

New Covenant Church Firm Foundation Bible Study

Bible Study Outline (Generated by AI)

“Soul Increase: Choosing the Good Part”

Speaker: Pastor William Bumphus III, Ed.D.

Primary Scripture: Luke 10:38–42, Supporting Scriptures: 3 John 1:2; Isaiah 55:1–3; 2 Corinthians 5:1–5; John 5:1–9; Hebrews 11:1; Ephesians 3:20

Central Theme: Spiritual growth and increase begin within the soul—our mind, will, and emotions. By prioritizing God's Word, believers develop a greater capacity for faith, hope, spiritual understanding, and experiencing God's goodness.

I. Introduction: God's Faithfulness and the Manifestation of His Glory

A. God remembers our prayers and desires

The speaker opened by reflecting on his long-standing desire to share the Gospel from his patio, inspired by a minister he watched years earlier.

Sometimes we pray for something sincerely and eventually forget about it.

God does not forget the desires we have expressed to Him.

As we grow spiritually, we begin to recognize how God has been working throughout our lives.

God's faithfulness becomes more evident as we mature in our relationship with Him.

Key Principle: What begins as a desire or vision may become reality through God's faithfulness and the process of spiritual growth.

B. The relationship between work and glory

Referring to his message from Haggai 2, the speaker emphasized: *“When the work is done, the glory will come.”*

He explained that believers often desire the blessings and manifestations of God's glory without wanting to do the necessary work.

The glory of God includes:

Miracles, healing, and supernatural demonstrations of God's power.

God's goodness revealed in people's lives.

Believers allowing their light to shine in the world.

The fulfillment of God's purposes through faithful service.

Application: We must be willing to participate in the work God has called us to accomplish.

II. Soul Increase: The Foundation of Spiritual Growth

Scripture: 3 John 1:2, *“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”* (NKJV)

A. God desires wholeness

The speaker explained that God's desire for believers includes prosperity and well-being in every area of life.

Spiritual prosperity.

Physical health.

Financial well-being.

Emotional and mental stability.

Growth in faith and understanding.

However, he emphasized that prosperity of the soul is foundational to growth in other areas.

B. Understanding the soul

The soul was described as consisting of three principal dimensions:

The challenge is bringing these dimensions into agreement with God's Word.

C. The battle for the soul

The speaker identified the soul as an area where discouragement, doubt, and spiritual opposition frequently occur.

Examples include thoughts such as:

"You have been praying for this, and nothing has happened."

"Maybe you should stop believing."

"Your circumstances will never change."

These thoughts can undermine hope, peace, joy, and confidence in God.

Key Principle: Soul increase involves bringing our thoughts, decisions, and emotional responses into alignment with God's promises rather than allowing circumstances to control our faith.

III. Choosing the Good Part: Mary and Martha

Scripture: Luke 10:38–42

A. Martha's distraction

Martha welcomed Jesus into her home and became occupied with serving her guests.

Although her responsibilities were legitimate, she became overwhelmed and frustrated that Mary was not helping.

Jesus responded:

"Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things." (Luke 10:41, NKJV)

The speaker compared Martha's experience with the pressures of modern life, including work, family obligations, ministry responsibilities, and financial concerns.

B. Mary's decision

Mary chose to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to His teaching.

Jesus declared: *"But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."* (Luke 10:42, NKJV)

Mary recognized the importance of receiving from Jesus before becoming occupied with other responsibilities.

C. The danger of excessive busyness

The speaker acknowledged that even productive activities can prevent us from maintaining spiritual priorities.

Examples included:

- Being overwhelmed with daily responsibilities.

- Neglecting personal prayer and Bible reading.

- Waiting until the end of an exhausting day to spend time with God.

- Allowing legitimate obligations to become spiritual distractions.

- Losing awareness of who we are in Christ.

D. Choosing the good part requires intentionality

The speaker emphasized the importance of stopping, pausing, and making room for God's presence and Word.

"We have to take that time to just stop, to pause, and to soak up who Jesus is, what Jesus did, and what God wants to do in our lives."

Key Principle: Being busy doing good things is not the same as prioritizing the most important thing—our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Practical Application: Make prayer, Scripture reading, and spiritual reflection deliberate priorities rather than activities reserved for whatever time remains.

