

The logo for Kanawha Valley Church features a green wavy line above the text "Kanawha Valley Church" and a blue wavy line below it.

Kanawha Valley Church

Follow-Up Studies

Bible Studies to Help Young Christians Grow

Study 1 God Loves You

Study 2 Talking to God: Prayer

Study 3 Listening to God: Bible Study

Study 4 Love One Another

Study 5 The “Why’s” of Church- Part One

Study 6 The “Why’s” of Church- Part Two

Study 7 Love Your Neighbor

Additional Studies:

Let Your Light Shine- Marriage

Let Your Light Shine- Spiritual Families

Let Your Light Shine- Academics

Let Your Light Shine- Dating

GOD LOVES YOU

Q: How do you think your experiences growing up have shaped your view of God?

Q: How was your relationship with your father? How do you view authority? Do you have any negative experiences with authority figures in your past?

- Our relationship with our earthly fathers and our past experiences with other authority figures can have a profound effect on how we view God.
- God is NOT distant, aloof, or disinterested; He is NOT angry or short-tempered; God is NOT unjust or unloving. God is the perfect father and he desires to have a real, daily relationship with us.

YOU ARE IMPORTANT TO GOD

Luke 15:3-6

- If you were the only person who needed to be rescued...God would come running after you! He loves you so much.

YOU ARE VALUABLE TO GOD

Luke 15:8-10

Q: Have you ever searched frantically for something you lost? What?

Q: Would you go through the garbage or mud for a single penny? How about a \$100 bill or winning lottery ticket?

- How valuable an item is determines our earnestness in finding it, and what we would be willing to do (even get dirty) to recover it.
- There are many scriptures in the Bible that show us how valuable we are to God. In the Old Testament, God called his people, his “treasured possession” (Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2, 26:18; Psalm 135:4)
- In the New Testament, he calls us sons and daughters, a royal priesthood, a chosen people, a holy nation, the body and bride of Christ and tells us that he loved enough to send his One and Only Son to die for us. (Ephesians 1:4-8; 1 Peter 2:9; John 3:16)

GOD LONGS TO BE WITH YOU

Luke 15:11-32

Q: When you sin and hurt God, does it make you hesitant to spend time with God?

Q: Do you think the prodigal son was initially eager to return to his father after what he had done?

Q: How did the father respond when his son returned home? Describe the father’s love for his son.

Q: How does God feel if we choose to stay in the muck/mire of sin rather than repent and return home to him?

Q: How will God respond when we choose to repent, come home and spend time with him?

- God loves us and desires to have a daily relationship with us. The only thing we can do to mess that up is to forget how much God loves us and allow Satan to convince us that we are better off with the pigs (in the muck/mire of sin) or that God will not accept us if we return.

Spiritual Exercise: Take some time thinking and journaling about your upbringing, and specifically, how it may have affected your view of God. Work on having a biblical and accurate view of God.

TALKING TO GOD: PRAYER

Q: How important is communication in a relationship?

Good communication is at the heart of every relationship. A relationship with God thrives on communication as well. In prayer we both speak to and listen for God on a personal level.

Mark 1:35

Jesus was a busy man, but always found time to pray and found places that were free from distraction.

Q: What are the potential challenges in your life for finding the time and place to pray?

Why do we need to pray?

Luke 11:1-4

- When a first century Jew heard “daily bread” they would have immediately remembered the exodus. In Exodus 16 (manna from heaven), the Israelites had to rely on God for nourishment. As they collected the manna, they could only collect enough for one day (anything extra would turn to maggots). This made God’s people go to God every day to get what they needed to survive.
- In the same way today, we must understand that we cannot have a weekly Christianity. We cannot survive spiritually if we just rely on weekly times of fellowship and worship for our spiritual nourishment. Like the Israelites we must learn to go to God every day to sustain us.

Q: What would have happened to the Israelites if they had stopped going daily into the desert for manna?

Q: What will happen to us if we do not spend time with God daily?

JESUS USED THIS BASIC MODEL WHEN TEACHING HIS DISCIPLES TO PRAY:

- “Our Father” — Acknowledge God
- “Hallowed be your name” — Praise God (Read some Psalms for inspiration!)
- “Your Kingdom come” — Pray for others (The church, family, enemies, leaders, & anyone you want to see in heaven!)
- “Give us each day our daily bread” — Pray for your daily needs (Think spiritual, emotional, and physical needs; Pray through your daily schedule)
- “Forgive us our sins.” — Confess and ask God for forgiveness (Pray specifically through your sins. Remember, the more aware you are of your sin, the more grateful you will be for Jesus- Luke 7:36-50)
- “Lead us not into temptation.” — Put on your spiritual armor (Pray for God’s protection)

Luke 11:5-13

Q: What does Jesus’ story teach us about our prayer lives?

