

## Living With Hope

### Presentation 15: The Church

#### *Mission of Hope*

*Last Revision: 6/12/2009*



(Note:  icon means "Next Slide," indicating when to advance to the next slide.)

*Introduction: Play video "Made For Mission", available on Pastor's DVD Volume 16*

▶▶ "Achieving the goal before this decade is out of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth."

Those simple words initiated one of the most ambitious missions in the history of human race. Tens of thousands of passionate, creative, tech savvy people pulled together for this herculean goal. The mission took \$25.4 billion (which used to be a lot of money) 11 years and 3 lives to accomplish. On the way among other things they invented Velcro, freeze dried food, athletic shoes, cordless power tools, and smoke detectors. Overcoming challenges such as propulsion, life support, guidance, and the all important safe return, NASA fulfilled John F Kennedy's dream. The world watched on July 20, 1969 as Neal Armstrong set foot on the surface of the moon returning a few days later to complete what many believe to be the greatest achievement of mankind.

The word mission usually describes an operational task, or organizational purpose. Do you have a mission in life? Do you know why you're here? Do you have purpose?

### **Need Oriented Evangelism**

As John Kennedy stated the mission he broke it down into two components: First, to send a man to the moon, and second to bring him back. Both components were essential for the mission to be completed. Jesus' mission also had two components.

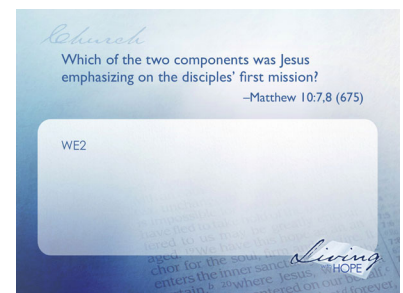
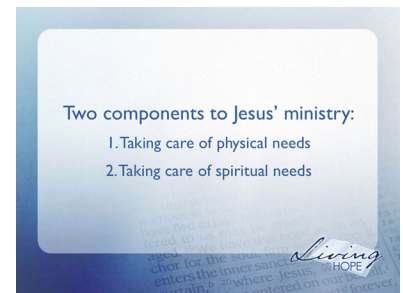
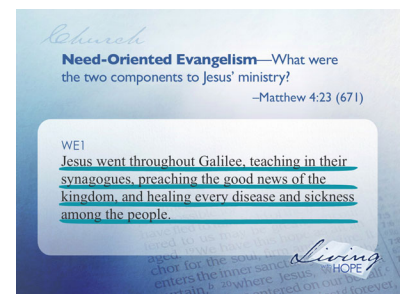
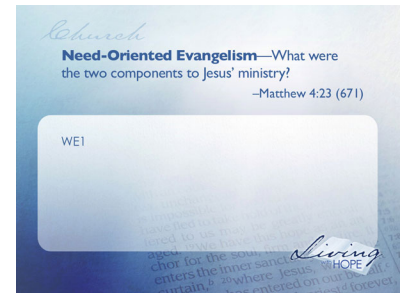


▶▶WE1      What were the two components to Jesus ministry?  
Matthew 4:23 (671)

▶▶Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

▶▶The two components are: 1) taking care of people's physical needs, and 2) taking care of their spiritual needs. Like the lunar mission both components are necessary for the mission to be complete.

▶▶WE2      Which of the two components was Jesus emphasizing as he first sent the disciples on their first mission?  
Matthew 10:7,8 (675)



