

DOMS 101: Foundations of Christian Life

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- The Assurance of Answered Prayer
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- The Assurance of Divine Guidance/Leadership
- 1John as a letter of Assurances (1Jn. 5:11-13; 1:9/2:1,2; 5:14-15; 3:7-9/4:4/5:4-5; 2:20,27)

10. The Six Basic Bible Doctrines

- Introduction to Christian doctrines (Heb. 5:11-14; 6:1, 2).
- The Doctrine of Repentance from Dead Works
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- The Doctrine of Baptisms
- The Doctrine of Laying on of Hands
- The Doctrine of the Resurrection of the dead
- The Doctrine of Eternal Judgement

QUIET TIME

What is Quiet Time?

The Quiet Time is quality time spent alone with God for fellowship in meditation upon the Word of God and prayer (Josh. 1:8; Mk. 1:35). It is the time to be quiet enough for God to speak into your life daily.

Why is Quiet Time so Important for the Christian?

God made man in His image and likeness (Gen. 1:26-27) so that He could fellowship with him (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Jn. 1:3) and man would be responsible for the works of God's hands. But through sin and disobedience, fellowship with God was broken. God cursed man and he became far removed from God. But God sent His only begotten son Jesus Christ to die for our sins and bring us back to God (1 Pet. 3:18).

1. Daily temptations from Satan (Matt. 4:1 & Lk.22:3, 32), the flesh (Rom. 7:17; 1 Pet. 2:11), and the world (1 Jn. 2:15-17; Jas. 4:4) still cloud the Christian's vision and the true image of God in man is blurred. We need to spend time alone in God's presence daily after accepting Jesus Christ as our Lord and personal saviour – so that we can have:-
2. Daily fellowship with God to know, love and worship Him, Jn. 4:23, 24; Acts 17:24-27; Phil. 3:7-10; Jn. 17:3
3. Daily practice of obedience and service to God, Matt. 4:9,10; Jn. 5:19,20; 6:38; Jer. 1:5; Ps. 119:11
4. Daily growth into God's image and Christlikeness, 1 Pet. 2:2; Rom. 8:29; Gen. 17:1; Col. 1:26; 2 Cor. 3:18
5. Daily meditation and intake of God's word in order to be richly indwelt by it, Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:1-3; Col. 3:16

When Should I have my Daily Quiet Time?

Give God the best part of your time in the day. It is best to meet God before entering the day:

- You are refreshed after sleep and your powers of concentration are highest;
- God may have instructions for you for the day;
- The devil may have temptations in store for you which God wants to reveal to you;
- You need to commit your plans and challenges, troubles, etc. for the day into His hands, Prov. 16:3;3:5-7;
- Spiritual manna, Ex. 16:19-21, daily, morning by morning when God wakens you up to instruct you, Is. 50:4.

Where should I have my Quiet Time?

Find a convenient place where you can be alone (Ex. 34:1; Mk. 1:35) but comfortable - never in bed.

For how long should I have my Quiet Time?

Between 10-30 minutes of quality time, depending on how much time you can take conveniently in season and out of season. If you exceed this, it becomes a Bible study and you may easily get fed up. Better start with a short time on a daily basis than one long quiet time in a week.

What do I need for a Quiet Time?

- Your Bible: In any language of your choice. New King James Version(NKJV)/New International Version (NIV) are best in English for study and memorization. Other versions may explain the passage more fully.
- A pen: writing is important:
 - 1) Notes and observations will not be lost
 - 2) It makes you alert. You pay more attention and concentrate more
 - 3) Other revelations: visions, dreams, etc. from the Lord will be put down
- A Quiet Time notebook/file

How do I have my Quiet Time?

- Draw a plan for your Quiet Time – the plan should indicate the topics you intend handling, the number of days you're handling the topic and the appropriate Bible verses you need to handle the topic.
- **TOPIC:** Indicate your topic and date for reference purposes
- **PRAYER:** The scriptures were written by holy men of God who spoke (1 Cor. 2:13) and wrote under inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16) as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20,21). Therefore you need to pray for illumination - that God may give you light, guidance and understanding, Ps. 119:18; Lk. 24:45, through the Holy Spirit, Jn. 14:26
- **BIBLE VERSE** – here, copy out the exact verse, meditate and memorise it.

Meditation: Write/copy out the verse

○ Emphasize key words one by one - Find the meaning of words, phrases, clauses, etc - define key words. Examine the contrary side, opposite words. Then individualize the verse. Instead of “we” use “I” or your personal name. Find similarities, compare and contrast - think through words, etc. Apply to your life; tell others; enjoy God.

- *Memorization:*

- Ps. 119:11; Jesus' example; Matt. 4:4,7,10
- Write out the verse from memory and check it until it is word perfect.
- Bible verse memorization will:
 - ✦ Keep sin out of your life, Ps. 119:11)
 - ✦ Enable Holy Spirit to remind you of the words of Jesus, Jn. 14:26
 - ✦ Give you boldness when witnessing about Jesus

- ✦ Enable you to challenge the devil and false teachers and stop their mouths, Matt. 22:29; Matt. 4:4, etc.

Note

1. *It is never helpful to use more than one or two verses for quiet time a day. Even if the choice of passage has several verses, it is best to take a verse a day.*
2. *Choose verses that relate to you personally, topically, etc. If you are an angry housewife, don't choose "Husbands love your wives". It may only make it more difficult to control your temper. Prov. 21:9,19 will surely help you better, "It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and an angry woman" or, "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop than with a brawling woman in a wide house." Verses on virtues you wish to build into your life can easily be found in a good concordance or through your pastor, etc.*
3. *Choose verses which are more straightforward and simple/easy to understand first, before going into the more difficult passages. For some parts of the Bible are more difficult to understand than others, 2 Pet. 3:15,16*
4. *Choose a string of passages which deal with your weakness to another on the same weakness for a week or more. It will help you considerably rather than jumping from one weakness to another daily.*
5. *Finally, be honest with God and yourself. All your ways may seem right in your eyes (Prov. 16:2,12) but the heart is deceitful above all things (Jer. 17:9). You need the word of God to probe you (Heb. 4:12,13). Face up to the challenges. When God knows you wish to obey, He will reveal more to you (Jn. 7:17).*

- **PARAPHRASE:**

- Write out the verse in your own words to reflect what you understand God to be saying through the writer.

- **LESSON**

- Write out the timeless truths from the verse.
- Write out the results and effects of obedience (disobedience) to that verse
- Any examples, Scriptural, personal
- What are the central facts, truths and lessons to be learnt?

- **APPLICATION:**

- Write out personal decisions to obey and apply that passage to your life, 1 Cor. 8:1; Jas. 4:17; Jn. 13:17, lest you deceive yourself, Jas. 1:22

- Let it be personal: I must ...
- Let it be **SMART**
- **Specific** – should be concise and precise – something practical you can do - Rom. 2:13
- **Measurable** - give time limit
- **Attainable** – Ask yourself if you can attain it.
Control - What if you fail to apply it? Get a friend to supervise you. Pay a fine to that friend if you fail.
- **Realistic**
- **Time Bound** – e.g. I'll pray from 4:00am to 5:00am every morning.
- **DISSEMINATION** – Share your **Quiet Time** with another person.
- **FINAL PRAYER:**
 - Pray the application into yourself. Let it ring in you throughout the day.
 - Write out your prayer topics for the day.

Sample Quiet Time Plan

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Topics	Humility	Obedience	Meekness
Monday	James 4:6	Phil 2:5	1 Peter 2:21
Tuesday	James 4:10	Phil 2:6	1 Peter 2:22
Wednesday	<i>Fasting and Prayers</i>		
Thursday	1 Peter 5:5	Phil 2:7	1 Peter 2:23
Friday	1 Peter 5:6	Phil 2:8	Matt 11:28
Saturday	Luke 14:11	Phil 2:9	Matt 11:29-30
Sunday	<i>Quiet Time Revision</i>		

DAILY QUIET TIME FORMAT

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>QUIET TIME TOPIC</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">DATE: _____</p> <p>OPENING PRAYER () Tick when done</p>
<p><u>BIBLE VERSE :</u></p> <p>Reference (Version) <i>Copy the exact verse (memorize and meditate on verse)</i></p> <p>Reference (Version)</p>
<p><u>PARAPHRASE</u></p> <p><i>Write down verse in your own words</i></p>
<p><u>LESSON:</u></p> <p><i>Write down lesson learnt from verse</i></p>
<p><u>APPLICATION:</u></p> <p><i>Write down the practical steps you intend taking towards effecting a change</i></p>
<p><u>DISSEMINATION</u></p> <p><i>Write down the name of the person you intend sharing your Quiet Time with</i></p>
<p>FINAL PRAYER () Tick when done</p>

CHRISTLIKENESS

Course Objective

To persuade students to be a permanent apprentice of the master Jesus Christ in every area of life.

