

Message Guide

This Message Guide may be a little different from those that you have used before.

The purpose of these Notes is not an in-depth study of the scriptures used, but rather to assist you or your Study Group as you reflect on this message given by Charles Price.

We present questions in order to stimulate discussion. Sometimes we will give you the answer ... sometimes not. At other times a statement or a theme is presented for your consideration.

As you allow the Holy Spirit to guide the direction of your study and discussions we pray the flexibility of this Message Guide will help you as you delve more deeply into Charles' message, and that you will unearth more lessons from the Lord than may not have been immediately obvious.

Message Guide & Questions

The Dynamics of an Effective Church Part 1 – The Dangers of a Mature Church Revelation 3:1 – 3a & 14 - 20

1. When Oswald J. Smith formed the church that was later to be known as 'The Peoples Church', what was its first name?

The C _____ T _____

2. O.J. Smith tried to distance this church from regular denominations by stating very clearly that: *"We are separate from all churches and denominations, reaching out for the thousands of people who never enter a church door."*

What were the 3 things that this church stood for?

1. The S _____ of S _____
 2. The E _____ of B _____
 3. W _____ E _____
3. When referring to a 'mature' church in this message this means mature chronologically, not spiritually. What are the potential dangers of churches that have been around for a long time? They are in danger of moving from being

O _____ L _____ to I _____ L _____

G _____ C _____ to N _____ C _____

S _____ D _____ to S _____ S _____

Moving our thinking from

B _____ R _____ to H _____ R _____

A L _____ O _____ to a well managed O _____

4. Who is it who has the right to define the church and what it is supposed to do?
Read and consider Matthew 28 v.18 – 20; Mark 16 v.15; Luke 24 v.45 – 49;
John 20 v.21; Acts 21 v.8

The mandate is very clear. What are the 4 things that the church is to do?

5. This raises the questions –
Are you as an individual clear about this?
Are we as a church clear about this?
Does this criteria influence our decisions?
Are these the fundamental reasons why we meet as a church?

6. When we understand the responsibility of the church's mandate from the Lord, what are the 3 usual responses?

1. I C _ _ _ do this.

2. I W _ _ _ do this.

3. I W _ _ _ do this.

7. To respond by saying "I can't do this" is actually absolutely true. Why?

Read and consider –

Acts 14 v.27; 15 v.4; 15 v.12; 21 v.19 Romans 15 v.18 WHO did it?

8. If we eliminate the "I can't" response, what are we left with?

Final Thoughts

Often people will try to avoid this by saying, "I haven't really thought about it."

Well, you are thinking about it now, so what will your response be?

Remember – "I can't" is not a valid response
because God has equipped us all to be able to do something.

A good place to start is to say,

*"Here I am Lord, whatever You want me to do, I am available
– just show me what it is, and I will trust in You to enable me to do it."*

Granted, that is a brave prayer, but it would be the start of an exciting life serving God.

Message Guide & Questions

The Dynamics of an Effective Church Part 2 – The Church as a Body of Christ 1 Corinthians 12:12 - 27

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12 v.12 – 27

When you see the word 'church' what do you think of?

2. When was this 'body' which is called the Church, born?

3. Something happened to the Disciples on that day – what was it?

4. On that same Day of Pentecost something happened to Jesus Christ – what was it?

5. When you ask yourself these questions -

Who is preaching this week?

Who is teaching Sunday School?

what should be the common answer?

Who is leading the youth ministry?

Who is on the church Board?

6. This links with last week's study pertaining to whether or not we are willing to say "I will" as opposed to "I won't". Read verses 15 to 20 and consider what would happen if part of the body said "I won't".

7. All parts of the body are different, having different functions which in themselves are all equally important. In the same way the members of the body of Christ have different functions. What should be our response to that?

8. What are two dangerous attitudes that can develop in the church in this context.

Final Thoughts

God does not make any mistakes.
He made us all, and has given us all unique gifts
to be used in His Body and for His glory.
No one is more or less important than anyone else.
But what God needs is that in the exercising of our free will,
we will say "**Yes, I will**".

