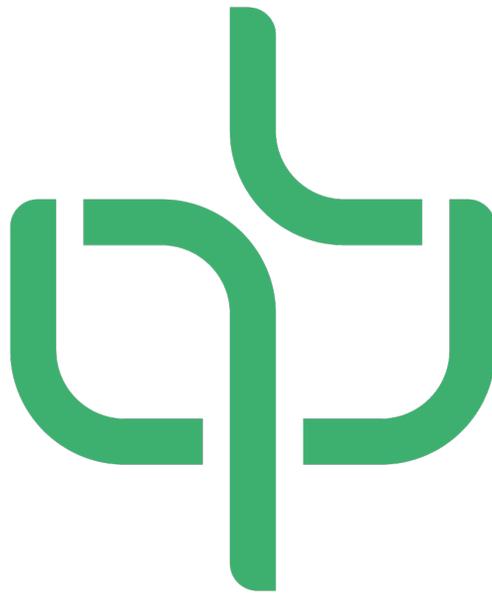


PART 1: BIBLICAL CONVICTIONS
MINISTRY PHILOSOPHY
LEADERSHIP CULTURE

DNA





BIBLICAL CONVICTIONS

LESSON 1 - God's Word, Our Authority for Life and Ministry

LESSON 2 - Salvation, God, the Author from Start to Finish

LESSON 3 - Sanctification, The Fruit of Transforming Grace

LESSON 4 - The Local Church, A Community on Mission

LESSON 5 - The Local Church, Plurality in Leadership

LESSON 6 - Spiritual Gifts, Spirit Empowered and Biblically Grounded

LESSON 7 - Complementary Design of Men & Women, Equal in Value, Distinct in Roles

LESSON 8 - Church Discipline, The Process of Restoration

We join with the apostle Paul in believing that the gospel is THE matter of first importance in all of life (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). The gospel is not simply the message we "by which we are saved," but it is also the reality "in which we stand" in our daily Christian lives. Being centered on the gospel means living each day focused on the good news of the cross of Jesus Christ so that it constantly fuels...

- **True humility**, because we are reminded of our sin and helplessness apart from Christ. It means we are continually aware of how he willingly suffered in our place to pay the penalty we deserved.
- **Fresh faith for today and tomorrow**. As we are daily reminded of God's willing sacrifice of his own son for us, then we are reminded of his promise to freely give us all things (Romans 8:32) and his commitment to work for our good in all things (Romans 8:28).
- **Genuine worship** because we are reminded of God's rich mercy and the undeserved favor he lavished on us. What a great love he has for us, and what a love welling up within us for him in response!
- **Real holiness** because we are reminded of the great price of our sin, and our striving for obedience is not an attempt to earn his love or favor, but a reflection of our love for him.
- **Passion for mission** because we are reminded of the wonder of what he did for us and we want to hold out the hope of the gospel to others.

We have purposed to bring out this broader gospel focus both directly and indirectly through these studies. Within our commitment to the gospel and foundational truths of historical Orthodox Christianity, we have adopted the essential Biblical Convictions covered on the following pages. These Convictions will certainly align us with many local churches but also set us apart graciously from others. While Crossway holds true to this Biblical doctrine in our teaching and conviction, we do not seek to be known for what we are against or to be set apart in spirit from some of our other brothers and sisters in the Universal Body of Christ.

For each of the eight lessons, please study the listed passages in context and answer the questions as you go. Always feel free to bring other passages into the discussion as you discover more. List specific principles that you glean from your study of these passages and note where your discoveries are coming from in God's word. Finish the lesson by summarizing what you have learned into a short principle statement and write it in the space provided at the end of the lesson.

LESSON 1

GOD'S WORD - Our Authority for Life and Ministry

The Bible is God's inspired Word and thankfully is without error. As such, the Bible is the final authority over humanity and the ultimate provision of God's truth *for* humanity. As a result of the spiritual new birth (being "born again"), the believer's life and ministry demonstrates and bears witness to the power of God's living Word. It is our joy and delight to come under the word of God and be led by it in all of life.