IV. Nourishing the Soul Through God's Word

Scripture: Isaiah 55:1–3

A. God's invitation to receive

Isaiah extends an invitation to those who thirst and those who have no money to come and receive what they need.

The speaker emphasized that God's provision is not limited by human resources.

B. The danger of pursuing what cannot satisfy

Isaiah 55:2 asks:

"Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy?"

The speaker described how people sometimes devote their time, resources, and energy to pursuits that never provide lasting satisfaction.

He compared this to individuals continually chasing an experience that cannot ultimately satisfy their deeper needs.

C. Letting the soul delight in abundance

Isaiah 55:2 continues: *"Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance."*

The speaker interpreted this as an invitation to develop an enlarged spiritual vision.

He emphasized that many things begin internally before becoming visible externally.

This process involves:

- Developing spiritual understanding.
- Allowing God's promises to shape our thinking.
- Expanding our capacity to envision possibilities.
- Growing in hope and expectation.
- Taking appropriate action in faith.

D. Personal illustration: The Range Rover testimony

The speaker shared his experience of desiring a Range Rover from childhood.

Over time, he moved from simply wishing for the vehicle to expressing his expectation through prayer and thanksgiving. Eventually, he purchased one.

He clarified that the point of the testimony was not that God exists to provide luxury possessions.

Rather, the illustration demonstrated his conviction that believers should not limit their expectations of what God can accomplish.

E. Hearing God's Word produces spiritual increase

Isaiah 55:3 says: *"Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live."*

The speaker connected this invitation directly to Mary's decision to listen to Jesus.

Key Principle: Spiritual growth is nourished through attentive listening to God's Word. The more we receive and understand His Word, the greater our capacity to believe, hope, and act upon His promises.

V. The Inner Life and Our Eternal Inheritance

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:1–5

A. Our earthly existence is temporary

Paul compares the physical body to an earthly tent.

The passage contrasts our present mortal existence with the eternal dwelling God has prepared.

B. Developing a greater desire for God's life

The speaker focused on Paul's language about earnestly desiring to be clothed with our heavenly habitation.

He applied this to the believer's present desire to experience more of God's life, character, and glory.

This includes growing in Christlikeness, spiritual understanding, and fellowship with God.

C. The necessity of spiritual preparation

The speaker used Paul's reference to being clothed rather than found naked to emphasize the importance of maintaining a genuine relationship with God.

He connected this theme to the importance of choosing the good part rather than neglecting spiritual development.

D. The Holy Spirit as God's guarantee

2 Corinthians 5:5 explains that God has given believers the Spirit as a guarantee.

The speaker emphasized that the Holy Spirit is evidence of God's present work and the promise of what is to come.

He also made the point that eternal life begins when a person receives Jesus Christ, rather than only after physical death.

E. Experiencing God's goodness now

The speaker stressed that believers do not have to wait until heaven to experience God's presence, grace, and power.

He encouraged believers to seek a deeper relationship with God now.

Key Principle: The Holy Spirit is both a present gift and the guarantee of our future inheritance. Our spiritual lives should continually grow in awareness of God's presence.

VI. Jesus Is Greater Than the Circumstances That Limit Us

Scripture: John 5:1–9

A. The man at the Pool of Bethesda

The speaker recounted the healing of a man who had suffered from an infirmity for 38 years.

The man waited near the pool, believing that entering the water at the appropriate time would provide healing.

However, he could not reach the water before others.

B. The limitations of human solutions

The man had become focused on one particular method of receiving healing.

When Jesus approached him, the man continued to explain why he could not get into the pool.

His thinking remained centered on what he believed was necessary for his healing.

C. The transforming encounter with Jesus

The speaker emphasized that the man's answer was not ultimately found in the pool, but in Jesus.

"Jesus is that water."

This statement expressed the speaker's central point that Jesus is the true source of the healing and restoration the man sought.

D. Modern parallels

The speaker compared the man's dependence on the pool to people waiting for external circumstances to change their lives.

For example, individuals may place their confidence in winning the lottery or receiving an unexpected financial breakthrough.

The underlying lesson was that believers must place their ultimate confidence in Christ rather than in limited human solutions.

E. The power of perseverance

Despite decades of disappointment, the man had not completely abandoned his pursuit of healing.

The speaker used this example to encourage believers not to surrender their hope.

Key Principle: Our expectations should not be limited to the methods or circumstances we understand. Jesus is greater than the limitations we perceive.

