

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	Assurance of Salvation
4	Personal Testimony
8	Personal Bible Study
11	Balancing Your Prayer Life
15	Christ's Lordship
18	Obedience
21	Church Membership
25	Stewardship
29	Church of God History
31	History of the Denomination Quiz
35	History of Our Church of God
36	<i>We Believe</i> Quiz
41	Organization of the Eastern Regional Conference
42	Organization of the Churches of God, General Conference
43	Our Church's Mission and Vision
43	Our Church's Organization
43	Eastern Regional Conference Organization Quiz
45	General Conference Organization Quiz
47	Your Unique Design
47	Spiritual Passion
48	Our Church's Ministries
48	Spiritual Gifts
49	Temperament
56	Your Ministry
57	Membership Vows/Covenant
59	Answer Key

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Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

LESSON 1

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

1. What does Jesus promise to do in Revelation 3:20 if you open the door of your life to him?

2. How do you know Jesus' promise can be trusted?

a. John 14:6 _____

b. John 1:17 _____

3. If Jesus is in your life, what else do you possess (1 John 5:11-12)?

4. Everlasting life is described in John 5:24 as (circle the best answer):

a. Past b. Present c. Future

5. Eternal life isn't just endless existence. It's Jesus' heart transplanted into you, a different kind of life altogether. When Jesus loves, He's just being Himself. His life gives you the ability to be like Him. One of its characteristics is that it has no end.

6. A car's gas tank feeds the engine and represents the facts. The gasoline is your faith and the car's trunk is your feelings. Filling up the trunk with fuel instead of the gas tank won't take you anywhere. Trust the facts (God's character and promises), not your feelings. Your feelings change, but the facts don't. Faith believes God's promises and ACTS on them.

7. God's character and promises support your faith. Great faith doesn't prevent you from breaking through thin ice. It won't hold you up just because you think it will. Thick ice supports one with weak faith. Why is faith the foundation for knowing that Jesus is living within you (Hebrews 11:6)?

8. 1 John 5:13 says that God wants you to _____ you have eternal life. With time you'll increasingly detect in yourself several vital signs of new birth from God:

Evidence #1—1 John 4:13 _____

As a result of the Holy Spirit's inner witness, do you have an inner assurance that you belong to God?

Yes No

Evidence #2—1 John 5:1 _____

Are you trusting Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection instead of your own goodness to make you 100% acceptable to God? Yes No.

Evidence #3—1 John 2:3 _____

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

Evidence #4—1 John 3:14 _____

Evidence #5—1 John 3:10 _____

9. Check below all the “fingerprints” of God’s nature you now see in your life compared to your life before you believed in Jesus:

- a. I’m more interested in the Bible.
- b. I can forgive others easier.
- c. I pray more now.
- d. A weight of guilt has been removed.
- e. I enjoy being with other believers.
- f. I have a greater desire to help others.
- g. I want others to know Jesus too.
- h. I love others more now.
- i. My talk is “cleaner.”
- j. I have a new ability to resist sin.
- k. Other changes I’ve seen _____

10. How do you know that Jesus is in your life and you have eternal life now?

If you aren’t sure, would you like to be? Yes No

To be sure, you must **repent** (Be willing to turn from sin and self-centered living to God and his way of life) and **believe** that Jesus Christ, God’s Son, died on Calvary’s cross in your place, was buried, and rose again the third day.

Believing in Jesus means receiving Him. Ask Him to forgive your sins and come into your life to be your Savior and Lord. The following is a prayer you could use:

Lord Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross in my place and taking my sin, death, and judgment upon yourself. I open the door of my life to you. I want you to come into my life and take control. Thank you for forgiving my sins, and making me a child of God. Make me like you. Amen.

Scripture Memory

Revelation 3:20—Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference



ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read "My Personal Spiritual Story" and then write *your* story.
2. Memorize Revelation 3:20.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

MY PERSONAL SPIRITUAL STORY

WHO? ME? A TESTIMONY?

Perhaps you think you don't have much of a spiritual story to tell. You weren't that bad before you received Christ, you aren't that good now, and it's been a struggle! Compared to those who can recount deliverance from alcoholism, drug abuse, prostitution, gambling, a life of crime, etc., your spiritual experience is as boring as watching water drip from a faucet. Unlike Saul of Tarsus, you haven't seen the risen Christ. You haven't heard God speak in an audible voice or seen even a five-second mini-vision in black and white. You're simply a "trust and obey" believer and at times feel decidedly inferior in even those two basics.

THE WAY WE WERE

Many of us have forgotten or never experienced the relentless single-file march of an army of unsatisfying days lived out under sin's merciless control. Nothing changes but the date. No peace. No purpose. No hope. No fulfillment in this world and no hope for the next. Life is a daily chase after the butterfly of good feelings. Although occasionally we capture it, it always escapes through a hole in the net. Tomorrow we must pursue it all over again. Butterfly chasers aren't happy with life, but don't realize Christ and his church promise the purpose they've longed for. Believing our story isn't important adds to the problem.

WRITE FOR INSIGHT

Each of us benefits from thinking long and hard about how God has been at work in our lives. We aren't yet what we want to be, and our failures, like facial blemishes, are all too familiar. Nevertheless, we've probably moved farther from the spiritual starting line than we realize. Writing your personal spiritual story prepares you to share it more clearly and often.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

HOLD THE TESTIPHONY

When we're living for ourselves, we're blind to most of our faults. Now, like kittens with their eyes open, we see ourselves more clearly, and that alone is significant progress. God has chosen to pour his living water into imperfect vessels still under construction. We're cracked, and we leak, but God can still channel his living water through us to satisfy the spiritually thirsty. We're a work in progress, and Jesus gets all the credit for any improvement. Our role isn't to pretend we possess sinless perfection but to be transparent. Not only can't people relate to Never Fail Fred or Freda, it just simply isn't true. Any one of us would be utterly humiliated if Hollywood made a movie based on *all* our thoughts during the last year. I wouldn't attend the premiere of my own movie! Would you attend yours?

YOUR STORY MATTERS

Your story will connect with the people like you. Persons who "aren't that bad now," and never battled alcoholism, can relate to how Christ has worked in a "not so bad life" better than how he has worked in the life of a converted alcoholic.

ONE THEME AND THREE SECTIONS

Your story can help open the eyes of not-yet-believers, but first you have to write it. Before you can do that, you need to pray and reflect on how God has been at work in your life. The whole process will probably take several hours, but the blessings that can result are beyond calculation. Try to organize your thoughts around a single theme, such as how your purpose or values have changed.

To communicate your story effectively, organize it into three sections:

- 1) Describe your life before knowing Jesus personally.
- 2) Spell out how you came to know Christ, so others will know how to receive him too.
- 3) Explain how receiving Christ has changed how you relate to God, others, and yourself.

A carefully prepared testimony impacts more than the best music or sermon. Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church, often pauses in the middle of a sermon while someone shares how the truth he's expounding has made a difference in his/her life. That makes Rick's point unforgettable.

Jack Selcher's testimony illustrates how you might organize your own. When you read it, look for the dominant theme.

"Spiritual things weren't always important to me. My parents took me to church three times a week for at least twelve years, but other things preoccupied my mind. Outside the church building I hardly ever thought about God, never prayed voluntarily, and never read the Bible on my own. My purpose was to excel in sports and my studies to win the love and acceptance of others. I set goals in both areas and sacrificed a lot to attain them, but discovered that achieving them never brought lasting satisfaction. The thought of dying scared me and a cloud of guilt hung over me. I believed in heaven but had no assurance I'd go there when I died.

In my church I often heard that Jesus had died on a cross to pay the penalty for my moral and spiritual imperfections. I knew I wasn't perfect, but I didn't understand how Jesus' death solved the problem. I pictured it as a down payment on my passage to heaven. I thought I had to make regular payments by the good things I did.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

During the fall of 1968 as a result of hearing 1 John 5:11-12 quoted, I understood I didn't have to make any payments at all. Jesus paid the penalty for my moral imperfections *in full*. Those verses say: 'And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.' That evening in my dorm room, I trusted in Jesus' sacrifice *alone* to give me right standing with God and invited him into my life. That evening was a turning point. Because God loved and accepted me as I was, I *wanted* to do what pleased him. Little by little love began to displace fear as a dominant motivator in my spiritual life.

My fear of death greatly diminished. God lifted the weight of guilt for my moral failures when I trusted Jesus' death as payment in full. I had assurance that I'd go to heaven because I knew I could trust Jesus to keep his promise to take me there.

The new life I received wouldn't allow me to relate to God or others in the same old ways. I remember feeling a twinge of conscience after talking in a negative way about people who weren't present—something I'd done repeatedly for years without thinking twice about it. God convicted me that my language needed some attention. My words (& % @ # !) were a symptom of the anger and desire for control that swirled within me. Gradually I saw improvement. Little by little God's love for and acceptance of me freed me to love and accept others. I gradually developed a strong desire to serve others that I didn't have before the fall of 1968. My goal became to know Jesus better and to help others know him too. Working toward that goal brought a measure of fulfillment I'd never known when I was doing my own thing."

The central theme of Jack's testimony is how his life 's purpose and values changed through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Your testimony is your spiritual autobiography, as unique as your fingerprints. To share it with others effectively, memorize the major points.

In the mid 1970s at Penn State University Jack was sharing his personal spiritual story with two graduate students in their dormitory room. When he had minutes earlier requested permission to share the gospel with them, they refused. He then asked whether he could share how Christ had made a difference in his own life. Since that seemed safe to the two, they agreed. Jack told how for years he'd lived under the slavery of setting goals, sacrificing to reach them, experiencing no lasting fulfillment, and then, starting the whole never-ending process again. He pointed to Jesus as the one who'd set him free from that way of life. One of the students smiled, looked at his roommate who was fidgeting in his seat, and said, "He's talking about you!"

Your story can similarly impact others whose hearts the Holy Spirit has prepared. Not only will it influence *them*, but sharing it also stokes your own spiritual fires by reminding *you* anew how much Christ has done.

Now it's *your* turn. First, organize and write your thoughts on another sheet of paper. Once you've written the first draft, give it to your leader for suggestions. Then, incorporating that input, write your story below.

Describe your life before you met Christ. What was important to you? What motivated you? What were your goals? What problems did you face? What place did self occupy in your plans and decisions? Organize your thoughts around a theme.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

Describe how you received Christ clearly enough so that someone else would know how to receive him. The basic content you need to communicate is that to become a Christian you needed to know that you were a sinner and that Christ died for your sins. You had to turn from going your way to his and invite him into your life as your Forgiver and Leader.

How has your life changed since receiving Christ? What's important to you? What motivates you? What are your goals and problems and how do you deal with them? How do you live for Christ, etc?

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

LESSON TWO PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY ASSIGNMENTS

1. Hand your leader a copy of your own personal spiritual story.
2. Recite Revelation 3:20 from memory (check one another in groups of two).

READING YOUR G-MAIL READ OR BLEED!

Ignore God's Word and you're a possum in Satan's headlights. Bump-bump. Road-kill for sure! Make no mistake about it—ineffective Christians make Satan smile. He's both powerful and subtle. He's like a _____ on one hand (1 Peter 5:8), and an _____ of light on the other (2 Corinthians 11:14). To defeat him you must spend time reading and studying God's Word. Begin with at least ten minutes each day and gradually increase. Start with Matthew's gospel. In one or two sentences for each chapter, record your observations and personal applications on a piece of paper. Each session you'll share with others at least one personal application you wrote. Set a goal of reading through the New Testament within the next twelve months (5 chapters/week). Then spend the following twenty-four months completing the Old Testament beginning with Genesis (about 9 chapters/week).

FATHER KNOWS BEST

A commercial said that wearing seat belts in Pennsylvania isn't just a good idea—it's the law. Studying God's Word is more than just a good idea. Put 2 Timothy 2:15 in your own words:

PROGRAMMING 101

Your brain is like a computer with defective software. It doesn't run according to the manufacturer's specifications. It never did. No one naturally imitates Jesus very well. His life alone was unaffected by the "___ bug" (1 Peter 2:22).

