

Becoming

MORE LIKE

JESUS

ONE - ONE DISCIPLESHIP

Acknowledgment

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Thank you for your Kingdom-minded generosity and investment in making disciples.

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Getting Started

Congratulations! You are about to begin the amazing journey of becoming a disciple of Jesus. What exactly is a disciple? It's someone who knows Jesus, follows Jesus, and is becoming more like Jesus. Disciples do what Jesus did, then help others do the same. In other words, a disciple is a constantly growing follower of Jesus Christ!

This workbook is designed to help you to grow spiritually and become more like Jesus by pursuing an intimate personal relationship with Him. As you grow, you will learn what He has done for you, and what He wants to do *in* you and *through* you.

Each session will direct you to read a few Bible verses that relate to that week's topic. It will also prompt you to answer specific questions that will help you put what you are learning into practice. You and your mentor will meet on a regular basis to discuss each lesson. It's important that you complete each lesson prior to your meetings. You will be able to ask questions, discuss your answers, give feedback, and make comments at that time.

After completing these lessons, you will be equipped to help someone else spiritually grow, motivated by your deeper love of Christ.

JESUS IS OUR ROLE MODEL FOR DISCIPLESHIP

As you follow Jesus through the Bible you will see how He managed the challenges of life and interacted with various people. Let's look at some of the ways Jesus is our role model for discipleship.

A DISCIPLE WILL:

- Surrender to God's will, *John 6:38*
- Pray to God often and ask Him for wisdom, *Mark 1:35*
- Know the power of God's Word and obey it, *Matthew 4:1-11*
- Desire to please God with your life, *John 8:29*
- Look for ways to help others know Christ, *Luke 19:10*
- Serve God by serving others, *Philippians 2:3-4*

As you become obedient and faithful to Jesus, we pray you will step out in faith and become a servant to others.

"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others..." Matthew 20:28 (NLT)

Who is God?

The opening line of the Bible reads, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*” (Genesis 1:1). In this first sentence we learn God existed before time began, that He is the author of history, and everything was created by Him.

Followers of Jesus believe in one God who exists in three persons. This is called “The Trinity”. We do not worship three separate Gods, or one who shapeshifts into three separate beings. We worship *one* God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit. They are not each one-third God – each is *fully* God. All three exist together in perfect unity as our Triune God. Genesis 1:26 says, “*Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness,...”*”

We see an imperfect and incomplete example of this in marriage. When a husband and wife get married, scripture says they become “one flesh” united together. In the Bible, the Hebrew word for “one flesh” is also used for “one God”. This analogy falls far short of the mystery of the Trinity, but it gives us an example of how two can be united as one.

MATTHEW 3:16-17 *What is each member of the Trinity doing?*

God the Father

God the Son

God the Holy Spirit

The pages of the Bible reveal a detailed portrait of God’s unique character traits that help us understand who He is. The deeper we dig into the Scriptures and the more time we spend time with Him, the better we will understand His character.

What do you see about God’s character through each of these passages?

PSALM 86:15

ISAIAH 6:3

The Gospel

The first two chapters of Genesis tell us that God created a perfect world and made human beings in His image. Then, He gave us a mission: partnering with Him to rule over His creation. God only gave mankind one rule; do not eat the forbidden fruit or they would be separated from Him and spiritually die. Sadly, Adam and Eve ate that forbidden fruit. The result of their sin was devastating. Their relationship with God, each other, and creation came under the curse of sin (Genesis 3).

You and I were created to be in a close, personal relationship with God, but our sin separates us from Him. Thanks to Adam, we are born with a sinful nature, and are in bondage to sin until our salvation. There is no way to restore or repair our relationship with God on our own; Jesus provides the only way.

ROMANS 3:10-11 *How many people are righteous and seek God on their own?*

ROMANS 6:23 *What are the consequences of our sin?*

HEBREWS 9:27 *What happens after we die?*

ECCLESIASTES 2:11 *This passage describes someone pursuing a meaningful life apart from God. What did they find?*

A life apart from God is *meaningless*, and a death apart from God is *hopeless*! Thankfully, the story doesn't end there. God, rich in mercy, had a plan to restore mankind. God sent His Son, Jesus, to pay the price for our sins. He lived a sinless, perfect life, and died on a cross for *our* sins. Jesus was buried but rose again that third day to bring us new life!