PASSAGES TO STUDY

Joshua 1:8

Isaiah 40:7-8

Hebrews 4:12

Psalm 19:7-11

2 Timothy 3:16-17

1 Peter 1:22-3:2

Psalm 119:105, 160

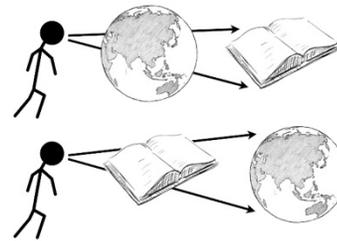
2 Timothy 4:3

2 Peter 1:20-21

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1. What are some of the unique claims and promises the Bible makes in these passages?
 2. Often in our culture people claim that right and wrong are relative. This means that generally speaking, each person can decide what is right and wrong for themselves and there are no moral absolutes. Another term for this concept is "moral relativity." What are some ways that you see the concept of *moral relativity* at work in your school, workplace, city, and society as a whole?
 3. In what ways does the Bible claim that there *are* moral absolutes (in other words, some things are right, some things are wrong)?
 4. In what ways should the truth of these passages influence the way you view the Word of God? How important is your view of the Word of God in relation to how you live?
 5. What are some reasons why you think it is wise and important for a local church to decide on its priorities, purposes, and programs, (everything the church does) based on what the Bible teaches?

6. What are some specific ways you would know that a church is genuinely committed to the Word of God as its authority?

7. This graphic illustrates two ways to use the Bible. In the first case, the “world” is the filter whereby we read and understand the Bible. In the second case, the Bible is the filter whereby we understand the world. What is the difference between the two? Which one would reflect God’s word truly being our authority?



8. Write down some recent examples of how the Word of God (the Bible) has impacted your life?

9. It takes about 30 days to change a habit. With that in mind, what are 2-3 commitments you can make for the next month that will help you grow closer in a relationship with God through his word? How will these commitments help you cultivate a great dependence on the truth of the Bible?

**SUMMARIZE THE LESSON
IN A SHORT PRINCIPLE**

LESSON 2

SALVATION – God, the Author, from Start to Finish

Salvation is a work of God from beginning to end and can be received only by his grace (unearned and undeserved favor) through faith. We are saved and sustained unto eternal life through believing and receiving Jesus' life, death, and resurrection in our place. God's lavish love toward us, despite the reality of our sin and disobedience, makes this the greatest joy in all of life.

PASSAGES TO STUDY	John 6:44	John 10:25-29	Romans 3:9-10
	Romans 5:8-9	Romans 8:12, 28-39	Romans 9:6-33
	2 Corinthians 4:4-6	Ephesians 2:1-10	

1. What do Ephesians 2:1-10 and Romans 3:9-10 tell us about the condition of an unbelieving person? Are they neutral beings? What are the implications? Why is this an important starting point for a discussion about salvation?
2. What does "free will" look like for mankind in our natural condition? What are we free to choose? What will we not choose?
3. Why was the death of Jesus Christ necessary to bring us back into a right relationship with God?
4. According to Ephesians 2:4-10, what does God do to us when He rescues us from our sin (when He saves us)? What is God's role in our salvation (review the longer Romans 9 passage as well)?

5. What does it mean to be “justified”? How can we be justified when we are guilty of sin and deserve death?

6. According to 2 Corinthians 4:4-6 and John 6:44, what is the only way that someone can come to believe in Jesus? What is the only way a person can become genuinely sorry for their sinful rebellion against God to the point where they will repent of their sin (turn from it) and receive the gift of salvation?

7. All Crossway Network churches teach that once a person is saved from sin, they cannot lose their salvation. Salvation is an irreversible work of God. What do John 10:25-29 and Romans 8:29-39 tell us about our security in Christ?

8. For personal application & reflection...
 - Why is it important to regularly remember what we have been saved from?
 - Why is it such good news that your salvation was God’s work, not yours?
 - How can this fuel your worship and passion for Christ (vs. going through the motions)?
 - How does this motivate evangelism (rather than discourage it)?

**SUMMARIZE THE LESSON
IN A SHORT PRINCIPLE**

LESSON 3

SANCTIFICATION – The Fruit of Transforming Grace

The life that is genuinely transformed by the gospel will increasingly show the fruit of obedience that is empowered by the Holy Spirit as he permanently indwells the followers of Jesus. The genuine reality of a person's salvation will show through growth and transformation in their lives as they become more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ. This all takes place progressively through life as we actively put to death fleshly and worldly desires and as we joyfully abide in Jesus Christ.

