

WHO WE ARE

Biblelandmarks is a Christian ministry dedicated to outreach and growth in the faith. We are a ministry arm of the Valley Home MBC in Central California.

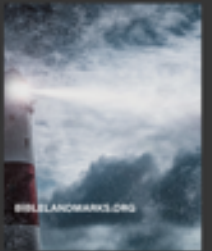
This work grew from a podcast, originally as a means to contact men that had received Christ as Savior while in prison. It has now grown into other on-line ministries.

- Biblelandmarks.org - the directory for our sites.
- Schoolofministryresources.org - Podcast
- Pastorlesschurches.org - an online service for churches without pastors are needing teaching lessons.
- Raisingwell.org - a blog to assist parents with raising godly children.



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Discipleship #1

WHO YOU ARE
IN CHRIST

Discipleship booklet #1

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Much of the content is original, however, some has been drawn from other sources and adapted to this format. A Bibliography is given at the end of this booklet to give reference and credit to the authors and publishers. Because of the wide variety of sources, we will never charge for these booklets, in hopes they will be used to spur your Christian growth.

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Who You Are in Christ

What Does It Mean To Be 'In Christ'?



The foremost need is to be sure you have a relationship with Jesus Christ, that you have trusted Him as Savior and acknowledge Him to be Lord. The rest of this study will have little meaning for you because spiritual matters can only be understood by those who have the new birth, given the indwelling Spirit of Christ (1 Cor. 2:14).

If you have a need to accept Jesus as Savior...

- Romans 3:23 – All have sinned.
- Romans 6:23 – Eternal life is a free gift of God.
- Romans 5:8 – Because of love, Jesus paid the death penalty for your sins.
- Romans 10:9-10 – Confess Jesus as Lord and believe God has raised Him from the dead.
- Romans 10:13 – Ask God to save you and He will.



The Greatest Command of the Bible



The greatest command is: *“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”* Deuteronomy 6:5

Jesus taught us the second commandment is like it – *“...And you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”* Matthew 22:39

Matthew 22:39

This course is designed to help you grow in these. For when we have the right love, we won’t have other struggles, for we want to please the God we love!

Introduction.

What’s in the booklet?

As a new Child of God, you will begin to see the Lord work and lead you in life. Our hope is to help you grow according to God’s Word, the Bible. God definitely does His part, but we too must do ours. This study is designed to start you on the path to now learn and grow in our love for the Lord. The more you understand God’s love toward you, the more you will love Him in return and want to serve Him. You are the creation of God, and Jesus, saw your need, even though it was over two thousand years before, He died a horrible death in order to buy your salvation or redemption. The more you learn and grow in that understanding the easier it is to live for Him. (More on this in ‘Critical First Step.’)

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11Lev 21-23	12Lev 24-25	13Lev 26-27	14Num 1-2	15Num 3	16Num 4-6	17Num 7
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As you look through the booklet, you find places to write your answers to various questions. This is your book and you make it your own. It can be a future reference guide and, in time to come, you will see your own spiritual growth. At the end of each chapter, the Scriptures are given in the same order you find them referred to in this study. Each chapter builds upon the last, so we ask you take them in order. This booklet uses the New King James Version as the Bible translation.

However, we encourage you to use a Bible translation that is easy to understand. Let me add, it is best to stay away from ‘para-phrased’ versions of the Bible. They are not translations of the original writings. This is a topic we will explore more deeply in future studies, but it’s best to stay with a good Bible translation.

This is a book to assist you as you begin to grow in Christ. We will later discuss what that means. For now, understand this is not an ‘in-depth’ study of each topic, and in time you will use this as a foundation for deeper study and understanding of the Bible. Interwoven in this study are ways to help you clearly identify the activity of God in your life. Our hope is to assist you in seeing the direction and purpose your life has and what the Lord wants to do through you. That said, our aim is that you can know what you need to do in response to His activity, that you might adjust your beliefs, character and behavior toward God’s ways.

Most important for your understanding is that the Bible is a spiritual book. It can only be understood with the Holy Spirit of God opening it to you, because of the new birth. You will study this aspect as we go, but it’s good to know the Holy Spirit is your divine teacher (John 14:26 – “*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things,...*”). You are not alone in this study and your Christian life.

CRITICAL FIRST STEP

Our theme and base text: *“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”* Deuteronomy 6:5. Jesus repeats this in the New Testament Gospels and explains this, with, what He called the second great commandment, is the heart of the Law including the ‘Good News’ of the New Testament.

One truth you will learn to understand in greater, deeper ways, is the sacrifice that Jesus paid to buy your salvation. Later, in this study, we will see that Jesus created the universe, which includes our world. That includes us, as people.

In time, we trust you will study the Gospels. In them you will learn how God became man. That man is Jesus the Christ. His name even means “deliverer.” You will also learn what your salvation cost. Imagine, the all-mighty, all-knowing, all-present God, limiting Himself in the form of a man, for one purpose. That purpose was to meet the demands of sinlessness, and being perfect and righteous. All demands of the law required by a Holy God, Who cannot have fellowship with sin and unrighteousness, had to be fulfilled. Not one man has been able to live up to that standard, except the man, Christ Jesus. He fulfilled the law and lived a sinless life.

Now consider how Jesus was wrongly convicted of a crime, cruelly beaten, mocked, spit upon, whipped and more, all to the point of death. He then went to a hill where He was nailed to a Roman cross, there He gave up His life. He had power to lay His life down and to take it up again. No one took His life, He freely gave it up for each of us.

The account goes on, for His body was three days and nights in the tomb. One the third day, He Arose! He took up His life

Bible Reading Plans

One that I like and is easy to apply:

Read one Proverb a day for a month (there are 31 of them).

-Or -

Read the Psalm that matches the date, then add 30, and again, and again – until you have read 5 Psalms. Here’s the example:

If today is the 4th, read Psalm 4, then add 30 = Psalm 34, then add 30 = Psalm 64, then add 30 = Psalm 94, then add 30 = Psalm 124.

This will help you read through the Psalms in a month.

Online there are many Bible Reading Plans – this one is from “Bible Reading Plan Generator” (2025) and has you reading the entire Bible in one year.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31	Apr 1Gen 1-3	2Gen 4-7	3Gen 8-11	4Gen 12-15	5Gen 16- 18
6Gen 19-21	7Gen 22-24	8Gen 25- 26	9Gen 27-29	10Gen 30- 31	11Gen 32-33	12Gen 34-36
13Gen 37-39	14Gen 40-41	15Gen 42-44	16Gen 45- 46	17Gen 47- 49	18Gen 50; Ex 1-3	19Ex 4-6
20Ex 7- 8	21Ex 9- 11	22Ex 12- 13	23Ex 14-16	24Ex 17- 20	25Ex 21-22	26Ex 23- 25
27Ex 26-28	28Ex 29	29Ex 30- 32	30Ex 33-35	May 1Ex 36-38	2Ex 39-40	3Lev 1-4
4Lev 5- 6	5Lev 7-9	6Lev 10- 12	7Lev 13	8Lev 14- 15	9Lev 16-17	10Lev 18-20

1 John 5:11-13 – *“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”*

Romans 8:38-39 – *“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Titus 3:4, 5 – *“But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,”*

John 3:16 – *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

Ephesians 4:30 – *“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”*

1 John 3:9 – *“Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.”*

again! In that, He overcame death, the grave and hell. This entails so much more. All of this was for the purpose of buying salvation for any that would accept His sacrifice. From the time of the resurrection, the New Testament Church began to meet on the first day of the week, Sunday, always remembering His resurrection and our hope in salvation. All of that so God can have a close relationship with you!

Why is this critical? It is my firm belief and experience that the more you know of what Jesus did, for you, the easier it is to live for Him. When problems and temptations come, and they will, as we will study, you can find the help needed. Our goal is to help you start living as the new creation you are and that you will love the Lord your God, with all your heart, mind, soul, strength, being. That will then replicate itself by being able to love other people as God does. This cannot be done on your own. But that is why this study was put together.

WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

You are a ‘New Creation’ in Christ.

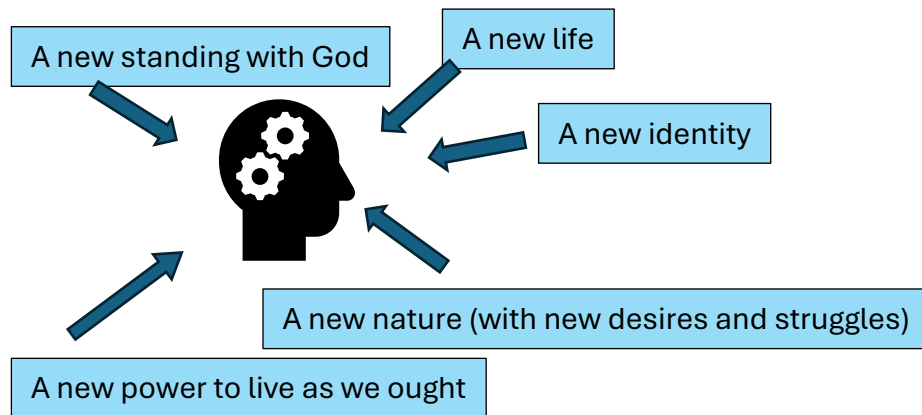
With the new birth, you have become a “new creation” in Jesus. This means your old life and sins are passed away, even though the results of some of those actions continue. Because of the sinless life of Jesus and His dying in our place we have been forgiven of ALL our sins.