This is the Gospel or the "Good News" – Jesus took our place! He was a perfect sacrifice, He died for our sins, and received the punishment we deserved! Jesus died so we could freely receive God's grace.

Assurance of Salvation

At one time or another, many Christ Followers have doubted their salvation. The main purpose of the book of 1 John is to give us unwavering confidence in our salvation. 1 John 5:13 says it like this, *“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”*

GOD'S PROMISES:

- God promises eternal life to everyone who repents and believes in Jesus, *John 3:16*
- God promises that if we believe in Jesus, our sins are forgiven, *Ephesians 1:7*
- God promises He is committed to complete our spiritual growth, *Philippians 1:6*

GOD'S ACTIONS:

- Patiently withholds judgement, wanting everyone to be saved, *2 Peter 3:9*
- Repeatedly forgives the worst sinners (Peter denied Jesus three times), *Luke 22:61*
- Shows repeated mercy to His people, *Lamentations 3:22-23*

When we obey Jesus' commands, our lives will become more like His. 1 John 2:3-5 tells us, *“3 We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. 4 Whoever says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. 5 But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him.”* This transformation confirms our salvation.

Why is it important for you to be confident in your salvation?

Which of these verses are the most encouraging to you and why?

SALVATION CHECK

➤ Have you asked Jesus to be your Lord and Savior? If you haven't, stop right now and tell Jesus you're sorry for your sins. Ask Him to forgive you, change you, and to make you more like Him. If you're *not sure* of your salvation, ask your mentor to help you.

Identity in Christ

When we become Christ followers, we receive a brand new identity. In 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul writes, *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”* Therefore, it is vital to understand what God’s Word says about being a new creation in Christ.

Some people have a negative self-image based on what others have said about them or their past failures. Both of those are lies from the enemy. Others have an elevated false identity based on personal success and accomplishments instead of God’s Word.

Knowing who you are in Christ is vital! When we believe the enemy’s lies, we feel condemned and defeated, fearful and insecure, or prideful and self-reliant. When our identity is secure, we feel safe and protected by God’s love. Read the following verses to learn more about your identity in Christ.

1 JOHN 3:1-2 *What does God call us?*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 *What does this say we become?*

Ephesians 2:10 *What are you and why were you created?*

1 PETER 2:9 *What four things does God say you are?*

1

2

3

4

EPHESIANS 1:7 *What two things does God’s grace provide for you?*

AS A NEW CREATION IN CHRIST

- You are part of the body of Christ, *1 Corinthians 12:27*
- Your citizenship is in heaven, *Philippians 3:20*
- God gives you every spiritual blessing you need, *Ephesians 1:3*
- You are called “a friend of Jesus,” *John 15:15*
- Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, *1 Corinthians 6:19*
- You are more than a conqueror, *Romans 8:37*
- You are no longer condemned, *Romans 8:1-2*
- God is for you, and He will help you face opposition, *Romans 8:31*

Knowing who we are in Christ enables us to rest securely in God’s love and helps us discover and fulfill His plan for our lives.

Water Baptism

Before being baptized we must ask Jesus to be our Lord and Savior and understand what He accomplished on the cross. After we commit our life to Christ, the next step we take should be water baptism. Baptism can be confusing because there is a lot of false information out there. Some believe they are baptized because their parents had them baptized/dedicated as a baby. But there is not a single Bible verse that supports baptism before salvation.

Some people believe that being baptized (even as infants) saves them. In Luke 23:39-43, a thief on the cross put his faith in Jesus while hanging next to Him. In verse 43 Jesus told him, *“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”* Jesus own words said the man would be with Him in heaven, but that man was never water baptized!

To better understand Baptism, we can compare it to the symbolic nature of a wedding ring. Wearing a wedding ring doesn’t make anyone married; it is an outward sign that symbolizes the marriage covenant we made with our spouse. Baptism is an *outward* expression of the personal, *inward* choice you have made to follow Jesus.

