

SYDNEY CHURCH OF CHRIST

NEW CHRISTIAN'S GUIDE



2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

"All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"



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Congratulations on becoming a disciple! It is the best decision we can make in this life. During this time as a new Christian it is important to make sure you build solid foundations for your faith. This guide is a tool to build these foundations with God's Word.

"For no one can lay a foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. if anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and fire will test the quality of each person's work"

1 Corinthians 3:11-13

"As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built."

Luke 6:47-48



One Another Scriptures

Ephesians 4:15 teaches that as members of one body, it is important that we live with our brothers and sisters in a way that builds the body up - this scripture bank is a helpful resource in learning how to do this.

Mark 9:50

Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other.

John 15:12

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

John 15:17

This is my command: Love each other.

Romans 12:10

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.

Romans 12:16

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Romans 13:8

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

Romans 14:13

Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.

Romans 15:7

Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Romans 15:14

I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.



Romans 16:16

Greet one another with a holy kiss.
All the churches of Christ send greetings.

1 Corinthians 1:10

I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

1 Corinthians 11:33

So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other.

1 Corinthians 12:24-26

...God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.

Galatians 5:13

You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom

to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

Galatians 5:15

If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

Galatians 5:26

Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Ephesians 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 5:19

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

Ephesians 5:21

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.



Colossians 3:9

Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices

Colossians 3:13

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

1 Thessalonians 3:12

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

1 Thessalonians 4:9

Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.

1 Thessalonians 4:17-18

After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-14

Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.



2 Thessalonians 1:3

We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.

Hebrews 3:13

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

Hebrews 10:24

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

Hebrews 10:25

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.

Hebrews 13:1

Keep on loving each other as brothers.

James 4:11

Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him

speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.

James 5:9

Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

James 5:16

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

1 Peter 1:22

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

1 Peter 3:8

Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.



1 Peter 4:8

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4:9

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

1 Peter 5:5

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

1 John 3:11

This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

1 John 4:11

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

1 John 3:23

And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

1 John 4:7

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:12

No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

2 John 1:5

And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another.



Forty Day Bible Study

Matthew 3:16-4:10. Jesus was lead by the spirit into the desert where for 40 days he was tempted by the devil shortly after his baptism. This is a study for young Christians that covers the basics of what they may be tempted with in their first 40 days.

Day One: Saved Completely

Colossians 1:21-23

What God has done for you through your baptism into Christ is truly AMAZING!

- What was your relationship with God before today? What had you done to make God your enemy?
- What does it mean to be holy/without blemish/free from accusation?
- What condition is there to staying saved? (vs. 23)

I John 3:1-4

- As a "child of God", what should your attitude be?
- How can you begin to "purify yourself"?

Hebrews 9:24-28 & 10:19-23

- What has Jesus' sacrifice done for you?
- How can you draw near to God with a sincere heart?

Psalms 103:1-5

- What has God done with your sins? Write other "benefits" God has done for you (vs. 2)

Application: Praise God and thank him for saving you! Write a thank you prayer to God. Keep it in a special place to re-read later.



Day Two: Tested and Tempted

Matthew 3:16-4:11

- What happened to Jesus after his baptism? What should you expect after your baptism?
- How was Jesus tempted to question his relationship with God? God's plan for him?
- How has Satan tempted you with doubts/insecurity/fears since your baptism?
- How did Jesus use the Bible to fight temptation? How does the Bible expose Satan's lies?

Ephesians 6:10-18

- How might the devil scheme against you?
- What armour has God provided to keep you strong?
- What is our only "weapon" against Satan (vs. 17)?

Application: Expect to be tempted and decide to be open about your struggles. Talk with another Christian today about your temptations and pray together.

Day Three: Growing Roots

Luke 8:13

- What happens to young disciples who don't grow roots?

Acts 2:41-47 & 4:32-37

- What helped to keep these young disciples faithful?
- Are you devoting yourself to the same things they did (2:42)?
- How can you deepen your relationships in the church?

1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

- What does it mean to have "deep conviction"? How can you develop conviction?



- Who should you imitate? In what ways?
- Are you becoming a "model" to others? How?

Application: Spend time this week with Christians you can imitate, encourage, and learn from.

Day Four: Learning to Pray

Luke 11:1-13

- Why does prayer need to be learned? Who are you learning from?
- How can you praise God's name? Do you pray for God's kingdom (church) to increase? Do you pray for daily needs and for forgiveness for yourself and to also forgive others? Do you pray for help and protection from temptations? (Vs 2-4)
- What else does Jesus want us to understand about prayer from verses 5-13?

A.C.T.S. - a simple outline for prayer is: Adoration (praise), Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication (requests). If you pray 10 minutes of each section, you will pray a powerful 40 minutes!

Read the Psalms to learn how to praise God.

Philippians 4:6-7

- What does God want you to pray about? What are some worries you can pray about today? Do you feel at peace when you pray to God? Trust he will answer!

Application: Pray following the Lord's prayer outline or using A.C.T.S. Write down some of your prayer requests and see how God answers them.



Day Five: The Grace of God

Romans 5:6-11

- How were you powerless when Christ died for you?
- What proves God's incredible love for you?

Titus 3:3-8 & 2:11-14

- Why do we need to be reminded about our old way of life?
- What did you do to earn God's forgiveness?
- How should you respond to the grace of God?
- Describe how you can be self-controlled and eager to do good works.

1 Corinthians 15:9-10 & 1 Timothy 1:7-12

- How did Paul show his gratitude to God?

Application: Write down (and do) 3 things today that will show God how grateful you are to be saved!

Day Six: Too Good to Keep

2 Kings 7:3-11

- How were you starving and without hope like the 4 lepers before being baptised?
- How is the kingdom of God like an unlimited feast?
- How does verse 9 apply to being a disciple? Do you have the same attitude?

Romans 10:1-4 & 14-21

- Do you feel like Paul does about the lost?
- Who does God send to preach?
- Will everyone accept the good news? Why?
- Why is it important to preach no matter what response you receive?

Psalms 116:1-14



- How can you repay the Lord for all his goodness to you?

Application: Set a "goal of faith" for yourself in evangelism today. Refuse to be discouraged!

Day Seven: The Family of God

Mark 3:31-33

- Why did Jesus have to make a choice between his physical and spiritual family?
- Who are the people you are closest to? What choices do you have to make? Are God's people *really* your family?

1 Peter 1:22

- What is "sincere love"? How can you love deeply, from the heart?
- Who have you loved this much in your life before? How does your love for the disciples need to grow?

2 Corinthians 5:16-17

- What are some worldly ways you have looked at people before?
- How do you need to change your way of seeing people? (Be specific)

1 Timothy 5:1-12

- Who are some people in your ministry that can become like spiritual "fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters" in your life?

Application: This week schedule time to spend with two Christians that you have not spent time with before.

Day Eight: The Hope of Glory

1 Corinthians 15:19

- Why does your hope in Christ go beyond this earthly life?



- Why are we as Christians to be pitied if there is no eternal life?

1 Corinthians 15:42-58

- What is the mystery Paul tells us (vs.51)?
- Why do we normally fear death - and why should we no longer be afraid of dying?
- Why should we work for the Lord? What will happen when we give ourselves completely?

Colossians 3:1-4

- When were you raised with Christ?
- What should you be thinking about from now on?
- What things should you stop thinking about so much?

Application: Think for a while about what heaven will be like, and don't forget to thank God every day for the opportunity to go to heaven!

Day Nine: Trials of Many Kinds

James 1:2-8

- Why does God allow us to go through trials?
- What should your attitude be about going through trials?
- What are the trials in your life right now?

James 1:12-15

- How can you persevere through trials and stand the test?
- Where do temptations come from? What things tempt you? Have you talked about your temptations with God and with another disciple?

1 Peter 1:3-9

- Why should we rejoice in trials?
- How can you know if your faith is genuine or not?



- Write a list of some of the tests that could come your way (financial, relationships, persecution, etc.) How can you prepare today for trials you may face later?

Application: Talk with another disciple today about the trials and temptations you face. Discuss your attitude about trials. Be happy!

Day Ten: Praying Like Jesus

Mark 1:32-39

- What sacrifices did Jesus make to go and pray? Think of his previous day. What excuses could he have made to not pray?
- When do you feel the need to pray? Do you ever make excuses not to pray?
- How has your prayer time been the past 10 days?

Hebrews 5:7-10

- What kind of prayer life did Jesus have?
- What things, besides going to the cross, would have been difficult for Jesus to obey?
- What things are difficult for you to do as a disciple?
- Have you been praying with loud cries and tears for God to help you be obedient?
- What situations in your life do you need to pray more about? Make a list and be specific.

Application: Spend time today praying about the things you wrote about on your list. Be specific in your prayers. Try praying out loud and talking to God as if you could see him and tell him how you feel about these things - what is difficult and why it is difficult. Being real and open with God will help your heart change.



Day Eleven: Holding to the Truth

2 Timothy 2:14-19

- Why do some people like to quarrel about words and spread their own ideas around? Do you ever quarrel about words?
- Have you talked about it with another disciple?
- How can you train yourself to be an approved workman?
- Have you been involved in any discussions lately about God's word or the church that were pointless or even harmful?
- How can you avoid godless chatter?

1 Timothy 1:18-20

- How can you fight the good fight?
- How can a disciple "shipwreck" their faith?
- Remember Hymenaeus (2 Timothy 2:17-18) and Alexander (2 Timothy 4:14-15)
- What is the outcome of people who turn away from the faith? How do they try to harm others?

1 Timothy 4:15-16

- Are you watching daily your life (as a disciple) and your doctrine (understanding the Bible)?
- Has anyone noticed changes in you?

2 Timothy 2:22-26

- What should your attitude be toward those who oppose you?

Application: Discuss with your discipling partner any questions about doctrine or the church that you do not understand



Day Twelve: Doing Good Things

Ephesians 2:10

- What has God created for us to do?
- Make a list of some good works that you could do.

1 Peter 4:8-11

- How does love cover over many sins?
- Have you been offering hospitality to other disciples?
- How can you improve in this?
- Why do you think God wants you to be giving to others?

Galatians 6:9-10

- Who does God want us to help?
- Who in your Bible talk has special needs right now that you could help?

Application: If you see needs you can meet, do it *this week*. If you don't know how you can help, *ask*. Remember that we need each other- we are family.

Day Thirteen: Saved to Serve

Matthew 25:31-46

- What will you be judged for on the last day?
- Why is it not enough to simply give money to beggars?
- Which of the six things listed in verses 35-36 have you done recently?
- Who are we really ignoring when we neglect the needy?

Deuteronomy 15:7-10

- What does it mean to be "hard-hearted" or "tight-fisted"?
- What kind of giving does God expect from you?
- Who are some of the poor and needy around you - and how are you going to help them?



Matthew 10:40-42

- What are some small acts of kindness that will not be forgotten by God?
- How can you help the needy even if you have little money?

James 1:27

- What is true religion in God's sight? Who does God have a special concern for?

Application: Who can you help today? Do it. Also, make plans with another disciple to help other needy people this week.

Day Fourteen: A New Creation

2 Corinthians 5:17

- What are some of the "old" parts of you that are gone?
- What are some of the "new" things you are becoming?

