

# UNION BAPTIST CHURCH

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## Discipleship Handbook

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## Salvation

“Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Acts 16: 29-31 (NKJV) Salvation is the foundation of the Christian faith.

Since the day that you believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, you have been saved. In this lesson you will learn what this means.

### I. What does it mean to be “saved” or “born again?”

Being “saved” and being “born again” are terms frequently used by Christians. Both come from the Bible. Being born again means entering into a new spiritual life through God's Holy Spirit. The Bible says we must be born again to see the kingdom of God (John, 3:3). Before we were saved or born again, we were considered lost. The Bible teaches that we are all born with a sinful nature (Psalm 51:5), inherited from our ancestral father, Adam, in his sin of disobedience (Genesis 3:1-21). Thus, we are all guilty of sin (Romans 3:23; Mark. 7:20-23). When we receive Christ as our Lord, we are not only saved but we are justified or clothed with the righteousness of Christ (Romans 3:21-26). Jesus introduced and described the spiritual reality of rebirth (being born again) in John 3: 1-8.

### II. Understanding your salvation

#### A. What am I saved from?”

We are saved from the **penalty**, the **power** and the **presence** of sin. But, what is sin? Simply put, sin is anything that is contrary to the character and/or will of God. There are three types of sin:

- The sin of omission – the failure to do something that is required by God (James 4:17)
- The sin of commission – committing any action or having any thought that is contrary to the character and/or will of God (1 John 5:17)

- The sin of unbelief - rejecting Christ by not receiving Him as Lord (John 3:18). This is the ONLY sin that results in eternal death.

**B. It is important to understand salvation as a threefold phenomenon:**

- We have been (past) saved from the penalty of sin (because Christ died on the cross),
- We are being (present) saved from the power of sin (by the help of the Holy Spirit),
- We will be (future) saved from the presence of sin (when we are in heaven with God the Father).

**C. Salvation from the penalty, the power and the presence of sin**

- 1. The penalty** - We have been saved from the penalty of sin. The Bible teaches that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23. We were all born with a sinful nature as a result of Adam’s sin. The Bible says, “The wages of sin is death...” Romans 6:23a. That being the case, we would all be guilty if we had to stand before God to be judged. Any sin that we had ever committed, no matter how small, whether intentional or accidental, would result in the penalty of eternal death.

(a) The penalty for sin is death:

- (i) Physical death (the separation of the soul from the body), which affects humankind as the result of Adam and Eve's sin (Romans 5:12-14)
- (ii) Spiritual death (the separation of the soul from God), a condition transmitted to us from Adam and Eve (Ephesians 2:1, 5)
- (iii) Eternal death (the culmination and extension of spiritual death), the eternal separation of the soul from God in Hell (Revelation 20:14)

(b) Jesus’ death on the cross saved us from the penalty of sin.

When Jesus died on the cross, He gave his life as a sacrifice to God the Father on our behalf. He became our substitute on the cross. By doing so, Jesus paid the penalty for our sin, past, present and future.

- 2. The power** - We are being saved from the power of sin. Unfortunately, although we are saved we still sin. We will not live perfectly (without sin) as long as we are

in the flesh or physical body. We sin in thought, word and/or deed every day. If it were possible for any person, other than Jesus, to live a perfect (sinless) life, Jesus would not have had to die. I John 1: 8 says, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” Nevertheless, sin does not have the power to condemn us to hell. Because of God’s great love for us, provision has been made for forgiveness when we sin. I John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” This means that sin’s power is nullified because, “we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins”. (I John 2:1).

(a) The Holy Spirit: our helper. When Christ ascended to heaven, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to be our Counselor (John 16:7). It is with the help of the Holy Spirit that we are empowered to overcome sin in our lives (Romans 8:9).

(b) Jesus Christ: our intercessor. So, while the Christian should make every effort to “throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles,” (Hebrews 12:1b) when we do sin it does not have the power to condemn us to hell because we are being saved continually, from the power of sin. (Romans 5:16-17, 20-21) Additionally, Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of the Father continually interceding on our behalves. (Romans 8:34)

3. **The Presence** - Finally, we will be saved from the presence of sin altogether. It is appointed for every person to die a physical death. The time will come when our bodies will go back to the dust from which it came. The Bible teaches that upon death the believer is “away from the body and at home with the Lord” (II Corinthians 5:6-8). At the death of the human body, the spirit goes back to the Lord who gave it. In the presence of the Lord, there is no sin (Rev 21:4). The Apostle Paul taught that when the body dies, a transformation takes place immediately, “For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality.” (I Corinthians 15:53). At the death of the body, we will be removed from this world, which is decaying because of sin, and take up residence in the perfect presence of God.

### III. What must I do to be saved?

Romans 10:9 sets forth the prerequisite for salvation. The only requirement for salvation is that you “confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead.” We cannot earn salvation. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For it is by grace you have been saved, though faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Verse 10 says, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God has prepared for us in advance." We cannot “do” anything to earn salvation. Rather, we do good works because we are saved. The Holy Spirit prompts us to do good works.

### IV. Can I lose my salvation?

Consider a mother giving birth to a child and the child growing into adulthood. Due to a conflict, the two become estranged from one another and have no contact for years. The lack of contact between the two does not change the fact that the mother birthed the child. So it is with Christ. Once we are born again we cannot be “unborn.”

#### A. Assurance of Sonship and Salvation

1. Romans 8:16 says, “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.” This means that the Holy Spirit that lives inside of every Christian bears witness (gives confidence) to the human spirit that he (she) is a child of God.
2. Furthermore, John 1:12 says “But as many as received Him [Christ] to them gave he the power [authority] to become the sons of God”.
3. With respect to the assurance of our salvation John 10:27- 30 says:

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.

## V. Terms to know

1. Sanctification means to set apart or make holy (Hebrews 10:10). Generally speaking, sanctification is the process by which a believer becomes holy as God is holy. Sanctification can be described as an inward spiritual process whereby God brings about holiness and change in the life of a Christian by means of the Holy Spirit. Sanctification has a number of aspects:
  - a) positional sanctification – refers to the fact that God declares a Christian to be holy the moment he or she believes in Jesus Christ. The very moment we are saved in Christ we are also immediately sanctified and we begin the process of being conformed to the image of Christ.
  - b) progressive sanctification – refers to the act of growing (progressively) in holiness as we cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit.
2. Justification - Simply put, to justify is to declare righteous, to make one right with God or to be in right standing with God. Justification refers to the fact that God declares those who receive Christ to be righteous based on Christ's righteousness alone (Romans 3:21-26).
3. Regeneration - Another word for regeneration is rebirth, from which we get the phrase "born again." To be born again is distinguished from our first (physical) birth when we were conceived in sin. The new birth is a spiritual birth signified by being made alive in Christ and receiving a new nature (John 3:6-7).
4. Pre-destination - the decree of God by which certain souls are foreordained to salvation -- called the elect. Therefore, it can be said that believers are "preordained" or elected by pre-knowledge because time has no rule over God. (Ephesians 1:3-14)

**Salvation Review Exercise:**

1. True or False. In order to be saved (born again), we must do good works and try to live sinless lives. Defend your answer.
2. Describe what one must do to be saved or born again.
3. What is sin? Name the three types of sin.
4. What is the only unforgivable sin?
5. Can a believer lose his or her salvation? Defend your answer.

