

Vancouver

Church of Christ



Bible Study Series

**A study of the Scriptures aimed to help a
seeker find a changed life in Jesus Christ.**

The Vancouver Church of Christ

Compelled by Christ to Know God and Make Him Known

Adapted from a series developed by the churches in Nashville, Hampton Roads and Boston

PREFACE

This study series was put together with much love, faith and prayer to help people seeking God to come to full knowledge of the truth. It lays a foundation for their spiritual walk with God that will last a lifetime – until they meet God – if they accept the scriptures and put them into practice. The first century church appeared to teach similar basics as elementary or foundational teachings:

Hebrews 6:1-3

Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.

The outlines offered here are, as Hebrew 6 says, elementary teachings or principles. They are not the final word. Simply reading these outlines to your friend will not guarantee salvation to anyone. Keep in mind that you are studying the Bible, not just these outlines, with your friend. If you have other scriptures – or other basics – in mind, by all means, include them! In all these things, do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

TIPS ON USING A STUDY SERIES:

- A study series is a guide. People did not use this series on the day of Pentecost. They did however, fully understand what Jesus did, were cut to the heart (broken), repented, and were baptized because of their faith. A good study series really helps as a tool because it joins scripture together with God's purposes in a way that is understandable and clear.
- A study series is like an outline. It is a skeleton, and you must put the flesh on it with your life and love as well as your knowledge and understanding of God. You CAN interchange scriptures and put the studies in a different order – the goal is that your friend will come to understand God and live for him.

TIPS ON LEADING STUDIES:

1. **Pray before you lead studies.** Pray for God's spirit to guide you, and that you would treat your friend with compassion and conviction as Jesus would. Pray for all of your hearts to be fertile soil for God's Word.
2. **Get to know them well.** It is always good if you can have a "life talk" with someone leading up to the studies. ("Life talks" are conversations where you can get to know the person's background and perspectives by asking questions.) Building a relationship with someone, and understanding why they think as they do, can prove vital in helping them remove spiritual roadblocks to gaining a correct view of God.

Proverbs 20:5
The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters,
but a man of understanding draws them out.
3. **You job is to plant and water.** You don't have to force anything – God has the power to make it grow! (1 Corinthians 3:5-9)

4. **Check to see if they have a Bible.** Make sure your friend has a Bible with a good translation that they can readily understand. If not, a great gesture would be to get your friend one and write an encouraging note in it for them!

5. **Be a great example yourself.**

1 Timothy 4:16

Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

6. **Get a good feel for each study.** The studies are laid out in a very practical manner.

- There is a brief note at the very top to explain the purpose of each study.
- The box underneath the note lists all of the main scriptures in the study and the main idea for each.
- Underneath the box is an opening question and then each scripture is listed in order with more depth.
- The study ends with a conclusion that contains some challenges that help apply the study to our lives.
- NOTE: There is also an additional resources section at the end that generally includes extra passages, homework and facilitation questions. You can use these resources to further bolster the power of each study!

7. **Be led by the Spirit and enjoy yourself.** God is about to do a miracle, even if we don't know how!

Mark 4:26-29

He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain--first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

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

“Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (1 Timothy 4:16)

Primary Studies

Seek God

**Getting to Know Your Friend
God and Man: The True Story
The Word of God
Knowing Jesus**

See Need

**The World's Wisdom or God's Wisdom
Sin**

Faith in Jesus

**The Cross of Christ/The Grace of God
Repentance and Baptism**

New Life

**The Lordship of Jesus
The Church**

Additional Studies

Seek God

**Seeking God
Teach Us to Pray**

See Need

Seeing Your Sin

Faith in Jesus

**The Kingdom of God
Savation by Grace Through Faith
Baptism: Additional study**

New Life

The Holy Spirit

Getting to Know Your Friend

Purpose

The goal of these questions is to get to know your friend's spiritual background, beliefs, and faith. They should be asked in a conversational non-threatening way while sharing your own experiences. Do not use these as a list of interview questions, but in your conversations seek to gain as much of this information as possible.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. Did you grow up going to Church or reading your Bible?
2. What churches or denominations did you attend? (Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, etc.)
3. How would you describe your experience with churches and religion?
4. What do you think about prayer? Is this something you do often?
5. What do you think about Christianity and other religious faiths? (Islam, Buddhist, atheism, etc) Do you think they're right or wrong? Do you think they all point to the same God?
6. What do you believe about the Bible? Do you believe it is from God? Why or why not?
7. What do you believe or know about Jesus? How did you come to those beliefs?
8. What do you believe or know about Satan?
9. What do you think happens after you die?
10. Do you think Heaven and Hell exists?
11. [If they have expressed belief] What are been some of the things that have given your belief a hit and maybe caused you to doubt?
12. What have been the key points on your spiritual journey?
13. What have you come to understand about what it means to be a Christian?
14. Would you like to study the Bible to find out its' answers to some of these questions? Are there any questions you have?



God and Man: The True Story

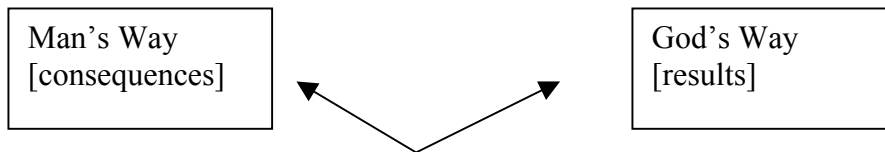
Purpose

To help the person to the picture of the great Bible epic or story and how it all fits together from Genesis to the New Testament. This will give your friend an overview of the entire Bible.

You may want to begin by asking the person if they like a great story and they saying you want to look with them at the greatest story in human history and how we all fit into it.

Genesis 1:1 The story starts with the creation of the universe and the earth. Everything in the Bible is built on the truth that this world did not just happen. It was created by God for a purpose.

Genesis 1:26-27. After the creation of other life, God created man and woman in his own image, the only beings with a spiritual nature. From beginning of time, God has wanted to be in relationship with man. He created us to be like him in special ways. He has communicated clearly with man to let him know how he could be in relationship with his creator. It has always been man's choice...and there have always been results or consequences that came from that choice---whether man chose to go



Genesis 2:6-7; Genesis 2:15-17. Man's way or God's way. What were the results of man choosing his way? [3:16-19] What would have been the result of obeying God?

But God had a plan to deal with man's sin and lostness.

Genesis 22:17-18 --Abraham

- It begins with the choosing of the man Abram whose name was changed to Abraham.
- What is the promise God made to him?
- The rest of the story is the story of Abraham's descendents and how through them God has given the whole world the opportunity to know him and be blessed.
- It is often a messy story because of how often men failed to love and obey God, but it also a story of God's faithfulness to do what he had promised Abraham.

