

# **DISCOVERY** **TEACHER'S GUIDE**

**Mark, 1 & 2 Corinthians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus,  
Philemon, 1 & 2 Peter**

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## **The Credentials, Introduction, and Opposition of the Son of God**

Mark 1:1 — 3:35

## **The Authentication of the Son of God**

Mark 4:1 — 8:38

## **The Instructions of the Son of God**

Mark 9:1 — 13:37

## **The Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Son of God**

Mark 14:1 — 16:20

## **Challenge to Unity**

1 Corinthians 1:1 — 4:21

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1 Corinthians 5:1 — 11:34

## **Results of Unity**

1 Corinthians 12:1 — 16:24

## **Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians**

2 Corinthians 1:1 — 13:14

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1 Timothy 1:1 — 6:21

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## **Paul's Letters to Titus & Philemon**

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## **Peter's First Letter**

1 Peter 1:1 — 5:14

## **Peter's Second Letter**

2 Peter 1:1 — 3:18

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Discovery is a Bible study course for the high school and adult levels. Bible references are taken from the King James Version. The companion to these Sunday school lessons is Daybreak, a daily devotional and personal Bible study continuum. All of the material is available on our website, as well as in printed form. The print version is designed to be stored in a binder; subsequent modules can then be easily inserted. Discovery is an official publication of the Apostolic Faith Church. All rights are reserved.

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would be pure. In every case where Jesus confronted evil spirits, He rebuked it and caused it to leave.

*This account gives the believer hope that Jesus not only has authority and ability to forgive sins, but also to deliver from the power that causes sin. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil and to defeat him in every way.*

**5.** When Jesus left the synagogue, He went to the house of Simon Peter and Andrew. As soon as they entered the house, Jesus was told about Simon's mother-in-law being sick. How did Jesus respond to the problem? (Mark 1:31) What difference should it make in our lives that Jesus has the power to heal the sick and deliver the demon-possessed?

*Jesus healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law. Each of the Gospel writers reported what stood out to them, and often they highlighted different details. Matthew's account mentions that Jesus touched the woman's hand (Matthew 8:14-15). Luke added that Jesus spoke to the fever and it left her (Luke 4:38-39). In Mark's account, He helped her up. These accounts do not conflict. Each writer chose to highlight different details of the account in order to emphasize certain characteristics of Jesus. We get a more complete picture as we read all of the accounts. The important point is that Jesus has power to heal the sick.*

*Today we can go to God in prayer, knowing that He has the power to meet our every need. If we are sick, we can be healed through the same power that was available when Jesus walked on earth. Those who are bound by demon possession can be delivered in the same way.*

*You could bring out to your class that Jesus was able to help Simon Peter's mother-in-law because He was an invited guest in their home. Think what Peter and his family would have missed if they had not invited Jesus to their house! What are some of the blessings we will enjoy if we invite Jesus into our homes?*

**6.** In the second chapter, Jesus came to a house in Capernaum, which became so full that there was no more room to enter. What do the details in Mark 2:3-4 tell about the paralytic man and his friends? What motivated Jesus to respond to the man's plight? Mark 2:5

*Class discussion could bring out that the man seemingly was desperate for help. He and his friends all demonstrated faith—the paralytic by being willing to be carried to Jesus, and the four men by putting their faith into action, proving that they believed if they could get their friend to Jesus, he would be healed. The extreme steps they took show the determination they had to reach Jesus. Their faith and determination resulted in more than healing: the sick man was also pardoned from his sins.*

*Jesus was motivated to respond to these men because of their faith. The Greek word pistis translated*

as faith in verse 5, indicates a strong conviction of belief and assurance of an answer to their request.

7. Several times Mark referred to an event taking place on the Sabbath day. What did the disciples do that outraged the Pharisees? How were the Pharisees misguided about the Sabbath? Mark 2:23-28 What benefits result from honoring the Lord's Day?

*The disciples plucked corn and broke the kernels off; or as Luke says, “[Rubbed] them in their hands” (Luke 6:1). The Pharisees were outraged with the disciples because the Law did not allow work on the Sabbath, and they deemed that the disciples had violated the Law by their actions.*

*It might be interesting to point out to your class that the Jewish legal traditions had thirty-nine categories of activities that were forbidden on the Sabbath. Harvesting was one of them. The Pharisees went so far as to describe different methods of harvesting that were forbidden, and one of these was to rub the heads of grain between the hands, as the disciples did.*

*The Pharisees were misguided in that they were locked into the letter of the Law, but missed the purpose and benefits of the Law. This resulted in bringing men into bondage and dread of the Law of God.*

*As you discuss the results of honoring the Lord's Day, it should be noted that setting Sunday aside to honor God helps us set our priorities spiritually. Also, it is beneficial in the physical and emotional aspects of our lives. Review with the class some specific benefits of honoring the Lord's Day, such as time to worship and pray, a way of showing our respect for God, and fellowship with other Christians.*

**8.** The religious leaders of Jesus' time were so desperate to excuse and defend themselves that they resorted to accusing Christ (Mark 3:22). What was their accusation against Him? How did Jesus answer the charge? Mark 3:22-27

*They accused Christ of having Beelzebub (a name referring to Satan) and casting out devils through the power of the prince of the devils.*

*Jesus answered the charge by asking the logical question: "How can Satan cast out Satan?" The answer was obvious: If Satan were to cast out evil, he would be working against himself.*

*Cover the three rebuttals Jesus used:*

1. *"If a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand" (Mark 3:24).*
2. *"If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" (Mark 3:25).*
3. *"If Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand" (Mark 3:26).*

**9.** In Mark 3:28-30, Jesus said that all sins, even blasphemy, can be forgiven. God's love reaches out to all, even those who curse and revile Him. However, He

warned of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which is sometimes referred to as “the unpardonable sin.” Because a person can only be saved through the Holy Spirit’s work, the person who rejects the Holy Spirit removes himself from the only One who can lead him to repentance. Who was Jesus talking to in this passage, and why do you suppose He addressed this subject with them? Mark 3:22, 30

*Jesus gave this warning to the scribes because they said, “He hath an unclean spirit.”*

*The key point of this question is to make sure your students understand what “the unpardonable sin” actually is. Sometimes people worry that they have committed the unpardonable sin. However, the very existence of concern shows that they have not rejected the Holy Spirit. The sin of rejecting the Holy Ghost is unforgivable because the one who commits it will never feel any drawing to seek forgiveness.*

*Encourage all unsaved in the class to seek God while He is dealing with them. The time may come when the Spirit will not do so.*

## CONCLUSION

Jesus showed Himself to be the Son of God. Many people opposed Him, but He was able to demonstrate His Messiahship by both His words and His miracles.





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- *God has all power; no situation is beyond His power to remedy.*
- *God cares when we face “storms” in our lives.*
- *God does not want us to be fearful; faith overcomes fear.*

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*Their circumstances in life were very different. The demoniac was a picture of the wretchedness and fatality of sin, a man possessed by satanic influences, self-destructive, and with impaired mental and emotional faculties. The child was young and innocent, the offspring of a distinguished member of the community who was an elder or religious leader of the synagogue. The woman was a social outcast in that she suffered from an incurable malady which resulted in her being designated by the Law as ceremonially unclean.*

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*When your students have finished noting differences, move on to question four.*



**4.** How are the miracles referred to in the previous question similar?

*In all three cases, there was an urgent need.*

*In each case, a request was made for help.*

*In all three instances, man's remedies likely had been tried but the situations still needed the power of God in order to be resolved. The demoniac had been bound with chains but was still uncontrollable. Though Scripture does not specifically state that Jairus had sought the counsel of physicians, we can assume that he had done all he could possibly do. The woman with the issue of blood had spent all her money on doctors' treatments, but her condition had continued to deteriorate.*

*Though their needs were very different, all received amazing and complete healings. The demoniac was restored to his right mind; Jairus' daughter was raised from death; the woman with the issue of blood felt in her body that she was healed, and "straight-way" (or immediately) the work was done.*

*In each case, the miracle of healing was a testimony to observers. The demoniac was commanded to stay and testify of Christ, and we read that "all men did marvel" (verse 20). The woman with the issue of blood was summoned by Christ to tell what had happened to her, and she told him "all the truth" (verse 33). When Jairus' daughter was raised from her deathbed, all men were filled with "great astonishment" (verse 42).*

*Responses to questions three and four should lead your class to conclude that it does not matter to God who we are when we approach Him with our needs. It does not matter where we are. It does not matter what the need is. What does matter is that we bring it to Him, recognizing His power to come to our aid.*

**5.** Mark 6:33-44 records another amazing miracle of Jesus'. Far away from the city in a desert place, a crowd of five thousand men, plus women and children, had been listening to Jesus teach. With evening approaching, the people needed food. What solution did the disciples first propose? What lessons can we learn from studying Jesus' response to the situation?