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## **The Bible**

### **I. What is the Bible?**

The Bible is **God's revelation of Himself** to mankind. God took the initiative to disclose Himself to man in many ways. The Bible is the only revelation that shows man's sinfulness and God's provision to atone for man's sin through the work of Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us what we need to know about God and how our relationship with God is to be established and maintained. The Bible invites us to enter a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

### **II. Why was the Bible written?**

God wants man to know Him, and He reveals Himself in many ways. One of the ways God reveals Himself is through nature or His creation. (Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:20) Nature, however, cannot completely tell us all that there is to know about God. Thus, another way God reveals Himself is through direct and indirect encounters with humans. For example, God had direct encounters with Moses and the prophets, but indirect meetings with His people. God spoke directly to Moses and to the prophets, and they, in turn spoke to God's people and told them what God had to say. Then, in the fullness of time, God revealed Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ. (John 14:7-9) Finally, when men began to write, God inspired some to write what He wanted us to know about Him . . . and, not just about Him but ourselves as well, including our sinful nature and our need for a savior, and the world that He created. The whole reason that God left us this knowledge is so that we might know why we need to have a relationship with Him and how to have and maintain a relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.

### **III. Who wrote the Bible?**

"Who wrote the Bible" is a question that is undoubtedly asked by many who are familiar with the impact this book has made on people around the world. It is a historical book that is backed by archeology and a prophetic book that has lived up to all of its claims thus far. In light of all these facts, asking, "Who wrote the bible," is a vital question that deserves serious investigation and a serious response.

The Bible consists of 66 books written by 40 divinely inspired writers. These writers came from all walks of life. Kings and common folk, such as tax collectors and fishermen, alike, wrote it and it spans 1,500 years or more. These claims may seem dramatic (or unrealistic to some), but a careful and honest study of the scriptures shows them to be true.

#### **IV. If men wrote the Bible, can it be trusted?**

A. Yes. The Bible was not just written by men. Rather, men divinely inspired by God wrote it. Thus, God authored it through men. Because the Bible is divinely inspired, the original record was protected from human error by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Bible, as God's **divinely inspired** instrument is **of immense value** to Christians because it provides **unalterable spiritual principles** we need to know in order to live victoriously for Christ.

#### **B. Evidence of Divine Inspiration**

2 Timothy 3:16 states, "All scripture is inspired by God...." In 2 Peter 1:20-21, Peter reminds the reader to "*know this first of all, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, ... but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*" The Bible says further, "*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work*" II Timothy 3:16-17. Thus, the Bible itself tells us that God authored of His book.

#### **V. What do Baptists believe about the Bible?**

When we say that we are Baptists, we are saying that we believe certain things about God, His Word (the Bible), Jesus Christ, ourselves and the world. Baptist beliefs are contained in our Articles of Faith, which can be found in our Red Baptist Hymnals. The following doctrinal statement expresses what Baptists believe about the Bible.

*We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men being divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction protected in its original record by the ministry of the Holy Spirit; that it has God for its author, chosen men as it's scribes, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which we enter and maintain*

*relationship with God, also by which God will judge us, and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried.*

## VI. What should we as Christians do with the Word of God?

The Word of God is **worthy of examination and memorization**, as the following verses reflect:

- a. Deuteronomy 6:6-9 – Keep it always before us. God’s commands are to permeate our lives.*
- b. Psalm 1:2-3 – Delight in it. When we do, we flourish.*
- c. Romans 1:16 –Be reassured by it. God’s Word reveals his salvation plan.*
- d. 2 Timothy 2:15 – Study it. God’s Word is to be rightly handled.*
- e. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - Learn it. God’s Word thoroughly equips us for life.*
- f. Hebrews 4:12 –Let it penetrate our hearts and minds. God’s Word judges our thoughts and attitudes.*
- g. James 1:22 – Live it. We are not only to listen to God’s Word; we are to obey it.*
- h. 2 Peter 1:21 - Believe it. God’s Word can and should be believed for it was inspired by the Holy Spirit.*

## VII. Which version (translation) of the Bible should I use?

As you may already know, there are many versions of the Holy Bible. The word *version* indicates that that particular Bible has been translated into a modern language, like English, using slight variations and modern interpretations of certain words and phrases. For example, in the gospel according to John 14:16, some versions, when referring to the Holy Spirit, interpret the Greek word *parakletos* (which means one who comes along side), as **Comforter**, others use the word **Counselor** while still others use the word **Helper**. The meaning does not change. The spiritual truth does not change; scholars simply give more clarity to the words which have been translated from the Greek language. So, we do not get upset about the various versions of the Holy Bible.

The most common version used is the Authorized King James Version. King James did not write the Bible. Rather, he authorized its translation from Greek to the English language in 1611 A.D. Therefore, the King James Version was written in Old English, a difficult language that is no longer used. There are, however, modern language Bibles such as The New King James Version (NKJV), The New Living Translation (NLT) and The New International Version (NIV).

Although there are times when the Pastor does refer to the King James Version as well as other versions of the Bible, at Union Baptist Church the New King James Version is used primarily. The reason we use the NKJV is two-fold. First, the language is easier to understand. It is written in slightly more modern language, without all the *thous* and *thees* and *peradventures* without doing an injustice to the original meaning of the text. Secondly, biblical scholarship has improved since 1611, the year the King James Version was commissioned. Certain archeological discoveries and a better understanding of the ancient biblical languages have increased the accuracy of language translators. The Bible is nevertheless, God's complete written record of self-revelation and, regardless of the version used, the truth of God's love and the method of humankind's salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ come shining through.

Since there are many very good translations or versions of the Bible, if there is one which you like better than the NKJV, feel free to use it. For purposes of personal study and memorization, the best version for you to use is whichever version you find enjoyable and easy to read and understand. You should select a version you are comfortable with and stay with it. When you are in service, however, you might want to bring a small NKJV *along with* whatever version you are most comfortable with.

### **VIII. The Bible's Makeup.**

The Bible is made up of sixty-six books. There are thirty-nine Old Testament books and twenty-seven New Testament books.

***The Old Testament***

<b>Books of Moses [(The Law or Pentateuch)]</b>	<b>History</b>	<b>Wisdom Literature</b>	<b>Major Prophets (longer)</b>	<b>Minor Prophets (short)</b>
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah	Hosea
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah	Joel
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations	Amos
Numbers	I Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel	Obadiah
Deuteronomy	II Samuel	Song of Sol'	Daniel	Jonah
	I Kings			Micah
	II Kings			Nahum
	I Chronicles			Habakkuk
	II Chronicles			Zephaniah
	Ezra			Haggai
	Nehemiah			Zechariah
	Esther			Malachi

***The New Testament***

<b>The Gospels</b>	<b>History</b>	<b>Epistles to</b>	<b>Pastoral letters</b>	<b>Epistles of</b>
Matthew	The Acts	Romans	I Timothy	James
Mark		I Corinthians	II Timothy	I Peter
Luke		II Corinthians	Titus	II Peter
John		Galatians	Philemon	I John
		Ephesians		II John
		Philippians		III John
		Colossians		Jude
		I Thessalonians		
		II Thessalonians		
		Hebrews		

The Revelation

### **IX. Summing it up**

God intended His Word to abide forever. Therefore, His written propositional self-disclosure was protected from error in its original writing and collected in 66 books of the Old and New Testaments (canonicity). The book which we read, study, obey and preach deserves to unreservedly be called the Bible or “The Book without peer,” since its author is God and it bears the qualities of total truth.

