



FOLLOWING JESUS

LEARNING TO LIVE AND LOVE LIKE JESUS

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When Jesus began His public ministry, he encountered two men, Peter and Andrew, as they were fishing by the Sea of Galilee. These men might be considered some of His first converts. But Jesus did not ask them to “invite Him into their hearts,” nor “accept Him as their Savior,” nor “just believe in Jesus” for their salvation. What Jesus requested was simple, but life-changing: “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” A theology that stops at salvation is missing the full life Jesus offers. God invites us to grow up – to mature and become like Christ. Following Jesus is a process and a journey, not a one-time decision. More so, to be a follower of Jesus comes with a calling to help others follow Jesus.

Following Jesus means Jesus will make my heart, attitude, behavior, mind and relationships like His, so as I become like Jesus I too can reach others who will also follow Him. Simply put, following Jesus is allowing Jesus to make me like Jesus so I live like Jesus. At Calvary, we believe in this calling because of Christ’s last command to us in us in Matthew 28:19-20: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” So we are called to “make disciples” not just make decisions for Jesus.

Discipleship is not a program. It is a relationship in which two people journey through life together while learning to obey the teachings of Jesus. Being a disciple requires an open, teachable spirit, willing to spend time with someone who wants to help you follow Jesus and experience the best life possible. Through this discipleship course, you will be empowered and equipped to fulfill your part in God’s work of redeeming and restoring the world as you learn how to live and love like Jesus.



FOLLOWING JESUS

LEARNING TO LIVE AND LOVE LIKE JESUS

STUDENT EDITION

THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO:

CONTACT:
(PHONE OR EMAIL)

INTRODUCTION

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full!” John 10:10 (NIV)

FOLLOW ME.

Follow me and find your true self.

Follow me and find what you were made for.

Follow me and find wisdom for how life is meant to be lived.

You were made for a purpose. Every human life is a masterpiece created by God to accomplish great things. When we choose to live life according to our own ways, we disconnect ourselves from God and His purposes for our life. Jesus came to reconcile us to the Father, to fix the broken relationship caused by our selfish ways, and show us a new way to live.

If we choose to follow Jesus, we are invited and caught up into a greater story of how life is meant to be. We learn from the Creator of life Himself how this span of years we are given here on earth was originally intended to be.

We were made to know and be known by God. We were made to live in healthy relationships with those around us. Sin and brokenness have marred this life we were created for, but Jesus has made a way for us to get back to the relationship and the life we were intended for. He paid the price we couldn't pay for ourselves, dying on our behalf so that we could live for Him! It's not just about going to Heaven, but following a new way of life during our time here on earth—living differently TODAY because of the new life we have found in Jesus.

It's the kind of life that has no regrets.

It's the kind of life that has confidence in making good decisions.

It's the kind of life that is life abounding with purpose, meaning, and fulfillment.

It's the kind of life that is invested in healthy relationships with the people we love.

Jesus taught and modeled a new way to live. It's a life of freedom, selflessness, joy, and adventure.

Maybe you're new to who Jesus is, or maybe you've grown up hearing a lot about who He is but still haven't quite figured out how and why it matters in your own life. This book is designed to help you learn more about who Jesus is and what it means to follow Him. He's invited you into an incredible adventure and a new way of life...

Will you follow Him?

“For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

CONTENTS

PART 1: LOVING GOD

- STEP 1 Finding Confidence in Your Relationship with Jesus 2**
How can I be sure? Did I do it right? Am I really good enough?
- STEP 2 Unpacking Forgiveness 8**
What happens if I sin again? Will God always forgive me?
- STEP 3 Taking Hold of Your Identity in Christ 14**
Am I really that different? What changed when I started following Jesus?
- STEP 4 Being a Student of God’s Word 20**
How do I learn about this life of following Jesus?
- STEP 5 Learning to Talk to God 26**
What is prayer? How can I talk to God?
- STEP 6 Understanding the Role of the Holy Spirit 32**
Who is the Holy Spirit? How can He help me follow Jesus?

PART 2: LOVING OTHERS

- STEP 7 Relating to the People of God 40**
How should we treat one another? What characterizes my relationships?
- STEP 8 Discovering God’s Plan for His Church 46**
Why do we gather together? What about baptism, communion, & tithing?
- STEP 9 Carrying Out Our Purpose 52**
What is our purpose as followers of Jesus? What role do I play?

MATTHEW 22:37-39

“And He said to him, ‘You shall **love the Lord your God** with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall **love your neighbor** as yourself.’”

Note: All verses used are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB) Updated Edition, unless otherwise noted.

"AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD
YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR
HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR
SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND,
AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH."

Mark 12:30



PART 1

LOVING GOD



STARTING THE CONVERSATION

- What are some of the big decisions you have made in your life?
- What gives you confidence that you have made a good decision?
- How would a relationship be affected if one of the people has doubts?
- If doubts affect our relationship with other people, how could similar doubts also affect our relationship with Jesus?
- What's your story of how you made the decision to start a relationship with Jesus?



TURNING TO SCRIPTURE

Hearing what God has to say can help build your confidence! Read the following verses and look for what God says is true for those who believe in Jesus. Make a list on the next page of what you find.

John 1:12

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to *those who believe in His name.*”

John 20:31

“These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and *that believing* you may have life in His name.”

