

A New Beginning: Setting a solid foundation for your new life in Christ



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Contents

Introduction	3
Making sure of your salvation	5
Study 1 – Assurance: Being assured of your salvation	7
Study 2 – The Bible: God's Word to all mankind	9
Study 3 – Prayer: Connecting with God	11
Study 4 – Church: Meeting with other Christians	13
Study 5 – Servant-hood: Serving God with your gifts	15
Study 6 – Evangelism: Sharing your faith with others	17
Study 7 – The Holy Spirit: Our helper in this life	19
Study 8 – Christology: Having a right view of Jesus	21
Study 9 – Having a right you of ourselves	23
Study 10 – The Future: What does God want me to do now?	25
Appendix 1 - Answers to Reflection Questions	27

Introduction

Welcome to our free discipleship program “New Beginnings: Setting a Solid Foundation for you New Life in Christ.

Our heartbeat in writing this program is that people would come to know Jesus Christ in a personal way, set a solid foundation in Him and go on to follow Jesus as a disciple all the days of their lives.

Setting a solid foundation is vitally important. Jesus shares a story about this in the Bible in Luke 6:46-49. He talks about building a house on the solid foundation of rock. He says when the storms come the house will stay standing because it is built on a firm foundation. It is the same with us. If we are firmly anchored to Jesus, we will stand strong when the trials and struggles of life come our way too.

For us as Disciples or followers of Christ, this foundation is built on a personal relationship with Christ and walking with a Him daily. It is also built on daily habits of prayer, reading the Bible, and regularly meeting with other people who share our faith. We do these things to connect with God and connect with others.

Jesus also told another story that is closely linked with building on a solid foundation. In Matthew 13:3-9 Jesus tells of a farmer who sowed seed on his farm. In the story the farmer scatters seed on four types of ground – road, rocky, thorny and good soil.

We see that the seed that fell on the road was eaten by the birds, the seed on the rocky ground couldn't put down roots and dried out in the sun, the seed in the thorny bushes was choked by the bushes and the seed that fell in the good soil grew to its potential.

Jesus used this story to talk about people receiving the word of God into their hearts and what then happened to it. It is explained further on in Matthew 13:18-23. In short, the seeds that fell on the road, rocky ground and the thorny bushes never reached their potential. While the seed that fell in good soil went on to reap a harvest 30, 60 or 100 times more (Matthew 13:8).

As I read this parable I can't help but think of my life as a follower of Jesus. I want to make sure my “seed” goes as far down as possible into good soil so it reaches its full potential. I want to make sure I produce a harvest 100-fold. I want this for you too.

Building a house on solid rock and planting seed in good soil is what this program is all about. We want to give you the right start so you can be strong in your faith and life in Christ. We want you to become lifelong followers of Jesus Christ.

Each page of the booklet has a simple study that will teach you about the Bible, prayer, church, serving God, sharing your faith, the role of the Holy Spirit and being assured of your salvation. It includes a number of Scriptures on each topic, some reflection questions, an explanation of a key Bible word, a simple prayer and some Bible memory verses.

For best use of this booklet you might like to work through it with a person who has been a Christian for some time. They may be able to answer some of the questions you may have.

We hope and pray that you enjoy your time spent doing this discipleship program. Our heartbeat is that you will set a solid foundation in Christ and go on to walk with Him all the days of your life.

God's Richest Blessings,

Dave Quinn
Founder of PASSIONAustralia.org

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Scripture Quotations

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Making sure of your salvation

Before you begin the studies on the coming pages it is important that you make sure of your own personal salvation. Making your personal connection with Jesus Christ is what salvation is all about.

To be saved or to receive salvation means to be rescued from the penalty of sin - which is eternal separation from God - and to be assured that you are going to spend eternity with God when you die. In the present tense, it also means that you are in relationship with God, He is with you wherever you go and He is able to guide you and help you in all situations.

The Bible tells us that salvation is found in Jesus Christ. John 14:6 says, "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me". This verse tells us that Jesus is the way to the Father. The Bible also tells us in Acts 4:12 that there is no other way to find salvation. Salvation comes through Jesus Christ alone.