When you repented and received Jesus into your life, the manufacturer inserted a spiritual drive into your "computer." That's the new birth. Your spiritual drive enables you to "read" God's truth. According to Romans 12:2, what needs to be renewed? _____ How does that happen? According to 1 Peter 2:2, you are to *crave* _____. May your defining passion be the same as the psalmist who wrote, "Oh, how I _____ your law... (Psalm 119:97).

Renewing your mind isn't automatic or easy. It takes time and effort to think, feel, and act more like Jesus. A lot of both! God's part is to work in you to enable you to _____ and _____ according to his purposes (Philippians 2:13).

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

Your part is to program your mind with and act upon one transforming God-truth after another after another. Jesus said that those who practice his teachings prove they're his _____ (John 8:31). What's the latest God-truth you're trying to apply to your life?

It's a life-long journey. You need to learn and be reminded of God's truth daily. What's the best time of day for you to do this? _____. Where is the best place to do it where you can be alone? _____.

God's truth, like a mirror, reflects your Father's face and your own. Probably no single discipline helps you grow as a believer as much as thinking hard about how Scripture applies to your life and then applying it. When during your daily routine do you include reflection time? How are you recording these reflections? Consider writing down at least the date, the Scripture on which you're reflecting, and one truth you'll apply. For example, 2/18/09, 2 Chronicles 12:14, I'll set my heart on seeking the Lord today. As you practice this discipline as a way of life, someday someone may say to you, "My, my, don't you look like your Father!"

Some Bibles are easier to understand than others. *The King James Version* was published in 1611. Its elevated language is both beautiful and difficult. Those who classify reading material rate it at grade level 14. *The New International Version*, by comparison, is about grade level 8.5. The Bible isn't a magical book. Reading a chapter a day *won't* keep the devil away! He probably reads more than that himself trying to figure out what God is going to do next! Only Scripture you understand and apply will make you more like Jesus. Simpler is better.

Consider purchasing a study Bible. It'll help you digest a lot more soul food. *The Life Application Bible*, for example, will both help you understand the Bible and apply it to your life.

A Bible dictionary and concordance deepen your study. You can purchase them in a Christian bookstore.

A Bible dictionary provides historical and cultural backgrounds that'll help you understand what you're reading. It explains Bible people, places, things, books, and customs.

A concordance is an index of important words found in the Bible. A complete concordance lists all 250 places "peace" occurs (book, chapter, and verse). Your concordance should correspond to the version of the Bible you're using. You can also search online for Bible words through sites like www.biblegateway.com.

NINE PRINCIPLES TO INTERPRET SCRIPTURE

1. Let the Bible explain itself. Matthew 7:7-8 doesn't guarantee getting everything you ask for from God. Other passages, such as James 4:3, describe conditions for answered prayer.
2. Consider literary forms. Jesus is the door (John 10:9), but don't expect a knob and hinges. The language is symbolic.
3. Look for only one meaning (the original intention of the author) in a passage, but many applications.
4. Understanding grammar and historical background enable accurate interpretation.
5. Interpret unclear passages in the light of clear ones. Ephesians 2:8-10 describes how good deeds relate to salvation better than James 2:24 does.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

6. Research what words meant to the biblical authors. Two resources to help: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament* by Merrill F. Unger and Williams White, Jr. and *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* by W. E. Vine.
7. Proverbs express general principles, not moral absolutes. Proverbs 3:16 promises long life to the wise, but some wise persons die young.
8. In parables look for one main point. Luke 15:3-7 teaches that God cares about lost people.
9. Pray for the Holy Spirit to teach you.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

1 Peter 2:2 - Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.



ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Beginning with Matthew 1, read at least 5 chapters/week and daily write down a personal application (1 or 2 sentences). Prepare to share at least one application next week with the group.**
2. **Memorize 1 Peter 2:2 and review Revelation 3:20.**

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

LESSON 3 BALANCING YOUR PRAYER LIFE

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Share a personal application from your reading in Matthew.
2. Revelation 3:20 and 1 Peter 2:2 check-up with a buddy.

PRAYER TIME

Prayer's primary motivation is to become more like Jesus. The acrostic PRAYER will help you develop a balanced prayer life. PRAYER represents: **P**raise, **R**ely, **A**dmit, **Y**ield, **E**xpress thanks, and **R**equest.

PRAISE

Definition: Praise is words or deeds that honor and exalt God for who he is and what he's done. Knowledge of both comes from the Bible.

Biblical Basis:

1. What is one thing for which we can exalt God _____ (Ephesians 1:6)?
2. Jesus is God's all-sufficient sacrifice for sin. What sacrifice is appropriate for those he's rescued _ _ _ _ _ (Hebrews 13:15)
3. What praise word do the servants of God in heaven use H _ _ _ _ _ h (Revelation 19:6)? (This word means "Praise ye Jehovah" or "Praise the Lord").

Example:

Father, I praise you for your glorious grace that rescued a sinner like me. I deserve hell, but you gave me heaven. Without grace I wouldn't know or serve you. I couldn't do your will with the right attitude for even one minute. You made a way for me to know you even when I didn't care. I praise you for your grace.

I praise you for your love for me that's new every day. I can always depend on it. I love you only because you first loved me. Your love doesn't contain even an ounce of selfishness. Lord, I praise you for your love.

RELY

Definition: You trust your auto mechanic to fix your car. The Greek word translated faith means trust or reliance. It includes dependence upon Jesus, his teachings, and his finished work on the cross. It describes a commitment to believe God no matter what.

Biblical Basis:

1. Prayer without _ _ _ _ _ doesn't please God (Hebrews 11:6).

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

2. In Matthew 8:13 Jesus told a centurion _____
3. If you _____, you will receive _____ (Matthew 21:22). This verse isn't a blank check to obtain luxury cars, executive positions, etc. Other verses on prayer qualify it.

Example:

Father, I need a job. I trust you to supply it. You've promised that if I seek you first, you'll provide the things I need. You know my faith wavers. I've been without a job for two months. I've filled out 23 job applications, but still haven't heard any encouraging news. Lord, I believe you'll provide a job where you want me to have a ministry. Help me persevere despite the heckling unbelief within that tells me I'm a fool to rely on you.

ADMIT

Definition – We must acknowledge the sins of which we're guilty.

Biblical Basis:

1. Based on Leviticus 5:5, when we're guilty of offending God, what must we do?

2. When we wrong another person, what must we do (Numbers 5:6-7)? _____
3. If we confess our sins, what does God promise (1 John 1:9)? _____

Example:

Dear Lord, I'm sorry I watched that television show last night. It didn't glorify you and I knew it. It appealed to the lust of my flesh. I chose the show in preference to your will. Please forgive me. Help me develop a plan to keep this from happening again.

YIELD

Definition: Prayer demonstrates our dependence on God. He's God. We aren't. We surrender to him and his purposes for our lives.

Biblical Basis:

Effective prayer requires surrendering to God our _____ (Matthew 26:39), minds (Colossians 3:2), k _____ (Matthew 6:33), b _____ (Romans 12:1), u _____ (Proverbs 3:5-6), w _____ and t _____ (Isaiah 55:8-9), and the control of our lives (Ephesians 5:18).

Example:

Father, I present my whole life to you this morning, without reserving parts of it for myself. Think with my mind, speak with my mouth, love with my heart, walk with my feet, and bless others with my hands today. I give you the control center of my life. Thank you for controlling me by your Holy Spirit.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

EXPRESS THANKS

Definition: Thanksgiving means expressing gratitude to God for what he's done.

Biblical Basis:

1. How are we to enter into God's presence (Psalms 100:4)? _____
2. Give _____ to the Lord for he is good (Psalms 106:1).
3. Always giving _____ to God the Father for _____ (Ephesians 5:20).
4. In what circumstances are we to give thanks (1 Thessalonians 5:18)? _____

Example:

Dear Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross in my place. Thanks for giving me this healthy body. Thank you for my house, a warm and dry refuge, as the snow is piling up outside. Thank you for the food you've provided for my family. Thanks for Bill who's taught me so much about you since I met him. Thanks for Sarah Walton who led me to faith in you. Thanks that you'll give me everything I need to serve you today.

REQUEST

Definition: Asking God to supply what we need (petition) and what others need (intercession).

Biblical Basis:

1. In Romans 1:10, what did Paul ask for? _____
2. Paul asked three times that a " _____ " be removed (2 Corinthians 12:7-8).
3. In 1 Timothy 2:1 Paul urged Timothy that r _____, prayers, i _____ and thanksgiving be made for everyone.
4. Christians are to keep on praying for all the s _____ (Ephesians 6:18).

Example:

Dear Father, give me wisdom as I shop for cars today to pick one that'll provide the best value. Give me safety as I travel.

Lord, encourage Pastor Richards, protect him from Satan's efforts to trip him up, and fill him with wisdom and knowledge as he prepares his sermon this week.

Help Betty adjust quickly to her new job, and may her Christian light shine brightly there.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

KEY REQUESTS

Along with your other concerns please pray regularly for:

1. The salvation of at least three acquaintances who don't yet know Jesus.
2. The purity, protection, and effectiveness of your pastor and the spiritual leaders of your church.

How many minutes/day will you spend in prayer _____

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer (Matthew 21:22).



ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read at least the next five chapters in the New Testament, write down thoughts and applications, and prepare to share an application next week with the class.
2. Apply the PRAYER model at least 10 minutes/day, five days this week and report on your experience next week:
 - a. What was good about your prayer time?
 - b. What struggles did you experience?
3. Memorize Matthew 21:22 and review previous verses.

LESSON 4 CHRIST'S LORDSHIP

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Share one application from your Scripture reading.
2. Share benefits and struggles of your prayer assignment.
3. Revelation 3:20, 1 Peter 2:22, Matthew 21:22 check-up with a buddy.

Few question that Jesus was a man; many doubt he was God. Jesus Christ is more than a great teacher. He's fully God and fully man. You owe him complete obedience. He's your ultimate boss with authority over every area of your life.

1. At His birth, what three words were used to describe Jesus (Luke 2:11)?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. The Word was (John 1:1)? _ _ _
3. The Word became (John 1:14)? _____
4. Who is the Word? _____
5. If Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh, then He is both G _ _ and m _ _ .
6. How does Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples, describe Him when he sees the crucifixion-wounds (John 20:28)?

7. What did Jesus claim the ability to do that only God can do (Mark 2:7-11)? _____
8. Who is the shepherd in Psalm 23:1? _____
In John 10:11? _____
- What's your conclusion about Jesus' identity? _____
9. Why did the Jews try to kill Jesus (John 5:18)? _____
10. How did the Jews interpret Jesus' claims in John 10:30 (John 10:30, 33)? How did they respond?

11. How many people do you know who've never done anything wrong? _____
12. What sins did the Apostle John observe in Jesus (1 John 3:5)? _____
13. How many did the Apostle Peter witness (1 Peter 2:22)? _____
14. Jesus came to show us God the Father. He's God's "Show and Tell"!

