

Discussion Questions

School of the Shepherds 104

Lesson 1: Creation and the Curse

Place the biblical reference(s) next to each of your points.

1. Why is it absolutely necessary for a church elder to know well the first three chapters of Genesis? List as many reasons as you can.
2. From the passages of Scripture in this lesson, what do you learn about God—his character and his demands?
3. From the passages of Scripture in this lesson, what do you learn about the character and nature of the human race? List as many things as you can. How will this affect your ministry as a shepherd of the people of God?
4. From the passages of Scripture in this lesson, attempt to make connections with the rest of the Bible by answering the following questions: How does this particular section of Genesis prepare the reader for the rest of the storyline of the whole Bible? How does this section of Genesis contribute to the emerging history of redemption in the entire Bible? That is, how does this passage anticipate fulfillment in Christ and God's plan of salvation for fallen humanity which every elder must know (e.g., [Romans 5:12-14](#))?
5. What do you learn about God and the created world from [Psalm 33:6, 9](#); and [Psalm 148:5, 7-8](#)?
6. How do the above passages of Scripture prepare you to shepherd the flock of God, that is, protecting the sheep and feeding the sheep?
7. Christian leaders differ in their interpretation of the events of the Creation, the Fall, and the Flood. Which, if any, might be subject to different interpretations among Christians? What are the most essential lessons from Creation, the Fall, and the Flood?

Lesson 2: Key Old Testament Covenants and Promises

1. From this lesson, what do you learn about the character and nature of the God of the Bible? List as many things as you can.
2. From this lesson, what do you learn about the character and nature of the human race? How will this affect your ministry as shepherd of the people of God?
3. Exactly what is the Abrahamic Covenant between God and Abraham?
4. Exactly what is the Mosaic Covenant between God and Israel?
5. Explain the main differences between the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant.

6. What is it about the Davidic Covenant that is all-important to Christians?
7. Why does God promise a New Covenant when he already has established one with the nation of Israel ([Exodus 24](#))?
8. Read the following passages of Scripture from the New Testament. How would you use these texts of Scripture to educate Christian believers regarding who they are now in Christ in light of the people of God in the Old Testament and under the old covenant? [1 Peter 2:5, 9-10](#); [Hebrews 12:18-29](#); [2 Corinthians 3:4-18](#); [Romans 4:1-12](#)

Lesson 3: The Lord Jesus Christ

1. Why are the statements by Jesus in [Luke 24:25-27, 44-47](#) so fundamentally important to all Bible students?
2. Make a list of all the marvelous truths that you learned (and must know) from reading the verses above about the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.
3. We listed a number of key verses that state Christ's divine nature. Which three texts would you use to show a person that the Bible teaches Christ's divinity? Explain.
4. We listed a number of key verses that state Christ's human nature. Which three texts would you use to show a person that the Bible teaches that Christ was truly human? Explain.
5. What are the truly unique features of the birth of Jesus Christ? (see [Matthew 1:18-25](#); [Luke 1:26-38](#); [2:1-21](#))
6. What is unique about an elder's task of shepherding God's flock that requires you to understand the doctrines presented in this lesson?

Lesson 4: Gospel Salvation Truths

1. Every elder is a gospel theologian and defender of the gospel. For your own theological education, write out a definition of the following gospel words. Place a key biblical text by each definition. Use whatever Bible tools you have to accomplish this assignment. You can even use someone else's definition as long as you understand it and acknowledge the author (for help in definitions, see <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/>):
 - The penal, substitutionary death of Christ
 - Propitiation
 - Imputation
 - Justification
 - Union with Christ
2. Talk through [Romans 3:21-26](#) with your mentor or group in order to show that you understand this mountain-top gospel message. Do this by first reading the notes in your study Bible or a simple commentary. Every gospel elder should own at least one good commentary on Paul's letter to the Romans. Then identify all the key words or concepts of this towering gospel passage. Write them out.

3. Write out your own creative, expanded paraphrase of [2 Corinthians 5:21](#). People talk of the “great exchange” in salvation. What do they mean by this?
4. Explain the meaning of [Romans 4:1-11](#) by outlining the passage and discussing it with your mentor or group. Do this by first reading the notes of your study Bible or a Bible commentary. Then identify all the key words of this critical gospel passage. Use whatever Bible tools you have for completing this assignment. What does this statement mean: “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness” ([Rom. 4:3](#))? It is absolutely essential that you correctly interpret this key statement.
5. Explain why every elder must be a gospel theologian.
6. As an elder, you need to be a master of “applied theology”. That is, you need to be able to connect theology with obedience and you need to root obedience into sound theology. Observe how the following passages clearly connect theology with duty: [Romans 12:1-2](#); [1 Peter 1:16-17](#); [Colossians 3:12](#)
7. Explain how [Zechariah 3:1-5](#) illustrates the two sides of imputation. How does this apply to Christians today?

