

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Thank you so very much!

INTRODUCTION

The lessons contained in this manual are designed to involve the student. If you are teaching this manual, it is important for you to observe the following:

First, with the exception of Genesis chapters 37-50, you will best serve your students by reading every Scripture reference that is given in each lesson. You should read the Scripture and point out its correlation to the lesson.

Second, each lesson has its own questionnaire. You will find that some of the answers to the questions are just plain silly. The questions are designed both to lighten up the atmosphere and to emphasize important points.

I have made it a practice to allow the class to call out the answers after I have read the entire question and all the possible answers. This teaching style allows for participation while preventing out of control discussions. I have found that nearly every time I use the questionnaire, someone will call out the wrong answer to the question even though they have the questionnaire in front of them as I am teaching. Although that may happen on only one or two of the questions, these answers also serve as an opportunity to make a point clearer. Please do not embarrass anyone for calling out a wrong answer. You do not want to kill the spirit of cooperation in your class. Divide your questions. By that I mean teach for ten minutes then stop and cover the questions relating to the material to that point. Breaking up the material will help keep your students' attention.

Third, the doctrine of this book is right. If there is an area that you're not in agreement with in application, do not tell the class, "I can't go along with that." If the lesson brings conviction to your own heart, you may want to have someone else teach the lesson for that Sunday. In other words, when teaching a series on fellowship to your class, do not introduce division.

Finally, these lessons are designed to strengthen the fellowship in your class and thereby strengthen the fellowship in the local church. If this series helps your students to be more committed to Christ Jesus our Lord and the local church, then they will also be more dedicated and faithful to your class.

Please pray and seek the power and utterance of the Holy Spirit as you teach these lessons.

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CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS FELLOWSHIP?

The word *fellowship* appears fifteen times in the New Testament. There are four Greek words translated *fellowship*. Twelve times the Greek word *Koinonia* is used. The other three times that *fellowship* is used, it is translated from the three remaining Greek words.

The word *Koinonia* is used in Acts 2:41, 42. Here we find that fellowship is placed alongside the apostle's doctrine, the Lord's Supper, and prayer. Its inclusion in this list shows us how important fellowship is. This particular Scripture tells us what a local church is to be based upon. Acts 2:41-42 is a purpose statement for the church, which is built upon the foundation and cornerstone, Jesus Christ.

Today, we often consider fellowship as referring to a party or a social gathering; but this idea is a highly inaccurate use of the true biblical sense of the word. Perhaps we can derive the best and most accurate understanding of biblical fellowship from the way the word is used in England. The word refers to a foundation established for the support of selected scholars called fellows. A fellowship usually includes a sum of money, a room, and meals awarded to scholars for a fixed period of time so that they may pursue special study or research. These scholars are graduates. The holder of a fellowship is expected to pursue post graduate work in the department to which the fellowship is attached. Basically, then, a fellowship is a commitment of the institution to the fellow and of the fellow to the institution. The scholar does not go outside of the department of his call.

That brings us to the word *church*. *Church* comes from the Greek word *ekklesia* which is defined as "a called out assembly." It refers to a congregation of people called out from the general public. In the New Testament, nearly every appearance of the word *church* refers to a local church. Rarely does it refer to all of the saved. We are called out from the world into a fellowship of holiness and righteousness. This fellowship is a commitment of each to the other, but only within the guidelines of God's Word. Today, many fellowships are like a lot of Christian marriages, too many Christians are divorcing their local churches in order to seek churches that put them more in touch with the world than with the holiness of God.

With that scriptural backdrop, let us examine the following passages dealing with fellowship. I John 1:6, 7 says that "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." What is walking in darkness? We see this darkness illustrated in I John 2:15-17. We, through salvation, are graduates, and now we are called into a fellowship with God. That fellowship or department we are now in does not allow for darkness. I Peter 1:14-16 is the pursuit we are given. Philippians 4:19 and I Thessalonians 5:24 show that He will supply all our needs for that pursuit. I John 1:7 describes further our fellowship with a

local church: "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

Please notice first that we must walk in the light as He (that is God) is in the light. In light of this truth, two particular passages come to mind, John 1:4 and Psalm 1:1-3. While we may understand that we must walk by the light, we might further question to what light these passages are referring. Psalm 119:105 says that the Word of God is that light. Our fellowship is based on the Word of God. We commit ourselves to one another, but never do we overlook or tolerate continued darkness in one another. We will not be perfect or sinless; however, we have the promise that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

Next, let's take a look at Ephesians 5:11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." The word *fellowship* here is a stronger Greek word for fellowship, *sugkoinoneo*. This word means to participate with someone in something. *Sugkoinoneo* indicates the idea of a partnership. We are not to have a partnership with those who commit works of darkness. For example, unsavory characters may go to the casinos to gamble; but a partnership that attempts to justify gambling as a religious activity and to use God's name, goes to bingo to gamble. Playing bingo may sound religious, but it is still conformity to the world. How many applications can be made with music, language, dress, etc? We must not tolerate these things or form a partnership with those who do these things, even if the intention is to accomplish good. Note Romans 3:8, 6:1 and 15. We are to reprove those who commit "unfruitful works of darkness," not fellowship with them.

Finally, let us consider one last verse concerning fellowship. I Corinthians 1:9 says: "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." God has called us to a fellowship with His Son. Because of this call, we meet together; and, according to Hebrews 10:24- 25, we are not to forsake this fellowship. As believers, we have been called, not by the pastor, but rather by God Almighty Himself. Ours is to accept or reject His fellowship. We will be a part of the local church if we are in fellowship with God because it is the call to which our fellowship has been awarded.

With this basis for the word *fellowship*, it is important for us to see in the upcoming weeks what components make up a fellowship.

CHAPTER ONE:
WHAT IS FELLOWSHIP?

1. In Acts 2:41, 42 four of the main purposes for the local church are
 - a. Doctrine, prayer, music, and Sunday school.
 - b. Doctrine, prayer, tongues, and the Lord's Supper.
 - c. Doctrine, prayer, the Lord's Supper, and fellowship.
 - d. Religious videos, CCM, drama, and seminars.

2. The foundation or cornerstone for the four purposes of the local church is _____.

3. What word best describes fellowship as it pertains to the local church?
 - a. Party
 - b. Commitment
 - c. Eating
 - d. Gossip

4. Which of the following statements is true?
 - a. New Testament Fellowship is a commitment of an individual to his local church.
 - b. New Testament Fellowship is a commitment of a local church to its members.
 - c. New Testament Fellowship is a commitment of the local church and its members each to the other according to the Word of God.

5. The word *church* in the Bible is defined as
 - a. A called-out assembly.
 - b. An invisible body of believers.
 - c. Whatever Paul and Jan say it is.
 - d. A denomination.

6. Which of the following statements is not true?
 - a. Nearly every appearance of the word *church* in the Bible is in reference to a local church.
 - b. As a called out assembly, we are called out from the world.
 - c. As a called out assembly, we are working together with other churches and denominations for a common good, forgetting our doctrinal differences.

7. The light that we are to walk in is obedience to the _____ of _____.

8. Can a Christian have fellowship with God and have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness at the same time? Yes or No.

9. Each saved person has a special calling to be in “fellowship” with the Son of God according to I Corinthians 1:9? Yes, that’s right or No, it’s not.
10. If you are in fellowship with Christ, you will belong to a local Bible-preaching, Bible-believing, New Testament church in an active form as implied by the word *fellowship* in the Bible.
- a. True
 - b. False
 - c. Maybe
 - d. If it has a television ministry

CHAPTER TWO: AGAPE

As we begin to study each one of the components of a fellowship, it only seems appropriate to begin with *agape*. Agape is not a small fish, nor is it the sound some people make when eating! Agape is the highest form of love. It is a love which is divine in nature. An unsaved person is incapable of this love because he does not have God's Holy Spirit indwelling him. Only Christians are capable of agape love. They can love this way only by the Holy Spirit's power and control. Each and every Christian is commanded to love this way. Read the following Scriptures: John 13:34, 35; I Thessalonians 4:9; I Peter 1:22; I John 2:7-10; and I John 4:20, 21.

To define agape love, one would perhaps use the word *benevolence*; however, a person does not show agape love by doing whatever the person he loves desires, but rather by giving the person he loves what is needed. We see an example of agape love in John 3:16. God perceived man's need and gave him what he needed, although man may not have wanted it. (i.e., He first loved us.)

