



MAKING CHOICES

Living Free



FALL QUARTER 2023
EASTRIDGE CHURCH OF CHRIST
Rockwall, Texas

MAKING CHOICES
October – December 2023
Sunday Morning 9:45a - 10:30a
Room 105

Prologue: Where it all begins

Making the right spiritual choices leads to a life of freedom. In this series we explore the scriptural foundation for those decisions. Our journey begins by embracing person-to-person core values recorded in 1 Corinthians 13.

- Session 1: The freeing power of faith, hope, love
- Session 2: Real Life Choices
- Session 3: “sola scriptura” – A Plea for Unity
- Session 4: Choosing to “Hear” Assessing what I hear.
- Session 5: Choosing to “Believe” What should I believe?
- Session 6: Choosing to “Repent: Why should I repent?
- Session 7: Choosing to “Confess” To what and how?
- Session 8: “Baptism”: Choosing the Beginning of a New Life

Epilogue: The sum of it all

- Session 9: “A Common Love”: Unity in the Spirit
- Session 10: Lifestyle: Galatians 5
- Session 11: Family Life: Ephesians 5
- Session 12: A Servants Life: Romans 12
- Session 13: Eternal Life: John 3:14-16

MAKING CHOICES
Session 1: Oct 1, 2023
Sunday Morning 9:45a - 10:30a
Room 105

Core Values

The freeing power of faith, hope, love

Introduction

- Core values are principles, qualities, or standards that we find important.
- They make up our fundamental beliefs about what's wrong or right, and direct our behavior in all the decisions we make, even if unconsciously. (Jesse J. Lang)

Where the Bible Speaks: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Record your Responses in Notes/Outline in Your Notebook

- a. What do “core values” have to do with freedom?
- b. Do you have options? What are they?
- c. What options does the writer present?
- d. Using “I” statements, how might you apply this lesson?
- e. Will anybody notice if you apply it?
- f. Do you think you will have the support to change?

Save Your Personal Application in Your Notebook

Scripture Reference

1 Corinthians 13

New International Version

13 If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. 12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

MAKING CHOICES
Session 2: Oct 8, 2023
Sunday Morning 9:45a - 10:30a
Room 105

Real-life choices/decisions

Introduction

One way to build up your confidence is to regularly practice balancing the risks and potential impacts of each decision you make. This is simply a matter of thinking as broadly as you can to identify the “what ifs” of your choice. How likely is it that a potential negative outcome will arise and, if it does, what would the consequences be? (HBR)

Where the Bible Speaks: Ecclesiastes 3:1 - 13

Record your Responses in Notes/Outline in Your Notebook

- a. When do you know a decision is needed?
- b. Do you always have a choice in every decision?
- c. How do you react to choices you did not make?
- d. How do you evaluate the results of a decision?
- e. How does scripture give you a foundation for decisions?
- f. How do you react if others disagree with your decision?

Save Your Personal Application in Your Notebook

Scripture Reference

Ecclesiastes

3 There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:

- 2** a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
3 a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
4 a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
6 a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
7 a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
8 a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

9 What do workers gain from their toil? **10** I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. **11** He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet^[a] no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. **12** I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live.

MAKING CHOICES
Session 3: Oct 15, 2023
Sunday Morning 9:45a - 10:30a
Room 105

“sola scriptura” – A Plea for Unity

Introduction to the Restoration Movement

At the heart of the **Reformation** was an emphasis on the principle of "Scripture alone" (sola scriptura). This, along with the related insistence on the right of individuals to read and interpret the Bible for themselves and a movement to reduce ritual in worship, formed part of the intellectual background of early **Restoration Movement** leaders. (Wikipedia)

Where the Bible Speaks: 2 Timothy 3:16 (key)

Record your Responses in Notes/Outline in Your Notebook

- a. What would your life be like without scripture?
- b. What favorite scripture gives you hope?
- c. Describe the difference between reformation and restoration?
- d. What do you think Eastridge best represents?
- e. Does this understanding affect your approach to bible study?
- f. Using “I” statements, how might you apply this lesson?

Save Your Personal Application in Your Notebook

Scripture Reference

[2 Timothy 3:16](#)

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

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[Acts 17:11](#)

Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

[John 5:39](#)

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me,

[Matthew 22:29](#)

But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.

