

# *Life!* *Training*

Name:

Date:

# Essential Elements

*Learning what the  
Church is and  
Does*

Welcome to this journey through the experiences and teachings of the apostolic church as recorded in the book of Acts and the Letters written by the apostles. As a member of His body, you will discover His treasures for those who take His Name and receive His Spirit.

Come to the Scriptures with a prayer-filled heart and open mind as you uncover truths for your life. Record these in the blanks provide to help keep yourself accountable in your daily growth. Talk to the Lord when you find yourself coming short in an area. Share with others the riches you find in His living Word.

Day 1: embellished Bible story.

Day 2-6: interactive journal devotions.

Day 7: contemporary stories of faith.

## Doing Church Biblically

We grow daily in \_\_\_\_\_ and people \_\_\_\_ us.<sup>1</sup>

We adopt the \_\_\_\_\_ of fellow \_\_\_\_\_.<sup>2</sup>

We see \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ manifestations.<sup>3</sup>

We get \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ often.<sup>4</sup>

We \_\_\_\_\_ with like-\_\_\_\_\_ believers.<sup>5</sup>

We do not \_\_\_\_\_ from the apostle's \_\_\_\_\_.<sup>6</sup>

We \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ from sinful society.<sup>7</sup>

We \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_ of the Spirit of God.<sup>8</sup>

We teach \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus' Name.<sup>9</sup>

We tell about Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 2:47; 4:21, 33; 5:13-14; 11:24; 13:48; Luke 2:52; 16:19-31; 19:48

<sup>2</sup> Acts 2:44-46; 4:32-37; 6:1; II Corinthians 8:9, 14-15; 9:6-15; I John 3:16-18

<sup>3</sup> Acts 2:43; 3:6-9; 4:33; 5:11-12, 15-16; 9:34, 40; Mark 16:17; John 14:12

<sup>4</sup> Acts 2:42, 46-47; 4:31; 6:4; 12:5; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2; Jude 1:20

<sup>5</sup> Acts 2:42, 46; 4:23; 5:12; 20:7; I Cor. 11:20-32; Hebrews 10:25; I John 1:7

<sup>6</sup> Acts 2:42; 11:23; 14:22; John 8:31-32; I Cor. 11:2; Ephesians 4:11-16

<sup>7</sup> Acts 2:40; II Cor. 6:17-18; 7:1; Hebrews 3:12-13; 12:14; Revelation 18:4-5

<sup>8</sup> Acts 2:38-39, 41; 8:14-17; 10:44-45; 19:2-6; Matthew 27:25; Ephesians 5:18

<sup>9</sup> Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 36-39; 9:18; 10:44-48; 16:33; 19:1-6; 22:16; Titus 3:4-5

<sup>10</sup> Acts 2:22-36; 4:8-12; 5:21-33; 7:53; 8:35; 9: 20; 10:34-44; Philippians 2:1-11

## Foundations for Fulfillment

*See Joel 1, 2; Luke 24:52-53; Acts 2:13-21*

“Listen old men!” the prophet Joel yelled in front of the temple. His beloved Israel stood ready for God’s judgment and punishment from Assyria and Babylon. “Hear me citizens! Have you or your fathers seen anything like what is coming?” His echo died out before he continued. “Inform your children of this. Let them tell their children, and let them pass it to the next generation.

“That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten. So wake up, you drunks! Weep, drinkers! Howl for new wine you cannot have!”

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Mockers on the day of Pentecost shouted out in the Temple precincts. “You are all drunk on new wine!”

Peter stood up before the crowd. “We are not drunk as you suppose. It is only nine in the morning! This is what the prophet Joel spoke about...”

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Prophet Joel continued, “Destruction is upon us. Just as all your crops are laid waste, so your joy has dried up. Put on rough clothing and lament, you priests. Howl, you ministers of the altar. Come, lie all night in discomfort, ye ministers of my God. Order a fast, call a solemn assembly, and gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God. Cry unto the Lord for deliverance.”

After describing a mighty, unstoppable army, Prophet Joel said, “‘Turn to Me,’ says the Lord, ‘with all your heart: with fasting, weeping, and mourning.’ Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God. He is gracious, merciful, patient, kind, and ready to forgive.

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For the past week the disciples had spent days and nights in prayer. After Jesus ascended into the clouds, they went to Jerusalem and joined together as one body to pray, praise, worship, sing, and seek the face of God.

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Prophet Joel continued, “Blow the trumpet in Zion, order a fast, and gather the people into a holy congregation. Include the elderly, the children, nursing infants, and even the newlyweds. Let the priests, the servants of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar.”