Resources – Books

- Watchman Nee: *Changed Into His Likeness*
- Kenneth Boer: *Conformed to His Image*
- Christians: *12 Different Traditions*
- Rev. & Mrs. J.F.K. Mensah: *Christlikeness, God's Priority*

Course Introduction

Next to being born-again as a new creation child of God, God's priority for every one of His children is that we should grow daily to become more and more like His Son Jesus Christ. Nothing else is dearer to His heart. Nothing else is more important to Him.

Now, many Christians are not interested in becoming like Christ, for many reasons, some of which include:

1. They reason that it is impossible to be like Christ and walk in His steps on this side of heaven.
2. There is a lack of successful Christlike models.
3. Some people are frightened by the price they have to pay to be like Christ.
4. Many believe that a Christlike life will be boring and uninteresting.
5. Many belong to churches that do not prioritize Christlikeness.
6. Many Christians do not think that God's plan for their lives is really the wisest. They believe that Christianity is simply a nice title.
7. Our pulpits do not prioritize Christlikeness

But in this course, we will *stimulate your wholesome thinking* on the need for christlikeness and get you to make a decision and strive to be like Christ.

What is Christlikeness

Christlikeness is growing up spiritually into the same image of Jesus Christ – Eph 5:1, 1 Corinthians 11:1

Seven Biblical Proofs That Christlikeness is God's Priority

1. God planned from eternity past that all His children should be conformed to the image of His Son, Rom. 8:29, Eph. 1:3,4.
2. The supreme task of the Holy Spirit is to change the believer into the image of Jesus from one degree of glory to another, 2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Cor. 4:16.
 - a. He is involved in the new birth process, Jn. 3:3-5; Tit. 3:5,6.
 - b. He changes us from within by building the fruit of Christlike character, Gal. 5:22-23; and empowers us without with the gifts of the Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:7-11.

- c. He desires to present the church to Christ as a bride that is pure and unblemished.
3. God has already decided that in eternity to come, we shall all be like Jesus and be with Him forever, 1 Jn. 3:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:16-18; 1 Cor. 15:45-49.
4. The goal of the apostles and early Christian leaders was to know and imitate Christ, 1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:7,8,10; 2 Cor. 3:18.
5. The focus of the five-fold ministry in the church is to perfect the saints until we all attain the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ, Eph. 4:11-13; Col. 1:28, 29
6. Our most important Christian call is to follow the example of Jesus and walk in his steps, 1 Pet. 2:21-23; 1 Jn. 2:4,6.
7. Of all lives that ever lived on this earth, God expressed the greatest pleasure in the lifestyle of Jesus Christ, Matt. 3:17; Matt. 17:5; Jn. 8:29; Heb.12:1,2

The Standard of Christlikeness

Below are some standards clearly indicated in the Scripture which show how heaven expects every child of God to possess the intimacy, character and ministry focus of Jesus Christ.

○ Character

- We are expected to be perfect, even as our heavenly Father is perfect, Matt. 5:48
- We are expected to possess the same degree of supernatural *agape* love for one another that Jesus has for his disciples, Jn. 13:34, 35; Jn. 15:9, 12.
- We are expected to forgive one another just as God forgave us in Christ, Eph. 4:32; Eph. 5:1; Col. 3:13
- We are expected to have the same mind, attitude of obedience and humility that was in Christ, Phil. 2:5-8; 1 Cor. 2:16
- We are expected to follow Christ's footsteps in suffering and holy living, 1 Pet. 2:21-23. We are expected to purify ourselves even as he is pure, 1 Jn. 3:2,3 In addition to all this, baptism symbolized our union with Christ in his death and resurrection, Rom. 6:3,4; Col. 2:11-13. We put on Christ, Gal. 3:27. The Lord's Supper consisted of the body and blood of Jesus, Matt. 26:26-28. Marriage is the mystery of Christ and his church, Eph. 5:25-33.

○ Ministry

- We are expected to have the same sense of mission and "sent-ness" that Jesus had, Jn. 17:18; Jn. 20:21
- We are expected to walk just as Christ walked, and do the works that Christ did, 1 Jn. 2:6; 1 Jn. 4:17; Jn. 14:12.
- We are expected to copy, imitate and follow Christ's example and lifestyle, Jn. 13:15; 1 Cor. 11:1

DISCIPLEMAKING

What is Disciplemaking?

Disciplemaking is the strategy of concentrating one's energy, time and talents upon a few prayerfully selected believers to teach, train and build them in the image of Christ until they can also reproduce similar disciples for Jesus. (Matt 28:19, 2 Tim 2:2, 1 Cor 11:1)

The goal of Disciplemaking is Christlikeness – Col. 1:28-29, Acts 4:13

The Importance of Disciplemaking

1. Jesus Christ himself committed himself to disciple-making, Mk. 3:14,15; Lk. 6:12,13. He spent his three years of ministry life with his 12 disciples. This is the Master's master plan, Jn. 17:4,6,9,12. His last high priestly prayer was to tell his Father that he has finished the work he was given to do, and he gave the account of the disciples.
2. Jesus Christ commanded us to make disciples, Matt. 28:19,20. Obedience to the Lord is paramount here. If we love him and wish to please him, we shall listen to him. His presence will continue to be with those who heed him.
3. Disciple-making allows impartation of vision, character and experience, Acts 1:8; Acts 4:13; Prov. 13:20; Prov. 27:17. The carriers of God's vision for ministry cannot be found in the market. They must be formed. The constant association and teaching impacts and imparts the character to carry on ministry long after you are dead.
4. Disciples expand and continue with the ministry, Acts 2:42. This is obvious as in the case of Joshua for Moses, Elisha for Elijah, Timothy for Paul and the disciples for Jesus.
5. True disciples continue with you in your temptations and stay with you when all men leave, Lk. 22:28; Jn. 6:66-69. The true test of the success of your work is seen during the challenging times. Loyal disciples continue with you and the unfaithful are exposed.
6. Even John the Baptist and the Pharisees had disciples. They knew the secret, Lk. 5:33; Jn. 3:25. When disciplemaking failed, the people returned to idolatry, Judges 2:7-15
7. Old Testament men of God had disciples and mentorees: Moses – Joshua; Elijah – Elisha, Naomi and Ruth, David, Saul, Joab, Jonathan and their armour-bearers, etc.
8. Apostles in the New Testament taught and practiced disciple-making, 2 Tim. 2:2; Paul – Timothy, Peter and John Mark, etc.
9. Disciples make work easier and faster, Ex. 18:18-22
10. Disciple-making fills the church of God with apostles, Lk. 6:13, and new leadership for the flock.

Main Qualities of a Good Discipleship Material

The person must be **FAT**, that is:

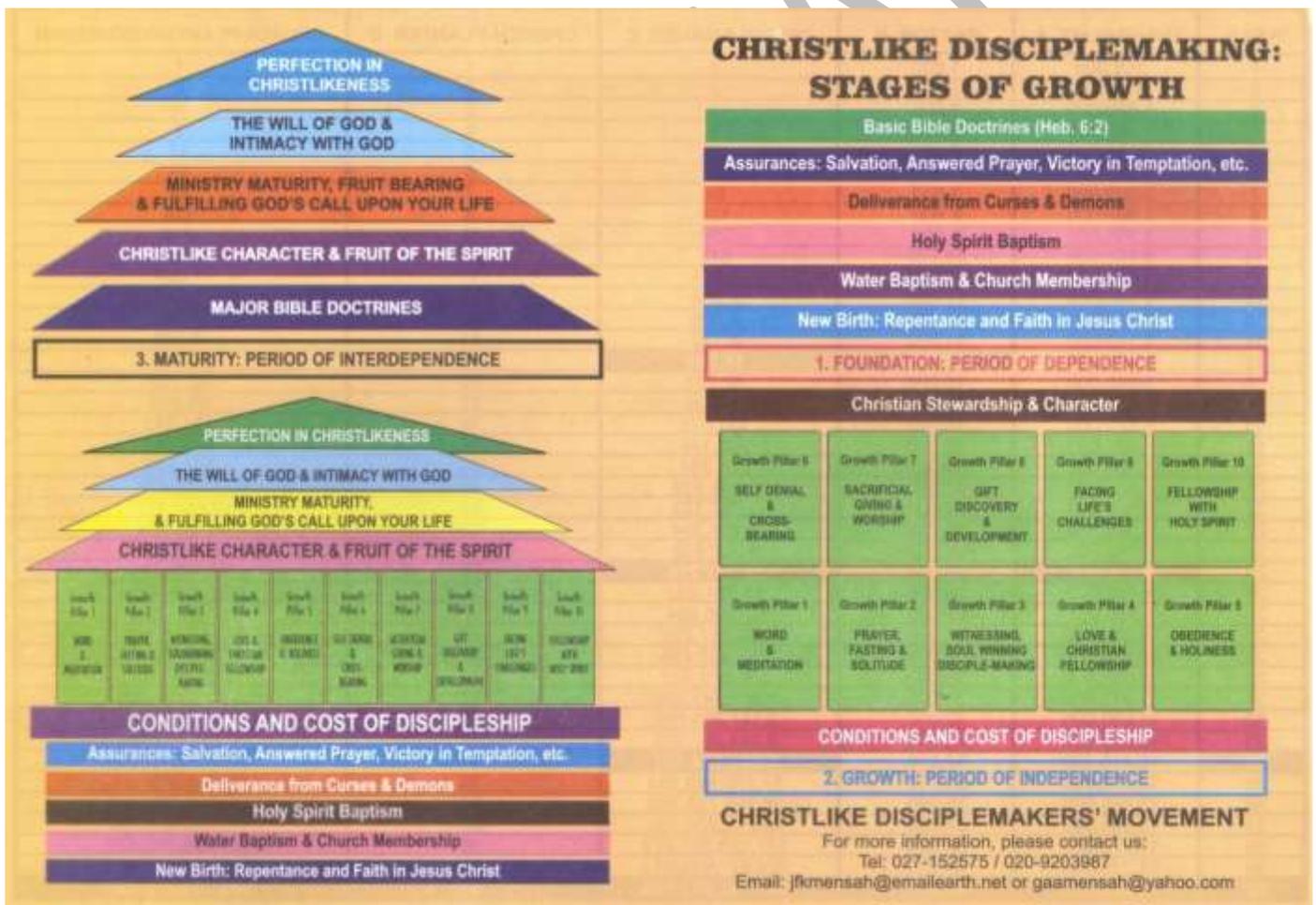
- Faithful – 2 Tim. 2:2
- Available, and
- Teachable – 2 Tim. 2:2

Vision Chart and Comparison

YEAR	EVANGELIST A	PASTOR B	DISCIPLEMAKER C	CHURCH-PLANTER D
1	365,000	1,000	1	1
2	730,000	2,000	2	2
3	1,095,000	3,000	4	3
4	1,460,000	4,000	8	4
5	1,825,000	5,000	16	5
6	2,190,000	6,000	32	6
7	2,555,000	7,000	64	7
8	2,920,000	8,000	128	8
9	3,285,000	9,000	256	9
10	3,650,000	10,000	512	10
11	4,015,000	11,000	1,024	11
12	4,380,000	12,000	2,048	12
13	4,745,000	13,000	4,096	13
14	5,110,000	14,000	8,192	14
15	5,475,000	15,000	16,384	15
16	5,840,000	16,000	32,768	16
17	6,205,000	17,000	65,536	17
18	6,570,000	18,000	131,072	18
19	6,935,000	19,000	262,144	19
20	7,300,000	20,000	524,288	20
21	7,665,000	21,000	1,048,576	21
22	8,030,000	22,000	2,097,152	22
23	8,395,000	23,000	4,194,304	23
24	8,760,000	24,000	8,388,608	24
25	9,125,000	25,000	16,777,216	25
26	9,490,000	26,000	33,554,432	26
27	9,855,000	27,000	67,108,864	27
28	10,220,000	28,000	134,217,728	28
29	10,585,000	29,000	268,435,456	29
30	10,950,000	30,000	536,870,912	30
31	11,315,000	31,000	1,073,741,824	31
32	11,680,000	32,000	2,147,483,648	32
33	12,045,000	33,000	4,294,967,296	33
34	12,410,000	34,000	8,589,934,592	34
35	12,775,000	35,000	17,179,869,184	35
36	13,140,000	36,000	34,359,738,368	36
37	13,505,000	37,000	68,719,476,736	37
38	13,870,000	38,000	137,438,953,472	38
39	14,235,000	39,000	274,877,906,944	39
40	14,600,000	40,000	549,755,813,888	40

STAGES OF DISCIPLEMAKING

1. Prayerful Selection
2. Determined Association
3. Consistent Impartation
4. Living Demonstration
5. Supervised Delegation
6. Total Consecration
7. Empowerment and Targeted Reproduction
8. Releasing To Fulfill God's Call



Pitfalls in Disciplemaking

Pitfall/ Abuse	Solution
Disciples who are attracted to you but are not yielded totally to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.	Check for deliverance or drop them gently until you see change.
Cloning – Instead of producing Christlike individuals, disciplemakers and mentors pressurize their disciples to become a carbon-copy of themselves with disregard for the disciple’s gifts, temperaments and personality style	Keep Christ central. Imitate Christ, teach Bible not your opinions, and let your disciple/mentoree look up to Christ and study the Bible (1 Cor. 11:1; Heb 12:2)
Disciples seeking a spiritual father/mother to control them instead of leading them. Every simple decision must be taken for them by the disciplemaker/mentor. Immaturity results.	Watch the content of your teaching/training manual The goal is reproducing Christlike disciplemakers; not dependant spiritual infants.
Friendship without goals of Christlike reproduction. The formal discipling process begins well, but the disciple-maker releases the person before he/she is actually mature. The relationship degenerates into a friendship with no accountability for reproduction or growth in Christlikeness.	Re-engage them for the discipling process with accountability until they are mature and begin to reproduce.
Abandoning after the formal discipling. If you neglect the final stage of continuously affirming and appreciating your disciple, it can result in hurt and appearance of an uncaring attitude.	Mentoring and leadership development must follow closely after the formal discipling.
Over keeping the disciple – disciple’s gifts and calling get suppressed if the discipler keeps him/her beyond the training duration. Disinterest develops.	Design a teaching and learning scheme of work and keep to it.
Engaging the disciple with household chores.	Focus on discipleship.

Why Disciplemaking is Desperately Needed in Africa

1. Increase in new converts

There is the influx of new converts into the church at the unprecedented rate of 4,000 to 20,000 Africans daily. Around 25,000 to 30,000 are added to the church daily in Africa now, an estimated 10 million a year.

2. *The escalating poor population*

The high incidence of poverty in Africa demands a method of soul-winning, discipling and church-planting that is inexpensive but effective. This can only be achieved by a mass involvement and training of lay leadership that will be strong in tent-making but skilled in discipling. Friends and family fill the church with more converts than the pastor does.

3. *The ethnic diversity of Africa*

The tribal and ethnic diversity of Africa demands strategic discipling. Even though Africa now has only 14% of the world's population (Wikipedia, world population, 2012), 30.5% of the world's ethno-linguistic people groups are found on this continent (ethnologue 2009, online). There is no one unifying language. This has brought with it the challenge of multiple languages and translation/interpretation, even at the national level. Most tribes can best be reached by those tribes and ethnic groups closest to them in culture and distance. For example, the Mossis spread from Burkina Faso into Togo and Ghana. The Ewes are in Volta Region (Ghana), Southern Togo and into Benin. Across national borders, on school campuses, in our markets and within the same nation are Christians from different ethnic groups who can be strategically disciplined to disciple their neighbours.

4. *The growth of Islam*

We are facing an increasing threat from the growth of Islam on the continent. Over 40% of this populace is not only resistant but has been entrenched in Islam for over 1000 years. Islam is growing mostly through reproduction, migration and some conversion. Christianity is growing mostly through conversion, missions and some reproduction. This battle for souls can never be addressed by the average church member we have now. The organized and strategic discipling of converted Muslims, the involvement of polygamous homes with Christians, etc. may well be the greatest labor force we have.