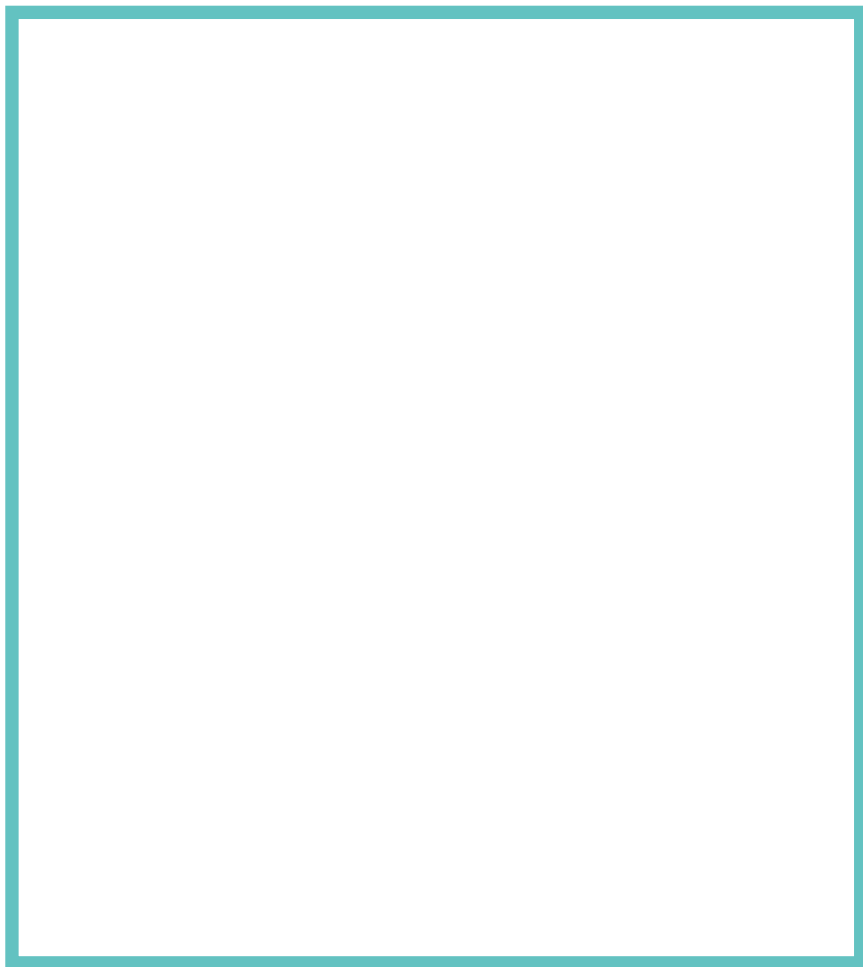
Romans 10:9

“That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and *believe in your heart* that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Ephesians 1:13

“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-*having also believed*, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.”

MAKE YOUR LIST HERE:



Food for Thought

THE WORD **CONFIDENCE** IS ROOTED IN THE LATIN WORD "FIDE" = FAITH. IT MEANS TO HAVE FAITH, FULL TRUST, CERTITUDE, ASSURANCE.





TURNING TO SCRIPTURE

John 1:12 tells us that we become children of God.

How can knowing that your relationship to God is like a child to a parent help give you confidence?

John 20:31 tells us that we have life in His name.

We already have physical life, so this must be talking about some other kind of life that we have. What do you think this “life” is talking about?

Romans 10:9 tells us that we will be saved.

This tells us about the confidence we can have about our eternal destination. One of the crippling doubts for any relationship is the question, “Will it last?”. How can knowing the eternal status of your relationship with God give you confidence in your relationship with Him today?

Ephesians 1:13 tells us that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit.

In Biblical times, a king would put a wax seal, with his special imprint or stamp, on a document. This seal communicated that whatever was inside this document had the king’s seal of approval. It also carried with it the idea of ownership or identification. But we are not sealed with wax; God’s seal of approval and ownership is accomplished through giving us the Holy Spirit (Step 6 of “Following Jesus” will explain more about who the Holy Spirit is.) How can this image of being sealed with the Holy Spirit help further your confidence in this relationship?

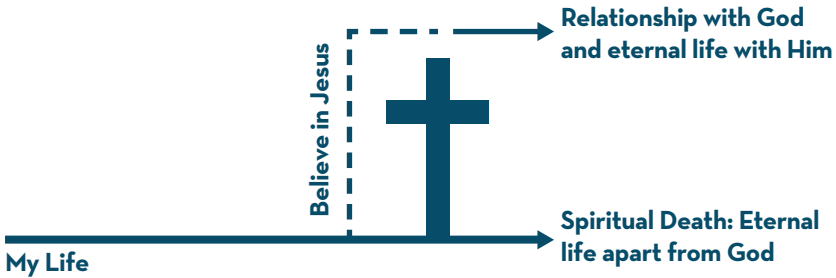
Food for Thought

WHEN WE BELIEVE, GOD GIVES US HIS SEAL OF APPROVAL BY
SENDING THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BE A PART OF OUR LIVES!





GETTING THE PICTURE



Romans 6:23 says that “the wages of sin is death.” If a wage is something you earn, then what is earned by living our lives apart from God’s will is to spend the rest of our lives apart from God. This is the “death” talked about in Romans. This is the path that we were all on. The good news is that God has made it possible for us to have a right relationship with Him and made a way for us to have life!

Read 1 John 5:11-13. According to these verses, there are only two options: if we have the Son of God, we have life. If we do not have the Son of God, we do not have life. All we have to do is believe and put our trust in Jesus!

Where would you put yourself on the picture above?

On a scale of 0% - 100%, how confident are you that you have a relationship with God?

If we believe in Jesus as the Son of God who lived a sinless life, died on the cross and was raised from the grave, conquering sin and death, we can have 100% confidence that we have begun our new life with God, and that this relationship will continue into eternity in heaven!

1 John 5:11-13

“AND THE TESTIMONY IS THIS, THAT GOD HAS GIVEN US ETERNAL LIFE, AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON. HE WHO HAS THE SON HAS THE LIFE; HE WHO DOES NOT HAVE THE SON OF GOD DOES NOT HAVE THE LIFE. THESE THINGS I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU WHO BELIEVE IN THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD, SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW THAT YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.”

 NEXT STEPS

As you have begun this new relationship and life with God, it is important to take steps and keep growing in your faith. A theology that stops at salvation is missing the full life Jesus offers us today. God invites us to grow up – to mature and become like Christ. Following Jesus is a process and a journey, not a one-time decision.

In any relationship, it is normal to experience doubts. Times will come when you may experience doubt in your relationship with God. And that's okay! When you experience doubts, it's important to be honest about them and seek the answers you need.

One answer you can always have confidence in is that if you have believed in Jesus, you can have 100% certainty that you have a relationship with God and have begun a new life with Him. *Our confidence for this is not because of anything we have done, but because of the complete work of Christ on our behalf!*

Here's a few things you can do this week to grow in your confidence:

- When we experience doubt, it is good to remember the truths of Scripture. Read John 1:12 every day this week to remind yourself of the confidence you can have as a child of God.
- Read the Gospel of John and look for evidence that Jesus is the Son of God. Also keep an eye out for how many times Jesus says to believe in Him.
- If you want to examine the evidence for Jesus outside of the Bible, check out the book *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel, or *More than a Carpenter* by Josh McDowell.

John 1:12

"BUT AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM, TO THEM HE GAVE THE RIGHT TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD, EVEN TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIS NAME."



STARTING THE CONVERSATION

- How would you feel if you disappointed someone important to you?
- How might those feelings affect the way you relate to that person?
- If you had to explain forgiveness in your own words, how would you define or describe it?
- Can you think of a time when someone forgave you? What was that experience like for you?
- Why is understanding forgiveness so essential for living the Christian life?



TURNING TO SCRIPTURE

Read these verses to see how God has taken care of the penalty for our sin:

Hebrews 10:11-14

Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

Ephesians 1:7

In [Jesus Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.

2 Corinthians 5:21

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**According to the verses you just read, how are our sins taken care of?
Is there anything left for us to do?**

**Often times people feel the need to try and “earn” our forgiveness.
Why do you think that is?**

We know that all of our sins—past, present, and future—were taken care of at the cross when we trusted in Jesus. However, becoming a follower of Jesus is not just a transaction with God to pay for our sin and make sure we go to heaven. Becoming a follower of Jesus is about a personal relationship that we have today with God. The verses on the next page explore how sin and forgiveness affect this personal relationship with God.