1 John 1:9 – How do you understand this verse, and being cleansed from all unrighteousness?

Your salvation is also future! You have been assured of an eternal home in heaven with the Lord! Salvation is not based upon you or your works. Look at these two verses and describe how that affects you.

Ephesians 2:8,9 and 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

So your salvation was for the past, and for the future. But how about the 'now'? The 'Gospel' means, "the good news." The gospel is about your living a 'new life' now. Hebrews 2:3 calls the gospel, "so great a salvation." This brings amazing benefits through Jesus Christ, and here are some of the obvious blessings:



What thoughts or questions does this bring to mind?

Let's look at each of these along with the Bible Scriptures.

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints..."

Philippians 3:7-11 – *"But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."*

Romans 7:22-24 – *"For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"*

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 – *"And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."*

not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;”

I Thessalonians 5: 15-18 – *“See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.*

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

1 Peter 2:15, 16 – *“For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.”*

Hebrews 4:15 & 16 – *“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”*

1 John 1:9, 10 – *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”*

Ephesians 6:10-18 – *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

NEW LIFE

Please read Ephesians 2:1-10.

What does it mean that non-believers are “dead in their transgressions and sins (v.1)?

How do you feel now that you know that apart from Christ we were all separated from the life of God? (Ephesians 4:18). ___

But now, what do you think, that you have trusted Jesus as Savior, “*But God...made us alive together with Christ*” (Eph. 2:4)? _____

A NEW STANDING WITH GOD

Please read Romans 5: 1-21.

In the same way we all became sinners, as the result of the actions of one man, our earthly forefather Adam, we can now be ‘justified’ before God through the acts of another, Jesus. (The term, ‘justified,’ means that you have been declared – ‘Just.’ Think of it – “*Just as if I’d “never sinned.*)

What do we see from these verses of how we enjoy the result of our new standing with God? _____

A NEW IDENTITY

Please read Romans 8:5-17.

When you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you were given a new identity, as it were. The Bible now gives us

new titles with this new identity. We are now referred to as 'beloved,' 'accepted,' 'forgiven,' 'chosen,' 'child of God.' According to verses 14-16, what does it mean that we are "children of God?" _____

In verse 17 you are referred to as an 'heir of God' and 'co-heir of Christ.' What does this verse say that we share with Him?

There are many more names by which the child of God is now referred to in the New Testament. We are: 'salt,' 'light,' 'stewards,' 'ambassadors,' 'saints,' 'fishers of men,' 'living stones,' 'a priesthood,' 'citizen of heaven,' and more. With these titles/names, can you see they often speak to the kind of life and occupation we have as a Christian? What do these mean to you? _____

A NEW NATURE

Please read 2 Corinthians 5:17.

How can you put this into words to help you recognize your new nature? _____

Here are two more verses to consider:

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES FOR CHAPTER 6

Ephesians 3:21 – "to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

Acts 2:41-44 – "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common..."

1 Timothy 2:3, 4 – "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Matthew 28:19 – "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"

Acts 2:41-42 – "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Acts 2:47 – "praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 – "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

CONCLUSION:

Your Christian life is likened to the natural pattern of life and growth. When we are just 'born-again,' we are like new-born babies. We are told to desire the 'sincere milk of the Word.' Then we grow into adolescence. Finally, our goal is to be full grown in the Lord. The New Testament says this is a place of maturity. Along this way, there will be problems, trials and struggles. But you are not alone, the Lord is with you every step, He will never leave you or forsake you. Allow these troubles to help you grow and experience God's strength in your life. Yours is now a life of faith. Faith is believing what is unseen. God always blesses when we place our faith in Him.

Don't look at your chronological age, spiritually our age depends upon our growth in the Word/ Lord Jesus. It is the sincere desire that this study has helped you grow spiritually. Our emphasis in all this booklet is to assist you in growing to love the Lord your God, with all your heart, all your mind, all your strength, your whole being.

That growth and strength will now grow to help others, to bring others to Christ and to be a good witness. In that we fulfill the second commandment, to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Look for opportunities to show God's love toward others, even if they don't appreciate it. Look for opportunities to put the things you have learned into practice.



“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” Colossians 3:3,4

Why is your union with Christ so important? _____

NEW DESIRES

Please read Romans 7:21-23 and Galatians 5:17. Consider what the Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 7 and Galatians 5 and compare it with what we have learned about being a new creation in Christ. If we are a new creation, why do we still have bad or evil desires? _____

A NEW POWER

Please read Ephesians 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:3. How can prayer and the promise of God's help in times of temptation or testing, assist you to see His power work in your life? _____

Does this help you see that it is God's power and His help, and not our own strength, to carry you through difficult testing? Explain in your words. _____

GOD HAS GIVEN...

His Holy Spirit to live within us to accomplish such things as:
He enlightens our minds – 1 Cor. 2:9-10
He helps purify our emotions – Rom. 5:5
He helps to empower our wills – Rom. 8:13

He sensitizes our consciences – 2 Cor. 7:10-11

He helps satisfy our longings – John 4:13-14

He expresses our needs to the Father – Rom. 8:26

New life in Christ means so much more than what we have just studied. It means a new standing with God, a new identity, a new nature, and new power to live as we should!

Plus one more fact that some fail to implement. Being a new creation means you can't go on living the way you used to live. That is because you are no longer the person you used to be. Now, as a child of God, you have a brand new nature that contains a new "divine spiritual DNA" (for lack of better explanation), which means the desire to do right is within you.

OUR NEW UNDERSTANDING...

According to the promise of the Gospel, when you put your trust in Jesus as the Christ (Messiah), you have been completely, utterly and absolutely transformed. We have seen what God said about it, now, do you dare believe it?

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES FOR CHAPTER 1

1 John 1:9 – *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

Ephesians 2:8, 9 – *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”*

2 Corinthians 5:6-8 – *“So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. We are confident, yes,*

Now we'll look at another Scripture, **John 5:24** – *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”*

If you have something, even if it was a gift, is it still yours?

Write your thoughts and answer here. _____

YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT YOUR SALVATION IS SECURE – BOUGHT AND PAID FOR BY JESUS' DEATH & RESURRECTION – GOD WILL NEVER TAKE IT AWAY ONCE HE HAS GIVEN IT.

Let's study the Scripture that explains your salvation is secure. Read Romans 8:38, 39. In the list the Apostle Paul gives, is there anything that can cause you to lose your salvation? _____

Let's look at Titus 3:5. If salvation is by works it could not be by grace. One definition for grace is:

“Grace is the unmerited favor of God.”

If grace is 'not merited' is it something you worked for? _____

We have seen that salvation is a free gift of God.

We learned earlier that salvation is a 'new birth.'

We also learned that salvation is totally of God.

We learned that salvation is 'eternal life.'

Let's read one more Scripture – John 3:16. How long is 'eternal life'? _____

Therefore, having a clear understanding of the eternal nature of the new birth, knowing it has no time barriers and that we cannot become 'unborn,' once born of God, and recognize it was never of our own power, work or effort. How about another Scripture? Ephesians 4:30. Our salvation is sealed by God and the Holy Spirit was placed within you keep your salvation sure. It is true that we may sin – 1 John 1:8 In our born again spirit, it is impossible to sin – 1 John 3:9.

Assurance of Salvation -

In my experience, Satan will try and cause you to doubt that you were ever saved. In this way, he makes you waiver in your Christian life (daily walk). As we begin this section, let's read 1 John 5:11-13. This passage deals with the question of our status with God. As a follower of Jesus, we must have confident assurance that we are right with God. Thinking of what we just studied, we can be confident that our sins are forgiven and that we are, in fact, a child of God. The Epistle of 1 John is a good place to read when you have doubts about your salvation. After reading the 1 John 5 passage (above), what are the truths you take away? _____

Let's think again about Ephesians 2:8-9. *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”* What does this teach us about our salvation? _____

Now let's read Romans 6:23 again. *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* What does this say about our salvation? _____

These verses contrast the idea of a gift and that of a wage you earn. What is the difference between these two concepts? _____

Have you ever tried to “earn” God's grace? Explain please _____

Let's look again at 1John 5:12 – *“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”*

well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”

Ephesian 2:1-10 – *“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Ephesians 4:18 - *“having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;”*

Romans 5:1-21 – *“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the*

love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many

Dealing with Discouragement –

This is another of Satan's effective weapons against the child of God. What is discouragement?

“Discourage: to deprive of confidence, hope, or spirit; dishearten; daunt.”

At the base of every discouragement is a lie from Satan. Fear, unbelief, bitterness, self-pity, or condemnation of self or others are all based upon Satanic lies.

In Ephesians 6, we are told of the “whole armor of God.” This is given to help protect, defend and fight off the causes of discouragement and spiritual failing. Please read Ephesians 6: 10-12. What stands out to you in these verses? _____

When we lose sight of God's ways or our resources in Christ, we remove the spiritual protection which Christ has provided for us in the armor – especially here with the shield of faith.

There is a benefit to discouragement...

It confirms our need for God.