Message Guide & Questions

The Dynamics of an Effective Church

Part 3 – Desiring Spiritual Gifts

1 Corinthians 12:27 – 31; 14:1

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:27 – 31 and 14:1 then consider this statement by Charles. “Christians don’t go to church.” Why?

2. Name 4 things that happen to us when we become true Christians.

3. Name 2 things that the ‘church’ is not, and one thing that the church is.

4. Who is the ‘head’ of this body?
What is the ‘life’ of this body?
Who are the members [the functioning parts] of the body?

5. You will remember from our last study that we are all –

D _____ but D _____

6. Now a third element is added in 1 Corinthians 14:1; and that is what we are to do –

D _____ S _____ G _____

7. Just as this whole question of “Spiritual Gifts” was too extensive for Charles to deal with in this one message, so it is too extensive for us to deal with in just one study session; however, consider the following questions –

What are Spiritual Gifts?
Why are there Spiritual Gifts?
When do we receive Spiritual Gifts?
How do we receive Spiritual Gifts?

Read these scriptures – Rom. 12:6 – 8; 1 Cor. 12:14; Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 4:9 – 11 and 1 Cor. 7:7

There is no comprehensive list of gifts in the Bible, but in the aforementioned verses there are 22 different gifts.

Can you identify 2 elements of church ministry that are not mentioned as 'spiritual gifts'?

Final Thoughts

The reason for the existence of Spiritual Gifts
is found in 1 Corinthians 12:7 and in 1 Peter 4:10;
They are available to all
as is stated in 1 Corinthians 12:7 and Romans 12:4 – 6.
However, it is important to note that while we should 'desire spiritual gifts',
God is sovereign in the distributions of his gifts.
They are 'gifts', not rights to be demanded.

Read again: 1 Corinthians 12:11, 18, 24, 28 and Hebrews 2:4

Message Guide & Questions

The Dynamics of an Effective Church Part 4 – Human Frailty and Spiritual Gifts 2 Corinthians 1:3 - 7

1. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3 – 7

Then consider what elements make up the human body.

2. When we consider the raw materials that make a human body, it does not do much for our self esteem, does it!

So who are we? What gives us value? Can you remember from our last study?

3. Do you recall the 3 'D's'?

We are all D _____

We are all D _____

And we all are to be D _____ S _____ G _____

But now we need to add another 'D', which we must guard against.
Do you know what that 'D' is? It is not easy.

4. Consider how men tend to define themselves compared with how women define themselves.

5. What do you think God is most interested in concerning us?

6. Therefore our spiritual gifts, our ability to minister to other people, flows out of a combination of two things. Do you know what they are?

7. Consider then what two things we need to come to terms with.

Our C _____ and Our C _____

8. Read Jeremiah 1:5 – 7 and then Psalm 139:15 – 16. What do we learn from these verses?

9. God was our C _____ before He was our S _____

10. What do we learn when we read 2 Corinthians 1: 3 – 6?

11. We are all raw material that God uses; not pristine and perfect; perhaps broken and bleeding, but we are covered with the forgiveness and righteousness of Christ.

If you think you are bad, consider this list of those whom God chose to use –

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| A Murderer | - M _____ |
| An Adulterer | - D _____ |
| A Liar | - A _____ |
| A Polygamist | - S _____ |
| A Cursing Coward | - P _____ |
| A Sex Maniac | - S _____ |
| An Anti-Christian Terrorist | - P _____ |

Final Thoughts

When you stop to consider how God could use you,
don't listen to the lie of Satan that God would not use you;
that you have nothing to offer.

Instead, allow yourself to be clay in the hands of the master potter,
who has been, and is, molding us -
with all our pain, hurt and even sin -
to be instruments of blessing in His hands.

