality and quantity time with the *Person of love*...**I must continually be in the presence of God with my sins confessed, my heart clean and my desire to please Him. This refers both to spiritual disciplines and to a heart motivation.

- **That Person has poured out His love on us. Our *Purpose* is to love Him and others with His love.** Though God has given us all different ministries and vocations, He has called us all—every one of us—to extend His love to the world we live in and the people we live with.

- **Being with the Person of Love and knowing my Purpose is to love allows me to start sharing His perspective and understanding. This brings the *Priority* of love into my life.** We become like the people that we associate with. We start to value what they value and mimic them. When we value what God values and mimic Him, we begin to love.

- **As I spend time with the Person and understand the Priority...God working in me starts to grow spiritual fruit. This gives me the *Product* of love.** Remember, love isn't from us; it is from God. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, a by-product of walking with the Lord. I don't create love. I receive it.

- **The Product that I have received from the Person begins to change my life. It starts to *Produce* the virtue that is inherent in love.** This love that God has given me starts to make me kind, patient, unselfish, giving...all the things we see in 1 Corinthians 13.4-8.

Spiritually responding to God's love being available for me:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- Is there anyone who you have not been allowing God to love through you? How should you respond to God, as well as to them, if you have not?
- What can you do this week to deepen your own walk with Christ in light of this love of His for you?

Before Next Week:

- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and discuss how to love each other with this type of love.
- Evaluate the way that you have historically loved others.
- Be ready to discuss how having this God-first focus works in everyday relationships, and share an example of how you implemented it this week.

d. Ephesians 5:29.

5. Review what scripture teaches about love. How can you possibly love anyone this way? It is such a high standard! How does this command to love as Christ loved make you feel? What do you think about it? How can you accomplish it?

Spiritually responding to loving others:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- What areas do you need to seek God's help in improving in light of today's lesson?
- How can the Holy Spirit help you become a vessel of God's love on a deepening level?
- Spend some time meditating on this truth. Let God know how this truth is impacting you through prayer/praise.

Before Next Week:

- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and discuss how to love each other *just as Christ loved.*
- What areas do you need to seek God's help in improving?
- Share insights that you have gained with your Christian friends.

Week Five—My Identity In Christ

Introduction: Think about the impact that peer groups and peer identity has on a person. What areas of life does it affect? How can perceiving yourself as a member of a group change you?

1. It is important for us to realize that something has been radically changed since we gave our lives to Christ. We are that something. When we become a Christian, we don't receive something, we become someone. Our salvation is not simply a gift wrapped up and given to us. It is a transformation of who we are as we become a redeemed dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. We are no longer who we were! Read Ephesians 2 and fill out the following chart.

Before I Knew Christ I Was...	Now I Am...

2. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and pay particular attention to the word “were”. What is this saying about you? Compare it with 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. What is God saying about His children?

3. Pick 8 of the following passages and write down **Who I Am** in Christ.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matt. 5:13-14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ephesians 2:19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 1:12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ephesians 4:24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 15:1,5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philippians 3:20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John 15:15 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colossians 3:3-4

• Romans 8:14-15	• Colossians 3:12
• Romans 8:17	• 1 Thessalonians 5:5
• 1 Corinthians 6:19-20	• 1 Peter 2:5
• 1 Corinthians 12:27	• 1 Peter 2:9-10
• Galatians 3:26	• 1 John 3:1-2
• Galatians 4:6-7	• 1 John 5:18
• Ephesians 1:1	

4. Pick 8 of the following passages and write down **What Has Happened To Me** because of the grace of God and my identity in Jesus.

• Romans 5:1	• Ephesians 1:5
• Romans 6:1-6	• Ephesians 1:13-14
• Romans 8:1	• Ephesians 2:5-6
• 1 Corinthians 1:30	• Ephesians 2:18
• 1 Corinthians 2:12	• Colossians 1:13
• 1 Corinthians 2:16	• Colossians 1:14
• 1 Corinthians 6:19-20	• Colossians 1:27
• 2 Corinthians 5:17	• Colossians 2:10-13
• 2 Corinthians 5:21	• 2 Timothy 1:7
• Galatians 2:20	• Hebrews 2:11
• Ephesians 1:3	• Hebrews 4:16
• Ephesians 1:4	• 2 Peter 1:4

5. These previous two questions are showing you who you are in Christ. It is your identity: your person, who you really are is what you have seen in the scripture above. Your worth, value or importance has nothing to do with culture, or with the world, or with your abilities, socio-economic, education, life-stage, etc. The world measures by all of these things. God has already used Jesus to measure your worth.

6. When you identify with someone, you give them permission to shape your life. The group you perceive yourself to belong to influences your spending decision, ethics, appearance, language, values, etc. What does it mean to you to realize that your identity is found in Jesus Christ?

Spiritually responding to my new identity:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- Is there anything in your life that gives you your identity more than Jesus? What can you do about it?
- How can your new identity impact your prayer life and or Bible reading time?
- Spend some time meditating on this truth. Let God know how this truth is impacting you through prayer/praise.

Before Next Week:

- Take time each day to reinforce this truth.
- Mentally, try and start thinking of yourself like God does. Seek to see Jesus in you more than you see yourself.
- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and affirm his or her identity in Christ

Week Six—Completely Righteous Forever

Introduction: One of the most important questions we could ever ask ourselves would be this, “How can someone be made right with God?”. What is your answer? Now, let's ask a follow up question. “How can someone *stay right* with God after they have been *made right* with Him?”

