

SbS-Preacher Missionaries

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The Methods used by Peter and Paul when
they did missionary work

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A. Peter as an Example Missionary - Text

The following started as a summary outline of what David M. Howard wrote in His book entitled: What Makes a Missionary. It has been expanded upon below.

1. The Call of Peter

Matthew 4:17-22; Mark 1:15-20; Luke 5:2-10 are commonly presented as the call of Peter and Andrew, James and John. This was not a call to salvation but a call to discipleship, which comes after salvation. **John 1:40-42** is where we read that Peter accepted Jesus as God's "Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ". In addition, we read that Jesus ordained the twelve disciples and sent them out as missionaries in **Matthew 10; Mark 6:7-11** and **Luke 9:1-5**. Jesus also made them apostles with the power of an ambassador for Heaven (**Matthew 16:19; Matthew 18:18**), but that position did not take effect until after they received the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

God does not call the lazy. In every Gospel account we are told about the call of these four (4) men (Peter, Andrew, James and John) and we see that they were working. Hence, even if people don't have a regular job, they can find things to do to help those around themselves.

God only calls people with a submissive attitude into His service. We also see that they were tired from having worked all night. Yet, they were willing to do as Jesus commanded - even if Peter did grumble a little. This call (for discipleship) interrupted their plans for the day and for their life. It was inconvenient. They had worked all night - they were tired and probably hungry and dirty. They were probably looking forward for a bath, some food and sleep and some socializing with friends later. However, if someone is going to be a true disciple of Jesus, they are to give up some of the selfish things in their life.

God demands that He has top priority in the life of the disciple and if God does not receive that position, then God does not provide the blessings that He promises to those people who become true disciples. They must put their time of prayer and Bible study at a higher priority than everything else in their life. They will have to start every day with prayer for help during the day and Bible study so that God can instruct them. They will have to end every day with a review of how God helped them and thank God for His help so that they learn to have a thankful heart as God gives them good rest. There will be times that they will have to give up things in their personal life, such as sleep, friends, social events, family obligations and more.

The main requirement for being a disciple is obedience. God will demand that we do things that go against our natural reasoning (**Isaiah 55:8**). As already pointed out, God will demand that we do things that are not convenient. Sometimes, I am personally convinced that God does this just to prove that we are obedient and will obey every command from Him without question. Of course, God always rewards us after we pass His test.

Jesus was dealing with the multitudes but then made a personal call to Peter, and the others, to follow Him and become a "fisher of men". In these accounts, Luke gives us the most detail. The call to discipleship is always personal and often happens when others are around but they do not receive the same call. Think about when Paul was on the road to Damascus. Others were with him and heard the voice from heaven but did not understand the words and did not receive the same call as Paul did. Likewise, when Jesus called Peter, and the others, to be His disciples He had just finished preaching to a multitude but did not extend the same call to the multitude.

Earlier in their life (**John 1:36-42**), we see these men accept Jesus as "the Lamb of God". John the Baptist told them this and they accepted God's truth when the prophet told it to them. That was their salvation experience. This call to discipleship came later after they knew Jesus better. Most

people have a time of spiritual growth between their initial profession and their commitment before becoming a true disciple.

A “*fisher of men*” is someone who leads others to salvation. They are called to find men who are willing to receive God’s salvation. They also help such people to spiritually mature after receiving God’s life in them. God uses the physical reality to teach about the spiritual reality. The Bible calls it being “born again” when someone receives true salvation (God’s life in them). A person who is an early teen can (usually) reproduce physically but before that they are a child or a “babe”. Someone who cannot reproduce spiritually (lead someone else to true Biblical salvation) is still a spiritual child, or a “babe”, no matter how long they claim to be saved.

A missionary is called to devote his, or her, life to the ministry. Teenagers, usually, are not sent out to work a full-time job and support a family. They, generally, need more time to mature before leading a family. If they do start a family before they are ready, they usually make a mess of the lives of their children. The same is true in the spiritual work of the ministry.

The church is the spiritual family of God and it needs spiritually mature people to lead it. We see Jesus “ordained” the twelve and sent them out to do the work of missionaries, in **Mark 3:14** and **John 15:16**. (Matthew and Luke also tell us about their call but do not tell us that they were “ordained”. In addition, although they were “ordained” in **Mark 3:14**, we are not told about their being *sent out* until **Mark 6:7**.) This was some time after they had become disciples and after they had time to mature spiritually. At the time that Jesus called them to be “fishers of men”, He was only calling them to be disciples but tells them what they would learn and become later after they received the required spiritual maturing. All of the twelve, except Judas Iscariot, received additional calls, and greater positions of responsibility later in their life. This manifests that they had to spiritually mature more before they received greater responsibilities and rights.

The first four called became the inner-circle -- except for Andrew who did not have leadership potential. We need to realize that many people want to take over the work started by someone else and enjoy the results of someone else’s labor. **2Corinthians 10:15-17** tells us that Paul did not want to “boast of things without *our* measure, *that is*, of other men’s labours” but wanted to go “to preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man’s line of things made ready to our hand.” He followed this with: “But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” Thus, we see that the men whom the Bible reports as being the top leaders and receiving the greatest spiritual rewards did not follow anyone but Jesus. They did not rely upon what someone else started but let “the Lord” work through their life to start a new work so that the only person who would receive glory was “the Lord”. These men were the first disciples, the closest in their personal relationship, the first in preaching to new people, and the leaders in expanding the ministry of God in new regions. Hence, we know that God is looking for people who will take His gospel to new regions and not just take over the work started by someone else. From our Bible examples, we can expect such people to receive the greatest and everlasting spiritual rewards.

Luke 5:4-7 – A true “call” has a confirmation from God and Jesus confirmed the call by doing a miracle for Peter. Peter, and us, must obey what makes no sense to our flesh in order to receive the confirmation. This is the first test: *Are you willing to obey when it goes against all senses?*

Luke 5:8 - Peter had a godly reaction. He saw his own unworthiness and God’s great holiness and power. The missionary must realize from the start that it is God’s power, and not his own, which will accomplish the work. Once Peter reacted properly, Jesus told him “fear not” because God can remove our fears only after we recognize that it is God’s work and not our own. Therefore, it is God’s responsibility to take care of the problems arising from His work.

Peter obeyed even though it led to a martyr’s death. *This is the required response of all true missionaries.*

In **Luke 5:10-11** we see that Peter was not called alone but that Jesus also called Andrew, James and John at the same time. God rarely calls a single person separate from their friends and family. Most of the time, when we are called, we are supposed to invite our friends and family to go also. Those who refuse will eventually leave us and those friends and family who chose to go into discipleship with us will, usually, become closer to us through true Christian fellowship.

We see further calls in the life of Peter and others as they grew spiritually. Those calls are dealt with in the next section on 'The Growth of a Missionary'. However, it is important to realize that God has more for us than He gives in our initial call. There is a popular doctrinal error which claims that we receive everything from God at our initial salvation and that is a lie from a devil designed to discourage God's people from true spiritual growth. God has more for every child of God but we must mature spiritually before God offers the further callings and blessings associated with those further callings.

In **Matthew 10, Mark 3:14-19** and **Luke 6:13-16** we read that Jesus "ordained" the twelve and sent them out to do the work of the ministry in towns where He would go. This is their "call" and "ordination" to be missionaries. In **Luke 10:1-17**, we see Him do this for another seventy. Therefore, this is not something limited to the eleven which became apostles but is something that God wants to do with many disciples. However, please note that people must be true Biblical disciples before God makes this call. The church, or parents, or other men might make the same call, but they cannot empower the people like God does.

In **Luke 10:1-17**, we read that Jesus appointed seventy followers to go into villages where He would come and do the work of the ministry. These seventy did not become apostles but were sent as missionaries. Thus, we see the job of the missionary in what they were appointed to do.

- Their main job was to be "labourers in the harvest" (**Luke 10:2**).
- They were to accept persecution and hardship (**Luke 10:3**).
- They were to depend upon the provision of God that came through the people they ministered to (**Luke 10:4**).
- They were to bring God's peace to where it was not (**Luke 10:5; Psalms 23:6**).
- They were to let God do miracles through them, and other acts of the ministry, so that the people they were giving God's message to were convinced that the message was truly from God (**Luke 10:9**).
- They were to leave the judgment, of anyone who rejected them, to God (**Luke 10:10-12**).

They became apostles but not until Jesus returned to Heaven, after His resurrection, when he appointed them to this special position to represent His kingdom. An apostle has more authority than an ambassador. However, both positions require a face-to-face meeting between the ruler and the person appointed to such a position because both positions allow the ambassador / apostle to make binding decisions for the government which they represent.

In **Matthew 13:54-58, Mark 6:2-5, Luke 4:16-30** and **John 6:42**, we read that people asked: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" Because of their familiarity and the perspective that it gave them, these people refused to see the truth. They were either not saved, or were not saved until much later, or were saved but did not mature spiritually because they closed their minds to the truths which would have brought spiritual maturity. They did not receive a call to discipleship until they changed their attitude, if they ever did. Hence, the saved people, who never become disciples, never receive many of the blessings which God wants to give them.

2. The Growth of Peter

Growth starts with personal soul winning. In **Mark 1:29-31** and **Matthew 8:14-15**, we see Peter taking Jesus to his mother-in-law's house to have her need met. As with all truly saved, she immediately started serving the Lord. Please notice that this happened after Jesus called the twelve to be disciples and they responded. It is very rare that we can be used by God to lead others to salvation without first having some spiritual growth of our own. We need to start as disciples where we learn to study our Bible, pray, and recognize the leading of God's Holy Ghost before we can truly be effective in leading others to true salvation. Please notice that in **1Corinthians 3:1**, Paul called the people in the church of Corinth "babes in Christ". They thought that they were spiritually mature because of the spiritual gifts which they had received but Paul wrote that they were "babes in Christ" because of their lack of growth in spiritual knowledge, understanding, and changed personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

God uses things in the physical reality to teach us spiritual truths. As such, a young teen can reproduce physically even though they are not yet ready to lead a family and someone who cannot reproduce physically is a child or a babe. Likewise, someone who cannot reproduce spiritually (lead someone else to true Biblical salvation) is a spiritual child or a spiritual babe. That is what Paul wrote in **1Corinthians**.

Growth continues as we watch and imitate Jesus. On my web site (ljc1611kiv.com) there is a Doctrinal Study called What Would Jesus Do? It has hundreds of references to the Gospels which tell us what Jesus would do in different circumstances. One of the reasons that Jesus came here and lived as a literal physical man and used the power of the Holy Ghost (He set aside His own power as Lord and God until after He died as a literal physical man) was so that He could be our example on how to live in this flesh and still please God. Finding what He would do in different circumstances and following His example will help our faith in God to grow and will help us to mature spiritually.

In **Mark 1:35-36**, we read that Jesus went outside to be alone and pray. Peter and the other disciples went and sought Him. They didn't sit around the breakfast table and gab while they waited on Him to return. An important part of our spiritual growth is to start our day seeking Jesus, in prayer, and asking Him for help and direction for the day. Then we need to review our day, before falling asleep, and thank Him for His help during the day. This prayer of thanks helps to keep us thankful and protects our sleep so that we get better rest.

Jesus was not satisfied with the ones that He had saved but was constantly seeking more for salvation (**Mark 1:35-37**). A true missionary is never satisfied with what he has already accomplished but constantly seeks more for the kingdom of God. This is a calling with no retirement plan short of death.

When Peter asked questions, he wasn't worried about looking foolish but was more concerned about getting the wisdom of God.

- In **John 6:67-69** and **Matthew 16:13-19**, we see that Peter's questions were based upon what was happening at that time. He was willing to look foolish if that was required to understand what was happening.
- In **Matthew 15:15**, we read that Peter said to Jesus: "Declare unto us this parable." Thus, Peter was not afraid to ask for increased knowledge and understanding. This is a normal process of growth and the saved person who is not willing to do the same will limit their own personal spiritual maturity.
- In addition, in **Luke 12:41**, we read: "Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?" One of the most important things about understanding scripture is

knowing who is *spoken to* and who that part of scripture is *applied to*. Our learning how to personally get understanding from the Bible with the help of God, and not through another human being, is an important part of spiritual growth.

- In **John 13:4-20**, we read about Jesus washing the feet of the disciples with **John 13:6** and having the question from Peter of: "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" The answer from Jesus was that what He did was symbolic and that they would not understand it then but would understand it later. From this we learn two lessons. The first is -- many symbolic lessons require a certain level of spiritual maturity in order to understand them. The second lesson is - when Peter did not understand, he asked for understanding. While he did not receive understanding at that time, he did receive a promise that understanding would come later. From this we see that, when we don't understand, we need to ask God for understanding. Also, if God does not give the understanding right away, then we need to have faith that God will provide it when we are spiritually mature enough.
- In **John 13:21-30**, we read about Jesus saying that one of them would betray Him. In this section, we see Peter indicating that John should ask Jesus who was the betrayer. Jesus answered, but none of them understood the answer. However, the lesson is that when we need an answer from God, it is good to ask a spiritually mature person to also pray with us about the matter and be willing to accept any answer that God sends through that person.

Mark 5:23-43; Mark 9; Mark 14 – Peter, James and John had personal intimate experiences with Jesus. These were different experiences but in each we see the 'inner circle' receiving special blessings which the other disciples did not receive. A true missionary seeks to become part of the 'inner circle' so that they can see Jesus do more with the power of God. In addition, missionaries need to fellowship with others who have as much or more faith to grow and their time of fellowship with others of lesser faith is a time of service to others. Peter, James and John saw the resurrecting power of Jesus, the glory of Jesus, and the suffering of Jesus, in a way that others did not see because of their personal intimate relationship with Him. Peter also gives us lessons from these experiences when he writes about the suffering of Jesus Christ and about future glory and resurrection. One reason to get close is so that God can use us to help others. Thus, getting closer to Jesus and letting Him teach us things that others are not taught allows Him to use us to be a blessing to others in a way that other ministers cannot do.

In **Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:31-44; Luke 9:10** and **John 6:1-14** -- We read about Jesus feeding the 5,000 men plus women and children. In these accounts, we see the disciples directly involved in doing the work related to the miracle. Part of the growth of a disciple comes from doing the work of God and seeing God work. Yes, the people who were there realized the miracle and benefited from it, but later in the Gospel accounts we read that they followed Jesus around the lake and Jesus berated them for following Him only for the bread and the show of His doing miracles. They did not follow him for His teaching and they did not mature spiritually. However, the disciples who helped in the work did mature spiritually. In addition, we also read that Jesus forced the twelve into a boat and sent them across the lake without Him. They ran into a big storm and this was when he walked on the water. This was actually a test to be sure that they learned the lesson from His feeding the 5,000.

Thus, the people who were not involved in the work of the ministry did not get the test and the additional spiritual lesson. From this we learn an application: there are many saved people involved in church who do not grow spiritually because they are not really involved in the work of the ministry. If people who wish to mature spiritually, they must be involved in the work of the ministry.

In **Matthew 14**, Peter was the only one who got out of the boat and when he got into trouble he turned to the right person (Jesus) for help. Criticizing Peter distracts us from the fact that he displayed more faith than his critics. Hence, when a missionary is criticized, he needs to understand that most of the time the critic is trying to hide their own lack of faith. Moreover, we need to exercise faith in God and our relationship to God even in the face of criticism.

In **Matthew 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30** and **Luke 9:18-21**, We read about Jesus asking the twelve, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” This is when Peter declares, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”. It is only after this that Jesus starts telling the twelve that He will die and rise again.

We must reach certain levels of spiritual maturity before God reveals certain truths to us and there are several of these levels in our spiritual growth. Thus, our spiritual growth is required in order for us to receive, and pass on, certain truths that God wants taught to His people. Our refusal to mature spiritually will limit how God can use us and will also limit the everlasting spiritual rewards that we can receive.

In **Matthew 16:22-23** and **Mark 8:32-33**, we read: “Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.” Jesus had just told the twelve that He would suffer, die and rise again. His being God’s “Christ” and dying went against all of their prior religious training and their hope of ruling this world. However, their prior religious training went against what the Bible actually said.

When Peter fought for his prior religious training, Jesus responded with, “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men”. This was considered to be a “hard saying” from Jesus. There are times when we must accept what the Bible literally says even when it goes against our prior religious training. Accepting Bible truth allows us to advance in our spiritual maturity and rejecting Bible truth will cause us to leave Jesus.

In **John 6:60-70**, we read that many of the disciples of Jesus left Him because His doctrine disagreed with their traditions and they couldn’t understand His doctrine. Jesus asked if the twelve would leave also. “Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” (**John 6:68**). Part of our growth is to believe what the Bible literally says even when we don’t understand it and even when what it says goes against our traditions.

In **Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13** and **Luke 9:28-36** we read about Peter, James and John going with Jesus to the ‘Mount of transfiguration’. This was a reward for being the ‘inner circle’. God lets us know that there are rewards which are given to people who get closer to Jesus and have more spiritual maturity. As we see in this incident, the other disciples weren’t given this experience and those who don’t make the effort to reach greater spiritual maturity are also denied certain blessings. Thus, even with growing pains, God lets us know that there are greater rewards available at each level of spiritual maturity that we reach.

Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34 and **Luke 8:43-48** tell about the healing of the woman with an issue of blood while Jesus, and a throng of people, were on the way to heal the daughter of Jairus. In **Luke 8:45**, Jesus asked “Who touched me?” The verse continues with: “When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?” Here we see that they missed what happened spiritually because they were paying attention to what was happening physically. Part of spiritual growth is learning to sense and to understand what is happening spiritually even while many distractions are happening physically.

In **Mark 10:17-22** and **Luke 18:18-27**, we read about the rich young ruler coming to Jesus and asking what he must do to “inherit eternal life”. This resulted in Peter saying: “Lo, we have left all, and followed thee” (**Luke 18:28**). This, in turn, led to Jesus saying: “Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake, Who shall

not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.”, in **Mark 10:28-31** and **Luke 18:28-30**. We also have a similar lesson, but with different details, in **Matthew 19:27-30**; **Luke 22:28-30** and **Hebrews 11:24-26**. Many people think it is wrong to ask what rewards we will receive for serving God but the truth is that God wants us to ask such questions and doing so shows a level of maturity. If we truly understand to rewards then we will be motivated to make the required sacrifice to continue to serve. If we only have some vague hope of some unknown reward then we lose a lot of our motivation, especially when continuing to serve seems to get hard.

In **Luke 17:24-27** we have an incident that many people fail to understand properly. Jesus and Peter were returning home and the customs man demanded that they pay a tax which it was not proper, nor legal, for them to charge. Jesus pointed this truth out to Peter and then said: “Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.”

I had a similar incident in my personal life. I was declared permanently disabled just before I moved to the mission field. Continuing to do the work of the ministry is causing my health to permanently deteriorate. While such activity is my choice, an employer cannot demand that people accept permanent medical damage as part of employment. I had been paying for short-term disability insurance and long-term disability insurance. The short-term disability insurance is designed to cover financial needs while the insurance company investigates and makes a determination about the long-term disability insurance. Thus, the requirements are far less for the short-term. However, the insurance agent kept denying my short-term claim in an illegal manner.

After six (6) months, I had to return from the mission field to see a medical doctor and planned to fight the agent then because communication was too difficult from the mission field. When I was almost home, another insurance agent contacted me and said that my short-term claim would be paid immediately. In addition, my long-term claim was approved within two weeks. The agent who was acting illegally had gone out on permanent disability himself and no other agent was willing to risk God’s judgment by continuing the illegal denial of my claim. The lesson in this Bible reference, and in my experience, is that God wants us to concentrate on doing the job that He gives us and trust Him for our protection. Yes, in both cases, what the agent did was illegal and Satan was using such activity to try and cause a distraction to get God’s minister to stop doing the work of God while they fought this illegal activity. When such happens, God wants His minister to concentrate on doing the job that God gave him and not be distracted. We are to trust God to provide for our needs and for God to deal with that agent of Satan in God’s time and in God’s way. However, learning this lesson, and actually applying it, requires some spiritual maturity.

In **Matthew 18:21-35**, we have an account which is used to teach a lot of doctrinal error. Therefore, I will not go into details but advise the reader to do their own search for the doctrinal truth. This is where Peter asked: “Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?”. People use this to insist that saved people must forgive everything, no matter what is involved. However, in the associated parable by Jesus, the servant who was initially forgiven was tortured to death. The fact is that this lesson was teaching about multiple different offenses and not the same offense repeated multiple times. The fact is that some people are just very irritating, even if they are saved. Part of spiritual maturity is to learn to help everyone, including the very irritating people, without showing our irritation.

In **Matthew 21:18-20** and **Mark 11:12-14, 20-21** We read about Jesus cursing a fig tree for not having any fruit on it even though it had leaves. This is symbolic of a religious person who does all that is required to have the outward evidence of a relationship with God, but produces no spiritual fruit. They are not a soul winner and they do not help others to mature spiritually and they provide no, or minimal, support for missions with no prayers for the missionaries. Thus, the first lesson is

that God will curse us, and not give us any everlasting rewards, if we are this way. Obviously, if such a person claims to be a missionary, they are really a 'moochanary'. That is, someone who takes financial support as a missionary but does not do the true spiritual work.

Related to this event is the lesson that Jesus attached to it in **Matthew 21:21-22** and **Mark 11:22-26**. This lesson was on having effective prayer -- a missionary must have an effective prayer life if they wish to produce any true spiritual fruit.

Matthew 24:1-25:30, Luke 21:5-36 and **Mark 13** all contain prophecies from Jesus about future events. **Mark 13:3** tells us: "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately". We have these prophecies because the spiritually mature disciples asked for them. We have seen many places in the Bible, such as in **1Corinthians** and in the use of parables by Jesus, that God reveals some things to people who are close to Him while He hides the same from those saved people who are not spiritually mature and from those lost people. One reason to seek spiritual maturity is so that you can obtain answers from God and use those answers to minister to others who are less spiritually mature.

No one sends a baby to work in a field. So, the father leaves the babies and children with their mother so that she can teach them and cause them to grow until they pass the test done by the father to determine that they are mature enough to start learning adult work. God does the same. There is a Test of Spiritual Maturity in the Book Study on 1Corinthians (LJC1611KJV.com) that lets us know how God determines that someone is spiritually mature enough for God to start teaching him personally and not just use the church to teach him. One reason that many missionaries fail in their first term on the mission field is that they go before they are truly ready.

In Galatians 1:15-19 We read that, after his training by Jesus, Paul went to Peter to verify his doctrine before starting his ministry. We need to remember that, at that time, they did not have any of the New Testament and the greatest authority, for church doctrine, in this world, were the apostles. Therefore, Paul went to Peter in recognition of his having the greatest authority of all, for people in this world. This shows us the complete restoration of Peter by Jesus.

One thing to note is that **Galatians 2:6-9** tells us that the church in Jerusalem acknowledged that "the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel of the circumcision was* unto Peter". Part of Peter's failure, as noted in the next point, was to forget this point. When he went to the area of Paul's authority, he failed to submit to local customs in the church and tried to impose religious practices from another culture. Not only were those practices wrong to the Gentile culture, but they were wrong everywhere and God was trying to show this correction to the Jerusalem church before God had to bring judgment upon that church. While God allows His people a lot of latitude, God's people need to remember that, ultimately, Jesus Christ is in charge. Therefore, refusing the correction that He sends through His messenger is daring Him to bring a judgment which can include death to the person, to their family, and even death to their church.

3. The Failure of Peter

The Bible tells us how all of the great men in the Bible first failed in the area of their spiritual strength. We fail when we rely upon ourselves. In **Matthew 26:31-35**; **Mark 14:29-32**; **Luke 22:31-34** and **John 13:36-38**, we read about Peter insisting that he would not fail. In **Matthew 26:33**, we read: "Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended because of thee, *yet* will I never be offended." Of course, Peter denied our Lord three times before the cock crowed twice. Hence, the first step towards failure is trusting in our own strength. Our pride also will lead us to failure.

Next, Peter fell asleep in the garden when he should have been praying (**Matthew 26:40-45**; **Mark 14:37-41** and **Luke 22:45**). This should have warned him that he was not being as vigilant as he should be. In fact, he fell asleep three times before he denied Jesus once. Our lack of vigilance in our prayer life also leads to failure.

Next, in **John 18:10-11**, Peter tried to serve God by using fleshly efforts when he cut off the ear of the servant in the garden. This reminds us that our efforts to serve God using fleshly methods will often lead us to a mess.

In **Matthew 26:58**; **Mark 14:54**; **Luke 22:54** and **John 18:15-16**, we read that Peter "followed him (Jesus) afar off". When we mess up our natural, fleshly reaction is to separate from the person we offended until they stop being mad. However, Jesus does not get mad at us for messing up and, if we separate from Him, the devil can use that to get us to mess up further, just like Peter did. What we really need to do is get closer to Jesus every time that we mess up and seek His protection from further temptation from the devil.

As already mentioned, Peter did not get close to Jesus. Instead, he warmed himself at the servant's fire. We read this in **Matthew 26:58**; **Mark 14:54**; **Luke 22:55** and **John 18:18**. The lesson there is that when we seek worldly comfort after a spiritual failure, we are setting ourselves up for a greater failure.

After joining the servants at their fire, Peter denied Jesus three times (**Matthew 26:69-75**; **Mark 14:66-72**; **Luke 22:56-62** and **John 18:25-27**), just as Jesus had prophesied. This is a perfect example of the saying: 'When you lie down with the dogs, expect to rise up with fleas'.

In **John 21:2-3**, we read that Peter said: "I go a fishing". Peter returned to his former job in the world and took the majority of the other future apostles with him. God never accepts His disciple and servant returning to the world. We may mess up to the point where we can't keep our former position, such as when a pastor violates the moral requirements of his office. However, God wants us to stay in His service even if we have to do another type of job.

In **John 21:20-22**, We read about Peter asking about John and Jesus basically told him to mind his own business and leave the business of others to God. We are to do the same and concentrate on the job that God gives to us and not worry about the work of people that we are not responsible for. This was right after being restored by Jesus. Even though God restores us, we still have the sin nature and natural impulses that led to our prior failure. When restored, we need to ask for God's help identifying what led to our failure and replace those things with what will keep us close to Jesus, relying on Him and avoiding the natural impulses from our flesh which will lead us right back into failure again. Second marriages have a higher rate of failure than first marriages and third marriages have an even higher rate of failure. This is because most people fail to eliminate the parts of their nature which led to the first failure after they are restored by God.

In **Galatians 2:11-14**, we read that Paul "withstood him (Peter) to the face, because he was to be blamed". Imagine being the highest person in all churches and being hauled in front of a church

and publicly chewed out for doing sin which led others into sin. That's what God had Paul do to Peter. Now, Peter learned his lesson on the prior time but he failed to watch for a similar, but different, error. Just as Peter led a majority of the disciples into error when he returned to fishing, Peter was leading disciples into error again. Since he did sin publicly, he had to be corrected publicly. The Bible tells us this in **1 Timothy 5:24**, but we also see it in the example of king David and how his sin brought a greater punishment than another man doing a similar sin because king David had a greater influence on God's people.

Now that we have dealt with the punishment, we need to look at the error. Peter preached at Pentecost and was regarded as the main apostle. Also, Philip preached to the Samaritans but they did not receive the Holy Ghost until Peter and John went there and laid hands on them, signifying that God would only work through the authority structure that he set up in the church. (After the first time, Samaritans could be saved but the door had to be opened by the apostles.) Then God used Peter to reach the first Gentile, who was named Cornelius (**Acts 10**). The church had a fit with Peter over this (**Acts 11**) but he said: "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (**Acts 11:17**). Thus, we see Peter standing against religious traditions and prejudices.