- He will help destroy our delight in earthly, temporal things. – See Philippians 3:7-11.
- He will destroy our confidence in human effort. – See Romans 7:22-24.
- He has set a principle that through our weakness His strength is made perfect or complete. – See 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

Dealing With Temptation –

We now move to ways to fight temptation. Temptation will come, but how we deal with it is foremost to being able to overcome them.

separate me from God's love (See Romans 8:35-39). My sin is forgiven and my salvation is secure, but my fellowship may be in jeopardy, if I allow sin in my life.

When Satan Attacks –

If you have not recognized satanic attacks already, you soon will. That is something Satan and his vast army of demons does. It is his effort to make you ineffective for the cause of Christ. He does this in a wide variety of ways, and he (or one of his demons) has studied you and figures out weaknesses. Demons are fallen angels that are far greater than we. Therefore, it is no great thing that they know human nature and watch for opportunities to cause you to fall or fail. The name 'Satan' means 'slanderer'

Here are a few Scriptures that you want to keep in mind:

1 John 4:4 – *“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”*

Who is it that is in you? _____

Explain how this may encourage you. _____

God will allow these, at times, to help us grow and become Christlike. Remember, Jesus, in His flesh, suffered every type of temptation that is common. Jesus was tempted but never sinned. So it is possible to be tempted without sinning.

Please read Hebrews 4:15, 16. From these verses, where can we find help while we are tempted? _____

We do sin and we will, but we don't want to make excuses for our failings or allow opportunities to fall.

Please read 1 John 1:9-10. What does this teach you should be our reaction when we do sin? _____

were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 8: 5-17 – *“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

2 Corinthians 5:17 – *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”*

Romans 7:21-23 – *“I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”*

Galatians 5:17 – *“For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”*

Ephesians 3:16 – *“that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,”*

2 Peter 1:3 – *“as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,”*

Ephesians 2:19 – *“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,”* (added to show more of what we have become in Christ.)

“Avoid sexual immorality...”. “By doing good, silencing the ignorance of foolish men...”		
Has God shown me His will in some other area that I need to obey before deciding this?		
Has God shown me recently in His Word something that relates to this? (What?)		
Have I prayed about this?		
Have I sought counsel from other mature Christians?		
Do I know it is right and have a ‘spiritual peace’ about making this decision?		

Our goal now is to grow closer to the Lord God, to have an intimate love relationship with Him. He loves you and gave Jesus to die in your place. His love toward us took His action, and He desires to have a personal, strong relationship and fellowship with you. That is something only He can fill within our lives. Some have termed it, “the God void.”

Jesus called disciples, those that already had come to a place of faith in the Lord (they were saved and had been obedient to being baptized by John), to “follow Me.” You have taken the initial steps, but Jesus’ Words are still applicable to you today. This “following” is a process characterized by a walk of faith and obedience. As I continue to follow Him, despite life’s ups and downs, more and more I am at home with Him, wherever I am. This idea of being ‘at home’ with the Lord is also known in the Scripture as “abiding with God.” (See John 15:5-11). Intimacy or abiding with God is not what I do for Him or how valuable I am to Him. It is Christ Himself living in me.

Sin can and will destroy intimacy and breaks my fellowship with the Lord. I am a part of the family of God through Christ Jesus’ death on the cross and resurrection. Nothing can

- It is God’s will that we live pure lives – 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5
- It is God’s will that we pray – 1 Thessalonians 5:13-18
- It is God’s will that we do good as an evidence of the new-birth – 1 Peter 2:15, 16.

These are all obvious and really ‘self-evident.’ We can add many other things, like, it is always God’s will to live by faith. Kind of a side note here – faith is like muscle – it has to be exercised and worked out. As you experience God’s faithfulness in your life, it becomes easier to trust Him and then you rely upon Him, and live by faith.

Also – “An Ounce of Prevention...” is true for our lives also. Seeking God daily, dealing with sin immediately and staying accountable to other Christians. When we do these things we will not wander off from the will of God. The Lord never tries to hide His will from you; He’s eager to be a part of your life and reveal Himself to you in even greater ways.

Consider this chart –

Spiritual Guidelines	Yes	No
Is my heart’s desire, “ <i>Not my will but Yours be done?</i> ”		
Will I love God and others more as a result of this?		
Am I waiting patiently on God to teach me and reveal Himself to me through His Word?		
Am I being completely honest with myself?		
Will this increase my desire to win and disciple others for Christ?		
Will it help me “be holy as He is holy”?		
Will it help me grow in my relationship to Christ and in my training to become more effective for Him?		
Am I obeying the verse that clearly state God’s will, i.e. “ <i>In everything give thanks...</i> ”.		

CHAPTER 2

HOW DO I GROW IN CHRIST?

The New Testament has much to say about our growing strong in our new relationship with Jesus Christ. In 1 Peter 2:2, we are told, “*...as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,*”

God took the initiative in having a relationship with you! He has provided everything necessary for this love relationship. He has given His Word, so we can know Him. It is through the Word we are drawn to His saving grace. It is through the Word that we learn why Jesus came and what He did to purchase our salvation. It was through the Word that the Holy Spirit brought the conviction that we knew of our need of salvation. It is through the Word that we will grow and develop as mature Christians.

When you read Romans 1:16, we learn it is the Gospel, which is contained in the Word, that has the power of salvation. In future lessons, we will examine this more in depth, but for now, learn this was God taking the initiative toward you.

1 Corinthians 1:18 also explains how the message, we might say, ‘the Word’ or ‘the Gospel,’ that is able to make us wise, or to understand God’s saving power toward you, and all people. (See also 2 Timothy 3:15).

Learn foremost all of God’s working, plans and efforts He took in order that you can be saved. He takes the initiative with you because of His great love for you!

The love that God focuses on your life is an everlasting love.

Please read Romans 3:10-12 and answer the following questions.

How many people are righteous on their own? _____

How many people understand spiritual things on their own?

How many people seek God on their own? _____

How many people do good on their own? _____

Please think about what this means to you. Now, can you write on how you know God loves you? What are some reasons you can give that convinces you that God loves you?

Next – we understand that God did all of this for His purpose. He has a plan for you and a great purpose for your life. As you learn more of Him, you will understand this more clearly. You have been called to be His disciple! What do you believe this means for you? _____

Read now 2 Timothy 3:16-17. In this we learn what is our ‘guide.’

The Scripture was “God – breathed” (that’s the idea of the “inspiration”) and is necessary for our growth and is equipping us for the purpose God has for you.

The Greek word “disciple,” in the New Testament is ‘math-etes’, which means “to learn.” So the most basic and literal meaning of ‘disciple’ is “student.” A disciple is first and foremost ‘a learner.’

CHAPTER 6 –

How Do I Serve The Lord in Greater Ways?

Also in this chapter:

When Satan Attacks -

Dealing with Temptation

Assurance of Salvation

We now want to put into practice what we have been learning. We want to seek to serve the Lord through one of His true New Testament Churches, (Ephesians 3:21). It’s our hope that you submitted yourself for baptism, after your salvation, and then church membership. That’s the order we have seen in the New Testament (see Acts 2:41-44).

At this point you want to be sure you understand God’s will for your life. You were saved for a purpose. God has been working His plan throughout history, and you will see that more in your Bible studies. God knew you, He formed you, He loves you, and He has a place for you within His plan. God has been working in great and small ways throughout history, and will continue until the end of time, when we pass into the final, eternal age. I hope you will always note, whenever God’s purpose is mentioned in Scripture, His love is also discussed. These are inseparable. So it is with your life.

GOD’S WILL IS SIMPLE

There are certain things we know are always true according to the Bible. As example:

- It is God’s will that you be saved – 1 Timothy 2:4
- It is God’s will that you be baptized – Matthew 28:19
- It is God’s will that you serve Him in His Church – Acts 2:41-42 & 47

...eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

"Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance."

Acts 26:21-23 – *"For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come— that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."*

Matthew 28:19, 20 – *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

Act 1:8 – *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

The disciple's goal is to be "Christ-like,"

A definition of "Disciple" –

"A disciple is a person who follows Jesus – to know Jesus and His teaching; to grow more like Jesus; and to go for Jesus, serving others and making new disciples."

Discipleship involves three components: knowing, growing, and going. They are compared to the head, heart and hands of a disciple.

- Head – Beliefs that don't penetrate our hearts to help us grow or alter our behavior so that we go and serve are worthless.
- Heart – Growing in the faith can't be separated from knowing the truth and going to serve.
- Hands – Serving the Lord effectively is tied together with knowing God's truth and growing to have the right heart attitude.

A follower of Christ is a student of Christ.

Jesus was a teacher and taught from the Bible, which at that time was the Old Testament.

FIRST – GROW IN STUDYING THE BIBLE

You cannot grow spiritually without reading a portion of the Bible every day. Why is this important? The Bible is the "Divine Handbook." Psalm 119:9 asks the question, *"How can a young man cleanse his way?"* The Psalmist answers, *"By taking heed according to Your word."*

The Bible contains God's mind and will for your life. It is the only source of absolute divine authority for you now as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

In the next chapter we examine methods of studying the Bible, but here we want to see why it is important and the benefits. At the end of this booklet, there is a “Bible reading chart” to help you get started.

Why study the Bible?

- It is infallible in its totality – Psalm 19:7
- It is inerrant in its parts – Proverbs 30: 5,6
- It is complete – Revelation 22:18,19
- It is authoritative and final – Psalm 119:89
- It is totally sufficient for your needs – 2 Tim. 3:16, 17
- It will accomplish what it promises – Isaiah 55:11
- It provides the assurance of your salvation – John 8:47

How do I benefit from studying the Bible?

