



Special points of interest:

- Bible Study
- Christian Prayer
- Church
- Witnessing
- Study Questions
- Meditation and Memorization



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Learning the Basics

Lesson One

Growing in Christ

Introduction

Surrendering your life to Jesus Christ the Lord is only the beginning of the Christian life. There is more, as Romans 5:10 tells us:

For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of His Son. (NLT)

When you were born into this world you were an infant with an infant's body and an infant's understanding. When you began your new life in Christ, the Bible tells us that you are a spiritual infant and must grow similarly each day as you walk with Christ.

In the following you will find the four spiritual food groups to help you grow:

1. Bible Study

Your physical body could not be healthy and grow as it should without the proper nourishment. It is the same with your Christian life. Christ Himself said:

The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' (Matthew 4:4 NLT)

2. Christian Prayer

Noah Webster defines prayer as follows:

In worship, a solemn address to the Supreme

Being, consisting of adoration, or an expression of our sense of God's glorious perfections, confession of our sins, supplication for mercy and forgiveness, intercession for blessings on others, and thanksgiving, or an expression of gratitude to God for his mercies and benefits.

In a real and practical sense, it is having a personal conversation with your Savior and Lord. Prayer develops joy and hope in our everyday lives. It fosters intimacy in our relationship with Christ.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7 NLT)

3. Church

When you received Christ as Savior and Lord, you were adopted into His family. That is why it is important that you become part of a local body of believers (the Church) so that you may receive the love and support necessary for your continued

health and growth. The Bible says:

And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near. (Hebrews 10:25 NLT)

4. Witnessing

Witnessing means sharing with others what has happened to you. It is our testimony of the wonderful "Good News" of Jesus Christ that has given us forgiveness of our sins and brought us into a right relationship with Him. Many of the Bible verses that follow will assist you in sharing your faith with others.

For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. This Good News tells us how God makes us right in His sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life." (Romans 1:16-17 NLT)

Bible Study Lesson

As You Begin

Start your time in the Word with prayer! It is the Holy Spirit that will “guide you into all truth.”

When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own but will tell you what He has heard. He will tell you about the future. (John 16:13 NLT)

You have a new life in Christ! The purpose of this new life is that we might grow according to His plan.

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT)

This is the brand new you! Not a remodeled old self but a new creation! As you follow the Lord Jesus Christ in this new life you will find it both exciting and rewarding.

The New Happening

As you begin your study, read the following passages:

One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow Me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” And they left their nets at once and followed Him. A little farther up the shore He saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And He called them to come, too. They immediately followed Him, leaving the boat and their father behind. (Matthew 4:18-22 NLT)

As they were walking along, someone said to Jesus, “I will follow You wherever You go.” But Jesus replied,

“Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay His head.” He said to another person, “Come, follow Me.” The man agreed, but he said, “Lord, first let me return home and bury my father.” But Jesus told him, “Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead! Your duty is to go and preach about the Kingdom of God.” Another said, “Yes, Lord, I will follow You, but first let me say good-bye to my family.” But Jesus told him, “Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God.” (Luke 9:57-62 NLT)

His disciples didn’t understand at the time that this was a fulfillment of prophecy. But after Jesus entered into His glory, they remembered what had happened and realized that these things had been written about Him. Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb, raising Him from the dead, and they were telling others about it. That was the reason so many went out to meet Him—because they had heard about this miraculous sign. Then the Pharisees said to each other, “There’s nothing we can do. Look, everyone has gone after Him!” Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, “Sir, we want to meet Jesus.” Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus. Jesus replied, “Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into His glory. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies,

it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. Anyone who wants to be My disciple must follow Me, because My servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves Me. (John 12:16-26 NLT)

So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses. When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God. But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to His cross and crucified

Bible Study Lesson Continued

them there. Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another. (Galatians 5:16-26 NLT)

Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith. Watch out for those dogs, those people who do evil, those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved. For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence in human ef-

fort, though I could have confidence in my own effort if anyone could. Indeed, if others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more! I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault. I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, every-

thing else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with Him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with Himself depends on faith. I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised Him from the dead. I want to suffer with Him, sharing in His death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead! (Philippians 3:1-11 NLT)

Study Questions

1. What kind of life does Jesus give to those who trust Him?

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.... I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from Me, (John 10:10, 28 NLT)

2. How did Jesus save you?

The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent His own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving His Son as a sacrifice for our sins. (Romans 8:3 NLT)

3. How do I confirm my own salvation?

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and

believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. (Romans 10:9-10 NLT)