However, by the time Peter gets to Galatia, as in our initial reference, Satan had used Peter's popularity and influence in the church to lift him in pride and make him afraid of losing his position and influence. Therefore, he submitted to old Jewish traditions, which some saved Jews had brought into the church. He stopped associating with saved Gentiles and led others in the church to do the same. ("For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision." **Galatians 2:12**). Peter almost caused the first church split in the first missionary church which was at Antioch. What we see here is that sinful attitudes can sneak into us if we are not diligent to continually verify all of our attitudes and actions with Jesus. This is especially true for a missionary in a foreign culture. Something that is acceptable in our home culture can cause great problems in another culture. We are to preach the Gospel but let the applications and practices vary as needed to fit in different cultures (**1 Corinthians 9:19-23**). The error that Peter made is one that is quite common for preachers traveling to other cultures to preach the Gospel. Instead of preaching just the Gospel, they preach their home culture and their 'convictions', which are additions to the Gospel that we are to take around the world.

4. The Restoration of Peter

Jesus prayed for Peter before Peter's failure. Even when we fail, we can be sure of our Lord's care and efforts on our behalf (**Luke 22:31-32**). God gives us a free will. When we sow sin, we reap the results in spite of the prayers of Jesus Christ for us.

In **Luke 22:61**, we read how our Lord let Peter know of his failure. This was not to be mean but an act of love because we cannot overcome an error while we are in denial. **Luke 22:32** says: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." Jesus knew that Peter would fail but He also knew that the failure would teach Peter things which he could use to "strengthen thy brethren". The bottom line is to not quit on serving God no matter how badly we think that we failed. God is smarter than us and can figure out how to still us if we are willing to continue to serve. When God can't use His servant any more, God takes them to Heaven. Thus, if you are still sucking air then God can still use you, if you are willing to continue to serve.

In **Mark 16:7**, we read that the resurrected Lord said, "But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." As busy as He was after the resurrection, Jesus took time to care for Peter because no matter how badly we mess up, our Lord always has time to care for His servants.

In **John 21:3**, we read that Peter tried to return to His prior profession and failed. Part of being restored is realizing how badly we messed up and how much we need restoration. **John 21:2-3** says: "There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing." Count the number of disciples and realize that this was seven (7) out of the eleven (11). We all influence others in some way.

The others were also feeling like they had failed Jesus but only John followed, like Peter, when Jesus was arrested. While John had enough influence to get Peter into the high priest's house, John didn't do anything more to help Jesus. He couldn't have done anything more but that doesn't help the feelings of guilt. The bottom line is that when we mess up in a big way, others probably also feel like they also messed up. Also, when we quit on God, we influence others to do the same.

Notice that **John 21:5** says: "Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat?" Children mess up all of the time but a loving parent doesn't stop loving them but gently corrects them in love. This question was an indication from Jesus that He planned to correct all of these disciples and do it in love. Yes, our account from John only tells us what Jesus said to Peter, but, often, correcting the main person in error also provides a correction to the lesser offenders, especially if they are there for the main person's correction.

When Peter was at his lowest point, full of despair and feeling like a failure at everything, Jesus came to him. God will not let us go once He has accepted us as His servant. He waits until we are ready to hear His message of restoration because God will not take away our free will but will let us freely choose to return to His service.

Our flesh feels ashamed at our failure and tells us that we can never be forgiven so we might as well do something else besides serve God. Also, often, devils will encourage that thinking so that God loses a worker. However, **1John 1:9** says: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Jesus not only will forgive us but will remove the stain of sin and then use the lessons which we learned to help others.

In **John 21**, we see that Jesus had a meal already prepared and He had a lot of fish for Peter and others to catch. This shows that He knows our needs and wants us to know that He will provide for those needs. However, we need to trust Him.

John 21:15, we see that love is the basis of restoration and we must recognize God's love for us and reaffirm our love for Him before we can be truly restored. When Jesus addressed Peter as: "Simon, *son* of Jonas", He was delivering a very specific message because every time that we see the Bible use the name of "Simon", that person is following their flesh. Just like the Bible uses "Jacob" / "Israel" to distinguish between when he was following his flesh or when he was following the Spirit of God, so also does the Bible use the names of "Simon" and "Peter". In addition, Peter's physical father was named "Jona" not "Jonas" and the Bible uses the word "son" to indicate someone who has received the character of their father. Therefore, when Jesus addressed Peter as: "*son* of Jonas", He was saying that Peter, by returning to his profession in this world, was acting like the prophet who ran the opposite way from the way that God told him to go.

Luke 9:61-62 says: "And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God". Lots of people like to preach about people repeatedly getting right with God and backsliding, only to repeat the process. Jesus gave Peter this chance to get right, but there is nothing, that I know of, within the Bible which says that we can keep on doing this error over and over again with no consequences. Peter wept bitterly over His turning away from our Lord and it is very doubtful that anyone who claims repeated times of 'backsliding' have done the same. The lesson being that God might restore us after we turn away from following Him, but we must not presume upon God doing so repeatedly.

In **John 21:15-17**, we read: "feed my sheep/ lambs". God provides a call to return to the work that He gave to us. With restoration, God tells us to concentrate on working for His kingdom and to rely upon Him for our protection and provision. By letting us experience failure and restoration, God teaches us lessons that we cannot learn in any other way.

In **John 21:18-19**, we see Peter receiving new revelation and a command to "follow me". God makes it clear that He will restore His blessings to the restored missionary but it is so that the missionary can fulfill his calling to "follow Jesus". God does not give us these blessings for any other reason.

5. The Ministry of Peter

After Peter's failure and restoration, the main thing which we see about Peter is that he served Jesus Christ faithfully. While he needed to be rebuked again because he taught doctrinal error, he accepted the rebuke from Paul and even, at a later time, wrote: "even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you" (**2Peter 3:15**). No matter what happened to him, Peter remained faithful after Jesus dealt with him for returning to his worldly job.

In **Acts 1**, Peter tried to take the lead in the church. They were told to stay in Jerusalem and the church stayed in the upper room as instructed (**Acts 1:15**). His motivation was right but we don't read that he prayed about it first. While they were there, "Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said: Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry...Wherefore, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection" (**Acts 1:15-22**). This sounded good and the man they voted for probably was "a witness with us of his resurrection". However, the church does not have the power to appoint someone as an "apostle" because only Jesus has the right to do that within His role as King. (An apostle has all of the rights and responsibilities of an ambassador and more. Therefore, the requirement for such an appointment must be equal to, or greater than, the requirements for an ambassador.) We know that King Jesus appointed Paul to this position, which Peter was trying to fill. Yes, Paul's appointment came later and neither Peter, nor the church, had the authority to do what they were trying to do. Their motive was right, so God did not punish them. However, we never read where God honored this appointment. God, apparently, chose to ignore this action.

In **Acts 2**, we read how the Holy Ghost came and Peter stood up to preach in the power of the Holy Ghost. Now, we see totally different results from what were reported as a result of the actions in **Acts 1**. Thus, we see the necessity of truly relying on the power of the Holy Ghost in order to have a successful ministry. This is critical. When Peter messed up again, it was because he was following, and supporting, religious traditions instead of checking with God's Holy Spirit about the matter.

While almost everyone concentrates on the message and the number of professions in **Acts 2**, we need to realize that **Acts 2:41** says that all of the people who made a profession were baptized and joined the church. Further, **Acts 2:42** says: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers". The practice of saying that people are saved because they made a profession, even if they are never seen around the church again and continue to live the same sinful life, does not match the example that we find in the Bible. The rest of **Acts 2** tells us about the changed life of these people and how they demonstrated the influence of God's Holy Spirit in their life. True Biblical salvation is God's life in a person.

All living things change the environment where they live. Someone brings a baby home and the baby changes the home. The same is true for a puppy. If a plant is put in the ground and lives, it changes the ground around it. (That is why mature forests have very little small plants growing in them.) Thus, if a person is truly saved then God's Holy Spirit must change their lives. Yes, it can be some time later as we measure time but there must be a God-caused change in their life if they are truly Biblically saved.

In **Acts 3:1-10**, we see Peter and John heal a man. Peter displayed care and concern for others even if it endangered himself. After the healing, we see Peter preaching when the opportunity was presented and Peter and John ended up being arrested for their acts which started when Peter showed care to the lame man. Here we see the boldness that God will provide to all who are willing to let God work through them. In addition, we first see God doing a miracle through

Peter and John. Lots of religious people claim that God doesn't do miracles any more. However, God does not change (**Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8**). I have had several different times where lost people have declared that I had multiple undeniable miracles in my life. Like I teach the people where I am at, I am not special. God wants to do miracles in all of His peoples' lives but they have to be willing to meet God's requirements.

- First, they must have true Biblical faith in God. This means that they have to find the promise of God in God's word, find God's requirement to receive the promise, and do what God requires with the absolute knowledge that God will keep His promise in His time and His way. Many people think that their vague undefined hope of good things is true faith instead of finding a specific promise. Others think that what their religion promises them must be done by God. Others think that true Biblical faith is a feeling instead of an action verb. And there are many other doctrinal errors believed about true Biblical faith. When people don't receive the promise of their error, they blame God instead of finding and correcting their error.
- Secondly, God always requires that He gets the glory. Many people are not willing to let God put them into a position where it is obvious to everyone that they cannot get out by their own efforts and that other people cannot get them out of their situation. In one instance, the drive train on my motorcycle locked up and I hit the freeway cement with my head twelve (12) times at well over 70 mph. Many doctors and nurses came into the emergency room and said that they just wanted to see someone who had lived through that type of accident. In addition, they found it unbelievable that I never even passed out. Later, after six (6) days in Critical Care, they found out that my back was so far out of alignment that I had no feeling and no function in one leg. The top Neurologist, the top Back Surgeon and the head of the Physical Therapy each told me that I would never walk without back surgery. I told them "watch what my God can do" and I walked out of the hospital 8 days later and have never had back surgery. I could go on but most people, when they find themselves in the same situation, start praying for God to get them out of it and calling everyone that they know to get them out of the situation. I will remind the reader that Peter was sleeping while the church had an all-night prayer meeting for him, according the **Acts 12:6-17**. God's people need to have an attitude that whatever God chooses to do, it is the best. Instead of praying for God to get them out of a situation, they need to learn to pray that God gets glory from it.
- Peter and John boldly preached in the Temple where the same religious leaders, who had Jesus crucified, were still in charge. In addition, it was still close enough to the time of the crucifixion of Jesus that they were pretty much guaranteed to be arrested. Yes, it did not affect their preaching and doing miracles in the name of Jesus. People who claim to be saved need to go out and boldly witness and, thereby, prove that they trust God for their protection. When a person's actions don't match their profession they are a liar.

In **Acts 4**, we see that Peter and John had courage to do the job that God gave to them even when their lives were threatened.

- A missionary must have the courage to face the possibility of being a martyr and do so knowing that the promise from God for greater rewards is based upon greater service. Also, the suffering that we have here is not to be compared to the eternal reward which we will receive as a result. History tells us that Peter did end up dying as a martyr but here we see that Peter was willing to do so if that was what was required in order to do the job which God gave to him.

- After they had been arrested, put in jail for the night, and then hauled into court, they did not apologize but preached the truth and accused their judges of doing the work of the devil and going against how God had told them to rule God's people. All of the efforts to intimidate them had failed.
- **Acts 4:13** says: "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus". They didn't rely upon the messages of famous preachers, note on religious traditions which make people shout 'Amen!', because they lacked that knowledge ("were ignorant"). They didn't rely upon their Bible School education nor on their ordination because that did have neither ("were unlearned"). They preached what they could personally testify about (what they had personal experience with). God wants us to rely upon our personal testimony more than any education and that is one reason why we need to have God work miracles in our own personal life. People can dispute your doctrine and your education but they cannot dispute a personal experience. For example, people have a hard time arguing with the fact that I have personally died and have been revived twice. They can't argue with the God-caused results after an accident that all medical people, who personally saw the results, agree should have killed me. God's people need to start telling others how God saved them and add to that testimony as God does more in and through their personal life.
- When Peter and John were threatened, and even later when they were beaten, they glorified God instead of being intimidated. Instead, **Acts 4:33** says: "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all". Their testimony caused others in the church to truly trust God for their provisions. God wants our personal testimony to encourage other saved people to trust God more and to do more for God.

In **Acts 5**, we read about Peter confronting sin while he stood for the full truth of God. This was a sin of omission. It would be easy to praise God for what was done but instead Peter dealt with the people who claimed to do more than they actually did. One of the problems that is in the church which cause great troubles is people teaching and preaching less than the full word of God and those who know better not standing for the full truth while they condemn people who preach half-truth lies.

After that, while still in **Acts 5**, we read about Peter and John being arrested for preaching. An angel let them out of prison and they went back to preaching in the same place. When the religious leaders (the ones who had arrested Peter and John) knew what had truly happened, they were afraid. Thus, when we are bold and doing what God wants us to do, God will protect us even from secular authorities. When I first went to the mission field, I was supposed to receive payments from medical disability.

In my case, the insurance agent kept wrongly refusing my claim until he went out on a permanent medical disability of his own -- he didn't dare refuse my claim again. God will still do miracles for His people if they meet His requirements such as serving Him and trusting Him to take care of their physical needs.

Acts 6 deals with a problem in the church which the entire church authority dealt with. **Acts 7** deals with Stephen being martyred and God used that to scatter the non-preachers abroad to preach the gospel. (The apostles stayed in Jerusalem).

Other than Peter and John following up on the work of Philip the evangelist and deacon, these chapters tell us how God used others in the church. It is easy for a preacher, especially a

missionary preacher, to be caught up into thinking that God only works through him and his family. Here, God's word reminds us that while others may not have as spectacular ministry as the missionary pastor, God does use them and the missionary pastor needs to recognize this truth. **Acts 8:6** says: "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did".

Our chapter continues with **Acts 8:14-17**, which says: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost". Philip the evangelist did not have the authority of an apostle but he prepared the way for Peter and John. Likewise, people in the church can prepare the way for the pastor.

In **Acts 8**, we read how Philip "went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake". At the time spoken of, the New Testament was not written and God was confirming the messages that He sent with signs, especially with people speaking in tongues. (God has not been doing that since the New Testament has been completed.) At the time of **Acts 8**, God was still confirming the authority of His apostles and His church.

God is a God of order (**1Corinthians 14:40**) especially when it comes to authority. Therefore, he only gave His Holy Ghost after His chosen authority in the church, Peter and John, went and laid hands on them. After the first time, that was not necessary, such as when Philip preached to the Ethiopian eunuch. However, God chose who would first bring His Holy Ghost to the non-Jews.

We also see a similar thing in Antioch. God had established a church in Jerusalem but not elsewhere. There were people getting saved, baptized and growing spiritually in Antioch but God's word does not call their assembly a "church" until after the Jerusalem church sent a properly ordained pastor, named Barnabas, to be their pastor. Likewise, today God does not recognize an assembly as a true church until they have a pastor sent from a God-recognized church which gives the pastor the authority to organize the assembly.

Please note that the Bible identifies three different men who were named Philip. We have a governor at the time of Jesus, the apostle and one of the seven deacons, who is also identified as "Philip the evangelist". (**Acts 21:8** says: "Philip the evangelist, which was *one* of the seven [original deacons]"). In addition, **Acts 8:1** says: "And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles". Therefore, the Philip of **Acts 8** is the deacon, and evangelist, and not the apostle. This is why God did not give the Holy Ghost to the people who believed until after Peter and John were sent to lay hands on them (**Acts 8:15-17**). God is very particular about authority and only apostles, who were personally appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ, could bring the gospel to a new people and have God provide His power to those people. However, once someone with the proper authority opens the way, others with lesser authority can do the work. We see this by the Ethiopian eunuch getting saved at the preaching of this same Philip. By the time Philip preached to him, the way to salvation and the power of God was opened by the apostles.

Returning to the ministry of Peter, we see, in **Acts 8**, that Peter cursed the man who thought that he could buy the power and authority which God gave to Peter and John. God's people need to give the power and position; which God gives to them, the proper respect which recognizes that the source is God.

In **Acts 9**, we read about the conversion of Paul and the turmoil caused by it. Yet, Peter continued to act the same way and healed a man in Lydda and raised Tabitha from the dead. Peter showed great faith and obedience to Jesus Christ by continuing to do the job given to him while leaving what the Lord did to others alone, as he had been commanded when he was restored (**John 21:22**).

In **Acts 10**, we read about Peter going to the Gentiles even while his culture and religion told him not to do so. We see that the missionary must obey the word of God even if it goes against his own traditions. We also see that the missionary must adapt to other cultures even if it's different from his own culture as long as they do not go against what the Word of God literally says.

In **Acts 11**, we read about Peter getting chewed out by “they that were of the circumcision” in the church of Jerusalem. These were the saved Jews who claimed that saved people had to keep Jewish traditions. This same group started the riot which caused Paul to be arrested and, eventually, beheaded. This group is also the reason why God had the Roman Army tear down the Temple so that they couldn't keep the Jewish traditions of sacrifice and more. God also wiped out the church in Jerusalem by having all of them, and their families and followers, killed. However, at the time of **Acts 11**, they “contended with Peter”. Peter proved that it was God's decision and not Peter's decision. In **Acts 11:18**, we read: “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life”. After this report, the book of Acts tells about the start of the church in Antioch because it is transitioning from reporting about Peter to reporting about Paul.

In **Acts 11**, we see Peter dealing with doctrinal dispute by pointing the disputers to what God did. This is the proper way to deal with doctrinal dispute within the church. Even today, there are people who argue that their religious traditions are just as binding as the word of God, even though their traditions started as a change from the traditions which were in effect before theirs' started. Just as God did with these Jews, God will, eventually, bring judgment on all such people who lift up their religious traditions. All saved, but especially missionaries going to different cultures, need to be careful to keep to the truth of the Gospel, which is literally written in the Bible, while allowing different applications and practices of the truth in different cultures and churches.

In **Acts 12**, we read about Peter being arrested after the king murdered James. As already mentioned, the church had an all-night prayer meeting seeking God to set Peter free while Peter slept. Peter had matured to the point that he trusted God to do what was best for God's glory and Peter's good. He slept rather than worry about the situation in this physical world. God wants all of His people, especially His missionaries, to reach a similar state of spiritual maturity.

The last time that we read about Peter, in **Acts**, is in **Acts 15**, at the council of Jerusalem when he argued that God had not put the Jewish traditions on saved Gentiles, and that the Jews had not kept their own traditions. Therefore, the church should not demand that the Gentiles keep Jewish religious traditions. The church agreed with this proposal at this time but changed their stand the next time that Paul returned to the church in Jerusalem. God blessed them at this time and destroyed them when they changed their stand. The lesson is very clear to anyone with an open mind. Preach God's Bible and not your religious traditions (your convictions), if you want to be blessed by God. Preach your religious traditions (your convictions), if you want God to curse and destroy you and all of your followers.

6. The Character of Peter

John 1:40 tells us that Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. Every time that we see Andrew mentioned in the Bible, he is bringing someone to Jesus. Even though Andrew followed Jesus before Peter and James and John, he was not part of the 'inner circle'. He also was not part of it in spite of his service to Jesus. It appears as if Andrew was a good worker but not a leader. All churches need both types of people. Peter was a leader but his willingness to follow Andrew to Jesus shows us that he respected Andrew. A good leader must respect his followers and their abilities even though the follower is not a leader.

John 1:42 tells us that Jesus renamed Simon to "Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone". Every place in the Bible that we see the word "rock", it is making a direct or indirect symbolic reference to the role of the Son of God known as "Christ". (Please see the note for **John 1:42-LJC** for details on this truth.) When Jesus renamed Simon to be "Cephas", He was saying that Simon would have his character changed to the point that he appeared to be a little "Christ". Thus, he is an example of the type of spiritual character growth that God wants in all of His children. In addition to this, **Mark 3:16** and **Luke 6:14** tell us: "And Simon he surnamed Peter". We are told that "Peter" means: 'pebble or little stone'. This is another name which conveys the meaning of "Cephas". Other than our reference in the Gospel of John, we see "Cephas" only used by Paul in the rest of the Bible. We also see that the name of "Peter" was used when he was acting as directed by God but was called "Simon" when he was following the lusts of the flesh. Thus, even though a child of God, and a missionary, can act spiritual and, in general, lead a life which displays the character of "Christ", he can also have times of following the desires of the flesh.

John 1:44 tells us that "Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter." That was a city in Galilee. As we read through the Gospels, we see that the religious leaders looked down on anyone from that region. They were considered backward country people. Now, Jesus did condemn the people from that region and from the cities in that region where He did His greatest works, but that was because they stuck to the doctrinal error taught by the religious leaders. However, there were some people from the area, such as several of the disciples who became apostles, who were not so locked into the doctrinal error that they refused to accept God's truth. The point is that people always tend to assume that the largest and most popular ministries are going to produce the best religious leaders of tomorrow.

Most people went to the big popular ministries but Jesus went to the rejected backward people. And, again, it was not because some region or type of environment produces the best people. Consider Paul and his background. The main thing that God looks for are people who are flexible enough in their thinking to accept doctrine which goes against popular doctrinal error. In addition, they need to be capable of verifying what they are taught and have the character to do so. **Acts 17:10-11** tells us that the people of Berea "were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so". God wants His people to verify what they are taught before they accept it as Bible truth. The disciples from this region did just that, which is why Jesus chose them.

Although the Bible does not literally say it, the indication is that Peter was a disciple of John the Baptist along with his brother Andrew. John the Baptist was rejected by the religious leaders because of his message and his refusal to accept that their man / church given credentials made them an authority. John the Baptist required true Biblical repentance and a changed spirit and life. As a disciple of John the Baptist, Peter had to believe the same thing. We also see this belief by the report of how Peter lived and reacted to events in his life. However, the important characteristic is that Peter did not just accept what the recognized authorities told him about God but believed in verifying the message of those whom he followed. Peter believed in personal responsibility, a personal relationship with God and only followed preachers who preached that type of relationship with God.

The Gospels are not in time-sequence order but each Gospel reports events in the order that the event supports the message that the author is trying to get across. However, within that limit, the Gospel writers appeared to present events in a time-sequence. Therefore, what we read in **Mark 1** probably, but not absolutely, preceded events in **Mark 3**. With that in mind, we see Peter taking Jesus to his home in **Mark 1**, and providing food and other things, before Peter's call in **Mark 3**. A person that God calls into the ministry will already be busy trying to do the work of God and provide for the ministers of God.

In **Mark 1:29-31**, we see that Peter was in the synagogue on the Sabbath with Jesus and others. Peter took Jesus, and others, to his home where he had Jesus heal his mother-in-law. Here we see that Peter was in church when he was supposed to be, in spite of sick family at home. We also see that Peter sought help and healing for his mother-in-law. Thus, his character was to have the right priorities: God, then others then self.

In addition to the prior point, **Mark 1:29-31** tells us that the mother-in-law started working and serving as soon as she was healed. Thus, the indication is that Peter made sure that others in his home also had the right priorities and a character of willingness to work.

In **Matthew 14:28-31**, we see the account of Peter walking on water. Many people criticize Peter for taking his eyes off Jesus and starting to sink, but Peter and Jesus are the only people who are reported to walk on water. In addition, **Matthew 17:20; 21:21; Mark 9:23; 11:22-23; Luke 17:6; Acts 3:16; Romans 4:19; Philippians 4:13**, and other places in the Bible, tell us what God can accomplish through us if we have sufficient true Biblical faith. In addition, **Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 3:11** and **Hebrews 10:38** all say: "The just shall live by faith". Further, **2Corinthians 5:7** says: "For we walk by faith, not by sight". Thus, we need to be careful about criticizing the faith of others, especially if we have not demonstrated greater faith in our own life. In addition, and what is more important, is that a critical part of the character of a missionary is to live by enough true Biblical faith that God can do miracles in and through their personal life.

In **Matthew 17:4**, we read: "Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." This was at the 'Mount of transfiguration'. Anyone who knows the account of that incident knows that Peter was talking foolishly at the time. We have an example by Jesus for how we should deal with those whom we are training when they act foolishly. He ignored the comment. However, what we learn from Peter is that the missionary, and all of us, are human and remain subject to foolish behavior so long as we are alive. We need to remember to pray for one another (**James 5:16**) and to especially pray for our missionaries that they are protected from errors which would harm the ministry,

Matthew 24:1-25:30; Luke 21:5-36 and **Mark 13** all contain prophecies from Jesus about future events. **Mark 13:3** tells us: "And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately". We have these prophecies because the spiritually mature disciples asked for them. We have seen many places in the Bible, such as **1Corinthians** and the use of parables by Jesus, which God reveals some things to people who are close to Him while He hides the same from those saved people who are not spiritually mature and from the lost people. One reason to seek spiritual maturity is so that you can obtain answers from God and use those answers to minister to others who are less spiritually mature. Part of the character of a true missionary is spiritual maturity.

In **Luke 24:12** and **John 20:2-10**, we read: "Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." Earlier, in **Matthew 16:22-23** and **Mark 8:32-33**, we read: "Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." This was when Jesus

prophesied something that went against Peter's beliefs based upon prior religious training. Now, Peter had been told that Jesus rose from the dead, which goes against everything that He knows is possible. Yet, instead of claiming 'impossible', Peter went to verify the report. A spiritually mature person knows that God can do the impossible. They verify reports of miracles because they also know that, within limits, devils can also do miracles and that there are many liars in the world looking for fame.

In **2Peter 3:15**, we read that Peter wrote: "even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you" after Paul hauled Peter before the entire church and publicly accused him of following doctrinal error and of causing others, including the pastor of the church in Antioch, to follow the same doctrinal error. Most people would be extremely upset with the person who gave them that type of treatment. Most people would never have forgiven that type of treatment. However, Peter had reached the level of spiritual maturity that he realized that the worst embarrassment here in this life is far better than embarrassment at the "judgment seat of Christ". Paul's public rebuke saved Peter the worse fate and caused others to stop following his doctrinal error, which would have brought a worse judgment upon Peter from God. What we see here is a level of spiritual maturity that is rarely achieved by anyone.

In **1Peter**, He writes "to the strangers", which are the Gentiles. Peter started out being concerned with the saved Jews (**Galatians 2:7**). By the time that he writes his first epistle, Peter has learned to care and minister to Gentile believers. Then when he writes his second epistle, Peter addresses his epistle to "to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ". This means that Peter has put aside all religious prejudices and considers Jews and Gentiles to be the same once they are saved.

Where many people become more exclusive of who they consider to be a brother in Christ, Peter has become more inclusive and sees his ministry as being to all saved and not to just those who are like him. Jesus had told Peter "when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" in **Luke 22:32**. We see in the way that Peter addresses his epistles that he was "converted" and the content of his epistles shows that he is "strengthening his brethren". If we seriously consider all of the things which the Bible reports Peter going through, and compare those experiences to the advice in his epistles, we see that Peter is trying to tell us how to avoid making the same mistakes as he made. Admitting your prior errors and trying to get others to avoid making the same type of errors is a sign of a mature character.

In his second epistle (**2Peter**), the main thing that Peter writes about is false prophets. He is warning against doctrinal error taught by them and telling us to verify our doctrine against what scripture truly tells us. If the reader remembers, Peter had more than one instance of being embarrassed by standing for doctrinal error which came from traditions inserted by false prophets. So, once more, we see Peter using his own errors to warn others to not make similar errors.

7. Peter's Writing in the Bible, His First Epistle:

Peter's first epistle is "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia". These are non-Jews ("strangers"). Peter has spent his life ministering to the Jews and was even declared to be the "apostle of the circumcision" (**Galatians 2:8**). However, at the end of his life, he became more concerned about the non-Jew believers. Thus, we see that Peter has grown further, spiritually, and is concerned with all saved equally.