[2 Timothy 2:15](#)

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

[2 Timothy 3:15](#)

And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

[Romans 15:4](#)

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Outside Reading

“History of Christianity” (Wikipedia)



➤ Origins

- [Early Christianity \(c. 31/33–324\)](#)
- [Late antiquity \(325–476\)](#)
- [Early Middle Ages \(476–842\)](#)
- [High Middle Ages \(800–1299\)](#)
- [Late Middle Ages and the Renaissance \(1300–1564\)](#)
- [Early modern period \(c. 1500–c. 1750\)](#)
- [Late modern period \(c. 1750–c. 1945\) \(Restoration Movement\)](#)

Growth of Restoration Movement Churches (c. 1945 – 1975)

➤ [Contemporary Christianity \(c. 1975 – Today\)](#)

“Churches have become captive to culture, ...”

The **Restoration Movement** (also known as the **American Restoration Movement** or the **Stone–Campbell Movement**, and pejoratively as [Campbellism](#)) is a [Christian](#) movement that began on the United States frontier during the [Second Great Awakening](#) (1790–1840) of the early 19th century. The pioneers of this movement were seeking to reform the church from within^[1] and sought "the unification of all Christians in a single body patterned after the church of the New Testament." (Restoration Movement – Wikipedia)

Basic Concepts

- "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent."
- "The church of Jesus Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one."
- "We are Christians only, but not the only Christians."
- "In essentials, unity; in opinions, liberty; in all things love."
- "No creed but Christ, no book but the Bible, no law but love, no name but the divine."
- "Do Bible things in Bible ways."
- "Call Bible things by Bible names."

Elder "Raccoon" John Smith: 1784 born – 1868 died.

Preached 60 years (1808-1868) choosing to proclaim Christian living can be free of extra-biblical creeds of men.

As a preacher, Smith began to wrestle with the [Calvinist](#) teachings of [predestination](#) and [total depravity](#) as taught in *The Philadelphia Confession of Faith*.^{[1]:690[4]} His doubts regarding these doctrines meant that when he met [Alexander Campbell](#) in 1824 he was open to the Restoration Movement themes that [salvation](#) is open to all based on faith in [Christ](#), [repentance](#) from [sin](#) and [baptism](#) by immersion.^{[1]:690}

MAKING CHOICES

Session 4: Oct 22, 2023
Sunday Morning 9:45a - 10:30a
Room 105

Choosing to “hear”: Assessing what I hear.

Introduction

- Many individuals interchange the words "hearing" and "listening" and mistake them for the same meaning.
- The definition of hearing revolves around the physiological act of hearing sounds.
- The definition of listening revolves around actively paying attention to the words and sounds that you hear to absorb their meaning.
- When we choose not to listen to someone, whether our spouse, coworker, friend, or child, we potentially create a rift in the relationship. (Psychology Today)

Where the Bible Speaks: Matthew 28:18 – 20 (Key)

Record your Responses in Notes/Outline in Your Notebook

- a. Who were the people involved?
- b. Were they hearing or listening?
- c. Do you have options? What are they?
- d. Do you remember a situation when you were really listening?
- e. Do you remember a situation when you were hearing only?
- f. Using “I” statements, how might you apply this lesson?

Save Your Personal Application in Your Notebook

Scripture Reference

Matthew 28:18-20 (Authority given to Jesus not Men)

New International Version

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18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Acts 2:22, 37

22 “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know...

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Acts 8:35

35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

Acts 9:6

6 “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

Romans 10:17

17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

James 1:21-25

21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

MAKING CHOICES
Session 5: Oct 29, 2023
Sunday Morning 9:45a - 10:30a
Room 105

Choosing to Believe: What should I Believe?

Introduction

The dictionary definition of belief - An acceptance that a statement is true or that something exists.

From this definition, I hope you can see what the difference between faith and belief is. Belief is acknowledging something is true. This helps us understand what the biggest difference is possibly between the two – belief does not automatically translate into action. While it has the potential to transform or shape your behavior, there is no guarantee it will. **Belief in its most elementary form is about what you accept to be true, not what you do with it.** (Clarence L. Hayes, Jr.)

Where the Bible Speaks: James 2:17 (Key)

Record your Responses in Notes/Outline in Your Notebook

- a. What does “I believe you” mean to you?
- b. Do you think “belief and faith” are the same?
- c. What did the three writers say about faith/belief?
- d. What should we believe (faith) before and after baptism?
- e. Is active faith easier today than in the past?
- f. Using “I” statements, how might you apply this lesson?

Save Your Personal Application in Your Notebook

Scripture Reference

“In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (James 2:17).

Acts 8:34-40

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34 So the eunuch answered Philip and said, “I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?” 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”

37 [b]Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. 39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at [c]Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

Hebrews 11

New International Version

Faith in Action

11 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. 2 This is what the ancients were commended for.