1. Read Colossians 2:1-15. Look for the words, “In Him, With Him, Through Him”. Write down 8 things that are true in this passage about Christ and/or what He did for us where those phrases are used. What is this passage saying?
2. Re-read 2:6-10 and then 2:16-23. What is this passage saying about our spiritual growth? How much do we *add* to what Jesus did? How valuable are our spiritual activities if we depend on them to grow?
3. In Galatians, God addresses the doctrine that we add to our salvation, stay saved, or even grow spiritually by works. Read Galatians 1:1-10 and identify the words that God used to describe this teaching in regards to the true gospel of by grace through faith plus nothing.
4. What is the basis of our righteousness before God for all eternity? Read 1 Corinthians 1:30 and 2 Corinthians 5:21.
5. According to Philippians 1:11 where does our righteousness come from? What does this mean?
6. Compare the 1st Adam and the imputation (accounting, placing) of sin with the 2nd Adam, Jesus Christ, and the imputation of righteousness in Romans 5:11-20. What is the bottom line that this is teaching?
7. So, do Christians live holy and righteous lives *because* we are righteous in Christ, or *before* God makes us righteous in Christ?

Spiritually responding to eternal and complete righteousness:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- How does knowing that nothing you do adds to your righteousness cause you to react?
- Do you really believe you are righteous, right now? Where do you struggle believing it?
- How can the knowledge of your righteousness in Christ impact your prayer life and/or your Bible reading time?
- When you are tempted to sin, think back to who you are in Christ and to the truth that you ARE righteous. How would verbalizing your position in Christ and your righteousness in the sight of God impact your temptation?
- Spend some time meditating on this truth. Let God know how this truth is impacting you through prayer/praise.
- Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you in Bible memory. If He leads you to, is there a verse in today's lesson that you chose to memorize?

Before Next Week:

- Take time each day to reinforce this truth.
- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and affirm their righteousness in Christ
- Be prepared to share any victories in thought/action because of understanding your righteousness in Christ.

Week Seven—Spiritual Fruit

Introduction: What is your favorite fruit? What does the fruit tell you about the tree/plant that it came from? What is the purpose of fruit? Keep these thoughts and the metaphor of fruit on a vine or a tree in mind as you study through what scripture says about spiritual fruit.

1. Read John 15:1-8,16. What is the Father doing in the life of the Christian? How does the Christian bring glory to the Father? What is the reason that Jesus chose us?
2. In Luke 6:43-45 God tells us something about fruit. What is it?
3. In Matthew 7:13-21, Jesus says that there is only one way to know false believers, what is the criteria that He uses and what principle can we derive from it?
4. Read Psalm 127:3 and Genesis 1:28. What is another reference for fruit? How could this apply to your spiritual life (see Romans 13; 1 Timothy 1.2)?
5. Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 5:9, and Philippians 1:11 are a few passages that list spiritual fruit by name. These are the things that God uses to evaluate our walk in Christ by. List them and honestly ask if they are the supernatural by-product, the knee-jerk reaction of your life.
6. Comparing our earlier lesson on grace with John 15:1-8 and Galatians 5:21-22 teach us something about bearing fruit. What do you learn from these verses?
7. Look at each section of the following definition of spiritual fruit (next page). Comment on it, is it adequate, do you agree, etc.?

Spiritual Fruit: The Holy Spirit producing within me, and reproducing through me, the character and kingdom of God

- **The Holy Spirit producing within me:** It is not a work of the flesh, it is the product of the Holy Spirit. I don't make fruit, I bear it.
- **and reproducing through me:** Spiritual fruit is something that benefits others and causes other to know and love Christ.
- **the character:** The Holy Spirit produces and reproduces Christ-likeness. It is His job to conform me to the image of Jesus. The listing of fruit describes Christ.
- **and kingdom of God:** When my life bears fruit, the Holy Spirit uses me as a midwife to bring new children into the Kingdom. My fruit helps other know God better and love Him more.

Spiritually responding to God's call to be fruitful:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- Is there any area in your life that you see you need to surrender to the Holy Spirit, based upon the visible fruit?
- How does knowing God desires fruit change your thinking about things such as Bible reading and memory?
- Spend some time meditating on this truth. Let God know how this truth is impacting you through prayer/praise.
- How can you cooperate with God as He produces this fruit?

Before Next Week:

- Watch for your fruit to be manifested. What does it tell you about God working in your life?
- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and discuss the fruit in your lives.
- Be ready to share any insights you may have.

Week Eight—True Humility

Introduction: What would you say if someone asked you the following question: “Are you humble?”? Would you be able to honestly say yes? This week we want to explore a Biblical view of humility.

1. Describe or define humility in your own words:
2. There are two people in the Bible that are referred to as humble. They are Moses and Jesus. Does your description or definition fit them?
3. Read James 4:6-10 and 1 Peter 5:5-7. Why is humility important?
4. Look at this Matthew 11:28-30. How could Jesus truthfully declare Himself to be humble?
5. Go back to James 4:6-10, what does verse seven clarify about the humility listed in verse 6 (hint: look for the word “therefore”)?
6. Read 1 Peter 5:5-7 again. What do you see about humility in this passage?
7. In both of the passages that we are told to humble ourselves, we are warned against pride. How is pride manifested in our lives? What about people with a low self-esteem?
8. If humility is the opposite of pride, then re-define humility in terms that reflect this.
9. How does this definition of humility fit with what you have learned in these passages, and what you know about the Lord Jesus Christ?

