

THE  
SCRIPTURAL ROOTS  
OF  
OUR MINISTRY

-BIBLICAL RESEARCH STUDY GUIDE-

# SCRIPTURAL ROOTS OF OUR MINISTRY

## PURPOSE

God has a great deal to say about doing his work in his way, for his glory. He has a passion for people, being vitally concerned about how they live and what they live for (1 Thessalonians 4:1). The purpose of the SRM is to absorb this passion . . . to possess it and be possessed, by going deeper into the Scriptures.

The times we live in demand extraordinary faith and courage. There are no soft options. Our commitment to obeying the Scriptures forces us to seek and participate in the fullness of God's program. We have to get at the roots. What is foundational? How does it integrate around Christ? What is our part?

Searching the Scriptures is more than an exercise. It's a dialogue with the living God. The SRM, we believe, can help us grasp and submit to what he has in store for us.

What are the ingredients?

- prayerful research in the Scriptures
- interacting with one another on what we find
- discerning and digesting the implications
- testing new insights in our ministries
- being renewed and transformed, for his service

The SRM is not a project. Instead, it is an avenue of life-long discovery and learning. As the Holy Spirit empowers, we will keep on narrowing the gap between God's requirement and our responses.

## STUDY GUIDES

The material that follows can help us get started. The study guides are not the SRM; they are a tool, an outline to help us gain a grasp of the breadth of what Scripture says to the people of God about serving others. They can serve us during the biblical research phase of the SRM by helping broaden our picture of ministry. Then, during the forum to follow, we will have prepared ourselves to appreciate the whole of what God is doing through his people, and yet bring into focus that part, or contribution, that he has assigned to us.

# SCRIPTURAL ROOTS OF OUR MINISTRY

## -STUDY GUIDES-

|   |      |
|---|------|
| I. Introduction to Study Guides                         | v    |
| II. Six major topics                                    | v    |
| III. The Process  | vi   |
| a. Personal Research                                    | vi   |
| b. Debriefing and Interaction                           | vii  |
| c. Implementation                                       | viii |
| <br>  |      |
| Section I: God and His Revelation                       | 1    |
| <br>  |      |
| Introduction 1  |      |
| Part 1.    God: Who is He?                              | 2    |
| Part 2.    Is God Really Knowable?                      | 5    |
| Part 3.    God and His Glory                            | 12   |
| Part 4.    Understanding the Scriptures                 | 16   |
| Section I    Summary: God and His Revelation            | 22   |
| <br>  |      |
| Section II: God and His Kingdom                         | 23   |
| <br>  |      |
| Introduction 23   |      |
| Part 1.    God's Sovereign Reign in the Old Testament   | 24   |
| Part 2.    The Kingdom in the Gospels                   | 29   |
| Part 3.    God's Sovereign Reign in the New Testament   | 40   |
| Part 4.    The Kingdom of God and the dominion of Satan | 44   |
| Section II    Summary: God and his Kingdom              | 50   |
| <br>  |      |
| Section III: God's Purposes for His Creation            | 51   |
| <br>  |      |
| Introduction 51   |      |
| Part 1.    God's Overarching Plan                       | 52   |
| Part 2.    Creation                                     | 55   |
| Part 3.    The Unseen Reality                           | 58   |
| Part 4.    The Fall                                     | 62   |
| Part 5.    God Working out His Plan                     | 67   |
| Part 6.    The Gospel                                   | 70   |
| Section III    Summary: God's Purposes for His Creation | 77   |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Section IV: God and His People                  | 79  |
| Introduction                                    | 79  |
| Part 1. The People of God                       | 80  |
| Part 2. Unity And Community                     | 85  |
| Part 3. Gifts and Service                       | 96  |
| Part 4. The People of God among the Lost        | 101 |
| Part 5. Leading and Colaboring in the Body      | 107 |
| Part 6. What is the Church?                     | 113 |
| Section IV Summary: God and His People          | 119 |
| Section V: God's Pursuit of the Nations         | 121 |
| Introduction                                    | 121 |
| Part 1. Nations and cultures                    | 122 |
| Part 2. Sent to the Nations                     | 128 |
| Part 3. The Expansion of the Gospel             | 135 |
| Part 4. The Pauline Apostolic Model             | 139 |
| Part 5. The Purity and Mobility of the Gospel   | 149 |
| Part 6. Function and Form                       | 153 |
| Section V Summary: God's Pursuit of the Nations | 159 |
| Section VI: The Nature of Ministry              | 161 |
| Introduction                                    | 161 |
| Part 1. The Role of the Holy Spirit             | 162 |
| Part 2. The Place of Prayer                     | 168 |
| Part 3. God at work in Individuals              | 172 |
| Part 4. God at Work in and through the Body     | 176 |
| Part 5. The Servant:What is he to be and do?    | 180 |
| Part 6. The Servant-Leader                      | 187 |
| Section VI Summary: The Nature of Ministry      | 191 |
| Index of Scripture References                   | 192 |

# Scriptural Roots of our Ministry

## I. Introduction to Study Guides

It is surprising how much the Bible has to say about ministry: its true nature and the manner in which it should be approached. Inevitably, however, the forces of tradition and pragmatism tend to take over, making it a constant challenge to preserve the biblical integrity of our work. The degree to which we allow extra-biblical norms to control us measures the freedom we have lost. Loss of freedom is a matter of serious concern where the Gospel is concerned. What is at stake is the purity of the Gospel and its mobility among the lost.

Our aspirations for these studies is that they will give us a fresh look at the scope of God's workings as revealed in the Scriptures. We anticipate that this will give us the security, the confidence, to strike out and follow God into the future, which is surely filled with unmapped trails.

We do not attempt in these studies to embrace the "whole counsel of God." Rather, we are focusing on what the Bible has to say about ministry. The material is divided into six major topics.

## II. Six major topics

1. *God: His Glory and Revelation.* These truths - that God is, and that he has revealed himself to mankind in some knowable way - are our assumptions in these studies, which we accept by faith. But are we aware of the greatness of all he has revealed? And what do these truths suggest about the way we understand and respond to his revelation?

2. *God and His Kingdom.* The Kingdom provides the broad context for God's workings. How does the Kingdom grow? What is success? What are the implications of Kingdom citizenship to everyday life? Questions such as these are basic to our understanding of ministry.

3. *God's Purposes for His Creation.* In this section we explore some of the most intriguing questions man faces. What is revealed to us about these? What is man? Why is he here? What about evil? Why did there have to be a cross? Why did God create at all? Understanding purpose in our lives and ministry begins with an understanding of God's eternal purposes.

4. *God and His People.* God has always had his people. This message runs through both the Old Testament and the New. But why? What does he want to do in and through his people? What are the major formative truths for the church today? What do these imply for us? This is the scope of this section.

5. *God's Pursuit of the Nations.* Ever since the Fall God has worked at reconciling lost mankind to Himself. When we think of nations we must also think of cultures. The diversity represented by nations and cultures is almost infinite. How do we deal with this? Can we hope for unity in the face of this demand for diversity? What are the vehicles for taking the Gospel to the nations and then on into society? These and related issues are discussed in this section.

6. *The Nature of Ministry.* This section summarizes the previous five and carries them forward to their specific implications. It deals with questions such as: How does true transformation occur? How does this happen on the individual level, and in the community of God's people? For us who aspire to be God's servants, what kind of people must we be? What does serving involve? And what are the implications for us as leaders of others?

### III. The Process

#### a. *Personal Research*

It is obviously impossible for us to be comprehensive or exhaustive in our treatment of these topics. Invariably, the writers had to select passages out of an ample reserve of biblical resources. (Indeed, the study guides have been extracted from over 700 pages of original biblical research produced by International leaders from about 40 countries, and then critiqued by respected Christian leaders outside our traditional circle.) At times you will probably think that some of the most significant scriptures related to a topic have been omitted. We count on you to include these scriptures in your own work and thus enrich the final outcome of the total effort.

Since comprehensiveness is an unreasonable goal, we have aimed at being representative. That is, we have tried to expose you to the spectrum of the issues related to a topic. Even at that, we realize that the amount of work we are calling on you to do may seem daunting. This concerns us. But we are consoled by the reminder that you are not a novice in the Scriptures. You have probably already done chapter analysis studies on much of the New Testament and have certainly read and reread the Old Testament. We trust this foundation will serve you well as you go through the SRM.

Each of the six sections is divided into 4-7 Parts. We estimate that you will want to spend approximately 6 weeks per Section on the average to get a good grasp of the biblical material. At that rate you will spend about 9 months in these studies.

In its simplest definition, Bible study consists of three stages:

- observation
- interpretation
- application

Observation asks, what does it say? In what context was the passage written? What was it trying to communicate? What do the main words mean, etc.?

Interpretation asks, what does this passage mean? What is its contemporary meaning? What are its implications? What does it mean in this situation? What does it mean to me?

Application asks the question, what response does this call for on our part? On my part?

Your primary focus as you work through these six sections should be on observation. We want you to look at what the Bible really says about ministry. We will also be asking you at intervals to take the first steps towards interpretation. You will find questions intended to draw from you the implications you see coming out of your observations. This can be hard work. It requires thinking. But the quality of your contribution when we meet as a forum will be determined to a large degree by your grasp of the implications of the truths you have studied.

At the end of each section in the study guides there is a box with space for both observations and, "If...then...", statements. This, "if...then...", exercise is to help you bring into focus those truths that are most significant, and to think through their implications for your life and ministry. For example, if you were impressed in the second Section by the life style of a Kingdom citizen you may write: "If the Kingdom of God is concerned about righteousness and justice, then I need to re-evaluate the priority that a concern for 'my neighbor' has in my discipleship training."