5. *Lack of disciplined ministers*

Many of our pastors, evangelists, prophets and Bible-teachers, denominational heads, etc. have never been disciplined to be like Christ. They can preach prosperity and miracles, divine and prophesy and reach millions with a social gospel for schools, hospitals and good drinking water. Yet it is in vain that we expect them to produce Christlike disciples. Disciples are made, not born. To raise a generation of ministers and shepherds who can disciple this new generation, we need to start producing Christlike disciplers now.

6. *Increase in nominalism in Africa*

The threat of nominalism on the continent is alarming. In Ghana alone, 51% of Christians do not go to church on Sunday. Shallow Christianity and shameless worldliness is rampant all over the world. The salt of the earth and light of the world have become salt-less, conscienceless and compromising of darkness, blindly following the godlessness and sexual promiscuity of the West. Media influence, information explosion and ease of communication have been used to spread a culture which has swept our Christian youth off their feet.

7. *The issue of Brain drain in Africa*

Then there is the issue of the brain drain. Thousands of Africans --professional and youth -- are leaving our shores daily for greener pastures in the West, who themselves are rejecting the faith of their fathers. Suppose that these emigrants are all strategically identified, discipled and commissioned as transformational disciplinarians wherever they go, what a joy it will be to carry the gospel back to the nations that died to bring it to us!

8. *The rate of rural-urban migration*

In addition to this, urbanization in Africa demands a response: transformational disciplinarianism is the answer. The cities of Africa are virtual nightmares of desperate crime, prostitution, the homeless, entrenched poverty and slum. One-third of the wealthy in the city employ the other one-third to guard them against the criminal one-third.

9. *The rate of illiteracy*

Finally, we have the issue of illiteracy. The world's most illiterate countries are still in Africa: Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali. About half of the world's children not in school today are in Africa (*The state of the world's children*-UNICEF, 2012). Therefore, we cannot use the conventional methods of disciplining with written materials indiscriminately. We need to strategize. Christlike disciplinarians who can reproduce their kind within their tribes cannot just happen: they must be targeted and given a focus, mission and vision.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. - Heb 6:1-2

There are necessary principles that all Christians must have laid as foundation before they can move on to perfection. Just as the strength of a foundation determines the number of stories you can build on it, even so the maturity level of every Christian depends heavily on how well his foundations in Christ have been laid. Some Christians can never mature or even grow beyond a certain level in their Christian life and ministry because their foundations are either too weak or too carelessly laid. They end up never becoming fruitful in God's house.

No other foundation can be laid except Christ, 1 Cor. 3:10. He is the author and finisher of our salvation, Heb. 12:2. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone, Eph. 2:20-22. This foundation consists of four experiences, five assurances and six basic bible doctrines, Heb. 6:1-2.

Any believer who does not have his foundation in place must break down and rebuild where necessary just as the Ephesian believers did when Paul questioned them in Acts 19:1-7. They did not receive the Holy Spirit when they believed and when their baptism was found out to be John's baptism of repentance, they were re-baptized with the Christian baptism of regeneration. When Peter saw that Cornelius and his household had received genuine baptism of the Holy Spirit without water baptism, he commanded them to be baptized in water, Acts 10:44-47. When Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God and were water-baptized but had not received the Holy Spirit baptism, they sent Peter and John to pray for them to receive this gift also, Acts 8:14-17. Many of our problems with spiritual stagnation of believers can be traced to this neglect.

THE FOUR (4) EXPERIENCES (ENCOUNTERS WITH CHRIST)

THE NEW BIRTH: REPENTANCE AND FAITH IN THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

The Meaning of the New Birth

The new birth (also known as regeneration) refers to that inner spiritual renewal that takes place within a person when he/ she turns away from their former slavery to sin, Satan and the world (Repentance) and surrenders their life to the Lordship of Christ (Faith in Jesus Christ).

This experience which begins one's walk with Christ takes place within our spirit-man (Ezek. 36:25-27; 2Cor. 5:17). A careful study of Jesus' words to Nicodemus in John 3 reveal that;

- Entrance into God's kingdom is impossible without the new birth (v. 3)
- This birth is a spiritual one which comes through receiving Christ as one's Lord and Savior (v. 6, 7, 16; 1:12, 13; Rom. 10:9,10)

- The regeneration that takes place is a direct operation of God's Spirit through His Word (v. 5; 6:63; 15:3; 17:17; Eph. 5:25-27; Jas. 1:18; 1Pet. 1:23). The sinner who hears the message of the Gospel, believes it and surrenders to Christ's Lordship opens the door for the Spirit to cause a complete overhaul of his/her spirit-man such that the sinner becomes a new creation whose sins have all been washed away (Tit. 3:3-7) and who experiences an everlasting living relationship with God (Jn. 17:3).

The Message of the New Birth (Rom. 1:16)

1. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life – Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1Jn. 4:9,10; Jer. 1:5; 29:11 Eph. 2:10
2. Sin has separated us from God – Isa. 59:1-3; Hab. 1:13; Rom. 3:23; 6:23
3. God's only provision for sin is Jesus Christ, His Son – Jn. 3:16; Isa. 53:6; 2Cor. 5:21; 1Jn. 2:1,2; Jn. 14:6
4. We must personally and voluntarily receive Jesus Christ as 'Lord' and 'Savior' in order to enjoy forgiveness of sins and a living relationship with God (eternal life) – Rom. 10:9,10,13; Jn. 3:16,17; 6:40

The Methods of the New Birth

True Christian repentance is incomplete and inadequate without a total commitment to Jesus as our Master, Ruler and Savior. To be born again we need to believe in Christ's work on our behalf. How can we share the message of the gospel such that sinners can be saved?

Roman Road

- Romans 3:23 – All have sinned, including you.
- Romans 6:23 – The ultimate punishment for your sin is eternal separation from God.
- Romans 5:8 – God's love for you was displayed when Christ carried your sin and your punishment on His cross.
- Romans 10:9, 10 – The only way to born again is to believe His victorious work on your behalf and confess His Lordship over your life.

Personal Testimony (Mark 5:18-20)

Share with the soul:

- **Your life before** you surrendered it to Jesus;
- Then tell them **exactly how you gave your life to Christ** (what happened?);
- **Now that you are born again, what has changed in your life?**
- Which **favorite verse** of yours captures what has happened to you?

How can I Practice?

Pick a partner and try to win a soul by using either the Roman Road or your personal testimony to share the gospel with them. Lead them to Christ with the simple confession: *"Lord Jesus, from today I accept you as my Lord and personal Savior."* Pray for them and challenge yourself to win at least one soul before next week.

WATER BAPTISM & CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

What is Water Baptism?

Water baptism refers to the Christian experience in which the believer unites with the Lord Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection through the symbol of immersion in water (Rom. 6:3, 4; Acts 2:38). Passages like Rom. 6:1-23; Col. 2:11-15; 1Pet. 3:21 etc. point out the following as the purposes of water baptism;

1. A public confession of personal faith in Jesus
2. A public confession of personal surrender to Jesus
3. A public act of consecration to God
4. A covenant before God and man
5. A demonstration of the fact that the old life is finished and of one's intention to live a new life.

Christian baptism into water is a practice of the new covenant that God foreshadowed through the following OT events;

- Noah's Flood - (1 Peter. 3:18-22)
- Crossing of the Red Sea - (1 Corinthians. 10:1, 2)
- Circumcision - (Colossians. 2:12, 13)

Why is Water Baptism important for every believer?

1. Because our Lord and model, Jesus was baptized (Matthew. 3:13-17). Jesus was sinless but He identified Himself with those He came to save (Hebrews. 2: 14, 15).
2. Because Jesus and His disciples practiced it during Jesus' lifetime (John 3:22, 26; John. 4:1, 2).
3. Because Jesus commanded it (Matthew. 28: 19, 20; Mark. 16:15, 16)
4. Because it symbolizes your union with Jesus; your death, burial and resurrection with Jesus to newness of life, Rom. 6:3, 4; you put off the old man to put on the new man in Christ, Col. 3:12, 13.
5. Because you put on Christ as a garment, Gal. 3:27; and have assurance that your sins are washed away enough to call upon the name of the Lord. Acts 2:38; 22:16.
6. Because it is the pledge of a good conscience toward God - 1 Pet. 3:18-22.

Which people qualify to be baptized and who qualifies to baptize others?