In 1 Corinthians 1:14-17 Paul says, *“I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don’t remember if I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.”*

Paul traveled throughout the world, sharing the Gospel and telling people to put their faith and trust in Jesus. If baptism was necessary for salvation, Paul would have ensured everyone he led to Christ got baptized. However, in the verse above, he said he only baptized some of them.

Baptism doesn't save us, but God commands us to be baptized *after* we believe. Not as infants, but as someone who has professed their faith and decided to follow Jesus!

ACCORDING TO ROMANS 6:3-4, LIST THREE PARTS OF JESUS' LIFE REPRESENTED BY BAPTISM:

1

2

3

MATTHEW 28:19 *How do we relate to God (the Trinity) when we are baptized?*

ACTS 8:12, 36-38 *What was the first thing people did after believing in Jesus?*

WHY WE SHOULD BE BAPTIZED

- Jesus commanded it. An essential part of our new life with Christ is obedience. Jesus told His disciples to baptize new believers, *Matthew 28:19*
- Jesus was sinless, so He didn't need it. He modeled it for us, *Luke 3:21-22*
- We join Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection in our water baptism, *Romans 6:3-4*
- Baptism symbolically crucifies our old body, the body ruled by sin, *Romans 6:5-7*
- Jesus' baptism is an example to follow, it's part of being like Him, *Matthew 3:13-17*

Water Baptism (immersion) is an outward, visible sign that we have chosen to follow Jesus. He established it and He commanded us to continue it until He returns. It is an outward symbol of our faith, and it joins us with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. It is our public declaration that, "I have placed my faith in Christ alone, and I proclaim Him as my Lord and Savior."

In Scripture, people confessed their faith in Jesus, then were immersed in water afterwards. It was always two *separate* events, teaching us that water baptism can't save us.

If you cannot be immersed (fully submerged) the Pastors and Elders can pour water over you. This is an acceptable substitution for full immersion, and it will honor Jesus' command.

DIGGING DEEPER

➤ If you have not been water baptized, or were baptized as an infant, get baptized at the next available opportunity.

The Church

The word “church” means different things to different people, so the first question we must answer is this: “What *exactly* is the church?” Is it the building where we meet on a regular basis, or is it the physical location where the building is located? Or is the “church” neither of these two things?

To answer that question, let’s look at the Greek word for church, *ekklesia*. This word was originally used to refer to a gathering of people, it was never used to describe the place they met. So then by definition, the church is actually *us*, a gathering of Christ Followers. Unfortunately, some people believe that they really don’t need to gather as a group. They believe, “I’m fine, as long as I read my bible at home.” But God’s Word tells us we need to actively participate in the fellowship and shared faith church attendance offers.

HEBREWS 10:25 *What does this verse have to say about not attending church?*

Studying God’s Word and spending time in corporate worship (gathering to worship God) are two things we do when meeting together. Studying God’s Word helps us learn how to love and obey God better.

Worship is about praising and thanking God. Our focus must be upward, not inward. Singing praises is a good time to tell God (out loud) how much we appreciate and adore Him. But this shouldn’t be the *only* time we tell Him! Praise Him in private too.

Colossians 3:16 says, “*Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.*”

Is there is more to being a Christ Follower than just attending church?

JOHN 14:21 *How did Jesus say we demonstrate our love for Him?*

Groups

The main purpose of groups is to bring people together. One clear example of a small group is Jesus and His twelve disciples. They understood their mission - they were committed to growing together not just reaching others. Their relationships with one another were critical to their pursuit of Jesus, their spiritual growth, and their witness of the Good News. We see this demonstrated in Acts 2:42.

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

Groups are safe, comfortable places where you can meet new people, make friends, grow spiritually, and learn more about Jesus. They are also a way to have fun in a Christian social setting. When you're in a group, a big church becomes smaller, and you begin to feel like you are part of a family.

