

Disciple of Christ Study: Lesson 10 Godly Relationships

Purpose of study: *Live life as a disciple of Christ and intentionally make disciples for the glory of the triune God. A disciple is a “student” or “follower” who learns, studies, and acts in accordance to the teachings of Christ, the Master.*

Lesson 10: Godly Relationships (Day One) *Jesus is the Word*

Trusting Jesus as Lord and Savior enables us to have a personal relationship with our triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus' death and resurrection assures us that our sins are forgiven, we are in a right relationship with God, and will go to heaven when our physical bodies die. As we were reminded in *Lesson 9: Sharing Christ*, these are all good reasons to be vigilant (attentive, watchful) in making the gospel known.

I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Philemon 1:6

As the apostle Paul writes in Philemon 1:6, we do pray for you to be active in sharing your faith. And as we learned from Paul in Philippians 2:1, we also encourage you to keep up the good work in looking out for Christ's interests. One of His interests is relationships. Jesus wants you to have healthy, positive and loving relationships with others and especially with the triune God.

Definition: Relationship is the way in which two or more people, groups, etc., talk to, behave toward, and deal with each other.

Everything God wants us to know about having a strong and vibrant relationship with Him and with others is contained in His *Word*. The Bible is known as the *Word of God*. It is a book that contains God's divine communication to people. There are messages of life, hope, love, instruction and warning.

A person's words are an extension of his or her personality. They encompass the thoughts and attitudes of a person. We cannot speak what has not been formed or generated in our minds.

In the same way, God's words are an extension of Himself. What God says contains some of His thinking and attitudes on certain subjects. We could not possibly take in all of God's thoughts and attitudes because of His massive intellect and wisdom. He tells or gives us what we need in order to know Him and live holy lives in harmony with others.

No matter what form the Bible takes, it is still the word of God. For example, you may hear it through a CD or someone reading to you. Part of the Bible may be written in a scroll, book, magazine or Bible study. You may also have it on a computer, tablet, iPad or get it online. The medium (form) of the message does not change the divine communication.

Read Romans 12:17-18 and answer questions 1-3:

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Romans 12:17-18

1. List two ways we are to deal with others (v. 17):

****See end of lesson for repeat of questions and blank spaces for you to write your answers.**

2. Living in a fallen world, is it possible to live at peace with *everyone*? Yes No (Circle One)

3. Even though it is not possible to live at peace with *everyone*, what instruction are we given (v. 18)?

In the Old Testament God's word is a synonym¹ for the Law or Torah. Statute is another word for law, order or decree. In order for the Israelites to have known the one, true living God, they were to study and meditate on God's Law (Joshua 1:8-9). They were to study and meditate on His words so that His ways would be hidden in their hearts (Psalm 119:11).

Read and meditate on Psalm 119. Then read 119:2, 9-10, 57-58 and answer questions 4-6:

Blessed are they who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart. Psalm 119:2

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.¹⁰ I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. Psalm 119:9-10

You are my portion, O LORD; I have promised to obey your words.⁵⁸ I have sought your face with all my heart; be gracious to me according to your promise. Psalm 119:57-58

4. What is the prescription (preparation, instruction) in the Old Testament for seeking God?

5. List the four words in each biblical citation that describes how you should be seeking God?

6. Are you seeking God with all your heart? Yes No Maybe (Circle One)

7. If you answered "no" or "maybe" in question 6, how can your CLI Discipeler pray for you so that you will seek God with all your heart?

Jesus taught the same concepts regarding God's word found in the Old Testament (Luke 11:28). He confirmed the importance of God's word by telling parables (Luke 8:11) and speaking against those who would try to change it (Mark 7:13). In all His teaching and instruction, He spoke as one with authority; He spoke as God would speak. Jesus did this beautifully and seamlessly because He was, is, and always will be God. This is the great truth of the Bible: Jesus is God. He is Yahweh. He is the third Person of the Trinity.

¹ Synonym is a word that means the same, or almost the same, as another word in the same language, either in all of its uses or in a specific context.

Read John 1:1-18 for the complete teaching and then answer questions 8-12:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.² He was with God in the beginning.³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men. John 1:1-4

8. Who is the apostle John talking about in this passage (v. 17-18)?

9. Who is the Word (v. 1)?

10. Who were all things made through (v. 3)?

11. Who holds the key to our life (v. 4)?

12. Who is the light of men (v. 4)?

The opening words of John 1:1, ‘in the beginning...,’ are identical to the first words of Gen 1:1, ‘In the beginning...’ Both passages speak of creation and God’s existence before the foundations of the world. God is eternal; He always was and always will be. He is timeless.

The apostle John chose the Greek word *logos* (λόγος) that we translate *word* into English. He chose *Word* for his opening statement about Jesus. It would serve his purposes in explaining the truth to both the Greeks and the Jews. These two groups made up his main listeners or readers at the time and therefore he wanted to explain the truth in terms they would understand.