Spiritually responding to my true humility:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- You have learned that you can know when you are humble, and that you are to humble yourself. How does this change your every day life?
- How can your understanding of humility impact your prayer life and or Bible reading time?
- Spend some time meditating on this truth. Let God know how this truth is impacting you through prayer/praise.

Before Next Week:

- Take time each day to reinforce this truth.
- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and talk to your spouse about how you can better serve him or her.
- Did you take time this week to humble yourself? How did God honor it?

Week Nine—Grace Life

Introduction: What is the best gift that you have ever received? What made it so good? What makes something a gift? What makes something a special gift? This lesson is about the incredible gift that God has for us. He calls it Grace.

1. Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and write down what it is saying about grace.
2. Look at Colossians 2:6-7—what is this saying about your spiritual growth?
3. In 1 Corinthians 15:10, God uses the word grace three times. What does God's grace do for the believer according to this verse? What is the role of grace in the Christian's life?
4. What is the warning found in Galatians 3:1-3? How are modern Christians tempted to violate this warning?
5. Read through the definition of grace below a few times until you understand it fully. Do you think that it adequately defines grace? How would you change it?

Grace:

God Freely Meeting My Needs Through Himself And His Power For His Glory.

All of the components of this definition are at work in Biblical grace.

- **First of all, it is God-initiated.** God is the one that dispenses grace. It begins within Him. True grace comes from God.
- **Freely meeting my needs.** I do not earn the favor of God, nor do I pay it off after it is given to me. I cannot do anything that will make God give me grace. On top of that, it is the very fact that I need grace that makes it available. If I did not need grace then I would simply be earning a wage. (Romans 11:6)

- **Through Himself.** Please stop and think about this. Grace is not only God initiated, it is an actual attribute of God. *Grace is not just God giving me something, it is God giving me Himself.* (John 1:14, 17; 1 Peter 5:10) The term “Grace of God” or “Grace of our Lord”, phrases describing grace as a derivative of God appears *50 times* in the New Testament.
- **And His Power**—Grace is not only an attribute of God, it is an activity of Him. It describes how He works towards us. It is God’s grace that saves us—His power in our lives. It is God’s grace that sanctifies us and it is God’s grace that will ultimately take us to heaven.
- **For His glory**—God doesn’t meet my needs so that my needs are met. He does it so that through meeting them He can be glorified in and through my life.

The incredible truth is this...*Everything that God desires me to be, His grace enables me to be!*

Spiritually responding to God’s grace:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- Is there any area in your life that you have been trusting works for? What are you going to do about it?
- How can God’s grace impact your spiritual disciplines?
- How can you balance the disciplines with grace? How is God working in your life to do this?
- Spend some time meditating on this truth. Let God know how this truth is impacting you through prayer/praise.

Before Next Week:

- Take time each day to reinforce this truth.
- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and discuss God’s grace in your lives.
- Be ready to share any insights you may have on the Grace of God.

Week Ten—Walking By Faith

Introduction: What is it that God really wants you to do that the Bible says brings Him pleasure? How can you please God?

1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:9. What is the ambition of the Christian? Now look up a couple of verses to 5:7...what is the method that allows us to accomplish verse 9?
2. Read Hebrews 11:6. This verse states that it is impossible to please God unless we have....?
3. Look at Galatians 2:20 and Galatians 3:11. How do righteous people live out their righteousness?
4. Meditate on Hebrews 11:1, 6. Comment on this definition of faith.
5. What are some ways faith is portrayed to us by our culture outside of God?
6. How would you respond to the way the world portrays faith?
7. Following is a definition of Biblical faith. How do you see it? What would you change?

Faith is a total trust in the existence and character of God as revealed in the Bible.

- *Faith is a total trust:* It is an assurance and conviction that what God has said is true.
 - *In the existence:* “he who comes to God must believe that He is.”
 - *And character of God:* faith in God is inextricably entwined with knowing Him, His attributes, and how He has acted in history.
 - *As revealed in the Bible:* God has revealed Himself to us. Our faith must emanate from that revelation as recorded in scripture.
2. Get practical. What does it mean to you to live by faith? Look back at Hebrews 11 for examples of relationships and activities done by faith. What is the difference between doing these things, and doing them by faith?

Spiritually responding to walking by faith:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- Is there any area in your life that you have been walking by sight and not faith? How can you move from sight to faith?
- How do you walk by faith as you read the Scripture?
- How do you pray by faith?
- Spend some time meditating on this truth. Let God know how this truth is impacting you through prayer/praise.

Before Next Week:

- Take time each day to reinforce this truth.
- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and discuss your faith: where it is strong and where it needs strengthening.
- Be ready to share any insights you may have on the walking by faith.

Week Eleven—Keeping A Pure Heart

Introduction: Imagine two people living next door to each other. They both go to church, have great moral lifestyles, and wonderful families. They are wise with their money, well educated and respected by their peers. They spend the weekends together, volunteer in community and church, and are great neighbors. Which, if either, is going to heaven? What makes you say that? Chances are, you pointed out something about their heart. It isn't the external things that prep us for heaven, rather it is the heart—is it right with God. Re-read the above paragraph, but substitute “hypocrites and Pharisees” for the people and neighbors. That is what I described... a Pharisee right out of the New Testament. Both of them. God places a high emphasis on the heart. The word heart is used 784 times in Scripture.