Each of us must respond personally to God's plan for our salvation. God played His part by giving His Son to die on the cross for us to pay the price for our sin. Our part is to receive what Jesus has done for us. God requires us to do three things to find salvation.

They can be described as the A, B, C of salvation -

A - Admit.

We need to admit to God that we have sinned and fallen short of His standards and to ask for His forgiveness.

The Bible says...

Romans 3:23-24 - For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

1 John 1:9-10 - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

When we admit to God that we have sinned and not fully followed Him or His ways, it is like a huge weight is lifted from our shoulders. We can know that we are right with God and our sins are forgiven.

B - Believe.

We need to believe in Jesus Christ, that He is the Son of God and that He died on the cross for our sin.

The Bible says...

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 1:12 - Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

When we believe in Jesus and what He has done for us, we become His children and have the promise of eternal life with Him. We can know in this life that our eternal destiny is sorted out by God. God promises us this in the Bible.

C - Confess.

We need to call on Jesus to save us and we need to confess Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

Romans 10:13 - Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Romans 10:9-10 - That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

The final step in the ABC of salvation is to call and confess. We call out to Jesus to save us and we confess Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. This means we are trusting Jesus to save us from our sin and we are asking Him to be our King and ruler of our life.

Prayer to find salvation

Responding to God is as simple as praying a short prayer that expresses our thanks for what He has done, confessing your sin and asking Jesus to be our Lord and Saviour. You can pray this prayer right now.

Heavenly Father,

I thank You that Jesus came and died on the cross for my sin. Right now I ask for Your forgiveness for all of the wrong things I have done in my life. Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God and that God raised you from the dead. Right now I surrender my life to You and I ask you to be my Lord and Saviour. Please guide me and lead me in all I do by the power of Your Holy Spirit and help me to live for Your Kingdom. Amen.

If you have sincerely prayed the prayer above it now means you are in relationship with God, that your sins are forgiven and that you will spend eternity with Him when you die. That is great news!

Now you are ready for the study...

1. Assurance - Being assured of your salvation

What is salvation?

When the Bible talks about salvation it touches on two main areas.

1. Being rescued from the penalty of sin - which means death and eternal separation from God.
2. Being in right relationship with God - both now in this life and for all eternity.

In the Bible we see that when Jesus came and died on the cross, He came to pay the price for our sin. He took the punishment that was rightfully ours. His death opened the way for us to be forgiven of our sin and to be brought back into a right relationship with God. In a future tense it means that those who put their faith and trust in Jesus will spend eternity with God.

When we ask Jesus Christ into our lives and we become a Christian, it is a start of a whole new journey of faith and life. The Bible tells us the old life is gone and the new life has come (2 Corinthians 5:17). However, during our first few months of being a Christian it is quite normal to have periods of doubt about God or if we are really saved. In these times it is very important to seek reassurance from the Bible.

Bible Verses on salvation

Please read the following Bible verses and then answer the reflection questions below. Circle or underline any key words that stand out as you read.

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 1:12 - Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

1 John 5:13 - I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Romans 10:13 - Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Hebrews 9:28 - Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast.

Titus 3:5 - He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

Reflection questions

1. John 3:16 talks about God's great love for all mankind. What does it say we have as Christians if we believe in Jesus Christ?
2. When we receive Jesus Christ into our lives, what does the Bible tell us we become? (John 1:12)
3. Romans chapter 10 talks about salvation. Who according to Romans 10:13 who can be saved?
4. Hebrews 9:28 tells us that the first time Jesus came it was to take away the sins of many people. What does it say Jesus will bring to those when He comes back again?
5. Which of the reflection verses tells us we are saved by grace through faith?
6. Which reflection verse tells says God saved us by His mercy?
7. In 1 John 5:13 it says if we believe in the name of the Son of God we have something. What is that?

Key Words from the Bible

Saviour - The word Saviour means someone who saves a person or persons from something else, usually something which is harmful to them. In the context of Christianity, Jesus is the Saviour. This means that he saves us from the judgement of God the Father on people who have sinned against Him. Sin is breaking the law of God (1 John 3:4). The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23) and separation from God (Isaiah 59:2). Therefore, Jesus is the Saviour who saves us from eternal separation from God.