- Be bold. (Verse 8)
- Know that God loves you and wants what is best for you! (Verse 13)

Philippians 4:6-7 / 1st Peter 5:7

- God cares for you! Prayer is a time where we can bring our burdens, anxieties and worries to God.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

- Prayer is something that should become a continuous habit. Even when we are engaged in other activities, we can always include God in our thoughts and heart.

Q: How would “continual prayer” change the way you engage your day-to-day activities and schedule?

Spiritual Exercise: Have a regular distraction-free time to pray every day. Other ideas: find special/inspiring places to have prayer times or begin a prayer journal and track answered prayers.

LISTENING TO GOD: BIBLE STUDY

Luke 4:1-13

- It was the “habit” of Christ to overcome temptation by knowledge of the Scriptures. He knew them so well; he was even able to see where Satan was misusing them! (v.10-12; 2 Peter 3:15-16)
- Satan’s temptations and deceptions will be something we battle day-in and day-out, overcoming them means building the Christ-like habit of answering the temptations with the Word of God.

Q: What kinds of temptations does Satan bait you with? How can Scripture help you overcome?

Psalm 1:1-3

- The Bible does not actually say that we should have a “Quiet Time” everyday- it actually goes much further! The blessed man is the one who meditates on God’s word day and night (not just for 30 minutes in the morning)!

Q: What is the difference between “meditation” and “just reading”?

Q: How has meditation on the Word led you to “prosperity” in your life (v.3)?

Psalm 119:9-10

- Keeping a pure and upright life comes from hiding God’s word in your heart
- Jesus teaches us that man’s heart is a source of sinfulness (Mark 7). Our hearts are changed by the work of the Holy Spirit and by “hiding God’s word in our hearts” we can take preventive measures to keep us from sinning
- *Psalm 119 is the longest chapter of the Bible extols the benefits and virtues of God’s Word*

Psalm 119:59-60

- We should not delay to obey God’s commands
- Bible study is rendered worthless if we do not put what we learn/know into practice (James 1:22-25)

Q: What are some reasons why you might “delay” to obey God’s commands?

Acts 8: 26-29

- The Ethiopian Eunuch was a busy, important man who found the time to study God’s word.

Q: How does the eunuch demonstrate his heart to know God’s Word?

PRACTICAL BIBLE STUDY TIPS:

- Decide in advance what you want to study.
- Suggestions:
 - Study one book of the Bible (read, outline, study)
 - Study a section of a book (i.e. Sermon on the Mount, Last Supper, etc.)
 - Study one topic using a concordance (i.e. Grace, faith, impurity, etc.)
 - Study the life of one character (Abraham, Moses, David, Ruth, etc.)
 - Study out a sermon you’ve heard. Be a Berean (Acts 17: 11).
 - Ask a question you don’t know the answer to and dig for an answer.
- Read out loud
- Read different translations (ESV, NET)
- Use a notebook to write down thoughts and questions about your Bible study.
- Share what you are learning with others.

Spiritual Exercise: Learn to use a concordance and any study tools that will complement your Bible study.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

Proverbs 17:17

- Our spiritual friendships and our spiritual family (the church) are designed to love us, support us, and help us find strength in God as we face the adversities of life.

Q: What kinds of adversity or challenges do you think you will have or have had already as a disciple of Jesus?

- Persecution, temptation, family challenges, health issues, financial hardships, conflict in relationships, problems at school, problems at work, etc.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Q: What is the advantage of having a close spiritual friend?

- We need people in our spiritual lives to help us up when we struggle and fall or it is only a matter of time before we will experience grief and despair!

CONFESS TO ONE ANOTHER

1 John 1:5-10

Q: Can we be close to God and others if we live in darkness or dimness (living in a little darkness)?

- Claiming to be without sin equates to deceiving ourselves and calling God a liar. Confessing our sin allows us to “walk in the light”
- If we walk in the light: We have fellowship with one another (builds deep, authentic friendships) and Jesus’ blood purifies us and allows us to have a relationship with God.

Q: What are some obstacles that would prevent you from being open about your life and confessing sin?

Q: What should we do when someone confesses their sin to us?