Genesis 25:22-26 - Israel

- Abraham had Isaac and Isaac had Jacob (Israel) and Jacob had 12 sons.
- Their descendents became the Twelve Tribes of Israel
- The entire group went to Egypt of survive a famine
- They eventually became slaves of the Egyptians

Exodus 3: 1-8 – the Exodus

- God calls Moses to lead the people out of Egypt
- The rest of Exodus is the story of how that happened
- The way God led his people out of the bondage of slavery and into a promised land becomes a picture of how he will lead all nations out of the bondage of sin and into a new relationship with him.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 – Loving God with ALL

- Throughout the OT this is what God wants Israel to learn
- And he continually emphasizes how he wants to bless them (7:12-13)

2 Chronicles 33:23– Israel's Unfaithfulness

- A. 2 Chronicles is one of the historical books—the first being Joshua—that describes the history of Israel.
- B. This passage describes something seen so often in these books. What is it?
- C. God is faithful and continues to work with them. When they repent, he forgives. (**2 Chron.34:27-28**).

The Prophets – Calling Back; Looking Forward [show this section of the Bible]

- A. The section we call the Prophets contains the writing of men God sent to remind the people of his love for them and to call them back to him. See **Hosea 11:1-4; 14:1-2**
- B. But these men also began to look forward and predict that God was going to bring a Messiah, a savior through the nation of Israel.
- C. This will finally fulfill the promise made to Abraham

Isaiah – 740-680 B.C. – The Coming Messiah

- A. Some of the clearest prophecies are in Isaiah
- B. **Isaiah 9:6-7** -- Isaiah looks forward and sees an amazing man; but he is more than a man
- C. **Isaiah 42:1-6** –The servant God will send will be compassionate and bring a message for all the nations. A light to the Gentiles
- D. **Isaiah 49:5-6** – not just for Israel but also for the Gentiles
- E. **Isaiah 53:1-6; 11-12** – The servant God will send will lay down his life for others and through his suffering and death men will be healed.

New Testament – the Fulfillment of the Ages

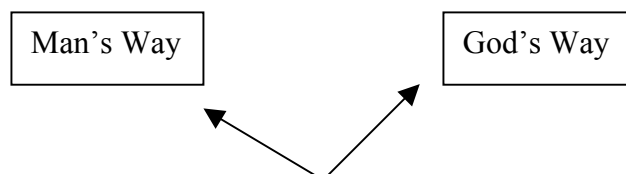
- A. 400 years transpire between this page (end of Malachi) and this page (beginning of Matthew).
- B. During this time the Jews kept looking for the Messiah. They began to think he would be a powerful military leader. Ignored Isaiah 53.
- C. Old Testament was all about God working through Israel to fulfill his promise to Abraham.
- D. New Testament is all about how that promise is fulfilled in Jesus.

Jesus – The One

- A. God in the flesh – **John 1:1-14**
- B. God's revelation to us – **Hebrews 1:1-2**
- C. God's effort to embrace us -- **Luke 13:34**
 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"

Our Story

- A. Our story will be determined by our choice.
- B. We have a decision to make, just as those in the beginning.
- C. How you feel about what we have looked at?
- D. Our studies will help make the issues clear about the choice between God's way and Man's way. How do you feel about learning more about the choice between:



The Word of God

Purpose

To show a seeker what the Bible says about itself so that he will be eager to read it in order to discover God's will and apply it to his life so he can change to become like Jesus!

- **2 Timothy 3:16-17.** All Scripture is inspired by God, and is to be applied to our lives so that we can be ready for every spiritual challenge. (Other scripture 2 Peter 1:20-21).
- **Hebrews 4:12-13.** The word of God is relevant and can expose and convict us of sin in our lives. It can cut us, but its purpose is to cut out the bad, so that we can be healed—just like a surgeon's scalpel.
- **John 8:31-32.** Jesus teaches these Jews that intellectual belief is not enough. He calls them to believe God enough to trust his will for their lives. This trust is demonstrated by the decision to live according to Jesus' teaching. True faith is seen in our obedience.
- **1 Timothy 4:16.** How we live and what we believe are both essential to salvation. Illustration: Which wing of an airplane is most important? So it is with what you believe and how you live out those beliefs. What is the result of careful attention to our life and doctrine?
- **2 Timothy 4:2-3.** If the Bible is so powerful and helpful, why aren't more people truly following what it says? Bottom line, we prefer to live according to our own feelings and desires.
- **Matthew 15:1-9.** What is another hindrance to following God's word? Religious tradition which takes precedence over the Word of God can result in worldly solutions to spiritual issues and make our worship of God empty and pointless.
- **Acts 17:10-12.** We are ultimately responsible for what we believe. Religious leaders can be wrong, so we cannot be lazy. Review in greater depth the lessons and sermons you hear to be sure about what you are being taught. Are you willing to take personal responsibility for knowing what the Bible says?
- **Psalms 1, Psalm 19:7-11.** The Bible is more than just words on a page. We need to develop a thirst and devotion to the word of God. How eager are you to regularly meditate on the Scriptures?
- **Isaiah 66:1-2.** Our attitude should be one of humility, reverence and awe for God's word. Are you willing to live by the Bible, taking God at his Word in your relationship with him? Are you willing to trust God's Word above your own feelings, religious traditions or religious leaders? Will you seek to understand God's will and ways through his inspired Word? (Other scriptures: John 12:47-48; James 1:22-25)

Knowing Jesus

Purpose

To examine the life, character and teachings of Jesus so that an individual can come to faith in him and aspire to follow him and come to know God through him. If the person isn't firm about their faith in Jesus after this study, then do the *Lord, Liar or Lunatic* study in the appendix. See the appendix for the additional study: *Teach us to Pray* related to Mark 1:35.

- **Hebrews 1:1-3.** Jesus is God's ultimate attempt to communicate with mankind, with us. Illustration: Imagine trying to talk to an ant. How could you do it? God, an all-powerful and all loving Father, sent Jesus, his Son, as the perfect representation of who he is.
- Jesus is the unique Son of God: fully God and fully man! God came to earth as a man in order that we could come to know him. (See also John 1:1, 14)
- **Colossians 2:9.** All the fullness of God lives in Jesus Christ. This means that every aspect of God's character can be found in Jesus. Reading through any of the Gospels, the four books that describe Jesus' life and words will give you insight into God's character and will for your life. Here are several aspects from Jesus life in the first chapter the Gospel of Mark:
 - **Mark 1:14-20** Jesus, preached the good news and called men to follow him.
 - **Mark 1:21-22.** Jesus was an amazing teacher whose words were spoken with authority.
 - **Mark 1:23-28.** Jesus cast out demons, showing that the power of God was present in him.
 - **Mark 1:29-31.** Jesus met people's felt needs and healed the sick.
 - **Mark 1:32-34.** Jesus focused his attention on others and selflessly gave of himself.
 - **Mark 1:35.** Jesus was dependent upon God in prayer for his strength and direction. See Luke 11:1-4 Jesus prayed and taught his disciples to pray. Prayer is not the repetition of words but a heartfelt talk with your Father in Heaven—a time for connection with God.
 - **Mark 1:36-39.** Jesus was consumed with his mission to preach the good news.
 - **Mark 1:40-42.** Jesus was filled with compassion for all people.
 - **Mark 10:32-34, 45.** Jesus came to serve, and gave his perfect life as a ransom for sinners. As predicted, he was rejected by his people and crucified—but he rose from the dead three days later.
- **John 14:6.** Jesus claimed to be *the* way, not a way. He claimed to be *the* truth and not one truth among many. He said he was *the* life, not just a better life. How important is it that we put our faith, our trust, our obedience in Jesus? (See also Acts 4:12 - No one will make it to the Father unless they come to him through Jesus!)
- **1 John 2:3-6.** Knowing Jesus is not just an intellectual exercise. The goal of the Christian is to obey his commands and become more and more like him: to think like Jesus, to act like Jesus, to live like Jesus. Are you ready to passionately commit yourself to following him?
- Choose a Gospel and read more about Jesus for yourself.