In the sense that John is talking about creation, the Greeks understood the *word* to be divine reason or divine wisdom in the planning and coordinating of the universe. They knew something had to account for their finely tuned and structured world. They just did not know the *Who* behind the word (reason, wisdom).

The Jews clearly understood the concept of the word of God as being communication from the one, true, living God. They believed God and His word were inseparable. The Old Testament is filled with God speaking in power to create and rule. God speaks, and it comes to pass.

Thus, *word* represents divine wisdom and divine speech. Both the Greeks and Jews would understand the concept being conveyed to them. Jesus is both divine wisdom and divine speech. He is one with God Almighty. This is not to say that everyone would accept the truth of what John was writing, but only that they would understand what was being communicated to them.

Read Hebrews 1:1-3 and answer questions 13-17:

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Hebrews 1:1-3

13. How does God speak to us today (v. 2)?
14. Through whom did God make the universe (v. 2)?
15. Who is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being (v. 3)?
16. Jesus sustains all things by His powerful _____ (v. 3a).
17. Who provides the purification for sins (v. 3b)?

18. Now it's your turn. Read and meditate on Exodus 16:4, Deuteronomy 8:3 and Matthew 4:4 below. Write out three questions that you feel are important in understanding how God's words in these verses fit together in a believer's life. Then, answer the questions that you have written:

Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions." Exodus 16:4

He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. Deuteronomy 8:3

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Matthew 4:4

Lesson 10: Godly Relationships (Day Two) *Jesus, the Bread of Life*

19. How are you living on every word that comes from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4)?
20. How are you discipling others to live *on every word that comes from the mouth of God*. (Matthew 4:4)?
21. Please give a status report (details on the current situation) of those you are discipling:
- (1. List the names of the people in your study group:
 - (2. How is their relationship with God growing in love and service? (list each one separately; use a separate sheet of paper if necessary)
 - (3. How is their relationship with you and others growing in holy love and service? (list each one separately; use a separate sheet of paper if necessary)
 - (4. What lesson number are they working on in the CLI Leadership study?
 - (5. Where do you personally need improvement in teaching, discipling and leading others?

Read John 6:32-35 and answer questions 22-25:

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven."³³ For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."³⁴ "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread."³⁵ Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." John 6:32-35

22. Who really gave the manna (bread from heaven) so that the Israelites would not starve to death (v. 32)?

23. Who also gives the true bread from heaven so that all people might have life (v. 33)?

24. Who is the *true* bread from heaven, the bread of God and the bread of life (vs. 32-33)?

25. How does one partake of this holy Bread (v. 35)?

Bread was an important commodity (product) and source of food in biblical times. In fact, bread was often used as a word for food. Food is essential for physical life. Without food, our bodies die. Jesus is essential for spiritual life. Without Jesus, we are dead in our trespasses.

Jesus is the bread of life. In God's goodness He allows people to suffer pain, both physical and emotional, so that we will hunger for the true bread from heaven. Even if we are believers and experience loneliness, despair, heartache, financial troubles, disabilities or illness, these troubles should drive us to eat more from the hand of God. Make up your mind to seek Jesus daily and trust Him, no matter your earthly situation.

Jesus, the bread of life, is sufficient for each day. Jesus is like the manna that fell each day for the Israelites. Jesus is also like the "bread of the Presence"² (showbread, shewbread) that was eaten by Old Testament priests (Leviticus 24:5-9) and now eaten by priests of the New Covenant (believers). He nourishes us and gives us the strength for each day. There is no need to worry about tomorrow, for Jesus will be our daily bread for all the days to come.

Jesus is the Word. When we read God's Word, we find the bread of life. We find Jesus.

"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." John 6:51

26. Read John 6:51. How did Jesus give His flesh for the life of the world (Romans 4:25)?

² "The literal meaning of the Hebrew expression is "bread of the face." Holman Bible Dictionary, p. 209.

Brother Andrew: God's Undercover Agent³

Not everyone has access to God's Word. Perhaps your calling is to get Bibles into as many hands as possible. That has been Brother Andrew's calling. He has been nicknamed "God's Smuggler" because at the height of the Cold War⁴ he secretly carried Bibles and tracts behind the Iron Curtain.⁵

Brother Andrew was born Andrew van der Bijl on May 11, 1928. He was born in Sint Pancras, in the region of Holland located in the country of the Netherlands. The capital of the Netherlands is Amsterdam.

Andy grew up in a Christian home but had no interest in "religion." He was known as a reckless child and youth in his village. He would lie and steal because he could get away with it. It did not bother him at all.

On May 11, 1940, Germany's Nazi army invaded Holland. At first the changes were small and the Dutch people did not seem to mind. But soon the Nazis showed their evil nature. They took available resources, so many Dutch had to dig up and eat tulip bulbs in order to survive. They also started rounding up Jews and young Dutch boys and men who were never seen again.

Andy joined the Dutch underground movement and was successful in evading the German soldiers. He stole weapons, food, cigarette lighters, knives, pencils and anything that might be useful for their effort to stop their adversaries. The Nazis remained in Holland for almost five years until finally they were defeated and World War II ended.