(There are many good study Bibles and good Bible translations. Your Church may ask that you use a particular translation, so everyone is reading the same. Ask your pastor or a strong Christian which Study Bible they use. I encourage you to pick a translation, not a paraphrased Bible, but one that makes sense to you and one you understand. We want you to grow in Christ, and if you don’t understand what you are reading, it won’t have the impact it could.)

Only the Bible remains as the source of divine revelation and power that can sustain the Child of God in your daily walk with God. Here are a few significant promises.

- The Bible is the source of truth – John 17:17
- The Bible is the source of God’s blessing when obeyed – Luke 11:28
- The Bible is the source of victory – Ephesians 6:17
- The Bible is the source of growth – 1 Peter 2:2
- The Bible is the source of power – Romans 1:16
- The Bible is the source of guidance – Psalm 119:105

What should be my response to the Bible?

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES FOR CHAPTER 5

Acts 26:4-11 – “My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. To this promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. For this hope’s sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

“Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.”

Acts 26:12-20 – “While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their ...

Romans 5:8 (God’s Provision) *“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*

Romans 10: 9 (Your Response) *“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

Adapt this so it is easy for you to follow. Mark your Bible so you can easily flow from one Scripture to the next. Then practice and be familiar with these so your sharing comes naturally.

Witnessing is the command of the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19, 20; and Acts 1:8.

Now is a good time to make a list of people you would like to see saved also. I like to have a **“10 Most Wanted List.”** Make the list and use it for your prayer time, then look for opportunities to share your testimony or one of the methods for sharing the Gospel we just studied.

Name	Begin Prayer Date	Answer to Prayer Date
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

(Because the Bible is so important and because it provides unparalleled eternal benefits – these should be our responses as a disciple of Christ.)

- Believe It – John 6:68, 69
- Honor It – Job 23:12
- Love It – Psalm 119:97
- Obey It – 1 John 2:5
- Guard It – 1 Timothy 6:20
- Fight for It – Jude 3
- Preach (proclaim) It – 2 Timothy 4:2
- Study It – Ezra 7:10

Reading the Scripture –

Read a passage of the Bible repeatedly until you understand the meaning of the main truth of the passage. Always keep it in context. A simple method is this: *Ask, who is speaking? To whom were they speaking? What are they speaking about? When were they speaking? Where were they when speaking?* By using these basic methods, we have a true understanding of what is being said. There are times the Bible records the Devil speaking. Although the Bible correctly tells us what he said, it may truly tell of his lie. Does this make sense to you? Knowing this, how will you put into practice your daily Bible reading? _____

The Bible is unlike other books, so you will probably not read it straight through from cover to cover. (Bible reading plan in back of this booklet).

You may want to begin with a short book, like 1 John. Read through it daily for 30 days. This will help you develop a visual perception of the entire book.

The Gospel of John is a good beginning book, but you may want to divide it into three sections (it contains 21 chapters), that would be seven chapters. At the end of 90 days, you will finish the Book. Don't wear yourself down, read what you are able.

BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is a library of 66 books.

It is divided into two parts – Old and New Testament

It was written over a period of about 1500 years by about 40 different authors.

Each author was inspired by the Holy Spirit as they wrote. See 2 Peter 1:20, 21 and (again) 2 Timothy 3:16,17. Each writer was allowed to use his style of writing, but the Holy Spirit super-intended and oversaw the work and sometimes particular words brought to the writers mind, to bring across the Lord's message. Therefore, we have many human authors but one single divine author with one single overriding message – It all leads us to Jesus Christ.

GOD WANTS TO SPEAK TO YOU

If the Christian does not know when God is speaking, he or she is in trouble at the very heart of the Christian life.

We want you to know clearly when God is speaking. Let's focus our attention on how God speaks through the Word. Unfortunately, in this day, many have a very wrong concept of when God is speaking. So we hope to help you get off to a right start.

In the Old Testament God spoke in different ways than He does today, because we now have the complete written "Word of God."

Hebrews 1:1, 2 tells us: *"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has*

The commitment question: "Do you want to receive this gift of eternal life that Christ left heaven and died on a cross to give you?"

Then I lead in prayer, I pray first and "introduce the person to the Lord," (as such), then ask them to pray aloud, to be sure they understand. You can assure them there is no formula to pray, simply ask the Lord for His free gift of salvation: Romans 10:9,10 –

"...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

The second method-

I have often used what is commonly called "The Roman Road." The important thing to remember is that it is the Word of God that has power, it is not in our words, or wisdom to lead men to Christ. Therefore, you must use the Word!

The Roman Road – Bible verses from the Book of Romans. This was used when I went to the altar at an invitation, which led me to Christ. It has been used countless times very successfully. It is easy to mark in your Bible, then just remembering where to begin, write the 'chain' or 'link' of passages in the margin, directing you where to read next.

Begin with:

Romans 3:23 (Our Need) *"For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."*

Romans 6:23 (Sin's Penalty) *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

(I like to add here – Ephesians 2:8,9, although this is not in Romans), (Not of Works) *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."*

visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children..."

D. Jesus Christ

1. **Who He is** – the infinite God-man – John 1:1, 14
*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."*
2. **What He did** – paid for our sins and purchased heaven for us, which He offers as a free gift.
Use Scriptures like: Isaiah 53:6 – *"All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."*
And: Isaiah 53:4,5a – *"Surely He has borne our griefs, And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities;"*
Also: Isaiah 53:10a – *"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin,"*
One more: Romans 6:23b – *"the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

E. Faith

1. **What it is not** – mere intellectual assent – Ephesians 2:8
"For by grace you have been saved through faith"
(nor is it temporal faith).
2. **What it is** – trusting Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

Commitment:

The qualifying question: "Does that make sense to you?"

appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds,"

In the Old Testament God spoke through:

- ⇒ Angels (Genesis 16)
- ⇒ Visions (Genesis 15)
- ⇒ Dreams (Genesis 28:10-19)
- ⇒ The use of the Urim & Thummim (Exodus 28:30)
- ⇒ Symbolic Actions (Jeremiah 18:1-10)
- ⇒ A gentle whisper (1 Kings 19:12)
- ⇒ Miraculous signs (Exodus 8:20-25)

How God spoke in the Old Testament is not the important factor we now consider. That God did speak is the crucial point.

TODAY GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE BIBLE.

God is not speaking to you in those ways any longer. So we emphasize it is important for your spiritual growth to read it! It always raises up Jesus Christ, and isn't just about us. Perhaps there are areas in our lives we need to clean up, and we feel a "conviction" or a heavy feeling in your heart, but that is to ultimately glorify Jesus in your life. Part of the work of the Holy Spirit today is to bring about that type of cleansing conviction. In that way we become better witnesses for Him.

You may find the Holy Spirit will bring forth some verse to your memory when you need it. That too is God speaking. When you are sitting in church, you hear a Bible lesson or the sermon, and something in that speaks to your need. That may be God speaking to you also.

You might be speaking to a Christian and they refer to a Bible passage, or a Biblical principle, that also applies to a need in your life. That could be God speaking.

SO – GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS WORD. We hear it in various ways, but ultimately it is through the Bible. God will never contradict His Word. If there is an apparent contradiction, hold off and get a better understanding. Satan does, and has in the past, used God’s Word, but always out of context, he twists it. God speaks through His Word, and reveals Himself, His purpose, and His ways, and we will know it is God.

HOW TO DISCOVER PURPOSE IN LIFE

We now move into how we discover God’s purpose for your life. It is always by faith. Hebrews 11:6 tells us, “...*without faith it is impossible to please Him (God).*” It is through faith that we understand God’s purpose for the world, and it is through faith that we understand what He wants to accomplish in the world. We have many examples given in Hebrews chapter 11.

Definition of Faith:

“Faith is the Spirit-led ability to see something God wants done, and the perseverance to do it according to Bible (Scriptural) principles.”

A person without faith is a person without purpose.

How do we gain more faith?

Faith is activated (we grow in faith), by giving God those things He requests. For example, He would have us read His Word and pray. He asks us to give our life as a living sacrifice, which is total dedication. So everything we have now belongs to Him. Initially it may seem difficult for us to give these. However, as we give them to God, He is able to do so much more with them than we would be able, and He rewards us with more faith and greater direction for our lives.

Question #2 – Suppose that you were to die tonight and stand before God and He were to say to you, “Why should I let you into my heaven?” What would you say?

(From their answers you can understand what their basic beliefs are and how you can go forward.) Most times when I have used this, it leads right into my personal testimony, that I thought it was my good works that would get me into heaven. From here you may want to say something like: “Well, that’s interesting. Those things are very commendable. When you answered the first question, I thought I had some really good news for you. After hearing your answer to the second question, I know that I do. In fact, I would go so far as to say that in the next sixty seconds you are going to hear the greatest good news that you have ever heard in your whole life! That’s quite a statement, isn’t it?). Now go into the Gospel...

A. Grace

1. **Heaven is a free gift** - Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

2. **It is not earned or deserved** –

B. Man

1. **Is a sinner** – (None of us are good enough, Jesus says we would have to be perfect) Matthew 5:48

“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

Romans 3:23 – *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”*

2. **Cannot save himself** – Ephesians 2:8,9

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

C. God

1. **Is merciful** – therefore does not want to punish us.