The Greek also used the word *phileo* or *philia* which is friendship love. We get the word *Philadelphia* from this Greek word which emphasizes the idea of brotherly love. This love can be a strong "best friends" type of love; it can even refer to the soulful love of husband and wife; yet it does not rise to the level of agape love. John 21:15-17 gives us the best illustration of the use of these two words. Jesus asked Peter in verse fifteen, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (agape) thou me more than these? Peter answered, "Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love (*phileo*) Thee." Jesus asked the same question a second time, and Peter gave the same answer. Peter realized the magnitude of the word *agape*, so he used *phileo*, believing that he had a true, deep friendship love for Christ. Although Peter was grieved the third time Jesus asked the question, he was not sorrowful because Jesus was asking a third time; rather, he was grieved because now he was being asked by his Lord, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (*phileo*) thou me." Peter knew the vast difference inherent in these two words that we simply translate as *love*.

Now that we understand the differences between agape and phileo love, we can see that we are taught in Scripture to show agape love to others. First, in Ephesians five, God commands us to have agape love for our marriage partner. Second, we are also taught by Christ in John 13:34, 35 to have agape love for one another in the local church. Have you ever heard someone in a church say, "I know my rights!" Perfect love casteth out rights. It does not have the "What's in it for me" attitude.

Not only are we commanded to have agape love for our marriage partner and for one another in the local church, but we are also commanded to have agape love for Christ. As we read Revelation 2:1-5, we see that God threatened to remove the candlestick of the church at

Ephesus. Eventually, Ephesus did lose its candlestick: there is not a church there today. Did they lose that candlestick for tolerating immorality or for not soul winning? Did God remove the candlestick because the Ephesians were not separated from worldliness? No! It was for none of these reasons, although any of those would be cause enough for God to remove the candlestick. The reason was simply that the church at Ephesus left, not lost, their first love. One never loses love; he simply stops pursuing it. This tragedy happens in marriages, and it happens in local churches. The believer often leaves his first love in his relationship with Christ as he begins to pray and read the Bible much less and no longer seeks to live obediently.

In our striving to show agape love for Christ, it is crucial for us to understand that obedience is the key. We must not get so involved in working for Christ that we become like Martha, so busy that we have no time to love Him, sitting at His feet. Sometimes people leave a church because of a problem that is neither doctrinal nor immoral. So why did they leave? They evidently had left their first love long before there was a problem. They had already lost the commitment that the word *fellowship* entails.

In conclusion, we do need agape love for fellow members within our fellowship, especially since Christ commanded us to show this love. There are those who need encouragement that only genuine love can bring. James 1:27 defines “pure” and “undefiled” religion as displaying this kind of love. In every church, there are those who are withdrawn and do not relate well to others. They may be lonely, depressed, and feel unwanted. When we talk to them, they aren’t very friendly or outgoing. They haven’t learned Proverbs 17:17 and 18:23. However, when we have agape love, we will look for these hurting people and without being a nuisance, do our best in God’s power to keep them from feeling unloved or unwanted. It may take personal visits, and we may find that we are doing most of the giving. We must realize, though, that since this is addressed to all who are in Christ, this is a personal ministry we have and God expects it. Think of it. Our great command is to love. Love is not a noun expressing feeling; it is an action word. Christ told Peter, if you love me, then “Feed my sheep.” That is, share the Word of God with believers, building them up in the faith as we see in Hebrews 10:24, 25.

Our church should have good doctrine, active soul winning, and separation; yet without agape love, our local church will stand on the brink of annihilation.

CHAPTER TWO: AGAPE

1. The Greek word *agape*, translated *love* is
 - a. A small fish.
 - b. The sounds some people make when they eat.
 - c. A divine love that a human is unable to exercise if he does not have Christ in him and is not submitted to the Holy Spirit.
2. True or False. Agape love is shown by one doing what the person loved wants done.
3. The Greek word *phileo* or *philia* gives us our word *Philadelphia*, and it means _____ love.
4. Circle the Greek word that scripturally expresses the love we are to have in each of the following:

a. For God	Agape	Phileo
b. For mate	Agape	Phileo
c. Fellow Christians	Agape	Phileo
5. Is an unsaved man capable of having phileo love? _____
Is an unsaved man capable of having agape love? _____
6. What was the main reason that God threatened to remove the candlestick at Ephesus?
 - a. Not separated
 - b. Not soul winning
 - c. Tolerating evil in the church
 - d. Since the church was not guilty of any of the above, the threat was for their leaving their first love.
7. Did the church at Ephesus lose its first love?
8. The key to our love for Christ is
 - a. Obedience
 - b. Tithing to a T.V. ministry
 - c. Making sure no one takes our seat at church
9. When one leaves his first love in regard to his local church, it is because he has left the commitment that the word _____ entails.

10. Is having agape love for fellow Christians, which includes every Christian, a personal ministry for each of us that God expects us to fulfill?

CHAPTER THREE: CARING

The next ingredient included in a biblical fellowship is caring. Without caring, fellowship is incomplete. The first biblical truth we must understand regarding care is that we must give all our care to Christ. I Peter 5:7 states, “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.” Jesus is our example in caring; therefore, in fellowship with Christ we must show utmost care for Him. With that in mind, let us consider Ephesians 5:25-32. The Lord Jesus Christ likens His relationship to the local church to marriage. Christ seeks to sanctify the church. He gave Himself for it. He wants the church cleansed using the Word of God as the cleansing agent. He wants to make it glorious, without spot, wrinkle, blemish, or any such thing. He nourishes and cherishes the local church. We are even members of His bones, flesh, and body. In short, these verses tell us that the Lord Jesus Christ values the local church very highly: it is of utmost importance to Him. To show my care for Jesus Christ my Lord, I will expend my energy for Him through the local church. Most of the New Testament was addressed to local churches. In I Timothy 3, we see guidelines for the local church concerning the pastor and deacons. It is in this context that we direct our attention to verses 14 and 15. Behaving ourselves in the house of God is speaking of our behavior in the local church.

If we are going to really care for God, then we will be committed to minister in those areas that appeal to His heart. As we can see, the local church is very near His heart. The local church has many needs: Sunday School teachers and teaching assistants, choir members, musicians, Master Club and youth leaders, and on we could go. The bus ministry is probably the greatest area of need. When my brother was dying, I was impressed with the great extremes the hospice people would go to in order to be a blessing and help. On one occasion, one lady came back to help my brother after her own husband and children were already at home. She did not have to come again since she had already been there that day, but she did. When one cares, he goes out of his way, and he will do that on a consistent basis. For example, perhaps you could drive a bus; but the trouble of getting a CDL, actually getting up early on Sunday, and then getting home later than most people after the morning service is simply too much trouble. Or perhaps you and your family could go out on visitation together, but you do not really want to move out of your comfort zone. However, when the Lord shows you a need in His house, one that needs cared for on a regular basis, He is giving you an opportunity to show Him your care and compassion on a consistent basis. It has been said that ten-percent of the people are doing ninety-percent of the work. More often than not, this saying is too true in most local churches. Frequently, we see one person doing three jobs when it was God’s will for them to do only one for the simple reason that no one else cared enough to make a continual commitment. The ministry might interfere with camping, golfing, etc. One of the saddest portions of Scripture is Psalm 142:4: “I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.”

In addition to being committed to ministering in a local church, caring would also include being committed to praying for one another, visiting the sick, and comforting the bereaved according to James 1:27. These acts of caring fulfill the command in Galatians 6:2 to “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” Obedience to this command is not only the pastor’s duty, the deacon’s duty, or the teacher’s duty: it is as much the duty of any saved person in the local church as it is the duty of another. When we share in the burdens of others, we find that sorrows lessen and joys increase, Romans 12:10. Fellow members need those who care. We have people who really hurt. Would it not be a wonderful thing if every member of the church knew that they were truly loved and that within the local church there were people who honestly cared for them?

For fellowship in a church to be right, (as the word *fellowship* is used in its scriptural sense and defined for us in the first lesson of this book) loving and caring must be practiced by every member. Jesus Christ gave us the following example. The day was long; He was tired. As He retired to rest, some mothers brought their supercharged little children to see Jesus. Exhausted! Weary! Drained! Now little children full of vigor were being brought to see Him! The disciples in caring for Jesus’ physical need told them to go away. Jesus overheard them and quickly moved to tell them to allow the little children to come to Him and forbid them not. Although the disciples truly cared for His physical need, there was a greater matter than that of the body. It was a matter close to our Lord’s heart--the love of little children. The disciples would show greater care for Jesus by bringing little children unto Him. We can still do the same today.

Let us close this lesson with these thought-provoking questions. First, am I measuring and looking to see what people are doing for me instead of wondering what I can do for them? Secondly, how can I show care for Christ concerning those things that are closest to His heart? Finally, am I fulfilling the true sense of the word *fellowship* in my care for my brothers and sisters in my local church?

If you can define ways in which you are doing these things, you are on the right road of fellowship.