**The Bible Review Exercise:**

1. There are four (4) characteristics outlined in this paper which define the Bible. List them below.
2. We know that men divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit wrote the Bible. We also know that all men are human, and as such, make mistakes. How does this principle apply to the Bible? Support your answer below.
3. True or False. Because there are so many different versions of the Bible, it is best to use the New International Version for clarity and understanding. Defend your answer.
4. The Bible is sometimes called “The Book Without Peer”. Why?
5. The Bible contains 66 books. List the categories into which they are grouped.

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## **The Church Covenant**

### **I. What is a covenant?**

A covenant is a written agreement or a promise between two or more parties. Whenever parties enter into a covenant, each makes promises to the other. In that way, each party gains the rights and takes on the obligations or responsibilities that are spelled out in the covenant. The biblical concept of covenant began in the Old Testament when God made a covenant with Noah in Genesis 9:12-17; with Abraham in Genesis 15:18; with Isaac in Genesis 17:19, 21; with Jacob in Genesis 28: 13, 14; with Israel in Exodus 6:4; and with David in 2 Samuel 23:5. We can see from these examples that God is a God of covenants. We make covenants all the time. Whenever you enter into an agreement which outlines responsibilities you promise to keep, that is a covenant. If you are married, the wedding vows that you made in the presence of God and the audience that witnessed the ceremony are a covenant.

### **II. Why do we have a church covenant and why is it significant?**

Just before our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was betrayed, He gathered His disciples together in the upper room to celebrate a final Passover Feast. At that gathering, Jesus established a new covenant with the people of God. The details of this gathering and the institution of this new covenant are found in Matthew 26:17-30. Because the Lord's Supper signifies a covenant agreement, on the first Sunday of each month when the Church family observes the Lord's Supper (which is also known as Holy Communion), we acknowledge this covenant that Christ made with the church and we take the opportunity to make and renew the *church covenant* with one another as one body in Christ.

When we recite the *church covenant*, we are renewing the promises which are outlined therein. It is a time to take seriously our pledge to one another. With God's help and our sincere effort we pledge (or promise) to live together, guided by the terms of our *church's covenant*. In this lesson, we will look carefully at the covenant we make with one another, in the presence of God and angels each first Sunday.



### *The Church Covenant*

**Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior; and on the profession of our faith, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another as one body in Christ.**

- It is a covenant made by believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- It is a covenant made in the presence of God, angels and other believers.
- It is entered into solemnly and joyfully.
- It is entered into with the believers who make up the local assembly.

**We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness; to give it a place in our affections, prayers and services above every other organization of human origin.**

- We need the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit in order to keep this covenant.
- Love for one another is the foundation of the covenant (see I Corinthians 13).
- We are to commit ourselves to and work toward the advancement of Union Baptist Church in both knowledge and holiness. Both knowledge and holiness are achieved through our personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We are to love our church.
- We are to pray for our church.
- We are to give our church priority above all other organizations.

**To contribute cheerfully and regularly as God has prospered us, toward the support of the ministry, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world.**

- Giving money is a Christian obligation (see Malachi 3:10; II Cor. 9: 6-11).
- Money supports ministries and administration.
- Money supports home and foreign missions.
- The church is to have a world vision for missions.

**We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion, to study the Word of God, to religiously educate our children, to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintance.**

- We promise in this covenant to maintain family and personal devotional time.
- We promise in this covenant to study our Bibles.
- We promise in this covenant to make sure that our children understand their faith.
- We promise in this covenant to pray for and share the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ with our friends and family members with a view toward their salvation.

**We promise to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our service.**

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**We further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the infirmities of others; to participate in each other's joys, bear one another's sorrows; and to cultivate Christian courtesy.**

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**We promise to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, being mindful of the rules of the Savior to secure it without delay.**

- We are not to be quick tempered.
- We are to be willing to forgive each other and to be reconciled.
- We are not to allow for division over long periods of time.

**When we remove from this place, we engage as soon as possible to unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.**

- In this covenant we acknowledge the importance of always being a part of the body of Christ.
- The church covenant is universal
- The church covenant is based on the principles of God's Word
- The church covenant is personal

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## Baptism and the Lord's Supper

### I. Baptism and the Lord's Supper:

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are called ordinances. An ordinance is a prescribed religious ceremony, ritual or rite. These are the only two ordinances that are observed in the Baptist Church. They are called ordinances because through Scripture we have been given an order by our Lord Jesus Christ.

### II. Baptism

#### A. What is it and how is it done?

- The Bible teaches that the act of water baptism is a spiritual ritual by which an individual announces publicly that he/she has accepted the free gift of salvation which is obtained through belief in Jesus Christ. It is a visible symbol that declares one's belief in the new birth.

*Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

Romans 6:3-4

- There is, however, no salvation in the water. That is, the act of water baptism alone does not bring salvation into a person's life. We are saved by grace through faith alone. Ephesians 2:8-9 says "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast." Remember, conversion occurs before the Spirit gives the desire to be baptized. Upon one's confession of faith, the Holy Spirit takes up his permanent residence in the heart. The Spirit then gives the believer a desire to be baptized. A person is baptized because he is saved. No one is saved simply by participating in the ritual of water baptism.
- Baptism is also the public event which announces one's formal entry into the body of Christ universal and one's membership in the church. It is our public identification with Jesus Christ. It is a prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation and to partaking of the Lord's Supper. In baptism, a person signifies repentance toward God, trust in God's mercy and surrender to God's will.

- The Bible teaches that immersion is the proper mode of baptism. To immerse means to plunge into something that surrounds or covers. Baptism by immersion means to be completely submerged in water. This mode of baptism symbolizes the death of the old sinful way of life by going down in the water as one would go down into the grave. By faith we are crucified with Christ, buried with Him symbolically in baptism. It also symbolizes our being raised to newness of life upon coming up from immersion. That is, we symbolically rise with Christ in His resurrection.
- We baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit to show forth our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior and in accordance with Matthew 28:18b-20 (“... baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . .”)
- The following is a paraphrase of the doctrinal statement from the Baptist Articles of Faith:

*We believe the Scriptures teach that an individual first believes the gospel and receives Christ as Savior and is then baptized. In Scripture, water baptism follows a personal confession of faith in Jesus Christ. We call this “believer’s baptism”. Mark 16:16, Acts 2:41, 8:35-37, 16:4-15.*

Therefore, in the Baptist faith, infants are not baptized because they are not capable of making a free and voluntary confession of faith.

## **B. Why should we be baptized?**

- The Bible teaches that Jesus himself was baptized and that the Father was pleased with Him:

*Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Matt 3:13-17*
- Jesus instructed us to be baptized:

*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I*

*have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. Matthew 28:18b-20*

- So not only was Jesus himself baptized, even though he had no sin, He also commanded the disciples to baptize all those who believe.