TURNING TO SCRIPTURE

1 John 1:5 - 2:2

⁵This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

¹My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ²and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

How does the image of light and darkness help you understand the idea of sin and how it relates to God?

One reason John wrote this letter to some of the first followers of Jesus was to help them understand the right and wrong way to respond to sin. Fill in the table below with how we should and shouldn't deal with the sin in our lives:

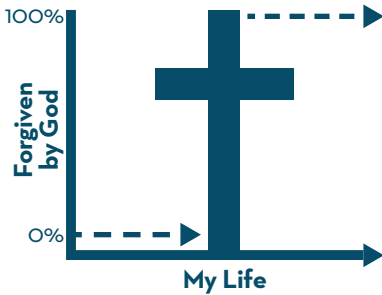
WRONG WAY	RIGHT WAY
v. 1:6	v. 1:7
v. 1:8	v. 1:9
v. 1:10	v. 2:1-2

How can understanding God's forgiveness of our sins, along with these right responses to the sin in our lives, help us have a healthy and growing relationship with God?

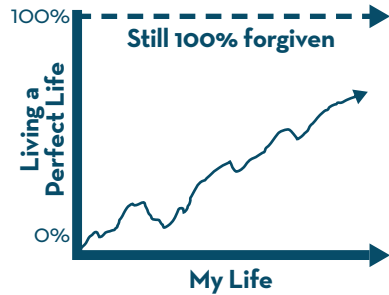


GETTING THE PICTURE

MY POSITION IN CHRIST



MY CONDITION



When we trust Jesus, we can have confidence that all of our sins—past, present, and future—have been completely forgiven. However, we are still far from living a perfect life!

The picture on the left shows we are 100% forgiven by God the very moment we place our trust in Jesus. This is the position we enter into before God, and it will never change! We are forever in a position of “good standing” before God because of the sacrifice of Jesus.

The picture on the right shows that, while we are 100% forgiven the moment we start following Jesus and trust Him to reconcile us to God, the condition of our life still has a lot of room to grow. Our ability to live our lives modeled after the perfect example of Jesus, and overcome the sin in our life, is something that we will continually be growing in throughout the rest of our life here on earth. Just as we are saved by grace – it is not something we earn – we will continue to grow by grace. It is something we learn to do in cooperation with the Holy Spirit at work within us.

1 John 1:9

“IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND RIGHTEOUS TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.”


 NEXT STEPS

We can know that God has completely forgiven us, and yet still go through life struggling with sin and feelings of guilt and shame. There can be things from our past, or even present struggles, that we think are beyond the grace of God to forgive. We try to hide these things, living in the darkness.

Romans 8:1 tells us, “*Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*” The Holy Spirit does convict us of sin in our life—inviting us to confess and repent—but He doesn’t condemn us because we are now *in Christ*. Our sins are completely forgiven by the death of Jesus on the cross, and this frees us from the fear that God will condemn us!

Sin is wrong, and we should actively seek to avoid the sin in our lives as we repent, turning from our sin and trusting God to change our heart’s desires and habits. However, Christ has set us free from the captivity of sin and burden of shame, and restored us to right standing before God. Here are a few things you can do this week to help you in the area of forgiveness. When you identify a sin in your life, respond with these steps:

- Remember Jesus’ death on the cross, which cleanses us from the sin in our lives. Take a minute to thank God for this gift of forgiveness.
- Confess, or agree with God, that this behavior or attitude is wrong.
- Repent, or turn away from that sin. Take active steps to remove the sin, or the temptation to sin, from your life.
- Sometimes in your journey as a follower of Jesus it is helpful to have a friend or mentor hold you accountable. There is power in confessing to a fellow believer (James 5:16). Find someone you trust, and ask them to help you overcome this sin.

Here’s a few things you can do to grow in your understanding of forgiveness:

- Read 1 John 1:9 every day this week to remind yourself that when you sin, you can confess it to God and receive His forgiveness.
- Read these other verses to learn more: Psalm 86:5, 103:12; Proverbs 28:13; Micah 7:18-19; Matthew 6:9-15; Acts 3:19; Ephesians 1:7; and Colossians 1:13-14.
- As we understand God’s forgiveness for us, it is also important to extend forgiveness to others. Read Matthew 18:21-25; Ephesians 4:31-32 and Colossians 3:13. Is there anyone in your life that you need to forgive? Ask God to help you forgive that person this week.



STARTING THE CONVERSATION

- If we identify what kind of group a person belongs to, we can usually deduce a few more things about that person. For example, what would you be able to deduce about someone if he or she was a professional athlete? A member of the military? A veterinarian?
- What are some things you should be able to deduce about someone if he or she is a follower of Christ?



TURNING TO SCRIPTURE

Read through the verses below to learn about what is automatically included in the identity of all who follow Christ.

WE HAVE A PLACE TO BELONG

We become a child of God:

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name” John 1:12

We belong to the family of God:

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household” Ephesians 2:19

How can a sense of belonging help you live out your life in Christ?

WE HAVE A NEW PURPOSE

We are created to fulfill the good works that God has prepared for us:

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” Ephesians 2:10

We are given spiritual gifts to help accomplish God’s mission:

“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” 1 Peter 4:10

How can a sense of purpose help you live out your life in Christ?

WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit comes and lives within us:

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.” John 14:16-17

The Holy Spirit helps us to live in power, love, and discipline:

“For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.” 2 Timothy 1:7

How can the Holy Spirit help you live out your life in Christ?

WE HAVE A NEW BEGINNING

We are forgiven:

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace” Ephesians 1:7

We are no longer controlled by sin:

“Our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin” Romans 6:6-7

How can a new beginning help you live out your life in Christ?

WE HAVE A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

We have access to God:

“Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:16

We are never alone:

“For He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you’” Hebrews 13:5

We can never be separated from the love of God:

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

How can a new way of relating to God help you live out your life in Christ?

WE KNOW THE BEST IS YET TO COME

We have an unshakeable source of hope for our lives:

“This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast”
Hebrews 6:19

We look forward to eternal life with God:

“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” John 17:3

How can hope for the future help you live out your life in Christ?

WE EXPERIENCE NEW ATTRIBUTES

We experience freedom:

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.” Galatians 5:1

We experience peace:

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” Philippians 4:7

We are holy and blameless before God:

“He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him” Ephesians 1:4

How can these attributes help you live out your life in Christ?

Food for Thought

A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD CHANGES OUR **PAST** (A NEW BEGINNING),
OUR **PRESENT** (A NEW RELATIONSHIP) AND OUR **FUTURE** (A NEW HOPE).





GETTING THE PICTURE

MY LIFE BEFORE CHRIST



MY LIFE AFTER CHRIST



When you decided to follow Christ, a lot of new things became true about you! These changes took place on the inside, and it can take time for them to work their way outward so that some of your external behaviors change. But you can still have confidence that all of these things are true of you, and over time you will begin to see more and more changes happen in your life!