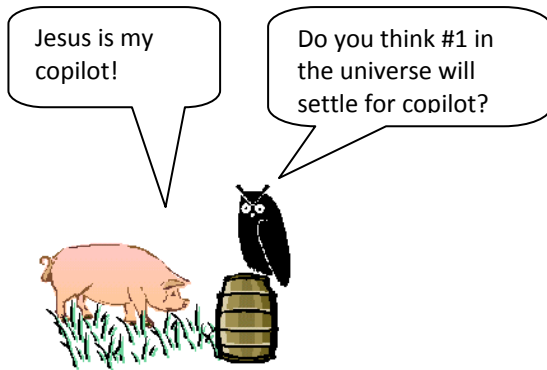
Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

- a. Knowing Him means knowing (John 8:19) _____
 - b. Believing in Him means believing in (John 12:44) _____
 - c. Honoring Him means honoring (John 5:23) _____
 - d. Hating Him means hating (John 15:23) _____
 - e. Seeing Him means seeing (John 14:9) _____
 - f. Welcoming Him means welcoming (Mark 9:37) _____
15. Colossians 1:15-18 describes Jesus #1 status three different ways.
- a. He's the i _ _ _ _ of God, like a reflection of Him in a mirror. He perfectly reveals what God is like.
 - b. He's the f _ _ _ _ born (first in rank) over all creation because He made it to do His will and give Him glory.
 - c. He's the h _ _ _ _ of the church (the collection of all believers past, present, and future). He's its Leader and source of life.
16. He has first place in E _ _ _ _ THING (Colossians 1:18).
17. Instead of saying, "We're #1," we should say, " _____."
18. What physical action accompanies confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10-11)? _____
19. What does calling Jesus Lord imply about your relationship to Him (Luke 6:46)? _____
20. Check below the relationships that you especially need to submit to Jesus' control:
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> with friends | <input type="checkbox"/> ...brothers/sisters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ...spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> ...coworkers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ...parents/guardians | <input type="checkbox"/> ...boss |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ... neighbors | <input type="checkbox"/> ...relatives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ...other Christians | <input type="checkbox"/> ...money |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ... unbelievers | <input type="checkbox"/> specify _____ |

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Colossians 1:18 - And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference



ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read the next five chapters in the New Testament and share a personal application with the group next week.
2. Spend at least 7 minutes in prayer daily for the next week.
3. Memorize Colossians 1:18. Review Revelation 3:20, 1 Peter 2:22, and Matthew 21:22.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

LESSON 5 OBEDIENCE

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Share a personal application from your Scripture reading.
2. How has your prayer life changed since the lesson on prayer?
3. Revelation 3:20, 1 Peter 2:22, Matthew 21:22, Colossians 1:18 check-up with a buddy.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

A relationship with God isn't complicated. You don't have to dig a hole 1000-feet deep with a teaspoon or climb a ladder 49 miles into the atmosphere to stay on his good side. You need to know what he's said, believe it, and do it. Don't bother exploring other options.

RULE #1

Rule #1 of the Christian life is that *God's will takes priority over your own and everyone else's*. We like to rationalize our way around that rule. We sometimes think our situation is special, so we don't have to obey. When tempted to make excuses, refer back to rule #1!

PRIORITY #1

Obedience to God is more important than any other claim on our lives. Imagine an elderly woman at Penn State's football game with Michigan. Every seat in Beaver Stadium is filled except the one beside her. Someone asks her whose seat it is. She says that she and her late husband have been season ticket holders for 35 years, and the seat belonged to him. She is asked why she didn't ask a friend or relative to come with her. She says, "Are you kidding! They're all at the funeral." We need that kind of commitment to God. What's the result of such obedience (Hebrews 5:9)? _____

SUBMISSION'S SEVEN-PACK

The Bible requires obedience to seven human authorities:

(1) Parents (Ephesians 6:1) - Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

(2) Teachers - What is the root cause of disobedience to teachers (Proverbs 5:12-13)? _____

(3) Husbands

a. What's the wife's responsibility? _____

b. What's the husband's? (Ephesians 5:21-25) _____

(4) Other Believers - Ephesians 5:21. Submit to _____

(5) Masters (employers) - (Ephesians 6:5). How are we to relate to our employer? _____

(6) Government (Titus 3:1) - Christians are to be subject to _____

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

(7) Spiritual Leaders (Hebrews 13:17) How are we to relate to our spiritual leaders? Why?

If the demands of any of these seven "bosses" conflict with God's commands, what must we do (Acts 5:29)?

OBEDIENCE DEMONSTRATES FAITH

Obeying Jesus' commands demonstrates (John 14:21, 15:14)? _____

What else does it demonstrate (1 John 2:3)? _____

OBEDIENCE PAYS DIVIDENDS

Name three benefits of obeying Jesus' commands: (John 15:10-11)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

HOW DOES GOD REWARD OBEDIENCE?

1. 1 John 3:22 _____
2. Proverbs 3:1-2 _____
3. Isaiah 48:18 _____
4. Luke 11:28 _____
5. John 14:23 _____
6. 1 John 2:17 _____
7. Luke 8:15 _____
8. Matthew 7:24-27 _____

PUT YOUR HEART INTO IT!

Is outward conformity to God's commands enough (Matthew 22:37)? Why? _____

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WHAT ATTITUDE IS APPROPRIATE?

1. Ephesians 6:7 _____
2. 2 Corinthians 5:15 _____

APPLICATION

Christian growth requires obedience. Write how you'll be a disciple of Jesus in the following areas:

1. Regular prayer and Bible reading _____
2. Giving of my time, talents, and treasures to further God's kingdom _____
3. Commitment to a small discipleship group _____
4. Regularly attend worship services _____
5. Involved in serving others _____
6. Submitting my will to God's will _____
7. Telling others how they can know Jesus _____

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

John 14:15 - If you love me, you will obey what I command.



ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read the next five chapters in the New Testament and share a personal application with the group next week.
2. Spend at least 7 minutes in prayer daily for the next week.
3. Memorize John 14:15. Review Revelation 3:20, 1 Peter 2:22, Matthew 21:22, and Colossians 1:18.

LESSON 6 CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Share a personal application from your Scripture reading.
2. Share a recent answer to prayer.
3. Revelation 3:20, 1 Peter 2:22, Matthew 21:22, Colossians 1:18, John 14:15 check-up with a buddy.

THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP A SUPPORTING FAMILY

We need other believers! If someone is caught in a sin, those who are spiritual are to restore him _____ (Galatians 6:1). We fulfill the law of Christ by carrying each other's _____ (Galatians 6:2). We help one another attain spiritual maturity. From Christ the whole body, joined and held together by every _____ ligament grows and builds itself up in _____, as each part does its work (Ephesians 4:16).

Ministry Opportunities

Every believer receives the manifestation of the _____ for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7). God gives us all at least one spiritual gift to build up the church.

Most churches reserve at least some ministry opportunities for those who are church members. To fully unwrap our spiritual gifts, we need to be members of the church.

A Worshiping Family

Members are the pumping heart of the church's worshiping family. Others can come and go as they please, but members commit themselves to worship God in a specific place together with others who've made a similar commitment. They also commit themselves to increase the number of worshipers in that place. God has given us one another. All the believers were together and had everything in _____. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had _____ (Acts 2:44-45).

Accountability

Some nonmembers flit, like honeybees, from one church flower to the next. They never get involved or become accountable. Is someone in your church holding you accountable to grow as a believer and reach out to others?
___ Yes ___ No If so, who? _____

When you join a Church of God, you commit yourself to attend worship, participate in Holy Communion and feet-washing, support educational programs the church offers, become involved in ministry, and support the church financially. In addition you promise to live in Christian peace and love, to obey the teachings of Scripture and to submit to the church's rules of order and to its leaders. God takes your vows *very* seriously. We're commanded not to be _____ to pay our vow, for the Lord will certainly _____ it (Deuteronomy 23:21).

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

Conflict Resolution

Becoming a church member provides a practical way to resolve conflicts with other believers. Matthew 18:15-18 describes a three-step process.

A Spiritual Shepherd

Church members are blessed with spiritual lifeguards—pastors and church leaders who watch over their souls, shepherd and give direction. We obey these leaders because they _____ watch as those who must give an account (Hebrews 13:17). We respect them because they work _____ among us. We hold them in the highest _____ (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

The Responsibilities of Membership

Six terms highlight your responsibilities as a member:

Believer

What set apart those who were added to the early church (Acts 5:14)? _____

What responsibility does this term suggest for church members? _____

Brother

Brother is a relationship-rich term. Brothers...

- a. have _____ with other believers (1 John 1:3,7).
- b. are all part of one _____ (Colossians 1:18).
- c. _____ one another deeply from the heart (1 Peter 1:22).
- d. _____ others up (Ephesians 4:29).
- e. _____ one another on toward love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24).
- f. _____ and admonish one another (Colossians 3:16).
- g. _____ each other's burdens (Galatians 6:2).
- h. _____ each other (1 Thessalonians 4:18).
- i. _____ each other (Ephesians 4:32).
- j. _____ as one man for the faith of the gospel (Philippians 1:27).
- k. Faithfully _____ (Romans 12:12).

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

l. _____ one another in love (Galatians 5:13).

m. _____ the needy (1 Timothy 5:16).

Choose a "brother" responsibility you need to give more attention: _____

Specifically, how can you become a better "brother" in this area? _____

Saint

The one who called us is _____, so we need to be _____ in all we do (1 Peter 1:15).

A saint's way of life should be set apart and consecrated to God.

Read Colossians 3:5, 8-9. Identify one aspect of your earthly nature that still has a grip on you?

How can you put it to death? _____

Disciple-Maker

Disciple-makers seek to extend to every part of the earth and every people group Jesus' influence on and reign over individuals (Matthew 28:19-20).

How can God use you to make disciples in your circle of influence? _____

Citizen

Church members are citizens of the kingdom with responsibilities to:

- a. b_____ and I _____ (Matthew 16:19).
- b. assemble and _____ one another (Hebrews 10:25).
- c. t_____ to the Lord (Leviticus 27:30).
- d. _____ their leaders and _____ to their authority (Hebrews 13:17).
- e. give to believers who have _____ (Acts 2:45).
- f. support financially those who _____ the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:14).
- g. give _____ (2 Corinthians 9:6) and _____ fully (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- h. provide _____ and daily _____ for needy brothers and sisters (Jas. 2:15-16).

Promoter

How is the servant's assignment in Luke 14:23 also ours? _____

What key to unity in the church is described in Romans 15:6-7? _____

How would you grade your promotion of your church during the last year?

___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ F

How could you improve? _____

How would you grade your acceptance of others in the church during the last year?

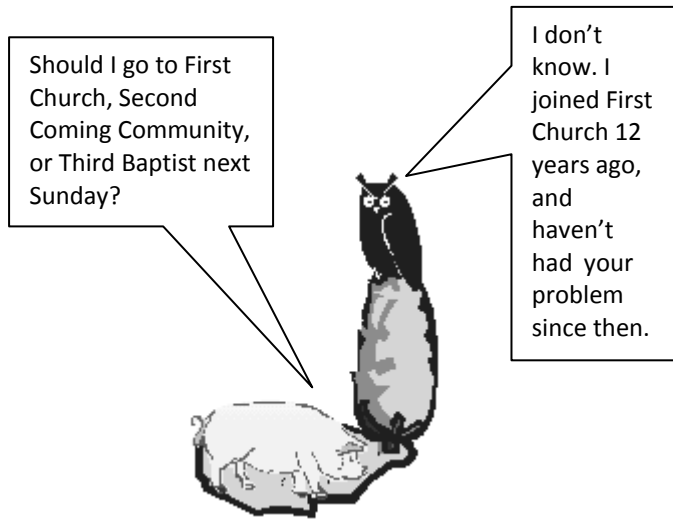
___ A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ F

How could you improve? _____

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

Memory Verse

John 15:8 – This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.



ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read the next five chapters in the New Testament and share a personal application with the group next week.
2. Spend at least 7 minutes in prayer daily for the next week.
3. Memorize John 15:8. Review Revelation 3:20, 1 Peter 2:22, Matthew 21:22, Colossians 1:18, and John 14:15.

Lesson Seven Stewardship

Assignments

1. Share personal applications from your Scripture reading.
2. Name several things for which you are thankful.
3. Review your six Scripture memory verses with a buddy.

Living a Borrowed Life

In the first century a steward cared for the material goods, property, or children that belonged to a superior. He could use them, if he chose, for his own benefit. If called upon, however, he had to explain how he'd carried out his duties. His continuing employment depended on his faithfulness (Luke 16:1-13).

Jesus speaks as a superior in Luke 12:42 and implies that you're managing his resources while he's absent.

To whom do you belong (Romans 14:8)? _____. Why don't you hold the "title" to yourself (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)? _____

What's the purchase price (Revelation 5:9)? _____

As a result, for whom are you to live (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)? _____

Let's consider how these *huge* ideas should radically alter how you live.

Who's the Boss?