#### *b. Debriefing and Interaction*

Having completed the biblical research, the next step will be some means of interaction over the material studied, with your colaborers. This will ideally take place both during the period of your research, after completing the study of each section, and at a forum upon completion of the SRM studies.

After finishing each of the six sections, it is very profitable to meet to discuss the biblical content as a group of collaborators while the material is fresh in mind. This gives a chance to express new insights, raise difficult questions, as well as test the validity of possible applications within the body. It would be good to plan to meet together regularly and consistently during the study phase.

The climax of the SRM will be a forum in which you will interact with others ministering in situations of high affinity with your own. The forum will serve:

- to test and expand the individual biblical research.
- to integrate the research done by individuals into a body of thought.
- to identify the major implications coming out of the biblical research.
- to describe the ethos, or collective personality, of the ministry you are involved in.
- to bring the Scriptures to bear on that ethos.
- to define the scope, or sphere of service, of this ministry.
- to work out a plan of action and further study that will, in time, harmonize ministry with biblical truth.

The specifics as to how this can take place will need to be arranged locally, matching the goal of significant time together in the Scriptures with on-the-scene opportunities and realities.

### *c. Implementation*

The forum will result in specific applications to ministry. It will produce experimentation as we seek ways to translate truth into practice. It will also serve to identify areas where more biblical research will be needed. It will be important to reconvene at appropriate intervals to compare notes on what is being learned through practice and study.

The SRM is not to be viewed as an activity to be engaged in and finished. Rather it should be a dynamic interaction between you, your collaborators and God, through the Scriptures, that will continue throughout your lifetime. Thus, it should be ever open-ended (1 Corinthians 8:2).



## Section I:

# God and His Revelation

## Introduction

"In the beginning God." All things have their origin in God, and Scripture helps us understand the nature of his person.

It is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of getting a true picture of God. We live in a world of great confusion about this, with alarming consequences related to knowing truth. Everyone creates a god according to his own imagination. And then he decides how he is going to relate to this image of his own creation - whether he is going to believe in him or not.

So we are continually facing the perils of stereotypes and misconceptions. What we believe about God determines life for us. Our concept of God is foundational to our world view, central to our perception of reality. What we think about other issues ultimately rests on our view of him. Consequently it is crucial that we deal with God as he really is, not as we imagine him to be. Our message must reflect and address God as he really is.

This opens up some very basic questions about truth and our limited knowledge of spiritual realities. Since God is spirit, can we even reach him? Is he not unknowable to our five senses *unless* he takes the initiative to communicate with us and makes the first move?

As we draw close to him, we recognize - with relief and joy - that he has done just this. He is committed to communicating with us. This section deals with God and this revelation.

## Part 1. God: Who is He?

In many places the Scriptures record God's description of himself and of his character. We also have numerous descriptions of God by people who encountered him.

1. How does God describe himself in the following passages?

Genesis 17:1-8

Exodus 34:5-7

Isaiah 45:18-25

Isaiah 55:8-11

Jeremiah 9:23-24

Hosea 11:1-4

Matthew 23:37-39

2. How is God described by some of those who walked with him?

Exodus 15:1-18

Deuteronomy 33:26-29

1 Chronicles 29:10-13

Psalm 145

Lamentations 3:21-25

Revelation 11:16-19

Can you think of other passages which may give additional insight about God and his ways?

Summary:

## Part 2. Is God really knowable?

The Bible states that God is knowable, but it also shows us that any true knowledge of him will have to come to us by his initiative.

1. Examine the following examples of initiatives taken by God in revealing himself to us. Record your observations, trying to find answers to the following questions:

| What did God reveal about himself? | How did he do it? | Why did he do it? |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|

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Genesis 28:10-22

Exodus 33:12-34:35

Leviticus 19

Deuteronomy 4:1-40

What did God reveal  
about himself?

How did he do it?

Why did he do it?

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Job 38-42

Isaiah 6

Ezekiel 36:16-23

1 John 1:1-4

2 Peter 1:16-21

3. There appears to be a progression in God's revelation of his attributes. In Exodus 6:3 God said, "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name 'The Lord' I did not make myself known to them." In Hebrews 1:1-3 it says, "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son...The son is...the exact representation of his being." Would this imply that Moses probably knew things about God that Abraham did not, and that David knew more than either, and Isaiah had access to even greater truth?

What do the following passages suggest about the process of God's revealing himself?

Genesis 17:1

Exodus 3:4-17

Exodus 6:2-3

Leviticus 10:3

Isaiah 9:7

Matthew 13:35

John 16:12-13

Ephesians 3:4-5

1 Peter 1:10-12

a. How would you summarize your conclusions?

b. What relevance does this have to the way we minister, e.g. in cultures or with people who have little knowledge of God?

4. Observe the place of the Scriptures in God's revelation of himself to us.

Exodus 24:1-12

Deuteronomy 30:11-14;

Jeremiah 36:1-3



2 Timothy 3:15-17

Hebrews 4:12-13

2 Peter 1:19-21

What is particularly significant about God's revealing his person and his ways to us via this approach of a written, recorded, preserved collection of documents?

### Part 3. God and His Glory

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God," writes Paul to the Corinthian believers. What does he mean? Do we Christians understand this concept? Sometimes we treat the subject of God's glory unbiblically, as though God is preoccupied with some selfish concern or insecurity, or that glory satisfies some need on God's part. Obviously that is not what the Scriptures teach. What do they teach?

1. How do you understand God's glory? Look at each biblical passage with the view to understanding what is being said about God's glory.

Exodus 16:6-12

Psalm 3:3

Psalm 96:3-8

Isaiah 42:5-9

John 1:14

John 12:23-28

John 13:31-32

John 17:22-24

Romans 1:21-23

Romans 3:23

Romans 9:4

1 Corinthians 2:7-10

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

other passages

In light of these passages, what common threads do you see running through the Bible's treatment of God's glory?

2. Several other Scriptures deal directly with the intertwining of God's glory on one hand, and his purposes for and destiny of his people on the other. Observe this relationship in the following passages.

Matthew 25:31-34

John 17

Romans 8:15-33 ff.

Ephesians 1:3-14

Hebrews 2:5-13

How do God's purposes relate to the glorification of his people?

How do God's purposes relate to his glory?

## Summary

As you understand the Scriptures, what is God's attitude towards his glory? For example, is he primarily working to receive glory or to give it away? Document and explain your answer.

What does it mean to glorify God?

## Part 4. Understanding the Scriptures

In developing the SRM, considerable thought and prayer have been given to the matter of hermeneutics: the proper handling of Scripture.

A thorough study of hermeneutics would be a major undertaking in itself, beyond the scope of these SRM studies. Fortunately, however, the Scriptures themselves shed considerable light on how we should receive and understand God's Word.

In order for us to "rightly handle the Word of truth," we must grow in our awareness of our own *presuppositions* - those attitudes or concerns which we assume in advance. These may arise from our theological heritage, our cultural norms, church traditions or personal experiences. They assuredly do influence our understanding of the Scriptures by subtly controlling what we look for and how we look for it in our Bible study. This, in turn, affects what we can or cannot discover.

Becoming aware of our own unconscious presuppositions is not an easy task. It is a process which will go on throughout our whole life as believers.

The following questions help us review the way we approach and understand God's Word.

1. What biases (or presuppositions) might you be bringing to the Scriptures that could color your understanding or interpretation?



2. Luke 24:25-49 describe Jesus' handling of the Scriptures with two groups of people. What do you observe about his attitude toward the Scriptures and how he treated them?

3. How does the condition of the heart affect our grasp of God's truth?

Matthew 13:11-15

Hebrews 3:7-15

What do you think is meant by the heart, in Scripture?

4. How does our mind influence our grasp and use of God's truth?

Acts 17:1-4

2 Corinthians 3:14-17

2 Peter 3:1-2

5. How do "heart" and "mind" interrelate in the process of interpreting Scripture?

Mark 12:30

Ephesians 4:17-24

2 Peter 3:15-16

Summary:

6. How does the Holy Spirit help us to understand God's Word?

Romans 8:5-9

Ephesians 1:15-23

1 John 2:27

How will his work affect the way we approach the Scriptures?

7. What do the Scriptures say about mastering (being mastered by) God's Word?

Proverbs 2:1-6

2 Timothy 2:15

1 Peter 1:10-12

8. What else shapes or contributes to our understanding of God's truth?

Psalm 25:4-5

Psalm 119:33-34

Mark 7:5-13

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

1 Timothy 4:11-14;

Hebrews 5:11-14

9. In summary, what do you consider to be the essential elements to help us to understand God's word?

## Section I Summary: God: His Glory and Revelation

Summarize the significant truths that the Holy Spirit has drawn to your attention through this study.

For each truth, compose an "If..., then..." statement.

## Section II

# God and His Kingdom

## Introduction

We saw in Section I that God discloses himself.

We could, at this point, pick up and faithfully trace any of several large themes that accompany God's self-revealing activity. For example: grace, covenant, glory, reconciliation or judgment. We shall look at each of these in later Sections.

But, it seems that the theme of the King and his Kingdom is especially important as we reflect on the roots of our ministry. For ministry is service...and we are servants of the King.

In addition, one of the first things that God reveals is his sovereign rule. Our understanding of his power and authority continues to grow, as we progress from Genesis to Revelation. The first three Parts of this Section reveal the significance of the Kingdom, in every portion of the Scriptures.

We see shadows of the Kingdom in God's involvement with Israel and in his judgment of the nations. The arrival of Messiah unveils the Kingdom. Jesus' teachings revolve around it. In the Gospels and in the Epistles we are brought to understand that citizenship in God's Kingdom is an incredibly privileged status, awarded to whomever will receive it.