All and only true disciples of Jesus must be baptized as soon as possible after conversion as a foundation for discipleship (Mk. 16:15, 16; Matthew 28:19). Even after receiving Holy Spirit baptism, Peter commanded Cornelius and his household to be water-baptized (Acts. 10:47). There is no evidence or indication of water baptism by/of anyone prior to genuine conversion or confession of Christ (Acts. 8:36; Acts. 10:47).

All true disciples of Christ who have themselves been baptized and are recognized by fellow believers as such are scripturally qualified to baptize others (Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15, 16). The disciples of our Lord were baptizing on His behalf within six months of following Him (John 4:1, 2) and people such as Ananias (Acts 9:15-17) and Phillip (Acts 8:14-17) are noted to have baptized others in the early church. Moreover Paul's words in 1Cor. 1:13-16 prove that his ministry at Corinth, where he worked for more than a year (Acts 18:11), saw him personally baptize only a handful of people, the several others who made up the Corinthian church were obviously baptized by others in his team.

How should Water Baptism be done?

Water baptism should be by immersion in water:

Firstly, the Greek words used in the NT that speak of baptism in its various word forms all point to immersion. *Bapto* = to dip (as used in Luke.16:24, John.13:26 & Rev.19:13); *Baptizo* = to cause to be dipped and *Baptisma* = the process of immersion, submersion and emergence.

Secondly, there is also no ground for sprinkling and other forms of baptism, all examples of baptism in the NT point to immersion;

- Jesus (in Matthew. 3:16), He came *'up out of the water [Jordan]'*.
- Ethiopian Eunuch (in Acts. 8:38) *'they both went down into the water'* and *'they were come up out of the water'*.
- John the Baptist (in John. 3:23) *'he baptized in a place because there was much water there.'*

Finally, by immersion, we symbolize our union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection - Col. 2:12, 13. We rise to newness of life (Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 3:1-3; Gal. 3:27).

Baptismal formula: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, (Witnessed by the God-head), and in the Name above every name: the Name of Jesus.

This is the format according to Matthew. 28:19, 20; Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 1:13, 17.

(It does not matter whether the baptism is done forwards, straight, down or backwards, once it is an immersion).

When should a person be baptized again?

Normally, water-baptism is done once and is valid throughout your Christian life. In some cases however, there is the need for rebaptism.

1. If the initial baptism was infant baptism.
2. If the mode of baptism was wrong, for example: sprinkling instead of immersion.
3. If the believer falls back into apostasy and sin and disobedience -- idolatry, adultery, occultism, etc. involving denouncing Jesus as Lord or swearing allegiance to some other power that negates your initial

commitment to Jesus. In such cases, your conscience condemns you and you find it difficult to forgive yourself.

4. If the baptism is not complete as a baptism of regeneration (like in Acts. 19:1-7 where the believers were baptized with John's baptism of repentance).
5. If the initial baptism is performed in a false denomination, i.e. a cult with false doctrine (1Tim. 4:1).

HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

Who is the Holy Spirit?

- He is a spirit so He has no flesh and blood, Lk. 24:39
- He is a divine personality. The Holy Spirit is a person, not a force or thing
- He hears and speaks, Jn. 16:13; Rev. 2:7; Acts 10:19,20; Matt. 10:20
- He leads and gives commands, Matt. 4:1; Rom. 8:14; Acts 8:29
- He guides and comforts us -- Jn. 16:12,13; Acts 9:31
- He testifies of Jesus, Jn. 15:26; Acts 5:32; Heb. 2:4; 10:15; Rom. 8:16; Rom. 9:1; 1 Jn. 5:6-8
- He has emotions, He can be grieved and vexed, or pleased, Is. 63:10; Eph. 4:30; Acts 15:28
- He can be insulted or blasphemed, Matt. 12:31,32; Heb. 10:29
- He can be lied to, tempted and resisted, Acts 5:3,4,9; 7:51

What is Holy Spirit Baptism?

The term is used seven times in the Bible:

- By John the Baptist - Matt. 3:11; Mk.1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33
- By the Lord Jesus Christ - Acts 1:5
- By Peter the Apostle - Acts 11:15

It is the initial infilling to overflowing of the power and presence of the Holy Spirit when He comes to dwell personally and permanently in the believer in Jesus Christ. This is the same experience as the '*outpouring of the Holy Spirit*', '*the Holy Spirit fell on them*', '*the gift of the Holy Spirit*', etc.

The Holy Spirit baptism is the special promise of the Father to us (believers), Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33, 38, 39; Gal. 3:14 (of Acts 1:16-18)

The Holy Spirit baptism is a separate and different experience from water baptism or even conversion/new birth,

- Acts 2:1-4: Apostles were born again and baptized in water but it was on Pentecost day that they were baptized in the Spirit

- Acts 8:14-17: Believers in Samaria were born again and baptized in water but it was only after Peter and John came and prayed for them that they were baptized in the Spirit.
- Acts 10:44-48: Cornelius and his household were born again and baptized in the Spirit but Peter commanded them to be baptized in water
- Acts 9:17, 18 - Paul (Saul was born again and Spirit baptized before he was baptized in water.)
- Acts 19:1-7: These Ephesian believers were born again, baptized in water, before Holy Spirit baptism.

All are important valid Christian experiences. None excludes the other.

Why is the Holy Spirit and His infilling important for every believer?

Students should be encouraged to list as many biblical reasons of their own as possible.

- Supernatural power to witness - Acts 1:8; Lk.4:14; Matt. 12:28; Lk. 24:48; Rom. 15:13,19
- Supernatural ability to pray - Rom. 8:26,27; 1 Cor. 14:14,15; Eph. 6:18; Jude 20
- Supernatural love - Rom. 5:5; 15:30
- Supernatural anointing - Lk.4:18; 1 Jn. 2:20,27; Acts 10:38; 2 Cor. 1:21
- Supernatural sealing - Eph. 1:13; 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 4:30
- Supernatural endurance in trial and persecution - Matt. 10:20; Jn. 16:12, 13. Ability to cope with life, Acts 4:8,31; 7:55-60
- Gateway to the supernatural - (Charismatic gifts, 1 Cor. 12:7-11; Heb. 6:4; and Revelations, 1 Cor. 2:10,11)
- Supernatural Teacher and "Remembrancer" of all things - Lk.12:12; Jn. 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:13
- The Supernatural Comforter - (Gk. *Parakletos* - helper, intercessor, stand-by advocate, counsellor, instructor, patron, Jn. 14:16,17; Acts 9:31)
- God's supernatural pledge, Earnest - 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13,14 (Guarantee)
- Supernatural leadership, supernatural guidance - Lk. 4:1; Rom. 8:14,16; 9:1; Acts 16:6-10
- Supernatural (Physical) health - Rom. 8:11
- Supernatural sanctification - Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:11,19; 3:16; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Thess. 3:16
- Supernatural boldness to glorify and exalt Jesus - Jn. 16:14; 7:39; 15:26; Acts 2:32-35
- The supernatural constant abiding presence and power of God - Jn.14:16,17; 1 Jn.2:27; Lk. 12:12

7 Hindrances to Receiving the Baptism of the Spirit

The reason why most born again Christians fail to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit is their inability to believe that:-

- He is a gift - Acts 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17. He must be received. You cannot merit Him (of Rom.11:6)
- He is for all flesh - Acts 2:16-18; 2:38,39
- God will not give them an evil spirit when they ask Him for the Holy Spirit, Lk. 11:11-13

- d. The Holy Spirit is for even sinners and those who think themselves most unworthy (Jn. 1:29, 33). He comes to make sinners holy.
- e. There is no need to wait for the Holy Spirit. If you are ready now, He is ready always. The Apostles waited till the day of Pentecost because Jesus was not yet glorified (Jn. 37-39; Acts 2:32, 36). From that time, no believer needs to wait anymore (Acts 9:17, 18; 10:44; 19:1-7; 8:14-17, etc.)
- f. Most believers are skeptical about the manifestations which accompany the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7; Acts 2:13). There is no accepted manifestation. God is sovereign. Speaking with other tongues and prophecy may accompany it. The presence of the Holy Spirit may be accompanied by shaking, trembling, falling over, drunken staggering, perspiration, deeper breathing, laughing or sobbing, etc. which are scriptural reactions to the powerful presence of God (Dan. 8:17; 10:8-11; Rev. 1:17; Acts 9:4; Jer. 23:9, etc.) Sounds may be heard, tongues of fire may be seen (Acts 2:1-4). The place may be shaken. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). See Acts 4:31; Acts 2:3,4; 10:44,45; 19:6
- g. Some Christians also resist the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51). It is the devil who should be resisted (Jas. 4:7). We ought to yield and submit to God and His spirit. Co-operate with Him and allow Him to move in you. Be sensitive to His presence (Acts 5:32).