### III. The Lord's Supper (also sometimes called "Communion")

#### A. What is it, why should we do it and how is it done?

- The celebration of the Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and wine (the "elements"), together commemorate the sacrificial love of Christ, that is, His death on the cross for us, and anticipate His second coming. The Lord Jesus himself introduced this practice at the last supper. <sup>1st</sup> Corinthians 11:23-26 says:

*For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

- The bread represents Christ's body which was broken for us and the wine represents the blood that He shed for us. We believe that these elements are symbols. We do not believe in "transubstantiation." That is, we do not believe that the elements change into the actual body and blood of the Lord. Nor do we believe that one is saved by taking the communion elements.
- Since the Bible is silent on how often the Lord's Supper is to be taken, we choose to take communion once per month on the first Sunday of the month. This is our tradition. However, there is nothing wrong with taking the Lord's Supper on a different Sunday, at a different time or more often.

#### B. How should I prepare to take the Lord's Supper?

- <sup>1st</sup> Corinthians 11:27-32 says in part:

*... whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.*

*A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep . . .*

This, however, does not mean that one should not take communion if one has sinned at some time prior to taking communion. One partakes of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner when one does not approach the communion table with a right heart and attitude and a reverential spirit. Taking the Lord's Supper should always be preceded by solemn self-examination. If there are any unconfessed sins that you are aware of, you should confess them and ask God for forgiveness. Once you have confessed your sins and asked God for forgiveness, know that God is faithful to forgive and participate in the Lord's Supper with a clear conscience.

- Taking the Lord's Supper is a serious and solemn act. Therefore, we should come to the communion table remembering the sacrifice that our Lord made for us, the high price he paid for our salvation and with a grateful heart.

#### **IV. One final note**

As we participate in these ordinances, we should be careful to neither reduce the Lord's Supper and baptism to mere rituals nor elevate their meaning to something that may equate to idolatry.

**Baptism and the Lord's Supper Review Exercise:**

After reviewing this lesson on Baptism and the Lord's Supper, please answer the following questions:

1. According to scripture, what is an ordinance?

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2. What two ordinances are practiced in the Baptist Church?

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3. True or False: We know that a person is saved because he has been baptized. Defend your answer.

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4. Who first introduced the Lord's Supper to the Christian Church? When was the Lord's Supper first observed?

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5. What are the "elements" of the Lord's Supper? What does each "element" represent?

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## The New Birth

### I. What is the New Birth?

- A. Upon your confession of faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you invited his Spirit to come into your heart. In response to your sincere invitation, God enacted a spiritual transformation in your life. The Holy Spirit moved into your heart (conscience) to take up His permanent residence. At that moment, you were born again and the Holy Spirit began his ministry in your life.
- B. Jesus introduced and described the spiritual reality of rebirth (being born again) in John 3: 1-8:

*Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him." <sup>3</sup> In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." <sup>4</sup> "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup> You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup> The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.*

### II. What does the Holy Spirit do?

- A. The Holy Spirit helps us become more like Christ and His work is mysteriously performed in the life of the believer. Among the things that the Holy Spirit does are:
1. He counsels, *John 14:15*;
  2. He teaches and brings what we learn back to our remembrance, *John 14:26*;
  3. He comforts, *John 16:7*;
  4. He convicts of sin, *John 16:8*;
  5. He guides us into righteousness, *John 16:13*;
  6. He informs us regarding the things of God, *John 16:14*;
  7. He motivates and enables us to do the will of God, *Philippians 2:13*;
  8. He empowers us to witness, *Acts 1:8*;

9. He shapes the believer's character, *Galatians 5:22*;
10. He gives life to the believer, *Galatians 5:25*.

B. Once we are “born again” we become a part of the family of God. As a result, at that time, the Spirit of God comes alongside the human spirit and speaks to us concerning our lifestyles and behavior. The Bible says in Romans 8:14-15, “... *those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God... And by him we cry “Abba Father”*, which is a term of affection a child uses to address his parent.

### III. Why is the new birth important?

Jesus emphasizes in the lesson on the new birth that without it one can neither see nor enter the kingdom of God. These two statements are extremely important.

- A. Without the new birth, one cannot **see** the kingdom of God. We can interpret the word “see” to mean understand. Consequently, one cannot understand the spiritual principles at work in the kingdom of God without the help of the Holy Spirit. Understanding the principles of the kingdom of God is difficult because they are the opposite of worldly principles. For example, Jesus taught that in the kingdom the least is the greatest, we forgive those who have wronged us; we gain by giving away and give leadership by serving. It takes spiritual power to even will to apply these principles in our lives.
- B. Without the new birth, one cannot **enter** the kingdom. This suggests that a person must have the Spirit of God present in order to participate in the kingdom in a way that is spiritually productive and pleasing to God. It is the Spirit of God that directs their activities. While it is possible for a person to participate in the activities of the church and in some cases even hold an office in the church, unless that person is born again he or she is spiritually unproductive and is not recognized by God. (*See Luke 13: 25-27*)

### IV. What does “*born of water*” mean in John 3:5?

Jesus compared spiritual birth with physical birth. Notice that in order for spiritual birth to take place, physical birth must occur first. Some biblical scholars and teachers interpret “to be born of water” to mean one has to be washed by the word of God. However, in light of the question asked by Nicodemus in verse 4, “*How can a man be born when he is old? Surely he*

*cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!*" I interpret "being born of water" to mean a physical birth. Therefore, this scripture teaches that physical birth is prerequisite to spiritual birth.

**V. What is one's state when he or she is born again and why is this significant?** When one becomes born again, he or she is a spiritual new born.

A. Similar to a physical newborn baby, a spiritual newborn requires certain conditions in order to thrive. The infant needs nourishment from the mother or some specific formula depending on the need. A healthy, loving and nurturing environment is crucial. The infant learns how to relate to and trust others from positive interaction with people in his life. The spiritual new born also needs nourishment, loving interaction with other Christians and an environment conducive to growth and maturity.

B. God expects us to grow to spiritual maturity and to fulfill the purpose for which he called us into fellowship. Ephesians 2:10 says, *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."* But, what is the key to growing to spiritual maturity? The key to spiritual growth is deepening our relationship with God by getting to know Him. That is, we must (1) develop a close personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ by consistently or regularly practicing the Spiritual Disciplines, (2) fellowship with other believers, and (3) practice what we learn.

