

Bible Studies
for
Discipleship Training

Prepared To Equip the Saints
By
Lighthouse Missionary Church
East Jordan, Michigan

30 Key Areas in our Christian Walk

From *The Christian Life Profile* by Randy Frazee

Beliefs (transformed mind)

Trinity – I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation by Grace – I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible – I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God – I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ – I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church – I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity – I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion – I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity – I believe there is a heaven and a hell, and I believe Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship – I believe everything I am or own belongs to God.

Virtues (transformed heart)

Love – I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy – I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace – I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Patience – I take a long time to overheat, and I endure patiently the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness – I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Faithfulness – I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to that relationship.

Gentleness – I am thoughtful, considerate, and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control – I have power, through Christ, to control myself.

Hope – I can cope with the hardships of life and death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

Humility – I choose to esteem others above myself.

Practices (transformed behavior)

Worship – I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer – I pray to God to know Him, to lay my requests before Him, and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study – I study the Bible to know God, the Truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness – I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Biblical Community – I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Spiritual Gifts – I know and use my spiritual gifts to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Time – I gave away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money – I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith – I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life – I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

We believe in the Trinity. The God of the Bible is the only true God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



THE MISSIONARY CHURCH BELIEVES:

The Triune God: We believe that the one and only true God is Spirit ... that the Father is begotten of none. He is the eternal Father of the Lord Jesus Christ... We believe in the

deity of the Lord Jesus Christ ... [and] that the Holy Spirit, the third person of the triune God, proceeding from the Father and sent by the Son, is one ... The Scriptures reveal the work of the Holy Spirit in the church to be that of uniting believers into the body of Christ ...

Condensed from the Constitution of the Missionary Church, 2011, Article 4, Pages 4-5.

The word “*trinity*” is not found in the Bible. However, the Bible clearly teaches that there are three distinct Persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit. This term, “*trinity*,” literally means “*three in one*.”

No one can fully comprehend or understand the full nature of God. If we could, our minds would be greater than God’s. God has revealed certain truths about Himself so we can gain knowledge and have a greater understanding about Him. In the end, it requires a giant leap of faith for us to accept this and to believe what the Bible tells us about God.

The Bible often uses plural words to describe God. In the Old Testament two names are used when speaking about God: **Elohim** is usually translated using the word **God**. (This is a *plural* form of the proper noun.) Genesis 1:1, “*In the beginning God [Elohim] created the heavens and the earth.*”

The second word for God is a singular term: **Yahweh** or **Jehovah** that is usually translated as **LORD**. (Note the use of capital letters indicate *which* name for God is used in the original Hebrew.)

In some places in the Old Testament, the plural name **Elohim** and the plural name **Jehovah** are used together to express the idea of plurality in unity. When translated, it usually appears as “**the LORD God**,” or “**The LORD our God**,” or “**God the LORD**,” or “**The LORD their God**.” There are also places in scripture where *plural* pronouns are used to refer to God or the Godhead.

1. In Genesis 1:26, it states “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, ...’” Why would God use the pronoun “us” to refer to himself?
2. In Numbers 6:24-26, the Aaronic blessing, given by the High Priest to God’s people, repeats the word **LORD** three times. Many Biblical scholars believe this represents the Trinity. Read this passage and substitute these words for LORD: 1st God the Father, 2nd God the Son, 3rd God the Holy Spirit. Does this help you better understand the character of the Trinity?

3. How does Isaiah 48:16 indicate the Trinity?

4. In Matthew 3:16-17, Mark 1:10-11, and Luke 3:21-22, the baptism of Jesus is described. How is the Trinity of God represented in these verses?

5. Read II Corinthians 13:14, how does Paul describe God in this scripture? What words are used to describe each part of the Trinity?

6. What words did Jesus use in John 14:16-18 that help us understand the nature of the Trinity?

7. Summary Question: Why is the teaching of the Trinity and the nature of the Godhead so difficult for people to understand?

Close your session with a time of prayer. Ask for God to continually reveal His character to you and give you a better understanding of the Trinity.



We believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by God's Grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

THE MISSIONARY CHURCH BELIEVES:

Salvation: We believe since all people are sinners and guilty before God and are dead in trespasses and sin and therefore are unable to save themselves, God has out of His infinite love given His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to become

their Savior. We believe that genuine repentance is a necessary attitude and act of one's will that makes it possible for a holy and just God to forgive one's sins. We believe faith must accompany repentance and is the act of the will whereby one embraces the promises of God and appropriates to oneself personally the provisions of God's grace. It is resting in the completeness and adequacy of the atoning merit of Christ's sacrifice as the sole ground and hope of salvation. Faith must be active throughout the life of the believer and must manifest itself in obedience and good works.