The World's Wisdom or God's Wisdom?

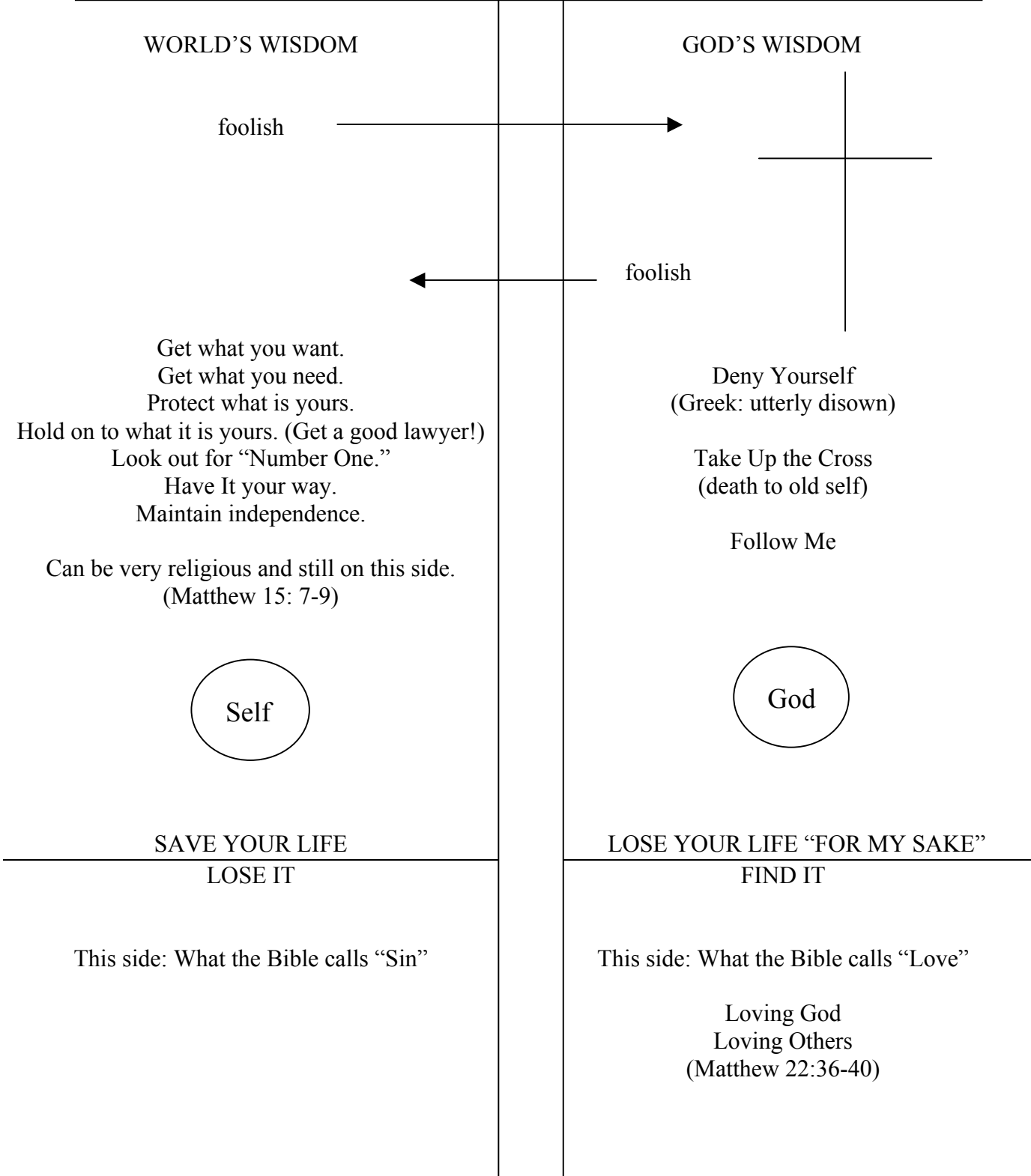
Purpose

This study will show the stark contrast between the world's wisdom and God's wisdom and help the seeker understand that he or she cannot have it both ways. The accompanying diagram should be developed as the study progresses. (You may want to refer back to this diagram periodically, as it sets up a helpful way of viewing the whole process of conversion.)

- **1 Corinthians 1:18-20.** Everyone wants to know “How can I really live?” This passage spells out two fundamental ways to answer this question. The world's wisdom or God's wisdom. How does man in his wisdom view God's wisdom (the cross)? How does God view man's wisdom? Can we have it both ways? If you think I am a fool and I think you are a fool, what will our relationship be like? Establish the wide gulf in the two ways of viewing and living life. (Other Scripture: Isaiah 55:8)
- **1 Corinthians 3:18-20.** Why does Paul say “Do not deceive yourselves?” There is something about the world's wisdom that is deceiving. It is easy to convince ourselves that what we want to believe, what is comfortable, what is familiar, is right. . (Other Scripture: Luke 16:15)
- **Matthew 16:13-17.** What kind of man was Peter? Was he religious? He certainly gets a right answer here. According to Jesus, where does this answer come from?
- **Matthew 16:21-23.** What does “Peter rebuked him” mean? Peter thought he was seeing things God's way, but in reality he was still on the side of the world's wisdom. We can know the right answers and still be living according to the wisdom of the world. What was Jesus' response? Where does the world's wisdom really come from? From Satan. No wonder it is the opposite of God's wisdom. (. (Other Scripture: James 4:4)
- **Before we go on:** What is the “world's wisdom”? If you asked a person who is street smart or the person on Wall Street or just a person who watches a lot of TV, what is at the heart of the world's wisdom about how to live? “Look out for number one.” “Get what you want.” “Get the power, the pleasure, the control you want.” “Get the money.” “Protect yourself.” “Guard your rights.” “Maintain your independence.” And so what is at the center of man's wisdom? Self! (See 2 Timothy 3:2.)
- **Matthew 16:24-26.** What is Jesus' message? How is it the opposite of the world's message? (1) Deny self – “disown” (Matthew 26:34). We renounce our old self, our old approach to life. (2) Take up the cross (instrument of death). Die to ourselves. (3) Follow Jesus. Make his life our model. Jesus life is a demonstration of his message. What does Jesus say will be the bottom line for those who “save their own lives”? For those who foolishly lose their lives for him?
- **Final thought.** What is everything on the left side (world's wisdom) called? Sin. What is everything on the right side (God's wisdom) called? Love. How have you lived according to the world's wisdom? Have you ever made a decision to renounce it? Which side was Peter still on (though he was religious)? Which side are you on? During the next few days pay attention to your thoughts. Which side?



How Can I Really Live?