▶▶ *As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.*

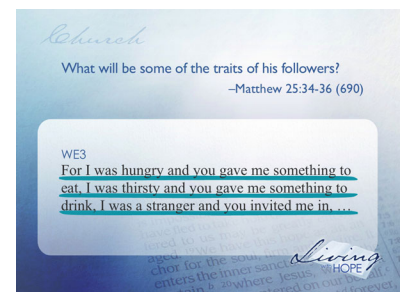
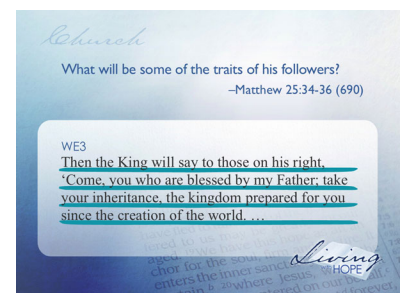
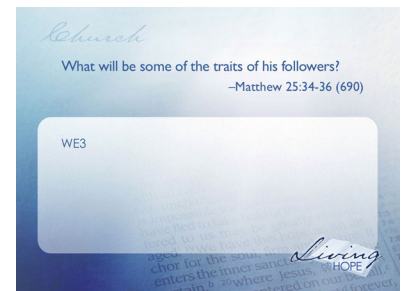
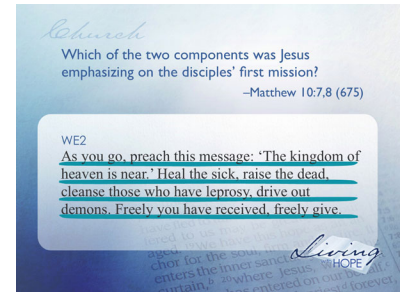
The followers of Jesus are called to make a difference in the world here and now. In fact, if we aren't bringing hope to the physical needs of our friends, neighbors, towns, and the people of the world we aren't really following Jesus at all.

Matthew records Jesus as he shares what kind of people will be joining him in his kingdom.

▶▶ **WE3**      What will be some of the traits of his followers?  
**Matthew 25:34-36 (690)**

▶▶ *"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.*

▶▶ *For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,*



▶▶ *I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'*

If you continue to read the passage you'll discover that those who didn't bring hope to the physical needs of their community were left out of God's eternal community.

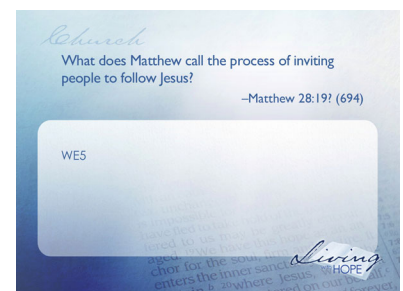
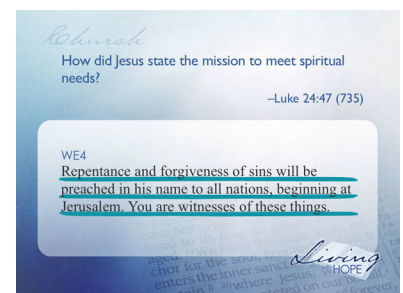
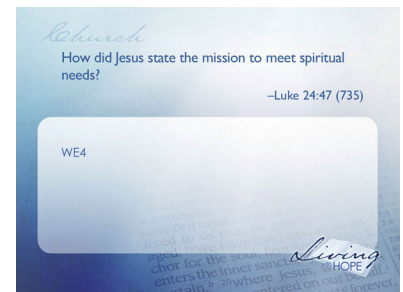
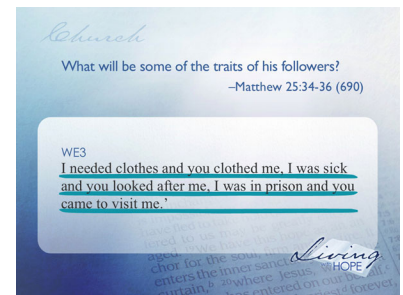
Followers of Jesus are deeply involved in the great needs of the planet earth. This is the first component of the mission of the church. Yet like the lunar mission this is only half of the equation. John Kennedy did not believe that sending a man to the moon was enough. He emphasized the second part of the mission as well—bring man back safely to earth! The second component of the mission of the church is to bring hope to the spiritual needs of the planet earth.

▶▶ **WE4**      How did Jesus state the mission to meet spiritual needs? **Luke 24:47 (735)**

▶▶ *repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.*

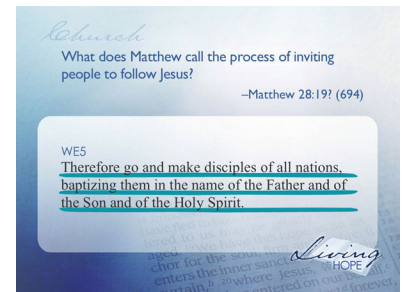
Taking care of physical needs and teaching spiritual things are the two main components of the mission of the church. Bringing physical and spiritual hope is what the church is about. But it is not enough simply to heal and teach. There comes a time when the invitation is given to follow Jesus.