CHAPTER THREE: CARING

1. The Lord Jesus Christ considers His relationship to the local church to be the same as
 - a. Marriage
 - b. War
 - c. What's the difference?
2. If you really care for God and are going to exercise care for Him, then you will minister in those areas that appeal to His _____.
3. When the Lord shows us a need in His house that should be cared for on a consistent basis, He is giving us an opportunity to
 - a. Start a new Christian rock group.
 - b. Decry the sad situation that exists because other Christians will not do what we know they need to.
 - c. Show Him our care and compassion on a consistent basis.
 - d. Tell the preacher what he is doing wrong; or better yet, tell others what the preacher is doing wrong.
4. True or false. What generally keeps one uninvolved in ministry is that the ministry may take him out of his comfort zone.
5. One of the saddest portions of Scripture is
 - a. Hezekiah 3:2
 - b. First Condominiums 12:8
 - c. Psalms 142:4
6. Bearing one another's burdens, that is, "caring" for one another, fulfills what?
 - a. Your own emotional needs
 - b. The law of Christ
 - c. Nothing at all
7. Are we in right fellowship with the local church if we're not caring for one another as has been scripturally shown in these lessons?
8. These last three questions are short answer questions that you should write out on the back of this page and perhaps discuss it with your mate or another Christian friend. Ask yourself the following:
 - a. "Am I measuring and looking to see what people do for me, instead of wondering what I can do for them?"
 - b. "How am I showing love for Christ about those things that are closest to his heart?"
 - c. "Am I fulfilling the true sense of the word *fellowship* in my care for my brothers and sisters in Christ at my local church?"

CHAPTER FOUR: FORGIVENESS

In the last few lessons, we have learned that a fellowship of believers is a commitment of those believers to one another and that in order to be a truly biblical local church, we must be a fellowship. In addition, we also understand that this fellowship must include agape love and caring. Yet a fellowship must include other virtues as well. The next virtue we will consider is forgiveness.

Forgiveness is one of the most important elements of fellowship. Ephesians 4:32 states: “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, FORGIVING one another, EVEN AS GOD for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

Forgiveness is desirable in all relationships, especially within the local church. We must realize, however, that when we as individuals, or a church, extend forgiveness to someone, that forgiveness will often be criticized. Most often those people who criticize will say, “That person doesn’t deserve forgiveness for what he did.” However, the Bible says in Ephesians 2:8, 9 that we do not deserve forgiveness; rather, God gives it to us, and as a result, we are to forgive others “even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven [us].”

When a church is unforgiving, the result is often a lack of spiritual growth. Notice the gravity placed on this virtue by the Lord Jesus Himself in Matthew 6:14, 15. He uses strong language, wouldn’t you agree?

Paul reiterated this teaching of Christ in Colossians 3:13: “Forbearing one another and forgiving one another. If any man have a quarrel against any EVEN AS Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (emphasis mine). An unforgiving spirit can be a hindrance to revival; and if there is a revival, it can be stopped if we persist in having an unforgiving spirit as individual Christians or as a local church.

One of the hindrances to forgiveness is that Christians often do not understand repentance. Many times we hear the phrase, “I see no evidence of repentance in that person’s life.” Perhaps we do not understand the word **repent**. To repent means “to turn away from.” When individuals are in sin and they repent, they are actually turning away from that sin. That is, they are committing that sin no longer. For example, in I Corinthians 5, the story is told of the man who was having an adulterous relationship with his stepmother. In essence, Paul told the church that it is not grace or mercy to tolerate this sin. Put this man out of your assembly (my paraphrase). The church obeyed. Then, in II Corinthians we see Paul telling the church to receive the man back into the church. The man had repented, yet there were those that thought more should be required of this young man. We do not read that the young man became a soul winner, a missionary, or a fiery, dedicated Christian; but we do see that he repented. That is, he turned from his sin: he was no longer in adultery with his stepmother. Usually people want to see strong, consecrated Christian living and witnessing as evidence of repentance; but if those

are a necessity, we may need to put out many members who aren't living for Christ. These members are faithful to church services, but they are somewhat carnal. I myself have witnessed (and I'm sure you have as well) those who not only put out the repentant person, but also require psychological counseling before that person is allowed back. This process sounds good to the modern religious mind, but it is not scriptural.

Another reason we often possess an unforgiving spirit is that we are self-centered, egotistical Christians. Someone wronged us and we want our "pound of flesh." To illustrate, let me ask if you have ever seen someone that was wronged and then became quite angry when he or she figured out what had happened to them. You may have said something like, "You're making a mountain out of a molehill" which may be a fair evaluation; however, if the same thing happened to you, then there would be a whole new perspective on the case. If you thought they overreacted and then you act the same way when you are wronged, then it is evident that you have a self-centered ego. Some people may assert that they are seeking a spiritual victory in the matter when the truth is that they are actually taking vengeance and then using the Lord's name to alleviate their own consciences.

A third hindrance to forgiveness is Satan himself. When there is a revival in the church and when there are souls being saved, Satan becomes angry and seeks to sow discord in the church. People often will say things that just pop into their minds. Those words are wrong; they should not have said them, but Satan tempted them; and, unfortunately, they lost that battle with temptation. Satan will also see to it that others hear what was said. It may be a slander; it may insinuate that someone is being unethical. It may be about the pastor, or it may be about a fellow member. That person might simply imply that there is wrong-doing. They may give others inaccurate information or use facts in such a way as to give a false impression. That situation then becomes a temptation Satan is placing in front of you, the one being talked about. You may seek to get back at the person instead of seeking to turn them to righteousness. You may then develop an unforgiving spirit. Satan will help backslidden and unsaved people see the hypocrites in the church because it is also easy for Satan to sow unforgiving spirits in the minds of the backslidden and unsaved since they desire to ease their consciences about their backslidden condition.

Although there are many hindrances to forgiveness, we have no greater example of a forgiving person than Jesus Christ our Lord as seen in I Peter 2: 21-25. Think once again of the word *fellowship*. An unforgiving spirit is diametrically opposed to fellowship. When we have an unforgiving spirit, we tear down one of the pillars of the local church according to Acts 2:42, the pillar of fellowship. Is there someone who has wronged you? Are you holding a grudge? Perhaps that person will never feel that he or she is wrong and will never apologize, but you can forgive that one in your heart. Did not Joseph forgive in this way in Genesis 45:4-15? Perhaps you should pray and then go to someone today.

CHAPTER FOUR: FORGIVENESS

1. According to Ephesians 4:32, how are we to forgive others?
 - a. With reservation
 - b. By saying, “that’s all right”
 - c. “even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you”

2. If we do not forgive the trespasses of others against us, God will
 - a. Reward us
 - b. Not forgive our trespasses
 - c. Make us listen to CCM

3. The word **repent** means to:
 - a. Say I’m sorry
 - b. Have an excuse
 - c. Turn away from

4. True or False. When individuals repents they are turning from a sin and are committing that sin no longer.

5. Right or Wrong. Repentance is not complete without Christian psychological counseling.

6. Often, an unforgiving spirit is the result of a person’s being a _____ centered, egotistical Christian.

7. An unforgiving spirit is diametrically opposed to
 - a. Baptists
 - b. House cats
 - c. Fellowship

8. What Bible character is the best example of having a forgiving spirit even before those that offended him asked forgiveness?
 - a. Judas
 - b. Jacob
 - c. Joseph
 - d. Judah

9. Can you be a good Christian and have an unforgiving spirit toward anyone? Yes or No.

10. If you do have an unforgiving spirit, what should you do?
- a. Go to the person, asking God for His help as you do
 - b. Let it ride
 - c. Ask Dear Ann Landers
 - d. Volunteer to do a job that you don't like to make up for it.

CHAPTER FIVE: FORBEARANCE

It is only natural that as we move from the aspect of fellowship that involves having a forgiving spirit, that we now consider the fact that fellowship involves forbearing. Ephesians 4:2 admonishes us to “[forbear] one another in love.”

To be in right fellowship, we are to love one another, care for one another, and forgive one another. But what do we do about people we just don’t like? Forbearing allows for personality differences and weaknesses. Some of us are naturally drawn toward that bubbling, outgoing, “Miss Congeniality” type of person. Others have been so mistreated and burned by this type of person that when they see people with that personality, they naturally do not trust them. What we fail to see is that we often will tolerate things in other people that we won’t tolerate in that outgoing person. Perhaps you’ve been around the person who either enters the conversation and talks nonstop, saying “much ado about nothing,” or that feels as if he already knows everything and no one can offer him any suggestions; he is going to do what he is going to do and not allow for any suggestions.

We must understand that there are people with whom we develop much closer relationships, and we will naturally be closer to them than anyone else in the church. There is nothing wrong with that. I believe the story of Jonathan and David illustrates the value of close friendships. It is not wrong to have close friends. On the other hand, we must understand that these close relationships do not eliminate the ingredients that make up fellowship in the scriptural sense, of which agape, caring, and forgiving are a part. Irritability and impatience are selfish responses which are completely out of keeping with Christian character. Galatians 6:9, 10 tells us not to be weary in well doing. Some people do well for a short period of time but do not endure. If we continually do well, we will reap in due season. When is that season? Read II Corinthians 5:10.

