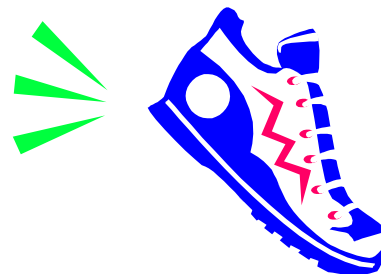


## THE CHRISTIAN RACE – “Getting Started”

### Weekly Studies:



1. How to know Jesus (pg.2)
2. The disciple of Christ (pg.8)
3. The cost of being a disciple (pg.12)
4. Loving Jesus (pg.17)
5. The Word of God and Christian growth (pg.21)
6. The Word of God and spiritual warfare (pg.25)
7. Baptism in water (pg.31)
8. Our inheritance in Jesus (pg.35)
9. The baptism in the Holy Spirit (pg.40)
10. God's plan for our finances (pg.46)

### Appendix

- A. The sin and occult list (pg.51)
- B. Responding to infant baptism (pg.55)
- C. Mariology (pg.57)

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# HOW TO KNOW JESUS

## Memory Verse:

**"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."**

**John 3:16**

Bible Passage: Genesis 3:1-13

## Goals:

- To receive Jesus Christ as Savior through faith in Him.
- To understand how much God desires an intimate friendship with us.
- To be certain that we are accepted by God and have eternal life.

Suggestion for groups: Someone in the group may like to share their testimony instead of using the one given below. Members may like to practice briefly sharing their testimony. Some may like to prepare it during the week to share next time. (The author's stories are always in the third person to make it easy for someone else to read it to the group).

## **How Mark came to know Jesus**

Mark grew up in a Christian family with a background of generations of preachers, including the great American revival preacher, Jonathon Edwards. From his childhood he regularly attended church every Sunday with his family. With all this he thought that he was a Christian. However, in reality he was separate from God, not having a personal relationship with Him.

When he was 10 years old Mark and his family were taking vacations in a beautiful country town that bordered a river. One night during family prayers, his mother asked him a simple question: "Do you know Jesus Christ?" Mark asked himself: "Do I truly know Jesus, personally?" Unable to answer the question confidently, he responded: "I don't know".

Mark realized that through this simple question God was inviting him to know Him in a new and personal way. He knew that God was calling him, and was unable to avoid the challenging question: "Do you know Jesus?". Before his family he prayed: **"Lord Jesus. I am a sinner. Forgive me my sins. I want to know you. Come into my heart. Be my Lord and Saviour. In the Name of Jesus Christ. Amen"**



The next day Mark woke up at dawn. The sun had not yet risen. Looking out at the beauty of the stars and the universe, Mark felt the greatness of the Creator God. At the same time he knew that this great God was now his loving Father. He knew that he was a child of God, having a new relationship with Him. God was so great and awesome, but also loving and personal.

Some years later, as a young man of 18, Mark's father passed away. Shortly afterwards Mark left home, and found himself alone as a foreign student in a new

culture, without the support of family and friends. Even so, he was not alone. His loving heavenly Father was there to comfort him in his grief. God never abandons His children.

### **Religion does not bring acceptance by God**

Just like Mark's experience, today many believe that they are Christians because of their "religion". However in their heart there is an emptiness that only a loving heavenly Father can fill. Out of obligation or guilt, they try to fill this void by religious efforts such as saying certain prayers, fasting, church attendance, giving money, penance, social works. All our good efforts fall far short of the standard of a perfect and holy God. God has provided another way: a loving friendship with Him, through believing in His Son, Jesus Christ.



**“For there is no distinction; 23 since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” Romans 3:22-24**

### **Friendship with God**

God created us in His own likeness or "image". He created us to be in loving, intimate relationship with Him. That's His great purpose for each of us: to know Him.

**"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;" Genesis 1:26**

This makes us different from the animals who are without that image, and unable to communicate with God. The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, had a beautiful relationship with God. They walked with their Creator in the garden of Eden. Yet, when they disobeyed God and sinned, their spirit died within them.

**"But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ."**

**Ephesians 2:4-5**

Adam and Eve lost the privilege of being in the Presence of God and enjoying His friendship. They were ashamed and afraid of God. After they had sinned we read:

**“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, "I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid; because I was naked, and I hid myself. ””**

**Genesis 3:8-10**

### **Born again**

When we believe in Jesus, and invite Him into our heart, He gives us a new spirit (or heart). This is called being "born again" or "converted". When His spirit enters into us we are made new inside, we have a true love for God, and desire to be with Him and talk with Him. Our sin is washed away by the blood of Jesus shed on the cross. The prophet, Ezekiel, years before the coming of Christ spoke of this cleansing of sin, a new heart, and God's Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

**"I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances."**

**Ezekiel 35:25-27**

**"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come."  
2 Corinthians 5:17**

### **The flesh against the spirit**

Nicodemus, one of Israel's great religious teachers, had real trouble understanding being born again by the Holy Spirit. That's because the religious things people do to gain God's acceptance is part of the "flesh". Our human and religious efforts can become a real obstacle to simply believing in Jesus for salvation. The "flesh" and the Holy Spirit are opposed to each other. The flesh brings eternal death but the Holy Spirit brings abundant life. Only by being born of the Holy Spirit can we enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

**"Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born anew.""**  
John 3:3-7

### **The pain of God**

On one occasion, when Mark (the author) was speaking in a small group, a lady asked why she frequently cries when she prays. The reply was given that the Holy Spirit is a Person with emotions. When we intercede for others we at times enter into His emotions. For example we may experience the compassion of God for those who are separated from Him by their sin.

While Mark was explaining that God in His compassion is seeking sinners, another lady asked if she could share a "word from the Lord". Upon being given permission, she began to sob. Through her tears the Holy Spirit was speaking powerfully to the group that Christ the Saviour earnestly desires to bring sinners into that place of peace and forgiveness with God.

Jesus is calling to you also. God loves us, and wants us to live in obedience to Him. Our sinful thoughts and actions are in fact rebellion against His purpose for our lives, and cause Him pain.

**"The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart."**

Genesis 6:5-6

### **The cross of Christ**

God in His great love has provided the way out of sin for us, by sending His Son, Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross His hands were extended in death as an invitation to you and I to receive forgiveness of sin. As Isaiah the prophet wrote:

**"I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was be found by those who did not seek me. I said, "Here am I, here nation that did not call on my name. I spread out my hands all a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following devices..."**



**ready to am I," to a the day to their own**

Isaiah 65:1-2

When Mark said a simple but sincere prayer, repenting of his sins, his relationship with God was healed. The forgiveness of sins and friendship with God is available to each of us. When Jesus Christ died on the cross He took our sins upon Himself. The punishment that we should receive from a just God, Jesus received upon the cross. Sin is when we turn away from Him in our heart, and do our own thing.

**The gift of eternal life**

God is a tender and loving Father, but He is also a just Judge. He doesn't want to condemn anyone. He sent His only Son to die for you that you might have peace, forgiveness, and eternal life. We can choose friendship with God and eternal life, or we can reject this and suffer under God's justice on that day when all will give account before Him.



**"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal Life. 17 For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. 18 He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."**

**John 3:16-18**

# THE PRAYER OF SALVATION

**Suggestion:** Before continuing, please read appendix A at the back of this book for a listing of sins and the occult. Please place a tick against any sins you may have committed. Read them out at the time of saying the prayer of salvation.

**An invitation:** God loves you and desires that you have eternal life through His only Son Jesus Christ. You are invited to pray the prayer of salvation, if you are aware of any of the following:

- that you lack an intimate and loving relationship with God the Heavenly Father,
- that you have fallen from such relationship,
- or, if there is a distance between you and God.

**In this prayer of salvation we are going to:**

- Confess specific sins (that you may have marked on the sin and occult list at the back).
- Renounce Satan, all his works, and all forms of the occult and witchcraft.
- Invoke the blood of Jesus against sin, and break curses.
- Decide to forgive and to love those who have hurt us, turning away from all resentment.
- Receive Jesus Christ in your life as your Saviour and Lord (Master), and declare your faith in Him.

If we pray sincerely, in faith and repentance, we have the assurance of receiving what we have asked for.

**Pray this prayer:**

*"Heavenly Father I recognize that I am a sinner, and that I am separated from Your love by my sins. I now confess these sins and turn away from them, and ask for Your forgiveness (take time to confess each of your sins, see sin list). I renounce Satan, I renounce all forms of witchcraft, the occult, the New Age, and any previous vows, baptisms, and experiences I had in religions or sects.*

*I turn to Christ and His light. Forgive me Lord and cleanse me from my sins by the Blood of Jesus Christ. I invoke the Blood of Jesus against my sins and the sins of my ancestors. In the Name of Jesus I break any curses upon my life.*

*I forgive all those who have hurt me. (Name the person who hurt you, in silence if you prefer). Father, all those who have hurt me I now forgive choosing to love them, and to bless them in the Name of Jesus. I honor my father and my mother, and forgive them also if they wronged me. Forgive me Lord for being angry, resentful, or bitter towards these people.*

*Jesus Christ come into my heart and be my Saviour and Lord. I believe that I have eternal life, that Jesus is God, Saviour, and Lord; that Jesus died on the cross, rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and that He will come again in glory. Thank you Lord Jesus for my salvation, for my place prepared for me in heaven Thank you that no one or anything can separate me from Your great love. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen."*



# STUDY QUESTIONS

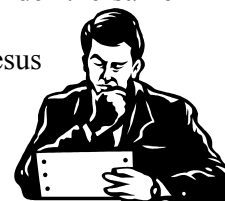
## Suggestions:

1. After the sharing of a testimony, the teaching, and salvation prayer, take a moment to briefly answer these questions. If you lack time it can be done the following week. The questions are meant to be easy, don't get complicated when answering them. The questions are very important to do, so please don't skip them.

2. The whole group should practice the memory verse. Be patient with those who are slower in memorizing. Learn the verse, phrase by phrase. Go on to the next phrase only after the group has got the prior phrase correct.

3. If you don't know the answer check the teaching notes under the same heading.

4. At home briefly write out your personal story of what Jesus has done in your life to share with the group or discipleship partner.



WRITE OUT THE MEMORY VERSE John 3:16

## TESTIMONY

1. How can we have peace with God? Circle the correct letter:

- a. Attending church & following one's religion.
- b. Infant baptism
- c. Being born in a good Christian family
- d. Doing kind things. Being a good person.
- e. True repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

## FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

2. What is the difference between a human being and an animal? (Genesis 1:26)

3. What caused the break down in relationship between God and man? (Genesis 3:8)

## BORN AGAIN WITH A NEW HEART



4. What happens when we invite Jesus into our heart? (Ezekiel 36:25-27; 2 Cor. 5:17).

## THE FLESH AGAINST THE SPIRIT

5. Why are our human religious efforts such a problem in getting into heaven? (John 3:3-7)

## THE PAIN OF GOD

6. How does God feel about our sins? (Genesis 6:5-6)

## THE CROSS OF CHRIST

7. Who is a sinner? Why? (Romans 3:21; Isaiah 65:2)

8. What choice does God offer us? (John 3:16-18)

# THE DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

## Memory Verse:

**"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."**

**Mark 8:34**

Bible Passage: Mark 8:34-38

## Goals:

- To be like Jesus, showing forth His love and humility.
- To be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

## **What is a disciple of Christ?**

What is a Christian? What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ? How does such a person live and act? Many folk have never had a good example of a Christian through their parents, friends or even in the church. They have little idea of how a Christian behaves. Their lives before confessing faith in Christ and afterwards may not have changed much. In this study we will begin to explore what a disciple of Jesus is. There are many characteristics of a disciple. We will look at two of them: love and humility.

## **The disciple wants to be like Jesus**

The Lord Jesus invites us to walk with Him. Jesus said  
**"I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except by Me."**

**John 14:6**

So the first thing we learn here is that Jesus is the Way and that we are to walk in His way, and not our own.



The disciple wants to live like Jesus as we see Him in the New Testament. Jesus showed love, compassion, courage, authority, patience, wisdom, and power when on earth. The apostle Paul, living in prison for the sake of Christ, encourages us to be like Jesus.

**"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love..."**

**Ephesians 4:1-2**

**"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."**

**Ephesians 5:1-2**

## **The disciple is more than a student**

The disciple is a student and much more. These days there is little understanding of what a disciple is. The student learns abilities and information. The disciple however not only learns with his mind, but also learns to be like his teacher and mentor. The disciple learns by the way his teacher lives, acts, his manner of speaking, his attitudes, and character.

The Christian learns not only as a student (e.g. learning things about the Bible), but also as a disciple of Jesus. That means getting to know Jesus. The disciple seeks to



show the beauty of the character of Christ in his life. We may also speak of Christ's character in us, as the fruits of the Holy Spirit.



Jesus calls us to follow Him and imitate Him. Mark remembers a time in his childhood when he was playing with a friend in the yard of a house. The ball rolled under a bush and it was difficult to reach. He didn't want to crawl under the bush to get it. He and a young friend began to argue about who would get the ball. An adult who was there asked them, "What would Jesus do if He was here?" At that moment Mark learnt something very important: the Christian is to show the life of Christ in whatever moment of his life. So with much enthusiasm, Mark crawled under that bush and pulled out the ball, knowing that in so doing he was pleasing the Lord.

### **The way of love**

The life that Jesus lived was a life of love. He even offered His life in love for us and for the world. The principal task of a disciple is to show the love of Jesus, whether it be the child who crawls under a bush in order to help his friend, or the husband who cooks the dinner, or the actions of love shown to our children, boss, employees, the poor or even our enemies. Only by the grace of God can we show this love, especially in difficult situations, and even more so with our enemies.



**"Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man--though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."**

**Romans 5:1,2**

The disciple is always a follower who walks in the steps of Jesus. It is He who teaches us how to love and minister to others.

**"As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."**

**Matthew 4:18,19**

### **The way of humility**

In the short story of Mark's childhood, he had to humble myself and forget his pride in getting the ball. Humility is a tremendous attribute that we see in Christ. He rejected the religious pride of the Pharisees, and chose to be with the sinners, the poor, the sick, the prostitutes, the tax collectors and demonized. He obeyed the will of His Father and humbled Himself, He took up His cross, was spat on, mocked, whipped, and died naked, nailed to a cross. Jesus calls us also to take up our cross. That means in part, daily "dying" to what we want, and choosing to follow Jesus.

**"And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it."**

**Mark 8:34-35**

### **Humility in ministry**

Without doubt the sin of pride is deep seated in most of us, hidden from our sight. One sign of pride is the desire to be recognized by others. In any ministry pride is

a great temptation. Here are some good questions to ask ourselves: Are we working in the kingdom of God for His glory or for ours? Is our ministry driven by ulterior motives (money, success, praise), or are we ministering out of obedience to God and in compassion to others?

**"Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he marked how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, 'When you are invited by anyone to a marriage feast, do not sit down in place of honor, lest a more eminent man than you be invited by him; and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'"**

**Luke 14:7-11**

### **Transformed by the Holy Spirit**

We cannot be like Jesus in our own strength. If holiness is something we do then we just end up feeling guilty all the time. The deep changes in our heart and character occur by the Holy Spirit. By spending time with Jesus, His character, goodness and beauty begin to shine in the Christian. It is His presence which brings the change that we are searching for. Communion with the Holy Spirit is central.

*Holiness is  
Jesus  
shining  
through us*

People in the New Testament who approached Jesus in faith and humility were radically changed by His Presence. As we seek to enter into the glory of God, Jesus shines through us, and people see Him in us, and that's holiness.

**"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."**

**2 Corinthians 3:17-18**

Paul says, "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom". It is a great revelation to understand that "sanctification" (becoming more holy) is what God does within us. Cleansing of sin doesn't come by our own effort, but by believing the work of Christ on the cross. It is the Holy Spirit who applies that cleansing work.

## **PRAYER**

*"Heavenly Father, I want to be a disciple of Christ. In myself I don't have the strength that I need to do it. Help me to follow Jesus, to deny myself and take up my cross. I want to be more like Jesus, and to live like Him. Forgive me for my lack of love. Give me a fervent love for my Saviour. Fill my life with Your divine love to be able to love others as well. I give You thanks by faith for the work of Your Holy Spirit in my life, to be able to follow Jesus and to be like Him. In the Name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, Amen."*

# STUDY QUESTIONS

1. MEMORY VERSE Write out Mark 8:34

THE DISCIPLE WANTS TO BE LIKE JESUS

2. In what way does the disciple want to be more like Jesus? Eph. 4:1-2, 5:1-2

3. What is the difference between a disciple and a student?



THE WAY OF LOVE

4. How did Jesus show us His love? Romans 5:8

5. How can you show this same love in your daily life?

TRANSFORMED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

6. What is holiness? Who transforms the disciple? How? II Corinthians 3:18



# THE COST OF BEING A DISCIPLE

## Memory Verse:

**“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.”**  
Deuteronomy 6:5

## Bible Passage: Luke 14:25-33

## Goals:

- To have a first love for Jesus.
- To give Jesus first priority in our lives over competing “loves”.

## **Jesus has first priority**

Jesus wants His disciples to have a fervent and radical love for Him. Our love for Jesus is not a sentimental love that doesn't last. Jesus requires His disciples to love Him more than their own lives, family, children, spouse, country, business and financial security. He desires nothing more than everything. Loving God involves obedience to Him and to His Word.

**“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”**

**John 14:15**

**“And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read?” And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have answered right, do this, and you will live”**

**Luke 10:25-28**

## **Loving our neighbor**

Jesus demonstrated in His life a profound compassion for others. We see the deep love of Jesus as He weeps at the tomb of Lazarus. Likewise in His care for His mother who was with Him while He died. He calls us to show this same love for others.

**“Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. 3 For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell on me.”**

**Romans 15:2-3**

We are to love: the poor (Deut. 15:7), the disadvantaged (Deut. 15:11), the lost sinner (Luke 14:15), our boss or employee (Eph. 6:5, Col. 3:18), our spouse (Eph. 5:33) children and parents (Eph. 6:1f) other Christians (Phil. 2:2f, Col. 3:12), our enemies (Rom. 12:20), the sick (Mark 4:14), demonized (Matthew 9:32-36), migrants, the fatherless, orphans, and widows (Jer. 22:3).

## **Counting the cost of following Christ**

If we really want to be disciples of Jesus, we need to count the cost of following Him. *“What does it really cost to follow Jesus?”* It is clear that Jesus didn't make it easy for people to follow Him. In that sense He gave us the following parable:

**“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a**

foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not; while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an embassy and asks terms of peace. So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple."

Luke 14:27-33

Now we will look more specifically at the cost of following Christ.

### **Possessions:** The rich young man

Jesus commands us to be willing to give all our possessions to God's kingdom. Perhaps we think "I am willing, but God isn't calling me to do it". If a Christian doesn't show generosity with his possessions and money for the kingdom of God, it shows he is still tied to them. This applies just as much to those who have little, as to those who have much.



"The young man said to him, "All these I have observed; what do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions."

Matthew 19:20-22

### **Honesty in business**

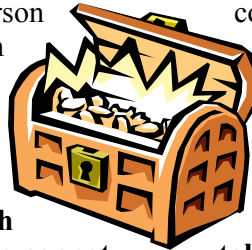
One of the characteristics of the disciple is being honest in business. Lies and corruption in business arise from a love of money which replaces our love for Jesus. Greed is a form of idolatry. Whatever we love most becomes our god.

"Where  
your  
treasure  
is, there  
your  
heart will  
be also."

"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they scoffed at him. But he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

Luke 16:13-15

The disciple of Christ is content with what he already has. Greed is never satisfied. The greedy person comes under the curse of God, and suffers "many pains". We see in our society the problems of covetousness with the misuse of credit cards, the buying of unstable investments to gain high interest, the desire to rise quickly in position by luxury items by credit, the desire to rise in order to gain power and money.



"There is great gain in godliness with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world, but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs." 1 Timothy 6:8-10

## Our lives

Jesus said that we are His friends if we are willing to die for Him, just as He died for us.

**“Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.”** John 15:13-14

In practice this means dying to our own desires and plans, and doing what Christ would have us do each day. The Bible encourages us to use our time well, and not to waste it doing whatever we like. In modern society time has become more and more valuable.



The most valuable way we can spend our time is with Jesus.

**“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”**

**Ephesians 5:15-17**

## Family

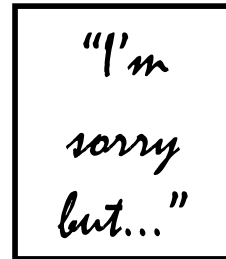
Again the Lord teaches us that our love for Him should be greater even than the love we have for our family:

**“Now great multitudes accompanied him; and he turned and said to them, ‘If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brother and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.’”** Luke 14:25-26

## Culture and social life

Those who really love Jesus show it. They have an enthusiasm for the things of the kingdom, whether it be attending all-night prayer vigils, sharing their faith with others, evangelistic activities, reading their Bibles, or helping the poor. But when there is no true love there are always excuses.

**“But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.’”** Luke 14:18-21



## Religion

The Christian doesn't belong to any religion, he belongs to Christ, and to the universal church. Religion, with its traditions and rules is opposed to the powerful kingdom of God. We see in the Gospels the continual conflict between Jesus and religion:

**“One Sabbath when he went to dine at the house of a ruler who belonged to the Pharisee, they were watching him. “And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. And Jesus spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?” But they were silent. Then he took him and healed him; and let him go. And he said to them, “Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well, will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?” And they could not reply to this.”** Luke 14:18-21

**Our community and country**

We can't be disciples of Jesus if we love our country more than Him and His Gospel. Jesus is calling for workers who will go out into His harvest, despite the cost of leaving home and friends.

**“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”**

**Matthew 28:19-20**

## PRAYER

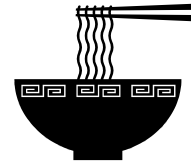
*“Heavenly Father, I want to live as a disciple of Jesus. I am willing to do the will of my Lord Jesus. I commit my life and all I have to Him. Father, only by Your grace can I truly follow Jesus, and have a true love for Him. Thank you for Your help. In the Name of Jesus, Amen”*

# STUDY QUESTIONS

1. MEMORY VERSE: Write from memory Deuteronomy 6:5.
2. Give some examples (from the teaching) of who your neighbor is. From the list choose one, and say how you could show him God's love.
3. How are we to be recognized as disciples of Jesus? (John 13:35)

## COUNTING THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

4. Briefly say what you have learnt about your (heart) relationship to:
  - a. Possessions and money(Matthew 19:20, Luke 16:13; 1 Timothy 6:6)
  - b. Your life (John 15:13-14)
  - c. Social and cultural activities (Luke 14:18)
  - d. Religion (Luke 14:1)
  - e. Country (Matthew 28:19)
  - f. Family (Luke 14:25-26)





# LOVING JESUS

Memory verse:

**“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”**

**John 14:15**

Bible passage: Luke 7:36-48

Goals: To show our love for Jesus through obedience and repentance.