Everything you have comes from Jesus. The earth is the Lord's and _____ in it, the world, and _____ who live in it (Psalm 24:1). *Everything* is his and you'll have to give account of its use to him. Based on how you spent your time, money, energy, and abilities this last week, whose name was on the title deed of your life the majority of the time?

___ Mine ___ Jesus'

Stewardship with Zip

The Parable of the Loaned Money illustrates both "steward-zip" and "sinking-steward-ship." Read Matthew 25:14-30. In the first century a talent was the largest unit of silver currency. It could purchase an ox and would be worth more than a thousand dollars today.

The man going on a journey represents (v. 14)? _____. The servants represent _____. It wasn't unfair to give the servants different amounts because (v. 15) _____

Were the first two servants equally faithful? Why (vv. 21,23)? _____

How were they rewarded? _____

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

Sinking-Steward-Ship

The third servant returned to his master what he'd been given. He'd successfully protected it against loss. Why wasn't his master pleased (vv. 26, 27)? _____

How was the third servant punished (vv. 28-30)? _____

Based on this parable, what does God expect from *you*? _____

Facets of Stewardship

God is the giver of every _____ and _____ gift (James 1:17). You are a steward of all the gifts he has bestowed. Some day you'll have to explain how you managed each one. Many believers think stewardship begins and ends with dollar signs. It comprises *much* more. You're responsible to manage faithfully your *whole life* including:

1. Spiritual _____ (s) (1 Peter 4:10-11)

In Lesson #10 you'll discover your spiritual gifts.

2. G _____ (1 Thessalonians 2:4)

Suppose on his deathbed, a very intelligent relative gives you a paper that explains how to make a medicine that cures all kinds of cancer. That news is too good to keep to yourself! The gospel is the only cure for sin. You can't keep it to yourself and tell no one! To prepare to share the message as effectively as possible, will you attend evangelism training during the next year or read a book on evangelism such as *How to Give Away Your Faith* by Paul Little? __ Yes __ No

Will you share at least one difference Christ has made in your life with three unchurched persons in the next three months? __ Yes __ No

3. W _____ (s) (Matthew 12:36)

Well-chosen words build up; careless words tear down. To or about whom do you need to alter the way you speak _____ (first name)? To change the way you talk to or about this person, you need to think about him/her differently. Praying for that person will help you change your attitude. Will you pray for this person's welfare every day for the next three weeks? __ Yes __ No

Think about the situations in which you most often speak words and display attitudes that don't represent Jesus accurately. Specifically, how can you increase your wise words and decrease your foolish ones in these situations? _____

4. G _____ (2 Corinthians 8:7)

What to Give

Giving is one way to thank God for his grace. Matthew 25:35-36 describes various types of giving including (unscramble):

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

odof _____
knird _____
aliythsopit _____
locignht _____
mdecinei _____
meit _____
yemon _____ (Mark 12:41-44)

Several ways to meet needs in the aforementioned areas are to support a child through an organization like World Vision, participate in relief efforts in areas of the world touched by natural disasters, give to local projects that meet basic human needs or help meet the basic needs of those who are part of your church fellowship.

How to Give

1. **Proportionately.** The freewill offering was to be given in _____ to the Lord's blessings (Deuteronomy 16:10).
The Lord expects _____ from those who've been given much (Luke 12:48). Whom did Jesus commend for giving (Luke 21:1-4)? _____ Why? _____

What is it about someone's giving that impresses Jesus? _____
2. **Cheerfully.** God doesn't want you to give _____ or under _____. He loves a _____ giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).
3. **Generously.** The generous giver realizes that everything he has comes from God's _____ (1 Chronicles 29:14). The one who sows generously will _____ generously (2 Corinthians 9:6).
4. **Regularly.** On the first day of _____ week, Paul told the Corinthian believers to set aside a sum of money in keeping with their incomes (1 Corinthians 16:2).

Blessings of Giving

1. What does God promise faithful managers of material resources (2 Corinthians 9:6, 8)? _____
2. God awards _____ for giving (Philippians 4:17).
3. A generous person will _____ and be _____ and _____ (Proverbs 11:25, 22:9).
4. God promises those who give him 10% of their income that he'll pour out so much blessing that they won't have _____ enough for it (Malachi 3:10).
5. By the same measure you use to give, it will be _____ to you (Luke 6:38).
6. God will meet all your _____ according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

Summarize what you're going to do with the resources God has entrusted to you:

1. Spiritual Gifts -

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

2. Gospel -
3. Words -
4. Giving -

Memory Verse

1 Corinthians 4:2 – Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.



Assignments

1. Read the next five chapters in the New Testament and share a personal application with the group next week.
2. Spend 2 minutes/day praying for the salvation of lost loved ones.
3. Read "Church of God History," pages 26-27.
4. Memorize 1 Corinthians 4:2 and review other verses.
5. Read *We Believe*, pages 7-29.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

Lesson 8

Church of God History

Based on “Historical Introduction to the Churches of God, General Conference” from the Churches of God, General Conference Website.

The Churches of God, General Conference began in 1825 as a result of the labors, revivals, and ideas of John Winebrenner, a German Reformed pastor who ministered in and around Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

During the late 1820s, Winebrenner came to new theological conclusions about the nature and government of the church, the importance of the regenerating experience of the new birth, and the ordinances (Believer’s Baptism by immersion, Lord’s Supper, and Feet Washing). He reaffirmed the belief that the Bible was the “only authoritative rule of faith and practice.”

In 1830 he joined five other “teaching elders,” or ministers, in central Pennsylvania to form an “eldership” for mutual cooperation. This was the initial organization of the Church of God.

Churches of God settlers moved west, and by 1853 they’d established new churches and elderships in Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan. By 1900 the denomination had spread to Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. Separate elderships had also been formed for churches in Maryland and West Virginia. The California Eldership began in 1948. Congregations from the Church of God chartered in Mississippi became the Mid-South Conference in 1983. Churches of God once existing in Maine, Washington, Oregon, Colorado, and other states have ceased to function.

A General Eldership was formed in 1845 to provide for cooperation between local elderships. John Winebrenner was elected speaker. Since the 1960s, the trend has been to call judicatories “conferences” rather than “elderships” because representatives no longer had to be “elders.”

Around the beginning of the 21st century regionalization organized the churches in the General Conference into the following regions: Allegheny, Eastern, California Eldership, Great Lakes, Midwest, Mid-South and Western.

Churches of God periodicals, *The Gospel Publisher* (1835-1845) and *The Church Advocate* (1846-present), have helped distribute information about and for the Churches of God and provided a forum to discuss important issues. Two other publications have had a long and distinguished history. *The Gem*, a Sunday school paper, began in 1867. *The Workman* was first published as a monthly lesson booklet in 1879 and became a quarterly in 1890. The denomination maintained Central Publishing House in Harrisburg from 1901 to 1979.

Foreign mission work was established at Uluberia, India, in 1898. In 2011 the work included 30 churches, Uluberia Child Development Center, Uluberia Town Mission School, and Uluberia Mission House School which together enrolled 750 children.

Another work began in Bogra (now Bangladesh) in 1905. In 2011 the work in Bangladesh was totally nationalized and included 158 churches, 9 primary schools, a secondary school, a boarding school, a Blind School, Bogra Christian Hospital, Khanjanpur Mission Health Services and village health programs.

In 1967 Project Help began in Haiti. By 2011 it had grown to include 33 churches, medical facilities at Pierre Payen, and 22 primary schools educating 3,000 students.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

A ministry to Navajos began in 1976. It includes Tsaile Community Church, Hooghan Nizhoni Church and Gamarco Church of God (in New Mexico and Arizona).

In the late 1990s the denomination began a ministry in Brazil. As of 2011 in Brazil six churches have been planted under the name National Biblical Good News Conference.

The Churches of God also have three churches in the Dominican Republic, ten in Kenya, and ten in Venezuela as well as missionaries in Sweden and Thailand.

In 2011 the Churches of God have 3 Haitian-American churches in their affiliation network, and 7 Latino churches in California, Pennsylvania and South Carolina.

The last quarter of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st have brought a renewed vision for church planting and church multiplication.

Findlay College was incorporated in 1882 and opened for classes as a Churches of God college in 1886. About 100 years later it became The University of Findlay. The denomination also once supported Barkeyville Academy (1881-1906) in Pennsylvania and Fort Scott Collegiate Institute (1902-1917) in Kansas.

Winebrenner Seminary began as a graduate department of theology in 1942 and was chartered as a separate institution in 1960. During 2011, 76 students were enrolled for credit.

Church camping began in 1931 with the first of three annual General Eldership camps. Within a few years several local elderships began summer camping programs. Many regions now own and operate their own facilities, some on a year-round basis, including Doubling Gap Center near Newville, PA.

Three lay organizations have played an important part in the history of the denomination. The Churches of God Youth Advance (CGYA) was formed in 1947, the Women's Christian Service (WCSC) in 1953 (now Women's Ministries), and the Churches of God Winebrenner Brotherhood (CGWB) in 1967. Only Women's Ministries still exists.

Facilities for the aging are operated in two locations. The Eastern Regional Conference operates the Church of God Home in Carlisle, Pennsylvania (founded 1948). In 2012 the ERC in session voted to partner with New Dawn Christian Community Services and now is under that umbrella. The Allegheny region operates Grove Manor in Grove City, Pennsylvania (founded 1971) and is expanding ministry to the elderly.

The name of the denomination has changed several times. It was first known as the *Church of God*. The phrase *in North America* was added by the first General eldership in 1845. In 1896 the name was made plural and became *Churches of God in North America*. In 1974 two changes were made. The phrase "in North America" was eliminated because there were also members in India, Bangladesh, and Haiti. "General Eldership" was changed to "General Conference" because delegates were no longer limited to "elders." The denomination today is called "*Churches of God, General Conference*."

The Administrative Office and operational headquarters is located at 700 East Melrose Avenue in Findlay, Ohio, in the Center for Christian Ministries, constructed by the Churches of God in 1981.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

Assignments

1. Share personal applications from your Scripture reading.
2. How has praying for the lost changed you?
3. Review your verses with a buddy (Revelation 3:20, 1 Peter 2:22, Matthew 21:22, Colossians 1:18, John 14:15, John 15:8, 1 Corinthians 4:2).