3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

4 By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

5 By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.”[a] For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

7 By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. 9 By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. 11 And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she[b] considered him faithful who had made the promise. 12 And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

17 By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18 even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.”[c] 19 Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph’s sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

22 By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.

23 By faith Moses’ parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.

24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. 25 He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26 He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. 27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

29 By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days.

31 By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.[d]

32 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. 35 Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. 36 Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted, and mistreated— 38 the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.

39 These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40 since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

MAKING CHOICES
Session 6: Nov 5, 2023
Sunday Morning 9:45a - 10:30a
Room 105

“Living Free”

Repent or Regret?

Introduction

What is Regret?

Regret is a negative cognitive or emotional state that involves blaming ourselves for a bad outcome, feeling a sense of loss or sorrow at what might have been, or wishing we could undo a previous choice that we made.

For young people in particular, regret, although painful to experience, can be a helpful emotion. The pain of regret can result in refocusing and taking corrective action or pursuing a new path. However, the less opportunity one has to change the situation, the more likely it is that regret can turn into rumination and trigger chronic stress that damages mind and body.

What is Repentance?

The true meaning of repentance is being sorry for your sins, confessing them to the Lord (and in some cases to another person if you have wronged them or just need godly counsel), and then making that change in direction. You choose to walk a different path than the one you had been on and pursue the path of righteousness.

Where the Bible Speaks: Psalms 51:10 - 12 (Key)

Record your Responses in Notes/Outline in Your Notebook

- a. When do you know a “life change” is needed?
- b. Did David have a choice in making a change?
- c. How can repentance bring freedom?
- d. Will it be easy to make this change?
- e. Do you think you will have support to make this change?
- f. Using “I” statements, how might you apply this lesson?

Save Your Personal Application in Your Notebook

Scripture Reference

Psalms 51

David

10 Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

11 Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.

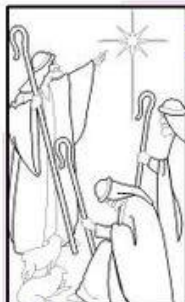
12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Luke 15:1 - 7

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

15 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. 2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

3 Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.



Psalm 23

1. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

**2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.**

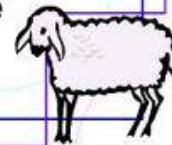
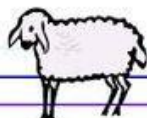
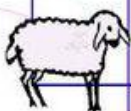
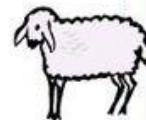
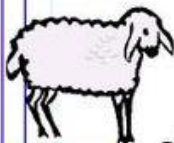
**3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of
righteousness for his name's sake.**

**4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of
death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.**

**5 Thou preparast a table before me in the presence of mine
enemies: thou anointest my head with oil;
my cup runneth over.**

**6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house
of the Lord for ever.**

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MAKING CHOICES
Session 7: Nov 12, 2023
Sunday Morning 9:45a - 10:30a
Room 105

Confess or Acknowledge Jesus?

Introduction

The Greek word John uses for “confess” means “to say the same thing.” To say the same thing as who? To say the same thing that God says. When we confess, we describe something exactly as God describes it. Confession is no more, and no less, than being honest and transparent before God.

Where the Bible Speaks: Acts 8:26 - 40 (Key)

Record your Responses in Notes/Outline in Your Notebook

- a. Why was Phillip on the road to Gaza?
- b. Who is Phillip talking to?
- c. What was Phillip talking to the official about?
- d. What was the official’s response? What did Phillip tell him?
- e. Do you have options? What are they?
- f. Using “I” statements, how might you apply this lesson.

Save Your Personal Application in Your Notebook

Scripture Reference

Acts 8:26-40

New King James Version

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Christ Is Preached to an Ethiopian

26 Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is [a]desert. 27 So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28 was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

30 So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 The place in the Scripture which he read was this:

"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter.

And as a lamb before its shearer is silent,

So, He opened not His mouth.

33 In His humiliation His justice was taken away,

And who will declare His generation?

For His life is taken from the earth."

34 So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water.

And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”

37 [b]Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. 39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at [c]Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

MAKING CHOICES
Session 8: Nov 19, 2023
Sunday Morning 9:45a - 10:30a
Room 105

Baptism

“Crucified with Christ” or “Joining the Church”?

Introduction

The book of Acts is a history of the early church and so it describes what the Apostle said and did. As far as baptism is concerned, the Apostles did as Jesus commanded them:

- They preached that people needed to be baptized.
- They baptized the people who believed.