## **First we receive God's love**

Our love for God begins with our allowing Him to love us. While we are unbelieving and disobedient we are simply unable to love God. We must first reach out and receive His forgiveness and love poured out on the Cross. The death of Jesus on the cross shows us the depths of God's great love towards us. While we were still in sin, with our hearts rebellious to God, doing what pleased ourselves, Christ died for us. The love that the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts comes at the high price of Jesus' own blood. Only by humbling ourselves and first accepting God's love to us in Christ, can we then in turn love Him.

**“...hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man - though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”**

**Romans 5:5-8**

## **Our love for Jesus is shown in deep repentance**

The deeper the repentance from sin the more we come to love Jesus. The greatest offering we could give to Jesus, is that of sincere repentance rendered in love. Surely no offering would be more pleasing to Jesus than if we were to humble ourselves before Him, confess our sin, and lovingly obey Him.

**“Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.”**

**Luke 7:47**

One of the most intimate and moving stories of the life of Jesus is that of the repentance of a city prostitute. She goes to where Jesus was dining. Her tears fall on His feet. She dries His feet with her hair. She kisses His feet and anoints them. These were acts of intimacy and love, by a woman moved by the Holy Spirit in the throes of repentance.

## **God offends the religious**

The Pharisee whose heart was hardened towards God was offended by the woman. His moral scruples were shocked that a prostitute should enter his house, and worse yet, begin to touch the feet of his guest. He despised Jesus in his heart for allowing the woman to touch Him. He failed to see Jesus as the Saviour of the world, receiving the love of a forgiven sinner. How often we Christians react in the same way. In religious pride we don't see the beautiful loving work of the Holy Spirit. We sit in judgment on the manifestations of emotions and power which so often occur in the upheaval of love, without seeing the shallowness of own love for Jesus.

“One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house, and took his place at table. 37 And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, 38 and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner."  
Luke 7:36-39

### **Our actions reveal the heart**

Simon's lack of love for Jesus is shown by the way he fails to give Jesus the customary middle-eastern greeting for a guest. He doesn't wash Jesus' feet, nor greet Him with a kiss, nor anoint His head with oil. Simon was so aware of his own religiousness, that he didn't see his own need for repentance, and for Jesus, the Saviour. Moreover, his neglect of Jesus revealed his heart condition.

“And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "What is it, Teacher?" 41 "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." 44 Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." 48 And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

Luke 7:40-48

### **Broken by love, or hardened by pride**

Many of the Pharisees and religious leaders hated Jesus. Their jealousy of Him drove them to plot against Him and kill Him. Jesus lived and taught a sincerity of life and purity of religion that when placed beside the Pharisees' religion showed it to be hypocrisy. In the parable of the tax collector and Pharisee, Jesus contrasts the attitude between the religious hypocrite and a true lover of God. The one who is repentant publicly acknowledges his sin in brokenness and humility. The other shows his hardness of heart and pride by saying how much better he is than the tax collector.

“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others: 10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Luke 18:9

The man who loves Jesus isn't at all religious, but a corrupt tax collector. It is his sincere and public repentance of sin which shows a true love for Jesus. The Pharisee on the other hand is full of self righteousness, and thinks of himself as far better than

common sinners. His pride blinds him from seeing that he is spiritually bankrupt, and under the condemnation of God. Real repentance of sin reveals a heart of love for Jesus.

### **Religious sacrifice or true love**

We all are in danger of becoming like the religious Pharisee in mistaking love for Jesus, for being religious. We begin the Christian life with a fresh love for Him, and an eagerness to obey and serve Him. As time goes by our hearts harden, and we are no longer flexible to the quiet voice of the Holy Spirit. We become accustomed to dutifully reading the Bible, prayer, attending worship, and home group. In faithfully doing these good activities comes the temptation to think of ourselves as better than others. We are tempted to look down on our brother who has fallen into sin, or to judge the new Christian who doesn't dress like us, or know his bible to the same degree. Our church activities and ministry must always proceed from a heart of love for Jesus. Jesus commended the scribe for saying that religious sacrifice is not the same as love for God. **"To love him (God) with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."** Mark 12:33

### **To love Jesus is to obey Him**

We have seen that deep repentance is the sign of true love for Jesus. Repentance is not only a turning away from sin, such as given in the sin list. Repentance is a positive decision to obey God's will for our lives, and follow Jesus. To obey Jesus we need to know what He wants of us. We understand His will for us by reading the Word with an open ear to the Holy Spirit.

**"Jesus answered him, 'If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.'"** John 14:23-24

**"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."** John 15:9-11

**"And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us."** 1 John 3:23

### **The old testament: love to God is shown in obedience**

Throughout the old testament we see how God yearns for His people to obey Him out of love. A loving relationship with God was always central to the laws and sacrificial system of the Old Testament. God describes His relationship to His people like that of a mother and child, a husband and wife, a bride and groom. The idea of obeying God out of religious obligation, as with Simon the Pharisee, is the opposite of what God has intended for us.

**"Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,"** Deuteronomy 7:9

**"And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,"** Deuteronomy 10:12

# STUDY QUESTIONS

Write out the memory verse from John 14:15

## FIRST WE RECEIVE GOD'S LOVE

1. Why is it that we are unable by ourselves to love God? (Romans 5:5-8)

## OUR LOVE FOR JESUS IS SHOWN IN DEEP REPENTANCE

2. Is there an area in your life (e.g. pride, anger, resentment) that inhibits your love for Jesus?

## GOD OFFENDS THE RELIGIOUS

3. Why was Simon offended? What did Simon think of Jesus? (Luke 7:36-39)
4. In what ways are we the church like Simon?

## OUR ACTIONS REVEAL THE HEART

5. What did Simon neglect to do that revealed his hard heart?

## BROKEN BY LOVE, OR HARDENED BY PRIDE

6. What is the difference in prayer attitude between the tax collector and the Pharisee? (Luke 18:9)

## RELIGIOUS SACRIFICE OR TRUE LOVE

7. In what way are we Christians in danger of becoming like the religious Pharisee?
8. What is the difference between church/religious activities and love for God? (Mark 12:33)

## TO LOVE JESUS IS TO OBEY HIM

9. How does Jesus expect His followers to love Him? (John 15:9-11)

10. How can we understand God's will for us? (John 14:23-24)

## THE OLD TESTAMENT: LOVE TO GOD IS SHOWN IN OBEDIENCE

11. What was central to the laws and sacrificial system of the Old Testament? (Deut 10:12).
12. From this study what do you understand about repentance and obedience to God?

## THE WORD OF GOD AND CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Memory Verse:

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

Bible Passage: Psalm 1

Goal: To have a daily discipline of Bible reading so that we may grow as Christians.

### **Scripture is inspired by God**

The Bible is the divine book of God. It is “inspired” by God. This is the same word used to speak of God breathing life into Adam. God has breathed life into the Bible, His Word. The Bible is much more than a book of history, or poetical literature. When we read it with the help of the Holy Spirit it becomes life to us.

As the Bible is inspired by God as no other book is, it is also the foundation of our doctrine, life, faith, and daily conduct. We submit to its authority, placing it above that of our own ideas, culture, philosophy, and religious traditions.

**“All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”**  
2 Timothy 3:14-17

**“First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”**  
2 Peter 1:20-21



### **Prospering in the Word**

The Christian who daily reads and meditates on the Bible is like a tree, planted beside streams of water, with green leaves and delicious fruit. The Word of God is the delight of the Christian, and by it we prosper. The Spirit filled Christian has a thirst to know the Bible and to obey it. He reads it, meditates on it, memorizes it, writes it out, prays it through, and shares it with others.

**“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does he prospers.”**  
Psalm 1:1-3

### **Fed by the Word**

We are nourished by the Word of God. The Bible is as important to the Christian as his daily bread.

**“And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” 4 But he**



answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" **Matthew 4:3-4**

A lie of Satan is that life only consists of the physical and social: bread, shelter, clothes, friends. He tells us that our first responsibility is to fulfill our needs. To the contrary, Jesus clearly teaches to put God's kingdom first:

**"Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well." Matthew 6:31-33**

For this reason we ought to seek to spend time with the Lord in prayer, and meditate on His Word each day. As we seek to put Him first in our lives, we can be assured that He will look after our daily needs.

### **God's Word shines in our hearts**

We need to accept the Word of God with humility, getting rid of all pride. The Word of God acts like a light to the soul, it reveals our sins, even those that are hidden from our sight. Before beginning our Bible reading we should ask the Holy Spirit to shine the Word like a light on our hearts. In this way the Lord will lead us into repentance.

**"And we have the prophetic word made more sure. You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."**

**2 Peter 1:19**



**"Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."**

**Ps 119:105**

### **Obedying the teaching of Jesus**

Given that the Bible is our authority we cannot avoid its personal challenges. We cannot blindly trust in our traditions or the theology of our church, we must come to accept what the Scripture teaches. If Jesus is our Lord we are to obey His words, or we will be like the religious hypocrites of Jesus' day.

The person who builds his life on the Word of God, and obeys it, has a solid foundation as a Christian. Such a person belongs to God's family, because he has truly received the gospel of Christ. Those who have received Jesus as Lord, show obedience to Him and His Word.

**"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them. I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49 But he who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."**

**Luke 6:46-49**

**"Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him for the crowd. 20 And he was told, 'Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.' 21 But he said to them, 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.'"**

**Luke 8:19-21**

## Saved by the Word

Those that accept, obey, and continue in the Word of Christ are His disciples.

**"Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."  
John 8:31-32**



The Word is like an eternal seed planted in our heart. Once planted, it begins to sprout in our heart (new birth in Jesus) and grow like a tree (to maturity in Christ). The Word doesn't change like the things of this world: friends, wealth, work, homes, or our situations. Therefore we can trust fully in the promises of the Bible, which never change. God is always faithful to His Word and promises.

**"You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; 24 for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord abides for ever." That word is the good news which was preached to you."  
1 Peter 1:23-25**

## Believing the Word

A major purpose of the Word is to create faith in those that hear it. By hearing and believing the Word, we are saved, forgiven, healed, delivered of demons, baptized in the Holy Spirit, and anointed in the power of God. As we believe the Word we can receive all the heavenly blessings and gifts that are ours in Jesus.

**"So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ."  
Romans 10:17**

## We are sent out with the Word of God

Jesus sends us out to share the Gospel with those that don't know Him. It is not sufficient for us to simply attend a worship service or Bible study, and listen to the Word. If we don't go out and tell others, how will others come to have faith in Jesus, receive eternal life, and know the precious promises of God?

**"For "everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? 15 And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!"**



**Romans 10:13-15**

# PRAYER

*"Heavenly Father, I believe in Your Word. I submit myself to the authority of the Bible. Your Word is the basis for my doctrine, life, faith and conduct. Help me to set aside time each day to read and meditate on Your Word, so that I might grow in Jesus and understand your will. I believe that in Your Word I find eternal life and the daily nourishment that I need. I ask You for Your grace to obey, and share Your Word with others. In the Name of Christ Jesus. Amen."*

# STUDY QUESTIONS

MEMORY VERSE Write out 2 Timothy 3:16-17

THE SCRIPTURE IS INSPIRED BY GOD

2. What is the basis for our life, behavior and beliefs? 2 Tim. 3:16-17

PROSPERITY IN THE WORD

3. How can the Christian have prosperity in his life? Psalm 1:1f

FED BY THE WORD

4. What is our major source of nourishment for growing in Jesus? Matthew 4:4

GOD'S WORD SHINES IN OUR HEARTS

5. How does God use His Word to lead us into repentance?

OBEYING THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST

6. Who is like a house built on the rock? Luke 6:47



BELIEVING THE WORD

7. How do we enter into faith? Romans 10:17

## Your Commitment

The Word of God is imperative in order to live as Christ's disciple. We need to read it every day to grow in Jesus and be useful to Him. You are invited to make a commitment to read the Bible every day, and pray. The best time is usually first thing in the morning. At this time there is less noise and less interruptions (children, phone, etc.) We can commit all our daily activities to the Lord, and start the day in peace and confidence. As part of your commitment please fill in the following:

1. Time
2. Place
3. Alone or with others
4. \*System of Bible reading (please consult your leader or pastor).

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\* A system in which you can read the whole Bible in one year is recommended.



## THE WORD OF GOD AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Memory Verse:

**“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword...”**

**Hebrews 4:12**

Bible Passage: 2 Timothy 3:10 - 4:4 (Ch. 3, v.10 through to Ch.4, v.4)

Goals:

- To be sure that we honour God’s Word by our example.
- To learn to use the Word of God as a spiritual weapon to advance the Kingdom of God.

### **Honoring the Word of God**

God holds His Word in high esteem. All of Psalm 119 tells us about the value of His Word and the benefit of meditating on it. The Bible also warns us about not respecting His Word. If we do not highly esteem the Scriptures, we undermine the solid basis from which we can fight Satan and his attacks against us.

WE DISHONOUR GOD’S WORD BY:

#### **Our poor example or testimony**

If we are going to share with others of a Gospel of repentance from sin, our own personal lives must show it. We have to live what we preach. Otherwise for our poor conduct others are not going to believe us. Paul appeals to Christian slaves to show that they can be fully trusted, **“so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.”** (Titus 2:10)

Never is this more highlighted than when preachers and pastors fall into sin, destroying the witness of the church for the community.

**“...to be sensible, chaste, domestic, kind, and submissive to their husbands, that the word of God may not be discredited.”**

**Titus 2:5**

#### **Preaching the Word with insincerity**

Here we are referring to those who with the ungodly motives of greed, success, or power preach the Word.

**“For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word; but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.”** 2 Corinthians 2:17

#### **Religious tradition which denies the Word**

Perhaps the greatest struggle that faces the church today is the struggle between religious tradition, and practicing the Word of God. So many churches have the form of religion without the power of God’s Word.

**“For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die'; 11 but you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, What you would have gained from me is Corban' (that is, given to God)--12 then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God through your tradition which you hand on. And**

many such things you do."

Mark 7:10-13

## THE WORD IS A SPIRITUAL WEAPON

### The promises of the Bible

When Mark was 16, he was praying to the Lord in order to know what career to follow. One day his pastor came up to Mark and prophesied that the Lord had called me to full time ministry. Afterwards he went to his room and asked the Lord that He would confirm it from the Scriptures. The Lord clearly gave the verse 1 Peter 5:1 which speaks of caring for the flock of Christ. This same verse became a spiritual weapon in Mark's life. Years later while running a business to support himself while training for the ministry, the temptation came to leave the calling and continue in business. However the Lord reminded Mark of the verse received years before. Mark used the verse as a spiritual weapon against the temptation.



The Christian is a soldier of Christ, involved in a serious battle.

In order to resist the attacks of Satan, the sword of the Spirit (the Word) is essential. The Bible is the basis of the faith, hope, encouragement, and courage of the soldier of Christ. The Word helps us to stay on track, and to overcome doubt, fear and discouragement. The Word reminds us of the precious promises of God that give us so much strength in the day of testing. Against sickness we declare the promise of healing, in need, the promise of the provision of God. We resist Satan using the promises of God, which is the sword of the Holy Spirit.

**"Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; 16 besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."**

Ephesians 6:13-16

One can clearly see the destructive effects of critical, angry & negative words spoken against others. Such words are often released with demonic force, causing demonic oppression and curses, doubt, inner hurts, sickness, low self-esteem, and rejection. Such destructive words are demonic spiritual weapons, the opposite to those of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand the powerful and eternal Word of God releases great blessings in our lives. Through faith in the Scriptures we are saved, sanctified, cleansed, edified, comforted, healed, delivered, receive wise counsel, and are directed in our decisions.



### The Word of God discerns the heart

God's Word is a spiritual weapon which digs deeply in our hearts to reveal to us our sins. The Lord, using Scriptures, or a personal prophetic word, reveals the sins of others so that they might repent and receive forgiveness.

**"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do."**

Hebrews 4:12-13

## SATAN WARS AGAINST GOD'S WORD

### The expansion of God's Word

In the New Testament we see Satan opposing the spread of the Word of God. It is a great spiritual victory when people understand, believe and practice the teaching of Scripture. The spreading of the Word of God results in conversions, healings, love, unity, repentance of sin, and the power of God.

**"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke."**  
Acts 6:7-10

### Satan fights against sound doctrine



We live in a time in which many Christians say that doctrine isn't important. However, sound doctrine is fundamental to the church. Good teaching empowered by the Holy Spirit releases blessings and opens the mind and heart towards Christ. Wrong doctrine can close the mind off to the promises of God, and can bring a person under demonic influence. For example, those who teach against the gifts of the Holy Spirit deceive people in not desiring those gifts that God wants to give us. Therefore the sick remain sick, and the spiritually thirsty remain unsatisfied. The sects who deny the unique role of Jesus as Saviour, and emphasize legalism (good works), deny their followers of eternal salvation.

Jesus rebuked the Pharisees because they stopped people from entering the kingdom of God, through their wrong doctrine.

**"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in."**  
Matthew 23:13

The warning of Paul is being fulfilled in our times regarding teachers who follow their passions, leaving aside sound doctrine. It is a disgrace that there are teachers who support the ordination of homosexuals, undermine scripture's authority through liberalism, defend promiscuity and worldliness.

**"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:2 preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths."**  
2 Timothy 4:1-3



## The power of God and the Word

A major extension of the Word occurred because Jesus sent out His disciples in the power of the Holy Spirit to preach the Kingdom, cast out demons, and heal the sick. These empowered disciples obviously caused more than a stir in Satan's kingdom through their preaching:

**Jesus "replied, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you."**

**Luke 10:18-19**

We see how Satan opposed the preaching of the Gospel by Paul to the Gentiles:

**"At my first defense no one took my part; all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! 17 But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the message fully, that all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth."**

**2 Timothy 4:16-17**

The desire of the church in Acts was to preach the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit with courage. Satan wanted to silence the church, that they would not preach in Jesus' name. Therefore one of the goals of our prayers should be that the anointing comes upon the church to preach the Gospel.

**"And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, 30 while thou stretches out thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of thy holy servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness."**

**Acts 4:29-31**

## The power of God and the interpretation of the Bible

Without the power of God, we can be mistaken in our ideas about the Bible. The Bible is full of stories and events of the power of God. From cover to cover we read of a powerful God who acts on behalf of His people. In spite of this there are many Christians who believe that God is far away, and that He doesn't interact directly with His church. Their religion leaves little room for God, Creator of the universe.



If someone rejects the power of God, it's as if they put on sun glasses when they read the Bible and they can't see properly. Jesus told the Sadducees they were mistaken in their interpretation of the Bible. The Sadducees, although well versed in the Scriptures, were unable to understand them because they didn't believe in the power of God to raise the dead.

**"The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection; and they asked him a question, 24 saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies, having no children, his brother must marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.' 25 Now there were seven brothers among us; the first married, and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother. 26 So too the second and third, down to the seventh. 27 After them all, the woman died. 28 In the resurrection, therefore, to which of the seven will she be wife? For they all had her." But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God."**

**Matthew 22:23-29**

## PRAYER

*“Heavenly Father, apply Your Word to my heart. Reveal all pride and wrong motives that dwell there. Change me according to Your Word. I desire to take Your Word to others, so that they might know Jesus and leave their sin. Thank you, Heavenly Father, by faith for the power and authority to preach Your Word. In the Name of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.”*

## STUDY QUESTIONS

MEMORY VERSE. Write out Hebrews 4:12

WE DISHONOUR GOD'S WORD BY:

1. What area(s) of your life are giving a poor example for your Christian witness? (Titus 2:5,10)
2. What is one of the great struggles the church faces today (see notes)? Why? (Mark 7:10-13)

THE WORD IS A SPIRITUAL WEAPON

3. When Satan attacks with doubt, fear, or discouragement, how can we use the Bible to defend ourselves? (Ephesians 6:13-16)
4. How does Satan use words to try to damage or destroy us?

THE WORD OF GOD DISCERNS THE HEART

5. Write briefly an experience of when God used the Scriptures to show you your heart condition – e.g. jealousy, resentment, greed, etc. (Hebrews 4:12-13)

THE EXPANSION OF GOD'S WORD

6. What happens in Acts 6 with the spread of God's Word accompanied by miracles? (Acts 6:7-10)

SATAN FIGHTS AGAINST SOUND DOCTRINE

7. How does good or bad doctrine affect those who believe it?
8. How did the Pharisees stop people from entering the Kingdom of heaven?

THE POWER OF GOD AND THE WORD

9. If we are to follow the example of Jesus and the apostles, how are we to preach God's Word?

THE POWER OF GOD AND THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE:

10. Although the Sadducees had studied the bible, what stopped them from understanding it? (Matthew 22:23-29)
11. Are there wrong doctrines that you need to renounce? (Such as teachings that deny the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit, deny the inspiration and divine authority of the Scriptures, or deny the divinity of Christ.) If so, take this opportunity to renounce these false teachings and to turn in faith to Christ anew.

# BAPTISM IN WATER

## Memory Verse:

**"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38**

Bible Passage: Romans 6:1-11

## Goals:

- To be baptized in water.
- To be able to explain to others the importance and meaning of water baptism.

## **Why be baptized?**

Why is it necessary to be baptized in water? Christians all over the world tell of how they decided to be baptized in obedience to the command of Jesus. Jesus said:

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

**Matthew 28:19-20**

Likewise the apostles encouraged and commanded , the believers to be baptized.

**"And he (Peter) commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days."**

**Acts 10:48**

**"And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name."**

**Acts 22:16**

## **How many times can one be baptized?**

In the New Testament we see that people were baptized after believing in Jesus. For example when the gaoler saw that the Lord had opened the prison doors for Paul and Silas, he says:

**"Men, what must I do to be saved?" 31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family."**

**Acts 16:30-33**

Baptism is a once off event for those who come to believe in Jesus. Baptism is not a ceremony for being received as a member into a church. Those who have changed churches do not need to be rebaptised. Nor is baptism for Christians who have backslidden or fallen into serious sin and then return in repentance to the Lord. There are no New Testament examples of people having received believer's baptism, who were later rebaptised. Water baptism is simply for those who have come to believe in Jesus.

It is appropriate for those who had once received infant baptism, or have been baptized into a sect, to later receive a "believer's baptism" via immersion. The reason being that infant or sect baptism does not fulfill the requirement of baptism as a personal response of one who believes the Gospel.