Condensed from the Constitution of the Missionary Church, 2011, Article 4, Page 6.

Since mankind is sinful and separated from God, we deserve death and hell. The scriptures are clear that there is no forgiveness from sin without the shedding of blood. (Heb. 9:22) God wishes to have fellowship with the people He created, however our sin blocks that from happening. He has done something about this. *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!" Rom. 5:8-9*

It was the love of God for us that caused this to happen. He reached out to us by sending His One and only Son to die on the cross. By the shedding of His blood, salvation came to us. This is God's **mercy** ... not getting what we actually deserve – death and hell. It is also God's **grace** ... being offered salvation that we cannot earn.

Is anyone so terrible that they cannot experience God's love, mercy, and grace? No, God's grace is offered to everyone as a free gift. Nothing we do can earn it. There is no way to purchase salvation. No one has enough righteousness through their own efforts to become good enough to have fellowship with God. However, God's grace, often referred to as *prevenient grace*, is a characteristic of God. This term is explained as "before-operating grace," or "grace that goes before." Another way of understanding this is that it is a measure of God's grace that precedes the saving grace of God in the life of a person.

It is unconditional. That means that there is NO condition that must be met by sinful people before they experience the love of God. He is willing that all people can participate and accept what He offers. As Corrie ten Boom often quoted, "There is no pit so deep that He [God] is not deeper still." This means that no matter the gravity of our sins, the extent of our depravity, the multitude of our missteps, God is willing and able to forgive all our sins.

This is true grace. Unmerited favor from God is extended to each of us. The question is, have you accepted His grace, found forgiveness, and turned away from your sin? Are you living daily in the way of Christ?

1. What does 1 Peter 2:24 say about God's saving grace?
2. According to John 16:8-11, what is the reason for us being drawn to accept the love of God?
3. Read John 3:16-21; is God's grace so powerful that no one will ever be lost?
4. According to Psalm 103: 11-12, to what extent are our sins forgiven?
5. In Romans 5:1-2, what happens to us when we genuinely repent from our sins?
6. After reading 2 Corinthians 5:17-20, what are we like after we have been made right with God?
7. After reading Romans 8:14-17, what is our relationship to God once we accept salvation through grace?
8. Summary Question: Why do you think the teaching of salvation by grace so difficult for some people to accept?

Close your session with a time of prayer. Ask God to show how His grace has affected your life and to show you how it could change the lives of your family, friends, and neighbors.



We believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

THE MISSIONARY CHURCH BELIEVES:

The Bible: We believe that the Bible, consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God given by divine inspiration and is inerrant in the original manuscripts. The Bible today remains the

unchanging authority in matters of Christian faith and practice. It is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses.

From the Constitution of the Missionary Church, 2011, Article 4, Page 5.

The Bible is God's revelation to mankind. It is unique and special for a variety of reasons. Most of all, its message inspires people to change their way of thinking and living. We believe that it is entirely inspired by God and given to holy men who wrote the words as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21) The word "*inspired*" literally means "*God-breathed*." 2 Timothy 3:16-17 states: "*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*"

It is unique in that it is God's letter to us, His people. The words, it contains, were inspired by God and were written down by holy men who were moved by the Holy Spirit according to 2 Peter 1:20-21. This means that God **communicated** to men, there was a **revelation** from God, and His **inspiration** caused them to write down His message. Therefore, God is the divine author and it **IS** the Word of God!

The words and accounts that are contained in the scriptures explain how this world and mankind was created by God and existed in perfection until man sinned. At that time, man was separated from God. Since then, God has made a way for mankind to be reconciled to God, first through the Old Testament covenant and now through the New Testament covenant. The ultimate conclusion is that mankind will be united with God in perfection, once again in a new heaven and a new earth.

Also, within the Word of God, mankind is given guidance and direction about how we should live and conduct our lives while here on earth. God encourages us, describes blessings and curses, gives principles for living, examples of what actions to take and what actions to avoid, and inspires us to live Godly lives. A major theme throughout the Bible is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and all your strength; and, to love your neighbor as yourself.