4. What has happened to my old desires?

We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with Him. We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and He will never die again. Death no longer has any power over Him. When He died, He died once to break the power of sin. But now that

He lives, He lives for the glory of God. So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace. (Romans 6:6-14 NLT)

5. What must happen for a person to both "see" and be able to "enter" the kingdom of heaven?

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the

Study Questions Continued

Kingdom of God...I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit....So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.'" (John 3:3, 5, 7 NLT)

6. How can I show the Lord that I love Him?

"Those who accept My commandments and obey them are the ones who love Me. And because they love Me, My Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal Myself to each of them." Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to Him, "Lord, why are You going to reveal Yourself only to us and not to the world at large?" Jesus replied, "All who love Me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and We will come and make Our home with each of them. Anyone who does-

n't love Me will not obey Me. And remember, My words are not My own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent Me." (John 14:21-24 NLT)

7. What are some ways I can show others God's love?

We know what real love is because Jesus gave up His life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in that person? (1 John 3:16-17 NLT)

8. As the Holy Spirit has full control in my life, what can I expect to see?

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law

against these things! (Galatians 5:22-23 NLT)

9. Is there any way to heaven besides Jesus?

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6 NLT)

10. What will separate you from the love of God?

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39 NLT)

Meditation and Memorization

Meditate on (think about) the following verses:

For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NLT)

But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. (1 John 4:4 NLT)

But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (Romans 5:8 NLT)

And now you Gentiles have

also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, He identified you as His own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom He promised long ago. (Ephesians 1:13 NLT)

Memorize the following verse:

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7 NLT)



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Learning the Basics

Lesson Two

Continuing to Grow in Christ

Introduction

In the following quote from the Epistle of Second Peter, we find not only God's provision for Christian growth set forth but His definition:

By His divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know Him, the One who called us to Himself by means of His marvelous glory and excellence. And because of His glory and excellence, He has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share His divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and

brotherly affection with love for everyone. The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But those who fail to develop in this way are shortsighted or blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their old sins. So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away. Then God will give you a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:3-11 NLT)

Therefore, growing in Christ is in part knowing about Him and more importantly, knowing Him! Growth is the fruit of this miraculous relationship! As with all relationships, it requires time and effort. We have to choose to push aside the things of this world in order to make time to spend with Christ. To do otherwise is to perish from utter starvation.

"Christ does not intend that you be saved, sanctified, and petrified." He gives you the

liberty to be what you are with the hope of becoming what you were meant to be. (Growing with Christ, Douglas Beyer).

The *Reader's Digest* section entitled "Pardon, Your Slip is Showing," quotes a church announcement: "Spiritual growth has been postponed until September." Perhaps a case of too much information? How about you? Are you postponing your spiritual growth?

There is much more we would like to say about this, but it is difficult to explain, especially since you are spiritually dull and don't seem to listen. You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right. Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong. (Hebrews 5:11-14 NLT)

Bible Study Lesson

As You Begin

Start your time in the Word with prayer! Ask God to give you His wisdom as you study through this lesson.

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and He will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. (James 1:5 NLT)

Remember, it is the Holy Spirit that will “guide you into all truth.”

When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own but will tell you what He has heard. He will tell you about the future. (John 16:13 NLT)

The New Happening

As you begin your study, read the following passages:

I am the true grapevine, and My Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of Mine that doesn't produce fruit, and He prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in Me. Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in Me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in Me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. But if you remain in Me and My words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are My true disciples. This brings great glory to My Fa-

ther. I have loved you even as the Father has loved Me. Remain in My love. When you obey My commandments, you remain in My love, just as I obey My Father's commandments and remain in His love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with My joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! (John 15:1-11 NLT)

I have told you these things so that you won't abandon your faith. For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy service for God. This is because they have never known the Father or Me. Yes, I'm telling you these things now, so that when they happen, you will remember My warning. I didn't tell you earlier because I was going to be with you for a while longer. But now I am going away to the One who sent Me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. Instead, you grieve because of what I've told you. But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send Him to you. And when He comes, He will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in Me. Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see Me no more. Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged. There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now. When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own but will tell you what

He has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring Me glory by telling you whatever He receives from Me. (John 16:1-14 NLT)

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all He has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind He will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship Him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. In His grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly. Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what

Bible Study Lesson Continued

is good. Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. (Romans 12:1-12 NLT)

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against Him. They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

But that isn't what you learned about Christ. Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from Him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil. If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, He has identified you as His own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:11-32 NLT)