How to receive the baptism of the Spirit

1. Repent - Acts 2:38
2. Water baptism - Acts 2:38
3. Thirst - Jn. 7:37
4. Ask in faith - Lk. 11:13; Jas. 1:6-8
5. Yield yourself and members to obedience - Acts 5:32; Rom. 6:13; Rom. 12:1
6. Drink - Jn. 7:37
7. Co-operate with the Holy Spirit and receive - Jn. 7:39

HEALING & DELIVERANCE MINISTRATION

What does Healing and Deliverance ministration mean?

People are under the power and authority of Satan through curses and demonic influence as well as sicknesses and diseases (1 Jn. 5:19; Eph. 2:1-3; Lk. 13:11-13). The Kingdom of God overthrows the kingdom of Satan and a major part of Jesus' ministry was setting the captives free, in every way (Matt. 12:28; Lk. 4:18; Acts 10:38). Christians suffer consequences of curses, demonization and poor health through inheritance, ignorance and the general effects of the fall.

African Traditional Religion is deeply rooted in idolatry and ancestral worship: - chieftaincy & family stools, tribal gods, witchcraft & fetishism, spirits of the dead, etc. Deut. 18:9-12.

Our fathers made far-reaching innocent covenants with evil spirits that continue to plague towns, tribes, families and individuals.

The church today is faced with challenges of slow spiritual growth, little character change, backsliding and spiritual retrogression.

The work of Christ on the cross is God's response to all the consequences of the fall and the influence of Satan on humankind (Gal. 3:13, 14; Col. 1:13; 2:14, 15; Heb. 2:14, 15; 1Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:3-5; Ps. 103:3; Acts 3:16).

What are Curses?

Curses are simply negative pronouncements on a person, place or thing that are backed with supernatural power and are usually enforced in human lives through the operation of demons (Gen. 3:14-19; 4:10-12; 12:1-3; Matt. 21:18-20). Curses can be usually classified into three inter-related categories;

a. By Inheritance -- Generational Curses, Covenants and Pacts

These are covenants from tribal, clan or city authoritative sources that continue to affect each generation until revoked spiritually; Ritual murder, family stools, altars of sacrifice, etc. Good examples are:

- Jericho - Josh. 6:26; 1 Kings. 16:34; 2 Kings. 2:19-22;
- Reuben, Simeon, Levi - Gen. 49:3-7; 1 Chron. 5:1;
- Amalekites - Exod. 17:8-13 & 1 Sam. 15:1-, etc.

b. By Inheritance -- Family Curses, Covenants and Pacts

These are curses and demonic pacts from covenants/oaths made by a family with spirits and/or the result of some specific sins; Exod. 20:3-5; Gehazi - 2 Kings. 5:27; Achan - Josh. 7; Lev. 20:4-5

c. Personal Curses, Covenants, Pronouncements, and Vows

Individual demonic/blood covenants, negative pronouncements and vows invite personal curses and demonization; Deut. 27:15-; Num 14:28; 30:2ff

Sources of Curses and Demonization

1. God and His agents – Gen. 3:14-19; 4:10-12; 12:1-3; His agents – Joshua (Josh. 6:26); Elisha (2Kings 2:23-25; 2Kings 5:25-27); Paul (Acts 13:8-12).

2. Curses from Agents of Satan and Demonized Objects - Witchcraft & Charms, etc. Balaam (Num. 22:6-7); Cursed Objects (Deut. 7:25, 26; 13:17; Acts 19:17-20)

3. People with Relational Authority
 - Father/Mother vs. household, e.g. Noah and Ham (Gen. 9:24-27); Jacob & Sons (Gen. 49:4-7); Micah (Judges 17:1, 2); Jabez (1Chron. 4:9, 10).
 - Husband vs. Wife; Jacob & Rachel (Gen. 31:31, 32)
 - Teacher vs. Student (2Kings 5:25-27)
 - King/Chief vs. Citizen, Subject; King Saul & Jonathan (1Sam. 14:24)
 - Pastor/Elder vs. Congregation - Heb. 13:17

4. Childhood Abuses

- Sexual Abuse	- Verbal/Emotional Abuse
- Physical Abuse	- Spiritual/Religious Abuse

5. Sexual Abuses (Lev. 18:6-25; 20:10-22; Rom. 1:18-24; 1 Cor. 6:9-11)

- Incest	- Pedophilia
- Bestiality	- Adultery
- Rape & Gang Rape	- Prostitution
- Masturbation	- Pornography
- Homosexuality/Lesbianism	- Spiritual Marriages
- Fornication	- Sex Change
- Group Voyeurism or Wife Switching	

6. Idolatry, the Occult and the Cults (Deut. 27:15)
 - Worship of idols/images in sky, sea, forest or the dead ancestors
 - Black or White Magic; White Garment churches, etc.
 - Secret Societies & Lodges
 - Deviations from the standard Christian faith

7. Specific Sins, Addictions, and Enslavement (Gen. 49:5-7)
 - Smoking, Drinking, Gambling; Drugs
 - Anger, Bitterness, Unforgiving spirit,
 - Abortion, Murder

Manifestations of Curses and Demonization (Repeated Trends)

In general, when you are experiencing one or more of the following conditions in your individual or family life, then have somebody break the curse(s) for you. Sometimes repeated dreams/visions of these states are enough, Gen. 41:32. You can sense a resistance in your life pushing you back in all your endeavors.

- repeated divorces/family disunity
- Repeated miscarriages/menstrual problems, etc.
- Barrenness/premature deaths/infant deaths, etc.
- Extreme poverty/continuing financial insufficiency, etc.
- Madness/emotional problems, etc.
- Suicide/unnatural deaths, etc.
- Frequent accidents
- Repeated chronic or long-standing sicknesses/diseases (asthma, rheumatism, leprosy, epilepsy, stroke, etc.)
- Business failures/repeated demotions, etc.

How to break curses and facilitate healing & deliverance ministration

1. Invite the Holy Spirit & use Gal. 3:13,14
2. Confess Christ as Lord, Rom. 10:9, 10; 1 Cor. 12:3
3. Confess and denounce generational, family, personal curses
4. Destroy idolatrous objects
5. Break Curse and command unclean spirits to leave
6. Pray the Deliverance & Freeing-Up Prayer using Gal. 3:13, 14

How to maintain & keep your deliverance

- The Daily Quiet Time and Bible Verse Memorization, Meditation
- Water Baptism & Holy Spirit Baptism
- Bible-believing church attendance and regular Christian fellowship
- 100% Obedience and submission to God
- Spirit-filled and Spirit-led life
- Self-deliverance

- Putting on the whole armor of God

THE FIVE (5) ASSURANCES

What is an Assurance?

Per the dictionary definition, to be assured of something refers to 'the state of being certain or sure' about that thing or 'a strong feeling of confidence about yourself or about being right' or 'a strong definite statement that something will happen or that something is true' (the Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Biblically speaking, an assurance is that conviction or certainty that a believer possesses concerning certain things graciously won for him/her through the redeeming work of Christ on the cross. (Heb. 11:1; Col. 4:12)

Assurance of Salvation

The conviction, certainty, total confidence that, through your surrender to the Lordship of Christ, you have the free gift of eternal life, your name is written with Divine Blood in the Book of Life and an endless promise of joy in the presence of God awaits you in Heaven. What are some necessary facts about salvation that are critical to its assurance?

1. Salvation comes simply through voluntarily believing and receiving the person and work of Christ (Jn. 1:12, 13; 1Jn. 5:11-13).

2. Anyone who lays hold of Him possesses eternal life because this life is hidden in Him (1Jn. 5:11-13).
3. This experience with Christ completely delivers us from eternal condemnation. We no longer face the judgment along with the world because that judgment was carried on the cross on our behalf (Jn. 5:22-24).
4. Salvation/eternal life can be lost through disobedience and neglect (Matt. 13:18-23; Phil. 2:11, 12; Heb. 6:4-8; 10:26-29).