And the Kingdom calls its citizens to a unique style, a righteousness that confronts the injustices that characterize every society in the world.

Finally, we need to be alert to the fact that ministry is a spiritual battle. The King is at war with the forces of evil...even though the ultimate victory is assured, in Christ. This is the focus of Part 4.

The context of God's Kingdom enriches our understanding of biblical truth.

## Part 1. God's Sovereign Reign in the Old Testament

From the time that we are first allowed to see God in action, as he creates the heavens and the earth, he displays his power and authority. As David affirms in Psalm 24 - "The Lord almighty, he is the King of glory."

As the Old Testament unfolds, we progressively learn more of the scope of his realm and the nature of his reign. What is his Kingdom? This Part begins to build our answer.

1. How do you see God exercising his kingly authority in the following passages:

Genesis 1 - 3

Exodus 15:1-21

Deuteronomy 4:32-40

Psalm 99



Isaiah 40:10-26

2. What are some characteristics of God's kingdom?

Psalm 9

Psalm 145

Isaiah 37:14-20

Daniel 4:19-37

Daniel 7

3. How did God work through human agents to accomplish his royal aims?

a. in Israel

Judges 2:10-19

1 Samuel 12

2 Samuel 12

1 Kings 18

Ezekiel 34

b. among the nations

Isaiah 45:1-7

Habakkuk

;

## Zephaniah 2

4. How would you summarize the message of the Old Testament concerning God's Kingdom?

## Part 2. The Kingdom in the Gospels

When Jesus came to earth, the Kingdom was the first thing he talked about, and the last. Although much of what he had to say was new, his teachings about the Kingdom were rooted in the Old Testament.

In what he did and said, he greatly enlarged our understanding of the Kingdom. This long Part explores his teaching.

1. Reflect on some Old Testament descriptions of the coming King.

Psalm 2

Isaiah 9:1-7

Jeremiah 23:1-8

2. Observe Jesus exercising his royal authority on earth.

Matthew 12:22-28

Matthew 21:1-16

Mark 4:35-41

John 13:3-5

John 18:37 - 19:11

Summary:

3. What is the essence of Jesus' teachings on the Kingdom in the Sermon on the Mount?

Matthew 5

Matthew 6

## Matthew 7

Summary:



4. What do you learn about the Kingdom from the parables he told?

a. Record your observations from the following passages.

Matthew 13:1-23

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Matthew 13:31-32

Matthew 13:33

Matthew 13:44

Matthew 13:45

Matthew 13:47-52

Matthew 18:1-9

Matthew 18:21-35

Matthew 20:1-16

Matthew 21:33-46

Matthew 22:1-14

Matthew 25:1-13

Matthew 25:31-46

Mark 4:26-29

Luke 19:11-27

- b. Which of your observations from these parables stand out to you as being most relevant to the way you serve others? Why?

5. Jesus had many other things to teach about the Kingdom, and he referred to it in different ways (e.g. already/not yet). Try to discern his usage in each of the following statements. Then, in the space provided on the following page, summarize the different ways Jesus spoke of his Kingdom.

- Matthew 4:17            From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."
- Matthew 12:28           But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.
- Matthew 16:19           I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."
- Matthew 19:23-24       Then Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."
- Mark 9:1                And he said to them, "I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."
- Mark 12:34              When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.
- Mark 14:25              "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."
- Luke 4:43                But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent."
- Luke 9:11                ...but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.
- Luke 9:62                Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."
- Luke 12:31-32           "But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.
- Luke 16:16               "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and

everyone is forcing his way into it.

- Luke 17:20-21      Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."
- Luke 18:29-30      "I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life.
- John 3:3              In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. "
- Acts 1:6-7            So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel? He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

6. Jesus' followers, even the Twelve, had great difficulty understanding the true nature of the Kingdom. Why do you suppose that was?

7. Why do you think the Kingdom had such prominence in the ministry and teachings of Jesus?

Summary:

How would you simply explain the essence of the Kingdom to an enquirer, drawing from the words and actions of Jesus?

What is the Gospel of the Kingdom?

### Part 3. God's Sovereign Reign in the New Testament

Although the term "Kingdom" is less evident in the Epistles than in the Gospels, there is much to absorb on the power and authority of the King, as he reigns victorious. Indeed, the very name "Christ" is kingdom talk: it means "anointed."

1. The Kingdom is mentioned at the beginning and end of Acts (1:3-8; 28:30-31;). As you skim the book, write down your thoughts on how God's kingly power is manifested in the movements and events recorded in Acts.



2. James, Peter and Paul place a focus upon inheriting the Kingdom. Examine the contrasts in the following verses.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

1 Corinthians 15:50

Galatians 5:19-21

Colossians 1:10-14

1 Thessalonians 2:12

James 2:5

2 Peter 1:10-11

Summary:

3. Describe your perspective on the kingly reign of Christ in the light of the following passages.

1 Corinthians 15:20-28

Ephesians 1:9-10

Philippians 2:9-11

2 Timothy 4:1-2

Hebrews 12:28-29

Revelation 19:11-16

Summary:

## Part 4. The Kingdom of God and the dominion of Satan

In this Part, we trace the conflict raging until our accuser is finally thrown down and the loud voice in heaven declares - "Now have come the salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ."

- Revelation 12:10

1. What does Scripture tell us about the nature and extent of Satan's power and dominion?

Luke 10:17-20

John 8:42-44

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

Ephesians 2:1-3

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

1 John 5:18-20

Revelation 12:7-17

Summary:

2. How does this conflict between God and Satan express itself?

Job 1:1 - 2:10

Daniel 10

Luke 4:1-13

Luke 11:14-26

Acts 13:8-11

Summary:

3. What bearing does this conflict between God and Satan have on the believer?  
What does it require of us?

John 15:18-25

Ephesians 4:26-27

Ephesians 6:10-18

1 Peter 5:8-9

1 John 4:4-6

Summary:

4. How does God deal with this conflict?

1 Corinthians 15:12-28

Ephesians 2:1-10

Colossians 1:12-13

Colossians 2:13-15

Hebrews 2:14-18

Revelation 5

Revelation 19

Summary:

5. How should this conflict influence the way we approach ministry?



Summary: (For all of Section II)

1. How do these reflections on the King and his Kingdom from this section illuminate the nature of ministry?
2. How does what we have learned about the Kingdom affect the way we define success?
3. How does understanding the Kingdom shape the lifestyle of a disciple?

## Section II Summary: God and his Kingdom

Summarize the significant truths that the Holy Spirit has drawn to your attention through this study.

For each truth, compose an "If..., then..." statement.

## Section III

# God's Purposes for His Creation

## Introduction

In our study of God and his Kingdom, we saw the inclusiveness of his realm. It embraces all that exists, whether seen or unseen. We also saw that his reign is characterized by holiness, justice and love.

This third section grows out of the previous two. God exists. He has purposes. He was working out those purposes even before the world began. He is able to proceed with them because he is the sovereign King and, as such, can do what he wills.

The Scriptures warn us that our knowledge of his purposes is fragmentary. Our finite minds are no match for his infinite ways. But we sense the freedom to ask the large questions. Why did God create the universe? What part is man to play? What provision has God made for us, after the Fall? To what has God committed himself? How do the cross and resurrection function in his plan? How will it all end?

Just as we looked at the spiritual battle in Section II, so here we need to explore both seen and unseen realities. This, again, prepares us for ministry.

Finally, we can celebrate the good news of the Gospel...the heart of God's plan to liberate and reconcile all things to himself.

## Part 1. God's Overarching Plan

History is not an accident. From eternity past God knew what he wanted to do, and he has been at work bringing his intended purposes to fruition.

What he has revealed to us of these awesome intentions gives us a glimpse into a far greater drama than anything we could have imagined.

Study the following passages that reveal some aspects of God's purposes. Draw observations from these and other scriptures as you try to answer the broad questions following.

Genesis 1

Psalm 33:10-11

Isaiah 45:18-25

John 1:1-18

John 17

Acts 17:24-31

Romans 8:17-30

Ephesians 1

Ephesians 2

Ephesians 3

Colossians 1

Colossians 2

Revelation 21:1-7

From your understanding of the Scriptures:

1. On what basis can you conclude that God does have a plan for the created order?
2. Why did God create the universe?
3. Why did he permit his creation to be marred?
4. How do the cross and resurrection fit into his plan?
5. How do you understand the glory of God and its part in God's plan?
6. How will his plan be consummated?

## Part 2. Creation

Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. In him, all things hold together.

In this Part, having looked in general at God's purposes, we focus upon how the created order participates in these purposes...and what creation means for us, as God's servants.

1. Reflect on the grandeur of God's creation.

Job 38 - 41

2. What part does man play in God's creation?

Genesis 1:26-30

Genesis 2:15-25

Psalm 8

Summarize man's role in the created order:

3. What is destined to happen to this created world?

Romans 8: 18-25

2 Peter 3

Revelation 21:1 - 22:7



4. In your opinion, what responsibility does man continue to have to preserve the "goodness" of this earth?

5. Does a biblical perspective on God's creation have any effect on our view of what is included in "ministry"? If so, what?

### Part 3. The Unseen Reality

God's creation consists of realities that, from our perspective, are partly seen and partly unseen . He is the maker and ruler of both.

We are called to live in the material world but to be engaged in his workings in both the seen and unseen arenas.

1. From the following passages, begin to build a picture of the unseen beings that Scripture describes.

2 Kings 6:8-23

Ezekiel 10

Daniel 10

Matthew 18:10

Mark 5:1-20

1 Corinthians 10:19-22

Hebrews 1:4-14

Hebrews 12:18-24

Hebrews 13:2

1 John 4:1-3

Jude 6-10

Revelation 2:20-25

Summary:

2. Ephesians 3:10 speaks of "rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms."  
Review the following scriptures and answer the questions below.

