

MEMBERSHIP CLASS
Spiritual Leadership for the 21st Century

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HILLTOP CHAPEL COVENANT Associate Member

Now that I have accepted Christ as my Savior, I desire to identify with the people of Hilltop Chapel Bible Methodist Church by committing to the following biblical principles.

1. I WILL SAFEGUARD THE HARMONY AND UNITY OF THE CHURCH

- ❖ *By living out a life of divine love toward others*
- ❖ *By refusing to gossip or slander another person's reputation*
- ❖ *By reconciling conflict as soon as it arises.*
- ❖ *By following delegated leadership and the chain of command*

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

Ephesians 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen..

Ephesians 4:25-27 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.

James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders, and submit *to them*; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

2. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH

- ❖ *By praying daily for its spiritual and numerical growth*
- ❖ *By inviting the unchurched to attend*
- ❖ *By welcoming guests and those who need my hospitality*

Colossians 4:3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ,

Luke 14:23 Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full.

Romans 15:7 Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

3. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

- ❖ *By discovering my spiritual gifts and talents*
- ❖ *By having a servant's heart*
- ❖ *By developing a daily devotional time for Bible reading and prayer*

1 Peter 4:10-11 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever.

Philippians 2:4-5 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. . . who took on the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

Joshua 1:8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

4. I WILL SUPPORT THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

- ❖ *By attending scheduled services unless providentially hindered*
- ❖ *By living a godly life away from church*
- ❖ *By giving back to God in gratefulness in tithes and offerings*

Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

John 13:15-16 For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor *is* one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.

Malachi 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, "How do we rob you?" In tithes and offerings.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 Now this *I say*, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;

Signed

Date

Pastor's signature

SIX EVIDENCES OF SALVATION

Many Christians have doubts about salvation because they do not understand what actually takes place at the time of salvation. **Salvation results in a growing relationship in which we become more and more conscious of God's words and ways by obedience to the prompting of His Holy Spirit.** The following evidences are God's ways of reassuring us that a new relationship exists between God and us.

EVIDENCES OF SALVATION

PROJECTS TO STRENGTHEN COMMITMENT

1. A NEW LOVE FOR SCRIPTURE

(See I Peter 2:2.)

BEGIN READING Matt. 5-7, Mark, Romans, I John. **Memorize** Rom. 6, 8, I Cor. 10:13; I Jn. 1:9; Gal. 2:20; Luke 9:23

2. A NEW AWARENESS OF RIGHT AND WRONG.

(See Hebrews 5:13-14.)

VISUALIZE the words, actions, thoughts or attitudes which you know are displeasing to God and which grieve His Spirit when you do them. **MEMORIZE** Scripture which refers to each offense, and whenever you are tempted, quote the Scripture which would be violated if you yielded to the temptation.

3. A NEW DESIRE TO BE LIKE CHRIST.

MEMORIZE, VISUALIZE, AND PERSONALIZE the character of Christ in Matt. 5:1-12, Gal. 5:22-24, and II Pet. 1:3-7

4. A NEW SOCIAL PRESSURE FROM THOSE CONVICTED BY YOUR CHANGED LIFE

(See I Peter 4:3-5.)

EXPECT TO SUFFER. It is the **KEY** to spiritual growth. Prepare for it by memorizing Phil. 1:29. Rom. 5:3, and I Pet. 1:6; 2:19-24; 3:14

5. A NEW DESIRE TO PROCLAIM CHRIST TO OTHERS

(See Colossians 1:28-29.)

WRITE OUT in three parts how you became a Christian:
A. What my life was like before becoming a Christian.
B. How I committed my life to Christ
C. Evidences of God's work in my life since salvation.

6. A NEW LOVE FOR OTHER CHRISTIANS

(See I John 3:14.)

FIND OTHER CHRISTIANS with whom you can meet regularly to build up each other spiritually. Memorize together the above Scriptures and relate them to daily decisions. Meet weekly to share your answers to prayer.