Assurance of Forgiveness of Sins

This refers to that surety in your spirit-man that when you fall into sin and come back to God in repentance, He is "...faithful and just..." to forgive all sin and also cleanse us through the washing of the water of His Blood and His Word (1 Jn. 1:9; Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 1:5; 1Jn. 5:7). Some facts about assurance of forgiveness of sins;

1. Released only on the condition of sincere confession of wrongs committed and a determination to turn away from them (1Jn. 1:9; Prov. 28:13).
2. No sin is too great for the Blood of the Lamb to wipe out (Ps. 103:3)
3. His forgiveness is at the point of sincere repentance and confession of His children-its instantaneous, a free gift, devoid of lingering guilt and accusation (Ps. 103:8-14; Zach. 3:1-3; Rev. 12:10).
4. Forgiveness is released as a free gift of God's grace and He does not grant it to those who sin willfully or commit sins that lead to death (1Jn. 3:7-9; 5:16-18; Heb. 10:26-29).

Assurance of Answered Prayer

"This is the confidence that we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know He hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of Him." (1 Jn. 5:14, 15-NIV)

In other words, an assurance that when we approach God in prayer, whatever the form, He hears us and not only does He hear us but whatever we ask Him, which are in accordance with His will, are in our possession the moment we ask. The assurance of answered prayer is of prime importance especially to those of us who have been asking for certain things for long and it is as if He hasn't heard, or those who feel only some 'Man-of-God' somewhere can ask God on their behalf before He will answer. It is important to remember that Abraham waited expectantly for a child for 25 years (Gen. 21:1-5) and the angel who revealed himself to aged Zechariah in the temple and announced the coming son (John the Baptist) said "...your prayer has been *heard*...". These 'heard prayers' surely had been offered right from the beginning of their married life when Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were still young (Luke 1:10-13). God hears AND answers the prayers of His children. Facts about this assurance;

1. God hears and answers prayer that is according to His will. Laying hold of God's will and praying according to it is the most important factor when we approach God in prayer (1 Jn. 5:14, 15).
2. Sin and the unregenerate nature are a blockade to our prayers (Isa. 59:1-3).
3. Keys to effective, mountain-moving prayer;
 - Faith – Mk. 11:20-24; Jas. 5:13-15
 - Forgiving others – Mk. 11:25; Matt. 6:9-15
 - Fervency and Passion – Jas. 5:16
 - Commitment to God's righteous standards – Jas. 5:16; Isa. 59:1-3;
 - A posture of humility, meekness, submission and yieldedness – Lk. 22:41

Assurance of Victory over Temptation, Sin, the World and Satan

"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." (1 John 4:4, NIV)

Is it really possible for the child of God to live a life of victory in a dark, crooked and perverse generation (Phil. 2:15) where the desires, attitudes, beliefs, values etc. are directly contrary to that of God and 'the Prince of the power of the air' (Eph. 2:1, 2) is declared, even by the scriptures, as 'the god of this age' (2Cor. 4:4)? Is there provision to overcome this global system of evil and injustice (1Jn. 5:19) or to exercise power and authority over Satan and his hordes or even to conquer every personal sin and temptation the enemy uses to ensnare (Heb. 12:1-4)? The scriptures answer with a resounding 'Yes!'

There must be an absolute certainty in the heart and mind of every believer that;

1. The Spirit of God in him/her is infinitely greater than the prevailing spirit that rules the kingdom of darkness (1Jn. 4:4; 5:4, 5, 18).
2. Satan is doomed to destruction and every believer has been given power over him (Gen. 3:15; Luke 10:17-19; Acts 10:38).
3. God provides a door of escape and grace to overcome every temptation (1Cor. 10:13).
4. Christ conquered every besetting sin on the cross for him/her (Rom. 6:6, 7, 11, 12, 14, 18; 8:1-11; Heb. 12:1-4).

Assurance of Divine Guidance (God's Leadership and Protective Care)

"²⁰ But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth....²⁷ As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you

about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit — just as it has taught you, remain in him.” (1 John 2:20, 21 – NIV)

Are God’s many promises to lead and to guide us in any and every situation true for EVERY believer or does He speak to only MEN OF GOD and those designated as Prophets? Why is it that though we are GOD’S CHILDREN the least problem and need for God’s counsel must be forwarded to the nearest prophetic ministry, many times with a processing fee. The Scriptures offer helpful alternatives;

1. One necessary requirement of being a child of God is to be led by the Spirit. He is the Person of the Godhead forever resident with and in us who has taken up the responsibility of being our guide right into eternity (Rom. 8:9, 14; Jn. 14:16, 17, 26; 16:13).
2. The Spirit promises to ‘teach us all things’ and ‘guide us into all truth’ – (Jn. 14:26; 16:13; 1Jn. 2:20, 27).
3. The Spirit searches all things even the deep things of God and He has made this known to us – (1Cor. 2:9-11).
4. The Spirit strengthens our mortal bodies in all its weaknesses and intercedes for us according to the Fathers’ will – (Rom. 8:11, 26-27).

BASIC BIBLE DOCTRINES

The English term ‘doctrine’ is derived from a root Latin word ‘*doctrina*’ which literally means teaching. Christian doctrine refers to instruction from the Scriptures that reveals God’s heart and mind concerning any topic. For the purposes of discipleship we want to differentiate between two (2) types of Christian doctrine, namely; basic bible doctrines and major bible doctrines. The latter refers to an advanced set of bible teachings that evangelical Christians (believers who view the Bible as the only and final source of authoritative divine truth) hold to. These are discussed fairly exhaustively in the maturity stage. In the meantime, the former is worth focusing on; basic bible doctrines are the set of elementary teachings from God’s word listed in Heb. 6:1, 2. It is worth noting here that whilst the major bible doctrines characterize the maturity stage of one’s walk with

Christ, the basic bible doctrines are for the purpose of laying a solid foundation for new believers, that is, infants in the faith.

*“Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of **repentance from acts that lead to death**,^a and of **faith in God**,² **instruction about baptisms**, the **laying on of hands**, the **resurrection of the dead**, and **eternal judgment**.³ And God permitting, we will do so”* (Heb. 6:1-3).

Repentance from Dead Works (Acts that lead to death)

Repentance finds its root in an interesting Greek term, ‘*metanoia*’; ‘*meta*’ (lit. afterwards) referring to a change/transformation and ‘*nous*’ which speaks of the mind/perception. In other words, ‘*metanoia*’ refers to a complete change or transformation that begins from one’s mind.

Dead works are simply the acts/deeds that characterize unbelievers, i.e. those who are ‘*dead in their trespasses and sins*’ (Eph. 2:1, 2).

The 15th chapter of Luke is perhaps the golden chapter of the bible on repentance and of the three parables used by the Master on the topic, none so vividly captures the crux of the matter as His narrative on the Prodigal Son does (Lk. 15:11-32). What does repentance then involve?

1. A change of one’s mind/perception concerning sin – Lk. 15:17; 2Cor. 4:4
2. A change of heart/emotions (deep remorse and regret) – 2Cor. 7:9, 10; Matt. 5:3
3. A determined decision of one’s will to turn away – Lk. 15:18; Rom. 7:18; Jn. 8:34
4. The conviction of the Spirit – Jn. 16:7, 8; Acts 2:37; Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17
5. The confession of the mouth – Lk. 15:18,19,21; 1Jn. 1:9; Prov. 28:13; Lk. 18:13 14
6. Restitution/restoring back – Lk. 19:1-10; Acts 26:18, 20; Num. 5:6-8

Faith toward God

How would you define faith? Several definitions come to mind but how would you define faith in the context of Christianity and the Bible? One way of explaining faith is to see it as being convinced/certain that God is who **He says** He is, that He will do whatever **He says** He will do and that we are who **He says** we are. This puts Christian faith in its proper light; faith is taking God at His word. Heb. 11:1, 3, 6; Rom. 10:17

Another thing to know about faith is that in the context of salvation, or more specifically the new birth, it is a mirror image of repentance such that regeneration is only made possible when you ‘*repent and believe*’ (Acts 26:18, 20).