History of the Denomination Quiz

1. The Churches of God founding father is:
 - a. Martin Luther
 - b. James Winebrenner
 - c. C. H. Forney
 - d. John Winebrenner
2. He had been a pastor in what denomination?
 - a. Presbyterian
 - b. German Reformed
 - c. Methodist
 - d. Lutheran
3. His ministry was in and around:
 - a. Harrisburg
 - b. Carlisle
 - c. Philadelphia
 - d. Lancaster
4. The church traces its origin to:
 - a. 1817
 - b. 1832
 - c. 1820
 - d. 1825
5. Winebrenner came to new theological conclusions about:
 - a. The nature and government of the church
 - b. The importance of the new birth
 - c. The ordinances
 - d. All of the above
6. The Churches of God believe in how many ordinances?
 - a. Two
 - b. Three
 - c. Four
 - d. Five
7. The first eldership was formed in:
 - a. 1822
 - b. 1826

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

- c. 1828
 - d. 1830
8. The Churches of God has never had more than six elderships. ___ True ___ False
9. The General Eldership was formed to provide for cooperation between local elderships in:
- a. 1832
 - b. 1845
 - c. 1850
 - d. 1885
10. The first General Eldership elected whom as speaker?
- a. John Winebrenner
 - b. Walter Newman
 - c. Michael Reiter
 - d. George Huber
11. Since the 1960s Churches of God judicatories have been called:
- a. Elderships
 - b. Conferences
 - c. Synods
 - d. Councils
12. Representatives at General Eldership were once all elders. ___ True ___ False
13. The Churches of God periodical published the greatest number of years is:
- a. The Gospel Publisher
 - b. The Church Advocate
 - c. The Workman
 - d. The Gem
14. The above publication has been printed for :
- a. More than 150 years
 - b. Less than 75 years
 - c. 75-100 years
 - d. 130 years
15. The denomination's printing between 1901 and 1979 took place at:
- a. Winebrenner Press in Findlay, Ohio
 - b. Central Publishing House in Harrisburg, PA
 - c. Central Publishing House in Findlay, Ohio
 - d. Winebrenner Press in Harrisburg, PA
16. Churches of God foreign mission work was first established in:
- a. Africa
 - b. Europe
 - c. India
 - d. China

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

17. This work began in:
- 1898
 - 1908
 - 1918
 - 1928
18. The second mission work was organized in:
- Bogra
 - Jaipur
 - Bombay
 - Calcutta
19. In 2011 how many Churches of God congregations existed in Bangladesh?
- 13
 - 26
 - 158
 - 65
20. Project Help began in Haiti in:
- 1902
 - 1942
 - 1949
 - 1967
21. By 2011 it included how many churches and mission stations:
- 9
 - 15
 - 33
 - 45
22. The Churches of God began a mission to Navajos in:
- 1900
 - 1926
 - 1956
 - 1976
23. This ministry in 20011 included how many churches?
- 3
 - 5
 - 9
 - 12
24. A recently opened foreign mission field is in:
- Venezuela
 - Honduras
 - Brazil
 - Argentina

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

25. In that country our churches are named:
- National Biblical Good News Conference
 - Churches of God of South America
 - Churches of God of Central America
 - Brazilian Conference, Churches of God
26. The last quarter of the 20th century witnessed a renewed vision in the Churches of God for:
- Revival services
 - Church planting
 - Camp meetings
 - Homeless ministries
27. Although the denomination once supported Barkeyville Academy and Fort Scott Collegiate Institute, its long-standing commitment has been to:
- Winebrenner Institute of Technology (WIT)
 - Union College
 - Winebrenner Academy
 - Findlay College (now the University of Findlay)
28. Winebrenner Seminary began in:
- 1922
 - 1942
 - 1962
 - 1968
29. In 2011 the student enrollment for credit at Winebrenner was:
- 19
 - 32
 - 62
 - 76
30. The first General Eldership camp was in:
- 1920
 - 1925
 - 1931
 - 1949
31. Churches of God Youth Advance was formed in:
- 1929
 - 1939
 - 1947
 - 1949
32. The denomination has been called:
- The Church of God
 - The Church of God in North America
 - The Churches of God, General Conference
 - All of the above

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

33. The administrative office and headquarters is located in:
- a. Harrisburg, PA
 - b. Carlisle, PA
 - c. Findlay, OH
 - d. Anderson, IN

30-33 right – Doctor of church history!

26-29 right – Not bad at all!

<26 right – This review didn't hurt!

History of Our Church of God

[Include a summary of the history of your local church here]

Assignments

- 1. Read at least 5 chapters/week and write down thoughts and applications and prepare to share at least one application next week with the group.**
- 2. Pray at least 50 minutes next week, spending at least 25% of your time praying for the leaders of our church by name using the list supplied by your leader.**
- 3. Read We Believe- pages 30-51.**

Lesson 9

We Believe Quiz

Assignments

1. Share personal applications from Scripture reading (5 minutes).
2. How might praying for the leaders of your church benefit their ministries (5 minutes)?
3. Revelation 3:20, 1 Peter 2:22, Matthew 21:22, Colossians 1:18, John 14:15, John 15:8, 1 Corinthians 4:2 check-up with a buddy.

1. We believe God is three persons
 - a. F _____
 - b. S __
 - c. H ___ _ ___ it
2. We believe Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all-knowing, all powerful and everywhere present. ___ True ___ False
3. God's holiness means he is separated from and opposed to evil. ___ True ___ False
4. We believe God's work is primarily:
 - a. Creation
 - b. Grace
 - c. Justice
 - d. Mercy
 - e. All of the above
5. God is revealed most clearly in:
 - a. Creation
 - b. History
 - c. Jesus Christ
 - d. Church
6. When the world began, Christ was already alive. ___ True ___ False
7. The incarnation means that God became:
 - a. Flesh
 - b. An angel
 - c. Mother Nature
 - d. A spiritual principle
8. Choose the best answer:
 - a. Jesus was truly human but not divine.
 - b. Jesus was truly divine but not human.
 - c. Jesus was truly human and truly divine.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

9. We believe that Jesus is absolutely nothing like the Father. ___ True ___ False
10. We believe that Jesus is both S_____ r and L___ d.
11. Jesus' r_____ rr_____ n is the basis for the Christian hope of eternal life. He ascended and promised that he would come a_____ n.
12. We believe the Holy Spirit is
- God
 - Active in the old covenant
 - Knowable and can be experienced
 - All the above
13. The Holy Spirit came into the world in a new way on the day of:
- Atonement
 - Pentecost
 - Ascension
14. The Holy Spirit promotes unity and spiritual growth. ___ True ___ False
15. The Holy Spirit dispenses spiritual g_____ s to build the church.
16. We don't believe the Bible is the inspired, infallible authority, the Word of God, our only rule of faith and practice. ___ True ___ False
17. In the Bible God used the words of men to communicate divine truth. ___ True ___ False
18. The central message of the Bible is:
- God created the universe
 - People are basically good
 - Jesus Christ is the Son of God
19. Proper interpretation of the Scriptures comes from the H_____ S_____.
20. The original manuscripts were written in what languages:
- Hebrew
 - Greek
 - Aramaic
 - All of the above
21. People don't matter to God. ___ True ___ False
22. God created human beings in his i_____ e.
23. We believe we have a
- Sinful nature
 - Kind, generous nature
 - Loving, forgiving nature

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

24. We believe that after the new birth we receive a n __ nature.
25. We are free to think and act according to our own will because we are
- independent beings
 - Free moral agents
 - Independent moral agents
26. All individuals will have to give account of themselves to _____.
27. We believe individuals are free to accept Christ but not free to turn away from Him. __ True __ False
28. The power to live a victorious Christian life comes from:
- Self-discipline
 - Perseverance
 - God
29. Regeneration is the change from
- Hate to love
 - Revenge to forgiveness
 - Self-centeredness to God-centeredness
30. Experiencing regeneration requires
- Our response
 - God's sovereign choice
 - Extensive personal prayer
31. We believe we are declared right with God as a result of our good works. __ True __ False
32. The Scriptures teach that justification includes
- Remission
 - Restoration
 - God-given righteousness
 - A new standing before God
 - All of the above
33. Sanctification is both instantaneous and progressive. __ True __ False
34. Changing the way we live is related to our consecration to God. __ True __ False
35. Holy living isn't important. __ True __ False
36. We believe the Church is
- God's called-out people
 - The body of Christ
 - Characterized by a special fellowship
 - All of the above
37. We call Baptism, Feet-Washing, and the Lord's Supper
- Ordinances
 - Sacraments

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

38. Only believers are eligible for water baptism which celebrates new life in Christ. True False
39. Baptism is essential for salvation. True False
40. We believe in baptism by
- a. Sprinkling
 - b. Pouring
 - c. Immersion
41. We believe the ordinance of feet-washing celebrates the incarnation and reminds us of our calling to be
- a. Disciples
 - b. Servants
 - c. Joint-heirs with Christ
42. We believe this ordinance
- a. Is an expression of our love for one another
 - b. Reminds us of our need to minister and be ministered to
 - c. Helps us prepare for the Lord's Supper
 - d. All of the above
43. We believe the Lord's Supper
- a. Is a celebration of our redemption
 - b. Reminds us of Christ's atoning death
 - c. Is a proclamation of hope
 - d. All of the above
44. We believe the Lord's Supper should be open only to members of our church. True False
45. We believe in infant baptism. True False
46. We believe children are a gift of God and part of the covenant community. True False
47. We believe
- a. Parents are responsible for the spiritual nurture of their children
 - b. The congregation is responsible for the spiritual nurture of children.
 - c. Both a and b.
48. Biblical healing involves spiritual, emotional, physical, mental and social dimensions. True False
49. We believe suffering is the result of man's sin in the Garden of Eden. True False
50. We believe that sickness and suffering
- a. Are the result of the sin of the sufferer
 - b. Are not necessarily the result of the sin of the sufferer
 - c. Are an illusion
51. We believe
- a. God has the power to heal all diseases
 - b. God can reconcile all circumstances to his ultimate will

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

- c. The Church is a means of God's grace in healing.
- d. All of the above

52. We believe Christians should be servants of G __ and others.

53. We believe the primary obligation to be a witness rests with
- a. Evangelism committees
 - b. Preachers
 - c. Council members
 - d. Sunday school teachers
 - e. All Christians

54. As Christians we are to be the ____ of the earth and the ____ of the world.

55. We believe the Christian has a dual citizenship. __ True __ False

56. We believe in the Second Coming and ultimate victory of Jesus Christ. __ True __ False

57. We believe God will end history in his own way and time. __ True __ False

58. We believe we can pinpoint the time of Christ's return. __ True __ False

59. (Unscramble) We believe the message of the end times is one of (citvryo) _____ and fulfillment for the Christian and the ultimate (mhpurti) _____ of God's kingdom.

60. We believe in the spiritual resurrection of believers. __ True __ False

61. We believe judgment will accompany Christ's return. __ True __ False

Assignments

1. Read at least 5 chapters/week and write down thoughts and applications and prepare to share at least one application next week with the group.
2. Pray at least 50 minutes next week, spending at least 25% of your time praying for the missions supported by our church using the list supplied by your leader.
3. Read overview of organization of local conference and General Conference.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

Lesson 10

Organization of the Eastern Regional Conference

Our Church of God belongs to the Eastern Regional Conference of the Churches of God, General Conference. The Eastern Regional Conference was established to further the work of the Kingdom of God by establishing churches, providing for their welfare and carrying on a cooperative ministry for the benefit of all its members. The Conference usually holds one annual meeting. All ordained and licensed ministers, assigned lay pastors, and at least two lay delegates from each member church compose the Conference. The Conference elects a vice-president and secretary to two-year terms. The vice-president then serves two additional years as president.

The Conference in Session elects twelve members to the Administrative Council. The Administrative Council is the corporation of the Conference and has authority over the work of the Conference between its annual sessions. The Council includes four ordained pastors of the Conference, four lay persons, the president, vice-president, secretary, Executive Director and two additional members at large selected by the Administrative Council from the Conference.

The Administrative Council appoints commissions that carry out the programs and ministries of the Conference and annually names a chairperson for each commission. Each commission has a staff person relating directly to its work.

The Commission on Church Vocations encourages persons to respond to God's call to church vocations; helps churches support such persons; suggests appropriate educational programs to those sensing God's call; evaluates readiness for ministry; recommends persons for credentials; and sets rules for and grants financial aid to persons under its care.

The Commission on Church and Pastor appoints pastors to local churches; receives and acts on pastoral resignations; gives direction and guidance to pastors and local churches; helps pastors with special needs; encourages healthy relationships between pastors and churches and pastors and their families; facilitates reconciliation in churches; sets parish boundaries and pastoral salary and benefit standards; approves the transfer of ministerial credentials; intervenes when necessary to protect the integrity and order of the Church; encourages continuing education for pastors; grants financial assistance to local churches and pastors; and oversees changes in pastoral status.

The Commission on Church Planting plants new Churches of God; recommends persons to the Commission on Church and Pastor for appointment as pastors of mission churches; oversees and gives financial assistance to mission churches and mission pastors; assists local churches in mothering new churches; and challenges the churches of the Conference to have a vision for and give support to church planting.

The Commission on Church Renewal provides programs for and oversees the revitalization of existing churches; gives financial assistance for churches in revitalization; counsels pastors and congregations considering revitalization; and directs churches involved in building projects or the sale or purchase of real estate.