Romans 8:38-39

1 Corinthians 15:23-25

Ephesians 1:21

Ephesians 2:6-7

Ephesians 3:10-11

Ephesians 6:11-12

Colossians 1:16

Colossians 1:20

Colossians 2:10

Colossians 2:15

Summarize what we are told about these realities?

3. How should the reality of these unseen beings affect us?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. In your opinion, what is the relationship (if any) between the unseen powers and authorities spoken of in Scripture, and the forces and structures (governments, media, commerce, etc.) at work in a society or culture?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What implications do these truths have on our view of ministry?

## Part 4. The Fall

The early chapters of Genesis describe the forces that govern human behavior, society and man's relationship to nature. They also give us insight into the dynamics of the relationship between God and man.

1. What do you think prompted man to succumb to evil (Genesis 3)?

2. Why does man find sin so alluring?

Mark 7:18-23

John 8:40-44

Romans 7:7-25

Ephesians 4:17-19

James 4:1-12

other passages:

Summary:

3. Review the progression and consequences of sin in the following scriptures:

Genesis 3:1 - 7:4

Genesis 11:1-9

Romans 1:18-32

Romans 5:12-19

Romans 8:18-25

4. Summarize the results of the Fall:

-in the individual

-in man's relationship with God

-in society

-in nature



5. What provision did God make that allows man to survive the consequences of his fall?

Genesis 3:14-24

Genesis 11:1-9

Leviticus 16

Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12

John 1:29-36

other passages:

Summary:

6. How should understanding man's original purpose, his fall and God's provision influence our attitudes and actions?

## Part 5. God Working out His Plan

God is both the maker and sustainer of his people. He is active, in history.

The biblical view is that history had a beginning and will have an end, both being in God's hands...and that, therefore, what comes between is invested with meaning and purpose (Schlossberg).

1. God gave many promises to his people. Review the following covenants or promises:

| Passage        | Participants | Description |
|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Genesis 9:8-17 |              |             |

Genesis 15:9-21

Genesis 17

Exodus 19-24

2 Samuel 7:5-16

Jeremiah 31:31-34

What do these tell you about God's interaction with his people?

2. God maintained (and maintains) an active role as king in history. Observe God's involvement with kings, rulers and nations. What does this teach us about how we should view history?

Genesis 11:1-9

Exodus 14:1-4

Deuteronomy 9:1-6

Isaiah 14:24-27

Daniel 5:18-21

Jonah 1 - 2

Acts 12:21-24

Revelation 19:11-18

Summary: What do we learn about God's involvement in history?

## Part 6. The Gospel

Jesus Christ is the invisible God made flesh. He bridges the seen and the unseen realities of God's Kingdom. He entered human history to fulfill God's purposes, established from before the beginning of time.

He came as liberator, to release the cosmos from bondage and to redeem fallen men and women. "For God was pleased...through Christ, to reconcile to himself all things..."

1. What is God's righteous response to sin throughout history?

Genesis 4:9-15

Ezekiel 18:25-32

Romans 2:1-16

Revelation 20:11-15

2. How do the Scriptures reconcile God's judgment of sin with his great love for fallen man?

Leviticus 16

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Luke 4:16-19

John 3:16-21

Romans 3:21-26

Hebrews 8:1 - 10:25

other passages:

Summary:

3. What common theme is emphasized in the following passages?

Acts 2:23-24

Acts 4:27-28

Ephesians 1:3-14

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

2 Timothy 1:8-10

Titus 1:1-3

1 Peter 1:18-21



Summary:

4. How does God's redemptive program for the cosmos extend beyond reconciling individual men and women?

Romans 8:17-25

Ephesians 3:8-11

Colossians 1:15-20

Colossians 2:13-15

Summary:

5. The Greek verb *sozo* (to save) and noun *soteria* (salvation) are used all through the Gospels to describe Jesus' ministry. Observe the usages and translations of the verb *sozo* throughout the Gospel of Luke as you answer the question below.

- Luke 6:9 "...which is lawful on the Sabbath; to do good or to do evil, *to save* life or destroy it?"
- Luke 7:50 "Your faith *has saved* you; go in peace."
- Luke 8:12 "...and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they cannot believe and *be saved...*"
- Luke 8:36 ...told the people how the demon-possessed man *had been cured*.
- Luke 8:48 ..."Daughter, your faith *has healed* you. Go in peace."
- Luke 8:50 ..."Don't be afraid; just believe and she *will be healed*."
- Luke 9:24 ..."For whoever wants to *save* his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me *will save* it."
- Luke 13:23 Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going *to be saved*?"
- Luke 17:19 ..."Rise and go, your faith has *made you well*."
- Luke 17:33 "Whoever tries *to keep* his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it."
- Luke 18:26 Those who heard this then asked, "Who then can *be saved*?"
- Luke 18:42 Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith *has healed* you."
- Luke 19:10 "...For the Son of Man came to seek and *to save* what was lost."
- Luke 23:35 "He *saved* others; let him *save* himself if he is the Christ..."
- Luke 23:37 "If you are the king of the Jews, *save* yourself."
- Luke 23:39 "Aren't you the Christ? *Save* yourself and us!"

What do these usages indicate about the nature of "salvation"?

## 6. What is the Gospel?

### Summary:

Based on what we can know from the scriptures studied in all six parts of this section:

1. What are the purposes of God?

2. What are the means he is using?

3. Describe the outworking of God's cosmic plan as it flows through human history.

### Section III Summary: God's Purposes for His Creation

Summarize the most significant truths that the Holy Spirit has drawn to your attention through this study.

For each truth, compose an "If..., then..." statement.

## Section IV

# God and His People

## Introduction

Throughout the Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, we hear the refrain, "They shall be my people, and I will be their God." This fact - that God is constantly calling out a people to himself - is so prevalent in Scripture that its tremendous implications can be easily overlooked. Why would he do that? To what end has he chosen a "people"? And what characterizes them that differentiates them from the rest of mankind?

In this Section, we reflect on who comprise the people of God and how they are to conduct themselves, in this world. What are the dynamics? Where are the dangers? How are God's people equipped for works of service?

As we looked at the Gospel in the previous Section, so now we consider the people of God among the lost. How do we serve those without Christ?

The challenge is profound and there are many adversaries. So, we examine the concept of leadership in the Scriptures. How do we work together, as the people of God?

Finally, we return to the ways in which the people of God are described... and carefully examine how the New Testament uses the concept of *ekklesia* or church.

In all of this, we are still exploring the Scriptural Roots of our Ministry. Who are we? How should we labor together? What are our works of service?

## Part 1. The People of God

From eternity past, God planned a Kingdom filled with his people under the reign of his Son.

Consequently, the theme of the people of God is very prominent in the Scriptures. In this Part, we study some reasons why God wanted a people and some of the characteristics he desires in them.

1. What have been, and are, God's purposes in working through a people?

Genesis 12:1-3

Exodus 19:3-6

Deuteronomy 4:5-8

1 Kings 8:56-61

John 17:13-23

Ephesians 3:10-11

## 1 Peter 2:9-12

Based on the above verses, how would you summarize the purpose of the people of God in the world?

2. What characteristics were to distinguish God's people:

a. in the Old Testament?

Leviticus 19:1-2

Deuteronomy 6

Jeremiah 22:1-17

Micah 6:8

other scriptures



b. in the New Testament?

John 13:34-35

1 Corinthians 13:13

Galatians 5:13-23

Hebrews 11:6

1 Peter 1:15-16

c. What other passages shed light on how God's people are characterized?

d. Compare and contrast the distinguishing marks of the people of God in the Old and New Testaments.

3. Throughout history, how has one become included in the people of God?

Deuteronomy 7:6-9

Ruth 1:1-18

John 1:12-13

Acts 3:19

Romans 4

Romans 9:16-26

## Galatians 3

Summary:

4. How should what we have studied about God's people in Part 1 affect the way we live?

## Part 2. Unity And Community

Unity and community are foundational characteristics of God's people. In this Part, we look more closely at the lives of believers, in relationship to one another. What motivations should drive us and what dangers confront us?

1. What are some sources of our unity in Christ?

John 17:20-23

Ephesians 4:1-6

Galatians 3:26-29

2. How do these passages define the relationships believers have with one another?

Romans 12:3-8

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

Ephesians 1:22-23

Ephesians 4:3-16

Colossians 2:19

1 Peter 4:8-11

In what sense does the individual need the group? In what sense does the group need the individual?

3. How does the book of Acts portray the believers in community?

a. What took place among them?

Acts 2:42-47

Acts 4:23-31

Acts 4:32-37

Acts 6:1-7

Acts 11:27-30

Acts 13:1-3

Acts 15:1-35

Summary:

b. Why do you think these dynamics occurred?

4. What is biblical love?

Matthew 22:37-40

1 Corinthians 13

Colossians 3:12-14

1 John 2:9-11

1 John 3:11-20

1 John 4:7-21

Summary:

5. Why is love essential to the life of the people of God?



6. According to the New Testament, what are some serious threats to the healthy functioning of the body of Christ, and why do you think they are such serious threats?

What?

Why?

---

Acts 20:29-30

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

Galatians 2:11-21

Colossians 2:16-23

Revelation 2:1-7

Revelation 2:12-17

What?

Why?

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Revelation 2:18-29

Revelation 3:1-6

Revelation 3:14-22

a. Which of these are present in your fellowship?

b. Pick one of the threats you have listed. How could you begin to challenge it or eliminate it from your fellowship, in a biblical manner?