1. Knowledge of God’s Word/Promises (Mental Assent)– Rom. 10:17;
2. Believing God’s Word in the Heart – Rom. 10:9, 10
3. Deciding with one’s will to believe His Word – Mark 9:20-25
4. Faith from the Holy Spirit – Acts 6:5; 11:24; 1Cor. 12:9
5. The confession of God’s Word – Rom. 10:8-10; Heb. 13:5-7
6. Acting out our faith in God’s Word – Jas. 2:17-26; Acts 3:1-6

Doctrine of Baptisms

As discussed earlier, the Greek words used for baptism in the NT all denote 'dipping' or better still 'immersion'. Baptism is therefore dipping something in a substance until it is completely submerged and then bringing it out again. Many make the blunder of supposing that there is only one baptism mentioned in the NT (i.e. Christian water baptism). In actual fact, five (5) different types of baptism are specifically mentioned in the NT.

1. The baptism of Repentance – Luke 3:2, 3; Acts 19:1-10

- Agent - John the Baptist (Lk. 3:2, 3)
- Substance/Element – Water (Lk. 3:16)
- Purpose – Repentance (Acts 19:1-10)

2. The baptism of Regeneration – 1Cor. 12:13, 14; Eph. 1:13-15; Jn. 20:22

- Agent – the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 12:13)
- Substance/Element – the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:13-15; 1Cor. 12:13)
- Purpose – Union with the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:13-15)

3. Christian Baptism - Acts 2:38; 8:14-17; 19:1-10

- Agent – recognized disciple of Christ (Matt. 28:18-20; Jn. 4:1,2; Acts 8:38)
- Substance/Element – water (Acts 8:36-40)
- Purpose – union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3, 4)

4. Holy Spirit Baptism – Lk. 3:16; Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 8:14-17

- Agent – the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:33;
- Substance/Element – the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:16-18)
- Purpose – infilling to overflowing with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit (Lk. 24:49; Jn. 14:16, 17; Acts 2:4)

5. The baptism into Suffering – Mark 10:35-40; Luke 12:49, 50; Phi. 1:29; Rom. 8:17

- Agent – the Lord Jesus (Rom. 8:17; 1Pet. 1:6, 7)
- Substance/Element – trials, tribulations, persecutions and all that puts our faith to test (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10).
- Purpose – to prove our faith genuine (1Pet. 1:6,7)

The Laying on of Hands

The act of placing hands on someone as a means of transferring/imparting the spiritual such as gifts, anointing, ordination, blessing etc. The laying on of hands was used extensively in the scriptures going as far back as Jacob blessing the sons of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen. 48:13-16). In the scriptures, what purpose(s) does this act really serve?

1. Conferring of blessing – Gen. 48:13-16; Matt. 19:13, 15; Mark 10:16
2. Ordination/commissioning into spiritual leadership – Deut. 34:9; 1Tim. 5:22; Acts 6:4-6; 13:3
3. A sign of substitution – Lev. 1:4; 16:21
4. Healing of the sick – Mark 16:17,18; Luke 4:40; Acts 28:8
5. Baptism of the Holy Spirit – Acts 8:17,19; 19:6
6. Impartation of spiritual gifts – 1Tim. 4:14; 2Tim. 1:6

The admonition of 1Tim. 5:22 to “...not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.”(NKJV) should be a guide to us in the practice of laying on of hands. The text speaks primarily of ordination of people into offices within the church and exhorts those tasked to install such officers not to ordain people hastily. Conferring of such spiritual authority and responsibility should be done with deep reflection, under the specific leadership of He who actually ordains (Acts 20:28) and with a careful consideration of prospective officers in light of standards outlined in 1Tim. 3, Titus 1, among others.

We can also infer however, that although the context of the passage is the ordination of ministers, such precautions should also be employed at all times when hands are to be laid for spiritual purposes.

The Resurrection of the Dead

The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is a compilation of the Bible's instruction concerning an event reserved for the end of the age where all the dead (both righteous and unrighteous) will be raised up with a spiritual body in order to face judgement that will determine one's eternal home, namely, Heaven with God or the Lake of fire with all others facing God's infinite wrath (Rev. 20:11-15; Jn. 5:24-29).

Shadows of the Resurrection

Old Testament sacred writers clearly displayed under the inspiration of the Spirit a constant belief in life after death. Job speaks about it in Job 14:13-15 as well as in 19:25-27; Psalms refers to it in 16:9-11; 17:15; 49:15; 73:24; the prophet Isaiah's magnificent declaration in Isa. 26:19 as well as what was told Daniel in Daniel 12:1-3, 13.

Apart from all these, there are specific instances, both in the OT and the NT, where the dead were raised to life as a shadow of life after death;

- Elijah raised the widow's son (1Kings 17:17-24)
- Elisha raised the Shunammite woman's son (2Kings 4:32-37)
- Elisha's bones raised a dead man (2Kings 13:20-21)
- Jesus raised Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:35-43)
- He also raised a widow's son from his coffin at Nain (Luke 7:11-16)
- Not forgetting Lazarus who Christ commanded out of the grave (John 11:38-45)
- Peter raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:36-42)
- Paul raised Eutychus and handed him over to relieved friends and relatives (Acts 20:9-12)

In all of these, one key denominator is the fact that they were raised to life but not with a resurrection body and certainly not to live forever – each of these tasted physical death again and therefore can only serve as shadows of the resurrection.

In a few rare cases, we see certain unique shadows that resemble more accurately the resurrection that is to occur at the end of the age, namely; Samuel's spirit raised up by the witch of Endor (1Samuel 28:5-20), Moses and Elijah at the transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8) and the raising of many righteous people after the death of Christ (Matt. 27:52-53). In each of these unique instances however, one fact still remains the same – they were raised to life but not with resurrection bodies.

In addition to these, the translation of Enoch (Gen. 4:21-25) and of Elijah (2Kings 2:1-12) to heaven alive proves that death is not the end and that there is indeed life beyond the grave.

Significance of Christ's Resurrection

Passages like Acts 17:30,31; Rom. 1:4; 8:11; Rom. 6:3, 4; 2Pet. 3:19-21 all point to the relevance of Christ's resurrection from the dead with Paul's 1Cor. 15 as a golden chapter on the topic providing us with an exhaustive work generations have benefitted from. From these passages and the many others, try to construct a list of the gains of the resurrection of Christ. In other words, enumerate from these verses the reasons why His resurrection is a unique aspect of our faith as Christians.

Eternal Judgement

The judgement of God refers to the full extent of His justice being meted out to creation, each creature receiving their due whether good or bad (Ps. 96:13; Eccl. 12:14; Heb. 9:27). The doctrine of eternal judgment is a study area that examines God's final decision/verdict concerning His creation. God's final words concerning our lives carry implications and consequences whether rewards or punishment, and these are everlasting in nature.

Texts such as Jn. 5:22 point to Christ Jesus as the Judge who will unleash the justice of God: *“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgement to the Son,”* (2Tim. 4:1; Acts 17:30, 31).

God’s judgement is not one absolute outpouring of justice but rather composed of a series of ‘judgements’ each at its own time, directed at different subjects and with varied results;

1. The Judgement at the Cross – punishment for the sin of mankind (Jn. 5:24; 12:31; 1Pet. 2:24)
2. The Daily Judgement – especially in the life of the believer (2Sam. 12:13, 14; 1Cor. 5; 11:31, 32; Acts 5:1-11).
3. The Judgement Seat of Christ (2Cor. 5:10; 1Cor. 3:11-15).
4. The Judgement of the Living Nations – at Christ’s reappearing for His millennial reign (Matt. 25:31-46).
5. The Judgement of Israel (Ezek. 20:33-44; Ps. 50:16-22; Matt. 19:27, 28).
6. The Great White Throne Judgement (Rev. 20:11-15).
7. The Judgement of the Fallen Angels (1Cor. 6:3; 2Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).

The Final Destiny of the Wicked and the Righteous

The Scriptures present a truly bleak future for the wicked. Passages like 2Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 21:8; Matt. 13:41, 42 point to destruction, torment and everlasting fire as the end of the unregenerate. Their reward is broken down further in ‘Hamartiology’ under the sub-topic ‘The Punishment for Sin’.

Those committed to Jesus and to righteousness are promised *‘the fruit of their doings’* (Isa. 3:10, 11). Apart from the bountiful rewards we are promised, the Bible speaks of crowns (Rev. 3:11) that are imperishable (1Cor. 9:25) awarded based on certain criteria;

- Crowns of Gold (Rev. 4:4)
- The Crown of Life (Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10)
- The Crown of Righteousness (2Tim. 4:7, 8)
- The Crown of Rejoicing (1Thess. 2:19, 20)
- The Crown of Glory (1Pet. 5:4; cf. Jn. 17:22; Heb. 2:9)

COM. GHAFES