▶▶ **WE5**      What does Matthew call the process of inviting people to follow Jesus? **Matthew 28:19? (694)**



▶ *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...*

Making disciples is the process of assisting others in their journey with Jesus. In fact the name church literally means “those who are called out”. As disciples, we minister to the physical and spiritual needs of our community and invite them to join us in following after Jesus. A church is simply a group of people who have joined together in the mission of bringing physical hope and spiritual hope to all people.



### **Natural Church Development**

Christian Swartz, has been studying tens of thousands of churches over the years and has given a name to mission. He entitles it “Need Oriented Evangelism”. Evangelism simply meets sharing the hope.

Not all the missions to the moon were successful. In fact in the early years most missions failed. Some rockets never made it into the air; they simply exploded on the launch pad. Others exploded in the atmosphere. Three American astronauts died in a fire while still on the launch pad. Unmanned rockets missed the moon, or crashed into it. Many believe that the Apollo Mission was impossible and man would never land on the moon. So it was an unbelievable victory when Neil Armstrong uttered the famous words “That was one small step for man, and one giant leap for mankind”.

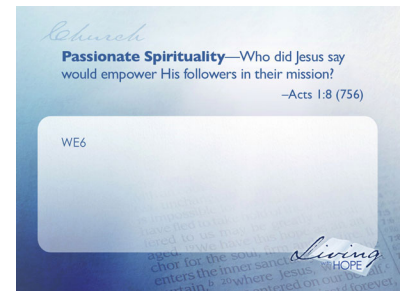
Many, if not most churches, fail at their mission. Like exploding rockets, some never get off the ground. Some make it off the ground but lose focus on their mission and get lost in space. Swartz, in his landmark study of Natural Church Development has studied mission successes and failures and has determined that churches that are fulfilling their mission seem to have eight characteristics, including need oriented evangelism, that they excel in.

## Passionate Spirituality

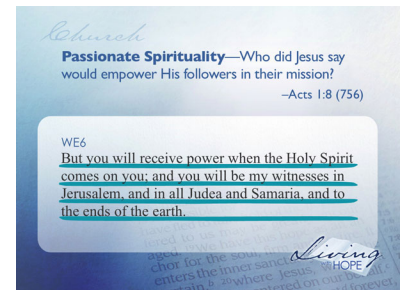
The thousands of developers in the Apollo mission had a singular passion. They believed that mankind possessed the ingenuity to land a man on the moon. With enough knowledge, expertise, they would finally figure out how to do it.

For a church to fulfill its mission it has to have a passionate belief that God is in control and the Spirit will empower them.

▶▶ **WE6** Who did Jesus say would empower His followers in their mission? **Acts 1:8 (756)**



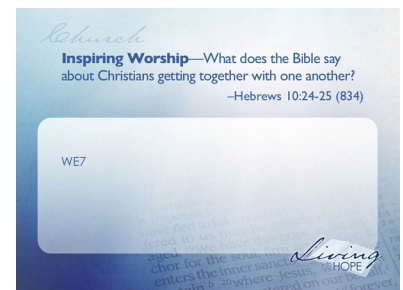
▶▶ *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*



Effective ministry flows out of a passionate spirituality. Spiritual intimacy leads to a strong conviction that God will act in powerful ways. A godly vision can only be accomplished through an optimistic faith which views obstacles as opportunities and turns defeats into victories. How does this happen? The spiritual disciplines are the key to passionate spirituality.<sup>1</sup> These exercises are tools to open up the believers spiritual senses beyond the natural world.