These verses talk about this inner change that takes place:

Ezekiel 36:26-27: *“Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”*

2 Corinthians 4:16: *“Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.”*

Since you have been following Christ, what are some of the changes you have already seen take place in your life?

 NEXT STEPS

Does all of this seem too good to be true? That God has already done so many good things in your life? Take some time to go back and read through the verses from the Step 3 lesson this week, and remind yourself that these are all things that God has done for you!

Here's a few more things you can do this week to help you continue to grow in understanding your new identity in Christ:

- When we experience doubt, and wonder if all of these things are too good to be true, it is helpful to listen to what God has said about you. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 every day this week to remind yourself that God HAS made you into a new creation!
- Look up the following verses to learn even more about your new identity in Christ:
 - We belong to the body of Christ - Romans 12:5
 - We belong to the people of God - 1 Peter 2:10
 - We are called to proclaim the excellency of Christ - 1 Peter 2:9
 - We are a friend of God - John 15:15
 - We are made fully alive - Ephesians 2:4-5
 - We are free from condemnation - Romans 8:1
- If you want to read more about this topic, check out the book *Who I Am In Christ* by Neil T. Anderson.

2 Corinthians 5:17

"THEREFORE IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A **NEW CREATURE**;
THE OLD THINGS PASSED AWAY; BEHOLD, **NEW THINGS** HAVE COME."



STARTING THE CONVERSATION

- How is the way we think influenced by our surroundings?
- How does the way we think affect the way we live?
- Before you started following Jesus, what did you think about the Bible?
- How do you think about the Bible now?
- What place does the Bible have in your life?
- How confident do you feel in your ability to use and understand the Bible on your own?



TURNING TO SCRIPTURE

Before we get into the Bible, we want to look at a few principles to use for how to read God's Word. Then we'll practice applying these principles.

1. Identify the genre you are reading.

The Bible is made up of many books from many different types of literature called "genres."

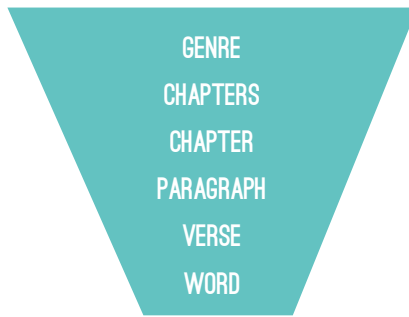
- OLD TESTAMENT
 - Genesis through Esther is mostly narrative.
 - Job through Song of Solomon is mostly poetic or "wisdom literature."
 - Isaiah through Malachi is mostly prophetic.
- NEW TESTAMENT
 - Matthew through Acts is mostly narrative.
 - Romans through Jude is mostly letters or epistles.
 - Revelation is mostly prophetic, or apocalyptic.

How does knowing the genre help you better understand what you're reading?

2. Read everything in context.

It is always best to understand the context of what you are reading. We want to understand the cultural, historical, grammatical and literary contexts in order to truly get the big idea and understand what the author meant.

See the passage from a bird's eye view with a top down perspective. Usually, the minimum starting point is at the paragraph level. We don't want to look at the leaf first. Start with the forest, then trees, then leaves.



Has anything you've said ever been taken out of context? Why is this principle so important?

3. Search for the correct meaning of the text.

- Step #1: OBSERVE!
Ask: What does it say?
- Step #2: INTERPRET!
Ask: What does it mean?
- Step #3: APPLY!
Ask: How does it apply to my life?

Food for Thought

BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS (PRONOUNCED HUHR-MUH-NOO-TIKS)
IS THE PRACTICE OR DISCIPLINE OF INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE.





TURNING TO SCRIPTURE

The Bible has a lot to say about itself, and how to handle the truths of God. Read through these verses to start getting a handle on how to learn from God's Word.

Psalm 119:1-8

*¹How blessed are those whose way is blameless,
Who walk in the law of the LORD.*

*²How blessed are those who observe His testimonies,
Who seek Him with all their heart.*

³They also do no unrighteousness; They walk in His ways.

⁴You have ordained Your precepts, That we should keep them diligently.

⁵Oh that my ways may be established To keep Your statutes!

⁶Then I shall not be ashamed When I look upon all Your commandments.

*⁷I shall give thanks to You with uprightness of heart,
When I learn Your righteous judgments.*

⁸I shall keep Your statutes; Do not forsake me utterly!

My observations:

My interpretation:

My application:

2 Timothy 3:16-17

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

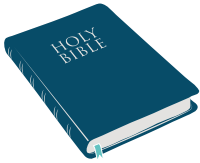
My observations:**My interpretation:****My application:***Food for Thought*

ASK: WHAT DOES IT SAY? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
HOW DOES IT APPLY TO MY LIFE?





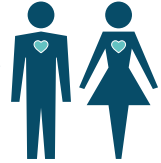
GETTING THE PICTURE



Change how
we think



Change how
we live



Being a student of the Bible should start to change how we think. But it shouldn't stop there! We want to move from information to transformation. We want to move past just learning to think differently, and actually begin to live differently as we connect the head and the heart.

Why is how we think so important?

How can the Bible help change how we think?

Romans 12:1-2

"THEREFORE I URGE YOU, BRETHREN, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD, TO PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING AND HOLY SACRIFICE, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR SPIRITUAL SERVICE OF WORSHIP. AND DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND, SO THAT YOU MAY PROVE WHAT THE WILL OF GOD IS, THAT WHICH IS GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT."

 NEXT STEPS

The best way to be a student of God's Word is to just start reading! The Bible is one big story of how God is redeeming this world. Get caught up in the story and be amazed at how even our everyday lives are really a part of something so much bigger! As you read, look for how God is an active agent in this world, and how He is always faithfully working to bring about His purposes here on earth. You'll discover amazing truths about how God designed this life to be lived, and as you begin to put what you are learning into practice you'll find your life has more meaning and purpose than ever before.

Here are more ideas to get you started with being a student of God's Word:

- Remind yourself of the importance of transforming your mind by reading God's Word. Make a goal of reading 2 Timothy 2:15 every day this week to remind yourself of the importance of studying God's word.
- If you're not sure where to start, pick one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) and start reading about the life of Christ. Or pick from several reading plans available online to get you started.
- There are so many great online resources available today! Check out a few of these online Bible study tools:
 - www.studylight.org
 - www.biblegateway.com
 - www.youversion.com
 - www.str.org
 - www.everystudent.com
- If you want to read more about how to study the Bible, *Playing with Fire* by Walt Russell, or *How to Read the Bible for All It's Worth* by Gordon Fee are great introductions to a more in-depth study of the Bible.

2 Timothy 2:15

"BE DILIGENT TO PRESENT YOURSELF APPROVED TO GOD AS A WORKMAN WHO DOES NOT NEED TO BE ASHAMED, ACCURATELY HANDLING THE WORD OF TRUTH."