With only a 6th grade education and no actual trade, Andy chose to join the Dutch army. He was assigned to the Dutch East Indies,⁶ which encompassed over thirteen thousand islands off Asia. The Dutch had been in control of these islands for over 300 years but during the war the Japanese had conquered them and convinced the natives to help them defend the islands.

Nevertheless, Andy did not expect much warfare, but he was mistaken. He did not understand guerilla warfare and how devastating it would be to his company. Only 8 out of 80 returned alive.

His mother gave him a Bible as he left for the Dutch East Indies, but he had no intention of reading it. In fact, during all the killing and bloodshed, he did not seem to seek God. Instead he sought alcohol. When he was not fighting for his life and the lives of his comrades, he would get drunk. Losing so many of his buddies just made him angry and mean.

³ Millwright, Alan, "Brother Andrew, God's Undercover Agent," Heroes of the Faith Series by Barbour Publishing, Inc., Uhrichsville, Ohio, 1999.

⁴ Cold War: A state of political tension and military rivalry between nations that stops short of full-scale war, especially that which existed between the United States and Soviet Union following World War II (The Free Dictionary).

⁵ Iron Curtain: An impenetrable barrier to communication or information especially as imposed by rigid censorship and secrecy; used by Winston Churchill in 1946 to describe the demarcation between democratic and communist countries (The Free Dictionary).

⁶ Today these islands are part of Indonesia.

After two years in combat, a bullet shattered his ankle. Amputation was considered, but in the end they did not remove his foot. His recuperation took place in a hospital run by Franciscan nuns. His buddies brought his things, which included the Bible his mother had given him. He started reading it through boredom and to get more attention from one of the nuns, Sister Patrice.

"One of the sisters who noticed him reading his Bible mentioned that Ignatius of Loyola was a Spanish soldier wounded in a battle with the French in the year 1521. During his recuperation he turned to religious books out of boredom. He found that Christianity seemed to answer all his questions. He was a compulsive man. If Christianity had all the answers, should not a man pursue its truths to the very limit of his understanding?"⁷ Certainly Ignatius did and eventually became the founder of the *Society of Jesus* or the *Jesuit* order, focusing on education.

Andy did not know much about Catholics, so the sister patiently explained that St. Francis of Assisi was the founder of her order. An order is composed of men and women who live under the same religious vows (promise). She then quoted a prayer St. Francis had written:

*Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.
Where there is hate, may I bring love;
Where there is offense, may I bring pardon;
May I bring union in place of discord;
Truth, replacing error;
Faith, where once there was doubt;
Hope, for despair;
Light, where was darkness;
Joy to replace sadness.
Make me not so crave to be loved as to love.
Help me to learn that in giving I may receive;
In forgetting self, I may find life eternal."*

"Is that what you Franciscans believe, or do all Catholics believe that?" asked Andy. "What was that last item: 'in forgetting self, I may find life eternal'?" "Yes," said the sister, smiling.⁸

Andy began to wonder if Jesus really was the Son of God who came to save mankind from their sins. But it seemed like such a wild story. He continued to read the Bible, but it did not really bring him much joy.

When Andy was healed well enough to leave the hospital, Sister Patrice told him a story of how the Javans captured monkeys. He patiently listened even though he knew how they did it.

⁷ Alan Millwright, *Brother Andrew, God's Undercover Agent*, 49.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

“The natives take a very large, heavy coconut and bore a small hole in it. After they drain the milk, they put a pebble inside the coconut. Then they wait in the bushes for a monkey to come down out of the trees to investigate the coconut. Eventually a monkey will come down. The hole is just large enough for the monkey’s hand. He reaches inside and feels the pebble. But he can’t take his hand out when he clutches the pebble. The hole isn’t big enough.”⁹ When the natives come out of the bushes, the monkey will not let go of his pebble. He cannot run or climb a tree very well with the coconut attached.

“Maybe you are like that monkey, Andy. What are you holding on to? What is it that will cost you your soul?”¹⁰

At 21 Andy was released from the hospital and continued his drinking and sour attitude. A few months later, he was invited to a revival. He went but was drunk and boisterous. The speaker prayed for them and then led the audience in a booming hymn to drown out Andy and his drunken friend’s laughter and remarks.

The next day a peace settled on him and he picked up his Bible. The words were clear and God’s message of salvation real. Soon after, one night in January 1950, he surrendered his life to God. He was not going to be like the monkey; he let go of the pebble.

God put a desire on his heart to become a missionary, but with only a 6th grade education he was concerned. He expressed his concerns to the British evangelist Sidney Wilson. Sidney said, “Have you not heard of Gladys Aylward? She was a tiny, mousy parlor maid almost thirty years old. The mission people told her that at her age she could never learn a foreign language. She went to China on her own and became an assistant to a missionary. Today she speaks Mandarin Chinese like a native. Although she disdains fame, she is famous anyway. That tiny woman escorted one hundred orphan children through the mountain during the war to save them. Don’t ever say ‘I can’t!’”¹¹

With that encouragement he enrolled in the WEC missionary training school in Glasgow, Scotland. It was founded by missionary C.T. Studd, who died in Africa in 1931. C.T. also had inspiring words to encourage Andy: “Some wish to live within the sound of church and chapel bell. I wish to run a rescue mission within a yard of hell!”¹²

Right before he graduated from his training school, he prayed for direction. He was led to a communist magazine and noticed a youth conference to be held in Warsaw, Poland, July 15, 1955. He sent the organizers a simple note about being a Christian and desiring to exchange ideas at the conference. Amazingly, he was invited and given a special permit to board a train and enter Poland.

