

# *Elementary Principles*



Series Council of God 



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*Series Council of God*

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# Introduction

When placing this material in the hands of the Church in 1990, our intent was not to create a complete and closed theological study. We wanted instead to supply the church with a convenient and straightforward material that would cooperate with the edification of every precious disciple. Still, with this purpose in mind, we created a new edition of the Elementary Principles booklet that, like everything which is alive and dynamic, has received modifications and a restructuring. We have done this to make its use simpler and more practical for the disciples. This is the result of the work being done over the years, along with those who are being shaped into the image of Jesus Christ.

The pastors of the Church in Salvador, Bahia, are glad to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the shaping of God's family. We cannot, however, fail to honor our brothers from other cities and countries whom, with patience and much love, have helped us with their lives, ministry and teaching. We would like to continue learning about all who work towards this ideal. We praise the Lord for grace and wisdom that has spread over the whole Church in all places.

This first booklet is part of a set that composes the basic themes for the shaping of a disciple. The other booklets are the following: The Eternal Purpose of God; Life in Christ; Communion with God; Gospel of the Kingdom; Family.

All honor and glory be given to Jesus Christ: "Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28).

# Preface

This is an exclusive workbook for the Church.

It is unique because it did not flow out of the mind of a single man. On the contrary, it came from the direct, immediate action of the Holy Spirit, operating in the life of the local church in Salvador, Bahia.

It is unique because it is not the result of a theory drawn up artificially. On the contrary, it jumped out of the Bible directly into the church's life. It is a guide that has been calibrated by our experience through corrections and discipline of the Holy Spirit. And now comes back to the church's practice as a dynamic teaching, precisely because it is truly practical.

It is unique because it is neither complicated nor confusing like theological studies and methods that are commonly used in teaching. On the contrary, it is as simple as the gospel is simple.

It is unique because it is neither dry nor bland as most teaching materials are. On the contrary, it is perceived, felt and almost immersed in the anointing that surrounds it and that is discerned by simply reading it.

It is therefore with great joy that we introduce this booklet which the Holy Spirit brought to our brethren in the Northeast of Brazil because we know that it can be a precious instrument for the Church of the Lord throughout our beloved Brazil and the World.

Porto Alegre, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1990

Moysés C. de Moraes  
Presbytery in Porto Alegre

# How should we teach in the Church

The disciples who both learn and teach must be prepared to handle simple studies. Jesus said: “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes” (Matthew 11:25). The church does not need an academic and intellectualized teaching (1 Corinthians 1:18-31; 2:1-16) to please the Lord.

It is good to remember the example of the first church in Jerusalem. That church is the model for everything throughout the ages. The brothers from that time were simple, and many of them did not know how to read nor write. They did not have a printing press, nor paper. They also did not have Bibles. However, the church was holy and glorious – a model for us.

Looking at the way they lived, we noticed that the apostles used the method of constant repetition (catechism). Those who learned could assimilate and keep the Word in their minds and hearts. They were not looking for novelties nor wanted to invent things. The important things that they taught were repeated multiple times until everyone had learned them well (Philippians 3:1, 2 Peter 1:12-15).

The apostles were well aware of the need to convey the entire counsel of God and not mere biblical or theological studies. Each disciple had to be shaped into the image of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:26-27; Philippians 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:2). The teaching of the apostles pointed essentially to three things:

- Revealing Christ: His person, His power, His promises;
- Teaching all the commandments of Jesus;
- Establishing all the principles for the functioning of the Church.

It is necessary to return to simplicity so that the whole counsel of God may be received and absorbed by all brothers, in particular by the simpler ones.

God will not examine our knowledge concerning the contents of the Bible. He will ask us how we lived it. Doctrine consists of practical commandments for the life of the disciples (Titus 2:1-15).

# How to work with this material

This booklet is divided into lessons, to be studied by the disciples alone or with their disciplers.

Since we want you to benefit from searching the scriptures and meditation, each lesson has two sections: **Seeking Insight** and **Understanding More**.

## Seeking Insight

In this section, we want the disciple to have contact with God and with His Word, as well as to gain insight and knowledge of God and His Word through prayer and meditation.

He or she should read each of the writings listed in **Bible Reading**, praying to the Lord to gain insight.

You should also try to answer in your notebook the questions listed in **Meditation**, writing everything you have learned in addition to your questions.

In each lesson, there are also some phrases and Bible verses for **Catechism** (teaching by repetition). They must be repeated in the same way that they are written in the booklet so that all disciples will work with the same verses.

## Understanding More

In this section, disciples will have teachings to deepen and enrich their understanding of the subject that they meditated on by themselves.

However, disciples should only proceed to this section after carefully completing the previous section - **Seeking Insight** - and having shown their meditations and notes to their discipler. Then they should read and study together the content that is in the second section - **Understanding more**. In case the disciple has difficulties going through the first section alone, the discipler must help him.

# Why should we be well-founded?

We aim to bring each disciple clear and objective knowledge about the fundamental truths of the Kingdom of God. These truths are going to create in our lives a solid foundation on which all else is edified. There are three reasons why we believe that the foundation is very important:

1) Ephesians 2:20-22 talks about of our lives as buildings. Jesus said that without foundation, the house would collapse (Matthew 7:24-29). God will not allow us to build a multi-story building on an inconsistent foundation.

2) Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 that even those who built their house using hay, wood, and straw were saved because they had the proper foundation.

3) In Hebrews 5:11 to 6:3, we see that because of a lack of being well-founded, the brothers from that time were not practicing followers of the word and could not progress in the knowledge of God. All Christians should be masters of the word, capable of transmitting the foundations to those who come to Christ. Each disciple must understand, practice, and teach everything regarding the Kingdom of God, the purpose of God for those who enter it, and the steps one must take at the beginning of their journey.

To have the right foundation - Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11) - in our lives, we must remember what the Lord Himself spoke in His Sermon on the Mount:

Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. Luke 6:47-48

To start building this foundation in our lives, we must remove all the dirt from our lives until we find a rock. The rock in the New Testament is the Lord Jesus himself. We need to dig everything that is ours, human and sinful so that only the life of Jesus will flourish.

# Who is well-founded?

1. He who has faith in the Son of God, the incarnate, the Son of Man, crucified, risen and exalted.

2. He who truly denied himself and through repentance placed his life under the authority of Jesus.

3. He who lives in the faith of his baptism lives by faith because he knows that he is united to Christ.

4. He who has experienced the gift of the Holy Spirit and received power from on high.

Once well-founded, the new disciple must learn what the goal of God for his life is and how to cooperate with His eternal purpose, serving in the church. This will be studied in the booklet *The Eternal Purpose of God*.



# Part 1 | **Jesus, His life and His Work**

Jesus did not say that he came to bring truth. He said I am the truth (...) John 14:6 Jesus did not come to bring simply a religion, not a philosophy, or a bunch of rules as a code of conduct. Jesus came to bring himself. He is the resurrection and the life. To receive this life we must know him: Who He is, where He came from, what He spoke, what He did, where He is, etc. “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). We attain this knowledge by faith in His word. Oh, how important it is to receive and believe in the word that God gives concerning His Son Jesus Christ! Pray, read and meditate on this word. Ask the Holy Spirit that will help you to know Jesus because it was for this reason that the Spirit came (John 16:13-15).



# Lesson 1 | Jesus existed before all things

## Seeking Insight

### Bible Reading

- John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2.

### Meditation

- According to John 1:1-3, how does the Bible call Jesus before he was born in Bethlehem?
- Who was the Eternal Word? What were His characteristics?
- Who created the Eternal Word? Since when has He existed?
- What does John 1:1-3 say about the creation of all things?

### Catechism

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**Jesus existed before all things.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. John 1:1-3

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## Understanding More

### Jesus existed before all things.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. John 1:1-3

Many people think that Jesus is a person who began his life when he was born in Bethlehem of Judea. This is not true. For us, life begins when we are generated in the womb of our mother, and we did not exist before that. This was not the case with Jesus. He existed long before His birth in Bethlehem. Not as a man, but as the Word of God. The Word was not created, He was God and always existed. He made all things.



