

**Introduction:**  
**Invitation to Christian Discipleship and Church Membership**

The Holy Bible teaches in I Timothy [New Testament], Chapter 1.15-17

“The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ may display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in Him for eternal life. The King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever”. Amen. – NRSV

There are four sessions that I encourage you to watch, to be viewed in sequence:

- I. Becoming A Christian Parts A & B
- II. Christian Development
- III. Becoming a Member of a Christian Church

All the scriptural references from The Holy Bible will be from the New Revised Standard Bible. I encourage you to invest via kindle or hard copy for study purposes.

**I. Becoming A Christian: (A)**

*Song: Because He Lives*

The most critical decision you will make that will impact all other decisions you'll make throughout your life is to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. As a Christian, experiencing Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, Divine forgiveness and daily spiritual presence provide light and life eternal.

Roman's 10.1 <NT> says:

“Brothers and Sisters my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them – meaning those who do not believe in Jesus Christ – is that they may be saved.

***How?***

Romans 10.4:

“For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.”

***Believe what? How?***

Romans 10.9:

...because if you confess with your lips that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead you will be saved.

- Confess – Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior
- Believe – God raised Jesus Christ from the dead: Mark 15.39; Acts 2. 32.. this Jesus God raised up!
- Saved – Romans 10.13,

For everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Confess, being honest about our wrong attitudes and actions, believing God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, our sins.

*Prayer: Heavenly Father, we are humbled and eternally grateful for your longsuffering, patience, and kindness for me. For the eternal gift of salvation, I give you thanks in Jesus the Christ’s name. Amen.*

## **I. Becoming A Christian (A)**

### **Scriptural References**

1. I Timothy 1.15 – 17
2. Romans 10.1, 4, 9
3. Mark 15.39
4. Acts 2.32
5. Romans 10.13

**Introduction:**  
**Invitation to Christian Discipleship and Church Membership**

**I. Becoming A Christian: (B)**

*Song: I have Decided to follow Jesus*

I John 1.7 reveals the blessedness of walking, living in the light of Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior, which says, "...if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his son cleanses us from all sin.

God is Light!

Verses 5 – 7, there is no darkness, Christians have fellowship with God and with one another – ***HOW?***

- the blood <sacrifice, crucifixion> of Jesus God's son  
cleanses us from all sin!

***Being honest!***

Verses 8, If we confess our sins, backup! If we say we have no sin,

- we deceive ourselves
- the truth is not in us!

Verse 10, if we say we have not sinned we make him [God] a liar and his word is not true.

Verse 9, God promises forgiveness to those who will be honest with themselves and God when it says,

"If we confess our sins, he who is faithful - God – and just will  
forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

***NEXT***

Acts 2.37, What should I do now?

Now then, when they hear this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and other Apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

Verse 38,

1. repent, godly sorrow for all sins
2. be baptized, immersed in
  - (a) an awareness of God’s Divine love as expressed in Jesus Christ;
  - (b) be immersed in water, buried, an open acknowledgement of your submission to God’s will for your life, an act of humility of your willingness to serve Jesus as Lord and Savior;
  - (c) receive the spirit of God’s presence into your life.

Summary: I’ve decided to:

- 1). Confess the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior
- 2). Believe in your heart that Jesus’ sacrifice was for your sins and God raising Christ a new
- 3). Repent, as for Divine forgiveness of all your sins
- 4). Accept God’s salvation through Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior – NOW!

*Prayer: Gracious God, I realize now just how much You love me. It feels good to be saved through Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior. Amen.*

## **I. Becoming A Christian (B)**

### **Scriptural References**

1. I John 1.5 – 7
2. Acts 2.37 – 38

**Introduction:**  
**Invitation to Christian Discipleship and Church Membership**

**II. Christian Development**

*Song: Through it All*

After accepting Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior, the lifelong process of Christian development into maturity begins. Paul, an Apostle of Christ, said to a group of Christian believers in the Philippi community about his spiritual maturity:

“Beloved I do not consider I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about anything, this too God will reveal to you. Only let us hold fast to what we have attained”. [3.13-16 NRSV]

I encourage you to invest in a good study Bible, preferably The New Revised Study Bible, which can last a lifetime and serve as your Christian textbook. Also, five lessons are available for your consideration to enhance your awareness of The Holy Bible, Spiritual gifts and mission (service/volunteerism) in the church and community. You can access these classes and scheduled availability through the Friendship website.

These classes are:

101 Discovering Membership

201 Discovering Spiritual maturity

301 Discovering Ministry

401 Discovering Mission

501 Biblical Stewardship and Giving the Tenth

In the New Testament Gospel of St. Matthews Jesus Christ provides directives for enhanced Christian Development to Christian students.

A) Coming:

St Matt. 11.28-30, those warm welcoming words:

“Come to me” you did that when you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior – **WHO?** *All* – Promise, I will give you rest.