## Inspiring Worship

▶▶ **WE7** What does the Bible have to say about Christians getting together with one another? **Hebrews 10:24-25 (834)**



▶▶ *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.*

▶▶ *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

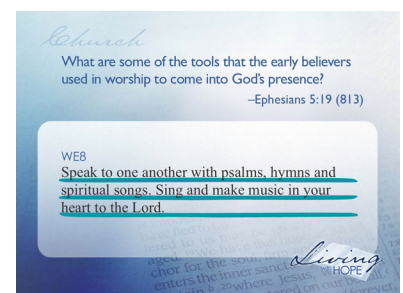
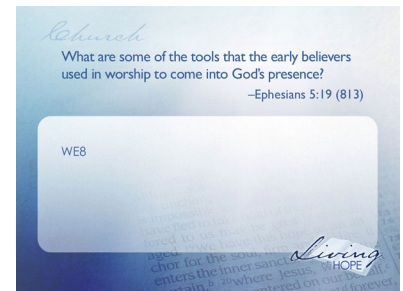
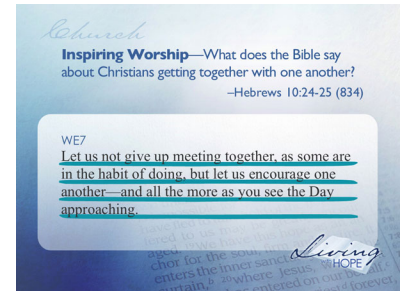
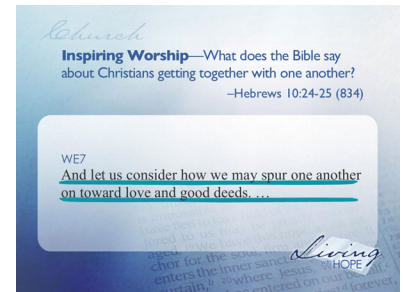
While following the individual spiritual disciplines can serve to open up windows to heaven, it is essential for us followers of Jesus to get together with other believers and worship our Creator. Worship services are designed to move us, as a community, into the very presence of God.

Inspiring worship is a personal and corporate encounter with the living God. Inspiring worship is not driven by a particular worship style or ministry focus group, but rather, the shared experience of God’s awesome presence.<sup>2</sup>

▶▶ **WE8**      What are some of the tools that the early believers used in their worship service to be transported into God’s presence? **Ephesians 5:19 (813)**

▶▶ *Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.*

George Barna has discovered that followers of Jesus today generally find the following tools helpful in their journey to the throne: time of reflection, communion, sermon, prayer music, and offering.



## Holistic Small Groups

Recently there was a story about a young man who had committed suicide. He took an overdose of sleeping pills, sat down in a chair, and—with the TV going—just died. That would be bad enough, except that no one knew. Though he lived in a big city, had a phone (two when you count his mobile), a computer with high-speed internet access, three e-mail accounts, he had few friends, and his relatives lived far away and didn't talk with him much. This guy was so "connected" in that he had all the right wires and devices but still so isolated as well.

Who knew about his death? Not his friends, not his relatives, anyone. One friend said later that he and guy had talked now and then, and when he hadn't heard from him for a while he didn't think much of it. Just figured he was busy, as was everyone else.

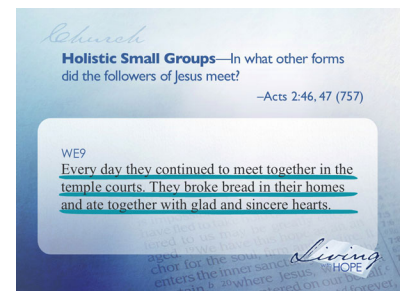
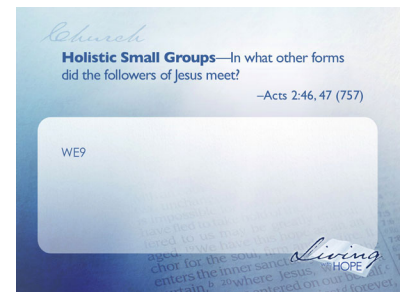
You know how they finally knew he was dead? A neighbor called the landlord to complain about the stench coming from this guy's apartment. No one really knew him in the apartment building. Few people ever saw him. It was only when his body began to rot did anyone take notice of him.

Mission fulfilling churches have a tool that can prevent people from being isolated.