### *Jesus was never created. He was God and always existed*

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. Colossians 1:15-17

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Hebrews 1:1-3

## Lesson 2 | He became a man

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- Philippians 2:6-8; John 1:14; 1 John 4:2-3; 1 Timothy 3:16; Romans 8:3.

#### Meditation

- What did the Eternal Word do? (John 1:14)
- In what form did Jesus exist before he became a man? (Philippians 2:6-8)
- What does it mean that Jesus abandoned the form of God and became a man?
- Does Jesus today remain to be the same person of God? Explain your answer.

#### Catechism

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**He became a man.**

(...) Christ Jesus, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men, and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Philippians 2:6-8

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## Understanding More

### He became a man.

(...) Christ Jesus, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men, and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Philippians 2:6-8

What an incredible truth! The Eternal Word, the creator of all things, has emptied himself of his glory and assumed the form of man. Imagine a man becoming a worm! It would still be very little to be compared with the emptying of the Word, because it would be a creature taking the form of another inferior creature. However, when the Word was made flesh, it was something much more tremendous! This was the Creator Himself, taking the form of one of his creatures. The humiliation of Jesus did not begin on the cross; it began in Bethlehem of Judea. How wonderful is Jesus! (1 John 4:2-3; 1 Timothy 3:16; Romans 8:3).

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:14



*When the Word became flesh, it was the Creator Himself, taking the form of one of his creatures.*



## Lesson 3 | His life was perfect and blameless

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- 1 Peter 2:22; John 4:34; 8:29;
- Hebrews 4:15; 7:26;
- 1 John 3:5.

#### Meditation

- According to 1 Peter 2:22, how was Jesus' life?
- Write about the texts John 4:34 and John 8:29
- Was Jesus tempted to sin?
- Why did he never sin?

#### Catechism

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**His life was perfect and blameless.**

(...) "who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth."

1 Peter 2:22

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# Understanding More

## His life was perfect and blameless

who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth. 1 Peter 2:22

First, Jesus emptied himself, becoming a man. Then, as a man, he continued emptying himself. In what way? By never doing his own will. The text of Philippians 2:8 says: "...He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death...". What was Adam's sin? He did his own will. Now, Jesus, as last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45), came always to do the will of the Father.

Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work. John 4:34

And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him. John 8:29

Scripture says that He did not sin because He never did his own will. The devil tempted Jesus from the beginning that He would do his own will, but Jesus remained obedient to the Father until death and death on the cross. Holy is Jesus. (Also read 1 John 3:5).



*Jesus never sinned, because He never did his own will.*



# Lesson 4 | His work was great and glorious

## Seeking Insight

### Bible Reading

- Acts 10:38;
- Acts 2:22;
- John 20:30-31.

### Meditation

- Read and meditate on the healings and miracles that Jesus did.
- What was Jesus' daily life? And His power?
- If Jesus was a simple man, where did such power come from?

### Catechism

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**His work was great and glorious.**

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Acts 10:38

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# Understanding More

## His work was great and glorious.

(...) how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. Acts 10:38

When looking at the life of Jesus, we admire not only his holiness but also the power that manifested in His ministry. He did many miracles, wonders and signs (Acts 2:22): He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, raised the dead, walked on the waters, multiplied food, preached to the multitudes, made disciples and taught them how to please the Father. With what power did He do it? He did nothing as God - He had emptied himself

of the form of God and lived as a man. Therefore, He needed the power of the Holy Spirit to do the work of God. That is why the father rejoiced so much in his baptism because there He received the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:13-17). It was again Jesus emptying Himself, assuming the limitation of being a man and His need of the Holy Spirit to fulfill His ministry. Tremendous is Jesus. (Read also John 20:30-31).

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. John 20:30-31



*No man did such  
miracles and  
manifested such  
great power on  
earth as Jesus did.  
All of this because  
God was with Him.*

## Lesson 5 | He died for our sins

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- 2 Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 53:5-6;
- 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; Galatians 3:13

#### Meditation

- What is the punishment for sin?
- What was the situation of all men after the fall?
- Has God given up punishing our sin? What did God do with the sin that was ours?
- Meditate and write about Jesus' moment on the cross.
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. How does God see us now?

#### Catechism

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God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21

**He died for our sins.**

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:5-6

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## Understanding More

### He died for our sins.

Everyone, even unbelievers know that Jesus died for our sins. However, only when we understand why it was necessary for Him to die that we receive spiritual revelation. Why did God demand the life of his only Son?

In order to know the love of God, it is necessary to understand also his holiness and justice. God is perfectly holy and perfectly righteous. He cannot bear even what for us would be a "small mistake." His holiness is offended by any form of sin and His justice demands punishment (Romans 1:18).



*In the sight of God, all men have sinned and were sentenced to death.*

If the demand is so great, and if only one utterly perfect man can please God, then who else can please Him? Is there someone who fulfills the conditions? The clear answer from scripture is no.

(...) There is none righteous, no, not one (...).  
Romans 3:10

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of  
God. Romans 3:23

And what is the consequence of this? "...For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23). This is the eternal death and eternal punishment. Who is subject to this punishment? The entire human race.

When the Spirit of God convicts us of sin, righteousness and judgment, it is then that we understand how evil we are

before God and how great our debt to Him is. We know our guilt and lose our peace. Only then can we begin to understand why Jesus died. He died to satisfy the righteousness of God and to appease His wrath. We deserve to be punished for our sin, but Jesus accepted to be punished in our place. Thus, God fulfilled His justice and His anger. That is why Isaiah said: "...it pleased the Lord to bruise Him..." Isaiah 53:10

But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:5-6

If we are guilty before God, how can we have peace with Him? We have peace when we understand that Jesus paid our punishment and when we are united to Him: "...and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). Jesus paid our debt, alleluia! So, now we have peace with God (Romans 5:1).

God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21



## *Jesus died in our place, paying our debt and reconciling us with God.*

Let us see below a picture of the broad meaning of Jesus' death.

### **Consequences of Sin**

- a) Man offended the holiness of God and provoked his wrath (Romans 1:18).

- b) Because of this, man is condemned to eternal punishment (Romans 6:23).
- c) Man became a slave of Satan and sin (Ephesians 2:2-3, John 8:34).
- d) Man lost his communion with God and can no longer relate to Him (Isaiah 59:2).

## **Solution to Sin**

- a) The death of Jesus was Propitiatory (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). Propitiation means that the death of Jesus on the cross satisfied the righteousness of God. It does not mean that His wrath was simply forgotten, but that it was fulfilled.
- b) The death of Jesus was a sacrifice (Hebrews 10:12). This means that his death was substitutive (1 Peter 2:24; 3:18). A swap took place: the just was punished in place of the unjust. It means that our punishment has already been paid.
- c) The death of Jesus was Redemptive (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7). This means that He Redeemed us (Galatians 3:13). Jesus, who was not a slave to Satan, went to the "slave market" and freed us (Hebrews 2:14-15). He bought us by paying the price of our redemption. And what price was that? His precious blood (Acts 20:28; Revelation 5:9).
- d) The death of Jesus was Reconciling (2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Colossians 1:21-22). To Reconcile means to make peace. Thus, with the barriers taken away, man can again reestablish his relationship with God. Since we already had propitiation, sacrifice and redemption, God now reconnects with His mankind and makes mankind rejoice in His friendship and love. Beloved is Jesus.<sup>1</sup>



*The death of Jesus is the only  
solution to sin and its consequences.*

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<sup>1</sup>Note: There is another aspect of Jesus' death: The fact that we were included in his death. This will be addressed later when we discuss baptism.