Mark 2:21-22

- How new must you be?
- What is the difference between adding on new habits and being changed from the inside?
- Are you like an old wineskin or a new one? Why?

Romans 12:2

- What are some examples of worldly thinking in your life?
- How can you change your thinking?

Ephesians 4:17-5:2

- How does God describe your old way of thinking and living?
- Who were you created to be like? Why is it so important to keep on forgiving each other?
- What does it mean to live a life of love?



Application: Ask your discipler or a Christian who knows you well how they see worldly attitudes or habits in your life.

Day Fifteen: The Hope of Heaven

Revelation 20:11-15

- Imagine what the day of judgment will be like. Who will be there?
- How will everyone be feeling?

Revelation 21:1-8

- Who is the bride of Christ?
- Describe heaven.
- Check yourself against verse 8. Are any of these sins in your life?

Revelation 22:1-6

- What other eternal joys will be in heaven?
- Why does God want us to know these words are trustworthy and true?

Revelation 22:14-15

- Are any of these sins in your life?

Application: Pray about what God promises in heaven! If there are any sins you need to confess and change, do it *today*!

Day Sixteen: Saved to Save

1 Peter 2:9-10

- What does it mean to be a royal priesthood?
- What message should you be sharing? Are you really declaring God's praises or just giving out an invitation?

2 Corinthians 5:14-21

- How can you tell if you're living for yourself or living for Jesus?



- What does it mean to be Christ's ambassador?
- Would Jesus be pleased with the way you present him?
- What does it mean to *appeal* to and *implore* people?
- What attitude should you have toward the lost?

Acts 17:16-34

- Why was Paul distressed?
- What are some sights around your city that should distress you?
- Where did Paul share his faith?
- Why did Paul begin his message by commending the Athenians for being very religious?
- What does this teach you about preaching Paul's message?

Application: Write at least 4 things you have learned today about evangelism from this study. Share your faith with these things in mind.

Day Seventeen: Distracted or Devoted?

Luke 10:38-42

- Why was Martha distracted?
- How was she feeling?
- What are some things you have let distract you this week?
- Are you more like Martha or Mary?
- What did Mary choose?
- How was it better?

Luke 8:14

- What does it mean to be "choked"?
- What is the result?
- What are the worries/money and business concerns/pleasures that are keeping you from growing more?

Luke 12:35-40



- Why do we need to stay alert and ready for Jesus?
- How does Jesus feel when we get distracted from our purpose and start doing other things?

Application: If you have been distracted or wasting time, try writing a personal schedule every day. Let other disciples help you.

Day Eighteen: Learning from Others

Matthew 18:1-4

- What kind of heart does God want us to have?
- What qualities of children do we need to imitate?

1 Thessalonians 5:12-14

- Who is "over you" in the Lord?
- Does it have anything to do with age or education?
- Write the names of some Christians who work hard, set a good example and admonish you.
- Are you showing them respect?
- What kind of disciples need special help (vs. 14)?
- Have you been admonishing for any of these problems?

Psalm 119:99-100

- What gives us real maturity and understanding?
- How is verse 100 opposite of how our society thinks?
- What should your attitude be when you are being taught/disciplined/corrected by someone younger than yourself?

1 Timothy 4:11-12

- What does the Lord expect from young leaders?

Psalm 32:8-10



- How can you not be like a horse or mule?

Application: If you have resisted learning from younger disciples, repent today and seek them out to ask questions. If you are young yourself, set the believers a great example!

Day Nineteen: Powerful Prayers

1 Chronicles 17:15-22

- What was David feeling as he prayed to God? Why?
- How has the Lord treated you with undeserved honour and blessings?
- How did God bless Israel?
- How has he done even greater things for his people today?
- What attitude toward God does this prayer express?

Genesis 24:10-27

- Why do you think the Lord answers this prayer so quickly?
- The servant's prayer was simple, but he had great faith. How can you tell?
- What was the servant's first response to the answered prayer?
- Are you remembering to thank God for every answered prayer?

James 5:15-18

- What makes prayer powerful and effective?
- Do you pray eagerly and earnestly?
- Do you pray with great faith? Have you been righteous this week

Application: Make your prayer very special today. Pray with faith and gratitude!

Day Twenty: Tempted by the World

Psalms 73:1-14

- What was the writer feeling as he looked at the wealthy, unsaved people around him?



- Why did life seem unfair to him?
- How have you envied people in the world?
- Have you struggled with this since becoming a Christian? Have you talked about it?

Psalm 73:15-22

- What did he realise about their final destiny?
- How is the "good life" like a dream that will end on judgment day?
- How was the writer thinking when he was envying them?

Psalm 73:23-28

- What did the writer realise about his relationship with God?
- Memorise verses 25-26.

1 John 2:15-17

- What things in the world are you supposed to hate?
- What worldly things are still attracting you?

Application: Talk with your discipler about your feelings about the world. What temptations have you been having? Pray about them today.

Day Twenty-One: Rejoice in Persecutions

Matthew 5:10-11

- What should make us rejoice in persecutions?
- Have people insulted or spoken evil of you because of Jesus? 3. How did you feel?
- Who else has been treated this way?

John 15:18-23

- How should we expect to be treated?
- Why does the world hate us?
- What makes people feel guilty when they see us become disciples?



Acts 4:13-22

- What made Peter and John so bold?
- Has anyone tried to stop you from teaching, speaking or worshipping Jesus?
- How have you responded?

Acts 5:17-29

- Jesus was persecuted out of envy (Mark 15:10); the apostles were arrested out of jealousy.
- Why will we be persecuted or slandered?
- By whom?
- What was the apostles' reply when they were told to stop?

Acts 5:40-42

- What made the apostles happy?

Application: Let verse 42 be your theme today and every day.

Day Twenty-Two: Giving Living

John 13:1-17

- How did Jesus show the full extent of his love?
- What was he trying to teach his disciples?
- How can we obey verse 17?
- Give specific examples.

Acts 9:36-42

- Why was Dorcas so loved by everyone?
- Who were her "special friends"?
- Why do you think she did so much for them?
- If you died today, what would you be remembered for?
- What can we learn from Dorcas' life?



Philippians 2:19-24

- What made Timothy different from the others?
- What shows a genuine interest in the welfare of others?
- How can you be more like Timothy?

Application: Think of a practical way to show another disciple that you truly care. Do it today.

Day Twenty-Three: Confessing Sin

Psalms 32:1-7

- How do we feel when we are hiding/not confessing sin?
- Have you felt this way since your baptism?
- Are there any sins you have been afraid to confess?

Proverbs 28:13

- Can we conceal our sins from God?
- Who do we need to confess our sins to besides God?
- What effect will unconfessed sin have in our life?

Luke 8:17

- Why is it foolish to try to keep our sins hidden?

Psalms 66:18-19

- What else happens if we conceal or cherish sin?

Application: Take some time to think about any sins - attitudes, action, thoughts - that are troubling you because you haven't shared them. Write them down and make sure you talk about them even today!

Day Twenty-Four: Family Pressures

Mark 3:20-21

- Why do you think Jesus' family was upset with him?



- Has anyone in your family tried to stop you from serving God because they think you are hurting yourself?
- What would have happened if Jesus had agreed with them?

John 7:1-9

- What did Jesus' own brothers think about him?
- Why did Jesus do what his family wanted?

Matthew 10:37-39

- List some examples of ways we can "love" our families more than we listen to Jesus.

Application: Discuss any pressures you are feeling about family expectations with strong disciples. Are there any changes you need to make?

Day Twenty-Five: Being Open

John 15:15

- What did Jesus share with his disciples?
- Are you this kind of a friend to other Christians?
- Do others really know all about your life?

2 Corinthians 6:11-13

- What does it mean to speak freely?
- Are you opening your heart to others?
- What are some feelings you aren't expressing to anyone?

Proverbs 20:5

- Are you helping others to disciple you by being open or does someone have to "draw you out" by asking many questions?



Application: Spend some time today writing down some feelings/plans/secret sins that you haven't been sharing. Discuss these things with another Christian this week. Be open!

Day Twenty-Six: Dealing with Doubts

Matthew 11:1-6

- After all that John the Baptist knew about Jesus, why do you think he began having doubts? What did John do to deal with his doubts?
- What should you do when doubts enter your mind?

Matthew 18:16-17

- Does this surprise you? Read on and see what Jesus told his doubting disciples to do.

1 Corinthians 15:11-14

- What were the Christians in Corinth doubting? They had believed at first, but later some began to doubt.
- What are some teachings you have doubted after believing?

Luke 24:36-45

- Where do you think doubts come from?
- How did Jesus help them to find faith?

Application: Write briefly on how you can overcome doubts through openness, the word of God, prayer and obedience.

Day Twenty-Seven: Learning to be Loyal

First, what does loyalty mean to you?

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

- Write out this passage substituting your name in place of the word love. Now read through it again, thinking about some specific relationships you have.



- What do you see about yourself that needs to change?

Ephesians 4:29

- What kind of talk is harmful to others?
- Have you been involved in talk that is unkind, slanderous or mocking?

1 Thessalonians 5:12-15

- Who is "over you in the Lord"?
- Is this based on how they live?
- Write some names of Christians who work hard among you. Do you respect them from your heart?
- What is your attitude toward Christians who are weak or slow to learn?

Application: Write a note of appreciation to someone you respect, who is over you in the Lord and also to someone who needs patient encouragement.

Day Twenty-Eight: Disputable Matters

Romans 14:1-8

- What are some disputable matters among Christians today? (dress, taste in music, food and drink)
- What should your attitude be toward those who see these things differently?

Romans 14:16-23

- What does God care about the most?
- Are you doing anything that could cause others to stumble?
- What does verse 23 mean?
- Do you feel good about the way you are living now?

1 Timothy 2:9-10 & 1 Peter 3:3-5

- What makes a woman beautiful to God?



- In your own words, write what you think these passages are teaching about clothing and about godliness.

Matthew 11:18-19

- Why did the people criticise Jesus and John the Baptist?
- Why do you think they were so different yet both were pleasing God?

Application: Do you have questions about what is right and wrong for a Christian? Find out from a mature disciple whether these are disputable matters and come to your own decisions.

Day Twenty-Nine: Jesus is Coming Soon

2 Peter 3:3-14

- Why do some people scoff (mock) at the promise of Christ's return?
- What will the "day of the Lord" be like?
- Are you living as though Jesus could come back *today*?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

- Compare this passage to 2 Peter 3:7-10.
- Will there be any "second chance" for those who are not ready to meet the Lord?
- Why will this day be like "a thief in the night"?
- What does it mean to be alert and self-controlled?

2 Timothy 4:6-8

- How does Paul feel about facing the Lord on judgment day?
- Why is living for Jesus like fighting the good fight, finishing the race and keeping the faith? 3. What kind of effort does it take to be this way to the end?

Application: Live each day like it is your last!



Day Thirty: Joined Together in Love

Psalm 133:1-3

- What is unity and why is it so important to have it in the church?

Ephesians 4:1-3

- Explain verse 2 in your own words.
- What happens when we act the opposite of this?
- Why does it take every effort to keep unity?

