

FIRST STEPS DEVOTIONAL

A STUDY OF BASIC CHRISTIAN BELIEFS & CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

Welcome! Over the next 21 days, we invite you to learn more about the Christian faith and church membership. You will discover who we are, what we believe, how you can serve, and about the privileges and responsibilities of members at Henderson's First Baptist Church (HFBC).

So whether your faith journey with Christ has just begun or you have been a believer for some time, we pray this material will aid you in establishing some disciplines necessary to grow in your faith while also guiding you to become a covenant member of our church.

We encourage you to follow the layout of the devotional and not jump ahead. It is structured to provide time to reflect on each daily topic and teaching as you begin to apply what you have learned. We trust you will find this material a blessing and we look forward to partnering in ministry with you at Henderson's First Baptist Church!

OVERVIEW OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

We have made joining this church a process that better allows us to get to know one another. Christians are, after all, called to a “one another” kind of faith:

“Love one another”—John 15:17

“Be devoted to one another”—Romans 12:10

“Accept one another”—Romans 15:7

“Admonish one another”—Colossians 3:16

“Serve one another”—Galatians 5:13

“Bear one another’s burdens”—Galatians 6:2

“Be kind to one another”—Ephesians 4:32

“Bear with one another”—Colossians 3:13

“Encourage one another”—1 Thessalonians 5:11

“Pray for one another”—James 5:16

How to join in three easy steps:

1. **Complete** the *First Steps Devotional* you are holding in your hands! Fill out the final page of the devotional and either turn it in to the church office or give it to one of our ministerial staff members who will follow up with you.
2. **Attend** a “First Steps” new member class & luncheon. Register by calling the church office at 270-826-2332 or register online at fbchenderson.org.
3. **You will be contacted** by one of our ministerial staff members for follow up.

Upon completion of these three steps your name will be presented to the church body at our next members’ meeting where we will celebrate your becoming part of the HFBC family.

We hope you enjoy the next 21 days as you explore Henderson’s First Baptist Church!

WEEK ONE: WHAT WE BELIEVE

DAY 1: GETTING STARTED

We worship a relational God. So many religions focus on rules and rituals, but we serve and worship the One True God through a personal relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ!

The Bible teaches that Christians are to grow and mature in their relationship with Christ.

One reason we call this devotional *First Steps* is to signify the Christian's brand new beginning in Jesus Christ. That's right! When you place your faith in Jesus Christ, you enjoy a fresh new beginning in life. The Bible says:

...anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT

This new life in Christ provides a whole new meaning and purpose to life and the Bible instructs us to mature in this salvation we have found in Christ.

Glad to have you with us on this incredible journey of faith! Together we are on a course of daily growth in our Christian life.

Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity...

Hebrews 6:1a NIV

Day 1 Reflection:

We don't want to assume you have already trusted Christ and received Him by faith.

So, have you in fact received Jesus Christ as Savior, surrendering to Him as Lord of your life?

If not, please KEEP READING to learn more about the Gospel!

If so, when and where? _____

In what ways do you see yourself as a new person?

In what ways do you still struggle with sin?

Prayer for today: Thank God for the gift of faith and a fresh beginning! Take time to thank Him for bringing people into your life to guide you in your spiritual journey.

DAY 2: STATEMENTS OF FAITH

Today we will look at a few of the basics about what we believe at HFBC. We believe that the Bible is God's Word and that it is clear in what it teaches. We also believe that God wants us to understand who He is and what He has done. Spend a few minutes today reviewing what the Bible has to say about the basics of the Christian faith.

1. About God

God is Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three persons are co-equal and co-eternal and are the one God.

Genesis 1:1, 26, 27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19

2. About Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless human life, and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all believers by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven and will return again someday to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Matthew 1:22,23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5; 14:10-30

3. About The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make mankind aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily.

John 14:16,17; John 16:7-13; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:25

4. About The Bible

The Bible is God's Word to us. It was written through human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is the truth without any mixture of error.

2 Timothy 1:13; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21;

5. About Human Beings

People are made in the image of God, to be like Him in character. People are the pinnacle of God's creation. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of disobedience toward God called "sin". This sin separates people from God and causes many problems in this life. Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Isaiah 59:1,2; Romans 3:23

6. About Salvation

Salvation is God's free gift to us, but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. When we turn from our self-ruled lives and turn to Jesus in faith we are saved.

John 1:12; John 14:6; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5

7. About Eternity

People were created to exist forever. We will exist eternally in either one of two ways: separated from God eternally because of our sin or with God eternally through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is hell. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and hell are real places of eternal existence.

John 3:16; John 14:7; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:17-18

Day 2 Reflection:

Do you agree with each of these statements? If not, you may want to consider spending some time looking up the reference verses. Schedule a time with one of the pastors or a Sunday School teacher to discuss these in greater detail.

What new insights did you learn from the statement or Scripture references?

Prayer focus: Pray and offer thanks to God for the revelation of Himself through Scripture.

DAY 3: VISION AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH

Vision Statement:

“We exist to develop generations of God-glorifying **disciples who make disciples** from the community to the continents.”

Mission Statement:

Cherish the Word

Everything we do at HFBC is grounded in and guided by the the Bible, the Word of God. Our worship services are built around expository preaching where our pastor regularly teaches through books of the Bible ensuring that we study passages in context and rightly interpret the Bible’s meaning.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

2 Timothy 3:16 NKJV

Share the Gospel

According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, the chief end of man is “to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” One way we bring glory to God in this world is by sharing the message of the Gospel, God’s mercy, grace, and salvation through Jesus Christ. At HFBC we want every member to be ready at all times to tell others what Jesus has done to accomplish their salvation.

Strengthen the Family

God gave the responsibility of sharing the Gospel and making disciples to two institutions: the family and the church. At HFBC we are committed to disciple making through the ministries of the church and to partnering with families to bring up children and grandchildren who know God and who make Him known to others.

Serve the Community

HFBC has been ministering to the community of Henderson for nearly two centuries. We believe the church and its members are called to be “salt and light” by serving those around us in practical ways that reflect the fact that we are followers of Jesus Christ. We want our community to see servants who love Jesus and care about them.

“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16 NIV

Reach the World

Through the years our church has been challenged to memorize and live out our Lord’s teaching in Acts 1:8.

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8 NIV

We believe these words of Jesus are directed to every believer and that we all are called to share Jesus with everyone, whether they live across the street or across the globe. The great commission compels us to reach people for Christ in all places and at all times. HFBC likes to think of our covering the scope of Acts 1:8 by thinking in terms of the “4Cs.” We take the Gospel to our Community, our Commonwealth, our Country, and the Continents.

Henderson’s First Baptist Church was founded in 1839 and has been ministering in the name of Jesus to the community, the commonwealth, the country, and the continents for over 175 years. We are affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and the Green Valley Baptist Association.

We also believe in being missional with our dollars. We graciously support the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program, including the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and the International Mission Board (IMB), by contributing 15% of undesignated giving to these missional entities. We also actively partner with church planters and new churches in cities and locations across the country and around the world.