7. Review the following passages about the internal life of the body. What does the Holy Spirit impress upon you as you look at them?

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Romans 12:10-13       | Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves....Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.  |
| Romans 12:15-16       | Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.   |
| Romans 13:8           | ...the continuing debt to love one another....   |
| Romans 14:13          | ...stop passing judgement on one another...make up your mind not to put any...obstacle in your brother's way.  |
| Romans 15:1           | ...bear with the failings of the weak. Each...please his neighbor  |
| Romans 15:7           | Accept one another...as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.  |
| 1 Corinthians 1:10    | ...agree with one another...no divisions among you...be perfectly united in mind and thought.  |
| 1 Corinthians 5:4     | When you are assembled in the name of our Lord...  |
| 1 Corinthians 5:7     | Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast - as you really are. ...of malice and wickedness.   |
| 1 Corinthians 5:9-13  | ...don't associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is...immoral or greedy, an idolator...a swindler. With such a man do not even eat....Expel the wicked man...  |
| 1 Corinthians 8:10-13 | ...anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge....so this weak brother...is destroyed by your knowledge...you sin against Christ...I will not cause him to fall.  |
| 1 Corinthians 12:7-27 | ...to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good....(v.11)...gives....to each...just as he determines.... (v.12) The body is a unit,...(v.18) ...God has arranged the parts of the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be... (v.25) ...its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. (v. 27) ...you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. |
| Galatians 5:13        | ...do not use your freedom to indulge...rather, serve one another in love.   |
| Galatians 6:1         | ...if someone is caught in a sin,...restore him gently...carry each other's burdens...each one should carry his own load...  |
| Galatians 6:10        | Let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.   |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Ephesians 2:19-22    | ...fellow citizens with God's people...members of God's household.   |
| Ephesians 4:2-3      | Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love... keep the unity.   |
| Ephesians 4:7        | ...to each one of grace has been given....gave gifts to men.   |
| Ephesians 4:11-13    | It was he gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up, until we all reach unity in the faith....become mature,...attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.  |
| Ephesians 4:15       | ...speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up....From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.  |
| Ephesians 4:28       | ...something to share with those in need.  |
| Ephesians 4:32       | Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.   |
| Ephesians 5:3-4      | ...there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality...of impurity ...of greed...obscenity, foolish talk,...but rather thanksgiving.  |
| Ephesians 5:19       | Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.   |
| Ephesians 5:21       | Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ  |
| Philippians 2:2-4    | ...being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose....consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.  |
| Colossians 3:12-17   | ...as God's chosen people...clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity...as members of one body you were called to peace....Let the word...dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing... |
| 1 Thessalonians 4:9  | ....you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other ....do so more and more.   |
| 1 Thessalonians 5:11 | ....encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.  |
| 1 Thessalonians 5:15 | ...warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone....nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always...be kind to each other and to everyone else.   |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 2 Thessalonians 3:14           | If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter...do not associate with him...may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.   |
| 1 Timothy 1:3<br>1 Timothy 4:6 | ...command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer...<br>If you point these things out...you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus.  |
| 1 Timothy 4:11-13              | Command and teach these things...set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love.... faith...purity....devote yourself to public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.                          |
| 1 Timothy 5:1-2                | Do not rebuke an older man harshly...treat younger men as brothers...older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.   |
|                                | 1 Timothy 5:17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church....   |
| Hebrews 3:13                   | ...encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.   |
| Hebrews 10:24                  | ...let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together...let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.                        |
| Hebrews 13:1-3                 | Keep on loving each other as brothers...remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners...  |
| Hebrews 13:7                   | Remember your leaders....Consider the outcome of their way of life...  |
| Hebrews 13:16-17               | Do not forget to do good and to share with others....obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give account. Obey them...  |
| James 2:1-4                    | ...don't show favoritism....If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes...have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges...?  |
| James 2:15                     | Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes...but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?   |
| James 4:11                     | ...do not slander one another.   |
| James 5:9                      | Don't grumble against each other...  |
| James 5:14                     | Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil...the Lord will raise him up...confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. |
| 1 Peter 1:22                   | ...love one another deeply, from the heart.  |
| 1 Peter 2:5                    | you also, like living stones, are being built (shaped) into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God....   |
| 1 Peter 3:8                    | ...live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult....  |

- i.1 Peter 4:8-11 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, ...if anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised...
- 1 Peter 5:2 Be shepherds of God's flock...serving as overseers...because you are willing...not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.
- 1 Peter 5:5 Young men...be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another....
- 1 John 1:7 ...if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another...
- 1 John 2:10 Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble.
- 1 John 3:11 ...we should love one another.
- 1 John 3:16-17 ...we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity...how can the love of God be in him?
- 1 John 3:23 ...this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another...
- 1 John 4:7,11 ...let us love one another...
- 1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother commit a sin ... he should pray and God will give him life
- 2 John 5 ...I ask that we love one another.

Summarize the relational principles characterizing the people of God.

### Part 3. Gifts and Service

Having seen the unity of God's people, we now study their diversity. This leads us into an appreciation of giftedness.

God provides gifted people to exercise the functions necessary for the body to be healthy and do its work.

1. "There are different kinds of gifts [*charisma*], but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service [*diakonia*], but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working [*energema*], but the same God works all of them in all men. . . . All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines."

1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 11

a. What does this passage tell us about diversity in the body?

b. In serving others, what abuses flow from neglecting these truths?

2. The Bible has much to say about gifts. What are they? What is their function in the growth of the body?

Examine the following passages as you answer these questions.

Romans 12:3-8

1 Corinthians 12:1-31

Ephesians 4:7-16

1 Peter 4:10-11

Summary:



3. Gifted believers are given "to prepare God's people for works of service [*diakonia*]" (Ephesians 4:12). Such service (often translated "ministry" in English) is not confined to "spiritual" contributions. For example, *diakonia* is used three times in Acts 6:1-6, where the NIV translates:

- |      |                |                |
|------|----------------|----------------|
| v. 1 | distribution   | ...of food     |
| v. 2 | wait on (verb) | ...tables      |
| v. 4 | ministry       | ...of the word |

a. What is the practical service of each of the following?

Agabus            Acts 11:27-30; 21:10-14

Apollos            Acts 18:24-28; 1 Corinthians 3:5-9; 4:1-13; 16:12

Aquila/  
Priscilla            Acts 18:24-28; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19;  
2 Timothy 4:19

Archippus            Colossians 4:17; Philemon 2

Dorcas            Acts 9:36-39

Epaphroditus    Philippians 2:25-30; 4:18

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Paul      | Acts 17:16-18; 2 Corinthians 10:13-16;<br>2 Timothy 4:16-18                |
| Philemon  | Philemon   |
| Philip    | Acts 6:1-8; 8:4-40; 21:8   |
| Stephanas | 1 Corinthians 1:16; 16:15-18   |
| Stephen   | Acts 6:1 - 7:60  |
| Tychicus  | Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7-9; 2 Timothy 4:12;<br>Titus 3:12 |

b. What do you see to be the implications of this specialization for works of service?

c. Describe your *diakonia*.

4. Summarize your understanding of gifts and specialized tasks or functions in the upbuilding of the body.

## Part 4. The People of God among the Lost

In Section III, on God's purposes, we saw his plan to reconcile the lost world to himself, by employing his people as his instruments.

God has chosen us to "declare the praise of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." - 1 Peter 2:9. What do the Scriptures tell us about this service or ministry?

1. By what means did God communicate his name to the world in the Old Testament?

Exodus 9:13-18

Deuteronomy 4:5-8

Joshua 2:8-11

Isaiah 55:1-5

Jonah 3-4

Isaiah 61:6-11

Ezekiel 36:16-38

Summary:

2. Jesus often stated why he came into this sinful world (e.g. Mark 10:45, Luke 19:10). According to your understanding of Scripture, how does the presence of the body in the world complement his purposes?

Luke 24:46-49

John 17:18-23

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

3. What is the New Testament teaching on how Christ's followers should relate to the lost around them?

Luke 5:27-32

Luke 6:27-42

John 15:18 - 16:4

John 17:14-18

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

2 Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1

1 Peter 2:9-25

Summary:

4. How do the epistles portray the local body penetrating society with the Gospel?

Paul's teaching:

Romans 12:9-21

1 Corinthians 10:27-11:1

1 Corinthians 14:22-25

2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 7:1

Galatians 6:9-10

Ephesians 6:5-9

Philippians 1:27-30

Philippians 2:14-16

Colossians 4:5-6

1 Thessalonians 1:8

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

1 Timothy 2:1-4

1 Timothy 3:1-7

Titus 2:2-10



## Philemon 6

### Peter's teaching:

1 Peter 2:11-18

1 Peter 3:1-16

### Summary:

5. Answers to the questions in this part relate to our priorities and our approach to ministry. What conclusions do you draw in terms of your own approach to the lost?

## Part 5. Leading and Colaboring in the Body

If all believers are gifted and called to service, how does the body of Christ receive leadership? For what do we look to God and when do we follow human leaders?

1. Examine several ways in which the three persons of God lead his people.

John 15:1-5

John 16:12-15

Acts 16:6-10

Romans 8:5-14

1 Corinthians 12

1 John 3:21-4:6

other passages:

How should this influence the way God's people carry out his work?

2. To understand the way the body functions, we have to understand that Christ is the head of the body. What does it mean that Christ is the head?

Ephesians 1:22-23

Ephesians 4:15-16

Colossians 1:17-18

Colossians 2:19

Summary:

3. Examine the following New Testament passages about leadership among God's people, and answer the questions following.

Acts 20:17-35

Romans 12:3-8

Titus 1:5-9

Titus 2:1-15

1 Peter 5:1-5

Hebrews 13:17

Summary:

- a. How are human leaders to serve the people of God?

b. What errors are leaders repeatedly admonished to beware of?