VII. Moving From Desire to Hope and From Hope to Faith

Scripture: Hebrews 11:1 *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* (NKJV)

A. Spiritual growth begins with desire

The speaker encouraged believers to allow their souls to grow in their desire for God.

This desire should extend beyond material possessions and personal achievements.

The greater objective is to know God more deeply and experience His presence.

B. Desire develops into hope

As God's Word reshapes our thinking, our desires become connected to spiritual expectation.

The speaker described this progression:

Desire

Hope

Faith

Expectation

Action

The speaker's description of how soul increase develops confidence and purposeful action.

C. Faith changes our perspective

The speaker used his experience teaching incarcerated individuals to demonstrate the difference between simply hoping for something and developing faith-filled expectation.

His illustration contrasted:

"I hope I go home" with "I'm going home."

"I hope I can pay my bills" with a confident expectation of provision.

Fear of illness with confidence in God's healing power.

These were presented as examples of the speaker's understanding of how faith changes a person's outlook.

D. Faith must be grounded in the Word

The speaker stressed that believers must learn what God's Word says about their circumstances.

Faith is not simply positive thinking. In his teaching, it develops through exposure to Scripture, spiritual understanding, and confidence in God's promises.

E. God's power exceeds our expectations

Supporting Scripture: Ephesians 3:20

The speaker referenced God's ability to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power working in us.

He connected this promise with the importance of inward spiritual development.

Key Principle: The Word of God nurtures hope, establishes faith, and develops the expectation that God is able to work beyond our present understanding.

VIII. Conclusion: One Thing Is Needed

The Bible study returned to Jesus' words to Martha:

"But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part."

The speaker concluded by encouraging believers to desire more of God rather than focusing primarily on material possessions or external achievements.

A. The main lessons

God desires His people to grow spiritually.

The soul—mind, will, and emotions—must increasingly align with God's Word.

Busyness and distractions can weaken our spiritual focus.

Spending time with Jesus is the good part that must be prioritized.

God's Word enlarges our spiritual vision and nourishes our faith.

The Holy Spirit assures us of God's present work and future promises.

Jesus is greater than our perceived limitations.

Faith transforms hope into confident expectation.

Genuine soul increase should deepen our desire to know God.

Spiritual growth prepares believers to reflect God's glory.

B. Final exhortation

The speaker's concluding emphasis was that believers should continually seek more of God—greater understanding, closer fellowship, deeper faith, and greater spiritual maturity.

His prayer was that the listeners would experience genuine soul increase and, through that inward growth, experience more of God's goodness in their lives.

IX. Bible Study Reflection and Discussion Questions

The following questions are drawn from the major themes of the message and can be used for group discussion or personal reflection.

What does it mean for your soul to prosper according to 3 John 1:2?

How can legitimate responsibilities become distractions from spiritual priorities?
What made Mary's choice different from Martha's response to Jesus?

What practical changes would help you consistently choose the good part?

How does Isaiah 55:1–3 challenge the things we pursue for satisfaction?

What is the relationship between spiritual desire, hope, and faith?

In what ways can our thinking become limited by circumstances?

What does the Holy Spirit's presence mean for our lives today?

What can we learn from the man at the Pool of Bethesda about depending on Jesus?

How can growing in God's Word help us fulfill our calling and reflect His glory?

Summary of the Bible Study

"Soul Increase: Choosing the Good Part" presents spiritual maturity as the foundation for experiencing greater growth in the Christian life.

Drawing upon Mary's decision to sit at Jesus' feet, the speaker emphasizes that believers must deliberately prioritize God's Word above the distractions and demands of life.

The teaching connects the prosperity of the soul with the development of faith, hope, spiritual vision, and confidence in God's promises. Through Scripture and personal testimonies, the speaker encourages believers to expand their expectations of what God can accomplish while recognizing that the greatest blessing is a deeper relationship with Him.

The central message is that true increase begins on the inside. As the mind, will, and emotions become increasingly aligned with God's Word, believers grow in faith, develop greater spiritual confidence, and become better prepared to fulfill God's purposes.

Editorial note: This is a structured summary and outline, rather than a verbatim transcript. Repetitions, conversational interruptions, and speech-to-text errors have been streamlined. Personal illustrations and the speaker's scriptural interpretations have been preserved in substance, without presenting them as independent exegetical conclusions.