## Lesson 6 | He Resurrected

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- Acts 2:24; Romans 1:4; Romans 14:9;  
1 Corinthians 15:4-8;
- Acts 1:1-3; 1 Peter 1:3.

#### Meditation

- What happened on the third day after Jesus' death?
- By whom was Jesus seen after the resurrection?
- The resurrection of Jesus is the greatest proof of him being whom?
- Why was Jesus resurrected?
- Where are the founders of ancient religions today?  
And where is Jesus today?

#### Catechism

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**He Resurrected**

(...) whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, (...) Acts 2:24

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# Understanding More

## Resurrected

whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. Acts 2:24

If Jesus' death is covered with meaning and glory, how much more is His resurrection! The scriptures show us different aspects of Jesus' resurrection and its wide meaning. Let's look at the main ones.

## The resurrection of Jesus is His victory over death

So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O Death, where is your sting? (...) But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:54-57)

What is death? Death is not ceasing to exist. Physical death occurs when the spirit and soul leave the body and when the link is broken between spirit, soul and body.

To overcome death, Jesus needed a physical resurrection, the resurrection of the body: A body of flesh and bone, and not a Spirit (Luke 24:39-40). To prove this, Jesus ate in the presence of the disciples (Luke 24:41-43). His body still had even the marks of the cross (John 20: 20,24-27), though it was a transformed body. It was not bound to space nor the time, He could appear and disappear (Luke 24:31; John 20:19,26).

With the physical resurrection, Jesus started again to have unity between His mind, body and soul. He conquered death (1 Corinthians 15:54-57).

## **The resurrection is what produces faith in the Lord**

that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

The faith of the disciples "went into a tailspin" after the death of Jesus (John 20:19,25; Luke 24:21-22). This faith was restored when the resurrected Jesus appeared to the disciples (John 20:8,20). Without the physical resurrection, who would believe in the crucified Jesus? But by His resurrection, it was proven that He is the Son of God (Romans 1:4; Acts 13:33) and the universal Judge (Acts 17:31).

## **The resurrection of Christ is the foundation of our union with Him**

Our faith in Jesus is not a simple thought of our mind, nor is it a simple mental acceptance of the things we hear about it. Our faith in Him is powerful, because it unites us to Him. Our whole life is "in Christ" (Paul uses this phrase 164 times). The sinner can only be blessed by the work of Christ when he is united to Him.

However, we are men, and the Church despite being a celestial body, it is also a human body (see 1 Corinthians 15:48-49). In order for Jesus to become the head of this human body, it was necessary for Him to be a man forever. That is why He needed a human body. Without the resurrection of the body, Christ would have ceased being human. The Lord became an eternal man with a body transfigured and glorified by the physical resurrection. He is now the "man from heaven" (1 Corinthians 15:47), the son of man which is in the midst of the seven lampstands (Revelation 1:13), He is the head of a new race (Ephesians 1:22-23). Hallelujah!

The resurrection of Christ is, therefore, the greatest difference between the Christian faith and a religion of men. Men like Buddha, Mohammed, Alan Kardek and others, founded their religions. But where are they now? They are dead.

This proves that they did not win the wages of sin: death. The followers of these men are alone and have nothing other than books of rules and doctrines. These books did not save their writers, much less will they save their followers. But we do not have a religion, a dead book of doctrines without power. We have a living person who lives in us and us in Him. "Christ in you, the hope of glory" Colossians 1:27

## **The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of our resurrection**

But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

The resurrection of the body is possible only through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. By His resurrection, He glorified and transfigured humanity in Him. He is the firstfruits (1 Corinthians 15:20,23; Colossians 1:18). His victory over death guarantees our own resurrection (Romans 8:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:14). His body of glory is the pattern of our future bodies (Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 15:48-49). Glorious is Jesus!

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Romans 8:11

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 4:14

## Lesson 7 | He was exalted

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- Acts 2:36; Philippians 2:9-11;
- Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-22;
- 1 Peter 3:22.

#### Meditation

- What does it mean that God exalted Jesus above all?
- What is the position of Jesus today in the universe?
- Acts 2:36. What does it mean that Jesus was made Lord and Christ?
- Explain the statement of Jesus in Matthew 28:18.
- Who sits today on the throne of the Universe?

#### Catechism

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##### He was exalted.

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Acts 2:36

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9-11

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# Understanding More

## He was exalted

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11

What a glorious truth! "Every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."

The men from Jesus' time, including the Jewish priests judged Jesus as a criminal and despised him. But God had a completely opposite judgment of Him to that of men. What a tremendous day that was when Peter got up and said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

There is, however, a truth that must be remembered and well explained: Before coming to this world, the Word had all the glory of God (John 17:5). But He was the Word of God: He was God, He was not a man. Now, the Word made flesh in Jesus was received in heaven as a man after the suffering of the Cross and the physical resurrection. As a man, He is exalted and as a man, He sits at the right hand of God the Father and receives a name above every name. Hallelujah! There is a man sitting on the throne of the universe: Jesus, the Son of man, the head of a redeemed race.

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying: All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Matthew 28:18



## *Jesus received all power and authority in heaven and on earth.*

However, let us never forget the mystery (1 Timothy 3:16): Jesus is our God-man. As he was exalted He received back all the glory as God (John 17:5). He has the whole divinity (Colossians 2:9). He had reaffirmed that only God could be worshiped and revered (Matthew 4:10); however, He accepted this worship (Matthew 14:33; 15:9; John 20:28; Hebrews 1:6 and Revelation 5:8-14). He is omnipresent (is everywhere - Matthew 18:20 and 28:20), is omniscient (knows all things - John 21:17; Colossians 2:2-3) and omnipotent (has all power - Revelation 1:8). He is a God (Titus 2:13; Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:2 and 1 John 5:20).

What incomprehensible things happen in this great unknown world that we call heaven! Our minds cannot imagine what tremendous things happen on the other side of the veil. But the Church needs to understand one thing: everything that happens there is done at the authority of the Lord and nothing is done without His initiative. Majestic is Jesus!

Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.  
Acts 2:33-36.

## Lesson 8 | He will return

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- Matthew 24:30; Revelation 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 4:16;
- 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 2 Timothy 4:1; Matthew 24:44;
- John 14:2-3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; James 5:7

#### Meditation

- Describe how the coming of the Lord will be. (Matthew 24:30; Revelation 1:7)
- At the coming of the Lord, what will happen to those who have already died in Christ? (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
- And what happens to us, those who are alive at the coming of the Lord? (1 Corinthians 15:51-52)
- What will the Lord do with the living and the dead? (2 Timothy 4:1)

#### Catechism

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**And He will return**

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Matthew 24:30

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# Understanding More

## And He will return

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.  
Matthew 24:30

What a blessed hope! The glorified Lord will come and manifest Himself to the world. This will undoubtedly be the most tremendous day this earth has ever known. For many, it will be a day of terror and lamentation. For us, however, it will be a day of gladness and unmatched joy.

What does the Bible teach about this day? The subject is so broad and with so many implications that some texts are subject to discussion and give rise to different interpretations. Most of the teaching, however, refers to things clear and indisputable. We will talk about the clear and indisputable texts here.

Read each of the texts with attention and **rejoice in the Lord**.