1. Read Matthew 23:23-28 and right down three word pictures that Jesus used to describe people who are outwardly moral and religious, but have impure hearts.
2. Why is the heart so important? Read and explain Mark 7:20-23.
3. What does Jesus say in Matthew 15:7-9 about devout worship and service without our hearts?
4. How do you get a pure heart (as per Hebrews 10:19-22 and Acts 15:7-9)?
5. Once our heart is made pure by Christ, how do we keep it pure? Write the answer found in the verses below.
 - a. 1 John 1:9
 - b. 2 Timothy 2:22
 - c. Matthew 6:12-15

6. Read Psalms 32 about the man whose sins have been forgiven—his heart is pure. Note three to five main reactions you have from reading the passage.

7. By faith we know that forgiveness of sin is less than a heartbeat away. We simply need to ask, and before our thought finishes or our words die out, we have it. However, sometimes it is good to go into more detail as the Holy Spirit leads. Therefore, go over the following five steps of forgiveness and be able to explain them to others.
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal every sin. (Psalms 139:23-24)
 - Confess each sin specifically as revealed. (Proverbs 28:13) Important note: forgiveness is given here...the other steps are response to it.
 - By faith, accept the forgiveness. (1 John 1:9)
 - Repent of the sin. (2 Corinthians 7:10)
 - Make restitution if possible/needed. (Matthew 5:23-24)

Spiritually responding to a pure heart:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- Is there any area in your life that you have been hiding an impure heart? Did you get forgiveness through the blood of Jesus for it?
- God is seeking a pure heart. How does your heart influence your personal times alone with God?
- Spend some time meditating on this truth. Let God know how this truth is impacting you through prayer/praise.

Before Next Week:

- Take time each day to reinforce this truth.
- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and ask where you need repentance in your relationship.
- Be ready to share any insights you may have on the Grace of God.
- Memorize 1 John 1:9 and be ready to share how God used it in your life.

Week Twelve—Spiritual Responses Of A Disciplined Heart

Introduction: Think about all you have learned up to this point. You have discovered that God loves you more than you can ever know. You have been made completely righteous apart from any work you could ever do and given a new identity in Christ. You have access to the spiritual power and person of God as He meets your needs through His grace. You have learned to walk in a humble faith. The main thing that you have discovered is that all of these blessings are upon you because God loves you so much. You have done, and can do, nothing to merit anything God has given to you.

An appropriate response to God for all these blessings would be great love for Him and a desire to know Him more deeply. This is where the spiritual disciplines come in.

1. Read the following definition of spiritual disciplines and make sure that you understand it. *“Spiritual disciplines are the Spirit-led habits and actions that I do in order to help me know God better and love Him more.”*
 - *Spirit-led habits:* They are initiated by God not me, and some of them are continual, set activities in my life.
 - *And actions:* Spiritual disciplines are active. Some disciplines are one or short-time events
 - *That I do:* They involve my active participation
 - *In order to help me know God better and love Him more:* The purpose of the discipline is this. I am not doing the discipline for discipline’s sake. I am doing it so that I can know God better and love Him more. The disciplines are a mechanism to allow that to happen.
2. Read the warning in Galatians 3:1-3. What is the admonition that you see there?
3. Read 1 Timothy 4:7-8. The same Bible that warns us constantly against working in the flesh and legalism, also instructs us to discipline ourselves. What is the purpose of this discipline?
4. What is the last spiritual fruit mentioned in Galatians 5:23?

5. How can Christians be spiritually disciplined, and yet live by grace, walking by faith?

6. Every discipline either includes or is rooted in the Scripture. Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17 and write down nine things that God's word does for the believer. What is the purpose, or end result of God's word in a Christian's life?

7. Based upon this truth, how important is it for Christians to regularly spend time in God's word? If the Father inspired His Word, the Son is called the Word, and the Holy Spirit inspired the Word, do you believe that God will lead His children to spend regular time in memorizing, meditating, studying, and reading it?

Spiritually responding from your heart:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- If God is leading you to spend time with Him everyday in His word, what practical steps can you take to make this happen?
- What do you foresee competing with spending time in the Bible? How can you defeat this?
- Spend some time meditating on 2 Timothy 3.15-17. Knowing that this is truth, what does it say to you about your everyday lifestyle?

Before Next Week:

- Take time each day to reinforce this truth.
- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and evaluate your own spiritual disciplines as a couple.
- Share how God has used His word in your life.
- What prevents you from spending a regular amount of time each day in God's word?

Week Thirteen—Spiritual Responses Of A Disciplined Heart

Introduction: Remember our definition of spiritual disciplines: *Spiritual disciplines are the Spirit led habits and actions that I do in order to help me know God better and love Him more.*

1. Read Matthew 6. What three disciplines does Jesus expect of His disciples? What keeps the disciples from entering into hypocrisy when they participate?
2. Name three things that God expects from us in prayer (Matthew 6:5-13).
3. Here is a definition of prayer: *Prayer is cooperating with God in the accomplishment of His will by faithful communication with Him.* Explain why we would define prayer in this way.
4. Fasting is another discipline God desires us to pursue as He leads. Read Acts 13:1-3 and write three things that the church leaders did to discern God's will.
5. What differences do you see in the fasts listed in Acts 9:9, Matthew 4:2, and Daniel 10:3?
6. What is a benefit of fasting listed in Psalm 35:13 and Ezra 8:21?
7. The third discipline mentioned in Matthew 6 is giving. Read 2 Corinthians 8-9 and list the teaching beside each verse.
 - a. 8:1-3
 - b. 8:4
 - c. 8:5
 - d. 8:7:

e. 8:8,24

f. 8:9-15, 9:1

g. 9:1-5:

8. Read 1 Timothy 6:9-10 and list nine things that materialism produces.

Spiritually responding to a pure heart:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- Does your current percentage and level of giving bring God pleasure?
- How is God leading you to pray? Is there a reason that He doesn't want you to talk to Him everyday? If not, then how can you discipline yourself to do this without become legalistic?
- Spend some time meditating on Matthew 6. How do you incorporate spiritual disciplines into your life?