How have you lived according to man's wisdom? What are your greatest tendencies in this direction?


When did you make the decision to renounce man's wisdom and commit to following God's plan? Which side was Peter on? Which side would Jesus say you are on? Which do you want to be on?

See
Need

Sin

Purpose

To help seekers see themselves as our Holy God sees them: loved by him yet utterly sinful and separated from him. This realization brings about a desire for both forgiveness and repentance. Pray for the Holy Spirit to convict seekers of their sinfulness in this study (John 16:8). See also appendix: *Breaking the Law*.

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|--|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 Peter 2:9-10. | Darkness
Not a People
No Mercy |  | Light
People of God
Mercy |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|

Every person is either in the darkness or the light. This study will show us that outside of Jesus we are all in the darkness.

- **Isaiah 59:1-2.** What is the consequence of sin? Sin hurts others, hurts ourselves, but ultimately sin hurts and separates us from God. God is light. As long as the wall of sin remains, we are in the darkness. In order to have a relationship with God, the barrier of sin must come down.
- **Romans 3:21-24.** We will come back to other ideas in this text later, but focus on v23. Who has sinned? Use illustrations to show that some are better than others, but all sin and fall short. Examples: Swimming to Hawaii, or graph showing piles of sin. Who is more lost? There is no “good person” who is without sin.
- **Mark 7:14-23.** Sin is not simply wrong actions, but a problem of the heart. Who is responsible for our sin? Despite genetics, parenting, peer pressure and socio-economic conditions, we are responsible for our own sin, which comes from our own hearts and makes us unclean. What is the consequence of being unclean before God? Discuss the sins Jesus talks about here.

Use One of the Following:

- **Galatians 5:19-21.** Sin is the fundamentally “un-God-ward” orientation of our “flesh” or “sinful nature” and finds expression in many different ways. Emphasize “and the like.” What is the common element in all these things? Self-centeredness. Be as specific as necessary to explain and share from your own life about the sins listed. How do you see yourself in these verses? What sins have been characteristic of your own sinful nature? (If needed, look at additional Scriptures which catalog sins like 2 Timothy 3:1-5 or Colossians 3:5-11. Also Rev. 21:8.)
 - **Romans 1:18-32.** What is God’s attitude toward sin? Why are men without excuse? What things do we see tare sinful in God’s eyes? The Christian shares out of his life and then asks the other person to share. Similar questions to those above.
- 📖
- **James 4:17.** We are sinful and in need of forgiveness not only as a result of those sins we have committed, but for failing to do the good that we know to do. (Other Scripture: James 2:10-11)
 - **Romans 6:15-18.** How does sin enslave? Note that sin is a *power* that must be defeated as well as *specific acts* that must be repented of. Who alone can set us free from sin? (*John 8:31-36*)
 - **Romans 6:23.** What are the eternal consequences of sin? Why be urgent to learn about receiving the gift of God that comes through Jesus Christ? Review these verses as honestly as you can to get in touch with the *bad news* about your own sinfulness. In the next couple of studies, we will look at the *good news* of God’s solution to our bondage to sin. (Note: In some instances it is important to have the person articulate how he or she was saved or forgiven of sin before examining the Bible’s teaching about salvation.

The Cross of Christ

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to show through the Cross, the incredible, unstoppable love of God as well as his righteousness and justice—in other words, what God did to win our hearts and pay for the penalty for our sin. This study also stress that we are saved by grace through our faith in the cross. An additional study on grace is in the appendix if the person needs a more in depth study.)

- **Romans 3:22-26, 5:6-8.** The cross is a demonstration of God's *justice* in the face of sin. God would not be righteous if he simply looked the other way in the face of sin and evil. At the same time, the cross is the greatest demonstration of God's *love*. God loved his enemy – you. Because God loves us, Jesus Christ died for our sins. (See also 1 John 3:16; 4:10)
- **Mark 10:42-45.** Jesus understood God's plan for him to give himself as a ransom for us—to die for our sins. He could do this only because of his sinless life and his own love for us.
- **Matthew 26:36-46:** What *choice* did Jesus make for *you* that night in the garden? Read **Matthew 20:17-19.** Jesus knew this day would come!
- **Matthew 26:52-54:** What *choice* did Jesus make for *you* by not calling on the twelve legions of angels? Read **John 12:27-28.** Why did Jesus not seek to escape the Cross?
- **Matthew 26:59-63, 27:11-14:** False witnesses as well as false evidence were brought against Jesus. What *choice* did Jesus make for *you* by remaining silent and not defending Himself?
- **Matthew 27:27-29:** Jesus as a king could have chosen a crown of glory, but instead He chose the crown of thorns. What *choice* did Jesus make for *you* by choosing the crown of thorns?
- **Matthew 27:38-44:** The robbers, the chief priests, the elders of the law and the teachers all mocked Jesus and said, "*Come down from the cross, if You are the Son of God!*" What *choice* did Jesus make for *you* by staying nailed to the Cross? **See the adjoining medical account at this point to help them understand the depth of the suffering of Jesus.**
- **Isaiah 53.** Written about 700 years before Jesus, this chapter predicted what the Messiah would do at the cross and why. (Note: In Luke 22:37, Jesus quotes from Isaiah 53 and says it was about him.) Read entire chapter. Points of emphasis:
 - Verses 1-3 – despised and rejected
 - Verses 4-6 – pierced for our transgressions; crushed for our iniquities; by his wounds we are healed. Suggestion: read this passage again putting in your own name.
 - Verses 7-9 – like a lamb to the slaughter; for the transgressions of my people he was stricken. You may want to remind the person of the sins he/she described in earlier study.
 - Verses 10-12 – he is a guilt offering; but after his suffering, he received satisfaction in his resurrection. (See also Psalm 22)

- **Ephesians 2:1-10.** What condition are we all in? We are *dead* in sins and transgressions. How much can a dead man do to improve his own condition? What then is the only way we can be saved? What do you learn about God in his passage? His love? His mercy? His grace? Grace is the word that the Bible uses to describe what God has done for us. We are saved *by grace through faith*. Faith is obedient trust in God (James 2:14-18). Here we trust what God has done in Jesus as the grounds of our salvation and commit our lives fully to him. (See also Titus 3:3-8 and for more insight into God's heart see Luke 15:11-31)
- **1 Corinthians 1:18:** You can only see the message of the Cross in one of two ways. For those who are perishing, the message of the cross is *foolishness*. Why? For those who are being saved, the message of the cross is the *power of God*. Why?
- **Luke 23:39-43:** Once nailed to their cross, all three would die. However, the question is not *if* they would die, but *how* did they die?
 - One died *for* sin: Jesus.
 - One died *in* sin: For him the Cross was foolishness and he was lost.
 - One died *to* sin: For him the Cross was the power of God and he was saved.
- **1 Peter 2:21-25.** Why did Jesus die on the cross for us? So that we might die to sin and live for the new righteousness that the cross provides. This is our response to the cross.

What impact do the Cross and the grace of God have on you?

Medical Account of the Crucifixion

. Truman Davis, M.D., M.S.