Peter's opening remarks include: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ". Thus, he is no longer supporting the doctrinal error from saved Jews which claimed that everyone should, but Jews must, keep Jewish traditions even after being saved.

His first chapter tells us about "the trial of your faith" and, as we have seen in prior sections, Peter had many personal experiences to base his doctrine upon. He also tells us that the Old Testament prophets tried to understand what they prophesied but that was not for them but for us. Likewise, Peter, apparently, learned that his own trials were not for himself so much as they were so that God could use him to help others. With that basis, he encourages us to look at our own trials as a learning experience which will enable us to help others. He also tells us that if we allow these trials and use them for God's purpose, then there will be "grace that is to be brought unto you". Peter summarizes this with the command "*see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently*" and attaches it to spiritual reasons to do so. Thus, we see Peter warning us about suffering in the flesh while attaching that suffering to spiritual rewards if we respond properly. Further, from our earlier sections, we know that Peter had experience responding correctly and responding wrongly. Therefore, he could tell us the results of both types of response based upon personal experience.

In the second chapter of his first epistle, Peter gives us more specific reasons why to be obedient and also gives more specific warnings about the consequences of disobedience. Following these things are several very specific commands on how to act. Thus, while Peter tries to give us spiritual concepts, we see that he is still better at the specific commands of what to do and what to not do. He does not have the education of Paul, nor his spiritual thinking, but God uses what Peter does have. Therefore, we are to not be covetous of the gifts given to others but do our best to let God use what we do have.

Following the specific commands on what to do in our personal lives, Peter gives commands about our relationships with others and then returns to our relationship with "Christ" and how He is our example of how and why to accept suffering in the flesh in order to gain spiritual rewards.

Peter returns to our relationship with others and reminds us that we need a testimony of a God caused changed life and says specific things which should be in our testimony and things which should never be in our testimony. From this, Peter reminds us that we each face judgment by God with potential rewards and punishments. With this reminder of future judgment, Peter gives people in different specific commands which will enable them to receive the best judgment.

In the first sentence of his fifth chapter, Peter reminds his readers of his personal testimony, and lets us know that his personal experiences and the blessings from God are the basis of his writing. Thus, we see that Peter is writing to remind all believers that we each face a judgment at the end of our life and that the "judgment seat of Christ" will be based upon "the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad". Based upon his personal experience and testimony, Peter writes that we want to have the best results at that trial and gives us specific attitudes and actions to make part of our personal testimony if we truly want the best results.

8. Peter's Writing in the Bible, His Second Epistle:

In the first chapter of his second epistle, Peter writes that he knows that he will die soon. Therefore, he is writing this epistle so that people will have doctrine from him after he is dead.

The prior is in the middle of the first chapter. Peter starts his epistle by telling us that God gave us the spiritual gifts that we have so "that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature". After that opening sentence, Peter tells us specific attitudes and actions that we should have in order to display "the divine nature" in our personal life. Peter, then, tells us the different results that saved people will have depending if they have these things in their life or do not have them. After this message, Peter says that he knows that he will die soon and that this is what he feels is the most important message that he can leave to other believers.

After those remarks, Peter tells us that "we have also a more sure word of prophecy" (God's word) that is more reliable than the testimony of his personal experience on the 'Mount of Transfiguration'. Since that was the ultimate of personal experiences, Peter is telling us to trust God's word above all personal experiences. He writes this just before writing "but there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction". Thus, Peter had personal experience with being deceived by doctrinal error and "damnable heresies". As in his first epistle, Peter is writing to warn believers about things which he has personal experience with.

Peter's second chapter is dedicated to describing these "false teachers" in several different ways including their attitudes, their actions and their spiritual effects (using symbolic language). Peter warns that these "false teachers" are in the church and knew the truth but "turned from the holy commandment delivered unto them".

In his third chapter, Peter tells us that we should remember the things written in God's word which warn us against these "false teachers" and their doctrines and the consequences of following doctrinal error. He, then, explains that God's time is not measured like we measure time and the God will keep His promises no matter how long it takes for Him to do so. He also reminds us that God will destroy this heaven and Earth and create new ones that only the saved will enter. Therefore, we should not get too attached to the things in this Earth. Also, Peter warns us that while God is "longsuffering", God's judgment is sure. He then ends his epistle with: "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen." (**2Peter 3:17-18**).

Thus we see that Peter's last message is a warning to the believers to not follow the errors of "false teachers". Those who do will suffer judgment and those who are "steadfast" will receive reward.

Thus, just like his first epistle, we can see that Peter wrote to believers based upon things that he had personally experienced and had a valid basis for what he wrote. He tells us what to do and warns us against the consequences of following "false teachers".

B. Paul as an Example Missionary - Text

1. Paul's Early Life:

Much of Paul's life before his salvation is based upon historical documents. Any document written by man must be considered to have suspect accuracy. Therefore, while the following is probably accurate, we cannot 'take a stand' on what is reported unless a particular point is literally said in at least two places within the Bible.

The Bible tells us that Paul was initially named "Saul" and that his name was changed as a result of his conversion. 'Saul' is a name in the Hebrew language and his name was changed to 'Paul', which is Greek. Since he was made the "apostle to the Gentiles", his name was changed to reflect his God-given purpose in life. We see a similar thing with Jacob, Peter, and other people in the Bible. A true conversion is supposed to change the character of the person who is converted. Therefore, this conversion has a symbolic application to all who claim to be saved.

In **Philippians 3:4-7**, Paul tells us some of his religious credentials -- these he had before his conversion. In that section, Paul also writes: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ". There, we learn that our top New Testament Doctrinal Expert tells us that all of our religious credentials should be "counted loss for Christ", especially those credentials which a lost person can also get. In **1Corinthians 2:4-5**, we read: "And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God". The religious credentials, which both saved and lost can get, are the result of "the wisdom of men". Before Paul was saved, he practiced the religious doctrine of 'believe what I say or die'. Some religions have practiced this doctrine at times throughout history. Many religions practice the less violent form of this which is 'agree with our religious doctrine or we will destroy your reputation and prevent you from speaking to people'.

Another form of this is addressed in **2Corinthians 10:10**, which says: "For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible." That is: you must dress like what we say a preacher must dress and you must preach like what we say a preacher must preach or we won't listen to you even if your words are "weighty and powerful" because they are backed by the power of God. For example, one leading preacher in America, and several others, condemns any man with facial hair even though Jesus had to have such in order for the Roman soldiers to pluck His beard.

Many preachers refuse to let someone speak unless they have a wide-spread reputation. Many people say that someone preached well only if they scream well-accepted doctrines, even if the doctrines are doctrinal error. You look at these facts, and similar facts, then compare them to our Bible reference. Paul only had "letters (that) *are* weighty and powerful" after he was saved but having the right "bodily presence" and the right "speech" is possible, and accepted, in ministers of Satan.

The point is that when Paul was lost, he had the credentials that the world looks for. In addition, many preachers, including true 'antichrists' and ministers of Satan's doctrines also have these credentials. However, what the Bible tells us to look for is the true power of God in their ministry and in their personal life. Such people will have Godly Biblical attitudes and will get rid of attitudes that the Bible says are wrong.

The first wrong attitude, which is commonly accepted in many places, is that a true preacher of God's word should not get any formal Bible training. Such people end up preaching the religious doctrine, including doctrinal error, which they are informally taught while being filled with pride because they are not preaching the doctrinal error that is formally taught in Bible Schools. However, preaching doctrinal error is wrong no matter what source you get it from.

The fact is that God used Paul's formal education, after God had Paul discard all of the wrong conclusions, to reveal several "mysteries". Without the formal education, Paul would not have had the basis for God to reveal the true meaning, and applications, of Old Testament passages which his writings reveal. Yes, Paul had to discard the religious conclusions and applications taught by his formal education, but people with informal education also need to do the same. Peter and John were called "unlearned and ignorant men" in **Acts 4:13**. Yes, God did use them to write part of the Bible but not as much as God used Paul. In addition, God did not use them to reveal the true doctrine from the Old Testament like God used Paul to do that. What Paul had learned about the Bible itself, in his formal education, is what God used and that God could not use in the other apostles because they lacked the formal education. Therefore, we see that the true thing which God looks for is not if someone has a formal education or not, but if they are willing to verify everything which they are taught against what the Bible actually says and if they are willing to let the Bible correct the doctrine that they are raised with.

The second wrong attitude, which Paul had to deal with, was the opposite claim: credentials from men qualified people to be the top authority on God's word. This was the basis that the religious leaders used to get the Jews to crucify Jesus Christ and brought a curse for more than 2,000 years upon the Jews. This was also the basis for saved Jews banding with lost Jews and getting Paul arrested and his head cut off. It also resulted in God having the Temple torn down, so that they could not continue the Jewish religious traditions, and having the Jerusalem church destroyed when God had all of those saved Jews, their families, their followers, and the families of their followers, killed. God used death to end that movement for doctrinal error and we can expect God to do the same again in the future.

Thus, we see that the important thing was not if Paul had a formal education or lacked the same, but it was the fact that God could get Paul to verify what he was taught against the Bible and let God tell him to discard the error while retaining the truth. We see this in all of the Old Testament references found in Paul's writing and in the "mysteries" that he revealed. God used Paul, Peter and John, but used them each differently based upon what they made available to God.

Next, we are told that, in order to be part of the Sanhedrin, Paul had to be married. Being part of the Sanhedrin (the ruling council of the Jews), is what Paul meant when he said that he was "an Hebrew of the Hebrews". Now, Paul's writings, especially **1Corinthians 7:7-8** ("For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I."), lets us know that he lived as a single man while he was saved. Reportedly, his wife left him when he got saved and he stopped worrying about getting worldly wealth. The Jews believed that their eternal position in the kingdom of God was determined by the amount of worldly wealth they had, and, supposedly, Paul's wife chose worldly wealth over being Paul's wife. That, supposedly, explains Paul writing **1Corinthians 7:15**.

Regardless of what truly happened in Paul's personal life, he had to be married at some point in order to write the things that he did about the relationship between a man and his wife. With that in mind, we may not know exactly what happened for Paul to lose his wife but we can know that the Bible tells us that our ongoing personal relationship with God is more important than a marriage relationship. There are many preachers and churches that condemn all divorced people, and mistrust all single people, regardless of how they truly live and regardless of their testimony. Such preachers and churches would refuse to let Paul speak even while preaching messages which, supposedly, come from his epistles. The point is that we need to look at how people truly live and look at their true testimony when judging their service for God. We need to reject the religious prejudices which condemn all divorced people, and mistrust all single people.

While we can see many problems with the way how Paul acted while lost, one thing is clear -- he believed in backing his beliefs with the way that he lived and he did it completely without reservation.

There are many hypocrites who claim to be saved and very few saved people who will give their life to back their beliefs like Paul did even while he was lost. Few are willing to be a martyr. Lots of people think it would be great to have a conversion like Paul, but I don't know anyone who would want the Lord to say: "he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (**Acts 9:15-16**).

Think about it. Paul was just saved, not even baptized yet, and "the Lord" showed him that He would suffer: "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I *am* more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (**2Corinthians 11:23-28**).

Who else would go into the service to God knowing these things even before they are baptized? The point is that Paul had his personal character even as a lost person. If we want to be greatly used by God, then we must be willing to become the type of person with a character that God can use even knowing that such a character is only formed through personal suffering.

2. Paul's Salvation:

Before his salvation, Paul was a religious scholar who knew the interpretation of the Bible as taught by his religion. He was zealous to the point of arresting people for them to be persecuted, and possibly killed, for their belief in Jesus. **Acts 8:3** tells us: "As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison". **Acts 9:1-2** tells us: "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem." Not only does the Bible tell us these things in these references, but Paul's confession of his conversion (**Acts 22:1-21; 26:2-26**) includes these things in his testimony. Yet, as he writes in **Galatians 1:12-24**, he was converted by a personal meeting with our Lord Jesus Christ. And, as the Bible teaches, every person who is truly saved is saved because God sought them while they, as lost people, did not seek God but were His enemies (**Romans 3:9-18**).

There is an advantage and a disadvantage to seeking lost people who know the Bible. The advantage is that they accept the Bible as the word of God and accept many of the truths of the Bible. The disadvantage is that they have been taught that their religious beliefs are part of the Bible, or even are greater than the Bible. Thus, the doctrinal errors, which they believe are truth from God, must be disproved before they can accept the true doctrine from the Bible.

Paul, and all people who are truly saved out of a Bible-based religion, had to allow Bible truth to correct his religious doctrine. In **Acts 9**, and repeated in Paul's testimonies, we see that God gave Paul irrefutable proof that Jesus Christ is God. The fact is that He does the same for others. However, many people refuse to consider the evidence that God provides like Paul considered the true evidence.

Paul was literally knocked off his horse, had a light shine out of heaven and had God talk to him in an audible voice. And, no, I doubt if anyone else ever had such dramatic conversion experience. However, no one else has been asked to suffer as much for Christ as Paul did. In addition, God provides enough evidence for each person to be saved if they are willing to truly consider the evidence provided. Think about it. People in Paul's day believe in magic and **Acts 8** tells us about a sorcerer. Therefore, Paul could have dismissed it all as magic. Instead of dismissing the evidence, as many religious people do, Paul seriously considered the evidence given to him and, more importantly, he was willing to let true evidence from God override his religious training. Such a reaction is not common for religious people. Think of all of the evidence in the miracles that Jesus did and how the religious people still rejected the evidence. Think about how people of today still reject evidence of truth and we will move on.

In **Acts 9:5**, we read that Paul said: "Who art thou, Lord?" when God got his attention. All who are truly saved must accept Jesus Christ as their "Lord" in an ongoing personal relationship, and not just accept Him as some 'savior' who must continue to pay for their sins while they live for the flesh and doctrines of devils.

In the verse before (**Acts 9:4**), we read that Jesus said to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Here we see Saul accused of sin and he did not deny it but accepted the accusation. (We read of his acceptance of truth in **Acts 9:5-6**). Many religious people reject the accusation that they sinned and need to truly Biblically repent. That keeps many from true salvation and proves that they are trusting in their religion more than the evidence of truth. In addition, there are many people who claim salvation but then reject the need of further repentance.

A true study of Paul's life, as recorded in the Bible, shows that he was consistently willing to repent from doctrinal error. This is also required of all who wish to be great in God's kingdom.

Next, in **Acts 9:6-8**, we read that he immediately obeyed and went where he was told to go. In addition, he fasted until receiving assurance of forgiveness by having his sight restored (**Acts 9:9-18**). How many people are slow to be baptized and obey God, yet want God to use them like God used Paul?

True Biblical salvation is always personal. In **Acts 9:7**, we see that Paul received personal salvation even while those with him did not receive salvation. In addition, there were many others with Paul who did not receive salvation at the same time. The presence of others, who reject the invitation to salvation, cannot be an excuse to reject or delay our own personal salvation because not everybody is promised a second chance. Yes, God does give many people more than one chance at salvation, but we do not have a promise of such and some people do not receive multiple opportunities.

In **Acts 9:8-17**, we see that Paul waited on God to change his life and prayed and fasted until God acted and showed Paul what God wanted him to do. There was no question about salvation completely changing Saul's life because it even resulted in his name being changed to Paul. Think about how many people who claim salvation and, yet, there is no evidence of a God-caused change in their life. We cannot claim that they are not saved because only God knows the truth of that. (They may have deceived themselves.) However, if they are truly saved but resist responding to God, that will limit their use by God and the everlasting rewards which they have waiting in Heaven for them.

One perversion of Bible truth claims 'all grace with no works at all'. The opposite perversion is called 'works salvation'. And there are many other doctrinal errors in between which uses forms of those two extremes. However, **Ephesians 2:8-10** is the simplest declaration of the truth, which I know of, with one extreme leaving out **Ephesians 2:10** and the other extreme leaving out **Ephesians 2:8-9**. **Ephesians 2:8-9** declares that spiritual conception is: "Not of works, lest any man should boast". However, **Ephesians 2:10** follows **Ephesians 2:8-9** and tells us "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." The word "are" is: 'an ongoing verb of existence'. Therefore, true Biblical salvation demands God's ongoing "workmanship" in the life of the believer.

In addition, the phrase "created in Christ Jesus" speaks of the new life which is "created" by spiritual conception and that new life grows "in (the relationship with) Christ Jesus", which causes spiritual maturity after spiritual conception. If there is no spiritual maturing then we have the results which Paul explains in **1Corinthians 15** when he claims that professors without evidence of God-caused spiritual life have "believed in vain". Finally, our last phrase in **Ephesians 2:10** is: "unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them". God provided us with salvation and has a law that we are to produce "good works" ("ordained that we should walk in them"). Anything that the Bible calls "good" comes from God. Anyone who claims salvation without resulting "good works" claims that they can set aside the law of God ("ordained"). Let such people strip down to their birth suit and jump off a 25 story building with nothing between the top and bottom. After they prove that they can set aside God's law of gravity, then we can hear their argument about setting aside God's law ("ordained") of the truly Biblically saved producing "good works in Christ Jesus". Without such evidence, they prove themselves to be a liar representing the doctrine of devils when they claim Biblical salvation with no "good works".

God used truths from physical life to teach us about spiritual truths. When the devil tempted Jesus, he quoted Bible. There was no problem with what he quoted, but he was able to pervert the message of the Bible by leaving some parts out. Likewise, people pervert the true Biblical plan of salvation by trying to create a conflict between "grace" and "works" when there is no true conflict.

True Biblical salvation is 'God's life in you' and the Bible uses physical life to teach us about spiritual life. Life starts at conception. There is no body before conception. Therefore, it is not

possible for anyone to do “work” until they have a body to do it with. However, after conception and once the body starts to grow, all living babies start to move and do “work”. Ask any mother if a baby moves (does “work”) even while in the womb. If there is no movement, then the baby is “still-born” and declared to be dead. Therefore, there cannot be “works” before physical conception but there must be “works” after conception for there to be true life. This is exactly what also happens in true spiritual salvation.

Another source of doctrinal error is caused by preachers claiming that they were ‘instantly born again’. There is no form of physical life that has ‘instant birth’. God allows abortionists to claim that there is no true physical life until birth is complete because God’s people refuse to acknowledge the difference between spiritual conception and spiritual birth. We see evidence of this truth in the history of Israel when God allowed physical problems every time that His people turned away from God and believed what this world, and devils, told them to believe.

In our account of the salvation of Paul, we have several days between his encounter with Jesus on the road and his receiving his sight and being baptized. This illustrates the difference between spiritual conception and spiritual birth.

While I could go on with this doctrine and the related doctrinal errors, that is not the purpose of this Study. Here we are talking about the salvation of Paul. I doubt if an honest person can deny that he was saved by the direct action of Jesus Christ and that his true Biblical salvation resulted in a changed life.

Next, in **Acts 9:18**, we see that He was “baptized immediately”. There are many people who claim salvation, but have a long time between when they claim to have received Jesus and when they obeyed the command to be baptized. In addition, there are many saved people who are slow to obey further commands from their Lord. I don’t write this to condemn people, because I am also guilty. However, God’s ‘Law of Sowing and Reaping’ is absolute. Our being slow to obey limits the work of God in and through our personal life with the resulting limit on our personal eternal rewards stored in Heaven for us.

Next, in **Acts 9:19**, we read that Paul immediately joined the church and stayed in fellowship with the saved people. Further, **Acts 9:20-21** tells us that “straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God”. The change in his life was so profound that everyone started talking about it, which gave further witness to the Bible truth of salvation changing the life of anyone who is truly saved.

Next, **Acts 9:22** tells us that he spiritually matured through personal Bible study because he could correct many of the doctrinal errors which he used to believe. When people are saved out of doctrinal error, they have an advantage when it comes to helping others to correct such erroneous beliefs. All saved people need to study the Bible for truth but people need to concentrate on the errors which they used to believe because their personal experience in being converted gives them an advantage in helping others with similar wrong beliefs.

In **Acts 9:23-26**, we read that Paul was forced to leave the city because of the reaction to his preaching. When this happened, he went to another local church and immediately tried to join them. When believers must leave their home church for any reason, they are to try to join another local church. If there is none available, they are to start witnessing and start a Bible Study like the believers did when they first arrived at Antioch where there was no church before their arrival.

In **Acts 9:27-28**, we read that Paul was accepted at the new church (Jerusalem) because of his testimony of a changed life. The people who tried to kill Paul, in the prior city, were the people who supported him before his salvation and conversion. Yes, true conversion will result in many of our former lost friends and associates leaving us and even, sometimes, turning against us to attack us.

However, a truly converted life will result in new doors opening and new friends and associates among the truly saved.

3. Paul's Sanctification:

In **Acts 9:29-30**, we read that Paul again argued doctrine to the point that he had to flee another city. At this point, he was sent to his home city. However, **Galatians 1:11-19** indicates that he went out into the desert instead. There, as I understand it, he was personally trained by Jesus Christ so that he could be the apostle to the Gentiles. Given the membership among the saved today, his apostleship was, in many ways, the most important of all of the apostles.

In the Word Study on Apostle, available at ljc1611kjv.com, I provide the Biblical evidence of what it means to be a Biblical Apostle. One of the requirements is that the Apostle had to see Jesus in the flesh and, in **1Corinthians 15:5-8**, Paul lists the people who physically saw "Christ". This list ends with Paul writing: "And last of all he was seen of me". One of the reasons for this requirement is that an apostle had all of the authority of an ambassador and any true ambassador must be appointed in a face-to-face meeting with the head of their country. This is because they have the authority to bind their country into war and into peace. The true Biblical apostles had such authority to represent "the kingdom of heaven" (**Matthew 16:19; Matthew 18:18**). The point being, such people had to be spiritually mature, separated from this world and completely separated unto God's service. As such, there can be no question about Paul's true Biblical sanctification.

In addition to his position as an apostle, Paul's writing and his testimony of suffering for the ministry make his sanctification abundantly clear. Now, while we have plenty of evidence of Paul's sanctification and dedication to the ministry of Jesus Christ, the Bible does not tell us anything about the process. In fact, the most that we have are the indirect references in **Galatians 1:11-19**, which happened after **Acts 9:30**. With these references, I personally believe that he received 3.5 years of training, as much as the other apostles, from Jesus Christ personally while he was in the desert of Arabia. However, since this is not literally said in at least two places within the Bible, others are allowed to disagree with this opinion.

In **Acts 11:25-26**, we read that Paul used to teach in the first church with Gentile believers. [You must learn before you can teach.] A deacon led other non-preachers to witness, lead others to salvation and start a Bible Study at Antioch when "they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen" (**Acts 11:19**). Then we read: "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch." (**Acts 11:21-22**).

Barnabas was an ordained preacher from God's church who had God's authority to organize the mission work into an independent church. Please note that things were done differently then, with the non-preachers starting the mission work and the ordained preacher only sent when they were ready to be organized into an independent church. Regardless of that fact, after they were a church, we read: "Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (**Acts 11:25-26**). Please notice that it was not the preaching by the preacher but was the teaching by Paul which resulted in "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch".

Now, most saved people, preachers and churches allow the world to give them a non-Biblical definition for the word "Christian". There were many saved, according to the Bible before **Acts 11:25-26**, but they were not "called Christians". Therefore, it is doctrinal error to call all who make a profession "Christians". Secondly, our Bible tells us that only "the disciples were called Christians" and not everyone in the church. People who claim salvation, but who do not have a disciplined personal relationship with Christ which, at a minimum, includes starting their day with prayer and

Bible Study so that Christ can direct their day, and ending their day with prayers of thanksgiving, are not true Biblical “disciples” and, therefore, cannot be true Biblical “Christians”. What we see here is that Paul taught these saved people how to mature in their personal relationship with Christ so that they also had a truly sanctified life which displayed Christ to the extent that the lost people around them gave them the title of “Christian”.

In **Acts 18:24**, we read: “And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus”. Then, in **Acts 18:26**, we read: “And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.” “*Aquila and Priscilla*” were not preachers but were regular church members who had been taught by Paul and were true Biblical “Christians”. They knew the true doctrine of the Bible well enough to correct the doctrine of a world-traveling evangelist. They also helped to start at least three churches, according to the Bible. This is the type of spiritual maturity and Biblical sanctification that the Bible indicates is required in order for someone to be a true Biblical “Christian”. Not only did Paul have this level of spiritual maturity and Biblical sanctification in his own life, but he was able to pass it to others as we see in the testimony of “*Aquila and Priscilla*”.

Several places in the Bible tell us about Paul training and using Timothy/Timotheus. He also trained several other preachers such as Titus and Onesimus and also trained several non-preachers such as Gaius, Luke and others mentioned in the book titles SbS-Non-Preacher Missionaries. Paul, obviously, had to learn and practice the sanctification which he taught to others. Please see the book mentioned, along with the numerous Bible references in it, to see the types of sanctification demonstrated in the lives of the believers whom Paul taught. Please also note that others were teaching a different doctrine at the same time as Paul taught. Their jealousy is what led them to deceitfully have Paul arrested in Jerusalem. However, the Bible recorded testimonies of the disciples of Paul testify of the sanctification which Paul lived and taught.

In **Acts 15:36-40**, we read that Paul wanted Barnabas to go with him on his second missionary journey but they split over John Mark. John Mark had “departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work” (**Acts 15:38**). Therefore, Paul refused him as not qualified. Yet, in **2Timothy 4:11**, we read: “Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry”. When John Mark became qualified, Paul used him. When Paul separated from Barnabas, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark because he was a nephew. Barnabas didn’t care that he was not yet qualified. Paul cared nothing about politics or anything other than the person’s qualification to do the ministry. We see the same attitude in the Pastoral Epistles where Paul writes the qualifications for a person holding offices in the church. As already mentioned, Paul first met the sanctification qualifications which he demanded in others.

In **Acts 11:27-30**, we read that Paul was trusted to handle money in a righteous way. One of the temptations which most often trips up saved people is handling money, especially when they have access to far more than they normally have in their personal life and there is little oversight from others in the church. Paul, obviously, had enough spiritual maturity, and sanctification, that traveling for several days, while holding church money, did not tempt him to sin.

In **Acts 12:25**, we read that Paul helped others to get to the mission field. Other than the **Book of Acts**, and possibly the Gospels to a certain extent, **3John** is the main book in the New Testament which is dedicated to missions support. Yet, it is rarely preached at Missions Conferences and, when I have heard it preached, the preacher neglected to mention that it was written to a non-preacher who traveled on mission trips with Paul and was, in his retirement, doing all he could to help get missionaries to the field. It also tells us how John planned to straighten out the local pastor who opposed support of missions. The point is that all spiritually mature and truly sanctified

saved people are actively involved in supporting missions efforts. Anyone who is not actively involved in supporting missions is not truly sanctified, no matter what they claim.

Missions was the main reason why God the Father sent God the Son to pay for our sins and make a way for us to go to Heaven. It is the reason why God leaves us here after we get saved. It is the main focus of the 'Great Commission', which is rightly called 'the heart-beat of God'. A person cannot be truly sanctified, and close to God, while ignoring this matter which is central to God's dealings with man. Paul understood this and actively recruited and trained others to do missionary work regardless if they were preachers or not. The distinction between preachers and non-preachers was not if they were to do missionary work, but what specific job they had on the mission field.

Next, we see that Paul bowed to religious traditions when they did not directly support doctrinal error. However, he also disputed religious traditions which taught doctrinal error, especially traditions which taught religious works for salvation and/or sanctification.

