

AUGUST 21 – SEPTEMBER 19

ONE

SOUTHLAND A2 RESOURCES



AUGUST 21 – SEPTEMBER 19

ONE

SOUTHLAND A2 RESOURCES



One City
One Mission
One Leader
One Sacrifice
One Voice

WORD Processing

The studies that will transform your life.

It is the same with my word.

I send it out, and it always produces fruit.

It will accomplish all I want it to,

and it will prosper everywhere I send it.

Isaiah 55:11 (NLT)

What is “WORD Processing”?

“WORD Processing” is a Bible study designed for communities of believers and individual believers who want to dig into and discover the truths of God’s Word and then discern what God is saying to them through those truths. Believers’ hearts long to be in tune with the Creator. When people spend time processing God’s Word, God speaks to the individuals who then enter into an intimate relationship with Him.

Many rely on the church to do the research and study and educate the believers. “WORD Processing” is designed to teach believers to study the Bible for themselves and then apply the lessons learned. Spending time in God’s Word causes individuals to be changed. The goal of Bible study is not simply to gain more facts and information; the goal of any Bible study is to move people to hear from God, to allow the Holy Spirit to transform their hearts and minds so they will look more like Jesus. “WORD Processing” is built on this principle.

Explanation of Terms

WORD Processing is divided into sections designed to help learners study and apply God's Word to the hearts of the learners. The sections are:



INQUIRY

These words bring together our present culture and the biblical principles of the series.



PROPOSAL

This is a statement of the objectives the series seeks to achieve when the learners are diligent in studying and applying the principles explored.



OBSERVING

The purpose of this section is to answer the question, "Why do we need to know this?" Here we make use of life experiences connecting the learners to the WORD.



FOCUSING

This section includes the Scripture passages covered in the study. It seeks to answer the question, "What do we need to know?" This is where the analysis of the WORD occurs.



DISCOVERING

Here the principles examined in **Focusing** begin to answer, "How do I use these principles this week?" This section is a place where learners are given various problems to solve using the principles of the text.



DOING

How does this lesson apply to life this week and in the coming weeks? It seeks to answer the question, "Why should I incorporate these principles into my life?"



BREAKING NEWS

These extra insights into Bible study, language tools, and the specific cultural references appear from time to time to assist in better understanding of the WORD.



MEMORY VERSE

A Bible verse or verses that help learners remember the principles of the study.



SOURCES

A list of resources providing additional materials that learners can examine for further insight into the week's study.

AUGUST 21 – SEPTEMBER 19

ONE

SOUTHLAND A2 RESOURCES



One City	9
One Mission	15
One Leader	21
One Sacrifice	29
One Voice	35
Sources	43

Temple Truth: "Nurturing Our City"

One ... If Together Had a Number - Fall 2010

“Nurturing our city”



INQUIRY

One! Is it a title, an ordinal, a movement, or something else?

One is a grassroots campaign of more than 2 million people committed to the fight against extreme poverty and preventable diseases.

One is the fourth song by Metallica on the fourth album “And Justice for All.” One is also a song by U2 from their 1991 album, “Achtung Baby.”

O.N.E. (One Natural Experience) is a brand of natural fruit drinks offering an alternative to sports drinks, energy drinks, and sodas.

One is a rollerblading magazine. The **One Club** is the world’s foremost non-profit organization for the recognition and promotion of excellence in advertising.

When you hear one, what comes to your mind? One hope, one faith, one love, one God and Father, one Lord, one nation, one Son, one baptism, one body, one church are some of the 2295 times one is used in the NIV Old and New Testaments. Maybe you think of one family, one child, one life, or one spouse. Other people may think about one more time, one more chance, one more day, or one more try.

Around the world people often try to determine which god is the one God. Is he Allah? Is he YHWH? Is he Vishnu? Maybe he is Achaman. We who follow the God of the Bible know Him as many names, including Elohim, Adonai, El Shaddai, King, Shepherd, Judge, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, Father, Almighty, Word, Rock, Cornerstone, and many others, yet He is One.

In Ephesians 4 we see Paul’s great statement: “1As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called— 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” (NIV) In these verses we find unity and one tied together.

In this five-part series we will examine the concept of one from a variety of angles, while maintaining the unity of one. Our focus for this series is on One Church concentrating on One City. The church is Southland Christian Church and the city is Lexington, Kentucky though any congregation could concentrate on their particular city, exploring what God wants done by believers in that city.

One City: Lexington, Kentucky. The study will take us to Jerusalem and Rome to see how the early church impacted these particular cities so we can learn from them how to make an impact on our city. How did the early believers interact with their neighbors, with those who opposed them, with the city officials, and even with the “police” of their day?

Once we have a better understanding of the city God is calling us to impact we then turn our attention to One Mission: Fall in love with Jesus and Follow Jesus. When Jesus was ready to leave the earth he called his disciples together and sent them to make disciples of all ethnic groups. If we look around our city we need to ask, who are these groups? And how do we live our lives in such a way they fall in love with Jesus and want to follow him?

One Leader: Jesus. What are the commands of Jesus? Are we willing to follow them? Really? Are we willing to give up everything to follow Him, including our houses and land, our families, our positions of power and authority? If Jesus is our leader we must follow him in all ways every day.

To follow Jesus means sacrifice. Jesus came to earth to live in humility and to give his life as a ransom for all who willingly choose to follow. David at one time would not take a gift so he could offer a sacrifice to God on the space, because he would not offer something which cost him nothing. What will it cost to follow Jesus? This is the focus of study four in this series.

If we examine the early years of the church, no matter which in cities of the Roman Empire, we find one common voice calling people to the Lordship of Jesus. The various Roman leaders loved being called Lord, but none of them really cared for the people except as slaves for the Empire. We are called to be ambassadors for the King of King and Lord of Lords, and how we represent Him means paying close attention to what He wants done in His kingdom. One Voice calls us, are we listening?

One ... If Together Has a Number will be both a homecoming and a challenge to us. We can no longer sit on the sidelines, gathering corporate dust. Jesus calls us to get involved making disciples of all people.



PROPOSAL

As a result of this study we expect people to:

1. Follow Jesus, no matter how radical His call seems to us.
2. Tap into the power and authority God gives us to accomplish the kingdom work to which we are called.
3. Willingly sacrifice everything for the sake of making Christ known to our city.

ONE ...IF TOGETHER HAD A NUMBER – FALL '10

STUDY ONE: ONE CITY

Temple Truth: "Nurturing Our City"



OBSERVING

Think of the last time you were out and about and witnessed an act of random kindness. What did you see? What was so compelling to you about that particular action?

In the 1970's, ethics theorist and university professor Philip Hallie was struggling with his study of institutional cruelty during the Holocaust. Working day in and day out with the eyewitness reports of Nazi brutality in the concentration camps, Hallie was surprised to discover a very simple and spare report of French parish pastor and his congregation's work to save Jewish children. During the years between 1942 and 1945, the faith community at Le Chambon saved over 3,000 Jews fleeing Nazi Germany. The quiet and unsung efforts of this community shocked and overwhelmed Hallie. After spending a sleepless night in despair over the desolation caused by genocide, Hallie reports he got out of bed to revisit the story of Le Chambon. As he read, he states "to my surprise, again the spear [of pain over the horrors], again the tears, again the frantic, painful pleasure that spills into the mind when a deep, deep need is being satisfied, or when a deep wound in starting to heal." Hallie did not just find the story of a faith community determined to save Jewish children simply inspiring - he found it *healing*. For him and for many others, the small actions of this one church in one community at one point in history bears witness to an enduring hope for true goodness in the world.

When we witness acts of random kindness, it encourages our hearts for a moment. But when we witness simple acts that flow from the deep wells of faith, we are invited and challenged to live into the eternal and in-breaking kingdom of God. This kind of witness takes on the characteristics of the miraculous not just because it becomes an instrument of God's healing but also because it comes through the actions of ordinary people and ordinary places.

When you consider the pain and chaos that is often in the world, where do you see goodness flourishing? List 2-3 places or actions that particularly speak of God's love for the world:

The people of Le Chambon refused to be called good; for them, their actions were simply in response to what needed to be done. Do you see places in your experience where there are things that need to be done so that hope can be restored?

Turning to the book of Acts, we find another group of ordinary people in an ordinary place where God is doing extraordinary things. This group would be the first Jesus followers in Jerusalem; certainly, Christ has just ascended into heaven, telling them that they would be the first witnesses to God's bigger plans in their own communities.



FOCUSING

Read Luke 24:45-49

In this passage, Christ reveals the plans of God for the world.

Where does this passage say this plan is recorded? What factors allows the disciples to see God's plan in a clearer way?



BREAKING NEWS

In Greek, the word for 'witness' can have several different meanings. Like its English counterpart, this word was generally used to refer to those who testify in legal matters in either secular or religious courts (see Hebrews 10:28). But it also refers to one who affirms or attests events that they have seen or experienced personally. In this passage, Christ confirms the disciples as those who have seen and experienced the divine message of his life, death, and resurrection and God's desire for all to experience reconciliation through Christ.

Where does Christ say the fulfillment of God's plan will begin? What is the significance of this place to the disciples?

Read Acts 2:42-47, 4:32

While in Jerusalem, how do the disciples live together? What kinds of actions characterize their way of life?

How do these passages indicate the disciples treated one another? What is the response of others to this kind of shared life?

Read Acts 4:8-13

Skim the first portion of chapter 4. Why are the Sadducees upset with Peter and John?

In this passage, how do Peter and John respond to their opponents? What do they cite as the reason for their actions?

Their opponents are amazed at their response. What seems to impress the Sadducees about Peter and John? Who do they know these men have been with?



BREAKING NEWS

When the text refers to Peter and John as 'ordinary,' it is suggesting that the teachers of the law were surprised that they were untrained. Unlike their audience, Peter and John were not formally schooled in matters of Torah observance. Rather, as the text reveals, they were able to speak with authority on such matters because they had been well-trained in their three years of learning from and observing Jesus in his ministry.

Read Acts 23:6-11

How does Paul address his opponents? How does the text indicate his words to the Sanhedrim are spoken?

Despite the negative responses of Paul's opponents, what does Christ reveal to Paul about His purposes in these circumstances? Because of Paul's witness in Jerusalem, where will Paul be able to witness next?

Read Acts 28:21-31

When Paul arrives in Rome, what do the leaders of the Jews there want to know from him? What is the result of Paul's witness among the Roman Jews?

Consider the end of this passage (verses 30-31). Although Paul is in legal custody, what is he able to do while in Rome?



DISCOVERING

As we explore the life of the early church in the Book of Acts, we can begin to see how God works through faith communities to impact the cities in which they live. The unfolding of God's plan to reconcile all people to Himself through Christ begins with a one mismatched group of followers in a town called Jerusalem during the 1st century AD. But the narrative didn't stop there! Rather, it is unfolding in our midst, and God is inviting us to participate in His vision of life lived in love, grace, and truth.

Problem

At Jesus' ascension, the disciples were charged with being witnesses to a reality that was hidden prior to Christ's life, death, and resurrection. In what ways do you see the early church followers being witnesses to God's purposes in Christ?

If we are called to be witnesses like those in the early church, what would it look like to be witnesses in our individual lives? In our shared life as a faith community?

Problem

For the early church in Jerusalem, their way of shared life served as a testimony

to the realities they experienced with God in Christ. What kinds of shared practices within our faith community speak to the faith, hope, and love we have in Christ?

Problem

In times of conflict with their communities, the Christians of the early church speak kindly to their opponents. Considering conflicts you may have had with others, would you say that you are able to speak kindly in the heat of the battle? Why or why not?



DOING

"Nurturing Our City"

We are One Church concentrating on One City, exploring God's purposes for Lexington, KY through shared life at Southland Christian Church.

Part of becoming the One Church for the One City is engaging in shared life together. Thinking of my participation at Southland, where do I find myself participating in meaningful ways with my brothers and sisters in the faith? Focusing on the One City, God's unfolding story doesn't just involve the early church...it involves us. What needs to I see in my community that could be a way to engage and thus witness to the love God has for us all?

Answers these questions, noting what stirs your heart on each. Then pray about both how God might be leading you to engage within the Southland community as well as connect with the city of Lexington. As you receive more guidance from the Lord, consider pursuing one or more of these ideas as ways to allow God's grace to minister to you and those you with whom you come into contact.



MEMORY VERSE

This is what is written: the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. Luke 24:46-48 (NIV)



SOURCES

Hallie, Philip. (1994). *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There*. San Francisco: HarperPerennial Publishers.

ONE ... IF TOGETHER HAD A NUMBER – FALL 2010



STUDY TWO: ONE MISSION

Temple Truth: "Nurturing Our City"



OBSERVING

Tell about a time you were lost.

If you've ever been lost you know the sinking feeling when you realize you are hopelessly off track. A hike in the woods as a Boy Scout was one early experience for me. When the boy responsible for being our navigator realized he didn't know where we were, I panicked. I can remember the fear and sense of disorientation. I lost heart. But then I remembered my father, the scoutmaster, was with us. Just because the kid entrusted with leading us was lost didn't mean my loving father, a long time military man, couldn't extricate us from our predicament! When I remembered who was with us, who was on our side, I realized all would be well.

Later in life lostness took on another dimension: the hopeless predicament of debt. The realization of the spending habits of a decade – earning an average of \$25,000 per year and spending even more than that quarter of a million dollars of income - was overwhelming. It felt just like being lost in the woods – panic, disorientation. But God placed a guy in my path who loved me and also happened to be a financial professional. He was able to help my family sort out the pieces and find our way through that dark season.

When I first became a pastor, I was again feeling lost when I prepared for my first funeral. What would I say? What should I do? How in the world do I help? I had no idea. But, again, several mentors who loved me and knew the way helped me through.

You see - it is not enough when we're lost to follow someone who doesn't know the way – they're as lost as we are! And it's not safe to follow someone whose intentions may not be for our best interest – someone who doesn't love us. It takes someone who loves us *and* knows the way ahead to lead us. The combination of love and clear direction is the only one worth following.

Southland's mission is to help people fall in love with Jesus and follow Him. This has been the mission of Jesus' followers for almost 2000 years now. Falling in love and following Him are intertwined. Our love results in willing obedi-

ONE:
One Mission

ence. Our obedience results in loving Him more. Eugene Peterson describes this as a long obedience in the same direction.

To accomplish this mission, we must follow Christ's lead. He knows the way. He loves us more than we will ever know – unconditionally. He accepts us with all our flaws and foibles. And as He lovingly shows us the way, as we grow in love for God and people – we can confidently invite others, regardless of their background, to follow us as we follow Christ in the One Mission!



FOCUSING

The love relationship we have with Jesus and our confidence in His leadership are at the heart of our mission at Southland.

Fall in love:

Read Jeremiah 31:3

What are the key ingredients as God draws people toward Himself?

Read Luke 15:11-32

What evidence of everlasting and/or unfailing love do you find demonstrated in this text?

Do you see any examples of love implied or specified being returned to the father in this account?

Following Jesus is not like heavy-lifting. Becoming a Christian is simple, although following Jesus is sometimes difficult. We generally have the most trouble with obedience, not so much with belief. Obedience is an issue of the heart.

Read Matthew 21:28-31

What was Jesus' point in this parable?



BREAKING NEWS

There is something inherently good about obedience. Almost like it's built into our existence. We obey to avoid punishment or adverse consequences. That's good, right? In the case of competition, we obey to obtain reward. Also a good thing. But we also obey because of love – for the simple fact we wish to be a delight to the one we love and respect – a parent, grandparent, or mentor.

Which brother in Matthew 21:28-31 are you more like?

God is pleased when we obey "just because"...

Read 1 Peter 2:18-20

What does the surrounding text tell you about Peter's statement in verse 19?

Following is easiest from a position of humility. It's also easier when we realize (and admit!) we do not know the way on our own.

Read Romans 14:23

What is the state of a heart that acts contrary to its convictions of right and true?



BREAKING NEWS

God is all about His people obeying what they deeply believe. He wants them to do even if others believe it's wrong – as long as their actions don't cause another person to think they are sinning! At the same time, we can only obey when we comprehend the expectations. When we aren't clear, we may accidentally obey but we are also just as likely to disobey... Accidentally.



DISCOVERING

How did I fall in love with Jesus?

Falling in love with Jesus has been a long process – the same way falling in love with *anyone* is a constantly growing, changing, morphing, deepening experience. I first realized this love for Christ growing about 5 years after I was baptized. During the first years of my Christianity, I considered Jesus to be my “fire insurance” – I wasn’t going to hell and I could call on Him when I needed something. Later I began to notice the way of life He was leading me into was so much more desirable than they way I had been living. My relationship started to change with Him and with the people around me. I can remember noticing how I was, more and more, desiring to do, say, and think the things that I knew would bring a smile to His face. In the dozen or so years since then, I’ve found this has been a constantly-changing, deepening love-experience of relationship with Christ.

Have you fallen in love with Jesus? Share your story!

What does following Him look like for me?

In the beginning it was trying to live in ways I knew He designed me to live – sinning less and less. I realized along the way this was the better way to live. It was for my relational best with Jesus, but also with others! Sin and selfishness separated me emotionally from Christ and other people. Right now, following Him looks a lot like listening for His voice in scripture, worship, prayer, silence and attempting to be obedient when I perceive what He’s saying. This plays out in my role as a husband, father, friend, pastor, in private and in public. It shows up in love, joy, and other fruit of His Spirit in me. It shows up as generosity with time, gifting, resources. It also manifests in deep inward conviction when I act, think, or speak in ways that reflect the old, sinful, flesh-centered ways I lived out before knowing Jesus.

Do you follow Him? Tell about it:

If I don’t know Him, how do I meet Him?

Read the following texts and formulate an answer to the question above:

John 3:16-21

Acts 2:38

Romans 3:19-24

If I know Him through belief, confession, repentance, and baptism, but haven’t followed, what steps do I need to take?

Pray and ask God to show you what you need to do. As you read these texts, listen for His voice answering your question through the pages of scripture.

Galatians 5:16-17

Philippians 4:6-8

Ephesians 4:1

Acts 2:42-47



DOING

“Nurturing our city”

Read Matthew 28:18-20.

Fall in love with Jesus and follow Him. And teach others to do the same. How can you go about doing this?

Help others fall in love with Jesus.

The more you become like Him, the more the people who are attracted to your way of life will understand who this Jesus is. As you turn their attention away from yourself to Him, giving Him the credit for what He’s done in you, they will be led closer and closer to Him. You have to be present – living in their view, loving like He does: Consistently accepting them as they are but loving them enough to not leave them that way.

Help others follow Jesus.

As the people you know fall deeper in love with Jesus, naturally you are further along the journey than they are. Share what He has done and is still doing in you. Sharing authentically from who you are and who you are becoming will help them to understand the reality of following Jesus daily. Your lifestyle of Christ-followership is the best model for leading others to do the same.

Who has God put in your path at each of these stages?

What is your next step?

ONE ... IF TOGETHER HAD A NUMBER – FALL '10

STUDY THREE: ONE LEADER

Temple Truth: "Nurturing Our City"



OBSERVING

In a few weeks we will head to the polls to elect people for various positions in our cities and states. We will look at the candidates running for office and seek to determine what kind of leaders they will be once elected. Sometimes we make what we think are the right choices, and when the elected are in office we discover a lack of leadership we expected.

Similar outcomes occur from time to time when a company hires a new CEO, a university hires a new president, and a church hires a new senior minister. The person interviewed had the necessary qualities the "boards" thought to be an excellent leader, only to discover the individual possessed flaws which seemed to rise to the surface when placed in a new leadership position.

Over the years there have been a number of theories suggesting why this failure in leadership happens. One recent theory says organizations tend to hire people who have "starred" in a previous position, but when coming to a new place do not have all the people and circumstances of the former organization to support them, thus they may fail as leaders in their new place of employment.

Recently I was reading a number of articles and books based on events in World War II. What I couldn't help but wonder was why certain national leaders were chosen; specifically Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin, though certainly Churchill could be included. What kind of leader did the people of those nations think they were getting? Were they simply choosing based on what little information they could gather, or was there something else driving their selection? I've often wondered why so few church leaders were virtually silent during the years of mass executions of innocent people during that war, and since. Why do you think this silence happened?

In our own era we see the moral failures of so many business and political leaders, as well as those within the church? What in your opinion causes such failures?

Did you ever wonder what it would have been like to wander the hills and valleys of Galilee and Judea with Jesus as leader? From what you know describe what an "average day" with Jesus might have looked like:

This particular study looks at Jesus as our one leader. Now if he is leader this means we must be followers, else we are rebels looking for another to lead us. Are you ready to follow wherever he leads? Really? Even if he calls us to go or do something we think is way too risky? If you're willing, daring, and ready let's see what Jesus says to those who want to follow him?



FOCUSING

Jesus speaks to potential followers

Read Matthew 8:18-22

What will life be like for those who follow Jesus based on these verses?

What excuses are made by people who say they want to follow, but don't?

Read Matthew 19:16-22

What does this young man want?

What does he have to do to obtain what he wants?

Why do you think he responded as he did?

Jesus speaks to hanger-on followers

Read John 6:60-69

What was Jesus teaching which made some of his followers leave him?

Why were some not willing to leave when they had the opportunity?

Read Luke 8:6-7;13-14

What causes some people to readily accept the good news of Jesus and so quickly fall away?

Jesus speaks to disciples

Read Matthew 10:24-33

What do we learn about being a follower of Jesus from these statements?

What is a disciple promised for following Jesus in this teaching?

Read Mark 12:28-31

When asked about the greatest commandments Jesus says:

And what does Jesus add as a second commandment?

Read Luke 9:18-27

What are the various answers given in this passage regarding the identity of Jesus?

What does Jesus say about himself which he then applies to those who want to follow him?

What does Jesus promise those who turn their backs on following him?

The world usually counts profit in economic terms. How does Jesus count profit?

Jesus speaks with authority
Read Luke 7:2-10

What does the Roman centurion say about Jesus' authority?

How does Jesus exhibit his use of authority?

What are the disciples thinking when they gather on the mountain with Jesus?

What is Jesus' claim to authority as a leader?

What does Jesus tell his disciples to do as a result of this authority?

Read Acts 1:7-8

What does Jesus, as leader promise to his followers?

What are the followers supposed to do with the power Jesus gives them?



DISCOVERING

Read Mark 4:1-9

How does this parable relate to the various groups of people who hear the words of Jesus?

Based on the Scriptures of this study, as well as other Scriptures you know, provide answers or guidelines for the following scenarios.

Elder's Dilemma

The elders of the Community Christian Church are searching for a new senior minister. Their previous minister was a vibrant young man filled with ideas about how to attract big crowds of people, and frankly was quite successful. In fact he was so successful he was "called" to a larger church in another part of the country and continues to attract larger and larger crowds there.

Now these men are trying to listen to the Holy Spirit's leading in calling another senior minister. Some of the elders want a man similar to what they just had. After all, big crowds is what church is all about, and someone who knows how to manage such a church is essential to the future growth of the congregation. Others of the elders are really searching the Scriptures to see the sort of leader Jesus was, and then seek to find someone who follow the ministry model of Jesus. This may mean smaller numbers of people attending since discipleship and making more disciples is what they see as the key purpose of the church.

You've been called in as a consultant to the elders. Based on what you've read in the Scriptures in this study, as well as other biblical knowledge you have, what will you say to these elders about their next senior minister?

Follower's Choice

The senior minister of your congregation over the last year has been preaching from the Gospels about Jesus. He examined those who followed Jesus and why they came and stayed, or why they came and left. Your minister also looked at the lifestyle of Jesus and saw he spent a lot of time meeting physical, social, and emotional needs as well as spiritual needs. Now he is challenging the congregation to live like Jesus in the community.

One of the challenges presented by the minister is a call for radical discipleship, giving up self for the sake of following Jesus in every way he calls. Examples given include downsizing houses; selling vacation homes and boats, donating the proceeds to organizations helping people in third world countries begin their own "businesses;" keeping only 7 days worth of clothes, while giving the rest to those in need; basically materially simplifying life so others, especially believers around the world, can have more than they do.

The minister also suggested the members give 50% or more of their personal income to mission organizations which are dedicated to helping people with a hand up, taking personal responsibility for their need, and missions which provide relief following disasters, but not on an on-going basis thus creating a welfare mentality, or as one missionary calls such people, "Cargo Christians."

Another of the minister's proposals is for members to move to cities where there are few if any evangelical congregations effectively reaching people with the Gospel. This means leaving family and friends and starting over in a new place without the advantages of a "friendly home congregation."

You and your family are not sure about all these calls to follow. After all, you come to church weekly, give 10% of your after tax income, once in a while buy ice cream for the children in the neighborhood, and bring food supplies when asked. These ideas now presented seem radical. Where do you begin, or do you?



DOING

"Nurturing Our City"

If Jesus is the leader, the Lord of life, how will you respond to his call in your life? Listed below are some suggestions for following the leader. Pray for guidance as to which you will choose to follow for the remainder of this year, and maybe for the remainder of your life.

Increase your financial support of the church by 1-3%
Clean out your closets, basement, garage, and give to Helping Through Him Mentor a child through the school mentoring program
Take a prayer walk through various sections of the city and ask God what he wants to do there through you
Adopt a child through Food for the Hungry www.fh.org
Plan a neighborhood block party
Skip one meal per week and give the money to Food for the Hungry
Pay the tuition for a ministry student from Eastern Europe or Central Asia through TCMI www.tcmi.edu
Pray daily the Lord of the harvest will raise up an army of workers to change our city
Give up your favorite drink and donate the money to the Dollar Club



MEMORY VERSE

"A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master." Matthew 10:24 (NIV)



SOURCES

Blanchard, Ken, and Phil Hodges. (2008). *Lead Like Jesus*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
Briner, Bob and Ray Pritchard. (2008). *The Leadership Lessons of Jesus*. Nashville: B&H Publishing.
Engstrom, Ted, and Paul Cedar. (2003). *Compassionate Leadership: Rediscovering Jesus' Radical Leadership Style*. Glendale, CA: Gospel Light.
Hull, Bill. (2007). *Lead as Jesus Led*. Richardson, TX: Biblical Studies Press.

Was your motive to gain something better in the long-term, or did you willingly give knowing there would be no return?

In this study we explore what biblical sacrifice looks like, and how we can carry the concept over into nurturing our city. Grab your Bible and let's get started.



FOCUSING

Read Genesis 22:1-19

What is Abraham's response to God's request to sacrifice his son Isaac?

What is Isaac's response to what his father is about to do?

How does God intervene in the sacrifice Abraham is ready to make?

What does God promise because of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son?

Read 2 Samuel 24:18-25



BREAKING NEWS

King David did not follow the directions of the Lord when taking a census of the people. God then allowed David to choose his punishment: 7 years of famine; 3 months of fleeing from enemies; or 3 days of pestilence in the land. David chose pestilence, but immediately repented of his sin and was told to offer a sacrifice in order to relieve the people's punishment.

Where is David headed to make his sacrifice to God for his sin?

What is Araunah willing to do to help King David?

What is David's response to Araunah's offer?

What was God's response to David's sacrifice?

Read Exodus 36:1-6

Why was Moses calling for the people to bring their contributions?

What did the workmen tell Moses about the contributions?

What did Moses then tell the people about additional contributions?

Read Ephesians 5:1-2

What is Paul's challenge to those who follow Jesus?

What two words does Paul use to describe what Jesus did for people?



BREAKING NEWS

Sweet smelling savor is a phrase often used of sacrifices in the Old Testament. The phrase is used of sacrifices and or offerings which made atonement or expiation. Paul also uses this phrasing in Philippians 4:18 to describe the sacrifice of the people in giving to his physical needs. In 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 we who follow Jesus are said to be the sweet aroma of Christ.

Read Hebrews 13:15-17

The writer instructs believers to sacrifice what?

In addition to praise and thanksgiving the writer also reminds people of what other sacrifices they are to make?

How is submitting to church leaders a sacrifice according to this particular text?



DISCOVERING

Have you ever thought about sacrifices made in various movies? What are some of the sacrifices which are made in movies, and how can these sacrifices teach you more about the attitudes and motivations for sacrificing?

Tim and Amy are just graduating from seminary and trying to discern where the Lord is leading them. For three years they prayed about staying in the US verses going overseas to a people group where the Gospel is not yet well-known. Of course their parents have done all they could to convince them they need to stay in the US. Just recently they were invited to come to Siberia to work in a Bible College as faculty members, teaching theology and New Testament. However, they will be responsible for raising their financial support, and with the current exchange rate their needs will appear to be fairly high compared to a ministry in the United States.

Siberia is a long way from home, and a long way from the United States and their seminary friends. However, the Gospel is beginning to make inroads into the outreach areas of Siberia as well as places in Central Asia. The call is for a five year commitment which will require \$500,000 in income over the time period. Tim and Amy keep praying and of course their parents keep putting the pressure on as they pray God will keep their children in the US. The college needs an answer in two weeks in order to get all the necessary paperwork done for Tim and Amy to begin the new school year.

Since they are your friends how do you help Tim and Amy make their decision? Maybe you're more their parents age; so how do you help them support Tim and Amy in their decision? What are sacrifices everyone will have to make if Tim and Amy choose to take the call to Siberia? What are the possible sacrifices if they do not follow the call?

In a recent study by White Hutchinson based on US Department of Commerce statistics (2000-2008) the average American adult gives 3.5% to charity and religious organizations, while at the same time spending over 5.5% on entertainment, which includes fees, electronics, and tickets. Per person this amounts to an average of \$1717 donated to charity and \$2827 for entertainment. The Bureau of Economic Analysis figures for the year 2007 place the percentage of church giving at 2.56, slightly less than reported by White Hutchinson. The fact that church giving is less than the overall US giving to charity may well suggest Christians are no different than non-believers in terms of economic giving.

What percentage are you giving to the church? The Old Testament called for 10%, the tithe. While there is no command of a set amount in the New Testament what resources would the church have if every adult gave 10% of their financial resources as well as the same amount of their time? What are you willing to sacrifice to see the kingdom of God advance?



DOING

"Nurturing Our City"

As a family what are you willing to sacrifice for the next month, year? Listed below are some ways of sacrificing money and time for the kingdom. Choose at least one and try it for a month, or commit to a year and see what God does with your sacrifice.

1. Give 10% of your income to the church. If you find this too difficult at present seek to increase your giving by 1% per year for the next years until you can give 10%.
2. If you are already giving 10% seek to increase your giving by 5% for the next month or year.
3. Give 10 hours per week to making a difference in your community. This could be a school, one of the medical clinics, adopt a block, visiting the elderly at a retirement or nursing home, or some other missional outreach to the community.
4. Take a mission trip and let God use your time and energy to advance the kingdom.



MEMORY VERSE

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship." Romans 12:1 (NIV)



SOURCES

Blackaby, Henry. (2005). *Experiencing the Cross*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Press.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. (1995). *The Cost of Discipleship*. Austin, TX: Touchstone.

Kent, Carol. (2004). *When I Lay My Isaac Down*. Colorado Springs: NavPress.

Swindoll, Chuck. (2007). *So You Want to Be Like Christ?* Nashville: W Publishing.

ONE ... IF TOGETHER HAD A NUMBER – FALL '10

STUDY FIVE VOICE – ONE VOICE

Temple Truth: "Nurturing Our City"



OBSERVING:

What is your favorite kind of book to read? Fiction? Non-fiction?

What is your favorite kind of movie to watch? Comedy? Romance? Action? Suspense?

When you are stumped by or don't understand something said to you, how do you respond?

- a. Ask clarifying questions.
- b. Ask for repetition.
- c. Do nothing. (I don't want to appear dumb.)

When you hear the word "kingdom" what comes to mind?

If you were appointed King or Queen of the World for a day, what would your first Royal Command be?

Have you ever thought an element or responsibility of your job was going to mean one thing, but you later discovered it to be something very different, and you realized your understanding was very different than that of those in charge? Describe your reaction or thoughts.



FOCUSING

Read Matthew 13:24 - 52

In this passage, Jesus himself describes the Kingdom of Heaven. He uses what is known as “parables” to teach the people about the nature of His Kingdom. Remember that the Hebrews of Jesus’ day were expecting their Messiah to come as a literal King, a political and powerful figure, who would change their lives, and rescue them from rulers and enemies who had persecuted and treated them badly. What they got was a baby in a manger.

As we often learn, God’s economy seldom resembles mankind’s. As you study the Kingdom of Heaven described in the following parables, ask God to prepare your heart to see His heart in understanding these now famous stories.

All Scripture references are from the New International Version (NIV), unless otherwise indicated.

Parable #1- The Parable of the Weeds

Read Matthew 13:24-30

There are six parables in these verses, but we will only look at the first four. We will examine from Matthew 13 uses a particular phrase to begin. What is that phrase? See Matthew 13:24.

The _____ of _____ is _____ ...

In Matthew 13:24, what does Jesus say the kingdom of heaven is like?

So, the kingdom of heaven is like a farmer who plants his good seed in a ready field. What does that say to you?

Verses 25 and 26 then give us a plot twist. What happens next?

Based on the text, what do you believe the “weeds” are?



BREAKING NEWS

The word “weeds” in Greek is *zizanion*. This is actually a poisonous rye grass which looks like wheat until the heads appear. Judaism understands “weeds” in this context not to be a different plant from wheat, but rather a degenerate form of it that cannot be pre-determined to be a “bad seed” until it’s already among the “good seed.”

No farmer would knowingly plant good seed among bad, right? In fact, the Hebrew farmers were specifically instructed by the Lord not to mix seeds in the same fields. Look up Leviticus 19:19 and record what you find about God’s instructions to Hebrew farmers.

Verse 25 says, “But while everyone was sleeping...” Why do you think the Lord included this phrase in the parable?

The parable tells us the bad seed was sown by “his enemy.” Who is the enemy?

The owner’s instructions to the servants are not to act immediately, but to wait for a specific time to separate the weeds from the wheat (verses 28-29). What feelings does the idea of waiting evoke in you?

According to verse 30, what will happen to the “weeds”?

What will happen to the “wheat”?

Jesus doesn't often do this with parables, but verses 36-43 explain the parable in whole. Record all that you learn about the identities of the...

Good Seed: _____

Field: _____

Enemy: _____

Harvest: _____

Harvesters: _____

Parable #2 *The Parable of the Mustard Seed*

Read Matthew 13:31-32

Much shorter in length, the remaining parables nonetheless have valuable lessons for the disciple.

In Matthew 13:31, what does Jesus say the kingdom of heaven is like?

According to verse 32, what is unique about the mustard seed?

Have you ever felt your contribution to God's Kingdom is small or limited in some way?

What, according to verse 32, happens to the mustard seed upon reaching maturity in the garden?

Parable #3 *The Parable of the Yeast*

Read Matthew 13:33-35

In Matthew 13:33, what does Jesus say the kingdom of heaven is like?

What are we told about the yeast in this parable?

What do the following Scriptures tell you about yeast?

Exodus 12:15-20 _____

Exodus 29:1-2 _____

Leviticus 2:11-12 _____

Matthew 16:6-12 _____

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 _____

What are we told about the flour in this parable?



BREAKING NEWS

The same words are used in the telling of the parable in Luke 13:20, regarding the flour. The original translation included the amount of flour used as three "satas," or, about 50 lbs. of flour, meaning that bread for over 100 people could be yielded from this mixture! That's a lot of bread from a little bit of yeast!

Yeast is considered an "active" ingredient in bread-making. Its addition to the dough is not immediately seen. But upon kneading, covering and being left to sit for a time, its effect produces a risen loaf, ready to bake and be used for sustenance for the family.

Parable #4 *The Parable of the Hidden Treasure*

Read Matthew 13:44

In Matthew 13:44, what does Jesus say the kingdom of heaven is like?

Just one verse for an entire story – verse 44. Again the Lord describes the kingdom of heaven. The scene is the same as in Parables #1 and #2. What is the location he uses in both? (See Matthew 13:24, 31)

This parable (verse 44) focuses in on the field where the treasure was hidden and then re-hidden. What do you glean from this parable, then, about the field?

Historians tell us two discoveries changed much of the socio-economic structure as well as expansion of territory of the United States of America: the discovery of gold, and the discovery of oil. When men and women discovered these resources, they sold everything, gave up everything and put everything into becoming owners of plots and acres containing these valuable commodities.

Imagine you found a fist-sized lump of gold buried beneath the surface of your rental property. Would that be a place you might be interested in buying?



BREAKING NEWS

According to Jewish tradition, if a treasure is unmarked and found on public land, it belongs to the finder. If it is marked, the owner must be sought. If it is natural (a gold nugget or a diamond) or unmarked and on private land, it belongs to the owner of the land. That's why the finder bought that field – to become the owner.



DISCOVERING

How do we wait for God to act in a world that seems to have gone mad? In a place where good and evil must abide together until such time as God Himself chooses to change the order of things?

Jesus reminds us here that God (the owner) is the one who has the right to determine the appropriate time for the harvest. Until then, we're simply charged to work in the fields.

Luke 10:2 proclaims, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

You, friend, are that worker. Act while you wait.

Problem: expectation vs. reality

Solution:

What we learn from these particular parables is that sometimes our expectations exceed reality. And we are not the ones who get to decide how the spiritual timeline is played out – God is. Israel always believed when the kingdom of God was established on earth, it would be great. They were not prepared for a seemingly insignificant beginning. This would have been a shocking teaching to the children of Israel; one that could even cause some to turn away.

How about you? Are you willing to keep on keeping on, even when it doesn't seem to be going like you expected? In your job, in your family, your marriage, your church – are you someone who will stay the course, leaning on God's understanding rather than your own?

Proverbs 3:5-6 declares, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

Problem: hidden vs. obvious

Solution:

Yeast is any number of different forms of fungi that multiply rapidly, bringing about the process of fermentation. The baking of bread in biblical times required a bakers' yeast to cause it to rise or "leaven." Thus, a small piece of fermenting, rising dough, set aside from an earlier baking, was "mixed" or "hidden" in the flour and kneaded. While Scripture uses leaven almost exclusively as a negative metaphor (probably because fermentation implied disintegration and corruption), Jesus uses yeast to symbolize the positive, hidden permeation of the kingdom of heaven in this world.

Jesus defines our work for us here. We may be small, but we are not insignificant. Our power is in the activity of the yeast (the Holy Spirit), hidden in us. We mix into the dough of the world, modeling and demonstrating to that world the concepts of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness and self-control. We win people by quiet example, modeling the activity of our Savior.

1 Corinthians 4:12-16 is a great passage on this. Paul wraps it up by saying something like this: "Imitate me as I imitate Christ."

Doing: "Nurturing Our City"

How can I incorporate these principles in my life this week?

Parable #1 (Matthew 13:24-30) Parable of the Weeds:

In God's economy, are you the owner or the servant?

How can you serve His Kingdom or His people in a fresh way this week?

Parable #2 (Matthew 13:31-32) Parable of the Mustard Seed:

Pray this prayer today: Lord, though I am a mustard seed, plant me in such a way as to have a great impact for your kingdom.

Parable #3 (Matthew 13:33-35) Parable of the Yeast:

Allow your new knowledge and instruction about the kingdom of God to rise up in you. Determine this week to make one change in your life that reflects God's activity within you.

Parable #4 (Matthew 13:44) Parable of the Hidden Treasure:

Make a list of the things that bring you joy. Tuck it away in your Bible and refer to it during dark or trying times.



MEMORY VERSE

Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. Matthew 13:43 (NIV)



SOURCES

Edersheim, Alfred. (2003). *Sketches of Jewish Social Life, Updated Edition*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.
Hare, Douglas R.A. (1993). *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching – Matthew*, Louisville: John Knox Press.
Lifeway's Online Bible Library. www.BibleLifeway.com
Stern, David H. (1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary*. Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc.
Wilkins, Michael J. (2004). *NIV Application Commentary-Matthew*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
Young, Brad H. (1998). *The Parables: Jewish Tradition and Christian Interpretation*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.

Sources

Books

Blackaby, Henry. (2005). *Experiencing the Cross*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Press.
Blanchard, Ken, and Phil Hodges. (2008). *Lead Like Jesus*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. (1995). *The Cost of Discipleship*. Austin, TX: Touchstone.
Briner, Bob and Ray Pritchard. (2008). *The Leadership Lessons of Jesus*. Nashville: B&H Publishing.
Edersheim, Alfred. (2003). *Sketches of Jewish Social Life, Updated Edition*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.
Engstrom, Ted, and Paul Cedar. (2003). *Compassionate Leadership: Rediscovering Jesus' Radical Leadership Style*. Glendale, CA: Gospel Light.
Hallie, Philip. (1994). *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There*. San Francisco: HarperPerennial Publishers.
Hare, Douglas R.A. (1993). *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching – Matthew*, Louisville: John Knox Press.
Hull, Bill. (2007). *Lead as Jesus Led*. Richardson, TX: Biblical Studies Press.
Kent, Carol. (2004). *When I Lay My Isaac Down*. Colorado Springs: NavPress.
Lifeway's Online Bible Library. www.BibleLifeway.com
Stern, David H. (1992). *Jewish New Testament Commentary*. Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc.
Swindoll, Chuck. (2007). *So You Want to Be Like Christ?* Nashville: W Publishing.
Wilkins, Michael J. (2004). *NIV Application Commentary-Matthew*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
Young, Brad H. (1998). *The Parables: Jewish Tradition and Christian Interpretation*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.

Curricula

Kimball, Dan. (2008). *They Like Jesus But Not the Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. (6 weeks DVD)
McNeil, Reggie. (2006). *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (6 weeks DVD)
Williams, Matt. (2009). *The Life of Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. (6 weeks DVD)



Movies

Invictus

1. How does Mandela use rugby to bring together the black and white people of South Africa?
2. What are the positive leadership traits this film portrays for Mandela?
3. What role does forgiveness play in Mandela's leadership?
4. From Mandela's leadership what compares to the leadership of Jesus?

The Mission

1. Describe Gabriel's leadership both prior to being told his colony is sold as well as after it is sold.
2. Describe the changes in Mendoza's leadership from before and after he makes a commitment to Christ.
3. What dilemma does Altimirano face and how does he deal with the dilemma?
4. How can leaders claim valid positions of leadership when they treat people brutally?

To Kill a Mockingbird

1. What are the various ways Atticus Finch shows leadership qualities?
2. How does Scout learn about leadership?
3. What do you learn about injustice and how leaders need to respond?
4. Why do leaders have to take on the hard roles no one else wants to do, like Atticus Finch?

Temple Truth: “Nurturing Our City”

In this five-part series we will examine the concept of one from a variety of angles, while maintaining the unity of one. Our focus for this series is on One Church concentrating on One City. The church is Southland Christian Church and the city is Lexington, Kentucky though any congregation could concentrate on their particular city, exploring what God wants done by believers in that city.

One City: Lexington, Kentucky. The study will take us to Jerusalem and Rome to see how the early church impacted these particular cities so we can learn from them how to make an impact on our city. How did the early believers interact with their neighbors, with those who opposed them, with the city officials, and even with the “police” of their day?

Once we have a better understanding of the city God is calling us to impact we then turn our attention to **One Mission:** Fall in love with Jesus and Follow Jesus. When Jesus was ready to leave the earth he called his disciples together and sent them to make disciples of all ethnic groups. If we look around our city we need to ask, who are these groups? And how do we live our lives in such a way they fall in love with Jesus and want to follow him?

One Leader: Jesus. What are the commands of Jesus? Are we willing to follow them? Really? Are we willing to give up everything to follow Him, including our houses and land, our families, our positions of power and authority? If Jesus is our leader we must follow him in all ways every day.

To follow Jesus means sacrifice. Jesus came to earth to live in humility and to give his life as a ransom for all who willingly choose to follow. David at one time would not take a gift so he could offer a sacrifice to God on the space, because he would not offer something which cost him nothing. What will it cost to follow Jesus? This is the focus of study four in this series.

If we examine the early years of the church, no matter which in cities of the Roman Empire, we find one common voice calling people to the Lordship of Jesus. The various Roman leaders loved being called Lord, but none of them really cared for the people except as slaves for the Empire. We are called to be ambassadors for the King of King and Lord of Lords, and how we represent Him means paying close attention to what He wants done in His kingdom. One Voice calls us, are we listening?

One ...If Together Has a Number will be both a homecoming and a challenge to us. We can no longer sit on the sidelines, gathering corporate dust. Jesus calls us to get involved making disciples of all people.



SOUTHLAND