▶▶**WE9** In addition to worshipping together in an assembly in what other configurations did the followers of Jesus meet?  
**Acts 2:46,47. (757)**

▶▶*Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.*

Notice that the new believers not only assembled in the temple but they also met in small groups. One of the characteristics of a healthy congregation is holistic small groups. The intimacy provides a place where people can know and be known. When 3-12 people meet





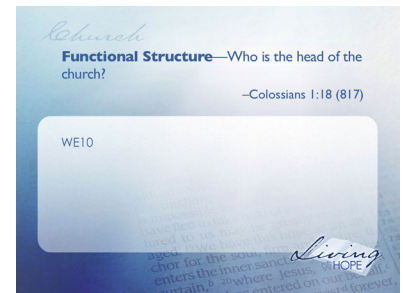
together regularly to pray, study the Bible, and encourage one another, and focus on mission the church can grow deeper spiritually, and wider numerically. In order for believers and churches to grow, it is essential for members to be active in a small group.

### Functional Structure

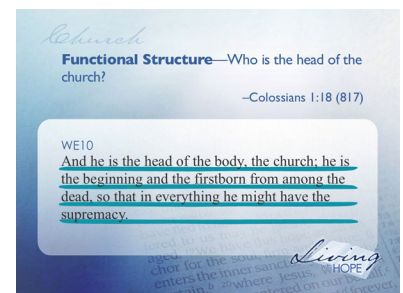
You know, it's easy to be down on church, or on the idea of a church. You sometimes hear folks say, "Well, I'm against organized religion." Of course, a quick quip back could be, "Well, then, what are you for--disorganized religion?"

The fact is, the idea of a church, of a community of believers, working and fellowshiping together is a biblical concept—and a very important one too.

▶▶**WE10** Who is the head of the church? **Colossians 1:18**  
**(817)**



▶▶*And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.*



The Church is the living Body of Christ. Like all healthy organisms, it requires numerous systems which work together to fulfill its intended purpose. But ultimately, for a church to succeed Jesus has to be in charge.

There are many different ways that churches are organized. Some are free standing congregations. Others are part of a collection of many churches. The advantage of a congregational church is that it can focus all of its resources on its own community. The disadvantage is that the world outside of their mission area is neglected.

▶▶WE11 Where is the mission of hope to go? **Revelation 14:6 (856)**

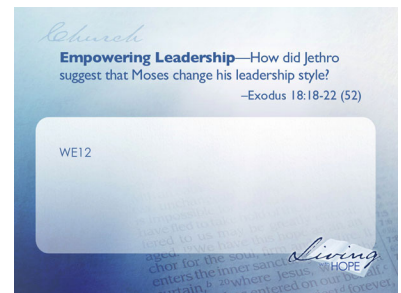
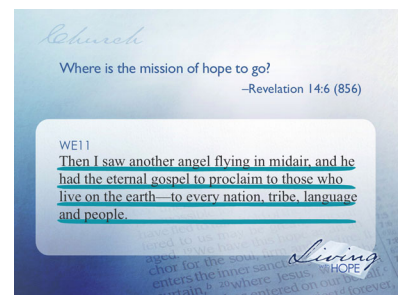
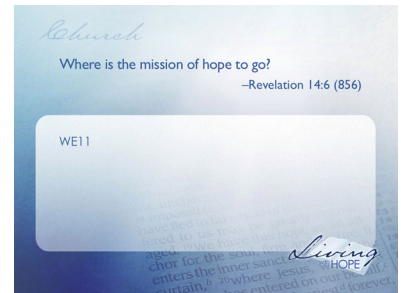
▶▶*Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people.*

When churches unite together in mission, such as Seventh-day Adventist Churches, they have the ability to share their resources and plant new congregations within unreached people groups.

### Empowering Leadership

Moses was nearing burnout. Every day long lines of people would line up to seek his advice from morning to evening. He wasn't able to see them all and they were wearing him out. His father-in-law saw what was happening and gave him some great advice.

▶▶WE12 How did Jethro suggest that Moses change his leadership style? **Exodus 18:18-22 (52)**



▶ *You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone.*

*Rehurch*  
**Empowering Leadership**—How did Jethro suggest that Moses change his leadership style?  
—Exodus 18:18-22 (52)

WE12  
You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. . . .

*Living HOPE*

▶ *Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him.*

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▶ *Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform.*

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*Living HOPE*

▶ *But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.*

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*Living HOPE*

▶ *Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves.*

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Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. . . .