STARTING THE CONVERSATION

- What has been your experience with prayer?
- Have you ever directly seen God answer a prayer?
- Have you ever been frustrated by praying for something? What was frustrating to you?
- Do you find yourself praying more spontaneously throughout your day, or praying more at scheduled times (i.e. in the morning, before meals, before bed, etc.)?



TURNING TO SCRIPTURE

In Matthew 6, Jesus teaches the disciples how they should pray. Read through the following verses to learn some guiding principles about how to talk to God.

Matthew 6:5-6

“When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.”

What do you think is the main point Jesus is trying to make about prayer? Does this mean we should never pray in public? Why or why not?

Do you ever get distracted when you pray? What kinds of things might you need to do to help reduce distractions?



TURNING TO SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:7-8

“And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”

How do you respond to this idea that God already knows what we need before we ask Him? Is it reassuring? What does this tell you about why we pray?

Matthew 6:9-13

“Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is 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 also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.’”

If you had to come up with categories about what kinds of things we should pray about, how would you break down the different things that Jesus models in this prayer?

Do you think prayer should be more structured or more spontaneous?

Food for Thought

“WE HAVE TO PRAY WITH OUR EYES ON GOD,
NOT ON THE DIFFICULTIES.” – OSWALD CHAMBERS





GETTING THE PICTURE

The acronym ACTS is a way to help us remember how to start talking to God.

<p>A Adoration</p>	<p>Talking to God about how great you think He is. This helps remind us of who we are talking to!</p>	<p>Romans 11:33 <i>“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!”</i></p>
<p>C Confession</p>	<p>Talking to God about the ways we have made mistakes, asking for His help in those areas of our life, and receiving His forgiveness. This helps us restore our relationship and remove any barriers that would keep us from talking to God in a trusting and open way.</p>	<p>1 John 1:9 <i>“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”</i></p>
<p>T Thanksgiving</p>	<p>Talking to God about all the things we are thankful for. This can be relationships, circumstances, or ways you’ve seen God at work in your life. This helps us cultivate a heart of gratitude and realize how God has richly blessed us!</p>	<p>Ephesians 5:20 <i>“...always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.”</i></p>
<p>S Supplication</p>	<p>Talking to God about what we need or what others need. God is good and generous, and He wants us to talk to Him about what is going on in our life and what we would like to see be different. And like a loving Father, He delights in giving good gifts to His children. This helps build dependence on God to trust Him to provide for us in all areas of life!</p>	<p>Philippians 4:6 <i>“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”</i></p>

Which one of these ways of talking to God feel the most natural to you? Which is the most uncomfortable for you? Why?

 NEXT STEPS

The best way to learn how to pray is to just start talking to God!

As you pray, learn to pay attention to how God is responding. Prayer is a two-way conversation! God may be trying to get your attention because there is something in your life He wants to talk to you about. While this won't necessarily be an audible voice, there are other ways God will communicate with you. It may be something a friend says that hits you a different way, or a verse that comes to mind that is exactly what you need to hear. It may be an idea that comes to mind that you can't seem to shake, or a desire in your heart that is new and unexpected. Always test these ideas or things against the truth of Scripture, because that is one sure way that God has already communicated to us!

Here's a few more ideas to get you started with learning to talk to God:

- Remind yourself of the importance of talking to God, especially about the things in life that you are worried about. Make a goal of reading Philippians 4:6 every day this week.
- The Bible has a lot more to say about prayer! Read through the following verses to uncover more of what God has to say about talking to Him:
 - Matthew 7:7-11
 - Matthew 18:19-20
 - John 14:13-15
 - John 15:7
 - Acts 1:14
 - Acts 2:42
 - Romans 8:26-27
 - Ephesians 6:18
 - Colossians 4:2
 - James 5:16
 - 1 Peter 4:7
- If you're looking for more ideas of what to pray for yourself or someone else, Paul has written a beautiful prayer for the church in Ephesus in Ephesians 3:14-21. This is a great model to follow!

Philippians 4:6

"BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING, BUT IN EVERYTHING BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION WITH THANKSGIVING LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN TO GOD."



STARTING THE CONVERSATION

- How do you feel when you are unable to do something you want to do?
- As you try to follow the example of Jesus, have you experienced frustration about how difficult it is?
- When you hear about the Holy Spirit, what do you think of?
- How might the Holy Spirit help you live out the life of following Jesus?
- Have you experienced a time when you knew that the Holy Spirit was at work in your life? What did that look like?



TURNING TO SCRIPTURE

The Holy Spirit is God, and the third person of the Trinity (God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit). He was present at Creation (Genesis 1:1-2), is viewed as equal to God (1 Corinthians 12:6-11), and possesses all the same attributes as God.

What does the Holy Spirit do?

There are several roles talked about in the Bible that help us understand how the Holy Spirit is a part of our life, and what He does in our lives. Read through the verses on the next few pages and think about all the different ways the Holy Spirit is at work in you.

THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVES IN US

John 14:16-17

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.”

(See also Romans 8:9-11 and 1 Corinthians 3:16)

What does it mean?

When does it happen?

THE HOLY SPIRIT BAPTIZES US

1 Corinthians 12:13

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit”

(See also John 1:29-33)

What does it mean?

When does it happen?



TURNING TO SCRIPTURE

THE HOLY SPIRIT SEALS US

Ephesians 1:13-14

“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.”

(See also 2 Corinthians 1:21-22)

What does it mean?

When does it happen?

THE HOLY SPIRIT WALKS WITH US

Galatians 5:16-18

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.”

What does it mean?

When does it happen?

THE HOLY SPIRIT FILLS US

Ephesians 5:18

“And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.”

What does it mean?

When does it happen?

Feed for Thought

“THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT CAN ALWAYS BE RECOGNIZED BY THE WAY HE MOVES US TOWARD WHAT JESUS WOULD BE AND DO.” –DALLAS WILLARD





GETTING THE PICTURE

Towards the end of His time on earth, Jesus gathered His disciples to teach them about the Holy Spirit. As Jesus prepares His disciples for His departure, He reassures them by telling them about the Holy Spirit who He would send.

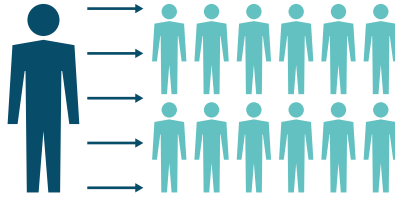
John 16:7-8

“But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment”

Imagine you are in the disciples’ shoes and Jesus just told you it’s better if He leaves. How could it possibly be to your advantage to have Jesus leave you?

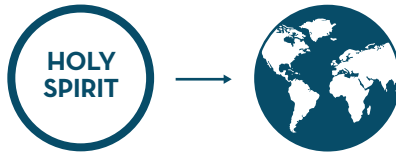
JESUS

Able to be present with the 12 disciples at one time



HOLY SPIRIT

Able to be present with all followers at one time



What kinds of things did Jesus do for and with His disciples? In a similar way, what kinds of things can the Holy Spirit do in your life?