It is left to the writers of the epistles to explain the significance and meaning of baptism. (Mike Mazzalongo)

Where the Bible Speaks: Act 2:38 (Key)

Record your Responses in Notes/Outline in Your Notebook

- a. When do you know a decision is needed?
- b. Do you have options? What are they?
- c. What does “crucified with Christ” mean to you?
- d. What is the difference in “baptism” and church membership?
- e. Do you think you will have support to make this decision?
- f. Using “I” statements, how might you apply this lesson.

Save Your Personal Application in Your Notebook

Scripture Reference

Acts 2:38

New International Version

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38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ 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.”

⁴⁰ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this [i]perverse generation.” ⁴¹ Then those who [m]gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were **added to them.**

Romans 6

Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ

6 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— ⁷ because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. 14 For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

Hebrews 12

New International Version

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

MAKING CHOICES
Session 9: Nov 26, 2023
Sunday Morning 9:45a - 10:30a
Room 105
Epilogue: The Sum of It All

A Common Love

Introduction

Many see love as little more than an attitude of “niceness” to everyone. This means that any dispute, any strong speaking over important matters, and any firm spiritual discipling or disciplining of another is to be regarded as unloving. In some churches this has even led to a watered-down Christian faith being preached with little emphasis on holiness lest some should feel condemned or unloved.

(Zondervan Academic)

Where the Bible Speaks: Acts 18:11)

Record your Responses in Notes/Outline in Your Notebook

- a. Why do you think Paul stayed in Corinth one and a half years?
- b. As new Christians, is “love” all we need?
- c. Why is application of the word of God important?
- d. Will anyone notice if you lovingly talk about God’s love?
- e. Who are church leaders and what is their primary accountability?
- f. Using “I” statements, how might you apply this lesson.

Save Your Personal Application in Your Notebook

Scripture Reference

Acts 18:11

He stayed there a year and a half, teaching the **word of God** among them.

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Ephesians 6:17

Take the helmet **of** salvation and the sword **of** the Spirit—which is the **word of God**.

Colossians 3:16

Let the **word of** Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to **God** with gratitude in your hearts.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

This is why we constantly thank **God**, because when you received the **word of God** that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, the **word of God**, which also works effectively in you who believe.

Responsibilities in the church defined in the word of God.

1 Timothy 3

Elders

Qualifications for Overseers

3 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. ² Therefore an overseer^[a] must be above reproach, the husband of one wife,^[b] sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not a drunkard, not violent

but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, ⁵ for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷ Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Qualifications for Deacons

⁸ Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued,^[c] not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. ¹¹ Their wives likewise^[d] must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. ¹² Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. ¹³ For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

Saints and Ministers

Ephesians 4:11-13

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds^[a] and teachers,^[b] **to equip the saints for the work of ministry**, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood,^[c] to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

1 Corinthians 13

New International Version

13 If I speak in the tongues[a] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. 12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

MAKING CHOICES
Session 10: Dec 3, 2023
Sunday Morning 9:45a - 10:30a
Room 105
Epilogue: The Sum of It All

Lifestyles

Introduction

Think of your lifestyle as your identity. It shapes the way you view the world and how you live your life.

It influences your behaviors, interests, opinions, and values. This also impacts your hobbies, relationships, career, and choice of leisure activities. Your lifestyle can also be responsible for how well you set and achieve goals.

Where the Bible Speaks: Galatians 5

Record your Responses in Notes/Outline in Your Notebook

- a. What criteria could you use to assess your “lifestyle”?
- b. What would be the positive result of a lifestyle change?
- c. Who would benefit most by making these changes?
- d. Would anyone oppose you for making changes?
- e. How does scripture give you a foundation for decisions?
- f. Using “I” statements, how might you apply this lesson?

Save Your Personal Application in Your Notebook

Scripture Reference

Galatians 5

English Standard Version

Christ Has Set Us Free

5 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

² Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you. ³ I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law. ⁴ You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified^[a] by the law; you have fallen away from grace. ⁵ For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.

⁷ You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? ⁸ This persuasion is not from him who calls you. ⁹ A little leaven leavens the whole lump. ¹⁰ I have confidence in the Lord that you will take no other view, and the one who is troubling you will bear the penalty, whoever he is. ¹¹ But if I, brothers,^[b] still preach^[c] circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. ¹² I wish those who unsettle you would emasculate themselves!