*They proposed that Jesus send the people away to find their own food.*

*Class discussion of the second question could bring out a number of varying lessons to be learned from this account. You may wish to consider the following:*

- Man's extremities are God's opportunities. The disciples saw the problem; Jesus saw the potential.*
- While the disciples proposed sending the people away, Jesus' message is just the opposite: He encourages all to come to Him.*

- *When we face a problem, the first step should not be to measure our resources, but to determine God's will and trust Him to meet our needs. However meager our resources may be, in God's hands they will be enough.*
- *Sometimes God requires us to participate in the answer to our prayers. The disciples did what they could by organizing the people into groups, offering what they did have, and distributing what God provided.*
- *Whatever we give to God, He can bless and multiply. We are not the producers; we are merely the distributors.*
- *When God gives, He gives generously. The "fragments that remained" were more than what had been offered in the first place.*

**6.** In Mark 7:1-13, a delegation of Pharisees and scribes confronted Jesus, finding fault with His disciples for eating with "unwashed hands." Jesus rebuked the accusers by making several charges against them. Note at least three behaviors He condemned.

*Verse 6—They honored God with their lips but not their hearts.*

*Verses 7-8—They taught the traditions of men instead of the commandments of God.*

*Verses 10-12—They failed to support their parents as commanded by the Law, claiming what should have been given to their parents was "Corban" (something set aside for God).*

*This might be a good opportunity to discuss with your class the dangers of hypocrisy—pretending to be something you are not. Jesus referred to the Pharisees as "hypocrites" because their supposed worship was false and motivated by the wrong reasons. They wanted to appear righteous in the eyes of men, but had no inward righteousness. By contrast, Jesus taught the necessity and joy of inward purity. He made it clear that we are not pure because of outward acts. Rather, we become pure on the inside through submission to God and His cleansing power. Then our inward purity will naturally be reflected in clean, holy outward behavior.*

**7.** When Jesus warned His disciples of the "leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod" (Mark 8:15), the disciples thought He literally meant bread. What did He really mean, and why did He give this warning?

*In the Bible, leaven (yeast) is consistently a symbol of sin, or of false doctrine. Christ was warning His disciples that the teachings of the Pharisees and attitudes of Herod and his followers were wrong. Just as only a small amount of leaven will permeate an entire batch of bread dough and cause it to rise, so the hypocritical teachings, lack of love, and worldliness in these religious and political leaders would*

contaminate an entire society. It would even infiltrate the disciples' own ranks if they were not alert to the danger.

*The warning given here is still valid in our day. Sin has phenomenal properties of expansion. As a follow-up question, ask your class what type of "leaven" Satan might try to introduce into our lives today. The point should be made that all believers must be on guard against being contaminated by the leaven of evil, in whatever form it takes.*

**8.** In Mark 8:34-38, Jesus revealed the cost of true discipleship. In verse 34, He said to His followers, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." What are some ways we can fulfill that challenge in our lives?

*Class discussion will likely cover a variety of suggestions. To begin with, you may wish to establish that there is only one way to truly be a disciple of Jesus, and that is to follow His admonition. Obedience is vital to a Christian life.*

*In reference to taking up the cross, it is important to note that Jesus was not speaking of self-inflicted trials, or purposely looking to make our lives more difficult. Nowhere does the Bible teach us that we need to invent our own crosses. This thinking can lead to a works-oriented salvation, and result in a burdensome and lifeless relationship with God.*

*Rather, taking up the cross means that we must yield to the standard of holiness that God wants to put into our hearts, and mortify the deeds of the body through the Spirit. We grow and become more like Christ as we continually deny ourselves things that can hinder us, in favor of walking in the Spirit of God. God provides grace for this, if we provide willingness.*

*As we walk with God, we will all have a cross to bear, and when we are willing to take up the challenge of the Gospel and be faithful at any cost, we will find the grace of God drawing us further and deeper into Christ's fellowship. Rather than sadness and heaviness, we find a joy that surpasses any "sacrifice" we make. We will find that the cross (a calling, challenge in our lives, etc.) which may at one time have seemed too hard to bear, was in fact the doorway to God's richest blessings.*

## **CONCLUSION**

Christ revealed Himself openly while on earth. He also reveals Himself openly to us through His Word and the Holy Spirit. Let us determine to learn and uphold the truths He shows us about Himself!

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*Jesus' point was not the value of the coins, but rather that the woman gave all she had.*

*Class discussion should bring out several lessons.*

- *God does not condemn the rich who contribute much out of the generosity of their hearts.*
- *The attitude of giving is important; giving for show will earn no eternal reward.*
- *This widow gave sacrificially. Proportion may be more important than quantity, and God may look more at what we hold back than the amount we give.*
- *Our giving should be evidence of our love for God and faith in Him.*

*Ask your students what we can give to God besides money. They may mention time, talents, and energy. Sometimes we can give by a smile, a word, or a prayer.*

**8.** In Mark 13:32-37, Jesus warned His listeners of things that would occur at the end time. He repeatedly urged them to be ready, to watch and pray, and then concluded it all by saying, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." What are some ways we can "watch" in order to be ready for Jesus' coming?

*Your class may bring out the following thoughts:*

- *We must keep the Lord close in our minds at all times.*
- *We must be alert, and always choose what we know to be right in each decision we make.*
- *We must pray always, and seek for our deeper experiences and a closer walk with God.*
- *We must study His Word.*
- *We need to gather for worship and fellowship with other believers, even more as the day of Jesus' coming draws near.*
- *We need to love God with all our hearts, and give Him thanksgiving and praise.*

## **CONCLUSION**

After Jesus gave instruction concerning the Kingdom of God, He concluded by warning His listeners to be ready for His next coming, and to "Watch."



## The Crucifixion and Resurrection of the Son of God

## SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

Mark 14:1 through 16:20

### KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.”  
(Mark 15:39)

## BACKGROUND

The final chapters of Mark contain the account of the most crucial event of all time: Jesus' ultimate deed of servanthood. Chapters 14 and 15 are sometimes called the "passion narrative," and offer Mark's account of the events that were preliminary to Jesus' death, His Crucifixion, and details regarding His burial. Chapter 16 gives the Resurrection story.

Not one of the events that transpired was an accident, nor was Jesus a victim. The plotting of the religious leaders, the betrayal by Judas, the trials, the mocking and physical abuse, and the agony of the Cross were all foretold by the prophets. Jesus willingly submitted Himself and was obedient to His Father's plan, thereby making it possible for all people to be delivered from sin and death.

The city of Jerusalem was exceedingly crowded during this final week before the Crucifixion, because Passover had to be observed there. Jesus' nights during this time were spent either on the Mount of Olives, where the Garden of Gethsemane was located, or in Bethany, a city about two miles from Jerusalem on the east side of the Mount of Olives.

After Jesus' betrayal by Judas, arrest, and the mockery of a trial, Mark tells how Jesus was led away to be crucified. Crucifixion was an agonizing and degrading form of punishment used by the Roman government. Jesus died about 3:00 p.m. on Friday, and was buried quickly before the Sabbath began at 6:00 p.m.

On Sunday morning, the angel inside the tomb declared the message that contains hope for every person: “He is risen.” Because Jesus conquered death, every soul has the opportunity to have eternal life.

## SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

1. The word *Messiah* means “Anointed One.” Given this, why were some of those present at the home of Simon the leper indignant when Mary anointed Jesus? Mark 14:4-5

*Their perspective was that the costly ointment could have been sold and the proceeds used to help*

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broken bread and “fruit of the vine” symbolize? Why is this observance significant to us?