NEXT STEPS

As you understand more about the Holy Spirit, you should begin to live differently as you allow Him to become more and more a part of your daily life. Remind yourself that the Holy Spirit IS a part of your daily life and wants to help you follow Jesus! The more aware of this truth you are, the more you will look for the ways that the Holy Spirit is showing up in your life.

Here's a few ideas to help you understand more about the Holy Spirit:

- Read John 14:16 every day this week to remind yourself that the Holy Spirit is with you.
- John 14 - 16 teaches about the Holy Spirit. Look up the following verses to see what Jesus teaches His disciples about what the Holy Spirit will come to do for them, and highlight the key things you see about the role of the Holy Spirit:
 - John 14:16-17
 - John 14:26
 - John 15:26
 - John 16:13-14
- To learn more about the Holy Spirit, read *Forgotten God* by Francis Chan.

John 14:16

"I WILL ASK THE FATHER, AND HE WILL GIVE YOU ANOTHER HELPER,
THAT HE MAY BE WITH YOU FOREVER."

“A NEW COMMANDMENT I GIVE TO YOU, THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER, EVEN AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, THAT YOU ALSO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. BY THIS ALL MEN WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES, IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.”

John 13:34-35



PART 2

LOVING OTHERS



STARTING THE CONVERSATION

- Think about one of the better relationships in your life. What are the distinguishing marks of how you interact with one another that make this a healthy relationship?
- Think beyond individual relationships to group dynamics. What group have you been a part of that had the best community? What made it that way?



TURNING TO SCRIPTURE

The Bible has a lot to say about how God has intended for His followers to interact with one another. When we come to Christ, we are not just saved as individuals. We are saved into God's family! Within the context of these life-changing relationships, God invites us to grow up – to mature and become like Christ. The image of family is the most commonly used metaphor in the Bible when talking about the church. Take a look at this idea of the church as family to learn how God wants His people to connect with one another:

THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY

Matthew 12:49-50

“And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, “Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

(See also Luke 17:3; John 1:12; Romans 14:13-15, 21; Ephesians 2:19; Hebrews 3:6)

How does this image of the church as a family contribute to your understanding of how we should treat other Christ followers?

THE “ONE ANOTHER” PASSAGES

There are over 60 passages in the New Testament about how we are to interact with one another. Read through the following verses and make a list on the next page of how God calls us to treat one another as His followers:

John 13:34 *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”*

1 Peter 4:10 *“As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”*

Romans 12:16 *“Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:11 *“Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”*

Philippians 2:3 *“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves”*

Colossians 3:13 *“bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”*

Ephesians 4:32 *“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”*

Romans 12:10 *“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor”*

1 Peter 4:9 *“Be hospitable to one another without complaint.”*

1 Peter 5:5 *“You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”*

Make a list below of how God calls us to treat 'one another' in the verses you just read.

HOW TO INTERACT WITH ONE ANOTHER:

Which of these ways of interacting with one another do you already do well?

Which of these do you see room to grow?



Food for Thought

"GOD'S DESIGN FOR HIS PEOPLE IS THAT WE EITHER GROW TOGETHER, OR WE DO NOT GROW MUCH AT ALL."

-JOE HELLERMAN



GETTING THE PICTURE

Imagine that one of your friends is sick. What are different ways a community can come together to help care for and support this person? What different strengths would people need for each role?

Ways to Help	Strengths Needed
ex: Organize people to help bring them meals	ex: Organization skills

Romans 12:4-5

“For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

How does this metaphor of a body help give a picture of how we are supposed to function as the people of God?

What strengths and gifts do you bring to the body of Christ?




NEXT STEPS

God has painted a beautiful picture through Scripture of how His followers are supposed to live together. We're a family and we look out for each other. We're a body and we work together. We love, serve, forgive, and encourage one another. Who wouldn't want to be a part of this kind of community? As we walk through life together, we want to learn to grow more and more into this kind of people.

Remind yourself of how we are to interact with one another as followers of Jesus. Read John 13:35 every day this week and look for opportunities to put it into practice!

If you are not connected yet in community with other believers, talk to someone at your church about how to get more connected. Joining a small group or volunteering are the two best ways to start meeting more people and getting more involved.

Read through more of the "One Another" passages. Pray and ask God to give you opportunities and show you how you can practice living them out this week. Here is the complete list for you to look through of how God has instructed us to live with one another:

- **Discuss and work things out with one another:** Mark 4:41; 9:10; Luke 4:36; 8:25; John 16:17; Acts 2:12; 4:15
- **Be at peace with one another:** Mark 9:50
- **Serve one another:** John 13:14; Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 4:10
- **Bear one another's burdens:** Galatians 6:2
- **Treat one another with humility:** 1 Peter 5:5
- **To show tolerance for one another:** Ephesians 4:2
- **Love one another:** John 13:34, 35; 15:12, 17; Romans 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:22; 4:8; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12
- **Be hospitable to one another:** 1 Peter 4:9
- **Be members of one another:** Romans 12:5; Ephesians 4:25
- **Be devoted to one another:** Romans 12:10
- **Be of the same mind with one another:** Romans 12:16; 15:15
- **Do not cause one another to stumble:** Romans 14:13

- **Encourage and build up one another:** Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 3:13; 10:25
- **Do not speak against one another:** James 4:11; 5:9
- **Confess your sins to one another:** James 5:16
- **Spur one another on:** Hebrews 10:24
- **Live in peace with one another:** 1 Thessalonians 5:13
- **Seek the best for one another:** 1 Thessalonians 5:15
- **Accept one another:** Romans 15:7
- **Admonish one another:** Romans 15:14
- **Greet one another in a heartfelt manner:** Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Peter 5:14
- **Be in fellowship with one another:** 1 John 1:7
- **Care for one another:** 1 Corinthians 12:25; Ephesians 4:32
- **Forgive one another:** Colossians 3:13
- **Worship with one another:** Ephesians 5:19
- **Speak the truth with one another:** Colossians 3:9
- **Be subject to one another:** Ephesians 5:21
- **Regard one another as more important than yourselves:** Philippians 2:3
- **Teach and admonish one another:** Colossians 3:16
- **Comfort one another:** 1 Thessalonians 4:18

If you want to learn more on this topic, read *When the Church Was a Family* by Joe Hellerman to learn more about how God intended for us to live together.

John 13:35

“BY THIS ALL MEN WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES,
IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER.”



STARTING THE CONVERSATION

- What has been your experience with church? What was positive & negative?
- Did you grow up going to church?
- What different kinds of churches have you been to? What did you like about each of the different churches?



TURNING TO SCRIPTURE

The Acts of the Apostles is a record of the history of the early church. The epistles of the New Testament (Romans through Jude) are letters that were written to various churches and individuals in the first century. These are great resources to help us figure out practically what it looks like to live out our belief in Jesus, and give us direction about what to do when we gather together with other believers.