Galatians 6:1-2

- NEVER be harsh! Do not overreact. God calls us to “restore gently.”
- Make sure that they bring things into the light (no dimness). Make sure you are getting enough information to really pray specifically and also help them to come to repentance.
- Ask “What do you think repentance looks like?” The goal is to help them to bring everything into the light and help them to repent (be restored) so that times of refreshing can come (Acts 3:19)
- Pray. Praying together after confession is always helpful (James 5:15-17)

HELP ONE ANOTHER BE LIKE CHRIST

1 Corinthians 11:1

- In our discipling relationships, Christ is the standard and our lives are examples.

Q: What is the difference between setting an example with our lives and making our lives a standard?

Q: Why is it important to know this distinction?

- We need to have the humility and desire to imitate the Christ-like qualities in one another. However, the foundation and focus of our discipling relationships should always be our desire to be just like Jesus.

Proverbs 27:5-6

- The Bible teaches us that it is better to be corrected harshly in love, than to have someone who does not love you enough to correct you at all.

Q: Do you have spiritual friends that you trust enough to allow them to correct you on a regular basis?

Q: Are people who tell you “what you want to hear” rather than “what you need to hear” really a good friend?

- Have a designated discipleship partner and/or group in your life and meet regularly.
- When you meet: confess sins, share burdens, talk about what you are learning from God, pray together, share your faith together, challenge one another’s faith, etc.

Spiritual Exercise: Do a study of “one another” passages in the New Testament.

THE “WHY’S” OF CHURCH- PART ONE

When we meet as a church, we share in many things together. This study explains the biblical reasons of why we do what we do.

SINGING

Ephesians 5:18-20

- Singing fills us with the Holy Spirit
- We actually speak to one another as we sing
- Our attitude should be joyful and thankful

Colossians 3:16-17

- Singing is a way of letting the word of Christ dwell among us
- Most songs have Scriptural grounds so we are actually singing the Bible!

I Corinthians 14:15

- We are to sing with our spirit, which means we are excited, joyful and fired up!
- We are also to sing with our minds, thinking about the words and allowing them to move our hearts

SCRIPTURE STUDY/SERMONS

Ezra 7:10, Nehemiah 8:1-6

- It was an intricate part of God’s people

Malachi 3:16-18

- God is honored as we are moved to decisions through preaching
- It is a great time to make solid decisions to change
- Note Taking – The opportunity to carefully examine the sermons afterwards like the Bereans (Acts 17:11-12)

SAYING “AMEN”

Deuteronomy 27:14-15

- This pattern continues through verse 25
- The people respond to affirm their community conviction

I Chronicles 16:36

- It was the spontaneous response to their heart being moved

Nehemiah 5:13; 8:6

- Affirmation and action!

I Corinthians 14:16

- It is about being a part of the community
- Church is meant to be multi-directional, not uni-directional
- As people speak or sing and we affirm with “Amen” we now give to others
- This strengthens the overall conviction of the church as a community

CONTRIBUTION

Proverbs 3:9-10

- Giving is a form of worship in which we honoring God

Deuteronomy 16:16-17

- Agrarian societies tithed three times per year according to their harvests
- We should give in both time and percentage

Spiritual Exercise: During the next Sunday worship service, think about the words to the songs as you sing. Or say “amen” when you agree with something in the service.

THE “WHY’S” OF CHURCH- PART TWO

COMMUNION

Acts 20:7

- It appears from the evidence of the New Testament and that of early church history that the disciples broke bread together at least once a week.

1 Corinthians 11: 23-30

- Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper. His instructions were clear: “do this in remembrance of me.” Christ’s sacrifice and covenant are holy and precious. The Bible teaches us that taking communion calls for self-reflection and unity among the believers.
- Before taking communion, reflect on the following:
 - Is there lingering sin I ought to confess?
 - Is there a relationship in the church that needs to be mended?

Luke 22:14-20

- The Passover was a CELEBRATION of how God rescued his people. Communion serves the same purpose for us today.
- It is an opportunity to reflect on God’s love and mercy and how he has rescued us.
- The bread – representative of Christ’s body, broken for his people
- The wine/juice – representative of Christ’s blood, poured out for his people
- By taking communion we (1) acknowledge/remember Christ’s sacrifice for us and (2) reconfirm the covenant relationship that he established with us. (3) we celebrate / give thanks for being rescued by God.

FELLOWSHIP

Malachi 3:16-18

- Fellowship should be filled with discussion about responses to the time of worship
- This provides prayer (James 5:16-17), accountability and encouragement

John 15:9-12

- God has made a direct spiritual connection between our love for one another and our connection to Him!
- Fellowship is a great time to bond and open our hearts to each other (II Corinthians 6:11-13)
- Fellowship is also a great time to plan time together outside of church (Acts 2:46, Romans 12:13, 2 John 1:12)

SERVING

Romans 12:1, 4-8

- Giving our lives to Christ is spiritual worship
- That offering finds application in serving in the church

Ephesians 4:15-16

- We grow closer to Christ and other disciples as we share in the work of church

Spiritual Exercise: Find a way you can serve in the church and talk to someone about beginning to volunteer.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

Matthew 9:35-38

Q: What did Jesus do when he saw the crowds? What does it mean to have compassion for people?