The 66 books, contained in the Bible, were written by some 40 different authors, over a period of about 1,600 years. Three languages were used to write the original script, Hebrew (most of the Old Testament), Aramaic, and Greek. The "canon," or books included within the Bible, was settled upon by 397 A.D. The Old Testament books were accepted without controversy. However, the New Testament books were more difficult to establish. The Catholic Bible also includes 15 Apocryphal books that are not usually found in the Protestant Bible. However, the acid test or principles of inclusion were: 1) the author was an apostle or known of by the apostles; 2) the Body of Christ accepts these writings; 3) the doctrines and teaching are orthodox and consistent; 4) the moral and spiritual values reflect the work of the Holy Spirit. In the end, it was God who determined what books should be included in the Biblical Canon, not simply a decision made by a council of men.

1. What are the two major sections of the Bible?
2. According to Luke 24:44, what scriptures did Jesus fulfill?
3. What does 1 Thessalonians 2:13 say about scripture being just the words of men?
4. What is the purpose of the scriptures?
 - A) John 20:30-31
 - B) I John 5:13
 - C) Romans 15:4
 - D) 2 Timothy 3:16-17
5. In 2 Peter 1:20-21, what role did human will or personal interpretation have in the writing of scripture?
6. What does Psalm 119:9 have to say about living a pure life?
7. What warning is given about scripture?
 - A) 2 Peter 3:16-17
 - B) James 1:22-25
8. Summary Question: What do you think is more important, obeying or knowing God's Word?

Close your session with a time of prayer. Ask God to show you how His Word can become more active in your daily living.



We believe God is involved in and cares about our daily lives.

THE MISSIONARY CHURCH BELIEVES:

We believe that the one and only true God is Spirit: self-existent, infinite, **personal**, unchangeable, and eternal in His being; perfect in holiness, love, justice, goodness, wisdom, and truth; omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent; Creator

and Sustainer of all things, visible and invisible; both immanent and transcendent to creation; eternally existent in three persons, one in substance and co-equal in power and glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

From the Constitution of the Missionary Church, 2011, Article 4, Page 4.

A personal God is a deity that can be related to as a person, instead of some sort of an “impersonal force.” We can know Him. The Bible describes God as being a personal creator and also speaks in the first person to mankind. He has emotions, such as anger and pride, and is often given human-like features such as the “arm of God” or eyes when it says “He saw what He made and it was good.” God talked with men, instructed the prophets, and made covenants with His people. In the Garden of Eden, God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day. This was God personally relating to man. His attributes are characteristics that allow us to relate to God on a personal way.

In addition, God sent His one, and only Son, to live upon the earth in the form of Jesus Christ. Jesus had flesh and bones, all of our human emotions, he had relationships with many humans. He was so human that some refused to recognize Him as God. The incarnation of God in human form is one of the great mysteries given to us. When Jesus returned to heaven, He gave us His Holy Spirit to dwell inside of us and to communicate with our spirits.

In the Old Testament, God is shown as being all powerful, yet personal. He told Moses, that no man can see the face of God and remain alive. In Exodus 33, Moses was able to see the “back” of God as He passed by. As a boy, serving in the temple, God spoke to Samuel and continued speaking to him throughout his life. God also talked to the prophets: Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Obadiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and many others. They each were used by God to send messages of both blessings and curses. Through all of these prophets, God gave His commandments for living as well as the promise of a coming Messiah who would lead the people into a new and lasting covenant.

Hebrews 8:8-12 quotes from the book of Jeremiah about the day when the old covenant would be written upon their hearts. For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. *“But God found fault with the people and said: The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. ... I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”* This promise is of a personal God, known by each individual and in their own heart, who would communicate to them in a very personal way.

The God of the Bible is a personal God that is knowable by individuals in a way that we can understand. He is not some distant deity that is a complete mystery. As we believe in Him, we can know in our hearts that he loves us and He will speak to us, sometimes in an audible voice, sometimes in a still small voice, sometimes in our spirit, and also through His written word to us. However, He is our God and we are His people.

1. What does the Old Testament say about God's relationship with the chosen people of Israel? Look up Leviticus 26:3-13, Jeremiah 32:36-41, and Ezekiel 37:26-28.

2. According to Matthew 28:18-20, who is with all who believe in Christ?

3. What does John 14:16-17 say about who lives inside us?

4. What does Acts 17:24-28 say about the relationship between God and mankind?

5. In Hebrews 1:1-3, how has God communicated with people throughout history and now, in the present?

6. Read 1 John 4:10-16. Where does God live? How do we know this fact?

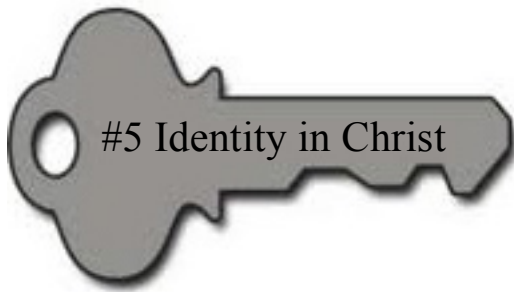
7. Who is living in us if we believe in God?
A) Romans 12:6-8

B) 2 Corinthians 6:16

C) Ephesians 2:21-22

8. Summary Question: What does this personal relationship to God really mean in your life?

Close your session with a time of prayer. Ask God to come into your life in a more personal way than ever before. Also, ask that you will clearly hear His voice and always obey what He tells you.