- a) The coming of the Lord was predicted (prophesied)
- By the prophets                      Zechariah 14:3-5
  - By John the Baptist                Luke 3:3-6  
    John 14:2-3
  - By Jesus Christ                        Acts 1:11 James 5:7;
  - By the angels                            1 Peter 1:7,13;

b) The coming of the Lord will be:

- Personal (and physical)      John 14:3; Acts 1:10-11
- Visible      Revelation 1:7; 1 John 3:2-3
- Literal (real)      1 Thessalonians 4:16
- Sudden      Matthew 24:42-44;  
1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

c) The Lord will come to:

- Raise the dead in Christ      1 Thessalonians 4:16;  
1 Corinthians 15:22-23
- Transform the living to  
immortality      1 Corinthians 15:51-53
- Snatch them to meet  
Him in the air      1 Thessalonians 4:17
- Judge and reward the  
saints      2 Corinthians 5:10;  
1 Corinthians 3:12-15
- Marry the bride      Revelation 19:7-9; 21:2
- Destroy the Wicked      2 Thessalonians 2:8
- Judge the nations      Matthew 25:31-33
- Judge everyone      2 Timothy 4:1
- Chain Satan for a  
thousand years      Revelation 20:2-3



*“Certainly I come without delay. Amen.  
Come, Lord Jesus.” (Rev 22:20).*

## Part 2 | **The order that Jesus gave us**

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. Matthew 28:18-20



## Lesson 9 | The order Jesus gave us

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15

#### Meditation

- What were Jesus' last words to his disciples after receiving all power and authority?
- Explain the mission of the church today.
- How does one make disciples? What did Jesus tell us to do after baptizing someone?
- What is a disciple?

#### Catechism

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##### **What did Jesus command us to do?**

*Jesus commanded us to make disciples...*

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matthew 28:18-20

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# Understanding More

## The order that Jesus gave us

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. Matthew 28:18-20

These were Jesus’ last words to his disciples. It seems that this is the greatest point in the New Testament. It is as if the Lord had been waiting all along to give this word. After He had done all that the Father had commissioned, finally the Lord could give the order: **Make disciples of all nations.**

Can we neglect this commandment? Can we do it in any way we please or whatever way as see fit? No. We must seek with all diligence to understand it well. The risen Lord gave us an order, and we must fulfill it to the letter.



*Jesus commanded us to make disciples.*

The Lord does not command us to get together for meetings. Meetings are important, as is healing the sick. Sermons have their place and, certainly, we must sing and praise. However, the crucial thing we must do is to make disciples. If this is not well understood and not well practiced with a clear strategy, all the other important things we are called to do will be like the bark of a hollow tree.

They will be a heap of disconnected activities, without any purpose or eternal value.

In this booklet, we do not intend to communicate everything that is involved with this commandment, but we want the church to understand the essential points of making disciples.

## **What is a disciple?**

Let us begin with an objective statement: a disciple is someone who believes in everything that Christ says, and who does everything that Christ commands.

It is important to understand that in the context of the New Testament there was no one who was converted and was not a disciple. Converted, saved and disciple are all terms that refer to the same person, being so, each term emphasizes a different aspect of a person's life or experience:

**Saved:** Him who has been delivered from the condemnation and power of sin.

**Converted:** Him who has gone through a transformation in his mind;

**Disciple:** Him who follows, submits and practices the teachings of his master;

**Believer:** Him who believes.

Each of these terms carries a different meaning, but all apply to the same person. There will be much confusion in our lives if we do not understand this. It is common to find people who say they are converted and who believe they are saved, however, in contradiction, who say that their goal is to be submissive to Christ. Their desire is to "someday" be consecrated and totally given to the Lord. What a great confusion! How can someone be converted if he or she has not totally and unconditionally surrendered themselves to Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:21), renouncing everything that he or she has (Luke 14:33) including their own lives (Luke 14:26)? These are all conditions for conversion.



*Someone who converts is more than a  
believer: He is a Disciple.*

We know, with much sadness, that a spirit of false prophecy, like the one in Israel in the days of Jeremiah, has deceived many today. In those days, when the people were under God's condemnation because of their rebellion, false prophets said there was peace with God, deceiving the people (see Jeremiah 6:14; 23:16-17). The lies prevented people from experiencing true repentance.

In these days, God has been restoring the understanding of the Gospel of the Kingdom, and fulfilling the prophetic word of Malachi 3:18. He who wishes to convert without being an entirely devoted disciple of the Lord does not understand the scriptures.

We could have referred to a person who is in the Kingdom of God using any of the terms that appear in Scripture; however, we use the term disciple because:

1<sup>st</sup> It is the most comprehensive term. It expresses more accurately the reality of the life of one who belongs to the Kingdom of God.

2<sup>nd</sup> It is the term that Jesus, the apostles and the first brothers had chosen. The word "disciple" appears 260 times on the N.T. whereas "believer" appears 15 times.



*A disciple is someone who renounced  
everything and gave himself or herself  
entirely to Christ.*

# Lesson 10 | What we should talk about to make disciples

## Seeking Insight

### Bible Reading

- Acts 2:22–39.

### Meditation

- What is the center of the message in the first part of Peter's preaching? (see 22 to 36)?
- What points of the life and work of Jesus did Peter proclaim?
- What happened in verse 37? What was Peter's answer to the question of those men?
- What are the three steps that need to be taken at the door of the Kingdom?

### Catechism

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**What should we talk about to make disciples?**

*Talk about Jesus and the door of the kingdom.*

**What is the door of the Kingdom?**

*Repentance, Baptism in Christ and the Gift of the Holy Spirit.*

**What is the Way of the Kingdom?**

*To keep all things that Jesus commanded.*

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Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38

## Understanding More

### What should we talk about to make disciples?

To answer this question, we must first read Acts 2:22–39. Here, we can see the first outburst of the Church, when the brothers began to obey Jesus' command. What was the content of Peter's message? His preaching was divided basically into two parts:

#### a) Peter talks about Jesus, His life and His work.

- vs 22 Talks about the miracles, wonders and signs (His work was great and glorious).
- vs 23 Talks about his death on the cross (showing that the Father gave him to be crucified).
- vss 24–32 Talks about his resurrection, using two proofs: the promises made to David (vss 24–32) and the testimony of themselves, who saw the risen Jesus (vs 32).
- vss 33–35 Talks about the exalting of Jesus.
- vs 36 Proclaims that Jesus is Lord and Christ.

The proclamation about Jesus, His life, death, resurrection, exaltation, and lordship is what will produce faith in the hearts of those who hear. No one can experience a new birth, if not by faith in the risen Lord (Romans 10:9). This proclamation should not be formal or academic, but should be given with simplicity, joy, authority and anointing of the Holy Spirit. He who proclaims must be full of faith, so that he may transmit faith to those who hear him.

#### b) Peter tells them what they should experience when entering the Kingdom of God.

When those who heard Peter believed his word and feared it (vs 37), Peter gave them the second part of his message (vs 38). In the first part (vss 22–36), Peter spoke of what Jesus did. Now on the second part, he tells them what Jesus wanted us to do.

Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38

Here we have a clear indication that there are three distinct realities that must be experienced at the beginning of our life with Christ. The first and the second one are the conditions to enter the Kingdom of God; the third is a promise from God to those who fulfill the conditions. We can say that this is the Door of the Kingdom. Faith alone in the proclamation of Jesus is not the entrance to the Kingdom. Faith is the foundation – it is what gives power for someone to enter it – it empowers someone to become a child of God (John 1:12). The entrance to the Kingdom consists of:

- Repent
- Be baptized in the name of Jesus
- Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We saw then, that Peter talked about two things: He talked about Jesus and the door of the Kingdom. This is what we should talk about to make disciples.



*To make disciples  
we should talk  
about Jesus and  
the door of the  
Kingdom*

Talking about the work of Jesus hoping that men will believe, without setting the conditions on being a disciple produces a faith lacking the practical expression and who will quickly die. This has been one of the main errors of the church of our century. On the flip side, talking about the demands (requirements) of the kingdom, without communicating the grace of Jesus Christ, produces a legalistic religiosity without power. In the same way, repenting and being baptized without receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit brings an unfruitful life in the performance of your service.

It is necessary to communicate the truth about Jesus, the commandments, and the promise of verse 38. Truth produces Faith in order for obedience to take place. The commandments direct that obedience, and the promise enables the work of being witnesses.