PASSAGES TO STUDY	John 14:21-24	John 15:8	Romans 6
	Romans 8:16	2 Corinthians 5:17	Galatians 5:16-24
	Ephesians 2:4-10	Philippians 1:6	Philippians 2:12-13
	Titus 1:16	Titus 3:5	1 Thessalonians 5:23-24
	James 2:14-26	1 John 2:3-4	1 John 3:8-10

1. The Bible teaches that we are saved by GRACE ALONE, through FAITH ALONE, in CHRIST ALONE - this is the gospel. Why is each component of this statement important? Why is it important to know that our good works have no place in God's saving us?

2. What is the relationship between God's work in us and the way we live our lives (i.e. our behavior, our obedience, our good works)?

3. Read the two Philippians passages and the 1 Thessalonians passage again. Describe what God's word has to say about your dependence on him for growth, maturity, and persevering in the Christian life?

4. If we have been saved, what do these verses tell us our lives should look like? How should our lives change as we walk with Jesus?

5. While our lives are to be marked by obedience, our obedience will be imperfect at best. How are we to handle sin in our lives? How can the battle with sin (and not just the moments of victory over sin) deepen our assurance in our salvation?

6. What significance or role do you think your emotions (how you feel) should have in your choice to obey God's word? Explain some of the reasons for your answer.

7. A person who is born again is able to have a deep assurance that he or she is a true child of God forever. According to these passages, where does that assurance come from? What role does obedience have in our ability to truly experience that assurance?

8. If you knew someone claiming to have faith in Christ but whose life didn't indicate any change in behavior, what would you say to them? How would you challenge and encourage them?

9. How has this study impacted you personally? How has it encouraged you? How has it challenged you?

**SUMMARIZE THE LESSON
IN A SHORT PRINCIPLE**

LESSON 4

THE LOCAL CHURCH – A Community on Mission

God's design is for local communities of believers to be intimately involved in one another's lives and spiritual growth, and to be intentionally living out the mission of making Jesus known. The local church is a family of believers who are growing together in genuine love and sacrificial service. God's strategy for evangelizing the world is to empower individuals in the local church to live on mission and multiply churches together.

PASSAGES TO STUDY	Matthew 16:13-18	Matthew 28:18-20	Acts 1:8
	Acts 2:41-47	Acts 8:1-3	Acts 11:19-26
	Acts 13:1-4	Acts 14:21-28	Philippians 1:1, 27
	1 Corinthians 12:12-27	Ephesians 2:19	Ephesians 4:11-14
	1 Timothy 3:5	Titus 2:1-8	Hebrews 10:24-25

1. In the two passages in the gospel of Matthew what does Jesus reveal about his intended purpose for the church?
2. Acts 1:8 provides an outline for the book of Acts as a whole. As the gospel is proclaimed throughout the known world, how does the church (that Jesus promised to build) begin to take shape?¹
3. Describe the atmosphere of the early church (the local church in Jerusalem) as described in Acts 2:41-47. What stands out, and why? What keeps us from experiencing the beautiful picture of biblical community and fruitfulness described in this passage?
4. When thinking about the church biblically, we can talk about it in its *universal* sense, and also in its *local* sense. What is the difference between the two? Why is it important to see that God wants every believer to be a part of a *local* church (not just the *universal* church)?

¹ See these additional passages in the book of Acts to follow the expansion of the church in the New Testament - Acts 15:1-4, 15:22-36, 16:4, 18:22, 20:17, 28, 32, 21:18-19.

5. What do the passages above tell us about God’s design for community through the local church? What is the church compared to and why? What kind of commitment should we show to one another within the local church and what might that look like in this day and age?

6. Using an online Bible, do a search in the New Testament for the phrase “*one another*”. What are the things we are called to do for / to one another? What does this tell you about God’s design for community?²

7. What is the connection between community and mission? How do they work together?

8. Why are some people resistant to the idea that they are to be committed to a local church? What would you say to them as a way to encourage them toward God’s design?

9. What implications does this study have for you personally? How does it shape your understanding of what it means to be a part of the local church?

