

Each One Teach One



Discipleship Lessons



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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE "CHURCH"?

The word *church* has a variety of definitions in our 21st Century American society. To most folks, a **church is a building**, where people go to participate in "religious" activities. (We might say, "The Methodist Church is on the corner of Main and First Street.") And the word is also commonly used to refer to a whole **institution** governing the meetings that are held in such buildings. (Someone might comment, "The headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church is in Rome.")

But are those definitions what are implied by the word *church* in the New Testament of the Bible? No--English versions of the Bible use the word "church" to translate the Greek word *ekklesia* in the New Testament. And this word has nothing to do with buildings or institutions. Its basic meaning is an **"assembly of people** called out of their regular activities for a special purpose."

It is the PEOPLE that are the church...

... not the building they meet in or the institutions they may organize to coordinate or govern their activities.

The real *Church* of the scriptures is a Spiritual Organism, not a human organization. Jesus said, "I will build my Church." Over the past 2,000 years He has called people out of this world to a new way of life. All who have answered that call make up the Spiritual *Church of God*.

Within that unseen world-wide church, there are groups of "called out ones" who meet together in local assemblies. Each of these local groups are also referred to as *churches* in the New Testament. Paul wrote to the "Church in Ephesus" and the "Church in Philippi." How, then, did we come to refer to organizational institutions--with buildings, committees, treasurers, board meetings, etc.--as "churches"?

Human Organization--Servant of the Spiritual Organism

If a handful of Christians wish to merely fellowship in their homes, they seldom feel the need to "organize" their group activities beyond a simple informal structure. But when larger groups begin to assemble, to look for a central building to meet in, to join efforts to evangelize their community or meet social needs, they soon realize **some** sort of organization is needed. Ideally, such an organization should really just be a **tool** for the Spiritual Organism to accomplish its goals. Historically, however, such organizations have often taken on a life of their own. It is entirely possible for them to be taken over by individuals who have never really answered the call of Jesus!

It is not the goal of these discipleship lessons to make organizational "members" out of those who study the lessons. The goal is rather to help individuals grow spiritually, and bear fruit as **disciples of Christ**

The discipleship lessons of many denominations cover such topics as the life of the denomination's founder, details of required doctrinal beliefs, prescriptions for approved "life style" (hair lengths, skirt lengths, etc.), and behavioral expectations (How **much** Bible Study is enough? How **much** prayer is enough?)

These discipleship lessons do not follow this pattern. These lessons cover broad Biblical **principles** which are vital for a growing Christian. They are divided into four areas of emphasis:

- 1. FAITH THAT LOOKS UP: Establishing your FAITH in God**
- 2. FAITH THAT GROWS UP: Growing in your FAITH**
- 3. FAITH THAT LIFTS UP: Learning to share your FAITH**
- 4. FAITH THAT BUILDS UP: Participating in the "Household of FAITH"**

These lessons will enable you to:

1. Understand the **basics of faith** in God through the Savior Jesus Christ
2. Gain **assurance** as a child of God
3. Realize the importance of spiritual **growth and maturity**
4. Prepare to **lead others** to faith in God through Jesus
5. Prepare for positions of **service** in the Body

Although the format of the lessons lends itself to individual, independent study, their **ideal** use would be in an **interactive** setting. You are encouraged to use them as a **tool** to work with other individuals or small study groups. In that setting, each person would be encouraged to study the material and fill in the answers to discussion questions and quizzes, in **preparation for** an interactive session with others.

Thus after you have studied the material to aid in your **own** growth as a disciple, you are encouraged to use it in “discipling” others. You may wish to keep your first unmarked copy of the lessons in a file as a “master” copy, making photocopies of each for yourself and others as you work your way through the lessons.

Format of the Lessons

The central focus of each lesson is passages from the Bible. You may be asked to:

- ...read* passages
- ...fill in* blanks in passages
- ...repeat the meaning* of passages in writing *in your own words*
- ...memorize* passages
- ...answer questions* about passages
- ...apply principles* from the passages to your own experience

Each lesson will also have some commentary to focus your attention on specific principles covered in the Bible readings.

At the completion of each section of four lessons, you will be given a review/quiz to complete. This is not to cause you "test anxiety"! You are encouraged to complete each one **as much as possible** from memory, but you will be allowed to use your Bible and notes as necessary. The purpose of the review/quiz is to help **you** make sure you have understood the material.

Terminology

Throughout these lessons, the phrase *Church of God* is used to describe that **Spiritual Organism** that has Jesus Christ at its head. When referring to a local assembly of Believers who gather together for worship and mutual edification, the term "fellowship group" is used. Some such groups meet in home, and may refer to themselves as "House Churches," "Home Fellowships" or "Cell Churches." Some such groups meet in rented or purchased halls and may refer to themselves as "congregations." Some have an organized system of leadership, perhaps with individuals designated as pastor, elder, deacon and the like. Others may have only informal organization with individuals functioning in various areas of service without any special title. "Fellowship group" is a neutral term that can include any of these various types of groups.

Bible Translations

The Old Testament of the Bible was originally written in the *Hebrew* language. The New Testament was originally written in the *Greek* language. If you are not a Hebrew and Greek scholar, you must rely on translations of the Bible into your native language.