**VI. What are the Spiritual Disciplines?**

The spiritual disciplines are disciplines and practices that Christians over the years have learned help them keep the spiritual channels open and help keep the heart turned toward God. These disciplines can't save you; they can't even make you holy, but what they can do is heighten your desire, awareness, and love of God by stripping down the barriers that you put up yourself as well as those that others put up for you. A spiritual discipline is, when practiced faithfully and regularly, ***a habit or regular pattern in your life that repeatedly brings you back (connect or reconnect you) to God and opens you up to what God is saying to you.***

- A. **Prayer - Prayer is essential for all Christians and is vital to spiritual growth and maturity. You must have a consistent prayer life.** *1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*. It is always recommended that believers make time during the day for prayer. Most say a quick prayer when they awaken in the morning, during the morning commute and periodically all during the day. However, what is being suggested here is that time be set aside daily to sit in the presence of God for one purpose: to talk to God in prayer. Becoming consistent with a designated prayer time may be a challenge at first, but its benefits outweigh any challenges one may encounter.
- B. **Study - You must take time to study the Bible.** *Ephesians 4:11-14*. The Bible is referred to as milk and as solid food in *Hebrews 5:13-14* because it is from the Word that we gain spiritual nutrients. Our faith is strengthened by studying the word of God. *“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.” Romans 10:17*. It is absolutely impossible to grow spiritually without reading and studying the Word of God. As a spiritual new born, you might find some of the Bible difficult to understand, and that is expected. Just as no reasonable person would expect an infant to eat a steak or a chicken drumstick, one should not expect a spiritual new born to understand the Bible at a mature level. You begin with a consistent diet of the milk of the Word.

At Union, there are a wide range of Bible study opportunities. There is Adult Sunday school, Wednesday Discipleship classes, Wednesday Adult Bible Study (at noon and 7 p.m.), Thursday Teen Bible Study and Sunday Children’s Bible Study (11:00 a.m. only). We also offer the annual L.W. Hughes Christian Education Institute and Vacation Bible School and a number of workshops and seminars throughout the year. The Sunday school makes the Sunday School Quarterly available which offers a systematic study of the Bible complete with commentary and lessons.

- C. **Worship – You must be consistent in attending worship.** *John 4:23*. Very often over time the emotional feeling which causes a person to confess Christ subsides. The person is saved, but sometimes has to be reminded of the necessity of consistency in worship. It is God’s will that his people come together and worship Him. Worship is an important

spiritual activity for the individual and the community of faith. Through the worship experience, God brings the community together, strengthens the bonds of fellowship and addresses the needs of the community as well as the needs of individuals. God expects believers to worship Him. In *John 4:23* the Bible says, “*Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.*” Worship gives us opportunity to gather in God’s presence, bring tithes and offerings for His work and to give God praise for who He is and for what He has done. In worship we are encouraged by the love of God, enlightened by the word of God, and empowered by the Spirit of God.

There are times when work schedules or some other situation may keep you from worship. However, when your schedule permits, on Sunday mornings make your way to worship.

- D. Fasting - Fasting has been practiced as a means of aiding spiritual focus by virtually everyone, inside of Scripture and out, who had any degree of spiritual maturity.** It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that fasting is essential to spiritual growth. Fasting, like everything else, must be God-centered and God-ordained. Its first purpose is to glorify God. After that, though, there are a number of other purposes to keep in mind: (i) fasting, more than any other discipline, starkly reveals the things that control us (not only physical drives, but pride, anger, impatience, and so on); (ii) fasting reminds us that we are sustained not by food, but by the word of God; (iii) fasting helps us to keep balance in our lives, helping us to keep nonessential things from taking control of our lives.

While fasting as described in the Bible always involves food, today many fast from other things as well, such as a bad habit or something that a person does often and enjoys greatly like watching television or playing video games. The key is to fast in such a way that it involves a sacrifice and honors God.

- E. Meditation - Meditation is the practice of reflecting upon, ruminating about, and considering matters of our faith.** The objects of meditation can vary:

1. Scripture. Meditation on Scripture is **not** study, not exegesis (interpretation) or analysis. Rather, it is focusing on a single event, or parable, or a few verses, and allowing it to take root. Proceeding in this fashion allows your imagination to put you in the midst of the scripture or circumstance and thereby draw close to God.
2. Creation. Meditation on creation is attending to the created order; but not only its grandeur and splendor, but its little things as well.

**F. Solitude – is the practice of spending quiet time, alone time, with God primarily listening for his voice and enjoying His presence.**

**VII. You must fellowship with other believers.**

Hebrews 10:25 says *“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.* Usually when you confess Christ you find that your activities change. The Holy Spirit leads us to be more involved with spiritual activities. The Holy Spirit has led you to the Church family he wants you to be a part of. To be sure, none of us is perfect, but we are all “born again.” Thus, as works in progress we fellowship as the body of Christ. Fellowshiping gives us the opportunity to pray for each other, strengthen and encourage one another, study and grow together and learn to forgive and to love one another. No one can grow spiritually mature in isolation. Growth can only happen as we fellowship in community.

**VIII. You must practice what you have learned.**

*James 1:22* says, *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive your selves. Do what it says.”* A person can go to college and earn an undergraduate degree, finish law school with honors, and even pass the bar exam, but that person is not really a lawyer until he or she actually practices law. In the same way, a believer can have much knowledge about what the Bible says and may understand the spiritual principles of the kingdom of God, but until he or she actually puts into practice what he or she has learned, they are of little use to the kingdom of God and will never reach the level of maturity that God desires.

**The New Birth Review Exercise:**

1. Jesus compared the \_\_\_\_\_ birth to the \_\_\_\_\_ birth.

2. What does it mean to **see** the kingdom of God?

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3. What does it mean to **enter** the kingdom of God?

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4. What is the prerequisite of seeing and entering the kingdom of God?

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5. List the five areas of Christian growth:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6. What in your life gives evidence of your spiritual rebirth?

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7. Tell the when and where of your spiritual rebirth. When did it happen for you?

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## Stewardship

### I. What is stewardship?

- A. A **steward** is one who manages the property, finances or affairs of someone else. In ancient kingdoms, stewards ran the country in the absence of the king. Upon the king's return, the steward gave a full accounting for his actions. Even when the king was present, the steward often handled the daily affairs of the kingdom. However, a steward did not own the kingdom. Additionally, the king determined when and how long a steward would serve him. In the Bible, we find many examples of stewards being placed over the affairs of their masters. Genesis 41 is one of the best-known examples. Genesis 41 recounts the story of Joseph and how Pharaoh made him steward over the land of Egypt.
- B. **Stewardship**, then, is the act of conducting, supervising, or managing something; especially the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care by someone else.

### II. Why are we considered stewards and what does the Bible teach about how we should act and/or what our attitude should be toward all that He has created and all he has given us?

In Genesis 1:28, God told Adam that he was to subdue the earth and exercise dominion, which is rulership, over all of His creation. Thus, God made man stewards of His creation. Additionally, the Bible teaches the following:

- A. **Everything belongs to God** – Psalm 24:1 *“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it . . .”*
- B. **We are just the caretakers or trustees of what God has created** - Lev. 25:23 *“The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants.”*
- C. **Everything we have comes from God** - Deut 8:18 *“But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.”*
- D. **We will be rewarded for doing the right thing with what God has placed in our care** - Prov. 19:17 *“He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done.”*

- E. You can't take it with you** - Eccl. 5:10-15 *"Naked a man comes from his mother's womb, and as he comes, so he departs. He takes nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hand."*
- F. We are to be faithful in handling what God has entrusted to us** - 1 Cor. 4:2 *"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful."*
- G. We ourselves are God's creation and we belong to God** - 1 Cor. 6:19-20 *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."*
- H. We are to be givers** - Acts 20:35b - *"It is more blessed to give than to receive."*
- I. We show love when we give** - 1 John 3:16-19 *"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence."*
- J. We are to give cheerfully, not grudgingly** - 2 Cor. 9:7 - *"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."*
- K. The more time, talent and treasure God gives us, the more we are to give for the kingdom** - Luke 12:48b *"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."*
- L. We never have to worry about giving because God knows our needs and will always meet them.** Matt. 6:31-33 *"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."*
- III. So, what is being entrusted to our care, that is, what are we actually stewards over? Is stewardship just about money?**

Although our finances tend to be the key area that people refer to when speaking of stewardship, stewardship is *not* just about money. The above stewardship principles apply to everything we have been given. It begs the question: What do we give in response for all that has been given to us? We give time, talent, and treasure or self, service and substance in response to the gifts that God has given to us. So, Christian stewardship is a way of living in

which we recognize that everything belongs to God. All resources must be used for His glory and the common good. Our time, our money, our God given gifts and abilities, our influence, it all comes from God and is to be used for His glory.