**SUMMARIZE THE LESSON
IN A SHORT PRINCIPLE**

² See more on Biblical Community and the “One Anothers” in Lesson 5 of DNA, Part 2 - Ministry Philosophy

LESSON 5

THE LOCAL CHURCH – Plurality in Leadership

God's design for leadership in any local church is a plurality of biblically qualified, mutually accountable men who shepherd, equip, and oversee the spiritual health of the body. These men understand that they are simply under-shepherds of the Chief Shepherd and guardian of our souls, Jesus Christ.

PASSAGES TO STUDY

Acts 14:23

Acts 20:28-29

Ephesians 4:11-14

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

1 Timothy 3:1-7

1 Timothy 5:19

Titus 1:5-9

Hebrews 13:17

1 Peter 5:1-4

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1. In Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5 we see the biblical pattern of plurality established for leadership in the church. Why might God have designed His church to operate under this pattern of leadership? What are the blessings of plurality? What are the dangers of operating without plurality? (*For other examples of plurality in action, see James 5:14, 1 Tim 4:14, Acts 13:1-3*).
 2. According to Acts 20:28-29, 1 Peter 5, Hebrews 13:17, and Ephesians 4:11-14 what is the role of a pastor? What activity are they to be engaged in? What responsibility do they have for the church? What responsibility do they have to God?
 3. What do we mean when we say that pastors are “under-shepherds to Jesus?”
 4. According to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, what are the qualifications for those who are to serve as pastors? Why is it important to note that these qualifications focus on a person’s character (while competency is assumed)? What happens when greater emphasis is placed on competency over character?

5. What do 1 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy 5:19 and Hebrews 13:17 tell us about our responsibility to God ordained leadership? Why would God call his church to respond this way?

6. According to these passages, what would be a biblical process for recognizing new pastors in the church and appointing them to that role?

7. Why might God's design for biblical leadership in the church be difficult for many today? How might a person's past experiences with the church impact their view of God's design?

8. How has this study impacted your thinking?

9. How would you share this with someone who has a hard time coming under the shepherding authority of their local church pastors?

**SUMMARIZE THE LESSON
IN A SHORT PRINCIPLE**

LESSON 6

SPIRITUAL GIFTS – Spirit Empowered, Biblically Grounded

The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit gives every believer supernatural gifts for the purpose of building up his church and expanding his kingdom. The focus and priority of these spiritual gifts is not for self-edification or self-expression but for the edification of others, and as a result, building up the body of Christ. It is our incredible privilege as believers to be conduits of his supernatural power as he puts his glory and grace on display in this way.

PASSAGES TO STUDY	Acts 2:43	Acts 14:3	Romans 8:9
	Romans 12:3-8	1 Corinthians 3:16	1 Corinthians 12-14
	2 Corinthians 12:12	Ephesians 2:19-22	Ephesians 4:11-14
	Hebrews 2:3-4	1 Peter 4:10-11	

1. Ephesians 2:19-20 refers to the apostles as being the “foundation” of the church? Why was their role so important in the establishment of the early church?
2. According to Acts 2:43 and 14:3, 2 Corinthians 12:12, and Hebrews 2:3-4 what is the connection between the role of the apostles and the abundance of supernatural or “sign” gifts in the early church? How might this help us understand the role these may or may not play in the church today?³
3. According to Ephesians 4, who is it that does the ministry of the church? Why is this a critical observation to make?
4. Write down as many observations about spiritual gifts from these passages as you can.

³ Crossway Network churches do not teach that certain spiritual gifts listed in the Bible have ceased to operate in the church today. God can and will continue to work powerfully through all of his gifts as he desires. However we teach that the *abundance* and relative regularity of “sign gifts” in the New Testament was due the unique role of the apostles who first bore witness to Jesus and first established the church. The genuine manifestation of sign gifts today in the church will likely occur in unique situations and always within the biblical parameters set forth in 1 Corinthians 12-14.

5. According to these passages, what is the purpose of spiritual gifts?

6. How do these verses influence your understanding of your role in the local church? What are the ramifications for you and the church if you are not using your gifts?

7. Do you think the gifts listed in these passages are meant to be exhaustive? In other words, are these the only spiritual gifts a person might have?

8. What is the difference between spiritual gifts and “natural” abilities? Is it possible for a person’s natural abilities to also function as spiritual gifts?