*The broken bread symbolized Jesus' broken body. The fruit of the vine was a picture of Jesus' Blood being "poured out for many."*

*This observance is significant to us because it illustrates the fact that Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, offered Himself as a sacrifice. His body was broken and His Blood was shed that we might come to God through Him, in full confidence that He will hear us and save us from our sins.*

*This could be an opportunity to encourage your class to participate in the ordinance services if they are saved and living a victorious Christian life. Many have received wonderful blessings, healings, and spiritual experiences as they looked back during this time of memorial to the death of Jesus at Calvary. You may wish to refer to 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 for further instruction on the significance of the Lord's Supper.*

**5.** During Jesus' trial, why do you think He refused to answer Pilate's questions? (Mark 15:5) What can we learn from Jesus' example here?

*Class discussion may bring out such thoughts as:*

- *Jesus remained silent as a fulfillment of Scripture. (See Isaiah 53:7.)*
- *He did not need to defend Himself; He had committed no crime.*
- *It would have been futile to answer Pilate. Jesus' trial was pure mockery and a façade. Also, Jesus knew His time had come to give His life for our sins. His work on earth was done, and He had no reason to prolong the trial or try to save Himself.*

*In response to the second question, your class should reach the conclusion that we can “speak” through our lives, even without words. They may also bring up that it is not always necessary to defend ourselves or have the last word in a situation.*

**6.** We read in Mark 15:37 that Jesus “gave up the ghost.” Why did Jesus have to die?

*Jesus had to die in order to pay the penalty for the sins of mankind. This question will provide you with a good opportunity to review the fact that the descendants of Adam and Eve—every person born into this world—inherited their sinful nature. Instead of coming into the world desiring to do right, all are born with an inclination toward evil, which leads to sinful actions. Acts of sin may be dramatic or subtle, but they always separate the sinner from God, and the penalty is death.*

*Thankfully, that is not the end of the story. Because of God's great love for His creation, He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to this world to live as a man and die on the Cross in the place of sinful man. Jesus paid the penalty for our sins. Because of His death, if*

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The death and Resurrection of Christ was not just an event that occurred over two thousand years ago. The power of the Cross and of His Resurrection are real today and will give new life and hope to the one who will totally surrender, take up his cross, and follow Christ.

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## Challenge to Unity

## SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

1 Corinthians 1:1 through 4:21

### KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1 Corinthians 1:10)

## BACKGROUND

The city of Corinth was one of the most prosperous Greek cities in Paul's time. In this wicked society, Paul and his contemporaries planted a church. While there were some Jewish believers in the church, it was made up mostly of Gentiles with a pagan background.

The Apostle Paul had labored diligently in the city of Corinth, but after his departure, many problems surfaced, and division spread in the church. Soon, reports of these problems came to Paul, and a delegation of Corinthians brought a letter from the church requesting his guidance on a number of issues. Paul's first letter, comprised of basic instructions to the church, was a response to those questions.

Paul was writing to a church in which some members were not doing as well as others spiritually. Possibly, some in attendance had not yet been converted. Some were saved but not yet sanctified. Others were sanctified but not yet filled with the Holy Ghost. Others had all three foundational spiritual experiences, yet were unwise in their use of the Spirit-endowed gifts they possessed. Paul's goal was to point all of them to higher ground. Today, too, we have the same goal every time we hold a church service. Some comments may be directed to sinners, but that does not mean everyone in the meeting is a sinner. The spiritual level of those in the audience is varied, and so it was in the Corinthian church.

Paul began his epistle by addressing the need for unity and exhorting those in the church to resolve their differences. He reminded his readers that the Cross of Jesus Christ must be the foundation of His Church, and he asked them, “Is Christ divided?” He passionately encouraged the Corinthians to reconcile—to lay aside their selfish desires and personal preferences, and “grow up” in the faith.

Satan, the enemy of the Church, has not disappeared. He still would like to cause divisions within the church body. Like the Corinthians, we are called to live in peace with other believers. As Paul knew, unity is critical in a successfully functioning church!

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**1. What was the initial point of dissension in the Corinthian church that Paul addressed in his letter? (1 Corinthians 1:12)**

**2.** In order to live in harmony with other believers, certain behaviors are required. What three things did Paul admonish the Corinthians to do in order to maintain oneness? (1 Corinthians 1:10) How can we be sure that we have an attitude of unity toward fellow Christians?

**3. What does it mean to have “the mind of Christ,” as opposed to worldly wisdom? (1 Corinthians 2:16) How will possessing the mind of Christ affect unity within the church?**

**4.** At the beginning of chapter 3, Paul refers to the Corinthian believers as “babes” in their spiritual lives. How would you define a “babe” in Christ? How does a “babe” differ from one who is spiritually mature?

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**CONCLUSION**

There is a big difference between *knowing* the Gospel and *living* the Gospel, and part of “living it” is getting along in peace and love with our fellow believers. Let us do our part to build unity in the Body of Christ!

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## Instructions for Unity

## SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

## 1 Corinthians 5:1 through 11:34

### KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”  
(1 Corinthians 6:20)

## BACKGROUND

Chapter 5 begins the second major division of the epistle. In these chapters, Paul was writing to this group of believers to address a variety of issues that had arisen and were severely affecting the unity of the church. Basically, the Christian faith was under attack in Corinth.

Although the Corinthian converts had broken from idolatry and stepped out of the corruption of their society to form a local church, it was imperative for them to realize that the Gospel does not tolerate compromise. There must be a clean break with the old sinful lifestyle, and it was at this point the Corinthian believers had faltered.

In addition, the Corinthians needed to understand the supreme importance of love in order to build and preserve unity among their members. Followers of Christ cannot be in unity if they are in conflict with one another, and this was a primary issue in the church at Corinth.

Non-believers watched the Early Church, much as they do today, to see if Christians lived the message they preached. Paul desired for the Corinthian church to grow spiritually and mature into the Spirit-led believers he knew they could be. How could a church reach out to those in need of the Gospel when they are bickering from within? So many issues were unresolved in Corinth that the Holy Spirit was hindered. When hearts of believers are in unity with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit is able to move on their behalf, convicting sinners, healing the sick in body and spirit, and moving believers to a closer walk with God.

As in any church, those at Corinth were in different stages of growth. Many were truly “babes in Christ.” Others were slow to abandon their pagan ways. Because of this, they did not know the answers to questions that arose and they needed guidance. Paul offered that guidance—a sort of “how to” manual; gentle when appropriate, but in many cases up front and to the point. Some of the key issues needing to be addressed included: fornication, marriage, discipline within the church, handling differences with fellow

## OPENER

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believers, caring for those who were weaker in the faith, eating food that had been offered to idols, and proper conduct at the Lord's Supper.

The Gospel message is plain and simple. Paul encouraged the church to pursue a bond of unity with this being the focus.

## **SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS**

**1.** Leaven was symbolic of sin, and Paul wrote that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Why should a church be diligent in dealing with sin? (1 Corinthians 5:6-7) How can we keep the sinful practices of our culture from creeping into our lives and our church?

*If even a small amount of sin is allowed in the church, it will cause division and confusion. Just as a little yeast eventually causes the entire mass of dough to rise, a small amount of sin can cause an entire church to be jeopardized spiritually. In chapter 5, Paul instructed the church in Corinth to get rid of all the "leaven." Applying this to our lives and to our church today, we see that we cannot tolerate sin, even in small doses.*

**2.** What two points did Paul make regarding settling disputes among Christians? (1 Corinthians 6)

*Paul's two points were:*

- *Do not take differences between brothers in Christ to an unbeliever for settlement.*
- *Relinquish your personal rights in order to avoid contention.*

*Matthew 18:15 indicates that regardless of whether the problem was an unintentional error or something done flagrantly, the first step is to go to the brother or sister and discuss it in private. Discuss with your class why and how such a practice will build unity.*

**3.** What Bible doctrine does chapter 7 teach?

*Marriage is for life. In verses 10-11, Paul clearly states that if a woman departs from her husband, "let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband." Later, verses 39-40 explain that the marriage vows endure until death, and only then can one remarry. Discuss how ignoring this one Bible doctrine can diminish the unity of a family as well as the unity of a church body.*

**4.** In what way should we apply Paul's advice concerning stronger and weaker brothers to our lives? (1 Corinthians 8:12-13)

*1 Corinthians 8:12 tells us that if we sin against a weaker brother, wounding his conscience, we are sinning against Christ. Freedom does not bring license to disregard others; in all things we are to act in love, preferring our brother. Ask your class for examples of situations when someone would refrain from doing something out of concern that it might offend a brother or sister.*

## **NOTES**



**5.** To what two athletic events did Paul compare the Christian walk? (1 Corinthians 9:24-26) What disciplines does an athlete have that can be applied to our Christian walk?