4. Ephesians 4:11 lists four (or five) specialized categories of gifted people whom Christ gave to prepare his body to be and do what he wanted.

a. How do you view these people - as exercising gifts? as providing services? as holding offices? or what? Why do you think so?

b. Work at finding other references to the following terms in the New Testament. Write out what you understand to be the New Testament meaning of each term.

apostles

prophets

evangelists

pastors\* (shepherds)

teachers\*

Summary:

5. From the following passages, what can you conclude about human leaders in the New Testament churches?

Jerusalem:

Acts 2:42

Acts 15:2-6

Antioch:

Acts 13:1-3

\*Note: Many commentators consider these two to be combined as pastor/teacher

Ephesus:

Acts 20:17-38

Crete:

Titus 1:5

Philippi:

Philippians 1:1

Galatia:

Acts 14:23

Scattered fellowships:

1 Peter 5:1

Summary: In what ways did Paul and his team provide for the oversight of the churches that he founded?

## Part 6. What is the Church?

Jesus Christ is building his church. The gatherings of his people in the New Testament are frequently called "church" (*ekklesia*). This Greek term, which occurs 115 times in the New Testament, literally means "called out" and was used of other gatherings or assemblies.

Because the concept of church has been overlaid with much subsequent history, we need to try to see it again, with fresh eyes, as it was used in the New Testament context.

1. Note some of the metaphors for the people of God in the New Testament. What truths do these express about God's people?

Body: Ephesians 1:22-23

Bride: Ephesians 5:25-27

Building: 1 Corinthians 3:9-15

Family: Ephesians 3:14-15

Field: 1 Corinthians 3:9

Flock: John 10:1-30

House: 1 Peter 2:4-8

Temple: 1 Corinthians 3:16-17



2. When we think of the word "church" (*ekklesia*), some people tend to think locally, while others think only of the universal church. Some of the numerous New Testament references to *ekklesia* are listed below. As best you can, place each of these references into the categories that follow:

universal      regional      city      house      general sense      Comments

Matthew 16:18

Matthew 18:17

---

Acts 8:1

Acts 8:3

Acts 9:31

Acts 11:26

Acts 12:1

Acts 14:23

Acts 14:27

Acts 15:4

Acts 20:28

---

Romans 16:5

---

1 Corinthians 1:2

1 Corinthians 4:17

1 Corinthians 11:18

1 Corinthians 12:28

1 Corinthians 14:4

1 Corinthians 15:9

1 Corinthians 16:1

1 Corinthians 16:19

---

2 Corinthians 1:1

2 Corinthians 8:1

---

Galatians 1:2

Galatians 1:13

Galatians 1:22

---

Ephesians 1:22-23

Ephesians 3:10

Ephesians 3:21

Ephesians 5:23-32

---

Philippians 4:15

---

Colossians 4:15-16

---

1 Thessalonians 1:1

---

2 Thessalonians 1:1

---

1 Timothy 3:5

1 Timothy 3:15

1 Timothy 5:16

---

Philemon 2

---

Hebrews 12:21-23

---

James 5:14

---

3 John 6

3 John 9

3 John 10

---

Revelation 1:11

---

3. What do your observations in question 2 tell you about the meaning of *ekklesia*?

4. Consider the following passages. In your opinion, are these believers or groups manifestations of *ekklesia*? Why, or why not?

Acts 13:1-3

Acts 13:44

Acts 15:1-21

Acts 15:22-23

Acts 16:6-10

Acts 16:25-34

Acts 20:17-18

Ephesians 4:11-13

3 John 5-12

Summary:

5. How do the various manifestations of *ekklesia* interact with each other?

Romans 15:23-33

Romans 16

1 Corinthians 16

2 Corinthians 8:1-24

2 Corinthians 11:7-9

Philippians 4:14-19

Colossians 4:7-18

Summary:

Summary: (Of Part 6) On the basis of your study, how would you define *church*?

What are the distinguishing characteristics of *church*?

Could any group of believers be called *church*? If not, what biblical limits or conditions apply?

What are the implications of your answer?

## Section IV Summary: God and His People

Summarize the significant truths that the Holy Spirit has drawn to your attention through this study.

For each truth, compose an "If..., then..." statement.

## Section V

# God's Pursuit of the Nations

## Introduction

Since the Fall, God has pursued us in our lostness. Even before then, he purposed to redeem us in Jesus Christ. His love is the mainspring of ministry - "we love him because he first loved us."

We are to be useful instruments of service, in God's hands. But we quickly recognize our limitations. Our humanity binds us, making it difficult to be in step with God.

Yet we recognize that his love extends to all nations. How, therefore, does the Gospel spread among the nations? What is required of us if we are to accompany God in his pursuit of the nations?

We will look at the spread of the New Testament church and the commission that sent them out. What took place? Who carried the good news? How did they cope with diversity? How was the truth kept pure and mobile?

Finally, we will reflect on ministry functions and the forms that give shape to them. How can we ensure that the forms and structures we use continue to meet real needs?

As the people of God, participating in God's liberating and reconciling agenda among the nations, we can know that we have the high privilege of walking in step with the purposes of God.

## Part 1. Nations and cultures

The Scriptures reveal a God whose heart of love has constantly found expression in the redemptive pursuit of men and women. The initiative has always been his.

We need to see the nations through God's eyes, in order better to appreciate how he draws us into partnership with him in reaching out to the nations.

1. Trace the revelation of God's interest in the nations as it flows from Genesis to Revelation.

Genesis 12:1-3; 22:15-18; 28:14

Joshua 4:24

Isaiah 49:1-7

Jonah 1 - 4



Luke 2:25-32

Luke 24:45-47

Acts 15:12-19

Revelation 7:9-10

Summary:

2. Look at the place of culture throughout the Scriptures.
  - a. Where does the factor of culture\* fit into God's plan?

Genesis 10:4-5, 10-12, 21-31

\*Culture is the integrated system of a people, their language, habits, customs, social organization – those things that give them an identity and distinction from the many thousands of other peoples of the world.

Genesis 11:1-9

John 4:4-27

Acts 11:1-18

Acts 17:26-28

Ephesians 2:11-22

b. What should our attitude be towards culture?

3. God has always employed his people as he pursues the nations. What are the similarities and differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament in the manner in which he employed them?

Old Testament

Deuteronomy 4:5-8

Deuteronomy 28:9-10

Joshua 2:8-11

1 Kings 8:41-43

2 Kings 19:14-19

Jeremiah 4:1-2

New Testament

Matthew 28:19-20

John 17:18; 20:21

Acts 11:19-26

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Philippians 2:14-16

Summary:

4. What do the Scriptures tell us about the outcome of God's pursuit of the nations?

Isaiah 2:1-4



Isaiah 42:1-9

Joel 3:1-3

Matthew 24:14

Revelation 5:9; 7:9

Revelation 21:22-27

Summarize the outcome of God's plan for the nations:





## Part 2. Sent to the nations

As the Gospel began to spread, people were raised up, called and entrusted with God's message. The word apostle is the translation of *apostolos*, a Greek word made up of *apo*, "from", and *stello*, "to send", thus referring to the act of sending someone on a commission to represent the sender. It was used of a messenger or envoy who was provided with credentials.

1. The foundational biblical model of this is clearly Jesus, coming to earth as the Father's apostle, ambassador, or sent one. "Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess." (Hebrews 3:1).
- a. Using a concordance or Bible reference book, identify 8-12 references in the Gospel of John to Jesus being "sent" (*apostello*) and record your observations.

Reference

Observations

---

b. What light do other scriptures throw on Jesus being God's sent one?

Mark 12:1-12

Galatians 4:4

Acts 10:36-43

other passages:

c. Summarize your understanding of why the Father sent Jesus into the world.

2. Study the following passages relating to the function of "sending and being sent" as you answer the questions following.

Mark 3:13-19

Luke 10:1-3 ff.

John 17:6-19

Acts 13:46-47

Romans 10:14-15

- a. How do you understand the tasks that were given to those who were sent out?

- b. According to your understanding, do these tasks given to the first century Christians still apply to the church today? Why or why not?

The term apostle (*apostolos*) is used in several distinct ways in the New Testament. The Twelve were obviously unique and unrepeatable, as they bridged between the life and work of Jesus and the establishing of the church (Luke 22:28-30; Acts 1:22; 2:42-43; Ephesians 2:20). They were also invested with an exclusive special authority.

The apostle Paul was also unique (1 Corinthians 9:1-3; 2 Corinthians 12:11-12). The mystery of the Gentiles was first revealed to him (Ephesians 3:2-7). And he had a unique contribution to make to the New Testament.

But the subject of apostleship does not end here. A number of other New Testament people are described as apostles who did not carry the same unique credentials or authority but who nevertheless were to function in an apostolic way.

3. Who, besides the Twelve and Paul were identified as apostles (*apostoloi*)? Can you determine on what basis were they given this designation?

Acts 14:1-4, 14

Romans 16:7

1 Corinthians 3:21-22; 4:6,9

Galatians 1:19

Philippians 2:25

1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6-7

2 Corinthians 11:13; Revelation 2:2

Summary:

4. Review the accounts which state Jesus' Great Commission.

Matthew 28:16-20

Mark 16:14-20\*

Luke 24:44-53

John 20:21-23 (cf. 17:18)

Acts 1:6-9

5. Summarize the nature and scope of the Great Commission, as you understand it.

6. What, if any, is the connection between the office given to the twelve apostles and the tasks or functions they were to carry out on earth?