Read the following passage and underline the kinds of things you see these early believers doing to practically live out their faith:

Acts 2:38, 41-47

“Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’ ...So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

GATHERING TOGETHER

Acts 2:44

"And all those who had believed were together..."

Hebrews 10:23-25

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

Do you think it is possible to be a follower of Jesus if you never meet together with other followers? Why or why not?

Elements of gathering together included listening to teaching, praying, and praising God together. Why are each of these elements essential to incorporate?

What does this look like in your own life? How often do you gather together with other followers of Jesus?

COMMUNION

Acts 2:44

"They were continually devoting themselves...to the breaking of bread."

Matthew 26:26-28

"While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins."

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

"The Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes."

Why is it important for followers of Jesus to participate in communion? Why do you think Jesus set this up as a regular thing for His followers to do?

What is significant about taking communion as a community? Why do you think Jesus gives these instructions for when we gather together, and not for something to do individually?

1 Corinthians 11:24

... DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

BAPTISM

Acts 2:38

“Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ...”

Romans 6:3-4

“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

1 Corinthians 12:13

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

How does the physical act of water baptism symbolize spiritual truths?

The word for baptism comes from a Greek word, baptizo, which means to place into, or to immerse. It was used to describe the ancient process of dying cloth. A white cloth would be “baptized” into dye and take on a new identity.

What do you think we are placed into when we are baptized by the Spirit?

What new identity do we take on as a result of being baptized by the Spirit?



GETTING THE PICTURE

Acts 2:44-45

“And all those who believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need...”

Consider these 5 major categories your financial resources (income) can go to:



As you consider what avenues your wealth should be spent in, consider the difference between how God advises us to use our resources, as opposed to how the world says we should use our money.

Matthew 6:19-21

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Financial Priority Ranking according to the World
Lifestyle
Debt (borrow to support your lifestyle)
Save
Taxes
Give (if anything is left)

Financial Priority Ranking according to God
Give
Taxes
Pay off Debt
Save
Live off the rest

How are you at managing your finances? Can you make and follow a budget? Why does God care how you spend your money? What do you think about the priorities God sets for how we should use our resources?

 NEXT STEPS

The early church was able to overcome the most incredible odds, growing from a ragtag group of a handful of followers to a movement that changed the world.

- Remind yourself of what the early church modeled, and what it looks like to be a part of the church community. Read Acts 2:42 every day this week and look for opportunities to put these examples into practice!
- If you are not connected yet in community with other believers, talk to someone at your church about how to get more connected. Joining a small group or volunteering in a ministry are the two best ways to start meeting more people and living out life with other followers of Jesus.
- Next time you take communion, take a moment to remember what it symbolizes. Reflect on the importance of doing it together, with the people surrounding you who also have placed their trust in Jesus.
- If you haven't been baptized, look for the next opportunity to do so. Jesus himself was baptized (Matthew 3:13-17), and so set the example for us. In Acts, we see the example of the early believers getting baptized. This is a special moment for you to publicly and practically follow the example of Jesus by being baptized!
- We are called to live wisely and generously as good stewards, handling our finances with biblical priorities so that we can help bless others in need and reach the world for Jesus Christ. The Bible has a lot to say about this area of our life. Here are some key verses to learn more: Proverbs 3:9, 28:25; Malachi 3:9-12; Matthew 6:24; Luke 12:15, 16:10-12, 21:1-4; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7; 2 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:8, 6:6-19; Hebrews 13:5. Look into the resources at Crown Financial (www.crown.org) or Financial Peace University (www.daveramsey.com/fpu). You can also pick up a copy of *The Treasure Principle* by Randy Alcorn, a brief but life-changing book that unlocks the secret of joyful giving.

Acts 2:42

"THEY WERE CONTINUALLY DEVOTING THEMSELVES TO THE APOSTLES' TEACHING AND TO FELLOWSHIP, TO THE BREAKING OF BREAD AND TO PRAYER."



STARTING THE CONVERSATION

- Who were the people that helped introduce you to Jesus, and who are the people that have helped you grow in your faith?
- Over the last few months, have you seen any practical ways that you are taking steps to better follow Jesus and integrate your faith in every area of your life?
- When you think about sharing what you believe with other people, how confident do you feel?
- When you think about encouraging someone else to grow in their commitment of following Jesus, how confident do you feel?



TURNING TO SCRIPTURE

After His death and resurrection, Jesus' time on earth was coming to a close. However, He still had a great mission yet to be accomplished, and He entrusted the completion of this mission to His followers. We get to have a role in God's work of redeeming the world. We are called to share the love and grace of Jesus, in what we do and in what we say, so that others will know the good news!

Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

When you consider talking to people about Jesus, how does it make you feel?

How does it help knowing that the Holy Spirit is the One who gives us the power to share with people about Jesus? Have you ever experienced the Holy Spirit helping you do this in a conversation?

Have you ever shared with someone about Jesus? How did it go?



TURNING TO SCRIPTURE

Matthew 28:18-20

“And Jesus came up 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 the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

The central command in this passage is to “make disciples.” We are commanded to make disciples as we “go” about our normal day to day lives, and also as we “go” out into the world. And the kinds of things we do to make disciples are to baptize people, and to teach them to follow the commands of Jesus.

As you “go” about your day-to-day life, who are some of the people you could talk to about Jesus who might not know Him yet?

As you “go” about your day-to-day life, who are some of the people you know who would already call themselves followers of Jesus, that you could encourage to keep growing in their faith?

Do you feel confident to do these tasks? What is holding you back from carrying out this command to make disciples? What steps do you need to take towards carrying this out?

Romans 10:15

“HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS.”



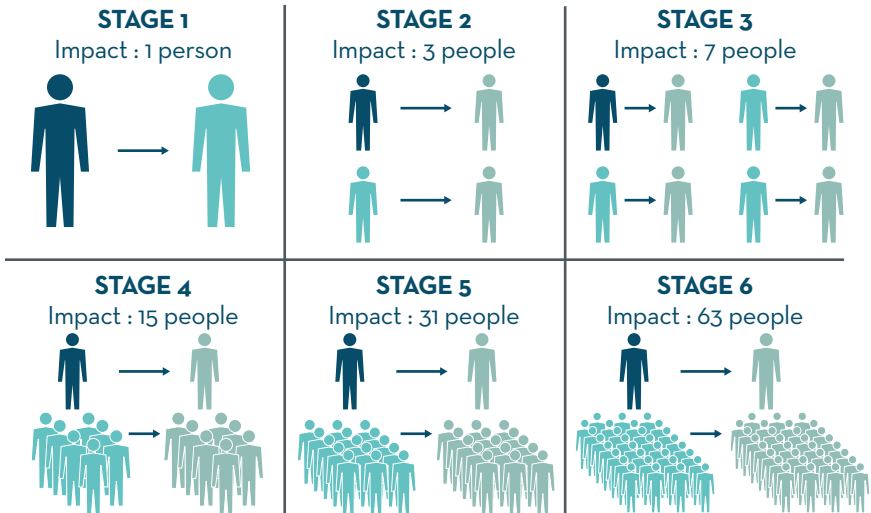
GETTING THE PICTURE

It's good if you've learned how to follow Jesus and walk in His ways. It's better if you can also help those around you start walking in this kind of life. It's best if you can reproduce the life of walking with Jesus with those around you, and expect them to multiply this life into others as well.