Day 3 Reflection:

How can you personally be involved in our church's vision and five-fold mission?

Do you cherish the word through daily Bible reading?
If not, start today by reading through a book of the Bible!

Prayer focus: Pray, asking God to show you how you can be on mission for Christ!

DAY 4: UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

What does it mean to be a Christian?

People sometimes speak of “making peace with God,” but how does that really happen? How is it possible to be absolutely certain that God accepts us, has forgiven our sin, and will allow our soul into heaven at death? Here are some basic steps to peace with God taken from God’s Word, the Bible:

Step 1. Understand who God is—loving, holy, and just

God is loving, holy, and just. He has created all people to glorify Him and He does all things for their good and for His glory.

God loves you and wants you to know Him and live for Him. You can have peace with Him.

The Bible says...

“We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Romans 5:1 NKJV

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

John 3:16 ESV

“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”

John 10:10 ESV

Why don’t most people have this peace and abundant life that God intended them to have?

Step 2. Admit the problem—our sin and separation

While God is holy and without sin, human beings are unholy and sinful. This doesn’t mean we are incapable of doing good things, we just do them imperfectly and often without even thinking of the One True God.

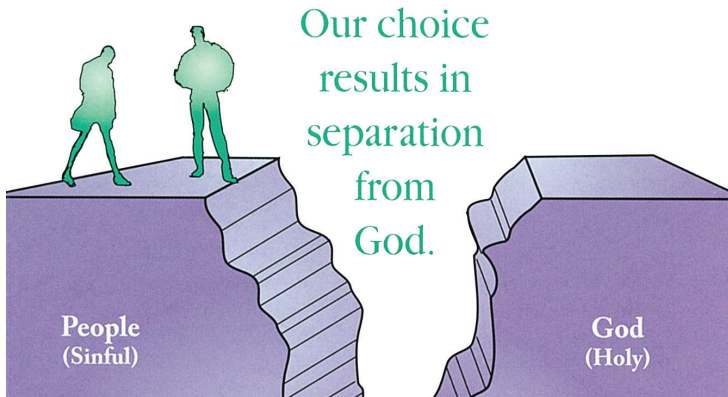
Because of God's holiness, He is separated from us. Because of our sin, however, we also are separated from Him. We are sinners by nature and sinners by choice. The first man and woman (Adam and Eve) chose to disobey God and go their own way. We continue to do the same today.

The Bible says...

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 3:23 NKJV

"For the wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23 NKJV



Many people have tried different ways to “bridge this gap” of separation, trying somehow to make a way to God and earn His approval and forgiveness. These ways—things like religion, philosophy or trying to be good enough—are like bridges that are too short.

The Bible says...

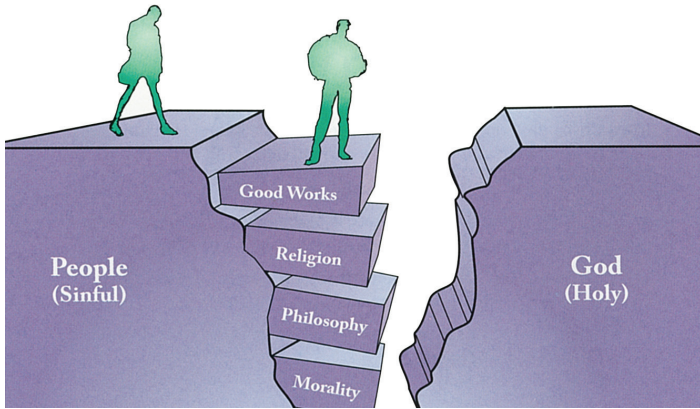
"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."

Proverbs 14:12 ESV

"Your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God..."

Isaiah 59:2 ESV

No bridge reaches God ... except one.



No bridge reaches God—except one. This is a bridge we ourselves do not build, but God builds for us.

Step 3. Discover God’s bridge—the cross

God the Son added humanity to His nature and came to us and lived among us. Jesus lived a perfect life for us and died on the cross as our substitute and rose from the grave. He took our punishment for sin, paid the penalty we owed, and thus became our “Bridge” to life, bridging the gap between God and us.

The Bible says...

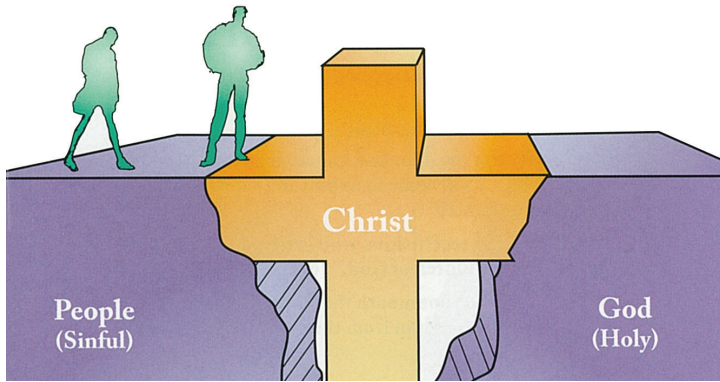
“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” 1 Timothy 2:5 ESV

“Christ... suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God.” 1 Peter 3:18 ESV

“Christ died for our sins... he was buried... he was raised on the third day.” 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 ESV

Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me.” John 14:6 NKJV

God has provided the only way ...
Each person must make a choice ...



God has provided the only way to forgiveness of sin and eternal life. The only way to receive this forgiveness is by turning from sin in repentance and turning to Jesus, receiving Him as Lord.

Step 4. Embrace the truth—receive Christ

We must trust Jesus Christ as our Savior and receive Him as Lord.

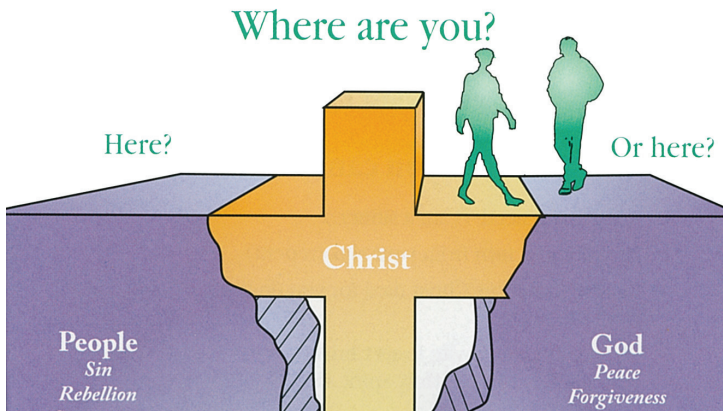
Jesus says...

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6 NKJV

The Bible says...

“To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” John 1:12 ESV

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.” John 3:36 ESV



Day 4 Reflection:

Have you received Christ as Lord and Savior?

If not, will you now receive Him, trusting Him alone for forgiveness of sin? The Bible says He is the only way to have peace with God.