2. **Is just** – therefore must punish sin. – Exodus 34:7b

God will – *“...by no means clear the guilty,*

How to Share the Gospel:

There have been many methods used to lead someone to Christ. Here we share two examples, but there are others. Find and USE that method for sharing the Word that is comfortable for you. USE is the keyword. Remember, it is the Word that has power for new life, not our imagination or wisdom. You won't argue or talk someone into spiritual re-birth. It takes the Holy Spirit to give life. Therefore, use the Word, although you don't have to give the address, you will need to memorize a few Scriptures.

An effective testimony is one that conveys both your own experience and the Gospel of Christ so that someone else has the information about the process of salvation.

testimony and the gospel.

- Note – for this next section, the Scriptures are given with the outline for better understanding.

Methods of Evangelism:

Evangelism Explosion by Dr. James Kennedy

This is the method I was taught in seminary, and it is very effective. The book is still available and is a great resource, if only for answering objections to the gospel. This brief outline of the presentation of the gospel is from pages 16, 17 of "Evangelism Explosion."

Begin with talking about their secular life. What they enjoy, where they work, etc.

Ask about their church background. Do they have a church background and learn their basic belief system.

Next, talk about your church.

Now, **two diagnostic questions** –

Question #1 – Have you come to a place in your spiritual life where you know for certain that if you were to die today you would go to heaven?

If we do not have a clear purpose in life, you will have great difficulty making correct decisions. The result will be frustration, insecurity, and an ineffective Christian witness. Because this is a critical aspect of the Christian life, we will add more on this throughout the entire study.

Discipleship is the pursuit of whole life transformation, not just Biblical or theological information. Disciples see their knowledge of Jesus deepens as they study and put into practice God's Word!

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES FOR CHAPTER 2

Romans 1:16, 17 – *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”*”

1 Corinthians 1:18 – *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”*

2 Timothy 3:15 - *“and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”*

Romans 3:10-12 - *“As it is written:
“There is none righteous, no, not one;
There is none who understands;
There is none who seeks after God.
They have all turned aside;
They have together become unprofitable;
There is none who does good, no, not one.”*”

2 Timothy 3:16,17 - *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

Psalms 19:7, 8 – *“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;”*

It is God’s Word that brings about conviction (the Holy Spirit uses it to bring mankind to salvation), therefore, it also offers the best outline for your testimony. Acts 26 records how the Apostle Paul stood before King Agrippa and gave his testimony. He gave it boldly, simply, and logically. Paul used three points: his life before Christ, how he met the Lord, and what his life was like after he became a Christian. Your testimony can follow the same pattern.

PREPARE YOUR TESTIMONY:

Begin today – Write a one-page (or short) testimony.

1. **My Life Before I Came to Christ:** This sets the stage by sharing relevant information like your age, your friends and family, your lifestyle – see the example from Acts 26:4-11. Include information you know unbelievers will be able to relate to. Connect your own experience to the universal needs, such as love and forgiveness.
2. **My Conversion Experience:** Also in Acts 26:12-20, Paul describes how Jesus confronted him. Consider the circumstances that led you to encountering Christ. Think about key events and highlight turning points. Include the steps you took, people you talked to, prayers you prayed, and Scripture passages that touched you.
3. **My New Life:** Now share how Christ has changed your life. Since you started following Him, how has your behavior, motivation, or values changed? In Acts 26:21-23, Paul declares his identity is now in the Lord. How has your identity changed?

Along with this, memorize a few key verses that will relate the gospel and fit your testimony. Below are several you may consider. It cannot be over-emphasized: study the Word, seek to live the Christian life, and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work in and through you, then look for opportunities to share your testimony and the changes you have experienced.

CHAPTER 5

HOW DO I SHARE WHAT HAS HAPPENED WITH OTHERS?

This is known as “witnessing” or sometimes, “evangelism.” It is the job of every Christian to be a witness to others. As those close to you see the changes, they may begin to ask questions as to what has brought about the change. That’s a perfect opportunity to tell them about what Jesus has done.

Writing Your Christian Testimony

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;” 1 Peter 3:15

Your Christian testimony is the story of how you came to know Jesus Christ and how He has changed your life. This should not be a surprise to your hearers, but should simply confirm your lifestyle, values and decisions. That’s why it is good to write out your testimony before, so you will be ready to share it as the opportunity arises. Your testimony can open a broader conversation about Christ and what it means to have a relationship with Him.

As you write it out, think about who you would like to share it with and how much time you’ll have with that person. This will help you choose your words and determine what to include. The purpose is two-fold: to remind you of Jesus Christ’s faithfulness and to be ready to share Him with others. As you write your story, keep these tips in mind:

- Use everyday language and keep a conversational tone.
- Avoid religious phrases and Christian jargon.
- Share from the heart – you don’t need to preach.
- Be concise and to the point.

Proverbs 30:5,6 – “Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.”

Revelation 22: 18-19 – “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Psalm 119:89 – “Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.”

(2 Timothy 3:16,17 – see above or below)

Isaiah 55:11 – “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”

John 8:47 – “He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”

John 17:17 – “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”

Luke 11:28 – “But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

Ephesians 6:17 – “... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;”

1 Peter 2:2 – “as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.”

Romans 1:16, 17 – “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

Psalms 119:105 – “Your word is a lamp to my feet, And a light to my path.”

2 Peter 1:20, 21 – “knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

2 Timothy 3:16, 17 – “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Hebrews 11:6 – “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

Matthew 4:18-20 – “And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” They immediately left their nets and followed Him.”

Colossians 1:18 – “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”

Acts 1:8 – “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

1 Corinthians 16:19 – “The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.”

Acts 2:41 – “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.”

Matthew 16:18b – “...on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

Matthew 28:19, 20 – “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.”

Ephesians 3:21 – “to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

John 3:22 – "After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized."

John 4:1,2 – "Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples)"

Matthew 28:18-20 – "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Galatians 3: 26, 27 – "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Acts 2: 40-42 – "And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Ephesians 3:21 – "to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

CHAPTER 3 –

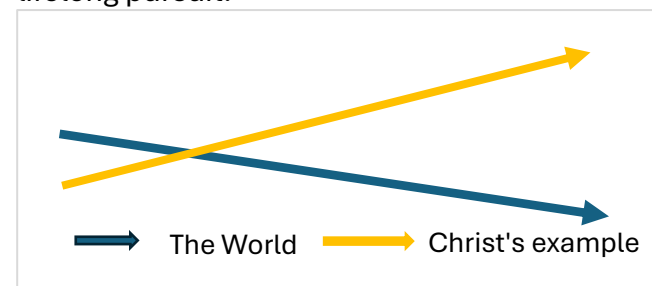
HOW DO I KEEP GROWING?

Being a Disciple of Jesus means that we never stop growing, learning and becoming more Christ like. Our hope is that you can continue to:

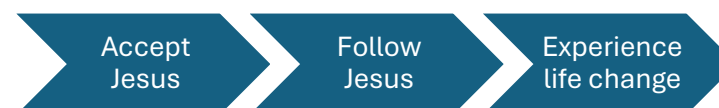
- Grow in knowledge
- Grow in faith
- Grow in practice

A good verse, and one you can memorize is Philippians 1:6 "*...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ*".

Your purpose is to step into the new life and keep following Jesus. Our standard is not just to be better than the rest of our society or world. Our standard is to be like Christ. It is a lifelong pursuit.



I have seen charts that show our life as a Child of God –



REMEMBER - DEFINITION OF A DISCIPLE

“A disciple is a person who follows Jesus – to know Jesus and His teaching; to grow more like Jesus; and to go for Jesus, serving others through His church and making new disciples.”

Describe what you now understand the life of a Christian to be

Please read Galatians 4:19 and answer what does it mean that Christ is formed in you? _____

Now please read 2 Corinthians 3:18 and explain in your own words what it means to be transformed into the image of the glory of the Lord. _____

Let’s now read Colossians 2:6,7. What does this verse tell you about walking in Christ and being rooted and built up in Him?

The Apostle Paul was helping a young minister, named Timothy, to continue to grow in his faith and life, and then how to use it to benefit others. I want to call attention to 1 Timothy 4, especially verses 7 and 12. Paul tells Timothy to ‘exercise’ or ‘train’ yourself to be godly, then how the example is shown for others to follow.

...by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

1 Corinthians 15: 3, 4 – “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,”

Romans 6:3-5 – “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,”

Matthew 28:18 – “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”

John 1:6,7 – “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.”

Mark 1:4 – “John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”

Matthew 3:14-17 – “And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?” But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting...

Luke 23:39-43 – “Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.” But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, “Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.” And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

Matthew 3: 16,17 – “When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Acts 8:38, 39 – “So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.”

John 3:23 – “Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized.”

Colossians 2:12 – “buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”

Romans 6:4 – “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead....