⁹ Ibid., 51.

¹⁰ Ibid., 52.

¹¹ Ibid., 70.

¹² Ibid., 71.

Andy packed a few clothes but took a huge suitcase filled with copies of a booklet entitled “The Way of Salvation” in Polish. Not only did he distribute all the booklets, he realized the great need for Bibles in communist countries. Christians were desperate for the Word of God.

Thus began Andy’s unique missionary work: taking Bibles behind the Iron Curtain. The countries included Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, East Germany, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and Russia. It was dangerous work, as he would have to pass inspection by each border patrol as he entered into a foreign country. He would pack his car and hide the Bibles and tracts in and among his clothes and camping gear. He prayed for God to blind the guard’s eyes to the Bibles and Christian materials that he was carrying. God answered his prayer.

All of these countries wanted to end Christianity but they all had a different way of dealing with it. For example, in East Germany, they allowed the churches to remain open but attacked God and Christianity. They had their propaganda machine working and publishing things such as, "only a moron would believe in God." Plus, every state ceremony had the people vowing loyalty to the Communist state and not to God.

But for the faithful, they knew the Bible was God sent. Tears would roll down their cheeks when Andy would bring out a Bible in their own native language. The Bible was also a needed reminder that Christians in the free world had not forgotten them.

Andy married a young woman named Corrie in 1958 and together they had four children. By 1960, Andy was going by the name of Brother Andrew. It was a way of protecting his identity. It is harder to track someone if you do not know his last name.

God sent other workers into the field with Brother Andrew. His work has developed into a ministry called “Open Doors International,” and they deliver Bibles and strengthen Christians in 45 countries, including the Muslim world.

27. Recall the story of the monkey holding on to the pebble. Is there anything that you are holding onto that is keeping you from fully serving Jesus? Yes No Maybe (Circle One)
Explain your answer:

Lesson 10: Godly Relationships (Day Three) *Kingdom Living*

Although Brother Andrew traveled to a number of countries with different rulers and regulations, his loyalty and commitment remained the same. He served God's kingdom and placed himself under the rule and kingship of God. Indeed, his purpose was to bring God's kingdom and rule to other nations.

Definition: Kingdom is defined as a country whose ruler is a king or queen. It is also defined as God's rule or sovereignty; the spiritual world of which God is king.

God's kingdom is made up of people of every race and nation. He wants everyone to be part of His kingdom (2 Peter 3:9) and live together in peace, joy and fear of the LORD. That was Brother Andrew's mission and calling. Indeed, it is every believer's mission and calling.

Read Revelation 5:9-10 and answer questions 28-31:

And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." Revelation 5:9-10 (Also 1 Peter 2:5 and Revelation 1:5-6)

28. Who is worthy to take the scroll and open its seals (v. 9)?
29. Who purchased men and women, boys and girls for God (v. 9)?
30. What did Jesus' death enable believers to become (v. 10)?
31. What do kingdom people and priests do (v. 10)?

Read 1 Corinthians 11:24-26 and answer questions 32-36:

and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:24-26

Explanation Note and Definitions: This rite or practice described above was instituted by Jesus at the Passover meal (Last Supper), before His crucifixion, as a sign of the New Covenant. It is commonly called the *Lord's Supper*, *Holy Communion*, and the *Eucharist*. Paul used the expression the *Lord's Supper* (1 Corinthians 11:20) when he was instructing the church in keeping this observance holy.

Communion or fellowship is a name that Paul used to explain how Christians share relationship with Christ in His life and death (1 Corinthians 1:9). The Greek word, *koinonia*, (κοινωνία) that Paul uses means fellowship, a close mutual relationship, participation, sharing in, and partnership. Christians not only share in close relationship with Jesus, but with each other.

Eucharist is taken from the Greek word *eukharistia* (εὐχαριστία), meaning thanksgiving and gratitude. Believers give thanks as we remember Christ's death as our *Passover Lamb*. His death and resurrection brought forgiveness of sins and a right relationship with God.

32. Who eats the bread and drinks the wine of the New Covenant (vs. 24-25)?
33. What are believers supposed to think about when we participate in the *Lord's Supper* (v. 24)?
34. Whenever we participate in the symbolic act of *Holy Communion*, what are we proclaiming (v. 26)?

35. Explain what it means in the partaking or sharing of the *Eucharist* to "proclaim Christ's death until He comes" (v. 26)?