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴ For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: **“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”** ¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

Keep in Step with the Spirit

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ **Now the works of the flesh are evident:** sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy,^[d] drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do^[e] such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,** ²³ **gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.** ²⁴ **And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.**

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

MAKING CHOICES
Session 11: Dec 10, 2023
Sunday Morning 9:45a - 10:30a
Room 105

Epilogue: The Sum of It All

Family Life

Introduction

Family life is changing. Two-parent households are on the decline in the United States as divorce, remarriage and cohabitation are on the rise. And families are smaller now, both due to the growth of single-parent households and the drop in fertility. Not only are Americans having fewer children, but the circumstances surrounding parenthood have changed. While in the early 1960s babies typically arrived [within a marriage](#), today fully four-in-ten births occur to women who are single or living with a non-marital partner. At the same time that family structures have transformed, so has the role of mothers in the workplace – and in the home. As more moms have entered the labor force, more have become breadwinners – in many cases, *primary* breadwinners – in their families. (Pew Research)

Where the Bible Speaks: Ephesians 5

Record your Responses in Notes/Outline in Your Notebook

- a. How do you know when your family life is healthy?
- b. Do husband and wife relationships affect family life?
- c. How do culture issues affect family life?
- d. In what ways should family life reflect Christ and the church?
- e. How do children benefit from mates applying these scriptures?
- f. Using “I” statements, how might you apply this lesson.

Save Your Personal Application in Your Notebook

Scripture Reference

Ephesians 5

New International Version

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5 1 Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children 2 and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. 5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.[a] 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. 7 Therefore do not be partners with them.

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. 11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13 But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. 14 This is why it is said:

“Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”

15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. 18

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Instructions for Christian Households

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing[b] her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— 30 for we are members of his body. 31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”[c] 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

MAKING CHOICES
Session 12: Dec 17, 2023
Sunday Morning 9:45a - 10:30a
Room 105
Epilogue: The Sum of It All

Choosing a Servant's Life

Introduction

Every one of us has been blessed with God-given talents. And yes, that absolutely includes you. You don't have to take our word for it either—the Bible clearly spells it out in the first half of Romans 12:6 (NLT), which says, “In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well.” That's a promise we can take to the bank!

But even though we know God has blessed us with certain talents, *using* your God-given talents can still be a challenge. It can be difficult to know where you can put your gifts to use, and sometimes it's hard to know what exactly your talents are. (Ramsey Solutions)

Where the Bible Speaks: Romans 12 (key)

Record your Responses in Notes/Outline in Your Notebook

- a. How do you feel when you are called a servant?
- b. How is “sacrifice” essential to servanthood??
- c. Describe how “ways of the world” impact servants?
- d. How does your talent(s) impact how you serve?
- e. Why “honoring one another above yourself” important?
- f. Using “I” statements, how might you apply this lesson.

Save Your Personal Application in Your Notebook

Scripture Reference

Galatians 2:20 (New International Version)

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

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Romans 12

New International Version

A Living Sacrifice

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Humble Service in the Body of Christ

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. 4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your[a] faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Love in Action

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.[c] Do not be conceited.

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay,"[d] says the Lord. 20 On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."[e]

21 Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.

"God gave us leaders to equip church members, not to supplant them. Ministry belongs to the members."

MAKING CHOICES
Session 13: Dec 24, 2023
Sunday Morning 9:45a - 10:30a
Room 105

Epilogue: The Sum of It All

Eternal Life

Introduction

We live in a world that is chaotic, messy, and oftentimes, scary. People disappoint us, hurt us, and we find ourselves facing many hardships. This verse guides us to finding peace, comfort, and hope. John 3:16 reminds us that there is an eternal glory awaiting us beyond this life of pain and sorrow. It is an important verse because we are reassured of a God who loves us so much that he would sacrifice even his beloved Son so that we could have life. (Ben White)

Where the Bible Speaks: John 3:14 - 16 (Key)

Record your Responses in Notes/Outline in Your Notebook

- a. How does the promise of eternal life encourage you?
- b. How do you know that “God is for you”?
- c. Who shall separate you from the love of Christ?
- d. How are you more than a conqueror?
- e. How do you encourage others with this promise?
- f. Using “I” statements, how might you apply this lesson

Save Your Personal Application in Your Notebook

Scripture Reference

John 3:14-16

New International Version

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14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”[b]

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Romans 8:31-39

More Than Conquerors

31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;

we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”[j]

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

MAKING CHOICES

Session 13: Dec 24, 2023
Sunday Morning 9:45a - 10:30a
Room 105

Class Evaluation

Questions:

Comments:

Recommendations:

Rating: 1 to 5 _____

1 - Did not help me make decisions

5 - Yes, Helped me rely on God's word when making choices