

# LIFE PRINCIPLES NOTES

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



## A Heart for God— A Vision for the World

KEY PASSAGE: Luke 24:45-49 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: Matthew 17:27; 28:19 | Mark 16:15  
John 3:16; 14:2-3, 6, 15, 21, 23 | Acts 1:6-8 | 1 Timothy 2:3-5 | Hebrews 13:5 | 2 Peter 3:9 | 1 John 2:1-2

### SUMMARY:

#### Do you know where you would be today without the gospel?

If someone hadn't told you about Jesus, you'd be separated from God, living without His help, and facing the prospect of His righteous judgment after death. Sadly, that's where most people in the world are today. Their only hope is in Jesus because He is the one way to come to the Father (John 14:6), yet many have never even heard of Him. This is why a church must always be willing and prepared to share the gospel outside the walls of a building.

Believers must have both a heart for God and a vision for the world. It was the last direction Christ gave to His church before ascending to heaven (Luke 24:45-49). He reminded His followers, "You are witnesses of these things" (v. 48) and must share what you've seen with everyone. Like them, we need to remember that whenever God plants a vision in our hearts, He has a purpose and a blessing in mind. If we'll take the first step of obedience, the Lord will lead us to the second and provide everything we need.

### SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES:

#### What does a heart for God look like?

■ **A Desire to Know Him**—When you have a heart for God, you experience an insatiable desire to know Him. It's not a matter of learning facts, but rather a pursuit of an increasingly personal relationship with Him.

You want to spend time alone with the Lord in intimate conversation to better understand His character, thoughts, desires, activities, and plans. Just as you want to know other people you love dearly, you crave time with the Lord

When I was growing up, I noticed some people in my church didn't seem very excited about Jesus though they had walked with Him for many years. Their desire for Him had dwindled instead of increased. This can happen to any of us if we get sidetracked and neglect our relationship with the Lord.

- **A Desire to Obey Him**—The night before His trial and crucifixion, Jesus told His disciples, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Genuine love for Christ always results in obedience. Knowing this, could you honestly say that you love Jesus? Is your life one that is characterized by obedience and submission? Consider how you make decisions about things like spending money and using your time. As a believer, you should always be fully surrendered to His will in every aspect of your life.
- **A Desire to Share Him**—If you're genuinely devoted to Jesus, you'll want to tell others about Him—the most important person in your life. You shouldn't keep Him to yourself because Christ didn't call followers to private faith. Instead, He said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15). Fear of criticism shouldn't keep you from telling others about the Savior because they won't know how desperate they are if believers don't share His message. This is the good news of Christ!

## God intends for every person to hear the gospel.

Many passages of Scripture are evidence of our heavenly Father's plan. Remember, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Salvation is a gift He intended for whoever accepts Jesus as Savior; there is no limit to His mercy and grace. The Lord desires that each and every one of us would know the truth (1 Tim. 2:3-5), and that is why He patiently continues to call people to Him so none might perish (2 Pet. 3:9).

Because Jesus paid the sin debt for each of us, we have also been given a lifelong obligation. Christ gave His disciples the job of spreading the good news both near and far—"even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). We are now the ones who carry this responsibility. Although God is the only one who can open a person's heart to the gospel, our job is to tell others about the Savior—beginning in our homes, workplaces, and neighborhoods. However, we can't stop there because the Great Commission compels us to reach the entire world.

God's plan is working. All over the globe, people are being saved, churches are being established, and missionaries are being sent out. We have the message that can transform a person's life and eternal destiny. That's why none of us has an excuse for not sharing our faith and our churches are responsible for having a missionary plan for the world.

## God's plan is the missionary church.

Since the Lord wants everyone to hear about Christ and has tasked believers with the message, we know He has a plan to accomplish it. This plan involves:

- **The Person of Jesus Christ**—He is the One who offered His life as a substitutionary atonement for our sins. And by His divine authority, Jesus has commanded us to tell

others about His offer of forgiveness.

- **The Power**—Knowing the job was beyond us, Jesus sent His Holy Spirit to live within believers, empowering and equipping them to carry out the task of witnessing to the world (Luke 24:49).
- **His Program**—Because God loves everyone on earth, He desires no place be left unevangelized. The plan was set in motion with just twelve men who faithfully shared the message and led thousands to salvation. And today, millions upon millions of people know Jesus as Lord.

## What exactly does a missionary church look like?

A church willing to fulfill the Great Commission:

- Has a vision for the world, not just its own city.
- Responds obediently to Jesus' command by sending out missionaries.
- Clearly proclaims Christ's message of redemption for mankind.
- Challenges those who are called by God to carry the message wherever He sends them.
- Supports those who are called to take the gospel to the mission field.

## RESPONSE:

- What is your concept of sharing Christ with the world? Do you automatically think of having to go to a foreign country?
- Who has had the biggest impact on your thinking in regard to sharing the Lord with those who don't know Him?
- How can you share with someone you know about the many ways God blesses and guides you and your family throughout the year?

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