Philippians 2:1-5

- What does it mean to be one in spirit and purpose?
- How can you consider others better than yourself?
- Whose interests have you been looking out for besides your own? What is the attitude of Jesus? Is yours the same?

Matthew 18:15-17& 5:23-24

- How does Jesus tell us to resolve conflicts and disagreements with one another?
- Who should go to whom first?
- Is there anyone in the church with whom you need to go and settle a problem?

Application: Think about your relationships today. Pray to be unified with all your brothers and sisters and reach out to and spend time with those you do not love as Jesus would.

Day Thirty-One : Dealing with Discouragement

The prophet Elijah had just experienced some tremendous victories from God: the destruction of 450 false prophets, and the first rainfall in 3.5 years because of his earnest prayer. (See James 5:17-18). But then he got afraid and discouraged.



1 Kings 19:1-8 1

- Why did Elijah feel so overwhelmed?
- What are some things that have made you feel like giving up?
- How did the Lord encourage him physically, spiritually and emotionally?
- What do you normally do when you start feeling "down"?
- How can you apply the 3 lessons from above the next time you are tempted to give in to discouragement?

1 Kings 19:19-21

- How do you think Elijah felt to be given a friend and disciple like Elisha?
- Why did God wait until Elijah was "in action" again before sending him to Elisha?

Application: How are you dealing with discouragement today? Share what you have learned with someone else.

Day Thirty-Two: Walking as Jesus did

1 John 2:5-6

- Think back over the past several days. Are you walking like Jesus?

Mark 1:21-28

- What was different about the way Jesus taught?
- Are you teaching others with authority?

Mark 1:29-34

- How late do you think Jesus worked that night?
- Do you think he felt tired?
- Why did he work so hard?
- Are you willing to push yourself for others to know Jesus - even when it is very challenging?

Mark 1:35-39



- Note how early Jesus got up the next day? Why did he?
- How much do you feel the need to pray like Jesus?

Mark 2:13-17

- What kinds of people did Jesus make friends with? Why?
- How do you treat sinners and pagans?
- Are you making new friends to share the gospel with?

Application: Write down two things from today's study that you can do to imitate Jesus. Do them!

Day Thirty-Three: Shining Like Stars

Philippians 2:14-16

- How do we "hold out the word of life" to others?
- What kind of example do we need to show those around us?
- What have you complained or argued about lately? How can you change?

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

- How can you be a slave to everyone? (Give examples)
- What are some ways you need to adapt to people in your life to help them be saved?

Psalms 126:6

- Why should we be "weeping" as we go out to make disciples?
- What is the promise for those who do?

Daniel 12:3

- Are you being wise?

Application: Pray for a heart that truly loves others deeply as you share your faith today.



Day Thirty-Four: Taking Correction

Galatians 2:11-16

- What was Peter's sin?
- Why did Paul correct him publicly? (See 1 Timothy 5:20 & Matthew 18:15)

2 Corinthians 7:8-13

- Why did Paul correct and challenge the Corinthians?
- How does God want you to respond to correction?
- Has anyone corrected you lately?
- How did you respond?
- Were they encouraged by your response?

Galatians 6:1-5

- What obligation do we have to help one another?
- How can pride keep you from taking correction?
- Why is it dangerous to compare ourselves to others?

Proverbs 15:31-32 & 16:18

- Which one describes you?

Application: Ask the person discipling you how you take correction. Do you need to repent?

Day Thirty-Five: Worthy of the Name

1 Peter 4:12-19

- What kinds of insults and sufferings have you endured for Jesus?
- What should your attitude be?
- What does Satan want you to think and do when you are being persecuted?

Hebrews 10:32-34

- Have you gone through suffering like this?



- What are you doing to encourage other Christians who are going through insults and persecutions?

Hebrews 11:32-40

- Have you faced lions, flames, swords, armies, tortures, flogging, imprisonment, chains - or even banishment for Jesus' sake?
- How did God regard these people?

2 Corinthians 11:23-29 & Romans 8:18

- What kind of life did Paul live for Christ?
- How did he feel about his sufferings?
- Have you been rejoicing or complaining as a Christian?

Application: Would Jesus say you are worthy of the name "Christian"?

Day Thirty-Six: A Hope and a Future

Do you worry about your future? What are your hopes and what are your fears?

Jeremiah 29:11-13

- What does God promise to those who seek him with all their hearts?
- Are you seeking him or something else?

Psalms 37:3-4

- What are the desires of your heart? Do you believe God will give them to you?

Psalms 16:5-8

- Do you feel this way about your life? Why?

1 Timothy 6:6-10

- What should make you content?



- What will a desire for money and things do to your life?
- How does someone "wander" from the faith?
- What other desires could make us wander?

Romans 8:31-32

- How has God proven his love for you?

Application: If you see anxiety or discontentment in your life, confess it as a lack of faith, and memorise one of these scriptures to remind yourself of God's faithfulness.

Day Thirty-Seven: The Grace of Giving

Luke 21:1-4

- What do you learn from this widow's example?
- Think of at least 3 reasons she could have given to be "stingy"

1 Timothy 6:17-19

- How should you live if you have money?

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

- Have you decided to give generously to God?
- Are you giving that amount regularly?
- What does God promise to those who give freely?
- How does your giving benefit others, God, and yourself?

Application: If you think your financial giving has not been generous or faithful, decide what you will give and honour that promise to God.

Day Thirty-Eight: Go and Make Disciples

2 Timothy 2:1-7. Compare verse 2 with Matthew 28:19-20.

- What is Christ's "strategy" for evangelising the world?



- Describe a reliable disciple. Are you reliable in terms of keeping appointments, keeping time, following instructions?
- How are you to follow the example of a soldier, an athlete and a farmer? Be specific.
- Would Timothy or Paul have chosen you to teach others? Why?

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

- How is the Christian life like running a race?
- What happens if an athlete does not train or "beat" his body?
- What happens if you do not train and discipline yourself as a disciple?

Application: List ways you can be more disciplined in your Bible study, prayer, evangelism, and your use of time. Share it with the person who is disciplining you.

Day Thirty-Nine: Faith is the Victory

Mark 2:1-12

- Why was this man so determined to see Jesus?
- List at least 3 reasons the man could have given to not try to see Jesus
- What impressed Jesus about this man?
- How can you be more like him?

Mark 5:21-43

- What did Jairus and the bleeding woman have in common?
- Why did Jesus help both of them?
- Why is it important for us to depend completely on Jesus when we need help?
- What are some ways you have not been depending on God enough?
- Have you turned to other sources for help?

Mark 6:1-6

- What was different in this place? Why?



- Is Jesus amazed at your faith or your lack of faith? Why?

Hebrews 11:5-6

- Why do you think faith is so important for pleasing God?

Application: What are some things in your life (or someone else's) for which you really need God's help? Keep a prayer list and keep on praying!

Day Forty: Good Heart, Good Deeds, Good Things

Luke 8:15

- Do you have a heart like this?
- What is your life producing?

Philemon 4-7

- What are 3 things Philemon did that showed a good heart?

2 Peter 1:5-11

- What do you need to do to keep growing as a Christian?
- Define goodness, perseverance, and brotherly kindness.
- What happens if you stop growing?
- What does verse 10 mean?

3 John 2-6

- If a brother or sister came to visit you, what kind of report would they give about your life?
- How do you feel about your life in Christ up until today?
- Are you growing?
- In what areas do you need help?

Application: Now that you have finished your 40-days study, decide what you are going to study next and have a plan. Share these notes with the people you are leading to the Lord. Keep growing!



Applying God's Word

John 13:17 "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

The more questions you ask and answer about a verse of Scripture, the more you will understand it and the more clearly you will see how to apply it. Here are some examples of application-oriented questions that can help you become a doer of God's Word:

- Does this text reveal something I should believe about God?
- Does this text reveal something I should praise or thank or trust God for?
- Does this text reveal something I should pray about for myself or others?
- Does this text reveal something I should have a new attitude about?
- Does this text reveal something I should make a decision about?
- Does this text reveal something I should do for the sake of Christ, others, or myself?

An encounter with God through His Word should result in at least one specific response.

Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life by Donald S. Whitney (p. 74-75)



Seven Suggestions For Bible Study

The material you have been presented with has been mainly intellectual, however this must never replace our main purpose in studying the Word: to know God's will.

These seven suggestions are from Paul Little's book, *How to Give Away Your Faith*.

- A. Is there an example for me to follow?
- B. Is there a sin for me to avoid?
- C. Is there a command for me to obey?
 - Truth has been revealed and, in many areas, these truths need to be applied immediately to our lives.
- D. Is there a promise for me to claim?
 - Some are conditional: "Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." (Psalm 37:4)
 - Others are unconditional: "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)
- E. What does this passage teach me about God or Jesus Christ?
 - Our understanding of the Father and the Son will continue to grow as we mature—just as the relationship between a husband and wife deepens with the passing of years.
- F. Is there a difficulty here for me to explore?
 - Don't waste your time on the difficulties at the start. Learn the basics. Time, growth, experience, and additional knowledge will provide for this problem.
 - The Bible is for the spiritually immature as well as the mature.
- G. Is there something in this passage that I should pray about today?
 - Always conclude the time you've been spending listening to God by talking with Him. Prayer and Bible study when coupled together will strengthen all aspects of your spiritual life.

Guard

the

Gospel

Sydney Church of Christ Study Series

Seek God

Seeking God

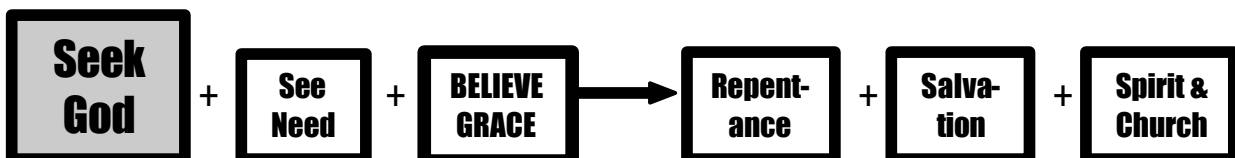
Purpose

Seeking God is a study to clarify what it takes to pursue a relationship with God. While this study will clear up many misconceptions, it can likewise provide great inspiration for one to wholeheartedly seek our Lord and God. In some cases, you may need to share these scriptures with a seeker who has become complacent along the path in his/her search.

- **Matthew 7:7 & 7:13-14.** One of the great promises of the bible: everyone who seeks finds! Plus, one of the great warnings in the bible: only a few will find. If only a few find God, then how many actually seek Him?
- **Luke 13:22-30.** Yes, only a few will be saved; therefore, make every effort to seek. Those who simply ‘try’ will be caught off guard by their rejection from the kingdom of God. How can you make every effort to seek Him? These efforts should help develop and increase your *faith* in Jesus. Why is it so dangerous to simply ‘try’?
- **Matthew 6:25-33.** The greatest enemy of best is good. What good things can distract you from seeking God as your first priority? What changes must you make in order to make God’s kingdom and righteousness your top priority?
- **Matthew 13:44-46.** Finding God is like finding a great treasure or a valuable pearl. Is it a joy for you to sacrifice everything in exchange for God’s grace? Do you really understand and believe the trade off?
- **Acts 8:26-40.** Here’s an example of a seeker who humbly puts God first, thus finding Him and finding great joy. Take note that the Ethiopian Eunuch was: a busy man, a man who needed a disciple’s help to seek God, a man who used the bible as his guide to finding God, a man who was eager to be baptized.