Reprinted with Permission from *Arizona Medicine*, March 1965

The physical trauma of Christ begins in Gethsemane with one of the initial aspects of His suffering the bloody sweat. It is interesting that the physician of the group, Luke, is the only one to mention this. Luke's biblical account tells of Jesus suffering, "*And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground*" (Luke 22:44).

Though very rare, the phenomenon of *He-ma-ti-dro-sis*, or bloody sweat, is all documented. Under great emotional stress, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can break, thus mixing blood with sweat. This process alone could have produced marked weakness and possible shock.

After the arrest in the middle of the night, Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas, the High Priest. One of the soldiers struck Jesus across the face for remaining silent when questioned by Caiaphas. The palace guards taunted Jesus to identify them as they each passed by, spat on Him, and struck Him in the face.

In the early morning, Jesus, battered and bruised, dehydrated, and exhausted from a sleepless night, is taken across Jerusalem to the *Praetorium* of the Fortress Antonia. It was there, in response to the cries of the mob, that Pilate ordered Bar-Abbas released and condemned Jesus to scourging and crucifixion.

Preparations for the scourging are carried out. Jesus is stripped of His clothing and His hands tied to a post above His head. The Roman legionnaire steps forward with the *flagrum* in his hand. This is a short whip consisting of several heavy, leather thongs with two small balls of lead attached near the ends of each. The heavy whip is brought down with full force across Jesus' shoulders, back and legs thirty-nine times.

At first the heavy thongs cut through the skin only. Then, as the blows continue, they cut deeper and deeper into the *sub-cu-ta-neous* tissues, producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles. The small balls of lead first produce large, deep bruises, which are broken open by subsequent blows.

Finally, the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue. When it is determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner is near death, the beating is finally stopped.

The half-fainting Jesus is then untied and allowed to slump to the stone pavement, wet with His own blood. The Roman soldiers see a great joke in the provincial Jew claiming to be a king. They throw a robe across His shoulders and place a stick in His hand for a scepter. A small bundle of flexible branches covered with long thorns is pressed into the scalp of Jesus. Again there is copious bleeding (the scalp being one of the most vascular areas of the body). After mocking Him and striking Him across the face, the soldiers take the stick from His hand and strike Him across the head, driving the thorns deeper into His scalp. Finally, the soldier's tire of their sadistic sport and the robe is torn from His back. This has already become adherent in the clots of blood and serum in the wounds, and its removal just as the careless removal of surgical bandages, causes excruciating pain- almost as though He were again being whipped, and the wounds again begin to bleed. Jesus is then led off to be crucified. The heavy beams of the cross are then tied to His shoulders, and the procession of the condemned Christ, two thieves and the execution detail, begins its slow journey. The weight of the heavy wooden beam, together with the shock produced by copious blood loss, is too much. Jesus stumbles and lacerates the skin and muscles of His shoulders. Jesus tries to rise, but His human muscles have been pushed beyond their endurance.

At Golgotha, the beam is placed on the ground and Jesus is quickly thrown backward with His shoulders pressed against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He then drives a heavy, wrought iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly, he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexion and movement. The beam is then lifted in place at the top of the posts and the titulus reading "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" is nailed in place.

The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through

the arch of each. As Jesus pushes Himself upward to avoid the stretching torment, He places His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there is the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the me-ta-tar-sal bones of the feet.

As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in a deep relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by the arms the pectoral muscles are paralyzed and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but not exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order get one short breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, Jesus is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen. Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain, as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins. A deep crushing pain deep in the chest as the par-a-car-di-um slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart. The compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues- the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues send their flood of stimuli to the brain. Jesus gasps, "I thirst."

Jesus can feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues. With one last surge of strength, He once again presses His torn feet against the nail, He straightens His legs, takes a deeper breath, and utters His seventh and last cry, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

Apparently to make double sure of death, the legionnaire drove his spear through the fifth interspace between the ribs, upward through the par-a-car-di-um and into the heart. Immediately there came out blood and water. We, therefore, have rather conclusive postmortem evidence that Jesus died, not the usual crucifixion death by suffocation, but of heart failure due to the shock and constriction of the heart by fluid in the *par-a-car-di-um*.

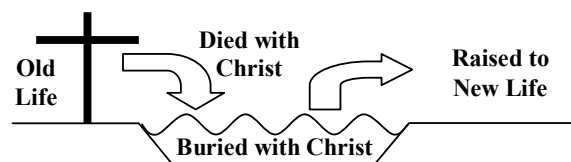
Thus we have a glimpse of the manifestation of evil which man can exhibit toward man and toward God. This medical description of what Jesus endured on the cross is apt to leave you hopeless and depressed. How grateful you can be that, "He Did This Just For You" showing you a glimpse into what God did to win your heart.

Repentance and Baptism

Purpose

When we understand God's grace, the response of faith is to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (*Acts 2:36-38*). This study is designed to show a seeker what biblical repentance entails and the meaning of baptism into Christ. (And additional study of baptism is in the Appendix if the person is not convinced of the need.)

- **Acts 2:36-38** – Why is this such an important passage? What two responses did Peter call for? We need to look at both repentance and baptism.
- **Luke 13:1-5, 6-9**. Jesus preaches that without repentance, we will all perish. He likewise expects to find fruit every time there is true repentance. The Greek word for repentance, *metanoia*, signifies a “turning,” a “change of heart and mind.” In this case, we turn from a life where self has been at the center to a life that makes God the center of our devotion, our faith, our obedience. *Remember the world's wisdom and God's wisdom.* (Other: Rom. 12:1-2)
- **Luke 3:7-14**. The tangible fruit of repentance is the evidence of a changed mindset. John the Baptist insisted on repentance before baptism. If you were to ask John, “What should I do?” how would he respond to you?
- **2 Corinthians 7:8-11**. What is the difference between “worldly sorrow” and “godly sorrow?” What kinds of attitudes characterize godly sorrow? Why does it lead to repentance? What would you say your attitude right now is toward your sin? What will godly sorrow mean in your life?
- **Ephesians 4:20-24**. Repentance is turning from an old life to a new one. What must be “taken off”? What is to be “put on” in place of the “old self”? What do you need to “take off” and “put on”? **Acts 3:19-20**. What will be the result of repentance? How will it be refreshing?
- **Acts 2:38-40; 8: 34-39; 16:29-34, 22:12-16**. What is happening in all these events? People are putting their faith in Jesus and his salvation. In each passage: [1] What was preached? [2] What was the person's (people's) response to the message? [3] How long did the person (people) take to make the decision? [4] What was their response after baptism?
- **Romans 6:1-4**. What happens when we baptized with wholehearted faith? We are united with Jesus in his death, burial, and resurrection.



The benefits of salvation made *available* at the cross become *real for us* when we participate in his death, burial and resurrection. Through baptism, we die to sin and are raised to a new life.

- **Galatians 3:26-29**. We are baptized “into Christ.” Note that Paul did not consider faith and baptism to be contradictory. Baptism is a tangible expression of faith that places us “in Christ” where salvation occurs.
- **Ephesians 1:3-10**. An important New Testament teaching: every spiritual blessing from God is found “in Christ.” What are some of those blessings listed here? (Sonship, adoption, grace, redemption, forgiveness...) So how does a person enter “into Christ” according to Romans 6 and Galatians 3?
- **Acts 22:16**. What question was Paul asked? What would you say if asked the same question?