*Living HOPE*

▶▶ *That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you.*

Churches succeeding in their mission generally have empowering leadership. Leaders of growing churches concentrate on empowering other Christians for ministry. Leaders equip, support, motivate, and mentor individuals, enabling them to become all that God wants them to be.<sup>3</sup>

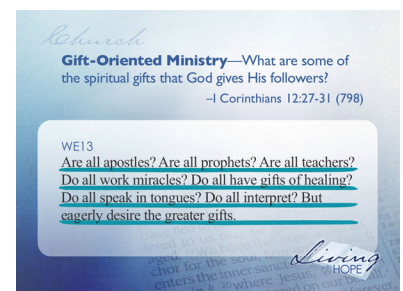
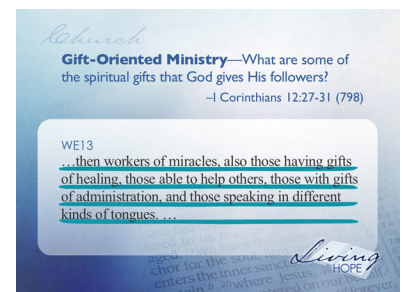
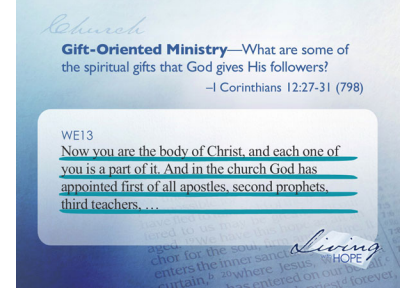
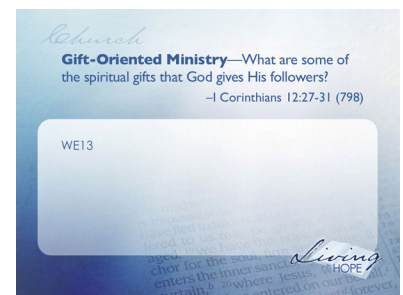
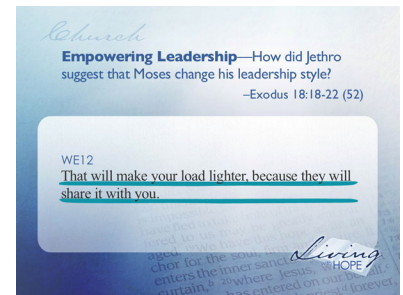
### Gift Oriented Ministry

▶▶ **WE13** What are some of the unique spiritual gifts that God gives His followers? **I Corinthians 12:27-31 (798)**

▶▶ *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers,*

▶▶ *then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.*

▶▶ *Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts.*



Just as the human body isn't made of only one part, so the church isn't either. The human body could not function were it not for all the parts. In fact, it wouldn't even be a body. And the great thing about being part of the church body, is that we all have been given gifts that we can use as part of the body.<sup>4</sup>

Maybe you have the gift of compassion, a personality that knows how to love, how to listen, and sometimes all people need is a compassionate and sympathetic ear. Maybe you have the gift of hospitality, and are able to help people who might be in need of shelter for a little while. Maybe you have building skills that can be put to use for those who might need just what you happen to have. Maybe you have training in healing arts; maybe you have the gift of encouragement? The list goes on and on.

What one person has all of these, and more? No one. That's why there's a community; people get together, united in a common bond of fellowship and love for God and for each other, and out of that they pool their God-given gifts, resources, talents and time all for the good of others.

### **Loving Relationships**

Amir Vehabovic thought it would be funny, a joke, the kind of prank he and his friends had played on each other for years now. Though it cost the 24-year old Bosnian Serb a lot of money, he faked his death. He got a false death certificate, and then bribed the undertaker to take his empty coffin to the graveyard, where his "funeral" would then be held. After all his friends had gathered to pay last respects to their dear friend, Amir would suddenly appear from the "dead," giving his grieving friends the fright of their lives. They'd all have a good laugh, and then go out for a night on the town to celebrate the non-death of their beloved buddy, Amir.

Or so he thought.

There was only one problem. At his funeral, his mother alone (who was in on the hoax) came. None of his friends did. Not one.