The central message of the gospel is that Christ died as a sacrifice or atonement for our sins. He made a way for mankind to be reconciled to God. When faithful believers share the bread and wine, we are saying by our actions and our hearts that Jesus died to save us from our sins. In faith, we are waiting for His return and everlasting life.

There is another side to proclaiming Christ's death until He returns. It is in our relationship to others. Believers are the body of Christ and proclaim this fact as we share the one loaf and one cup (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).¹³

Being of one body, we recognize the uniqueness and equality of each member. We remember the grace of God's gift in our lives and joyfully extend it to others. Not only do we come together as a body to share in the Lord's Supper, but as we return to our homes, community or jobs, we display in actions and attitudes the mind and heart of Christ Jesus.

Relatives, friends and strangers are observing our behavior and deeds. Therefore, honor Christ, not only with your words about Him, but your actions in Him. Here are a few quotes that emphasize this point.

"Actions speak louder than words." From a work entitled *Melancholy State of Province* 1736.

"What you do speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say." Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1875.

"You Are The Only Bible Some People Will Ever Read." Dr. Christlieb, 1878.

"Preach the gospel at all times. Use words if necessary." St. Francis of Assisi, 1206.

"...let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." 1 John 3:18, 87 A.D.

36. How do these quotes or sayings help *you* to "proclaim Christ's death until He comes" in your relationship to others?

Relationships are difficult. It is easy to agree with good advice about relationships, but challenging to put into practice. We live in a fallen world and hurt each other in both physical and emotional ways.

Forgiving others for the pain they have caused is hard. We may try to protect ourselves by putting up invisible walls to keep people out of our lives. But that is not what God wants for us. He wants us to have healthy relationships and promises to help us.

¹³ Today, churches do not always use one loaf and one cup for *Communion*. Some use prepared crackers and plastic containers of grape juice that are passed out in baskets. Although churches may provide the Lord's Supper in a variety of ways for sanitary and logistical reasons, the meaning of this holy remembrance remains the same.

The Lord's Supper is an enactment (acting out, ratification) of the *New Covenant*. We are acknowledging and pledging ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ through His blood sacrifice and we are gratefully receiving His benefits. Review the *New Covenant Promises* in Lesson 6 and seek God's divine help to heal your soul and restore relationships.

Lesson 10: Godly Relationships (Day Four) *Relationship with Jesus*

Although all in the body of believers are equal, we are *not* equal with Jesus. He is God and we are not. We need to be reminded of this fact so that we treat Jesus with the utmost reverence and respect. The health of our relationship with Him depends on recognizing that Jesus is God's Son.

Read 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 and answer questions 37-40:

Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.²⁸ A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.²⁹ For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. 1 Corinthians 11:27-29

- 37.** How are believers supposed to eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord (vs. 27-29)?
- 38.** What happens to those who eat the bread or drink the cup in an unworthy manner (v. 29)?
- 39.** How do *you* recognize the body of the Lord when you partake (share) of the Lord's Supper?

The apostle Paul was giving direction to the church at Corinth because some were partaking of *Lord's Supper* in an unworthy manner. They had either forgotten, or did not care, that their behavior dishonored Christ. Paul writes that some were going ahead of everyone else, getting drunk and overeating. Their actions made them look guilty of sinning against Jesus and the other members of His body.

Although *Holy Communion* is celebrated differently today, the instruction is still valid. Therefore, before eating the bread and drinking from the cup, a person should test or examine his or her relationship with Jesus. Do you believe in Christ? Do you trust Him for your salvation? Do you love Jesus? Are you following Him to the best of your ability? Do you love the other members of the body with whom you share the *Eucharist*?

- 40.** How do *you* recognize and love your local church members?

Earlier in the passage (1 Corinthians 11:17-18), Paul talks about divisions and differences among the people. Of course, the body is a metaphor for the close connection and relationship between Christ and His followers. What would happen if your own body was divided in half? What would happen if your body had different ideas about accomplishing a task? For example, think about trying to pick up a cup of coffee with your right hand, while your left hand is attempting to push it away.

Believers are all part of the body of Christ. Ideally, we are to be unified. However, the reality is that we live in a fallen world. In addition, we come from different backgrounds with various sensitivities and opinions.

Therefore, because we see and feel things differently, we may cause problems either in the body as a whole, or with another individual member. In the same sense, we may be on the receiving end of an offense or sin. In order to restore the body or the relationship, we must learn how to forgive and ask to be forgiven. This advice goes for our relationship with non-believers, as well.

Definition:

Forgive is a verb meaning to grant pardon for or cancellation of (an offense, debt, etc.) It also means giving up resentment of or claim of compensation (costs).

"Psychologists generally define forgiveness as a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your forgiveness.

Just as important as defining what forgiveness is, though, is understanding what forgiveness is not. Experts who study or teach forgiveness make clear that when you forgive, you do not gloss over or deny the seriousness of an offense against you. Forgiveness does not mean forgetting, nor does it mean condoning or excusing offenses. Although forgiveness can help repair a damaged relationship, it doesn't obligate you to reconcile with the person who harmed you, or release them from legal accountability.