Lesson 5: Gospel Salvation Truths (continued)

1. Every elder is a gospel theologian and defender of the gospel. For your own theological education, write out a definition of the following gospel words. Place a key biblical text by each definition. Use whatever Bible tools you have to accomplish this assignment. You can even use someone else’s definition as long as you understand it and acknowledge the author:
 - Regeneration
 - Grace
 - Faith
 - Repentance
 - Redemption
 - Reconciliation
 - Adoption
 - Election
 - Glorification
2. Talk through [2 Timothy 1:8-10](#) with your mentor or group in order to show that you understand this summary gospel passage. Do this by first reading the notes of your study Bible or a simple commentary. Every gospel elder should own at least one good commentary on Paul’s first letter to Timothy. Then identify all the key words or concepts of this gospel passage. Write them out.
3. Talk through [Titus 3:4-7](#) with your mentor or group in order to show that you understand this summary gospel passage. Do this by first reading the notes of your study Bible or a simple commentary. Every gospel elder should own at least one good commentary on Paul’s letter to Titus. Then identify all the key words or concepts of this gospel passage. Write them out.
4. Explain why unmeritorious faith must be *the means* whereby one is justified and born again.

5. Read [Psalm 51:1-12](#), King David's cry for forgiveness. List the key statements that show he is a sincerely repentant man.
6. Explain the "Golden Chain," [Romans 8:28-30](#). What is its significance in relationship to salvation?

Lesson 6: The Holy Spirit

1. As a pastor elder, or potential elder, how do you know the Holy Spirit of God dwells within in you? Give your reasons and a text(s) of Scripture.
2. Why is it necessary that a church elder understand the New Testament teachings on the Holy Spirit? List as many reasons as you can.
3. Elders are servants of the new covenant. Read [2 Corinthians 3:1-18](#). List the contrasts between the "ministry of the death" and the "ministry of the Spirit." What are some of the characteristics of an elder as *minister* of the new covenant?
4. What are the purposes of spiritual gifts? Back up each answer with a Scripture text.
5. Read [Acts 20:28](#). What exactly does it mean that the Holy Spirit set the elders as overseers in the church? How would you identify Spirit-appointed elders? How would an elder candidate know that the Holy Spirit was moving him to be a pastor elder?
6. The Scripture charges all believers to "be filled with the Spirit" ([Eph. 5:18](#)). What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? What does a Spirit filled elders look like? How would you describe such an elder?
7. In what ways does the Holy Spirit help church elders do their pastoral work?
8. Explain how the Holy Spirit uses holy Scripture to make church leaders more mature, more effective, and capable of shepherding others. See [Acts 20:32](#) and [2 Timothy 3:15-17](#). What does God-breathed Scripture tell you about your work as a Bible-centered leader?

Lesson 7: Walking Worthy of the Gospel

1. Explain how each of the passages below teach you about how to live the Christian life:
I . . . urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called. ([Eph. 4:1](#))
Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ. ([Phil. 1:27](#))
We ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more ([1 Thess. 4:1](#))
Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked. ([1 John 2:6](#))
2. How would you best explain your new status/position in Christ now that you are a believer in Christ? (e.g., a privileged son of God, not a slave to sin and Satan). What real difference does your status/position in Christ make to how you live your life? Can you give some examples?
3. As a church leader why must you especially avoid worldly attitudes and behaviors and strive for holiness ([Heb. 12:14](#)).

4. An important element in Christian maturity is the paradigm of “putting off” and “putting on”—that is, laying aside the old garments of sin and its behavior and clothing yourself (substituting those old patterns) with the works of the Spirit. Read [Ephesians 4:25-32](#). Identify the five sins in this passage that we must “put off” and the five godly habits we must “put on” in their place. How would you use these verses to counsel people who are struggling with sin?
5. As you counsel the people under your care to grow in Christ, you will want them to differentiate between Spirit-filled obedience and bare, external legalism. Notice the way the apostle Peter grounds Christian living in the great truths of the gospel in [1 Peter 1:2](#) and [1 Peter 1:13-25](#). Discuss the difference between Christian maturity from the heart and mere outward conformity. Do you perceive this to be a problem in your congregation?
6. We commonly talk about believers being Christlike. How would you identify Christlikeness in an elder? Be specific.
7. Identify some of the counterfeit (nonbiblical) ideas of Christian holiness, which members of your congregation might be faced with.
8. What do the following verses teach you about undivided devotion to Christ? ([Romans 6:16-22](#); [Romans 12:1-2](#); [1 Corinthians 7:35](#); [1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#); [2 Corinthians 5:14-15](#); [1 Peter 4:1-3](#))