I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: For-

getting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you disagree on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you. But we must hold on to the progress we have already made. Dear brothers and sisters, pattern your lives after mine, and learn from those who follow our example. For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth. But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for Him to return as our Savior. He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like His own, using the same power with which He will bring everything under His control. (Philippians 3:12-21 NLT)

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all His glory. So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sex-

Bible Study Lesson Continued

ual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshipping the things of this world. Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like

Him. In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and He lives in all of us. Since God chose you to be the holy people He loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all

together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom He gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (Colossians 3:1-17 NLT)

Study Questions

1. What kind of life can I have as a born-again Christian?

For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. (1 John 5:4 NLT)

2. What is the Bible's definition of faith?

Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see. Through their faith, the people in days of old earned a good reputation. By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen. It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. Abel's offering gave evidence that he was a righteous man, and God showed His approval of his gifts. Although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us by his example of faith. It was by faith that Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying—"he disappeared, be-

cause God took him." For before he was taken up, he was known as a person who pleased God. And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to Him must believe that God exists and that He rewards those who sincerely seek Him. It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who warned him about things that had never happened before. By his faith Noah condemned the rest of the world, and he received the righteousness that comes by faith. It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob, who inherited the same promise. Abraham was confidently looking for-

ward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God. It was by faith that even Sarah was able to have a child, though she was barren and was too old. She believed that God would keep His promise. And so a whole nation came from this one man who was as good as dead—a nation with so many people that, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore, there is no way to count them. All these people died still believing what God had promised them. They did not receive what was promised, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed it. They agreed that they were foreigners and nomads here on earth. (Hebrews 11:1-13 NLT)

3. How can I grow in my faith?
So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ. (Romans 10:17 NLT)
4. What two facts must I believe for my faith to be pleasing to God?
And it is impossible to

Study Questions Continued

please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to Him must believe that God exists and that He rewards those who sincerely seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6 NLT)

5. What do the following verses tell you in regards to living a victorious Christian life?

Then He said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be My follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow Me. (Luke 9:23 NLT)

Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did. (1 John 2:6 NLT)

Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever. (1 John 2:15-17 NLT)

6. How often should we pray?

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about every-

thing. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7 NLT)

7. Prayer is like oxygen, it will keep us from fainting spiritually. What is the lesson Jesus is trying to teach us from Luke 18:1-8?

One day Jesus told His disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up. "There was a judge in a certain city," He said, "who neither feared God nor cared about people. A widow of that city came to him repeatedly, saying, 'Give me justice in this dispute with my enemy.' The judge ignored her for a while, but finally he said to himself, 'I don't fear God or care about people, but this woman is driving me crazy. I'm going to see that she gets justice, because she is wearing me out with her constant requests!'" Then the Lord said, "Learn a lesson from this unjust judge. Even he rendered a just decision in the end. So don't you think God will surely give justice to His chosen people who cry out to Him day and

night? Will He keep putting them off? I tell you, He will grant justice to them quickly! But when the Son of Man returns, how many will He find on the earth who have faith?" (Luke 18:1-8 NLT)

8. What else can I do to pray effectively?

But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too. (Mark 11:25 NLT)

9. Will my prayers be answered immediately?

So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! Patient endurance is what you need now, so that you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that He has promised. (Hebrews 10:35-36 NLT)

10. What are some things I should pray for?

Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.] (Matthew 6:11-13 NLT)

Meditation and Memorization

Meditate on (think about) the following verses:

Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak! (Matthew 26:41 NLT)

And we will receive from Him whatever we ask because we obey Him and do the things that please Him. (1 John 3:22 NLT)

Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. (Matthew 7:7 NLT)

And we are confident that He hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases Him. And since we know He hears us when we make our requests, we also know that

He will give us what we ask for. (1 John 5:14-15 NLT)

Memorize the following verse:

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. (James 5:16 NLT)



Special points of interest:

- Introduction
- Bible Study Lesson
- Study Questions
- Meditation and Memorization

Learning the Basics

Lesson Three

Knowing the Word

Introduction

The Bible (a word that comes from the Koine Greek, *ta biblia*, which means “the books”) refers to the collection of books we refer to as the Holy Bible. The Bible was originally written in various ancient languages, like Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, by men who were inspired by God.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be ade-

quate, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NASB)

A more literal rendering of the actual Greek would be “God-breathed.” So there is more here than mere pen and ink written by the hand of men. The Apostle Peter affirms this when he said:

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its ori-

gin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21 NIV)

One of our core beliefs is:

We believe that the Old and New Testaments as originally written are the verbally inspired Word of God, and accept them as the supreme and all-sufficient authority in faith and life.