In **Acts 16:1-3**, we are told that Paul had Timothy circumcised before taking him on a missionary trip "because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek" and his mother "was a Jewess". Now, in the prior chapter (**Acts 15**), we read: "And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question." (**Acts 15:1-2**). After a big council and dispute, the church concluded: "that we trouble not them (by demanding circumcision), which from among the Gentiles are turned to God" (**Acts 15:19**). Therefore, it could be argued that Timothy was a Jew, through his mother, and therefore needed to be circumcised, or that he was a Gentile, through his father, and therefore did not need to be circumcised. However, Paul tried to avoid further dispute by having Timothy circumcised before taking him on a missionary trip.

It is interesting that here was how Paul acted towards Jewish believers and the dispute, in Jerusalem, which ended up with Paul being arrested, was that Paul taught Jewish believers to disobey the Mosaic Law. How Paul treated Timothy proved that to be a lie but the Jews in the church, which lied to cause Paul trouble, wanted to avoid the truth. They brought the judgment of God upon themselves, their followers and their church. However, that is not the point here. Here we see that Paul allowed religious traditions which did not lead, directly, to doctrinal error.

We also see evidence of this attitude when Paul submitted to the decision of the heads of the Church of Jerusalem, even though what they demanded would not prove Paul's innocence or guilt (**Acts 21:17-27**). Neither of these incidents had a direct effect upon doctrine even though the people demanding religious traditions thought these things made them stronger while they, in fact, proved that the people making the demands were weaker in faith. We see Paul, and others, teaching about this attitude and doctrine in **1Corinthians 8**; **1Corinthians 10:29-33**; **1Timothy 1**; **Titus 1:13-16**; **Hebrews 9:7-14**; and possibly other places.

However, when the religious practice directly supported doctrinal error, Paul did all he could to fight against such doctrines. **Acts 15:1** tells us: "And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved". This, of course, is a type of 'works salvation' and the fore-runner to the doctrine of today which claims baptism is required for salvation.

The rest of **Acts 15** tells us that Paul and Barnabas went to a lot of time, expense and trouble (think of the travel requirements of that day) in order to take this dispute to the church at Jerusalem and get a judgment against works salvation (requiring circumcision). Yet, as we read through the Epistles and the rest of **Acts**, we see that these people persisted with their heresy until they had the Temple destroyed, the Jerusalem Church destroyed, and all in that city who believed the heresy killed. Now, some might claim it stamped out. But, as already mentioned, this doctrine from devils just reformed into the claim that Baptism is required for salvation and has spun off all of the other doctrines of 'works salvation'. The point being that Paul kept up this

spiritual battle and we need to do the same or our followers will receive the same type of destruction and death as the people following the original error received.

The last thing that will be mentioned is that Paul stayed true despite severe physical suffering.

4. Paul's Call as a Missionary:

He was called by God for this task (**Acts 13:1-2**). This chapter starts with the word "Now", which means: 'after you understand what came before this'.

- The first thing that came before and that we need to understand is the prior chapter of Acts. There we see the government, in the form of "Herod the king", killing and trying to kill the church leaders in order to pacify the lost religious Jews. We are told: "And he killed James the brother of John with the sword" in **Acts 12:2**. Then, **Acts 12:3** says: "And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also". After this, we are told that the church prayed all night and an angel freed Peter. When he showed up at the church, they had a hard time believing it. Later (**Acts 12:19**), we are told that Peter "went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and *there* abode". We are also told that "Herod the king" had the prison keepers killed because the angel freed Peter. At the end of the chapter, he visited "Tyre and Sidon" and, when he spoke, the people said: "*It is* the voice of a god, and not of a man" (**Acts 12:22**). As a result, **Acts 12:23-24** tells us: "And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost. But the word of God grew and multiplied". Thus, we see God protecting Peter but moving him out of Jerusalem. We also see God letting the civil government prove that they were under the influence of devils and then killing the king. We also see that the death of the king ended persecution by the civil government and that the church was able to do the work of God without interference ("the word of God grew and multiplied"). Through all of these, we see that God allows testing of His people but then rewards those who pass the test.
- Next, we see that the church had a time of relative peace and spiritual growth. As part of this truth, the last verse in **Chapter 12** tells us: "And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark". Here we see their concern for a young saved, but spiritually immature, man. He had a lot of maturing to do and abandoned the first missionary trip but later was "profitable" and wrote the Gospel of Mark. Thus, we see that the church saw the need for spiritual maturity of the members so that they would be ready for the next time of persecution. We also see efforts by church members to help each other in physical and spiritual ways.

Next, we need to understand the spiritual preparation of others mentioned in **Acts 13:1**. God called for the best to be missionaries and let lesser trained men take over the work in the mother church (**Acts 13:1-2**).

Barnabas was the pastor and Paul had been brought in to teach people spiritual maturity and, as a result of his teaching, "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (**Acts 11:26**). Not only were regular church members disciples whose lives showed "Christ" to lost people, but others mentioned in **Acts 13:1** were "prophets and teachers". This meant that they had the spiritual gifts and spiritual maturity to lead the church while God had Paul and Barnabas travel for several months. So, even though they were probably not as well-trained as Paul and Barnabas, they were still prepared to take over an existing work while Paul and Barnabas went to the mission field. Please note, more than one church has gone down in their numbers, spirituality and other measurements when there was a change in leadership. We do not see that in what the Bible reports about this church.

Next, we need to understand the special preparation of Paul.

- He was trained in the Bible and the religion of the Jews by the best scholars of his day (**Acts 22:3; Galatians 1:14**).
- He was saved and, afterwards, trained directly by Jesus Christ (**Galatians 1:11-12**) so that he got rid of the doctrinal error taught by the Jews but retained the Bible knowledge and added the teaching directly from Jesus Christ.

- Other than Jesus Christ, in the Gospels, and the **Revelation of Jesus Christ**, Paul is the only other New Testament writer to reveal a “mystery”, which is an Old Testament truth which was hid until God revealed it through the man that the Bible identifies. That is: God used Paul’s Bible knowledge to reveal things which the other Apostles could not understand because they lacked the Bible knowledge. We see this truth verified in Peter’s epistle when he writes: “even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (**2Peter 3:15-15**).

After his training and meeting with Peter (**Galatians 1:16-25**), Paul traveled to different churches but remained unknown and ended up in his home town of Tarsus until Barnabas sought him there (**Acts 11:25-26**). The point being that after his personal training, Paul had a period, of probably a few years, to meditate on the application of what he had been taught. He also learned to apply his teaching while being an ‘unknown nobody’. Therefore, the only person who affected Paul’s learning to apply his religious training was God.

Paul was sent out only after the church “had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them” [he was ‘ordained’] (**Acts 13:3**). All saved are called to do ‘The Great Commission’ and to be missionaries wherever they go. But, only an ordained preacher, who is sent out by the proper mother church, has the authority to organize a mission work into a church (**Acts 11:26**). In **1Timothy 3:1-17** and **Titus 1:5-9**, we see the requirements for a man to be a pastor. Too often, in this current age, novices are sent out to be missionaries and to start churches because they are the only ones willing to go to a foreign field. Most preachers are too entangled with the things of this world, like owning houses and cars and having debts, to go to a mission field once they have enough experience to actually be a missionary pastor. If you doubt this claim, look at the typical training and experience of missionary pastors sent out from America and compare those things to what has been reported as the training and experience of Paul when he went to the mission field.

Missionary pastors are sent by “the Holy Ghost” working through a proper church (**Acts 13:3-4**). However, we know that John Mark went on the first missionary trip (**Acts 15:37-41**) but was not one of the ordained missionary pastors (**Acts 13:3-4**). In addition, the Bible names 50 non-preachers, and identifies several others, who did missionary work but, as far as we know, they were not ordained. They also did not have God’s authority to organize a mission work into a church. (The church at Antioch was started by non-preachers but the Bible does not call it a church until Barnabas came with proper authority from the Jerusalem Church.) Therefore, while missionary pastors and missionary non-preachers are sent by “the Holy Ghost”, only the missionary pastors need to be ordained by the sending church.

Once on the mission field, Paul was in charge. Barnabas was the pastor of the mother church and in charge while at home. However, when they got ready to return for the second trip, they disputed over taking John Mark and parted ways. That is the last that we read about Barnabas.

On the mission field, the missionary must be in charge because, while he must preach the gospel and the message from God, he must apply it to the local culture which is different from the culture of the mother church. Meanwhile, the pastor of the home church is in charge of applying the message of God within the home culture. This difference in cultures and of applications has caused many mission works to fail altogether. They fail to bring the mission members to full spiritual maturity because home churches demand that their religious practices, which are based upon their own culture, be preached as the gospel of God. There is only one interpretation but many applications. Only the Bible truths (interpretation) are to remain the same across all cultures with the applications allowed to vary from one culture to another..

5. Paul's Service as a Missionary:

Paul preached a clear and simple plan of salvation (**Acts 16:30-33**). His gospel included the jailer's family getting saved, being baptized and having a God-changed life. The results reported, in the Bible, from Paul's preaching did not include these people who make a profession and keep on living for the flesh and doctrines of devils while claiming going to Heaven. Yes, there were people who later turned away from the gospel. **1Corinthians 15:1-2** says: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." Plain and simple, people who make a profession but do not live it are liars and do not fulfill the requirement of "wherein ye stand". The fact is that they fulfill Paul's statement of "ye have believed in vain". In addition, **Galatians 4:11** says: "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." Paul wrote this to people who were trying to say that their salvation and sanctification was dependent upon their keeping religious rules and not dependent upon a personal relationship whereby the believer accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Lord. In other words, Paul preached a gospel which was fundamental Bible believing and rejected the corrections which many people preach and also rejected the lies which are generally called liberal.

He took others with him on mission trips. We see that he took Barnabas and John Mark (**Acts 13:1-2**), Silas (**Acts 15:40**), Luke (**Acts 16:13**), Timotheus (**Acts 17:15**) and many others who are mentioned in Acts and the Epistles. These mission trips helped others to mature spiritually and to add to their own personal spiritual heavenly account. Paul concentrated his dealing with others on those things which would give them the greatest spiritual rewards by helping them to become more effective in their service to God and God's kingdom.

Paul concentrated his mission trips on going where the gospel had not been preached before (**2Corinthians 10:15**; **Acts 13:4-6** and other reference within Acts). From what the Bible reports, Paul's majority of problems from religious sources was from preachers who wanted to take over Paul's work instead of going out and starting their own work where the gospel had not been preached before. If we look at enrollment in American Bible Schools, we will see far more people being trained to join the staff of existing American churches than we see in Missions programs. One of the top complaints about American churches, by American preachers, is how spiritually immature the members seem and how high a percentage actually seem to be lost. A major source of this problem is preachers running churches when they are not spiritually mature enough to go start their own work. This was a problem in Paul's day and it is still a problem today. These preachers who wanted to take over Paul's works preached religious traditions, and most preachers of today especially those who want to get on the staff of existing works, also preach religious traditions.

With that written, don't get me wrong. Someone coming out of Bible School should join the staff of a good work to get experience before going out to start their own work. However, that is a totally different attitude from someone whose goal is to take over an existing work and who has no interest in going "to preach the gospel in the regions beyond".

Paul reached out to existing believers, and potential believers, wherever they were found on the mission field (**Acts 13:5**; **16:13-15** and other reference within Acts). We often read that Paul went first to a synagogue if there was one in the place where he went to preach. Paul first tried to reach the Jews who knew the Bible and had a basis for belief. He often ran into problems when the truth of God went against their religious traditions, but he also found people who became believers and who added to the ministry considerably. One example is Timotheus, his mother and his grandmother.

While Paul started with the Jews, he did not stop there. One problem that is often seen in foreign missions is that missionaries will reach out to those from their home nation who are in the foreign country, but fail to reach the locals. One reason for this is that everyone is more comfortable with

their home culture than they are with a foreign culture. This leads to the additional problem of missionary preachers preaching their home culture and home religious practices.

There is a critical missions doctrine in **1Corinthians 9:19-24** that says: "For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with *you*. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." Please notice the end of this reference which says: "So run, that ye may obtain". If the missionary fails to win the locals because they are preaching their home culture and religious practices, they are not obeying the command of this Bible reference. Please notice that Paul wrote: "I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more...I am made all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with *you*." Paul preached the gospel without any changes. However, he allowed the application of the gospel (religious practices) to vary with the culture and he, as a missionary, also adjusted to the local culture. ("And unto...I became as..."). This is the same thing that Hudson Taylor did in order to become successful in the interior of China where other missionaries were afraid to go. The point is that the missionary must be willing to accept the culture of the people he is trying to reach so long as it does not go against the basic gospel or Biblical righteousness.

Paul withstood devils and ministers of devils (**Acts 13:6-11; 16:16-19**). However, many in America doubt the existence and work of devils even though the Biblical evidence is all around them. Their insistence of using the non-Biblical word of "daemon" is evidence. This doctrinal error causes God's people to ignore the warnings that are in the Bible because the Bible uses the word "devil" and their preachers warn them against "daemon". In their subconscious, believers associate "devil" with a child wearing a red costume, looking cute and having a rubber pitchfork.

1Timothy 4:1-2 warns us with: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;". Preachers all over America, Philippines and all around the world preach against false preachers who preach "doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" and yet deny that this is the work of devils because these people aren't doing blatant things like sacrificing animals and children to Satan. However, our Bible reference clearly says that what they preach against is "doctrines of devils" even while they deny the work of devils in their culture. One of the main reasons for this obvious blindness to spiritual truth is that they believed the lie from devils that this is the work of "daemon" and not, as what the Bible literally says, the work of "devils". No one can fight against an enemy that they deny exists. Paul could, and did, withstand devils and their ministers because he did not deny their existence, their work and their influence. If missionaries are to be effective, they need to follow the example of a successful missionary like Paul instead of following the unsuccessful traditions of their home culture.

Paul witnessed to the important and the unimportant (**Acts 13:12, 15**). In our first reference Paul witnessed to the head of the government where he was at. In the second reference, he witnessed to the everyday Jew who was at the synagogue in the city that he was visiting. Their point is that Paul firmly believed that everyone needed the gospel and he would witness to anyone who would listen.

Paul wrote, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (**1Corinthians 2:2**). That is: he did not argue on politics or current events or religious differences but concentrated on preaching only what is in the Bible and the testimonies of God. This is a critical attitude for missionaries and even for all people who are saved. In the same epistle, Paul also writes: "But to us *there is but one God, the Father, of whom are*

all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him.” (**1Corinthians 8:6**). Further, Paul started this epistle by saying that they were divided according to doctrines supposedly taught by different men instead of being united by the “one God, the Father...and one Lord Jesus Christ”. He goes on to write: “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ” in **1Corinthians 3:1**. When we put all of this together we find that divisions within the church, which cause God’s people to remain as spiritual “babes”, are caused by divisions which go beyond the basic gospel (“Jesus Christ, and him crucified”). Now, with Paul’s background, he knew all of the doctrinal disputes among the Jews. But he did not take those disputes to the mission field. He knew the traditions of the Jews and the main complaint from other Jews was that Paul refused to preach their traditions. In fact, that argument was their basis of starting the riot which eventually got Paul’s head chopped off and was the reason why God sent the Roman Army into Jerusalem to tear down the Temple and kill everyone, and their followers, who insisted on this doctrinal error.

When Paul writes, “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified”, he is saying that he knew all of the disputes over religion, disputes over laws and government, disputes over society practices, disputes over business practices, and all other disputes that divide men. He knew these things and determined to claim no knowledge and no opinion on any of these matters. The only thing that He dealt with was “Jesus Christ, and him crucified”.

When Paul writes, “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified”, he is saying that he would be rejected by the popular preachers of his day and of today. We have all of these different doctrines and religions which each claim to be Biblical and Christian while having fundamental differences. Even among the preachers who claim to be ‘*Good godly fundamental independent KJV only Baptists*’ we have disputes which cause some of this group to declare that others in this group are heretics or the next thing to heretics.

In addition to those disputes, which Paul refused to participate in, we have divisions over the way that people dress and over the way that people speak and over how the gospel is to be presented. Other than matters of modesty, how a person dresses should not matter at all. The missionaries in China, reportedly, severely criticized Hudson Taylor for dressing in the Chinese style but they did not go into the interior of China to reach the lost and they did not have the spiritual fruit that Hudson Taylor had.

Further, we read in **2Corinthians 10:10**, “For *his* (Paul’s) letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible”. Paul didn’t look like a preacher nor did he sound like a preacher but he did more for the kingdom of God than all of his critics. Yet, even to this day, we have people, who are not missionaries, insisting that they can specify how a missionary must dress, speak and present himself.

In all of these, we see that Paul was able to enter these disputes and truly be an expert based upon personal experience. However, he “determined” to avoid all of these things which caused disputes and to concentrate on preaching the gospel to save the lost. He concentrated on preaching how Jesus Christ died to save the lost and used his ongoing personal relationship with the saved to cause them to grow spiritually. Given what the Bible reports about his spiritual results, when compared to the spiritual results of his critics, we would be wise to follow his example, especially when God has him write it in the word of God for our instruction.

When the gospel was rejected by one group, he turned to another group who received the truth (**Acts 13:45-52**). In that section, we see the Jews “were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming”. I’ve seen the same in America and the roots of the same in the Philippines. Many American preachers have said that Americans come to church with an attitude of: ‘bless me if you can’ instead of praying first and coming to church to be a blessing. Many American churches are dying because they have very few active

members under 50 and many of the members have an attitude that they pay the staff to do the spiritual work of the church. These attitudes, and similar ones, will result in people being “filled with envy” when others receive results and blessings from God while they are denied the same. When such people are positive that they are right, because their traditions are right and they ignore the obvious judgment of God, they “spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming”. That is: their “blaspheming” is claiming that God is wrong to bless people who do things God’s way while refusing to bless their religious traditions and their attitudes which were already mentioned.

When Paul and his missionary team ran into the attitudes mentioned, they “turned to the Gentiles”. Rather than fighting with critics and disputing with people who refuse to respond to the gospel, we need to ask God to send us to people who will receive His truth and be willing to leave our home, and go to strange people and cultures, so long as they are willing to receive the basic gospel.

Paul and his company stayed when people assaulted him but went elsewhere when they assaulted new believers (**Acts 14:1-7; 17:1-10**). Paul and his missionary team had enough faith to trust God for their physical protection and provision and were even willing to be martyrs (**Philippians 1:21** “For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.”) However, they also understood that new believers did not, yet, have this level of faith. Therefore, they avoided circumstances which could seriously damage the faith of new believers.

Paul and his company refused to accept glory given to them which belonged to God (**Acts 14:11-18**). This is where the people wanted to worship Paul and Barnabas as gods, and when Paul and Barnabas refused to allow it, the people turned on them under the influence of unbelieving Jews. The people stoned Paul and Barnabas and threw them out of the city, supposing them to be dead. Thus, we see that, even if it endangers our lives, we are to not accept glory that belongs to God.

Paul and his company “confirmed the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorted them to continue in the faith”. That is: they made sure that the new believers matured spiritually and that they understood more than the basic doctrines (**Acts 14:21-26**). Failure to do this is why cults flourish on mission fields. Cults do not go after the heathen but prefer new believers who know basic doctrines but do not know enough to spot perversions of God’s word. They claim to teach a ‘greater truth’ and the people are attracted if their church leaders fail to teach them all of the doctrine of the Bible, including those doctrines which cannot be taught until after the people receive a certain level of spiritual maturity.

Paul and his company reported back to the sending church (**Acts 14:26-28**). This is a requirement that many missionaries resent and I don’t understand it. I’ve had preachers argue that people on the other side of the world from them should know that they are doing God’s work, even without any verification, and financially and prayerfully support the work even without any reports. However, there are too many people who present a great presentation when raising support but then do no work, and even lie about what they are doing. There are others who leave the faith, such as “Hymenaeus and Alexander” (**1Timothy 19-20**). Therefore, the sending church has a God-given responsibility to check on the work of all missionaries that they support. In addition, we have the example of God in the Bible such as in the **Book of Numbers**. Further, we see Paul request prayers eight times but only mentioned money once. When Paul requested prayers, he also, usually, specified specific prayer requests. Thus, part of reporting is to let supporting ministries know how to pray for the missionary team.

Paul followed up with churches he had started and not only received their report but personally returned to verify the accuracy of the reports received (**Acts 15:36** and other Bible references). One of the truths that is often overlooked is that Paul’s second and third missionary journeys were to verify the spiritual health of the churches that he started. People preach about Paul having three missionary journeys. They preach about Paul starting churches but fail to mention the Biblically reported purpose of each of those journeys. As a result, many people believe, and even teach, that all of Paul’s journeys were about starting new churches. However, **Acts 15:36** tells us differently. Paul was concerned about the spiritual health of the believers. In addition,

while people preach from Paul's epistles, they were written to teach. Further, many people believe that Paul wrote his epistles to churches that he started. However, **Colossians 1:4** tells us that Paul did not start the church there and **Colossians 1:7** names a convert from a church that Paul started who did start the church at Colosse. Thus, that church was a grandchild church and Paul was actually more concerned about saved people maturing spiritually so that they would continue the work, and teach future generations to continue the work; than he was about saving lost people. We see this truth by two out of three missionary trips being made to "strengthen the brethren" (**Luke 22:32**) and by what is seen in his writing as the actual purpose of his epistles.

Paul and his company made sure that the beliefs of saved people matched the agreed doctrine that all believers were to accept (**Acts 16:4**). There was no division of doctrine and no differences of religions among those who claimed to be 'Christian', and were saved under the ministry of Paul, in the time of the Paul's ministry. However, saved Jews brought in the doctrinal error of keeping Jewish religious practices as a requirement for salvation and sanctification. Then, by the time that John wrote **Revelation**, there was an opposing false doctrine within the church that not only rejected the strict religious rules of the Jews but claimed that all life-styles were OK and that there was no judgment of sin by saved people. Thus, what we have is two opposing extreme doctrines that came into the church because God's people believed whatever was preached without first verifying the doctrine with God's word as interpreted by God's Holy Spirit. We not only must verify any doctrine which we accept but we must teach our converts and followers to do the same.

Paul and his company responded immediately to directions received from God's Holy Spirit (**Acts 16:9-10**). This is known as the 'Macedonian Vision'. Paul and his team tried to take the gospel into certain areas and were "forbidden of the Holy Ghost / the Spirit suffered them not" (**Acts 16:5-8**). They continued on trying to figure out what God's plan was when it was finally revealed to Paul. Please notice that they continued as they were doing until they received a new direction from God. In addition, they obeyed as soon as they received a new direction from God. Our example is to respond immediately but to not make any change until we are positive that the change comes from God. Another thing to notice is that Paul first wanted to go "to preach the word in Asia" and was "forbidden of the Holy Ghost". That was where the believers came from who taught doctrinal error and got Paul's head chopped off. However, "Macedonia", where Paul was directed to go, was the area where the strongest supporters of Paul's ministry came from.

Paul and his company "prayed, and sang praises unto God" as a result of being beaten and thrown in prison for preaching the gospel (**Acts 16:25**). Think about this people. Paul tried to go elsewhere, as reported earlier in this chapter and in the prior point, and God's Holy Spirit refused to let them go anywhere else. So, they knew that they were in God's will when they were beaten and thrown in prison for preaching the gospel. Then, they met people who believed in God and were trying to pray and worship God to the best of their ability. After these people got saved, a rich lady (Lydia) gave them a place to stay and to start a church. Then they were minding their own business when they were harassed by a girl who was possessed by a devil. That righteous charitable act is what got them beaten and thrown in prison.

Not only were they doing right, but it was illegal for them to beat Paul and throw him in prison because he was a Roman citizen. Thus, they had all of these reasons to cry and complain and to be upset with God. Instead, they refused to look at things from a physical perspective but viewed them from a spiritual perspective and "prayed, and sang praises unto God (so that) the prisoners heard them". This resulted in God responding in the way reported in the end of **Acts 16** and in the Philippian jailer being saved with his household. The point being that true missionaries must expect devils to try and stop their work for God. When that happens, they need to expect God to work in a mighty way if they respond to the devil's attack in the right way.

Devils don't bother people when they are doing things which have no eternal spiritual impact. Therefore, if the servant of God truly is attacked by a devil, they can know that God's blessing will soon follow but only if they stay true to God. The devils attack to try and get God's people to

respond in the wrong way and God allows it as a test that He can reward when we pass the test by responding in the right way.

When government officials violated the law, Paul made them confess their wrong doing or he would have a greater government official punish those who did wrong (**Acts 16:36-40**). This provided protection for believers who stayed under the authority of those government officials because of the threat of reprisal if they did more wrong. There are times when God's ministers need to fight with the government and when they need to let wrongs go. Paul did nothing when it was himself and his spiritually mature mission team who were wronged. However, he moved to protect the new believers because their faith was too new and immature to survive an attack by government officials who were motivated by devils.

Paul and his company did not receive financial support from new believers but waited until they were organized as a church before having them give financial support to the ministry (**2Corinthians 11:7-9**). After a mission work organizes as a church, they are to support missionaries who go "to the regions beyond" (**2Corinthians 10:16**). They are also to provide people to be part of the mission efforts which reach their neighbors and people in regions beyond them.

Paul had gone to Corinth before his missionary team met him there (**Acts 18:4**). While he was there alone, he met, befriended and starting working with Aquila and Priscilla. They were converted, later went on missionary trips with Paul, and ended up helping to start at least three churches. In addition to the encouragement from these believers, Paul had started out "reasoning in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks" (**Acts 18:4**). Please notice that while they were "persuaded", that did not mean that they were truly converted and willing to let God change their life. Then, "Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus was Christ*". This was after the rest of his missionary team showed up in Corinth. At this time, Paul ended his teaching and started truly preaching. That made it harder for "the Jews and the Greeks" to disagree and disregard Paul's message. As a result, they "opposed themselves, and blasphemed" (**Acts 18:6**). That is: they stopped "reasoning" and started reacting emotionally to defend their doctrinal error and did not let the truth of God correct their doctrinal error.

Thus, we have a lesson here. Many people are taught to put off questions when they are 'soul winning' and to do so in a way that the question will be forgotten after the people hear the presentation of the plan of salvation. That method works with some people but others become convinced that you really are not willing to discuss things but only want to push your beliefs on others. Even those people who do accept the plan of salvation are often discouraged from asking questions and having an honest discussion even later. As a result, some people end up leaving the church and the pastor never has a chance to discuss their reasons with the people before they leave. Others become convinced that the soul winner / pastor is only interested in his own ideas, and that cripples true fellowship.

Paul had started out "reasoning". Only after that failed to motivate the people did Paul start preaching. However, when they stopped "reasoning" and started reacting emotionally and arguing, Paul cut it off and left them to go to others. The point is that there are times that we need to "reason" with people and not just push a 'plan of salvation'. However, when people start arguing, that is the time to quit and move on. There are too many people who have not heard for us to waste our time arguing with people.

Our text indicates that there were some people who were saved while Paul "reasoned" with "the Jews and the Greeks". After turning his back on the people who wanted to argue, Paul went to their house and worked with them to build a church. I imagine that, at this time, Paul was discouraged and thinking about moving on because we are told "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city." (**Acts 18:9-10**). With this promise, we see that Paul spoke boldly (**Acts 18:9-10**). Even though the Jews promised riots and beatings if Paul continued to preach the gospel, he still persisted and started the church of Corinth. Now, when people are threatened with bodily harm, arrest, death and other things; many people would question if they are really in the will of God. However, Paul put the personal promise from God above everything

else. We need to do likewise when God gives us a personal promise. Even if it means our death, we only receive the reward of being a martyr. Therefore, when we have a promise from God, we need to be bold.