## **How do we complete the work of making disciples?**

The work does not end here. When someone believes, repents, baptizes, and receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, they have just entered through the door. Jesus said that now it is necessary to teach them to keep all the things that He has commanded: This is the path of the kingdom (Matthew 7:13-14);

These three words - **Door, Path and Goal** - help us greatly to see in a simple way, the work that the Lord has entrusted to us. We can say that a **Disciple** is someone who entered through the **Door** of the kingdom, is walking on the **Path** and seeking diligently to achieve the **Goal**. Now we need to understand each of these three points well:

**The Door:** This is the subject covered in the rest of this book, where we will study in detail each of the three steps of the door.

**The Path:** It is the whole counsel of God. It is everything that we need to learn and practice to reach the goal. It is not a theoretical study, nor a teaching of customs and traditions of men. It is the sound doctrine (Titus 2:1; Matthew 7:28). It is a teaching for all areas of life. This teaching will be found in other booklets prepared for the shaping of a disciple. The topics are:

- Salvation in Christ
- Relationship with God
- Family





# Part 3 | **The Door of the Kingdom**

Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38



## Lesson 10 | Repentance (Part 1)

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- Genesis 3:1–7; Acts 2:38; Matthew 4:17; Mark 8:34–36.

#### Meditation

- Comment on this phrase: The central problem of man is not what he does wrong, but it is his independence from God.
- If God does not want just a change of external acts, what kind of change is needed?
- What is the new inner attitude, after repentance?

#### Catechism

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##### **What is repentance?**

*Repentance is a change of inner attitude.*

##### **What is the inner change that happens in repentance?**

*Stop being independent to being dependent on God.*

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Mark 8:34–36

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# Understanding More

## Repentance (part 1)

It is very important to have a clear understanding of what is repentance. We are surrounded with worldly and religious concepts that do not define exactly what is our problem before God. If we do not understand well what the problem is, how can we know what is the solution? Everyone who hears the gospel must have this understanding.

### What is the main problem of man?

In order to answer this question, we must start by analyzing how everything began and what happened in the fall of man (Genesis 3:1-7). In this text, we have the description of how sin entered the world. Generally, it is said that Adam's sin was disobedience, but disobedience does not define exactly the problem. In fact, disobedience is already a fruit and consequence of sin, not sin itself.

The key to reaching this conclusion is in the words: "...you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (verse 5) and "...a tree desirable to make one wise" (verse 6) Why was knowledge so tempting for Adam? Why did he want to have knowledge to the point of risking the punishment of death that God had promised? It is simple. Until that moment, he lived in a relationship of total dependence on God, he needed the guidance of God for everything and was directed by God and his wisdom (see Proverbs 8:22-31). Why did he want the knowledge and wisdom that came from a tree and not from God? Adam wanted to direct his own life; he wanted to do his own will and be his own God. Adam wanted **independence**.

This was not something that Adam did, it was a decision inside his heart. A disposition of being independent, being the owner of his own life. Sin resulted in his disobedience, but was generated by an inner attitude of rebellion.

When Adam sinned, his human nature degenerated. Sin became part of his nature, and, therefore an inheritance for the whole human race, since all are his decedents (Romans 5:12,19). Adam's problem, now, is the problem of the entire human race. What is our problem then?



*The central problem of man is not what he does wrong, but it is his independence from God.*

Our biggest problem in the eyes of God is not in the wrong things we do, but in our inner attitude of **independence** and rebellion. All the sins we commit are a consequence of this interior disposition. When, in my inner soul, there is an attitude of independence (I am the owner of my life, I do my own will), thus, my actions will not please God. We must understand that the main problem is **independence** (sin), whereas sinful acts (sins) are the consequence.

### **What is the solution to the problem?**

We must pose a question: Is it enough for a man to forsake his worst sins (such as vices, orgy, and idolatry) and believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, without, however, solving his fundamental problem of independence? The answer is **no**. God wants to reach the root of the problem. He wants to change our attitude, that we abandon **independence** and become **dependent** on God. The word of the Gospel of Jesus is not to heal the wounds of man. God wants to treat the cause

of the problem and not just the consequence. This is why He sent His Son Jesus: The Lord came not to bring only the forgiveness of sins, but came to bring the solution to the problem of sin and rebellion. And how did he do this? Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:60; 16:16).

The apostles also preached the Gospel of the Kingdom (Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23,30,31).

The Gospel of the Kingdom is the end of man's rebellion and independence. God wants to forgive, but also wants to govern and rule over man. This is the meaning of repentance. Forgiveness without the government of Christ is like giving a water bath for someone who continues swimming in the mud.

## What is repentance?

From the Greek, the word that appears in scripture is "metanoia," which means change of mind, change of inner attitude. What change is that? It is swapping an attitude of **independence** to an attitude of **dependence**. Swapping the attitude of rebellion (I do whatever I want) for the attitude of submission (I belong to God so I must do his will).

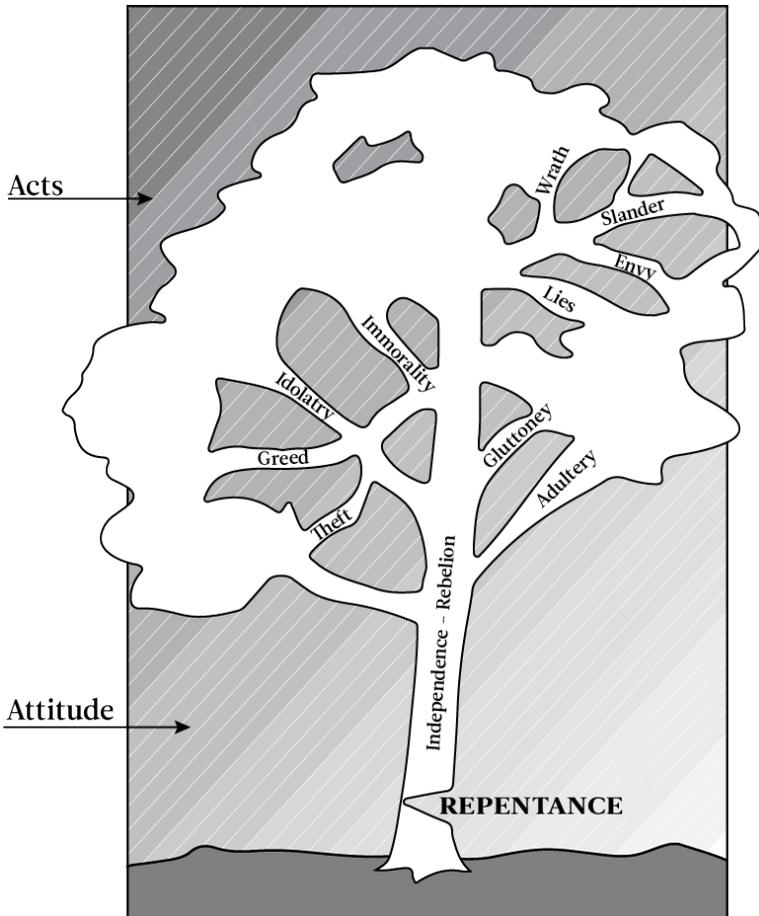


*Repentance is a change of attitude: stop  
being independent to becoming  
dependent on God.*

Old attitude	New Attitude
Rebellion I do whatever comes to mind <i>Independence</i>	Submission Subject to Christ in everything <i>Dependency</i>

When we change our attitude toward God, our actions also change. If we only change our acts (we stop doing some things that we consider very wrong) but continue internally with an attitude of independence, we are still being rebellious and in need of repentance.

Let us see, next, the illustration of the tree:





## Lesson 11 | Repentance (Part 2)

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- Mark 8:34-36; Luke 9:23-25; 14:26-33;
- Matthew 10:37-39.

#### Meditation

- What are the conditions for someone who decides to become a disciple?
- In the texts above, Jesus speaks primarily of four things that are necessary for true repentance. What are they?
- What do these expressions mean: deny yourself, take up your cross, lose your life, and give up everything?
- What is the difference between a religious person and a true disciple?