Therefore, there is much to be enjoyed as you begin to search the Scriptures daily.

Bible Study Lesson

As You Begin

Start your time in the Word with prayer! Ask God to give you His wisdom as you study through this lesson.

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and He will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. (James 1:5 NLT)

Remember, it is the Holy Spirit that will “guide you into all truth.”

When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own but will tell you what He has heard. He will tell you about the future. (John 16:13 NLT)

The New Happening

As you begin your study, read

the following passages:

And now, Israel, listen carefully to these decrees and regulations that I am about to teach you. Obey them so that you may live, so you may enter and occupy the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. Do not add to or subtract from these commands I am giving you. Just obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you. You saw for yourself what the LORD did to you at Baal-peor. There the LORD your God destroyed everyone who had worshiped Baal, the god of Peor. But all of you who were

faithful to the LORD your God are still alive today—every one of you. Look, I now teach you these decrees and regulations just as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may obey them in the land you are about to enter and occupy. Obey them completely, and you will display your wisdom and intelligence among the surrounding nations. When they hear all these decrees, they will exclaim, ‘How wise and prudent are the people of this great nation!’ For what great nation has a god as near to them as the LORD our God is near

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Bible Study Lesson Continued

to us whenever we call on Him? And what great nation has decrees and regulations as righteous and fair as this body of instructions that I am giving you today? But watch out! Be careful never to forget what you yourself have seen. Do not let these memories escape from your mind as long as you live! And be sure to pass them on to your children and grandchildren. (Deuteronomy 4:1-9 NLT)

Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9 NLT)

The instructions of the LORD are perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy,

making wise the simple. The commandments of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are clear, giving insight for living. Reverence for the LORD is pure, lasting forever. The laws of the LORD are true; each one is fair. They are more desirable than gold, even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb. They are a warning to Your servant, a great reward for those who obey them. How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart? Cleanse me from these hidden faults. Keep Your servant from deliberate sins! Don't let them control me. Then I will be free of guilt and innocent of great sin. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to You, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. (Psalms 19:7-14 NLT)

I have hidden Your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You. (Psalms 119:11 NLT)

But you, Timothy, certainly know what I teach, and how I live, and what my purpose in life is. You know my faith, my patience, my love, and my endurance. You know how much persecution and

suffering I have endured. You know all about how I was persecuted in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra—but the Lord rescued me from all of it. Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil people and impostors will flourish. They will deceive others and will themselves be deceived. But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work. (2 Timothy 3:10-17 NLT)

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. (Hebrews 4:12 NLT)

Study Questions

1. How has God transmitted His written Word to man?

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. (2 Timothy 3:16 NLT)

2. What did the Lord tell the

prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah to do?

Now go and write down these words. Write them in a book. They will stand until the end of time as a witness... (Isaiah 30:8 NLT)

This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Write down for the record everything I have said to you,

Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 30:2 NLT)

3. Who is the Bible written about?
Jesus said:

You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to Me! (John 5:39 NLT)

Then Jesus said to them,

Study Questions Continued

“You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn’t it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering His glory?” Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. (Luke 24:25-27 NLT)

4. What did Jesus say about His Word?

The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. (John 6:63 NLT)

5. Why do I need to know the Word of God?

Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. (1 Peter 2:2 NLT)

6. Who is sent by God to teach me the truth?

But when the Father sends the Advocate as My representative—that is, the Holy

Spirit—He will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you. (John 14:26 NLT)

7. What should I do once I have read the Word?

But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. (James 1:22 NLT)

Jesus replied, “But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice.” (Luke 11:28 NLT)

8. How are we to approach our study of God’s Word?

My child, listen to what I say, and treasure my commands. Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding. Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures. Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD, and you will gain knowledge of God. Proverbs 2:1-5 NLT)

9. What are some things that will happen if I obey His Word?

3:16 NLT)

Heaven and earth will disappear, but My words will never disappear. (Luke 21:33 NLT)

Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive His approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15 NLT)

But Jesus told Him, “No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that

Jesus said to the people who believed in Him, “You are truly My disciples if you remain faithful to My teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31-32 NLT)

I have hidden Your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You. (Psalms 119:11 NLT)

“And now I entrust you to God and the message of His grace that is able to build you up and give you an inheritance with all those He has set apart for Himself. (Acts 20:32 NLT)

10. What reason did the Apostle give for writing the Gospel of John?

The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in Him you will have life by the power of His name. (John 20:30-31 NLT)

comes from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4 NLT)

Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, (1 Peter 2:2 NLT)

And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32 NLT)

Memorize the following verse:

So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ. (Romans 10:17 NLT)

Meditation and Memorization

Meditate on (think about) the following verses:

Heaven and earth will disappear, but My words will never disappear. (Matthew 24:35 NLT)

Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in Your instructions. (Psalms 119:18 NLT)

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. (2 Timothy



Special points of interest:

- Introduction
- Bible Study Lesson Preparation
- Study Questions
- Meditation and Memorization

Learning the Basics

Lesson Four

Called to be a Disciple

Introduction

When are we disciples? The word “disciple” comes from the same root as the word “discipline,” which has as one of its meanings “training that develops self-control and character.” What, then, is Christian discipleship? Perhaps the best definition is this: Self-training on the part of a believer in the Lord Jesus; a training that develops self-control, love and Christian character.

Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly.

(1 Timothy 4:7 NIV)

In the last phrase of the verse above the Greek is rendered:

γύμναζε δὲ σεαυτὸν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν

gumnaze de seauton pros eusebeian

G-1128 γυμνάζω: to exercise vigorously, in any way, either the body or the mind. (Thayer)

G4314 πρὸς: 1) to the advantage of 2) at, near, by 3) to, towards, with, with regard to

G2150 εὐσέβεια: 1) reverence, respect 2) piety towards God, godliness

Therefore one could say train yourself toward godliness. Thus implying both training and direction.

Every believer – every Christian – has the obligation to become a disciple, constantly learning about the ways of the Lord and continually putting into practice those things which he has learned.

Bible Study Lesson Preparation

As You Begin

Start your time in the Word with prayer! Ask God to give you His wisdom as you study through this lesson.

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and He will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. (James 1:5 NLT)

Remember, it is the Holy Spirit that will “guide you into all truth.”

When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own but will tell you what He has heard. He will tell you about the future. (John 16:13 NLT)

1 Corinthians 2:13 tells us that godly wisdom is

learned through the words of the Holy Spirit: the Bible.

Through prayer we can assure ourselves of profitable study as the Holy Spirit gives us godly wisdom.

When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths. (1 Corinthians 2:13 NLT)

Before beginning your study please read:

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these

new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20 NLT)

For I have a great sense of obligation to people in both the civilized world and the rest of the world, to the educated and uneducated alike. So I am eager to come to you in Rome, too, to preach the Good News. For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. This Good News tells us how God

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Bible Study Lesson Preparation Continued

makes us right in His sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life." (Romans 1:14-17 NLT)

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against Him. They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity. But that isn't what you learned about Christ. Since you have heard about Jesus

and have learned the truth that comes from Him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil. If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, He has identified you as His own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:11-32 NLT)

Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, "Sir, we want to meet Jesus." Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus. Jesus replied, "**Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into His glory. I tell you the truth, unless a ker-**

nel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. Anyone who wants to be My disciple must follow Me, because My servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves Me. Now My soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But this is the very reason I came! Father, bring glory to Your name." Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, "I have already brought glory to My name, and I will do so again." When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to Him. Then Jesus told them, "**The voice was for your benefit, not Mine. The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to Myself.**" He said this to indicate how He was going to die. The crowd responded, "We understood from Scripture that the Messiah would live forever. How can You say the Son of Man will die? Just who is this Son of Man, anyway?" Jesus replied, "**My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going. Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light.**" After saying these things, Jesus went away and

Bible Study Lesson Preparation Continued

was hidden from them. But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in Him. This is exactly what Isaiah the prophet had predicted: "LORD, who has believed our message? To whom has the LORD revealed His powerful arm?" But the people couldn't believe, for as Isaiah also said, "The Lord has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts—so that their eyes cannot see, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to Me and have Me heal them." Isaiah was referring to Jesus when he

said this, because he saw the future and spoke of the Messiah's glory. Many people did believe in Him, however, including some of the Jewish leaders. But they wouldn't admit it for fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. For they loved human praise more than the praise of God. Jesus shouted to the crowds, "If you trust Me, you are trusting not only Me, but also God who sent Me. For when you see Me, you are seeing the One who sent Me. I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their

trust in Me will no longer remain in the dark. I will not judge those who hear Me but don't obey Me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it. But all who reject Me and My message will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken. I don't speak on My own authority. The Father who sent Me has commanded Me what to say and how to say it. And I know His commands lead to eternal life; so I say whatever the Father tells Me to say." (John 12:20-50 NLT)