Next, we see that when Paul refused to be intimidated, the devil motivated Jews tried to bring criminal charges against him. However, as Jesus promised, that failed and the local governor refused to get involved in a religious dispute (**Acts 18:12-16**). That's when people started being attacked in public and the governor still refused to settle it (**Acts 18:17**). Paul still stuck around awhile, to prove that he wasn't being driven away. But, after a time, returned to his prior works to strengthen them (**Acts 18:18-23**). On the way, he stopped at Ephesus, and preached there, and was asked to stay and start a work but he moved on because he had other tasks to do for the Lord (**Acts 18:19-21**). However, Paul did leave Aquila and Priscilla there to work with the believers (**Acts 18:24-28**) and they helped correct the doctrine of Apollos. Thus, we see that missionaries may pass a job to a worker, even a spiritually mature non-preacher worker, if they cannot do it themselves. However, there is an overall lesson of this section. There are times that the devil will provide an opportunity to work in God's kingdom, but it is not the task that God wants us to do. We must always prioritize the known will of God as our top priority. Yes, we can do other things along the way, but we cannot let them distract us from the primary job that God has given to us.

Next, we see that Paul corrected doctrinal error of people who thought they were saved but had been taught with an incomplete doctrine (**Acts 19:1-7**). A lot of people make this mistake of accepting someone's profession without verifying that they are actually saved or without verifying the doctrine and level of spiritual maturity a person has. This is why it is important for the pastor, or some senior member of the church, to visit and get to know new members and potential new members. Such a visit, for the expressed purpose of verifying doctrinal issues, can avoid a lot of surprise problems later on and can help to spot a devil-motivated wolf trying to pretend to be a sheep. This is true at home and on the mission but more so on a foreign mission field because of cultural differences and potential problems arising from cultural differences. In addition, it allows the opportunity to correct doctrinal errors in private, which is what our account says that Paul did.

Once more, we see Paul getting in disputes over doctrine with other Jews and separating the disciples from those who taught doctrinal error (**Acts 19:8-17**). We also see God verifying the doctrine of Paul with miracles and other evidences of approval by God. We have a funny account of some Jews thinking that Paul just used some inanimate force (*'May the force be with you!'*). They tried to drive out a devil: "And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." (**Acts 19:15-16**).

God is not some inanimate force that anyone can use any way that they want but is three persons in one being and thinks and acts by His own will. He chooses to answer our prayer requests. We do not order God around. However, with the many false religions that are in the world, many will understand our message. Therefore, it is important that we emphasize that God is a person; He thinks for Himself; he is greater than us; and, we do not order God around but that He answer our prayers when we ask the right thing in the right way.

We see here (**Acts 19:17-20**) that when the church is truly following God, then the society around them will be affected. The influence of devils should be reduced in society and church doctrine should not be changed to accommodate neither doctrine from devils nor the desires of worldly societies. This is the end result that God wants all churches to have and this is the goal that every missionary, preacher and church member should desire.

After his success in Ephesus, Paul did not sit back and take it easy but asked God what was next in God's plan. So, as long as we are in the flesh, God has a job for us to do. Paul went to check on the churches he had started (**Acts 19:21**) while waiting for an answer and God answered by

telling Paul to go to Jerusalem. We see here that without personal direction from God, Paul was checking on his disciples and encouraging them and looking for any problems from devils in the lives of the believers. Here we see, Paul make long term plans but stay where he was until God told him to go. We must always wait on an OK from God before doing what we think God wants done in the ministry.

In the remainder of **Acts 19**, we see an account of a problem that Paul tried to deal with but was restrained. He had to let his disciple deal with the problem, and trust God to take care of it, while he sat out and prayed. This might be the hardest thing for a loving preacher, or parent, to do but there are times when we must let our followers go through their own trial without interference.

In **Acts 20**, we have the account of Paul making his final round of the churches that he had started before he went to Jerusalem where he ended up being arrested and sent to Rome to be beheaded. In this section, Paul followed what he believed was the will of God in spite of testimony from “the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me” (**Acts 20:22-23**). There are times that the believer must look death in the eye and say ‘you are only the door to my final reward’.

As Paul visited each church he preached a final message, reminded them of his testimony, and charged them to keep the faith. His testimony was that he “coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel (and) these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me” (**Acts 20:33-34**). This is where he reminded them that “ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (**Acts 20:35**). This was Paul's final encouragement to his disciples and it should be our guiding principal in this life.

Paul did what was required by the leaders of the church even though their demands would not prove what they claimed that the act would prove (**Acts 21:20-26**). The first part of **Acts 21** tells of Paul's journey to Jerusalem and how many people warned him of future troubles and tried to dissuade him from going. However, nothing turned him from what he believed to be the will of God for his life at that time. When he got to Jerusalem, he reported all that God had done through his ministry “And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord” (**Acts 21:20**). However, they did not think about that report but concentrated on how many Jews were upset with Paul because of lies told about him. They admitted what they required of Gentiles and that the Gentiles were not required to keep Jewish traditions. However, the liars claimed that Paul required Jews to stop Jewish traditions. Like many religious leaders and pastors of today, they believed the rumors and did not require eyewitnesses. There were no Jews which testified that Paul had required this of them, only liars who claimed that Paul required it of others who were not available to testify for themselves. When we look at what truly happened to this church, we see the error of believing second-hand claims and of disobeying the command to “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.” (**1Timothy 5:19**). The head of a mission board, who has not personally gone to the mission field to witness what he passes on in a report, does not meet the Biblical requirement to be a “witness”.

In addition to that error, they demanded that Paul do a ceremony that they, and Paul, had to know would not prove the truth of his guilt or his innocence. However, they were not trying to find the truth but were trying to placate bunches of church members (“the multitude must needs come together”) who were zealous of religious error. They should have corrected the error and have demanded that the people accept true evidence, but, instead, they tried to appease the crowd. This ended badly for the Jerusalem Church, and some believe ended badly for Paul, but helped all future believers through the Prison Epistles. Regardless of future results, we see Paul being submissive, and trusting God, when he was ordered to do the wrong thing. Thus, we have the example of being submissive even when we know that the superior is wrong. We must trust God for the end results which really will not be tallied until the “judgment seat of Christ”.

In the remainder of the **Book of Acts**, we see the circumstances of Paul while arrested and how he dealt with those circumstances. While these examples are useful to people in those circumstances, and while there is significant doctrine in those chapters, I do not believe they relate to the current subject. Therefore, they are not covered here. However, what we do see in those chapters, and in Paul's writings, is that Paul preached the same truth regardless of circumstances (**Romans 15:19; 1Corinthians 15:1-2**). This is the example that we are to follow.

6. Paul's Prison Years:

Paul spent several years as a prisoner starting at the time of the riot which was started by Jewish believers and ending when he was beheaded. Those Jewish believers joined with Jewish nonbelievers to start a riot, while Paul was quietly praying in the Temple, and then blamed him for the riot. They did this because they disagreed with Paul's doctrine about Jewish religious traditions but they kept losing the arguments because Paul was right and had the backing of God. When they could not get the power of God to back them, they turned to the power of the civil government and methods of devils. God allowed this so that there would be no question of their guilt when they were judged by God. God also used it to put Paul into a position where Paul would do the will of God such as write the prison epistles. Further, God prevented the doctrinal goals of these people from producing the end result that they sought. In general, God's people should understand that they can't force God to do things their way. If what we are trying to do does not get the power and protection from God, then we need to find out what God's will truly is and not turn to the way of devils.

Paul's arrest happened while he was at Jerusalem for the purpose of bringing money to help the poor members of the Jerusalem Church. Instead of being grateful, they were more concerned with appeasing members with a religious fanatical bend (**Acts 21:20**). Earlier (**Acts 15:18-33**), the Jerusalem Church had determined that their doctrinal belief was wrong to be applied to Gentiles. They should have seen that it was being eliminated by God, with the start of the 'Church Age', but they weren't ready for accepting this truth applied also to Jewish believers. As a result, this doctrine was spread until they had "many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law" (**Acts 21:20**). These people were so "zealous of the law" that they lied about what Paul actually taught and to whom.

In addition, the Jerusalem Church leaders failed to stop the spread of doctrinal error and the use of it to justify bringing a false witness against Paul. When the false witness was brought, they failed to verify the claims and, instead, sought to appease the loudest accusers. The end result was the destruction of the Jerusalem Church, the destruction of the Temple, and the death of most people who believed doctrinal error. We will see the basis of these claims in the Bible. However, before dealing with these truths, we need to look at events which happened earlier and which are related. In particular, we need to look at a problem that exists even today. That is: people who are not missionaries demanding that missionaries preach their home culture and religious standards to believers in foreign cultures instead of insisting that the basic Gospel of Salvation be preached and allow differences of practice in other cultures.

Back in **Acts 15**, we read: "And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" (**Acts 15**). Then Paul and Barnabas went to the Jerusalem Church about this doctrine and, after reporting the power of God on their work among the Gentiles, we read: "But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses" in **Acts 15:5**. Of course, the "Pharisees" were leaders of the religious group which insisted that their own religious beliefs corrected the Bible and used that belief to justify demanding that Jesus be crucified and more. Therefore, the same type of doctrine which was used to justify crucifying Jesus; and beating Peter and John; and the martyring of Stephen; and the persecution which scattered the church; was now being used to justify this doctrinal error. That is, a dispute between Bible truth (as seen by the presence of the power of God behind the Bible truths), and religious traditions which do not have the approval from God (as seen by the lack of the power of God behind the religious beliefs).

In this dispute, we see those backing the religious traditions insisting that the traditions were more important than doctrine which had the obvious power and approval from God. For example, in this instance, we have God blessing Gentiles who believe but are not circumcised, nor were keeping

the Jewish traditions; while we also have starving believing Jews who are keeping the Jewish traditions but not receiving the power and provision of God. You also have the self-proclaimed experts on the Bible, the “Pharisees”, ignoring the many lessons and commands from God in the Old Testament which say that God will bless obedience and curse disobedience.

At the time of **Acts 15**, the Jerusalem Church determined that Gentiles did not have to keep Jewish traditions, did not have to be circumcised, and accepted that true Biblical salvation came “through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” only (**Acts 15:11**). Then, in **Acts 16:1-3**, we see Paul have Timothy circumcised even though he was half Gentile and in spite of the pain of doing it to an adult. Paul could have claimed that Timothy was a Gentile and, therefore, free from the Jewish traditions. But Paul did what he could to avoid further disputes. However, we read in **Acts 21:19-21**: “And when he (Paul) had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs.” Paul had just brought them financial support because of their poverty in spite of the evidence that God was not blessing and providing for the church members. Further, Paul reported God blessing his ministry but their response was to quickly “glorify the Lord” and then start blaming Paul for the problem that they had with church members being “zealous” for doctrinal error (“the law”). They took the easy way in the flesh and blamed Paul based upon lies instead of investigating the claims against Paul and correcting the liars and those who followed their lies.

Now, think about this. Our reference said: “they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the **Jews** which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs”. They made this claim about “the **Jews**” because the Jerusalem Church had already determined that they could not lay Jewish traditions on the Gentiles. The church leaders allowed this division instead of looking at what God’s approval was based upon the power of God and how God demonstrated His approval for each side of the dispute.

In addition, the church is letting their members accept rumors and lies (“they are informed of thee”) against an elder (**1 Timothy 5:19**) without verifying the accusation and insisting that people produce true “two or three witnesses”. This is also in spite of Paul’s actions with Timothy, which showed that he went out of his way to keep Jewish traditions with the Jews. Now, this is bad enough, but look at what they commanded Paul to do (**Acts 21:22-25**). They made this command, and stated motivation, while starting out acknowledging that these traditions do not apply to the Gentiles to whom Paul was ministering. Their religious ceremony had nothing to do with proving or disproving the charges but everything to do with trying to appease people who had been led into doctrinal error. Church leaders should have used proper methods to investigate the truth. When they choose methods of appeasement, they should have considered how God would judge their actions and their choices to appease people who want to continue in sin. As for Paul, we see the proper response to being wrongly accused in the church.

That is part of the circumstantial considerations. However, there is another consideration which the devils have caused arguments among believers over. While Paul was traveling to Jerusalem, several prophets, and others, warned Paul that he was going into problems (**Acts 20:22-23** “And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.”, **Acts 21:4** “And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.”)

Now, Paul believed he was in the will of God as he was going the Jerusalem. Yes, he was arrested when he got there, but God used his arrest to bring a witness to kings who would not have heard otherwise. God also used this restriction on Paul’s travels to cause him to write

epistles, which are part of the Bible, and which we probably would not have otherwise. So, while people argue about if Paul was in God's will, they miss some other considerations.

God gave us a free will and will not take it away for any reason, not even to prevent someone from going to the "lake of fire" for eternity. If God won't take away the free will of the lost, He certainly will not take away the free will of the saved. Yes, the Bible says: "And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem". Notice the word "should" and compare that to **Acts 16:6** where we read "were forbidden of the Holy Ghost". Thus, God was still leaving the choice with Paul. It is wrong for us to try to take away the free will of another person, especially the free will of another believer. The bottom line is that God left the choice to Paul and we are wrong to try and say that Paul had no right to use the free will that God gave him. In addition, we have a lesson for today in that we are not right to try and force someone to do our will for their life unless we are a parent dealing with the child that God has put into our control and they are still living in our house.

Another consideration is that this argument distracts from understanding Bible truths. **Romans 8:28** says: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose." No matter what we chose to do in our free will, God is able to make "all things work together for good" so long as we are part of "to them who are the called according to *his* purpose". Paul was certainly that. We don't know what God would have done if Paul chose to not go the Jerusalem but we have a lot of information on how God can use even a decision that many think is wrong. The important point is that Paul was part of "to them who are the called according to *his* purpose". Therefore, whatever choice he made with his own free will, God could use it and since God did not criticize Paul's decision, we are wrong to do so. Hence, instead of arguing about if Paul was in God's will or not, we should concentrate on how God uses Paul's decision for his own life.

Now, having considered many important background points, we can go forward with the consideration of how Paul dealt with being arrested and how this is an example to believers of today, especially if a believer is arrested in a foreign country while trying to serve the kingdom of God and spread the Gospel of Salvation. As we see Paul do here, sometimes we need to submit to the person in authority, even when we know that they are wrong and that we will be hurt, and trust God to make "all things work together for good".

Returning to **Acts 21:22**, we see the church leaders say that their true motivation was: "the multitude must needs come together". They demanded that Paul do this religious ceremony ("Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave *their* heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but *that* thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.") In **Acts 21:26**, we see that Paul did as requested and "when the seven days were almost ended".

The Jews wanting to cause trouble saw that their plan had failed. Therefore, "the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all *men* everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place" (**Acts 21:27-28**). Their claim was another lie and even if their assumption of another time (**Acts 21:29**) was true, it was not true about the four Jews that Paul had been with for seven (7) days. So, what we have here is Paul submitting to the religious leaders even when what they demanded that he do would prove nothing about the accusations made against him. In addition, the desire of the religious leaders ("the multitude must needs come together") would not happen because nothing would appease these religious people who were zealous of doctrinal error.

The fact is that the church leaders came up with a plan but did not verify that it would actually work before implementing it. For example, if they had demanded the agreement of church members to

drop their dispute with Paul if he did this ceremony, then the members would have refused, at which point they would have known that their plan would not have worked, or the members would have agreed. If the members had agreed and then acted as reported, the church leaders could have backed Paul and kicked the problem members out of the church. At the very least, it would have separated the rest of the church from their error. However, by doing nothing, the church leaders made the entire church complicit in this sin and brought the judgment of God upon the entire church. This is an important consideration for church leaders, but that is not what this document is about. Here we are considering what Paul did in this situation and how he is an example to us if we find ourselves in a similar situation.

We read in **Acts 21:30-31** that the people dragged Paul out of the Temple and started to beat him to death and that the Temple closed their doors and refused to deal with the violence that their own doctrine had spawned. However, God had the civil authority step in and stop the beating of Paul (**Acts 21:33-36**). Next, Paul received permission and told the crowd of Jews his personal testimony and how that God had sent him to the Gentiles who were outside of Jerusalem. Therefore, they should have understood that he had not “polluted” the Temple. As with any lost zealous religious person, the crowd still demanded his death and did not care if he was guilty or not nor did they care what was right before God.

Thus, we see that Paul was wrongly accused, turned on by the church leaders, lied about, beaten by zealots who were trying to kill him, and his response was to give his testimony and try to get people saved. When this failed, God had the civil authorities take Paul into custody and protect him from the crowd. Thus we see that God will protect us when we are truly more concerned about giving the Gospel than we are about our physical life. That is, with the exception when God decides that it is time for us to go to Heaven and uses us as His martyr.

Next, we see that the civil government was going to mistreat Paul and he exercised his rights as a Roman citizen to avoid unnecessary abuse. In this case, the civil authority was not deliberately trying to do wrong but was using the quickest way to get the answers that they needed. The difference in motivation by the civil government, from earlier times as reported in **Acts**, caused this different response from Paul. Instead of seeking proof of the civil authority doing wrong, Paul sought to avoid problems. Thus, we see that we must consider the motivations of authority figures when we determine how to respond.

When the civil authority understood what was legally required of him, he “commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear” (**Acts 22:30**). When they came Paul started out telling the truth and the high priest ordered him struck for saying what the high priest didn’t like. Paul responded to being mistreated and was told that he spoke against the high priest. As a Roman citizen, Paul could have brought charges against the high priest and the man who obeyed him, but decided to submit because the Bible says: “Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.” Thus, we see that even when God’s leader does deliberate wrong, we are to not speak against him but leave his judgment to God.

When Paul saw that they were not interested in truth and justice, he used a division of their zealous doctrine to split them and get them to fight against each other. And, once more, God used the civil authority to protect Paul. Thus we see God give Paul wisdom to avoid death by zealots. Our lesson is to pray, stay sensitive to the leading of the Holy Ghost, and trust God when dealing with religious zealots.

The rest of the chapter tells us more about the attempts of zealots to kill Paul and of God’s protection. From this we learn that devil motivated men can do nothing against us unless God allows it or we stop obeying God and get out from under the protection of God.

Acts 24 tells us, in detail, about the Jews coming to court and telling more lies about Paul and Paul responding with the simple truth. Here we see that we should stick to the truth and trust God to take care of us. This chapter ends by telling us that Paul was kept under arrest because of political reasons. Yet, Paul still stuck with the truth and did not cause problems and, apparently, did not worry about his fate.

In **Acts 22 through Acts 26**, we see accounts of Paul testifying before various government officials including Governors and Kings. Thus is a fulfillment of prophecy that Jesus gave at Paul's initial salvation. Think about the report in the Bible. Paul has been arrested for two years based upon lies and false accusations, according to **Acts 24:27**. Think about yourself experiencing the same. Now consider that Paul remained arrested for at least two more years before he was beheaded. He never was let go even though he was innocent. However, he gave the gospel to many who would not have heard it otherwise, he wrote the prison epistles and he continued to minister and win souls and train preachers. Thus, when things go terrible in this physical world in spite of our serving God, we should look for unique opportunities to give out the gospel and to serve in God's kingdom where God lets us be.

In **Acts 27**, we read about the trip of Paul to Rome. In this chapter, we read about Paul receiving favor of the chief captor and we should realize that God will give us favor with even the lost if we are truly serving God. We also read about Paul fasting and praying for his jailers. This shows us the attitude that God wants us to have even towards those who treat us wrong because they often are only obeying orders and also can be controlled by devils who wish to make us react wrongly.

In **Acts 28**, we read about the end of the trip of Paul to Rome. The chapter starts with Paul surviving the bite of a viper, which fulfills the promise from Jesus (**Mark 16:18**) to people taking the gospel to the lost. In this chapter, and the prior chapter, we see God protecting Paul as he journeyed. This is a testimony of God's protection for His servants who take the gospel to people who have never heard it. Yes, God let things like the ship wreck and the viper happen, but then they become a testimony of God's protection when His people come out the other side of the adventure. And face it dear reader. None of us are getting out of this life except through death or the rapture. This entire experience of life is a test. First, to see if we will accept Jesus Christ as our personal Lord. And secondly, to see how well we will obey Him while trusting Him for protection.

Thrill parks and adventures put people into scary positions while keeping them safe and that is what people find thrilling. God is willing to make the entire life of His servant an adventure if they are willing to follow Jesus anywhere, just like people like to sing about doing while they are in church.

Returning to **Acts 28**, we read how Paul used the incident of the viper to heal "the father of the chief man of the island" and to give the gospel. This shows us that we should look for, and take, every opportunity to give the gospel to others, especially if we want to keep God's protection. I have been in dangerous situations many times and found that few people want to hurt someone who walks up to them, smiles, and gives them a gospel tract or asks them if they know that they will go to Heaven when they die. Yes, there are some religious fanatics that you want to be careful of and some Communistic countries that you want to be careful about giving the gospel out too openly, but that is just being "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (**Matthew 10:16**).

In **Acts 28**, after we read about Paul making it safe to Rome, we also read that he was treated better than other prisoners because of the blessings that God gave to others who traveled with Paul and heard the Gospel. God wants us to see that giving out the gospel not only gets us God's protection but also can make us look good to others and can be used by God for our provision. In this case, even though Paul was a prisoner, he was "suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him" (**Acts 28:16**). Paul used this to "call the chief of the Jews together" and explain his situation. They agreed to return and let him explain things to them and he used it to give the gospel to them.

Once more, we see many of the Jews rejecting the truth in favor of their religious traditions. Our chapter, and the **book of Acts**, end with: “And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him” (**Acts 28:30-31**). With this we see God turning from those people who claimed special favor, because of religious position, and turning to everyone who was willing to listen. This is the example that God wants His people to follow. Too many places, like in America, the people have heard the Gospel and many refuse to listen while many others refuse to obey. God wants His true servants to take His gospel to people who are willing to listen and obey. Yes, we may end up in prison and we will all certainly die. However, this life can be an adventure before then if we truly let God use us as servants in His kingdom.

7. Paul's Writing in the Bible:

All of Paul's epistles were written to specific people or churches. He did not write 'General Epistles' to a large group as the other New Testament writers did. In addition, **2Thessalonians 3:17** says: "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write". Paul had a problem of others writing epistles and claiming that they came from Paul. Thus, he personally wrote "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand". We do not have that "salutation" in the epistle to the **Hebrews** and that epistle is a 'General Epistle'. Further, all of the arguments which claim that Paul wrote **Hebrews** are based upon writing style. However, Paul had three men (Timothy, Titus and Onesimus) whom he called "son" in the faith, even though he trained many other preachers. The true Biblical meaning of "son" is: 'one who receives the character of the father'. Just as Jesus Christ displayed the character of God the Father, so also would these three men have the same character in the faith, and speaking and writing style, as Paul had. Therefore, there are three other men who could have written the epistle to the **Hebrews** with the same writing style and not have the first two problems mentioned with the claim that Paul wrote it.

With that written, we need to recognize a greater problem with the argument about who the author of epistle to the **Hebrews** is. God deliberately hid that information. Therefore, God decided that we do not need to know it. Further, while people are arguing about who the author is, which they cannot truly specify, they are distracting people from the message of that epistle. Therefore, **Hebrews** is not considered to be written by Paul and the argument over the author, whom God deliberately hid, is a distraction from a devil.

Moving on, we see that only some of his letters were preserved by God (**Colossians 4:16** – the epistle to Laodicea was not preserved). When Paul wrote, he wrote as a pastor to his people and was not aware that God would preserve some of his writings as scripture. People who claim that their preaching is equal to, or greater than, the written word of God are liars who are representing devils. We are to serve God to the best of our ability and let God worry about how He uses and preserves our efforts.

Many of his epistles were co-authored by other preachers (**Romans 16:21-23; 1Corinthians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1-2; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1Thessalonians 1:1; 2Thessalonians 1:1**). What we teach and preach should be in agreement with other godly people and churches. In addition, the basic rule for dividing commandments that all must obey from those that we can disagree on is: "two or three witnesses". Since each of these epistles had at least two authors ("witnesses"), their doctrine is something that we must all believe and that we will be judged for how well we obeyed the commandments in them.

Many of his epistles were written because he could not personally visit the church at that time; such as the prison letters and the ones to Corinth. God deliberately had prevented Paul from traveling so that he would write these letters. When we read them, we see that Paul was not happy about having to write instead of visiting the church. Many times when we are upset by circumstances, God is doing something which we are not aware of. Therefore, praise God in all circumstances, especially when we don't understand them. We must use our faith to believe that God is in control.

Many people have noted how Paul wrote to admonish and encourage even while he was in terrible circumstances. True Biblical love is considering the needs of others, especially their spiritual needs, without considering our own needs or circumstances.

All of Paul's letters corrected doctrinal errors except the epistle to the Philippians which encouraged them to 'keep on keeping on serving our Lord Jesus Christ'. Getting others to get right with God, and to mature spiritually, is the primary job of a pastor and of all spiritual leaders.

Each of the preserved epistles from Paul has a different theme and a different message to us for today. God preserved these epistles so that we would apply the lessons in them to our personal lives and so that we could help others to apply these lessons. Please see the Addendum called New Testament Themes for the theme of each epistle written by Paul.

Many commentators provide the historically claimed site and date when Paul wrote various epistles. They also claim many things about the circumstances. Please read those commentators with the knowledge that their writing is not the Bible and often contains commonly accepted errors. However, please be aware that these comments are often used by the devil to distract from the message of the epistle. For example, many people are aware of the argument about who wrote the epistle to the Hebrews but know nothing or know little about the content of the epistle.

Many preachers preach from the last chapters of Paul's epistles which tell us what to do and what not to do, while saying very little about the first chapters. They, then, get frustrated when God's people don't obey. The fact is that Paul's epistles always start with precepts (universal truths which do not change regardless of circumstances). They, then, go to general truths which apply to his message and continue to build upon the truths presented until Paul gets to the truth which he wants to present. Only after presenting this truth, based upon reasoning which people can follow from universal truths which they know, does Paul provide the application. Thus, Paul tells people why they should obey before telling them what to obey. The reason why to obey is often not presented, which is why people refuse to obey the commands preached. We need to teach God's books in the order that God presents them because God is a God of order and He presented His message in the order that He wants it presented to others.

Some of Paul's epistles are taught as if the entire epistle is talking about only part of what is actually in the epistle. For example, **1Thessalonians** is taught as if it is all about the rapture when it actually tells us about how to identify the true power of God, the true preacher of God, and the true church of God. Only after showing that the false doctrine comes from preachers who are not true pastors of God does Paul correct their false doctrine about the rapture. We need to consider, and present, the whole counsel of God so that people understand everything God wants them to understand. When Satan tempted Jesus, he quoted scripture. There was nothing wrong with what he quoted. The problem was with what he left out. We need to be careful not to leave out part of God's message while we follow commentators who are repeating common religious methods of presenting a partial truth as the whole.

Several times, Paul said that he revealed a "mystery". Paul was probably the best trained writer of the New Testament but he started out saying that religious training cause him to murder God's true people. He had to get rid of what religion taught, as verified by his comment in **1Corinthians 2:1-2**, which says: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Only, after discarding the teaching of religion, could he verify his beliefs against what was actually written by God in scripture. When he did this, God revealed new truths to him, which included the "mysteries" which he revealed. We need to use the same process. No, God probably will not reveal any new "mysteries" through us but God can show us truths which are in the Bible but which have been forgotten because people only preached common religious beliefs instead of the entire message of the Bible. We, like Paul, must get rid of all of our religious beliefs except the basic gospel. We must then use our education to verify every other belief and only preach and teach what we have actually verified against the word of God using the Spirit of God. In particular, the foreign missionary must avoid preaching his home culture's religious beliefs and practices and present only the message of the Bible while allowing the new believers to create applications which fit within their culture.