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The momentum had begun to build as God moved in the disciples’ hearts. The ancient city so long abandoned by the glory cloud of God’s presence prepared for something breathtaking. Not only the apostles, but also Mary, Jesus’ mother, gathered with His brothers and sisters and any other believer who cared to wait for the Promise from above.

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“And it shall come to pass afterward,” Joel prophesied, “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

“And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

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Apostle Peter explained to the crowd, “This is what Joel was talking about when he said,

‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh: and your sons and daughters shall prophesy. You young men will see visions. You old men shall dream dreams. Also, on my male and female servants in those days, I will pour out my Spirit and they shall prophesy.’”

And with many other words, he told them of Jesus and warned them to escape the coming judgment.

## **Get Ready for Rain**

Pentecost was not a random fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. While the Apostle Peter preached the prophecy about the Spirit, the disciples had been fulfilling other parts of the prophet's instructions. Joel said, "It shall come to pass afterward." After what?

What was the problem in Israel when this prophecy first came? Answer from Joel 1:4.

How does society today suffer from a spiritually worm-eaten existence?

What did Joel urge the priests to do in 1:13-14?

How can you obey the principles of this command today?

In Joel 2:12, what does God want His people to do?

In 2:16, who should be involved in this heart change?

A Jew used to rip his garment to show grief. This time, God did not want a public demonstration. He did not want their sacrifices, which they could not offer anyway because of the damage from the famine and plague of locusts. He wanted their hearts to change.

We can put on a show like we want God to move, but sometimes it is just hype and antics. He wants to start with our hearts. If our hearts are right, our worship will be, too. Something else must come before all our good music, polished presentations, and well-delivered homilies. We must fall on our faces and weep. How can you apply the Spirit of Joel 2:17 in your life?

When people begin to fast and pray and seek the face of God, what does He promise in Joel 2:25-27?

When calling the people to weep and to worship, the prophet invited whom, in Joel 2:16?

Who then does God want to bless? Notice the people described in 2:28-29. Who all does He include?

How can you help involve children and the elderly, leaders and social inferiors, the well-to-do and the deprived in this last days outpouring?

## Tell the World Christ Reigns

The Apostle Peter did more than tell the crowd that Jesus loved them very much. He did more than tell them to get saved. He exalted Jesus. Peter built his sermon on his audience's knowledge of the Scriptures and respect for King David. What key points did he raise from Psalm 16:8-11 when he quoted this in Acts 2:25-28?

Although it seems Psalm 16 is written about David, how does Peter prove that it is about Jesus, in Acts 2:29?

Peter shows how David knew this prophecy applied to the Messiah. Next, how does Acts 2:31 explain Jesus' three days in the tomb?

### **Patriarch, Prophet, or Poet?**

*Many people think of David as just a poet who wrote songs to worship the Lord. While he was a poet, the apostle Peter calls him a patriarch since he founded a dynasty of kings. Peter also calls him a prophet since he predicted much about the life of Jesus.*

Peter preaches about Jesus' humiliation at the hands of wicked men and His having to enter a tomb. However, he turns quickly to the message of Jesus' resurrection and victory over death. In Acts 2:32-33, what did Jesus' ascension accomplish for humanity?



Peter tells this great news to people guilty of his death. Many of these people were in the crowd shouting “Crucify him!” (Matthew 27:22-23). Upon the mention of their guilt for this senseless crime, the people shouted, “His blood be on us, and on our children” (Matthew 27:25). When Peter invites these repentant people to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, he provides an answer to their irrational statement. In Acts 2:39, he also promised what?

That same verse also links back to the initial quotation the apostle made from Joel. God calls on us (2:39) to call upon Him (2:21). To call down the name of the Lord and invoke it over our lives would have been different for Joel’s audience than it was for Peter’s. Here, the name of the Lord is no longer just Yahweh, but Jesus (Yeh-shua). The apostle did not arrive at this thought arbitrarily, but through using the scriptures.

In Acts 2:34-35, what does Peter quote from Psalm 110:1? Why is this significant?

Jesus did not just ascend into clouds, but into the Spirit realm. To “go to the Father” is not to travel out of the solar system but to leave the visible world and enter the unseen Kingdom of the Spirit. Once Jesus entered this realm he was not just another heavenly being. He has the place of all authority, indicated by the phrase “right hand of God.”

In Acts 2:25, the Messiah is saying God is on his right hand. This indicates Jesus’ inability to save Himself except by divine power. Now, the exalted man Jesus has all power (Matthew 28:18), a.k.a. God’s right hand. This does not make two thrones, but one (Revelation 3:21; 7:17; 21:5-8).