Message Guide & Questions

The Dynamics of an Effective Church Part 5 – Developing Spiritual Gifts Ephesians 4:11 - 16

1. Before reading the scripture verse for today, consider this question and some of the possible answers.

If a church has become static and needs to grow and be built up, to be effective and fruitful, name some ways to accomplish this. Some answers may be –

Change the P _ _ _ _ _

Change the M _ _ _ _ _

Change the S _ _ _ _ _

Change the L _ _ _ _ _

Change the B _ _ _ _ _

2. None of the above list will change a church from being dead to coming alive in Christ.

What will bring it to pass?

3. Now read and consider verse 14. What does this tell us?

4. Having, in previous studies, defined Spiritual Gifts as *those abilities God gives to His people to enable the church to do its task*, what are the two important things to remember concerning these gifts?

5. Explain the difference between your 'natural abilities' and your 'spiritual gifts'?

6. Can you think of someone whose natural abilities were actually used **against** God, but later used **for** God?

7. Are all our 'spiritual gifts' simply an extension of our 'natural gifts' [abilities]? Explain.

8. What lesson do we learn from 1 Timothy 4 v.14, and 2 Timothy 1 v.6?

Final Thoughts

Do you know what your Spiritual Gifts are?
You may be closer to that answer than you think.

We are not all called to have every gift,
so look first at what your natural abilities are.

Remember the 3 'D's

Desire Spiritual Gifts

Discover them in yourself

Develop your Spiritual Gifts

And remember that you 'develop by doing'.
One of the best teachers will be the mistakes you make.
Don't be afraid of them.
If you are not willing to make mistakes you will never grow.

Surrender your strengths and weaknesses to Jesus Christ
and allow the Holy Spirit to fill and direct your life.

Pray for opportunities

Look for opportunities

Engage in opportunities

And by this, the body of Jesus Christ will be built up;
and that body can reach out to the world.

Message Guide & Questions

The Dynamics of an Effective Church Part 6 – Love Makes The Church Go Round 1 Corinthians 12:31 – 14:1

1. Read and consider 1 Corinthians 12:31 to 14:1a
2. The word 'love' is greatly misused. We can say we love our spouse, or we can say we love ice-cream, but they mean completely different things.

In the Greek language of the New Testament they had 3 different words for 'Love' –

E ____ P _____ and A _____

3. We need to remember that the passage that we read is not a digression by Paul into the subject of 'love'; he is still talking about Spiritual Gifts.

When it comes to the operations of the church of Jesus Christ we have to understand –

The M _____ of operations is J _____ C _____ - the head of the body.

The M _____ of operation are P _____ - the members of the body.

The M _____ of operation is L _____.

4. Consider the futility of 'Gifts without Love'. Read 1 Corinthians 13 verses 1 – 3

5. Why is 'LOVE' held up as such a high virtue? Read 1 John 4 v.8 and v.16

6. So what is the frightful thing that can happen?

7. Now consider the 'fruit of spiritual gifts exercised in love'.
Read I Corinthians 13 v.4 – 8a and list the 'virtues of Love'.

8. What is this list describing?

9. Now read and consider 1 Corinthians 13 v.8 – 14a
What is this teaching us?

Final Thoughts

What is it that is really important to the church of Jesus Christ?

What is it that gives us our ministry?

What is it that makes us significant in our community, our city?

What is it that reaches into the hearts of other people?

It is the character of God seen in our daily lives. It is LOVE.

It was said of the early church – “see how these Christians LOVE”.

Lord, may the same be said of the church - Christ's Body, you and me – today!

Message Guide & Questions

The Dynamics of an Effective Church Part 7 – A Dynamically Functioning Church Matthew 16:13 - 19

1. Read Matthew 16:13 – 19. Why are these comments by Jesus so important?

2. In Matthew 16 v.18 Jesus is talking about the U _____ Church.

Read also Matthew 18 v.15 – 17 where He is talking about the L ____ Church.

3. The claims of the Catholic Church that each Pope is a successor of Peter are based on their interpretation of Matthew 16 v.18. Consider this claim.
4. What historical, and what doctrinal problems appear if Peter is the rock upon which the church was to be built?