Memory Verse

Read and memorise John 3:16 for next week's lesson.

Prayer

*Heavenly Father,
I pray that You will assure me of my salvation. Help me to remember that I am saved because of what Jesus has done for me. I pray that when I have doubts about Your existence or my salvation that I will read the Bible and find assurance in Your Word.
I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.*

2. The Bible – God’s Word to all mankind.

Christians see the Bible as different from every other book because they believe that its writers were ‘inspired’ by God when writing it (2 Timothy 3:16).

The Bible is not just one book, but instead a collection of sixty-six books which consists of 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. These books were written by 40 people over a 1600-year period from 1500 BC to 100 AD.

For Christians, the Bible is God’s handbook for life. When we read the Bible it teaches us about God, about this world and about God’s great love for all mankind. We also learn how to live our lives and how we should relate to each other.

It is important for us as Christians to read the Bible as it helps us to line our thinking up with God’s thinking and to live the life God wants us to live. It also helps to grow strong in our faith and belief in God.

Bible verses on the Bible

Please read the following Bible verses and then answer the reflection questions below. Circle or underline any key words that stand out as you read.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Psalms 119:11 - I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Psalms 119:105 - Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Psalms 1:2-3 - Blessed is the man...[when] his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

James 1:22-24 - Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

Psalms 119:165 - Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.

Psalms 119:130 - The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

Psalms 119:9 - How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.

Reflection questions

1. The Bible teaches us many things about life. What four things does 2 Timothy 3:16-17 say the Bible is useful for?
2. Why is it important for us as Christians to keep God's Word in our hearts? (Psalm 119:11)
3. What are some of the things Psalm 1:2-3 tells us will happen if we read and meditate on God's Word?
4. What does James 1:22 tell us we are doing if we only listen to God's Word and not put it into practice?
5. Which reflection verse tells us we will have understanding as God's Word unfolds in our lives?
6. Psalms 119:9 talks about living according to God's. What does it say we will have as we do this?
7. What reflection verse talks about God's Word being a light to our path?

Key word from the Bible

Inspiration – The word inspiration refers to the process of how God communicated His word to the human writers of the Scriptures. Inspiration comes from the Hebrew and Greek words meaning “breathed”. To Christians, the Bible is God ‘breathing out’ his word and ‘breathing it in’ to the writers, guiding their thoughts so that what they wrote was *exactly* what God wanted written. Inspiration gives us a picture of God imparting His truth to His people.

Memory Verse

Read and memorise 2 Timothy 3:16-17 for next week's lesson.

Prayer

*Heavenly Father,
Please help me to read the Bible every day. I pray that You will teach me all about You,
about Your great love for me and how I should live my life. Please give me a real love for
Your Word and a desire to study it and apply it to my life.*

I ask this in Jesus name, Amen.

3. Prayer – connecting with God

Prayer is one of the key aspects of the Christian life. Prayer helps us to communicate with God and develop our relationship with Him. As we pray we bring our prayer requests to God and we ask Him to help us in the things we do.

We also ask God to bless those around us or we might ask God for wisdom or direction. Before long you will see the difference, prayer makes in your life and in the lives of those around you.

Remember to keep your prayers simple, just like you are talking to a friend. You don't have to use big words to get God's attention. He is always ready to listen and hear your requests. As you pray remember to be open to God, so He can speak to you or prompt you to do something. Like all good communication, prayer is a two-way thing.

Bible verses on Prayer

Please read the following Bible verses and then answer the reflection questions below. Circle or underline any key words that stand out as you read.

Philippians 4:6-7 - Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 5:7 - Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Jeremiah 29:11-12 - For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.

John 14:13 – And I will do whatever you ask in my name [Jesus], so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.

James 1:5 - If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

1 John 5:14-15 - This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him.

Mark 11:24 - Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Reflection questions

1. Philippians 4:6-7 tells us not to be anxious about anything, but to take our needs to God. What does God promise to give us when we do this?
2. Jeremiah 29:11-12 talks about calling upon God and praying to Him. What do these verses assure us about our prayers to God?
3. The Bible tells us that when we pray to the Father we should pray in someone's name. In whose name should we pray? (John 14:13)
4. 1 Peter 5:7 talks about praying to God and casting all of our worries on Him. Why do you think we should do this?
5. What does James 1:5 say we can ask God for in prayer?
6. Which reflection verse talks about having confidence in approaching God in prayer?
7. What does Mark 11:24 say is important in receiving answers to our prayers?