Study Questions

1. What did Christian discipleship mean to Paul? (Romans 1: 14-16)
2. What are some evidences of being a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If any of you wants to be My follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow Me." (Matthew 16:24 NLT)

"If you want to be My disciple, you must hate everyone else by comparison—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:26 NLT)

So you cannot become My disciple without giving up everything you own. (Luke 14:33 NLT)

Jesus said to the people who believed in Him, "You are truly My disciples if you remain faithful to My teachings." (John 8:31 NLT)

When you produce much fruit, you are My true disciples. This brings great glory

to My Father. (John 15:8 NLT)

3. How should you treat your enemies?

Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for He is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. (Luke 6:35 NLT)

4. What is the secret of Christian kindness and forgiveness? (See Ephesians 4:32 above)
5. As Christians, what has God promised us in regards to our spiritual growth?
asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. (Ephesians 1:17 NLT)
6. Can you be a "secret" disciple of Jesus? Is that what God desires of you? (See John 12:42 above)
AND

Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus' body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away. (John 19:38 NLT)

7. What things should we watch out for and stay away from?

Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. (Ephesians 5:3 NLT)

Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. (Ephesians 5:4 NLT)

You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. (Ephesians 5:5 NLT)

8. What level of maturity does God want from us in our spiritual

Study Questions Continued

lives?

Dear brothers and sisters, don't be childish in your understanding of these things. Be innocent as babies when it comes to evil, but be mature in understanding matters of this kind. (1 Corinthians 14:20 NLT)

9. How can we grow in maturity? What are some causes for not maturing?

You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. For someone who lives on

milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right. Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong. (Hebrews 5:12-14 NLT)

10. How important of a priority is knowing Jesus and being His disciples?

I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have

discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with Him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with Himself depends on faith. I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised Him from the dead. I want to suffer with Him, sharing in His death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead! (Philippians 3:7-11 NLT)

Meditation and Memorization

Meditate on (think about) the following verses:

Oh, that we might know the LORD! Let us press on to know Him. He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn or the coming of rains in early spring. (Hosea 6:3 NLT)

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, **"I am the light of the world. If you follow Me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."** (John 8:12 NLT)

Anyone who wants to be My disciple must follow Me, because My servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves Me. (John 12:26 NLT)

For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in His steps. (1 Peter 2:21 NLT)

Memorize the following verse:

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If any of you wants to be My follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow Me." (Matthew 16:24 NLT)

Consider the following words from Dr. E. M. Bounds from his book, *The Necessity of Prayer*

Here, let it be said, that no two things are more essential to a spirit-filled life than Bible-reading and secret prayer; no two things more helpful to growth in grace; to getting the largest joy out of a Christian life; toward establishing one in the ways of eternal peace.



Special points of interest:

- Introduction
- Bible Study Lesson Preparation
- Study Questions
- Meditation and Memorization

Learning the Basics

Lesson Five

Sharing Your Faith

Introduction

As Christians our motivation for service is based solely upon our love for God.

We love him, because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19 KJV)

Our witnessing for Jesus be-

gins in the world in which we live; in our immediate surroundings.

We must look around us and pray for God's direction and leading in sharing the gospel with our friends, loved ones, and those with whom we

serve. As we shall see in the scriptures, witnessing involves more than just speaking of the Lord. To be an ambassador for Christ requires a lifestyle compatible with our confession of faith.

Bible Study Lesson Preparation

As You Begin

Start your time in the Word with prayer! Ask God to give you His wisdom as you study through this lesson.

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and He will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. (James 1:5 NLT)

Remember, it is the Holy Spirit that will "guide you into all truth."

When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own but will tell you what He has heard. He will tell you about the future. (John 16:13 NLT)

1 Corinthians 2:13 tells us that godly wisdom is

learned through the words of the Holy Spirit: the Bible. Through prayer we can assure ourselves of profitable study as the Holy Spirit gives us godly wisdom.

When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human

wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths. (1 Corinthians 2:13 NLT)

As we study the Word of God, we can be assured that we will be drawn closer to our Lord and prepared for things to come.