Lesson 8: The Church

1. Briefly explain the meaning of each of the following verses. Use whatever Bible helps will assist you in interpreting these verses. [Matthew 16:15-16](#), [Matthew 16:17](#), [Matthew 16:18](#), [Matthew 16:19-20](#)
2. Select two of the following metaphors for the church and discuss what they tell you about the nature and/or mission of the church?
 - The bride of Christ ([Eph. 5:25, 29](#); [1 John 4:19](#); [Rev. 19:7-8](#); [21:9-10](#); [22:17](#))
 - The household of God ([Gal. 6:10](#); [Eph. 2:19](#); [3:15](#); [1 Tim. 3:15](#))
 - The holy temple ([John 14:17, 23](#); [2:21-22](#); [1 Cor. 3:10-17](#); [2 Cor. 6:16](#); [1 Peter 2:5-7](#))
 - The body of Christ (see [1 Cor. 6:15](#); [10:17](#); [12:12-31](#); [Rom. 12:4-8](#); [Eph. 2:16](#); [3:6](#); [4:7-16](#); [25](#); [5:30](#); [Col. 1:18, 24](#); [2:19](#); [3:15](#))
 - The royal priesthood ([1 Peter 2:5, 9](#); [Rev. 1:6](#); [5:10](#))
 - The new creation ([2 Cor. 5:17](#); [Eph. 2:15](#); [2 Pet. 1:4](#))
 - Brotherhood ([Heb. 2:11](#); [3:1](#))
 - Pillar and buttress ([1 Tim. 3:15](#))
 - The flock ([John 10:27](#); [1 Peter 5:2-4](#))

From the remaining questions, select two or three to discuss with your mentor or group:

3. Since Christ is the head of the church, the Chief Shepherd ([1 Peter 5:4](#)), how should this truth influence the elders’ thinking, decision making, and philosophy of ministry?

4. How should the doctrine of every-member ministry influence the elders' thinking, decision-making, and philosophy of Christian ministry?
5. Explain why Christlike love is absolutely essential to a healthy, godly church, and why a lack of love is so displeasing to our Lord Jesus Christ, even to the point of Christ threatening divine discipline upon the church. Read [Revelation 2:1-7](#); [1 Corinthians 12:1-13:13](#); [John 13:34-35](#).
6. [Ephesians 4:7-16](#) is a deeply significant passage of Scripture for every local church. List five fundamental truths from this passage that every Christian need to know.
7. Why must the church elders be well versed in what the Scripture says about men and women's roles in the home and church?

Lesson 9: The End-Time Events

1. Revisit the biblical texts in the previous section entitled "The Christian's Response to End-Time Events." List as many ideas as you can for how end-time events should shape your thinking and behavior as a Christian here and now.
2. Paul speaks of "the Day" in which a believer's works will be tested by fire ([1 Cor. 3:10-15](#)). Outline [1 Corinthians 3:10-15](#) and briefly explain its teachings in bullet points. How should Paul's teaching about that "Day" deeply impact your life choices and behavior as a church leader? (See also [1 Cor. 4:3-5](#); [Rom. 14:10-12](#); [2 Cor. 5:9-10](#).)
3. Read [1 Corinthians 15:35-57](#). List at least five essential truths that you as a church leader must know, hold to, and teach about the new resurrection body.

For the following questions, use a good Bible dictionary or a dictionary of theology.

4. Define the following theological views concerning the time of fulfillment regarding the prophetic passages of [Daniel 9:24-27](#); [Matthew 24-25](#); [2 Thessalonians 2](#); [Revelation 6-10](#) (Christ's return, the great tribulation, the Antichrist, Israel's future, the millennium, and the eternal state):
 - Preterism
 - Historicism
 - Idealism
 - Futurism
5. There is much debate over [Revelation 20:1-7](#), the one thousand-year period when Christ and his saints are to reign. Here are three major views that you need to be able to articulate. Explain each of the following prophetic schools of thought:
 - Premillennial view
 - Amillennial view
 - Postmillennial view
6. Define the primary differences between dispensational theology and covenant theology.
7. Explain the difference between the pre-Tribulation rapture and the post-Tribulation advent of Christ. Provide one text of Scripture to support each view.