Then, you might ask, why is there so much emphasis on money and giving? Probably because money is one of the most difficult things for people to give. Most people find giving their time and talent much easier than giving their treasure. Additionally, it is an important topic. The Bible spends a great deal of time talking about it. There are 40 verses on “baptism”, 275 verses on “prayer”, 350 verses on “faith”, 650 verses on “love”, and 2,350 verses that specifically relate to finances and material possessions, many of which specifically have to do with giving. A healthy attitude toward, and consistent giving, leads to spiritual growth and maturity.

#### IV. How should a good steward behave?

##### A. The Teaching of the Parable of the Talents (Matt 25:14-30)

There are lots of stewardship verses that show us how we should act, but the best and most recognized scripture is the Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30). It gives a great illustration of what a good steward does.

Put simply, the good stewards were the ones who **took action** in order to multiply what they had been given. The bad steward was the one who, out of fear, decided to do nothing and was called lazy as well. This parable can relate to money, time or talent. Whatever time God gives, whatever talent God gives, whatever money God gives us is to be wisely managed and invested and used for the upbuilding of His kingdom. We are to rightly manage and put our time, talent and treasure to good Godly use.

##### B. Tithing

1. **What is a tithe?** A tithe is a "tenth."
2. **What is biblical tithing?** In general, biblical tithing refers to the practice of giving one tenth of one's income for the work of God. In the Old Testament, tithing was understood as a response of gratitude and an obligation. In light of the New Testament, some Christians believe tithing is still an obligation, while other Christians understand tithing to be a loving, freely chosen response to God's

gracious provisions for life – God's grace! Many Christians believe that tithing is a very helpful discipline of one's faith life.

3. **What are some of the most important biblical references to tithing?** In the Old Testament, there are a number of references to tithing. Some of the most important references are: Gen. 14:20 and 28:22; Deut. 14:22; Lev. 27:30; Malachi 3:10. The New Testament also speaks of tithing in Matt. 23:23 and Heb. 7:8.
4. **How does the New Testament deal with the opportunity to tithe?** We understand that Jesus and the apostles assumed that the tithe was a healthy guide for stewardship. In Matthew 23:23, Jesus warns the scribes and Pharisees not to misuse the tithe as an "excuse" for neglecting other weightier matters of justice, mercy and faith. The Apostle Paul follows the same logic in emphasizing that believers should give proportionately, as God has blessed (1 Corinthians 16:2 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-12). Nowhere in the New Testament is tithing repudiated.
5. **When one tithes, does one base the tithe on gross or net income?** There is no definitive answer to this question. One must choose the method that most adequately fulfills the intention of the tither.
6. **What is the tithe used for?** In the Old Testament, the tithe was used to support God's priests and their ministries. In time it was used to support the temple. Today it is used to support the local church and God's work through the local church.

#### V. **What should be our motivation for giving?**

Biblical stewardship calls a Christian to give back to God. One is to give of oneself through the giving of one's time, give of one's talent through the giving of service to the kingdom and others, and give of one's treasure or substance through tithing. However, tithing has more to do with one's heart during the act of giving than the actual amount given to God. The Bible offers this story: "As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. 'I tell you the truth,' he said, 'this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out her poverty put in all she had to live on'" (Luke 21:1-4). The woman gave two copper coins-what amounted to a fraction of a penny. This seems a trivial amount. However, God viewed her trivial amount with more regard than the large offerings of the rich.

Why? By giving all she had, the woman showed utter devotion to God. She was willing to offer everything she possessed to show love to God.

Biblical stewardship is a giving out of devotion rather than duty. It is about the heart of the giver, the Christian, willing to give out of poverty, not wealth.

And never forget, the greatest giver of all was God – John 3:16 - “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

**Stewardship Review Exercise:**

Complete the following sentences:

1. A **steward** is one who manages the property, finances or affairs of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. We are called to be good stewards of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Stewardship   is/is not   (pick one) all about money.
4. We are to put our time, talent and treasure to good \_\_\_\_\_ use.
5. A healthy attitude toward giving and consistent giving lead to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
6. A tithe is \_\_\_\_\_.

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## Spiritual Gifts

### I. Why is it important to know and use your spiritual gifts?

- A. God wants every disciple to know what his or her spiritual gift(s) is/are and to use them in a ministry.
  - 1. Christ's strategy for reaching the world for Himself is through His Church. Therefore, the Church needs YOU. Not because it needs people to fill positions within the organization, but because you are an important and integral part of the body of Christ and you have a significant contribution to make. When you do not fulfill the function that God has assigned to you, the church is poorer for it. You have a ministry in the church and a mission in the world. (See, 1st Cor. 12:20-30)
  - 2. You are part of God's plan and God has a purpose for your life. You must uncover or discover the spiritual gift(s) that God has promised to give to you and exercise them by the aid of the Holy Spirit in order to fulfill part or all of that plan and purpose.
- B. We will be held responsible for our gifts.

The parable of the talents (Mt 25:14-30) uses financial investments as an illustration and teaches that we will all be held responsible for our gifts. In the end, we will not be praised for our wealth, our possessions, or our fame. We will be praised if we can properly respond to the question, "Did you faithfully use the gifts I gave you"? Therefore, it is our responsibility to discover and develop our gifts. None of us is excused.
- C. There is joy in exercising our gifts for the building up of the kingdom of God.

1 Peter 4:10 says that "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

### II. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?

- A. Spiritual gifts serve many purposes:
  - 1. I Corinthians 12:7 states that gifts are given for the "common good" of the body.
  - 2. I Corinthians 14:12 and Ephesians 4:12 tell us that they are given "to build up the Church".
  - 3. I Peter 4:10 shares that they are given "to serve others" and I Peter 4:11 continues: "so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ".

4. In a nutshell, spiritual gifts build up the church so that the church can be an effective instrument in reaching the world for Christ. Please note that your spiritual gifts are not *for* you. They are given *to* you *for* others!!!!

### III. Where Does the Bible discuss spiritual gifts?

The main places in the Bible where we learn about Spiritual Gifts are 1 Corinthians 12-14, Romans 12 and Ephesians 4.