- Admit your need—that you are a sinner in need of God’s forgiveness.
- Turn from trusting in anything else for eternal life and trust only in Jesus Christ.
- Believe that Jesus Christ lived a perfect life for you, died for your sins on the cross, rose from the grave, and is your only way to heaven.
- Accept Jesus’ offer of forgiveness and receive Him as Lord of your life.

If you have already accepted Christ, this serves as a great reminder of what Christ has done for you and how blessed you are to be called His child, adopted into His family! If you have never taken these steps of trusting Jesus to be your Savior, you can do that right now by talking to Him in prayer.

Prayer focus:

If you are ready to take that step, talk to God in prayer. Share with Him your understanding of what He has done for you and how you are willing to turn from your sin in repentance and trust Him as your Savior and Lord. The following prayer may be a helpful guide as you talk to God and share the desire of your heart:

“Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for making it possible for me to have peace with God! I believe that when You died You were paying the penalty for my sins. I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but through You I understand I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank You for paying my debt, bearing my punishment and offering forgiveness. I turn from my sin and receive You as Savior. Thank you for the gift of eternal life!”

DAY 5: YOUR TESTIMONY

“I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness in the great assembly; Indeed, I do not restrain my lips, O Lord, You Yourself know. I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great assembly.” Psalm 40:9-10 NKJV

Every believer has a testimony, a brief story about how they came to trust Jesus as Savior. Some testimonies seem sensational, including radical or seismic shifts in lifestyle and thinking. Other testimonies are less dramatic, a story of growing up in a Christian home with Gospel truth ever-present from infancy. No matter the personal history, every Christian should be able to tell about the work of God in their heart, how God brought to them the *“light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”*

2 Corinthians 4:6 NKJV

Whatever the circumstances of your particular experience, God gave you a new heart when you received Christ as Lord and Savior. Sharing your testimony is simply telling your personal story, sharing how God gave you new life in Christ.

Day 5 Reflection:

Maybe you’ve been a Christian for an hour, a day, or for many years. What is He doing in your life now? This is your Christian testimony. You are an eyewitness to the works of Jesus Christ in your life.

Spend some time today writing down your testimony. Your story can serve as an anchor for you throughout life, giving you assurance of your relationship with Christ. It can also function as a valuable tool in sharing the Gospel with others.

Take some time to write out your testimony and share it with a friend or family member. Writing out your testimony helps solidify your faith and prepares you to share your story with others.

As you write, remember that your testimony is simply telling people about the events that have happened to you. In fact, it's not just your story - actually, it's God's story.

You may consider using the following guide and suggested wording to get you started. Your testimony has three parts:

1. How you lived before receiving Christ:

“My most important value was...”

“My religious background and attitude about Christ was...”

“My desires and interests before Christ were...”

“I thought of God as...”

“God was justly angered toward me because...”

“I mostly cared about...”

2. How Christ saved you and brought you into God's family:

“What I thought or noticed about myself/God at this point was...”

“I was awakened to my need for Christ by...”

“A particular Scripture or word that someone said that drew me to Christ was...”

“It happened when I was at/with...”

“During this process I felt...”

“The aspects of the gospel that touched me were...”

“I came to understand that Christ...”

“I saw my need was...”

Make sure you explain the Gospel clearly in this section:

“I was sinful and fully deserving of God’s wrath.”

“Christ died in my place on the cross as my substitute—bearing the wrath of God in my place.”

“I repented of my sin, turning from my old lifestyle. I placed my faith in his sacrifice. God forgave me of all my sin, and adopted me as a fully loved child of God. I have a new life in Christ.”

3. How Christ has made a difference in your life:

“What changed was...”

“My desires now are...”

“I’m now doing...”

“A difficult area of obedience is...”

“Now people look at me and notice...”

“I have hope of eternity with God because Christ is alive!”

FINAL TIPS:

Be brief—Your testimony will not include every detail. It is a simplified version of life before Christ, receiving the Gospel, and life since Christ, about 2/3 of a page.

Keep it focused on Christ more than focused on self.

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you so that the most important and helpful aspects of your Gospel story will be shared clearly.

Don’t exaggerate or glamorize your experiences.

Write as if you are talking to a friend and use simple language.

Prayer focus:

Pray today for the Lord to show you opportunities to share your testimony! Pray for the boldness to take those opportunities and speak a word about the goodness of God to others.

DAY 6: BAPTISM

A Christian ordinance is a ceremony that the Lord Jesus Christ has commanded to be permanently practiced by the church. There are two such ceremonies or ordinances practiced by every New Testament church. They are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Today we will take a closer look at baptism.

Understanding Baptism:

I. Why Should I Be Baptized?

Most importantly, because Jesus **COMMANDS** it.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”

Matthew 28:19 NIV

Baptism is an act of obedience!

It publicly identifies you with Jesus and demonstrates that you are a **BELIEVER**.

“Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.” Acts 18:8 NIV

To follow the example set by **CHRIST**.

“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.” Mark 1:9 NIV

In the Bible, those who accepted Jesus Christ as Savior were baptized almost immediately as the primary means of identifying with Jesus as Savior and Lord. Baptism happens after belief. That's why we refer to this as “Believer's Baptism.”

So we do not baptize persons before they have placed their faith in Christ (infants, for example). According to the Bible, one must be mature enough to understand the Gospel and personally repent

from sin and receive Jesus Christ as Lord.

We ask all members to follow in Believer's Baptism. If you have experienced this baptism already, we acknowledge and accept that baptism for membership. If you have questions pertaining to your baptism, just ask!

II. What Is The Meaning of Baptism?

It illustrates Christ's **BURIAL** and **RESURRECTION**.

"For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead." Colossians 2:12 NLT

It illustrates my **NEW LIFE** as a Christian.

"For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives."

Romans 6:4 NLT

In summary, we believe and teach that baptism does not make you a believer—it shows that **you already believe**. Baptism does not "save" you; only your faith in Jesus Christ saves. Baptism is beautifully symbolic, an outward expression of an inward change.

III. Why Do We Baptize By Immersion (under water)?

Because **Jesus** was baptized this way.

"After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water..."

Matthew 3:16 NLT

The word "Baptize" conveys this meaning.

The Greek word *baptizo* means, "**to immerse or dip** under water."

Only baptism by immersion **pictures** death, burial, and resurrection!

“For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead...now we also may live new lives.”

Romans 6:4 NLT

IV. Who Should Be Baptized?

Every person who **BELIEVES** in Christ.

“Many of them believed his message and were baptized...”

Acts 2:41 GNT

Day 6 Reflection:

Were you baptized by immersion when you believed and received Jesus Christ as Lord?

If not, don't delay. Schedule your baptism today by calling the church office at 270-826-2332.

Prayer focus: Thank God for the opportunity to declare your testimony through baptism! Thank Him for sending His Son to die on your behalf. Thank him for the power of the resurrection which allows you to walk in a new way and brings death to your old way of life!

DAY 7: THE LORD'S SUPPER

Yesterday we looked at the first ordinance of the church and why every believer should be baptized as a way of outwardly identifying with Jesus Christ. Today we will look at the second ordinance, the Lord's Supper.