Instead, forgiveness brings the forgiver peace of mind and frees him or her from corrosive anger. While there is some debate over whether true forgiveness requires positive feelings toward the offender, experts agree that it at least involves letting go of deeply held negative feelings. In that way, it empowers you to recognize the pain you suffered without letting that pain define you, enabling you to heal and move on with your life."¹⁴

When the apostle Peter asked Jesus, "How many times shall I forgive my brother who sins against me?" Jesus answered with a parable (Matthew 18:21-35). He told the story of a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servant. The servant did not have the money, so he begged for mercy. The king took pity on him and canceled the debt and let him go.

Later when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a smaller amount of money. Although his fellow servant begged for mercy, he refused and had the man thrown into prison until the debt could be paid. The other servants told the king what happened.

The master called the servant in and said, "You wicked servant, I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?"

Read Matthew 18:34-35 and answer questions 41-43:

¹⁴ *What is Forgiveness?*, <http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/forgiveness/definition>

In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.³⁵ "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." Matthew 18:34-35

41. In this parable, the king represents God. How much has God forgiven *you* in Christ Jesus?

42. Could anyone be as indebted to *you* as *you* have been indebted to God? Yes No (Circle One)

43. Explain the meaning of this parable in regard to forgiveness:

Our relationship with Jesus is built on the cross of forgiveness. Jesus not only taught about forgiveness, He lived it. He sacrificed His life so that we could experience forgiveness for our sins against God.

Read Luke 23:34 and answer questions 44-45:

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. Luke 23:34

44. Jesus asked God, the Father, to forgive the people who were crucifying Him. Had they asked Jesus to forgive them? Yes No (Circle One)

45. What does Jesus' example on the cross mean for you and how you forgive?

Jesus expects us to forgive others, whether they ask for it or not. It is not easy to forgive people who have hurt you, much less those who will not apologize. However the first step in our journey to forgive from the heart is to recognize how much the Lord forgave us.

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13

46. Read Colossians 3:13. Why do we forgive grievances (complaints) against each other?

Lesson 10: Godly Relationships (Day Five) Practical Ways to Forgive

God's word gives clear instruction about forgiving others. Jesus taught about it and modeled it perfectly. The Holy Spirit helps us by convicting and helping us forgive and seek forgiveness. Nevertheless, we are still free to forgive or not.

Hopefully, we choose forgiveness as our lifestyle. It needs to be a way of life because there will always be someone who offends or hurts us. Before we play the victim card, understand that we will also offend and hurt others. We may even be unaware of our offense, but rest assured, if you have breath, you offend.

Holding on to unforgiveness is toxic for the soul. Whether we cannot forgive ourselves or others, it is fatal. *Unforgiveness is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die.*¹⁵

Practical Ways to Forgive:

(1. Choose to Forgive or ask Forgiveness)

The decision to forgive or seek forgiveness is an act of the will. We must recognize that we have a problem with someone, or someone has a problem with us. Then we must make a decision to forgive or ask to be forgiven.

We have free will and therefore we have a choice. We can choose to forgive or not to forgive. However, when we make a choice not to forgive or not to seek forgiveness, we are hurting ourselves. We will find that thinking of the other person makes us feel either bitter or guilty. Neither of these conditions are healthy prescriptions for peaceful and joyful lives.

(2. Recognize Forgiveness is an act of Obedience)

God tells us in His word to forgive. So, if you are having difficulty choosing to forgive, remember that it is not an option. Some of you may have had some horrific things done to you. Forgiving can be extremely difficult; the flesh cries out for justice. But remember vengeance is the Lord's (Romans 12:19) and discipleship is about taking up our cross and following Jesus.

It is also important to understand that forgiving someone does not mean that you are excusing the evil done to you. Your forgiveness does not suggest, "That is all right, you can sin against me anytime you want." For example, if a married woman is being physically abused by her husband, she should remove herself from the danger. She should ask God for protection and a safe environment. The abused woman's actions are saying to her husband, "I forgive you but I will not allow you to continue hurting me."

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32

47. Read Ephesians 4:32. Why should you forgive others?

Now, some of you may have done some horrific things to others. Acknowledging your crime and asking forgiveness can be extremely difficult, also. The person you wronged may not accept your apology and reject you. They may even reject you with bitter and harsh words.

Before you ask the person to forgive you, prayerfully consider how your actions affected him or her. Think about how you would feel if someone had hurt you in that way. Be prepared to clearly express how sorry you are for what you did. If there is a legitimate reason for the pain you caused, be willing to explain carefully without justifying the sin.

¹⁵ This quote has also been used with anger and resentment as well as forgiveness. Google Books finds a citation in 1993, when it turns up attributed to someone in an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting: "Someone in a twelve-step meeting" said recently, 'Resentment is like swallowing poison and waiting for the other person to die'."

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." Matthew 5:23-24

48. Read Matthew 5:23-24. According to Jesus' teaching, how important do you think seeking forgiveness and reconciliation (restoration, reunion) is to God?