How can you apply this to yourself? _____

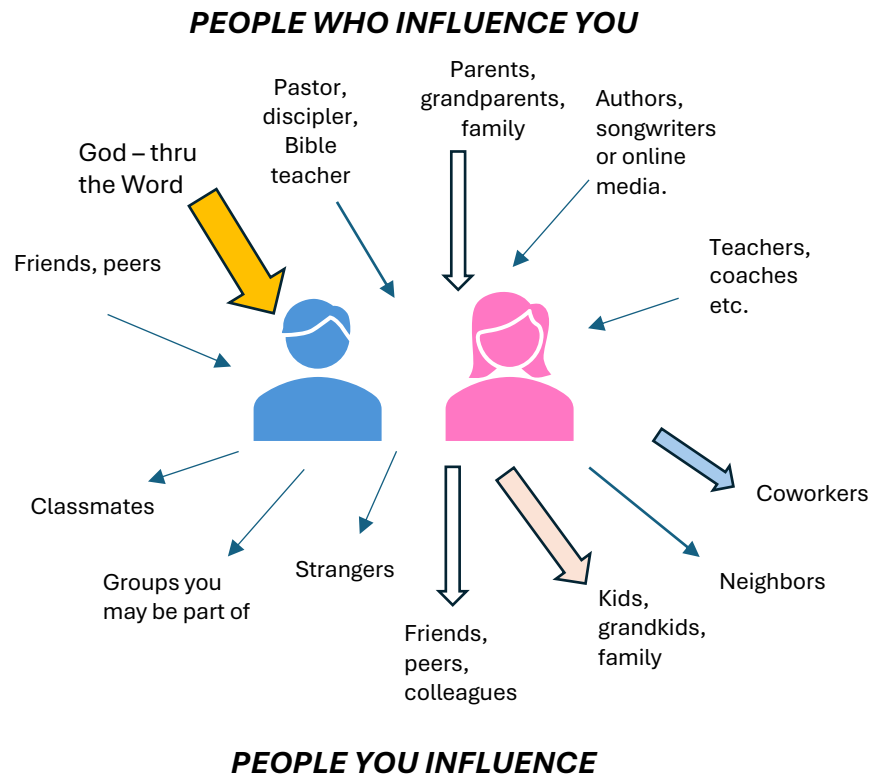
Our spiritual habits and practices are sometimes called: ‘spiritual disciplines.’ These include Bible reading, prayer, being regular in your church, taking part in outreach, and being open to opportunities for service where the Lord may use you.

Look over the chart below, and see common misconceptions about Growing in Christ Jesus.

Transformation Myths	Transformation Truths
Growth is automatic for believers	Growth has to be pursued
Maturity is an event or destination	Maturity is a lifelong process
Transformation is entirely up to God	Transformation ultimately depends on God, but it also requires my participation
Spiritual progress is mostly about finding and learning the right spiritual information & doctrine	Information & doctrine is important but is one part (training – 1 Tim. 4:7) and working out (Phil. 2:12) and doing (James 1:22) are also parts. We have to live the truth we know
Transformation comes from trying hard	Transformation is the result of consistent training and constant trusting God to help you
Following Christ means engaging in a lot of spiritual activities	The goal of the spiritual life isn’t activity; it’s the love relationship and intimacy with the Lord. It’s seeking to love God and others more, taking the character of Jesus
God should work in my life exactly the way He’s working in another person’s life	Spiritual growth will be different from person to person and for the seasons of life

CONSIDER YOUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

As a disciple of Christ, we have been studying ways to continue to grow. Now, let's consider people who influence you and people whom you influence. Our goal is to continue to see God's opportunities for your growth. We must be careful of whose influence we accept, so that it is promoting our spiritual growth, not distracting it. Understand that Satan will use a variety of people to discourage and distract you. He does not want you to become spiritually mature in Christ! It will come, and sometimes surprise you of people (maybe they do it unwittingly) he uses.



And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”

Romans 8:26, 27 – *“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”*

Acts 2:38a – *“Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ”*

Acts 2:41 – *“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.”*

Acts 16:30-33 – *“And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.”*

1 Peter 3:21 – *“There is also an antitype which now saves us— baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,”*

Acts 8:12 – *“But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.”*

Acts 12:5 – “Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.”

Romans 10:1 – “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.”

1 Timothy 2:1,2 – “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.”

Philippians 4:6 – “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;”

1 Corinthians 10:31 – “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

Matthew 6:8-15 – “In this manner, therefore, pray:
Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
Amen.
“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

1 John 5:14, 15 – “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

Being a disciple entails being single-minded, focused, committed and intentional. We can apply this mindset in practical ways – our job, school, family, friends and so on.

A healthy approach to discipleship means both being and doing. This calls for “*with-ness*” (being with Jesus – growing in your relationship) and “*witness*” (going for Jesus). Your life is now to be following Jesus in personal and inter-personal ways. This means our beliefs (based in the Word / truth), and behavior. We now take on the role of a servant of Christ. We recognize our new citizenship and new way of life.

That’s why it’s important who we allow to influence us and who we influence. We don’t want to buy into a worldly way of thinking, just so we fit in. When we see our new position, we want the Lord to be pleased with our life, not others around that we, perhaps in time past, were seeking their approval.

BIBLE STUDY METHODS

The more we know of God, the more we understand what our eternal salvation cost, and the more we grow in our love for all He has done. Through our study of Scripture, we understand our eternal position and possible rewards. The promise of life in heaven with the Lord, and the rewards He gives was ALL made available by Christ, and it’s nothing of ourselves. Always let your actions be motivated by your love for Christ, and not for what you will gain. Still, know that Scripture does teach the blessings of rewards.

What Are The Basics of Bible Study?

Step 1 – Read the Bible

Read a passage of Scripture repeatedly until you understand its theme and main truth of the passage. Look at

Isaiah 28: 9, 10, and we see the meaning. We discussed some of this in an earlier chapter.

Step 2 – Interpreting

According to Acts 8:30, Philip asked an Ethiopian man if he understood the Scripture he read (See Acts 8:30, 31). It's not enough to read the passage and jump to the application. We must determine what it means, otherwise we may make the wrong application. As you read, ask – “what does this mean?” It is important to understand here that all the passages will have other related passages, so we never take one verse and make a doctrine or some truth apart from the rest.

Errors to Avoid

1. Do not draw any conclusions at the price of proper interpretation. Do not make the Bible say what you want it to say, rather, let it say what God intended.
2. Avoid superficial interpretation. You might hear people say, “To me, this passage means,” or “I feel it is saying.” The first step in interpreting the Bible is to recognize the 4 gaps to bridge: language, culture, geography, and history. (More on this below).
3. Do not spiritualize the passage. Interpret and understand the passage in its normal, literal, historical, grammatical sense, just as you would understand any other piece of literature you were reading.

Gaps to Bridge – the books of the Bible were written many centuries ago. For us to understand today what God was expressing then, there are several gaps to be bridged. It's with this in mind that we look for proper interpretation.

1. *Language.* The Bible was originally in Greek, Hebrew and Chaldean (Aramaic). The New Testament was written in ‘Koine’ or common Greek. Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and some small portions in Chaldean.

Romans 12:3-5 – *“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.”*

Ephesians 4:12-15 – *“for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—”*

1 Peter 3:15 – *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;”*

Jeremiah 33:3 – *“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”*

Matthew 6:25 – *“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”*

John 16:23, 24 – *“And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.”*

originated from that first Church, Jesus established in Jerusalem. Therefore, we look at the practice, doctrine and origin to see if a church has these qualifications.

Learning all of this, what should your action or reaction be?

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES FOR CHAPTER 4

Isaiah 55: 8,9 - *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”*

Philippians 2:1-4 – *“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”*

Ephesians 2: 8-10 – *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”*

Matthew 5:16 – *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

2. **Culture.** The culture gap is sometimes a little tricky. Some try to explain away difficult passages to get around Bible commands. The Bible must first be viewed in the context of the culture, especially with regards to certain Jewish culture.
3. **Geography.** Biblical geography makes the Bible come alive. A good Bible atlas, or maps in your study Bible are great tools to reference.
4. **History.** Unlike the scriptures of other world religions, the Bible contains actual historical persons and events. An understanding of Bible history will help us place the people and events in their proper historical perspective. This is where a good Bible dictionary or encyclopedia are useful.

Four Principles to Understand

1. **The Literal Principle.** Scripture should be understood in its literal, normal and natural sense. While the Bible does contain figurative language and symbols, they were always intended to convey literal truth.
2. **The Historical Principle.** This means that we interpret a passage in its historical context. We must ask what the text meant to the people to whom it was first written. In this way, we develop a proper contextual understanding of the original intent.
3. **The Grammatical Principle.** This requires that we understand the basic grammatical structure of each sentence in the original language. To whom do the pronouns refer? What is the tense of the main verb? We find that when we ask some simple questions like those, the meaning of the text becomes clear.
4. **The Synthesis Principle.** This means the Bible does not contradict itself. If we arrive at an interpretation of a passage and that contradicts a truth taught elsewhere in

the Scriptures, our interpretation cannot be correct. Scripture must be compared with Scripture.

Step 3 – Evaluating

You have been reading and asking the question, “What does the Bible say?” Then you have interpreted, asking the question, “What does the Bible mean?” Now it’s time to consult others to be sure we have the proper interpretation.

If you have a good study Bible, it will help in this area. Read Bible introductions, sound commentaries, and background books to enrich your thinking. In your evaluation, be a true seeker. Be one who accepts the truth of God’s Word even though it may cause you to change what you thought. Allow it to alter your life patterns.

Step 4 – Applying

The next question is: “How does God’s truth penetrate and change my own life?” If we study the Scripture without allowing it to penetrate the depths of your soul, it would be like preparing a banquet without eating it. The bottom-line question to ask is, “How do the divine truths and principles contained in any passage apply to me in terms of my attitude and actions?”