We believe we are significant because of our position as children of God.

THE MISSIONARY CHURCH BELIEVES:

We believe since all people are sinners and guilty before God ... [and] has ... given His Son ... to become their Savior. We believe that genuine repentance is necessary ... [and] means confessing and forsaking sin. We believe faith

must accompany repentance ... and must manifest itself in obedience and good works. We believe ... God justifies and regenerates the sinner. We believe that sanctification is the work of God in making people holy. Our glorification is God's final act in our salvation and will be realized when we see Him as He is. *Condensed from the Constitution of the Missionary Church, 2011, Article 4, Page 6.*

Everyone, who receives Christ as Savior and Lord, becomes child of God. (John 1:12-13) Being a child of God is an extension of God's covenant with Abraham and the chosen nation of Israel. Hosea 1:10 speaks of the Israelites being called "children of the living God" and Jesus confirmed this concept during the sermon on the mount by stating that peacemakers are called children of God. Paul repeats this in Romans 8:14 by saying that those who are led by the Spirit are the children of God. Then in verse 17, it states that we are not only children, but we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ if we share in his sufferings. Romans 9:8 continues to make the connection of God's children being children of promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.

We are chosen by God and have been given a purpose. (1 Peter 2:9) This scripture goes further by saying we are "a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God." We need to clearly understand our magnificent identity with God. Psalm 139:13-16 is a powerful passage that says we are fearfully and wonderfully made, created by God, knitted and woven together in our mother's womb, and God saw our unformed body and wrote our names in his book before we lived even one day. In Jeremiah 29:11, the Lord declares that He has plans for our life, to prosper, not to harm us, and plans to give each of us a hope and a future.

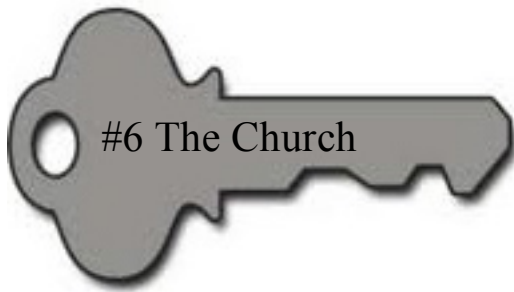
We can call God "daddy" or "Abba, Father" according to Galatians 4:6-7. God looks into our hearts (1 Sam. 16:7) and we are loved and chosen (1 Thess. 1:4-6) along with being fellow citizens and members of God's household (Eph. 2:19). If that is not enough to impress you, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). He loved us even when we did not love Him back. We were purchased out of sin into the light by Christ's blood and death on the cross. There is no greater love when some else is willing to lay down their life to save your life (John 15:13). We are justified and declared innocent (Gal. 2:16), our sins are no longer a part of us (John 1:29), and we have peace with God (Rom. 5:1) and are clothed with righteousness (Rom. 3:22). We are new creatures in Christ and the old is gone and all things are new (2 Cor. 5:17). In Christ, we are dead to sin and alive to righteousness (Rom. 6:18).

We need to realize who we are as well as whose we are. When we believe, we are forgiven and made new from the inside out. We are not perfect, but we are in the process of perfection. We may fall short of having all the qualities of faith, but if we have these "qualities in increasing measure" we will be productive and effective and someday be welcomed into heaven (2 Peter 1:3-11). The ultimate prize of every person is to be welcomed into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Look up these verses and write down the characteristics that we are given when we follow God.

- A) Psalm 139:1-4
- B) Isaiah 29:22-24
- C) Matthew 5:13-16
- D) Mark 16:15-18
- E) John 15:15-17
- F) Acts 2:38-39
- G) Romans 8:1-2
- H) Romans 8:31-32
- I) Galatians 5:1
- J) Galatians 5:22-25
- K) Ephesians 2:8-10
- L) Philippians 2:14-16
- M) Hebrews 12:1-3
- N) Hebrews 12:7-9
- O) Hebrews 13:1-3
- P) 1 John 2:3-6
- Q) 1 John 3:1-3
- R) I John 5:13-15
- S) 2 John 1:6
- T) Jude 1:20-21 & 24-25

Close your session with a time of prayer. Ask God to show you who you are; to help you see yourself and others from His point-of-view; for blessings upon you so you can bless others, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit so that when you act, others know it is from God and not simply from your good efforts.



We believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

THE MISSIONARY CHURCH BELIEVES:

The Church: We believe that the invisible and universal church is an organism composed of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have been called out from the world, separated from sin, and vitally united by faith to Christ, its

living Head and sovereign Lord. An organized body of believers in Christ who are voluntarily joined together, ... meet at regular times for teaching, ... fellowship, ... observance of ordinances, ... discipline, ... prayer, ... public worship and evangelism. Members of the true church [have] faith in Jesus as the Son of God, love for God and for those of like faith, obedience to God's commandments, and victory over the world. [Its] primary duties consist of glorifying God, ... exalting the Lord Jesus Christ, of building itself up in the most holy faith, and of preaching the Gospel in all the world as a witness to all men.

Condensed from the Constitution of the Missionary Church, 2011, Article 4, Page 7.

The church is described in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 as a body with many parts. We were all baptized by one Spirit into one body and were all given one Spirit to drink (verse 13). The passage goes on to emphasize that each part is necessary and that they were arranged by God, just as He wanted them to be and to function together as a whole body. It concludes by giving a list of appointments God has made to His body; *"first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues."* (verse 28)

One could note the absence of the terms such as; minister, pastor, bishop, etc. There is also no mention here of sects nor denominations in the 1 Corinthians 12 passage. These offices, as well as separate denominations, are something that has developed since the time of Paul and the apostles.

The true church is not the building, nor is it the offices and leaders. The true church is the people. It is made up of all believers. The church is all the people who have been separated from a sinful world and have been united by their faith in God, His Son Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The true church transcends denominations, theological theories and practices, as well as styles of worship, rules or ordinances, and many other issues that have generated the various sects and denominations since the time of the apostles.

According to Ephesians 1:22-23, Christ is the head of this body, the church. Chapter 4 of Ephesians goes on to explain that in the church there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Spirit, one body. God desires a unified church, not a body of believers that separate themselves. The church is not to be blown about by various doctrines, trickery, or schemes. We speak the truth in love and are knitted and joined together, promoting the body's growth and building the body up in love. Unity, not division, is the vision that God has for his body, the church.

However, since the church is composed of people that are not perfect, nor have they achieved full maturity, we experience differences of opinions. Peter's vision and dream, of no food being unclean, brought controversy to the early church. However it led to the ministry to both Jews and Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement that caused them to separate into two missionary teams. These differences led to spreading the message of Christ to a greater number of people and increase the number of believers. There were other examples where different opinions resulted in discipline, like in

the case of Ananias and Sapphira. John, the apostle, wrote to the seven churches in Asia warning them of their struggle with sin and temptation within the church. So, we the church, must stand up and fight against Satan and his efforts to destroy the body of Christ.

1. What does Matthew 18:15-17 say about handling differences between people in the church?
2. According to Acts 2:42, what should the church devote itself to?
3. Read Acts 2:46-47; what conditions led to increasing the number of believers in the early church?
4. According to 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, what problem existed in the church and what advice was given to them?
5. In 1 Corinthians 16:2, what instruction and practice was given to the church?
6. After reading John 13:34-35, what command did Jesus give to all believers?
7. After reading 1 John 3:11-18, what message and warnings are given to believers and to the body of Christ?
8. How does the church and individual believers achieve victory? (See 1 John 5:1-5)
9. Summary Question: According to Acts 1:8, how is the church empowered to carry out its mission and what is the mission?

Close your session with a time of prayer. Ask God to show what role you have in the body of Christ, the church, and what actions you can take to help the body grow in unity and to reach the lost.



We believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

THE MISSIONARY CHURCH BELIEVES:

We believe that the first man, Adam, was created by an immediate act of God and not by a process of evolution. [We] were created in the image and likeness of God. People ... are self-conscious personalities capable of free and

rational choice. The fall ... [was an] act of disobedience. The entire human race has become so corrupted that in every heart there is by nature [an] evil disposition. We believe that God has provided redemption for everyone through ... Christ. [We] are unable to save [ourselves]. God ... has given us His Son, ... to become [our] Savior. Genuine repentance is necessary. As an act, it means confessing and forsaking sin. Faith must accompany repentance. Justification (absolving from guilt) and regeneration (changing of the sinner's nature) ... produces in the heart a desire to do the will of God. Sanctification is the work of God in making people holy. [We must] deny self, be purified in heart, and be filled with the Holy Spirit ... to serve Him in righteousness and holiness.