*A form of boxing and running a foot race. Have your students share their thoughts about the discipline needed for a Christian life. How do we “train” as Christians? Possible answers include: prayer, Bible study, and attending church.*

**6.** Name the transgressions of the Children of Israel that Paul mentioned in 1 Corinthians 10. Why is it important to remember lessons from the past?

*Some of the transgressions of the Children of Israel were idolatry (verse 7), fornication (verse 8), tempting Christ (verse 9), and murmuring (verse 10). Paul said these are listed as examples. Discuss why it is important to remember lessons from the past, bringing out that those who fail to understand, learn from, and remember the lessons of the past might well repeat the same actions. To illustrate the importance of remembering, ask students to share personal lessons they have learned that they hope their children will not have to learn from personal experience.*

**7. What are some practical steps that we can take to maintain unity with our fellow believers?**

*Steps brought out may include: treat each other with love and consideration; move quickly to resolve any differences between brothers; refrain from negative speaking or complaining about others; do nothing to cause others to falter in their Christian walks.*

## CONCLUSION

Paul had a desire for the church at Corinth to have unity with the Spirit of God. We should have that same desire for our church today, and be taking steps to ensure that we are building the unity of the Body of Christ, not tearing it down.

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## Results of Unity

## SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

# 1 Corinthians 12:1 through 16:24

### KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.” (1 Corinthians 12:12)

## BACKGROUND

Instead of building up and unifying the Corinthian church, a misconception regarding spiritual gifts was dividing it. This misconception revolved around some members thinking they were more “spiritual” than others because of their gifts.

In chapter 12, verses 1-11, Paul described many spiritual gifts given by God. He then explained how essential each gift was in unifying the Body of Christ, the Church. Imagery of the human body was common in the ancient world, although Paul used it in a special way. He stressed both sides of the picture—first, the oneness of the body, and second, its diversity. Paul compared the necessity of each gift in the Church to the necessity of each part in the body; each part has its own function and all must work together for the good of the whole.

Chapter 13 reveals the greatest of God’s gifts, which is charity (love). In morally corrupt Corinth, the word *love* had little meaning. Four Greek words which translate into the English word “love” are:

- 1) *Agape*—selfless, sacrificial love that acts in conformity to the character and nature of God.
- 2) *Phileo*—endearing love that cherishes, such as the husband/wife relationship, the love of a brother/sister, or dearest friend.
- 3) *Eros*—passionate or physical love.
- 4) *Storge*—affectionate love, such as the loyalty of an employee to his employer.

Of the four, 1 Corinthians 13 describes *agape* love. Translators had no proper word to use when attempting to convey the true meaning of Christian love. Hence, in this chapter, the English word chosen to represent *agape* love was “charity,” which is related to “cherish.”

The misuse of the gift of speaking in tongues by some individuals was also a concern in the Corinthian church because it had caused disorder in worship. Paul instructed that speaking in tongues was a legitimate gift from the Holy Spirit, but should not be used as a sign of spiritual superiority. Rather, it should be a means to spiritual unity.

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*It is interesting that the first two traits of charity describe the patient kindness of charity. The next eight describe selfish qualities absent from charity and revolve around self-centeredness rather than selflessness. The final six describe the courage and character of charity.*

- Charity “suffereth long” (13:4) –  
*Love is patient.*
- Charity “is kind” (13:4) –  
*Love is courteous and helpful, and actively engaged in doing good to others.*
- Charity “envieth not” (13:4) –  
*Love does not begrudge others their earthly goods, positions, or spiritual gifts.*
- Charity “vaunteth not itself” (13:4) –  
*Love is unassuming and never boastful.*
- Charity “is not puffed up” (13:4) –  
*Love does not assume an air of superiority.*
- Charity “doth not behave itself unseemingly” (13:5) – *Love is tactful and polite.*
- Charity “seeketh not her own” (13:5) –  
*Love is more interested in others’ welfare than in personal gain.*
- Charity “is not easily provoked” (13:5) –  
*Love is good-natured and without temper.*
- Charity “thinketh no evil” (13:5) –  
*Love forgives and forgets slights and imagined slights.*
- Charity “rejoiceth not in iniquity” (13:5) –  
*Love is grieved or saddened by sin.*
- Charity “rejoiceth in truth” (13:6) –  
*Love appreciates and affirms that which is right.*
- Charity “beareth all things” (13:7) –  
*Love holds up, no matter what manner of trial appears.*
- Charity “believeth all things” (13:7) –  
*Love eagerly trusts and creates a spirit of trust by ascribing the best motives to others.*
- Charity “hopeth all things” (13:7) –  
*Love expects good to triumph.*
- Charity “endureth all things” (13:7) –  
*Love remains true in the most adverse circumstances, facing every assault of the enemy with courage and a conquering spirit.*
- Charity “never faileth” (13:8) –  
*Love cannot lose a battle.*

**3.** Why did Paul encourage the Corinthians to esteem charity more than the gifts listed in chapter 12?  
(1 Corinthians 13:8)

*The gifts the Corinthians valued were only temporal. They were not to esteem such gifts more than charity, which is eternal.*

4. Give an example of a time when you needed to exercise one of the traits of charity named by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

*Class input.*

5. Why is charity the ultimate solution to the problems at Corinth and in any other church?

*Love is what makes spiritual gifts useful. Great faith, acts of dedication or sacrifice, and miracle-working power produce very little without love. Love is the greatest of human qualities, and although there are many different spiritual gifts, love is available to everyone. Love is an attribute of God himself, and involves unselfishly giving of oneself to others. Love leaves no foothold for resentment.*

*Faith is the foundation and content of God's message, hope is the attitude and focus, and love is the action. When faith and hope are in line, people are free to love completely because they understand how God loves. See 1 Corinthians 13:13.*

6. In 1 Corinthians 14:3, what does Paul define as the three purposes of prophesying?

*Prophesying provides edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3). Edification is defined as "instruction or enlightenment." The definition of exhortation is "something that urges or warns" or "giving of urgent advice." Comfort is defined as "to provide relief," or "to cheer someone."*

7. What are the general principles that govern church services? (1 Corinthians 14:26,40)

*All things should be done for the edification of the church and with decency and order. Those involved in a church service must have love as their chief motivation when giving useful words or help that would strengthen the faith of other believers. Services without order or direction cause confusion among believers.*

8. What do you suppose is meant by the phrase, "They have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints"? (1 Corinthians 16:15) What might this have to do with unity?

*Members of the household of Stephanas had apparently given themselves wholeheartedly to arranging and caring for the needs of the saints. When we put others' needs ahead of our own, and dedicate ourselves to helpful and compassionate care of others, we will certainly be strengthening the bonds between believers and building up the unity of the church.*

## CONCLUSION

We each have a part to contribute to the health of the Body of Christ. When each member in the Body fosters love that is patient, kind, humble, generous, and everlasting, the unity among believers will increase. How thankful we are that we can look to Jesus Christ as the perfect example of this perfect love.





## SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

## NOTES

**1. What was Paul's secret for victory in the midst of tribulations? (2 Corinthians 1:3-5) What truths are revealed about God in these verses?**

*Paul's secret for victory was to experience the comfort of God. The truths revealed about God are: He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, He is merciful and His character is to show compassion, and as "the God of all comfort," His consolations meet every need.*

*Your students may enjoy sharing specific examples of times when God's comfort has met a personal need for them. The point should be made that when God comforts us, our experience becomes a rich resource for ministering to others. England-born pastor and theologian John Henry Jowett (1864 – 1923) once said, "God does not comfort us to make us comfortable, but to make us comforters."*

**2.** In 2 Corinthians 2:5-11, Paul began to address the specific problems that were troubling the Corinthian church. Seemingly, an individual in the assembly had undergone discipline by the Church for his sinful actions, and had subsequently repented. How did Paul instruct the Corinthians to treat this individual, and what godly principle is brought out through Paul's instructions?