“Take my yoke upon you and learn of me (KJV); learn from me (NRSV).

B) Doing: The Judgement of the Nations

St Matt. 25.31-46, a teaching by Jesus using an example of a king, other characters, hungry, prisoners, homeless, sick...all liken to either sheep or goats; this passage is also about eternal paradise or eternal condemnation.

People say to king when did we do ...

Response: Truly I say to you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family you did it to me.

(A). Coming, learning → (B) Doing for others →

C) Going: The Great Commission – of the maturing Christians:

St Matt. 28.16-20, Jesus’ last words the disciples and, Divine expectations for and from you for others as it relates to witnessing and teaching.

Go, text, facetime, email, tell others about my love for all –

Go, therefore and make disciple <learners> of all nations starting close to home – baptizing them in an awareness of God/Father/Creator; Son/Jesus/Christ; and the Holy Spirit and

teaching them about God's power to forgive, restore and resurrect all who are in low places of sin and sorrow.

- Coming - to Jesus Christ to learn of His teachings and will
- Doing – making a difference in the quality of life for others who are sick, homeless, suppressed, hungry and displaced
- Going – with a victorious message of God's love for all through Jesus Christ as Lord!

*Prayer: We need You Lord Christ to empower and enable us to intentionally make life better for the least of these. Thank you for the opportunity to be a blessing, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## **II. Christian Development**

### **Scriptural References**

1. Philippians 3.13 – 16
2. St Matthew 11.28 – 30
3. St Matthew 25.31 – 46
4. St Matthew 28.16 – 20

**Introduction:**  
**Invitation to Christian Discipleship and Church Membership**

**III. Being a Member of a Christian Church**

*Song: What a Fellowship*

There is a unique relationship between Christians and Churches. We are referred to as members in the “Body of Christ”. St Paul writes about this in a letter to the Christian members of the Church in the community of Ephesus, Chapter 4.15 – 16:

“But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”

(NRSV)

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church has a 130-year history of dedicated service as a member of “the Body of Christ”, locally, nationally, and globally through mission outreach. Being a Christian and becoming a member of Friendship you become a member of the global Christian Family, doing, going, serving, and teaching about Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Discovering membership class 101 is developed to enhance your witness and by taking this class you will be equipped with a biblical understanding of your important function in sharing God’s love in Jesus Christ for all. The Holy Bible teaches in II Timothy 3.16-17:

“All scripture is inspired by God, and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work”. (NRSV).

The Holy Bible continues this thought pattern when it says:

Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. II Timothy 2.14-15 (KJV)

I chose to use the wording of the King James Version of this text because of the word usage: “put them in remembrance”, “words to no profit”, “study to”, “workman” and “rightly dividing the truth”.

Paul, an Apostle teacher of Jesus Christ wrote a beautiful narrative about Christians being, “one body with many members” in I Corinthians 12.12-31. As a member of Friendship Church Family, you are a part of a global spiritual community who will celebrate your accomplishments; pray for you; serve alongside you and share your griefs and sorrows.

“If one member suffers, all suffer together with it: if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and individually members of it”. I Cor. 12.26-27 (NRSV)

There is an extremely important teaching in Romans chapter 12 in The Holy Bible: two aspects being a Christian and serving in the church. Verses 1-8 discuss the “new life in Christ” and verses 9-21 “marks of the True Christian”, a profoundly simplistic summary; the new life of the true Christian is encapsulated in verse 21 as it freshly says,

“Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good”. (NRSV)

Finally, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC is a congregation of believers in The Lord Jesus Christ; preaching, teaching, and witnessing and we welcome all to join us in our global outreach. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ are fitting as He prays to the Father for the members of “The Body”, the Christian Church. Listen carefully to Him: [I have chosen to capitalize references to God and Jesus].

“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they all may be one. As You, Father, are in Me and I am in You, may they also be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

The glory You have given Me, I have given them, so that they may be one, as We are One.

I in them and You in Me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

Father, I desire that those also, whom You have given Me may be with Me where I am, to see My glory, which You have given Me, because You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

Righteous Father, the world does not know You, but I know You and these know You have sent Me. I made Your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them”. – St John 17.20-26 (NRSV)

*Prayer: Jesus, thank you so much for praying for all of us. You know that in this world there is evil, strengthen us to be effective witnesses of You as Your kingdom is coming on earth. It is in Your name we do pray. Amen.*

### **III. Being a Member of a Christian Church**

#### **Scriptural References**

1. Ephesians 4.15 – 16
2. II Timothy 3.16 – 17
3. II Timothy 2.14 – 15
4. I Corinthians 12.12 – 31
5. Romans 12.1 – 21
6. St John 17.20 – 26

*Prepared by:  
Rev. Dr. Clifford A. Jones, Sr., Pastor  
Friendship Missionary Baptist Church  
Charlotte, NC  
October 15, 2020*