1. What is the Lord's Supper?

First, the supper is a time to remember.

"He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me'"

Luke 22:19 NKJV

On the night before his crucifixion Jesus ate the Passover meal with his closest disciples. During this meal He gave them—and us—a memorial by which to remember His great sacrifice on our behalf. Sometime later the disciples came to understand the words Jesus shared with them on that evening. They understood that He had commanded them to use the symbols of the supper as an ongoing and vivid reminder to all believers of His death and suffering in our place. Jesus does not want us to forget how much he loves us!

The supper is a time to look ahead.

"For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again."

1 Corinthians 11:26 NLT

Jesus has already come! He has already defeated sin and death in the place of every person who believes and trusts in Him. And Jesus has promised to come again in order to remove us from the very presence of temptation, sin, suffering, and pain in order that we might spend our eternity (that is forever!) with Him in His glory. When we partake of the Lord's Supper we are remembering

His promise to come again and we are looking forward to that day.

The supper is a time of evaluation and correction.

“...you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup.” 1 Corinthians 11:28 NLT

God is so good! He wants us to live a life that is holy, honoring, and pleasing to Him. Graciously, He gives us warnings and reminders. The Lord’s Supper should always cause us to stop and evaluate our lives. Are we living for Jesus? Are we showing love to others? Are we harboring a grudge against anyone? Are we embracing sin? The Supper serves as a loving reminder to repent of sin and follow Jesus closely.

2. Who can participate?

The Lord’s Supper is an ordinance for believers, a ceremony given to the church which is made up of all who have trusted in the saving grace of Jesus to whom it is a memorial. Therefore, every Christian is invited to participate in the Supper at HFBC. If you are accompanied by children or others who have not yet made a decision to follow Christ please encourage them to use this special time to consider who Jesus is and His offer of salvation, rather than taking the Lord’s Supper.

3. When is the Lord’s Supper at HFBC?

At HFBC we observe the Lord’s Supper at least quarterly, usually on the first Sunday of each quarter. The date is published at least one week before so you can prayerfully prepare for its observance. The Bible does not specify when or how often the Supper should be observed, it simply states that when it is observed it should be viewed as a special time of reflection, remembrance, and celebration of Jesus’ coming again.

Day 7 Questions: What new insights did you learn about the Lord's Supper? Take time to examine yourself and renew your commitment to walk in righteousness.

Prayer focus: As you pray today, ask the Lord to reveal any sins you may have committed. Ask Him to search your heart and mind for thoughts and actions that are displeasing to Him. Confess those sins and rejoice in the forgiveness of sins and restoration of fellowship with the Father. (1 John 1:9)

Week One Discussion: Take time to meet with other believers and discuss what you have learned this week. Share areas or concerns for which they can pray!

WEEK TWO: GROWING IN THE FAITH

DAY 8: BIBLE READING

Two brothers were walking on their father's estate when they came upon a young tree heavy with fruit. Both enjoyed as much of the delicious fruit as they wanted. When they started back, one man gathered all the remaining fruit and took it home with him. His brother, however, took the tree itself and planted it on his own property. The tree flourished and regularly produced a bountiful crop so that the second brother often had fruit when the first had none.

The Bible is like the fruit-bearing tree in this story. Merely hearing the Word of God is to be like the first brother. You may gather much fruit from the encounter and even bring home enough to feed on for a few days, but in the long run it doesn't compare with having your own tree. Through the discipline of studying God's Word, we make the tree our own and enjoy its fruit. It is therefore, important to have a time set aside each day to feed our souls with the fruit of the Bible.

Read Scripture Daily

"Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" Matthew 4:4 NIV

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16 NIV

God, in His infinite love for us, has given us His Word. He has told us how we can be reconciled in our relationship with Him through the Gospel. He has told us how to live a life that is glorifying to Him and that is pleasing in His sight. He has given us words of encouragement in difficult times. He has provided us with a message of hope for now and all eternity. In short God has given us an instruction manual on how to live according to His

will. In order to access all of these wonderful words, however, we must discipline ourselves to read the Bible.

An important part of the Christian life is spending time daily reading the Bible. There are many approaches, systems, and suggestions for daily Bible reading. Valuable tools include daily Bible reading calendars (available in the HFBC office), chronological Bibles, or any number of online reading plans. The important thing is not which plan you use, the important thing is that you read the Bible! Find a time that works for you and set that time aside each day as an important appointment that cannot be missed.

Meditate on Scripture

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever, things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things”
Philippians 4:8 NKJV

Meditation on Scripture is not like other types of meditation. When we meditate on Scripture we are not attempting to empty our minds, instead we are trying to fill our minds with the truth of God! When we meditate on Scripture we are simply slowing down, taking time to think about what we are reading, and beginning the process of committing the truths of God’s Word to memory.

Memorize Scripture

“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you”
Psalm 119:11 NIV

Scripture memory is important because it is the means by which God may speak to us at all times. Scripture that can be recalled from memory serves as a means of encouragement in difficulty, a source of wisdom to share with others, and a weapon against the temptation to sin.

Day 8 Reflection:

On day 3, you were encouraged to begin reading your Bible daily! How is that going? Are you staying faithful to reading God’s Word? Remember the Bible is God’s love letter to you!

If you do not have a plan for reading your Bible daily, consider reading a chapter a day from Matthew’s gospel. Just keep going until you finish. Then, move on to Mark, Luke, John, etc. Another great place to start is in the book of Proverbs. There are 31 chapters (one for each day of the month!).

Now would also be a good time to begin memorizing Scripture. List one verse that is particularly meaningful to you and begin memorizing it today.

Prayer Focus: Pray for the Lord to give you a hunger for His Word and the discipline to read it every day. Thank Him for revealing himself and speaking to you through His Word.

DAY 9: PRAYER

A Closer Look at Prayer and Its Importance

Being a Christian is all about a **relationship** with Jesus.

Pause for a moment and think about a relationship you have with a current friend. How difficult would it be to develop a closeness with that person if there were never any communication between the two of you? Actually wouldn't that person be more of a stranger? Prayer in its most basic form is simply communication between you and God. Prayer is not just a one-way conversation with God, but includes God's communicating with us. He speaks to our hearts and minds through the power of the Holy Spirit, answering our prayers with what He knows to be best for us (His will). God also answers in His perfect time, providing what we need and not always what we want. We must remember that He knows more than we know—and He always does what is right.

While some earthly fathers are good and some not so good, God is a perfectly good heavenly Father! You can talk to God as a child talks to a good father. Your heavenly Father loves you immensely and desires the best for you.

God desires for us to know Him deeply.

"I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the Lord; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart." Jeremiah 24:7 NASB

Jesus Set The Example For Us

"In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there."

Mark 1:35 NASB

Jesus Teaches Us The Necessity of Prayer

“Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart,” Luke 18:1 NASB

ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR PRAYER LIFE:

The acrostic **ACTS** is helpful in developing a prayer life.

