

## INTRODUCTION: THE PURPOSE FOR THIS CLASS

*"...that you may become mature Christians and may fulfill God's will for you."*

Colossians 4:12b (Ph)

*"We are not meant to remain as children... but to grow up in every way into Christ..."*

Ephesians 4:14-15 (Ph)

The purpose of this class is to provide the tools necessary to help each believer become a spiritually mature disciple of Jesus Christ.

## I. WHAT IS "SPIRITUAL MATURITY"?

Spiritual Maturity is Being like Christ.

*"For from the very beginning God decided that those who came to him... should become like his Son..."*

Romans 8:29 (LB)

## II. FACTS ABOUT SPIRITUAL MATURITY

*"Take the time and the trouble to keep yourself spiritually fit."*

1 Timothy 4:7 (Ph)

1. It is not automatic.
2. It is a process.
3. It takes discipline.

## III. UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLESHIP

*"...And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch."*

Acts 11:26 (NAS)

1. Mature believers are called Disciples.
2. The term disciple comes from the word Disciplined.
3. The more like Christ I become The more God can use me.
4. The mark of a disciple is Cross Bearing.

*Jesus said, "Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."*

Luke 14:27

5. How often am I to do this?     **Daily**    .

*Jesus said "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

Luke 9:23

6. What is involved in "cross bearing"?

    **Whatever it takes**     to give Christ first place in my life!

#### **IV. HOW CAN I BECOME A DISCIPLE?**

**By developing the     **Habits**     of a disciple.**

*"... You have put off the old self with its HABITS, and have put on the new self ... which God is continually renewing in his own image, to bring you to a full knowledge of himself."*

Colossians 3:9-10

**Definition of "habit" (Webster's II Dictionary):**

*"A continual, often unconscious inclination to do a certain activity, acquired through frequent repetition. An established disposition of the character."*

**The habits of a disciple are:**

1. Bible study & prayer.
2. Fellowship with other believers.
3. Growing spiritually by living a Spirit led life.
4. Giving of yourself.

#### **THE GOAL OF THIS CLASS:**

That I will     **Commit**     to the habits necessary for spiritual maturity.

## HABIT ONE: BIBLE STUDY & PRAYER

### Getting a Grasp on God's Word

*"The whole Bible was given to us by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives; it straightens us out and helps us do what is right. It is God's way of making us well prepared at every point, fully equipped to do good to everyone."*

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (LB)

## I. HOW TO GET MORE FROM MY BIBLE

### 1. I must Accept its authority

Your attitude toward the Bible makes a huge difference.

*"We also thank God continually because, when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of men, but actually as it is, the Word of God, which is at work in you who believe."*

1 Thessalonians 2:13

We believe in the closed canon of scripture:

A. There are not, nor will there ever be, any other books, verses or ideas added to the Bible or placed beside it as equal in authority or revelation.

B. All preaching, teaching, prophesying or any other communication being declared in the name of the Lord is to be subject to measurement by the content of the Word of God.

### 2. I must Assimilate its truths

A. Hearing God's Word

*"Faith comes from hearing the Word of God."*

Romans 10:17

B. Reading God's Word

*"Happy is the one who reads this book ... and obeys what is written in it!"*

Revelation 1:3 GN

How often should I read God's Word? DAILY.

*"(The Scriptures) shall be his constant companion. He must read from it everyday of his life so that he will learn to respect the Lord his God by obeying all of his commands."*

Deuteronomy 17:19 LB

C. **Studying** God's Word

*"...they accepted the message eagerly and studied the Scriptures everyday ..."*

Acts 17:11 Ph

D. **Memorizing** God's Word

*"Guard my words as your most precious possession. Write them down, and also keep them deep within your heart."*

Proverbs 7:2-3 LB

E. **Meditating** on God's Word

*"(Those) who are always meditating on His Laws ... are like trees along a river bank bearing fruit ... they never wither and whatever they do prospers."*

Psalms 1:2-3 LB

Meditation is **Focused Thinking** about a Bible verse in order to discover how to apply its truth to life.

F. **Receiving** God's Word with an open Heart

*"Those on the rock are the ones who receive the Word with joy when they hear it, but they have no roots... Therefore consider carefully how you listen."*

Luke 8:13-18

The word "receive" is dechomai in the Greek. It literally means "to welcome"

**3. I must Apply its principles**

*"Once you know these things you will be blessed if you do them."*

John 13:17

*"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."*

James 1:22

A. Claim His promises

Battles – 1 John 4:4, Luke 10:19, Rom. 8:37

Money – Philippians 4:19, Psalm 1:1-3

Fear – Psalm 27:1

Sickness – Psalm 103:3

Confidence – 2 Corinthians 3:6

Safety – Psalm 121:8

B. Share it with others

*How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?*

Romans 10:14

### C. How to Apply Scripture:

1st ask: What did it mean to the original hearers?