Now read again Galatians 6:10, “So as we have opportunity we should do good unto all men but especially them who are of the household of faith.” In other words, we should do good to our fellow believers within our local church. Jesus again stands as our example in John 13:13-17. Jesus knew Judas. He knew Judas was taking from the bag. He knew Judas was a hypocrite. He knew Judas would betray Him; yet, He washed Judas’s feet! If we ever lose the servant attitude, we will never attain unto the rewards “of the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 2: 1-4 deals with this very subject. Notice verse one speaks of the “fellowship of the spirit.” It is the same Greek word used in Acts 2:42 in speaking of the fellowship of the local church and in I Corinthians 1:9 of our fellowship with Christ. Again the word *fellowship* speaks of a commitment one to another. Verse one is showing us that it is God’s will and desire that we have this fellowship with His Holy Spirit. Fellowship with the Spirit takes us back to the local church; and we become like-minded, having the same agape, being of

one accord and of one mind. We do not do things through strife or vainglory, rather in lowliness and humility of mind we esteem others better than ourselves. Instead of looking to our own things or our own agendas, we look to the needs of others. This admonition is followed by the great passage of Philippians 2:5-11. Did you realize that Philippians 2:5-11 is an example illustrating what Christ means in verses 1-4? You see, there are people who have not wronged us and are fellow members of our local church. There are no apologies or extending of forgiveness needed; however, we will never be close friends with these people this side of Heaven because of their personalities. The temptation for us then becomes to avoid them or to not extend to them the fellowship that is needed, whether it is in the area of caring, forgiving, or forbearing. The mark of a mature Christian is that he is able to overcome a spirit that resists forbearance.

The word *forbear* means “to bear up with, endure.” Notice again that Ephesians 4:2 states, “Forbearing one another in love.” We are not only to bear up with and endure; we are to do those things in love (agape). Also, there is an *-ing* on the word *forbear*. In Scriptures, an *-ing* is usually indicative of a continuing state. In the Greek the grammatical construction of this phrase is called a present participle. A present participle expresses continuous or repeated action. In other words, “keep on keeping on.” Continually *forbear* one another, and be sure you do it in love. Keep in mind that you are not wrestling the person with whom you are forbearing according to Ephesians 6:12. When we entered the fellowship of our local church, we were entering a commitment, a commitment to Christ, His Holy Spirit, and to one another. Unless the church becomes immoral or enters into false doctrine for which the Scriptures admonish us to “come out from among them and be ye separate,” then we are to continue in love, care, forgiveness, and forbearance of one another. Often people leave a church for reasons other than doctrine or immorality. These individuals aren’t really being led or called to a specific ministry. Instead they leave and begin looking for another church. Why? They failed to *forbear* on a continuing basis. They failed the Spirit and broke that commitment. Remember, it was Christ who viewed the local church with the same level of commitment as in a marriage and commanded the same of us. Don’t be negative. Instead, be forbearing. Help build your church that it might reach the goal Christ set for it, that is, to be holy, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. *Forbear* and help your local church to have stronger biblical, holy standards each year.

CHAPTER FIVE: FORBEARANCE

1. Christians most often will need to exercise forbearance with a fellow church member that
 - a. Has more money than they do.
 - b. Has a personality that they do not like.
 - c. Is closer to the preacher than he is.

2. Yes or No. In forbearing all the brethren in a church and loving them with agape love, can a Christian have a closer relationship with another Christian in the church than he does with someone else?

3. Jesus knew that Judas was a hypocrite. He knew that Judas stole what was in the bag, yet He showed forbearance toward Judas by:
 - a. Overlooking Judas's sin.
 - b. Washing Judas's feet
 - c. Giving Judas 25% off in the confessional booth.
 - d. Sending to Judas's ministry a \$25.00 fellowship gift.

4. The mark of a mature Christian is that he or she is able to overcome a spirit that _____ forbearance.

5. The word "forbear" means to
 - a. Do something for a bear.
 - b. Put off doing something that you don't want to do.
 - c. Bear up with, endure.
 - d. See only the front of a bear.

6. How are Christians to forbear one another?
 - a. In love (agape).
 - b. By putting them out of the assembly
 - c. Avoiding them as to prevent argumentative confrontations.

7. In Ephesians 4:2, the phrase "forbearing one another in love" is in the Greek called a present participle indicating that this is a command to do something continuously and repeatedly. (Circle the right answer.) That is right or that is wrong.

8. True or False. When one enters a fellowship with the local church, he is entering into a commitment.

9. In your own words at home, explain if there is someone that you are not, or have not been willing to forbear. What can you do to turn that spiritual condition around? Are you willing to do so for Christ's sake?

CHAPTER SIX: SUBMISSION

Another virtue included in the practice of a fellowship is submission. Perhaps your idea of fellowship has been similar to what is taught in many liberal, Christ-denying churches that think of a fellowship as a time of social gathering such as a party, a play or some pursuit that a group within a local church does together. If so, then you have not really seen fellowship. We can readily understand that agape and caring are elements of fellowship to be carried out within the local church. As a matter of fact, we really do not have a problem seeing that in the actual use of the word *fellowship*, we are making a commitment to one another. However, it is difficult to see that the word *fellowship* includes forgiveness and forbearing. It may be equally as hard to see it including the next virtue as well. This virtue is nonetheless a part of the ingredients that are included in the word *fellowship* and is expected of us by God within the realm of the local church. This virtue is submission. Ephesians 5:21 states that we are to be “Submitting [ourselves] one to another in the fear of God.” When we turn to I Peter 5:4, 6, we find that without the humility of submitting ourselves one to another, we will not be exalted in due time. Too many Christians never develop these virtues of Christ-likeness and are, consequently, saved “so as by fire.”

Have you ever considered what the word *submit* means? To submit means to place under. The Lord through His infallible Word in Ephesians 5:22 told wives to “submit [themselves] unto [their] own husbands.” In marriage, to submit means for wives to place themselves under the authority of their husbands. The idea is much stronger than obeying his commands. While a child is told to obey, that obedience can be carried out grudgingly. Submission, on the other hand, is an attitude of yielding to the one to whom we submit. It is possible to obey grudgingly, but it is not possible to submit grudgingly. Submission is a mark of a mature Christian.

Not only must we consider what biblical submission means, we must also understand to whom we are submitting. We must acknowledge first and foremost that Christ is the head in the local church; however, he places in the body of the local church various leaders and gives them responsibilities. I Peter 5:1-4 talks about the elder. In short, that is the pastor. Notice that verse two states that the pastor has a twofold responsibility: “to feed the flock,” and to take “the oversight thereof.” Now let’s consider Hebrews 13:7. Who does it say has the rule over you in the local church? It says those who have spoken unto you the Word of God. Who is that mainly in the local church? The pastor. Now notice how Hebrews 13:17 states the command: obey and submit. Not just obey, but obey with a yielded spirit.

In our fellowship, submission to the pastor of the local church is really just the beginning. The next step is for the younger to submit himself unto the elder, who in this context

refers to older people in the congregation. Isn't it right for the elderly to be given seats when the church has a gathering in the social hall and there are more people than seats? Shouldn't they be given precedence? Shouldn't they be allowed in the food lines first? It is a shame today that so many children speak disrespectfully to older adults. It may be that the harbinger is that often younger adults, seeking to get their agendas and changes in a church, do not submit themselves.

While we are clearly taught in Scripture to submit to the pastor and the elderly, the area of submission does not end here. Now we are told in I Peter 5:5 to be subject one to another. The word *subject* here is the same Greek word for submit and means to place under another and yield to voluntarily. What would be an example of this? "She had the audacity to ask me to help in the nursery!" That is an un-submissive attitude. Regardless of our positions in the church or our stations in life, we must never be above serving or receiving advice from others. The book of Proverbs indicates that a wise person will receive instruction, and Ecclesiastes 4:13 states: "Better is a poor and a wise child, than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished." We should never get to the point that we can no longer be instructed. Imagine that the sound room motions to the preacher that his lapel microphone is not working, and that he needs to stand behind the pulpit microphone. No matter how much he says, "No sound man is going to tell me where to preach"; people will not hear the sermon, and he will be acting foolishly, if he does not do as the sound man asks.