Key words from the Bible

Intercession – Intercession or Intercessory prayer is the act of petitioning God on behalf of another person or group of people. In many ways intercessory prayer is like a lawyer talking to the judge on behalf of a client. In the Bible we see that Abraham interceded for Sodom, Moses interceded for the people of Israel and Jesus interceded for His disciples in John chapter 17. Christians are urged to intercede for others as we have a special relationship with Christ and we can bring their needs to the Father through Him.

Memory Verse

Read and memorise Philippians 4:6-7 for next week's lesson.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank You that love me and are concerned for me. Thank You that I can bring all of my prayers and petitions to You. I thank You that You always hear and answer my prayers.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

4. Church – meeting with other Christians

The word church refers to a gathering or assembly of people. In the Bible the word has two meanings - it refers to the local groups of Christian believers and also all believers worldwide who follow Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

God set up church, so we could have be a part of a caring community, to have a support network and so we grow in our faith together. We can also learn more about the Bible, prayer, baptism, serving God and living in community. It is important for all Christians to meet together regularly as this helps to encourage each other as we wait for Jesus to return.

Rick Warren in his book a *Purpose Driven Life* said this about church and being a part of the church. "You are called to belong, not just believe. Even in the perfect, sinless environment of [the Garden of] Eden, God said, 'It is not good for man to be alone'. We are created for community, fashioned for fellowship, and formed for a family, and none of us can fulfil God's purposes alone" (page 130).

Bible verses on Church

Please read the following Bible verses and then answer the reflection questions below. Circle or underline any key words that stand out as you read.

Acts 2:42 - They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Hebrews 10:24 - And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Hebrews 10:25 - Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

John 13:34-35 – Jesus said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Matthew 18:20 - For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

Romans 12:4-5 - Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

Galatians 6:10 - Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Colossians 1:17-18 - He [Jesus Christ] is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the first-born from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Reflection questions

1. Acts 2:42 talks about the early Christians and what their church was like. What four things does it say they devoted themselves to when they met together?
2. According to Hebrews 10:24 what two things should we encourage each other towards?
3. Hebrews 10:25 talks about meeting together as Christians. What does it say we should not do?
4. In John 13:34-35 Jesus talks about one thing that will show people that we are His disciples when we meet together. What is that thing?
5. According to Matthew 18:20 how many people need to be present for Christ to be with them?
6. Which reflection verse talks about the church being members of Christ's body with different functions?
7. In Galatians 6:10 it talks about doing good to all people. Who especially should we do good too?

Key words from the Bible

Fellowship – In the Bible, fellowship often means the friendship Christians share because they love and follow Jesus. The Bible tells us that it is very important to meet together so we can serve and encourage each other. This fellowship may take place in a traditional church setting, in home groups, or in a house church setting. The most important thing is that you meet with others who share your faith, so you can build each other up in your faith.

Memory Verse

Read and memorise Hebrews 10:25 for next week's lesson.

Prayer

*Heavenly Father,
I pray that You will help me find a church where I can meet with other Christians each week.
I pray I can find a place where I can serve You, where I can make friends and a place where I can grow in my faith and trust in You.*

I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

5. Servant-hood - Serving God with your gifts

As Christians it is important for us to see ourselves as God's servants. A servant is a person who works for the comfort or protection of others. Jesus described Himself as a servant. He instructed His followers to be servants of each other rather than trying to have authority over each other.

The Bible says each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others. That means if we are good at something we should think of ways to use that gift to help others and make their lives better.

Mother Teresa said this about serving God - "I see Jesus in every human being. I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus, I must feed him. This is sick Jesus. This one has leprosy or gangrene; I must wash him and tend to him. I serve because I love Jesus."

Bible verses on Serving

Please read the following Bible verses and then answer the reflection questions below. Circle or underline any key words that stand out as you read.