- Hebrews in the days of Jesus saw compassion as “being moved” to kindness, benevolence, or love.

Q: Have you ever seen anything that moved you to kindness, benevolence, or love? (charitable commercials for starving children, homeless people on the street, disaster victims on news, etc.)

Q: What does he mean “sheep without a shepherd”?

- A sheep without a shepherd has no one looking out for them, no one protecting them from the predators of the world. The Bible tells us that Satan is a devouring lion in our daily spiritual lives. People we pass everyday have no one to care for them spiritually, they are all alone and wandering without direction. This is how we should see people as we go through our day.

PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL

Romans 1:16-17

- The gospel is nothing to be ashamed of because it has the power to save.

Spiritual Principles for Effective Evangelism:

Matthew 10:11-14

- Be discerning and do not be focused on or discouraged by those who aren’t serious about God.

I Thessalonians 2:7-8

- Invest in a friendship, don’t just get together to do Bible studies; have fun together, study books together, eat meals together- share your life!

Matthew 5:14-16

- Be an example. It is God’s intention that our lives shine in the world for all to see and for our good deeds to bring him glory

Q: Does the example of your personal life, academics, finances, work ethic, etc. bring glory to God and make the gospel attractive, or would you be ashamed to show people how you behave in certain areas of your life?

Helpful Hints:

1) Push yourself to be friendly and to start conversations wherever you go.

2) Have a notebook/journal where you collect names and phone numbers of those you are reaching out to; this is doubles as a follow-up list and as a prayer list.

HELPING THE POOR

Proverbs 21:13

- The way that we respond to the poor/less fortunate has implications for the way that God will treat us.

Proverbs 14:31

- We are honoring God when we are kind to the poor.

Spiritual Exercise: Make a list of people you would like to see become a disciple in the next year (family, friends, co-workers, classmates, etc.). Add this list to your prayer journal. Pray that God will open a door for you to share your faith with the people on your list.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE- MARRIAGE

GOD'S PLAN

Genesis 2:24; Proverbs 18:22

- Marriage meets our deepest needs. Your husband or wife should be your closest friend.

Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7

- Husbands should NEVER be harsh! Husbands must serve their wives, being considerate. Husbands should do their share of the housework, cleaning, taking care of the children, etc.

1 Peter 3:5-6

- Wives must learn submission. Wives should never nag or be bossy.
- As each partner submits to God's plan, our greatest needs are met. Men feel respected and women feel loved.

SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE PRINCIPLES

Communication

Ephesians 4:29

- Build up with your words; do not tear each other down! (Proverbs 12:18, 18:21)

James 1:9

- Be quick to listen. (Proverbs 18:13)

Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:26

- Deal with resentments or bitterness / Do not bury them

Song of Songs 2:15

- Marriages can go bad when "little things" build up. Deal with conflict on a daily basis.

Proverbs 15:22

- Be partners in planning. Set up a regular planning time to work together on scheduling, finances, household needs, etc.

Spirituality

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

- Talk about spiritual things when you are together.
- Pray with your spouse daily.
- Considering studying a spiritual book together (marriage, parenting, or just a spiritual book in general).

Romance

1 Corinthians 7:5

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

- Do not forget to love like the Bible describes (this is the best recipe for romance!)
- Remember the special touches: cards, flowers, presents, surprises

Spiritual Exercise: Do something this month to build up your marriage spiritually. Examples: Pray together, seek out marriage discipling/counseling, share your faith together, start reading a marriage book together, etc.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE- SPIRITUAL FAMILIES

SPIRITUAL FOCUS

Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Ephesians 6:4

- God has given us the responsibility to train up our children to know him.
- Have regular, consistent family devotionals.
- Be on time to church. Allow extra time, particularly considering the children. Plan to come early!
- Pray with the children before they go to bed.
- Have a weekly family time.
- Find a spiritual family you can learn from and ask for input.
- If you have Christian children, work with the preteen or teen ministry. Embrace feedback they may give you about your family.
- Aim to have an evangelistically fruitful family.

SECURITY AND HAPPINESS

1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11-12

- Our children need our time—you will need to reorder your priorities!
- Our children need affection—without it, they will become insecure, cold, introverted and awkward around strangers.