A good rule of thumb involving submitting to one another in the church is that if the issue is not a doctrinal or a moral or a sin-related issue, then we should go along with the desire of the leader even if it is against our personal preference. If the matter does not involve the leader, then we should go along with the majority although it may go against our preference. However, we must never back the pastor or the majority **if the issue is in opposition to Scripture** or if it exalts the flesh above the spirit. **We must never follow the crowd into false doctrine, compromise, or sin.**

Most church conflicts and splits have resulted from one group's trying to enforce its own will and desires against another group. The virtue that is most often abandoned in that conflict is submission. Without submission we become guilty of tearing down one of the pillars on which the church was to be established according to Acts 2:42. That is, we tear down fellowship. We have seen how dear fellowship is to Christ's heart, and we have seen that it is a commitment to God as well as to each other. Perhaps we need to be more specific in our personal prayers and ask God to help us have a spirit of submission on a continuing basis.

CHAPTER SIX: SUBMISSION

1. The word *submit* as per its biblical usage is defined as
 - a. Less than mitt
 - b. To place under
 - c. A word to be used in marriage only
 - d. A technical term to describe a senior moment

2. Which of the following two words is the strongest?
 - a. Obey b. Submit

3. Which of the following two words cannot be carried out grudgingly?
 - a. Obey b. Submit

4. Whether its reference is to authority in the home, on the job, or at church, which word shows the most maturity in regard to those in authority over them?
 - a. Obedience b. Submission c. Confession

5. What is the two-fold responsibility of the pastor, according to Scripture?
 - a. Lording over God's flock and telling people where to get off
 - b. Guessing when people are sick and doing what the board tells him
 - c. Visiting all the sick, shut-ins, absentees and visitors, and preaching against sin while always being positive
 - d. Feeding the flock of God (spiritually) and taking the oversight thereof

6. Submitting in fellowship does not end with the pastor of the local church. The _____ are to submit themselves to the elder. As a matter of fact, in the local church we are to be _____ one to another.

7. Right or Wrong. We are deficient of the biblical spirit of submission when we will no longer be instructed.

8. A good rule of thumb in the local church is that if it is a non-doctrinal, or a non-moral issue, or is a non- sin issue, then go with the desire of
 - a. The pastor or leader
 - b. Your mate
 - c. Your children

9. If a matter does not involve the pastor or the leader of a particular ministry, and it is non-doctrinal, non-moral and not a sin, should you back the majority in the church although it may go against your preference? Yes or No

10. What if the issue is sin or false doctrine in questions eight and nine? When could we compromise with the crowd in the church?
 - a. Sometimes
 - b. Never
 - c. When it keeps the peace

CHAPTER SEVEN: COMMUNICATION

We have already established that the church is to be a fellowship, that is, a commitment of ourselves in the areas of agape love, caring, forgiveness, forbearing, and submission to one another in the local assembly. Another building block of fellowship is “communication.” Many problems result from a lack of communication; however, worse problems have resulted from too much communication or the wrong kind of communication.

We must first understand that communication involves both the mouth and two ears. Someone has said, “God gave us one mouth and two ears: perhaps he wanted us to listen twice as much as we talk.” James 1:19-21 are excellent verses in this regard. Even though we are told in II Timothy 3:12, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,” we should not expect that persecution to come from our own fellowship. There will be grievous words spoken about God’s people. The higher a leader’s position in the local church, the more grievous the words directed against him will be. In Luke 6:26 Christ warns us and says “Woe unto you when men shall speak well of you.” Yes, the world will speak evil about us. The religious world may make some very malicious comments about us. Often we are referred to as “funny-mentalists,” while others call us “legalists.” Then, there is Satan who according to I Peter 5:8 is seeking whom he may devour. With all this opposition (Ephesians 6:12), we certainly need fellowship one with another that is void of the wrong kinds of communication.

Each day in the world in which we live, we hear filthy language, wrathful words, and the taking of God’s name in vain. The fellowship of the local church is to be a wonderful respite and repose from the barrage of verbal abuse. What a terrible crime against God-ordained fellowship it is when our communication grows wicked. Proverbs 10:32 states, “The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.” The following are examples of wicked communication: gossip, slander, and discouragement concerning the church, its people, and its efforts. The same song that says, “Be careful little lips what you say” also says, “Be careful little ears what you hear.” So often, gossip, slander, or discouragement is heard in local churches; and it is always detrimental to fellowship. Some of the reasons for wicked speech stem from such situations as people who are trying to make the church’s music standards and doctrine more palatable to the world and more like the liberal-leaning churches. The term “change is good” is often heard, but is rarely referring to change to be more holy, righteous, and scriptural.

Many times the wrong communication comes in the form of the three *I*’s: implication, insinuation, and inaccuracy. Let us consider some biblical examples of these forms of wrong communication and then see the practical application. First, let’s look at implication. Just as Judas implied that the anointing of Jesus by Mary was wasteful and that the ointment should

have been sold and given to the poor, sometimes one sees a pastor, youth director, church employee, or some other leader in the church using a vehicle or borrowing a table for a class party and then implies that the leader is being selfish, not wanting to spend his own money or use his own vehicle or table. They further imply that the leader is being a burden to the church, because the church will have to replace that table or vehicle sooner than expected with money that could have been applied to greater use in the ministry. What has happened? The critics have impugned the integrity of that leader and perhaps damaged his or her effectiveness in working with others who in turn hear those complaints.

Secondly, sometimes people like to insinuate things. For example, David's brother insinuated that David was looking for self-glory and was up to no good when he was asking about Goliath. Have you ever heard someone say that about another Christian when they've given a testimony, donated a large gift, sung a song, or done some work in the church? The evil spirit of envy enters and the critic insinuates that the individual is "grandstanding."

Finally, there are those that give inaccurate or misleading information. Satan did this with Eve when he assured her, "Ye shall not surely die," but instead, "ye shall be as gods." Perhaps you have had misinformation or inaccurate information given about you. Pastors deal with this problem often. The most hurtful part is that these lies usually come from someone else in the church who is respected or holds a respected position. Usually when these things come from "Mr. Motor Mouth" or Miss Busy Body," people just consider the source and go on; but when those lies come from more respected members of the church, a cancer within the local body of Christ begins to grow. Avoid these three *I's*! Let them not proceed from your mouth, and avoid those who say these things, casting doubt on other Christians.

On the other hand, communication should involve right things. First, it should involve admonition--the giving of instruction, wisdom, and exhortation on the basis of Scripture. Admonition should be directed toward those going doctrinally astray. It should also be given to those who aren't as faithful as they once were: Hebrews 10:25 commands us to be "exhorting one another." Read the entire verse, and then think on that phrase within the context of that verse.

Another area in which right communication is necessary is comfort. Comfort may include an "I'm sorry, please forgive me." It may also include an "I am praying for you, and I will help in any way I can." Comfort also may involve our saying nothing at all but simply being there, preparing a meal, mowing a yard, or helping the sick in some other way.

Finally, good communication involves encouragement. Often this is seen by the word *exhort* in the Scripture. A good way to be an encouragement is for us to seek out and greet people at church. While it may be true that many are shy and even seem unfriendly, we should still go out of our way to be kind to them. When possible, we should arrive early and stay late,

learning to edify, laugh with, and draw closer to one another. A 164-hour week may only include seven hours at church for the faithful, truly God-loving Christian. Therefore, we should make each trip really count with edification and godly communication without griping and complaining. If our communication is not right, our fellowship is not scriptural.

CHAPTER SEVEN: COMMUNICATION

1. James 1:19-21 states that as beloved brethren we should be _____ to hear and _____ to speak, _____ to wrath.
2. True or False. Christ set for us as a goal in Luke 6:26 to live and work in such a way that all men will speak well of us.
3. Which three of the following are indicative of the world's communication?
 - a. Filthy language, wrathful words, taking God's name in vain
 - b. Saying "hello," praising the Lord, holding it in
 - c. Just say "no," "awesome," "make my day"
4. Which of the following three are indicative of a carnal Christian's communication?
 - a. Love, joy, peace
 - b. Gossip, slander, discouraging words
 - c. Methodists, Charismatics, Presbyterians
5. "Change is good," if it is referring to
 - a. Becoming more holy, more righteous, and more scriptural
 - b. Adopting CCM, Christian Rock, Contemporary worship
6. Yes or No. The three *I's* of wrong communication in a local church are implication, insinuation, and inaccuracies.
7. Which Biblical illustration matches best with the corresponding *I*?
 - a. Judas's statement about Mary's wasting the ointment on Jesus
 1. insinuate
 2. inaccurate
 - b. David's brother about David when asking about the giant
 3. imply
 - c. Satan with Eve "ye shall be as gods"

8. What three types of right communication should be in a local church?
 - a. Music, preaching, teaching
 - b. Admonition, comfort, encouragement
 - c. Bowling, sports, music

9. In your own words, give an example of each type of right communication included in your answer from number eight.

10. Right or Wrong. If our communication is not right in the local church, then our fellowship is not completely scriptural.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCIPLINE

The next component of a fellowship is the area of discipline. The Bible does instruct us in the way in which to discipline members of the church. Even the pastor may come under local church discipline. The local church is the Lord Jesus Christ's church, not the pastor's, the deacon's, or the congregation's. Christ is the head of the church; and as the head, He has set men throughout the body to carry out His will.