Condensed from the Constitution of the Missionary Church, 2011, Article 4, Pages 5 and 6.

From a study of Christian catechism, a student learns that man was the crowning work of God's Creation. However in most schools today, students are taught that man is a product of millions of years of random evolutionary steps from a primeval soup of molecules, then a single cell, and onward to a multi-cellular organism we now know as man. Man is no different than the animals we evolved from. This idea gives justification to people acting like animals instead of acting in the image and nature of God, our Creator.

According to Genesis 1:26-27, mankind was created by God and in His image and were given dominion over the rest of creation. Having God's image means we have the qualities and characteristics found in the Godhead. We are set apart from the rest of creation, the plants and animals, to rule over them. That sets us apart with such qualities as decision-making, creativity, emotions, thinking skills, social skills, self-evaluation, self-expression, and a many other unique qualities. 1Thessalonians 5:23 talks of man having a body, soul, and spirit. This is a reflection of the Trinity of the Godhead and that man is made in the image of God.

The dilemma, and story of the entire Bible, describes how Adam and Eve sinned and were removed from the Garden of Eden and from the daily presence of God. Now all of mankind is separated from God by sin. However, God provided a way for mankind to re-connect with Him. In the Old Testament, it was the system of Laws and sacrifices, the shedding of blood, so that a person could have fellowship with God. Unfortunately, this covenant was impossible to follow so God gave us a new covenant, through His Son, Jesus Christ. John 3:16 tells us the story in a nutshell. The book of Revelation describes the future of mankind; reunited with God in a glorious existence in heaven. So, mankind will again experience a perfect life as it was first found in the Garden of Eden.

The Bible is a guidebook for us to follow so that we will be able to share our eternity with God in heaven. Salvation, by the grace of God, is the means by which we accept the sacrifice of Christ, who was crucified on the cross and shed His blood, once and for all. Jesus was the Lamb of God, the perfect sacrifice, and when we accept this gift of salvation, our sins are "paid in full." We will never have to pay the price of death for our sins. 1 John 4:10 says, "*This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*" This "atoning sacrifice" means that all

of the requirements for punishment from our sins have been satisfied and God now declares that we are no longer separated from Him by our sins.

1. According to Romans 3:10-12, 3:23, and 5:8, what is man's condition and what did God do to change it?
2. Read John 3:16-20. What is the fate of a person who believes in salvation through Christ and for those who do not believe?
3. Christians are often accused of being narrow-minded in thinking that there is only one way to get to heaven, what does 1 Timothy 2:3-6 say about this issue?
4. Read Ephesians 2:4-9, what is salvation and how do we get it?
5. What is God's attitude toward those who repent and also the unrepentant according to Romans 2:4-8?
6. You have probably heard that "seeing is believing. According to Hebrews 11:1 & 6, what is true faith?
7. As a Christian, what are we "dead to" and what are we "slaves of" according to Romans 6:11-18?
8. According to Ephesians 5:15-20, what should a Christian be like and what things should you avoid?
9. Discussion Question: Since the theory of evolution pervades our educational system, what should or can be done to help children understand that humans are a unique creation of God?

Close your session with a time of prayer. Ask God to help you to die to your sinful nature and to live in a way that pleases Him and will influence others to also follow Christ.



We believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

THE MISSIONARY CHURCH BELIEVES:

WE STAND ... For generous response to the needs of the oppressed, poor and hungry through acts of Christian compassion ... **AGAINST** any “liberation theology” that advocates revolution and ideological subversion of the Bible

and/or basic Christian doctrines to Marxist dictates.

From the Constitution of the Missionary Church, 2011. Position Papers. XII. Our Values, Pages 57 and 58.

Compassion is key part of spirituality. One definition of compassion is: “a feeling of deep sympathy or sorrow for another who is stricken with misfortune, accompanied by the strong desire to alleviate the suffering.” Some synonyms are pity, mercy, and sympathy. The LORD is gracious and compassionate according to Psalms 111:4.

The entire Bible is a book about the compassion of God toward mankind. Man’s sin separated us from God and as a result, God has provided a way for us to be reunited to Him. From Genesis to Revelation, we get to see a God who has designed a way for us to become reconciled to Him and that we can one day enjoy a restored fellowship with God for all of eternity. True compassion is shown when God sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins so that we could have eternal life with God!