### IV. What is a Spiritual Gift?

A. A short, simple definition of a spiritual gift is “a Spirit-given ability for Christian service.”

B. What spiritual gifts are NOT:

1. Spiritual gifts are NOT the same as talents. Non-Christians have talents, but only Christians have spiritual gifts. Christians may also have talents but non-Christians do not have spiritual gifts.

Talents	vs.	Spiritual Gifts
Talents are present from natural birth		Spiritual gifts are present from spiritual birth
Talents have to do with techniques and methods		Spiritual gifts have to do with spiritual abilities
Talents depend on natural instincts		Spiritual gifts depend on spiritual endowment
Talents inspire or entertain on a natural level		Spiritual gifts relate to the building up of the church

Something supernatural happens in the one who is ministering when a gift is being exercised.

2. Spiritual gifts are not the same as the Fruit of the Spirit. When the Holy Spirit enters our lives at the time we receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, He brings certain attributes with Him. These attributes are laid out in Galatians 5:22-23. They include love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.



Spiritual Gifts	vs.	Fruit of the Spirit
No believer possesses all of the spiritual gifts		Every believer should have every variety of fruit
Spiritual gifts have to do with service		Fruit of the spirit have to do with character
Spiritual gifts have to do what a person has		Fruit of the spirit have to do with what a person is

3. Spiritual gifts are not the same as roles all Christians are to perform. Many spiritual gifts operate in the area of clear-cut scriptural commands. For example, every Christian is commanded to be liberal in giving. Because a believer does not have the gift of giving is not reason to say, "I don't need to tithe or even give." Notice that commands cover almost every one of the gifts. In fact, it is as we do service in obedience to God's commands that we often begin to discover special abilities in certain areas.

### V. What are the Spiritual Gifts

1 Cor. 12:8-10	1 Cor. 12:28-30	Romans 12:6-8	Ephesians 4:11
Wisdom	Apostleship	Prophecy	Apostleship
Knowledge	Prophecy	Serving	Prophecy
Faith	Teaching	Teaching	Evangelism
Healing	Workers of Miracles	Encouraging	Pastor/Teacher
Miraculous Powers	Healing	Contribution/Giving	
Prophecy	Helps	Leadership	
Distinguishing Spirits	Administration	Mercy	
Tongues	Tongues		
Interpretation			

### VI. Summary - What do we learn about the Spiritual Gifts from Scripture?

1. Spiritual gifts come from God. They are a gift, not something we earn.
2. God wants us to know and understand our spiritual gifts.
3. All believers are given at least one gift.
4. A believer receives his gift at the time of conversion. At conversion, a believer is indwelt with the Holy Spirit. I Corinthians 12:7 says that when He comes into our lives, He brings a gift or "manifestation of the Spirit".

5. No Christian has all the gifts and there is no gift that every Christian possesses.
6. We cannot choose our gifts; God does that.
7. The spiritual gifts are many and varied. Diversity is not division. Just as diversity was not meant to be division, so unity is not conformity. Unity is not achieved by being the same. Unity is achieved by having the same goal: to glorify God and edify others by using our individual, unique gifts.
8. Spiritual gifts are given to individuals for the good of all members, to build up the body of Christ and to build up one another. They are given to prepare God's people for works of service and they enable us to serve and glorify Christ together.
9. Very importantly, we must use our spiritual gifts with love. Gifts used without love do not accomplish God's intended purposes.

## **VII. How to Know Your Gift**

- A. Believe you are gifted. You must not view spiritual gifts as special rewards for the spiritual elite. Spiritual gifts are given to every believer.
- B. Pray. "You do not have, because you do not ask God" (James 4:2b) Remember, God wants you to know what your gift is.
- C. Become aware of the gifts available to you. Study the Bible passages listed above and be sensitive as you see these gifts becoming operative in your life.
- D. Accept responsibility. Many commands in the New Testament operate in the area of spiritual gifts. Everyone, whether gifted in the area or not, is commanded to evangelize, show mercy, encourage, give, help, etc. As we begin to obey in these and other commands, the Holy Spirit unveils certain gifts.
- E. Take a leap and try things on for size if you think you might have a gift in a particular area. BUT go slowly.
- F. Consider your desires and passions. What do you enjoy doing? What are you drawn to? Your passion or desire may be God's way of showing you that you possess that gift.
- G. Pay attention to the confirmation of others. What do others say about you? In what areas do people look up to you? What have you done in the past for which you were genuinely complimented? There is affirmation and positive feedback within the Body of Christ for the expression of the gift.

H. The Holy Spirit provides peace in our spirits and we experience joy and deep satisfaction as we offer our gift(s) to the Body of Christ.

I. Assessment tools can help you to pinpoint your area of giftedness.

### VIII. Serving with Love

**1 Corinthians 13:1-3** – the foundation for serving in the church and one another

If I speak in the <i>tongues</i> of men and angels,	Spiritual Gift
but have not love,	Lacking Love
I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal	No Impact

If I have the gift of <i>prophecy</i>	Spiritual Gift
and can fathom all mysteries ( <i>wisdom</i> )	Spiritual Gift
and all <i>knowledge</i>	Spiritual Gift
and if I have a <i>faith</i> that can move mountains,	Spiritual Gift
but have not love,	Lacking Love
I am nothing.	No Impact

If I give all I possess to the poor ( <i>voluntary poverty/giving</i> )	Spiritual Gift
and surrender my body to the flames, ( <i>martyrdom</i> )	Spiritual Gift
but I have not love,	Lacking Love
I gain nothing.	No Impact

**Spiritual Gifts expressed without love do not reflect who God is and will have NO IMPACT.**

**1 Corinthians 13:4-8:**

**Love is . . .**

Patient  
Kind  
Not envious  
Not boastful  
Not proud  
Not rude  
Not self-seeking  
Not easily angered  
Not keeping record of wrongs  
Not delighting in evil  
Rejoices with the truth  
Always protecting  
Always trusting  
Always hoping  
Always persevering  
Never fails

**Spiritual Gifts Review Exercise:**

Please answer the following True or False Questions:

- \_\_\_ 1) Every believer has at least 1 spiritual gift.
- \_\_\_ 2) I can decide what spiritual gift I should have.
- \_\_\_ 3) My spiritual gift(s) is designed to build me up.
- \_\_\_ 4) There are primarily 4 passages of scripture which cover the spiritual gifts and they are found in 1st Corinthians, Romans and Ephesians.
- \_\_\_ 5) God wants us to know what our spiritual gifts are.
- \_\_\_ 6) There are some Christians who have all of the spiritual gifts.
- \_\_\_ 7) Spiritual gifts are the same as the fruit of the spirit.
- \_\_\_ 8) The fruit of the spirit has to do with character while the spiritual gifts have to do with service.
- \_\_\_ 9) Whatever my gift, if I do not have love, my gift will have no impact.
- \_\_\_ 10) All spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit and are given for the common good.

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## **Our Mission and Purpose**

### **I. Our Mission Statement and Statement of Faith:**

We the disciples of Union Baptist Church agree that Union Baptist Church is established and sustained by God Almighty and we are committed to worshipping God in Spirit and in truth. Our purpose is to represent the presence of God in the world and our aim is to advance the kingdom of God by winning souls for Christ. We will make every effort to become disciples of Jesus Christ and to make disciples of those who join our fellowship. We will use God's resources through missions and ministry to transform our community and the lives of those who live here.