Ephesians 2:10 - For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

2 Corinthians 9:7 - Each man [or woman] should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Colossians 3:23-24 - Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Mark 10:43-44 - Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.

Romans 12:4-5 - Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

1 Peter 4:10 - Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

Galatians 6:10 - Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Philippians 2:6-7 – [Jesus] Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

Reflection questions

1. Ephesians 2:10 tells us that God created us to do good works. When did He prepare these works for us to do?
2. Serving God is about being generous and giving in all we do and say. What sort of giver does God want us to be? (2 Corinthians 9:7)
3. According to Colossians 3:23-24 who are we really serving when we do our work?
4. The Bible tells us that Jesus came to serve and not be served. What should we do if we want to be great in God's eyes? (Mark 10:43-44)
5. How does 1 Peter 4:10 say we should do with our gifts and talents?
6. In Galatians 6:10 it talks about doing good to all people. Who especially should we do good too?
7. Which reflection verse talks about Jesus taking on the nature of a servant?

Key words from the Bible

Spiritual Gifts – Spiritual Gifts are Spiritual abilities given by God for the purpose of building up the church. The Bible tells us that every Christian has at least one gift (1 Corinthians 7:7). It is important to see that these gifts given by God are for the purpose of serving others by doing good works in His name. The spiritual gifts are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. They include wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues. There is also another list of gifts in Romans 12:7-8. These include serving, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading and showing mercy.

Memory Verse

Read and memorise Colossians 3:23-24 for next week's lesson.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I pray that You will help me to serve You everyday. I pray that all I do and all I say will bring honour and glory to You. I pray that You will help me to use my gifts for the good of those around me.

I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

6. Evangelism - Sharing your faith with others

Sharing your faith with others is called Evangelism. Evangelism is the act of telling the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others.

For a Christian sharing our faith with others is very important. God wants us to be His witnesses and to tell people about His great love for them. In the Bible it tells us that God has given us the task of helping other people to know Him.

The famous evangelist Billy Graham once said this about the task of evangelism. "My one purpose in life is to help people find a personal relationship with God, which, I believe, comes through knowing Christ."

Bible verses on sharing your faith

Please read the following Bible verses and then answer the reflection questions below. Circle or underline any key words that stand out as you read.

Matthew 28:18-20 - Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

1 Peter 3:15 - But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

Romans 10:13-14 - "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"

Matthew 9:37-38 - Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Acts 4:20 - For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 - All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Reflection Questions

1. Matthew 28:18-20 was Jesus' last words before He ascended to heaven. It is often called the Great Commission. What three things did Jesus tell His followers to do for Him?
2. God doesn't expect us to tell people about Him in our own strength. What does Acts 1:8 says we will receive to be His witnesses? Where does that help come from?
3. 1 Peter 3:15 tells us that we should always be prepared. What should we be prepared to do? What sort of attitude should we have as we do this?
4. In Romans 10:13-14 it says that preaching is important part of the Christian life. Why do you think this is so?
5. Which reflection verse talks about the harvest of people being plentiful, but the workers or people who will share their faith are few?
6. In Acts 4:20 what two things did they speak about when sharing their faith?
7. Which reflection verse tells us that we are Christ's ambassadors with the task of reconciling the world to Himself?

Key words from the Bible

Gospel – Gospel means “Good News”. The good news of the Bible is that God sent His Son Jesus to take the punishment for sin when He died on the cross for us. God then raised Him from the dead so that any person who believes in Him will have eternal life. The story of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is told in the first four books of the New Testament which are also called the gospels.

Memory Verse

Read and memorise Matthew 28:18-20 for next week's lesson.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, please help me to share my faith with my family, friends and neighbours. I pray that when the opportunity comes that You will give me the courage, power and right words to say.

I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

7. The Holy Spirit – Our helper in this life

We see in the Bible that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When talking about the Holy Spirit it is important to realise that the Holy Spirit is a person just like the Father and the Son.

The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit is our helper as Christians. He helps us to live the Christian life effectively and helps us to become more like Christ in the way we think and live. We also read in the Bible that the Holy Spirit is our comforter, source of strength, and teacher too.