*Paul instructed the Corinthians to accept once again the repentant sinner. (This offender is generally thought to have been the man Paul referred to in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5.) While sin does have consequences, the saints were to forgive and comfort the wrongdoer, and to reaffirm their love for him. The principle brought out is that of forgiveness.*

*Discuss the fact that church discipline, like proper parental discipline, is designed to correct and bring about an alteration in behavior. The goal should always be to restore, not to damage or destroy. Paul was leading these believers to understand that there is a time to confront, but there is also a time to comfort and encourage.*

**3.** Legalists who had already created problems in Antioch and Jerusalem (see Acts 15) had infiltrated the believers in Corinth and persuaded some to live by the Law of Moses. Paul refuted these false teachings by contrasting the New Covenant ministry to the Old Covenant Law. Name at least three differences between the old Law and the New Covenant.  
2 Corinthians 3:3-18

*A number of points could be brought out based on this portion of text.*

- *The Law was **graven in stone**; the New Covenant is **written in the heart** (verse 3).*
- *The Law **revealed sin**, which resulted in **death**; the Spirit **changes the heart**, which results in **life** (verse 6).*

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**6.** Chapters 8 and 9 deal primarily with benevolent giving. Paul saw the members of the Gentile congregation as debtors to the Jews for sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them, and he encouraged the Corinthians to help the Jerusalem Christians financially in their time of need. What principles regarding giving did he establish?

*Some responses could be: Unselfish giving is commended. We want to give because Jesus gave to us. We give willingly, according to what we have—a person with much should give much; a person with little should give what is possible. When we give in faith, we receive God's spiritual blessings in our lives. What we do or give comes from our desire to serve and honor God. Giving to our brothers and sisters in need will glorify God. We should give cheerfully. The inner attitude is more important to God than the outward gift.*

**7.** Certain members of the Corinthian church had resorted to discrediting Paul, while boasting of their own qualifications. Paul boldly rejected the idea that he was inferior to these men, who claimed divine authority but whose claims were false. He intentionally mimicked them by providing details of his own “résumé,” which was far superior in the Gospel. What personal experiences did Paul list that proved his authority?

## 2 Corinthians 11:23-33

*Compile a list with your class. It will include: imprisonment, severe beatings, being shipwrecked, being attacked by robbers, enduring dangers from false brothers, sleeplessness, hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness, pressure from the care of the churches, etc.*

*Most of us will not undergo the types of trials that Paul faced. Follow-up discussion could include the credentials of a true servant of Christ in our day. Discussion should bring out that while the specifics will differ from those in Paul's experience, Christians will face trials, learn to lean on God for daily strength, prove God in multiple circumstances, be willing to undergo deprivation and loss for the sake of the Gospel, will have a burden for the work of the Lord, etc.*

**8.** Paul was planning another trip to Corinth, and he was concerned he might find that ungodly practices had infiltrated the Corinthian congregation. He wrote sternly to the group, hoping they would deal with such issues before he arrived. What particular problems did he name? How can we guard against such problems creeping into the church today? 2 Corinthians 12:20-21

*The sins Paul mentioned were: debates (quarrels), envyings (jealousy), wraths (outbursts of temper), strifes (contention), backbitings (slander), whisperings (gossip), swellings (those who have an inflated opinion of themselves), tumults (out-of-control situations caused by people acting without thought of the common good), uncleanness (impurity), fornication (sexual relationships between unmarried individuals), and lasciviousness (lust and debauchery).*

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*As Christians, we must guard carefully against the infiltration of any of these types of behavior into our personal lives. The church is only as pure and godly as the people who make up the church! The ministry has a God-given responsibility to instruct, encourage, and discipline us if necessary, in order to help us align our lives to God's standards. However, the ultimate responsibility is ours. We must desire holiness of heart and life, and ask God to help us to please Him in every area of our lives. When those in the church make this their highest personal priority, the church will thrive.*

## CONCLUSION

In Paul's closing words to the believers at Corinth, he gave a parting plea in the form of a series of exhortations. He encouraged them to seek reconciliation, to share a common purpose, and to live in harmony with one another. His admonition is still fitting for the church today. Like the Corinthians, we must apply the principles of God's Word in order to have God's blessing upon our fellowship!



# Paul's First Letter to Timothy

## SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

# 1 Timothy 1:1 through 6:21

### KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” (1Timothy 4:12)

## BACKGROUND

Paul's first epistle to Timothy is thought to have been written about A.D. 64, during the last few years of Paul's life. It is referred to as a "pastoral epistle," as are 2 Timothy and Titus. Paul was Timothy's spiritual father, and wrote to encourage and instruct him in practical subjects such as doctrine, public worship, qualifications for Church officials, and confrontation of false teaching in the Church. He also instructed Timothy concerning the treatment of widows, elders, and servants.

Timothy was the youngest member of the only three-generation family of believers mentioned in the New Testament. He was a young man when he joined Paul in the city of Lystra in Galatia (Acts 16:1-4), on the Apostle's second missionary journey. His father was a Greek and his mother, Eunice, was a Jew. Paul took Timothy with him on his third missionary trip, spending three years with him in Ephesus and the surrounding areas (Acts 18:23—21:14). After Paul's trip to Jerusalem for the Passover, he was sent to prison in Rome (Acts 21:18—28:31). Timothy was present with Paul in Rome when Paul wrote three of his prison letters: Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

After Paul's release from his first imprisonment, he and Timothy visited the churches in Ephesus. Paul eventually left for Macedonia while Timothy stayed to minister in Ephesus. It was during this time that Paul wrote this letter to Timothy.

Ephesus was a strategic center of travel and commerce. Situated on the Aegean Sea at the mouth of the Cayster River, the city was one of the greatest seaports of the ancient world. It was distinguished by the Temple of Diana and a theatre that could hold fifty thousand spectators. Many Jews lived there and the seeds of the Gospel are thought to have been sown in Ephesus immediately after Pentecost.

## SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

**1.** Paul had a spiritual father/son relationship with Timothy (1 Timothy 1:2, 18). How can we benefit from the example that Paul demonstrated?

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would expose worldly ambitions and/or wrong motives for our Christian service, or a lack of trust that God knows what is best for us.

**8. What is the root of all evil? 1 Timothy 6:10**

*The love of money is the root of all evil. You may want to emphasize to your class that it is not money that is evil, but the love of it. Ask the students to list how evil is manifested in the world today. Some suggestions may be crime, drugs, terrorism, and ungodly living. Then have them explain how the love of money, or greed, is the root of many of these activities.*

*Ask your class if the love of money can affect Christians. What might be some indicators of this? How can we guard against being caught in the trap of a love for money?*

**9. Paul reiterated the “good profession” and godly witness, or testimony, that Timothy had demonstrated and lived before his fellow man. Then he encouraged Timothy to “fight the good fight of faith.” How can we do this today? 1 Timothy 6:11-14**

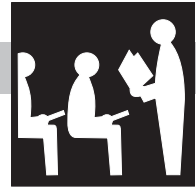
*Ask your students to give examples of how they can demonstrate their faith on a daily basis. Some responses may be: praying over their meals at school or on the job, sharing their testimonies with other students or co-workers, and showing a pattern of godliness in their actions and conversations.*

## CONCLUSION

Paul’s first letter to Timothy was a charge to all Christians to be living testimonies of God’s life-changing power in the world today.

1. Elizabeth Day, “The Secret of Long Life . . . Go to Church,” *Telegraph*, December 26, 2004. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2004/12/26/nchurch26.xml>> 7 April 2008.
2. <[http://www.healthandage.com/html/min/gentle\\_endings/web/churchgoers.htm](http://www.healthandage.com/html/min/gentle_endings/web/churchgoers.htm)> 7 April 2008.





# Paul's Second Letter to Timothy

## SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

2 Timothy 1:1 through 4:22

### KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:5)

## BACKGROUND

The Book of 2 Timothy is probably the last recorded words of the Apostle Paul. After a period of freedom following his first house arrest in Rome, Paul had been imprisoned again under much more stringent terms. In that setting, this intimate admonition by a veteran minister nearing the end of his life's assignment to his "son in the faith" was written.