#### Catechism

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**What is needed to change our attitude?**

*To deny ourselves, to take up the cross, to lose our life and to renounce everything.*

So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. Luke 14:33

# Understanding More

## Repentance (part 2)

### What is needed to change our attitude?

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Mark 8:34-36

So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. Luke 14:33

All of Jesus' preaching was embedded with the message of repentance. Jesus did not preach a "cute" gospel, a gospel of offerings; instead, He preached a convincing and extremely demanding gospel. All his preaching was intended to lead men to a true repentance, an inner revolution. He showed what practical way men could experience this repentance.

What is required to repent and become a disciple of Jesus? Basically, four things:

1. **Deny yourself** (Mark 8:34). Is not to deny only a few sins. It is to...

2. **Take up the cross** (Mark 8:34). But what is to take the cross? It is to...

3. **Losing your life** (Mark 8:35). How does this happen? Should I die literally? No. This is a spiritual reality, it is the proper repentance. Until today, my life was mine, I was my own master. But now I lose my life because I give it to God. From now on, He is my master. God can only govern my life if I give it up willingly and, to do this, I must be willing to lose it. But repentance also involves to...

4. **Give up everything you have** (Luke 14:33). If I no longer belong to myself, let alone the things that I possess. Now everything belongs to God: my family, job, home, car, salary, career, etc., everything belongs to God.

Now we have one more question to answer: Is this the message that the Church has preached? Unfortunately, not. The preaching of the church nowadays has been more of a gospel of offerings than a gospel of the kingdom. One could say no and say that lately God has raised up many in the church, talking about the kingdom and proclaiming that Jesus is Lord. Well, that is true, but the church does not seem to have changed its message. Let's analyze the following:

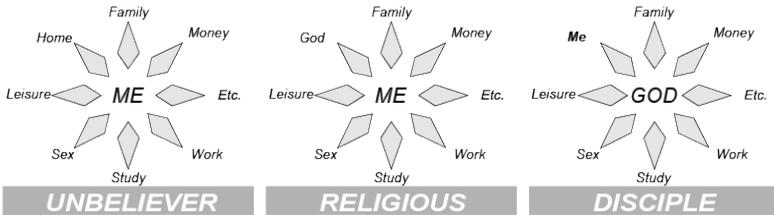
When Jesus set the conditions of the kingdom, He always began with "if any man wants to be my disciple ...", and he followed with the conditions. These were conditions for anyone to be a disciple, to be converted, saved. They were conditions for entering the kingdom of God. They were not an option given to those who wanted to be more devoted, to grow in the faith or to become a pastor. Repentance, with everything that it implies and produces, happens on **the door** and not on the way of the Kingdom. Many today are preaching a "cute" gospel (believe and nothing else) and someday want to narrow their path to be like the "consecrated" ones. However, who will want to lose their life later on, if on the entrance, they were already promised salvation and eternal life without any conditions? This preaching has filled the church of religious people who are not submissive to the authority of Jesus. We must change the situation and therefore, it is necessary to understand this truth:



*Total submission to Jesus' authority is not  
an option for the saved,  
but a condition to be saved.*

## The three types of men

In the world today there are three types of men. The first wants nothing to do with God. The second is very interested in God. The third lives for God. They are:



**The unbeliever:** Does not necessarily mean an atheist. It is someone who has no interest in God. What is his problem? He rules his life. He controls all areas of his life according to his will and for his own pleasure. He has **ME** in the center of his life. He lives for himself.

**The religious person:** He is very different from the unbeliever. He believes in God, reads the Bible, prays, sings, goes to meetings, calls Jesus Lord, etc. But what is his problem? The same problem as the unbeliever. He has **ME** in the center. He lives for himself. God exists to bless him, heal him, serve him and save him; God is his solver. This is worse than the unbeliever because he is fooling himself.

**The Disciple:** He no longer lives for himself, he lives to God. His whole life is structured according to the will of God. Jesus is his **Lord**. He experienced true repentance. What a difference between a disciple and a religious person! What love! What promptness! What gentleness! How he grows and bears fruit! Thank God for the revelation of His kingdom!

You should carefully read the texts below for more clarification: Matthew 5:20; 6:25-34; 7:13; 7:21-23; 8:18-22; 9:9; 10:37-39; 11:28-30; 13:44-45; 16:24-25; 19:29; Luke 9:23-26; 9:57-62; 12:29-34; 14:25-33; 18:18-30; John 12:24-26; Acts 3:19; 17:30.

## Lesson 13 | Baptism (1 part)

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Galatians 3:27
- Acts 2:38,41; 8:12; 8:36-38; 9:17-18; 22:13-16; 10:44-48; 16:13-15; 16:30-34; 18:8; 19:4-5.

#### Meditation

- What is the first step to be taken by someone who believed in the Lord Jesus and repented?
- Is baptism a step that should take place later in the walk with God or should it take place at the entrance?
- Study the nine cases of baptism that we find in the book of Acts of the Apostles and comment on how was the practice of the apostles.

#### Catechism

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**What happens in Baptism?**

*We are placed in Christ.*

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Galatians 3:27

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# Understanding More

## Baptism (Part 1)

This is another step that is associated to the door of the kingdom. It is not something that takes place along the way later in the Christian life: It is at the **Door**. When we talk about repentance, we need to clarify the difference between what the Bible teaches and some misconceptions embraced by some churches. In the same way, when we speak about baptism, we also need to bring clarity. This subject is loaded with human concepts that have taken away its tremendous importance. Baptism at times has been downgraded to a lower plane with claims that baptism is merely a "symbol" of our death with Christ, or, even worse, simply a public testimony of our faith.

Is baptism more than just a symbol? – Yes! Baptism is clothed with meaning and spiritual reality. This is what Jesus and the apostles tell us. Let us take a step by step view into what the scriptures teach us:

### The Word of God.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”  
Amen. Matthew 28:19-20

He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.  
Mark 16:16

In the verses from Matthew, Jesus placed baptism at the beginning of life with Him. First, we are to baptize and then teach to keep things that He commanded. He did not say we should first teach and then baptize.



## *Jesus put the baptism in the beginning of the Christian life.*

The text of Mark is stronger and very clear: "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." The Church lives as if Jesus had spoken: "He who believes and is saved, should be baptized." What authority do we have to change the words of the Lord? Why do most churches believe that baptism is not important for salvation? If baptism was just what the church has taught, Jesus would never say what He did. Could He have been too enthusiastic and exaggerated a bit? - No! Therefore, let's return to Him the authority. Let us see how the apostles interpreted the teaching of Jesus about baptism:

### **The Practice of the Apostles**

Throughout the entire book of Acts of the Apostles, we come across nine instances of baptism. By analyzing each of them we can notice a very significant fact that is common to all of them: in all cases, baptism happened immediately after someone received the word. The apostles did not even wait one day. There are, however, some strange cases. Let's review all of them:

- **At Pentecost** (Acts 2:38,41): Three thousand people were baptized in one day. Why were they not baptizing people little by little? Why did they not try to get to know all those people first? (There were many who were from other cities).

- **The Samaritans** (Acts 8:12): the only requirement was to give credit to the word of the kingdom and the name of Jesus. They did not need to pass any tests nor need months of Bible study before getting baptized.

- **The Ethiopian Eunuch** (Acts 8:36-38): He was a gentile. Philip did not even know him. Perhaps, therefore, he posed the question: Is there anything that keeps me from being baptized? The answer was: it is lawful for you

to get baptized. Again, he did not need a baptism class.

- **Paul** (Acts 9:17-18; 22:13-16): This was the case that took the longest (three days), but this happened because he was isolated and blind. There was no one to baptize him.

- **Cornelius and His Family** (Acts 10:44-48): These were Gentiles that Peter did not know but he had them baptized immediately, even though he knew that the brothers in Jerusalem would wonder and question (see chapter 11)

- **Lydia and the Family** (Acts 16:13-15): Yet again, an immediate baptism even though she was a Gentile woman.