Additional Helpful Scriptures:

- Acts 17:10-11
- Daniel 9:3
- Acts 17:22-27
- Jeremiah 29:10-13
- Hebrews 11:6
- 2nd Chronicles 15:1-4
- Deuteronomy 4:28-31
- 1st Timothy 4:7b-8



Seek God

Knowing Jesus

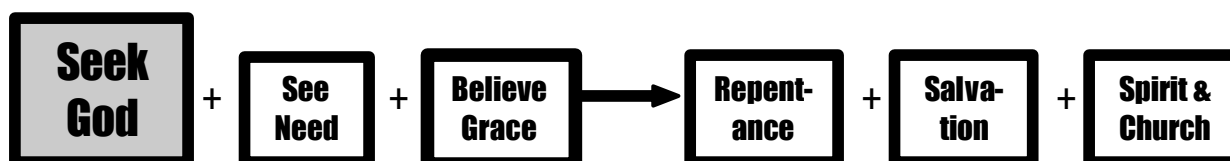
Purpose

The Apostle Paul's great desire was to know Jesus and the power of His resurrection (*Philippians 3:10*). Likewise, he prays that God may give us the wisdom so that we may know Him better (*Ephesians 1:17*). Few people seeking a relationship with Jesus have an accurate picture of Him. Before one can embrace true discipleship, he or she must first know, respect, even love the man to be followed. Otherwise, discipleship remains a mere commitment to 'commitment.' Knowing Jesus is a prerequisite for following Him. While this study will help, you may instead ask seekers to read through a gospel (suggest one week as a timeframe), listing every inspiring observation they make about Jesus. You can then discuss and celebrate that list with them.

- **John 1:1 & 1:14.** Jesus is God, yet he became man for us. Why would he do that? What type of man would be described as "full of grace and truth?"
- **John 2:13-17.** Jesus burned with zeal for righteousness. He was a man who acted on that zeal.
- **John 3:1-16.** Jesus taught the teachers. Later, Nicodemus was so amazed by Jesus' righteousness that he began to defend him before the intimidating council of Jewish leaders (*John 7: 50-51*). Ultimately, Nicodemus was so moved by Jesus' sacrificial love, that he exposed his commitment to Jesus by caring for his burial (*John 19:38-39*). What type of man inspires someone like Nicodemus to leave everything and start anew?
- **John 6:35.** Jesus was more than a good moral teacher; he pointed to himself as the source of spiritual nourishment. Could a mere human teacher make such statements about himself? (You may wish to view other "I Am" statements of Jesus in John's gospel: 8:12, 8:58, 9:5, 10:7, 10:11, 11:25, 13:13, 15:1, 18:37) He does not give us the option of simply admiring Him; you must conclude that either He is mad or He is Lord!
- **John 14:1-6.** Jesus is the only way. What more could he do to lovingly show us that one true way? If you get to know him, you will follow him. He will lead you to heaven.

Additional Helpful Scriptures:

- John 4:1-42
- John 12:32
- Luke 4:1-13
- Hebrews 1:3
- Hebrews 2:9-11
- Hebrews 2:17-18
- Hebrews 4:15-16
- 1st John 2:5-6
- Mark 1:32-39



Seek God

The Word of God

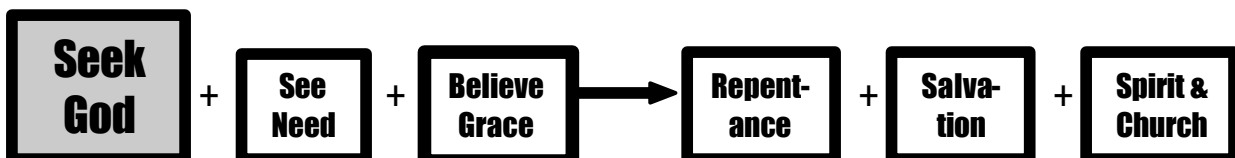
Purpose

Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ (*Romans 10:17*). Thus, the aim of studying the Word of God is to help a seeker build faith in Jesus. One must accept the bible as the one true standard (vs. feelings, experiences, peers' opinions, or family traditions) by which to live life if one is to know true salvation from Jesus.

- **2nd Timothy 3:16-17.** The bible is highly useful; use it to train in righteousness. Have you trained for anything in life? What principles of training ensure success? The bible thoroughly equips us; thus, it is all we need to seek a righteous life filled with every good work. Man's traditions cannot improve the Word as it equips and guides us.
- **Hebrews 4:12-13.** In the final analysis, we will give a full accounting to God. We won't be able to hide anything from Him. Thus, why is it so important to apply the Word to our life now? What can the Word do? How does penetrating power of the Word benefit us?
- **1st Timothy 4:15-16.** Life and doctrine are both important. What is the result of neglecting one or both? What is the result of persevering in both? Discuss principles of bible study that will produce correct doctrine. Suggest ways to put the bible's teaching into practice.
- **John 8:31-32.** How are these particular Jews described? Is belief sufficient if it is not accompanied by obedience? Who are really Jesus' disciples? How will you know the truth? How will you be set free?
- **John 12:47-48.** Take note of Jesus' purpose for coming to you. The Word will judge us if we reject it. Rejecting the Word is equated with rejection of Jesus and his salvation.
- **Acts 17:10-11.** A noble response to God's Word is an eager examination of it everyday! This is a great challenge to issue to any seeker! Suggest studying a gospel this week to know Jesus better.

Additional Helpful Scriptures:

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ▪ John 7:17 | ▪ 2 nd Timothy 2:15 | ▪ 1 st Corinthians 4:4 |
| ▪ Matthew 13:1-23 | ▪ 1 st Thessalonians 2:13 | ▪ 2 nd Peter 1:19-21 |
| ▪ 2 Peter 3:16 | ▪ Psalm 119:60 | ▪ Proverbs 3:5, 14:12, |
| ▪ Mark 7:6-9 | ▪ 2 nd Timothy 4:2-3 | 16:2, 28:26, 30:5-6, |
| ▪ John 8:31-32 | ▪ Ezekiel 33:30-33 | 28:9 |
| ▪ James 1:22-25 | ▪ Jude 3 | |



See Need

Discipleship

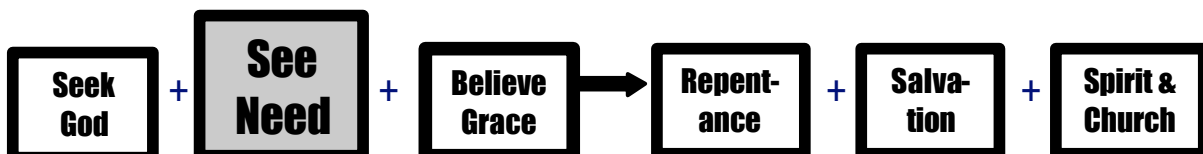
Purpose

The Holy Spirit comes to “convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment” (*John 16:8*). The Holy Spirit helps us *See Our Need*. Through His scriptures on Discipleship, He convicts us concerning Righteousness. Thus, these Scriptures should: clear up common misconceptions about following Jesus, convict us of our rejection of true discipleship, and inspire us to answer the true call of Jesus.

- **Acts 11:25-26.** How many times is the word Christian used in NT? How many times is the word disciple used? How would you define the word "disciple" non-religiously? If you asked someone on the street, "Are you a Christian," what would be the typical answer? How about being a disciple? Why the difference among synonyms? How can we use the Bible to define “Christian?”
- **Luke 9:23-27.** Emphasize the *heart* that God wants. What are the three demands of discipleship? What does it mean to "deny yourself?" What does it mean to “take up your cross daily?” How can we be “ashamed of Jesus and His words?” What is the consequence of this shame?
- **Luke 9:57-62.** Examine the issues involved with each person - thoughtless following, excuse making, and second thoughts. Note the parallel between “follow me” and “preach everywhere the kingdom of God.”
- **Luke 13:22-27.** Does Jesus answer the question? What’s the difference for you between *trying* and *making every effort*? Why are the rejected seekers surprised?
- **Mark 1:16-20.** What is the invitation? Which is easier to do, catch a fish or catch a man for God? Even fishing needs input. Following Jesus, being taught, disciplined trained for his mission... are you involved in that process? If you are not fishing for men, are you following Jesus?
- **Matt. 28:18-20.** The Great Commission: God's plan to save the world. Which would you rather have a penny doubled daily for a month or \$1,000 a day for a month? Likewise, a multiplying chain of disciples best achieves the mission.
- **Matthew 22: 34-40.** The Greatest Commandment! How can you better love God and neighbors? (Hint: He who has been forgiven much will love much...)

Additional Helpful Scriptures:

- Luke 14:25-35
- Matthew 10:26-39
- Matthew 7:21-27
- Matthew 25:31-46
- Colossians 3:13
- Luke 11:1-4



See Need

Sin

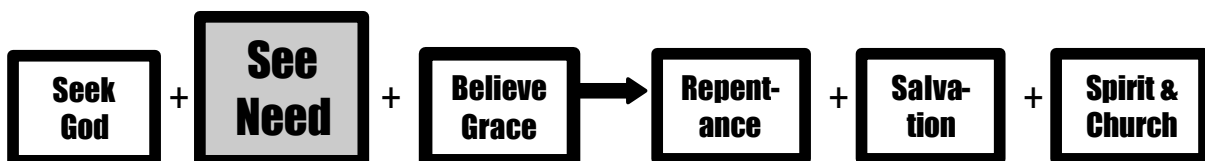
Purpose

While we want all seekers to be saved by grace, there is no grace if we perceive no sin. Of course, all have sinned (*Romans 3:23*); therefore, we all desperately need the grace of God (*Romans 6:23*). Thus, the aim of this study is to help seekers see themselves as our Holy God sees them: utterly sinful and separated from our God. This realization brings about a desire for both forgiveness and repentance. Pray for the Holy Spirit to convict seekers in this study (*John 16:8*).

- **Romans 3:23, 6:23.** See comments above.
- **Luke 7:36-50.** Jesus is a bridge between your sin and your potential for love. The more you appreciate your sinful indebtedness to Jesus; the more you will be grateful for his grace. The end result: you love much (i.e. Discipleship). Conversely, the less you appreciate your sinful indebtedness, the smaller your gratitude and the less you love. Is your attitude toward your sin more like Simon's or more like the sinful woman's? Suggest some practicals to get in touch with your sinful indebtedness: Study specific sins as detailed by the Bible. Consider the most recent time you committed that sin; consider the first time consider your attitude towards God each time you indulged that sin. Journals/discussions/time lines all help increase one's appreciation of our debt through sin.
- **Mark 7:21-22.** Take ownership for sin! We are responsible for our own sin. Despite genetics, parenting, peer pressures, and socio-economic conditions, sin comes from within our own hearts and makes us unclean. What is the consequence of being unclean before God? Discuss the sins catalogued by Jesus. Add scriptures, which catalog sins - if needed.
- **Galatians 5:19-21.** Sinful deeds are obvious. What does "will not inherit the Kingdom of God" mean? Be as specific as necessary to both explain and share about the sins listed.
- **Ephesians 5:3-13.** Not even a hint or a mention of sin should be the standard for followers of Jesus. Has anyone ever shared "empty words" with you in order to minimize God's wrath to sin and sinners? Exposing sin to the light is a great step toward proclaiming a real need for grace.
- **James 4:17.** Sins of commission (sins you commit) vs. sins of omission (virtues you omit).
- **Isaiah 59:1-3.** Your sin has made a separation between you and your God. This study is not just about a list of sins, but instead about the depth of your separation from your Father.