Paul Little in his book “Know What You Believe” says this on page 78 about the Holy Spirit. “To be filled with the Spirit means we allow Him to occupy, guide, and control every area of our lives. His power can then work through us, making us effectively fruitful for God and flooding our hearts with His joy.”

Bible verses on the Holy Spirit

Please read the following Bible verses and then answer the reflection questions below. Circle or underline any key words that stand out as you read.

Romans 8:11 - And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

John 14:26 - But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Acts 9:31 - Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.

Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Romans 8:26 - In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

1 Corinthians 3:16 - Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

Romans 8:14 - Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Reflection Questions

1. Romans 8:11 tells us that the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead and gives life to our bodies. Where does it say the Holy Spirit lives?
2. John 14:26 tells us that the Holy Spirit will help do two things for us about the things that Jesus said. What two things are they?
3. Acts 1:8 says that the Holy Spirit will help us to be God's witnesses. What does it say we will receive from the Holy Spirit to do this?
4. What two things did the Holy Spirit do for the churches Judea, Galilee and Samaria as it enjoyed a time of peace and grew in numbers? (see Acts 9:31)
5. Galatians 5:22-23 tells us that the Holy Spirit helps us to live a good life and produce good fruit (good works). What nine things does it say the Holy Spirit helps us to do?
6. Who helps us to pray when we are not sure how to pray? (see Romans 8:26)
7. Which reflection verse talks about our bodies being the Temple of the Holy Spirit?

Key words from the Bible

Spiritual Fruit – Although fruit is sometimes used in the Bible to describe food, it is commonly used to describe the actions produced by good and evil in people's lives. The fruit of the Spirit is mentioned in Galatians 5 and refers to the virtues produced in the Christian's life by the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is the result of the Holy Spirit's presence and working in the lives of maturing believers as they become more like Christ. The fruit is the good works the Christian produces as a result of following Jesus and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in their lives.

Memory Verse

Read and memorise Galatians 5:22-23 for next week's lesson.

Prayer

*Heavenly Father, I thank You that You have given us the Holy Spirit to help, teach, guide, encourage and strengthen us. I pray that the Holy Spirit will work in my life to produce good fruit and He will help me to live for You each and every day.
I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen*

8. Christology - Having a right view of Jesus Christ

The word Christology means the "study of Christ". It includes learning about Him and His works - what He has done, is doing and what He will do in the future. One very important part of living the Christian life is having a right view and belief about Jesus Christ. It is vitally important to understand that He is more than just a historical character who was a good person, a good teacher or the leader of an ancient religion.

We need to understand that Jesus as God is all powerful, all knowing and all present. He has always existed and was involved in the creation of the world. It is also important to understand that Jesus came to live amongst us, that He died on the cross for our sin and purchased our salvation. He then returned to heaven to be with the Father.

When we place our faith in Jesus Christ, He becomes not only our Saviour but also our Sovereign Lord and Master. We are under new ownership. We can only enjoy our new life in Christ as we daily seek His will and follow Him in obedience.

Bible verses on Jesus Christ

Please read the following Bible verses and then answer the reflection questions below. Circle or underline any key words that stand out as you read.

Isaiah 9:6 - For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

John 16:28 - I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.

Mark 2:10 - But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

John 4:25-26 - The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."

John 10:32 - I have shown you many great miracles from the Father.

Luke 1:35 - The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

John 1:12 - Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

John 10:28 - I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

John 1:1-3 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Reflection Questions

1. What four titles does Isaiah 9:6 give to Jesus?
2. After Jesus had spent His time on earth, where does the Bible say He came from and where did He go back to? (see John 16:28)
3. What authority does Mark 2:10 say Jesus have on earth?
4. Who did Jesus identify Himself as when talking to the woman in John 4:25-26?
5. What did Jesus perform to show He was from the Father in heaven? (John 10:32).
6. In Luke 1:35 when the Angel spoke to Mary, how did he describe Jesus?
7. In John 10:28 what did it say Jesus gives us? Who does it say can snatch from His hands?
8. Jesus is often described in the Bible as the Word. What things were made by and through Him? (John 1:1-3)

Key words from the Bible

Messiah - Messiah is a Hebrew word that means "anointed one." It is similar to the Greek word "Christ" which also means "anointed." Jesus, as the messiah, was anointed by God to be a Prophet, Priest, and King. As the messiah he has delivered the Christian from sin and has given to them eternal life. In that sense, messiah means deliverer, for He has delivered us. The Messiah was promised in the Old Testament.