Before Next Week:

- Take time each day to reinforce this truth.
- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and evaluate fasting as a couple.
- Share a testimony about praying, fasting or giving.
- Can you think of a reason why God doesn't want you to fast this week?

Thoughts on Fasting:

How To Fast

- Decide on the type and duration of your fast.
- Let your meal before the fast be light and healthy.
- If your fast is not an extreme fast, drink plenty of water.
- Pray for strength and others as you fast.
- Use meal times for devotion times. The purpose of the fast is not to go without a meal, it is to be with God.
- When you break your fast, do so with a light meal.

What To Expect In A Fast

These may/may not happen, but knowing that there are normal symptoms with fasting can help you continue. Most of these do not kick in until after a couple of days of fasting.

- Physical Symptoms: headaches, light-headed, shaky knees, hunger pains, cravings, exhaustion and weakness (on long fasts), clarity of thought

- Spiritual Symptoms: satanic attack, increased prayer capability, enhanced understanding of Scripture.
- Physical Results: detoxification, improved digestive system, breakdown of unnecessary fat deposits, clarity of thinking.
- Spiritual Results: Knowing God better, disciplined lifestyle, answered prayer, deeper walk with the Lord, spiritual strongholds knocked down, insights in Scripture.

Week Fourteen—Spiritual Gifted Ministry

Introduction: Have you ever been asked to do something that you really were not able to do, either because of a lack of knowledge or skills? How did you feel about it? When you hear about a need or ministry in the church, what is your initial response?

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1. What does God tell us about spiritual gifts?

2. Read Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Corinthians 12:7, and 1 Peter 4:10-11. The following definition summarizes what these verses teach. Read and assimilate the definition. Each part is essential. *“Abilities given to a Christian by, to be used for the good of other people, for the growth and maturity of the Church, and for the glory of God.”*

3. Read the following passages and write down what they teach about spiritual gifts.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 4:11-12

 - b. 1 Corinthians 12:7

 - c. 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Ephesians 4:15-16

 - d. 1 Corinthians 12:11, 28-30; Romans 12:3-8

 - e. Romans 12:1-8

 - f. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

4. Re-read Romans 12:1-8 and 1 Corinthians 12. What do you learn from the imagery of the body?

5. Go back to Romans 12:1-16 and list how we can discover our ministry.
 - a. 12:1

 - b. 12:2

 - c. 12:3

 - d. 12:4-5

e. 12:6-8

f. 12:9-16

6. What is one of the primary purposes of the church according to Ephesians 4:11-15?

7. We are called to be like Jesus Christ. What did He come to do in Mark 10:42-45?

Spiritually responding to God's call to use your gifts:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- How do you currently serve Christ through Blue Ridge Bible Church? Is the Holy Spirit pleased and God glorified through your ministry commitments?
- Based upon your spiritual gifts, is there any area of ministry that you believe you ought to be participating in?
- Spend some time meditating on this truth. Let God know how this truth is impacting you through prayer/praise.

Before Next Week:

- Prayerfully take the spiritual gift inventory following this lesson. This may give you insight into your gifts, although it isn't authoritative.
- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and evaluate each of your spiritual gifts and how you are using them in the church.
- Read, meditate, and pray about memorizing, 1 Peter 4.10-11.
- Pray about your specific ministry involvement.

Week Fourteen Addendum—Classification and Definition of Specific Spiritual Gifts

FUNCTIONAL Gifts are gifts that can stand alone in their use and edification of others. They are not dependent on other gifts for their expression or manifestation.

SUPPORT Gifts are gifts that are expressed through one or more of the functional gifts. They edify the body in a support role. They cannot stand alone. For example, how could the body be edified by a member with the gift of Wisdom, unless it was expressed by one of the speaking gifts.

There are different ideas of exactly how a gift should be defined. *This is because they are not defined in the scripture, only practiced.* The following definitions are common to evangelical Christians, although there may be a few variations from specific listings that you may have read.

Functional Gifts: Those gifts which can stand alone.

Speaking Gifts

- *Prophecy:* The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to proclaim God's truth in a clear and concise way to a group of people that calls them to repentance and correction of life-style, or provides comfort and edification.
- *Teaching:* The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to clearly and accurately understand, communicate, and apply God's truth.

Service Gifts

- *Administration:* The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to understand organizational function, and the ability to devise and execute effective plans to reach short and long term goals of that organization
- *Giving:* The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to give money and material resources far above the required tithe to the Kingdom and Work of the Lord with liberality and with joy.
- *Helps:* The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to invest their time and talents in practical and necessary tasks that help other Christians increase the effectiveness of their gifts.

People-Intensive Gifts

- *Encouragement:* The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to give words of comfort, consolation, encouragement and reassurance to those that are wavering in their faith or experiencing hurt.
- *Evangelism:* This is not mentioned as a gift, but I believe it is implied in the office of Evangelist. Sharing the gospel is a command, a privilege, and a responsibility for all believers, however this seems to be the divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to share the gospel in such a way that the Spirit moves upon the lost and brings them to faith and discipleship.