2nd ask: What is the underlying timeless principle?

3rd ask: How could I practice that principle?

## II. TALKING WITH GOD

*Always be joyful. Never stop praying.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-17(NLT)

In the beginning we were created to have fellowship with God but because of Adam's fall Jesus sacrificed Himself to make a relationship with God possible.

Jesus exemplified a personal relationship with God through prayer, that gave Him great strength.

Every person who has ever been effective in service for God has developed this habit. The only way to be a healthy Christian is to commune with God daily through prayer!

### 1. The purpose of daily prayer time

A. To Give devotion to God.

*"(Hezekiah) was successful, because everything he did ... he did in a spirit of complete devotion to his God."*

2 Chronicles 31:21 GN

B. To Get direction from God.

*"Show me the path where I should go, O Lord; point out the right road for me to walk. Lead me ..."*

Psalms 25:4 LB

C. To Gain delight in God.

*"Delight yourself in the Lord; and he will give you the desires of your heart."*

Psalms 37:4 KJV

D. To Grow more like God.

*"Jesus has the power of God, by which he has given us everything we need to live and to serve God. We have these things because we know him.... With these gifts you can share in being like God"*

2 Peter 1:4 NCV

## 2. How to begin a daily prayer time

A. Select a specific **Time** \_\_\_\_\_ and **Place** \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went to a solitary place, where he prayed.”*

Mark 1:35

B. Follow a simple **Plan** \_\_\_\_\_.

How to Spend Fifteen Minutes with God:

1. Read a verse. (4 Minutes)
2. Reflect on the verse. (4 Minutes)
3. Record what God desires of you. (3 Min.)
4. Request from God. (4 Minutes)
5. Resources in the Appendix

*“Let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t get discouraged and give up.”*

Galatians 6:9 LB

## 3. Use the model Jesus gave us

*“This, then, is HOW you should pray ...”*

Matthew 6:9-15

A. Praise: I begin by expressing **Love** \_\_\_\_\_ to God.

*“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...”*

B. Purpose: I commit myself to doing God’s **Will** \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven...”*

C. Provision: I ask God to **Provide** \_\_\_\_\_ my daily needs.

*“Give us today our daily bread...”*

D. Pardon: I ask God to **Forgive** \_\_\_\_\_ my sins.

*“Forgive us our debts...”*

E. People: I pray for **Other** \_\_\_\_\_ people.

*“...as we have also forgive our debtors.”*

F. Protection: I ask for **Spiritual** \_\_\_\_\_ protection.

*“And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.” (vs. 13)*

## HABIT TWO: FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS

*“Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage each other.”*

Hebrews 10:25 (GN)

How can a church grow large yet maintain close friendships?

Every member needs to be a part of a Small Group.

*“(They met) day after day, in the Temple courts and from house to house.”*

Acts 5:42

*“You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.”*

Acts 20:20

At Church of the Highlands, we believe our church must grow LARGER and SMALLER at the same time.

### I. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF SMALL GROUPS?

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”*

Acts 2:42-47

Small Groups provide opportunities for:

1. Bible Study.

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching...”*

2. Fellowship.

*“...and to the fellowship ... they ate together with glad and sincere hearts...”*

3. Communion.

*“...and to the breaking of bread ...”*

4. Prayer.

*“...and to prayer...”*

5. Support.

*“...they gave to anyone as he had need ...”*

6. Praise.

*"...praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people."*

7. Outreach.

*"And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."*

## II. SMALL GROUP GROUND RULES

To those in my Group, I commit to...

1. Make our group a priority (Frequency)
2. Share my true feelings (Authenticity)
3. Encourage our spiritual growth (Mutuality)
4. Respect our differences (Courtesy)
5. Support you in times of need (Sympathy)
6. Accept your weaknesses (Humility)
7. Speak the truth in love (Honesty)
8. Forgive when I am hurt (Mercy)
9. Keep your confidences (Confidentiality)
10. Support our purposes (Unity)

*"May the Lord make your love to grow and overflow to each other... so that you may stand before him guiltless on that day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns with all those who belong to him."*

1 Th. 3:12-13 LB

*"I am giving a new commandment to you now – love each other just as much as I love you. Your strong love for each other will prove to the world that you are my disciples."*

John 13: 34-35 LB

## HABIT THREE: GROWING SPIRITUALLY BY LIVING A SPIRIT LED LIFE

*“Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”*

Acts 1:4-8

### I. HOW WAS THE HOLY SPIRIT FIRST REVEALED?

*“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”*

*“Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: ‘Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?’*

*Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? ...we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!’*

*Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, ‘What does this mean?’ Some, however, made fun of them and said, ‘They have had too much wine.’*

*“Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: ‘Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.*

Acts 2:1-17

### II. WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

**1. The Holy Spirit is a Person.**

*“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever...”*

John 14:16

**2. The Third Person in the Trinity.**

*“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”*

John 14:26

### III. WHAT DOES SPIRIT LED LIVING PRODUCE IN OUR LIVES?

#### 1. Comfort.

*“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever...”*

John 14:16 KJV

*“So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.”*

Acts 9:31

#### 2. Conviction.

*“But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ “But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go , I will send Him to you. “And He, when He comes , will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment...”*

John 16:5-8

#### 3. Guidance.

*“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”*

John 16:13

#### 4. Power.

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

Acts 1:8

#### 5. Character.

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”*

Galatians 5:22-23

#### 6. Spiritual Gifts.

*“There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit... Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.”*

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

## IV. LIVING A SUPERNATURAL LIFE

One of the main purposes of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to connect us to the heavenly realms.

*“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”*

Ephesians 2:6-7

*“However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” — but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.”*

1 Corinthians 2:9-10

*“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below... And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

Acts 2:17-21

God desires to give us:

1. **Dreams**.

A dream is a picture you have in your mind of a desired future; that which gets inside of you and is beyond reason and is bigger than you on your own.

2. **Vision**.

A vision is that which is seen, an awake dream; you see something already done; you see something in “How to Steps”.

3. **Prophecy**.

To prophesy is to speak forth biblical truth in the mind and counsel of God that cannot be known through natural means.

## V. HOW DO I RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

1. **Remove** all barriers.

*Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 2:38

**2. Request the Holy Spirit.**

*“Now suppose one of your fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? “Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?”*

Luke 11:11-13

**3. Release the gifts.**

*“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”*

1 Peter 4:10

## HABIT FOUR: GIVING OF YOURSELF

*“Just as you excel in everything else... in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness... see that you also excel in the grace of giving.”*

2 Corinthians 8:7

### I. THREE AREAS OF GIVING

**1. Give of your Time.**

*Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.*

Ephesians 5:15-16 NAS

**2. Give of your Talents.**

*A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.*

1 Corinthians 12:7 NLT

**3. Give of your Treasure.**

*If your gift is... giving, give generously.*

Romans 12:8 NLT

*“Yes, you should tithe, and you shouldn’t leave the more important things undone either.”*

Matthew 23:23

### II. SEVEN BENEFITS OF GIVING

**1. Giving makes me become like God.**

*“God so loved the world that He gave his only Son...”*

John 3:16

**2. Giving draws me Closer to God.**

*“Where your treasure is, there your heart is also.”*

Matthew 6:21

**3. Giving is the antidote to Materialism.**

*“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to be generous and willing to share. In this way they may take hold of the life that is truly Life!”*

1 Timothy 6:17-19

**4. Giving strengthens my Faith.**

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Honor the Lord by giving him the first part of your income, and he will fill your barns to overflowing."*

Prov. 3:5, 9

*"Give and it will be given to you ... For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you."*

Luke 6:38

**5. Giving is an investment in Eternity.**

*"...Give happily to those in need, and always be ready to share whatever God has given you. By doing this, you will be storing up real treasure for yourselves in heaven - it is the only safe investment for eternity."*

1Timothy 6:18-19 LB

**6. Giving Blesses me in return.**

*"A generous man himself will be blessed."*

Proverbs 22:9

*"A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed."*

Proverbs 11:25

**7. Giving makes me Happy.**

*(Jesus) "There is more happiness in giving than in receiving."*

Acts 20:35 LB

### III. GIVING WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDES

**1. Give Willingly.**

*"For if the willingness is there, your gift is acceptable according to what you have, not according to what you don't have."*

2 Corinthians 9:12

*"Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under pressure ..." I Corinthians 9:7a*

**2. Give Cheerfully.**

*"...for God loves a cheerful giver!"*

2 Corinthians 9:7b

**3. Give Sacrificially.**

*"They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service ..."*

2 Corinthians 8:3-4

**4. Give Expectantly.**

*“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly; and whoever sows generously will reap generously.”*

2 Corinthians 9:6

*“...THEY FIRST GAVE THEMSELVES TO THE LORD ... “*

2 Corinthians 8:5

## **ESSENTIAL HABITS OF A HEALTHY BELIEVER**

Personally and Corporately

*But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.*

Psalm 33:11

*For when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep...*

Acts 13:36

**1. Bible Study & Prayer: Weekend Services.**

**2. Fellowshiping with Others: Small Groups.**

**3. Growing Spiritually: Growth Track.**

**4. Giving of Yourself: Dream Team.**

## **WHAT’S NEXT?**

Attend Discovery 301.