The Commission on Discipleship helps churches be more effective at nurturing discipleship and mature faith; works with churches to identify and develop small group leaders and mentors; identifies, recruits and trains persons to serve as resource persons and leaders in education and discipleship; assists churches in planning curriculum and in improving Sunday school and small group ministries; trains churches how to be safe sanctuaries for their congregations; and provides resources, workshops and programs in the areas of its mission.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

The Commission on Evangelism enables churches to share the gospel of Jesus Christ more effectively; aids churches in understanding and implementing church growth principles; works with churches to identify and develop leaders with the gift of evangelism; identifies, recruits, and trains persons to serve as resource persons and leaders in the area of evangelism and church growth; provides resources, workshops and programs in the area of its mission.

The Commission on Leadership facilitates leadership development across the conference and in the local church among pastors and people by: identifying Spirit-led and gifted leaders; encouraging emerging leaders; offering appropriate training and mentoring opportunities; and helping to establish effective systems of leadership accountability.

The Commission on Missions raises cross cultural mission awareness and involvement across the Conference; assists district and local church mission organizations; encourages opportunities for “hands on” mission service; facilitates the raising and distribution of funds and other resources for missions, disaster relief, or other special needs; and works together with the General Conference in promoting worldwide mission endeavors.

The Commission on Stewardship encourages faithful stewardship by the Conference, local churches, and individual believers; oversees the financial operations of the Conference; establishes the Conference budget; develops programs for stewardship education; responds to requests for fund-raising projects directly to churches in the Conference; oversees the business operations of the Conference; advises pastors and churches on financial matters including taxes, insurance, stewardship development, and budget building; makes sure Conference financial records are properly reviewed each year; and protects the financial integrity and reputation of the Conference.

The Commission on Youth and Family Life fosters outreach to, spiritual growth in, and leadership development among children, youth, young adults and families. It also oversees the work of all auxiliary lay organizations including the Churches of God Women’s Ministries, and the Churches of God Senior Life Fellowship.

The Conference is staffed with an Executive Director, a Director for Church Planting and Evangelism, a Director for Congregational Care and Renewal, a Finance Manager and an Executive Assistant.

Organization of the Churches of God, General Conference

The purpose of the General Conference is to further the work of the Kingdom of God in our midst, to establish churches and provide for their welfare, to operate educational institutions, and to carry on a cooperative ministry for the benefit of all church members. Delegates from all the Conferences assemble every three years to transact the business of the General Conference.

The Administrative Council of the General Conference constitutes the members and board of directors of the corporation. It consists of sixteen members, ten of whom are elected for a six-year term by the General Conference in session. The Administrative Council elects two delegates. The other four are the officers (President, President-elect, and Secretary) and the Executive Director. Vacancies are filled by action of the Administrative Council.

The Administrative Council develops the programs and goals of the General Conference. The Executive Director administers this ministry with the assistance of Directors of Ministries. Each Director of Ministries serves as chairperson of an assigned commission. These commissions are accountable to the Administrative Council.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

The President of the General Conference presides at meetings of the Administrative Council. The President-elect presides in the absence of the President and automatically becomes President at the next triennial assembly.

The Executive Director's primary role is vision caster and overseer of the personnel and programs that serve local churches. The General Conference employs Directors of the following ministries: Cross-Cultural Ministries, Finance and Conference Treasurer, and Youth and Family Ministries. The directors are the primary agents for all ministries within their areas of responsibility and serve as advisors to the Administrative Council.

Each Commission's area of responsibility coincides with that of the relevant Director of Ministries. Task Forces may be appointed by the Administrative Council, Commissions, or the Conference-in-Session to accomplish specific tasks.

The Churches of God, General Conference is connected to both The University of Findlay and Winebrenner Theological Seminary. The control and direction of The University of Findlay is vested in a Board of Trustees. At least two-thirds of the trustees of Winebrenner Theological Seminary are members of the Churches of God, General Conference.

Assignments

1. Share personal applications from Scripture reading (5 minutes).
2. How might praying for the missions we support make a difference (5 minutes)?
3. Revelation 3:20, 1 Peter 2:22, Matthew 21:22, Colossians 1:18, John 14:15, John 15:8, 1 Corinthians 4:2 check-up with a buddy.

Our Church's Mission and Vision

[Include here a description of your church's mission and vision.]

Our Church's Organization

[Include here a description of your church's organizational structures.]

Eastern Regional Conference Organization Quiz

1. The Eastern Regional Conference of the Churches of God was established to:
 - a. Establish churches
 - b. Provide for the welfare of churches
 - c. Carry on cooperative ministry for the benefit of all its members
 - d. All of the above
2. The Conference usually holds 3 meetings each year. ___ True ___ False
3. No matter how small, each church is entitled to at least how many delegates at Conference?

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4

4. The Administrative Council is composed of how many elected members?

- a. 8
- b. 12
- c. 16
- d. 20

5. The corporation of the Conference that has authority over its work is:

- a. The Administrative Council
- b. The Executive Committee
- d. The Staff
- e. The Executive Director

6. Commissions carry out the programs and ministry of the Conference. True False

7. The Commission on Church Vocations appoints pastors to local churches. True False

8. The Commission on Church and Pastor appoints pastors to local churches. True False

9. The Commission on Church Planting assists Conference churches in mothering new churches. True False

10. The Commission on Church Renewal oversees the revitalization of existing Conference churches.
 True False

11. The Commission on Missions helps churches nurture mature faith in believers. True False

12. The Commission on Discipleship helps churches nurture mature faith in believers. True False

13. The Commission on Evangelism trains Conference churches to do evangelism. True False

14. The Commission on Leadership facilitates leadership development across the Conference. True False

15. The Commission on Stewardship

- a. Oversees the financial operations of the Conference
- b. Develops programs for stewardship education
- c. Oversees the business operations of the Conference
- d. All of the above

16. The Commission on Youth and Family Life oversees the work of Churches of God Women's Ministries and the Churches of God Senior Life Fellowship. True False

17. The Executive Director is the chief of staff. True False

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

General Conference Organization Quiz

1. The purpose of the General Conference is
 - a. To further the work of the Kingdom of God
 - b. To establish churches and provide for their welfare
 - c. To operate educational institutions
 - d. To carry on a cooperative ministry for the benefit of all church members
 - e. All of the above
2. Delegates from all the Conferences assemble every
 - a. Year
 - b. Two years
 - c. Three years
 - d. Four years
3. The General Conference Administrative Council consists of
 - a. Ten persons
 - b. Twelve persons
 - c. Sixteen persons
 - d. Twenty persons
4. The Administrative Council develops the programs and goals of the General Conference. True False
5. No Director of Ministries serves as chairperson of a commission. True False
6. The Executive Director administers the ministry of the General Conference with the help of Directors of Ministries. True False
7. The Executive Director is the vision caster and overseer of the personnel and programs that serve the local churches. True False
8. The Churches of God, General Conference has no connection with the University of Findlay. True False
9. The denomination's seminary is called Winebrenner International Seminary. True False
10. Each Commission's area of responsibility coincides with that of the relevant Director of Ministries. True False

Assignments

1. Read at least 5 chapters/week and write down thoughts and applications and prepare to share at least one application next week with the group.
2. Spend at least 15 minutes of your 50-minute prayer time this week meditating on the following names of God: the Almighty (Genesis 49:25), Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9), the Amen (Revelation 3:14), Beginning and the End (Revelation 21:6), Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4), Eternal God (Genesis 21:33), Fear of Isaac (Genesis 31:42), Father (Deuteronomy 32:6), Faithful and True (Revelation 19:11), God who sees me [Lahai Roi] (Genesis 16:13), God my Savior (Psalm 25:5), Great King (Psalm 48:2), God of hope (Romans 15:13), Holy One (Job 6:10), The Lord Will Provide (Genesis 22:14).
3. Review Scripture memory verses.
4. Work through Lesson 11 to discover your spiritual passion, spiritual gifts and temperament. This is a long assignment, but it will pay rich dividends!

Lesson 11

Your Unique Design

Who Wants to Make a Difference?

Unless you're very unusual, you want your life to count for something. Moreover, it's unlikely your schoolwork or job will fulfill that desire. In fact, you probably don't even *like* your homework or job!

A Vital Part of an Eternal Plan

God's game plan for history includes you. You're a starter on his team. You're probably not the quarterback, but you have an important role. On God's team the cheerleaders are as important as the "stars." Without their encouragement many wins would've been losses. God has a purpose for everything and everyone. His lineup contains no designated pew potatoes, spectators, or critics. He's very serious about receiving a return on his investment in you (Matthew 25:14-30).

God made you to extend his kingdom on earth (Matthew 6:10). As he gave special skill, ability, and knowledge to Bezalel and Oholiab to build the temple (Exodus 31:1-6), he's hardwired *you* with talents, desires, and abilities to build his church! He's depending on and expecting you to use them to serve him.

Bodybuilding Equipment

Paul compares the church to the human body (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Each part performs a necessary function. Coordinated effort brings maximum results. Sprinters wear spiked shoes on their feet, but need ears to hear the starter's gun. Public speakers need a brain and tongue that function under pressure. Kidneys can't make a three point shot with a basketball, but good luck to your hands if your kidneys haven't been filtering blood for the last two weeks!

You need to find your place in the body of Christ and *work together* with other believers. In the process you'll experience deep satisfaction.

Spiritual Passion

Spiritual passion is a valuable guide to the "body-building" ministry to which God is calling you. Spiritual gift inventories are a recent development. For over 1900 years no such tools existed. The key has always been need and passion. Your ministry is where your desire to serve intersects the needs of the church and world. The key question is, "**What do you want to do for Jesus?**" What makes your spiritual wind chimes sing? What drives, excites, and fulfills you? If you're in the right ministry, you should be experiencing rich fulfillment and spiritual fruit through it.

Passion-Driven Ministry

Many Christians believe that whatever they want to do for Jesus couldn't *possibly* be what God wants. They think God's will has to be painful, obnoxious, distasteful, and the very last thing they want to do. Not so! Our spiritual

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

passion is like a flashing arrow pointing toward our ministry. “Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose” (Philippians 2:12-13). God constantly expends his unlimited energy to make you spiritually fruitful. He gives you the desire and ability to accomplish his will. He gives spiritual passion. Paul’s passion was to present every man perfect in Christ (Colossians 1:28). He wrote, “To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me” (Colossians 1:29).

Passion Identifies Your Ministry

Some persons prefer to work with people, some with things and others with information. A friend, who attended seminary with me, excelled in Hebrew and Greek. He spent a year as a pastoral intern in Idaho, and, in the process, discovered his passion *wasn’t* pastoral ministry. He prefers to work with information. In 1982 he joined Wycliffe. Since then he’s translated much of the Scriptures into the language of the Quechua in Peru. He relates with people but primarily works with information. He’s touching thousands for Christ in a ministry in which his desires and the world’s needs meet.

You may have a burden to work with infants, young children, Junior High, Senior High, young adults, adults, or the elderly. Perhaps you’re highly motivated to help singles, couples or young families.

The church’s task is to fulfill the Great Commission, motivated by love for God and others, and powered by prayer. What do you want to do more than anything for Jesus Christ that’ll help make more and better disciples?

One practical way to discover your passion is to consider our church’s ministries and a description of each. In general, the list includes ministries of the word and practical service. Which ones are most attractive? God might be giving you a passion to begin a ministry that isn’t yet on the list. Your pastor would probably love to hear about it. First, put a *check* in front of all that appeal to you. Second, review the ministries you’ve marked, and *circle* the four ministries of *greatest* interest.

Our Church’s Ministries

[Include here a list of all the ministries of your church with a brief description of each.] e.g.

- **Nursery overseer** - Schedules nursery workers and makes sure nursery is a safe environment with quality care.
- **Nursery attendant** - Provides quality child care during church services and other special church events.
- **Preschool teacher** - Teaches simple Bible lessons and leads learning activities appropriate for this age group.

Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts are God-given abilities to serve him. The Holy Spirit distributes them to believers as he chooses (1 Corinthians 12:11). They’re different from the natural and acquired abilities that unbelievers also possess. Natural and acquired abilities in athletics, art, music, business, accounting, advertising, agriculture, architecture, computer science, cooking, electronics, engineering, auto repair, industrial arts, marketing, craftsmanship, medicine, and acting, among others, are also useful in God’s service. God gives all believers gifts, abilities, and resources to use to glorify Jesus Christ.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

Interdependent Ministry

There's no single spiritual gift that all believers possess. In 1 Corinthians 12:29-30 Paul asks, "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?" The expected answer to all these questions is, "No!" The distribution of spiritual gifts demonstrates the parts of Christ's body, the church, are interdependent.