9. How does a person discover their spiritual gifts? What are some important components of that discovery process? What do you think your spiritual gifts are?

10. What are you naturally good at and what life experiences have you gone through that have significantly shaped you? How might God use your skills and experiences for the ministry he has given you for others?

**SUMMARIZE THE LESSON
IN A SHORT PRINCIPLE**

LESSON 7

COMPLEMENTARY DESIGN OF MEN AND WOMEN

Equal in Value, Distinct in Roles

God has created men and women of equal value and honor in his image but wonderfully different from one another. He intends for there to be a beautiful compliment of different functions and roles between men and women in the family and in the church for the good of all. When these created distinctions are joyfully embraced, men and women will flourish together, God's image will be wonderfully on display, and homes and churches will be strengthened for the mission of God in our world.

PASSAGES TO STUDY

Genesis 1:26-28

Genesis 2:7-25

Genesis 3:1-19

Galatians 3:28-29

Ephesians 5:21-33

1 Peter 3:1-7

1 Timothy 2:9-3:7

1 Corinthians 11:1-11

Titus 2:1-8.

1. Why is it such a potentially explosive topic in our society to speak of gender, and of men and women having different "roles" in certain contexts?
2. Why is it important that men and women are equal image-bearers of God as described in Genesis 1:27? Why is Galatians 3 such an important passage to understand?
3. What do we learn from the creation account (Genesis 1-2) about the created difference between men and women? What are the differences, and why did God create us this way?
4. Why is it important to realize that these differences were there by God's design before the fall of man (Genesis 3)?
5. Each time a specific role is discussed for men and women in the Bible, it always points back to the creation account in Genesis 2. Why is this important?

6. According to Ephesians 5, what role has God assigned to men and women in the context of marriage? What is the primary responsibility each has within that role toward their spouse?

7. According to 1 Timothy and Titus, how should God’s design for men and women be on display in the church?

8. What is the connection between the role husbands are given in the home and the idea of men providing the spiritual headship in the church family?

9. What might it look like to try and honor God’s design in the culture we live in? How do we best represent the beauty of God’s design to the watching world? Are there changes in heart or practice that might be necessary in your life and relationships?

**SUMMARIZE THE LESSON
IN A SHORT PRINCIPLE**

LESSON 8

CHURCH DISCIPLINE – The Process of Restoration

The Bible teaches that the body of Christ, the church, is to be committed to one another in love. This is true in all of life but perhaps especially as we fight against sin and disobedience together. Jesus instructs us how we are to pursue a brother or sister trapped in a sinful lifestyle. God has provided instructions for church restoration to lovingly keep individual believers from being ensnared by Satan and to maintain the purity of his church.

PASSAGES TO STUDY	Matthew 18:15-20	Romans 16:17	1 Corinthians 5:1-12
	Galatians 6:1-2	2 Thessalonians 3:6, 13-15	2 Timothy 2:24-25
	Titus 3:9-11	Hebrews 12:4-17	

1. What is the purpose of God’s loving discipline in our lives as described in Hebrews 12? Why should we see God’s discipline as a good thing?

2. According to Galatians 6, how should we go about addressing sin in each other’s lives in the body of Christ? What are the dangers in addressing sin if we do it wrongly?

3. Why should the process in Galatians 6 be seen as a normal, healthy part of biblical Christianity? What keeps us from living at this level of vulnerability and care?

4. What do these verses tell us regarding the church’s responsibility to a professing believer who is ensnared by sin and is unrepentant? Why is it important to note that this process is for “unrepentant” sin, and not just sin in general?

5. Summarize the process that is described in Matthew 18.

6. According to 1 Corinthians 5 and 2 Thessalonians 3, there are dual purposes in the church discipline process... (1) to restore the individual to spiritual wholeness, and (2) to protect the body. Why are both of these important, and how are they related?

7. How does this teaching fit in with our culture's perspective of "*whatever makes you happy*" or "*you do you*" and a lack of willingness for people to take personal responsibility for their actions? How would you describe the beauty of church discipline to someone who feels like it is unloving or harsh?

8. How has this study challenged and encouraged you?

**SUMMARIZE THE LESSON
IN A SHORT PRINCIPLE**



CROSSWAY NETWORK

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