5. It is important to know what exactly Christianity is built on. Do you know this?

6. What is the function of this living organism that is the Body of Christ?
Consider this question in the light of Matthew 16 v.18b – 19

Final Thoughts

It is wonderful to consider all that Christ did for us on the Cross,
but with that comes a responsibility on our part.
When we become part of the Body of Christ
we then have a job to do that we cannot shrink away from.

God has given to us variously all the abilities [spiritual gifts] needed;
He has promised to supply all our needs for the task;
He has empowered us with His Holy Spirit.
But God actually needs us as He works through His people – the Body of Christ.

Read Ezekiel 22 v.30 – 31 Sobering words indeed! But God has no Plan 'B'.

For us it is a fantastic privilege and a huge responsibility!

Are you a channel for God?

Built on the foundation of Christ alone!
Active in His purposes.
Seeking His will.

Or are you limiting God?

Having slipped into complacency.
A passive observer.
Satisfied just 'holding the fort'.

With God's help you CAN be an ACTIVE PARTICIPANT.

Message Guide & Questions

The Dynamics of an Effective Church Part 8 – Experiencing True Discipleship Matthew 16:13 – 26

1. Read and consider Matthew 16 v.13 - 26
2. In these verses Peter will have experienced two contrasting emotions; can you identify these?

3. What has gone wrong in such a short time? Read verse 21 – 22

4. Can you identify those two words and explain their significance?

5. Digging deeper, what was at the root of Peter's problem that caused him to say, "Never, Lord."?

6. There are 4 things that had to happen to Peter, that equally have to take place in you and me. The first one was that Peter had to D ___ S ___

7. Next, Peter had to D __ T _ S ___ verse 24.

8. Next, Peter had to D _____ himself verse 24

9. Finally, Peter had to D _____ F ___ S ___ verse 25

Final Thoughts

If you want to go on living your life your own way – go ahead;
God will never twist your arm or force the issue.
You can live exactly as you want to, BUT you will lose everything!
However, if you are prepared to deny yourself,
take up your cross and follow Him –
you will find life in all fullness.
Read 2 Corinthians 4 v.4 – 11

"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose"
Everything we give up is temporary / transient.
Everything He gives us is permanent / eternal

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

This Leader's Guide is prepared to help the Study Group Leader to keep the discussions moving along. Maybe your people will come up with different answers, or perhaps they will need a little prompting from you.

Remember, you want to encourage your people to fully participate. This is not a 'teaching session' by the Group Leader, but rather a discussion group. This may at first seem like a contradiction, but you will need the Lord to give you wisdom to keep the discussions 'on track' whilst also allowing the Holy Spirit to direct your path.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

The Dynamics of an Effective Church Part 1 – The Dangers of a Mature Church Revelation 3:1 – 3a & 14 - 20

1. When Oswald J. Smith formed the church that was later to be known as 'The Peoples Church', its first name was - The Cosmopolitan Tabernacle
2. The 3 things that this church stood for were -
 1. The Salvation of Souls
 2. The Edification of Believers
 3. Worldwide Evangelism
3. Outward Looking to Inward Looking
God Centered to Need Centered
Spirit Dependent to Self Sufficient
Being a Living Organism to A well managed Organization
Biblical Revelation to Human Reasoning
4. A church has no right to define itself. It is the prerogative of Jesus Christ alone to define the church.

The mandate was very clear. The church is to –

1. Preach the Gospel to the whole world.
 2. Make disciples of all nations.
 3. Start where we are [our Jerusalem] and expand our circles until we reach the ends of the earth.
 4. Do it by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit who will empower us.
5. The challenge to many is that our 'church' has become something of a 'social club' where we gather to partake in comfortable rituals. We like it as long as we are not challenged to do anything that would inconvenience us in any way.
 6. 1. I Can't do this. 2. I Won't do this. 3. I WILL do this.
Everyone responds in one of these three ways.
 7. Without God none of us can do anything; and God is not asking us to. HE is the one who does the work – but He does it through US.

If we understand the RESPONSIBILITY of the church of Jesus Christ –
To take the Gospel to the world etc.