HOW TO BEGIN YOUR CHRISTIAN LIFE

Lesson I

I. **REALIZE WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU**

A. **You have been reborn** -- Titus 3:5

The rebirth has been defined as "the communication of life by the Spirit to a soul dead in trespasses and sin." Ephesians 2:1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;"

1. **The realities of the new birth** --

- a) The new birth gives life to our spiritual capacity
 - (1) **Taste** -- "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8). We have now experienced the reality of God's love and goodness.
 - (2) **Sight** -- "having the eyes of your heart enlightened." (Ephesians 1: 18).
 - (3) **Touch** -- "we have looked upon and touched... the word of life" (I John 1: 1).
- b) The new birth gives us characteristics like our Father
 - (1) Righteousness -- Phil. 3:9
 - (2) Love -- I John 4:7-8
 - (3) Holiness -- I Peter 1:16

2. **The results of the new birth** --

- a) new understanding of spiritual matters -- Colossians 1: 9
- b) new life in Christ -- 2 Corinthians 5:17
- c) new purpose for living -- Ephesians 2:10
- d) release from the old way of life -- Ephesians 2:1-5
- e) peace with God -- Romans 5:1

B. **You have been forgiven** -- Colossians 1:14

- 1. God has removed your transgressions -- Psalms 103:12
- 2. God made your sins as white as snow -- Isaiah 1: 18
- 3. God placed your sins behind His back -- Isaiah 53
- 4. God remembers your sin no more -- Hebrews 8:12

C. **You have been justified** -- Romans 5:9

Justification means that God accepts me just as I am. Christ paid your penalty and you are justified. You are justified or pardoned because the demands of justice have been fully satisfied by Christ's death.

- 1. You have been justified by faith -- Romans 5: 1
- 2. You have been justified by God's free gift -- Romans 3:24
- 3. You have been justified through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ -- Romans 5:9; 4:25

D. You have been adopted into God's family -- Ephesians 5:3-6

1. God planned your adoption from the beginning -- Eph 1:4-5
2. Christ died to make your redemption possible -- Galatians 4:4-7
3. You can now call God "Father" -- Romans 8:15

E. You can now have the assurance of eternal life -- I John 5:11-13

1. You have the assurance of salvation -- John 10:27-29; Romans 1:16; Hebrews 5:9
2. You have the assurance of victory over sin -- I John 5:3-5
3. You have the assurance of answered prayer -- John 16:24
4. You have the assurance of the Spirit that you are a child of God -- Romans 8:16

II. RECOGNIZE THE RESOURCES GOD HAS FOR YOU

- A. Christ has been victorious over the world -- John 16:33
- B. Christ in you is a winning combination -- 1 John 4:4, Phil 4:13
- C. Christ's resources are adequate for your every need -- 2 Peter 1:3-4
- D. Through Christ you can survive all opposition -- Romans 8:35-39

III. REMEMBER TO MAINTAIN THIS SAVING RELATIONSHIP

- A. Your responsibilities are clear --
 1. You must continue in the faith -- Acts 14:22; Colossians 1: 23
2 Timothy 3:14-15
 2. You must build yourself up in the faith -- Jude 20-21
 3. You must work out your salvation with God's help -- Philippians 2:12
- B. Acknowledge the important part your will plays --
 1. There are some who say, "once a son, always a son." However, there are two essential differences between physical birth and spiritual birth:
 - a) A person does not have prior knowledge or give consent to physical birth. But in spiritual birth, there must be prior knowledge and consent of the will -- Romans 10:8-17; John 5:40
 - b) In physical life the person has life independent of his parents -- not so in spiritual life. Therefore, spiritual life can be forfeited -- John 15:5; Hebrews 2:1; 3:12-1
- C. Avail yourself of the means of spiritual growth which God provides --
 1. *Witnessing* -- Matthew 10:32-33
 2. *Baptism* -- as an outward confession to the world of an internal work of grace in your heart -- Acts 2:38
 3. *Prayer* -- James 5:16; I Thessalonians 5:17
 4. *The Bible* -- I Peter 2:2; 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 5. *Sharing in the life of the church* -- Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:43-47

6. *The Lord's Supper* -- I Corinthians 11:23-26

CONCLUSION:

You are a babe in Christ. God loves you as a mother would love her newborn child -- and more! Remember, He has plans for you! He dreams of your future just as other parents have dreams and plans for their children.