You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work. (2 Timothy 3:15-17 NLT)

Before beginning your study please read:

The Lord now chose

seventy-two other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places He planned to visit. These were His instructions to them: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask Him to send more workers into His fields. Now go, and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. Don't take any money with you, nor a traveler's bag, nor an extra pair of sandals. And don't stop to greet anyone on the road. Whenever you enter someone's home, first say, 'May God's peace be on this house.' If those who live there are peaceful, the blessing will stand; if they are not, the blessing will return to you. Don't move around from home to home. Stay in one place, eating and drinking what

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they provide. Don't hesitate to accept hospitality, because those who work deserve their pay. If you enter a town and it welcomes you, eat whatever is set before you. Heal the sick, and tell them, 'The Kingdom of God is near you now.' But if a town refuses to welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 'We wipe even the dust of your town from our feet to show that we have abandoned you to your fate. And know this—the Kingdom of God is near!' I assure you, even wicked Sodom will be better off than such a town on judgment day." (Luke 10:1-12 NLT)

Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord's followers. So he went to the high priest. He requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers of the Way he found there. He wanted to bring them—both men and women—back to Jerusalem in chains. As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting Me?" "Who are You, lord?" Saul asked. And the voice replied, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." The men with Saul stood speechless, for they heard the sound of someone's voice but saw no one! Saul picked himself up off the ground, but when he opened his eyes he was blind. So his companions led him by the hand to Damascus. He remained there blind for three

days and did not eat or drink. Now there was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, calling, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord!" he replied. The Lord said, "Go over to Straight Street, to the house of Judas. When you get there, ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying to Me right now. I have shown him a vision of a man named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him so he can see again." "But Lord," exclaimed Ananias, "I've heard many people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem! And he is authorized by the leading priests to arrest everyone who calls upon Your name." But the Lord said, "Go, for Saul is My chosen instrument to take My message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. And I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake." So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Instantly something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized. Afterward he ate some food and regained his strength. Saul stayed with the believers in Damascus for a few days. And immediately he began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is indeed the Son of God!" All who heard him were amazed. "Isn't this the same man who caused such devastation among Jesus' followers in Jerusalem?" they asked.

"And didn't he come here to arrest them and take them in chains to the leading priests?" Saul's preaching became more and more powerful, and the Jews in Damascus couldn't refute his proofs that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. (Acts 9:1-22 NLT)

Dear brothers and sisters, the longing of my heart and my prayer to God is for the people of Israel to be saved. I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal. For they don't understand God's way of making people right with Himself. Refusing to accept God's way, they cling to their own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the law. For Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given. As a result, all who believe in Him are made right with God. For Moses writes that the law's way of making a person right with God requires obedience to all of its commands. But faith's way of getting right with God says, "Don't say in your heart, 'Who will go up to heaven?' (to bring Christ down to earth). And don't say, 'Who will go down to the place of the dead?' (to bring Christ back to life again)." In fact, it says, "The message is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart." And that message is the very message about faith that we preach: If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, "Anyone

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who trusts in Him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on Him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” (Romans 10:1-13 NLT)

I really don't need to write to you about this ministry of giving for the believers in Jerusalem. For I know how eager you are to help, and I have been boasting to the churches in Macedonia that you in Greece were ready to send an offering a year ago. In fact, it was your enthusiasm that stirred up many of the Macedonian believers to begin giving. But I am sending these brothers to be sure you really are ready, as I have been telling them, and that your money is all collected. I don't want to be wrong in my boasting about you. We would be embarrassed—not to mention your own embarrassment—if some Macedonian believers came with me and found that you weren't ready after all I had told them! So I thought I should send these brothers ahead of me to make sure the gift you promised is ready. But I want it to be a willing gift, not one given grudgingly. Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.” And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty

left over to share with others. As the Scriptures say, “They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever.” For God is the One who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, He will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God. As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you. Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words! (2 Corinthians 9:1-15 NLT)

Then He said, “**When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about Me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.**” Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And He said, “**Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of His name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: ‘There is forgiveness of sins**

for all who repent.’ You are witnesses of all these things. And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as My Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.” Then Jesus led them to Bethany, and lifting His hands to heaven, He blessed them. While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up to heaven. So they worshiped Him and then returned to Jerusalem filled with great joy. And they spent all of their time in the Temple, praising God. (Luke 24:44-53 NLT)

While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning. But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of believers now totaled about 5,000 men, not counting women and children. The next day the council of all the rulers and elders and teachers of religious law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, along with Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other relatives of the high priest. They brought in the two disciples and demanded, “By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?” Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers and elders of our people, are we being questioned today because we’ve done a good deed for a crip-