And if we understand the RESOURCES of the church of Jesus Christ –
The indwelling Holy Spirit who empowers us

Then the response "I can't do this" becomes INVALID.

You **CAN** be involved – you **must** be involved – but in the strength and power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

8. If we eliminate the "I can't" response, we are left with either – I WILL or I WON'T

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

The Dynamics of an Effective Church Part 2 – The Church as a Body of Christ 1 Corinthians 12:12 – 27

1. When you see the word 'church' what do you think of?

A building with a steeple on top?
A group of people who meet on Sundays?
1 Corinthians says a 'church' is a 'body'.

It is not 'like' a body; it IS a body. It is the Body of Jesus Christ.

2. This 'body' called the Church was born on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the waiting people in Jerusalem.
3. The disciples were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them, so that 16 nationalities listed in Jerusalem heard them in their own native language.
4. On the day of Pentecost God not only presented His people with the Holy Spirit, but He presented His Son with a **new body** – the church.

For 33 years Jesus lived in a single human body through which He worked, and thus He was limited. Now He has been given a new body – the church – through which to work.

5. Hopefully the answer to all the questions is the same - Jesus – through His Body.
6. We all know if one part of our body is unable to function properly it has a considerable detrimental effect on the rest of the body. So it is with Christ's 'body'.
7. We are totally **Different to each other**, and that means we are totally **Dependent on each other**.
8. Two dangerous attitudes are –
 1. **Those who think they are insignificant and unimportant.**
They think God can work without them.
 2. **Those who think they are sufficient and all important and can go it alone.**
They don't need the help of, or to work with, others.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

The Dynamics of an Effective Church Part 3 – Desiring Spiritual Gifts 1 Corinthians 12:27 – 31; 14:1

1. “The majority of us here today do not go to church.” Why?
We no longer ‘go’ to church because we ‘are’ the church.

2. Four things that happen to us when we become true Christians–
 - a. We exercise repentance towards God.
 - b. We place our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
 - c. We are born again of the Holy Spirit.
 - d. We become indwelt by the Risen Christ by the Holy Spirit.

We no longer go to church because we ARE the church.

3. The church is not a religious club.
The church is not a building.

The ‘church’ IS a BODY.

4. Jesus Christ is the ‘head’ of this body.
The Holy Spirit is the ‘life’ of this body.
Christians are the members [the functioning parts] of this body.

5. You will remember from our last study that we are all Different but Dependent upon each other.

6. The third element added in 1 Corinthians 14 v.1 is that we are to DESIRE Spiritual Gifts

7. Two elements of church ministry that are not mentioned as ‘spiritual gifts’ are – music and counseling. This is especially strange as spiritual gifts are defined as, ‘those abilities God gives to His people to enable the church to fulfill its task’.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

The Dynamics of an Effective Church Part 4 – Human Frailty and Spiritual Gifts 2 Corinthians 1:3 – 7

1. The elements that make up the human body are –

Salt - enough to fill a small saltshaker.
Lime - enough to whitewash a chicken coup.
Iron - enough to make a 6 inch nail.
Phosphorous - enough to coat a few matches.
Plus small amounts of aluminum, nickel, copper, zinc and a few other minerals
and lastly 10 gallons of water.

The Bible adds dust to that list.

2. From our last study we learned that as a Christians we are now a part of another body. It's not just any body – but the Body of Christ; with Christ as its Head, the Holy Spirit as the Life, and we as the functioning members through whom Christ works, empowered by the Spirit.

3. The 3 'D's are - We are all **Different**.
We are all **Dependent** upon each other.
And we all are to be **Desiring Spiritual Gifts**

But we need to guard against the Danger of **Defining ourselves** by what we do.
[or defining other by what **they** do]

4. Generally men define themselves more by what they do; their jobs, their accomplishments in business or in sports; whereas women define themselves through relationships and / or their appearance. Consider this.