## WHAT IS BAPTISM?

### **Baptism as immersion**

Simply put baptism means to be immersed in water. In ancient classical literature the Greek word bapto (βαπτο) has the meaning of dipping a piece of cloth into a dye, of a man drowning, or of a ship sinking.<sup>1</sup> Essential to the word was the idea of being submerged, going under, and soaked.

“... baptizo, both in Jewish and Christian contexts, normally meant “immerse”, and even when it became a technical term for baptism, the thought of immersion remains.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Baptism as death in Christ**

Every year tens of thousands of new Christians choose to be immersed in water whether it be in a baptismal, a hole in the ground, a pool, a river, or the sea. Why do they do it? Because in baptism they are acting out their own death and resurrection in Jesus Christ. As we go into the water, we are reminded of the tomb of Christ. It is necessary that we die to our old sinful habits and selfishness, that the old way be “crucified with Christ.” In baptism we declare our death in Christ.

**“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”**

**Romans 6:3-4**

### **Baptism as life in Christ**

As Jesus was resurrected with the rolling away of the stone, so we also share in His resurrection. As we come out of the waters, we are reminded that we are made alive in Christ. The old has passed away, and now we have a new love and desire to follow and serve Jesus. The risen Jesus in power and glory lives within us.

**“A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”**

**Ezekiel 36:26**

**“For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.”**

**Romans 6:5-6**

### **When should one be baptized?**

The practice of the New Testament was normally to baptize people immediately after they had believed on Christ. So there is no scriptural impediment to a “quick” baptism. Whether the baptism is immediate or comes after a waiting period, true repentance is required for baptism. The timing of the baptism depends on the readiness of the candidate and the discretion of the pastor/leader. It may be appropriate to wait for the person to receive a basic instruction in the faith, and allow time to show that his repentance is genuine. John the Baptist was emphatic that the person must truly repent in order to be baptized.

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<sup>1</sup> The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. 1 Pg. 144 Ed. Colin Brown.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*



“And the multitudes asked him, "What then shall we do?" 11 And he answered them, "He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise." 12 Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" 13 And he said to them, "Collect no more than is appointed you." 14 Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Rob no one by violence or by false accusation, and be content with your wages." Luke 3:10-14

In the example of Simon the sorcerer, although he was baptized he lacked genuine repentance. The greed and desire for power that motivated his sorcery had not been dealt with.

“Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me also this power, that any one on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "Your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!" Acts 8:13,18-20

### **Belief and repentance required**

Essential to receiving baptism is believing in Jesus Christ as Saviour, and truly repenting from sin. The fruit of faith is repentance. Without a faith evidenced by repentance, baptism has little or no significance. Sins should be specifically confessed (stating what our sins are) and renounced (the decision to turn away from them). For example, in the baptism of John the people confessed their sins while in the water.

*Repent and be baptized...*

“John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.” Mark 1:4-5

“And Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:38

*Baptism is for those who believe...*

“But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

Acts 8:12

“And you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.”

Colossians 2:12

# STUDY QUESTIONS

MEMORY VERSE. Write out Acts 2:38

WHY BE BAPTISED?

1. What is the primary reason for being baptized? Matthew 28:19-20

HOW MANY TIMES CAN ONE BE BAPTISED?

2. In the New Testament people were baptized after \_\_\_\_\_ on the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup>
3. Baptism is (tick one box):
  - ☐ a form of church membership
  - ☐ for restoring back sliders
  - ☐ a once off event for those who come to believe in Jesus
  - ☐ for naming children
4. Why is it appropriate to water baptize those who previously received infant baptism or baptism via a sect?

BAPTISM AS IMMERSION

5. What does the word baptism mean?

BAPTISM AS DEATH IN CHRIST

6. In what way does baptism speak of our death?

BAPTISM AS LIFE IN CHRIST

7. What are we declaring as we come out of the waters of baptism?

WHEN SHOULD ONE BE BAPTISED?

8. What was the practice of the apostles as to when to baptize?
9. What did John the Baptist require for water baptism (Luke 3:10-14)?

BELIEF AND REPENTANCE REQUIRED

10. The fruit of faith is \_\_\_\_\_.<sup>4</sup>
11. Why do you think that baptism in water is important?
12. Have you been obedient to Jesus' command to be baptized? If you would like to take this important step please speak to your leader or pastor.

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<sup>3</sup> believing

<sup>4</sup> repentance

## OUR INHERITANCE IN JESUS

### Memory Verse:

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

Bible Passage: Ephesians 1:3-23

### Goals:

- To know some of the benefits and blessings that we have in Christ.
- To believe that they are ours and to use them to overcome attacks of doubt.
- To grow in Christ through faith in these promises.

FOR THE GROUP LEADER: This study is different from the others. The leader reads the titles below, giving a brief explanation. Different members of the group can look up the verses of each point. The leader could hand out slips of paper with a Bible reference on each one. That way the members of the group can find their verse beforehand, without making the group wait for them.

### **In Christ we are Made sons of God**

**“He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,”**  
**“for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.”**  
**Ephesians 1:5**  
**Galatians 3:26**

### **In Christ there is Forgiveness**

When we put our faith in Christ as Saviour, God sees the Blood of Jesus, which has washed our sins away. This blood is our protection from the judgement of God against sin.

For example in the Passover the Israelites placed the blood of a lamb on the doorposts of their houses. When the Lord was passing by and saw the blood, the Israelites were saved from the plague of death.

We could say that God sees the Blood of Jesus on the doorposts of our hearts. He turns away from His wrath against our sins and we are saved from eternal death.

**“For the LORD will pass through to slay the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to slay you.”**  
**Exodus 12:23**

If anyone is in Christ, the Blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin and we are forgiven. We have peace with God. We are redeemed (freed) from the hand of Satan.

**“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us.”**  
**Ephesians 1:7-8**

**“...as God in Christ forgave you.”**

**Ephesians 4:32**

## In Christ we are Justified before God

If someone has committed a crime and he comes before the judge, the judge has the power to justify him or condemn and punish him. In the same way, God is Judge of all humanity and has the authority and power to condemn sinners to hell, or to justify them. Only by faith in Christ can we be justified before God.

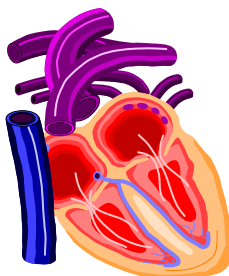
No religious or social works can justify the sinner before a Holy God. The only work that will atone for our sins is the perfect work of Jesus upon the cross. Only in Christ are we accepted before the Father.

**“... in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified.”** Galatians 2:16

**“... they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus..”** Romans 3:24

## In Christ we are Made Alive

Without Jesus we are spiritually dead. One can be physically, socially, and intellectually active, but unless we believe in Jesus, the joy and abundant life of God is absent. But when we believe in Jesus, God's Spirit enters us and we are made new, our spirit comes alive, resurrected by the power of Jesus who dwells within us.



It is like a heart transplant. The old heart was more dead than alive, the new one makes all the difference! The character of Jesus wells up within us and The abundant and eternal life overflows.

**“Jesus answered him, “Truly, one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”**

**John 3:3-5**

**“Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.”** 2 Corinthians 5:17

## In Christ we have Eternal Life

The sinner receives the judgement of God – eternal death. But the free gift of God for those who believe in Jesus is eternal life. That means that we shall live forever in the glorious Presence of God in heaven.

**“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** Romans 6:23

**“Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with its eternal glory.”** 2 Timothy 2:10

## In Christ we can Truly Worship God

We have the great privilege and joy in Christ of praising Him and giving Him thanks through the Holy Spirit. Our inheritance for all those who are in Jesus is to know

that abundant thanksgiving and praise that wells up in our hearts because of the goodness of the Lord.

**“In him, according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will, we who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory.”**  
Ephesians 1:11-12

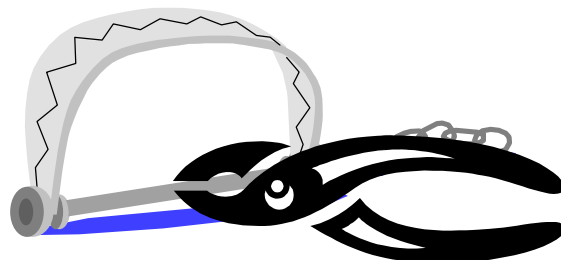
### **In Christ we find True Religion**

The religious satisfaction that people look for in rituals, traditions, or idols is a deceptive shadow of the Truth. The reality of true religion is found in the Person of Jesus Christ. He invites us to share an intimate and wonderful friendship with Him.

**“Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.”**  
Colossians 2:16-17

### **In Christ we are Set Free**

By faith in Jesus the addiction to sin is broken. In Christ there is freedom from sin. We no longer need to be a slave to sin. Christ has provided an escape from habitual sins such as anger, violence, masturbation, drinking, addiction to television watching, lying, and perverse thoughts. The wonderful news is that Jesus on the cross has broken the power that sin had over us.



**“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death.”**

Romans 8:2

### **In Christ we have the Love of God**

God created us to be loved by Him. Without Christ there will always be an emptiness and a void in our lives. People look for love and affection in many ways, whether it be in sex (including homosexual relationships), the acceptance of friends, recognition at work, affection from parents or children. However only in Jesus can we find the Father's great love. We were made to love God and be loved by Him. Nothing else will substitute.

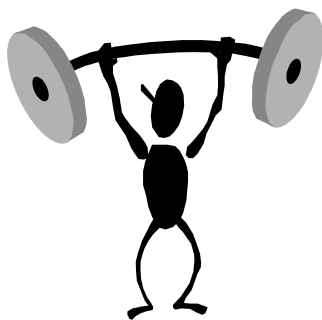
**“For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**  
Romans 8:38-39

**“... and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.”**  
1 Timothy 1:14

### **In Christ there is Hope of Resurrection**

**“For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord.”**  
1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

## In Christ we have Strength and Help



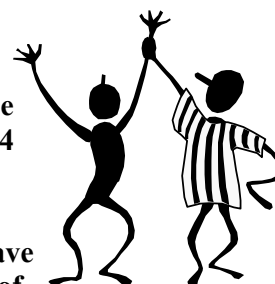
At times, people hesitate to commit their lives to Jesus and be baptized in water, because they are afraid of failing God. Yet we have the wonderful promise that Christ will be our strength and help to live the Christian life. He imparts to us “grace” to live in victory over sin. He is our holiness. It doesn’t depend on us alone.

**“You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,”** 2 Timothy 2:1

**“But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has commissioned us; he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”** 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 (See also 1 Corinthians 10:13).

## In Christ we are Victorious

**“But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.”** 2 Corinthians 2:14



## In Christ we Receive the Knowledge of God

**“For I want you to know how greatly I strive for you, ... to have all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”** Colossians 2:1-3

## In Christ our Life and Personality are Complete

**“For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.”** Colossians 2:9-10

**“Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ.”** Colossians 1:28

## In Christ we have a Great Purpose to Live for

**“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”** Ephesians 2:10

## STUDY QUESTIONS

MEMORY VERSE: Write out Ephesians 1:7

### **GROUP ACTIVITY:**

In the group take time to share some of the blessings you have personally experienced from knowing Jesus. (Please use the teaching given – e.g. your experience of being forgiven, having peace with God, being set free, experiencing God's love, etc.)

This will be an opportunity to give thanks to God for the blessings you have received from Him.

### **PRAYER:**

*Write out your own prayer of thanksgiving to God, appropriating the blessings of being in Christ...*

## THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

### Memory Verse:

**“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”**

**Luke 11:13**

Bible Passage: Acts 2:1-21

Goal: To understand and receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

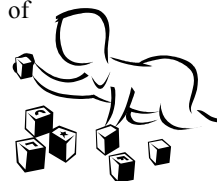
Note: The leader or a group member may like to share their own experience of how they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, instead of the using the testimony below. People’s experiences of the baptism in the Spirit vary, it may be a powerful and immediate experience, or gradual as with the testimony here.

### **An experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit**

When Mark was 16 he attended a conference on the Holy Spirit. There were about 500 people there and he sat in the gallery. The speaker shared a message and afterwards invited those who wanted to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit to stand up. Mark stood up with some others and the speaker prayed. He didn’t feel anything.

At that time Mark had received teaching about the prayer of faith: that our prayers are based on faith in God’s Word, and not on what we see or feel. He went home and entered his room and prayed: “Lord, I stood up in faith to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I now thank You for it by faith. Father, I ask that You might give me the gift of tongues as a sign of this baptism. I know that You are generous and that You desire to give good gifts to Your children. Lord I now believe that You impart this gift to me as I step out in faith and speak. In the Name of Jesus, Amen.”

As he began to speak a few words, Satan came to discourage him in his thoughts, saying, “Mark, you are just speaking like a baby.” He answered him, “Yes, I am speaking like a baby, but I am speaking by faith, and my faith pleases God (Heb. 11.6). Be gone!”



Each day Mark practiced the gift of tongues by faith for several months. At first he spoke very few words but little by little the words increased until they became a language. At the end of those months he went to his pastor and asked him about this language. He assured him that he was speaking in the language of the Holy Spirit, which was a great encouragement.

### **Receiving the power of God to live the Christian life**

The Lord not only gave Mark the gift of tongues, but also radically changed his life. Before he lacked courage to share his faith in Christ with others. He often suffered depression, like a black cloud over his life. He was violent, fighting with his five brothers and sisters at home, and with the boys at school. He felt a hypocrite. Even his mother said that she prayed more for him than all the rest! Mark was disciplined as much at school as at home for his bad behavior. The discipline gave him a deep desire to resolve his problems!

When Mark asked the Lord to baptize him with His Spirit, He wanted to receive the power of God to change him. By his own effort he could not do it. He felt frustrated and guilty. But thanks be to God that when we call to Him, He always hears us and responds. The depression and violence went in the Name of Jesus. The Lord gave Mark the courage to share the Gospel with others. He was chosen as president of the students. He formed prayer groups at school. His school mates couldn’t believe the change in his life. Instead of fighting he shared the Bible with them. He was hungry for the Word of God, and thirsty for prayer.



**"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."**

**Matthew 3:11-12**

In the baptism in the Holy Spirit we can experience the divine fire which burns and cleanses the spiritual rubbish out of our lives.

### **Rivers of living water**

Almost 15 years after this baptism, Mark asked for prayer as he felt spiritually dry. When someone laid hands on him, he fell under the power of God, and felt a wonderful peace. Mark had believed in Christ as Saviour and Lord, had studied at a Christian university and seminary. He had believed with his will and intellect, but on that day he experienced the waters of the well of salvation for the first time. While he was lying down on the floor, it seemed that he was under water, like in a pool, with people talking above. He couldn't hear clearly what they were saying. Then he understood better why this promise is called the 'baptism' of the Holy Spirit.

**"On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, 'If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'"** Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

**John 7:37-39**



### **What is the baptism in the Holy Spirit?**

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is part of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. We use the word anointing to describe all the manifestations of power of the Holy Spirit, such as deliverance, miracles, and healings. Even unbelievers can experience manifestations of the anointing. However the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a distinct promise for those who believe in Jesus. The baptism in the Holy Spirit consists of :

RECEIVING SPIRITUAL GIFTS and especially the gift of tongues;

EXPERIENCING the Presence of the Holy Spirit;

RECEIVING COURAGE AND POWER to share the Gospel with others.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a blessing promised to us by God. It is not a requisite for our salvation. Salvation only comes through faith in Christ and His work on the cross. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a further blessing and promise for all those who believe in Jesus. Being baptized in the Spirit is not an excuse to think one is better than other Christians who have not had the same experience. On receiving Jesus as Saviour and Lord, the Holy Spirit enters into our hearts. In the baptism, the Holy Spirit comes upon us in power and flows from within like a river.



### **Jesus is the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit**

The fullness of the Spirit dwells in Christ, therefore it is He who baptizes us:

**"I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."**

**John 1:33-34**

## **Holy Spirit baptism is a distinct promise for believers**

The promises of God don't depend on ourselves, but on the generosity of God. This promise of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is for all who believe in Jesus.

**"And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, 'you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'"**

Acts 1:4-5

**"but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.'"**

Acts 2:16-18



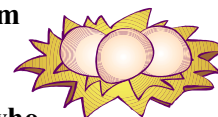
## **Perseverance in faith and the generosity of God**

One day Mark preached in a service about the baptism in the Spirit. Afterwards Pam, an older Christian, came forward and explained that in her youth she tried to speak in tongues but without success. She became discouraged and a thought of doubt entered her mind: "God doesn't want to give me this gift." Mark explained to her that God is generous and that He desires to give us His gifts. We must ask in faith and continue to give thanks until we receive them. The lady then understood that she had to ask in faith and rebuke all doubt.

Pam confessed her sin of doubt and asked God for the gift of tongues. In humility she began to speak like a baby. Satan through a small thought of doubt had robbed her of this precious gift for 50 years. Jesus teaches us about the generosity of the Father to His children:



**"What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 'If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'"**



Luke 11:11-13

## **Seek the Lord without discouragement**

At times people receive a great anointing and speak eloquently in tongues. However others like Mark, receive only a few words at first and by faith continue to speak. The Lord then expands our capacity, even adding other languages. We must persevere in faith and rebuke all doubts. In the same Bible passage Jesus encourages us to persevere in faith to receive the Holy Spirit.

**"And he said to them, 'Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything'? I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs. And I**



tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”  
 Luke 11:5-9

### **God will judge us according to the fruit of the Spirit**

God will not judge us according to the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Rather He will judge us according to the fruit demonstrated. The fruit of the Spirit is:

**“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”**  
 Galatians 5:22-24

The gifts and the power of God are given according to the generosity of God and not because of our own righteousness. We have no basis for pride, or thinking that we are better than others because we speak in tongues or that we have spiritual power. It is possible to have power without love, and to be condemned on the last day.

**“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits. "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.'”**  
 Matthew 7:19-23



To use the power and gifts of the Spirit without love and wisdom does not produce fruit, and is useless.

**“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”**  
 1 Corinthians 13:1-2

## HOW TO RECEIVE THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

There are various ways to receive the gift of tongues. Of course it is our desire to receive this blessing, and our faith in the promise of the Word that are important, not the method of receiving. It is helpful to spend time fasting and praying to prepare yourself for receiving this baptism. This method is adapted from the evangelist Bill Subritzky, and I have found it very helpful especially with people who have difficulty receiving.

1. RECEIVE CHRIST as your Saviour and Lord.
2. REPENT FROM SINS of resentment, witchcraft and the occult.
3. RENOUNCE DOUBTS about the baptism and gifts of the Spirit.
4. RECEIVE FREEDOM from demons if necessary.
5. PRACTICE talking like an infant.
  - We have to become like children to receive the blessings of the kingdom
  - Normally one does not lose control of the mouth. We must open our mouths and begin to speak.
  - We can commence in the natural repeating monosyllables such as ba, ba, ba...
6. ASK FOR THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT with the sign of tongues by faith. (See the prayer below).
7. SPEAK once more like a baby allowing the Holy Spirit to give you the gift of tongues.
8. SHARE with others your testimony and the Gospel.
9. CONTINUE daily to pray in tongues by faith.

## PRAYER TO RECEIVE THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

*“Heavenly Father I ask You to forgive me for my sins (name them....), and I renounce the sins of my ancestors. With Your help I forgive all those who have hurt me, and I ask that You bless them. Cleanse me by the blood of Jesus. Fill me with the power of Your Holy Spirit so that I might live a holy and pleasing life, share the Gospel with others and fulfill Your will in my life. Thank you, Father, that You are generous and You have promised in Your Word the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Now I receive it by faith. I thank You by faith for the gift of tongues. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.”*



The members of the group may pray for each other at this point. Sometimes people fall down or have other power manifestations. Make sure there is plenty of space before praying.

It is not necessary to become emotional to receive the Holy Spirit, nor to pray for others. Ask in faith and wait in faith. If there are manifestations of power the leader should maintain an attitude of calm and explain what is happening. That way the group can become accustomed to the power of the Spirit with peace, joy and understanding.

Very rarely a person may begin to speak in a demonic tongue which is very different from the gift of the Holy Spirit. This happens from lack of deliverance and repentance. It is better that the person stops trying to speak in tongues and receives ministry of deliverance from mature Christians.

# STUDY QUESTIONS

MEMORY VERSE. Write out Luke 11:13

**GROUP EXERCISE:**

1. Someone in the group can share their experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

RECEIVE THE POWER OF GOD TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

2. How does the baptism in the Holy Spirit help us in our Christian life? (Matt. 3:11-12)

RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

3. What promise does Jesus give us in John 7:37-38?

WHAT IS THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

4. What is the baptism in the Spirit? (List 3 things)
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
5. In what way is this baptism in the Holy Spirit different from our salvation?

PERSEVERANCE IN FAITH AND THE GENEROSITY OF GOD

6. What reasons do some people give for not having received the baptism in the Holy Spirit? (Luke 11:10-13)

SEEK THE LORD WITHOUT DISCOURAGEMENT

7. What should we do if we only receive one or two words in tongues initially? (Luke 11:5-9)

GOD WILL JUDGE US ACCORDING TO THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

8. What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit and why are they so important? (Gal 5:22-24; 1 Cor 13)
9. What warning does God give us about using His power and gifts without love? (Matt. 7:19-23)

**GROUP EXERCISE:**

Follow the instructions as to how to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This activity should be lead by the group leader.

# GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR FINANCES

## Memory Verse:

"Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house..."

**Malachi 3:10**

Bible Passage: Malachi 3:8-12

## Goals:

- That our giving be an act of worship.
- That our giving be an act of faith.
- That we be cheerful and obedient in our tithes and offerings.

## **Tithes and offerings**

From the Scriptures we see three types of giving which is of particular relevance to us today:

### **1. The tithe**

We are to tithe everything which is a source of income for us. This includes our salary or wage, pension, superannuation, commissions, government benefits, investment dividends, interest, etc.

*"As soon as the command was spread abroad, the people of Israel gave in abundance the first fruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything."*

**2 Chronicles 31:5**

"A simple, practical, and scriptural way to put God first with your money is by consistently setting aside for God the first tenth of your income. Tithing is the regular practice of setting apart the first tenth of your total income for God. When you have done that, you have laid a foundation for honoring God with your money."<sup>5</sup>

Under the law of Moses the tithe simply belonged to God.