The first complete *English* translation of the whole Bible was made about 1380. The most enduring and popular translation has been the *King James Version (KJV)*, made in 1611. It certainly retains the beauty of the English language at its best from the past. But after 390+ years, the English language has gone through many changes! What was clear, common speech at that time now may sound very foreign to our ears. The meanings of many words have changed. Many common words of that time are no longer in use. In addition, the modern study of historical Hebrew and Greek, and of Biblical history and archaeology, have provided scholars many new insights into the original texts of the Bible not available in 1611.

A large number of translations have been made into English in the past 100 years. Some were primarily the work of one individual, such as the *Moffatt* translation by James Moffatt. Others, such as the *New American Standard* were made by teams of scholars. Each version has good points and shortcomings. And most Bible students have their own favorite. The scriptures were inspired by God and without error--**in their original form**. But no translation is perfect.

The *New International Version (NIV)* has been chosen for these lessons. Since its publication in 1978, it has become the most popular modern version of the scriptures, adopted by many denominations for Church use, quoted by most Christian writers in books and magazines, even used for most poster and greeting card quotations. A product of a large, interdenominational team of evangelical scholars, it is admired for its natural style, clarity, and accuracy. Unless otherwise noted, all Bible quotations are from the *NIV*. Therefore you will need a copy of that version in order to properly "fill in the blanks" when required. Inexpensive editions of the *NIV* are available for well under \$10 at book and discount stores.

There is no intent, by this choice, to imply that the *NIV* is superior to other translations, including the *KJV*. Nor does the choice imply that it has no errors, for **all** translations have a certain number of debatable renderings. But since the purpose of these lessons is **not** to sort through serious doctrinal debates, but rather to provide a very **basic** introduction to the broad **principles** of the Bible, particularly daily Christian living, the modern language of the *NIV* is well-suited to the purpose. As you grow in a desire to go more deeply into the details of doctrinal issues, you are encouraged to consult several translations including the *KJV* before settling in your mind some of the more controversial issues you may study about in the future.

Bible Study and Memorization

As you study these lessons, it would be helpful to you to have at least **one** other translation to compare passages to better understand God's Word. Another highly respected modern translation is the *New American Standard Bible (NASB)*. "Parallel" Bibles are available which have two (or more) translations printed side by side on the same page so that you may easily compare them.

You may also want to use the *KJV*, particularly for memorization. Many popular Bible reference works-- in particular, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance With Hebrew and Greek Lexicons*--use the *KJV* exclusively. If you wish to do much detailed study, knowing the wording of passages in the *KJV* will enable you to look up specific words more quickly in the reference books.

Within these lessons, there are many "fill in the blank" sections. For these, **please use the *NIV***. At the end of each lesson there will also be key "memory passages." It is expected that most students will prefer to stick with the *NIV* for all parts of these lessons. However, you may substitute *KJV* quotations when asked to repeat the key memory passages, if you have decided to make that your version of choice for memory work. For your convenience, the collection of memory passages for all lessons are printed in full for you from **both** the *NIV* and the *KJV*. These sheets are found after the final lesson and quiz.

The key memory passages will be repeated throughout the course of all of the lessons. You should establish your own method of committing the passages to memory and regularly reviewing them.

Questions and Quizzes

At the end of each lesson there are questions for you to answer. You may be asked to repeat a point covered in the lesson, quote all or part of a passage, give an explanation or opinion. You should try to answer these first **without** looking at your Bible or lesson. However, you are then welcome to use the Bible and lesson as needed.

At the end of each group of 4 lessons, there is a Review/Quiz covering the combined material of the 4 lessons. The purpose of this Review/Quiz is **particularly** to help **you** evaluate how well you have mastered the material. Therefore you should go over your lesson sheets to refresh your memory **before** you start the Quiz. Then diligently try to answer all of the questions from memory. If you get stuck after giving it your best effort, you may then use the Bible and lessons to complete the Quiz.

Using *Each One Teach One* in your own discipleship efforts

These materials have been deliberately designed to be in loose-leaf format rather than bound as a book or booklet. The idea is for the initial person to receive a blank set of these as "seed." They keep the set as a master, and photocopy (or print out from digital files) a copy of each lesson as they get to it. That way, they can fill in the blanks, but still have their master copy. The loose-leaf form is easiest to use for copying.

When they finish the whole course, they are ready to use the same material to disciple one other person, or a small group. They go through the same process ... either giving each person a master for each lesson as they get to it, and having them make copies, or giving them two ... one to keep for their own master, one to use for each lesson.

This way the initial cost of distribution for the producer is minimal, as there is no worry about being able to send out unlimited copies to meet the need. The material reproduces itself out in the field, and spreads organically.

The materials are designed to be used by at least one committed Christian and one other person, since the worksheets call for discussions. Initially, for instance, two individuals who are already committed Christians could work through the materials together, so they get a feel for what is covered and think through their own answers to some of the thought questions. When the two of them complete the course, each is then able to use the material to mentor one other person (or more ... singly or in groups.)

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READY... SET... GO... TO LESSON ONE!