- *Leadership*: The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to instill vision, to set goals, to motivate others to the accomplishment of those goals for the glory and purpose of God.
- *Mercy*: The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to feel genuine empathy with and joyfully minister to those who are suffering.
- *Shepherding*: The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to care for, nurture, and love a group of believers. This is also called "Pastoring". It is mentioned as an office, but I believe the gift is implied within the office.

Support Gifts: Gifts expressed through another gift.

Enabling Gifts

- *Discernment*: The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to distinguish between truth and deception in character, relationships, and message content.
- *Faith*: The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to supernaturally understand and believe the will and purposes of God, and act on that belief without swerving or doubting.
- *Knowledge*: The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to discover, accumulate and analyze information effectively.
- *Wisdom*: The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to apply spiritual truth and teaching practically.

Miraculous Gifts

- *Healing*: The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to be God's instrument and channel to restore people to health.
- *Miracles*: The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to serve as channels of powerful acts of God that seem to circumvent the ordinary course of natural laws.
- *Languages*: The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to speak in an unlearned language the wonderful works of God.
- *Interpretation*: The divine ability given to a member of the body of Christ that enables them to make known the message of one operating in the spiritual gift of languages.

Week Fifteen—Serving Your Family

Introduction: Have you ever been too busy for your family? What was the result of it? Do you think that it honored Christ? Our family is God's basic unit both for organizing society and for developing disciples and leaders for the next generation.

1. Read Genesis 2:20-25. What was the first institution that God created?
2. Words referring to family are used over 4,400 times in the Bible. Read 1 Timothy 5:3-8 and state how important God says the family is.
3. Read the qualifications for an elder in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. What does God say about family relationships?
4. What is one of the primary purposes of marriage, according to Ephesians 5:22-28?
5. What is the responsibility of a parent in Ephesians 6:4?
6. What was the role of John the Baptist in Luke 1:17?
7. What are husbands called to do in Ephesians 5:25-28; 1 Peter 3:7?
8. What are wives told in Ephesians 5:21, 33; 1 Peter 3:1-6; Titus 2:4-5?

9. In summary, the home is to be the primary place of ministry and evangelism. Knowing this, on a scale of 0 – 10, rate your home for spirituality, with 0 being chaotic and out of control, 5 being moral and church going, and 10 being a place of regular family prayer, worship, and discipleship. What can you do to better serve your family?

Spiritually responding to God's call to serve your family:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- Do you think that God is glorified through your family ministry?
- God wants us to bless our families, how can you do this?

Before Next Week:

- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and ask your spouse if he/she is pleased with your family ministry. Have them rate it on a scale of 1-10, using the scale above.
- For all, married or not, evaluate your extended family. How are you participating, from your own position within the family, to make it a healthy and God-honoring unit?
- Pray about how to be a spiritual blessing to your family.

Week Sixteen—Small Group Fellowship

Introduction: Describe your relationship with your best friend. What makes it good?

1. Read John 13:34-35 and write down in your own words what Jesus said would make Christians obvious to the world.

2. Read 1 John 1:1-4 and write down three persons that you can have fellowship with because Christ died for you. What is the result of this? Now read 2 Corinthians 13:14 and list someone else we fellowship with.

3. Fellowship is a word that means to share, participate, or partner with someone. It refers to an intimacy of relationship when applied to Christianity. As you just read, it is used to illustrate the loving relationship that God has for His children through Jesus Christ. A good way to look at what fellowship produces is by studying how God told us to respond to “One-Another”. There are 59 “One-Anothers” in the Bible. Write down a few of the things God calls us to do with or to “one another” in the Christian fellowship.
 - a. John 15:12
 - b. Romans 12:10
 - c. Romans 15:7
 - d. Romans 16:16
 - e. Galatians 5:13
 - f. Galatians 6:2
 - g. Colossians 3:13
 - h. 1 Thessalonians 5:11
 - i. Hebrews 10:24
 - j. James 5:16

4. Notice how involved we are to be in each other's lives. Christianity is all about relationships. First and foremost, our relationship with God through Christ, secondary to that, our relationship with each other through Christ. Why is it, in your opinion, that Christians don't experience what you listed above?

6. What do the following verses have in common? Acts 2:46, 8:3, 16:40, 20:20?

7. Christian fellowship is centered on the power of the Holy Spirit flowing through us as we focus on becoming like Jesus Christ together. Contrast this with what is ordinarily called fellowshiping in today's church.

8. Read Acts 2:42-47 and list five things that the fellowship did together.

9. It is obvious that God wants us to be *in the homes of other Christians*, actively engaging in Christian fellowship. One of the primary methods of doing this in our culture and church is through small groups. Are you currently in a small group? Is there a biblical and/or Holy Spirit led reason why you are not?

10. What can you do to improve your fellowship with others? How can you do it? When will you do it? Who will it be with?

Spiritually responding to this truth:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- Do you think that God is honored through your involvement with other Christians?
- Is there a small group that God is leading you to join, because they need what you have to offer in terms of gifts and abilities?

Before Next Week:

- Evaluate your relationship and fellowship with other Christians on a scale of 1-10, with one being no spiritual involvement, and 10 being a small group leader. Are you where you should be or want to be? What can you do to change?
- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and evaluate your involvement in a small group. What should change?
- Pray about how to become involved in the lives of other Christians.

Week Seventeen—God's Heart For The Lost

Introduction: Have you ever considered how much time, energy and money go into life-saving and rescue operations? Think about how much of our resources we put into helping people whose physical lives are in danger—medically or extrinsically. Why is that? How does this apply to those who are in spiritual danger?