To begin with, I Timothy 5:19 addresses the rebuke of a pastor. Some preachers stop at the words "against an elder [pastor] receive not an accusation." However, the verse does not end there, for it continues saying, "but [except] before two or three witnesses." A witness is not one who simply agrees with someone else yet did not see the matter in question take place; rather, a witness is one who was there and saw or heard the situation as it happened. If that witness did see situation, then notice I Timothy 5:20. The apostle Paul himself followed this scriptural process for discipline in Galatians 2:11-14 when he rebuked Peter, who was an elder, or pastor, before all. You see, fellowship is not tolerant of sin, I John 1:6, 7.

Next, although the New Testament has several applicable passages concerning the discipline of church members, we will examine only two main passages in this chapter. First, let's consider I Corinthians 5:9-13. The background for this passage is that a man was living with his stepmother in fornication. The church thought it was exercising grace and liberty by tolerating this situation. They, as many do today, applied the terms grace and liberty as pertaining to the flesh and sin instead of pertaining to the spirit and righteousness. Notice the list in verse ten of those people we should not "company with." Read verse five and see what Paul instructs those believers to do. Rather than fellowshipping with them, they are to deliver them to Satan for the destruction of the flesh--not the spirit since neither we nor Satan can destroy the spirit. Verse seven says to "purge out" or, in other words, separate that man from your church. Now notice verse eleven which clarifies that we are to put these out only if they be called a brother --if they are members. We would have to leave the world if communication were broken off with all men who are described in verse ten. Only brothers in this condition are "purged out." Often times a Christian falls into sin and quits coming to church altogether. Obviously, he cannot be put out of the church if he is no longer there. Fortunately, I Corinthians 5 is not the end of the story. II Corinthians 2:6-8 shows us that this man did repent. Paul then tells them to restore him because of his repentance. Please don't miss this lesson: the purpose of discipline within the local church is not punishment; rather, it is to bring men and women to restoration of right fellowship. Some of the folks in Corinth had been reluctant to restore this man. Why? The Bible does not say; however, I wonder if the reason could be that the man did not become an on-

fire soul-winner or perhaps act as spiritually as others thought he should. The man repented. That is, he turned from his sin of fornication. He stopped living in fornication with his stepmother. Now he wanted restored to fellowship. When a man turns from his sin, we restore such a one. If we feel that he is not as spiritual as we want him to be or as sorry as we think he should be, and, therefore, do not restore him, then we are adding to the Scripture. Today, some even advocate psychological counseling before restoration is granted. That practice is totally unscriptural. If we judge the person not worthy to come back to our fellowship after he or she has repented, then we must eliminate many other church members as well because they probably have not met our spiritual standards either. We always err when we go beyond the Scripture.

The second passage for us to consider is found in Matthew 18:15-17. This teaching concerning the specific steps involved in church discipline comes directly from the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry. Notice in verse fifteen that the first step in this process is to go directly to the sinning person. If he repents, that is as far as the discipline needs to go. If he will not repent, then verse sixteen says that we are to take one or two more witnesses with us. If he still refuses to repent, then we are to bring the matter before the church as instructed in verse seventeen. If he repents, then the discipline stops right there. If he does not, however, then we are to put him out of the church which explains the words, "let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." Some today advocate that if the sin is public, it must be brought before the church. For example, if a man is stopped for drunk driving or if a young lady gets pregnant out of wedlock, some say the matter should automatically come before the church. When this procedure is followed, the first two steps which Christ commanded us to do are negated. (I don't personally think that it is good to negate what Christ says.) When I point out to these people that the book of Proverbs places gluttony, which has very obvious results, on the same level as drunkenness and then further insist that we should call out all the gluttons in the church to public repentance first since their sin probably happened first, those same people begin to protest; however, they do not have a foot on which to stand.

I have made it a practice to have those who have sin in their lives of which others may know to come forward during the invitation to pray and ask God's forgiveness and then have a personal worker make out a slip indicating that they are coming to re-dedicate their lives to Christ. Many people re-dedicate their lives to Christ publicly when they begin slipping away. Others do so after committing gross sin. Regardless of the situation, if other individuals present are aware of the sin, they will understand why that person came forward. The others who don't know will not need to know. They will know only that the person is rededicating his or her life and that they should pray for that one.

Every church must have biblical standards, and fellowship has to be based on those standards. When biblical standards are broken and sin enters, we want to try to correct the problem as soon as possible. In our fellowship we have our deacons sign a statement of belief and practice. The standard for these men is higher than the standard for the average member,

which is as it should be. If one of the deacons breaks the standard, then we must deal with the situation because fellowship is not tolerant of sin. In dealing with the sin, our goal will and must be restoration to right fellowship. Discipline is important in the local church; for without it, we lack true biblical fellowship. On the other hand, we are not to be vigilantes seeking whomever we can find with something wrong in their lives so that we can carry out discipline.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCIPLINE

1. The head of the local church is
 - a. The Pastor
 - b. The Deacons
 - c. The Ladies Christian Fellowship
 - d. The Lord Jesus Christ
2. True or False. Only the pastor is exempt from church discipline.
3. An accusation may be received against a pastor, but there must be
 - a. A female and a minority on the committee.
 - b. A church split first
 - c. Two or three witnesses
 - d. Permission from Nashville
4. Definitely Yes or Never! Tolerating a couple living in immorality by allowing them to be active in the local church comes under the umbrella of grace or liberty.
5. The church was to deliver those in fornication and unrepentant to Satan for the destruction of
 - a. The Spirit
 - b. The T.V.
 - c. The Flesh
 - d. Cats
6. A Christian is not to company with:
 - a. Anyone who is called a fornicator, covetous, an extortioner, or an idolater.
 - b. Only if those individuals are called a “brother” in Christ who are in the condition described in letter *a*.
7. Restoration to the fellowship of the church should come only after
 - a. Psychological counseling
 - b. Evidence that he is winning souls and is on fire for Jesus
 - c. Both of the above
 - d. Repentance, that is, after the person has completely stopped and turned from his sin
8. Right or Wrong. If a man is not as spiritual as we think that he ought to be, then he should not be restored.

9. In Matthew 18, who taught that if you go to someone about a matter and he or she repents that the discipline should stop right there?
- a. Jesus b. Augustine c. MacArthur d. The disciples
10. If you go to someone and he or she does not repent, what is the next step? (short answer)
11. If they will not repent before two or three witnesses, should they be brought before the church? Yes or No
12. Is there a scenario that negates this instruction of Jesus? Yes or No

CHAPTER NINE: TITHING

As we look at the last major component of a fellowship, we must keep in mind two things. First, a fellowship in the biblical sense of the word is a commitment of two entities one to another. You may recall from chapter one that in England sometimes a university will grant a “fellowship” to a scholar. This fellowship includes a sum of money that cares for the scholar’s room, board, and education. In return, the scholar will pursue a special study or research within the field for which the fellowship is awarded. Hence, a “fellowship” represents a commitment of one to another. Second, each ingredient of a fellowship is important; for if we neglect any element, then we do not have biblical fellowship within the local church. This last component is the one most rebelled against verbally, yet it is just as scriptural as any other. The final area we will discuss is tithing. Matthew 6:21 states: “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” As Christians, we will see to the work of the Lord if we have made the proper commitment: we will place our interest where we have invested our resources.

Rather than logic, the Scriptures ought to be used to teach us about the local church. It is important, therefore, for us to examine the scriptural history of tithing. In Genesis 14:20, when Abraham returned from the battle to rescue Lot, his nephew, he tithed and offered of all the spoils. As the Scripture records, Abraham was called the friend of God: Abraham had a fellowship with God Himself. According to Genesis 28:22, Jacob made a covenant at Bethel in which he promised God that he would tithe of all he received. Furthermore, when God gave the Law to Moses, tithing was commanded in Leviticus 27:30 and in Deuteronomy 14:22-29. The maintenance for the priesthood, the tabernacle, and all that pertained to these things was accomplished through the tithes of the people. On the other hand, according to Malachi 3:8-10, failing or refusing to tithe is the same thing as robbing God. Jesus, whose ministry occurred during the period of the law, said not to leave tithing undone in Matthew 23:23. Many argue by saying, “That’s right! Jesus said it while under the law, so it doesn’t pertain to us today.” However, if we are going to be consistent, then we must also admit that judgment, mercy and faith are not applicable today since Jesus mentioned those things in the same verse. One of the hallmarks of liberal, erroneous theologians is that many times they accept only parts of verses.