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pled man? Do you want to know how he was healed? Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead. For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says, 'The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.' There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved." The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing right there among them, there was nothing the council could say. So they ordered Peter and John out of the council chamber and conferred among themselves. "What should we do with these men?" they asked each other. "We can't deny that they have performed a miraculous sign, and everybody in Jerusalem knows about it. But to keep them from spreading their propaganda any further, we must warn them not to speak to anyone in Jesus' name again." So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than Him? We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard." The council then threatened them further, but they fi-

nally let them go because they didn't know how to punish them without starting a riot. For everyone was praising God for this miraculous sign—the healing of a man who had been lame for more than forty years. As soon as they were freed, Peter and John returned to the other believers and told them what the leading priests and elders had said. When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God: "O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—You spoke long ago by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, Your servant, saying, 'Why were the nations so angry? Why did they waste their time with futile plans? The kings of the earth prepared for battle; the rulers gathered together against the LORD and against His Messiah.' In fact, this has happened here in this very city! For Herod Antipas, Pontius Pilate the governor, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were all united against Jesus, Your holy servant, whom You anointed. But everything they did was determined beforehand according to Your will. And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, Your servants, great boldness in preaching Your word. Stretch out Your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness. All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they

owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need. For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means "Son of Encouragement"). He was from the tribe of Levi and came from the island of Cyprus. He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles. (Acts 4:1-37 NLT)

Study Questions

1. What is a Christian witness?

Then he told me, “The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and hear Him speak. For you are to be His witness, telling everyone what you have seen and heard.” (Acts 22:14-15 NLT)

We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:3 NLT)

2. What does Jesus say I will be for Him?

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be My witnesses, telling people about Me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8 NLT)

3. What must a person do before he can turn from his sins and be saved?

For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” (Romans 10:13 NLT)

4. What must he do before he can call on the Lord to be his Savior?

But how can they call on Him to save them unless they believe in Him? And how can they believe in Him if they have never heard about Him? And how can they hear about Him unless someone tells them? (Romans 10:14 NLT)

5. If I follow Jesus as He told me to, what has He promised to do?

Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow Me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” (Matthew 4:19 NLT)

6. If I tell them about Jesus, whom can I trust to convict them in their hearts?

But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send Him to you. And when He comes, He will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in Me. Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see Me no more. Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged. (John 16:7-11 NLT)

7. What is God's will for every person?

The Lord isn't really being slow about His promise, as some people think. No, He is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. (2 Peter 3:9 NLT)

8. Will God use me to answer questions about Him to those who are seeking to know the truth?

Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it. (1 Peter 3:15 NLT)

9. What facts from the following verses could you point out while witnessing to an unsaved person?

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. (Romans 3:23 NLT)

But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (Romans 5:8 NLT)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of

God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23 NLT)

For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” (Romans 10:13 NLT)

10. A witness shares what he has seen and heard. What facts about his life did Paul give in his testimony?

Life before:

Then Paul said, “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, and I was brought up and educated here in Jerusalem under Gamaliel. As his student, I was carefully trained in our Jewish laws and customs. I became very zealous to honor God in everything I did, just like all of you today. And I persecuted the followers of the Way, hounding some to death, arresting both men and women and throwing them in prison. The high priest and the whole council of elders can testify that this is so. For I received letters from them to our Jewish brothers in Damascus, authorizing me to bring the Christians from there to Jerusalem, in chains, to be punished.” (Acts 22:3-5 NLT)

Receiving Christ:

As I was on the road, approaching Damascus about noon, a very bright light from heaven suddenly shone down around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” “Who are You, lord?” I asked. And the voice replied, “I am Jesus the Nazarene, the One you are persecuting.” The people with me saw the light but didn't understand the voice speaking to me. I asked, “What should I do, Lord?” And the Lord told

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me, **“Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told everything you are to do.”** I was blinded by the intense light and had to be led by the hand to Damascus by my companions. A man named Ananias lived there. He was a godly man, deeply devoted to the law, and well regarded by all the Jews of Damascus. He came and stood beside me and said, **“Brother Saul, regain your**

sight.” And that very moment I could see him! (Acts 22:6-13 NLT)

After he received Christ:

Then he told me, **“The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and hear Him speak. For you are to be His witness, telling everyone what you have seen and heard.”** (Acts 22:14-15 NLT)

Meditation and Memorization

Meditate on (think about) the following verses:

(James 5:20 NLT)

When He saw the crowds, He had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:36 NLT)

You must teach these things and encourage the believers to do them. You have the authority to correct them when necessary, so don't let anyone disregard what you say. (Titus 2:15 NLT)

But if I say I'll never mention the LORD or speak in His name, His word burns in my heart like a fire. It's like a fire in my bones! I am worn out trying to hold it in! I can't do it! (Jeremiah 20:9 NLT)

Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. (1 Timothy 4:12 NLT)

Memorize:

You can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.