Forgiving yourself is also an act of obedience and can be difficult. You may be experiencing guile, shame and disappointment. You may feel like you do not deserve to be forgiven.

The truth: all sins are wrongs committed God, even when we hurt or injure others. We must take responsibility for our actions and confess to God where we have fallen short. There may still be natural consequences for our behavior, but if we are sincerely sorry, God forgives us.

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.
Romans 8:1-2 (Condemnation - blame, criticism, disapproval)

49. Read Romans 8:1-2. After you have sought after another's forgiveness, why are you obligated to forgive yourself?

(3. Keep Focus on God and His Divine Healing

Definition: We are using pride in the negative sense that defines a person who feels that he is more important or better than other people. It is excessive self-esteem.

One of the reasons it is so difficult to forgive is pride. Offenses against us, large or small, hurt our self-esteem and core beliefs about ourselves. We have dreams and expectations of how our lives should play out. Then someone comes along and shatters our image.

We may need to take a little time and grieve over the arrows that have pierced our hearts. But the key word is *little*. Remember, we are made in the image of God. No one, anywhere or at any time, can take that away from us. Place those wounds you have received in Jesus' hand.

Some wounds are both physical and emotional. Let us look at the battered woman example again. Instead of treating her in a loving, protective way, her husband yells and beats her. His actions toward her make her feel worthless and useless. Even small offenses can have similar effects in a person's life.

On the other hand, when we sin against someone, we tend to excuse our behavior. We come up with reasons why it is not our fault or someone else is to blame. Let us look at the husband who is doing the battering. A common excuse is, "She wouldn't stop nagging me." Or, "She doesn't follow my directions." His pride is saying he needs to have power and control and when his wife or anyone else does not listen, he feels threatened and weak.

In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.

Psalm 10:4

50. Read Psalm 10:4. Why do the wicked not seek God?

Hopefully, you have chosen to forgive, ask forgiveness or forgive yourself in obedience to God's word. Perhaps you need to engage in all three forms of forgiveness. This is not unusual. Every day brings the potential for offense to ourselves or others.

But now it is time to take your eyes off yourself and the other person. Your focus needs to be on God and His strength and power. Seek His healing hand in Christ Jesus, our Lord. You cannot do this alone. Ask God for help and trust that His grace is sufficient. Praise Him for His mercy.

Left to our own devices we will focus on the wrong done to us and how we might get even. We might lapse into self-pity, slander or depression. Take your mind off these negative emotions and fix your eyes on Jesus. Whenever you start having negative thoughts about others and even yourself say, "I forgive as Christ Jesus forgave me."

God may heal you completely or it may take time. Just like sanctification, learning to forgive can be a process. God may lead you to share with a trusted believer or get help from a reputable Christian counselor. Be open to God; He loves you and wants the best for you.

51. Prayerfully consider and list the name(s) of anyone (dead or alive) you need to forgive:

52. Prayerfully consider and list the name(s) of anyone (dead or alive) you need to ask forgiveness:

53. Prayerfully consider and list anything you have been unable to forgive yourself for?

54. In each situation listed in questions 51-54, will you choose to forgive and ask forgiveness?
Yes No (Circle One) If you answered no, why not?

Some of the people that you listed above may no longer be living. That is okay. You can still forgive and ask forgiveness in your mind and heart. God will know and He is the real reason we are going to live as merciful, generous and gracious disciples.

(4. Stand Firm with New Habits

Here is a visual to help you in your new life of forgiveness. Think of a bucket filled with smelly, disgusting garbage. The garbage represents all of your bitterness, resentments and unforgiveness. Dig a hole, empty the bucket and cover it with dirt. Great! You have chosen to forgive.

But the bucket still stinks. No matter how many times you dump it, you cannot get the residue of garbage sticking to the bottom and sides. Dip it into a rushing stream of water. The water represents your new life in Christ and the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:4-7).

Now place the bucket directly under the sun. The sun represents God and His power to keep you from falling into unforgiveness (Jude 1:24-25). Keep your bucket directly under God's gaze.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Romans 12:14

55. Memorize Romans 12:14.

New habits include thinking more of others than yourself, being humble, praying for those who persecute you, and loving your enemies (Matthew 5:44-48). Ask for God's help in making these new and solid habits in your life. Soon you will find it easier to seek forgiveness, forgive others and forgive yourself. This is the path of a disciple. This is your path.

---End Lesson 10---

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS Lesson 10
CLI Disciple of Christ Study: Godly Relationships

Return your answers to your Discipler for discussion and review. Include a personal letter with your answers. This study is designed to forge a close, yet professional, friendship between you and your Discipler. Even short notes help bridge the distance and connect hearts in Christ.