Even though we clearly see the word *tithe* in the Old Testament, many Christians may wonder why the word *tithe* is not mentioned from Acts through Revelation. While that observation is true, we must be consistent in our logic. If we use that line of reasoning, then we must also say that the rapture is not true and the Trinity is not true since the words *rapture* and *Trinity* do not appear in the Bible. We are not under the ceremonial law, but tithing was not just ceremonial. The Old Testament also instructs us to “Train up a child in the way he should go.” Since that was stated under the law are we no longer obligated to obey that principle today?

Although the actual word *tithe* is not used, The New Testament is filled with evidence that tithing was practiced. In Acts 4 and 5, the believers gave much to the local church. When Ananias and Sapphira lied about what they gave to the local church, God struck them dead. In I Corinthians 16, Paul addresses not only the collection at the church of Corinth, but in all the churches of Galatia. The term “given order” in I Corinthians 16:1 is a command. The language is after the manner of a military order. Some of us may protest by arguing that those offerings were for the poor, but we need only to look back to I Corinthians 9 to see the instruction about the care for the pastor and the other leaders. In addition, I Timothy 5:17 speaks of double honor or double pay for the elder or pastor who labors in the Word and in doctrine. The church handled the care of elders through collections. II Corinthians 9 speaks of the believer’s being a cheerful giver; while in II Corinthians 12, Paul apologizes to the local church at Corinth for not allowing them to give to his mission. Every evidence of giving to missions in the New Testament is through the local church. We must keep in mind that no less obedience is expected for the command to tithe than for the command “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Grace or liberty is not a license to free us from responsibility; instead, it is a vehicle to keep us from being limited to a minimum. Never, ever in the New Testament do we see a person told to bypass local church giving in order to give to a mission work.

Now that we have looked at some New Testament principles concerning tithing, let’s look at what is involved in tithing. The word *tithe* means ten percent. It is ten percent of your gross earnings. According to Proverbs 3:9, 10 individuals gave of the first fruits unto the Lord. We cannot give an offering until we give above ten percent. You may ask, “But can’t I give to a missionary or ministry that God has laid upon my heart?” The answer is most definitely, yes, you can! But you must not rob the local church to do so. If God lays a ministry on your heart, then give, but not out of the tithe and offering you give to your own church. If God lays it on your heart to give to this other ministry, then He will provide the money for you to give. It would be a lack of faith in God’s provision for you to take from your tithes to your local church in order to give to that other ministry. In America, many Christians do not want to sacrifice maintaining a certain standard of living, eating in a restaurant, or experiencing some other pleasure in order to give to missions. They know that in order to give to that mission above their tithe, they would have to sacrifice one of these things, so they rob God’s local church of the tithe and thereby show a lack of faith and love. God ordained the local church for this age as much as he chose Israel in the Old Testament. Common sense alone should tell us then that tithing is as much for the local church now as it was for Israel then.

Finally, as we discuss tithing, let’s consider Philippians 4, particularly the word *communicate* in verse 14. In this context, *communicate* means to be a partaker with. Paul said that when the local church at Philippi gave as a church to missions; they became partakers in that ministry. Furthermore, verse 17 shows that their giving became fruit abounding to their account, meaning that they earned eternal reward in Heaven. And finally, verse 18 likens the

collection to the sweet incense offering of the Old Testament. Their giving was an act of worship just as our tithing is an act of true scriptural worship and fellowship when it is given through the local church. As Christians, we do not reach the ultimate goal when we give a tenth; the tithe is rather the first fruit in the worship of God.

In conclusion, we have seen that agape, caring, forgiveness, forbearance, communication, submission, discipline, and tithing all require commitment by each member of the local church. Every part is a necessity too if the church is to be a true scriptural fellowship. If any one of these attitudes or actions is lacking in our own lives, then we personally contribute to the breakdown of fellowship within the local church; and whatever fellowship remains is not truly the scriptural fellowship intended by the Lord for the local church. Why not make a promise to God today to commit yourself to the fellowship of this local church?

CHAPTER NINE: TITHING

1. True or False. As seen in its popularity among church members, the best-loved doctrine of the local church is storehouse tithing.
2. Yes or No. Can we have biblical fellowship as is herein described if we are unwilling to tithe to our local church?
3. Right or Wrong. The only time we read in the Bible of any type of tithing, it is within the time period of the law.
4. Which of the following did not speak of tithing?
 - a. Abraham
 - b. Jacob
 - c. Moses
 - d. Jesus
 - e. Satan
5. Abraham, the _____ of God, tithed in Genesis 14 before the giving of the law.
6. How much did Jacob, also before the law, promise to give God of all he received?
 - a. Nothing
 - b. A portion of what his wives earned
 - c. A tithe or a tenth
 - d. What? Me give?
7. In Leviticus 27:30, when God gave the law to Moses, tithing was _____.
8. In Malachi 3:8-10, what does God call the failure to tithe?
 - a. An oversight
 - b. Robbing God
 - c. A mistake
 - d. In arrears
9. In Matthew 23:23, Jesus said “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these _____ ye to have done, and _____ to leave the other undone.

10. In Acts through Revelation which three words are not mentioned?
 - a. Tithe, Rapture, Trinity
 - b. Satan, Judas, Diotrephes
 - c. Altars, Andrew, Asia

11. True or False. Since the three words mentioned in question ten do not appear from Acts through Revelation, they must not be doctrines of the Bible.

12. All evidence of the New Testament giving was through the local church? Yes, that is right or No, that is Wrong

13. What order was given in I Corinthians 16:1 as a command for the local church?
 - a. Taking up the collection
 - b. Teaching in a children's church
 - c. Conducting business meetings

14. True or False. The word *communicate* in Philippians 4:14 means to be *partaker with* in reference to the missionary in the Lord's ministry; verse 17 shows that if we do tithe, then the result is eternal reward in Heaven; and verse 18 shows tithing to actually be an act of worship.

ANSWER KEY

CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS FELLOWSHIP?

1. In Acts 2:41, 42 four of the main purposes for the local church are
 - a. Doctrine, prayer, music, and Sunday school.
 - b. Doctrine, prayer, tongues, and the Lord's Supper.
 - c. **Doctrine, prayer, the Lord's Supper, and fellowship.**
 - d. Religious videos, CCM, drama, and seminars.

2. The Foundation or cornerstone for the four purposes of the local church is **Jesus Christ.**

3. What word best describes fellowship as it pertains to the local church?
 - a. Party
 - b. **Commitment**
 - c. Eating
 - d. Gossip

4. Which of the following statements is true?
 - a. New Testament Fellowship is a commitment of an individual to his local church.
 - b. New Testament Fellowship is a commitment of a local church to its members.
 - c. **New Testament Fellowship is a commitment of the local church and its members each to the other according to the Word of God.**

5. The word **church** in the Bible is defined as:
 - a. **A called-out assembly.**
 - b. An invisible body of believers.
 - c. Whatever Paul and Jan say it is.
 - d. A denomination.

6. Which of the following statements is not true?
 - a. Nearly every appearance of the word *church* in the Bible is in reference to a local church.
 - b. As a called-out assembly, we are called out from the world.
 - c. **As a called-out assembly, we are working together with other churches and denominations for a common good, forgetting our doctrinal differences.**

7. The light that we are to walk in is obedience to the **Word of God.**

8. Can a Christian have fellowship with God and have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness at the same time? Yes or **No.**

9. Each saved person has a special calling to be in “fellowship” with the Son of God according to I Corinthians 1:9? **Yes, that’s right** or No, it’s not.
10. If you are in fellowship with Christ, you will belong to a local Bible- preaching, Bible-believing, New Testament Church in an active form as implied by the word *fellowship* in the Bible.
- a. **True** b. False c. Maybe d. If it has a television ministry

10. Is having “agape” love for fellow Christians, which includes every Christian, a personal ministry for each of us that God expects us to fulfill? **Yes**

CHAPTER THREE: CARING

1. The Lord Jesus Christ considers His relationship to the local church to be the same as
 - a. **Marriage**
 - b. War
 - c. What's the difference
2. If you really care for God and are going to exercise care for Him, then you will minister in those areas that appeal to His **heart**.
3. When the Lord shows us a need in His house that should be cared for on a consistent basis, He is giving us an opportunity to
 - a. Start a new Christian rock group.
 - b. Decry the sad situation that exists because other Christians will not do what you know they need to do.
 - c. **Show Him your care and compassion on a consistent basis.**
 - d. Tell the preacher what he is doing wrong; or better yet, tell others what the preacher is doing wrong.
4. **True** or False. What generally keeps one uninvolved in ministry is that the ministry may take him out of his comfort zone.
5. One of the saddest portions of Scripture is:
 - a. Hezekiah 3:2
 - b. First Condominiums 12:8
 - c. **Psalms 142:4**
6. Bearing one another's burdens, that is "caring" for one another, fulfills?
 - a. Your own emotional needs
 - b. **The law of Christ**
 - c. Nothing at all
7. Are we in right fellowship with the local church if we're not caring for one another as has been scripturally shown in these lessons? **NO**

8. These last three questions are short answer questions that you should write out on the back of this page and perhaps discuss with your mate or another Christian friend. Ask yourself the following:
- a. “Am I measuring and looking to see what people do for me, instead of wondering what I can do for them?”
 - b. “How am I showing love for Christ about those things that are closest to His heart?”
 - c. “Am I fulfilling the true sense of the word *fellowship* in my care for my brothers and sisters in Christ at my local church?”