Amir, devastated, wrote the following note to them all:

“To all my dear ‘friends: Some of you I have known since early days, others I have forged a relationship with only in the last few years. Until my ‘funeral,’ I considered all of you close friends. So it was with shock and, I admit, sadness and anger that I realized not one of you managed to find the time to come and say goodbye to me when you heard I was to be buried... I lived for our friendships. They meant as much to me as life itself. But how easy it was for you all to forget the pledges of undying friendship I heard on so many occasions. . . . Now I have just one last message for you: My ‘funeral’ might have been staged, but you might as well consider me dead, because I will not be seeing any of you again.”

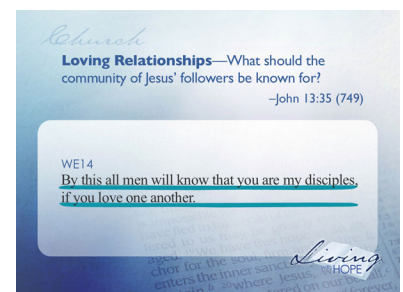
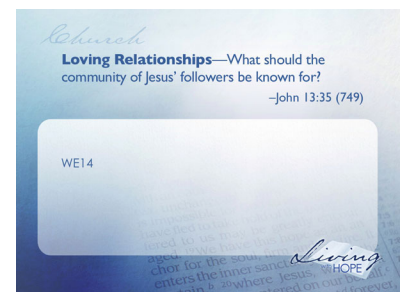
It’s not hard to imagine Amir’s hurt, is it? After all, how would any of us feel had what happened to him happened to us: having a funeral for yourself and not one of your friends came?

What’s especially sad were his words, “I lived for our friendships.” That says something important about us as human beings, and that is—we were not meant to live in isolation, were we? We all need to live in a community of love.

▶▶**WE 14** What does Jesus say that the community of His followers is to be known for? **John 13:35 (749)**

▶▶*By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

This is the gold standard of the followers of Christ. Unfortunately Christians have not always lived up to that standard. Why do you suppose that is?



▶▶WE15 What does the Bible say is one thing we all, regardless of our background, have in common? **Romans 3:10-12 (782)**

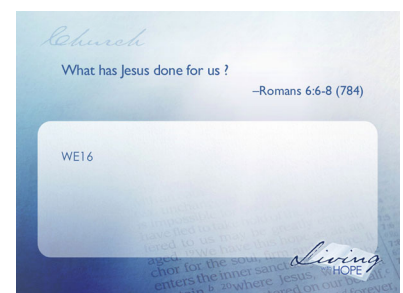
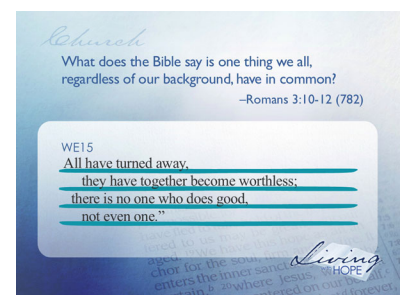
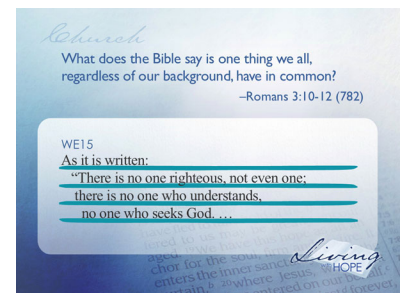
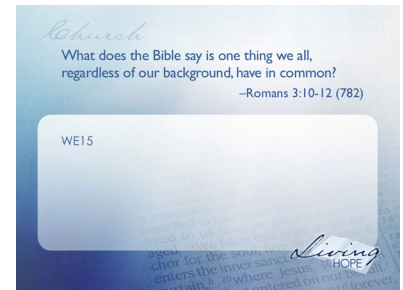
▶▶As it is written:

*"There is no one righteous, not even one;  
there is no one who understands,  
no one who seeks God.*

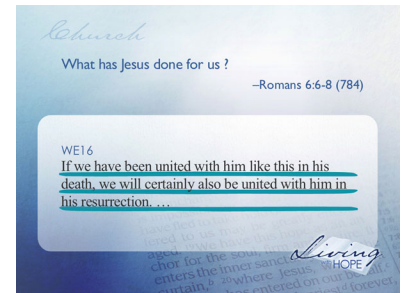
▶▶All have turned away,  
they have together become worthless;  
there is no one who does good,  
not even one."