*"All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD. If a man wishes to redeem any of his tithe, he shall add a fifth to it."*

**Leviticus 27:30-31**

### **2. Votive offerings or pledges**

Pledges are an important form of giving, because they form a commitment to a ministry. Examples include: pledging a regular amount to support a missionary, an orphanage, the printing of Bibles, or supporting a church building fund. With regards to missions, pledges make it possible for missionaries to have a constant income while overseas.

### **3. Freewill offerings**

These are what we freely and joyfully give, as moved by the Holy Spirit at a particular time.

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<sup>5</sup> D. Prince, pg.217, "Derek Prince on experimenting the power of God."

*"... and thither you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the offering that you present, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock;"*

**Deuteronomy 12:6**

### **Tithing releases God's blessing**

The Lord specifically says that our tithing and offerings determine whether we are blessed or cursed. If we withhold our tithe and become tight-fisted with our offerings we are actually robbing God of what belongs to Him and open ourselves to divine curse.

However God promises us that if we bring Him the full amount of our tithe that He will release tremendous blessing upon our lives. **He promises to open the windows of heaven and pour down an overflowing blessing.** The truth is that we cannot afford not to be obedient in our tithes and offerings.

*"Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How are we robbing thee?' In your tithes and offerings. 9 You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me; the whole nation of you. 10 Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. 11 I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil; and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. 12 Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts."*

**Malachi 3:8-12**

"Many years ago a lad of 16 was obliged to leave home because his father was too poor to support him any longer. So he trudged away with all worldly possessions in a bundle dangling from his hand, resolving as he journeyed to set up in business as a soapmaker in New York.

When the country boy arrived in the big city, he found it hard to get work. Remembering the last words of his mother and also the godly advice given him by the captain of a canal boat, the youth dedicated his life to God, determining to return to his Maker an honest tithe of every dollar he earned.

So, when his first dollar came in, the young man sacredly dedicated ten cents of it to the Lord. This he continued to do. And the dollars rolled in! Soon this young man became partner in a soap business; and when his partner died a few years later, he became sole owner of the concern.

The prosperous businessman now instructed his bookkeeper to open an account with the Lord and to credit to it one tenth of all his income. The business grew miraculously. The honest proprietor now dedicated two-tenths of his earnings; and then three-tenths, four-tenths; and finally, five-tenths. It seemed as if his sales increased in exact proportion to his generosity, so that soon his brand of soap became a household word throughout the world.

The late William Colgate was this man whom God so singly prospered in return for his faithfulness to his Maker."<sup>6</sup>

Henry Ford the founder of the Ford car company said: most people think of success "in terms of getting; success, however, begins in terms of giving."

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<sup>6</sup> Pulpit Helps Vol 1 - CD

## God's shovel

Jacob when he set out from home vowed to honour the Lord with a tenth of his income. He put the Lord first with his tithes even though he had nothing but a staff.

*"Then Jacob made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, 21 so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, 22 and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou givest me I will give the tenth to thee.'"*  
**Genesis 28:20-22**

The temptation when we are financially struggling can be to cut back on our giving. We think "I can't afford it". In cutting back we rob ourselves of God's wonderful provision in our lives. Jacob honored God with his tithe in his poverty, and 20 years later God had amazingly prospered him. He had left with one staff in his hand, and returned to his father's house with an abundance.

*"I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness which thou hast shown to thy servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and now I have become two companies."*  
**Genesis 32:10**

"A farmer was known for his generous giving, but his friends could not understand how he could give so much away and yet remain so prosperous. One day a spokesman for his friends said, "We can't understand you. You give far more than the rest of us and yet you always seem to have more to give." "Oh, that is easy to explain," the farmer said. "I keep shoveling into God's bin and God keeps shoveling into mine, but God has the bigger shovel!"<sup>7</sup>

## Does tithing apply to the Christian?

The scribes and Pharisees had totally focused on fulfilling their rules and traditions while neglecting the underlying principles of the Law – justice, mercy and faith. Even so Jesus affirmed the discipline of tithing as of continuing importance to us. Jesus is emphatic that we are not to neglect tithing.

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others."*  
**Matthew 23:23**

Some argue that tithing was part of the Old Testament Law and therefore does not apply to Christians today. Actually tithing is 400 years older than the Law. When Abraham had won a great battle and gained much war booty he gave a tithe to the High Priest, Melchizedek. In the New Testament, Abraham is regarded as a father and pattern of all who believe.

*"He received circumcision as a sign or seal of the righteousness which he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them,"*

**Romans 4:11**

So we see that Abraham tithed as an expression of faith and not because of obligation to the Law. Likewise as Christians we tithe not out of **obligation but as an act of faith**. We believe that as we are obedient to God in our finances that He will prosper and provide for us.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid



When we tithe it is an act of worship to Jesus our High Priest. It is Jesus who receives our tithes. Jesus is of the High Priestly order of Melchizedek. In a sense Abraham offered his tithes to Jesus.

*"Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."*

**Hebrews 6:20**

### **How the tithe is to be used**

The Israelites were not allowed to keep their tithes at home for their personal needs. The Lord instructed that the tithes were to be brought to the temple and offered to the Lord. In this way the Levite who was set apart for the Lord's service, could be provided for. In the same way we are to bring our tithes to church and offer them to the Lord as part of our public worship. Through our tithes the church's ministries can be financially sustained. The tithe is not to be used at ones personal discretion.

*"You may not eat within your towns the tithe of your grain or of your wine or of your oil, or the firstlings of your herd or of your flock, or any of your votive offerings which you vow, or your freewill offerings, or the offering that you present; 18 but you shall eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God will choose, you and your son and your daughter, your manservant and your maidservant, and the Levite who is within your towns; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all that you undertake. Take heed that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land."*

**Deuteronomy 12:17-19**

The primary use of the tithe is to financially support those who have been set apart to minister the Word of God, such as pastors and evangelists.

*"To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, their service in the tent of meeting."*

**Numbers 18:21**

The tithe is also to be used by the church to enable different types of ministries to occur. Particularly to help those in need, such as refugees, orphans, and widows who are without family support.

*"When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce in the third year, which is the year of tithing, giving it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within your towns and be filled..."*

**Deuteronomy 26:12**

## **Prayer**

*"Heavenly Father I ask that you forgive and cleanse me if I have been disobedient with my tithes and offerings, and have robbed you in this way. I now commit myself, in obedience to your Word, to bring the full tithe of all my income to You. I do so as an act of worship to Jesus, my High Priest and Lord.*

*Father I trust that as I am obedient in my finances that You will prosper and provide for my every need. I thankyou now by faith for your blessing and provision in every area of my life in the Name of Jesus, Amen."*

# STUDY QUESTIONS

Write out the memory verse, Malachi 3:10

## **Tithes and offerings**

1. Explain what each of the following are:  
The tithe (2 Chronicles 31:5)

Votive offerings or pledges

Freewill offerings (Deuteronomy 12:6)

## **Tithing releases God's blessing**

2. How can we rob God (Malachi 3:8-12)?

## **God's shovel**

3. What was the key to Jacob's prosperity (Genesis 28:20-22)?

## **Does tithing apply to the Christian?**

4. What did Jesus say about tithing? (Matthew 23:23)
5. How can our tithes and offerings be an act of faith?
6. How is tithing an act of worship (Hebrews 6:20)?

## **How the tithe is to be used**

7. Where are we to bring our tithes (Deuteronomy 12:17-19)?
8. What is the primary use of the tithe (Numbers 18:21)?

## **Group Activity**

The group can discuss whether it would like to take up an offering each week to support a mission or other Christian cause. It would be appropriate for the group leader to speak with his/her pastor about this.

## APPENDIX A

# SIN AND OCCULT LISTING

## Recognizing our Sin is Half the Battle

Often people don't recognize their sins because no one ever told them it was sin. This list of sins and occult is meant to be a blessing and help to people. As we identify our sins we can then confess them to God and receive forgiveness and peace. A real barrier in recognizing sin is the way that we justify what we do.

For example, some justify their anger by blaming the other person – "It's their fault that I'm angry because they.....". Others justify pornography as "a personal diversion which doesn't harm anyone". Others justify violence in marriage "because it helps" in some way. White lies are said to be "necessary and useful".

There is no end to the reasons we give to justify our sins. Such arguments become demonic fortresses of the mind that must be identified as unbiblical deceptions. True repentance begins when we stop justifying our sin, and call it what it is: sin. Then the cleansing work of the Blood of Jesus can begin in us.

**"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God."**  
1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Sin is sin, and we are guilty before God for our rebellion. Sin brings condemnation, curses, demons, eternal death, guilt and sickness. God requires humility in repentance so that there might be forgiveness and peace with Him. While we defend our sins, we have not truly repented, and therefore are not forgiven by God.

**"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."**

1 John 1:8-9

*Through repentance you can receive peace and forgiveness from God.*

## PLEASE MARK OFF YOUR SINS IN THIS LIST

### The greatest sin

*Not believing in Jesus as the only Saviour*

### Sins of the tongue:

Lies  
Anger, shouting  
Making fun of others in their need  
Coarse language, swearing  
Slander  
Criticism  
Judging others

Gossip

Self curses (e.g. "I am worthless, I will never succeed.")

Cursing others (e.g. "He will always be sick.")

Grumbling/criticism against the leadership of the church.

Unfulfilled promises and good intentions.

Using God's Name in vain

Blasphemy

**Sins in the family:**

Neglect of children  
 Lack of discipline and order in the family.  
 Not teaching the Bible to one's children.  
 Lack of respect for your partner  
 Putting down your spouse in front of others.  
 Mistreatment of one's wife  
 Lack of love, obedience and honour of the husband .  
 Violence and anger in the marriage.  
 Violent discipline of children.  
 Disobeying parents  
 Lack of respect of parents

**Sins of the heart:**

Unforgiveness  
 Resentment  
 Bitterness  
 Holding grudges  
 Hate  
 Lust  
 Greed  
 Envy and covetousness  
 Pride  
 Selfishness  
 Jealousy  
 Double mindedness  
 Lack of faith, doubt  
 Anxiety, worry, not trusting God.  
 Racism and bigotry

**Various sins:**

Lack of love towards God and others.  
 Religiosity and legalism  
 Persecution of Christians  
 Religious pride  
 Lack of daily prayer and Bible reading  
 Lack of prayer for authorities in the church  
 Lack of obedience, respect and support of church leaders and pastors.  
 Causing division in the body of Christ.  
 Rebellion and disrespect towards authority.  
 Laziness

Stealing  
 Addictions  
 Taking advantage of others unjustly  
 Violence  
 Impatience  
 Manipulation  
 Deceit  
 Not visiting the sick and prisoners  
 Mistreating the poor and needy  
 Murder  
 Vengeance  
 Abortion  
 Drunkenness  
 Bribes  
 Attending worldly parties with drinking & dancing.  
 Videos or films of violence, horror, swearing, pornography.  
 Inappropriate TV watching

**Sins of the use of resources:**

Dressing luxuriously as an expression of pride, vanity  
 Buying things out of vanity.  
 Gambling  
 Using our time wastefully  
 Not obeying God with our finances (tithing and offerings)  
 Lack of compassion and generosity to the poor  
 Using our resources selfishly  
 Not offering hospitality  
 Financial irresponsibility  
 Not paying taxes  
 Not declaring income in order to receive government assistance.  
 Not paying child maintenance

**Sins against the Holy Spirit:**

Resisting or grieving the Holy Spirit  
 Criticizing and belittling the work and manifestations of the Holy Spirit  
 Mistreating and persecuting those who are used by God in the Anointing  
 Speaking against the gifts of the Holy Spirit

**Sins in the work place**

Laziness or sloppiness at work  
 Taking advantage of and mistreating employees.  
 Not paying or withholding appropriate wages.  
 Borrowing and not returning is stealing.  
 Unjust or illegal contracts  
 Corruption  
 Not paying taxes

### **Sexual sins:**

Perverse sexual acts – oral, anal, or sex with an animal.  
 Violent or forced sex (including in the marriage).  
 Rape  
 Prostitution  
 Fornication  
 Adultery  
 Masturbation  
 Homosexuality  
 Lesbianism  
 Sex between family members – incest  
 Pornography  
 Lustful thinking

### **Obsessions & addictions**

Addiction to smoking, alcohol, novels, TV, the internet, computer games, video games, or play stations.

***NB.** Watching TV, reading novels, using the internet and games are not necessarily sins, but lack of self-control in these areas is.*

### **Occult and witchcraft sins:**

Acupuncture  
 Amulets (good luck objects, etc)  
 Ancestral worship  
 Ankh (a cross with a ring top used in satanic rites).  
 Apparitions – occultic  
 Astral traveling  
 Astrology  
 Automatic writing  
 Birth signs  
 Black arts  
 Black magic

Black mass  
 Blood pacts  
 Casting of spells and curses  
 Chain letters  
 Colour therapy  
 Conjunction (summoning up a spirit)  
 Consulting medium, espiristists, witchdoctors or psychic healers  
 Contact with spirits  
 Control of objects by mental power (Tk or Pk).  
 Coven of witches  
 Crystal ball gazing  
 Crystals & stones  
 Demon worship  
 Divining rod, twig or pendulum  
 Dungeons and dragons  
 Eastern meditation  
 ESP  
 Espiritism  
 Fire walking  
 Fortune telling  
 Halloween  
 Hallucinogenic drugs (e.g. heroin)  
 Hard rock & heavy metal secular music  
 Harry Potter novels, toys & movies  
 Horoscopes  
 Hypnosis  
 Idols and images used in worship  
 Incantations  
 Iridology (eye diagnosis)  
 Jonathan Livingstone Seagull (reincarnation).  
 Judo  
 Karate  
 Kung-fu  
 Levitation  
 Listening to demonic voices (including voices of deceased).  
 Magic (not sleight of hand but supernatural power)  
 Manipulation and cursing of others  
 Mantras  
 Martial arts  
 Mental suggestion, telepathy, therapy  
 Mesmerism  
 Mind control, dynamics, mediumship, reading.  
 Necromancy (conjuring up spirits of the dead)

New Age (in all its diverse forms)  
 Numerology  
 Occultic games  
 Ouiji boards  
 Occult novels, magazines, music, or movies  
 Pagan rites, religious objects, artifacts and relics  
 Palmistry  
 Pokemon Cards  
 Satanism  
 Secret society oaths  
 Sorcery  
 Soul traveling  
 Spells  
 Spirit guides or friends  
 Star signs  
 Superstitions  
 Tarot cards  
 Tea-leaf reading  
 The Lodge (Free Masonry)  
 TM – transcendental meditation  
 Videos and movies of violence, horror, pornography, occult.  
 White magic  
 Witchcraft  
 Yoga  
 Zodiac signs

### **Sects, World Religions & Philosophies:**

*It is important to renounce all oaths, pacts and baptisms made with any sect or secret society, destroy their religious objects, and destroy any books that are not in accord with Scripture.*

*A sect is a religious group that has one or more of the following characteristics:*

- Denies the full divinity of Jesus Christ.

- Doesn't recognize the full authority of the Bible as the basis of faith and conduct.
- Accepts prophecies, traditions, and other books as fundamental to belief and practice.
- Denies the Trinity, that of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Emphasizes traditions and rules to gain salvation.

*All religions that deny that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour and way to God are to be renounced.*

*To pray to, to use as a mediator, to show religious respect, or to worship idols and images.*

*To burn candles to them, to prostrate or bow before an idol or image.*

Seventh Day Adventists

Amanda Marga Yoga Society

Bahai

Buddhism

Children of God

Christadelphians

Christian Science

Communism

Confucianism

Divine Light Mission

EST

Hare Krishna

Hinduism

Islam

Jehovah's witnesses

Marxism

Materialism

Mormons

The International Way

The New Age (in all its diverse forms)

Unification Church (Moonies)

Universal Church of God

**This sin & occult list is adapted from Bill Subritzky's literature (see website, Dove Ministries).**

## APPENDIX B

**RESPONDING TO INFANT BAPTISM****Infant baptism or personal faith**

The theological premise of infant baptism is inconsistent and contrary to the Gospel. Scripture teaches that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ. Yet in infant baptism the rite of sprinkling water is substituted for the Scriptural requirement of personal faith in Jesus Christ. The priest having sprinkled the child with water then turns to the congregation and declares that the child is an inheritor of salvation and a member of the body of Christ.

*“God has called you into his church. We therefore receive you and welcome you as a fellow member of the Body of Christ, as a child of the same heavenly Father, and as an inheritor with us of the kingdom of God. I sign you with the sign of the cross to show that you are to be true to Christ crucified and that you are not to be ashamed, to confess your faith in Him.”*<sup>8</sup>

The priestly declaration is not made on the basis of an active, cognitive, or personal repentance from sin, nor is it made on the basis of the individual's faith in Jesus as their Saviour. In fact no response to the Gospel or understanding of it is required. The infant is declared a child of God on the basis of being sprinkled with water. If one can be saved, forgiven, and become a member of the Body of Christ through being baptized as an infant, why did Jesus die? Infant baptism makes a personal response to the Gospel unnecessary.

**Infant baptism and circumcision**

Those who justify infant baptism often argue that it is a christianized form of the Old Testament circumcision. Under the Old Covenant one was made part of the people of God through circumcision, it was a “work of the law.” However when Jesus Christ died on the cross he fulfilled the law, with all its stipulations and requirements. We are no longer under the law, and hence do not practice circumcision to be part of God's people. In the same way infant baptism is really part of the Old Covenant way of thinking.

David Pawson writes:

*“Some claim a parallel in the circumcision of male babies on the eighth day (and thereby justify ‘infant’ baptism); but this was not for the purpose of cleansing and is never linked with baptism in the New Testament... It belongs to Jewish flesh, not Christian faith.”*<sup>9</sup>

Under the New Covenant of Jesus Christ, salvation and entrance into the family of God is by faith alone. Our faith in Jesus in turn must show itself in good works. So works are the product of our saving faith. Human and religious deeds can never impute salvation, or faith. Infant baptism is a religious work that can not impute salvation. The only way to be saved is to personally believe that Jesus Christ bore our sins upon the cross. As a result of that faith, we then seek baptism. The New Testament never envisioned baptism as preceding faith. Baptism is to be the result of our new faith.

<sup>8</sup> An Australian Prayer Book Published 1978. Pg. 523

<sup>9</sup> Explaining Water Baptism by David Pawson. Pg. 9-10

Infant baptism inherently is the same as circumcision, it is a work of the law. The debate between Paul and the circumcision party, is basically the same debate that we have between infant baptism or immersion. It boils down to the question of whether salvation is by faith or by religious rites.

**"But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."**

**Acts 15:1**

Baptism is an outward sign of what has already occurred in the heart through repentance and faith in Jesus. True baptism is not just something "external and physical", nor passively received like circumcision.

**"For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. 29 He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal. His praise is not from men but from God."**

**Romans 2:28-29**

As we read Galatians it becomes evident that infant baptism as a means of salvation is "a different gospel". Those early Christians who were insisting on circumcision as necessary for salvation were attempting to pervert the Gospel. Those likewise who argue for infant baptism as a means of entering the Kingdom of God, likewise are in danger of attempting to pervert the Gospel, (even if they do so unknowingly).

**"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel 7 not that there is another gospel, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ."**

**Galatians 1:6-7**

### **Baptism is not an outward ritual**

So we see that baptism points to an inner work of the Holy Spirit. It is not an outward ritual but an appeal to God that our hearts have been cleansed through faith in Jesus.

**"Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ..."**

**1 Peter 3:21**



## APPENDIX C

# RESPONDING TO MARIOLOGY

## Introduction

This short appendix has been written to help those whom come from a Catholic background, or who have Catholic family and friends. Catholics have been taught that Mary is the mother of God, that she is the intermediary between God and man, that she is greater than Jesus, and other incorrect doctrines. It is distressing to see how millions of children are being religiously indoctrinated in this way. Yet tens of thousands of Catholics are keen to know what the Scriptures teach on these matters, and are coming to a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

## The relationship between Mary and Jesus

Mary didn't give life to Jesus, because Jesus is the Life, without beginning and end. His life existed before the creation of the world. The Bible clearly says that the life of Christ entered into Mary by the power of God. While Mary physically gave birth to Christ, she is not the spiritual mother of Christ, as Jesus existed before her. Jesus is the eternal Son of God.

**“And the angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.”**  
**Luke 1:35**

Mary didn't give birth to Jesus because she deserved it. Rather, she was chosen by the grace and mercy of God towards her. She gives us a good example of one who glorified God and humbled herself. We say that Mary was blessed because she had the great privilege of being God's vessel to bring the Saviour into the world.

**“And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation.”**  
**Luke 1:46-50**

## Catholic deification of Mary

Catholicism has deified Mary, calling her the “Queen of Heaven”. This is similar to other world religions who worship a female goddess. From Scripture we see that what is being worshipped is not Mary, but a hideous demonic principality, Jezebel. (For more about this demon see Isaiah 47; Zechariah 5:5-11; Ecclesiastes 7:26; Nahum 3:4; Revelations 2:20; 17; 19). Mariology is part of Satan's strategy of deception to pervert the true worship of God, turning people's hearts away to worshipping what is created (Mary is finite and part of creation).

The following scriptures show that Mary is not divine, that Jesus was greater than Mary, that Mary was an imperfect sinner redeemed by Jesus Christ.

- The wise men didn't worship Mary, but Jesus.

**“... and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.”**  
**Matthew 2:11**

➤ Jesus did not recognize Mary as having any special authority or position over Him.  
**“He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me...”**  
**Matthew 10:37**

➤ Mary did not fully understand Jesus’ mission as Saviour of the world, or His authority and power as the Son of God. Mark 3:21 infers that at one point Mary thought that Jesus was crazy.

**“And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for people were saying, “He is beside himself.”**  
**Mark 3:21**

➤ The instances below show that at times Mary was not in the will of God. We see that when Mary was seeking to stop Jesus, Jesus would not even speak with her. Mary did not receive preferential treatment from Jesus, and Jesus did not defer to her wishes for His ministry. As part of the human race she was a sinner, who had to learn to yield to God’s will in her life.

**“While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother.”**

**Matthew 12:46-50; (Also Mark 3:31-35)**

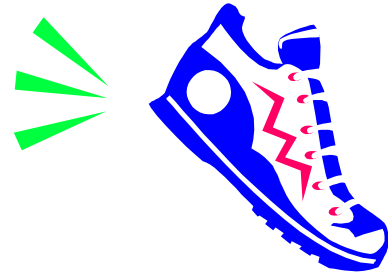
**“Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him for the crowd. 20 And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.” 21 But he said to them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”**  
**Luke 8:19-21**

➤ Mary became a Christian believer, and follower of Jesus Christ. She could have only done this by recognizing her sinful state, and accepting Jesus Christ as her personal Saviour.