Our Church Needs Your Gift(s)

Every part of the human body contributes to the well-being of the whole. No parts are unneeded. None are independent. The same truth applies to the church. You have at least one spiritual gift to build up the body of Christ (1 Peter 4:10, 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11). Ministry is every believer's business.

Jigsaw Ministry Placement

When putting a jigsaw puzzle together, we experiment to find the right fit. Lend a helping hand in many areas of service, especially in those in which you have the greatest interest. This is how you'll discover the ministry that best fits your passions, gifts, and temperament.

Make the Most of Your Gift(s)

Don't expect your gifts to bless the socks off others the first three minutes after they're unwrapped. No one jumps into the water for the very first time and sets a world record in the 400-meter freestyle. God gives some infants Olympic-caliber swimming potential, but their first strokes would suggest otherwise. Discovering and developing your gifts takes time. It starts when you "get into the water."

Fruitful ministry = God-given gifts & desire + Comfort-zone stretching faith + Training + Effort.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS TEST

Spiritual gifts testing helps you identify your gift(s) and/or special talent(s). Ken Ellis' test evaluates 28 gifts and talents. Take this test online and have it automatically analyzed by going to <http://www.kodachrome.org/spiritgift/>. There is also a spiritual gifts test for youth on the same site.

This test is just one tool in a life-long search for how God has blessed you so you can bless others.

Temperament

Tuned to Touch Lives

God designed your temperament to harmonize with your spiritual passion and spiritual gifts. Someone whose ministry is confrontational evangelism takes the initiative in sharing the gospel with others. He/she also takes the initiative in completing other kinds of tasks not related to evangelism, because that's characteristic of the personality God gave him/her. Some believers have a heart to love, respond to, and serve unbelievers and point

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

them toward the One who placed that love in their hearts. They love to serve people. God wired them with that nature.

Interdependent Temperaments

No personality type is superior to another. All are necessary to accomplish God's work in your church. Each of us has influencing strengths and weaknesses based on our temperament and revealed by how we relate to tasks and people. A "people-person" won't be very fulfilled doing some detail-oriented administrative task behind a desk all by herself. A task-oriented individual might actually enjoy that same job. We maximize our influence on others for Christ when our ministry environment fits the strengths of our temperament.

As we shall see, Directors are gifted at formulating your church's mission and goals. Promoters excel at pulling people together to accomplish the mission and goals. Helpers respond to Directors and Promoters to do the work necessary to fulfill the mission and achieve the goals. Perfecters make sure everything is done right.

Discovering Your Temperament

Here's how to determine your temperament. In each group of four descriptions, put a **3** in front of the characteristic that **best** describes you, a **2** in front of the next best description of you, etc., down to a **0** in front of the one that is the **least accurate** description of you. Each group of four descriptions will have exactly one **3**, one **2**, one **1** and one **0**. Answer based on how you see yourself at work or at school. If you don't work outside the home or go to school, answer based on how you see yourself at church. For example, Joe Smith fills out the first group of four descriptions as follows:

- 1 a. Take the lead in beginning tasks
- 0 b. Take lead in meeting people
- 2 c. Respond to people
- 3 d. Help others complete tasks

Joe **MOST** likes helping others complete tasks, so he put a 3 in front of "d." He hates taking the lead in meeting people, so he put a 0 in front of "b" because that was **LEAST** like him. Joe also likes to respond to people but not quite as much as he enjoys helping others complete tasks, so he marked "c" as a 2. He dislikes taking the lead in beginning tasks, but is more likely to do that than to take the lead in meeting people, so he marked "a" with a 1.

Number each of the 16 groups of four items from the one that describes you **best** (3) down to the one that is **least** like you (0). Each of the 16 groups of four should have one 3, one 2, one 1, and one 0.

Group 1

- a. Take the lead in beginning tasks
- b. Take lead in meeting people
- c. Respond to people
- d. Help others complete tasks

Group 2

- a. Love a challenge
- b. Like public recognition

- c. Calm
- d. Strive for perfection

Group 3

- a. Get results
- b. Seek others' approval
- c. Relaxed
- d. Make and follow the rules

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

Group 4

- a. Enjoy arguing
- b. Friendly
- c. Good listener
- d. Say things just right

Group 5

- a. Play to win
- b. Fun-Loving
- c. Patient
- d. Remember information

Group 6

- a. Work on many projects at once
- b. Fear losing face/social approval
- c. Excellent at completing projects
- d. Can figure out complex problems

Group 7

- a. Brave
- b. Persuasive
- c. Helpful
- d. Detail-Oriented

Group 8

- a. Take chances
- b. Make friends easily
- c. Give in
- d. Expect best of myself and others

Group 9

- a. Speak freely
- b. Look on bright side
- c. Logical
- d. Like planning/organizing

Group 10

- a. Determined
- b. Outgoing
- c. Steady

- d. Safety-Conscious

Group 11

- a. Poor listener
- b. Care-Free
- c. Family-Oriented
- d. Precise

Group 12

- a. Quick temper
- b. Talkative
- c. Loyal
- d. Shy

Group 13

- a. Like to change things
- b. Likeable
- c. Think before speaking
- d. Avoid risks

Group 14

- a. Want control
- b. Disorganized
- c. Hard on myself
- d. Want many explanations

Group 15

- a. Do it my way
- b. Lose things
- c. Want peace
- d. Want to be right

Group 16

- a. Speak before thinking
- b. Like to dream
- c. Hard to say, "No."
- d. Fear criticism of my work

Adding Your Scores

Add up the totals of all the "a"s (in Groups 1 through 16), all the "b"s, "c"s, and "d"s and record them in the **Temperament Analysis Sums Chart** that follows. The total of the "a"s, "b"s, "c"s and "d"s, added together, should be **96**. If not, check your addition.

Temperament Analysis Sums Chart

1. Total of "a"s in Groups 1-16 _____

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

2. Total of "b"s in Groups 1-16 _____
3. Total of "c"s in Groups 1-16 _____
4. Total of "d"s in Groups 1-16 _____
- Grand Total _____

If grand total isn't 96, recount.

Record the sums that correspond to each temperament name. The highest total is your dominant temperament, the next highest is your second strongest, etc.

- ___ Director ("a"s)
- ___ Promoter ("b"s)
- ___ Helper ("c"s)
- ___ Perfecter ("d"s)

Check (x) your dominant temperament. If two are tied for the highest, check both.

___ Director ___ Promoter ___ Helper ___ Perfecter

Temperament Strengths/Weaknesses

Exploring the strengths and weakness of your dominant and secondary temperaments will help you understand yourself better and point you toward the ministry that God has designed for you. Studying the descriptions of temperaments unlike your own will improve your understanding of and relationships with others. Just because people aren't like you doesn't mean there's something wrong with them!

Only some of the strengths or weaknesses that follow under a description of your dominant temperament will fit you. That's because your personality is a combination of usually two and sometimes three major temperament parts in varying proportions. The description of your dominant temperament should fit you better than any of the others, but strengths and weaknesses of other temperaments may also fit. To get a more complete picture of how you're wired, **underline any strength or weakness that applies to you in the following descriptions.**

Directors Strengths

Directors are take-charge individuals who excel at starting tasks. They love challenges and want to be in the middle of the action. They thrive on accomplishing what no one else can. Like a coyote locking its eyes on a rabbit, they pursue a goal until they achieve it.

Directors lead boldly. Their decisions aren't influenced by their emotions or possible consequences. If you need a job accomplished, assign it to a Director, and it'll get done. The Apostle Paul had the temperament of a Director.

Directors take risks that "play-it-safe" temperaments wouldn't even consider. They can play a valuable role in leading the church to step out in faith into risky ministries that are beyond the comfort zones of other temperaments.

Weaknesses

Directors quickly become impatient when life isn't going their way. They hate wasted time and probably get upset when they miss one panel of a revolving door!

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

Directors aren't in touch with the feelings of others because productivity has a higher priority. In their single-minded, pedal to the metal focus on their goal, they run over the "rabbits" and "opossums" with whom they work or whom they supervise. The office is strewn with "road-kill." Their bottom line is results, and they're pushy to get them. Directors are more productive than they are popular, but that doesn't bother them.

Directors are poor listeners. Since they hate wasting time, they want others to get directly to the point. When communicating with Directors, start with the bottom line, and then, only fill in those details they request.

In conflict situations Directors push the control pedal to the floor. They insist things be done their way and done now.

Directors would be more effective if they focused on patiently listening to and supporting people, worked at being less controlling, and gave people a higher priority than productivity.

Promoters

Strengths

Promoters inspire and influence people and get them involved. They make super salespersons. They lean heavily on their verbal skills. One church took teenagers to a movie, *Left Behind*. The majority of the 26 teenagers who attended came as a result of the invitation of one of the youth leaders who is a Promoter.

Promoters are warm, outgoing, and personable. They like to have fun and rush from one exciting activity to the next. People naturally are attracted to them. They make friends easily.

Church planters who are Promoters or Directors see their churches grow by their fifth anniversary to twice the attendance of those planted by Helpers or Perfecters. Why? Perhaps, because Directors take the initiative with tasks and Promoters with people, whereas Helpers respond to people and Perfecters respond to tasks. Taking the initiative pays big dividends in church planting.

Promoters' emotions swing more widely than any other temperament type, running from peak to valley to peak. They tend to be good speakers because of their verbal skills coupled with their passion and enthusiasm for the subject. They enjoy being on stage, in the spotlight, and in front of people. They stir the emotions of their audience. They value public recognition and approval. The Apostle Peter was a Promoter.

Weaknesses

Promoters tend to make snap decisions without considering all the facts or consequences. Peter denied Jesus without considering the impact on the remainder of his life. Promoters' decisions, based more on intuition than facts, sometimes get them and others into trouble.

Promoters tend to be overly optimistic. They could find a silver lining in a funnel cloud!

Follow through can be a problem. They don't always do what they so enthusiastically recommend to others. They start projects with great enthusiasm, but often don't finish. Uncompleted projects in and around their homes bear testimony to this characteristic.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

At times they use their considerable verbal skills to manipulate and take advantage of others. Some Promoters use words to paint a picture of reality that benefits them.

The response of Promoters in conflict is predictable. Like cornered animals, they attack. Verbal bullets are fired in a machine-gun barrage at the source of the irritation.

Promoters would be more effective if they focused on results, facts, possible consequences of their decisions and follow through.

Helpers Strengths

Helpers build relationships and get along well with others. Having close relationships with others is very important to their emotional health. They value peace and harmony. They're loyal to the core. When things aren't going well in a church, and people begin to leave, Helpers will stay until the bitter end.

Helpers are the best communicators of the four temperament types because they *listen* as well as they talk. They make great counselors.

Expressed appreciation motivates Helpers to keep on serving. If you're a Helper, you already know that. If you're not, make sure the Helpers in your church know you appreciate them. Don't drag them in front of the congregation for public recognition. Promoters love that, but Helpers don't. Send cards, give them a call, or tell them privately how much you appreciate them. That'll keep their motors humming!

Helpers are dependable, steady, and reliable. Emotionally they live on the plains, with few emotional peaks or valleys. Abraham was a Helper.

Helpers ask others for input before they make decisions. This leadership style can be a strength or weakness depending on how quickly the decision needs to be made. On one hand, people affected by a decision feel they have some say. On the other hand, a Helper's desire for peace and harmony often prevents his making a decision that'd benefit the majority, because it'd upset a few people.

Weaknesses

Helpers aren't comfortable initiating tasks or relationships with people. Although they'd make a faithful friend for unchurched persons who are looking for friends, they rarely risk the first step to form the relationship.