It is possible that Timothy's family (his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois) was converted on Paul's first missionary journey through Lystra and Derbe. Paul warmly spoke of the "unfeigned faith" which seemed to belong to all three generations. Later, Timothy joined the missionary team of Paul and Silas as they traveled through Lystra and Derbe during Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 16:1). He accompanied Paul to many locations, including Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica, Berea, and possibly even Rome. Apparently, he later became Paul's emissary to the church in Ephesus. Tradition suggests Timothy was the first bishop, or pastor, of the Ephesian church.

Scholars generally date the composition of this letter to be approximately A.D. 67. In A.D. 64, a great fire in Rome devastated much of the city. Emperor Nero subsequently began a period of persecution of Christians in an effort to turn the blame for the fire from himself to Christians. During this time, Paul was imprisoned in a Roman dungeon, and it was from that prison he wrote this letter to Timothy.

Paul’s final instructions included personal encouragement to Timothy to stand as a strong witness in the face of opposition and persecution. The Apostle warned of false teachers and instructed Timothy in how to counter them and their teachings. His advice was sprinkled with gems of wisdom acquired during his years of ministry that he passed on to Timothy and others who would later read this letter. Paul concluded with his “last words,” charging Timothy to remain faithful in his ministry, and indicated that his own ministry was coming to an end.

Tradition holds that after this letter was written, Paul was beheaded for his faith in Jesus.

## OPENER

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## SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

**1.** How did Paul address Timothy in verse 2 of chapter 1? What does this indicate about their relationship?

*He addressed the younger man as “my dearly beloved son.” This indicates a very close relationship as spiritual father and son. The characteristics that made this relationship possible were their mutual faithfulness to Christ, Paul’s careful teaching, Timothy’s evident desire to learn and follow instruction, and the trust both of them had in the “promise of life.” Ask your class to share personal examples of mentoring relationships they have been aware of or been blessed by participating in.*

**2.** In reading 2 Timothy 1:6-12, we find indications that Timothy had apparently come under fire for his youth, his association with Paul, and his leadership. Paul encouraged Timothy, who perhaps was more timid by nature than the older man, to persevere and to stand up for the truth he had received. Paul stated that he was “not ashamed” of the testimony of Jesus. What are some ways we can show the world that we are not ashamed of the Gospel?

*Class discussion may bring out such thoughts as being quick to say a word for the Lord when an opportunity arises, giving our testimonies, being faithful in fulfilling our Christian responsibilities, making sure our lives align to the principles of godly living, etc. It might be good to encourage the class to share times when this is not easy, such as praying over their meals in a group of unsaved peers, standing up for beliefs when challenged in a school class, reading one's Bible in front of others, etc.*

**3.** The three illustrations Paul used in verses 3-7 of chapter 2 are that of a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer. What point is brought out about each of them individually? What attributes do they all have in common?

*A good soldier is not afraid to suffer. He is wholly committed to the cause for which he fights, and willing to lay aside other entanglements for the good of the cause. He endeavors to please the one in authority over him.*

*An athlete strives to be the best he can be. He knows that to win the prize, he must abide by the rules of the game.*

*The farmer reaps the rewards of his own labor even before the final harvest. Those who labor in God's service are blessed in this life and hereafter.*

*Discussion should bring out that being a successful soldier, athlete, or farmer requires discipline, patience, ambition, willpower, diligence, focus, etc.*

**4.** In chapter 2, Paul warned Timothy to avoid “words to no profit” (verse 14), “profane and vain babblings” (verse 16), and “foolish and unlearned questions” (verse 23). In contrast, Paul encouraged Timothy

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**2.** In Titus 1:10-16, Paul warned Titus that there would be false teachers who would try to deceive the brethren. Some, for their own selfish ambitions, would



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*us to do good works. We are admonished to be careful to continue these good works, as it could be easy to become lazy or distracted by the cares of life.*

*You may ask your class to name some of the good works the Lord would have us do. Examples could include: feed a brother who is hungry, help someone who is in need, visit the sick, be faithful in our church duties, write a note of encouragement to the lonely, reach out to a lost world with the hope of the Gospel. There is so much to do and the laborers are so few!*

**5.** Paul was an Apostle and instructor of many churches. In his letter to his friend, Philemon, he had the authority to demand that Philemon forgive and restore his slave. Why do you think Paul, rather than commanding, pled with Philemon to forgive Onesimus and accept him as a brother?

*Bring out that in our relationships with other people, a soft touch usually has more influence than a demanding, overbearing manner.*

*Discuss the fact that the Gospel is based on free will—God made man with the power of choice to do good or evil. God wanted a friend, not a robot. God loves the sacrifices of obedience from a willing heart. Paul was wise to give Philemon the choice of how to deal with his slave. A sacrifice from a willing heart is so much more valuable to God than one that is coerced. Ask the students to think of the things they have given to the Lord, such as money, time, talents, an act of forgiveness, etc. Have these offerings been given with a willing and cheerful heart?*

**6.** Paul asked Philemon to forgive Onesimus, who had been Philemon's personal property before he ran away—an act which was punishable by death under Roman law. Philemon was asked not only to forgive him, but to receive him as a brother. We may be asked to forgive someone who has done us a great wrong. Is it always easy to forgive? What should we do if we find it difficult to forgive?

*It may not always be easy to forgive. However, it will help us to remember how much Jesus forgave us. We may have to spend time in prayer, asking God to help us see the matter from His perspective. As we pray and surrender the hurt to God, we will find a release. This is a form of consecration, of submitting our will to God. As we do this, we will grow stronger in grace. We must then remember not to pick up the burden of unforgiveness at a later time. We must keep the matter consecrated to God.*

*Your class may want to share times in which the offering of forgiveness was difficult, but brought peace.*

**7.** In Paul's day, the Roman, Greek, and Jewish cultures had strict levels of position within society. Slaves were demeaned and women had few rights. However, the Gospel restores human dignity. As Christians, we are to treat all people with honor and respect. What are

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ways we can show respect to people who are different from ourselves? What are ways we may show a lack of respect without intending to do so?

*We must always remember the Golden Rule. If we try to put ourselves in the place of others, we will have insight on how to act. Others usually desire to be treated with fairness, with no importance given to the differences between them and us. People of different income, education, gender, age, appearance, race, or ability can experience wonderful love and fellowship.*

*We need to avoid ethnic and gender jokes that are negative and humor that exploits any particular group of people. The criterion should be: does this disrespect the other person or people? Godly love to all should be our guideline.*

## CONCLUSION

Paul's letters to Titus and Philemon now serve as admonitions to us. Let us take heed and use these words as encouragement in our Christian walks.



## Peter's First Letter

## SOURCE FOR QUESTIONS

# 1 Peter 1:1 through 5:14

### KEY VERSE FOR MEMORIZATION

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” (1 Peter 4:12-13)

## BACKGROUND

The Book of 1 Peter is a letter written by Peter around A.D. 62-64, to the saints who had been scattered throughout Asia minor because of the rampant persecution of the time. Emperor Nero had come into power in Rome and great persecution followed in his wake. History tells us that Peter was later executed during this same period of oppression.

The purpose of Peter's letter was to comfort and encourage the saints who were suffering. Before He ascended, Jesus had told Peter to "strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32) and to "feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17). Peter was fulfilling this charge by encouraging believers in their time of intense persecution. He offered concluding thoughts when he said, "I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (1 Peter 5:12). Peter was describing their ability to stand as "the true grace of God."

Peter started the epistle by giving thanks for salvation, and pointed out the hope there is in the Gospel. He reminded the saints that adversity would come—in fact, it should be expected—but these trials would work to strengthen their faith. Peter admonished the saints to live holy lives, reminding them of Christ who suffered for them and had redeemed them. They were encouraged to react with love in the face of persecution, just as Jesus did when He faced the Cross.

Beginning with chapter 2 verse 11, Peter advised the believers on how to conduct themselves in many aspects of their lives. He spoke of submission to civil authority, to their masters, within the family, and among each other. He wanted them to live in God's will, with prayer, love, hospitality, and service.

Peter drew this epistle to a close by reminding the saints to be vigilant and to resist the devil, who as a roaring lion would try to devour them. He let them know that God's grace would be available to make them perfect, established, strengthened, and settled in the faith.