**“All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.”**  
**Acts 1:14**

## THE CHRISTIAN RACE – “Getting Started”

### Weekly Studies:



1. How to know Jesus (pg.2)
2. The disciple of Christ (pg.8)
3. The cost of being a disciple (pg.12)
4. Loving Jesus (pg.17)
5. The Word of God and Christian growth (pg.21)
6. The Word of God and spiritual warfare (pg.25)
7. Baptism in water (pg.31)
8. Our inheritance in Jesus (pg.35)
9. The baptism in the Holy Spirit (pg.40)
10. God's plan for our finances (pg.46)

### Appendix

- A. The sin and occult list (pg.51)
- B. Responding to infant baptism (pg.55)
- C. Mariology (pg.57)

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# HOW TO KNOW JESUS

## Memory Verse:

**"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."**

**John 3:16**

Bible Passage: Genesis 3:1-13

## Goals:

- To receive Jesus Christ as Savior through faith in Him.
- To understand how much God desires an intimate friendship with us.
- To be certain that we are accepted by God and have eternal life.

Suggestion for groups: Someone in the group may like to share their testimony instead of using the one given below. Members may like to practice briefly sharing their testimony. Some may like to prepare it during the week to share next time. (The author's stories are always in the third person to make it easy for someone else to read it to the group).

## **How Mark came to know Jesus**

Mark grew up in a Christian family with a background of generations of preachers, including the great American revival preacher, Jonathon Edwards. From his childhood he regularly attended church every Sunday with his family. With all this he thought that he was a Christian. However, in reality he was separate from God, not having a personal relationship with Him.

When he was 10 years old Mark and his family were taking vacations in a beautiful country town that bordered a river. One night during family prayers, his mother asked him a simple question: "Do you know Jesus Christ?" Mark asked himself: "Do I truly know Jesus, personally?" Unable to answer the question confidently, he responded: "I don't know".

Mark realized that through this simple question God was inviting him to know Him in a new and personal way. He knew that God was calling him, and was unable to avoid the challenging question: "Do you know Jesus?". Before his family he prayed:

**"Lord Jesus. I am a sinner. Forgive me my sins. I want to know you. Come into my heart. Be my Lord and Saviour. In the Name of Jesus Christ. Amen"**



The next day Mark woke up at dawn. The sun had not yet risen. Looking out at the beauty of the stars and the universe, Mark felt the greatness of the Creator God. At the same time he knew that this great God was now his loving Father. He knew that he was a child of God, having a new relationship with Him. God was so great and awesome, but also loving and personal.

Some years later, as a young man of 18, Mark's father passed away. Shortly afterwards Mark left home, and found himself alone as a foreign student in a new

culture, without the support of family and friends. Even so, he was not alone. His loving heavenly Father was there to comfort him in his grief. God never abandons His children.

### **Religion does not bring acceptance by God**

Just like Mark's experience, today many believe that they are Christians because of their "religion". However in their heart there is an emptiness that only a loving heavenly Father can fill. Out of obligation or guilt, they try to fill this void by religious efforts such as saying certain prayers, fasting, church attendance, giving money, penance, social works. All our good efforts fall far short of the standard of a perfect and holy God. God has provided another way: a loving friendship with Him, through believing in His Son, Jesus Christ.



**“For there is no distinction; 23 since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” Romans 3:22-24**

### **Friendship with God**

God created us in His own likeness or "image". He created us to be in loving, intimate relationship with Him. That's His great purpose for each of us: to know Him.

**"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;" Genesis 1:26**

This makes us different from the animals who are without that image, and unable to communicate with God. The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, had a beautiful relationship with God. They walked with their Creator in the garden of Eden. Yet, when they disobeyed God and sinned, their spirit died within them.

**"But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ."**

**Ephesians 2:4-5**

Adam and Eve lost the privilege of being in the Presence of God and enjoying His friendship. They were ashamed and afraid of God. After they had sinned we read:

**“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, "I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid; because I was naked, and I hid myself. ””**

**Genesis 3:8-10**

### **Born again**

When we believe in Jesus, and invite Him into our heart, He gives us a new spirit (or heart). This is called being "born again" or "converted". When His spirit enters into us we are made new inside, we have a true love for God, and desire to be with Him and talk with Him. Our sin is washed away by the blood of Jesus shed on the cross. The prophet, Ezekiel, years before the coming of Christ spoke of this cleansing of sin, a new heart, and God's Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

**"I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances."**

**Ezekiel 35:25-27**

**"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come."  
2 Corinthians 5:17**

### **The flesh against the spirit**

Nicodemus, one of Israel's great religious teachers, had real trouble understanding being born again by the Holy Spirit. That's because the religious things people do to gain God's acceptance is part of the "flesh". Our human and religious efforts can become a real obstacle to simply believing in Jesus for salvation. The "flesh" and the Holy Spirit are opposed to each other. The flesh brings eternal death but the Holy Spirit brings abundant life. Only by being born of the Holy Spirit can we enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

**"Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, "You must be born anew.""**  
John 3:3-7

### **The pain of God**

On one occasion, when Mark (the author) was speaking in a small group, a lady asked why she frequently cries when she prays. The reply was given that the Holy Spirit is a Person with emotions. When we intercede for others we at times enter into His emotions. For example we may experience the compassion of God for those who are separated from Him by their sin.

While Mark was explaining that God in His compassion is seeking sinners, another lady asked if she could share a "word from the Lord". Upon being given permission, she began to sob. Through her tears the Holy Spirit was speaking powerfully to the group that Christ the Saviour earnestly desires to bring sinners into that place of peace and forgiveness with God.

Jesus is calling to you also. God loves us, and wants us to live in obedience to Him. Our sinful thoughts and actions are in fact rebellion against His purpose for our lives, and cause Him pain.

**""The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart."**

**Genesis 6:5-6**

### **The cross of Christ**

God in His great love has provided the way out of sin for us, by sending His Son, Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross His hands were extended in death as an invitation to you and I to receive forgiveness of sin. As Isaiah the prophet wrote:

**"I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was be found by those who did not seek me. I said, "Here am I, here nation that did not call on my name. I spread out my hands all a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following devices..."**



**ready to am I," to a the day to their own**  
Isaiah 65:1-2

When Mark said a simple but sincere prayer, repenting of his sins, his relationship with God was healed. The forgiveness of sins and friendship with God is available to each of us. When Jesus Christ died on the cross He took our sins upon Himself. The punishment that we should receive from a just God, Jesus received upon the cross. Sin is when we turn away from Him in our heart, and do our own thing.

### **The gift of eternal life**

God is a tender and loving Father, but He is also a just Judge. He doesn't want to condemn anyone. He sent His only Son to die for you that you might have peace, forgiveness, and eternal life. We can choose friendship with God and eternal life, or we can reject this and suffer under God's justice on that day when all will give account before Him.



**"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal Life. 17 For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. 18 He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."**

**John 3:16-18**

# THE PRAYER OF SALVATION

**Suggestion:** Before continuing, please read appendix A at the back of this book for a listing of sins and the occult. Please place a tick against any sins you may have committed. Read them out at the time of saying the prayer of salvation.

**An invitation:** God loves you and desires that you have eternal life through His only Son Jesus Christ. You are invited to pray the prayer of salvation, if you are aware of any of the following:

- that you lack an intimate and loving relationship with God the Heavenly Father,
- that you have fallen from such relationship,
- or, if there is a distance between you and God.

**In this prayer of salvation we are going to:**

- Confess specific sins (that you may have marked on the sin and occult list at the back).
- Renounce Satan, all his works, and all forms of the occult and witchcraft.
- Invoke the blood of Jesus against sin, and break curses.
- Decide to forgive and to love those who have hurt us, turning away from all resentment.
- Receive Jesus Christ in your life as your Saviour and Lord (Master), and declare your faith in Him.

If we pray sincerely, in faith and repentance, we have the assurance of receiving what we have asked for.

**Pray this prayer:**

*"Heavenly Father I recognize that I am a sinner, and that I am separated from Your love by my sins. I now confess these sins and turn away from them, and ask for Your forgiveness (take time to confess each of your sins, see sin list). I renounce Satan, I renounce all forms of witchcraft, the occult, the New Age, and any previous vows, baptisms, and experiences I had in religions or sects.*

*I turn to Christ and His light. Forgive me Lord and cleanse me from my sins by the Blood of Jesus Christ. I invoke the Blood of Jesus against my sins and the sins of my ancestors. In the Name of Jesus I break any curses upon my life.*

*I forgive all those who have hurt me. (Name the person who hurt you, in silence if you prefer). Father, all those who have hurt me I now forgive choosing to love them, and to bless them in the Name of Jesus. I honor my father and my mother, and forgive them also if they wronged me. Forgive me Lord for being angry, resentful, or bitter towards these people.*

*Jesus Christ come into my heart and be my Saviour and Lord. I believe that I have eternal life, that Jesus is God, Saviour, and Lord; that Jesus died on the cross, rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and that He will come again in glory. Thank you Lord Jesus for my salvation, for my place prepared for me in heaven Thank you that no one or anything can separate me from Your great love. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen."*





# STUDY QUESTIONS

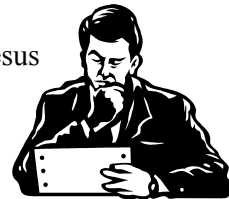
## Suggestions:

1. After the sharing of a testimony, the teaching, and salvation prayer, take a moment to briefly answer these questions. If you lack time it can be done the following week. The questions are meant to be easy, don't get complicated when answering them. The questions are very important to do, so please don't skip them.

2. The whole group should practice the memory verse. Be patient with those who are slower in memorizing. Learn the verse, phrase by phrase. Go on to the next phrase only after the group has got the prior phrase correct.

3. If you don't know the answer check the teaching notes under the same heading.

4. At home briefly write out your personal story of what Jesus has done in your life to share with the group or discipleship partner.



WRITE OUT THE MEMORY VERSE John 3:16

## TESTIMONY

1. How can we have peace with God? Circle the correct letter:
  - a. Attending church & following one's religion.
  - b. Infant baptism
  - c. Being born in a good Christian family
  - d. Doing kind things. Being a good person.
  - e. True repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

## FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

2. What is the difference between a human being and an animal? (Genesis 1:26)

3. What caused the break down in relationship between God and man? (Genesis 3:8)

## BORN AGAIN WITH A NEW HEART



4. What happens when we invite Jesus into our heart? (Ezekiel 36:25-27; 2 Cor. 5:17).

## THE FLESH AGAINST THE SPIRIT

5. Why are our human religious efforts such a problem in getting into heaven? (John 3:3-7)

## THE PAIN OF GOD

6. How does God feel about our sins? (Genesis 6:5-6)

## THE CROSS OF CHRIST

7. Who is a sinner? Why? (Romans 3:21; Isaiah 65:2)
8. What choice does God offer us? (John 3:16-18)

# THE DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

## Memory Verse:

**"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."**  
**Mark 8:34**

Bible Passage: Mark 8:34-38

## Goals:

- To be like Jesus, showing forth His love and humility.
- To be transformed by the Holy Spirit.

## **What is a disciple of Christ?**

What is a Christian? What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ? How does such a person live and act? Many folk have never had a good example of a Christian through their parents, friends or even in the church. They have little idea of how a Christian behaves. Their lives before confessing faith in Christ and afterwards may not have changed much. In this study we will begin to explore what a disciple of Jesus is. There are many characteristics of a disciple. We will look at two of them: love and humility.

## **The disciple wants to be like Jesus**

The Lord Jesus invites us to walk with Him. Jesus said  
**"I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except by Me."**  
**John 14:6**  
 So the first thing we learn here is that Jesus is the Way and that we are to walk in His way, and not our own.



The disciple wants to live like Jesus as we see Him in the New Testament. Jesus showed love, compassion, courage, authority, patience, wisdom, and power when on earth. The apostle Paul, living in prison for the sake of Christ, encourages us to be like Jesus.

**"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love..."**  
**Ephesians 4:1-2**

**"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."**

**Ephesians 5:1-2**

## **The disciple is more than a student**

The disciple is a student and much more. These days there is little understanding of what a disciple is. The student learns abilities and information. The disciple however not only learns with his mind, but also learns to be like his teacher and mentor. The disciple learns by the way his teacher lives, acts, his manner of speaking, his attitudes, and character.

The Christian learns not only as a student (e.g. learning things about the Bible), but also as a disciple of Jesus. That means getting to know Jesus. The disciple seeks to

show the beauty of the character of Christ in his life. We may also speak of Christ's character in us, as the fruits of the Holy Spirit.



Jesus calls us to follow Him and imitate Him. Mark remembers a time in his childhood when he was playing with a friend in the yard of a house. The ball rolled under a bush and it was difficult to reach. He didn't want to crawl under the bush to get it. He and a young friend began to argue about who would get the ball. An adult who was there asked them, "What would Jesus do if He was here?" At that moment Mark learnt something very important: the Christian is to show the life of Christ in whatever moment of his life. So with much enthusiasm, Mark crawled under that bush and pulled out the ball, knowing that in so doing he was pleasing the Lord.

### **The way of love**

The life that Jesus lived was a life of love. He even offered His life in love for us and for the world. The principal task of a disciple is to show the love of Jesus, whether it be the child who crawls under a bush in order to help his friend, or the husband who cooks the dinner, or the actions of love shown to our children, boss, employees, the poor or even our enemies. Only by the grace of God can we show this love, especially in difficult situations, and even more so with our enemies.



**"Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man--though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."**

**Romans 5:1,2**

The disciple is always a follower who walks in the steps of Jesus. It is He who teaches us how to love and minister to others.

**"As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."**

**Matthew 4:18,19**

### **The way of humility**

In the short story of Mark's childhood, he had to humble myself and forget his pride in getting the ball. Humility is a tremendous attribute that we see in Christ. He rejected the religious pride of the Pharisees, and chose to be with the sinners, the poor, the sick, the prostitutes, the tax collectors and demonized. He obeyed the will of His Father and humbled Himself, He took up His cross, was spat on, mocked, whipped, and died naked, nailed to a cross. Jesus calls us also to take up our cross. That means in part, daily "dying" to what we want, and choosing to follow Jesus.

**"And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it."**

**Mark 8:34-35**

### **Humility in ministry**

Without doubt the sin of pride is deep seated in most of us, hidden from our sight. One sign of pride is the desire to be recognized by others. In any ministry pride is

a great temptation. Here are some good questions to ask ourselves: Are we working in the kingdom of God for His glory or for ours? Is our ministry driven by ulterior motives (money, success, praise), or are we ministering out of obedience to God and in compassion to others?

**"Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he marked how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, 'When you are invited by anyone to a marriage feast, do not sit down in place of honor, lest a more eminent man than you be invited by him; and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'"**

**Luke 14:7-11**

### **Transformed by the Holy Spirit**

We cannot be like Jesus in our own strength. If holiness is something we do then we just end up feeling guilty all the time. The deep changes in our heart and character occur by the Holy Spirit. By spending time with Jesus, His character, goodness and beauty begin to shine in the Christian. It is His presence which brings the change that we are searching for. Communion with the Holy Spirit is central.

*Holiness is  
Jesus  
shining  
through us*

People in the New Testament who approached Jesus in faith and humility were radically changed by His Presence. As we seek to enter into the glory of God, Jesus shines through us, and people see Him in us, and that's holiness.

**"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another, for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."**

**2 Corinthians 3:17-18**

Paul says, "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom". It is a great revelation to understand that "sanctification" (becoming more holy) is what God does within us. Cleansing of sin doesn't come by our own effort, but by believing the work of Christ on the cross. It is the Holy Spirit who applies that cleansing work.

## **PRAYER**

*"Heavenly Father, I want to be a disciple of Christ. In myself I don't have the strength that I need to do it. Help me to follow Jesus, to deny myself and take up my cross. I want to be more like Jesus, and to live like Him. Forgive me for my lack of love. Give me a fervent love for my Saviour. Fill my life with Your divine love to be able to love others as well. I give You thanks by faith for the work of Your Holy Spirit in my life, to be able to follow Jesus and to be like Him. In the Name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, Amen."*

# STUDY QUESTIONS

1. MEMORY VERSE Write out Mark 8:34

THE DISCIPLE WANTS TO BE LIKE JESUS

2. In what way does the disciple want to be more like Jesus? Eph. 4:1-2, 5:1-2

3. What is the difference between a disciple and a student?



THE WAY OF LOVE

4. How did Jesus show us His love? Romans 5:8

5. How can you show this same love in your daily life?

TRANSFORMED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

6. What is holiness? Who transforms the disciple? How? II Corinthians 3:18



# THE COST OF BEING A DISCIPLE

## Memory Verse:

**“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.”**  
Deuteronomy 6:5

## Bible Passage: Luke 14:25-33

## Goals:

- To have a first love for Jesus.
- To give Jesus first priority in our lives over competing “loves”.

## **Jesus has first priority**

Jesus wants His disciples to have a fervent and radical love for Him. Our love for Jesus is not a sentimental love that doesn't last. Jesus requires His disciples to love Him more than their own lives, family, children, spouse, country, business and financial security. He desires nothing more than everything. Loving God involves obedience to Him and to His Word.

**“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”**

**John 14:15**

**“And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read?” And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have answered right, do this, and you will live”**

**Luke 10:25-28**

## **Loving our neighbor**

Jesus demonstrated in His life a profound compassion for others. We see the deep love of Jesus as He weeps at the tomb of Lazarus. Likewise in His care for His mother who was with Him while He died. He calls us to show this same love for others.

**“Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. 3 For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell on me.”**

**Romans 15:2-3**

We are to love: the poor (Deut. 15:7), the disadvantaged (Deut. 15:11), the lost sinner (Luke 14:15), our boss or employee (Eph. 6:5, Col. 3:18), our spouse (Eph. 5:33) children and parents (Eph. 6:1f) other Christians (Phil. 2:2f, Col. 3:12), our enemies (Rom. 12:20), the sick (Mark 4:14), demonized (Matthew 9:32-36), migrants, the fatherless, orphans, and widows (Jer. 22:3).

## **Counting the cost of following Christ**

If we really want to be disciples of Jesus, we need to count the cost of following Him. *“What does it really cost to follow Jesus?”* It is clear that Jesus didn't make it easy for people to follow Him. In that sense He gave us the following parable:

**“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a**

foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not; while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an embassy and asks terms of peace. So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple."

Luke 14:27-33

Now we will look more specifically at the cost of following Christ.

### **Possessions:** The rich young man

Jesus commands us to be willing to give all our possessions to God's kingdom. Perhaps we think "I am willing, but God isn't calling me to do it". If a Christian doesn't show generosity with his possessions and money for the kingdom of God, it shows he is still tied to them. This applies just as much to those who have little, as to those who have much.



"The young man said to him, "All these I have observed; what do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions."

Matthew 19:20-22

### **Honesty in business**

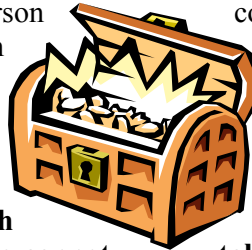
One of the characteristics of the disciple is being honest in business. Lies and corruption in business arise from a love of money which replaces our love for Jesus. Greed is a form of idolatry. Whatever we love most becomes our god.

"Where  
your  
treasure  
is, there  
your  
heart will  
be also."

"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they scoffed at him. But he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

Luke 16:13-15

The disciple of Christ is content with what he already has. Greed is never satisfied. The greedy person comes under the curse of God, and suffers "many pains". We see in our society the problems of covetousness with the misuse of credit cards, the buying of unstable investments to gain high interest, the desire to rise quickly in position by credit, the desire to rise in order to gain power and money.



"There is great gain in godliness with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world, but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs." 1 Timothy 6:8-10

## Our lives

Jesus said that we are His friends if we are willing to die for Him, just as He died for us.

**“Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.”** John 15:13-14

In practice this means dying to our own desires and plans, and doing what Christ would have us do each day. The Bible encourages us to use our time well, and not to waste it doing whatever we like. In modern society time has become more and more valuable.



The most valuable way we can spend our time is with Jesus.

**“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”**

**Ephesians 5:15-17**

## Family

Again the Lord teaches us that our love for Him should be greater even than the love we have for our family:

**“Now great multitudes accompanied him; and he turned and said to them, ‘If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brother and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.’”**

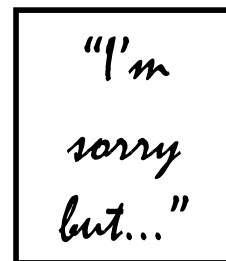
**Luke 14:25-26**

## Culture and social life

Those who really love Jesus show it. They have an enthusiasm for the things of the kingdom, whether it be attending all-night prayer vigils, sharing their faith with others, evangelistic activities, reading their Bibles, or helping the poor. But when there is no true love there are always excuses.

**“But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.’”**

**Luke 14:18-21**



## Religion

The Christian doesn't belong to any religion, he belongs to Christ, and to the universal church. Religion, with its traditions and rules is opposed to the powerful kingdom of God. We see in the Gospels the continual conflict between Jesus and religion:

**“One Sabbath when he went to dine at the house of a ruler who belonged to the Pharisee, they were watching him. “And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. And Jesus spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?” But they were silent. Then he took him and healed him; and let him go. And he said to them, “Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well, will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?” And they could not reply to this.”**

**Luke 14:18-21**



**Our community and country**

We can't be disciples of Jesus if we love our country more than Him and His Gospel. Jesus is calling for workers who will go out into His harvest, despite the cost of leaving home and friends.

**“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.”**

**Matthew 28:19-20**

## PRAYER

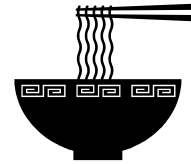
*“Heavenly Father, I want to live as a disciple of Jesus. I am willing to do the will of my Lord Jesus. I commit my life and all I have to Him. Father, only by Your grace can I truly follow Jesus, and have a true love for Him. Thank you for Your help. In the Name of Jesus, Amen”*

# STUDY QUESTIONS

1. MEMORY VERSE: Write from memory Deuteronomy 6:5.
2. Give some examples (from the teaching) of who your neighbor is. From the list choose one, and say how you could show him God's love.
3. How are we to be recognized as disciples of Jesus? (John 13:35)

## COUNTING THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

4. Briefly say what you have learnt about your (heart) relationship to:
  - a. Possessions and money(Matthew 19:20, Luke 16:13; 1 Timothy 6:6)
  - b. Your life (John 15:13-14)
  - c. Social and cultural activities (Luke 14:18)
  - d. Religion (Luke 14:1)
  - e. Country (Matthew 28:19)
  - f. Family (Luke 14:25-26)



# LOVING JESUS

Memory verse:

**“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”**

**John 14:15**

Bible passage: Luke 7:36-48

Goals: To show our love for Jesus through obedience and repentance.