2 Timothy 2:2

"The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

Consider how your impact can multiply if you not only invest in others, but teach them to do the same as well. Over time, it could start to really add up:



Suppose you invest in one person for 3 years, teaching them to do the same. After 3 years, you begin investing in a new person, as does your disciple. If this becomes a lifestyle you adopt, after 20 years you will have deeply impacted over 60 lives. And after 30 years you will have helped change over 500 lives!

What can you do uniquely well that you could use to impact someone's life?



NEXT STEPS

What are we talking about when we talk about discipleship?

- We are talking about the call to follow Jesus, learning to integrate our faith into every area of our life, and making disciples who will make disciples.
- We are talking about investing into the next generation, helping them learn what it means to walk with Jesus as they grow and mature in their faith.
- We are talking about developing Christ-centered, life-changing relationships as we follow Jesus by helping others to follow Jesus.

Jesus came to teach us about a new kind of life – a life with Him, living according to His example and teachings. Step into this invitation from Jesus to a life filled with meaning, purpose, impact, and transformation, and invite others along with you for the journey!

For further reading about discipleship and life with Jesus, read *Divine Conspiracy* by Dallas Willard or *Follow Me* by David Platt. To learn more about what it means to follow Jesus, read *Multiply* by Francis Chan.

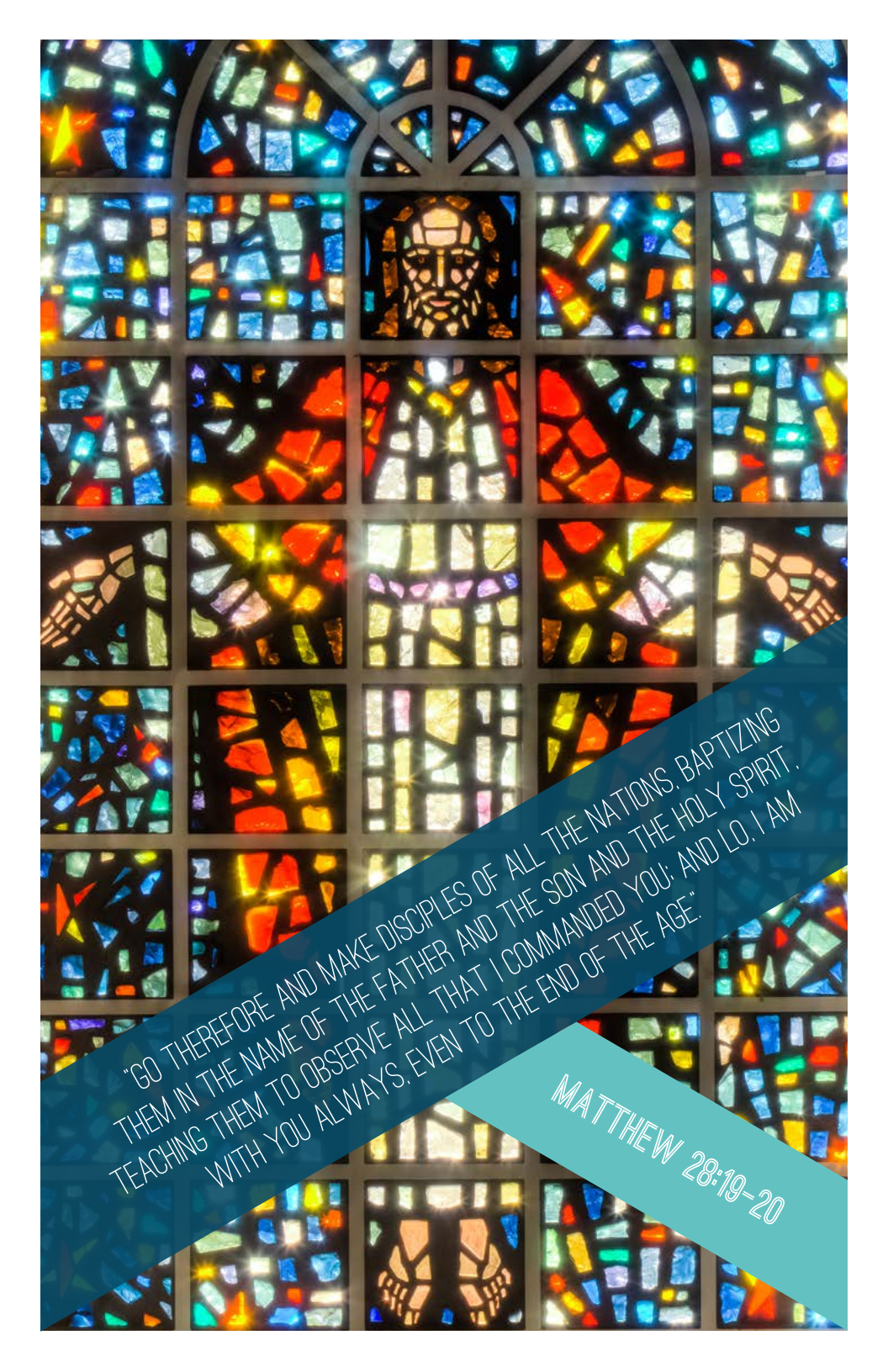
Matthew 28:18-20

“AND JESUS CAME UP 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 THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THAT I COMMANDED YOU; AND LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN TO THE END OF THE AGE.’”

NEXT STEPS

As we wrap up this study, here are some next steps you can take as a follower of Jesus to help others follow Jesus, experiencing the full life He offers.

- Remind yourself of the importance of making disciples as you go about your day-to-day life. Read Matthew 28:18-20 every day this week.
- Read through the book of Acts. These early disciples were convinced that Jesus offered them a better way of life – a kind of life that was even worth dying for! Look at how the earliest followers of Jesus set about fulfilling their mission to take the good news of Jesus to the ends of the earth.
- Start praying for the people who are in your sphere of influence who haven't yet been introduced to Jesus. Pray for their hearts to be softened to the good news about Jesus, and pray for an opportunity to share with them about who Jesus is and the difference He has made in your life.
- We're called to not just introduce people to Jesus, but to make disciples. Who in your life can you start investing in, and help them further along in their relationship with God? Take someone out to coffee, go for a walk, meet up for lunch, and start a conversation. You can even take them through this same study you have just finished!



"GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS, BAPTIZING
THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT,
TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THAT I COMMANDED YOU; AND LO, I AM
WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN TO THE END OF THE AGE."

MATTHEW 28:19-20

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