Throughout the life and ministry of Christ, we have the example of Jesus having compassion upon those around Him. Starting with the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus sets a very high standard for His followers. Blessed are the meek, the merciful, and the peacemakers. We are encouraged to go beyond the letter of the law. Do not murder or even harbor hate in your heart. As for an “eye for an eye,” don’t even resist evil. Turn your cheek; walk two miles instead of one; lend without question; and love your enemies and pray for them.

The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) tells us that compassion (pity and mercy) is essential for eternal life. When Jesus was asked, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” His answer was to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and mind and your neighbor as yourself. He went on to explain who our “neighbor” is. The story of the Good Samaritan describes the man’s actions, “when he saw him, he had pity on him.” He bandaged the attacked man’s wounds, took care of him, and paid the innkeeper to care for him. The man who asked Jesus the question quickly identified the Samaritan as having true mercy on his neighbor. So, if you wish to inherit eternal life, exercise compassion, pity, and mercy on your “neighbor” who has been beaten and “spit out” by a cruel and heartless world. We cannot pass by the needy without stopping and helping.

The Lord’s Prayer also gives us another insight to forgive others as we have been forgiven by God. How many times? In Matthew 18:22 Jesus said for forgive 77 times. Again He instructs us to show mercy and pity (compassion) toward those who have done wrong against us.

Compassion includes tangibility helping those in need with food and shelter, helping them with words of love and acceptance, and extending forgiveness as many times as necessary. In Matthew 7:12, Jesus says, “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”

1. What does the Old Testament have to say about showing compassion? Look up Proverbs 19:17, Psalms 82:2-4, Zechariah 7:9-10, and Job 30:25 and briefly summarize how we should show compassion to others.

2. Read Psalms 51:1, 111:4, and Daniel 9:9, what characteristics of God are given?

3. Summarize what these verses have to say to us about compassion.
 - (a) Ephesians 4:32

 - (b) Romans 12:15

 - (c) Romans 12:20-21

 - (d) 1 Peter 3:8-9

 - (e) 1 John 3:16-18

 - (e) 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

 - (f) Colossians 3:12-14

 - (g) James 1:27

 - (h) Galatians 6:2

4. Discussion Question: What actions and attitudes do you need to take in order that you can exhibit more compassion in your life?

Close your session with a time of prayer. Ask God to help you see the needs of those around you and for Him to show you how to show compassion to them.



We believe there is a heaven and a hell, and we believe Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and establish his eternal kingdom.

THE MISSIONARY CHURCH BELIEVES:

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead to one of two eternal destinies – heaven or hell. Ultimately, all unbelievers will be justly sentenced to eternal conscious

punishment in hell together with Satan and all his angels. All believers in Christ will live forever, experiencing eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace.

From the Constitution of the Missionary Church, 2011. Article 4, Page 8.

The idea of having eternal life with God in heaven is something that almost all people love and accept. However, the idea of eternal punishment is not readily accepted. Many people embrace the idea that a loving God would never send anyone to hell. These people place a greater emphasis on the gentle, loving characteristics of God and fail to understand and accept the justice of God, His demand for holiness in people, and that He hates sin and will punish the sinner.

The Bible is clear about heaven being real and that we can look forward to spending eternity with God. John 3:16 is one of the most famous of all Bible verses that gives us this promise. But, few go on the read just two verses later where it states, “but whoever does not believe stands condemned.”

There will come a day when we will all face judgment before God. Those who are not covered by the blood and sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross will be cast away into hell where they will experience eternal punishment. This punishment for the sinner is eternal, just as eternal life is forever for the believer. This is why the Gospel is so important for all people to understand that there is a choice to be made in this life as to where they will spend eternity. It should be motivation for every believer to help their families and friends understand the importance of making a decision to follow Christ and accept the grace of God, His forgiveness, and living a new life in Christ. It is more than just purchasing “fire insurance,” it is accepting living a life that is dead to sin and being alive to righteousness.

There are many different concepts of what heaven and hell will actually be like. The essential point is that in heaven, we will *be with God*, be conscious of Him, and life will be blessed and full of joy. Hell is eternal *separation from God* where people experience agony and that this condition is an eternal, conscious torment. The details and specific circumstances of heaven and hell can be debated. However, the Bible makes it clear that *people want to go to heaven* and that hell should be *avoided at all costs*.

Eternity is a subject that most people carefully avoid. We get caught up in the day-to-day demands of life and we figure that our immediate circumstances demand that we take care of today’s problems. This is a ploy by Satan for us to delay making decisions that have eternal consequences. We cannot afford to put off our eternal decisions. According to 2 Corinthians 6:2, today is the day of salvation.