5. God is interested in what we can do, (or what He can enable us to do), but He is more interested in what makes us WHO we are, **because the effectiveness of what we DO flows from what we ARE.**

6. Our spiritual gifts, our ability to minister to other people, flows out of -

1. What LIFE has made us to be.
2. What our abilities are.

Read and consider Ephesians 2:10

7. The two things we need to come to terms with are =

Our **Creation** and our **Circumstances**

8. These verse show us that we were equipped from before we were even born.

Do you accept the circumstances of your birth?
Most of us are OK with this, but some have problems with this.
Understand this very clearly; the circumstance of your birth may have been bad or wrong, but **you, yourself, are a creation of God.**

9. God was our **Creator** before He was our **Saviour**.
As 'creator' He planned for us and He equipped us.

You are WHO God made you to be for a good purpose.

10. This shows us how we are equipped also by our circumstances.

Things done TO us.
Things done BY us.

Troubles, sufferings, distress, hurts, pain, sorrow; can all make us more effective in ministering to others.

11. If you think you are bad, consider this list of those whom God chose to use –

A Murderer	- Moses
An Adulterer	- David
A Liar	- Abraham
A Polygamist	- Solomon
A Cursing Coward	- Peter
A Sex Maniac	- Sampson
An Anti-Christian Terrorist	- Paul [as Saul of Tarsus]

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

The Dynamics of an Effective Church Part 5 – Developing Spiritual Gifts Ephesians 4:11 - 16

1. If a church has become static and needs to grow and be built up, to be effective and fruitful, name some ways to accomplish this. Some answers may be –

Change the Pastor

Change the Music

Change the Service

Change the Location

Change the Board

Do these things work?

Now read Ephesians 4 v.11 – 16 and see what the Apostle Paul says.

2. When all the saints – that means you and me - are equipped and realize that it is **their** responsibility to serve in unity together.
3. Charles is doing a lot of going back over previous studies; and when this happens it is because of the need to keep repeating a point or a message so that people will really not just hear it, but more importantly put it into action in their individual life.

- a. We need to Desire Spiritual Gifts.
- b. We need to Discover them.
- c. We need to Develop them.

4. a. These Spiritual Gifts are **GIVEN** to all of us by God according to His will. They are not earned; they are not ours by right, all of them are not given to us; it is the Lord who determines which of the gifts we will get; the gifts are for His glory so that His work will be done – not for our personal gratification.

- b. We are to actively **DESIRE** these gifts – 1 Corinthians 14 v.1 and 1 Corinthians 12 v.31 – not sit around passively hoping they will suddenly appear.

5. Read Exodus 4 v.10 – 12

Although Moses claimed to lack eloquence, He was very eloquent in his attempt to get out of what the Lord was instructing him to do. The Lord reminded Moses that He, the Lord, had made Moses and had given him his mouth etc.

Jeremiah, in Jeremiah 1 v.5, also tried to get out of doing what he was called to do by giving excuses about his ability. In this case also God reminded him as to Who was his creator, and that God prepares us even before we are born.

Here is the important point to understand –

God made us all with **natural abilities**, and when we surrender our life to Christ our natural gifts [abilities], energized by the Holy Spirit, **become spiritual gifts**.

6. Paul – as Saul of Tarsus – was extremely ‘gifted’ in mobilizing enemies of the church to persecute them; but later, as Paul the Apostle, those same organizational gifts and energies were used to help establish the early church.

There is a relationship between ‘natural’ and ‘spiritual’ gifts.

7. Are all our ‘spiritual gifts’ simply an extension of our ‘natural gifts’ [abilities]?

The simple answer to this question is 'No'.

There are times when there are spiritual gifts, imparted to us by the Holy Spirit, that are not simply the Spirit's empowering of our natural gifts. Charles will expand upon this in a future message.

For now we need to understand that as God made us for a purpose, and equipped us from even before we were born, and that those natural gifts [abilities] we have will become spiritual gifts when we are fully surrendered to His will, and the Holy Spirit energizes us.

8. Through these verses we see the importance of not neglecting the use of our gifts and abilities. From Desiring Spiritual Gifts to Discovering what they are, you must then use them – don't let them become dormant in you.