Additional Helpful Scriptures:

- Revelation 21:8
- Revelation 21:24-27
- Romans 1:21-32
- 1st Corinthians 6:9-11
- Col 3:5-11
- 2nd Timothy 3:1-5
- Matthew 5:48



BELIEVE GRACE

The Cross of Christ

Purpose

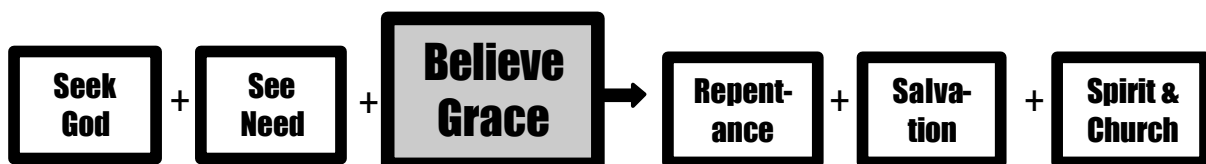
“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.” (*John 3:16-17*)

Here, the gospel message reaches its peak. We are saved through grace. There is hope! We are saved through Jesus’ loving sacrifice. Be sure that the seeker has seen his/her need for grace, and this study in grace will be powerful. It’s also important for the seeker to understand his/her responsibility for Jesus’ death. Establishing *personal* responsibility will later reap great gratitude and joy for Jesus’ *personal* love and forgiveness.

- **Romans 3:21-27.** All are in complete need of grace for all have sinned. Christ is *propitiation* or *atonement* (*temple illustration*) for the wrath we’ve earned. He *redeems* (*slavery illustration*) us; he *justifies* (*legal illustration*) us. Discuss the illustrations.
- **Romans 4:22-25.** We have Jesus’ righteousness credited to us via faith. Jesus died for our sins and was raised for our *justification*. He takes our sins and gives His righteousness!
- **Romans 5:6-11.** Jesus died for us while we were at our worst, enemies of God, weak and sinful. His blood changes all that and reconciles us to God.
- **Mark 14:26-15:41.** Jesus chose to die for us. Who killed Jesus? I did. You did. Reflect on the reasons why Jesus endures these afflictions (my sins require it, and His love offers it).
- **1st Peter 2:21-25.** Why did Jesus die on the cross for us? So that we might die to sin and live for the new righteousness that the cross provides. This is our response to the cross.
- **Acts 2:36-41.** Peter has preached the message of the cross. What are the next steps?
- **John 3:16-21.** Do you prefer the darkness over the light? Are you ready to move into the light of God’s grace?

Additional Helpful Scriptures:

- Isaiah 52:13-53:13
- Acts 2:22-38
- Ephesians 2:1-10
- Psalm 22
- Colossians 2:13-14
- John 1:29



Repentance

Repentance

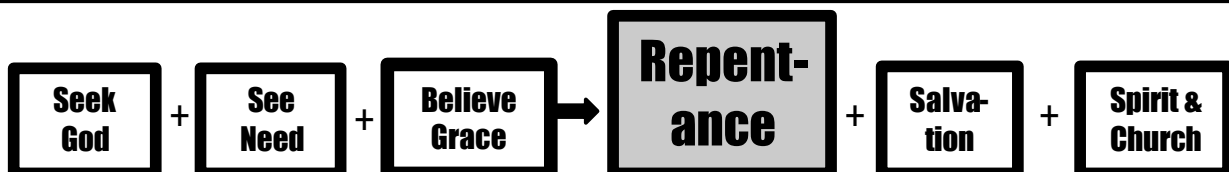
Purpose

After believing grace, the biblical response is to repent and be baptized for forgiveness of sins (*Acts 2:36-38*). Repentance, however, is a powerful blessing from God that has been stripped of its potency. The Greek word for repentance, *metanoia*, means “after – mindset.” With this gift of ‘hindsight,’ we see clearly to take the right path... the path of living for God rather than for self. Be careful not to present repentance as a work that leads to salvation; rather, it is our awakening to come to our senses and live the way God had always intended for us. It is more than a decision; it is God allowing us to see a new worldview, which *always* results in the fruit of a turned, changed life.

- **2nd Corinthians 5:14-21.** Why does Peter call us to repent as a response to the cross (*Acts 2:38*)? Because we are convinced of Jesus’ love for us through the cross. His love motivates us to repent; that is, to live for Him rather than for ourselves. Jesus’ resurrection opens our eyes to look beyond the earthly realm. The old is gone, the new has come! What does the new life look like? How do we view people through our new repentant eyes?
- **Luke 3:7-14.** The fruit of repentance is the evidence of a changed mindset. John the Baptist insisted on repentance before baptism. If you were to ask John, “What should I do?” – how would he respond to you? (Notice that he directs no one to pray and weep before God, confessing how bad he or she feels about his or her sins – which many people today confuse for repentance.)
- **Luke 13:1-5, 6-9.** Jesus preaches that without repentance, we will all perish. He likewise expects to find fruit every time there is true repentance.
- **Acts 26:15-21.** Jesus gives Paul the charge to “open their eyes” (e.g. the “red pill” of the *Matrix* or the Christmas ghosts for Scrooge) so that “they may turn” and prove their repentance by their deeds. Repentance involves a new perspective, a turning of allegiance, and fruit.
- **2 Corinthians 7:8-11.** Beware of worldly sorrow. Have you previously confused sorrow(s) with true repentance? Thoroughly examine godly sorrow, because it leads to repentance and salvation.
- **2nd Timothy 2:24-26.** Has God already opened your eyes via the Scriptures? Can you now see the truth? Then it’s time to escape the devil’s snares. God wants you to be set free from that captivity. Do not neglect this gift that God grants us.

Additional Helpful Scriptures:

- Luke 16:19-31
- Acts 3:19-20
- Acts 28:25-28
- Romans 12:1-2
- Romans 2:4
- Acts 5:30-31; 11:18
- Luke 19:1-10 vs. Luke 18:18-30
- Col 2:20-23 v. Titus 2:11-12
- Luke 15:1-2, 11-32



Salva- tion

Baptism

Purpose

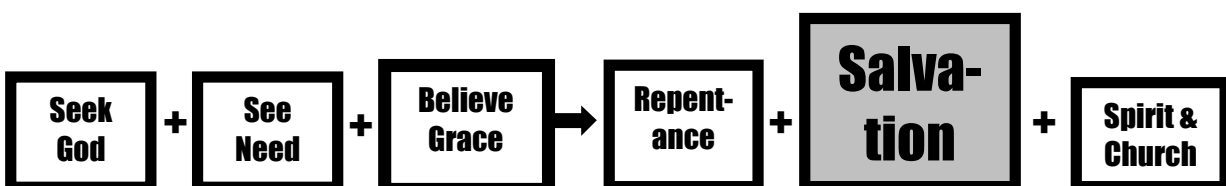
For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict (*Luke 21:15*).

After preaching about the cross, Peter calls his hearers to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (*Acts 2:38*). This study helps establish the link between Christ's sacrifice and our forgiveness of sins through baptism.

- **Colossians 1:13-14.** What is salvation or redemption? It's the *forgiveness of sins* by the blood of Jesus.
- **Ephesians 2:8-9.** We are saved by grace through faith, not by works. What a gift! Yet some claim that baptism is a work and, thus, can play no role in our salvation. Is this biblically sound?
- **Colossians 2:11-12.** Baptism is *contrasted* with the quintessential work of circumcision. However, baptism is *not* the work of the hands of men. Instead, it is the work done by Christ. Baptism is meaningless if not for our faith in God's power to raise us.
- **Titus 3:3-5.** We are by God's mercy, not by works – *by means of* baptism, the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit. (Notice the parallel to *Eph. 2:8-9*.) Baptism delivers God's grace.
- **John 3:1-5.** Being born from above is an act from God. Thus, being born of water and Spirit (grammar dictates *one* event here) is a parallel explanation of this act from God. Without baptism, no one can enter the kingdom of God.
- **Romans 6:1-4.** Baptism is our connection to Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. (Thus, Peter directed his hearers to be baptized in response to the cross – *Act 2:38*). We, too, will be raised through baptism. Thus, we are born again.
- **Acts 22:7-16.** After encountering Jesus, praying, fasting (see *Acts 9*), and being healed, Paul still remains in sin until he is baptized. He calls on the name of the Lord at his baptism (a profession of making Jesus Lord instead of self).
- **Romans 10:5-13.** A parallel to *Deut. 30:12-13*. We profess Jesus to be Lord (a profession of repentance) at our baptism. Are you ready to make Jesus your Lord?

Additional Helpful Scriptures:

- Acts 2:22-41, 47
- Acts 8:26-40
- Acts 9:1-19
- 1st Peter 3:21
- Ephesians 4:4-6
- Galatians 3:23-27



Spirit & Church

The Holy Spirit

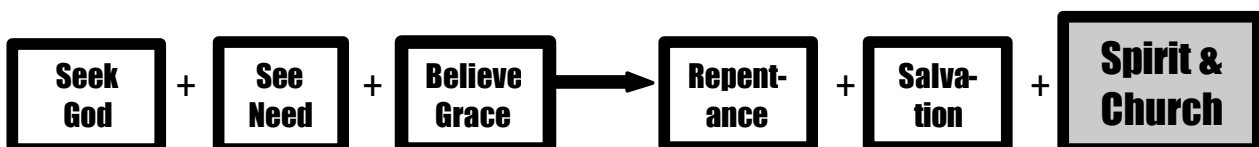
Purpose

Encourage the seeker that he/she will indeed receive the gift of God's Holy Spirit. After baptism, we are sustained by the help of the Spirit. He works powerfully in the life of every baptized disciple of Christ. You may want to combine this study with a study of the Church, as both gifts (the Spirit and the Church) from God help us hold fast to our confession to the end.

- **Acts 2:36-38.** Notice the harmony with *John 3:5* and *Titus 3:5* (perhaps from a previous study on baptism). At baptism, we are born again via water and the Spirit. As we are made holy by Jesus' blood, we are also filled with the Holy Spirit.
- **John 7:37-39.** *After* Jesus' glorification (crucifixion and resurrection), God sent His Spirit to flow from within us like streams of running water. Previously (OT), the Spirit came upon people. Now, He dwells within us.
- **John 16:5-11.** The Spirit convicts us (and the world) with regard to sin, righteousness, and judgment. He does this abundantly through His Word which He gave to the Apostles as they were guided into all truth (*John 16:13*).
- **Ephesians 3:14-21.** We are strengthened with real power through the Spirit who dwells within us. Understanding Jesus' amazing love for us is a source of that strength.
- **Romans 8:5-16.** A powerful statement on the Spirit's role in our Christian walk. A spiritual mindset brings life and peace, and obedience to God's word. Be secure that the Spirit of Christ dwells in you, thus you belong to Him. The Spirit leads us into freedom from fear to confirm God as our Father.
- **Galatians 5:22-23.** The fruit of the Spirit! Expect it. Pursue it. This is the best 'evidence' that you have received the Holy Spirit.