- **The Jailer and the Family** (Acts 16:30-34): This is the most interesting case. The verse 25 shows that everything began around midnight, followed by a series of events (vss 26-31). Later, Paul and Silas preached to all the family of the jailer (vs 32) and the jailer washed the wounds of Paul and Silas' scourges. And then they were baptized that very same night (vs 33). All of this took place in the wee hours of morning! Why such a hurry? Could not Paul have waited for the dawn? What did the apostles see in baptism that was so important to have such haste about it? Certainly, for them, it was not only a symbol. It also was not a public testimony of faith (in many cases there was no public). What was it then? First, let's look at other cases.

- **Crispus and Others** (Acts 18:8): Again, the only condition to be baptized was having received the word (they believed and were baptized). It does not say here that they were baptized on the same day, nor does it say otherwise. Certainly, the apostles had only one practice.

- **The Twelve Ephesians** (Acts 19:4-5): As soon as they heard about Jesus, they were baptized.

We saw then that the practice of the Apostles was very different than what many churches practice today. For them, the baptism was something so important, so fundamental and essential, that when someone received the word, they were



## Lesson 14 | Baptism (Part 2)

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-6; Ephesians 2:5-6; Colossians 2:12; 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17;
- Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16.

#### Meditation

- What is Baptism (Galatians 3:27)?
- What happens as a result of our union with Christ (Romans 6:3-6, Colossians 2:12, Ephesians 2:5-6)?
- What else happens in baptism (Acts 22:16; 2:38)?

#### Catechism

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**What happens in Baptism?**

*We are placed in Christ.*

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Galatians 3:27

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# Understanding More

## Baptism (Part 2)

### What is Baptism according to the apostles' teaching?

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Galatians 3:27

There are several texts in the letters of the apostles that gives us information and teachings about baptism. Most of these texts talk about the spiritual realities which are associated with baptism without clearly defining what is the baptism. However, the text of Galatians 3:27 sheds light on the subject: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." The apostles saw not only a baptism in the waters but a **baptism in Christ**. It was more than a symbol because the one who was being baptized, by faith was united to Christ, immersed in Christ, grafted into Christ and clothed in Christ.

Someone might ask: Isn't it faith that unites us to Christ? The answer is yes, but baptism is the way that Jesus determined that this faith would express and fulfill itself. The water of baptism does not have any power. If someone does not believe, nor repents (or in the case of a child who does not have any awareness), and enter this water,



*Baptism is  
more than a  
symbol.  
Through  
Baptism, the  
disciple is  
united to Christ.*

nothing will happen. Only if someone goes to the water with faith, by faith, he or she will be united to Christ Jesus. Hallelujah!

Many churches today think that there are two separate realities: an internal spiritual reality and an external sign that is merely symbolic. When a person believes, he or she is united to Christ. After comes baptism as a symbol

of something that has already happened. Therefore, they take so long to baptize the new converts. The apostles did not see it this way. They understood that, along with the exterior sign of baptism, there also operated an internal work through the faith of the one who was being baptized. This is why they had such urgency. The church nowadays has gone as far as swapping the exterior sign that Jesus established with other signs like "raise your hand" and "come to the front."

Another text that sheds light on the matter is Romans 6:3.

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Romans 6:3

It is interesting to note that here, Paul talks about two things: one that the Romans already knew and another that they ignored. What did they already know? That they had been baptized into Christ (this is the essence of baptism). What did they ignore? That consequently, they were dead with Christ (this is one of the truths associated with baptism).

## **Consequences of our union with Christ**

Many have taught that baptism means death and resurrection with Christ. This is part of the truth, but by doing so, they confuse baptism with its consequences. Baptism is basically one thing: union with Christ. Being immersed in Him. The death of the old man and the resurrection to a new life are, along with other things, the direct and immediate consequence of being united with Him. We list below all the spiritual realities that are directly associated with baptism.

- a) **The death of Jesus is our death.** Therefore, we are dead to sin (Romans 6:3-4,6; Colossians 2:12;3:3), to the world (Galatians 6:14) and to the law (Romans 7:4; Galatians 2:19).
- b) **His resurrection is our new life to serve God** (Romans 6:4,8,11; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:5-6; Colossians 2:12).
- c) **His exaltation is our victory over all the powers**

(Ephesians 1:20-23; 2:6). Although these texts do not refer to the baptism, it is clear that our position is in Him. And it is through baptism that we are placed in this position.

- d) **We have the forgiveness of sins** (Acts 2:38).
- e) **We are washed and purified** (Acts 22:16). We could pose the question: What purifies us from sin? Is it the baptism, or is it the blood of Christ? Surely it is the blood of Jesus. But when? When we are united to Him by baptism.
- f) **We are saved** (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21).
- g) **We are introduced into the body of Christ which is the church** (1 Corinthians 12:13). When we were in the world, we were independent from God and independent from men (no one has the right to get involved in anyone's life). Now, we have become not only dependent on God, but also on his church (submission to one another).

## Conclusion

God has a great work to do in us, but he does nothing in us apart from Christ Jesus. God does not treat us in isolation. All the work that God has in His will to do in our lives is through Christ. He has put us in Christ and all of Christ's experience became our experience. Remember the example of a leaf placed inside of a book: we are the leaf and Jesus the book. When the leaf is inside the book, whatever happens to the book, it happens with the leaf.

How can we annihilate the old nature? We cannot, but God has crucified our old self with Christ. How can we produce a new life? We cannot, but God gave us life together with Christ. How can we overcome Satan? By ourselves it is impossible, but God has placed us in the heavenly places (above Satan) in Christ Jesus. All this tremendous victory is possible because we were baptized into Christ Jesus.

## Some Final Notes

- Faith and repentance are indispensable prerequisites for baptism (Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38). Therefore, we should not



# Lesson 15 | The Gift of the Holy Spirit (Part 1)

## Seeking Insight

### Bible Reading

- Matthew 3:11; Luke 24:49; John 7:39; Acts 2:1-4, 16-18; 8:14-17; 9:17; 10:44-46; 19:1-7.

### Meditation

- What Jesus is talking about in Luke 24:49?
- Why was Holy Spirit not yet been given, per John 7:39?
- What happened in Acts 2:1-4?
- When did the new disciples experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

### Catechism

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#### **What happens in baptism with the Holy Spirit?**

*We receive power to witness and we can manifest the gifts.*

(...) but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1:8

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# Understanding More

## The Gift of the Holy Spirit (Part 1)

And (Jesus) being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which, He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” Acts 1:4-5

This is another fundamental teaching that Satan has sought to nullify by distortions and confusions. But he is not victorious; victorious is the Holy Spirit who has been known and experienced more and more! God has overthrown human barriers and traditions so that His people can know this tremendous experience of power. The lies and deceits of the devil are annulled by the Bible. With it, we can answer each of the questions below.

### What are the Biblical foundations of Baptism with the Holy Spirit?

- John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11).
- Jesus himself made this promise (Acts 1:4,5,8).
- This was the experience of the apostles (Acts 2:1-4).
- Peter said this was a promise to all those called by God (Acts 2:39). Some say that it was something only for the time of the apostles, that today God does not act this way anymore. However, this is not written anywhere in the Bible. The Holy Spirit gives power. It is the “engine” of the church. If God took our engine, the church would be stuck. The truth is that the promise is for all whom are called by God.
- It was also the experience of Cornelius and others in his house (Acts 10:44-47).

- When those who believed in Christ did not have this experience, the apostles led them, as it was the case of the Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17), and the Ephesians (Acts 19:1-7).