C. Peter as an Example Missionary – Outline

1. The Call of Peter

- a. In **John 1:35-42** Peter is called to salvation.
- b. In **Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:15-20** and **Luke 5:2-10** Andrew, Peter, James and John are called to discipleship.
- c. In **Matthew 10; Mark 6:6-11** and **Luke 9:1-5**, the twelve are called to be missionaries.
- d. In **Matthew 16:19; Matthew 18:18**, Jesus promised them the power of an ambassador which they would have when they became apostles at Pentecost.
- e. In **Luke 10:1-17**, Jesus calls another 70 to be missionaries.

The first three of these calls are available to us today, just like they were available to the “seventy also” in **Luke 10**.

- a. The call to be apostles is not available today.
 - i. In **Matthew 16:19; Matthew 18:18**, Jesus promised them the power of an ambassador which included: “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” This power has not been available since John finished Revelation.
 - ii. An ambassador and all true Biblical apostles were appointed in a face-to-face meeting with the resurrected Jesus Christ.
- b. The call of salvation in **John 1:35-42**.
 - i. They believed the message of the preacher (**1:35-37**).
 - ii. They understood the message of the preacher.
 - iii. They verified the message of the preacher (**1:35-39**).
 - iv. They reacted to the message of the preacher (**1:40-41**).
- c. The call of discipleship in **Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:15-20** and **Luke 5:2-10**. “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men”.
 - i. They were busy when called (**Matthew 4:18-19; Mark 1:16; Luke 5:2-3**).
 - ii. They left all to become a disciple (**Matthew 4:20,22; Mark 1:18, 20; Luke 5:11**).
 - iii. They went where Jesus went, obeyed His commands, and learned His doctrine well enough that He could send them out as missionaries. (The meaning of “follow me”).
 - iv. They accepted that they would have to learn to be more than they were at that time (“I will make you”).
 - v. They accepted that this was a work of God in their life (“I will make you”) and not something that they could learn from religion.
 - vi. They accepted that their training would take time (the meaning of the word “make”). However, they also understood that they would be different as a result.
 - vii. They learned His message (**Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15**) and passed His message to others (not the message of religion).
 - viii. Their call was confirmed (**Luke 5:5-9**). We may not have as dramatic nor obvious confirmation but we, each, need a God-caused change to confirm our discipleship.
- d. The twelve are called, and sent out, as missionaries in **Matthew 10; Mark 6:7-11** and **Luke 9:1-5**.
 - i. In **Matthew 10:1**, Jesus ordained the twelve and gave them power. However, this is based on **Matthew 9:36-38** where Jesus acknowledged the need for more workers.

- ii. In **Matthew 10:5-42**, Jesus gives the command to them as missionaries telling them what they will experience and what they are to do.
- iii. In **Mark 6:7-11**, we see Jesus commission the twelve as missionaries to people that he had not gone to. In **Mark 6:12-13**, we see their results. In **Mark 6:1-6**, we see that Jesus sent them because the people that He was preaching to refused to believe beyond the basics.
- iv. In **Luke 9:1-5**, we see Jesus commission the twelve as missionaries. In **Luke 9:6**, we see them obey. In the end of the prior chapter, we see the people mock Jesus and refuse to have faith.
- v. Many people say that they have faith but how much? Is it enough for them to become true disciples? Is it enough for them to become true missionaries?
- e. In **Luke 10:1-17**, Jesus calls another 70 to be missionaries.
 - i. These were not the 12. They were disciples but not the preachers.
 - ii. They had miracles done in and through their lives which they did not have before they went to the mission field.
 - iii. You can expect to receive blessings on the mission field that you do not have now and that you will not get unless you go and become part of a mission work.

In 5 years, where do you see your life being? In 10 years? Do you have a plan for your growth and service to the Lord? Are you just floating through life with vague desires for blessings or are you actively seeking how to get God's blessings and pursuing those goals?

2. The Growth of Peter

- a. Growth starts with personal soul winning. In **Mark 1:29-31** and **Matthew 8:14-15**, we see Peter taking Jesus to his mother-in-law.
- b. Growth continues as we watch and imitate Jesus. See the Doctrinal Study called What Would Jesus Do?
- c. Seek Jesus, in prayer, first thing in the morning. Ask Him for help and direction for the day (**Mark 1:35-36**).
- d. Always seek new people to be saved (**Mark 1:35-37**).
- e. Be willing to ask questions and give true answers even if it makes you appear foolish.
 - i. In **John 6:67-69**, Peter asked what might appear to be foolish.
 - ii. In **Matthew 16:13-19**, Peter gave an answer that could cause him problems.
 - iii. In **Matthew 15:15**, we read that Peter said to Jesus: "Declare unto us this parable."
 - iv. In **Luke 12:41**, Peter asked who the parable applied to.
 - v. In **John 13:4-20**, Peter asked what Jesus was doing when it had a symbolic meaning that the disciples did not understand.
 - vi. In **John 13:21-30**, Peter had John ask Jesus for clarification. We should be willing to get help from other saved people.
- f. In **Mark 5:23-43; Mark 9; Mark 14** – Peter, James and John had personal intimate experiences with Jesus which the other disciples were denied with. We should seek to get as close to Jesus as we can while still in this life because once we die, there are no more changes.
- g. In **Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:31-44; Luke 9:10** and **John 6:1-14**, we read about Jesus doing a miracle and the disciples were involved in the work. Get involved to see miracles and to grow your faith.
- h. In **Matthew 14**, Peter walked on water. Grow your personal faith to where you expect God to do miracles in and through your personal life.
- i. In **Matthew 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30** and **Luke 9:18-21**, we read about Jesus telling His disciples about His death only after they proved to have a certain level of spiritual maturity. Seek maturity in order to receive greater revelation from God.
- j. Accept hard truths which go against our religious traditions. In **Matthew 16:22-23** and **Mark 8:32-33**, Peter refused to do this and suffered the consequences.
- k. In **Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13** and **Luke 9:28-36**, we read about Peter, James and John going with Jesus to the 'Mount of transfiguration'. This was a reward for being the 'inner circle'.
- l. Be mature to the point of discerning what happens spiritually even while many confusing things happen physically (**Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34** and **Luke 8:43-48**).
- m. Be motivated, and directed, by the promise of eternal rewards (**Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-27**).
- n. Don't let being maltreated in this world distract you from the ministry (**Luke 17:24-27**).
- o. Be ready to forgive but demand true repentance first (**Matthew 18:21-35**).
- p. Make sure that you are producing true spiritual fruit and not just religious works (**Matthew 21:18-20; Mark 11:12-14, 20-21**).
- q. Seek answers from God so that you can help others with the answers (**Matthew 24:1-25:30; Luke 21:5-36** and **Mark 13**).
- r. Learn and pass the Test of Spiritual Maturity (**1Corinthians**).
- s. Personally verify your doctrine before preaching. Don't just repeat a 'good message' because it may contain doctrinal error.
- t. Preach the Gospel, not your culture and not your religious practices.

3. The Failure of Peter

- a. In **Matthew 26:31-35; Mark 14:29-32; Luke 22:31-34** and **John 13:36-38**, we read about Peter insisting that he would not fail. Pride and trusting in our own strength is the first step to failure.
- b. Next, Peter fell asleep in the garden when he should have been praying (**Matthew 26:40-45; Mark 14:37-41** and **Luke 22:45**).
- c. Next, in **John 18:10-11**, Peter tried to serve God by using fleshly efforts.
- d. In **Matthew 26:58; Mark 14:54; Luke 22:54** and **John 18:15-16**, we read that Peter “followed him (Jesus) afar off”. We need to get close to God when we mess up.
- e. In **Matthew 26:58; Mark 14:54; Luke 22:55** and **John 18:18**, Peter warmed himself at the servant’s fire.
- f. Then, Peter denied Jesus three times (**Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:56-62** and **John 18:25-27**).
- g. In **John 21:2-3**, Peter returned to his former job in the world and took the majority of the other future apostles with him.
- h. In **John 21:20-22**, we read about Peter asking about John and Jesus basically told him to mind his own business and leave the business of others to God.
- i. In **Galatians 2:11-14**, we read that Paul “withstood him (Peter) to the face, because he was to be blamed”. He, again, led others into doctrinal error and was publicly rebuked this time.
- j. In **2Peter 3:15**, we read that Peter wrote “even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you”. In this, we see that Peter corrected his error. He did not get mad at the man whom God used to publicly correct him but was grateful for the opportunity to get right before facing the “judgment seat of Christ”. He was grateful to the man who was willing to be God’s messenger and risk the wrath of the head apostle in the church.

4. The Restoration of Peter

- a. Jesus prayed for Peter before Peter's failure (**Luke 22:31-32**).
- b. In **Luke 22:61**, we read how our Lord let Peter know of his failure.
- c. In **Mark 16:7**, we read that the resurrected Lord sent a special message to Peter.
- d. In **John 21:3**, we read that Peter tried to return to his prior profession and failed. Part of being restored is realizing how badly we messed up and how much we need restoration.
- e. **In John 21:5**, Jesus went to them and called them "children".
- f. In **John 21**, we see that Jesus had a meal already prepared and He had a lot of fish for Peter and others to catch.
- g. **John 21:15**, we see that love is the basis of restoration.
- h. In **John 21:15-17**, we read that God provides a call to return to the work that He gave to us.
- i. In **John 21:18-19**, we see Peter receiving new revelation and a command to "follow me".

5. The Ministry of Peter

- a. Peter remained faithful.
- b. In **Acts 1**, Peter tried to take the lead in the church and got ahead of God.
- c. In **Acts 2**, we read how the Holy Ghost came and Peter stood up to preach in the power of the Holy Ghost. Thus, this is the only way to be successful in the ministry of God.
- d. Also, in **Acts 2**, we read how the people who were saved were baptized, joined the church and “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”. There was no accepting a profession with zero evidence of true godly life in them afterwards.
- e. In **Acts 3:1-10**, we see Peter and John heal a man and display care and concern for others even if it endangered themselves.
- f. We see God doing miracles in the lives of believers who were truly maturing spiritually and truly trying to serve God.
- g. Peter and John boldly preached in the Temple where the same religious leaders, who had Jesus crucified, were still in charge.
- h. Peter willingly became a martyr and lived a life, before that, where it was obvious that the threat of death had no effect upon his service for God.
- i. When Peter and John were hauled into court, they did not apologize but preached the truth and accused their judges of doing the work of the devil and going against how God had told them to rule God's people.
- j. **Acts 4:13** says: “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus”.
- k. When threatened, **Acts 4:33** says: “And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all”.
- l. In **Acts 5**, we read about Peter confronting a sin of omission while he stood for the full truth of God.
- m. Later, in **Acts 5**, we read about Peter and John being protected by God and freed by God's angel.
- n. **Acts 6**, **Acts 7** and **Acts 8** tell how God used others in the church. A true pastor is to train others to be able to do the work of God.
- o. **Acts 8** tells us about Philip (deacon and evangelist) preaching in Samaria but the people not receiving the Holy Ghost until Peter and John, went and laid hands on them. Even at the risk of people not being saved, God insists upon working through the authority structure that He created for the church.
- p. In **Acts 8**, tells that Peter cursed the man who thought that he could buy the power and authority which God gave to Peter and John. God's power and authority and other things (forgiveness, etc) cannot be bought.
- q. In **Acts 9**, we read about the conversion of Paul and the turmoil caused by it. Yet, Peter continued to act the same way and healed a man in Lydda and raised Tabitha from the dead. We are not to let any outside event interfere with our service to God.
- r. In **Acts 10**, we read about Peter going to the Gentiles even while his culture and religion told him not to do so. We see that the missionary must obey the word of God even if it goes against our own traditions.
- s. In **Acts 11**, we read about Peter getting chewed out by “they that were of the circumcision” in the church of Jerusalem. We must stand against religious traditions which are not Biblical. We are to base everything on what the Bible literally says.

- t. In **Acts 12**, we read about Peter being arrested after the king murdered James. While the church had an all-night prayer meeting, Peter was sleeping in jail. We must “rest” in God’s protection and provision.
- u. In **Acts 15**, we read about the argument between those who held with religious traditions and those who showed that God was against the traditions. Later, in Galatians, we see that Peter stopped fighting and joined with the people who held for Jewish traditions and, later still, we see God bring the Roman Army into Jerusalem in order to kill that heresy. Hence, not giving up the fight can save others and all that we spent our life building in the ministry of God.

6. The Character of Peter

- a. **John 1:40-42** tells us about Peter getting saved.
- b. **John 1:42** tells us that Jesus renamed Simon to “Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone”.
- c. Peter came from Galilee, which was considered to be low-class by the Jews. Peter was later called “unlearned and ignorant” (**Acts 4:13**).
- d. Peter was, probably, a disciple of John the Baptist, along with his brother Andrew, before becoming a disciple of Jesus.
- e. Peter provided for Jesus before becoming a true disciple (**Mark 1-3**).
- f. In **Mark 1:29**, we see that Peter was in the synagogue on the Sabbath with Jesus and others.
- g. In **Mark 1:29-31**, we see that Peter took Jesus to his sick mother-in-law who, apparently, lived with Peter.
- h. In **Matthew 14:28-31**, we see the account of Peter walking on water. He had enough faith to get out of the boat in the middle of a storm.
- i. In **Matthew 17**, we read about Peter being one of the three who were close enough to Jesus to see His glory, on the “mount of transfiguration”.
- j. **Matthew 24:1-25:30; Luke 21:5-36** and **Mark 13** all contain prophecies about future events which Jesus gave when “Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately”. He was close enough to receive special revelation.
- k. In **Luke 24:12** and **John 20:2-10**, we read: “Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.” He did not just reject the thing that was hard to believe but verified it.
- l. In **2Peter 3:15**, we read that Peter wrote: “even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you” after Paul hauled Peter before the entire church and publicly accused him of following doctrinal error and of causing others, including the pastor of the church in Antioch, to follow the same doctrinal error.
- m. In **1Peter**, He writes “to the strangers”, which are the Gentiles. Peter started out being concerned with the saved Jews (**Galatians 2:7**). By the time that he writes his first epistle, Peter has learned to care and minister to Gentile believers. He overcame learned prejudices.
- n. Jesus had told Peter “when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” in **Luke 22:32**. Peter used ‘bad’ experiences to build his character.
- o. In his second epistle (**2Peter**), the main thing that Peter writes about is false prophets. He is warning against doctrinal error taught by them and telling us to verify our doctrine against what scripture truly tells us. After Peter was taught a hard lesson, he tried to help others to overcome the same error with less pain than he personally experienced.

7. Peter's Writing in the Bible:

- a. Peter's first epistle is to non-Jews. Thus, we see that Peter has grown further, spiritually, and is concerned with all saved equally.
- b. Peter is no longer supporting the doctrinal error from saved Jews which claimed that everyone should, but Jews must, keep Jewish traditions even after being saved.
- c. His first chapter tells us about "the trial of your faith" and, as we have seen in prior sections, Peter had many personal experiences to base his doctrine upon.
- d. In the second chapter of his first epistle, Peter gives us more specific reasons why to be obedient and also gives more specific warnings about the consequences of disobedience.
- e. Following the specific commands on what to do in our personal lives, Peter gives commands about our relationships with others and then returns to our relationship with "Christ" and how He is our example of how and why to accept suffering in the flesh in order to gain spiritual rewards.
- f. In the first sentence of his fifth chapter, Peter reminds his readers of his personal testimony, and lets us know that his personal experiences and the blessings from God are the basis of his writing. Based upon his personal experience and testimony, Peter writes that we want to have the best results at that trial and gives us specific attitudes and actions to make part of our personal testimony if we truly want the best results.
- g. In the first chapter of his second epistle, Peter writes that he knows that he will die soon. Therefore, he is writing this epistle so that people will have doctrine from him after he is dead.
- h. The prior is in the middle of the first chapter, Peter starts his epistle by telling us that God gave us the spiritual gifts that we have so that "that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature".
- i. After those remarks, Peter tells us that "we have also a more sure word of prophecy" (God's word) that is more reliable than the testimony of his personal experience on the 'Mount of Transfiguration'. Since that was the ultimate of personal experiences, Peter is telling us to trust God's word above all personal experiences.
- j. Peter's second chapter is dedicated to describing these "false teachers" in several different ways including their attitudes, their actions and their spiritual effects (using symbolic language).
- k. Peter tells warn us against these "false teachers" and their doctrines and the consequences of following doctrinal error.
- l. Thus, we see that Peter's last message is a warning to the believers to not follow the errors of "false teachers". Those who do will suffer judgment and those who are "steadfast" will receive reward.
- m. Just like his first epistle, we can see that Peter wrote to believers based upon things that he had personally experienced and had a valid basis for what he wrote. He tells us what to do and warns us against the consequences of following "false teachers".

D. Paul as an Example Missionary - Outline

1. Paul's Early Life:

- a. Much of Paul's life before his salvation is based upon historical documents.
- b. Paul was lost but he had the credentials that the world looks for. When he was saved, he relied on the power of God to back his claims of authority.
 - i. Paul gives his religious credentials in **Philippians 3:4-7**.
 - ii. In **1Corinthians 2:4-5**, we read that Paul cited the power of God as what we should look for when someone claims to be a messenger from God.
 - iii. In **2Corinthians 10:10**, we read that His critics said that he did not sound, nor look like a preacher, but his writing had the power of God behind it.
- c. Doctrinal errors his life disproves.
 - i. Formal Bible School training is wrong. (It can be right.)
 - ii. Formal Bible School training is required. (It is optional.)
 - iii. Formal Bible School can be used by God if we let Him correct the errors which we are taught.
- d. Paul had to be married at one time but was not married while traveling as a missionary.
- e. Saved or lost, Paul lived what he preached and accepted the consequences.
- f. The Lord revealed to Paul "how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (**Acts 9:15-16**) before his baptism and he still went ahead and devoted his personal life to serving Jesus.

2. Paul's Salvation:

- a. He was a knowledgeable and zealous religious person (**Acts 9:1-2; 8:3; 22:1-6; 26:9-12; Galatians 1:13-14**).
- b. The Lord sought Him for salvation like the Lord does for all who are saved (**Acts 9:4**).
- c. Paul responded with, "Who art thou, Lord?" All who are truly saved must accept Jesus Christ as their personal "Lord" in their heart (**Acts 9:5**).
- d. He accepted God's accusation of acts against God, like all must do in order to be saved (**Acts 9:5**).
- e. He truly Biblically repented by turning towards God and agreeing to obey (**Acts 9:6**).
- f. His salvation was personal even though others who were with him did not understand the message (**Acts 9:7**).
- g. He waited on God to change his life and prayed and fasted until God acted (**Acts 9:8-17**).
- h. He was "baptized immediately" (**Acts 9:18**).
- i. He immediately joined the church and stayed in fellowship with them (**Acts 9:19**).
- j. He immediately started witnessing (**Acts 9:20-21**).
- k. He matured spiritually (**Acts 9:22**).
- l. When he was forced to leave because of his witness, he immediately sought another church to join (**Acts 9:23-26**).
- m. He had testimony from other Christians that he lived a changed life which displayed the influence of Christ (**Acts 9:27**).

3. Paul's Sanctification:

- a. He was personally trained by Jesus Christ for the ministry which God gave to him (**Galatians 1:11-19, after Acts 9:30**).
- b. He was used to teach in the first church with Gentile believers (**Acts 11:25-26**).
- c. It was his teaching that resulted in: "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (**Acts 11:25-26**).
- d. His trained non-preachers corrected the doctrine of a world traveling evangelist. (**Acts 18:24**).
- e. He trained preachers: Timothy, Titus, etc.
- f. He required others to be spiritually mature enough to do the jobs they were given. (His dealing with John Mark is an example and the writings in the Pastoral Epistles.)
- g. He was trusted to handle money in a righteous way (**Acts 9:29-30**).
- h. He helped others to get to the mission field (**Acts 12:25**).
- i. He bowed to religious traditions when they did not directly support doctrinal error.
- j. He disputed religious traditions which taught doctrinal error, especially traditions which taught religious works for salvation and / or sanctification.
- k. He stayed true despite severe physical suffering.

4. Paul's Call as a Missionary:

- a. He was called by God for this task (**Acts 13:1-2**).
- b. God called for the best to be missionaries and let lesser trained men take over the work in the mother church (**Acts 13:1-2**).
- c. He was sent out only after the church “had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them” [‘ordained’] (**Acts 13:3**). All saved are called to do ‘*the Great Commission*’ and to be missionaries wherever they go but only an ordained preacher, who is sent out by the proper mother church, has the authority to organize a mission work into a church (**Acts 11:26**).
- d. Missionaries are sent by “the Holy Ghost” working through a proper church (**Acts 13:3-4**).
- e. Once on the mission field, Paul was in charge.

5. Paul's Service as a Missionary:

- a. He preached a clear and simple plan of salvation (**Acts 16:30-33**).
- b. He took others with him on mission trips.
 - i. Barnabas and John Mark (**Acts 13:1-2**).
 - ii. Silas (**Acts 15:40**).
 - iii. Luke (**Acts 16:13**).
 - iv. Timotheus (**Acts 17:15**)
 - v. Many others mentioned in Acts and the Epistles.
- c. He went where the gospel had not been preached before (**2Corinthians 10:15; Acts 13:4-6** and other reference within Acts).
- d. He reached out to existing believers, and potential believers, wherever they were found on the mission field (**Acts 13:5; 16:13-15** and other reference within Acts).
- e. He withstood devils and ministers of devils (**Acts 13:6-11; 16:16-19**).
- f. He witnessed to the important and the unimportant (**Acts 13:12, 15**, etc).
- g. He "determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (**1Corinthians 2:2**). That is: he did not argue on politics or current events or religious differences but concentrated on preaching only what is in the Bible and the testimonies of God.
- h. When the gospel was rejected by one group, he turned to another group who received the truth (**Acts 13:45-52**).
- i. Paul and his company stayed when people assaulted him but went elsewhere when they assaulted new believers (**Acts 14:1-7; 17:1-10**).
- j. Paul and his company refused to accept glory given to them which belonged to God (**Acts 14:11-18**).
- k. Paul and his company "Confirmed the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorted them to continue in the faith". That is: they made sure that the new believers matured spiritually and that they understood more than the basic doctrines (**Acts 14:21-26**).
- l. Paul and his company reported back to the sending church (**Acts 14:26-28**).
- m. Paul followed up with churches he had started and not only received their report but personally returned to verify the accuracy of the reports received (**Acts 15:36**).
- n. Paul and his company made sure that the beliefs of saved people matched the agreed doctrine that all believers were to accept (**Acts 16:4**). There was no division of doctrine and no differences of religions among those who claimed to be '*Christian*'.
- o. Paul and his company responded immediately to directions received from God's Holy Spirit (**Acts 16:9-10**).
- p. Paul and his company "prayed, and sang praises unto God" as a result of being beaten and thrown in prison for preaching the gospel (**Acts 16:25**).
- q. When government officials violated the law, Paul made them confess their wrong doing or he would have a greater government official punish those who did wrong (**Acts 16:36-40**). This provided protection for believers who stayed under the authority of those government officials because of the threat of reprisal if they did more wrong.
- r. Paul and his company did not receive support from new believers but waited until they are organized as a church before having them give to the ministry (**2Corinthians 11:7-9**). After a mission work organizes as a church, they are to support missionaries who go "to the regions beyond" (**2Corinthians 10:16**).
- s. Paul spoke boldly because of God's promised protection (**Acts 18:9-10**).
- t. Paul corrected doctrinal error of people who thought they were saved but had been taught with an incomplete doctrine (**Acts 19:1-7**).
- u. Paul followed what he believed was the will of God in spite of testimony from "the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me" (**Acts 20:22-23**).
- v. He "coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel (and) these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me" (**Acts 20:33-34**).
- w. He did what was required by the leaders of the church even though their demands would not prove what they claimed that the act would prove (**Acts 21:20-26**).

- x. He preached the same truth regardless of circumstances (**Romans 15:19; 1Corinthians 15:1-2**).

6. Paul's Prison Years:

- a. Paul spent several years as a prisoner starting at the time of the riot which was started by Jewish believers and ending when he was beheaded.
- b. Paul brought a blessing and a report of God's working through his ministry to the Jerusalem church. Instead of being grateful, they were more concerned with appeasing members with a religious fanatical bend (**Acts 21:20**).
- c. The fanatics were supporting a doctrine which the church had already said was not to be applied to Gentiles, who were the main people that Paul ministered to. Some liars claimed that Paul told the Jews to also ignore their doctrine. Instead of verifying the report, these "zealous" Jews believed the lie and, eventually, brought the judgment of God upon themselves, their families, their church and their nation.
- d. Paul went to Jerusalem believing he was in the will of God and in spite of warnings to not go.
- e. The Jerusalem Church leaders wanted Paul to solve a problem that they let grow through their own inaction.
- f. Paul gives us an example of the proper response to being wrongly accused in the church.
- g. We read in **Acts 21:30-31** that the people dragged Paul out of the Temple and started to beat him to death and that the Temple closed their doors and refused to deal with the violence that their own inaction had spawned. However, Paul still tried to bring peace.
- h. When this failed, God had the civil authorities take Paul into custody and protect him from the crowd. Thus, we see that God will protect us when we are truly more concerned about giving the Gospel than we are about our physical life.
- i. When the civil authority sought a quick solution instead of using the right way, Paul reminded them of the law. When necessary, God's people are to use their legal protections.
- j. The civil authority brought in the Jewish leaders for the trial.
- k. When Paul saw that they were not interested in truth and justice, he used a division of their zealous doctrine to split them and get them to fight against each other. Our lesson is to pray, stay sensitive to the leading of the Holy Ghost and trust God when dealing with religious zealots.
- l. In **Acts 22** through **Acts 26**, we see accounts of Paul testifying before various government officials including Governors and Kings. Thus is a fulfillment of prophecy that Jesus gave at Paul's initial salvation.
- m. Throughout all of his adventures, Paul gave the gospel to many who would not have heard it otherwise, he wrote the prison epistles and he continued to minister and win souls and train preachers. Thus, when things go terrible in this physical world in spite of our serving God, we should look for unique opportunities to give out the gospel and to serve in God's kingdom where God let us be.
- n. In **Acts 27** and **Acts 28**, we read about the trip of Paul to Rome. We also read about Paul fasting and praying for his jailers.
- o. In **Acts 28**, we read about God protecting and fulfilling prophecy in the life of Paul as he was faithful to giving out the gospel to everyone.
- p. Our chapter, and the **book of Acts**, end with: "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (**Acts 28:30-31**).

7. Paul's Writing in the Bible:

- a. All of Paul's epistles were written to people or churches. None were written to a group. **Hebrews** is written to a group and God deliberately hid who the author was.
- b. Only some of his letters were preserved by God (Colossians 4:16 – the epistle to Laodicea was not preserved).
- c. Many of his epistles were co-authored by other preachers.
- d. Many of his epistles were written because he could not personally visit the church at that time.
- e. Many people have noted how Paul wrote to admonish and encourage even while he was in terrible circumstances.
- f. Please see the Addendum called New Testament Themes for the theme of each epistle written by Paul.
- g. All of Paul's letters corrected doctrinal errors except the epistle to the Philippians which encouraged them to 'keep on keeping on serving our Lord Jesus Christ'.
- h. It is doctrinal error to preach the do's and don'ts at the end of his epistles while neglecting the reasons for those commands. The reasons to obey are always given first.
- i. It is doctrinal error to preach and teach part of what Paul wrote while neglecting the context. For example, many people believe, and claim, that the 'rapture' is all that is in **1Thessalonians**. That epistle actually gives us 'The Definition of a godly church' and the neglect of this full doctrine causes many problems in churches.
- j. Paul said that he revealed a "mystery", but that came from the Bible and his religious education. We must use our education to verify every belief and only preach and teach what we have actually verified against the word of God using the Spirit of God. In particular, the foreign missionary must avoid preaching his home culture's religious beliefs and practices and present only the message of the Bible while allowing the new believers to create applications which fit within their culture.