Explain the significance of Acts 2:36.

## **Keep the Message the Main Thing**

After quoting from Joel, what did Peter focus on in Acts 2:23-24?

Jesus called us to be witnesses for Him. We do not just tell people about what God did or does for us, we tell them about His work in the Messiah. The apostles bore witness to the world that Jesus had in fact died and risen again. We can talk about many things, but this is the main thing: Jesus' crucifixion and His resurrection.

Of course, the crucifixion is necessary to the gospel since by it Jesus paid our sin debt and cleared us of guilt. Furthermore, we must focus on the cross because without it we would have no resurrection. By Christ's resurrection, He provided us access to eternal life, not just eternal pardon.

How is this message essential in Peter's words in Acts 3:14-15?

What did Peter preach in Acts 4:10?

And Acts 5:30?

If the apostles and the first believers preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified as the power of new life, then we who believe in Jesus should do no less. If we removed the message of the cross and the resurrection, what would we talk to people about that would change their lives?

Good story tellers move audiences. You do not want people to just listen, you want them to laugh, be terrified, or think about life differently after hearing your story. We are not idle story tellers, spinning yarns about Jesus. We expect people to be moved. When the crowd heard Peter, how did they respond in Acts 2:37?

When was the last time your “story-telling” about Jesus impacted someone like this?

Have you told your co-workers or neighbors? Have you told your children, grandchildren, or other relatives?

When the gospel message moves people’s hearts, what should they do? Answer from Peter’s response in Acts 2:38.

In other words, a person needs a death-burial and a resurrection. In Romans 6:3-4, how do we identify with Christ’s death and burial?

In Romans 6:5, what can a person then expect?

This “resurrection” occurs for those who have died to sin and come to life in the Spirit. What is the advantage of rising with Christ in the Spirit, according to Romans 8:11?

## **Caring and Sharing**

When a newborn lamb arrives in the flock, the other ewes will gather around to check it out. One-by-one, they will come close enough to say hello and let this newcomer know it is part of a big family. Sheep stick together as a flock for safety and group up to share a new patch of clover.

Another four-footed ruminant looks somewhat like a sheep but tends to wander away from the flock. This stock animal can become very selfish about its food, often butting others away from what it has. Goats come into churches, too.

The first church in Acts naturally grouped up with spontaneous care for those born of the Spirit. What does Acts 2:44-45 say they did?

In Acts 4:32, how were they different from your experience of Christianity?

These Christians knew they were a rare breed and they stuck together. When they saw someone in the flock who needed help, the Spirit-led love in their hearts motivated them to share. In Acts 4:34-35, how did those who owned extra real estate help provide for others' needs?

We cannot claim to be true Christians if we do not care for the needs and challenges of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Many do not balk at the joys of sharing a high-power church service. However, too many resist the thought of sharing their money or possessions.

What are some needs you can help your brothers or sisters with? Remember, you can give time, money, and skill.

Church is more than hype and hamburgers. We do not just fellowship in the sense of talking together, we do what we can to help each other. True believers are sensitive to one another, patient with each other, and encouraging to one another. It is one thing to say you care, another thing to do something about it.

You can sense the spirit of love and unity among those early believers as you read about how they helped each other. What can you do to bring a similar feel of compassion and oneness to your church?

Too many Christians abide alone. They never know the joy of sharing heart and soul with their fellow believers. In John 12:24, what did Jesus say about a kernel of wheat?

Are you a lonely grain of wheat? Or have you died? If you die to your own desires and share with others you will find yourself finally begin to live. Tight-fisted giving will keep you small and insignificant. Sharing with the people you claim to love will let you flourish many times larger than yourself. Self-interest kills a church. Self-sacrifice grows it.

What did Jesus say to you in John 12:25?

How have you experienced the art of losing your life and gaining eternal benefits?

You become aware of the needs of others as you spend time with others in the church and listen to the Lord.

## **Fellowship in the Faith**

You cannot be part of the church if you are not part of the church. The first believers shared meals together, shared prayer time together, shared their homes, and shared their hearts with those who believed the same precious truth.

If you avoid fellowship with the body of Christ, you are suffering from a heart problem. Which of these diagnoses applies to your condition?

- I do not love truth.
- I do not love the people in your church.
- I am harboring offense at someone in the church.
- I have been hurt before and cannot risk it again.
- None of these are true, I love church fellowship.

Fellowship rarely occurs at the VFW, food court, or YMCA. Fellowship is a knitting of hearts together. We weave ourselves into the lives of each other by weeping together with someone's sorrows. We thread our hearts as one in rejoicing for another's victory. We grow by laughing together, playing together, talking together, praying together, learning together, and working together.