## OPENER

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## SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

## NOTES

1. The saints Peter was addressing were suffering great persecution. He encouraged them by stating that there are benefits in suffering. What purpose might suffering accomplish in God's people? What should be our attitude when we go through trials? 1 Peter 1:7; 4:12-13

*The saints will be tried in the fire, but their faith, which is more precious than gold, will bring them praise, honor, and glory. Suffering makes individual believers and the church as a whole stronger and more dependent on God. When we go through temptations, trials, or persecution, it can be a time of refining for us. As we seek the Lord, embrace the promises in His Word, and fasten our eyes on the goal that awaits us, we will find our strength grows from day to day.*

*We should not think it strange, or become discouraged, when we are tried, but we should rejoice that, as Jesus suffered for us, we are given the privilege to suffer for Him. Discuss with your class other ways we can be encouraged when we face trials or temptations.*

**2.** In 1 Peter 1:15-16, we are admonished to be holy as God is holy. How is this possible when we are born with a sinful nature, and we live in a world where sin is all around us? How can we maintain our hearts in a manner so God's holiness can shine out through us?

*Christ has provided a remedy for sin through His Blood. When we are saved, we are given power to have victory over sin. When we are sanctified, a deep work of holiness is accomplished within us because the root of sin that we are born with is taken out. This results when we set ourselves apart to be separated unto God.*

*It takes effort to maintain a heart that reflects God's holiness. Remind your students that God in Heaven is holy, and that Jesus, who was God in the flesh, came down as man and maintained a holy life on earth. He understands our temptations, and He was victorious over sin. Therefore, we can be also. Ask your class how we can maintain our hearts in holiness. They may suggest the following: we need to study God's Word, commune with Him in prayer, keep our eyes focused on eternal values rather than earthly cares, and gather with the saints in worship whenever possible.*

**3.** The saints were instructed to “love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1 Peter 1:22) and to “have fervent charity among yourselves” (1 Peter 4:8). What does it mean to love with a pure heart? How do we love a brother or sister in Christ fervently?

*To have pure love would be to love others as God loves us. God's love is unconditional. He loved us while we were yet sinners. The love of this world*

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In this epistle, Peter confronted false teachers and heresies with the Gospel message in terms which were applicable to the Hellenistic (Greek) culture. He refuted skepticism over end-time issues and condemned the lowering of moral standards, including purity and holiness. Examples of judgment from Old Testament writers were used to remind Christians of the faithfulness of God both to deliver the godly and to judge the wicked. Peter outlined the requirements of godly living, grounding those requirements in the abundant salvation offered by Christ, and the inspiration of the Scriptures.

## SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

**1.** Peter opened his letter with a greeting to those who had obtained “like precious faith with us.” Why is faith precious? Why do you think Peter used the word “like” (or “alike”) to describe the faith they had?

*Discussion should bring up several reasons why faith is a very precious commodity. Without it, we cannot please God. We walk by faith; we live by faith. It is how we receive from God. By faith we know that the worlds were framed.*

*In focusing on the word “like,” your students should understand that the faith spoken of here was not faith in general, but was literally a faith of the same kind that Peter had obtained. It was important that the believers’ faith was the same as the faith obtained by the Apostle, since the theme of 2 Peter would be a warning against heresy, false teaching, and counterfeit “faith” which denied the return of Jesus and the need for godly pure living until that time. For the same reasons, it is important today that our faith be anchored in the truths taught by Jesus Christ and His Apostles.*

**2.** In 2 Peter 1:3-4, it is clear that God has given us all that we need for life and godliness by His power through Christ. He mentioned “exceeding great and precious promises,” which are given so that we can be partakers of the divine nature, escaping the world’s corruption. It is out of this sufficiency that we are called to diligently supplement or nourish our lives in Christ by adding certain godly qualities. List and describe the attributes Peter mentioned that Christians should diligently seek in their spiritual lives.

2 Peter 1:5-7

*Virtue = moral excellence and goodness, spiritual fortitude. We exhibit virtue when we do what is right.*

*Knowledge = the learning of information with accompanying wisdom for application. In this text, the focus is on knowledge of the Word of God, and the necessity of applying that knowledge in our daily lives.*

*Temperance = self-control. The world might define temperance as being moderate in one’s sinful practices, such as smoking or drinking. A Christian would put it this way: Do not do anything that is*

## NOTES



*sinful; and things that are not sinful should not be engaged in excessively.*

*Patience – endurance, steadfastness, perseverance. Patience includes endurance during trials, and longsuffering toward those about us who are difficult to get along with. You might ask your class for examples of when patience is necessary. Some may mention short-term issues, such as a traffic jam or poor service in a restaurant. In the Bible, patience generally deals with trials of a longterm scale, such as spiritual persecution or lingering physical afflictions. Patience in such cases is exemplified by calm, uncomplaining endurance.*

*Godliness = a manner of life that reflects our relationship with God; an outward manifestation of His nature within us.*

*Brotherly kindness = brotherly love (from the Greek word philo indicating deep friendship and commitment). This is the love and caring of fellow Christians toward one another. The Bible instructs us to bear one another's burdens and to be kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving of one another.*

*Charity = love (from the Greek word agape indicating selfless, sacrificial love). Charity is unselfish Christian love for others, which extends far beyond the confines of the local body of believers to include those who seem unlovable or farthest from God.*

**3.** Peter did not indicate that the attributes listed in question two were optional. If we do not seek to possess them, how will this affect our walk with God? (2 Peter 1:8-10) What will be the result if we do?

*Verses 8-10 indicate that failure to seek and obtain these attributes brings a sort of spiritual blindness or shortsightedness, which leads to an unfruitful life. Neglect will stunt one's spiritual development. Students should understand that this admonition does not imply that we can earn, deserve, or work our way into the kingdom, but adding these attributes will foster growth and strength in our Christian walk, helping us to remain faithful to God's plan for our lives.*

*If we do seek these attributes, we will be fruitful in the knowledge of the Lord, and we will gain strength to keep us from falling. Any one of those traits is a bonus, but increasing in all of them is a tremendous spiritual benefit.*

**4.** Peter, James, and John heard the voice of God at the transfiguration of Christ. Peter alluded to this experience in 2 Peter 1:16-18 and, in the concluding verses of the chapter, indicated that God's written Word is as reliable and verifiable as the spoken words heard on the mountain. Why is this true? 2 Peter 1:20-21

*Like the words heard on the mountain, Scripture is also from God. Peter declared that the Word of God was not inspired by human will or action, but by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a part of the Divine*

Trinity and fully God, just as God the Father is part of the Divine Trinity. When the Holy Spirit moved upon the hearts of holy men who followed God, the authority of God was present in their words. For that reason, believers of Peter's day and ours can trust in the truthfulness and authority of the Bible, and consequently have a responsibility to heed that authority.

**5.** In chapter 2, Peter predicted that false teachers would imperil the church by coming in "privily," or under pretense, disguising their motives. What types of false doctrinal teachings can we observe in religious society today? How can we guard ourselves from being influenced by them?

*Your students may bring up such teachings as eternal security, the allowance for divorce and remarriage, a failure to preach the necessity of sanctification as a second, definite work of grace, humanism, etc. Insidious infiltration could occur under the guise of political correctness, ecumenicalism, a disparaging of tradition, or an effort to be non-judgmental. Today, true Christianity often is assailed by accusations of intolerance or bigotry. While it is never appropriate to be vindictive or harsh in our treatment of others, we must not minimize the seriousness of false doctrine or the judgment that will fall upon those who teach or embrace it.*

*Discussion of the second question should center on the importance of continuing to teach, experience, and live the doctrines that we have received from godly men and women of old—doctrines based on the teachings of the Apostles.*

**6.** Make a list of some of the word pictures Peter painted in chapter 2 of those who teach falsely or embrace false teachings. Why do you think he chose to use some unpleasant illustrations?