## **First we receive God's love**

Our love for God begins with our allowing Him to love us. While we are unbelieving and disobedient we are simply unable to love God. We must first reach out and receive His forgiveness and love poured out on the Cross. The death of Jesus on the cross shows us the depths of God's great love towards us. While we were still in sin, with our hearts rebellious to God, doing what pleased ourselves, Christ died for us. The love that the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts comes at the high price of Jesus' own blood. Only by humbling ourselves and first accepting God's love to us in Christ, can we then in turn love Him.

**“...hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. While we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Why, one will hardly die for a righteous man - though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”**

**Romans 5:5-8**

## **Our love for Jesus is shown in deep repentance**

The deeper the repentance from sin the more we come to love Jesus. The greatest offering we could give to Jesus, is that of sincere repentance rendered in love. Surely no offering would be more pleasing to Jesus than if we were to humble ourselves before Him, confess our sin, and lovingly obey Him.

**“Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.”**

**Luke 7:47**

One of the most intimate and moving stories of the life of Jesus is that of the repentance of a city prostitute. She goes to where Jesus was dining. Her tears fall on His feet. She dries His feet with her hair. She kisses His feet and anoints them. These were acts of intimacy and love, by a woman moved by the Holy Spirit in the throes of repentance.

## **God offends the religious**

The Pharisee whose heart was hardened towards God was offended by the woman. His moral scruples were shocked that a prostitute should enter his house, and worse yet, begin to touch the feet of his guest. He despised Jesus in his heart for allowing the woman to touch Him. He failed to see Jesus as the Saviour of the world, receiving the love of a forgiven sinner. How often we Christians react in the same way. In religious pride we don't see the beautiful loving work of the Holy Spirit. We sit in judgment on the manifestations of emotions and power which so often occur in the upheaval of love, without seeing the shallowness of own love for Jesus.

**“One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house, and took his place at table. 37 And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, 38 and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.'”**  
**Luke 7:36-39**

### **Our actions reveal the heart**

Simon's lack of love for Jesus is shown by the way he fails to give Jesus the customary middle-eastern greeting for a guest. He doesn't wash Jesus' feet, nor greet Him with a kiss, nor anoint His head with oil. Simon was so aware of his own religiousness, that he didn't see his own need for repentance, and for Jesus, the Saviour. Moreover, his neglect of Jesus revealed his heart condition.

**“And Jesus answering said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' And he answered, 'What is it, Teacher?' 41 'A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?' 43 Simon answered, 'The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more.' And he said to him, 'You have judged rightly.' 44 Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.' 48 And he said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.'”**

**Luke 7:40-48**

### **Broken by love, or hardened by pride**

Many of the Pharisees and religious leaders hated Jesus. Their jealousy of Him drove them to plot against Him and kill Him. Jesus lived and taught a sincerity of life and purity of religion that when placed beside the Pharisees' religion showed it to be hypocrisy. In the parable of the tax collector and Pharisee, Jesus contrasts the attitude between the religious hypocrite and a true lover of God. The one who is repentant publicly acknowledges his sin in brokenness and humility. The other shows his hardness of heart and pride by saying how much better he is than the tax collector.

**“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others: 10 'Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I get.' 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.'”**

**Luke 18:9**

The man who loves Jesus isn't at all religious, but a corrupt tax collector. It is his sincere and public repentance of sin which shows a true love for Jesus. The Pharisee on the other hand is full of self righteousness, and thinks of himself as far better than

common sinners. His pride blinds him from seeing that he is spiritually bankrupt, and under the condemnation of God. Real repentance of sin reveals a heart of love for Jesus.

### **Religious sacrifice or true love**

We all are in danger of becoming like the religious Pharisee in mistaking love for Jesus, for being religious. We begin the Christian life with a fresh love for Him, and an eagerness to obey and serve Him. As time goes by our hearts harden, and we are no longer flexible to the quiet voice of the Holy Spirit. We become accustomed to dutifully reading the Bible, prayer, attending worship, and home group. In faithfully doing these good activities comes the temptation to think of ourselves as better than others. We are tempted to look down on our brother who has fallen into sin, or to judge the new Christian who doesn't dress like us, or know his bible to the same degree. Our church activities and ministry must always proceed from a heart of love for Jesus. Jesus commended the scribe for saying that religious sacrifice is not the same as love for God. **"To love him (God) with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."** Mark 12:33

### **To love Jesus is to obey Him**

We have seen that deep repentance is the sign of true love for Jesus. Repentance is not only a turning away from sin, such as given in the sin list. Repentance is a positive decision to obey God's will for our lives, and follow Jesus. To obey Jesus we need to know what He wants of us. We understand His will for us by reading the Word with an open ear to the Holy Spirit.

**"Jesus answered him, 'If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.'"** John 14:23-24

**"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."** John 15:9-11

**"And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us."** 1 John 3:23

### **The old testament: love to God is shown in obedience**

Throughout the old testament we see how God yearns for His people to obey Him out of love. A loving relationship with God was always central to the laws and sacrificial system of the Old Testament. God describes His relationship to His people like that of a mother and child, a husband and wife, a bride and groom. The idea of obeying God out of religious obligation, as with Simon the Pharisee, is the opposite of what God has intended for us.

**"Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,"** Deuteronomy 7:9

**"And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,"** Deuteronomy 10:12

# STUDY QUESTIONS

Write out the memory verse from John 14:15

## FIRST WE RECEIVE GOD'S LOVE

1. Why is it that we are unable by ourselves to love God? (Romans 5:5-8)

## OUR LOVE FOR JESUS IS SHOWN IN DEEP REPENTANCE

2. Is there an area in your life (e.g. pride, anger, resentment) that inhibits your love for Jesus?

## GOD OFFENDS THE RELIGIOUS

3. Why was Simon offended? What did Simon think of Jesus? (Luke 7:36-39)
4. In what ways are we the church like Simon?

## OUR ACTIONS REVEAL THE HEART

5. What did Simon neglect to do that revealed his hard heart?

## BROKEN BY LOVE, OR HARDENED BY PRIDE

6. What is the difference in prayer attitude between the tax collector and the Pharisee? (Luke 18:9)

## RELIGIOUS SACRIFICE OR TRUE LOVE

7. In what way are we Christians in danger of becoming like the religious Pharisee?
8. What is the difference between church/religious activities and love for God? (Mark 12:33)

## TO LOVE JESUS IS TO OBEY HIM

9. How does Jesus expect His followers to love Him? (John 15:9-11)

10. How can we understand God's will for us? (John 14:23-24)

## THE OLD TESTAMENT: LOVE TO GOD IS SHOWN IN OBEDIENCE

11. What was central to the laws and sacrificial system of the Old Testament? (Deut 10:12).
12. From this study what do you understand about repentance and obedience to God?

## THE WORD OF GOD AND CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Memory Verse:

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

Bible Passage: Psalm 1

Goal: To have a daily discipline of Bible reading so that we may grow as Christians.

### **Scripture is inspired by God**

The Bible is the divine book of God. It is “inspired” by God. This is the same word used to speak of God breathing life into Adam. God has breathed life into the Bible, His Word. The Bible is much more than a book of history, or poetical literature. When we read it with the help of the Holy Spirit it becomes life to us.

As the Bible is inspired by God as no other book is, it is also the foundation of our doctrine, life, faith, and daily conduct. We submit to its authority, placing it above that of our own ideas, culture, philosophy, and religious traditions.

**“All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”**  
**2 Timothy 3:14-17**

**“First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”**  
**2 Peter 1:20-21**



### **Prospering in the Word**

The Christian who daily reads and meditates on the Bible is like a tree, planted beside streams of water, with green leaves and delicious fruit. The Word of God is the delight of the Christian, and by it we prosper. The Spirit filled Christian has a thirst to know the Bible and to obey it. He reads it, meditates on it, memorizes it, writes it out, prays it through, and shares it with others.

**“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does he prospers.”**  
**Psalm 1:1-3**

### **Fed by the Word**

We are nourished by the Word of God. The Bible is as important to the Christian as his daily bread.

**“And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” 4 But he**



answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" **Matthew 4:3-4**

A lie of Satan is that life only consists of the physical and social: bread, shelter, clothes, friends. He tells us that our first responsibility is to fulfill our needs. To the contrary, Jesus clearly teaches to put God's kingdom first:

**"Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well." Matthew 6:31-33**

For this reason we ought to seek to spend time with the Lord in prayer, and meditate on His Word each day. As we seek to put Him first in our lives, we can be assured that He will look after our daily needs.

### **God's Word shines in our hearts**

We need to accept the Word of God with humility, getting rid of all pride. The Word of God acts like a light to the soul, it reveals our sins, even those that are hidden from our sight. Before beginning our Bible reading we should ask the Holy Spirit to shine the Word like a light on our hearts. In this way the Lord will lead us into repentance.

**"And we have the prophetic word made more sure. You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts."**

**2 Peter 1:19**



**"Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."**

**Ps 119:105**

### **Obedying the teaching of Jesus**

Given that the Bible is our authority we cannot avoid its personal challenges. We cannot blindly trust in our traditions or the theology of our church, we must come to accept what the Scripture teaches. If Jesus is our Lord we are to obey His words, or we will be like the religious hypocrites of Jesus' day.

The person who builds his life on the Word of God, and obeys it, has a solid foundation as a Christian. Such a person belongs to God's family, because he has truly received the gospel of Christ. Those who have received Jesus as Lord, show obedience to Him and His Word.

**"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them. I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep, and laid the foundation upon rock; and when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49 But he who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation; against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."**

**Luke 6:46-49**

**"Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him for the crowd. 20 And he was told, 'Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.' 21 But he said to them, 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.'"**

**Luke 8:19-21**



## Saved by the Word

Those that accept, obey, and continue in the Word of Christ are His disciples.

**“Jesus then said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”**  
**John 8:31-32**



The Word is like an eternal seed planted in our heart. Once planted, it begins to sprout in our heart (new birth in Jesus) and grow like a tree (to maturity in Christ). The Word doesn't change like the things of this world: friends, wealth, work, homes, or our situations. Therefore we can trust fully in the promises of the Bible, which never change. God is always faithful to His Word and promises.

**“You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; 24 for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, 25 but the word of the Lord abides for ever.” That word is the good news which was preached to you.”**  
**1 Peter 1:23-25**

## Believing the Word

A major purpose of the Word is to create faith in those that hear it. By hearing and believing the Word, we are saved, forgiven, healed, delivered of demons, baptized in the Holy Spirit, and anointed in the power of God. As we believe the Word we can receive all the heavenly blessings and gifts that are ours in Jesus.

**“So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ.”**  
**Romans 10:17**

## We are sent out with the Word of God

Jesus sends us out to share the Gospel with those that don't know Him. It is not sufficient for us to simply attend a worship service or Bible study, and listen to the Word. If we don't go out and tell others, how will others come to have faith in Jesus, receive eternal life, and know the precious promises of God?

**“For “everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” 14 But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? 15 And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!”**



**Romans 10:13-15**

# PRAYER

*“Heavenly Father, I believe in Your Word. I submit myself to the authority of the Bible. Your Word is the basis for my doctrine, life, faith and conduct. Help me to set aside time each day to read and meditate on Your Word, so that I might grow in Jesus and understand your will. I believe that in Your Word I find eternal life and the daily nourishment that I need. I ask You for Your grace to obey, and share Your Word with others. In the Name of Christ Jesus. Amen.”*

# STUDY QUESTIONS

MEMORY VERSE Write out 2 Timothy 3:16-17

THE SCRIPTURE IS INSPIRED BY GOD

2. What is the basis for our life, behavior and beliefs? 2 Tim. 3:16-17

PROSPERITY IN THE WORD

3. How can the Christian have prosperity in his life? Psalm 1:1f

FED BY THE WORD

4. What is our major source of nourishment for growing in Jesus? Matthew 4:4

GOD'S WORD SHINES IN OUR HEARTS

5. How does God use His Word to lead us into repentance?

OBEYING THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST

6. Who is like a house built on the rock? Luke 6:47



BELIEVING THE WORD

7. How do we enter into faith? Romans 10:17

## Your Commitment

The Word of God is imperative in order to live as Christ's disciple. We need to read it every day to grow in Jesus and be useful to Him. You are invited to make a commitment to read the Bible every day, and pray. The best time is usually first thing in the morning. At this time there is less noise and less interruptions (children, phone, etc.) We can commit all our daily activities to the Lord, and start the day in peace and confidence. As part of your commitment please fill in the following:

1. Time
2. Place
3. Alone or with others
4. \*System of Bible reading (please consult your leader or pastor).

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\* A system in which you can read the whole Bible in one year is recommended.

## THE WORD OF GOD AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Memory Verse:

**“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword...”**

**Hebrews 4:12**

Bible Passage: 2 Timothy 3:10 - 4:4 (Ch. 3, v.10 through to Ch.4, v.4)

Goals:

- To be sure that we honour God’s Word by our example.
- To learn to use the Word of God as a spiritual weapon to advance the Kingdom of God.

### **Honoring the Word of God**

God holds His Word in high esteem. All of Psalm 119 tells us about the value of His Word and the benefit of meditating on it. The Bible also warns us about not respecting His Word. If we do not highly esteem the Scriptures, we undermine the solid basis from which we can fight Satan and his attacks against us.

WE DISHONOUR GOD’S WORD BY:

#### **Our poor example or testimony**

If we are going to share with others of a Gospel of repentance from sin, our own personal lives must show it. We have to live what we preach. Otherwise for our poor conduct others are not going to believe us. Paul appeals to Christian slaves to show that they can be fully trusted, **“so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.”** (Titus 2:10)

Never is this more highlighted than when preachers and pastors fall into sin, destroying the witness of the church for the community.

**“...to be sensible, chaste, domestic, kind, and submissive to their husbands, that the word of God may not be discredited.”** Titus 2:5

#### **Preaching the Word with insincerity**

Here we are referring to those who with the ungodly motives of greed, success, or power preach the Word.

**“For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God’s word; but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.”** 2 Corinthians 2:17

#### **Religious tradition which denies the Word**

Perhaps the greatest struggle that faces the church today is the struggle between religious tradition, and practicing the Word of God. So many churches have the form of religion without the power of God’s Word.

**“For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die’; 11 but you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, What you would have gained from me is Corban’ (that is, given to God)--12 then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God through your tradition which you hand on. And**

many such things you do."

Mark 7:10-13

## THE WORD IS A SPIRITUAL WEAPON

### The promises of the Bible

When Mark was 16, he was praying to the Lord in order to know what career to follow. One day his pastor came up to Mark and prophesied that the Lord had called me to full time ministry. Afterwards he went to his room and asked the Lord that He would confirm it from the Scriptures. The Lord clearly gave the verse 1 Peter 5:1 which speaks of caring for the flock of Christ. This same verse became a spiritual weapon in Mark's life. Years later while running a business to support himself while training for the ministry, the temptation came to leave the calling and continue in business. However the Lord reminded Mark of the verse received years before. Mark used the verse as a spiritual weapon against the temptation.



The Christian is a soldier of Christ, involved in a serious battle.

In order to resist the attacks of Satan, the sword of the Spirit (the Word) is essential. The Bible is the basis of the faith, hope, encouragement, and courage of the soldier of Christ. The Word helps us to stay on track, and to overcome doubt, fear and discouragement. The Word reminds us of the precious promises of God that give us so much strength in the day of testing. Against sickness we declare the promise of healing, in need, the promise of the provision of God. We resist Satan using the promises of God, which is the sword of the Holy Spirit.

**"Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; 16 besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."**

Ephesians 6:13-16

One can clearly see the destructive effects of critical, angry & negative words spoken against others. Such words are often released with demonic force, causing demonic oppression and curses, doubt, inner hurts, sickness, low self-esteem, and rejection. Such destructive words are demonic spiritual weapons, the opposite to those of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand the powerful and eternal Word of God releases great blessings in our lives. Through faith in the Scriptures we are saved, sanctified, cleansed, edified, comforted, healed, delivered, receive wise counsel, and are directed in our decisions.



### The Word of God discerns the heart

God's Word is a spiritual weapon which digs deeply in our hearts to reveal to us our sins. The Lord, using Scriptures, or a personal prophetic word, reveals the sins of others so that they might repent and receive forgiveness.

**"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do."**

Hebrews 4:12-13

## SATAN WARS AGAINST GOD'S WORD

### The expansion of God's Word

In the New Testament we see Satan opposing the spread of the Word of God. It is a great spiritual victory when people understand, believe and practice the teaching of Scripture. The spreading of the Word of God results in conversions, healings, love, unity, repentance of sin, and the power of God.

**"And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith."**

**And Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke."**

**Acts 6:7-10**

### Satan fights against sound doctrine



We live in a time in which many Christians say that doctrine isn't important. However, sound doctrine is fundamental to the church. Good teaching empowered by the Holy Spirit releases blessings and opens the mind and heart towards Christ. Wrong doctrine can close the mind off to the promises of God, and can bring a person under demonic influence. For example, those who teach against the gifts of the Holy Spirit deceive people in not desiring those gifts that God wants to give us. Therefore the sick remain sick, and the spiritually thirsty remain unsatisfied. The sects who deny the unique role of Jesus as Saviour, and emphasize legalism (good works), deny their followers of eternal salvation.

Jesus rebuked the Pharisees because they stopped people from entering the kingdom of God, through their wrong doctrine.

**"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in."**

**Matthew 23:13**

The warning of Paul is being fulfilled in our times regarding teachers who follow their passions, leaving aside sound doctrine. It is a disgrace that there are teachers who support the ordination of homosexuals, undermine scripture's authority through liberalism, defend promiscuity and worldliness.



**"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:2 preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths."**

**2 Timothy 4:1-3**

## **The power of God and the Word**

A major extension of the Word occurred because Jesus sent out His disciples in the power of the Holy Spirit to preach the Kingdom, cast out demons, and heal the sick. These empowered disciples obviously caused more than a stir in Satan's kingdom through their preaching:

**Jesus "replied, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you."**

**Luke 10:18-19**

We see how Satan opposed the preaching of the Gospel by Paul to the Gentiles:

**"At my first defense no one took my part; all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! 17 But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength to proclaim the message fully, that all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth."**

**2 Timothy 4:16-17**

The desire of the church in Acts was to preach the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit with courage. Satan wanted to silence the church, that they would not preach in Jesus' name. Therefore one of the goals of our prayers should be that the anointing comes upon the church to preach the Gospel.

**"And now, Lord, look upon their threats, and grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, 30 while thou stretches out thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of thy holy servant Jesus." And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness."**

**Acts 4:29-31**

## **The power of God and the interpretation of the Bible**

Without the power of God, we can be mistaken in our ideas about the Bible. The Bible is full of stories and events of the power of God. From cover to cover we read of a powerful God who acts on behalf of His people. In spite of this there are many Christians who believe that God is far away, and that He doesn't interact directly with His church. Their religion leaves little room for God, Creator of the universe.



If someone rejects the power of God, it's as if they put on sun glasses when they read the Bible and they can't see properly. Jesus told the Sadducees they were mistaken in their interpretation of the Bible. The Sadducees, although well versed in the Scriptures, were unable to understand them because they didn't believe in the power of God to raise the dead.

**"The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection; and they asked him a question, 24 saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies, having no children, his brother must marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.' 25 Now there were seven brothers among us; the first married, and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother. 26 So too the second and third, down to the seventh. 27 After them all, the woman died. 28 In the resurrection, therefore, to which of the seven will she be wife? For they all had her." But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God."**

**Matthew 22:23-29**

## PRAYER

*“Heavenly Father, apply Your Word to my heart. Reveal all pride and wrong motives that dwell there. Change me according to Your Word. I desire to take Your Word to others, so that they might know Jesus and leave their sin. Thank you, Heavenly Father, by faith for the power and authority to preach Your Word. In the Name of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.”*

## STUDY QUESTIONS

MEMORY VERSE. Write out Hebrews 4:12

WE DISHONOUR GOD'S WORD BY:

1. What area(s) of your life are giving a poor example for your Christian witness? (Titus 2:5,10)
2. What is one of the great struggles the church faces today (see notes)? Why? (Mark 7:10-13)

THE WORD IS A SPIRITUAL WEAPON

3. When Satan attacks with doubt, fear, or discouragement, how can we use the Bible to defend ourselves? (Ephesians 6:13-16)
4. How does Satan use words to try to damage or destroy us?

THE WORD OF GOD DISCERNS THE HEART

5. Write briefly an experience of when God used the Scriptures to show you your heart condition – e.g. jealousy, resentment, greed, etc. (Hebrews 4:12-13)

THE EXPANSION OF GOD'S WORD

6. What happens in Acts 6 with the spread of God's Word accompanied by miracles? (Acts 6:7-10)

SATAN FIGHTS AGAINST SOUND DOCTRINE

7. How does good or bad doctrine affect those who believe it?
8. How did the Pharisees stop people from entering the Kingdom of heaven?

THE POWER OF GOD AND THE WORD

9. If we are to follow the example of Jesus and the apostles, how are we to preach God's Word?

THE POWER OF GOD AND THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE:

10. Although the Sadducees had studied the bible, what stopped them from understanding it? (Matthew 22:23-29)
11. Are there wrong doctrines that you need to renounce? (Such as teachings that deny the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit, deny the inspiration and divine authority of the Scriptures, or deny the divinity of Christ.) If so, take this opportunity to renounce these false teachings and to turn in faith to Christ anew.



# BAPTISM IN WATER

## Memory Verse:

**"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38**

Bible Passage: Romans 6:1-11

## Goals:

- To be baptized in water.
- To be able to explain to others the importance and meaning of water baptism.

## **Why be baptized?**

Why is it necessary to be baptized in water? Christians all over the world tell of how they decided to be baptized in obedience to the command of Jesus. Jesus said:

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

**Matthew 28:19-20**

Likewise the apostles encouraged and commanded , the believers to be baptized.

**"And he (Peter) commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days."**

**Acts 10:48**

**"And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name."**

**Acts 22:16**

## **How many times can one be baptized?**

In the New Testament we see that people were baptized after believing in Jesus. For example when the gaoler saw that the Lord had opened the prison doors for Paul and Silas, he says:

**"Men, what must I do to be saved?" 31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family."**

**Acts 16:30-33**

Baptism is a once off event for those who come to believe in Jesus. Baptism is not a ceremony for being received as a member into a church. Those who have changed churches do not need to be rebaptised. Nor is baptism for Christians who have backslidden or fallen into serious sin and then return in repentance to the Lord. There are no New Testament examples of people having received believer's baptism, who were later rebaptised. Water baptism is simply for those who have come to believe in Jesus.