1. What will happen to the lost according to Scripture? (Revelation 20:11-15; Matthew 13:41-42, Revelation 14:9-11)
2. Why did Jesus come? (Luke 19:10)
3. Read Matthew 9:35-38 and write down what Jesus was doing to reach the lost, and what He desires us to do?
4. How much does Jesus love the lost? (John 3:16, Romans 5:8)
5. Jesus said that we could tell a tree by its fruit, based on your fruit, how much do you love, really love, the lost?
6. What is the expressed, written desire of God? (1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9)
7. What did God tell us to do as believers? (Acts 1:8)
8. If it is so clear that God loves the lost, and we know that if they don't come to Christ they will spend eternity in hell...what prevents us from working harder to rescue them?

Spiritually responding to this truth:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- How do you see God's grace on you in evangelism? What should you improve?
- How can you be more in tune with God's heart for people who are like you were...lost and separated from the Lord?
- Pray over Luke 15 this week and be prepared to share an insight the Lord gives to you.

Before Next Week:

- Take time each day to reinforce this truth.
- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and evaluate your own passion for sharing the good news as a couple.
- Share how God has used His word in your life.
- Memorize 1 Timothy 2.3-4, pray for God to open your eyes to one of the many opportunities that you will have this week to point people to His love.
- Pray for an opportunity to share the gospel with someone.

Week Eighteen—Sharing The Gospel

Introduction: We are often scared to share our faith. This is because we have a negative view of sharing with others. We view it as intrusive, or trying to force people to do something that they don't want to. Read Romans 14:17 and you see that the Kingdom of God is incredible. When you share the gospel, you are really inviting people to a party. You are asking them to come to life and sight. You are rescuing them from emptiness, purposelessness and hell.

1. Read the following definition of evangelism and make sure that you understand it.
“Evangelism is sharing the story of the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit, leaving the results to the Father.”
 - *sharing the story of the Son:* It is the story of Jesus that saves people. The gospel is about Him.
 - *in the power of the Holy Spirit:* True evangelism is Spirit-filled and Spirit-led. The Holy Spirit is working in your life, and in the life of the one that you are sharing the good news with.
 - *leaving the results to the Father:* We do not bring anyone to faith in Christ. That is totally up to the Father. He uses us, but it is His job. We can relax and trust Him.
2. What does James 5:20 say about someone who leads another to Christ?
3. Read Romans 10:9-17. What 2-3 truths most impact you from the passage?
4. Be able to state the broad outline and give a presentation of the gospel *from your heart...* not a canned one! The information in the addendum can to help you prepare to share the good news with someone, but it is not designed as a canned presentation.

Spiritually responding to this truth:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- Who do you know that needs to know Jesus? How can God open doors for you to share with them? Do they know that you love them?
- We know that salvation is up to the Lord, but evangelism has been assigned to us as we cooperate with Him. Be ready to share about being used by God in sharing the gospel.

Before Next Week:

- Take time each day to reinforce this truth.
- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and evaluate your own passion for sharing the good news as a couple.
- Share how God has used His word in your life.
- Review the information in the addendum and be ready to discuss it.
- Pray for the opportunity to share Christ with someone who needs Him.

Week Eighteen Addendum—Sharing the Gospel

Remember: It is not our friendship or our testimony that saves people...*it is the power of God, through the shared Gospel!*

Communication Tips...

- People want to talk with you, not be talked at by you.
- Communication is two-way.
- You may need to give the gospel in doses or more than one time. Always recap.
- The two main problems people have are: STARTING and STOPPING.
- Be bold...you do not have to apologize for the gospel...this is what they need for life and eternity!

The Essentials Of The Gospel: G.O.-G.O. (a mnemonic aid)

God's Purpose—God made me to love me and have fellowship with me.

God made me to love me!

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

God's purpose is for me to have an abundant life!

The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly. (John 10:10)

Our Problem—Man has turned from God and ignored His love.

Man has a natural desire to selfishness and to ignore God's principles for living.

"Look out for #1"

"Do your own thing"

"If it feels good, do it"

"I'm the captain of my vessel"

"It's my life"

"No one orders me around"

The Bible calls this attitude sin. Sin breaks our relationship with God, causes us to fear and misunderstand God, and try to live our lives without him. All of us have sinned.

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

God's Provision—Christ came to solve our sin problem.

People try all kinds of different ways to solve this problem: Religion, good deeds, philosophy, work, self-medication and many others.

"There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death." (Pr. 16:25)

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we approach Him in the wrong way.

"My mother was a Christian. . . ."	"I will stop doing"
"I will go to church"	"I was raised Catholic"
"I was raised Baptist/?..."	"Just be sincere"
"All good people go to heaven"	

What Is The Solution?

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me. (John 14:6)

God Himself knew our problem, He knew that we were hopeless and could do nothing to help ourselves. He came to the earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. Jesus Christ came to the earth, lived a sinless life then died on the cross for our sins. He was buried for three days then he rose from the dead. He is offering to you eternal life if you will believe, if you will place your faith in Him. *The way to a right relationship with God is a person! Jesus Christ is my way to heaven and to fulfilled living!*

Jesus Christ Has Solved Your Sin Problem!

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

"...who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time." (1 Timothy 2:4-6)

Jesus took all of our sins upon Himself. He died for us. God will take the righteousness of Jesus and place it on us, totally forgiving us and making us pure in His sight.

Our Response—We need to respond correctly to the life and love of Christ.