E. Peter as our example Missionary-Q&A:

1. The Call-Q&A:

- a. What are the differences in the four times that we see Peter receive a “call” and which one is no longer given to anyone?
 - i. Peter was called to salvation when he accepted Jesus as “the Lamb of God”, he was called to discipleship when Jesus said “follow me”, he was called to be a missionary when he was “ordained” by Jesus and he became an apostle when Jesus returned to Heaven. The only “call” that is no longer available today is to apostleship and this is because God has completed His word.
- b. What were Peter, and the other three, doing when they were called to discipleship?
 - i. They were working in their profession. God never calls a lazy person.
- c. How was this call different from how Jesus was dealing with others at the time?
 - i. Jesus had been preaching to the multitude but made a personal call to Peter, Andrew, James and John to “follow me”.
- d. How did this call affect their lives?
 - i. It was very inconvenient and it required them to abandon all that was in their personal and professional life in order to follow this call. The closest equivalent for today is a call to go to Bible School in order to be properly trained and prepared for a life of service to God. Please note: a person does not have to be called to be a preacher, missionary, evangelist, wife of such nor any of the other careers typically thought of as a full-time Christian worker. Secular college teaches people how to make a living. Bible school teaches people how to live. Quite a few people would have a better life if they received both types of education.
- e. What is the main requirement for being a disciple?
 - i. A disciple should be obedient.
- f. What are the main functions of a true disciple, as we see from the report of Peter’s life at this time?
 - i. His top priority is to learn about Jesus in a disciplined life-style.
 - ii. He must make his discipleship the top priority in his life, even leaving home, if required, in order to learn more about Jesus.
 - iii. He must do the things which will help him learn about Jesus through personal experience. This includes personal soul winning, helping in the ministry, getting to know his teachers in a personal way, taking trips with teachers, when possible, to do whatever tasks and ‘menial work’ is required, and more as the opportunities present themselves.
- g. Were Peter and the others seeking the call to discipleship? Is that something people should seek or something they should avoid seeking?
 - i. They were not seeking the call. However, we never read about Jesus discouraging anyone who said “I will follow thee” (**Matthew 8:19; Luke 9:57**). We only read about Jesus telling them the requirements to being His follower. In addition, **John 10:27** says: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me”. Further, **John 8:12; John 12:25-26** and **John 21:22** all have commands from Jesus for people to follow Him. Finally, we see people like the women at the cross, Nicodemus and

others who followed Jesus. Therefore, we can conclude that people should seek to follow Jesus and become a disciple but they also should expect Him to demand that they meet His requirements in order to do so.

- h. What is the difference between how Jesus dealt with the multitudes and those who had met His requirements to become a disciple?
 - i. Jesus dealt with the multitudes in general terms and taught them with parables. With a few exceptions where he was making a point such as doing a miracle, Jesus did not deal with the multitudes in a personal way. He reserved His personal dealings for those people who had become His disciples. In addition, He only explained the parables to His disciples. Therefore, saved people are excluded from many blessings of God until they are willing to meet the requirements and become disciples.
 - i. Is there a similar barricade between the disciple and the missionary?
 - i. Yes. Both the twelve and the seventy were able to do miracles and cast out devils and have God provide for their physical needs once they were sent out as missionaries. The Bible reports their returning with a report of wonder at being able to do what they could not do before being sent as missionaries.
 - j. Why did the family and neighbors of Jesus reject His teaching and how can this possibly affect our personal call?
 - i. They had contempt for Him and His teaching because He had grown up among them. Likewise, the disciple and missionary might very well find that strangers accept their message from God better than their own family and friends.

2. The Growth-Q&A:

- a. What starts our growth as a disciple?
 - i. Personal soul winning.
- b. What comes next to cause growth?
 - i. Imitating Jesus. We are to study our Bible, especially the Gospels, to see how Jesus would handle different situations and follow His example of how to live in this flesh.
- c. What comes third?
 - i. Starting every day with personal prayer and meeting with God for direction and help during our day.
- d. What comes fourth?
 - i. Expanding our soul winning and personally becoming involved with missions work. This includes personally going to mission fields to do the Lord's work and partnering with missionaries as if they are our family that lives away from us (They are spiritually).
- e. What comes next?
 - i. Asking and answering questions. Working with other sincere disciples so that we have the same core beliefs (**Matthew 12:29; 1Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:5**) while allowing for different applications in different lives and situations as God works with His children in personal relationships. The main rule to follow is that if the Bible says anything literally in at least two places then it comes under the rule of "one Lord" and we must all obey it as God's law. However, anything else we must allow differences in opinion and practices.
- f. What comes next?
 - i. Getting as close to Jesus as we can in our personal relationship. The 'inner circle' received blessings that other apostles did not receive. All throughout the Bible, we see that blessings from God are proportional to how close we get to Him.
- g. What comes next?
 - i. Exercise faith and always look for ways to increase our faith in all areas of life. Be willing to do the impossible at the personal command of Jesus with the faith that he will do a miracle in and through our personal life so that people can believe that we truly represent God when we testify of Him. Remember, Peter truly did walk on water.
- h. What comes next?
 - i. Always remember that the Bible corrects our religious traditions and expect that, as we grow spiritually, God will show us spiritual truths directly which He did not show us through our teachers (**Psalms 119:99**).
- i. What comes next?
 - i. Becoming so spiritually sensitive that God gives spiritual discernment where there is no physical evidence to support what we know is true because of the personal revelation of God which matches true Bible principals. For example, God has shown me personally when couples were still virgins when married and what couples were not virgins.
- j. What comes next?
 - i. Learning to ignore the wrong happenings in the world around us and even when others treat us wrongly with the firm faith that God allows anything that happens to us. Many of these things are allowed as a test if we will allow them to distract us from serving God in the ministry that He has given to us. God wants us to ignore such things with the faith that God will provide all of our needs in spite of the world trying to steal from us. Also, God protects His workers even while people in the world, and even people in our family

and church, try to hurt us. God wants us to concentrate on serving Him and leave all of the problems in this world to Him.

- k. What comes next?
 - i. Be quick to forgive but demand true Biblical repentance before forgiving.
- l. What comes next?
 - i. Being sure that we always remain involved in soul winning and “fruit production”. The saved person who becomes so involved in religious activities that they don’t have time for soul winning loses God’s blessings.
- m. What comes next?
 - i. Become a channel that God uses to help other Christians too mature spiritually.
- n. What comes next?
 - i. Be sure that we never blame the person whom God uses to correct us, no matter how they do it. Instead, be thankful to them for letting us know of our error while we still have time in this life to correct the error.
- o. What comes next?
 - i. Remember that, while we may be the top authority in our own church or field, we are under the authority of another person when we go into their place of authority.

3. The Failure-Q&A:

- a. What was the first step in Peter's failure and, usually, the first step in our own failure?
 - i. The first step to our and Peter's failure is pride – when we trust in our own abilities.
- b. What was the next step in Peter's failure and, often, the next step in our own failure?
 - i. Peter had a lack of vigilance in his prayer life and we often have the same lack when we fail.
- c. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i. Peter relied on fleshly efforts when he cut off the servant's ear.
- d. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i. We read that Peter "followed him (Jesus) afar off" instead of staying close and getting closer after messing up.
- e. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i. He warmed himself at the servant's fire, which identified him with the servants of the enemies of Jesus. We often forget that other people aren't our enemy and they aren't the enemy of Jesus Christ. We make ourselves believe that they just serve the wrong master and the wrong cause.
- f. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i. Peter denied his personal relationship with Jesus.
- g. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i. Peter tried to return to his former worldly job. But, God wants His servants to keep working for Him, even if they have to change their position within the church
- h. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i. After Peter was restored, he asked Jesus what Jesus was going to have John do instead of concentrating on doing his own job. Often times, sticking our nose into someone else's business leads us into trouble. We need to concentrate on our own service to God and let God worry about others that are not our responsibility.
- i. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i. Peter let religious traditions from others affect his service to God. Hence, we need to carefully verify any religious activity with God through prayer and Bible study before accepting the practices from others.
- j. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i. It wasn't a mistake but it was the right thing that most people fail to do. He recognized that Paul didn't embarrass him but that it was God, working through Paul, who corrected him. Peter was thankful that Paul let God use him to correct Peter. Most people make the mistake of blaming the messenger.

4. The Restoration-Q&A:

- a. What is the basis of restoration?
 - i. Love. In **John 21:5**, Jesus addressed them as “Children” to show His love. Jesus restored Peter to show His love. God restores us to show His love for us. God wants to use us to restore others who mess up so that we can demonstrate God’s love that is provided to the brethren through us.
- b. When did Peter’s restoration start according to the Bible?
 - i. In **Luke 22:31-32**, we read: “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have you*, that he may sift *you* as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren”. Jesus prayed for Peter before he messed up and before he knew that he needed restoring.
- c. What is the main result that God looks for in restoring someone?
 - i. **Luke 22:32** says: “hen thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren”. God wants the restored person to use the lessons that they learn to help others to avoid doing the same error and to help others who do the same error to also be restored.
- d. What effect does the unrestored brother have?
 - i. Peter had most of the future apostles go with him when he returned to his former profession in the world. And, an unrestored brother or sister can have the same effect upon people in the church of today: they can influence saved people to stop serving God.
- e. Why, in **John 21:6**, did Jesus tell the disciples to “Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find”?
 - i. He was reminding them of their call to discipleship. The main path to restoration is to return to the basics of discipleship and let God work in the life of the person who needs to be restored.
- f. Why, in **John 21:10**, did Jesus tell the disciples to “Bring of the fish which ye have now caught”?
 - i. It is important to prove, not just say, to the restored person that they are still useful to the ministry and still have a position in it even if that position must be different than they had before their error.
- g. What is the main lesson of the meal that Jesus prepared in John 21?
 - i. He met the physical needs of the people that He was restoring. We need to take care of any problem that will interfere with the restoration of a brother or sister who stumbles.
- h. What was symbolically meant when Jesus said “Simon, *son* of Jonas” and why did He say it?
 - i. Jesus was directly addressing the source of the problem that led to Peter’s initial error and to his returning to the world. By calling him “Simon”, Jesus was letting him know that he was acting like a worldly man and not like a little image of Christ (the true meaning of “Peter”). By calling him “*son* of Jonas” (not “*son* of Jona” who was his Earthly father), Jesus was letting him know that he was acting like the prophet who ran away from the job that God gave him. We must confess our sin (be identified with the sin and the results of our sin) before God can forgive the sin and remove the consequences. A person who does not completely confess their sin and the consequences of their sin cannot be truly forgiven.
- i. Why did Jesus tell Peter “feed my sheep/ lambs” in **John 21:15-17**?
 - i. This was the job he was restored to. He was to give spiritually alive food, from the word of God, to God’s people.
- j. Why did Jesus tell Peter “follow me” in **John 21:18-19**?

- i. He was reminding Peter of the basic command that we all have no matter what position we may have on this Earth.

5. The Ministry-Q&A:

- a. What was the response of Peter to the public rebuke of Paul after he was restored by Jesus?
 - i. Peter wrote, in **2Peter 3:15**, “our beloved brother Paul”. He was not upset, not blamed Paul, for God using Paul to rebuke him.
- b. What was the mistake that the restored Peter made in **Acts 1**?
 - i. He tried to lead the church in a spiritual decision before they had the indwelling Holy Ghost to guide them. The desire of his heart was right but his actions were wrong because he was acting in the flesh.
- c. What was the difference that we see in **Acts 2**?
 - i. In **Acts 2**, the Holy Ghost came and Peter stood up to preach in the power of the Holy Ghost. Now, we see totally different results than when Peter acted in his flesh in **Acts 1**.
- d. What was the response of people who made a profession in **Acts 2** and how is that different from what we often see today?
 - i. **Acts 2:42** says: “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”. The practice of saying that people are saved because they made a profession, even if they are never seen around the church again and continue to live the same sinful life, does not match the example that we find in the Bible.
- e. In **Acts 3:1-10**, we see Peter and John heal a man. How is this related to the ministry of today?
 - i. Today we see a lot of church functions with no evidence of the power of God and no miracles done in or through the people who claim to be the ministers of God. However, if we look closely, we can also see instances where God still does miracles in and through the lives of His people. We are supposed to seek God working in and through our life so that people know that the results are truly because of God and not because of our own religious activity.
- f. In **Acts 4**, we see that Peter and John threatened with prison, beatings and possibly death. How does that relate to missions of today?
 - i. There was a martyr missionary who said: “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose”. He lost his physical life, but we all die and cannot hold onto physical life. But, as a martyr, he gained physical rewards that he could not lose. That was the attitude of Peter and John and it needs to be the attitude of all of God’s people, especially missionaries.
- g. In **Acts 5**, we read about Peter confronting a sin of omission. That is, people did not do all that they claimed. What does this teach us about the ministry?
 - i. The people that Peter dealt with died because they lied to the Holy Ghost. People get upset when you confront them for doing less than their all for God. However, Peter gave them a chance to get right with God and be blessed. They only died because they lied about their actions. As such, many churches have died and many more are dying because the people are not really serving God but use church to enhance their own social position while claiming to dedicate their life to the service of God. The leader, at home or on the mission field, who has the courage to confront people for giving less than their all preserves the church and the spiritual growth and the blessings of God and prevents or delays the judgment of God.

- h. When Philip, the evangelist, preached to the Samaritans, many believed and were baptized but they did not receive the Holy Ghost until Peter and John went there and laid hands on them. Why was this so and what does it tell us about missions work of today?
 - i. A similar thing happened at Antioch, as noted in the lessons. God is particular about His authority structure the He anoints. Philip the evangelist, at that time, did not have the authority to a new group of people. He did later and the people received the Holy Ghost. However, when he first went to the Samaritans, he was not under God-ordained authority. We need to reach the world but we also need to do it under God's program and while staying within the God appointed authority structure.
- i. In **Acts 9**, we read about the conversion of Paul and the turmoil caused by it. Yet, Peter continued to act the same way and healed a man in Lydda and raised Tabitha from the dead. What does this teach us about the ministry, especially for a foreign missionary?
 - i. God wants His people to concentrate on serving Him and not let the events of this world distract them from their God-given job. We actually see Jesus say this, indirectly, in the prophecy that he gives just before His crucifixion.
- j. In **Acts 10**, we read about Peter going to the Gentiles even while his culture and religion told him not to do so. In **Acts 11**, we read about Peter getting chewed out by "they that were of the circumcision", in the church of Jerusalem, because of what happened in **Acts 10**. What is the lesson for all ministries?
 - i. There are always going to be people who argue that we need to keep our religious traditions. That leads to stagnation and to letting Satan convince God's people to trade their personal relationship, with the matching responsibilities, for religious traditions which allow people to duck personal responsibilities. We need to avoid such things by keeping our personal relationship with God fresh and always allowing for God to do something new and different. While God does not change His basic character, nor His gospel, nor His basic requirements from His people, God is always subject to introduce a new application of His basic truths. Therefore, since arguments for maintaining religious traditions are almost always arguments to maintain the applications, we must remain open to God changing those types of things.

6. Peter's Writing in the Bible-Outline-Q&A:

- a. Who is Peter's first epistle written to and what is the significance of it?
 - i. It was written to Gentiles ("strangers"). At the end of his life, Peter became more concerned about the non-Jew believers. Thus, we see that Peter has grown further, spiritually, and is concerned with all saved equally.
- b. What doctrinal change can we see in Peter's writing that is different from what was reported earlier about Peter?
 - i. Peter is no longer supporting the doctrinal error from saved Jews which claimed that everyone should, but Jews must, keep Jewish traditions even after being saved.
- c. What is the basis of Peter writing about "the trial of your faith"?
 - i. Personal experience at passing such a trial and personal experience at failure.
- d. What does Peter tell us about this "trial of your faith"?
 - i. It requires obedience to God with consequences for obedience and for disobedience. Peter even names some of the results of each action.
- e. Why does Peter tell us to obey his commands about how to handle relationships?
 - i. We will suffer in the flesh but if our attitudes and responses are right then we will receive spiritual rewards.
- f. In **1Peter 3:20-21**, Peter writes about "baptism" and writes that it "saves us". What type of "salvation" is Peter writing about and why is it critical to know this?
 - i. The "salvation" is physical and we can know this by his use of the phrase "in the days of Noah...the like figure". It is critical because "false teachers" misuse his comments to teach a false 'works salvation' which claims that we must do a specific work in order to receive spiritual salvation.
- g. What reason does Peter give for writing his second epistle?
 - i. Peter writes that he knows that he will die soon. Therefore, he is writing this epistle so that people will have doctrine from him after he is dead.
- h. Why does God give us spiritual gifts, according to Peter?
 - i. "that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature"
- i. What does Peter write is more reliable than the testimony of his personal experience on the 'Mount of Transfiguration'?
 - i. "we have also a more sure word of prophecy" (God's word)
- j. What is the main message of Peter's second epistle?
 - i. Beware of "false teachers". Peter's epistle includes many ways to identify them.

7. The Character of Peter-Q&A:

- a. What was the first thing that Peter did which made him a potential follower of Christ and a disciple?
 - i. He truly, Biblically repented under the ministry of John the Baptist. Later, when Andrew took him to Jesus, he believed and was saved. However, what he did, which many people refuse to do, is to truthfully turn from trusting the doctrines of religion and accept a personal responsibility towards God.
- b. What do we learn when we compare the salvation, service and ministries of Andrew and Peter?
 - i. Andrew led Peter to Jesus and every time we see Andrew he is leading someone to Jesus. However, Andrew was not a leader and did not end up in the 'inner circle'. We each need to realize the differences in people and let God put them into the position that they are most suited for.
- c. What is the difference when the Bible uses the name Peter and when it uses Simon for the same man?
 - i. When he was acting like "a small example of Christ (Rock)", the Bible called him Peter (pebble). When he was acting like a man controlled by the flesh, the Bible called him Simon. Hence, each child of God should strive to be known as an example of Christ, which is the true Biblical definition of "Christian".
- d. What was the personal significance of Peter declaring "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (**Matthew 16:16; Mark 8:29; Luke 4:41; John 6:69**)?
 - i. Peter was risking being cast out of the Temple and, possibly, beaten and killed by the religious leaders. God wants His people to always have the courage to stand for the truth regardless of what the world threatens.
- e. What do we see Peter doing in **Mark 1** before his call in **Mark 3** which is an example of what all saved people should do?
 - i. He was busy in the ministry of God and providing for the needs of God's minister before He became a disciple. Becoming a disciple is a decision to have a life devoted to learning about Jesus Christ and getting close to Him. However, if someone isn't willing to care for God's ministers, whom they can see (**1John 3:17; 1John 4:10-11**), they will not truly love God whom they cannot see.
- f. What do we learn about Peter walking on water and what is the main lesson for us from that account?
 - i. Peter had true Biblical faith. His example shows us that if we also have true Biblical faith, we can expect God to do miracles in and through our personal life. The religious people who deny this truth are actually confessing their true Biblical faith and denying the power of God (**2Timothy 3:5**).
- g. What is the lesson from Peter running to the sepulcher when he was told that the body of Jesus was missing and that Jesus had risen from the dead?
 - i. He verified the report that went against what he personally believed completely. The main mistake that religious people make is to believe what their religion tells them and not verify contradicting reports from someone who should be regarded as a reliable witness.

- h. What is the lesson that we get from reading **2Peter 3:15**?
 - i. Paul had rebuked Peter in front of the entire church. Instead of resenting the embarrassment, Peter was grateful for the opportunity to correct his error before he faces the “judgment seat of Christ”. God wants His people to follow this example when they are corrected. God says that our rejecting a true message, and the messenger from God, is truly rejecting God and will bring a greater judgment than just the original sin would bring. Regardless of how we feel about the way that we are corrected, God wants us to be grateful because God is giving us an opportunity to repent from our sin before we personally face judgment.
 - i. What is the lesson from Peter writing “to the strangers” (Gentiles) in **1Peter**?
 - i. Peter was the ‘apostle to the Jews’. His ministry focus was on the Jews. However, at the end of his life he was concerned with all of God’s people. We might start out concerned about our own family and those around us, but God wants us to expand our concern to all of God’s people for ministry and all lost people for evangelism.
 - j. What is the main focus of **2Peter** and what does this teach us should be the main concern of a spiritually mature leader in the church?
 - i. The main thing that Peter writes about is false prophets. He is concerned about spiritual corruption getting into the people who followed him after he was no longer there to protect them. Likewise, all spiritually mature people need to be sure that their followers are aware of the ways of corruption and not only avoid corruption in their own life but also teach the generation after them to also be aware of spiritual corruption and to always be diligent on rooting it out.

F. Paul as our example Missionary-Q&A:

1. Paul's Early Life-Q&A:

- a. What was his initial name and what is the difference between it and his replacement name?
 - i. He was initially called 'Saul', which is Hebrews. His name was changed to 'Paul', which is Greek. Since he was made the "apostle to the Gentiles", his name was changed to reflect his God-given purpose in life.
- b. What was his religious background?
 - i. "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." (**Philippians 3:5-6**).
- c. What was the main advantage of his early religious background?
 - i. One major advantage was that Paul was an expert on the Bible and God could use his knowledge and understanding to "reveal a mystery". Paul often quotes the Old Testament in his writing and shows us that the New Testament is based upon the Old Testament.
- d. What was the main disadvantage of his early religious background?
 - i. Paul was an expert on the Jewish religion and he had to get rid of that doctrinal error. As he wrote in **Philippians 3:7** ("But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ"), he had to get rid of his trust in religious works in order to build his ongoing personal relationship with "Christ".
- e. What other major thing did he have to change in his personal life?
 - i. In **1Corinthians 2:4-5**, we read: "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God". Before his salvation, Paul was full of pride in his own religious knowledge as we see him confess in **Acts 22:3-5**.
- f. What are popular doctrinal errors of today which Paul's background disprove?
 - i. A preacher should avoid formal education. Those who believe that preach the doctrine popular in their group of churches, including the doctrinal error taught by them.
 - ii. A preacher should have a formal education. We end up with things like is going on in America where there is division and refusal of fellowship between men who went to different Bible Schools. Those who believe that preach the doctrine popular in their group of churches, including the doctrinal error taught by them.
- g. What should be some true purposes of a formal education for a preacher?
 - i. To teach him how to think for himself.
 - ii. To teach him how to pray and study God's word so that he can get an answer from God.
 - iii. To give him practical experience, in a controlled setting, to learn the things which can only be learned through experience.
 - iv. To teach him the right way to do things, such as dealing with governments and other authorities, and to teach him the ways to avoid.
 - v. To be sure that he is grounded in what the Bible actually says and to test his knowledge and experience so that he does not take over a work as a "novice".
- h. What is the basis for Paul writing about marriage and how does that apply to us?
 - i. Although the Bible does not say anything, historical knowledge of the times and societies, combined with what the Bible does tell us, lets us know that Paul must have been married at one point but, apparently, had no wife when he started his mission trips. How this change occurred is open to speculation but one thing is sure. Paul fulfilled the requirements that he specified for someone to be a "bishop" (**1Timothy 3; Titus 1**).
 - i. What was one of the main things that Jesus testified would change in the life of Paul due to his salvation and fulfilling the job that God planned for him?
 - i. "he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (**Acts 9:15-16**).

2. Paul's Salvation-Q&A:

- a. What was Paul's life like before his salvation?
 - i. He was a zealous religious Jew who was positive that he was going to Heaven because of his religious works.
- b. After Paul was saved, how was his education used?
 - i. "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (**1Corinthians 2:2**) He did not preach his religious teaching but only preached the gospel to people in other cultures. However, God used his education in their personal relationship so that the error was separated from Bible truth. The error was discarded while the Bible truth was retained and expanded. As a result, Paul understood truths within the Bible which were related to what he had been taught even while the details and applications were different from his religious training.
- c. What changed in Paul's relationship to God when he was saved?
 - i. He stopped trusting his religion, his religious position and his religious acts for salvation and accepted Jesus Christ as his personal "**Lord**". It means that Paul obeyed everything that his "**Lord**" commanded regardless of any personal consideration.
- d. What did Paul do right after meeting Jesus?
 - i. He obeyed the order to go where he was told then he waited and fasted and prayed until God changed his circumstances. When we aren't sure what God wants us to do next, we need to fast, pray and wait on God.
- e. What happened to the people who were with Paul?
 - i. The heard a voice but did not understand what was said and did not get saved. Salvation is personal and often one will be saved while another will not be saved.
- f. What did Paul do right after being saved?
 - i. In **Acts 9:18**, we see that He was "baptized immediately". Then in **Acts 9:19**, we read that Paul immediately joined the church and stayed in fellowship with the saved people.
- g. What did Paul do next?
 - i. **Acts 9:20-21** tells us that "straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God". Once people are saved, they need to get involved in soul winning.
- h. How did Paul spiritually mature once saved?
 - i. **Acts 9:22** tells us that he spiritually matured through personal Bible study because he could correct many of the doctrinal errors which he used to believe.
- i. What was the result of his changed life?
 - i. The change in his life was so profound that everyone started talking about it, which gave further witness to the Bible truth of salvation changing the life of anyone who is truly saved. In **Acts 9:23-26**, we read that Paul was forced to leave the city because of the reaction to his preaching by the lost.
- j. How did Paul go from being feared to being accepted and even a leader within the church?
 - i. In **Acts 9:27-28**, we read that Paul was accepted at the new church (Jerusalem) because of his testimony of a changed life. He maintained a consistent testimony of a God-caused change in his life.

3. Paul's Sanctification-Q&A:

- a. **Acts 9:29-30** tells us that Paul had to leave Jerusalem. Where does **Galatians 1:11-19** indicate he went and what happened there?
 - i. He went out into the desert and there he was personally trained by Jesus Christ so that he could be the apostle to the Gentiles.
- b. What is another Bible reference to support this thought and how does it apply?
 - i. One of the requirements is that the Apostle had to see Jesus in the flesh and, in **1Corinthians 15:5-8**, Paul lists the people who physically saw "Christ". This list ends with Paul writing "And last of all he was seen of me".
- c. What authority do apostles have which indicates that they must also have significant spiritual maturity in order to properly handle the authority?
 - i. The true Biblical apostles had such authority to represent "the kingdom of heaven" (**Matthew 16:19; Matthew 18:18**). The point being, such people had to be spiritually mature, separated from this world and completely separated unto God's service. As such, there can be no question about Paul's true Biblical sanctification.
- d. Why was Paul brought to Antioch and what does this indicate about his own sanctification?
 - i. He was brought there by the pastor, Barnabas, to teach the saved. That was the first place that saved people were called "Christians" because they had spiritually matured to the point that their lives displayed "Christ" in an undeniable way. Paul had to have that level of spiritual maturity before he could teach it to others.
- e. In **Acts 18** we read about people that Paul trained teaching a world-traveling evangelist, named Apollos, "the way of God more perfectly". What does this tell us about Paul?
 - i. He not only had to know "the way of God more perfectly", in order to teach it to others, but he also had to be able to motivate them to teach that level of spiritual maturity in their own life. Once more we see that Paul had to have the level of spiritual maturity before he could teach it to others.
- f. In **Acts 12:25**, we read that Paul helped others to get to the mission field. Other places in the Bible tell us the same. What does this tell us about Paul's sanctification?
 - i. Paul led by example. Since he was training people who went out and did all of the work of missionaries, including starting new churches and going to check on existing mission works and going to the mission field to do various support work, Paul had to be sanctified enough to do all of these things. In addition, the **Book of Acts**, and the **Pauline Epistles** also tell us the same thing.
- g. Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised and what does this teach us about Paul's spiritual maturity?
 - i. Paul did this to avoid arguments when he could have argued, and probably won, those arguments. When Paul was first saved, he was run out of several cities by people who wanted to kill him over doctrinal arguments that Paul won. Now, we see that he has matured enough to avoid arguments when possible.
- h. What did Paul do when the leaders of the Jerusalem church demanded that he do some ceremony because people had told lies about his doctrine? Why did he not argue that their ceremony would prove nothing and that they needed to deal with the liars?
 - i. Paul had enough spiritual maturity to realize that if the church leaders hadn't dealt with the liars then they probably couldn't stop them without a church split. He also was spiritually mature enough to realize that it wasn't about proving who was right but was about controlling wrong emotional responses by people with less spiritual maturity. What the church leaders asked for didn't work, and Paul knew that it wouldn't work, but he submitted to their wishes anyway.
- i. How did Paul react to other believers keeping on bringing up the same arguments based upon the same doctrinal errors but with only minor differences from their prior defeat?
 - i. Paul was consistent in his doctrine, faith and practice. He kept up the spiritual battle and did not quit nor slowed down in his spiritual battle.
- j. What does the physical suffering that Paul endured teach us about his sanctification?