Groups help us navigate everyday life by digging deeper into God's Word. God wired us for community. Genesis 2:18 tells us, *"It is not good for man to be alone."*

Bible study groups are where learning the Word and instructive discipleship is the core. Other groups are geared toward helping people break free from strongholds like drugs, alcohol, or pornography. Then, support groups fill voids like loss of a loved one, divorce, cancer, or chronic pain and illness.

IN A GROUP YOU WILL

- Connect with other Christ Followers.
- Study God's Word together.
- Disciple each other.
- Support and encourage each other.
- Pray for one another.
- Have Fun

HEBREWS 10:24-25

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

We are many parts of one body. We are not meant to do life alone, but together. To grow in Christ, we need to connect with other believers. When you find a group, you find a place of encouragement, discipleship and prayer.

Fellowship

We just read that relationships are an important part of being a Christ Follower. There is vital relationship we should have, and it's called fellowship. It is relational and more like a partnership. It's a bond that is closer than just friendship.

We can have friendships and relationships with believers and unbelievers, but true fellowship can only occur within the body of Christ, where we are united by shared beliefs, purposes and goals.

True fellowship is a mutually beneficial relationship between Christ Followers, who cannot have the same relationship with those outside the faith. It is much deeper and sweeter than secular fellowship. It's having a few close Christian friends who have the same beliefs as you.

Paul tells us in Acts 2:44, *"All the believers were together and had everything in common."*

Connecting with other Christ Followers through fellowship provides accountability, discipleship, and it facilitates our spiritual growth. When we personally connect with others, God will use them to bring support and encouragement into our lives. This helps us to remain focused on Jesus, His desires and goals for us.

PSLAM 133:1 *How should God's people live?*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:11 *What are the two things we are told to do?*

1

2

DIGGING DEEPER

- Commit to attending church on a regular, weekly basis.
- Join a group in a home or a Bible Study at church to connect with others.
- Personally connect with someone for encouragement and support.

Devotional Life

Effective communication includes speaking *and* listening, so our devotional life must include both practices. To effectively communicate with God, we must spend time talking to God and listening for Him to speak.

How do we do this? First, we must commit to spending time with God each day. Jesus spent time with God each morning. Mark 1:35 says, *“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”* Not everyone is a morning person. If mornings aren’t good, find a consistent time that works for you and stick to it. It starts as a discipline, turns into a habit, and eventually becomes a delight.

THREE ESSENTIALS FOR DEVELOPING AN INTIMATE REALATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- God’s Word
 - Prayer
 - Worship

God’s Word

The Bible is the primary way God speaks to us. When God speaks to us in other ways, it will always line up perfectly with His written Word. The Bible gives us everything we need to know about life. God’s Word doesn’t just tell us how to be saved, it tells us how to live a life filled with meaning and purpose God planned for us.

We recommend using a “slow and steady” approach to read the Bible. Instead of reading chapters, read a paragraph or a few verses at a time with the expectation God will speak to you personally. This will give you time to listen to what God is saying to you. The Bible is filled with *information*, but God designed it for *application*. He wants us to apply what we learn to our own lives.

A good devotional or a reading plan can be a tremendous help. The free “YouVersion” Bible app has hundreds of online devotionals and reading plans for you to choose from.

HEBREWS 4:12 *How does this verse describe the Word of God?*

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17 *What are the Scriptures able to do for us?*

Prayer

Prayer can be intimidating and easily misunderstood. Some people think prayer requires us to use big, impressive words that we might not even understand. Prayer is simply having a conversation with God about anything going on in your life. Prayers don't need to be formal; we should speak to God conversationally the same way we speak to everyone else. Our prayers don't need to be long or elaborate either, they should be genuine and heartfelt.

Some find it helpful to have a model or format to pray. One approach many Christ Followers use is the ACTS model. This is an acronym, and each letter reminds us of something to tell God.

- **A** – Adoration – Tell God you love, appreciate, and adore Him.
- **C** – Confession - Acknowledge your sins and shortcomings to God.
- **T** – Thanksgiving - Thank God for all He has done for you.
- **S** – Supplication - Bring your requests to God.