A – Adoration

C – Confession

T – Thanksgiving

S – Supplication

Adoration – Begin praying by praising God for who He is!

“Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom.” Psalm 145:3 NIV

Confession – Continue to pray by admitting to God where you have failed Him so that you may receive His forgiveness and repair the fellowship that may be hindered by unconfessed sin. (Note: the relationship is never lost, but the fellowship may be hindered.)

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9 NIV

Thanksgiving – As you continue to pray give thanks to God for specific acts.

“Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18 NIV

Thank Him for specific blessings, people, provision, etc.

Supplication – This is the portion of prayer where you are making your requests and expressing desires to God.

This can be broken down into two segments: petition and intercession.

Petition – Asking God about your needs.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

Philippians 4:6 NIV

Intercession – Praying for the needs of others.

“Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.” Romans 10:1 NIV

Day 9 Reflection:

Which aspect of the ACTS model of prayer do you find most difficult?

Spend time meditating on the attributes of God: His goodness, kindness, His all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-present nature.

List other attributes of God: _____

Prayer focus: Take time to consider God as Father, Son and Spirit and adore Him for who He is! List your prayer requests and seek God’s direction as you pray.

DAY 10: QUIET TIME/ PERSONAL OR PRIVATE WORSHIP

The Bible says as a believer you are His child! You are not a distant acquaintance, you are His very child. Your heavenly Father longs for a growing, close relationship with His child, with you! So let's look at a spiritual discipline that's crucial for you to embrace on this faith journey with Jesus.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEED FOR A QUIET TIME

What Is A Quiet Time?

It is a **daily time** you set aside to **be alone with God** to get to know Him through the Bible and prayer. At HFBC we often use the abbreviation "DQ" to refer to our time of Daily Quiet.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A DAILY QUIET TIME

Your time alone with God should be a top priority in your day for the following reasons:

1. We were **CREATED** to have fellowship with God.

"So God created man in his own image..."

Genesis 1:27; 2:7; 3:8

No other part of creation has this privilege!

"Look! I have been standing at the door, and I am constantly knocking. If anyone hears Me calling him and opens the door, I will come in and fellowship with him and he with Me." Revelation 3:20 TLB

2. Jesus **DIED** to make your relationship with God possible.

"God ... is the one who invited you into this wonderful friendship with his Son..."

1 Corinthians 1:9 TLB

3. Personal time alone with God was Jesus' **SOURCE OF STRENGTH.**

Read Mark 1:35; Luke 22:39; Luke 5:16

Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. He understood that time alone with the Father is our most important source of strength and encouragement.

4. In the Scriptures we see that many heroes of the faith **DEVELOPED THIS HABIT.** Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, Paul, and others spent time alone with God.

5. You cannot be a **HEALTHY, GROWING Christian** without it! *"I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my daily bread."* Job 23:12b NIV

THE PURPOSE OF A DAILY QUIET TIME

1. To give **DEVOTION** to God.

"Honor the Lord for the glory of His name. Worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness." Psalm 29:2 NLT

2. To get **DIRECTION** from God.

"Show me the right path, O Lord; point out the road for me to follow." Psalm 25:4 NLT

3. To gain **DELIGHT** in the Lord.

"Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart" Psalm 37:4 ESV

4. To grow **DAILY** like God.

"Jesus has the power of God, by which he has given us everything we need to live and to serve God. We have these things because we know him. Jesus called us by his glory and goodness. Through these he gave us the very great and precious promises. With these gifts you can share in God's nature, and the world will not ruin you with its evil desires."

2 Peter 1:3-4 NCV

ESTABLISHING YOUR QUIET TIME

FACT: The better I get to know Christ, the more I love Him

The objective of a quiet time is not just to study about Christ, but to actually spend time with Him!

In establishing your quiet time, figure out a time of least interruption. It may be in the afternoon, or sometime in the evening. Maybe you get up a little earlier in the morning. What better way to start your day! Location is also important and your place needs to be well-lit and comfortable. There is no magical formula on duration, some days may be shorter than others. The important thing is to experience quality time with the Lord through prayer and Scripture.

Tips for a better quiet time:

Consider your way

“Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways.” Proverbs 4:26 NIV

“In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:6 NASB

Commit Your Day

“Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him, and he will help you.” Psalm 37:5 NLT

Items for your Quiet Time:

Bible, pen or pencil. A journal is helpful to write down your prayer concerns along with any insights from your time of Bible study.

A Study Bible is recommended.

A study Bible will help clarify and give additional insight to the text. Study Bibles also provide background and context; things extremely important as you study. The internet is also very helpful to Bible study. Biblegateway.com, for example, is a great website to aid in your study, providing multiple translations and additional commentary.

The Bible comes in a variety of translations. A readable translation for daily Bible reading is important. You may consider the New International Version (NIV) which is especially helpful. Also the New King James Version (NKJV) is fairly readable, too.

One of the best Study Bibles is the English Standard Version (ESV). This version is used by most of our ministers in their study of the Word. The notes are trustworthy and the ESV is a good, scholarly translation.

Devotional guides are available to help assist you if you want an additional tool, but remember: there is NO SUBSTITUTE for reading the Bible! The Word of God has a power like no other book because it is actually God's Word to us!

Now it's time to put to practice what you have learned! Pick a time, a location, take your Bible, and meet with God!

Day 10 Reflection: Are you committed to having a daily quiet time? If so, write down your place and time here:

Prayer focus: Pray for the Lord to increase your commitment to spending time with Him each day! Ask the Holy Spirit to prompt you daily to spend time with the Lord!

DAY 11: FAMILY WORSHIP

The great puritan preacher Jonathan Edwards stated that every home should be like “a little church.” What he meant by this is that God has given every father and mother the responsibility of training their children to love, serve, and follow Him.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.”

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 NKJV

The church assists parents and grandparents in the spiritual education of their children, but worship in both the church and home are essential to training children to follow Christ. Therefore, we encourage every family—whether your household consists of one person or ten persons—to engage in worship in the home. Here is a simple formula to remember: **Read, Pray, Sing.**

Read the Bible. Chapter-by-chapter, read through books of the Bible together. The younger the children, the more you will want to use narrative passages and shorter sections. As children get older (or if there are no children in the home), you may consider setting a goal of completely reading the New Testament. Perhaps a later goal would be to read the entire Bible.

Pray. Whether prayer is led by the father or by other family members, be sure to pray together. Pray about at least one thing in the passage you read. By doing this, you and your family will learn to pray according to God’s Word.

Sing. Few things bring joy to a time of worship like singing to the Lord! Use an old hymnal, sing along with Christian songs on the radio, CDs, or an electronic device.

Begin worship in your home today! There is no preparation necessary, simply gather your family, open your Bible, read a passage, spend a few minutes in prayer, and sing a song everyone knows, maybe a verse from “Amazing Grace!”

Day 11 Reflection: Take time to share a verse or hymn that is meaningful to you with your family. If you live alone, spend time in prayer for your extended family or church family. Look for opportunities to share spiritual insights with family members! How will you begin the practice of family worship?

Prayer focus: Pray for your family and the other families in our church to find joy in family worship! Pray for opportunities to instill spiritual truths in the life of your other family members.

DAY 12: CORPORATE WORSHIP / BIG GROUP

At Henderson's First Baptist Church we often say, "Every Christian needs two groups: a big group and a small group." The big group we are referring to is the church body gathered for worship.

Every Sunday morning there are three opportunities (8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 AM) to be part of a big group and to engage in a service where the purpose is to praise, glorify, and worship God (there is also an opportunity for Hispanic worship at 9 AM).

In the big group it is all about God! It is not about our preferences and it is not about what we "get out of it." It is about Christians joining together to spend an hour focused on the One who has created us and has given us the wonderful gift of salvation. When we worship, we gather in the manifest presence of God in corporate assembly. What happens here is much more than people meeting people.

To be sure, however, we do benefit from this group! We learn from other believers how to worship and how to pray. We enjoy hearing the voices of many as we join them in singing Scripture-filled hymns and songs that express our joy in the Lord. We set aside a valuable time to listen to the preaching of God's Word and to hear what He has given our pastor to share with us each week. We have the opportunity to give our tithes and offerings as we support the work God has placed before His church. And we are blessed with the encouragement of simply spending time with others who love Jesus.

"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together..."

Hebrews 10:24-25a NKJV

“I looked and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb...” Revelation 7:9 NKJV

Plan now to worship in big group every week. Choose a service time, plan to be there every Sunday, and look forward to gathering with other Christians to praise God in big group worship!

Day 12 Reflection: How can you better prepare for corporate worship this week? Do you see God as the audience of our weekly worship gathering? How can you encourage those who lead worship each week?

Prayer Focus: Spend time in prayer for the pastor, musicians, and worship leaders as they prepare to lead worship this week! Pray for the Lord to speak to you through the message and music.

DAY 13: RELATIONAL GATHERING / SMALL GROUP

In addition to a big group, every Christian needs a small group, too! At HFBC our primary small groups occur in Sunday School and there is a class for everyone.

Sunday School is your opportunity to develop deep and personal relationships with other believers. These small group gatherings allow us to experience worship and fellowship in ways that are different from “big group.” Here are just a few of the benefits of being in a “small group” Sunday School class:

Additional Study of God’s Word

In Sunday School you join with others, spending even more time in the study of Scripture. In this format, however, you can also ask questions, share observations, and listen to others as they discuss what God has been teaching them in their study.

“People learn from one another, just as iron sharpens iron.”

Proverbs 27:17 GNT

Encouragement

Small groups are where we really get to know one another. We share our concerns, our needs, our sorrows, and our celebrations. Small groups are where relationships are built and where we are most likely to be missed if not present. Being part of a small group brings strength and accountability.

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.” Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 NIV

Prayer

Small groups pray for and minister to one another! Sunday School classes love to rally around one another as they pray for each other, the church, and the world.

Fellowship

It can be tough to make meaningful connections in a large group, but in small groups friendships can really be built. Small group Sunday School classes at HFBC make a point of spending time with one another in fellowship and fun.

Outreach

Small groups at HFBC share the same mission as the entire church! Therefore, every small group makes a point to reach out to others with the Gospel. Time is spent each week in these groups praying for the lost, reaching out to those who are absent, and sharing the Gospel according to the Great Commission.

If you have not found a small group Sunday School class at HFBC, visit one this week. All Sunday school classes are printed on resource cards available at the Connection Center. You can also visit the church website at fbchenderson.org.

Day 13 Reflection: List the names of individuals in your small group: _____

With whom can you intentionally build a relationship or get to know better in the near future?

Whom can you invite to be a part of your small group this week?

Prayer Focus: Spend time thanking God for the relationships you are building with other believers in Christ. Pray for the leaders of your small group! Ask the Lord to show you how you can get more connected with others in your small group. Pray regularly for the members of your small group and their spiritual growth.

DAY 14: HOW HFBC IS STRUCTURED

We believe the structure of the church should not be determined by culture, business practices, or even denominational traditions. Scripture tells us that Christ loved the church and gave His life for it! At HFBC we focus all our practices and structures on Scriptural principles with the goal of honoring Christ in everything we do.

We believe God puts a vision and a calling on a pastor's heart and that the pastor is following the leading of the Holy Spirit in setting a vision for the church. HFBC is a staff-led church where Jesus Christ is the foundation. We are a church that is "Pastor and staff-led, committee operated, deacon served, and congregation approved."

Our Members

The Lord has grown and continues to grow Henderson's First Baptist Church through PEOPLE REACHING PEOPLE. Therefore, we view all members as MINISTERS and MISSIONARIES within our community. Jesus in Matthew 28 commanded his followers...

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,..." Matthew 28:19a NIV

Our Ministerial Staff

"Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-12 NLT

The pastor and staff at HFBC are charged to equip God's people to do the work of the church. This means the ministerial staff helps members identify their spiritual gifts and empowers members to serve through the church. Our staff is committed to leading the church in the mission of cherishing the Word, sharing the Gospel, strengthening the family, serving the community, and reaching the world.

Our Committees

Our committees use their gifts to serve and support the work of the church and partner with staff in areas such as: finances—all aspects (budgeting, reports, accountability, planning, etc.), general operations (policies, insurance, maintenance, personnel, etc.), and ministry support (prayer, missional partnerships, bereavement, etc.).

Our Deacons

Our deacons are servants to the body of Christ. They are key in assisting the staff in meeting the needs of the church family. Every member of HFBC is assigned a deacon through the Deacon Family Ministry Plan. This deacon will visit and pray with you, answer questions about faith and the church, help your family get connected, help you discover ways to serve through the church, rejoice with you, and offer support and prayer during times of crisis.

Day 14 Reflection: Have you met the ministerial staff? Stop by Monday afternoon and you will find most of our staff present, planning out the new week. You can meet with one or more of our staff or go to our webpage for names and contact information! Visit fbchenderson.org.

Prayer focus: Spend some time in prayer today asking the Lord to make clear your role as a minister and missionary in His service.

WEEK THREE: HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

DAY 15: SERVING THE CHURCH

A church marquis once read: “The Christian life is like tennis: you can’t play unless you serve.” While following Christ is certainly not “play” in the sense of a sports activity, the principle is the same: serving is woven into the fabric of the Christian’s new nature. Indeed, as new creations in Christ, Christians reflect the very nature of their Lord Jesus, the consummate Servant. Consequently, Christians never look more like Jesus than when they are serving.

Every Christian is a minister but not every Christian is a pastor, nor is every Christian a paid staff person. This biblical mandate assumes members will be matched according to their unique personalities, backgrounds, giftedness, and passions which enable them to serve with the greatest joy.

“Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.”
Ephesians 4:11-13 NLT

“Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, ‘I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,’ that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, ‘I am not part of the body because I am not an eye,’ would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many

parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, 'I don't need you.' The head can't say to the feet, 'I don't need you.' In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it."

1 Corinthians 12:14-27 NLT

At Henderson's First Baptist Church, we truly believe every individual has been uniquely gifted to fulfill his or her role of service within the church. Service is an essential function of the entire body! We commit to helping you discover how God has uniquely gifted you for the work of the ministry of the church and the building up of the kingdom! As part of the "First Steps" new member class, we will take you through a Discover Your Design workbook!

Day 15 Reflection: What do these passages say in regards to the role of ministers who serve the church? What do these passages say in regards to the rest of the church (God's people)? What do you see as your role in our church? Stop by the Connection Center for a list of ministry opportunities!

Have you registered for the "**First Steps**" new member class & luncheon yet? You can call the church office or register online at fbchenderson.org.

Prayer Focus: Pray for the Lord to show you opportunities to serve alongside fellow believers through ministry. Thank God now for how He has uniquely gifted you to serve.

DAY 16: EVANGELISM

D. T. Niles described Christianity as, “One beggar telling another beggar where he found bread.” Indeed, that is the idea behind evangelism. The term “evangelism” derives from the same term that gives us the word “Gospel,” which means “good news.” Evangelism is simply sharing the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others. It’s telling someone else where to find spiritual bread!

Practically speaking, Christians should want to tell others about Jesus. If He truly brings salvation to those who are dead in their sin, everyone must hear about Him. Generally speaking, the most loving thing that a Christian can do for someone is to tell them about the good news of Jesus Christ.

The final words of Jesus are His commissioning of His followers to tell others about Him. It is often referred to as the Great Commission because it is His final instruction given to those He left behind.

“Jesus came and told his disciples, ‘I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”
Matthew 28:18-20 NLT

Notice that Jesus tells us that He will **be with us always**. At Henderson’s First Baptist Church we believe Jesus wants all of us to share His good news with others. This is something that should be part of our very nature as followers of Christ. His great love for us and in us motivates us to share the Gospel with others.

Day 16 Reflection: Do you find it easy or difficult to tell others about Jesus? Why?

Does your love for God motivate you to share the Gospel?

What steps can you take today to be more intentional in sharing your faith? Contact our Minister of Missions and Evangelism or other ministerial staff for a list of suggestions. You may also consider using the material from Day 4 of this devotional: “Understanding the Gospel message.”

Prayer Focus: Pray that God will help you understand the Gospel that you may communicate it clearly to others.

DAY 17: MISSIONS

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8 NLT

These are the words of Jesus to His disciples shortly before He ascended up into heaven to be with the Father. This is the mission that God has left us. When we speak of “missions,” we are referring to the task of accomplishing the mission that Jesus left for us.

At Henderson’s First Baptist Church, we firmly believe that Jesus desires for the whole world to know about Him. As we read on Day 16, Jesus commanded His disciples to *go, make disciples, baptize, and teach*. This is true for the muddy banks of the Ohio River, as well as the rice paddies of Thailand.

There are 16,510 people groups in the world. Of those, well over 6,000 are completely unreached. This means that there is a very small percentage (if any) Christians living among these unreached people groups. We believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only means of having a relationship with God. Therefore, it is essential that these people groups hear the Gospel.

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, ‘How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!’”

Romans 10:13-15 NLT

How will the people of the world hear? It starts with you! **Pray! Give! Go! and Send!**

We believe that God is calling all His people to the work of missions and you can be a part of the movement to reach the world! As a church we hope that you will join us in *praying* for missionaries and unreached people groups, *giving* to missions causes, *going* on short-term or long-term mission trips, and *sending* missionaries all over the world.

At Henderson's First Baptist Church we are strategically focused on four areas for our missions efforts. Using Acts 1:8 as a model, we focus on what we call the "4Cs" of our Community, our Commonwealth, our Country, and the Continents. We are committed to reaching people with the Gospel and we believe that God is calling you to be a part of that great work!

Day 17 Reflection: What part do you think God wants you to play in reaching the world with the Gospel? How can you commit to a greater sense of urgency to reach the unreached people of the world?

- What can you do to reach the Community of Henderson?
- What can you do to reach the Commonwealth of Kentucky?
- What can you do to reach our Country?
- What can you do to reach the Continents?

Visit our Missions Center and create a plan of action for reaching the nations!

Prayer focus: Pray that God would give you greater clarity on how to reach the world and a greater burden for people who are without Jesus in our community, our commonwealth, our country, and across the continents.

DAY 18: STEWARDSHIP / GIVING

Why Give? What the Bible Has to Say About our Finances

Money is one of the most common topics in Scripture.

Unfortunately the dollar bill seems to be one of the Lord's greatest competitors when it comes to being the master of people. We so easily become enslaved to serving our money rather than seeing and using our resources as a blessing from God.

Money is not evil! Rather, it is the LOVE of money that gets us in trouble. So we have to be honest with ourselves as we examine who our true master is. The Bible puts it this way:

"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

Luke 16:13 NIV

Getting A Biblical Grip On My Finances

"On every Lord's Day each of you should put aside something from what you have earned during the week, and use it for this offering. The amount depends on how much the Lord has helped you earn."

1 Corinthians 16:2 TLB

"Tithe" means "a tenth part." So a tithe is giving 10% of my income. An **offering** would be anything above your tithe.

So Why Should I Tithe?

1. Tithing reminds me that **EVERYTHING** was given to me by God.

"...remember that the Lord your God gives you the strength to make a living." Deuteronomy 8:18 CEV

2. Tithing demonstrates God has **FIRST PLACE** in my life.

"The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives." Deuteronomy 14:23b TLB

3. Because Jesus **COMMENDS** it.

“Yes, you should tithe, but you shouldn’t leave the more important things undone.” Matthew 23:23b TLB

4. Tithing is an **EXPRESSION** of my love for God.

“Now I want you to be leaders also in the spirit of cheerful giving....This is one way to prove that your love is real, that it goes beyond mere words.”

2 Corinthians 8:7b-8 TLB

Day 18 Reflection: In what way does your giving reflect your trust in God and your commitment to His church?

Prayer Focus: Thank God for all He has provided for you spiritually, physically and financially. Pray for clarity and obedience concerning your financial stewardship.

DAY 19: FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship is an important part of life in the church family. God created us to be relational, He created us in His image.

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.’” Genesis 1:26 NKJV

In the beginning God was talking to someone, He was talking to Jesus and the Holy Spirit. You see, He has for all eternity existed in perfect relationship, in perfect fellowship. And since He created us in His image we are “hard-wired” for relationships with others.

In Colossians chapter 3, Paul discusses several of the relationships God has given us: our relationship with Him, the relationship of marriage, the relationship of family, and relationships in the world at large. All of these are important and all of them are blessings from God.

Another important relationship we see in Scripture is the relationship of believers and church members with one another. In the book of Acts, Luke shows us a beautiful picture of this important relationship.

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” Acts 2:42-47 NKJV

Being with other believers is an important part of the Christian life and participation in the church through membership is the means God has provided for believers to fellowship with one another. Therefore, at HFBC we encourage members to fellowship with one another through large group worship, through small group Sunday School, through service together, through missions, and through ministry to one another in times of crisis or celebration. We also encourage members to spend time together and just enjoy hanging out with each other!

If you still have not found a small group Sunday School class, we encourage you to visit a class this Sunday so you can begin to fellowship with and be encouraged by other Christians at HFBC! Please contact any staff member and they will be happy to help you find a small group that is right for you.

Day 19 Reflection: Remember the Apostle Paul's metaphor of the church being a body? You may wish to review this teaching from Day 15 of this devotional or look up 1 Corinthians 12:14-27.

Prayer Focus: Take a moment to thank God that He has led you to a church where you can grow in your relationship with Him—and in your relationship with others!

DAY 20: MEMBERSHIP

What it Means to Be a Member

The difference between “attenders” and “members” can be summed up in one word: **Commitment.**

Here are the reasons we ask you to commit to membership.

Biblical Reasons

1. Christ is committed to the church.

“...Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her”

Ephesians 5:25 NIV

The church is called “the bride of Christ” and He is committed to bringing each of those who are part of it into his Kingdom as “co-heirs.” Therefore, every believer should respond in turn with an “all in” commitment like that of a bride to her husband, one that says He is the love of our life and that we will join with Him now and for eternity.

2. The church is made up of all its members.

Remember: in his first letter to the church at Corinth, Paul describes the church as a body.

“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.”

1 Corinthians 12:12 NKJV

Just as the human body is made up of many parts or “members” that are necessary for it to function properly, so the church is made up of many members who have different gifts, ministries, and callings. Every member of a church is necessary to accomplish the commission Christ has given to us, He does not place people in churches by mistake, He places members in churches to accomplish His will.

A Cultural Reason

We live in an age when very few people want to be committed to anything...a job...a marriage...our country. Membership swims against the current of America's "consumer religion." It is an unselfish decision, a commitment to others that says, "I care about you, I want to minister to you, and I want to serve with you." Commitment always builds character. We become what we are committed to!

A Practical Reason

It defines who can be counted on. Every team must have a roster; every school an enrollment; every army an enlistment. Even our country takes a census and has voter registration. These are good things! Similarly, it is an honor to have the privilege and opportunity to be a church member.

A Personal Reason

It produces spiritual growth. The New Testament places a major emphasis on the need for Christians to be accountable to each other for spiritual growth.

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

Philippians 2:3-4 NKJV

Just like a marriage, you simply cannot be fully accountable until you commit and say, "I do!" Similarly, you can't be fully accountable when you're not committed to a church family.

Tomorrow we look at expectation's of members and how to become a member of Henderson's First Baptist Church. We realize church membership is a big decision and we are thankful to have had the opportunity to share the past 20 days of *First Steps* with you. We look forward to having you read and pray through tomorrow's material.

Day 20 Reflection: Commitment and accountability are not popular in today's culture! What is your reaction to being accountable to others? How might you make a difference in the life of other believers by being committed to your church and small group?

Prayer Focus: Pray for the Lord to guide you as you commit to membership. Thank God for His commitment to you and the fellowship you can enjoy with Him and with His people.

**ONLY ONE MORE DAILY STUDY TO GO
IN THIS BOOKLET!**

DAY 21: COVENANT

Church membership is a covenant relationship between believers as we seek to serve the Lord together. Carefully read through our church's wonderful covenant:

Henderson's First Baptist Church Covenant

Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness, and peace; to promote its spirituality and fruitfulness; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, and the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations; to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior throughout the world.

We also engage to maintain family and personal devotions; to educate our children in the Christian faith; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger; to seek God's help in abstaining from all drugs, food, drink, and practices which bring harm to the body or jeopardize our own or another's faith.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and

courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church of like precious faith where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

Here are a few summary statements of member expectations which arise from this covenant:

I. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH.

...By acting in love toward other members

...By refusing to gossip

...By following the leadership of the church

"...live in complete harmony with each other—each with the attitude of Christ toward the other."

Romans 15:5b TLB

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Ephesians 4:29 NIV

"Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you."

Hebrews 13:17 NIV

II. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH

...By praying for its growth

...By inviting the “unchurched” and “de-churched” to attend

...By warmly welcoming those who visit

“To the church... We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers.”

1 Thessalonians 1:2 NIV

“...go out into the country lanes and out behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full.”

Luke 14:23b TLB

“So warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified.”

Romans 15:7 TLB

III. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH

...By discovering my gifts and talents

...By being equipped to serve by my ministers

...By developing a servant’s heart

“God has given each of you some special abilities; be sure to use them to help each other,”

1 Peter 4:10a TLB

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

Philippians 2:3,4 NIV

IV. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH

...By attending faithfully

...By living a godly life

...By giving of financial resources on a regular basis

“not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.”

Hebrews 10:25 NLT

“Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ.”

Philippians 1:27a NLT

Day 21 Reflection: Do you have any other questions about being a covenant member of Henderson’s First Baptist Church? If so, bring these with you to the **“First Steps”** new member class or call the church to speak to a minister.

Prayer Focus: Prayerfully consider the impact you can have on the church, community, and world through your involvement at HFBC! Thank God for the opportunity to join Him in His work!

AND NOW... We invite you to be a member of HFBC!
Here is a reminder of what to do in three easy steps:

1. **Complete** the *First Steps Devotional* (you just did!). Fill out the final page of the devotional (last page) and either turn it in to the church office or give it to one of our ministerial staff members who will follow up with you
2. **Attend** a “First Steps” new member class & luncheon. Register by calling the church office at 270-826-2332 or register online at fbchenderson.org.
3. **You will be contacted** by one of our ministerial staff members for follow up.

Upon completion of these three steps your name will be presented to the church at our next members’ meeting where we will celebrate your becoming part of the HFBC family!

Congratulations! You have completed the *First Steps Devotional*. Please complete the Application for Church Membership Form (last page) and turn it in to the church office or give it to one of our ministerial staff members who will follow up with you. If you would like to mail your form, mail to: Henderson’s First Baptist Church at 307 Center St. Henderson, KY 42420.

This book belongs to:

Name: _____

Completed on: _____

Congratulations! You have completed the *First Steps Devotional*. Please complete the following Application for Church Membership Form and turn it in to the church office or give it to one of our ministerial staff members who will follow up with you. If you would like to mail your form, mail to: Henderson's First Baptist Church at 307 Center St. Henderson, KY 42420.

Application for Church Membership

Name _____

Address _____

Birthdate _____ Sex _____

Email _____

Cell # _____

_____ Single _____ Married _____ Widowed _____ Divorced

Yes, I have completed the First Steps Devotional!

Completion Date: _____

I would like to join HFBC.

Are you currently a member of another Church? _____

If so, where? _____

Have you trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior?

Have you been baptized by immersion after receiving Christ as personal Savior? _____

When? _____ Where? _____

I have not been baptized; please schedule one.