*The list of examples used by Peter could include:*

- *Natural brute beasts (verse 12)*
- *Spots and blemishes (verse 13)*
- *Adulterous eyes, always sinning, greedy cursed children (verse 14)*
- *Dry wells, storm clouds (verse 17)*
- *Dog returned to vomit (verse 22 quoting Proverbs 26:11)*
- *Pig wallowing in mire (verse 22)*

*He also described false teachers as:*

- *Having lascivious ("pernicious") ways (verse 2)*
- *Making merchandise of others, or engaging in exploitation (verse 3)*
- *Being presumptuous, self-willed, not afraid to speak against angelic hosts (verse 10)*
- *Promising liberty but being servants of corruption themselves (verse 19)*

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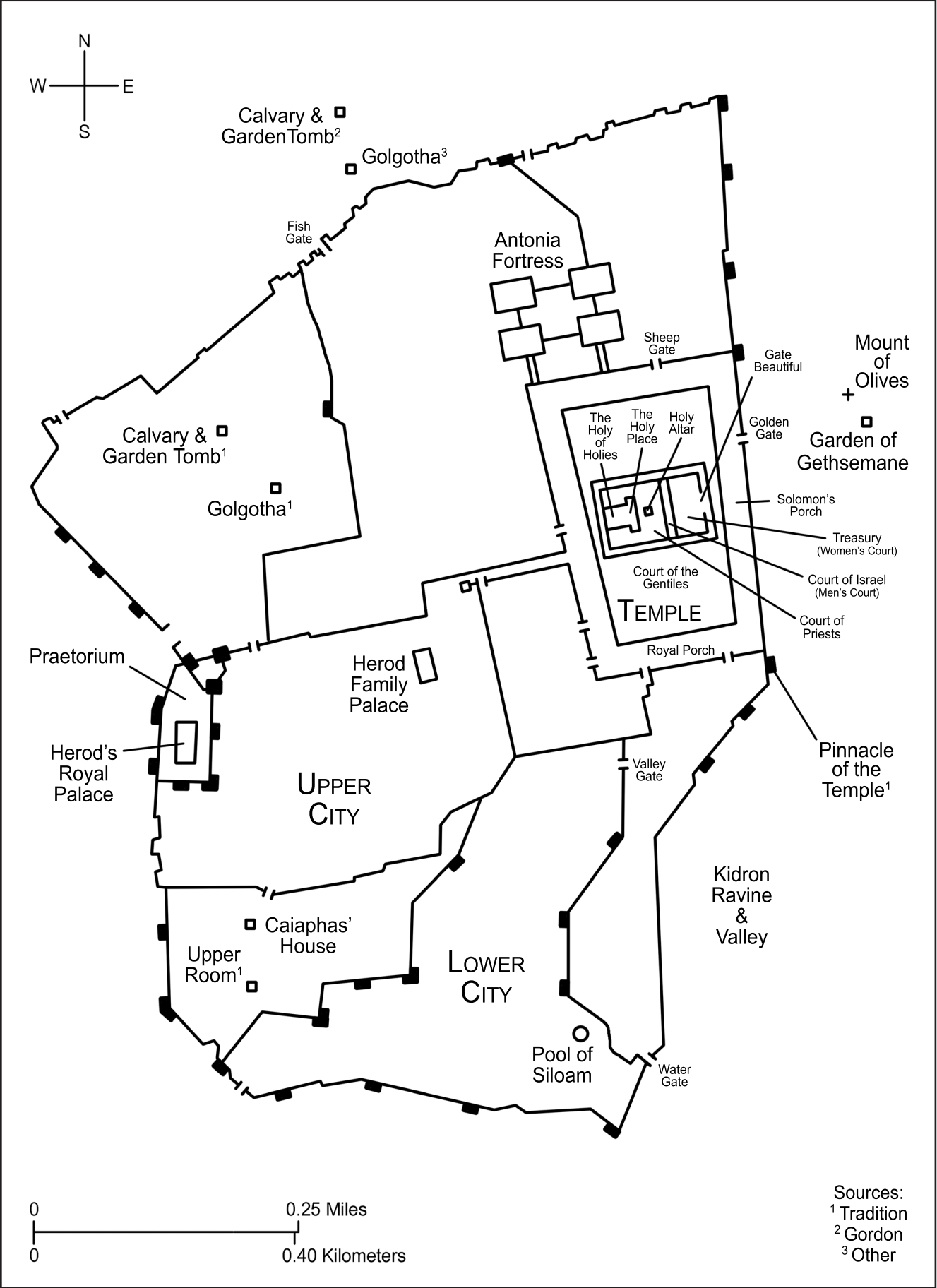
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# New Testament Jerusalem



# A Traditional View of Passion Week

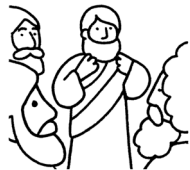
## PALM SUNDAY



- Jesus makes His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem on a donkey. The crowd waves branches, shouts “Hosanna,” and puts garments and branches in the road.  
(Matthew 21:1-11)

## MONDAY

- Jesus cleanses the Temple, overturning the money changers’ tables and declaring, “My house shall be called the house of prayer.”  
(Matthew 21:13)



## TUESDAY

- Jesus teaches the disciples and Jewish leaders with parables.  
(Matthew 21:23)

## WEDNESDAY

- Judas plots to betray Jesus the priests for 30 pieces of silver.  
(Matthew 26:14-16)



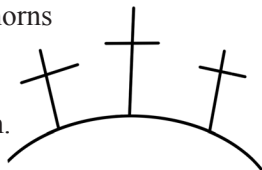
## THURSDAY

- Jesus celebrates the Passover Feast and institutes the Lord’s Supper and Foot Washing ordinances.  
(Matthew 26:26-28 • John 13:1-17)
- Jesus prays in Gethsemane.  
(Matthew 26:36-46)
- Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss.  
(Matthew 26:47)
- Jesus is arrested and taken to Caiaphas.  
(Matthew 26:57)



## FRIDAY

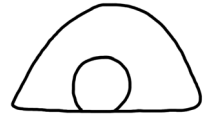
- Early in the morning, Jesus endures a Jewish trial.  
(Matthew 26:59-68)
- Before daybreak, Peter denies Jesus three times.  
(Matthew 26:58, 69-75)
- Jesus stands before Pontius Pilate, is sent to Herod, and is sent back to Pilate.  
(Matthew 27:1-2 • Luke 23:6-11)
- Soldiers crown Jesus with thorns and mock Him.  
(Matthew 27:29-31)
- Jesus is crucified at 9:00 a.m.  
(Mark 15:25)



- There is darkness from noon to 3:00 p.m.  
(Matthew 27:45)
- The veil in the Temple is torn from top to bottom.  
(Matthew 27:51)
- Jesus’ body is buried in a borrowed tomb.  
(Matthew 27:57-60)

## SATURDAY

- Jesus’ body remains in the tomb.  
(Matthew 27:62-66)



## EASTER SUNDAY<sup>1</sup>

- Soldiers guarding the tomb become as dead men because of an earthquake and an angel who rolls away the tombstone.  
(Matthew 28:2-4)
- The women in a group (Mary Magdalene in advance of the others) approach the sepulcher.  
(Matthew 28:1 • Mark 16:1 • Luke 23:55-24:1 • John 20:1)
- Mary Magdalene, seeing the stone removed and hastily concluding that the body has been removed, runs for Peter and John, thus separating herself from the rest of the women.  
(John 20:2)
- The other women arrive at the sepulcher and see two angels. They depart to tell the disciples.  
(Matthew 28:5, 8 • Mark 16:5 • Luke 24:4, 9)
- While the women are gone, Peter and John run to the sepulcher, find it empty, and leave.  
(Luke 24:12 • John 20:2-10)
- Mary Magdalene, having followed Peter and John to the sepulcher, stands outside weeping. After they depart, she sees two angels and then Jesus. According to His command, she departs to carry His message to the disciples.  
(Mark 16:9-10 • John 20:11-18)
- The women on their way—before their arrival at the abode of the disciples, but after the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene—see Jesus.  
(Matthew 28:9)
- All the women, including Mary Magdalene, unite in relating their story to the incredulous disciples.  
(Matthew 28:9 • Luke 24:10)
- Jesus appears to the disciples: to Peter, to Cleopas and another follower on the road to Emmaus, and then to a group of disciples in Jerusalem.  
(Luke 24:13-36)



1. D.D.. Whedon, *Commentary on The Gospels: Luke-John*, p. 408