Additional Helpful Scriptures to clear up misconceptions about the Spirit:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| ▪ John 14:16-18 v. 1 st Sam 16:13, 19:18-24; Act 2:1-4, 8:16, 10:44-45 | ▪ Ex 4:5, 1 st Kg 17:24, Mk 16:20, Act 14:3, Heb 2:4 | ▪ Rom 1:11, 12:4-8 v. 1 st Cor 2:1-5, 12:4-11 |
| ▪ Luke 1:15 v. John 10:41 | ▪ Act 8:18 | ▪ Act 6:3-6 |
| | | ▪ 1 st Cor 13:8-12 |



Spirit & Church

The Church

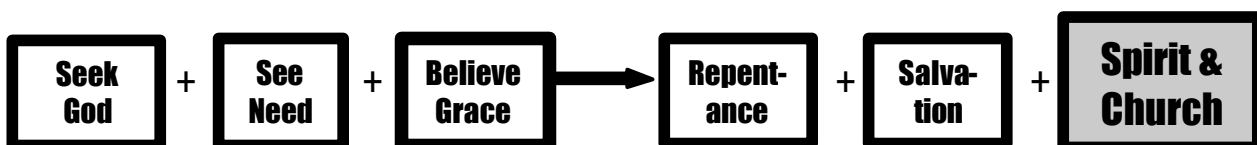
Purpose

Encourage the seeker that each will not be left to fend for one's self after baptism. Instead, Jesus baptizes us into the body, the church (*1st Corinthians 12:12-13*) to be joined by a *team* of likeminded disciples in our devotion to Him. These brothers and sisters are meant to be a continual source of encouragement in our walk with Christ. Even more good news!

- **Acts 2:40-47.** The first 3,000 converts joined together in devotion to the Apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. A beautiful view of the early church. How would such a church be received today?
- **1st Corinthians 12:12-27.** The Spirit baptizes us into the body of Jesus, his church. The church consists of distinct yet unified parts, just like a human body. God, Himself, has arranged it this way. We are the church; each of us must actively look for the distinct yet unified ways we are to support this body. How will you help build up the body of Christ?
- **Ephesians 4:1-16.** Making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the church requires humility, patience, gentleness, and selflessness. We maintain unity on the essentials of doctrine – one Lord, one faith, one baptism. God provides specific offices within the church in order to prepare us for works of service which build up the body.
- **Hebrews 10:22-25.** After being washed in baptism, we need the continual exhortations of brothers and sisters to stay the course. Prepare in advance how you will spur on fellow Christians in the fellowship. Also prepare to receive biblical input that will result in greater love and good deeds. Why is missing meetings of the body described as a bad habit? Why and when do we meet?
- **Hebrews 3:12-14.** We each have the charge and the responsibility to see **o** that no one has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from God. Daily encouragement helps everyone stand firm until the end.
- **2nd Corinthians 8:7.** God loves a cheerful giver. Our giving supports the body as we reach out to a world in need of Jesus.

Additional Helpful Scriptures:

- 1st John 1:5-10
- Eph. 2:19-20
- Rom. 12:4-8
- John 17:20-26
- Col. 1:18
- Col. 2:18-19
- John 13:34-35



False Doctrine

INFANT BAPTISM

The practice of baptising infants (not old enough to make their own faith decision). The scriptures are very clear on prerequisites for baptism:

Colossians 2:11-12 (“buried in baptism through your faith in the working of God”)

QQ: Can an infant have faith? (See also Hebrews 11:6, Romans 10:17)

Acts 2:38 (“Repent and be baptized”) — QQ: Can an infant repent?

Matthew 28:18-20 (“go make disciples... baptising them”) — QQ: Can an infant become a disciple of Jesus?

ORIGINAL SIN

The idea that because of Adam and Eve’s sin, we are all born guilty before God.

Exodus 34:6-7

Children certainly suffer consequences of their parents sin. When their parents divorce, do not love God, abuse them, or do not deal with their own character, it will inevitably effect their children. However, God does not hold the children responsible for their parents guilt.

Ezekiel 18:19-20 — We are each responsible for our own sin.

FAITH ALONE SAVES YOU

Became popular with Martin Luther during the reformation period (16th century A.D.) in reaction to the “works doctrine” of the Catholic Church. It is interesting to note that Luther did not believe the book of James should be included in the Bible. Why? James contradicts this false doctrine.

James 2:19-26

Faith is necessary but so is discipleship (**Matthew 28:18-20**), repentance and baptism (**Acts 2:38**). Faith without deeds is dead. Faith does save. The idea of faith alone is problematic.

ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED

There are many churches that teach that salvation can never be revoked. In other words, once you have been saved, it is impossible to lose that salvation. Many scriptures refute this teaching.

Hebrews 6:4-8; Hebrews 10:29-30; 2 Peter 2:20

Stubborn refusal to repent of sin can certainly lead to a hardened heart that no longer responds to God. God's grace is magnificent. We should never want to test the line!

PRAY JESUS INTO YOUR HEART/ACCEPT JESUS AS SAVIOR

Only began in the 18th century and became popular in Christian revivals on the early 20th century by preachers like Billy Sunday. Belief is that you only need to believe in Jesus, accept him as your personal saviour, and pray for salvation. See article The Sinner’s Prayer by Steve Staten for a more thorough history of this false doctrine.

This doctrine is often justified by **Revelation 3:20** and/or **Romans 10:9-10**.

Revelation 3:20

(notice who this is written to...see **Revelation 3:14**)

This verse was written to the church, people who were already baptised disciples. The instruction is about repentance from their lukewarm lives. This is NOT about salvation.

Romans 10:9-10

This is true but context is critical. This passage is addressed to the Israelites in Romans 10:1. They struggled with faith that Jesus was the Son of God.

Paul taught the necessity of baptism in **Romans 6:1-5**.

Acts 22:8-16 — Great example connecting faith, Lordship, and baptism. It must all go together for salvation.

BAPTISM DOES NOT SAVE BUT IS A SYMBOL

(Also known as an “outward sign of an inward faith.”)

This evolved in conjunction with the previous two false doctrines. If faith alone and praying Jesus into your heart saves you, what role does baptism have? Baptism is downgraded in importance to justify these other false teachings.

Romans 6:1-5

Baptism is participation in death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. New life begins.

Acts 8:26-40; Acts 16:16-40

Two great examples of the urgency of baptism. Baptism is not a public or outward symbol, but part of God's plan of salvation, hence the urgency of these two men.

1 Peter 3:20-21

We are saved at baptism, like Noah was saved through water.

BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Biblical baptism is connected to water.

Ephesians 4:4-6 — One baptism, there cannot be a separate Spirit baptism and water baptism.

Acts 8:36 — Clear indication of water baptism

John 3:5 — Jesus calls us to be born of water and the Spirit — one event in the Greek.

Acts 2:36-41 — You receive the gift of the Holy Spirit at your water baptism!



"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

A Foundation of Biblical Convictions for the New Disciple





Studies Chosen for Maturity into a CrossBearer:

	Study Title	CrossBearer's Signature/Date	Discipler's Signature/Date
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
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REMEMBER

Objectives: The two main objectives of this study are to **encourage disciples to remember how God has worked in their life** and **teach disciples how to take communion**.

The longer we are disciples; spiritual Alzheimer's can set in – we can begin to forget how God rescued us, how He has worked in our lives and how sinful and lost we are without Him. Remembering these things are a powerful weapon against Satan's schemes and attacks. If Satan can get us to forget, it is only a matter of time before we will be tempted to return to the world.

The Scriptures:

Remember God.

Exodus 16:1-3

Israel, even after being rescued from Egypt and experiencing the miracle at the Red Sea, was very quick to forget what God had done for them. When times became difficult the Israelites began to lack faith and trust in God. When Israel would cross the Jordan, to enter into the promise land, God commanded them to carry large stones from the middle of the Jordan River (which had been parted like the Red Sea) to be a "memorial for the people." (Joshua 4:1-7)

We too can set up "stones of remembrance" to help us remember God's power, love, and faithfulness in our lives. (*Keep a journal of answered prayers, take or make objects that will remind you of God's goodness and faithfulness and how he has worked in your life.*) Remembering God's past faithfulness is essential to trusting Him in the future!

Deuteronomy 8:10-18

Another danger, as we grow older as disciples, is forgetting God and His role in our lives. We can begin to believe that our lives and our blessings are the result of our own talents and abilities. God says that we will be tempted to forget Him not only in challenging times, but also in times of prosperity.

Remember the Cross.

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.

Remember Heaven!

Philippians 3:12-21

Q: How much did Paul think about the struggles and challenges of his past?

Q: How often do you think about heaven? Do you see being in heaven with God as your ultimate goal?

Q: How can you tell if someone's citizenship is heaven?

The Spiritual Exercise: Write out your conversion story. Keep it in a safe place and take it out and read it every year on your spiritual birthday (the anniversary of your baptism). Take communion together.



GOD LOVES YOU

The Objectives: The two main objectives of this study are to **teach disciples how to have an accurate (biblical) view of God** and **inspire them to build a daily relationship with God.**

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.

The Scriptures:

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. This is who God is.

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)

The Bible teaches us that we are very valuable to God!

Psalm 40:1-4

Q: From what mud/mire did God save you?

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.

The Spiritual Exercise: Take some time and write a letter 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 & FASTING

The Objectives: The two main objectives of this study are to **teach the disciples to have a prayer life** (start a prayer journal) based on the six sections of the Lord's Prayer and give them **a basic understanding of prayer and fasting**.

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.

The Scriptures:

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

Give us each day our daily bread...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 everyday 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 everyday 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 go 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.

1st Thessalonians 5:17—"Pray continually;" 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?

The Spiritual Exercise: Start a prayer journal using the outline that Jesus gave his disciples. Have a regular distraction-free time to pray everyday, and find special/inspiring places to have prayer times. Next week use your time together to pray (using Luke 11 / prayer journals).



FASTING

The Objectives: The main objective of this study is to give you a **basic understanding of fasting, including why, when, and how to fast.**

In brief, fasting is something that people do when they are drawing close to God, seeking out his will and depending on him. Like Jesus in the desert, fasting is another way we learn to depend on God.

The Scriptures:

Matthew 9:14-15—Jesus expected that after he departed, his disciples would dedicate themselves to the spiritual act of fasting.