It is appropriate for those who had once received infant baptism, or have been baptized into a sect, to later receive a "believer's baptism" via immersion. The reason being that infant or sect baptism does not fulfill the requirement of baptism as a personal response of one who believes the Gospel.

## WHAT IS BAPTISM?

### **Baptism as immersion**

Simply put baptism means to be immersed in water. In ancient classical literature the Greek word *bapto* (βαπτο) has the meaning of dipping a piece of cloth into a dye, of a man drowning, or of a ship sinking.<sup>1</sup> Essential to the word was the idea of being submerged, going under, and soaked.

“... baptizo, both in Jewish and Christian contexts, normally meant “immerse”, and even when it became a technical term for baptism, the thought of immersion remains.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Baptism as death in Christ**

Every year tens of thousands of new Christians choose to be immersed in water whether it be in a baptismal, a hole in the ground, a pool, a river, or the sea. Why do they do it? Because in baptism they are acting out their own death and resurrection in Jesus Christ. As we go into the water, we are reminded of the tomb of Christ. It is necessary that we die to our old sinful habits and selfishness, that the old way be “crucified with Christ.” In baptism we declare our death in Christ.

**“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”**

**Romans 6:3-4**

### **Baptism as life in Christ**

As Jesus was resurrected with the rolling away of the stone, so we also share in His resurrection. As we come out of the waters, we are reminded that we are made alive in Christ. The old has passed away, and now we have a new love and desire to follow and serve Jesus. The risen Jesus in power and glory lives within us.

**“A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”**

**Ezekiel 36:26**

**“For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.”**

**Romans 6:5-6**

### **When should one be baptized?**

The practice of the New Testament was normally to baptize people immediately after they had believed on Christ. So there is no scriptural impediment to a “quick” baptism. Whether the baptism is immediate or comes after a waiting period, true repentance is required for baptism. The timing of the baptism depends on the readiness of the candidate and the discretion of the pastor/leader. It may be appropriate to wait for the person to receive a basic instruction in the faith, and allow time to show that his repentance is genuine. John the Baptist was emphatic that the person must truly repent in order to be baptized.

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<sup>1</sup> The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. 1 Pg. 144 Ed. Colin Brown.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

“And the multitudes asked him, “What then shall we do?” 11 And he answered them, “He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.” 12 Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” 13 And he said to them, “Collect no more than is appointed you.” 14 Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Rob no one by violence or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.” Luke 3:10-14

In the example of Simon the sorcerer, although he was baptized he lacked genuine repentance. The greed and desire for power that motivated his sorcery had not been dealt with.

“Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, “Give me also this power, that any one on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” 20 But Peter said to him, “Your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!” Acts 8:13,18-20

### **Belief and repentance required**

Essential to receiving baptism is believing in Jesus Christ as Saviour, and truly repenting from sin. The fruit of faith is repentance. Without a faith evidenced by repentance, baptism has little or no significance. Sins should be specifically confessed (stating what our sins are) and renounced (the decision to turn away from them). For example, in the baptism of John the people confessed their sins while in the water.

*Repent and be baptized...*

“John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.” Mark 1:4-5

“And Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:38

*Baptism is for those who believe...*

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

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

# STUDY QUESTIONS

MEMORY VERSE. Write out Acts 2:38

## WHY BE BAPTISED?

1. What is the primary reason for being baptized? Matthew 28:19-20

## HOW MANY TIMES CAN ONE BE BAPTISED?

2. In the New Testament people were baptized after \_\_\_\_\_ on the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>3</sup>
3. Baptism is (tick one box):
  - ☐ a form of church membership
  - ☐ for restoring back sliders
  - ☐ a once off event for those who come to believe in Jesus
  - ☐ for naming children
4. Why is it appropriate to water baptize those who previously received infant baptism or baptism via a sect?

## BAPTISM AS IMMERSION

5. What does the word baptism mean?

## BAPTISM AS DEATH IN CHRIST

6. In what way does baptism speak of our death?

## BAPTISM AS LIFE IN CHRIST

7. What are we declaring as we come out of the waters of baptism?

## WHEN SHOULD ONE BE BAPTISED?

8. What was the practice of the apostles as to when to baptize?
9. What did John the Baptist require for water baptism (Luke 3:10-14)?

## BELIEF AND REPENTANCE REQUIRED

10. The fruit of faith is \_\_\_\_\_.<sup>4</sup>
11. Why do you think that baptism in water is important?
12. Have you been obedient to Jesus' command to be baptized? If you would like to take this important step please speak to your leader or pastor.

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<sup>3</sup> believing

<sup>4</sup> repentance

## OUR INHERITANCE IN JESUS

### Memory Verse:

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

Bible Passage: Ephesians 1:3-23

### Goals:

- To know some of the benefits and blessings that we have in Christ.
- To believe that they are ours and to use them to overcome attacks of doubt.
- To grow in Christ through faith in these promises.

FOR THE GROUP LEADER: This study is different from the others. The leader reads the titles below, giving a brief explanation. Different members of the group can look up the verses of each point. The leader could hand out slips of paper with a Bible reference on each one. That way the members of the group can find their verse beforehand, without making the group wait for them.

### **In Christ we are Made sons of God**

**“He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,”**  
**“for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.”**  
**Ephesians 1:5**  
**Galatians 3:26**

### **In Christ there is Forgiveness**

When we put our faith in Christ as Saviour, God sees the Blood of Jesus, which has washed our sins away. This blood is our protection from the judgement of God against sin.

For example in the Passover the Israelites placed the blood of a lamb on the doorposts of their houses. When the Lord was passing by and saw the blood, the Israelites were saved from the plague of death.

We could say that God sees the Blood of Jesus on the doorposts of our hearts. He turns away from His wrath against our sins and we are saved from eternal death.

**“For the LORD will pass through to slay the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to slay you.”**  
**Exodus 12:23**

If anyone is in Christ, the Blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin and we are forgiven. We have peace with God. We are redeemed (freed) from the hand of Satan.

**“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us.”**  
**Ephesians 1:7-8**

**“...as God in Christ forgave you.”**

**Ephesians 4:32**

## In Christ we are Justified before God

If someone has committed a crime and he comes before the judge, the judge has the power to justify him or condemn and punish him. In the same way, God is Judge of all humanity and has the authority and power to condemn sinners to hell, or to justify them. Only by faith in Christ can we be justified before God.

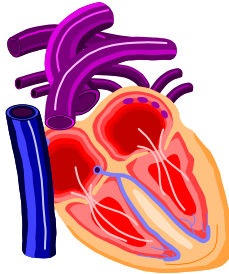
No religious or social works can justify the sinner before a Holy God. The only work that will atone for our sins is the perfect work of Jesus upon the cross. Only in Christ are we accepted before the Father.

**“... in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified.”** Galatians 2:16

**“... they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus..”** Romans 3:24

## In Christ we are Made Alive

Without Jesus we are spiritually dead. One can be physically, socially, and intellectually active, but unless we believe in Jesus, the joy and abundant life of God is absent. But when we believe in Jesus, God's Spirit enters us and we are made new, our spirit comes alive, resurrected by the power of Jesus who dwells within us.



It is like a heart transplant. The old heart was more dead than alive, the new one makes all the difference! The character of Jesus wells up within us and The abundant and eternal life overflows.

**“Jesus answered him, “Truly, one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”**

The old heart was more dead than alive, the new one makes all the difference! The character of Jesus wells up within us and The abundant and eternal life overflows.

**truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”**

**John 3:3-5**

**“Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.”** 2 Corinthians 5:17

## In Christ we have Eternal Life

The sinner receives the judgement of God – eternal death. But the free gift of God for those who believe in Jesus is eternal life. That means that we shall live forever in the glorious Presence of God in heaven.

**“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** Romans 6:23

**“Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with its eternal glory.”** 2 Timothy 2:10

## In Christ we can Truly Worship God

We have the great privilege and joy in Christ of praising Him and giving Him thanks through the Holy Spirit. Our inheritance for all those who are in Jesus is to know

that abundant thanksgiving and praise that wells up in our hearts because of the goodness of the Lord.

**“In him, according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will, we who first hoped in Christ have been destined and appointed to live for the praise of his glory.”**  
Ephesians 1:11-12

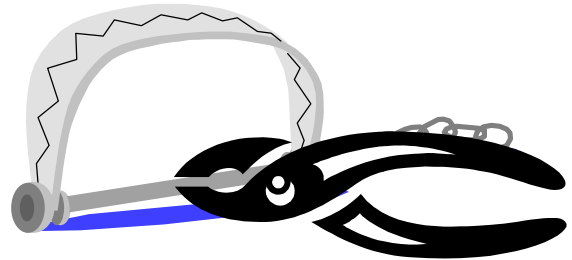
### **In Christ we find True Religion**

The religious satisfaction that people look for in rituals, traditions, or idols is a deceptive shadow of the Truth. The reality of true religion is found in the Person of Jesus Christ. He invites us to share an intimate and wonderful friendship with Him.

**“Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.”**  
Colossians 2:16-17

### **In Christ we are Set Free**

By faith in Jesus the addiction to sin is broken. In Christ there is freedom from sin. We no longer need to be a slave to sin. Christ has provided an escape from habitual sins such as anger, violence, masturbation, drinking, addiction to television watching, lying, and perverse thoughts. The wonderful news is that Jesus on the cross has broken the power that sin had over us.



**“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death.”**

Romans 8:2

### **In Christ we have the Love of God**

God created us to be loved by Him. Without Christ there will always be an emptiness and a void in our lives. People look for love and affection in many ways, whether it be in sex (including homosexual relationships), the acceptance of friends, recognition at work, affection from parents or children. However only in Jesus can we find the Father’s great love. We were made to love God and be loved by Him. Nothing else will substitute.

**“For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**  
Romans 8:38-39

**“... and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.”**  
1 Timothy 1:14

### **In Christ there is Hope of Resurrection**

**“For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord.”**  
1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

### In Christ we have Strength and Help



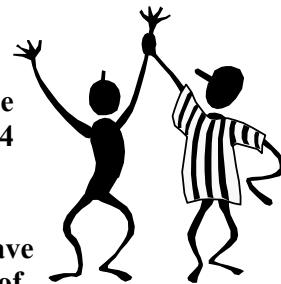
At times, people hesitate to commit their lives to Jesus and be baptized in water, because they are afraid of failing God. Yet we have the wonderful promise that Christ will be our strength and help to live the Christian life. He imparts to us “grace” to live in victory over sin. He is our holiness. It doesn’t depend on us alone.

**“You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,”** 2 Timothy 2:1

**“But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has commissioned us; he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.”** 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 (See also 1 Corinthians 10:13).

### In Christ we are Victorious

**“But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.”** 2 Corinthians 2:14



### In Christ we Receive the Knowledge of God

**“For I want you to know how greatly I strive for you, ... to have all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”** Colossians 2:1-3

### In Christ our Life and Personality are Complete

**“For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.”** Colossians 2:9-10

**“Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ.”** Colossians 1:28

### In Christ we have a Great Purpose to Live for

**“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”** Ephesians 2:10



## STUDY QUESTIONS

MEMORY VERSE: Write out Ephesians 1:7

**GROUP ACTIVITY:**

In the group take time to share some of the blessings you have personally experienced from knowing Jesus. (Please use the teaching given – e.g. your experience of being forgiven, having peace with God, being set free, experiencing God's love, etc.)

This will be an opportunity to give thanks to God for the blessings you have received from Him.

**PRAYER:**

*Write out your own prayer of thanksgiving to God, appropriating the blessings of being in Christ...*

## THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

### Memory Verse:

**“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”**

**Luke 11:13**

Bible Passage: Acts 2:1-21

Goal: To understand and receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

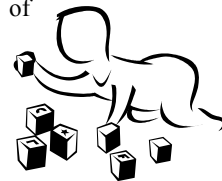
Note: The leader or a group member may like to share their own experience of how they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, instead of the using the testimony below. People’s experiences of the baptism in the Spirit vary, it may be a powerful and immediate experience, or gradual as with the testimony here.

### **An experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit**

When Mark was 16 he attended a conference on the Holy Spirit. There were about 500 people there and he sat in the gallery. The speaker shared a message and afterwards invited those who wanted to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit to stand up. Mark stood up with some others and the speaker prayed. He didn’t feel anything.

At that time Mark had received teaching about the prayer of faith: that our prayers are based on faith in God’s Word, and not on what we see or feel. He went home and entered his room and prayed: “Lord, I stood up in faith to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I now thank You for it by faith. Father, I ask that You might give me the gift of tongues as a sign of this baptism. I know that You are generous and that You desire to give good gifts to Your children. Lord I now believe that You impart this gift to me as I step out in faith and speak. In the Name of Jesus, Amen.”

As he began to speak a few words, Satan came to discourage him in his thoughts, saying, “Mark, you are just speaking like a baby.” He answered him, “Yes, I am speaking like a baby, but I am speaking by faith, and my faith pleases God (Heb. 11.6). Be gone!”



Each day Mark practiced the gift of tongues by faith for several months. At first he spoke very few words but little by little the words increased until they became a language. At the end of those months he went to his pastor and asked him about this language. He assured him that he was speaking in the language of the Holy Spirit, which was a great encouragement.

### **Receiving the power of God to live the Christian life**

The Lord not only gave Mark the gift of tongues, but also radically changed his life. Before he lacked courage to share his faith in Christ with others. He often suffered depression, like a black cloud over his life. He was violent, fighting with his five brothers and sisters at home, and with the boys at school. He felt a hypocrite. Even his mother said that she prayed more for him than all the rest! Mark was disciplined as much at school as at home for his bad behavior. The discipline gave him a deep desire to resolve his problems!

When Mark asked the Lord to baptize him with His Spirit, He wanted to receive the power of God to change him. By his own effort he could not do it. He felt frustrated and guilty. But thanks be to God that when we call to Him, He always hears us and responds. The depression and violence went in the Name of Jesus. The Lord gave Mark the courage to share the Gospel with others. He was chosen as president of the students. He formed prayer groups at school. His school mates couldn’t believe the change in his life. Instead of fighting he shared the Bible with them. He was hungry for the Word of God, and thirsty for prayer.

**"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."**

**Matthew 3:11-12**

In the baptism in the Holy Spirit we can experience the divine fire which burns and cleanses the spiritual rubbish out of our lives.

### **Rivers of living water**

Almost 15 years after this baptism, Mark asked for prayer as he felt spiritually dry. When someone laid hands on him, he fell under the power of God, and felt a wonderful peace. Mark had believed in Christ as Saviour and Lord, had studied at a Christian university and seminary. He had believed with his will and intellect, but on that day he experienced the waters of the well of salvation for the first time. While he was lying down on the floor, it seemed that he was under water, like in a pool, with people talking above. He couldn't hear clearly what they were saying. Then he understood better why this promise is called the 'baptism' of the Holy Spirit.

**"On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, 'If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.''"** Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

**John 7:37-39**



### **What is the baptism in the Holy Spirit?**

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is part of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. We use the word anointing to describe all the manifestations of power of the Holy Spirit, such as deliverance, miracles, and healings. Even unbelievers can experience manifestations of the anointing. However the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a distinct promise for those who believe in Jesus. The baptism in the Holy Spirit consists of :

RECEIVING SPIRITUAL GIFTS and especially the gift of tongues;

EXPERIENCING the Presence of the Holy Spirit;

RECEIVING COURAGE AND POWER to share the Gospel with others.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a blessing promised to us by God. It is not a requisite for our salvation. Salvation only comes through faith in Christ and His work on the cross. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a further blessing and promise for all those who believe in Jesus. Being baptized in the Spirit is not an excuse to think one is better than other Christians who have not had the same experience. On receiving Jesus as Saviour and Lord, the Holy Spirit enters into our hearts. In the baptism, the Holy Spirit comes upon us in power and flows from within like a river.



### **Jesus is the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit**

The fullness of the Spirit dwells in Christ, therefore it is He who baptizes us:

**"I myself did not know him; but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."**

**John 1:33-34**

### **Holy Spirit baptism is a distinct promise for believers**

The promises of God don't depend on ourselves, but on the generosity of God. This promise of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is for all who believe in Jesus.

**"And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, 'you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'"**

Acts 1:4-5

**"but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; yea, and on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.'"**

Acts 2:16-18



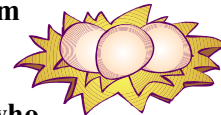
### **Perseverance in faith and the generosity of God**

One day Mark preached in a service about the baptism in the Spirit. Afterwards Pam, an older Christian, came forward and explained that in her youth she tried to speak in tongues but without success. She became discouraged and a thought of doubt entered her mind: "God doesn't want to give me this gift." Mark explained to her that God is generous and that He desires to give us His gifts. We must ask in faith and continue to give thanks until we receive them. The lady then understood that she had to ask in faith and rebuke all doubt.

Pam confessed her sin of doubt and asked God for the gift of tongues. In humility she began to speak like a baby. Satan through a small thought of doubt had robbed her of this precious gift for 50 years. Jesus teaches us about the generosity of the Father to His children:



**"What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 'If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'"**



Luke 11:11-13

### **Seek the Lord without discouragement**

At times people receive a great anointing and speak eloquently in tongues. However others like Mark, receive only a few words at first and by faith continue to speak. The Lord then expands our capacity, even adding other languages. We must persevere in faith and rebuke all doubts. In the same Bible passage Jesus encourages us to persevere in faith to receive the Holy Spirit.

**"And he said to them, 'Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything'? I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs. And I**



tell you, Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”  
 Luke 11:5-9

### **God will judge us according to the fruit of the Spirit**

God will not judge us according to the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Rather He will judge us according to the fruit demonstrated. The fruit of the Spirit is:

**“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”**  
 Galatians 5:22-24

The gifts and the power of God are given according to the generosity of God and not because of our own righteousness. We have no basis for pride, or thinking that we are better than others because we speak in tongues or that we have spiritual power. It is possible to have power without love, and to be condemned on the last day.

**“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits. "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers.'”**  
 Matthew 7:19-23



To use the power and gifts of the Spirit without love and wisdom does not produce fruit, and is useless.

**“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”**  
 1 Corinthians 13:1-2

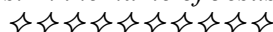
## HOW TO RECEIVE THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

There are various ways to receive the gift of tongues. Of course it is our desire to receive this blessing, and our faith in the promise of the Word that are important, not the method of receiving. It is helpful to spend time fasting and praying to prepare yourself for receiving this baptism. This method is adapted from the evangelist Bill Subritzky, and I have found it very helpful especially with people who have difficulty receiving.

1. RECEIVE CHRIST as your Saviour and Lord.
2. REPENT FROM SINS of resentment, witchcraft and the occult.
3. RENOUNCE DOUBTS about the baptism and gifts of the Spirit.
4. RECEIVE FREEDOM from demons if necessary.
5. PRACTICE talking like an infant.
  - We have to become like children to receive the blessings of the kingdom
  - Normally one does not lose control of the mouth. We must open our mouths and begin to speak.
  - We can commence in the natural repeating monosyllables such as ba, ba, ba...
6. ASK FOR THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT with the sign of tongues by faith. (See the prayer below).
7. SPEAK once more like a baby allowing the Holy Spirit to give you the gift of tongues.
8. SHARE with others your testimony and the Gospel.
9. CONTINUE daily to pray in tongues by faith.

## PRAYER TO RECEIVE THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

*“Heavenly Father I ask You to forgive me for my sins (name them....), and I renounce the sins of my ancestors. With Your help I forgive all those who have hurt me, and I ask that You bless them. Cleanse me by the blood of Jesus. Fill me with the power of Your Holy Spirit so that I might live a holy and pleasing life, share the Gospel with others and fulfill Your will in my life. Thank you, Father, that You are generous and You have promised in Your Word the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Now I receive it by faith. I thank You by faith for the gift of tongues. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.”*



The members of the group may pray for each other at this point. Sometimes people fall down or have other power manifestations. Make sure there is plenty of space before praying.

It is not necessary to become emotional to receive the Holy Spirit, nor to pray for others. Ask in faith and wait in faith. If there are manifestations of power the leader should maintain an attitude of calm and explain what is happening. That way the group can become accustomed to the power of the Spirit with peace, joy and understanding.

Very rarely a person may begin to speak in a demonic tongue which is very different from the gift of the Holy Spirit. This happens from lack of deliverance and repentance. It is better that the person stops trying to speak in tongues and receives ministry of deliverance from mature Christians.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

MEMORY VERSE. Write out Luke 11:13

**GROUP EXERCISE:**

1. Someone in the group can share their experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

RECEIVE THE POWER OF GOD TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

2. How does the baptism in the Holy Spirit help us in our Christian life? (Matt. 3:11-12)

RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

3. What promise does Jesus give us in John 7:37-38?

WHAT IS THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

4. What is the baptism in the Spirit? (List 3 things)
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
5. In what way is this baptism in the Holy Spirit different from our salvation?

PERSEVERANCE IN FAITH AND THE GENEROSITY OF GOD

6. What reasons do some people give for not having received the baptism in the Holy Spirit? (Luke 11:10-13)

SEEK THE LORD WITHOUT DISCOURAGEMENT

7. What should we do if we only receive one or two words in tongues initially? (Luke 11:5-9)

GOD WILL JUDGE US ACCORDING TO THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

8. What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit and why are they so important? (Gal 5:22-24; 1 Cor 13)
9. What warning does God give us about using His power and gifts without love? (Matt. 7:19-23)

**GROUP EXERCISE:**

Follow the instructions as to how to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This activity should be lead by the group leader.

# GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR FINANCES

## Memory Verse:

"Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house..."

**Malachi 3:10**

Bible Passage: Malachi 3:8-12

## Goals:

- That our giving be an act of worship.
- That our giving be an act of faith.
- That we be cheerful and obedient in our tithes and offerings.

## **Tithes and offerings**

From the Scriptures we see three types of giving which is of particular relevance to us today:

### **1. The tithe**

We are to tithe everything which is a source of income for us. This includes our salary or wage, pension, superannuation, commissions, government benefits, investment dividends, interest, etc.

*"As soon as the command was spread abroad, the people of Israel gave in abundance the first fruits of grain, wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything."*

**2 Chronicles 31:5**

"A simple, practical, and scriptural way to put God first with your money is by consistently setting aside for God the first tenth of your income. Tithing is the regular practice of setting apart the first tenth of your total income for God. When you have done that, you have laid a foundation for honoring God with your money."<sup>5</sup>

Under the law of Moses the tithe simply belonged to God.