Lordship and Discipleship

Purpose

The only appropriate and acceptable response to Jesus and his death on our behalf is willing obedience to God through following his Son; anything less cheapens the sacrifice that was made for us. These Scriptures should inspire us to embrace the high calling of discipleship to Jesus Christ.

- **Acts 11:25-26.** To call oneself a Christian can mean many different things to people today. The name “Christian” was applied for the first time to disciples at Antioch, about seven years after the beginning of the church. How many times is the word “Christian” used in NT? (Three times.) How many times is the word “disciple” used? (About 300 times.) What is a disciple? A disciple is a learner who strives to conform his thoughts, words and actions to those of his master. To understand what it means to live as a Christian today, we will start by looking at Jesus’ expectations for those who would be his disciples . . .
- **Mark 1:16-20.** Call of the first disciples: “Follow me.” A disciple asks himself, “What would Jesus do?” then strives to do it—regardless of the cost. A disciple of Jesus has the same purpose as Jesus: to be a fisher of men. What does this mean? What did they abandon to follow Jesus? Everything! (job, possessions, family)
- **Luke 9:23-27.** Emphasize the *heart* that God wants. What are the three demands of discipleship in this verse? What does it mean to “deny yourself?” What does it mean to “take up your cross daily?” What does it mean to “follow Jesus?” How can we be “ashamed of Jesus and His words?”
- **Luke 9:57-62.** Examine the issues involved with each person – thoughtless following, excuse making and second thoughts.
- **Luke 14:25-35.** If *anyone* would come after me... A disciple loves Jesus more than any other person (v.26). A disciple loves Jesus in spite of any persecution (v.27). A disciple loves Jesus more than any possession (v.33). Count the cost (vv.28-30): it’s the most important decision of your life! Consider the alternatives (vv.31-32): Surrender or lose everything! It’s a decision for the rest of your life (vv.34-35).
- **John 13:34-35.** What will disciples of Jesus will be known for? Their love. “As I have loved you”: What kind of love did Jesus demonstrate for us?
- **Matt. 28:18-20.** The Great Commission: God’s plan to save the world. Disciples make disciples by baptizing people from all nations in his name and teaching them to become mature, obedient followers of Jesus. Efforts to reach the world with the gospel are *multiplied* when every disciple embraces Jesus’ final charge. Are you willing to answer the call to be a disciple of Jesus?
- **Mark 10:28-31.** What did Peter and the others give up in order to follow Jesus? Is it possible to “out-give” God? What does Jesus promise to those who have committed their lives to following him? Being a Christian is not always easy, but it is the life we were created for. It is the best life *now*, and the best life for *eternity*!

Additional Helpful Scriptures:

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| ▪ Matthew 22:34-40 | ▪ John 15:1-12 | ▪ Philippians 1:20-21 |
| ▪ Luke 11:1-4 | ▪ Galatians 2:20 | ▪ Philippians 2:5-11 |

The Church:

The Body of Christ, the Family of God

Purpose

To help an individual understand God's role for us in His church and to see that they will become a part of the body of Christ, a member of God's family.

The Body of Christ ---At baptism we become part of the body of Christ

- **Colossians 1:15-18.** What is the church? It is the body of Christ. What does the head do for the rest of the body? Jesus should always be who guides the church.
- **1 Corinthians 12:12-27.** We are baptized into the body of Jesus, his church. The church consists of distinct yet unified parts, just like a human body. We are the church; each of us must actively look for the distinct yet unified ways we are to support this body. How will you help build up the body of Christ?
- **Hebrews 3:12-14.** We each have the charge and the responsibility to see to it that no one has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from God. Daily encouragement helps everyone stand firm until the end.
- **2 Corinthians 8:7.** God loves a cheerful giver. Our giving supports the body as we reach out to a world in need of Jesus.

The Family of God --- We also become a member of God's family.

- **Ephesians 2:19-22.** What does members of God's household mean? Share about your physical family and how they interact. Being apart of God's family we now have a safe place to come home to. What is great about God's household is that it is built on the foundation of God's Word.
- **Hebrews 2:10-11.** When we are made holy we become brothers to Christ. He is no longer ashamed and we can now approach God with confidence because of Jesus. How does this make you feel knowing that you can be apart of God's family in this way? Now we are going to look at members of God's family in the first century.
- **Acts 2:40-47.** The first 3,000 converts had just been baptized into Christ. What do you notice about their lives? We see they are devoted to:
 - Apostles teaching –Eph 2:20 Discuss the importance of Bible study.
 - Fellowship – Heb 10:23-25 Discuss why it is crucial to be together.
 - Breaking of Bread – 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 Explain Communion.
 - Prayer – Acts 4:31 Prayer helps us to stay connected to God and to each other.

Additional Helpful Scriptures:

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

Additional Studies

Seek God

Seeking God

Purpose

To teach a person how to pursue a relationship with God by developing a seeker's heart and by coming to know Jesus as revealed in God's Word, the Bible.

- **Acts 17:16-28.** Ever ask yourself: “What on earth am I here for?” You aren't alone! Why did God create you and bring you to this very point and time in your life? So that you would seek him and find him in order to have a personal relationship with him. Who takes the initiative in seeking this relationship? Because God loves us and desires a relationship with us, he has been actively determining times and places long before we ever thought about seeking him (*Psalm 14:2-3*). Why do so few seem to be seeking today? God is unknown and the image many have of him is distorted. To seek God, we must be willing to change our ideas about who God is to match what has been revealed to us in the Bible. There is nothing more important or exciting in life than to seek and to find our Creator God.
- **Jeremiah 29:11-14.** We will find God if we seek Him with all our heart. Have you ever done something with all your heart? What will it mean for you to seek God with all your heart?
- **Matthew 7:7-11.** What does God promise those who diligently seek? Prayer is the means by which we can make our requests known to God. Do you pray? As you seek to know God better, take him at his word that he truly listens and responds to our prayers as a loving Father.
- **Acts 8:26-40.** What do we know about this seeker? He is important and therefore certainly busy, but still finds time for God. He reads the Scriptures himself and asks questions about what he is reading. He is humble and sincere enough in his search to ask for help. What he learns he acts on right away, as seen with his baptism. How did he feel after coming to know God better? The burning questions he had about God were answered in an afternoon.
- **Acts 17:10-12.** What was it about these Berean seekers that made Luke refer to them as having “noble character”? What does “great eagerness” imply? Why was it important for them to “examine the Scriptures every day” for themselves? What was the result of this eager yet diligent attitude? As with prayer, reading the Bible is vitally important to knowing God.
- **John 1:18.** Jesus has made God known. Where do we begin our search for God? We begin by getting to know Jesus. To the degree that we know Jesus, we will know God.
- **John 20:30-31.** The Word of God produces faith in Jesus. What will we find if we seek God by coming to know Jesus through God's Word? Finding God begins with coming to faith in Jesus which promises true life now and eternal life later! As we take a closer look at Jesus, are you willing to make a heartfelt effort to draw closer to God by praying and reading the Bible?