Memory Verse

Read and memorise John 10:28 for our next lesson.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

I pray that I will have a right understanding of who Jesus is. Help me to always remember that He is my Lord, Saviour and King. I pray that I will never forget that He died on the cross for my sin and that He is the only way to salvation.

I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen

9. Understanding who we are in Christ

The Bible says in Romans 12:3 says, “Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgement, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.”

This verse reminds of the importance of having a right view of ourselves. It says we should think of our self with sober judgement. This means to think correctly about ourselves. Some people think too highly of themselves, while others have a too low opinion. The best way to think right about ourselves is by seeing who God says we are in the Bible.

As Christians, I believe at times we need to be reminded of who God says we are. In this study we will look at 8 Scriptures that help us see ourselves through God’s eyes.

Bible Verses on who you are in Christ

Please read the following Bible verses and then answer the reflection questions below. Circle or underline any key words that stand out as you read.

Genesis 1:27 - So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Ephesians 1:4 - For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love, He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.

Ephesians 2:10 - For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

John 1:12 - Yet to all who received him [Jesus], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

Romans 8:11 - And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Ephesians 2:4-6 - But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 139:13 - For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

1 John 4:9-10 - This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Reflection Questions

1. In Genesis 1:27 whose image does it say we are created in?
2. Looking at Ephesians 1:4-5, what two things did God choose us to be in His sight?
3. Ephesians 2:10 tells us that God created us to do good works. When did He prepare these works for us to do?
4. When we receive Jesus Christ into our lives, what does the Bible tell us we become? (John 1:12)
5. Romans 8:11 tells us that the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead and gives life to our bodies. Where does it say the Holy Spirit lives?
6. Which reflection verse tells us that God knit us together in our Mother's womb?
7. Where does Ephesians 2:4-6 tell us we are seated spiritually?

Key thought from the Bible

Made in God's image – To be made in God image means we can think, make decisions and choices; we can be creative and work with our gifts from God to serve God and others; and we are relational in the way we love and care for each. When we do these things, we reflect God. As Christians, we must remember that we have God's DNA stamped on us. Because we are made in God's image and have His DNA we can be all God wants us to be.

Memory Verse

Read and memorise John 1:12 for the next lesson.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank You that You created me in Your image. Help me to understand how much You love me and that You made me to do good works before You created the world. Help me to see myself through Your eyes.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

10. The Future – What does God want me to do now?

Now you are coming to the end of this discipleship program you might be wondering what next? What does God want me to do with the rest of my life? These are great questions.

Many Christians wonder what God wants them to do with their lives. While God does not give us all an individual road map for us to follow in the Bible, He does give us a number of general principles that He has given to His people in a few places.

Thomas Merton the Catholic Monk said this about finding God's will, "For each one of us, there is only one thing necessary: to fulfil our own destiny, according to God's will, to be what God wants us to be."

In this final study we will look at a number of verses to see what the Bible says concerning God's will for our lives. They give us general principles to follow. This combined with daily prayer, Bible reading and walking closely with Jesus will help us to know day by day what Jesus wants us to do.

Bible verses on God's will

Please read the following Bible verses and then answer the reflection questions below. Circle or underline any key words that stand out as you read.

Colossians 3:1-2 - Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Luke 10:27 - He [Jesus] answered: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'"

Colossians 3:12 - Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Proverbs 3:5-6 - Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

Micah 6:8 - He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

2 Peter 3:18 - But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

Psalms 37:4 - Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Ephesians 2:10 - For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Reflection Questions

1. According to Colossians 3:1-2 what does God want us to set our hearts and minds on?
2. In Luke 10:27 God wants us to do two things with all of our heart, soul, strength and mind, what are they?
3. As Christians God wants us to clothe ourselves with five things. These can be found in Colossians 3:12.
4. In Proverbs 3:5-6 God talks about guiding us and making our paths straight. What three things are vital to this?
5. In Micah 6:8 God talks about what He requires from us. What three things does the Bible say?
6. 2 Peter 3:18 tells us to grow in two things. What are they?
7. Which reflection verse tells us that God prepared good works for us to do in advance?