Step 5 – Correlating

This last step connects the doctrine truth you have learned in a particular passage with divine truths and principles taught elsewhere in the Bible to form the big picture. Always keep in mind that the Bible is a single book in 66 parts. It contains a number of truths and principles, taught over and over in a variety of ways and circumstances. By correlating and cross-referencing, you will begin to build a sound doctrinal foundation to help you live for Christ.

The Greek word that is translated ‘Church’ is ‘*ekklesia*.’ That is a compound word that means ‘to call out.’ That’s what Jesus began to do on the seashore of Galilee and it continued and grew. So a church is a group of people, ‘called out for a purpose.’ The Lord’s churches are always the people, not the building, not a denomination, not all of the saved (see 1 Corinthians 16:19), or an invisible, intangible group.

Notice in Acts 2:41, and throughout the Book of Acts, those that accepted Jesus as Savior were always ‘added’ to the church in that particular location.

Originally, the Lord’s Church was a group of disciples that were in Israel. At Jesus’ death and resurrection, they were primarily in Jerusalem. Jesus, when He was taken up, gave them instruction in Acts 1:8. This is still the marching orders for His churches today.

One more thing that is important. Jesus promised that His Church would never go out of existence. This means it has always been in the world, somewhere, from the time of Christ to this day. See Matthew 16:18; Matthew 28:19, 20 and Ephesians 3:21. All these tell us His Church would continue.

That means there was no need to ‘reform’ a church. It means, if a man started that church or denomination, it was not begun by Christ. The Lord’s churches were never a part of a government. The purpose of the Lord’s churches was to make disciples, baptize them and teach them. These churches were given the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper. These are only to be in and through His church.

Jesus did not name His Church. Through the centuries, they have been known by various names, but the doctrine and practice has always been the same. They also recognize they

Having learned all in this section, what should your reaction be to what you have seen in the Bible? _____

YOUR CHURCH LIFE

Up to this point we have focused primarily on your personal relation with the Lord. We now move to our relation with God's people. Your church life should always be a means of your love for the Lord, your spiritual growth, and your place of proper service and worship.

As you grow in the Lord, you will also learn much more about the nature and function of the Lord's true churches today. However, we just deal with a few basics at this point, with a prayer it will get you off to a good start.

God began several vital institutions. The home, civil government, and the church as examples.

Jesus gave the orders or direction for His Church. See Matthew 28:18-20 again. Notice the commission given:

1. Go into all of the world
2. Make disciples
3. Baptize those disciples
4. Teach them the Word

What is a true New Testament Church?

It is always a local, visible congregation of Scripturally baptized believers that have covenanted together to carry out the great commission, with Christ as their Head.

See Matthew 4:18-20 and Colossians 1:18.

Here, we present 5 Easy Bible Study Methods, each designed to help you engage with the Word in a meaningful way. Through these methods, you will discover how to explore the Bible's depth, uncover its truths, and apply its lessons to your life.

1. The Inductive Study Method

This method involves three main steps: *Observation*, *Interpretation*, and *Application*. It encourages a thorough examination of the text and seeks to understand its original meaning before applying it to one's life.

Steps:

Observation: What does the text say? Look at the context, who is speaking, and the main themes.

Interpretation: What does the text mean? Consider the cultural and historical background, and the intended message.

Application: How does the text apply to me? Think about what actions or changes are needed in your life.

Example:

Observation: In John 4:1-26, Jesus speaks with the Samaritan woman at the well.

Interpretation: Jesus breaks cultural barriers by speaking to a Samaritan and a woman. He offers her "living water," symbolizing eternal life.

Application: I should reach out to others, regardless of social barriers, and share the message of eternal life through Jesus.

2. SOAP Method

'SOAP' stands for Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer. This method encourages you to read the Bible passage and reflect deeply on its meaning and how it applies to your life.

Steps:

Scripture: Write down a verse or passage that stands out to you.

Observation: Note what you observe about the verse. Who is speaking? What is happening? What is the main point?

Application: Think about how this scripture applies to your life. What changes do you need to make? How does it impact your faith?

Prayer: Pray about what you have learned and ask God to help you apply it to your life.

Example:

Scripture: Philippians 4:6-7

Observation: Paul is encouraging believers to not be anxious but to pray and be thankful. He promises that God's peace will guard their hearts and minds.

Application: When I feel anxious, I should turn to prayer and gratitude, trusting God's peace to comfort me.

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember to pray and be thankful when I am anxious, and fill me with Your peace.

Here is how to follow the 4-step S.O.A.P. method. First, gather your Bible, journal, and other Bible study materials. Next, follow these steps:

4. **S – Scripture.** Choose any Scripture or passage of Scripture. Read the verse or verses in your Bible. Write and highlight meaningful words, phrases, or Scriptures that stand out or resonate with you.
5. **O – Observation.** Take a few moments to observe the passage of scripture you've read and ask further questions about the text. This step will help you to get a more in-depth view of what you've just read. Here are a few examples of questions we might ask ourselves when using the S.O.A.P. method:

- ⇒ Jesus had all authority. See Matthew 28:18
- ⇒ God initially instituted baptism, and the Scriptures show a chain of authority for proper administration.
- ⇒ John the Baptist is the first link in the chain of that authority. See John 1:6 and Mark 1:4
- ⇒ Jesus walked about 60 miles to receive John's baptism because he was the one with authority. This authority was confirmed by the Father. See Matthew 3:14-17
- ⇒ Jesus gave the authority to baptize to His church. See John 3:22 and 4:1,2.
- ⇒ Jesus gave the 'Great Commission' to His church. See Matthew 28:18-20

Anyone can say a wedding ceremony, but only one with the authority can sign the certificate that makes it legal. Anyone can dip a person in water, but it does not carry Heaven's authority.

P = Purpose. The proper purpose is to show the likeness of our being buried to the old man and risen as a new creation, to live a new life.

Any other purpose ruins the beautiful symbolic picture that is a witness to all that see it.

Baptism does not save a person. It is the act of obedience after salvation. See Matthew 3:14 (referred to before) and Galatians 3:26, 27.

Baptism is required to unite with a Scriptural Church. That, some have said, is the door to church membership. To begin a life of service, where we ought to serve, in a true church, we demonstrate our obedience to Jesus' commands. See Acts 2:40-42 and Ephesians 3:21.

As we begin our new life in Christ, we are pleasing to Him as we are obedient. Therefore we take the "Proper STEP" of Scriptural baptism.

In Luke 23:39-43, the thief on the cross was saved, but was not baptized.

E = Elements. The proper elements are full immersion in water and given by the proper authority, a Scriptural New Testament Church. Let's consider these elements.

Immersion in water – All New Testament examples of baptism are by immersion.

- ⇒ Jesus was immersed. See Matthew 3: 16,17
- ⇒ The Ethiopian eunuch was immersed. See Acts 8: 38, 39
- ⇒ John was baptizing near Salim because there was much water there. See John 3:23
- ⇒ The Bible states baptism is a burial. See Colossians 2:12 and Romans 6:4.
- ⇒ Baptism pictures the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. We are, by the symbolic act of a watery grave, likened to Jesus' resurrection. See 1 Corinthians 15: 3,4 and Romans 6:3-5.

The word 'baptize' is not translated from the original Greek, but it is "transliterated." The Bible translators brought the Greek alphabet characters into English letters. This way, they brought the Greek word '*bapto*' and '*baptizo*' into English without defining the meaning.

"Bapto" and "baptize" always means to 'dip,' 'immerse' or 'bury.'

Our baptism is a symbolic witness that we have died to the old person and now 'risen to walk in the newness of life.' (See Romans 6:4 again).

Proper Authority – Only a Scriptural New Testament Church was given the authority to administer baptism. Not only is the mode important but the administrator is also necessary.

1. What is the overall message of the passage?
2. Were there any commands or instructions?
3. Are there any warnings in the text?
4. What truth can you learn?
5. What do you feel God is showing you through His Word? Did you learn anything new?
6. **A – Application.** Reflect on how you can apply these scriptures to your daily life. After reading this passage of scripture:
 1. How does this verse apply to your life today?
 2. How can you implement what you've read?
 3. What habits, attitudes, or changes do you need to make?
 4. What lessons can you take away from the reading?
7. **P – Prayer.** Say a prayer in reference to the passage. What do you want to express to God as a result of what you've read? Try to incorporate the Scriptures you've read as you pray. In prayer, thank God for new or deeper understanding and ask Him for wisdom to help you apply these truths to your life.

3. Topical Bible Study

Third among our easy Bible study methods involves studying what the Bible says about a specific topic or theme. It helps in understanding the Bible's comprehensive teaching on subjects like faith, love, prayer, etc.

Steps:

Choose a Topic: Select a theme or topic you want to study.

Gather Scriptures: Use a concordance or Bible app to find all relevant verses on the topic.

Study and Summarize: Read and analyze the verses, noting key points and patterns. Summarize your findings.

Example:

Topic: Prayer

Gather Scriptures: Matthew 6:9-13 (The Lord’s Prayer),
Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

Study and Summarize: Prayer is essential in the believer’s
life. Jesus teaches a model prayer, encourages presenting
requests to God with thanksgiving, and urges believers to pray
continually.

4. Character Study

This method focuses on studying a particular person in the
Bible. It involves examining their life, character traits,
decisions, and their relationship with God.