YOUR MOVE!!

Make two columns. Entitle one "***Before Christ***" and the other "***After Christ.***" List five purposes for your life in each column. Put the most important purpose first, the second most important next, etc. Then compare the columns.

BEFORE CHRIST

AFTER CHRIST

HOW TO PRAY

Lesson 2

Communication is essential in all good relationships. In our relationship with Christ, He speaks to us through the Bible, the Holy Spirit, preaching, creation, our conscience, and the testimonies of others. We speak to Christ through prayer. Since prayer has such a high priority with God and it is one of the most important ways that we communicate with Christ to build a more meaningful relationship, let us study how to pray as the Bible teaches.

I. REMEMBER CHRIST'S INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRAYER

A. Christ's instructions on how to pray -- Luke 11:1-4; Matthew 6:5-13

In this passage, the disciples came to Christ and asked Him to teach them how to pray. Jesus gave the following guidelines for praying:

1. Address God with respect and honor
2. Pray for His kingly reign over all the earth
3. Pray for his will to be done in our lives
4. Trust him for daily needs
5. Seek forgiveness for our sins, being willing to forgive others
6. Ask for his help in times of temptation

II. RECOGNIZE THE CONDITIONS FOR ANSWERED PRAYER

A. **Privacy** " But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and Pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you" -- Matthew 6:6

God is not interested in who sees you pray or where they see you pray. Prayers should not be a show for others but should be the burden of your heart addressed to God. God is interested in the private times you spend with him in prayer.

B. **Forgiveness for others**

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you" -- Matthew 6:14

"And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive your trespasses" -- Mark 11: 26

C. **Believe God will answer your prayers**

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" -- Mark 11:24

D. Others praying with you

"Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven" -- Matthew 18:19

E. Persistence in prayer

"Ask, and it will be given you ; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" -- Matthew 7:7

F. Abiding in Christ

"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you" -- John 15:7

G. Continuing in prayer

"Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication" -- Ephesians 6:18

H. Righteous Living

"Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed" -- James 5:16

I. Obedience

"And we receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him" -- I John 3:22

"Never stop praying" -- I Thessalonians 5:17

III. REMOVE ANY HINDRANCES TO PRAYER**A. Sin**

"If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened" Psalms 66:18.

If we are willingly committing known sin, this verse tells us God will not hear our prayers.

B. Failure to obey

"Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord, would have none of my counsel, and despised all my reproof" Proverbs 1: 28-30

C. Doubt

"But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways, will receive anything from the Lord" -- James 1:6-8

D. Selfishness

"You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions" -- James 4:3

Apparently the Christians James wrote to were praying selfishly, praying for only what would please and satisfy them. For this reason, James said, their prayers were not answered.

YOUR MOVE:

A suggested four or five-step format for prayer includes:

1. Praise (to God)
2. Confession (of sins)
3. Intercession (for others' needs)
4. Petition (for our needs).
5. Thanksgiving (to God)

Prepare to communicate with God by listing what you will pray in each step of such a prayer. Pray and REMEMBER --

As we follow this format of the Lord's prayer, remember two things.

First, praying is NOT a formal language that we go to school for or that we learn in church. Prayer IS the honest desires of your heart reaching out to God. Tell God what you feel but be honest about those feelings.

Second, get rid of your selfishness. God will answer only as soon as He knows that we are free of selfishness. Start your petitions with a "Lord I want what you want " phrase and mean it. God loves honesty and unselfishness.

"Never stop praying" -- I Thessalonians 5:17