7. Based on your study of Scripture, to whom has the ongoing task of world evangelization been entrusted (e.g. to the worldwide body of Christ? to local fellowships of believers? to select individuals? or...?) Justify your answer biblically.

### Part 3. The Expansion of the Gospel

How did the Gospel grow? Beginning with one small band of simple, provincial disciples, the Gospel was planted and growing throughout the whole Roman world fifty years later. There was something in the way God had put the body together and energized it that gave great impetus to the message they were to pass on.

1. Note the expansion of the Gospel in Jesus' ministry. (Passages listed chronologically.)

John 4:4-6

Mark 1:38-39

Matthew 9:35-10:1

Luke 10:1-4

Mark 7:24-32



Matthew 23:37-39

Luke 19:28-44

2. Skim Acts 1-11 and observe how Jesus' words in Acts 1:8 began to be fulfilled.

Jerusalem

Judea

Samaria

the nations

3. Describe how the Gospel spread, especially in terms of who carried it and where it reached (up to c. A.D. 45 - Acts 11).

4. What means did the Holy Spirit use to generate such great expansion in the early Jerusalem church?

i. Acts 2:1 - 8:3

5. What means did the Holy Spirit use to spread the Gospel beyond Jerusalem to the surrounding provinces? Who did what?

Acts 8:1 - 12:25

6. Observe other expressions of the church's expansion in these passages:

Colossians 1:3-8, 23

1 Thessalonians 1





## Part 4. The Pauline Apostolic Model

Out of all of those who were at work spreading Christ's message in the first century, there is only one about whom the Bible tells us very much. This is the apostle Paul. It is providential that the Holy Spirit has left us with such a wealth of material - both by and about Paul - which gives us such an intimate portrait into the great apostle...his motives, his message and his way of operating.

1. Observe God's choosing, calling and commissioning of the apostle Paul, along with Paul's own understanding of his call, and then answer the questions following.

Acts 9:10-19

Acts 13:1-3

Acts 13:46-47

Acts 16:6-10

Romans 1:1-6, 14-15

Galatians 1:1, 11-16









c. What do you observe about Paul's response to God's call?

In order to understand Paul's ministry fully, a careful study of Acts and Paul's epistles would be required, an endeavor clearly beyond the scope of this study. Passages selected can give an overview, but are necessarily incomplete. Almost all of Paul's writings are relevant to how he served others.

2. Acts 13-28 display Paul's burning heart to get the Gospel out. This is especially prominent in these passages.

Acts 16:11-40

Acts 17:13-34

Acts 21:27-22:9

Acts 28:30-31

What do you think motivated Paul?

3. How would you characterize Paul's overall ministry approach, or strategy (e.g. his guiding principles, sphere of service, methods of operation, colaborship with others, etc.)?

Acts 14:1-28

Acts 18:1-22

Romans 15:15-22

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

2 Corinthians 10:1-18



2 Corinthians 12:11-13

Galatians 2:1-5

Ephesians 3:14-19

Philippians 1:12-26

Colossians 4:7-17

2 Timothy 4:6-18

Summarize Paul's strategy of ministry:

4. How would you characterize Paul's service in local settings (e.g. his standards of conduct, goals and expectations, methods of communication, etc.)?

1 Corinthians 3:5-15

1 Corinthians 4:14-17

2 Corinthians 4:1-6

Galatians 2:11-16

1 Thessalonians 2:1-20

2 Thessalonians 3:6-10

Summarize how Paul served the churches that he founded.

5. How would you summarize Paul's evangelistic strategy for himself and his team?

We have already seen Paul's burning commitment to see the lost brought to faith in Christ, by any and all means. Did he now expect all his converts to follow in his footsteps? It is instructive to compare and contrast Paul's personal manner of ministry with the teachings he gave the local churches he founded.

6. Review your answers to Section IV, Part 4, question 4 about Paul's words on the evangelistic work of local fellowships. How did Paul's personal manner of reaching the lost compare with the instructions he gave to the local churches he founded?

7. Observe the contact and relationships between Paul's team and the local fellowships, in the following passages.

Acts 14:21-23

Acts 14:26-28

Romans 1:11-12

1 Corinthians 1:11

1 Corinthians 7:1

2 Corinthians 8:16-21

Philippians 1:1-6

Philippians 4:10-19

Titus 1:5





Summary:

Describe Paul's understanding of his task and function as an apostle.

Application: (from Part4)

What should we be learning from the Pauline apostolic model? List the implications for ministry today from the Scriptures you have studied above.

## Part 5. The Purity and Mobility of the Gospel

It took only a few months after the first apostolic team began crossing cultural frontiers for conflict to break out. Paul and Barnabas insisted that the Gentiles had the right to live out the Gospel in their culture. The opposition insisted that certain Jewish forms be observed. This was a dangerous conflict.

The Gospel is always endangered as we carry it about. Its purity can be lost when we attempt to adapt it and its mobility will surely be lost when we do not.

1. Review your answers to the question "What is the Gospel?" (Section IV, Part 5, Question 5). What can easily happen to the Gospel if we are not vigilant?

2 Peter 2:1-3

Jude 3, 4

Revelation 2:12-17

2. Identify the struggles the Gospel faced as it crossed the border between the Jewish and Gentile cultures.

Acts 10 - 11:18

Acts 15:1-35

Galatians 1:1-3:5

Acts 20:17-25

a. How were these eventually resolved?

b. Review Galatians to answer the question: What would have happened to the Gospel and its mobility if these issues had not been checked?

- c. In your opinion which of these struggles continue to plague cross-cultural communication of the Gospel?

3. Consider Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 9:15-23. How can this commitment to communicate relevantly be fused with our zeal to protect the purity of the Gospel?

### Interpretation/application

4. Not all New Testament people were gifted to cross cultural barriers and successfully spread the Gospel in its purity. Even Peter had difficulty (Acts 10:9-11:18; Galatians 2:11-21). Why do you think this is so?



5. What are indicators that the Gospel we preach is pure?

6. What criteria help us to distinguish between adapting to culture and diluting the Gospel?

7. How can we free ourselves from the presuppositions and biases that we inherit from our own cultures so that we don't encumber the Gospel as we carry it about?

## Part 6. Function and form

One of the issues that has historically altered the purity of the Gospel and hindered its mobility as we have taken the Gospel to the nations is our inability to distinguish biblical functions from cultural forms. Thus, to cross cultures effectively with the Gospel we need to be able to discriminate between what is portrayed in Scripture as a function, and what is a cultural form used to accomplish it. Functions necessitate the creation of forms.

Function: a purposeful or essential activity

Form: the pattern or method used to exercise the function

Forms can easily outlive their original functions. When this happens, the forms become restrictive or redundant. A decline from tradition to traditionalism occurs.

In this Part, we distinguish between functions and forms...and we consider how to preserve meaning by using forms that fit current functions.

1. Observe the relationship between function and form in the following passages.

a. What was the function?

b. What was the form?

(What were they attempting to accomplish?)

(What did they do to accomplish this?)

---

Acts 2:42-47

Acts 3:1

Acts 4:32-35

a. What was the function?

(What were they attempting to accomplish?)

b. What was the form?

(What did they do to accomplish this?)

---

Acts 6:1-7

Acts 13:1-3

Acts 19:8-10

2 Corinthians 13:12

1 Timothy 2:8

Titus 1:5

What do you observe from this exercise? Would you say the early church's forms were normative or only illustrative? What about its functions? Why?



2. Observe Jesus' commentary in Mark 7:5-13 on some forms which had survived their functions and led to great abuse.

a. What had caused this to happen?

b. What was the result?

3. Consider the practices described in the following verses:

Matthew 6:5-15

John 13:2-5

Acts 10:47-48

1 Corinthians 11:2-16



## 1 Corinthians 11:23-34

a. In your opinion, are these forms or functions? Why?

b. What is their current validity?

4. Work through the following references to the 70 elders:

Exodus 18:13-26

Numbers 11:16

Ezekiel 8:6-12



John 11:47-53

Matthew 26:59

a. What was developing, through the centuries?

b. In your opinion, what should have happened instead, and why?

5. "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ." (Colossians 2:8)

What guidelines are given in Colossians 2:9-23 that help us to avoid the "captivity" mentioned by Paul in verse 8?



6. Make a list of some common contemporary Christian forms.

a. Which of these are in danger of losing their original functions? Why?

b. Which of these forms could hinder the the Gospel's purity, or our ability to carry the Gospel to the lost and the nations if not corrected?

c. How is this problem to be resolved?

## Section V Summary: God's Pursuit of the Nations

Summarize the significant truths that the Holy Spirit has drawn to your attention through this study.

For each truth, compose an "If..., then..." statement.



## Section VI

# The Nature of Ministry

## Introduction

This Section is intended to help us to integrate what we have studied and to capture the large themes of Scripture, at the level of our own service for the Lord.

We want to bring together the practical implications of the foundational truths that we have been surveying. How shall we then minister?

If our desire is to be fulfilled, it will only be because we acknowledge that ministry is not a matter of our own strength and competence. None of us is sufficient for the challenge. So, we look closely at the ways in which the Holy Spirit accomplishes his work of transformation. And we look closely at the spiritual dynamic of prayer.

What is the process of transformation? How are we changed? We look at God's work in individuals and in the body of believers...and consider the goal of maturity.

Inevitably, to minister requires us to assume the role of servants. So, we examine what the Scriptures disclose about servanthood. Whom do we serve? What does serving involve?

Finally, we draw our minds and hearts together around the concept of servant leadership. How, by God's grace, may we hold ourselves available to lead in service and to serve as leaders?

## Part 1. The Role of the Holy Spirit

We are to participate with God in rescuing the lost from Satan's dominion and relocating them in the Kingdom of the Son he loves. (Colossians 1:12-13). Ministry of this kind cannot happen apart from spiritual means.