*"All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD's; it is holy to the LORD. If a man wishes to redeem any of his tithe, he shall add a fifth to it."*

**Leviticus 27:30-31**

### **2. Votive offerings or pledges**

Pledges are an important form of giving, because they form a commitment to a ministry. Examples include: pledging a regular amount to support a missionary, an orphanage, the printing of Bibles, or supporting a church building fund. With regards to missions, pledges make it possible for missionaries to have a constant income while overseas.

### **3. Freewill offerings**

These are what we freely and joyfully give, as moved by the Holy Spirit at a particular time.

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<sup>5</sup> D. Prince, pg.217, "Derek Prince on experimenting the power of God."



*"... and thither you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the offering that you present, your votive offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herd and of your flock;"*  
**Deuteronomy 12:6**

### **Tithing releases God's blessing**

The Lord specifically says that our tithing and offerings determine whether we are blessed or cursed. If we withhold our tithe and become tight-fisted with our offerings we are actually robbing God of what belongs to Him and open ourselves to divine curse.

However God promises us that if we bring Him the full amount of our tithe that He will release tremendous blessing upon our lives. **He promises to open the windows of heaven and pour down an overflowing blessing.** The truth is that we cannot afford not to be obedient in our tithes and offerings.

*"Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How are we robbing thee?' In your tithes and offerings. 9 You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me; the whole nation of you. 10 Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house; and thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. 11 I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil; and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. 12 Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts."*

### **Malachi 3:8-12**

"Many years ago a lad of 16 was obliged to leave home because his father was too poor to support him any longer. So he trudged away with all worldly possessions in a bundle dangling from his hand, resolving as he journeyed to set up in business as a soapmaker in New York.

When the country boy arrived in the big city, he found it hard to get work. Remembering the last words of his mother and also the godly advice given him by the captain of a canal boat, the youth dedicated his life to God, determining to return to his Maker an honest tithe of every dollar he earned.

So, when his first dollar came in, the young man sacredly dedicated ten cents of it to the Lord. This he continued to do. And the dollars rolled in! Soon this young man became partner in a soap business; and when his partner died a few years later, he became sole owner of the concern.

The prosperous businessman now instructed his bookkeeper to open an account with the Lord and to credit to it one tenth of all his income. The business grew miraculously. The honest proprietor now dedicated two-tenths of his earnings; and then three-tenths, four-tenths; and finally, five-tenths. It seemed as if his sales increased in exact proportion to his generosity, so that soon his brand of soap became a household word throughout the world.

The late William Colgate was this man whom God so singly prospered in return for his faithfulness to his Maker."<sup>6</sup>

Henry Ford the founder of the Ford car company said: most people think of success "in terms of getting; success, however, begins in terms of giving."

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<sup>6</sup> Pulpit Helps Vol 1 - CD

## God's shovel

Jacob when he set out from home vowed to honour the Lord with a tenth of his income. He put the Lord first with his tithes even though he had nothing but a staff.

*"Then Jacob made a vow, saying, 'If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, 21 so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, 22 and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou givest me I will give the tenth to thee.'"*  
**Genesis 28:20-22**

The temptation when we are financially struggling can be to cut back on our giving. We think "I can't afford it". In cutting back we rob ourselves of God's wonderful provision in our lives. Jacob honored God with his tithe in his poverty, and 20 years later God had amazingly prospered him. He had left with one staff in his hand, and returned to his father's house with an abundance.

*"I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness which thou hast shown to thy servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and now I have become two companies."*  
**Genesis 32:10**

"A farmer was known for his generous giving, but his friends could not understand how he could give so much away and yet remain so prosperous. One day a spokesman for his friends said, "We can't understand you. You give far more than the rest of us and yet you always seem to have more to give." "Oh, that is easy to explain," the farmer said. "I keep shoveling into God's bin and God keeps shoveling into mine, but God has the bigger shovel!"<sup>7</sup>

## Does tithing apply to the Christian?

The scribes and Pharisees had totally focused on fulfilling their rules and traditions while neglecting the underlying principles of the Law – justice, mercy and faith. Even so Jesus affirmed the discipline of tithing as of continuing importance to us. Jesus is emphatic that we are not to neglect tithing.

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others."*  
**Matthew 23:23**

Some argue that tithing was part of the Old Testament Law and therefore does not apply to Christians today. Actually tithing is 400 years older than the Law. When Abraham had won a great battle and gained much war booty he gave a tithe to the High Priest, Melchizedek. In the New Testament, Abraham is regarded as a father and pattern of all who believe.

*"He received circumcision as a sign or seal of the righteousness which he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them,"*

**Romans 4:11**

So we see that Abraham tithed as an expression of faith and not because of obligation to the Law. Likewise as Christians we tithe not out of **obligation but as an act of faith**. We believe that as we are obedient to God in our finances that He will prosper and provide for us.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid

When we tithe it is an act of worship to Jesus our High Priest. It is Jesus who receives our tithes. Jesus is of the High Priestly order of Melchizedek. In a sense Abraham offered his tithes to Jesus.

*"Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."*

**Hebrews 6:20**

### **How the tithe is to be used**

The Israelites were not allowed to keep their tithes at home for their personal needs. The Lord instructed that the tithes were to be brought to the temple and offered to the Lord. In this way the Levite who was set apart for the Lord's service, could be provided for. In the same way we are to bring our tithes to church and offer them to the Lord as part of our public worship. Through our tithes the church's ministries can be financially sustained. The tithe is not to be used at one's personal discretion.

*"You may not eat within your towns the tithe of your grain or of your wine or of your oil, or the firstlings of your herd or of your flock, or any of your votive offerings which you vow, or your freewill offerings, or the offering that you present; 18 but you shall eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God will choose, you and your son and your daughter, your manservant and your maidservant, and the Levite who is within your towns; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in all that you undertake. Take heed that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land."*

**Deuteronomy 12:17-19**

The primary use of the tithe is to financially support those who have been set apart to minister the Word of God, such as pastors and evangelists.

*"To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, their service in the tent of meeting."*

**Numbers 18:21**

The tithe is also to be used by the church to enable different types of ministries to occur. Particularly to help those in need, such as refugees, orphans, and widows who are without family support.

*"When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce in the third year, which is the year of tithing, giving it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within your towns and be filled..."*

**Deuteronomy 26:12**

## **Prayer**

*"Heavenly Father I ask that you forgive and cleanse me if I have been disobedient with my tithes and offerings, and have robbed you in this way. I now commit myself, in obedience to your Word, to bring the full tithe of all my income to You. I do so as an act of worship to Jesus, my High Priest and Lord.*

*Father I trust that as I am obedient in my finances that You will prosper and provide for my every need. I thank you now by faith for your blessing and provision in every area of my life in the Name of Jesus, Amen."*

## STUDY QUESTIONS

Write out the memory verse, Malachi 3:10

### **Tithes and offerings**

1. Explain what each of the following are:  
The tithe (2 Chronicles 31:5)

Votive offerings or pledges

Freewill offerings (Deuteronomy 12:6)

### **Tithing releases God's blessing**

2. How can we rob God (Malachi 3:8-12)?

### **God's shovel**

3. What was the key to Jacob's prosperity (Genesis 28:20-22)?

### **Does tithing apply to the Christian?**

4. What did Jesus say about tithing? (Matthew 23:23)
5. How can our tithes and offerings be an act of faith?
6. How is tithing an act of worship (Hebrews 6:20)?

### **How the tithe is to be used**

7. Where are we to bring our tithes (Deuteronomy 12:17-19)?
8. What is the primary use of the tithe (Numbers 18:21)?

### **Group Activity**

The group can discuss whether it would like to take up an offering each week to support a mission or other Christian cause. It would be appropriate for the group leader to speak with his/her pastor about this.

## APPENDIX A

# SIN AND OCCULT LISTING

## Recognizing our Sin is Half the Battle

Often people don't recognize their sins because no one ever told them it was sin. This list of sins and occult is meant to be a blessing and help to people. As we identify our sins we can then confess them to God and receive forgiveness and peace. A real barrier in recognizing sin is the way that we justify what we do.

For example, some justify their anger by blaming the other person – "It's their fault that I'm angry because they.....". Others justify pornography as "a personal diversion which doesn't harm anyone". Others justify violence in marriage "because it helps" in some way. White lies are said to be "necessary and useful".

There is no end to the reasons we give to justify our sins. Such arguments become demonic fortresses of the mind that must be identified as unbiblical deceptions. True repentance begins when we stop justifying our sin, and call it what it is: sin. Then the cleansing work of the Blood of Jesus can begin in us.

**"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God."**  
**1 Corinthians 6:9-10**

Sin is sin, and we are guilty before God for our rebellion. Sin brings condemnation, curses, demons, eternal death, guilt and sickness. God requires humility in repentance so that there might be forgiveness and peace with Him. While we defend our sins, we have not truly repented, and therefore are not forgiven by God.

**"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."**

**1 John 1:8-9**

*Through repentance you can receive peace and forgiveness from God.*

## PLEASE MARK OFF YOUR SINS IN THIS LIST

### The greatest sin

*Not believing in Jesus as the only Saviour*

### Sins of the tongue:

Lies  
 Anger, shouting  
 Making fun of others in their need  
 Coarse language, swearing  
 Slander  
 Criticism  
 Judging others

Gossip

Self curses (e.g. "I am worthless, I will never succeed.")

Cursing others (e.g. "He will always be sick.")

Grumbling/criticism against the leadership of the church.

Unfulfilled promises and good intentions.

Using God's Name in vain

Blasphemy

**Sins in the family:**

Neglect of children  
Lack of discipline and order in the family.  
Not teaching the Bible to one's children.  
Lack of respect for your partner  
Putting down your spouse in front of others.  
Mistreatment of one's wife  
Lack of love, obedience and honour of the husband .  
Violence and anger in the marriage.  
Violent discipline of children.  
Disobeying parents  
Lack of respect of parents

**Sins of the heart:**

Unforgiveness  
Resentment  
Bitterness  
Holding grudges  
Hate  
Lust  
Greed  
Envy and covetousness  
Pride  
Selfishness  
Jealousy  
Double mindedness  
Lack of faith, doubt  
Anxiety, worry, not trusting God.  
Racism and bigotry

**Various sins:**

Lack of love towards God and others.  
Religiosity and legalism  
Persecution of Christians  
Religious pride  
Lack of daily prayer and Bible reading  
Lack of prayer for authorities in the church  
Lack of obedience, respect and support of church leaders and pastors.  
Causing division in the body of Christ.  
Rebellion and disrespect towards authority.  
Laziness

Stealing  
Addictions  
Taking advantage of others unjustly  
Violence  
Impatience  
Manipulation  
Deceit  
Not visiting the sick and prisoners  
Mistreating the poor and needy  
Murder  
Vengeance  
Abortion  
Drunkenness  
Bribes  
Attending worldly parties with drinking & dancing.  
Videos or films of violence, horror, swearing, pornography.  
Inappropriate TV watching

**Sins of the use of resources:**

Dressing luxuriously as an expression of pride, vanity  
Buying things out of vanity.  
Gambling  
Using our time wastefully  
Not obeying God with our finances (tithing and offerings)  
Lack of compassion and generosity to the poor  
Using our resources selfishly  
Not offering hospitality  
Financial irresponsibility  
Not paying taxes  
Not declaring income in order to receive government assistance.  
Not paying child maintenance

**Sins against the Holy Spirit:**

Resisting or grieving the Holy Spirit  
Criticizing and belittling the work and manifestations of the Holy Spirit  
Mistreating and persecuting those who are used by God in the Anointing  
Speaking against the gifts of the Holy Spirit

**Sins in the work place**

Laziness or sloppiness at work  
 Taking advantage of and mistreating employees.  
 Not paying or withholding appropriate wages.  
 Borrowing and not returning is stealing.  
 Unjust or illegal contracts  
 Corruption  
 Not paying taxes

### **Sexual sins:**

Perverse sexual acts – oral, anal, or sex with an animal.  
 Violent or forced sex (including in the marriage).  
 Rape  
 Prostitution  
 Fornication  
 Adultery  
 Masturbation  
 Homosexuality  
 Lesbianism  
 Sex between family members – incest  
 Pornography  
 Lustful thinking

### **Obsessions & addictions**

Addiction to smoking, alcohol, novels, TV, the internet, computer games, video games, or play stations.

***NB.** Watching TV, reading novels, using the internet and games are not necessarily sins, but lack of self-control in these areas is.*

### **Occult and witchcraft sins:**

Acupuncture  
 Amulets (good luck objects, etc)  
 Ancestral worship  
 Ankh (a cross with a ring top used in satanic rites).  
 Apparitions – occultic  
 Astral traveling  
 Astrology  
 Automatic writing  
 Birth signs  
 Black arts  
 Black magic

Black mass  
 Blood pacts  
 Casting of spells and curses  
 Chain letters  
 Colour therapy  
 Conjunction (summoning up a spirit)  
 Consulting medium, espiritists, witchdoctors or psychic healers  
 Contact with spirits  
 Control of objects by mental power (Tk or Pk).  
 Coven of witches  
 Crystal ball gazing  
 Crystals & stones  
 Demon worship  
 Divining rod, twig or pendulum  
 Dungeons and dragons  
 Eastern meditation  
 ESP  
 Espiritism  
 Fire walking  
 Fortune telling  
 Halloween  
 Hallucinogenic drugs (e.g. heroin)  
 Hard rock & heavy metal secular music  
 Harry Potter novels, toys & movies  
 Horoscopes  
 Hypnosis  
 Idols and images used in worship  
 Incantations  
 Iridology (eye diagnosis)  
 Jonathan Livingstone Seagull (reincarnation).  
 Judo  
 Karate  
 Kung-fu  
 Levitation  
 Listening to demonic voices (including voices of deceased).  
 Magic (not sleight of hand but supernatural power)  
 Manipulation and cursing of others  
 Mantras  
 Martial arts  
 Mental suggestion, telepathy, therapy  
 Mesmerism  
 Mind control, dynamics, mediumship, reading.  
 Necromancy (conjuring up spirits of the dead)

New Age (in all its diverse forms)  
 Numerology  
 Occultic games  
 Ouiji boards  
 Occult novels, magazines, music, or movies  
 Pagan rites, religious objects, artifacts and relics  
 Palmistry  
 Pokemon Cards  
 Satanism  
 Secret society oaths  
 Sorcery  
 Soul traveling  
 Spells  
 Spirit guides or friends  
 Star signs  
 Superstitions  
 Tarot cards  
 Tea-leaf reading  
 The Lodge (Free Masonry)  
 TM – transcendental meditation  
 Videos and movies of violence, horror, pornography, occult.  
 White magic  
 Witchcraft  
 Yoga  
 Zodiac signs

### **Sects, World Religions & Philosophies:**

*It is important to renounce all oaths, pacts and baptisms made with any sect or secret society, destroy their religious objects, and destroy any books that are not in accord with Scripture.*

*A sect is a religious group that has one or more of the following characteristics:*

- Denies the full divinity of Jesus Christ.

- Doesn't recognize the full authority of the Bible as the basis of faith and conduct.
- Accepts prophecies, traditions, and other books as fundamental to belief and practice.
- Denies the Trinity, that of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Emphasizes traditions and rules to gain salvation.

*All religions that deny that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour and way to God are to be renounced.*

*To pray to, to use as a mediator, to show religious respect, or to worship idols and images.*

*To burn candles to them, to prostrate or bow before an idol or image.*

Seventh Day Adventists  
 Amanda Marga Yoga Society  
 Bahai  
 Buddhism  
 Children of God  
 Christadelphians  
 Christian Science  
 Communism  
 Confucianism  
 Divine Light Mission  
 EST  
 Hare Krishna  
 Hinduism  
 Islam  
 Jehovah's witnesses  
 Marxism  
 Materialism  
 Mormons  
 The International Way  
 The New Age (in all its diverse forms)  
 Unification Church (Moonies)  
 Universal Church of God

**This sin & occult list is adapted from Bill Subritzky's literature (see website, Dove Ministries).**



## APPENDIX B

**RESPONDING TO INFANT BAPTISM****Infant baptism or personal faith**

The theological premise of infant baptism is inconsistent and contrary to the Gospel. Scripture teaches that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ. Yet in infant baptism the rite of sprinkling water is substituted for the Scriptural requirement of personal faith in Jesus Christ. The priest having sprinkled the child with water then turns to the congregation and declares that the child is an inheritor of salvation and a member of the body of Christ.

*“God has called you into his church. We therefore receive you and welcome you as a fellow member of the Body of Christ, as a child of the same heavenly Father, and as an inheritor with us of the kingdom of God. I sign you with the sign of the cross to show that you are to be true to Christ crucified and that you are not to be ashamed, to confess your faith in Him.”*<sup>8</sup>

The priestly declaration is not made on the basis of an active, cognitive, or personal repentance from sin, nor is it made on the basis of the individual's faith in Jesus as their Saviour. In fact no response to the Gospel or understanding of it is required. The infant is declared a child of God on the basis of being sprinkled with water. If one can be saved, forgiven, and become a member of the Body of Christ through being baptized as an infant, why did Jesus die? Infant baptism makes a personal response to the Gospel unnecessary.

**Infant baptism and circumcision**

Those who justify infant baptism often argue that it is a christianized form of the Old Testament circumcision. Under the Old Covenant one was made part of the people of God through circumcision, it was a “work of the law.” However when Jesus Christ died on the cross he fulfilled the law, with all its stipulations and requirements. We are no longer under the law, and hence do not practice circumcision to be part of God's people. In the same way infant baptism is really part of the Old Covenant way of thinking.

David Pawson writes:

*“Some claim a parallel in the circumcision of male babies on the eighth day (and thereby justify ‘infant’ baptism); but this was not for the purpose of cleansing and is never linked with baptism in the New Testament... It belongs to Jewish flesh, not Christian faith.”*<sup>9</sup>

Under the New Covenant of Jesus Christ, salvation and entrance into the family of God is by faith alone. Our faith in Jesus in turn must show itself in good works. So works are the product of our saving faith. Human and religious deeds can never impute salvation, or faith. Infant baptism is a religious work that can not impute salvation. The only way to be saved is to personally believe that Jesus Christ bore our sins upon the cross. As a result of that faith, we then seek baptism. The New Testament never envisioned baptism as preceding faith. Baptism is to be the result of our new faith.

<sup>8</sup> An Australian Prayer Book Published 1978. Pg. 523

<sup>9</sup> Explaining Water Baptism by David Pawson. Pg. 9-10

Infant baptism inherently is the same as circumcision, it is a work of the law. The debate between Paul and the circumcision party, is basically the same debate that we have between infant baptism or immersion. It boils down to the question of whether salvation is by faith or by religious rites.

**“But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”**

**Acts 15:1**

Baptism is an outward sign of what has already occurred in the heart through repentance and faith in Jesus. True baptism is not just something “external and physical”, nor passively received like circumcision.

**“For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. 29 He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal. His praise is not from men but from God.”**

**Romans 2:28-29**

As we read Galatians it becomes evident that infant baptism as a means of salvation is “a different gospel”. Those early Christians who were insisting on circumcision as necessary for salvation were attempting to pervert the Gospel. Those likewise who argue for infant baptism as a means of entering the Kingdom of God, likewise are in danger of attempting to pervert the Gospel, (even if they do so unknowingly).

**“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel 7 not that there is another gospel, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.”**

**Galatians 1:6-7**

### **Baptism is not an outward ritual**

So we see that baptism points to an inner work of the Holy Spirit. It is not an outward ritual but an appeal to God that our hearts have been cleansed through faith in Jesus.

**“Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...”**

**1 Peter 3:21**

## APPENDIX C

# RESPONDING TO MARIOLOGY

## Introduction

This short appendix has been written to help those whom come from a Catholic background, or who have Catholic family and friends. Catholics have been taught that Mary is the mother of God, that she is the intermediary between God and man, that she is greater than Jesus, and other incorrect doctrines. It is distressing to see how millions of children are being religiously indoctrinated in this way. Yet tens of thousands of Catholics are keen to know what the Scriptures teach on these matters, and are coming to a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

## The relationship between Mary and Jesus

Mary didn't give life to Jesus, because Jesus is the Life, without beginning and end. His life existed before the creation of the world. The Bible clearly says that the life of Christ entered into Mary by the power of God. While Mary physically gave birth to Christ, she is not the spiritual mother of Christ, as Jesus existed before her. Jesus is the eternal Son of God.

**“And the angel said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.’”**  
**Luke 1:35**

Mary didn't give birth to Jesus because she deserved it. Rather, she was chosen by the grace and mercy of God towards her. She gives us a good example of one who glorified God and humbled herself. We say that Mary was blessed because she had the great privilege of being God's vessel to bring the Saviour into the world.

**“And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation.’”**  
**Luke 1:46-50**

## Catholic deification of Mary

Catholicism has deified Mary, calling her the “Queen of Heaven”. This is similar to other world religions who worship a female goddess. From Scripture we see that what is being worshipped is not Mary, but a hideous demonic principality, Jezebel. (For more about this demon see Isaiah 47; Zechariah 5:5-11; Ecclesiastes 7:26; Nahum 3:4; Revelations 2:20; 17; 19). Mariology is part of Satan's strategy of deception to pervert the true worship of God, turning people's hearts away to worshipping what is created (Mary is finite and part of creation).

The following scriptures show that Mary is not divine, that Jesus was greater than Mary, that Mary was an imperfect sinner redeemed by Jesus Christ.

- The wise men didn't worship Mary, but Jesus.

**“... and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.”**  
**Matthew 2:11**

➤ Jesus did not recognize Mary as having any special authority or position over Him.  
**“He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me...”**  
**Matthew 10:37**

➤ Mary did not fully understand Jesus’ mission as Saviour of the world, or His authority and power as the Son of God. Mark 3:21 infers that at one point Mary thought that Jesus was crazy.

**“And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for people were saying, “He is beside himself.”**  
**Mark 3:21**

➤ The instances below show that at times Mary was not in the will of God. We see that when Mary was seeking to stop Jesus, Jesus would not even speak with her. Mary did not receive preferential treatment from Jesus, and Jesus did not defer to her wishes for His ministry. As part of the human race she was a sinner, who had to learn to yield to God’s will in her life.

**“While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother.”**

**Matthew 12:46-50; (Also Mark 3:31-35)**

**“Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him for the crowd. 20 And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.” 21 But he said to them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”**  
**Luke 8:19-21**

➤ Mary became a Christian believer, and follower of Jesus Christ. She could have only done this by recognizing her sinful state, and accepting Jesus Christ as her personal Saviour.

**“All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.”**  
**Acts 1:14**