Additional Helpful Scriptures:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| ▪ Deuteronomy 4:28-31 | ▪ Matthew 6:25-33 | ▪ Matthew 13:44-46 |
| ▪ 2 Chronicles 15:1-4 | ▪ Matthew 7:13-14 | ▪ Hebrews 11:6 |

Seek God

Lord, Teach Us to Pray

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to teach you how to pray just as Jesus taught His disciples, so that you can develop a loving relationship with God and be transformed in the process.

Lord, Teach us to Pray

- **Luke 11:1.** In what ways do you see humility in these disciples?

This is *How You Should Pray*: **Matthew 6:9-15**

- **Matthew 6:9.** This prayer was given by Jesus, not as a prayer mantra. This is not *what* you should pray, but *how* you should pray.

Hallowed be Your Name: *Praise His Holy name!*

- **Matthew 6:9.** First, always begin your time in prayer by praising God for who He is and all that He is. Second, when we pray “*hallowed*” we are in fact praying for His holiness to become apart of who we are. In truth, we begin the day by praying away our human nature. Look at **1 Peter 1:15** and **Hebrews 12:14**

Your Kingdom Come: It’s ALL About the Heart!

- **Matthew 6:10.** To pray, “*Your kingdom come*” is to ask God to use you to expand His kingdom. After all, Disciples are in “enemy occupied territory.”

Your Will Be Done: *On Earth as it is in Heaven!*

- **Matthew 6:10.** To pray, “*Your will be done*” is to recognize the sovereignty of God and it reminds us to always bring honor, praise and glory to God, before we dare to offer up requests for personal needs. We really do have this backwards! Read **Matthew 26:36-39** to see a living example.

▪ Give Us Our Daily Bread: *Personal Needs*

- **Matthew 6:11.** Like any parent, God as our Father already knows what you need and want. However, He longs to hear His children ask anyway. In the end, the greatest reward of learning to pray, the reward of prayer itself.
- **Proverbs 30:7-9.** What is the line between asking God for too much or nothing at all?

- **Matthew 6:12.** We have all sinned and fall short of God’s glory and holiness. Asking God to forgive us, will keep us in constant state of humility and willing to forgive others. Instead of holding a grudge the next time you are hurt by some one, look at Jesus on the Cross in **Luke 23:34** and imitate Him.

▪ Lead Us Not Into Temptation: *You’re at War with the Devil!*

- **Matthew 6:13.** As humans, can we unaided from Heaven; fueled by our own human strength, be a match for (1) the flesh and (2) against a fallen angel whose heart and thoughts have been sharpened by malice and hate? The challenge is to pray when tempted, not after it has grown into sinful actions.
Example: Feel mad. Pray before it becomes rage.

The Kingdom of God

1. Matthew 5:17

- A. Law and Prophets. What does this describe?
- B. What is Jesus saying he will do?
- C. What Jesus did completely fulfilled all the goals, dreams, shadows, types and prophecies of the Old Testament.

2. Matthew 4:13-17; Matthew 4:23; Mark 1:15

- A. What was Jesus main message? The kingdom, the gospel of the Kingdom
- B. If his life and work would fulfill the Law and the Prophets and his message was the Kingdom, what does that tell us?

2. Exodus 19:5-6

- A. Who is this referring to?
- B. What kind of kingdom did God want his people to be? What is true of a kingdom? What is true of priests?
- C. Did Israel become what God wanted them to be and fulfill his dream?

3. 1 Peter 2:9-11

- A. Who is this written to?
- B. How did Jesus fulfill what God wanted as described back in Exodus 19?
- C. How does scripture describe the church? (1) chosen people (2) royal (“kingdom”) priesthood (3) holy nation (4) people belonging to God.

4. Isaiah 2:1-4

- A. If “the mountain of the Lord’s temple” describes the Kingdom of God and the other mountains describe the kingdoms of this world, what is this passage teaching?
- B. What are some things that will be true of this kingdom?

5. Isaiah 9:6-7

- A. What kind of kingdom language do we find in this passage?
- B. What is unusual about the names given to the one who is coming to establish his reign?

6. Isaiah 11:1-9

- A. What will be true of the person God is going to send?
- B. What will be true of his “holy mountain.” (his kingdom).

7. Luke 17:20-21; Matthew 12:27-28

- A. How does he fulfill Isaiah 2:2? Isaiah 9:6? Isaiah 6:9?

9. Matthew 6:9-10

- A. Have you heard this prayer? Have you prayed it? What did you think it meant?
- B. What does it mean to let the kingdom come to your life? Notice parallel (“your kingdom come/your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”)

10. Matthew 6:33

- A. What does it mean to seek first God's kingdom?
- B. What is the promise for those who do this?

11. Philippians 3:20

- A. How does this completely change our thinking about how to live?
- B. How may we be viewed if we live like this? (1 Peter 2.11)
- C. Is the kingdom something you want to enter and be part of?

12. John 3:1-5

- A. What has to happen to enter the Kingdom?
- B. Are you eager to keep study and find out how do this?

Saved by Grace through Faith

Faith in
Jesus

Purpose

To show that we are saved by God's grace, through our faith in Jesus. We cannot earn our salvation.

- **Psalm 103:1-18.** In this psalm, David talks about the heart of the Lord toward weak and sinful people: he is a compassionate, gracious, loving father. How deeply does God love those who fear him? What is he willing to do with their sins (transgressions)? Is this the way you see God?
- **Luke 15:11-31.** Jesus taught many things in parables, short stories created to teach spiritual truths. What does this story tell you about God's attitude toward us when we repent and turn back to Him? Why did the older brother have such a hard time with his father's attitude? In what way did he fail to understand the father and his grace?
- **Luke 18:9-14.** In this story, we see two very different ways of viewing ourselves and God. How did the Pharisee approach God? How did he view himself? On what basis did he presume to be righteous? (His goodness, religious activities, his own efforts). By contrast, how did the tax collector see himself? What was his appeal to God based on? (God's mercy). Who went home justified (pronounced and considered "not guilty")? Jesus taught that a person can never be good enough to be saved through his own efforts. The only basis of our salvation is the mercy and grace of God.
- **Ephesians 2:1-10.** What condition are we all in? We are *dead* in sins and transgressions. How much can a dead man do to improve his own condition? What then is the only way we can be saved? What do you learn about God in his passage? His love? His mercy? His grace? What is the condition of receiving what God has done on our behalf? We are saved *by grace through faith*. Faith is obedient trust in God (James 2:14-18). Here we trust what God has done in Jesus as the grounds of our salvation and commit our lives fully to him. While we can never do enough good works to save ourselves, what are we saved *for*? Saving faith is "worked out" in ways that bring glory to God and attest to a Christ-centered life.
- **Romans 3:21-26.** Having shown that Gentiles (non-Jews) are sinners in Romans 1 and Jews are no better off in Romans 2, Paul summarizes his argument here. Is it possible for anyone to be "good enough" to be saved? Illustration: a plane goes down half way between Hawaii and California. Everyone must swim for the coast. Can some swim much further than others? But what eventually happens to them all? So with us, no one's own efforts are enough. All fall short. So how are we saved? God justifies those who "have faith in Jesus" (v26). Saving faith is not in ourselves but "in his blood"—that is, in the death of Jesus on our behalf (v25).
- **Titus 3:3-8.** When we humbly consider our own sinfulness, it becomes obvious that we are saved because of God's mercy, not because of righteous things we have done. Those who have trusted God for salvation, however, will devote themselves to doing his will. God's grace is AMAZING! He generously accepts us as a result of Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf. To enter into this saving relationship with God, we must be washed of our sins and renewed by the Holy Spirit. We will look more at the conditions of accepting God's grace in the coming studies.