Stable believers fellowship with one another naturally. You begin to sense your need for fellowship when:

- You suffer persecution or rejection.
- You are dying to tell someone what God did for you.
- You need to share your concerns with someone.
- You feel alone.
- You have questions about your faith.

How do you involve yourself regularly with face-to-face and group fellowship?

How can you improve the fellowship in your church?

Although sheep and goats look alike to those outside the fence, they know they are different. When you mix sheep and goats, invariably, the sheep will group up with the sheep and the goats will just do their own thing. A believer needs to know how he or she is distinct from others who claim to follow the Shepherd. Just because a group claims to be Christian does not mean you should participate.

The early church met in a side room of the Temple, away from the Jesus-haters. They stuck close together for strength and support. How does it help you to hang out with other people who believe the same as you do?

How does it help to pray with the church and not only pray alone?

What do you like the most about getting together for food when you fellowship?

How do you benefit by fasting together as a church?

What did the first church do, according to Acts 2:42?

How can you help include other believers and help involve them in this shared life of Pentecost?

## The Church Still Lives

Bro. Kenneth Haney shares these reports of the church today:

The revival in Ethiopia began with a few who sacrificed even their lives. In the past decade over one million have been filled with the Holy Ghost and FIRE. There have been many people experience healing, some have been raised from the dead, blind eyes have been opened, the lame have walked and many miraculous manifestations of God have been witnessed. Truly the Book of Acts is still being written in this land of revival.

In January 2001, people from North America joined others from around the world for a crusade in the Philippine Islands. There were 40 groups from different churches who took the responsibility of holding crusades simultaneously, and then all the groups met in Manila for the one big crusade. There were over 94,000 people who received the gift of the Holy Ghost and FIRE in a three-day period. Many miraculous miracles were witnessed, as well as many healings. God surely poured out His Spirit from on high. This was the beginning of a vision fulfilled that the Lord gave to Rev. Gordon Mallory several years ago. The vision was for a million-soul revival in the Philippines.<sup>1</sup>



Missionary Bill Drost responded to a request to visit a dying man who was also crying for someone to talk to him about God. He was surprised, however, when a block away from the house he began to hear this man screaming out, “Water! Water! Water!”

As soon as the car stopped, Bro. Drost ran upstairs to the second floor and crashed into the room, where several others were already present. He said, “Isn’t anyone giving this man water?”

“Yes,” they replied, “we’ve even tried to give it to him with a spoon.”

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Haney, *Baptism of Fire*, Stockton, CA, 2001, 181-82.



Then the dying man who was crying out stopped, turned to Bro. Drost, and said, “I don’t want water to drink, but I want water to be baptized.”

He proceeded to explain that when he was younger he had not obeyed the Lord and had refused to repent and be baptized, but as he was nearing death, he realized that he was not saved and that he needed to obey the Word of God. With the help of some of those present, Bro. Drost took him to the bathtub and baptized him in the wonderful name of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

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Another time Bro. Drost walked into a Christian book store in the United States and asked if they had any books on baptism in Jesus’ name.

The store manager replied, “No, we don’t have any books on that subject in this bookstore.”

Bro. Drost then asked, “If I find any, can I take them free?”

The manager laughed and said, “You can take any book you find on baptism in Jesus’ name for free, for we don’t carry any in this bookstore.”

Bro. Drost went over to the area where they had all of their Bibles and said, “Here, let me take all your Bibles, for baptism in Jesus’ name is taught in the Bible!”<sup>2</sup>

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*Time* magazine included this in 1998:

The Pentecostal movement, which originated in the U.S. and emphasizes the Holy Spirit’s descent upon Christ’s apostles, is the surpassing phenomenon of 20th century American religion. Fundamentalists feel the world changing so fast and so drastically under their feet and want to pin the ground down,” says minister and author Forrest Church. Pentecostals sense the movement under their feet and Want to reach for the sky.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> T. Wynn Drost, *Dedicated to Revival*, Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame, 2000, 32-33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>3</sup> Haney, 63.

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# *Life!* *Journal*

**Acts 2:42-45**

**And they continued stedfastly  
in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship,  
and in breaking of bread,  
and in prayers.**

**And fear came upon every soul:  
and many wonders and signs  
were done by the apostles.**

**And all that believed were together,  
and had all things common;  
And sold their possessions and goods,  
and parted them to all men,  
as every man had need.**

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15512 Kodiak Rd.,  
Neosho, MO 64850

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