The Bible teaches us that there are many reasons we should fast:

- Repentance
 - David fasted after sinning with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:15-16, 22)
 - Nineveh fasted as a whole nation for God's mercy (Jonah 3:5-8, 10)
 - Paul fasted after being confronted by Jesus (Acts 9:9)
- To draw near to God
 - Moses fasted for 40 days (Exodus 34:27-28)
 - Used in conjunction with worship (Luke 2:36-37, Acts 13:1-3)
- For God's deliverance
 - Daniel prayed for God to deliver Israel from slavery (Daniel 9:3)
- To seek God's will in appointing and guiding leadership (Acts 14:23)
- For other people
 - David fasted for sick friends (Psalm 35:13)
 - God called his people through the prophet of Isaiah to not be self-centered in their worship, prayers, and fasting (Isaiah 58:6-8)
 - In the days of Isaiah, when the nation of Israel fasted, they were fasting for their own personal deliverance, but they were not concerned for other people around them that were starving, naked, and homeless. God wanted them to have a heart, to fast about other people's spiritual needs as well as their own, and to bring forth good works of helping the needy. God is telling us that fasting brings us closer to God's will, and His will is to have humility, love, and concern for others. This is the most important principle of fasting, to draw closer to God and to seek His righteousness and His will in our lives.

THE BIBLE ALSO TEACHES US HOW TO FAST:

- Fasting should be done in humility and secrecy (Matthew 6:16-18)
- Fasting should be accompanied by prayer and Bible study. (Nehemiah 1:4; Nehemiah 9:1-3; Joel 2:12; Acts 13:1-3)
- Fasting can be partial (*abstaining from only specific things*) or absolute (*no food or water at all*).
 - Absolute fast (Ezra 10:6; Esther 4:16)
 - Partial fast (Daniel 10:3)
- Fasting can be done corporately (group) or individually (personal).
 - Corporate – 1 Samuel 7:5-7; Ezra 8:21-23; Acts 13:1-3
 - Personal – Daniel 9:3; Psalm 35:13

Fasting should be a regular part of a Christian's life. Fasting helps us draw near to God, depend on Him, and be strengthened and empowered by Him. Those who had a great relationship with God in the Bible (Moses, Elijah,

The Spiritual Exercise: *Before beginning a fast, please consult a doctor if you have any relevant health issues and remember that God desires us to be good stewards of our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). Decide to fast (to be closer to God, for a friend, for repentance, etc.). Pick a day and the type of fast that you will dedicate yourself to. Keep the fast between yourself and God.*



BIBLE STUDY

The Objectives: The two main objectives of this study are to **teach disciples how to have effective, daily Bible studies** and **teach them to use basic Bible tools** (*concordances, etc.*)

Having gone through the Word study, you should have a sufficient understanding for how important God's word is. The following study delves a little further into the importance of personal Bible study.

The Scriptures:

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—The longest chapter of the Bible extols the benefits and virtues of God's Word.

- Keeping a pure and upright life comes from hiding God's word in your heart (v. 9– 10)
 - 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
- We should not delay to obey God's commands (v. 59-60)
 - 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. (*Elaborate more on the desire to learn and the heart of the Ethiopian Eunuch*)

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 (i.e. Grace, faith, impurity, etc. / Use concordance).
 - 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
- Use a notebook to write down thoughts and questions about your Bible study.
- Share what you are learning with others.

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



THE BODY OF CHRIST

The Objectives: The two main objectives of this study are to **teach disciples about their relationships and roles within the body of Christ (the Church)** and to **help them consider how their individual gifts can be used to serve the body of Christ.**

When we enter the body of Christ, relationships are radically transformed! Instead of having ourselves as the center of our focus, we are to “consider others better than ourselves” (Philippians 2:3). The Bible teaches us that church is not something we attend; it is an opportunity to serve and tend to the needs of others.

The Scriptures:

Our Relationships

John 13:34-35

Jesus commanded us to love each other as he has loved us. This quality of love and our relationships with one another are what make us distinct as Christians. Jesus’ willingness to serve and sacrifice for his disciples was the ultimate expression of His love. We need to demonstrate that same love (service and sacrifice) for one another.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PRACTICE?

Look after each other’s material needs—1 John 3:17.

Being concerned about each other’s spiritual well being—Colossians 1:28.

Mark 3:35

We are Jesus’ brothers and sisters if we do God’s will. Because of this common purpose, Christian relationships transcend even blood relations.

Our Role

Ephesians 4:14-16

Everyone has a role to play and work to do in the church; finding that role and doing that work is essential for the church to be built up and grow into maturity.

1st Corinthians 12:12-26

Everyone is essential to the body functioning as God intended it! Even the weakest part is incredibly important! We must value everyone’s gifts and roles in the church and understand that we need one another! We rejoice and hurt together (that’s sincere love, from the heart!—1 Peter 1:22)

What’s Your Gift?

A spiritual gift is a particular talent/ability that God has put in your life. While some spiritual gifts were “miraculous” (it is our belief that these gifts were specific to the apostolic age and are no longer available to us today); the “non-miraculous” gifts are just as powerful and critical for building up the body of Christ.

- Non-miraculous gifts—Romans 12:4-8
- Leadership gifts—Ephesians 4:11

1 Peter 4:10

Whatever gift you have received should be used to serve God’s people. As individuals, God has placed gifts, talents and abilities in our lives to be used to build up his kingdom in unique ways.

Q: What are some of your gifts? How can you use those gifts to serve God’s people?

Examples: Leadership, Children’s Ministry, Ushering, Youth Ministry, Administration, Hospitality, Benevolence

The Spiritual Exercise: Find an area in the church where you can serve. Next week when you get together go out and serve or offer hospitality to someone together.



A BROTHER IS BORN FOR ADVERSITY (Confession/Restoring One Another)

The Objectives: The two main objectives of this study are to **teach disciples how to confess their sins and restore others who have sinned.**

The Bible says that a friend loves at all times and a brother (family) is born for adversity (*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..

The Scriptures:

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

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

The Bible tells us: "Pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!" 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!

Confession

1 John 1:5-10

"Walking in the light" means our lives are an open book and on display. The Bible tells us that "God is light; in him there is no darkness at all."

Q: Can we be close to God 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;" this has 2 effects:

- We have fellowship with one another (builds deep, authentic friendships).
- 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?

Proverbs 28:13

Concealing sin will cause downfall but we will find mercy if we confess and renounce our sins.

Restoring One Another

Galatians 6:1-2

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

IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES IN RESTORING ONE ANOTHER:

NEVER be harsh! Do not overreact. God calls us to "restore gently."

Never say things like, "Amen, brother, thanks for being open." God calls us to help them come to repentance "to RESTORE them".

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.

Always ask them "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

It is vitally important to pray for one another after confession so that God can truly bring about healing.

The Spiritual Exercise: Have a time of confession together. Role play how you would confront someone who has fallen into sin and how to respond to those who confess their sins to you.



DISCIPLING

The Objectives: The two main objectives of this study are to **help disciples understand the importance of discipling** and **to inspire them to develop dynamic and healthy one another relationships.**

Discipling is simply the training and learning process of becoming like Jesus. Discipleship and discipling is woven throughout virtually every page of the NT. In the spirit of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), where the apostles are commanded to “disciple the nations” and “teach obedience”, church members “disciple” and “teach obedience” to one another through individual and group settings.

The Scriptures:

Christ-Centered Discipling

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.

Teach & Admonish

Colossians 3:16

Q: What should always be “richly” apart of our discipling relationships?

Q: What is the difference between “teaching” and “admonishing”?

Teaching is to impart skills or knowledge. This is proactive discipling.

Admonishing is to warn or notify of a fault; to reprove gently or kindly, but seriously; to exhort; To counsel against wrong practices; to caution or advise; to warn against danger or an offense. This is reactive discipling.

We need both “proactive” and “reactive” discipling to have a healthy walk with God.

Proverbs 27:4-5

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 / challenge 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?

One-Another Passages

There are dozens of “one-another” passages in the Bible. These passages give simple direction for how Christians should and should not act toward one-another. These passages help govern and instruct our discipling relationships.

- Hebrews 3:13—encourage one another daily
- Hebrews 10:24 – spur one another on toward love and good deeds
- Galatians 5:13—serve one another
- Galatians 6:2 – carry each other’s burdens

Q: Do you have these kinds of “one-another” relationships? Do you actively seek them out for your life?

Important Discipling Practicals:

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

The Spiritual Exercise: Have a time of good point/bad point; as a way to learn to encourage and spur one another on. Start out with coming up with 3 good points (areas they are Christ-like) about one another and then sharing 1 bad point (an area they need to repent/grow in) about one another. See how many “one-another” passages can you find in the Scriptures?



THE COMPASSION OF JESUS

The Objectives: The two main objectives of this study are to **inspire disciples to see the world through Jesus' eyes (from His perspective)** and **encourage them to have the heart and compassion of Jesus.**

The Scriptures:

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.

Mark 6:30-44

Life can be exhausting! Jesus and his disciples were tired and hungry and left to get some rest. However, when they got to where they were going they found more people in need.

Q: What was Jesus' heart? What motivated Jesus to meet the needs?

Q: Think of times that you have had a long, tiring day (of work, school, family responsibilities, serving in the church); were you still willing to have compassion for the needs of others?

We may feel like the disciples, who didn't feel like they had the physical or emotional resources to meet the needs of others. However, we must never forget that if we are willing to act faithfully, God will give us the resources to meet the needs of others and be strengthened ourselves.

Mark 1:40-42

Jesus was willing to risk his personal well-being, his reputation, and even his life to help this man. Jesus had the heart to love the people who were looked down upon and were regarded as outcasts because of their physical, moral, or social condition.

Q: Would you be willing to risk your well-being, your reputation, and even your life to help someone?

Q: Do you love those around you who may be considered outcasts by others because of their physical, moral, or social condition?

Mark 2:13-17

Jesus saw not only people's physical and emotional needs, he saw their spiritual needs. These people may have looked okay on the outside but were spiritually sick, hurting, and needy!

Q: Do you see the spiritual needs of those around you?

Psalms 116:5-6

The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion and when I was in great need, he saved me.

As disciples of Jesus we must always remember why we serve, why we evangelize, and why we deny ourselves for the needs of others...we do these things to be like God...who is full of compassion and who, when we were in "great need" saved us!

The Spiritual exercise: Imitate Jesus' heart for people by having compassion that leads you to action. Decide to see the spiritual and physical needs of those around you and have a heart to help!



PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL

The Objectives: To **equip and inspire disciples to bold, respectful, and (most of all) effective evangelism.**

Evangelism is part of living out the Great Commission of Matthew 28 and a responsibility all Christians have. To “evangelize” literally means to “proclaim the gospel”. When it comes to evangelism, few young Christians possess both boldness and tact. People usually go to one extreme or the other: so tactful that they say little, if anything, or so bold that tact and respect is thrown to the wind. This Bible study teaches us the balance we need to effectively “proclaim the gospel.”

The Scriptures:

Motivation

2 Corinthians 5:10-21

We proclaim the gospel (trying to persuade men) because we know and fear God. Furthermore, Christ’s love “compels” us to live our lives for Him as His ambassadors. Understanding that God has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

Boldness

Romans 1:16-17

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

Luke 9:23-26

If we are ashamed of Jesus and his words, he will be ashamed of us.

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?

Acts 4:29-31

Pray for boldness! God will answer your prayers.

1 Peter 3:15-16

Show gentleness and respect.

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 doubles as a follow-up list and as a prayer list.

The 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. Pray for boldness and then go proclaim the gospel together.**



HELPING THE POOR

The Objectives: To **teach disciples the importance of helping the poor** and **to inspire them to serve and sacrifice** for the poor and needy.