Humbly seek where your gifts can be used – for the benefit of the church, not for your personal gratification. And through this you will see your spiritual gifts Develop.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

The Dynamics of an Effective Church Part 6 – Love Makes The Church Go Round 1 Corinthians 12:31 – 14:1

1. This is one of the best known descriptions of love in all of literature, comparing with the best of Shakespeare and Tennyson
2. In the Greek language of the New Testament the 3 words for 'Love' are –
EROS Meaning romantic and sexual.
PHILEO Meaning 'warm affection' as in friendships and acquaintances.
AGAPE Meaning an attitude and act of the will.
3. The MASTER of operations is JESUS CHRIST - the head of the body.
The METHODS of operation are PEOPLE - the members of the body.
The MEANS of operation is LOVE.
Effective Christian ministry depends not only on ability and / or skill, but on LOVE.
4. Being a great orator, speaking in tongues of angels, the gift of prophecy, having great faith, having great generosity, even suffering martyrdom for your faith – all mean nothing if you do not have 'love'.
Without Love - I am nothing.
 I gain nothing.
 I am just a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.
5. 'LOVE' is held up as such a high virtue because God IS love!

The mark of genuine spiritual activity is the measure to which God Himself is active in the exercise.

If we detach these things from God they become an expression of ourselves, on display for the applause of men; but if it is God doing these things it becomes an expression of Himself, and the trail leads back to Him.

6. The frightful thing is that we could receive spiritual gifts from God, but then detach them from God. We exercise them in ourselves and so they just become an exercise in human action, not divine action. They become nothing!
7. From I Corinthians 13 v.4 – 8a the 'virtues of Love' are –
patience, kindness, does not envy, does not boast, is not proud, is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not easily angered, keeps no record of wrong, does not delight in evil, rejoices with the truth, always protects, trusts, hopes and perseveres, Love never fails. These are not the **fruits** of the spirit, but rather the **fruit** of the spirit.
8. This list is actually describing the CHARACTER of God.
Our daily prayer should be that we are willing to allow Him to express Himself to the world through us, by way of displaying these same characteristics.
9. These verses show us the 'finality of Love over Spiritual Gifts.
The spiritual gifts are transient, but there will always be Love. Consider this.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

The Dynamics of an Effective Church Part 7 – A Dynamically Functioning Church Matthew 16:13 - 19

1. Although Jesus is talking here about the church, it is interesting to note that there is not much spoken by Jesus on the subject of 'the church' - most of which is done by Paul - so when Jesus does say something about the church we should take particular notice of what He says.
2. In Matthew 16 v.18 Jesus is talking about the Universal Church.

Read also Matthew 18 v.15 – 17 where He is talking about the Local Church.

3. When interpreting scripture it is always vitally important to know the context of the verse. Quoting a verse out of context can lead to subtle but dangerous error in interpretation.

In this particular dialogue we need to understand that the conversation was centered, not on the church, but on Jesus Himself and who HE was. The name Peter means 'little rock', so, with the understanding that the focal point of the dialogue is about Jesus and who He is, Jesus says, "You are Peter ['little rock'], but on THIS rock [Himself, Jesus Christ], I will build my church.

4. If Peter is the rock upon which the church was to be built, there are Historical problems in that there is no evidence that Peter ever went to Rome. He may have done so, but if that were so you would think there would be some historical record of that.

From a Doctrinal point of view there is no evidence that Peter was accorded any prominence over the other apostles. In fact –

Acts 15 James is the chairman of the Council of Jerusalem – not Peter.
Galatians 2 v.11 Paul rebukes Peter – hardly a sign that Peter was the leader.
Ephesians 2 v.20 It says the church is "*built on the foundation of the apostles [plural not a single person] and prophets with Jesus Christ Himself as the cornerstone*".
To further support this read 1 Corinthians 3 verse 11. All other arguments end here.