We shall attain our goal through:

- Public Worship
- Preaching the Gospel
- Consistent Christian Living
- Personal Evangelism
- Mission and Ministry
- Christian Education

Our faith is in the God and Father of our risen Christ who has made us his ambassadors and enables us through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Our desire is to represent the Lord Jesus as we minister to one another and to the world.

### **II. Our Core Values**

The areas that we value most and seek to instill in the individuals who make up the church are:

- Spirit Filled Worship
- Developing Disciples
- Enhancing Community Life
- Developing Leadership

### **III. What we Believe**

#### **A. The teaching of the Bible and the Lordship of Christ is central.**

1. First and foremost, we believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that it sets forth the principles of Christian living. We believe that the Word of God is profitable for

teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness so that the people of God may be complete. (2 Timothy 3:16) In short, Union Baptist Church is a Bible believing, Christ honoring church. Therefore, our goals, ministries and affirmations are firmly rooted in scripture.

**B. We are a redeemed people and, as such, we have a responsibility.**

Our Theme “A Redeemed People Growing, Going and Giving for Christ” identifies our church family as being made up of individuals who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ for a predetermined purpose. As members of the Redeemed Community, what we do makes a claim about our faith in and commitment to our Lord, Jesus Christ. Our faith in God is to be actualized and articulated in ways that glorify God, exalt Christ and liberate people from the bondage and consequences of sin. James 2:26 says, “For as the body without the spirit is dead so faith without works is dead also.”

**IV. Our Mission**

A. Our theme: “A Redeemed People, Growing, Going and Giving for Christ” is based upon the Biblical Mandate:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Luke 4:18-19 NKJV

B. Thus, our mission is four-fold with an ultimate goal of making disciples:

1. To preach the good news about salvation through Jesus Christ.
2. To proclaim freedom which involves providing practical methods to set people free who are socially, intellectually, financially, spiritually and psychologically imprisoned.
3. To recover sight for the blind by providing spiritual enlightenment.
4. To release the oppressed by providing opportunities for kingdom living through enlightenment, self-determination and community building.

**V. How we shall advance our God-given mission and purpose?**

**A. Growing ~ Ephesians 4: 11-15**

1. Our first responsibility as the redeemed of the Lord is personal spiritual growth. The Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 4: 11-15:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ."

2. Growing spiritually is the sign of true discipleship and we are instructed by Scripture to grow. 2 Peter 3:18 says, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." We are also to grow in fruitfulness (2 Corinthians 9:10) and in love (1 Thessalonians 3:12). We are to grow to perfection. (Hebrews 6:1)
3. Spiritual growth is the direct result of a healthy continual diet of the Word of God. (1 Peter 2:2) The Apostle Paul instructed the saints at Ephesus that the source of their spiritual growth and vitality is the Word of God and that it is the responsibility of the pastor to provide teaching that is conducive to spiritual growth and development. So that, "Speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ." (Ephesians 4:15)
4. This theme challenges every member of the family to grow spiritually by participating in the following five areas. First, develop a time for daily prayer and devotion. Second, participate regularly in Bible study, church sponsored seminars and workshops. Third, be consistent in worship. Fourth, we grow when we fellowship with other believers. Last, we grow when we put into practice the spiritual principles that we learn.

#### **B. Going ~ Matthew 28: 18-20**

1. Fulfilling the biblical mandate of evangelism and missions.

Going emphasizes the need for evangelism and missions. In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus tells his disciples, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age.”

2. Our responsibility

As a redeemed people, we are obligated to engage in ministry, missions and evangelism. The mandate given to us by our Lord is to make disciples, baptize them into the fellowship of believers and to teach them the things we have learned from Jesus. The unsaved need to know that there is power that transforms life and reconciles the sinner to God; and that God is working through us to meet the needs of hurting humanity. Our going out as disciples is for the purpose of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ through word and deed.

3. Some going arms at UBC:

Good for Girls – Mentoring program  
Jobs For Life – Job training program  
Outreach Ministries, for example:  
    Foreign Missions  
    Home Missions  
    Seniors ministry

**C. Giving ~ I Peter 4: 10-11**

1. Giving speaks of Christian stewardship. Stewardship is not just a matter of how one manages money, although it is vitally important for the believer to tithe. Peter writes in 1 Peter 4:10-11, “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms...”
2. The believer who is growing spiritually understands that whatever he possesses belongs to God and that he is only a manager of all that God has placed in his trust. Good stewardship is a lifestyle that glorifies God by managing well every blessing from God.
3. The Bible teaches that there is a way to give that is pleasing to God. We are to give without ostentation (Matthew 6:3), we are to give freely (Matthew 10:8), we are to give with simplicity (Romans 12:8), and we are to give regularly (I Corinthians 16:2). We are



also instructed to give generously according to our ability whether it is our time, talent or treasure.

4. Some giving arms of UBC:

- a. Union Baptist Community Development Corporation, the purpose of which is to improve conditions for the socially disadvantaged residents of Westchester County and elsewhere through a comprehensive community development strategy covering five major areas: housing, human services, economic development, education and community capacity building.
- b. serving and helping ministries, such as:
  - Christian counseling and bereavement ministry
  - Greeter's ministry
  - Food Service ministry
- c. foreign and home missions

**VI. What we expect of you:**

There are four basic, biblical directives that must be carried out by the congregation. Each member is asked to:

- Worship regularly.
- Prayerfully use and develop their unique gifting or talent by participating in at least one ministry in the church.
- Give as the Bible instructs us to give.
- Bring or invite at least one person to worship each quarter.

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## SERVING OPPORTUNITIES IN UNION BAPTIST CHURCH

Administration Volunteers  
Adult Praise Dancers  
Adult Praise Team  
Announcements Ministry  
Bereavement Ministry  
Children's Choir  
Christian Counseling Ministry  
Christian Education Ministry  
Dfree Ministry  
Disciples of Praise Choir  
Domestic Violence Ministry  
Drama Ministry  
Evangelism Ministry  
Flower Ministry  
FLY (Faithfully Living Your Life) Ministry  
Food Service Ministry  
Good for Girls  
Greeters Ministry  
Health and Fitness Ministry (Women's exercise group)  
Health and Wellness Ministry  
Homework Hub  
Hospitality Ministry  
King's Men Choir  
Mass Choir  
Men's Ministry  
Missions-Foreign and Home Ministry  
New Members Ministry  
Our Sons of Fairview (Scholarship) Ministry  
Security Ministry  
S.O.S. (Serving our Seniors, Sick & Shut-in) Ministry  
Stephen (Lay Caring) Ministry  
Technology Ministry  
Union C.A.R.E.S. Ministry  
Usher's Ministry  
W.I.N.G.S. (Women In God's Service) Ministry  
Youth Ministry  
Youth Praise Dancers

**If you are interested in joining, or desire information about these ministries, please call the church office (914-948-6439), leave your contact information and they will have the ministry head get in touch with you. You may also contact these ministries by using the ministry contact form on the Union Baptist Church website at [www.unionbaptistwp.org](http://www.unionbaptistwp.org).**

# UNION BAPTIST CHURCH