Helpers are very resistant to change because of the security old ways and forms provide. They faithfully support the status quo in churches. It's difficult to convince them why, for example, a change in musical style in the church would help to reach more people. If the music was good enough for Great Grandpa Smith, it's good enough for them!

In conflict situations, to promote peace and harmony, Helpers give in. Those who serve on church councils vote for a proposal even though they really don't favor it. The vote is unanimous. They don't voice their opposition at the meeting but might in the parking lot. Their "yes" doesn't always mean "yes." They won't support the proposal with their time or money.

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Helpers are hard on themselves and often have low self-image and little self-confidence. They hate to disappoint, so they don't say no to requests. As a result, they often serve in too many areas to do an adequate job in any of them. Meanwhile, resentment smolders because they don't like the jobs they agreed to take, and perhaps, because they don't feel very appreciated in those roles.

They'd be more effective if they cared less about what others think of them, didn't cave in during conflict, learned to say no to others' requests, and initiated more.

Perfeters

Strengths

Perfeters love details and facts. They're solemn, thoughtful, thorough, organized and accurate. Their strong motivation to do things right is the distinguishing characteristic of this temperament. If they don't have time to do a job properly, they won't do it at all. They're extremely careful and safety conscious. They work hard and don't quit when the going gets tough. Engineers, surgeons, and pilots typically are Perfeters. Moses is a biblical example.

Perfeters value making and keeping rules. They drive in the right hand lane and would be embarrassed to dust to receive a speeding ticket.

Perfeters respond to tasks. They aren't people-persons. Their social skills are often underdeveloped. They walk past others without saying hello because their mind is turning over how to do some task perfectly.

To encourage Perfeters, praise their *work*, not them. That will motivate them to keep serving with all of their heart.

Weaknesses

Perfeters waste time trying to make everything perfect. The volume of their work is limited by their fear of making mistakes. They need a mountain of evidence before they make a decision. Of all temperaments, they're most sensitive to criticism.

Perfeters avoid conflict. The problems they ignore often fester and become more serious.

Perfeters are critical of themselves and others. They're difficult to live with because their expectations are so high. Their child or spouse often feels that pleasing them is impossible. Perfeters take great pains in everything and give them to others!

Perfeters would be more effective if they emphasized doing right things as much as doing things right, made decisions before every possibility of error was eliminated, risked more, and worked harder on building relationships.

Preparing to Be the Churches of God, General Conference

Your Ministry

Assignments

1. Share personal applications from Scripture reading (5 minutes).
2. How has meditation on God's names/characteristics affected your concept of God (5 minutes)?
3. Revelation 3:20, 1 Peter 2:22, Matthew 21:22, Colossians 1:18, John 14:15, John 15:8, 1 Corinthians 4:2 check-up with a buddy.

Fulfillment in Ministry

1. In groups of two or three share what you learned about your spiritual passion, spiritual gifts and temperament (15 minutes).
2. Read the listing of our church's ministries and mark at least one in which you'll serve. Show your marked copy to your leader.

Assignments

1. Read at least 5 chapters in the New Testament this week and write down your thoughts and applications. Prepare to share at least one application next week with the group.
2. Pray at least 10 of the minimum of 50 minutes you spend in prayer this week praying for our pastor(s).
3. Review your Scripture memory verses.

Lesson 12

Membership Vows/Covenant

Assignments

1. Share personal applications from your Scripture reading (5 minutes).
2. How have your times in prayer during these weeks together enriched your relationship with God?
3. Revelation 3:20, 1 Peter 2:22, Matthew 21:22, Colossians 1:18, John 14:15, John 15:8, 1 Corinthians 4:2 check-up with a buddy.

Lighter-Than-Air-Vows

“I, Joe Smith take thee Jane Doe to be my wedded wife; and I do promise before God and these witnesses to be your loving and faithful husband; in plenty and want; in joy and sorrow; in sickness and health; as long as we both shall live. Therefore, now I pledge to you my love.”

Two years later, Joe doesn't love or want to be married to Jane anymore. What happened to his promise? He said the words because that's what grooms are supposed to say. He didn't really mean it.

Vow-Power

Is a vow an insignificant promise that can be broken with little consequence? Why?

(Numbers 30:1-2; Deuteronomy 23:21-23; Psalm 66:13-14; Ecclesiastes 5:4).

How do we reflect God's character when we keep our vows *(Numbers 23:19)*?

Membership Vows

When you join the church you'll be asked to make vows in response to several questions you'll be asked. The questions relate to your commitment to Christ, the Bible and this church. The response you'll be asked to make appears in bold type.

Your Commitment to Christ:

Questions: Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, having been reborn by the Word and the Spirit? Will you follow and serve Him as Lord of your life? If so, answer,

“I have, and I will.”

Your Commitment to the Bible:

Questions: Do you accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God, to make it your guide through life, and do you promise to follow its precepts faithfully? If so, answer,

“I do and I will.”

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Your Commitment to the Church:

Question: Do you promise to support the church faithfully by your presence, your natural gifts and talents and your means as the Lord may bless and prosper you? If so, answer, “**I do.**”

Church Covenant

Before you join this church, we ask you to agree to the following covenant to testify to your commitment to this church’s mission and leadership.

“We, whose names are recorded in this book, members of the Churches of God, do mutually and solemnly covenant and agree; for the promotion of our welfare, the salvation of others, and the glory of God, to unite in church fellowship, to live in Christian peace and love, and to walk and live according to the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, as He has revealed the same to us in His Holy Scriptures, which contain, as we believe the only authoritative rule of Christian faith and practice.

And moreover, we do solemnly promise, patiently to submit to the order of God’s House that is to say to the government and discipline of His Church; and also cheerfully obey the rulers, or office-bearers, who are, or at any time may be placed over us in the Lord.”

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Answer Key

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

1. To come into my life
- 2a. He is the truth
- 2b. Truth comes through Jesus Christ
3. Eternal life
4. Present
7. Without faith it is impossible to please God
8. Know
 - a. The presence of His Spirit
 - b. Believe Jesus is the Christ
 - c. Obey his commands
 - d. Love our brothers (other believers)
 - e. Do what is right

PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY

Roaring lion...angel
God approves the one who studies his word to properly understand it
Sin
My mind...pure spiritual milk...love
Will...act
Disciples

BALANCING YOUR PRAYER LIFE

1. His glorious grace
2. Praise
3. Hallelujah
1. Faith
2. It will be done to you as you believed it would
3. Believe...whatever you ask for in prayer
1. Confess it
2. confess the sin and make restitution (See Luke 19:8 as an example)
3. He will forgive our sin and purify us from unrighteousness
- wills...kingdoms...bodies...understandings...ways
...thoughts
1. with thanksgiving
2. thanks
3. thanks...everything
4. all circumstances
1. The way would be open for him to visit the Christians in Rome
2. "thorn in my flesh"
3. requests...intercession

4. saints

CHRIST'S LORDSHIP

1. a. Savior
b. Christ
c. The Lord
2. God
3. Flesh
4. Jesus Christ
5. God...man
6. My Lord and my God
7. To forgive sins
8. The Lord
Jesus
Jesus is the Lord
9. He made himself equal with God
10. That he was claiming to be God. They tried to kill him
11. None
12. No sin
13. No sin
14. a. The Father
b. The Father
c. The Father
d. The Father
e. The Father
f. The Father
15. a. image
b. firstborn
c. head
16. EVERYTHING
17. "He's #1."
18. Every knee bowing before him in worship
19. It implies that I do what he says

OBEDIENCE

- Eternal salvation
- (1) obey...right
 - (2) hating discipline and correction
 - (3) a. To submit to her husband
b. To love his wife as Christ loved the church
 - (4) one another out of reverence for Christ (other believers)
 - (5) obey them as we would obey Christ

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- (6) rulers and authorities
- (7) obey and submit to them because they have to give an account of their watch over me.

Obey God rather than men

That we love him

That we have come to know him

- 1) I will remain in Jesus' love
- 2) His joy will be in me
- 3) My joy will be complete
 - a. I receive from him anything I ask
 - b. My life will be prolonged and I will be prosperous
 - c. I will experience peace and righteousness
 - d. I will be blessed by God
 - e. The Father will love and make his home with me
 - f. I will live forever
 - g. I will produce a spiritual crop
 - h. Obedience brings stability and safety to my life

No. My obedience must be motivated by love for God.

- 1. Wholehearted service
- 2. Gratefully living for the one who died for me

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

A Supporting Family

- gently
- burdens
- supporting
- love

Ministry Opportunities

- Spirit

A Worshiping Family

- common
- need

Accountability

- Personal
- Personal
- slow
- demand

A Spiritual Shepherd

- keep
- hard
- regard

The Responsibilities of Membership

1. Believer

- They trusted or believed in the Lord
- They need to trust Jesus in all the circumstances of life

2. Brother

- a. fellowship
- b. body
- c. love
- d. build
- e. spur
- f. teach
- g. carry
- h. encourage
- i. forgive
- j. contend
- k. pray
- l. serve
- m. help
- Personal
- Personal

3. Saint

- holy
- holy
- Personal
- Personal

4. Disciple-Maker

- Personal

5. Citizen

- a. bind and loose
- b. encourage
- c. tithe
- d. obey, submit
- e. need
- f. preach
- g. generously, cheerfully
- h. clothes, food

6. Promoter

- Like his, our job is to fill the Father's house (our church)
- Accepting others as Christ accepted me
- Personal
- Personal
- Personal

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- Personal

STEWARDSHIP

Living a Borrowed Life

- the Lord
- I was bought at a price
- The blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God
- Christ

Who's the Boss?

- everything
- all
- Personal

Stewardship with Zip

- Jesus
- Christians
- Each received an amount consistent with his ability to manage and multiply
- Yes. Both doubled the amount given to them.
- They were given greater responsibility and a share of their Master's happiness

Sinking-Steward-Ship

- Because the servant was wicked and lazy and didn't multiply his Master's investment.
- His talent was taken away and he was thrown out into the darkness where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- God expects me to make the most of the gifts and opportunities for service he provides.

Facets of Stewardship

- good
 - perfect
1. gift
 2. Gospel
Personal
Personal
 3. Word
Personal
Personal
Personal
 4. Giving

What to Give

food
drink
hospitality
clothing
medicine
time
money

How to Give

1. - proportion
- much
- A poor widow. Because she gave all she had to live on.
- Jesus is impressed, not by how much we give, but by the sacrifice involved.
2. - reluctantly
- compulsion
- cheerful
3. - hand
- reap
4. - every

Blessings of Giving

1. - to provide all resources necessary to abound in every good work
 2. - credit
 3. - prosper
- refreshed
- blessed
 4. - room
 5. - measured
 6. - needs
- Personal

CHURCH HISTORY

1. d
2. b
3. a
4. d
5. d
6. b
7. d
8. False
9. b
10. a
11. b
12. True
13. b
14. a

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15. b
16. c
17. a
18. a
19. c
20. d
21. c
22. d
23. a
24. a
25. a
26. b
27. d
28. b
29. d
30. c
31. c
32. d
33. c

WE BELIEVE

1. Father, Son, Holy Spirit
2. True
3. True
4. e
5. c
6. True
7. a
8. c
9. False
10. Savior, Lord
11. resurrection, again
12. d
13. b
14. True
15. gifts
16. False
17. True
18. c
19. Holy Spirit
20. d
21. False
22. image
23. a
24. new

25. b
26. God
27. False
28. c
29. c
30. a
31. False
32. e
33. True
34. True
35. False
36. d
37. a
38. True
39. False
40. c
41. b
42. d
43. d
44. False
45. False
46. True
47. c
48. True
49. True
50. b
51. d
52. God
53. e
54. salt, light
55. True
56. True
57. True
58. False
59. victory, triumph
60. False
61. True

Eastern Regional Conference Organization

1. d
2. False
3. b
4. b
5. a
6. True
7. False
8. True

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9. True
10. True
11. False
12. True
13. True
14. True
15. d
16. True
17. True

General Conference Organization

1. e
2. c
3. c
4. True
5. False
6. True
7. True
8. False
9. False
10. True