

# MY HOPE AMERICA

## Lesson 1: The Effective Christian Life

### Open:

\*\* VIDEO CLIP: How Does This Work \*\*

– Take a look at packet:

√ The Matthew list ...

- Look around – identify those who do not know Jesus Christ as Savior.
- Look up – pray for them.
- Look out – be intentional and look for opportunities to hang out together.
- Look forward – to when you will watch the program.
- Look after – “My Decision” – tract and “Living in Christ” follow-up booklet.

\* Before we can help others, we need to prepare ourselves ...

– We need a good grip on the Word, and we need to be grasping onto God’s hand.

√ To keep from being conformed by the world, we need to be constantly renewing our mind.

**Romans 12:2 NLT** Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

### (1) Grip the Word

– The #1 reason believers don’t tell others about Christ ... they don’t know what to say.

- √ This can be fixed by becoming familiar with the Scriptures.
- √ The more of God's Word you get into your life, the more effective you'll be as a Christian.

→ A vital part of our walk with God is to get into the Word daily.

– Hand illustration ... 5 principles (hear, read, study, memorize and meditate)

- √ Many believers would agree they believe it but they are not gripping it!

a) Hear God's Word

**Romans 10:17 NKJV** So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

- √ We need to be hearing God's Word on a consistent basis.
  - This is done at church, podcast, life/home groups ...
  - However educators tell us we only retain about 10% of what we hear.
  - One 30 minute message a week will never be enough to help you become the person God wants you to be!
  - How do I increase my hearing? Sit where you are not distracted, take notes, review ... = spiritual growth.

b) Read God's Word

**Deuteronomy 17:19 NLT** (Guidelines for Israel's king) He must always keep that copy with him and read it daily as long as he lives. That way he will learn to fear the Lord his God by obeying all the terms of these instructions and decrees.

- √ We need not only to hear it but we need to read it for ourselves.
- √ We retain 25% of what we read.

→ It is important that each day we get into God's Word

- √ Make an appointment with God and meet with Him each day.

→ What you get on Sunday is never meant to take you all the way through the week.

√ To benefit from daily reading ... have a plan.

- Give God some time ... can you give Him 20 or 30 minutes?
- Read it with excitement and interest ... God's Word is like a love letter.

c) Study God's Word

**Proverbs 2:1-6 NLT** <sup>1</sup> My child, listen to what I say, and treasure my commands. <sup>2</sup> Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. <sup>3</sup> Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding. <sup>4</sup> Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures. <sup>5</sup> Then you will understand what it means to fear the Lord, and you will gain knowledge of God. <sup>6</sup> For the Lord grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

√ Search for truth ... circle key words, define words, check out the study notes, write a paraphrase.

√ We are now at 50% retention.

d) Memorize God's Word

**Psalms 119:9-11 NLT** <sup>9</sup> How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word. <sup>10</sup> I have tried hard to find you—don't let me wander from your commands. <sup>11</sup> I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

– When we hide God's Word in our heart, it is there for the Holy Spirit to encourage, convict and guide us ...

√ Memorization is a matter of motivation ... sure, it is hard work but it is worth the effort.

- If I offered you \$1000 for every verse you memorized, do you think you could have some ready next Sunday?

e) Meditate on God's Word ... marinate on it!

**Joshua 1:8 NLT** Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

√ Roll it through your mind, what does it mean to me personally today ... what do I need to do as a result?

→ This is where application comes in!

\* So Step One of the effective Christian life is to get a strong grip on the Word.

**(2) Grasp God's Hand** ... this is where the power comes from to live and speak as God would have you.

→ If we are to live the effective Christian life, we will need to daily grasp God's hand.

√ Illust.: When taking my daughters to the park, they would walk the balance beam with timidity, but when I held their hand they had renewed courage.

→ When we take hold of God's hand, we have courage to speak and live as He directs.

√ We need to live our life in dependence upon God.

a) God is sovereign and He has everything under control.

√ God has a plan for your life, and He has power to make it happen.

**Jeremiah 1:6-9 NLT** <sup>6</sup> "O Sovereign Lord," I said, "I can't speak for you! I'm too young!" <sup>7</sup> The Lord replied, "Don't say, 'I'm too young,' for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. <sup>8</sup> And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you. I, the Lord, have spoken!" <sup>9</sup> Then the Lord reached out and touched my mouth and said, "Look, I have put my words in your mouth!"

- Although Jeremiah felt he couldn't do what God had told him to do ... God assured him that He would help him.
- Few whom God called felt they had what it took to get the job done: ex. Moses, Gideon ...

→ God is with you, and He will help you!

b) God wants to work in and through your life.

**Philippians 2:13 NLT** for God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him.

√ Because we trust and love Him, we offer our life to God ... allowing Him to do what He pleases.

c) The Holy Spirit is our helper.

**John 14:16 NKJV** And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another helper, that He may abide with you forever.

**Ephesians 5:18 NLT** Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit.

→ The answer to the power question in your life is to be filled (controlled) by the Holy Spirit.

√ He is to be running the show!

√ i.e., what the engine is to the car, the Holy Spirit is to the Christian ... you can push the car or let the engine do the work ... one is old and tiresome, and the other is fun and adventurous.

\* Evidence we are living a life controlled by the Holy Spirit.

1) We have victory.

**Galatians 5:16 NLT** ... let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.

2) Power

**Acts 1:8 NLT** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

3) Love

**Galatians 5:22-23 NLT** <sup>22</sup> But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control.

\* How do we live a spirit-controlled life?

- (1) Surrender daily to the Holy Spirit ... take charge Holy Spirit.
- (2) Confess sin.

**1 John 1:9 NLT** But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- (3) Obey – give the controls back over to God.
- (4) Practice what He instructs us to do.

d) Each day led by the Word – Scriptures.

**Ephesians 6:17 NLT** Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

√ God's Word has power.

e) Exercise faith.

**Hebrews 11:6 NLT** And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

- √ By faith I believe God has a sovereign plan for my life ...
- √ By faith I believe His plan is better than my plan, and by faith I give up my plan and take His.

- √ By faith I surrender my life to Him and ask that He work in and through me.
- √ By faith I believe I am filled with the Holy Spirit ... I can't see Him but I yield to Him.
- √ By faith I live by the Word of God, and I know it is powerful.

→ I take His hand by faith.

**Close:** What has the Lord said to you?

- Are you gripping the Word? Hear, read, study, memorize and meditate on it?
- Are you grasping His hand? Does He have control of your life?
- √ Your life can count for Christ! These tools are available!

**Next Week:** The Christian Witness

Message Notes  
First Baptist Church of Lexington  
Pastor Ralph Schneck  
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