1. According to Daniel 12:1-2, what is the importance of having your name written in the “book?”

2. Read Matthew 25:31-46 and answer these questions.
 - (a) Who are the “sheep” and the “goats?”
 - (b) What did the “sheep” do and what was their fate?
 - (c) What did the “goats” do and what was their fate?
 - (d) How long does the judgment last for both groups?
3. Read Mark 9:42-48 and answer these questions.
 - (a) How is hell described in this passage?
 - (b) Why would someone choose to cut off their hand, foot, or pluck out their eye?
4. In John 14:1-4, what is prepared for people?
5. What happens to those people that have already died, according to John 5:28-29?
6. What happens to our bodies when we get to heaven? (see Philippians 3:18-21)
7. According to 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10, why does God punish people?
8. In 2 Peter 3:10-13, how should we live and what can we look forward to?
9. After reading Revelation 20:10-15, who are judged by God and what will their fate be?
10. Describe heaven after reading Revelation 21:1-4 and 22:1-5.

Close your session with a time of prayer. Ask God examine your life and let you know if it measures up to His standard so that someday you will be with Him in heaven.



We believe everything we are or own belongs to God.

THE MISSIONARY CHURCH BELIEVES:

God's ownership of all things creatively and redemptively is unquestioned in the Scriptures. Since we are saved by grace and the death of Christ provided our ransom, our whole being, body, soul, and spirit should be freely given to God, which is our reasonable service. Not only does God claim

our love and devotion, but He has made us stewards of what we have in time, talent, and temporal goods. Since giving of our means to support the Lord's work is a scriptural injunction and an act of worship received and memorialized by our Lord, and since tithing antedates the Mosaic Law, was confirmed in the Law, and was approved by our Lord Jesus Christ, and since the New Testament clearly indicates that our giving is to be proportionate, believers are encouraged to adopt the system of tithing their income as a minimum expression of their stewardship. Our stewardship in material things is to be motivated by the spirit and example of our Lord who freely gave Himself for us all.

From the Constitution of the Missionary Church, 2011. Article 4B, Page 9.

Stewardship is rooted in the understanding that God owns everything. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." (Rev. 22:13) "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." (Psalms 24:1) "To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it." (Deut. 10:14) "The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers." (Lev. 25:23) "Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me." (Job 41:11)

When we hear the word stewardship, we generally associate it with giving a tithe, or 10% of what we have earned or someone is about to take an offering. That is certainly a beginning point. However it goes beyond money to our time, talents, and treasures. It is having a generous spirit to meet the needs of another human. It involves reaching out to the poor and needy with physical, social, and spiritual acts. In our actions of compassion and love, we become the arms, legs, hands, and feet of Christ to a lost world. This is the heart of Christ reaching out to save every individual.

We cannot save the whole world, however we can do something that will make a difference in one life. There is great power in one person reaching out to another person in Christian love. As we provide for their immediate physical need, it provides hope to that person. It also forms a bond between us and that other person. As time goes on, we gain the opportunity to witness the tangible love of Christ to them. It is often said that our greatest witness to others is what we do, not what we say. The world will know that we are His disciples as we love one another.

As we do these acts of charity and kindness, we are asked to be generous, act cheerfully, and to act quietly. Matthew 6:1-4 says to carry out our actions in secret, not with a great announcement and hoopla so everyone knows we are being generous.

The riches of life are not counted in how many possessions we can accumulate. Nothing we have truly belongs to us. It is all "on loan" from God, our Father. When we die, there will not be a U-Haul truck to take with us into eternity so we can keep all of our "stuff." Too many times our possessions take possession of us and can replace God as being number one in our life. Instead, give of yourself, your time, treasure, and talents and you will reap heavenly rewards and find favor in the sight of God.

1. According to Genesis 14:20, who set the standard of giving a 10% tithe?
2. Read Malachi 3:8-11; what are the benefits of tithing as well as the warnings? What do you think it means here when the Lord says, “test me?”
3. According to Matthew 23:23, does God just want our money or something else?
4. Read Acts 4:32-35; what was practiced by the members of the early church and what were the results of their actions?
5. According to 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, should we have a plan for our stewardship to God?
6. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-11. What should be our attitude toward giving to God? Should we hold back our tithe so we can pay our other bills?
7. According to Luke 6:38, what do you think this verse means? Based upon this verse, should our motivation to give be based upon what rewards we will get in return?
8. In Matthew 6:1-4, what should our stewardship look like to the rest of the world?
9. **Discussion Question:** What do you think Christian ministries would look like today if everyone that attends church were also faithful in stewardship of their time, talents, and treasure?

Close your session with a time of prayer. Ask God examine stewardship in your life; is it all that it should be?