What does God want me to do?

1. Admit that God has not been first place in your life and ask Him to forgive your sins.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

2. Believe that Jesus died to pay the penalty for your sins, and that He rose again the third day, and is alive today.

"...that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." (Romans 10:9)

3. Accept God's free gift of salvation. Don't try to earn it, you can't.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name," (John 1:12)

The only way to have a right relationship to God is to accept the free gift of life through the person of Jesus Christ! He has already done everything we could not do, and He has done it for us!

4. Ask Jesus Christ to come into your life and be the Lord (the boss, master, director, controller) of your life.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

"...that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved;" (Romans 10:9)

Leading Them To Christ, Not Just The Gospel.

One of the hardest parts of sharing the gospel is leading someone to commitment.

The Bible uses farming as an illustration of someone coming to Christ. One man plants, another waters, but God gives the increase. The increase must be harvested or the fruit is wasted. Sometimes God uses you to plant, sometimes to water, other times God will let you see the fruit. But seeing the fruit is not the end, it is the beginning! We must cooperate with God when He allows us to see people be born again by becoming a spiritual caregiver to them. God has called us to make disciples, not get decisions!

The Assessment

After sharing the gospel, ask an application-based question to see if they are ready.

Apply an illustration..."Are you ready to get on the airplane?"

Apply a point..."Would you like to ask Christ into your life?"

If they are defensive or disinterested, you may—with caution—see if they are open to talking about why they reacted the way they did. Sometimes the wisest thing to do is to back off. Listen to the Holy Spirit and respond appropriately.

If they seem ready, make sure that they understand what they are doing.

Go over the highlights and ask if they *believe and understand*.

Explain and/or use other illustrations to answer questions they raise.

If they are not ready, ask why-answer questions-pray-and wait for another time.

If they are ready, then assist them in the graduation ceremony!

At this point, your friend has understood and believed the gospel. Now he/she wants to apply it...but they most likely do not know how.

- Relax and forget about formulas—this is God's doing and He will finish it.
- Pray together and out loud. Encourage them to pray in their own words.
- Close the time by thanking the Lord for saving them
- Share Scripture with them and set up a time to begin discipleship.

Week Nineteen—Sharing Your Story

Introduction: If you ever study the teaching style of Jesus, you will notice that it is full of stories. News shows and papers always have human-interest stories. What do you do when you hear one? Why do you think this is? One thing that people cannot argue with is your experience. They may not agree with or believe in it, but it is your experience. Experience does not create, nor validate truth—God does that, but our experience with God can be a powerful tool to reach our friends, especially after they know and respect us

1. In Acts 1:8 we are given a title in which Jesus describes what we are. What is it and what does it mean?

2. Read the testimony of Paul in Acts 26:1-23 and list how he shared his story in a way that pointed to Jesus.
 - a. 26:1-3
 - b. 26:4-12
 - c. 26:13-18
 - d. 26:19-23

3. Know the following principles for sharing your testimony:
 - Avoid church vocabulary
 - Exalt Christ, not yourself or your sin
 - Tailor your story to fit the occasion
 - Keep it short
 - Use it to share the story of Jesus, not just your story

4. Write your testimony out and rehearse it, being able to tailor it to the occasion.

Spiritually responding to this truth:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- How did going back over your salvation make you feel? Tell it to God.
- Spend some time praising the Lord for your own salvation. Why do you think God chose to save you? Is that being realized in your life?

Before Next Week:

- Take time each day to reinforce this truth.
- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and evaluate your own readiness to share your story.
- Memorize Acts 1:8
- Share your testimony with someone and pray for it to open the way for the story of Jesus.

Week Twenty—Discipling Others

Introduction: What is the purpose of parenting? Is it to have babies, or train up adults? That is the same thing with evangelism. We are not called just to share the gospel, there is much more joy to be had.

1. Read Matthew 28:19-20 and write down what we are to make.
2. Read that passage again, what is the curriculum for discipleship? What does this mean to you?
3. 2 Timothy 2:1-2 explains how the kingdom grows. What is our role?
4. What is the purpose of our discipleship according to 1 Timothy 1:5?
5. A great discipleship curriculum for people you lead to Christ is in your hands. Learn how to teach it and adapt it. The most important thing in discipling others is loving them, sharing your life with them, and teaching them to love God. What does 2 Peter 3:18 tell us to do?
6. Explain the church's motto and how it applies to discipleship: "*Communicating Christ, Building Believers, Sending Servants.*"

Spiritually responding to this truth:

- What do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you to do in response to this truth?
- Do you think that God is honored through your discipleship of others?
- How can you be more perceptive to those around you that need to be discipled? What practical steps are you going to take to be a part of their lives?

Before Next Week:

- Take time each day to reinforce this truth.
- If married, do this lesson together with your spouse and evaluate your own readiness to share your story.
- Come to your next meeting having prayed for three people who you may be able to lead as a mentor in a discipleship relationship.
- Become a part of Blue Ridge's discipleship of the heart!

Week Twenty-One—Evaluation

This is an open discussion week to go over any and all of the past weeks. Be prepared to share how God has used this and how you think He is going to use this. Share any constructive criticism about the content, and the communication of that content by your mentor. How can this curriculum be improved? How can your mentor improve?

Also, be prayed and open to any advice, admonition or challenges of your mentor into your life.

1. Comments about how God has used this discipleship in your life:

2. How I think God will use this:

3. Evaluation of course:

4. Evaluation of mentor:

5. Evaluation by mentor: