



Beginners **CHRISTIANITY** with David Gonzalez

Lesson 6 – Day 1

You are Part of a Body

This whole week is devoted to the concept of community with the body of Christ. In Ephesians 4:11-13 we read,

“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”

Today we live in a brand new age of Christianity and Christian community. Seventy years ago, everyone that identified as a Christian went to church weekly, and joined their denominational programs for development and education. Today, this is not so.

Twenty-six years ago in 1998, I was directed by the Holy Spirit to start a weekly television program. In two months, we had put together a program for television for the first time. Our TV programs now span a number of northern states, and our viewership is enormous, to God be the glory! Our half-hour television programs are viewed by those supplementing their home church attendance, by the infirm, by the incarcerated, by the home-bound, and by those who have no Christian affiliation at all. Our ministry still reaches those same groups today.

In 1997, those early days of the internet was still very new, and few used it, except for business websites and email. Now, 27 years later, that usage has dramatically changed, as we all get much of our information and teaching from the internet. As a result of that trend, our ministry now streams on multiple platforms all at once, and we have thousands of LIVE viewers, and in addition, possibly a hundred times as many viewers of our free online content.

This new era in technology has changed the way most younger people perceive how they are to relate to others in the body of Christ. In Acts 2:42-43 we read,

“They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a

sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.”

There is something about training up the new saints that requires person to person contact. In fact, it is very difficult to see if you are growing at all, without weekly contact with other like-minded believers.

Notice this explanation in Proverbs 27:17,

“Just as iron sharpens iron, a person sharpens the character of his friend.”

Iron is used to sharpen iron, notice a chef and how he handles his blades. So too, as metal on metal, man in the face of man, in the presence of another man, sharpens his friend.

In Christianity, this manner of sharpening helps us, by developing proper habits and godly character. You develop culture and a polished manner, through contact with others; you begin to change because you have been challenged. We get to smooth our ruggedness, by being around other Christians for the greater good of the kingdom of God.

So, we need that closeness with others, that the internet does not provide, particularly in the initial stages of our new walk with God.

Our prayer for today:

Father in heaven, I ask today that You show me and direct me to have better relationships with others in the body of Christ, and show me how to develop those good habits, in Jesus’ name, amen!





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Lesson 6 – Day 2

You are Part of a Body

Today I want to talk to you, about how you developed yourself to where you are now, in your walk with God. Becoming a Christian is designed to aid us, and cause us, to be victorious in our life. So, if Jesus wants to bring us victory, why then do we see so many not living a triumphant life? Are you happy where you are at, or do you think that there are some things that you are yet wanting in your new life with God?

This question comes up in many people's lives. As we read in Proverbs 27:17, *"Just as iron sharpens iron, a person sharpens the character of his friend."* There is a cleansing process in every relationship. Marriages grow up both the man and the woman, schools mature the untaught, and the old men can teach the younger men.

As a new or mature Christian, the worst thing that you can do for yourself is to not push yourself in to grow in God. Notice here in Mark 4:14-17,

"The sower sows the word. These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them. In a similar way these are the ones on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; and they have no firm root in themselves, but are only temporary; then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away."

There are four conditions of receiving the Word of God in this parable. Of those, the first two conditions are the most grievous, because, there is no lasting response in the hearer. In both conditions, there was no protection over the Word as the person was hearing it. When people get saved, and give their hearts to Jesus the Messiah, many believe that all their problems go away. But that is simply not true. So, Satan under his normal operation, just lets us think that tribulation, no matter how small, is a sign of "This Christian thing is not working".

When we are in a community of saints, these attacks have much less an opportunity of occurring. The community of believers will guide you through whatever you are experiencing, and encourage you to keep on the proper path. The third condition given by Jesus in this parable is for the saints who have been saved for a period of time, maybe even years. But, when some event appears to rock their boat, they begin to give up on God,

and say to themselves, “This isn’t working”. Look here again in Mark 4:18-19,

“And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”

These three types of people, after hearing the Word, and reaching various levels of growth and hearing, experience falling away from having a victorious walk with God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

When some non-believers witness this kind of behavior, the result is scorn for Christianity. The visible falling away empowers their hearts to mock God. Then the believers, see this as a bad witness for Jesus, and can begin to doubt themselves, that God is as powerful as He really is.

Our prayer for today,

Father Yahweh, Abba, Father! Take hold of me and do not let me go! I do not want to fall away, or be deceived by whatever I am experiencing. I believe that everything can be fixed and solved by You, in Jesus’ name, amen.





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Lesson 6 – Day 3

Staying Connected is Good for Everyone

Today we want to look at the concept of staying connected to Jesus, and staying connected to each other, in the body of Christ. In John 15:1-6, Jesus talks about making sure that we don't drift away from Him;

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.”

This aspect of staying connected to God is greatly overlooked by many good Christians. We must accept the fact that by ourselves, we have an enormous capability to make a big mess of things. We fail to see the coming freight train, and stand oblivious to problems around us that are brewing. If we could just stay in close contact with our Father, with Jesus and with the Holy Spirit, things would go much better for us.

If staying close to Jesus was never going to be a problem, then He would not have spent so much time, warning us about the pitfalls of falling away. But, the falling away only describes part of what Jesus is revealing to us here. The second part of the warning comes with a promise of protection, prosperity, and peace of mind. Let's look further here in John 15:7-11,

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide

in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”

So the benefits of staying in Jesus go way beyond eternal life. Let's look at the points that Jesus gives us in John 15:

1. Yahweh the Father is the land-owner.
2. Jesus grows as a Grapevine in God's garden.
3. We grow as branches out of Jesus the Vine.
4. The Father cuts away branches (people) that won't grow.
5. Branches not connected to Jesus the Vine, don't bear any good fruit.
6. The cut branches are burned by fire (signifying hell).
7. Branches that stay connected, get to ask God for anything!
8. God gets all the glory when you bear MUCH good fruit.
9. God loves those who stay connected.
10. Your joy is made full.

Our prayer for today;

Father Yahweh, fill me with Your joy, and increase my harvest, as according to Your word, and keep me connected to the Vine, that is Jesus, in Jesus' name, amen!





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Lesson 6 – Day 4

No Man is an Island

There is a sickness in men, mankind that is. The inability to follow wisdom is rampant at every level of society and religion. People often think, “I can do this myself, I don’t need help or direction in my walk with God”. This of course, is very wrong, but I’ve personally witnessed this thinking and behavior, maybe thousands of times. I can sit here and write this and hope that those who need direction will hear this and come back; but this might better serve as a warning to those who are also being tempted, to “do their own thing”.

Here is how this thinking happens. Some form of offense arises from interaction with a good leader. It could be that they were challenged to change, or maybe they wanted recognition and didn’t get it, or maybe they have never seen how true spiritual growth occurs. The next step that follows, is to find fault with God, or His words, or the bible, or quality teachers. The third step is they begin to resent the love of the truth, which was the walk they first had. As a result, they cease from attending church services, and eventually all interaction with their former Christian relationships. Now, they are an island, floating in the sea. Notice this in Revelation 2:4-5,

“But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place — unless you repent.”

For many Christians, walking alone is a most difficult thing. It takes a great deal of willpower, self-discipline, and humility, to walk alone. To walk alone successfully, you have to have self-control, in your walk with God, and be critical enough to admit mistakes to yourself.

Starting when I was quite young, I have started many small and large businesses. From selling potatoes from a small wagon, to candle making, to financial investments, and large construction projects. You learn a lot about your weaknesses from starting things, because if it falters or fails, you only have you to blame.

Business hopefuls and startup groups, have consulted me, and asked me for direction in their projects. Even if they have a great education, practical

skills, or a ton of money; I'll generally know early in our meeting, if they have the stamina to go the distance. It's not a crime to know the practical traits, about your strengths and your weaknesses, your nature and your character. However, most advice people get from God, or the Word, or from those who have done it before them, mostly goes unheeded. This is why we need each other. Notice, the wisest man ever born prior to Jesus' writes in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12,

"Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart."

No man is an island. God created us and designed us, to work with one another, and to help others in their walk with God.

If you are tempted to go it alone, stop right now and repent. God calls very few people to a wilderness experience. You need to be involved, and a working part in the body of Christ, not separate and apart from it.

Our prayer for today;

Father, I repent of anytime that I have slipped away from the body of Christ, because of rebellion, offense, or stubbornness. I ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to warn me, when I think that I can do without everyone else, in Jesus' name, amen!





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Lesson 6 – Day 5

Get a Spiritual Covering

Everybody needs a priest. In general terms, there were Old Testament priests that interceded to God on behalf of the people, through sacrifices and offerings. The New Testament priests ministers to the people on behalf of God. The calling of Christian leadership is as follows, in Ephesians 4:11-13,

“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.”

The titles may vary, even calling some leaders, elders. But, the sense of the matter is this, that they are the leaders that God has set up in the body of believers. Not everyone is called to leadership in the body of Christ, but we are all to be together, working together with one another. Most people do not have a true calling from God to publicly be a minister. A priest chosen by God to lead others, is first and foremost, a truth teller. Ezekiel 44:23,

“Moreover, they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.”

He or she must be able to tell the difference, between truth and error, and have the skills to teach the truth well. Today, a spiritual leader cannot do this effectively without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The second aspect of being a good priest, is to be a protector of the people that have you as their pastor or minister, as seen in Acts 20:28-30,

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.”

If your priest, your pastor, or spiritual leader does not have this drive to protect the flock from error, then they may not be the right leader for you. An honest spiritual leader, with the visible skills to protect you from deception, is an intended covering that God provides for His people. Everyone needs a spiritual covering, everyone needs a priest. Notice this instruction in Titus 1:5,

“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you...”

The KJV, uses the words, “ordain elders”, which carries with it, the concept of an anointing to preach and lead others. Ordination is a spiritually powerful act.

Further, we see that elders carry a role, as in Acts 14:23,

“When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”

Finally, we can see the responsibility of elders here in 1 Peter 5:1-5,

“Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”

Our prayer for today;

Father, show me my place in the body of Christ, and keep me under those who have a true concern for my eternal soul, in Jesus’ name, amen!





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Lesson 6 – Day 6 **Be Teachable**

If everyone needs a priest, then we should be able to hear what is being taught, so long as it is the Word of God. In Hebrews 4:12,

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

A teacher that spends a lot of time in the Word, will more likely use the Word a great deal, when preaching and teaching. The Word convicts people in ways that we do not quite fully understand, but it works. The Word of God, can separate your thoughts, that you have cherished for years, into different categories of importance to God. Some of our thoughts can be out of tune with God’s heart and His directives. This is why we need good bible teachers; to deliver to us God’s perspective on everything that we think about, speak about, and act on. There are rewards for allowing a good preacher to minister to you. In 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13,

“But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.”

Those who study to bring the Word to you, should be highly honored. One of the ways to honor any preacher, is to thank him or her, for the word that they just delivered. A second way is to show up! Too many people pick and choose when they are going to attend church. This alone is the reason so many preachers leave the ministry every year; because of a lack of gratefulness for the time it took them to prepare.

A third way to show honor, is to financially support your minister for his efforts. In Galatians 6:6,

“The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him.”

There is an exchange. Your pastor gives you spiritual meat, and in turn, you give him financial support. This continues, with both warnings and blessings, in verses 7-10,

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”

Many times, people are very disrespectful during teachings, regular church services, or prayer lines. Talking, gossiping, sleeping, or just not paying attention, all serve to show disdain for the man of God, and for the house that you are in. Many decide to read their bibles or just look at their cell phones, instead of listening to what the minister is preaching or teaching.

Being teachable involves a sense of loyalty, of generosity, and attentiveness, to your pastor and your man of God.

Our prayer for today;

Father, I ask that You continually teach me Your Word, and that I would honor my man of God in all ways, and that I would become all that You want me to be in the body of Christ, in Jesus’ name, amen.