5. It is critically important to understand that Christianity is NOT built on the 'teaching' of Jesus, **but rather upon his person.**

Others have said

Jesus Christ says

I will **show** you the way.
I will **teach** you the truth.
I will **give** you life.
I will **open** the door.
I will **give** you shepherds.
I will **feed** you the bread.
I will **switch** on the light.

I am the way.
I am the truth.
I am the life.
I am the door.
I am the good shepherd.
I am the bread of life.
I am the light of the world.

The Church's one – and only – foundation is Jesus Christ.
This church is not a building, it's not an organization, it's not a religious club;
The CHURCH is a living organism – the Body of Christ.

6. This is one of those often quoted – even sung about – scriptures that many people do not really give much thought to what it actually means.

Simply put; a 'gate' is a defensive structure designed to keep things out. The 'gates of hell' [Hades] therefore are not to keep Satan away from us. The gates of hell are a defense put up by Satan to protect himself from the activity of the church that should be on the offense. Through our witness and evangelism Jesus expects the Church to be constantly attacking and winning ground back from Satan.

Jesus is saying that He will build His Church, and that church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, will be actively engaged in soul winning evangelism; winning victory after victory over Satan.

This Church will be on the OFFENSIVE. It will not be 'holding the fort'.
The initiative takes place here on earth.
Whatever is bound on earth is bound in heaven not the other way around.
Whatever is loosed on earth is loosed in heaven – not the other way around.

Leader's Message Guide & Answers

The Dynamics of an Effective Church Part 8 – Experiencing True Discipleship Matthew 16:13 – 26

1. You will notice that some of this goes over similar ground as previous studies. This is done to help solidify what you are learning.
2. In verse 16 Peter will have felt very **pleased** with himself as Jesus called him 'blessed' at being the recipient of a divine revelation.

But just 7 verses later in verse 23 Peter will have been very **embarrassed** when Jesus – in the hearing of the other disciples – called him 'Satan' and that he was a 'stumbling block' to Jesus.

3. The problem can be found in two words spoken by Peter in verse 22.
4. The two offending words were when Peter said to Jesus, "Never, Lord"

Do you notice anything strange about those words?
They are a **contradiction in terms!**

You cannot say 'NEVER' and 'LORD' at the same time.

To say LORD is to cancel out ever saying NEVER.
To say NEVER is to cancel out his being LORD.

5. Peter's problem was that although his doctrine was correct – he recognized Jesus to be the Christ – his doctrine had not translated into experience and become 'life'.
Knowing Doctrine in itself does not make you spiritual.
6. Peter had to be willing to **Deny Self** verse 24.

Denying Self is not the same as 'self denial'. Self denial is acts of self imposed deprivation, whereas 'denying self' is being in that place where you can honestly say that whatever happens in the process of obeying the Lord and doing His will is OK with you. **This is a fundamental issue in discipleship.**

If you end up living a life of relative ease	- That's OK!
If you end up living a life of hardship and suffering	- That's OK too!
If you go to the Mission Field deprived of family and comforts	- That's OK!
If you stay at home and live in prosperity.	- That's OK too!
If you marry and have 6 kids.	- That's OK!
If you stay single all your life.	- That's OK too!

The important thing is not 'What I want', but 'What does God want.'
You cannot be a true disciple without facing this!

7. Peter has to **Die To Self** in **taking up his cross**.

"Taking up your cross' is not putting up with unavoidable problems or enduring arthritis or something similar.

Dying To Self is an issue of total **unhesitating obedience to the Father**. It is not a sporadic thing, obedient one day, maybe not so much another day – Read Luke 9 v. 62. It is ‘never looking back’.

Obedience is a key ingredient in growth and maturity.

8. Peter had to **DEMOTE** himself; he had to follow.

Satanic activity is to try to redirect Jesus – to get Him to do what you want.

Drop your own agenda – just FOLLOW Jesus!

9. Finally, Peter had to **DETACH from Self** verse 25

If you hand your life over to Jesus Christ, He will hand His life over to you.

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Personal Study Group Study Both

2. For Group Study, approximately how many attended each session _____
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Very helpful Somewhat helpful Mildly helpful Not much help

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