CHAPTER FOUR: FORGIVENESS

1. According to Ephesians 4:32, how are we to forgive others?
 - a. With reservation
 - b. By saying, "That's all right."
 - c. **"even as God for Christ's sake have forgiven you"**
2. If we do not forgive the trespasses of others against us, God will
 - a. Reward us
 - b. **Not forgive our trespasses**
 - c. Make us listen to CCM
3. The word **repent** means to
 - a. Say I'm sorry
 - b. Have an excuse
 - c. **Turn away from**
4. **True** or False. When individuals repents they are turning from a sin and are committing that sin no longer.
5. Right or **Wrong**. Repentance is not complete without Christian psychological counseling.
6. Often, an unforgiving spirit is the result of a person's being a **self**-centered, egotistical Christian.
7. An unforgiving spirit is diametrically opposed to
 - a. Baptists
 - b. House cats
 - c. **Fellowship**
8. What Bible character is the best example of having a forgiving spirit even before those that offended him asked forgiveness?
 - a. Judas
 - b. Jacob
 - c. **Joseph**
 - d. Judah
9. Can you be a good Christian and have an unforgiving spirit toward anyone? Yes or **No**.

10. If you do have an unforgiving spirit, what should you do?
- a. **Go to them asking God for His help as you do**
 - b. Let it ride
 - c. Ask Dear Ann Landers
 - d. Volunteer to do a job that you don't like to make up for it

CHAPTER FIVE: FORBEARANCE

1. Christians most often will need to exercise forbearance with a fellow church member that
 - a. Has more money than they do.
 - b. **Has a personality that they do not like.**
 - c. Is closer to the preacher than he is.
2. **Yes** or No. In forbearing all the brethren in a church and loving them with agape love, can a Christian have a closer relationship with another Christian in the church than they do with someone else?
3. Jesus knew that Judas was a hypocrite. He knew that Judas stole what was in the bag, yet He showed forbearance toward Judas by
 - a. Overlooking Judas's sin.
 - b. **Washing Judas's feet.**
 - c. Giving Judas 25% off in the confessional booth.
 - d. Sending to Judas's ministry a \$25.00 fellowship gift.
4. The mark of a mature Christian is that he or she is able to overcome a spirit that **resists** forbearance.
5. The word "forbear" means to
 - a. Do something for a bear.
 - b. To put off doing something that you don't want to do.
 - c. **To bear up with, endure.**
 - d. See only the front of a bear.
6. How are Christians to forbear one another?
 - a. **In love (agape).**
 - b. By putting them out of the assembly.
 - c. Avoiding them as to prevent argumentative confrontations.
7. In Ephesians 4:2, the phrase "forbearing one another in love" is in the Greek called a present participle indicating that this is a command to do something continuously and repeatedly. (Circle the right answer.) **That is right** or that is wrong.
8. **True** or False. When one enters a fellowship with the local church, he is entering into a commitment.

9. In your own words at home, explain if there is someone that you are not, or have not been willing to forbear. What can you do to turn that spiritual condition around? Are you willing to do so for Christ's sake?

CHAPTER SIX: SUBMISSION

The word *submit* as per its biblical usage is defined as

- a. Less than mit
 - b. **To place under**
 - c. A word to be used in marriage only
 - d. A technical term to describe a senior moment
2. Which of the following two words is the strongest:
- a. Obey
 - b. **Submit**
3. Which of the following two words cannot be carried out grudgingly?
- a. Obey
 - b. **Submit**
4. Whether it is in the home, on the job, or at church, which word shows the most maturity in regard to those in authority over them?
- a. Obedience
 - b. **Submission**
 - c. Confession
5. What is the two-fold responsibility of the pastor, according to Scripture?
- a. Lording over God's flock and telling people where to get off.
 - b. Guessing when people are sick and doing what the board tells him.
 - c. Visiting all the sick, shut-ins, absentees and visitors, and preaching against sin while always being positive.
 - d. **Feeding the flock of God (spiritually) and taking the oversight thereof.**
6. Submitting in fellowship does not end with the Pastor of the local church. The **younger** are to submit themselves to the elder. As a matter of fact, in the local church we are to be **subject** one to another.
7. **Right** or Wrong. We are deficient of the biblical spirit of submission when we will no longer be instructed.
8. A good rule of thumb in the local church is that if the matter involves a non-doctrinal area, or a non-moral issue, or is a non-sin issue, then go with the desire of:
- a. **The pastor or leader**
 - b. Your mate
 - c. Your children

9. If a matter does not involve the pastor or the leader of a particular ministry, and it is non-doctrinal, non-moral, and not a sin, should you back the majority in the church, although it may go against your preference? **Yes** or No
10. What if the issue is sin or false doctrine in questions eight and nine? When could we compromise with the crowd in the church?
- a. Sometimes.
 - b. **Never.**
 - c. When it keeps the peace.

CHAPTER SEVEN: COMMUNICATION

1. James 1:19-21 states as beloved brethren we should be **swift** to hear and **slow** to speak, **slow** to wrath.
2. True or **False**. Christ set for us as a goal in Luke 6:26 to live and work in such a way that all men will speak well of us.
3. Which of the following are indicative of the world's communication?
 - a. **Filthy language, wrathful words, taking God's name in vain.**
 - b. Saying "hello," praising the Lord, holding it in.
 - c. Just say "no," "awesome," "make my day"
4. Which of the following are indicative of a carnal Christian's communication?
 - a. Love, joy, peace
 - b. **Gossip, slander, discouraging words**
 - c. Methodists, Charismatics, Presbyterians
5. "Change is good," if it is referring to:
 - a. **More holy, more righteous, and more scriptural.**
 - b. CCM, Christian Rock, Contemporary worship
6. **Yes** or No. The three *I*'s of wrong communication in a local church are implication, insinuation, and inaccuracies.
7. Which Biblical illustration matches best with the corresponding *I*?
 - a. Judas's statement about Mary's wasting the ointment on Jesus
1. insinuate
2. inaccurate
 - b. David's brother about David when asking about the giant
3. imply
 - c. Satan with Eve "ye shall be as gods"
8. What three types of right communication should be in a local church?
 - a. Music, preaching, teaching
 - b. **Admonition, comfort, encouragement**
 - c. Bowling, sports, music

9. In your own words, give an example of each type of right communication included in your answer from number eight.

10. Right or Wrong. If our communication is not right in the local church, then our fellowship is not completely scriptural.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCIPLINE

1. The head of the local church is
 - a. The pastor
 - b. The deacons
 - c. The Ladies Christian Fellowship
 - d. **The Lord Jesus Christ**
2. True or **False**. Only the pastor is exempt from church discipline.
3. An accusation may be received against a pastor, but there must be:
 - a. A female and a minority on the committee.
 - b. A church split first
 - c. **Two or three witnesses**
 - d. Permission from Nashville
4. Definitely Yes or **Never!** Tolerating a couple living in immorality by allowing them to be active in the local church comes under the umbrella of grace or liberty.
5. The church was to deliver those in fornication and unrepentant to Satan for the destruction of
 - a. The Spirit
 - b. The T.V.
 - c. **The Flesh**
 - d. Cats
6. A Christian is not to company with
 - a. Anyone who is called a fornicator, covetous, an extortioner or an idolater.
 - b. **Only those individuals called a “brother” in Christ who are in the condition described in letter “a”**
7. Restoration to the fellowship of the church should come only after
 - a. Psychological counseling
 - b. Evidence that the person is winning souls and is on fire for Jesus
 - c. Both of the above
 - d. **Repentance, that is, after the person has completely stopped and turned from sin**
8. Right or **Wrong**. If a man is not as spiritual as we think he ought to be, then he should not be restored.

9. In Matthew 18, who taught that if you go to someone about a matter and that person repents that the discipline should stop right there?
- a. **Jesus** b. Augustine c. MacArthur d. The disciples
10. If you go to someone and he or she does not repent, what is the next step? (short answer)
11. If they will not repent before two or three witnesses, should they be brought before the church? **Yes** or No
12. Is there a scenario that negates this instruction of Jesus? Yes or **No**

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