Additional Helpful Scriptures:

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| ▪ Psalm 51:1-17 | ▪ Romans 4:1-8, 18-25 | ▪ 2 Timothy 1:8-9 |
| ▪ Ezekiel 18:21-32 | ▪ Colossians 1:21-23 | ▪ Titus 2:11-14 |
| ▪ Matthew 18:21-35 | ▪ 1 Timothy 1:12-16 | |

Baptism

Additional Study

- **Infant Baptism?** Colossians 2:11-12: Baptism is an immersion in water (from the Greek *baptizo* meaning “plunge, dip, immerse”—see Acts 8:38-39), but it does not operate “magically” apart from the faith of the one who is baptized. Can an infant believe? Repent of sin? And what sins need to be forgiven? Ezekiel 18:20: Contrary to the widely held doctrine of “original sin,” guilt for sin is not inherited from our parents. We are guilty for *our own* sins and saved by grace through *our own* response of faith.
- **Sinner’s Prayer?** 1 Peter 3:21: Some claim that baptism does not save, and instead propose that a person has only to call upon God through a “sinner’s prayer.” The Bible teaches that baptism does indeed save us, as a result of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Further, baptism is the biblical “sinner’s prayer” when we make our “appeal to God for a good conscience.” (Note: “Calling on the name of the Lord to be saved” in Romans 10:9-13 does not negate Paul’s teaching about baptism in Romans 6:1-4, and it was on the occasion of his own baptism that Paul “called on his name” for forgiveness; see Acts 22:16.)

▪ Other Issues

- *“Baptism does not save you”*: 1 Peter 3:21 says that baptism *does* save you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Acts 2:38 teaches that sin is forgiven at baptism—one is saved at the point sin is forgiven.
- *“Baptism is a work—yet we are saved by faith”* (Ephesians 2:8): Colossians 2:12 teaches we are saved by *faith*—in the working of God at baptism.
- *“Baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace”*: Romans 6:24 states that baptism is an actual participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. It is not merely a sign, seal or symbol.
- *“Baptism isn’t important, after all, look at what Paul said about it in 1 Corinthians 1:17”*: Paul does not diminish the importance of baptism here. (Paul himself was baptized to have his sins forgiven in Acts 22:16.) In context (read 1 Corinthians 1:10-17), he makes the point that he does not want people following men (denominationalism). He mentions baptism several times in the passage.
- *“The thief on the cross was not baptized and Jesus told him that they would see each other in paradise”*: Jesus had not even died yet, and baptism is participating in his death (Romans 6:2-4); also on earth, he had the power to forgive sins (Matthew 9:2-6).

▪ Six Places We Find Baptism

Baptism is not the most important subject in the NT, but it is a vital one. This becomes clear when we notice where baptism shows up—right in the middle of some of the most crucial and vital Scriptures.

1. Matthew 28:18-20—baptism is right in the middle of the Great Commission. Jesus leaves his disciples and tells them what he most wants them to do.
2. Acts 2:36-38—baptism is the vital conclusion of Peter’s Pentecost message. People convinced of Jesus and convicted of their sin are called to repentance and baptism.
3. Ephesians 4:1-4—baptism shows up right in the middle of “the seven ones.” It is right there with one Lord, one faith, one God and Father.
4. Romans 6:1-4—baptism shows up in the midst of a key conversion passage. When Paul wants to make that the point that those saved by grace will no longer continue in sin, he says in so many words, “Don’t you remember what happened to you in your baptism. In baptism you died to your old life.”
5. Galatians 3:26-27—baptism shows up in the midst of a key passage on Christian identity. When Paul wants to remind people of who they are, he reminds them of who they were baptized into.
6. 1 Peter 3:21—here baptism shows up in a vital passage comparing Christian salvation to deliverance in the OT flood. The passage clearly says, “baptism now saves you also.”

Conclusion: Baptism is a vital element in God’s plan to bring us to new life in Christ. Certainly, baptism has meaning only as it is related to Christ, but precisely because it is related to Christ, it is an essential, vital and powerful experience for every disciple of Jesus.

New
Life

The Holy Spirit

Purpose

To encourage the seeker that he or she will receive the gift of God's Holy Spirit. After baptism we are sustained by the help of the Spirit, who works powerfully in the life of every disciple of Christ.

- **Acts 2:36-38.** At baptism, we are not only forgiven by Jesus' death to begin a new life, we are also filled with the Holy Spirit.
- **John 3:1-8.** Jesus taught that we must be born again via water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God.
- **John 7:37-39.** *After* Jesus' glorification (crucifixion, resurrection and ascension), God sent his Spirit to flow from within us like streams of running water. Previously (Old Testament), the Spirit came *upon* people. Now, he dwells *within* us.
- **John 16:5-15.** One of the primary roles of the Spirit is to convict us (and the world) with regard to sin, righteousness, and judgment. He does this in harmony with (though not exclusively through) his Word, which he gave to the Apostles as they were guided into all truth.
- **Ephesians 1:13-14.** The Spirit is God's mark of ownership on his children and a "deposit" of the blessings of the age to come.
- **Ephesians 3:14-21.** We are strengthened with real power through the Spirit who dwells within us. We cannot live the Christian life on our own strength, but God himself provides us with the power to live as followers of Jesus. Understanding Jesus' amazing love for us is a source of that strength.
- **Ephesians 4:29-32.** How do we "grieve" the Holy Spirit? Why is anger and anger-related sin so devastating? How is disharmony in our relationships incompatible with having the Spirit of God in us?
- **1 Thessalonians 5:16-20.** How do we "put out the fire of" the Holy Spirit? Why is a life of faith the only one that is in keeping with God's Spirit living in us? What influences in the world around us can keep us from having a faithful, God-centered outlook?
- **Romans 8:5-17, 26-27.** A Spiritual mindset brings life and peace, and obedience to God's Word. The Spirit frees us from fear and confirms that we are fully God's children. The Spirit also aids in our life of prayer and devotion to God.
- **Galatians 5:22-23.** The fruit of the Spirit: Expect it! Pursue it! This is the best "evidence" that you have received the Holy Spirit, who is transforming us to become like Jesus. Decide to live according to the Spirit—and keep affirming that decision!

Additional Helpful Scriptures:

- Jeremiah 31:31-34
- Acts 1:4, 2:15-18, 32-33
- Galatians 3:26-29, 4:6-7
- Ezekiel 36:24-28
- 2 Corinthians 3:17-18
- Titus 3:3-7

Seek
God

+

See
Need

+

Faith in
Jesus

➔

New
Life