Now, that doesn't mean we're all like Al Capone or Charles Manson. What it does mean, though, is that we all are sinners, we all have broken God's law, and that unless something was done for us, we all would perish forever in our sins. And the great news of the Bible is that something, indeed, was done for us in order to save us from what our sinful deeds would lead to, and that is eternal death.

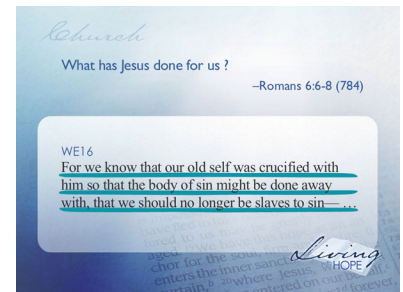
▶▶WE16 What has Jesus done for us ? **Romans 6:6-8 (784)**



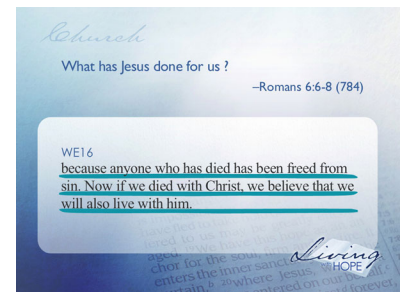
▶▶ *If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.*



▶▶ *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—*



▶▶ *because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.*



The point is a church community is a community of those who, realizing what was done for them through Jesus, band together to help each other, minister to each other, and love each other, despite all our faults. Yes, the text that we underlined said it so clearly, God loved us, even though we are sinners. And a church, if nothing else, should be a place where we can go and not be judged and not be condemned. A church, ideally, is a place filled with folks who know what forgiveness is all about because they have been forgiven in Jesus. And it's out of the realization that they have been forgiven that they learned to forgive others and that they seek to show others the source of the forgiveness that means so much to them.

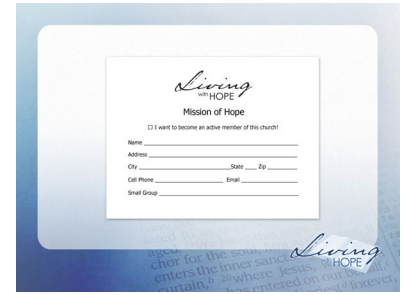
And when you have a whole community, a whole fellowship like that . . . there's power!



## Mission Possible

Today the NASA space program is struggling without a mission. Should they send man back to the moon again? Maintain the space station? Send a man to Mars? Without a clear mission NASA is having trouble getting off the ground.

▶▶ The great news of Jesus, and of being part of His church,<sup>5</sup> is that through Jesus we can have a great purpose in life. So many people struggle with what South African author Laurens van der Post once called “the burden of meaningless,” the struggle people have to find purpose and meaning for their existence. No question, though, when you come to know Jesus, and when you get involved in a church with a mission, and that is to spread the Gospel and to be a healing, loving community—to be part of that, to know that you have a role in that, is to find a great meaning and purpose in your life.



# # #

<sup>1</sup> See the lesson on Spiritual Disciplines entitled *Growing With Hope*.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nadei.org/article.php?id=17>

<sup>4</sup> This concept is explored more fully in the lesson on spiritual gifts entitled *Body of Hope*.

<sup>5</sup> Here is the teaching of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on this subject:

### Remnant and Its Mission:

The universal church is composed of all who truly believe in Christ, but in the last days, a time of widespread apostasy, a remnant has been called out to keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This remnant announces the arrival of the judgment hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and heralds the approach of His second advent. This proclamation is symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14; it coincides with the work of judgment in heaven and results in a work of repentance and reform on earth. Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness. (Rev. 12:17; 14:6-12; 18:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:10; Jude 3, 14; 1 Peter 1:16-19; 2 Peter 3:10-14; Rev. 21:1-14.)

### Unity in the Body of Christ:

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its

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source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children. (Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Matt. 28:19, 20; Ps. 133:1; 2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Acts 17:26, 27; Gal. 3:27, 29; Col. 3:10-15; Eph. 4:14-16; 4:1-6; John 17:20-23.)