The texts above, together with Acts 2:38, undo two very common mistakes in the church.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Mistake:

Traditional groups often reject the idea taught by Pentecostal groups that there is another experience besides conversion, called “Baptism with the Holy Spirit.” By doing this, they rightly rely on Acts 2:38, saying that if man fulfills both conditions (repentance and baptism), the third ingredient (the gift of the Holy Spirit) is automatically given by the Lord, since it is a promise, and God cannot fail. They say: "Everyone who has believed and has been baptized already has the gift of the Holy Spirit, they do not need another experience."

However, this argument stumbles in the texts of Acts 8:14-17 and 19:1-7.

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:14-17

If this was automatic, why would Paul ask the Ephesians if they received the Holy Spirit when they believed? And how do we explain the fact that the Samaritans, already baptized in the name of Jesus, had not received the Holy Spirit? We see then, that they needed one more experience they were lacking.



*The baptism with the Holy Spirit was a specific and well-defined experience.*

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Mistake:

The Pentecostal groups, supported by the texts above, correctly preach that there is one more experience. There is something beyond just repenting and being baptized. However, they generally add Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4 ("wait for the promise"), and they speak of "waiting," implying that this gift is to be expected, sought, and even begged for. Thus, their teaching goes to the other extreme, because it ignores the fact that the Gift of the Holy Spirit has already been given to all who have believed (Acts 2:38-39). The Holy Spirit has already been sent because Jesus has already been glorified (John 7:39). The promise has already been fulfilled. It is no longer a question of waiting for the promise, but of receiving.



*The Holy Spirit has already been poured out. We no longer need to wait for it.*

The point of equilibrium is the understanding that, on the one hand, the gift of the Holy Spirit has already been given to all who have believed, therefore we do not need to wait or seek for what God has already given us. However, on the other hand, when someone is converted to the Lord, he is to be instructed about this gift, receive the laying of hands, and to take hold of the promise in such a way that it is evident, palpable, and conscious (Acts 2:4; 8:17-18; 10:44-46, 19:2,6). It is not a seeking and waiting, but it is also not something automatic or unconscious.

If it is not automatic, why do we say it happens at the door? Because, although it is not automatically received at Christ's baptism, it must be received immediately after it. It is not necessary to wait days, months or years. It is part of the door. It is to be experienced early in our life with Jesus. In fact, it should be on the same day that we are baptized into Christ Jesus.



# Lesson 16 | The Gift of the Holy Spirit (Part 2)

## Seeking Insight

### Bible Reading

- Acts 1:4,5,8; 2:38-39; 8:14-17; 10:44-46; 19:1-7;  
1 Corinthians 12:7-11

### Meditation

- To whom was the promise made? What does the word Gift mean in (Acts 2:38-39)?
- Why did the Lord give the Gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8)?
- How did someone receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts?
- When someone was baptized with the Holy Spirit what manifestations happened?

### Catechism

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#### What happens in baptism with the Holy Spirit?

*We receive power to witness and we can manifest the gifts.*

(...) but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:8

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# Understanding More

## The Gift of the Holy Spirit (Part 2)

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

### What is the Baptism with the Holy Spirit?

There are several different terms that Jesus, John the Baptist and the Apostles used to refer to this experience:

- Baptism with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5).
- Receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 10:45).
- The promise of the Father (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33,39).
- Be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).
- Receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17; 10:47).
- The Holy Spirit fell (Acts 10:44, 11:15).
- The Holy Spirit poured out (Acts 2:17, 18:33, 10:45).

This baptism is a gift, which means, a present. It is not a prize. A prize is given to someone who deserves it; a gift does not depend on merit. Virtue belongs to the one who gives and not to the one who receives.

It is a filling with the Holy Spirit that gives us power. It is a covering of power (Luke 24:49). It is the qualification to being a witness of Christ (Acts 1:8).



*The Gift of the Holy Spirit is the covering of power and the ability to preach the gospel and serve God.*

It is also a defined and personal experience. He who receives is aware of this (Acts 19: 2). It is an experience that everyone should have at the door of the Kingdom.

There is another aspect of the filling of the Spirit in the New Testament. It is a gradual filling over of a disciple's life. This is a process that comes with growth and maturity. It is a filling that enables us to manifest more and more the character of Christ in us. We will look at this in another booklet. Here we will deal only with the aspect of baptism with the Holy Spirit, who gives us power.

## **Who can receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit?**

For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call. Acts 2:39

The promise is for everyone. It is not only for those who have great faith or for special and mature ones. It is for all the children of God, for all the disciples of all times.



*The Gift of the Holy Spirit is for all  
disciples of all times.*

The experiences in the book of the Acts of the Apostles tell us that everyone was filled with the Holy Spirit.

- Acts 2:4 “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.”
- Acts 2:39 “... it is for all as many as the Lord our God call.”
- Acts 8:17 “Then they laid their hands on them, and received the Holy Spirit.”
- Acts 8:44 “While Peter was speaking these things, when the Holy Spirit has fallen upon all...”

- Acts 19:6 "And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them..."

When receiving the laying of hands, each disciple today will also be filled with the Holy Spirit.

## **How to receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit?**

We emphasize that this experience takes place at the beginning of the Christian life. Some brothers believe that it is necessary to wait, but the Holy Spirit has already been sent. The promise is already fulfilled, the Gift has already been given to all who believe. Hallelujah! What is necessary, then?

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

Acts 19:5-6

Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:17

- First, it is necessary to hear the word in faith and believe in the promise of God (Galatians 3:2,14).
- Then, soon after being baptized into Christ, the new disciple must receive prayer and lay on of hands on him.
- At that moment, he must believe and receive the promise, giving thanks, praising God, speaking in other tongues and prophesying. In the same way that, to be placed in the waters, he believed that he was being united to Christ, so also should now believe that is being filled with the Holy Spirit.
- You must believe that it is a promise to all who believe (Acts 2:39). No one can ignore this Gift of God. Every disciple should and must receive the gift with joy.



*When receiving the laying on of hands, the disciple should only believe and receive this tremendous promise.*

It is important to communicate to the new disciple, as you pray and lay hands on him, that the Holy Spirit will not force your mouth. The Holy Spirit will not speak for them. The languages are given by the Spirit, but it is the disciple who speaks. Therefore, he must exercise his will to speak. It is he who moves his mouth, trusting that the Holy Spirit will give the languages.

## **What gifts the Holy Spirit can manifest through us?**

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

The Holy Spirit has various manifestations. We will not cover them here, but in another booklet. The important thing to know is that the new disciple should learn and believe that someone who is baptized with the Holy Spirit can manifest, immediately, any one of the gifts above.

## **Is it necessary to speak in tongues to receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit?**

From the list of manifestations of the Holy Spirit that appears in 1 Corinthians 12:7-10, the only one that does not appear in the Old Testament is the speaking in tongues. Everything indicates that God has reserved this gift to the Church, because only in the Pentecost that it appeared.

At Pentecost, they spoke in tongues (Acts 2:4). In Cornelius' house, they spoke in tongues (Acts 10:46). In Ephesus, they spoke in tongues (Acts 19:6). In Samaria, it does not say what happened, but there was some external and visible manifestation (Acts 8:17-18). There are no mentions about Paul (Acts 9:17), but in 1 Corinthians 14:18 we see that he spoke in tongues.

However, there is no text that states clearly that only those who speak in tongues received the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. There is no teaching of doctrine on the matter; we only have a description of experiences. We must therefore be open to accept that someone is baptized in the Holy Spirit without speaking in tongues. However, based on the evidence presented in the book of Acts of the Apostles, we must consider it an exception and not the rule. The desire of Paul is that all speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:5).

It is also good to point out that there are brothers who only have the gift of tongues after some time after being baptized with the Holy Spirit.

God is faithful. He comes to fill us with His Spirit and He will make all things in us. Blessed be His name forever!



*Now to him who is able to do exceeding  
abundantly above all that we ask or think,  
according to the power that works in us, to  
him be the glory,  
to Him be glory in the church by  
Christ Jesus to all generations,  
forever and ever. Amen.*

*Ephesians 3:20-21*