Key word from the Bible

Disciple – In the Bible the word used to describe a follower of Jesus is Disciple. We see this word is used 262 times in the New Testament, compared with 26 times for believer or 3 times for the word Christian. Being a disciple of Jesus is about committing to a way of life and of learning and growth. It goes past just believing in something, it is more about learning to follow and to heading in a new direction. The ultimate goal for a disciple is to learn from the Bible, grow in their faith and then pass it on to others. Jesus' last words He told us to go and make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20).

Memory Verse

Read and memorise Luke 10:27

Prayer

Heavenly Father, I thank You that the Bible gives us information about how you want us to live our lives. I pray that You will help me to love and trust you with all of my heart. I pray that as I go about my daily life that You will help me to keep my heart and mind focused on heavenly things and that I will always look to You for guidance in all I do.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Appendix 1 - Answers to the reflection questions

Study 1 – Assurance of Salvation

1. God promises us eternal life
2. We become children of God
3. Everyone who calls out to Jesus can be saved
4. Jesus will bring salvation to His followers next time He comes
5. Ephesians 2:8-9
6. Titus 3:5
7. We have eternal life

Study 2 – The Bible

1. Teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness
2. So we don't sin against God
3. We will prosper in all the things we do
4. We deceive ourselves
5. Psalm 119:130
6. We keep our lives pure
7. Psalm 119:105

Study 3 – Prayer

1. God promises to give us peace
2. That God will listen to us
3. We should pray in Jesus' name
4. Because He cares for us
5. We can ask for wisdom
6. 1 John 5:14-15
7. believe we have received it. Or have faith God can do it.

Study 4 – Church

1. Devoted themselves to the teaching of the Apostles, Fellowship or meeting together, Breaking bread (taking communion), and Prayer.
2. Love and good deeds
3. It says we should not give up meeting together with other Christians
4. People will know we are His disciples because of the way we love each other
5. Two or three people present
6. Romans 12:4-5
7. Everyone, but especially those in the family of God (other believers)

Study 5 – Serving God

1. God prepared our good works before He made the world
2. God wants us to be a cheerful happy giver
3. When we serve or work we are really serving the Lord
4. We need to become a servant of others to be great
5. Use our gifts to serve others
6. Everyone, but especially those in the family of God (other believers)
7. Philippians 2:6-7

Study 6 – Sharing your faith

1. Make disciples, baptise them, teach them what Jesus taught
2. We will receive help and power from the Holy Spirit
3. We should be prepared to answer questions about our faith, we should do this with gentleness and respect
4. So people can hear about Jesus and salvation
5. Matthew 5:37-38
6. What they have seen and heard
7. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Study 7 – The Holy Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit lives inside of us
2. The Holy Spirit teaches us and reminds us of the things Jesus said
3. We will receive help and power from the Holy Spirit
4. The Holy Spirit strengthened and encouraged them
5. Love others, be joyful, have peace, be patient, show kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and be self-controlled
6. The Spirit or the Holy Spirit
7. 1 Corinthians 3:16

Study 8 – Having a right view of Jesus

1. Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace
2. Jesus came from the Father in heaven and He went back to the Father
3. Jesus had the authority to forgive sins
4. Jesus identified Himself as the Messiah
5. Jesus performed miracles to show He was from the Father
6. Jesus was called the Son of God
7. No-one can snatch us out of Jesus' hand
8. All things we made through Jesus

Study 9 – Having a right view of ourselves

1. We are made in God's image
2. We are holy and blameless in God's sight
3. Since before the creation of the world
4. We become God's children
5. The Holy Spirit lives inside us
6. Psalm 139:13
7. We are spiritually seated at the right hand of God

Study 10 – What does God want me to do now?

1. God wants us to set our hearts on minds on heavenly things
2. Love God with all our heart and love our neighbour as ourselves
3. Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience
4. Trust God, lean on His understanding, acknowledge Him always
5. Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly with God
6. Grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ
7. Ephesians 2:10