Steps:

Choose a Character: Select a Bible character to study.

Read Passages: Read the passages that mention or describe
the character.

Analyze and Reflect: Note their strengths, weaknesses,
significant events, and lessons from their life.

Example:

Character: David

Read Passages: 1 Samuel 16-31, 2 Samuel, Psalms

Analyze and Reflect: David was a shepherd, warrior, and
king. He had great faith (defeating Goliath) and also serious
failures (his sin with Bathsheba). He is known as a “*man after
God’s own heart*” because of his deep repentance and
worship.

5. Verse Mapping

The last of our easy Bible study methods involves breaking
down a single verse to understand its deeper meaning. It

Here we have a simple acrostic to help us – **S-T-E-P-** and
understand what true and Scriptural baptism looks like.

S = Subject. The proper subject is a saved child of God.
Please read Acts 2:38.

Notice that repentance (salvation) always comes before
baptism. We will see that also in the next verses we study in
the Book of Acts.

In Acts 2:41, it says it like this: “*Then those who gladly
received the Word...*”. That simply shows they had accepted
the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they had accepted Jesus as their
personal Savior. This precedes baptism, always.
For further proof, lets read Acts 16:30-33. This jailor asks the
direct question, “*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*”
It isn’t until later, with his family who also believed, (see verse
34), were baptized.

T = Time. The proper time.
We have just read that the proper subject had accepted Jesus
Christ personally as Savior.
The next step then is baptism. Every example in the New
Testament, of anyone being baptized always followed their
being ‘born-again.’
Baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God.
Let’s read 1 Peter 3:21.

What does “*answer of a good conscience*” mean? _____

How does baptism give that answer? _____

See also Acts 8:12. Baptism never was a means to obtain
salvation, it shows what has taken place within, that the world
cannot see.

We have help in our prayers, because so often just don't know how to pray. But God has given us His Holy Spirit to translate and intercede where we fall short. Please read Romans 8:26, 27. How does this help you now? _____

There are so many other aspects of prayer, such as being persistent in prayer, but time and space do not allow too much more. You are encouraged to continue to study and grow in your prayer life. It needs to become a vital part of your daily life. Make prayer a regular habit.

All of the great men of the Bible had a dynamic prayer life. It is something the Lord has given to help us live for Him and see His working in and through us.

When closing your prayer, do it in Jesus' name, that is, ask in His authority. It's not of our own doing. Look back in the Scripture reference at John 16:23, 24 and see our instruction to ask in His name!

Baptism

Baptism is one of two New Testament 'ordinances' given for His Church to keep. After our salvation, baptism, complete immersion, is the first step of obedience for us to follow.

Unfortunately, in our day, there are many wrong teachings on this, so we stick close to the New Testament and are assured of being correct and obedient as a new Child of God.

We can define Scriptural baptism as –

“The immersion in water of a born-again believer by the authority of a local, visible, New Testament Church, in the name (by the authority) of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

includes looking at different translations, defining key words, and exploring cross-references.

Steps:

Choose a Verse: Select a verse you want to study.

Different Translations: Write the verse in several Bible translations.

Define Key Words: Look up the meanings of important words in the verse.

Cross-References: Find and read related verses that provide more insight.

Summarize: Write a summary of your findings and reflect on how it applies to your life.

Example:

Verse: Jeremiah 29:11

Different Translations: Compare NIV, NASB, NKJV, etc.

Define Key Words: “Plans” (intentions, purposes), “prosper” (welfare, peace), “hope” (expectation, confidence).

Cross-References: Romans 8:28, Philippians 1:6.

Summarize: God has good plans for our future, providing hope and peace. This encourages trust in His purposes, even during uncertain times.

These 5 Easy Bible Study Methods provide structured and meaningful ways to delve into the Bible, enhancing understanding and personal spiritual growth.

There is a lot of information in this chapter, and we don't want it to feel overwhelming. It is important to read the Word and apply it. Focus on that now, and try these various study methods, see what comes easiest for you.

To finish this chapter, please answer one more question.
What is the greatest impression you take away from this entire chapter? _____

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES FOR CHAPTER 3

Galatians 4: 18, 19 – *“But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you. My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,”*

2 Corinthians 3:18 – *“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”*

Colossians 2: 6,7 – *“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.”*

1 Timothy 4:7 – *“But reject profane and old wives’ fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness.”*

And

1 Timothy 4: 12 – *“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”*

...should be in a reverent manner. *“Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your Name.”*

We need the proper attitude as we come before Our Heavenly Father, one of awe for His attributes, of praise for Who He is, one of closeness as our Father.

1. Verse 10 – We have a desire for Christ’s return and recognize God’s almighty power in our world. *“Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”*
2. Verse 11 – We should ask God for every need in life, (even the small things). *“Give us this day our daily bread.”* We can include confessing our sins in this as well, because sin breaks our fellowship with God. Also, we need to yield to God’s will being done in all things.
3. Verse 12 – Unforgiveness is a sin. Sin breaks fellowship with God. This results in unanswered prayers. *“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”*
4. Verse 13 – God does not tempt us, but is able to deliver us from temptation. Thus, in prayer, we find help when we find the inward battle to sin or do right. We learn that “the evil one” (Satan and his demons) will attack us, but we have help. It’s just a prayer away. *“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”* -We see also, it’s all about God, His Kingdom, His power, and all the glory goes to Him! And then we get a view on the eternal aspect, “forever.” Amen (So be it!).

God does answer prayer! We need to ask, *“If it is according to Your (God’s) will.”* Let’s read 1 John 5:14, 15.

Can you give any example of praying according to God’s will, what it would be or look like? _____

Your Prayer Life

Prayer is a vital part of the Child of God's life. It is about fellowship with God, it's not reciting a memorized, formal passage. It's about relationship.

In this section we see Jesus taught His disciples to pray. This is another area that we just touch upon, with a desire to assist you to feel comfortable praying and having fellowship with God. This is an area of study you may spend time studying in the future as you continue growing in Christ.

First let's examine the purpose of prayer.

- To know God more intimately. He desires to reveal Himself to us in prayer. See Jeremiah 33:3
- To see God work through us in ways only He is able. See Matthew 7:25 & John 16:23, 24.
- To see other lives changed. See Acts 12:5 and Romans 10:1.

We are instructed to pray. Please read -1 Tim 2:1-3; Philippians 4:6.

What do you learn from these scriptures about what should be included in your prayers? _____

We must have right motives when we pray. Your prayers are for the honor and glory of God alone. Please see 1 Corinthians 10:31. What does this passage teach us about prayer? _____

Now, let's study the model pray Jesus taught on the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew chapter 6.

Verse 9 – At the beginning of our prayer, we recognize who we are speaking to – we address God, and this...

Philippians 2:12, 13 – *“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”*

James 1:22 – *“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”*

Isaiah 28:9, 10 – *“Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little.”*

Acts 8:30, 31 - *“So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”*

And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him.”

CHAPTER 4

HOW DO I LIVE A LIFE PLEASING TO THE LORD?

Sometimes people think that being a Christian is a lot of ‘do’s and don’ts.’ It’s easy to see why this idea gets started, but the truth is, because we love the Lord and all He has done for us, *we want* to live a new way of life. It’s not that we *have to* do anything or can’t do others, (a discussion on this in upcoming studies.) Living a life pleasing to the Lord will be our main occupation and purpose from now on. That means it is a continual growth and “re-adjusting” our lifestyle.

As we learn what God is doing around us, and He is at work all around us, we join Him in that. As we join God, we will adjust our life in all sorts of ways. We change our thinking, we change our daily routine at times, we need to be ready to change what we are doing as we see God working.

One thing I learned in a study called, “Experiencing God,” was that you cannot stay where you are and go with God. That meant adjustments. All of the great men of the Bible made adjustments to their lives because they believed God. Think of it in this way:

Faith  *Action*
Action = Adjustments + Obedience

Your greatest single difficulty in following God may come at the point of adjustment. See Isaiah 55:8, 9 please.

What does this mean and how do you understand it? _____

On the chart below, examine each pair of actions or attitudes. Where do you see yourself?

Where do you see yourself? There are no right or wrong answers.		
Doing occasional acts of service	↔	Having a servant’s heart
Serving on “official” capacities	↔	Serving in “unofficial” capacities
Helping when asked	↔	Noticing needs and taking the initiative to help
Focusing on needed tasks	↔	Focusing on people in need
Serving according to what others need	↔	Serving according to my passions and talents
“Out front” visible service	↔	“Behind the scenes” invisible service
Serving within the church	↔	Serving outside the church

Life Changes

As a Child of God, we now embrace our need to be a disciple and we are learning that following Him may mean:

- Rejecting the self-centeredness of our culture and taking on the mindset modeled by Jesus (See Philippians 2:1-4).
- Understanding you have been saved for a life of good works that match the unique way God created you (See Ephesians 2: 8-10).
- Let your light shine among friends, coworkers, neighbors, and those we come into contact (See Matthew 5:16).
- Discover, understand and use your God-given abilities to serve and build up others within your church (See Romans 12: 3-5).
- Get equipped to be of service and help as the Lord opens new opportunities (See Ephesians 4:12-15).
- Learn how to give a reason “*for the hope that is in you,*” then how to share your own story how the Gospel of Jesus Christ has changed your life (See 1 Peter 3:15).