DISCIPLINE

Proverbs 23:13-14; 22:15; 29:15, 17, 19, 21

- It is unloving not to give it. Discipline is training.
- The husband should be the chief discipliner
- Husband and wife should agree on the “rules,” lest the children pick and choose whom to obey!

Colossians 3:21

- Encouragement is necessary.

Proverbs 22:6

- Areas of training: Respect toward authority, speech and openness, affection, manners, tidiness, moodiness.

Spiritual Exercise: Have a fun-filled, spiritually focused, family devotional.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE- ACADEMICS

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

- God called us to be Christians as students for a reason! We have a responsibility to glorify God in academics and evangelism.

Colossians 3:22-23

- Attitude is more important than aptitude. Academics are a vital part of a student's spiritual life. To have consistent motivation, work for God, not for self.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

- A consistent example has an impact! Classmates will be drawn to those who can help others.

Mark 7:37

- People were amazed by Jesus' all-around excellence. You will amaze family and friends if you excel in all areas.

James 1:2-4

- Persevering with academics leads to spiritual maturity: discipline, focus and faith.

Proverbs 6:6; 13:4; 18:9; 21:5

- Be diligent in your studies- there is no substitute for diligence.
- Attend every lecture. This is also very important for your example.
- Take good notes and catch up on missed lectures.
- Go through homework within a day of receiving it, and plan how you will get it done.
- Keep current at all times (for conscience's sake, as well as for practical reasons)!

Proverbs 11:14

- Many advisors make victory sure. So seek discipling in your academics and get input from professors, lecturers and classmates.

Spiritual Exercise: Do, at least, one of the practical suggestions mentioned above during your next academic week.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE- DATING

Marriage and dating relationships are heavily influenced by cultural norms. Dating, as one would commonly understand it today, is a relatively recent phenomenon, developing in America and the West since the 1950's. Before that time, and in many places in the world today, marriage relationships were typically arranged by families or a formal "courting" took place. This was the case in Biblical times as well. Consequently, one will not find the term "dating" anywhere in the Bible. With regards to dating and guy-girl relationships, many of us may come out of the world with bad experiences or low expectations. The Bible offers some very important principles and viewpoints on guy-girl relationships that draw right boundaries and set us on a path for building successful friendships and dating relationships. In the church, we understand steady boyfriend-girlfriend dating to be a courting relationship that may eventually explore the possibility of marriage.

1 Corinthians 7:39

- This is neither encouragement nor suggestion; it is a clear command of God: "...he must belong to the Lord." Disciples marry disciples.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

- The context to this scripture is about who we give our affection to. Paul told the disciples in Corinth that he and his companions had given their affection (hearts) to them (2 Cor. 6:11) but the Corinthians were "withholding" their affection from Paul and the other disciples (2 Cor. 6:12). Paul was telling them that they should be eager to give their hearts to other disciples but NEVER be yoked (give their affection and hearts) to unbelievers!

TYPES OF DATING

- Friendly dating/Encouragement dating: guys and girls going out to encourage one another and get to know each other with no romantic strings attached and no expectations except friendship...this should happen a lot!
- Steady dating: having an exclusive boyfriend or girlfriend. This should happen after taking the time to build a regular friendship. It is wise to seek input from spiritual advisors in your life.

Psalms 37:4

- Steady dating (i.e. getting a boyfriend or girlfriend) in the world can take place for all the wrong reasons: insecurity (needing to "be with someone" in order to feel loved or special), social pressure, lustfulness or status.
- First and foremost, our delight should be in the Lord. He is the primary source for what our hearts desire in terms of intimacy, feelings of worth, security and confidence.

SPIRITUAL GUY/GIRL RELATIONSHIP PRINCIPLES

- Be considerate of one another. Do not be a stumbling block. (1 Corinthians 10:32-33)
- Go on dates with a double; home before midnight; dress appropriately, etc.
- Be absolutely pure – Ephesians 5:3 / 1 Timothy 5:2 In all guy-girl relationships (dating and non-dating) the standard of purity is very high. What kinds of things, short of sexual immorality, would still be a "hint" of sexual immorality/impurity? (Inappropriate kissing, touching, making out, etc.)
- Get Advice - Proverbs 19:2,20
- Our worldly notions of dating should not be imported into God's kingdom; be humble enough to admit that you do not know how to successfully build a spiritual dating relationship with a Christian...you need advice!

Spiritual Exercise: Write out a list of things / principles that God says are essential to building a spiritual friendship (with the opposite sex) and entering into a godly marriage. Make a list of people you can get advice from regarding building these relationships.