We can help those less fortunate than us in various ways, by contributing money to charity causes, by volunteering or simply by taking opportunities to help those less fortunate on a personal level. In any case, it is very important that a disciple adopts the heart to serve those in need.

The Scriptures:

Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus judges between the "sheep" and "goats". Sheep = those who give to others indiscriminately. "Goats" = those who do not, and simply take for themselves. The Bible says that we will be judged on how generous and helpful we are to the poor and needy!

Q: Who can you identify in your life that is among the "least of these"?

Q: How can you serve them?

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.

James 1:27

God has a heart for those who are in distress, who are vulnerable and unable to take care of themselves.

Galatians 2:9-10

The preaching of the gospel around the world is to be accompanied with service to the poor. They go hand-in-hand.

Q: Why do you think it was so important for the apostles to establish that the spread of the gospel be done along with service to the poor?

Q: Why is it important for us today to accompany our preaching with service?

Q: How eager are you "to remember the poor?"

As we proclaim the gospel, we must "continue to remember the poor." When we do this we honor God and are a light to the world. As Jesus said, "let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." (*Matthew 5:16*)

The Spiritual Exercise: Give a regular poor contribution, make every effort to serve the needy in your community (*Be on the lookout for local HOPE Worldwide projects in the church*) or even consider praying about the possibility of adoption.



CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE: CORD OF THREE STRANDS

Introduction: God's word and power provide us with everything we need for a happy, godly, fulfilling life in every area (2 Timothy 3:17, 2 Peter 1:3, John 10:10). The area of marriage is crucial, and if a marriage is not going well, serious spiritual problems will also be present. Marriage is a vital area for discipling. Indeed, Christian marriage is one arena in which disciples will dramatically outshine the many worldly examples surrounding them. A great marriage draws others to Jesus!

The Scriptures:

God's Plan

Genesis 2:24, Proverbs 18:22

Explain:

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

- **Matthew 19:9**—marriage is for life.

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

Proverbs 15:22 – Plans fail for lack of counsel – Be partners in planning. (Set up a regular planning time to work together on scheduling, finances, household needs, etc.)

Selfishness

Colossians 3:19, 1 Peter 3:7 – Know what GOD expects! 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...

1 Peter 3:5-6 – Know what GOD expects! Wives must learn submission. Wives should never nag or be bossy. Proverbs 21:19,25:24, 27:15

Ephesians 5:22-33— The husband has been called by God to be the spiritual leader of his family.

Marriage Discipling / Counseling

The scriptures teach us many things about marriage: our roles, responsibilities, our need for unity, how we should speak to one another, how we should treat one another, etc. We need to be "taught to obey" these scriptures just like we are taught how to have a deeper relationship with God, to love and serve others, and to serve the poor. Sometimes our marriage is the last place we practice our Christianity, when in truth, it should be the first place!

Acts 5:1-11—do not "protect" each other when there is lukewarmness, sin or compromise

Proverbs 15:22—take advice.

Q: Is either one of you closed to input?

Every marriage needs counseling; no one is above it. Marriages need discipling. "Four-way openness": husbands and wives having permission from each other to speak to the other's discipler if there are unresolved problems. This is a powerful safeguard and a good test of sincerity.

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—do not deprive one another.

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....

The 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.)



SELF-DISCIPLINE

Introduction: How many of us have had great dreams for how God was going to use us—how he would mold us into what he wanted us to be? Yet when the going got rough and the process became painful, we resisted—perhaps even took a couple of steps backward! Few of us are naturally disciplined; discipline must be learned. And yet without it, how do we suppose that we will take the gospel into all the world? Surely this is fantasy! Discipline, therefore, must be built into our Christian lives from the earliest possible moment.

The Scriptures:

1 Timothy 4:7

Train yourself to be godly. Physical training (e.g. sports) is of limited value, but spiritual training is immeasurably valuable. The Christian life is a process of training in righteousness.

Laziness

Hebrews 6:12

Do not become lazy. Laziness is a constant threat to the life of every Christian, young or old. Imitate those who are patient, faithful and disciplined. Look for good examples; learn from them. Realize laziness is a sin.

Suggested—Proverbs 12:1, 24:30-34, 26:13-16

Idleness

1 Thessalonians 4:11ff

Be constructive members of society and of the church. Hard-working people win the respect of others. Try not to be dependent on anybody. Do not go into or remain in debt.

2 Thessalonians 3:6ff

Follow the example of disciplined people. Do not be a “busybody”—appearing busy, but not really achieving anything.

Discipline

Hebrews 12:11-12

No discipline seems pleasant, but it yields a more satisfying life. Make your life count!

Suggested—1 Corinthians 9:24-27, 2 Timothy 2:4-6, Hebrews 5:14

PRACTICALS:

- Make a timetable of how you use your time. Get suggestions.
- Set goals.
- Spend time with a disciplined person and learn from him or her.
- If you are not a punctual person, make an effort to be early.

Suggested Reading: *The Disciplined Life* by Richard Taylor and *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*

The Spiritual Exercise: Do one of the practical suggestions mentioned above, or read one of the recommended books.



ACADEMICS: OBSTACLE OR OPPORTUNITY?

Introduction: God certainly expects excellence of Christian students: if not excellent results, at least excellent effort. Too often undisciplined students become Christians and then use evangelism or “the church” as an excuse for mediocre performance. We must help our students to see that academics are a God-given responsibility. There is nothing unspiritual about studies. The unspiritual course to take is to neglect academics. Without perseverance the student suffers great loss in character, discipline, confidence, and credibility—not to mention future prospects.

The Scriptures:

Clear Commission

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.

Evangelistic Example

1 Thessalonians 4:11

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. Conduct your ministry *through* academics, not *in spite* of academics.

Powerful Preparation

James 1:2-4

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

Suggested—Proverbs 6:6, 18:9, Philippians 2:14-16, 1 Timothy 3:7, 4:15-16

Spiritual Principles for Academic Success:

Get Help / Advice

Proverbs 11:14

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

Be Diligent in Your Studies

Proverbs 13:4; 21:5

There is no substitute for diligence. So 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)!

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



THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY: PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Introduction: The family is the most basic unit of society. To understand the desperate plight our society is in, you need only to look at the desperate straits the average family is in! In stark contrast to families in the world—with their narrow outlook, poor communication, brewing resentments, undisciplined children and decaying marriages—the Christ-centered family is a breath of fresh air and a ray of hope.

The family following God's word is a happy, communicative, warm, loving, committed and fruitful family. Just as Christian marriage is God's wise plan for men and women to love and live together, so the Christian family is God's answer to the ungodliness and selfishness of society. Family is the forum he has chosen for character development in his most precious gift to parents: their children.

The Scriptures:

Spiritual Focus

- Chain of command: Christ—husband—wife—children.
- If you want a great family life, you need discipling!
- Aim to have an evangelistically fruitful family.

Bringing Up Children

- Security and happiness:
 1. Time—you will need to reorder your priorities!
 2. Affection—without it, they will become insecure, cold, introverted and awkward around strangers. Spiritual examples (parents)—Ephesians 6:4, Deuteronomy 6:7
- Discipline:
 1. Proverbs 23:13-14—it is unloving not to give it. Discipline is training.
 2. Colossians 3:21—encouragement is necessary.
 3. Proverbs 22:15, 29:15, 17, 19, 21—God commands discipline.
 4. The husband is the chief discipler.
 5. Wife and husband should agree on the "rules," lest the children pick and choose whom to obey!
 6. Proverbs 22:6—areas of training: Respect toward authority, speech and openness, affection, manners, tidiness, moodiness.
 7. Have regular discipling times with each child.

Other Important Matters

- 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.
- If you have Christian children, work with the preteen or teen ministry. Embrace feedback. Do not be defensive.

Practicals

- Create a simple system of allowances and incentives for the children.
- Take the whole family out evangelizing. Reach out to other families as a family.
- Ask Christians you respect to recommend helpful books.

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



DATING AND MARRIAGE

Introduction: 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 court-ing relationship that may eventually explore the possibility of marriage.

The Scriptures:

Yoked to Believers

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

Discuss the church's two general views of "dating".

- Friendly dating: guys and girls going out to encourage one another and get to know each other with no ro-mantic 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 and consulting MANY advisors!

Need a Boyfriend/Girlfriend

Psalms 37:4

- Steady dating (i.e. getting a "boyfriend"/"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, 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.
- Sometimes our impulse to want to "date" is premature or based on worldly motives. Ask this question: What is it that you are seeking in a dating relationship that cannot be attained in (1) your walk with God or (2) a regular platonic guy-girl relationship?

Spiritual Relationships (Guy/Girl) Principles

Be considerate of one another. Do not be a stumbling block. **1 Corinthians 10:32-33**

- o 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 / 19:20**

- 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!

The 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.



TITHES & OFFERINGS

Introduction: A scholar once noted that money/wealth is the second most mentioned topic in the Bible (after the topic of “love”). The way that we handle our money/wealth says a lot about our spiritual lives. Sometimes the attitude toward giving our weekly offering is that we are taking part of our paycheck and offering it to the church leaders/administrators. While it is true that this weekly contribution meets practical needs of the church (facilities, salaries, ministry budgets, missions growth), such a view does not capture the spiritual reality of our giving. The reality is that God has given us everything we have, and by giving this weekly offering we are returning a portion of that to God as a willing sacrifice. In this study, we’ll examine three ideas that should govern our attitude toward giving to God through our weekly contribution to the church.

The Scriptures:

A Spiritual Act...

- **Proverbs 3:9-10**
 - In the same way that the OT Israelites honored God with their tithes/firstfruits to the temple, we are honoring God with our contribution.
- What is your perspective on giving contribution? Do you see it as a spiritual act? Or do you view it as simply putting money in a church administrator’s hands?

A Sacrifice...

- **Mark 12:41-44**
 - the widow’s offering was the greatest in Jesus’ view because it involved the greatest personal sacrifice; it was not about the \$ amount, but about the sacrifice behind the amount
- What do you think is the difference between viewing contribution in terms of “sacrifice” instead of strictly “\$ amount”? How would that change your giving?

A Willing Heart...

- **2 Corinthians 9:6-7**
 - Paul communicates 2 important principle for “giving” in these verses
 - § Give much = receive much; give little = receive little
 - § God loves a cheerful giver
- What is the difference between giving “cheerfully” and giving “reluctantly”? Why do you think it matters to God what we are feeling in our hearts when we give?

Weekly Offerings to God...

- Pray and decide what is a willing and sacrificial amount to contribute (it is between you and God).
 - Be consistent (weekly/monthly) and have integrity about your giving (if you miss a contribution, plan to “double up” the next time you give).
- Budget a saving plan and be organized about your contribution (**I Corinthians 16:1-4**)

Other Passages

Acts 2:44-47 – sacrificial attitude of early Christians

Acts 4:32-5:11 –Barnabas’ acceptable contribution vs. Ananias and Sapphira’s unacceptable contribution relationship with a Christian...you need advice!

The Spiritual Exercise: Look over your personal budget (*if you don’t have one, get some help and create one*). **Pray. Decide what would be a sacrifice and commit that amount every week as an offering to God.**