- i. Only a spiritually mature will suffer physically for the spiritual advancement of God's kingdom. Greater suffering requires greater sanctification. Other than Jesus Christ, Paul is the person who suffered the most, according to the Bible.

4. Paul's Call as a Missionary-Q&A:

- a. Who gave Paul his position as a missionary?
 - i. God gave Paul his position as missionary.
- b. What tasks did Paul do as a missionary?
 - i. He prayed and followed the guidance from God.
 - ii. He went where no one has preached before.
 - iii. He preached salvation to the lost and taught spiritual growth to the saved.
 - iv. He took others with him and taught them to do the ministry while they were on the mission field.
 - v. He ministered to anyone who was willing to listen.
 - vi. He kept to the Bible message and rejected religious traditions from other cultures but allowed new religious traditions so long as they did not go against the Bible.
 - vii. He publicly praised God when persecuted.
 - viii. He was willing to suffer in the flesh in order to accomplish his ministry.
 - ix. When people rejected his message, he left them alone. However, when people tried to keep him from giving God's message to others, he fought them even at risk of life.
 - x. He kept an ongoing life-long relationship with the people whom he led to salvation. And, he made sure that they became spiritually mature enough to carry on the ministry and to train the next spiritual generation.
 - xi. He corrected doctrinal error any time that he ran into it.
 - xii. He made sure that his followers understood that the final authority was God and that the evidence of someone being a "**man of God**" was the "**power of God**" seen in their life, doctrine and ministry.
- c. What led up to God calling Paul and Barnabas as missionaries?
 - i. The church at Antioch sent help to the poor in the Jerusalem church and brought some of the spiritually immature members from there to Antioch for training. Thus, we see that the Antioch Church saw, and responded to, the physical and spiritual needs of others.
- d. What special training did Paul receive to enable him to do the work of a missionary?
 - i. He had the best Bible training available.
 - ii. He was personally taught by Jesus Christ and this training was specific to the job that God gave to him. Today, this is accomplished through our ongoing personal relationship with Jesus Christ and His training for the specific job that He has for each of us.
 - iii. He had practical experience using the prior two types of training. Missionaries fail when they go to the field as novices as demonstrated by the report on John Mark.
- e. How were Paul and Barnabas different, spiritually, than the people who started the Antioch Church?
 - i. They were "ordained" as missionary pastors and had the God-given authority to organize a mission work into an independent church. The missionaries who started the Antioch Church were not preachers and did not have that authority but had to wait for the mother church to send someone with the authority before God (in the Bible) recognized them as an independent church.
- f. What part of Paul's writing tells us the requirements to be a pastor and, therefore, tell us the requirements that Paul himself fulfilled?
 - i. **1Timothy 3:1-17** and **Titus 1:5-9**.
- g. How do we know the difference in the requirements between a preacher missionary and a non-preacher missionary?
 - i. They are the same requirements used in home churches.
- h. Who is in charge on the mission field -- the pastor of the home church or the missionary pastor?
 - i. From what the **Book of Acts** reports about Paul and Barnabas, the missionary pastor must be in charge, especially about the application of the Gospel within the foreign society. However, the home church pastor still has authority over basic doctrine (the Gospel preached) and the church practices of the mission work until it is organized into an independent church.

- i. Who is the ultimate authority of all mission works?
 - i. God working through His Holy Ghost.
- j. What do we see as different between the Antioch church sending Paul as a missionary and the common practice of today when it comes to sending out missionaries?
 - i. Paul had a team with him on all of his journeys. Most missionaries are sent out with only their immediate families today.

5. Paul's Service as a Missionary-Q&A:

- a. What did Paul preach as a missionary?
 - i. A simple plan of salvation. Paul wrote: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (**1Corinthians 2:2**).
- b. What did Paul avoid preaching as a missionary?
 - i. His home culture and home religion.
- c. What did Paul avoid doing as a missionary?
 - i. Getting involved in arguments and discussions of political and social events which could distract from his preaching the gospel.
- d. What criticism did others make about his preaching?
 - i. "For *his* (Paul's) letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible" (**2Corinthians 10:10**). Paul was more concerned about being effective working for God than he was about meeting religious expectations of people who were not producing results for God.
- e. How did Paul respond to persecution and assault?
 - i. If he and the spiritually mature people were the victims, they accepted it and praised God. If the victims were spiritual babes, Paul and others moved to protect them so that their new faith would not be crushed.
- f. What was the main purpose of Paul's second and third missionary journeys?
 - i. Paul and his company "confirmed the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorted them to continue in the faith". That is: they made sure that the new believers matured spiritually and that they understood more than the basic doctrines (**Acts 14:21-26**).
- g. What does Paul and his company did upon returning to their home church which is required by God for all missionaries and even all churches.
 - i. They reported what God did through their ministry.
- h. What did Paul do when he personally could not visit a church and verify their spiritual condition?
 - i. He first sent spiritually mature and reliable people to check on them and report back. He then wrote them letters based upon the reports.
- i. What did Paul use to verify the beliefs of the early churches and what are we to use today?
 - i. Paul and others verified the beliefs against what was commonly believed because they did not have a written New Testament. Today, we use the preserved word of God, which is the English KJV-1611.
- j. What did Paul do about money?
 - i. He first received support from a sending church when going to a new mission field.
 - ii. If he did not have enough financial support, he got a job.
 - iii. After the church was spiritually mature enough to organize as an independent church, he then had them support their own ministry including paying the pastor and told them to produce and support missionaries to go to "the regions beyond".

6. Paul's Prison Years-Q&A:

- a. How and why did Paul's prison years start?
 - i. The prison years started because Jews who were zealous of religious error ("zealous of the law") lied about what Paul actually taught and to whom. In addition, the Jerusalem Church leaders failed to stop the spread of doctrinal error and the use of it to justify bringing a false witness against Paul. Thus, these years started when Paul brought a blessing and good report of God working through his ministry and the religious leaders ignoring the evidence of God's power behind Paul.
- b. What was the motive of the leaders in the Jerusalem Church and what error did that lead them into?
 - i. They were more concerned with appeasing members with a religious fanatical bend (**Acts 21:20**) than they were in finding and supporting the truth. When the riot started they failed to support Paul. When civil authorities called for the religious leaders to come and testify they failed to go. After they became accomplices to Paul's murder through their inaction, God destroyed the Jerusalem Church.
- c. What was the lie used to cause believing Jews to seek to murder Paul?
 - i. "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs" (**Acts 21:21**). Paul only taught the doctrine approved by the Jerusalem Church, which was that Gentiles did not have to keep the Mosaic Law. Paul also went out of his way to avoid offending the religious beliefs of the Jews. However, some Jews wanted their beliefs pushed on the Gentiles even though God proved that His will was otherwise. Like many religious people of today, they were concerned that everyone bow to their will and ignore God's will.
- d. Was Paul caught by surprise with what happened in Jerusalem?
 - i. No. Paul had been fighting this doctrinal error for many years. He had been fighting these Jews who wanted to steal his works instead of starting their own. In addition, many people warned him of the consequences if he continued to follow what he believed was the will of God for his personal life.
- e. How did Paul react to the false accusation made against him in the Jerusalem Church and to the church leaders plan to use him to appease the zealots instead of finding and supporting the truth?
 - i. Paul submitted to their authority and trusted God to "work together for good".
- f. In **Acts 21:30-31**, we read that the people dragged Paul out of the Temple and started to beat him to death. How did the various authorities respond?
 - i. The Temple closed their doors and refused to get involved.
 - ii. The Jerusalem church stayed away and did nothing even though their church members started to riot.
 - iii. The civil government stepped in and protected Paul at God's motivation.
- g. When the civil government held a hearing and asked interested parties to come and testify, how did they respond?
 - i. The Jerusalem church stayed away and did nothing even though their church members started everything based upon lies and false doctrine that the church leaders knew about.
 - ii. The Temple leaders showed up and supported the lies and tried to cause further problems and asked to take Paul so that they could murder him.
 - iii. Paul appealed to Caesar, which meant that he had to be sent to Rome for trial.
- h. In **Acts 22** through **Acts 26**, we read about Paul traveling to Rome. What is the main spiritual action that we read happened in his life along the way?
 - i. We see accounts of Paul testifying before various government officials including Governors and Kings. Thus is a fulfillment of prophecy that Jesus gave at Paul's initial salvation.
- i. What is the main lesson of the last chapter in the **book of Acts**?

- i. In **Acts 28**, we read about God protecting and fulfilling prophecy in the life of Paul as he was faithful to giving out the gospel to everyone.
- j. How does the **book of Acts** end?
 - i. The **book of Acts**, end with: “And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him” (**Acts 28:30-31**).

7. Paul's Writing in the Bible-Q&A:

- a) Why did Paul write and how does it apply to us?
 - i. When he saw a spiritual need in God's people and he could not personally go and deal with the problem, he wrote letters (epistles). When we see a need, such as people with no honest and Biblically sound messenger from God, we should do what we can to deal with the problem including praying and helping send a missionary.
- b) How do we know that Paul was not aware that he was writing scripture when he wrote?
 - i. God preserved the epistle to the Colossians while not preserving the epistle to the Laodiceans. Paul felt that both epistles had equal value but he did not realize that God valued one as scripture while refusing the same level of value to the other epistle.
- c) What letters of from Paul had a co-author and why is this doctrinally significant?
 - i. **Romans 16:21-23; 1Corinthians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1-2; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1Thessalonians 1:1 and 2Thessalonians 1:1**, Each had at least two authors. What we teach and preach should be in agreement with other godly people and churches. In addition, the basic rule for dividing commandments that all must obey from those that we can disagree on is: "two or three witnesses". Since each of these epistles had at least two authors ("witnesses"), their doctrine is something that we must all believe and that we will be judged for how well we obeyed the commandments in them.
- d) What was the main motivation for Paul writing his epistles?
 - i. He wanted to verify the doctrinal beliefs of people that he was responsible for and could not go personally or had to send the epistle with someone whose authority the receiving church might question.
- e) What was the main consideration that Paul had when he wrote his epistles and how do we know this?
 - i. Paul wrote to admonish and encourage even while he was in terrible circumstances. True Biblical love is considering the needs of others, especially their spiritual needs, without considering our own needs or circumstances
- f) What was the primary purpose of all of Paul's epistles, except the one to the Philippians, and how does that relate to today?
 - i. All of Paul's letters corrected doctrinal errors except the epistle to the Philippians which encouraged them to 'keep on keeping on serving our Lord Jesus Christ'. Getting others to get right with God, and to mature spiritually, is the primary job of a pastor and of all spiritual leaders.
- g) What is the main theme of each Pauline Epistle?
 - i. Please see the Addendum for the answer.
- h) What is a common practice among preachers when preaching from the Pauline Epistles and why does that make their preaching less effective?
 - i. Many preachers preach from the last chapters which have the "do" and "don't" commands but skip the first chapters which give us the God-given reasons to obey the commands of later chapters. Without knowing the God-given reasons, people tend to resist obeying the commands.
- i) What doctrinal error often results from preaching the Pauline Epistles without considering the context of the entire epistle?
 - i. People become convinced that the entire epistle is all about one popular point of the epistle and have no idea about what else is in the epistle. For example, many people believe, and even preach, that **1Thessalonians** is about the 'rapture' when that is one minor point. The epistle which is actually giving us the doctrine for a godly church.
- j) How did Paul end up revealing "mysteries" in his writing?
 - i. He first learned his Bible well enough to be considered a Bible expert. He then let the Holy Ghost correct and discard his traditional, but wrong, religious doctrine. He let God's Holy Spirit reveal a different perspective of the scriptures which he knew so that he how saw God's word from a new and godly perspective.

G. Peter as our example Missionary-Q:

1. The Call of Peter-Q:

- a. What are the differences in the four times that we see Peter receive a “call” and which one is no longer given to anyone?
 - i.
- b. What were Peter, and the other three, doing when they were called to discipleship?
 - i.
- c. How was this call different from how Jesus was dealing with others at the time?
 - i.
- d. How did this call affect their lives?
 - i.
- e. What is the main requirement for being a disciple?
 - i.
- f. What are the main functions of a true disciple, as we see from the report of Peter’s life at this time?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
- g. Were Peter and the others seeking the call to discipleship? Is that something people should seek or something they should avoid seeking?
 - i.
- h. What is the difference between how Jesus dealt with the multitudes and those who had met His requirements to become a disciple?
 - i.
- i. Is there a similar barricade between the disciple and the missionary?
 - i.
- j. Why did the family and neighbors of Jesus reject His teaching and how can this possibly affect our personal call?
 - i.

2. The Growth of Peter-Q:

- a. What starts our growth as a disciple?
 - i.
- b. What comes next to cause growth?
 - i.
- c. What comes third?
 - i.
- d. What comes fourth?
 - i.
- e. What comes next?
 - i.
- f. What comes next?
 - i.
- g. What comes next?
 - i.
- h. What comes next?
 - i.
- i. What comes next?
 - i.
- j. What comes next?
 - i.
- k. What comes next?
 - i.
- l. What comes next?
 - i.
- m. What comes next?
 - i.
- n. What comes next?
 - i.
- o. What comes next?
 - i.

3. The Failure of Peter-Q:

- a. What was the first step in Peter's failure and, usually, the first step in our own failure?
 - i.
- b. What was the next step in Peter's failure and, often, the next step in our own failure?
 - i.
- c. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i.
- d. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i.
- e. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i.
- f. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i.
- g. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i.
- h. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i.
- i. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i.
- j. What was Peter's next mistake?
 - i.

4. The Restoration of Peter-Q:

- a. What is the basis of restoration?
 - i.
- b. When did Peter's restoration start according to the Bible?
 - i.
- c. What is the main result that God looks for in restoring someone?
 - i.
- d. What effect does the unrestored brother have?
 - i.
- e. Why, in **John 21:6**, did Jesus tell the disciples to "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find"?
 - i.
- f. Why, in **John 21:10**, did Jesus tell the disciples to "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught"?
 - i.
- g. What is the main lesson of the meal that Jesus prepared in John 21?
 - i.
- h. What was symbolically meant when Jesus said "Simon, *son* of Jonas" and why did He say it?
 - i.
- i. Why did Jesus tell Peter "feed my sheep/ lambs" in **John 21:15-17**?
 - i.
- j. Why did Jesus tell Peter "follow me" in **John 21:18-19**?
 - i.

5. The Ministry of Peter-Q:

- a. What was the response of Peter to the public rebuke of Paul after he was restored by Jesus?
 - i.
- b. What was the mistake that the restored Peter made in **Acts 1**?
- c. What was the difference that we see in **Acts 2**?
 - i.
- d. What was the response of people who made a profession in **Acts 2** and how is that different from what we often see today?
 - i.
- e. In **Acts 3:1-10**, we see Peter and John heal a man. How is this related to the ministry of today?
 - i.
- f. In **Acts 4**, we see that Peter and John threatened with prison, beatings and possibly death. How does that relate to missions of today?
- g. In **Acts 5**, we read about Peter confronting a sin of omission. That is, people did not do all that they claimed. What does this teach us about the ministry?
 - i.
- h. When Philip, the evangelist, preached to the Samaritans, many believed and were baptized but they did not receive the Holy Ghost until Peter and John went there and laid hands on them. Why was this so and what does it tell us about missions work of today?
 - i.
- i. In **Acts 9**, we read about the conversion of Paul and the turmoil caused by it. Yet, Peter continued to act the same way and healed a man in Lydda and raised Tabitha from the dead. What does this teach us about the ministry, especially for a foreign missionary?
 - i.
- j. In **Acts 10**, we read about Peter going to the Gentiles even while his culture and religion told him not to do so. In **Acts 11**, we read about Peter getting chewed out by “they that were of the circumcision”, in the church of Jerusalem, because of what happened in **Acts 10**. What is the lesson for all ministries?
 - i.

6. Peter's Writing in the Bible-Q:

- a. Who is Peter's first epistle written to and what is the significance of it?
 - i.
- b. What doctrinal change can we see in Peter's writing that is different from what was reported earlier about Peter?
 - i.
- c. What is the basis of Peter writing about "the trial of your faith"?
- d. What does Peter tell us about this "trial of your faith"?
- e. Why does Peter tell us to obey his commands about how to handle relationships?
- f. In **1Peter 3:20-21**, Peter writes about "baptism" and writes that it "saves us". What type of "salvation" is Peter writing about and why is it critical to know this?
- g. What reason does Peter give for writing his second epistle?
- h. Why does God give us spiritual gifts, according to Peter?
- i. What does Peter write is more reliable than the testimony of his personal experience on the 'Mount of Transfiguration'?
- j. What is the main message of Peter's second epistle?

7. The Character of Peter-Q:

- a. What was the first thing that Peter did which made him a potential follower of Christ and a disciple?
 - i.
- b. What do we learn when we compare the salvation, service and ministries of Andrew and Peter?
 - i.
- c. What is the difference when the Bible uses the name Peter and when it uses Simon for the same man?
 - i.
- d. What was the personal significance of Peter declaring “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (**Matthew 16:16; Mark 8:29; Luke 4:41; John 6:69**)?
 - i.
- e. What do we see Peter doing in **Mark 1** before his call in **Mark 3** which is an example of what all saved people should do?
 - i.
- f. What do we learn about Peter walking on water and what is the main lesson for us from that account?
 - i.
- g. What is the lesson from Peter running to the sepulcher when he was told that the body of Jesus was missing and that Jesus had risen from the dead?
 - i.
- h. What is the lesson that we get from reading **2Peter 3:15**?
 - i.
- i. What is the lesson from Peter writing “to the strangers” (Gentiles) in **1Peter**?
 - i.
- j. What is the main focus of **2Peter** and what does this teach us should be a main concern of a spiritually mature leader in the church?
 - i.

H. Paul as our example Missionary-Q:

1. Paul's Early Life-Q:

- a. What was his initial name and what is the difference between it and his replacement name?
 - i.
- b. What was his religious background?
 - i.
- c. What was the main advantage of his early religious background?
 - i.
- d. What was the main disadvantage of his early religious background?
 - i.
- e. What other major thing did he have to change in his personal life?
 - i.
- f. What are popular doctrinal errors of today which Paul's background disprove?
 - i.
 - ii.
- g. What should be some true purposes of a formal education for a preacher?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
- h. What is the basis for Paul writing about marriage and how does that apply to us?
 - i.
- i. What was one of the main things that Jesus testified would change in the life of Paul due to his salvation and fulfilling the job that God planned for him?
 - ii.

2. Paul's Salvation-Q:

- a. What was Paul's life like before his salvation?
 - i.
- b. After Paul was saved, how was his education used?
 - i.
- c. What changed in Paul's relationship to God when he was saved?
 - i.
- d. What did Paul do right after meeting Jesus?
 - i.
- e. What happened to the people who were with Paul?
 - i.
- f. What did Paul do right after being saved?
 - i.
- g. What did Paul do next?
 - i.
- h. How did Paul spiritually mature once saved?
 - i.
- i. What was the result of his changed life?
 - i.
- j. How did Paul go from being feared to being accepted and even a leader within the church?
 - i.

3. Paul's Sanctification-Q:

- a. **Acts 9:29-30** tells us that Paul had to leave Jerusalem. Where does **Galatians 1:11-19** indicate he went and what happened there?
 - i.
- b. What is another Bible reference to support this thought and how does it apply?
 - i.
- c. What authority do apostles have which indicates that they must also have significant spiritual maturity in order to properly handle the authority?
 - i.
- d. Why was Paul brought to Antioch and what does this indicate about his own sanctification?
 - i.
- e. In **Acts 18**, we read about people that Paul trained teaching a world-traveling evangelist, named Apollos, "the way of God more perfectly". What does this tell us about Paul?
 - ii.
- f. In **Acts 12:25**, we read that Paul helped others to get to the mission field. Other places in the Bible tell us the same. What does this tell us about Paul's sanctification?
 - i.
- g. Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised and what does this teach us about Paul's spiritual maturity?
 - i.
- h. What did Paul do when the leaders of the Jerusalem church demanded that he do some ceremony because people had told lies about his doctrine? Why did he not argue that their ceremony would prove nothing and that they needed to deal with the liars?
 - i.
- i. How did Paul react to other believers keeping on bringing up the same arguments based upon the same doctrinal errors but with only minor differences from their prior defeat?
 - i.
- j. What does the physical suffering that Paul endured teach us about his sanctification?
 - i.

4. Paul's Call as a Missionary-Q:

- a. Who gave Paul his position as a missionary?
 - i.
- b. What tasks did Paul do as a missionary?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
 - vi.
 - vii.
 - viii.
 - ix.
 - x.
 - xi.
 - xii.
- c. What led up to God calling Paul and Barnabas as missionaries?
 - ii.
- d. What special training did Paul receive to enable him to do the work of a missionary?
 - iv.
 - v.
 - vi.
- e. How were Paul and Barnabas different, spiritually, than the people who started the Antioch Church?
 - ii.
- f. What part of Paul's writing tells us the requirements to be a pastor and, therefore, tell us the requirements that Paul himself fulfilled?
 - ii.
- g. How do we know the difference in the requirements between a preacher missionary and a non-preacher missionary?
 - ii.
- h. Who is in charge on the mission field, the pastor of the home church or the missionary pastor?
 - ii.
- i. Who is the ultimate authority of all mission works?
 - ii.
- j. What do we see as different between the Antioch church sending Paul as a missionary and the common practice of today when it comes to sending out missionaries?
 - ii.

5. Paul's Service as a Missionary-Q:

- a. What did Paul preach as a missionary?
 - i.
- b. What did Paul avoid preaching as a missionary?
 - i.
- c. What did Paul avoid doing as a missionary?
 - i.
- d. What criticism did others make about his preaching?
 - i.
- e. How did Paul respond to persecution and assault?
 - i.
- f. What was the main purpose of Paul's second and third missionary journeys?
 - i.
- g. What did Paul and his company do upon returning to their home church which is required by God for all missionaries and even all churches.
 - i.
- h. What did Paul do when he personally could not visit a church and verify their spiritual condition?
 - i.
- i. What did Paul use to verify the beliefs of the early churches and what are we to use today?
 - i.
- j. What did Paul do about money?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.

6. Paul's Prison Years-Q:

- a. How and why did Paul's prison years start?
 - i.
- b. What was the motive of the leaders in the Jerusalem Church and what error did that lead them into?
 - i.
- c. What was the lie used to cause believing Jews to seek to murder Paul?
 - i.
- d. Was Paul caught by surprise with what happened in Jerusalem?
 - i.
- e. How did Paul react to the false accusation made against him in the Jerusalem Church and to the church leaders plan to use him to appease the zealots instead of finding and supporting the truth?
 - i.
- f. In **Acts 21:30-31**, we read that the people dragged Paul out of the Temple and started to beat him to death. How did the various authorities respond?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
- g. When the civil government held a hearing and asked interested parties to come and testify, how did they respond?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
- h. In **Acts 22** through **Acts 26**, we read about Paul traveling to Rome. What is the main spiritual action that we read happened in his life along the way?
 - i.
- i. What is the main lesson of the last chapter in the **book of Acts**?
 - i.
- j. How does the **book of Acts**, end?
 - i.

7. Paul's Writing in the Bible-Q:

- a) Why did Paul write and how does it apply to us?
 - i.
- b) How do we know that Paul was not aware that he was writing scripture when he wrote?
 - i.
- c) What letters of from Paul had a co-author and why is this doctrinally significant?
 - i.
- d) What was the main motivation for Paul writing his epistles?
 - i.
- e) What was the main consideration that Paul had when he wrote his epistles and how do we know this?
 - i.
- f) What was the primary purpose of all of Paul's epistles, except the one to the Philippians, and how does that relate to today?
 - i.
- g) What is the main theme of each Pauline Epistle?
 - i.
- h) What is a common practice among preachers when preaching from the Pauline Epistles and why does that make their preaching less effective?
 - i.
- i) What doctrinal error often results from preaching the Pauline Epistles without considering the context of the entire epistle?
 - i.
- j) How did Paul end up revealing "mysteries" in his writing?
 - i.

I. Addendum

Pauline Epistles

- 1Corinthians – 16 Chapters - Pre-“Gospel of Christ”: Basics for spiritual babes, test of spiritual maturity.
- 2Corinthians – 13 Chapters - Post-“Gospel of Christ”: Spirit led life versus Fleshly life. This is the application of the “gospel of Christ”.
- Galatians – 06 Chapters - “Gospel of Christ” to people who turned from truth to doctrinal error.
- Ephesians – 06 Chapters - “Gospel of Christ” to people who mixed doctrinal error with truth.
- Philippians – 04 Chapters - Post-“Gospel of Christ”: Blessings to people who lead a Spirit led life.
- Colossians – 04 Chapters - “Gospel of Christ” to people who were ignorant, who had never heard it.
- 1Thessalonians – 05 Chapters - Definition of a godly church.
- 2Thessalonians – 03 Chapters - Trust the “Lord” and not the false doctrine from religious liars.
- 1Timothy – 06 Chapters - Godly Leadership: Take heed and preach only “sound doctrine”.
- 2 Timothy – 04 Chapters - Defend “sound doctrine” against fleshly lusts and worldly fables.
- Titus – 03 Chapters - Pastor’s basic job description and tells him how to use “sound doctrine”.
- Philemon – 01 Chapters - Responsibilities of the non-preacher.

All Biblical Gospels, except the “other gospel”, give the same basic message but with an emphasis or method of presentation that is unique. The “Gospel of Christ” is “the good news that God can spiritually mature you after you receive God’s life”. Moreover, True Biblical salvation is ‘God’s life in you’. However, all true life grows, especially after birth. Thus, all true Biblical “gospels” tell us how to receive God’s life (how to get saved), how to grow that life (sanctification and spiritual maturity) and God’s judgment of our handling of God’s life that is in us while we are in this world (judgment).

While the “Gospel of Christ” has all three main points, it emphasizes our spiritual growth and service to God after our initial salvation. With this understanding, we can see that while Paul started many churches and won many souls to salvation, the main emphasis of his writing in dealing with our spiritual maturity. Even the ‘Pastoral Epistles’ are aimed at telling the ‘man of God’ to be sure that he protects God’s way of maturing the saved and that he concentrates on using God’s way to help God’s children become spiritually mature.