Name: _____ Number: _____ Date: _____

Name of Institution: _____ Street address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

1. List two ways we are to deal with others (v. 17): (1. _____

(2. _____

2. Living in a fallen world, is it possible to live at peace with *everyone*? Yes No (Circle One)

3. Even though it is not possible to live at peace with *everyone*, what instruction are we given

(v. 18)? _____

4. What is the prescription (preparation, instruction) in the Old Testament for seeking God?

5. List the four words in each biblical citation that describes how you should be seeking God?

6. Are you seeking God with all your heart? Yes No Maybe (Circle One)

7. If you answered "no" or "maybe" in question 6, how can your CLI Discippler pray for you so

you will seek God with all your heart? _____

8. Who is the apostle John talking about in this passage (v. 17-18)? _____

9. Who is the Word (v. 1)? _____

10. Who were all things made through (v. 3)? _____

11. Who holds the key to our life (v. 4)? _____

12. Who is the light of men (v. 4)? _____

13. How does God speak to us today (v. 2)? _____

14. Through whom did God make the universe (v. 2)? _____

15. Who is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being (v. 3)?

16. Jesus sustains all things by His powerful _____ (v. 3a).

17. Who provides the purification for sins (v. 3b)? _____

18. Now it's your turn. Read and meditate on Exodus 16:4; Deuteronomy 8:3 and Matthew 4:4. Write out three questions that you feel are important in understanding how God's words in these verses fit together in a believer's life. Then, answer the questions that you have written:

(1. Question: _____

Answer: _____

(2. Question: _____

Answer: _____

(3. Question: _____

Answer: _____

19. How are you living on every word that comes from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4)?

20. How are you discipling others to live *on every word that comes from the mouth of God.*

(Matthew 4:4)? _____

21. Please give a status report (details on the current situation) of those you are discipling:

(1. List the name(s) of the people in your study group: _____

(2. How is their relationship with God growing in love and service? (list each one separately; use a separate sheet of paper if necessary) _____

(3. How is their relationship with you and others growing in holy love and service? (list each one separately; use a separate sheet of paper if necessary)_____

(4. What lesson number are they working on in the CLI Leadership study?_____

(5. Where do you personally need improvement in teaching, discipling and leading others?

22. Who really gave the manna (bread from heaven) so that the Israelites would not starve to death (v. 32)?_____

23. Who also gives the true bread from heaven so that all people might have life (v. 33)?_____

24. Who is the *true* bread from heaven, the bread of God and the bread of life (vs. 32-33)?_____

25. How does one partake of this holy Bread (v. 35)?_____

26. Read John 6:51. How did Jesus give His flesh for the life of the world (Romans 4:25)?

27. Recall the story of the monkey holding on to the pebble. Is there anything that you are holding onto that is keeping you from fully serving Jesus? Yes No Maybe (Circle One)

Explain you answer:_____

28. Who is worthy to take the scroll and open its seals (v. 9)?_____

29. Who purchased men and women, boys and girls for God (v. 9)?_____

30. What did Jesus' death enable believers to become (v. 10)? _____

31. What do kingdom people and priests do (v. 10)? _____

32. Who eats the bread and drinks the wine of the New Covenant (vs. 24-25)? _____

33. What are believers supposed to think about when we participate in the *Lord's Supper* (v. 24)?

34. Whenever we participate in the symbolic act of *Holy Communion*, what are we proclaiming (v. 26)? _____

35. Explain what it means in the partaking or sharing of the *Eucharist* to "proclaim Christ's death until He comes" (v. 26)? _____

36. How do these quotes or sayings help *you* to "proclaim Christ's death until He comes" in your relationship to others? _____

37. How are believers supposed to eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord (vs. 27-29)?

38. What happens to those who eat the bread or drink the cup in an unworthy manner (v. 29)?

39. How do *you* recognize the body of the Lord when you partake (share) of the Lord's Supper?

40. How do *you* recognize and love your local church members? _____

41. In this parable, the king represents God. How much has God forgiven *you* in Christ Jesus?

42. Could anyone be as indebted to *you* as *you* have been indebted to God? Yes No (Circle One)

43. Explain the meaning of this parable in regard to forgiveness: _____

44. Jesus asked God, the Father, to forgive the people who were crucifying Him. Had they asked Jesus to forgive them? Yes No (Circle One)

45. What does Jesus' example on the cross mean for you and how you forgive? _____

46. Read Colossians 3:13. Why do we forgive grievances (complaints) against each other?

47. Read Ephesians 4:32. Why should you forgive others? _____

48. Read Matthew 5:23-24. According to Jesus' teaching, how important do you think seeking forgiveness and reconciliation (restoration, reunion) is to God? _____

49. Read Romans 8:1-2. After you have sought after another's forgiveness, why are you obligated to forgive yourself? _____

50. Read Psalm 10:4. Why do the wicked not seek God? _____

51. Prayerfully consider and list the name(s) of anyone (dead or alive) you need to forgive:

52. Prayerfully consider and list the name(s) of anyone (dead or alive) you need to ask forgiveness: _____

53. Prayerfully consider and list anything you have been unable to forgive yourself for?

54. In each situation listed in questions 51-54, will you choose to forgive and ask forgiveness?
Yes No (Circle One) If you answered no, why not?

55. Write your memory verse, Romans 12:14, without referring to the Bible or notes:

Next: Lesson 11: Why the Bible is Trustworthy

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