The making and equipping of disciples involves the inner transformation of individuals and brings conflict against spiritual forces. In this, the Holy Spirit has to be central. What does he do, with which results?

1. Review the New Testament passages on the Spirit's ministry to the individual believer. What ministries does he have that stand out to you?

John 14:15-31

John 15:26-27

John 16:5-16

Acts 4:23-31

Romans 8:1-27

1 Corinthians 2:6-16

Galatians 5:16-26

Ephesians 1:13-21

Ephesians 3:14-21

other passages:

Summary:

2. In what ways does the Holy Spirit work among the lost?

John 3:1-8

John 16:8-11

Acts 2:1-41 (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:22-25)

Acts 8:26-39

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

Titus 3:5-6

other passages:

Summary:

3. What are the implications of the above observations as we seek to go to the lost and the nations?

4. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 that the Spirit supplies the needed ingredients for the body to function properly.

Summarize your understanding of the New Testament teachings on the Spirit's work in the body of believers.

5. How do you understand the interplay between the Spirit's direction and our taking initiative in serving others?

Acts 6:1-6

Acts 13:1-3

Acts 15:23-29

Acts 16:6-10

Ephesians 5:15-18

other passages:

Summary:

6. How does the fact that the Holy Spirit indwells, leads and equips every believer shape the role of human leaders among God's people?

John 16:12-15

Romans 8:5-14

1 John 2:26-28

Summary:

7. From what you've studied in questions 1 through 6, what would you say submission to the Holy Spirit's leadership implies?

## Part 2. The Place of Prayer

Prayer for others is an essential aspect of spiritual service: here we look primarily at the examples of Jesus and Paul. As the disciples said - "Teach us to pray."

1. We can learn much about vitally relating to God by observing the example Jesus set for us as he relied on God and served people. Skim John 5-17,; noting especially the Father-Son relationship from the following passages.

John 5:16-40

John 10:14-38

John 15:9-26

John 6:35-59

John 12:23-28

John 16:12-15

John 7:16-39

John 12:44-50

John 16:25-32

John 8:14-30

John 13:31-32

John 17:1-26

John 8:50-55

John 14:1-31

- a. Describe the relationship between Jesus and his Father.



b. How did Jesus maintain his awareness and perspective in serving his Father?

b. What did he ask of his Father?

2. Review your studies on the growth of the church, from Section V, Part 3 (pages 136-138). In your opinion, what place did prayer have in that expansion?

3. Examine the prayers of the apostle Paul for the believers and fellowships he knew.

Ephesians 1:15-23

Ephesians 3:14-19

Philippians 1:3-11

Colossians 1:3-14

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

Philemon 4-6

a. How did Paul balance prayer with his other ministry activities in nurturing young Christians ?

b. For what specific aspects of their upbuilding did Paul rely *primarily* on prayer to do the work?

4. Summarize the role of prayer in collaborating with God in serving others.

### Part 3. God at work in individuals

In order to understand the nature of ministry, it is necessary to grasp the way God works in individuals. He is able to take the worst of us, who have spent all our lives reinforcing sinful thought and behavior, and change us into people who please Him and bring light to others. How does he do this?

1. What does God want to see happen in the individual's life?

Matthew 22:34-40

Romans 8:29-30

2 Corinthians 3:18

Ephesians 1:4; 4:1

Philippians 1:9-11

Philippians 3:7-11

1 Timothy 1:5

other passages:

Summary:

2. What is the process of transformation and how does it occur? Read each of the following foundational passages, noting specifically what Scripture has to say about how we are changed.

John 15:1-17

Romans 5

Romans 6

Romans 7

Romans 8

Galatians 5

Ephesians 3:14 - 5:21

2 Peter 1: 3-11

a. What other verses or passages would you add that are crucial to understanding the transformation process? What is the essential teaching of each?

b. Summarize the essential elements of the process of transformation.

3. How should answers to questions 1 and 2 affect the way we minister to an individual in practice?

## Part 4. God at Work in and through the Body

The world could not stand against the New Testament body. Persecution only accelerated its growth. There was power in its togetherness and attractiveness in its characteristics. It was said, "They have turned the world upside down." How could this have happened? What forces were at work?

1. Observe the momentum and influence of the first century church.

Acts 4:13-20

Acts 4:23-35

Acts 5:12-16

Romans 1:8-17

1 Corinthians 1:18 - 2:5

Philippians 1:12-14



To what do you attribute their momentum and influence?

2. How does the body minister to itself, build itself up?

Acts 20:27-35

Romans 12:3-8

Romans 14

1 Corinthians 12:7-26

1 Corinthians 14:3-4, 12

Ephesians 4:1-16



3. What are the marks of spiritual maturity in the New Testament?

4. How should the truths we have discovered above about the body influence the way an individual approaches discipling another?

## Part 5. The Servant: What is he to be and do?

In the Scriptures, "ministry" and "service" are synonymous. There are at least six different Greek words that are translated "servant; serve." With more than 250 occurrences of this concept in the New Testament alone, the weight of Scripture reveals its importance for us.

What does the Holy Spirit say to us, as we take a close look at our role as servants.

### 1. Observe the multiple references to "servant; serve."

- Matthew 20:25-28 "...rulers lord it over them...officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
- Matthew 23:9-11 "...you are not to be called...for you have only one Master...The greatest among you will be your servant."
- Mark 9:35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."
- Luke 16:13 "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."
- Luke 17:7-10 "Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'?... Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"
- Luke 22:26-27 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.
- John 12:26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.
- John 13:16 I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

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| John 15:20 ;        | Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.   |
| Acts 26:16          | 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you.   |
| Romans 1:1, 9       | Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God....God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son....  |
| Romans 7:6          | ...released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.   |
| Romans 12:7-11      | If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach...Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.   |
| Romans 14:4         | Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls.  |
| Romans 16:1         | I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchrea.  |
| Romans 16:18        | ...such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites...  |
| 1 Corinthians 3:5   | What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe --as the Lord has assigned to each his task.   |
| 1 Corinthians 4:1   | So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.   |
| 1 Corinthians 12:5  | There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.  |
| 2 Corinthians 4:5   | For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.   |
| 2 Corinthians 6:4   | Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses;  |
| 2 Corinthians 11:23 | Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again.  |
| Galatians 1:10      | Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.  |
| Ephesians 3:7       | I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.   |
| Ephesians 4:12      | ...to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up   |
| Ephesians 6:7       | Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men,   |
| Colossians 1:7      | ...Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf,   |
| Colossians 1:23-25  | ...if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant...become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness.. |

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| Colossians 4:7     | Tychicus...is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.   |
| Colossians 4:12    | Epaphras,...a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you,...  |
| 1 Timothy 3:10, 13 | They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons...those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.                                 |
| 2 Timothy 2:24     | And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.  |
| Titus 1:1          | Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness--   |
| 1 Peter 2:16       | Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.  |
| 1 Peter 4:10-11    | Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised... |
| 1 Peter 5:2        | Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers -- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;   |
| Revelation 1:6     | and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father...  |
| Revelation 6:11    | Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.  |
| Revelation 22:3    | No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.  |

From these servant passages, how would you generalize:

What is a New Testament servant?

To whom is the servant responsible?

Whom does the servant serve?

Whose agenda does he or she follow?

How does his or her serving express itself?

What resources does the servant have at his or her disposal?

2. How does Scripture portray the servant collaborating with God in his work?  
How should he see himself? What does this imply about the way he serves?

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

1 Corinthians 3:5-15

2 Corinthians 3:1-6

2 Corinthians 5:18 - 6:10

3. What makes a person a "servant?" What would disqualify him or her from that designation?

Luke 17:7-10

John 12:23-26

1 Corinthians 4:1-5

1 Corinthians 9:16-18

1 Corinthians 9:24-27



1 Corinthians 13:1-3

2 Corinthians 4:1-6

Philippians 2:20-21

Summary:

## Summary questions:

From what you have observed from your study of the Scriptural Roots of our Ministry to date:

1. What, in essence, is ministry?
2. What values and commitments does serving God and people include?
3. How is God's work reproduced through the life of the servant?

## Part 6. The Servant-Leader

We have now reflected in depth on the Scriptural Roots of our Ministry. The time has come to try to draw together many of the biblical strands in our studies. No study of the interrelationship of God's people and service would be complete without considering the place of leadership.

Ministry, we have seen, is service. Jesus said - "I am among you as one who serves". Ministry among the lost...the harassed and helpless...also requires leadership. Hence, the concept of a servant-leader. What does it mean to be and to minister as a servant-leader?

In this final Part, we want to reflect on how to lead in service and serve as leaders.

1. What do you observe about the relationship between serving and leading in the following passages?

Mark 9:30-37

Mark 10:35-45

Matthew 23:1-12

1 Peter 5:1-4

Acts 20:17-38

Ephesians 4:11-16

a. Why is servanthood so essential to a biblical leader?

b. Where does positional authority fit in among the people of God?  
Explain.

c. How does suffering help to prepare one for leading others?

d. From these and other passages, what needs to motivate a leader?

2. What do each of these major themes contribute to our understanding of leadership among God's people?

- the Trinity

-God's Kingdom

-glorifying God

-cooperating with God's purposes

-the lordship and headship of Christ

-the ministry of the Holy Spirit

-the gifts of the Holy Spirit

-interdependence in the body

-*koinonia* or community

-the servant

3. Summarize how the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, regarding ministering as a servant leader, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel.

## Section VI Summary: The Nature of Ministry

Summarize the significant truths that the Holy Spirit has drawn to your attention through this study.

For each truth, compose an "If..., then..." statement.