When you pray, remember that you aren't bringing any new information to God. He already knows our needs! When we pray, we are telling God how much we depend on Him and how much we love Him. Prayer reminds us how good and faithful God is.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 *What is the benefit of presenting our requests to God?*

1 JOHN 5:14 *How should we pray in order for God to hear us?*

JAMES 4:8 *What happens when we draw near to God?*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-18 *How should we pray?*

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Worship

Worship is vital part of the spiritual life of every Christ Follower. It is how we celebrate God and acknowledge His magnificence and holiness.

Worship is not just singing praises. It is also acknowledging God's power and glory by praying, obeying, serving and trusting Him. The highest form of worship is obeying God and His Word.

Colossians 3:17 (CEV) says, “*Whatever you say or do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks to God the Father because of him.*”

PSALM 95:1-2 *What four thing should we do when we worship?*

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In John 4:23-24, Jesus tells us that true worshipers will worship God in spirit and in truth; “*Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.*”

True worship is God-centered worship from the heart, the way God designed it.

JOHN 4:24 *What two ways are we to worship God?*

ISAIAH 12:5 *Why should we worship the LORD?*

PSALM 150 *What strikes you most about how this passage describes worship?*

Journaling

One of the best things about having a relationship with God is that we are establishing a history with God. Journaling is simply putting that personal history down on paper. It is encouraging to look back and review our history with God. We will find comfort and encouragement as we review our written record of God's faithfulness.

Journaling is simple. To get started all you need is a notebook and a pen. Experiment with different journaling methods until you discover what works best for you.

WHAT TO WRITE

- Things God shows you from His Word.
- Bible promises to personally claim.
- Prayer requests and answers to previous prayers.
- A review of the previous day (the good/bad/ugly).

Make your journal personal. It is something private, between you and God. Once you start, you will find a format that works well for you.

A SAMPLE FORMAT

- Yesterday – A quick evaluation of the previous day.
- The Word – Write down what God shows you as you read His Word.
- Prayer – Jot down the requests you are bringing to God. You will be amazed when you see how God answers those prayers.

PSALM 102:18 *Besides us, who else may benefit from the things we write in our journal?*

DIGGING DEEPER

- Commit to having quiet time with God each day.
- Participate in worship at church this weekend praising God as you sing to Him.
- Start a journal to deepen your relationship with God.

Trust

Trust is an important part of any relationship; it draws you closer to God, your family, and your friends. Without trust we will never have the intimate relationships God designed for us.

The most important form of trust we can have is trusting God. Scripture says we can't place our trust in ourselves, our plans, or in the world's wisdom.

Completely trusting God is vital. Psalm 1:2-3 says the man who delights in the law of the Lord is blessed. When we seek God's will and His ways, we will draw closer to Him. When we draw closer to God, our trust in Him increases. Trusting God helps us become trustworthy.

PROVERBS 3:5-6 *How are we to trust in the Lord? Why?*

Being a person others can trust requires honesty and integrity. This means keeping our word, not belittling others, admitting when we are wrong, seeking forgiveness, and forgiving others as Christ forgave us. As we do these things, we learn to trust others more freely. Ask God to show you who you can trust, then trust the results He reveals.

ISAIAH 12:2 *Why is it important to trust God?*

LUKE 16:10 *What does the Bible say about earning trust?*

PSALM 28:7 *What happens when we trust God?*

Psalm 118:6 (ESV) says, "*The Lord is on my side, I will not fear. What can man do to me?*"

Understand that no matter what anyone does to you, God is always faithful, true, and trustworthy.

There is no substitute for faithful friends and Christian community. When we live in trusting relationships with one another, we can build up and encourage each other.

THREE PRACTICAL STEPS TO TRUST GOD COMPLETELY

- Saturate your heart and mind with God's Word.
- Constantly monitor your thoughts and feelings.
- Decide (make the choice) not to worry.

Forgiveness

We *all* need forgiveness. Our sinful nature separates us from God; and we would be lost forever without His forgiveness and mercy.

ROMANS 3:23 *Why is forgiveness necessary?*

Forgiveness can be one of the hardest things that God requires us to do. But the good news is He does not leave us to do it on our own. He gave us Jesus as an example in Luke 23:33-34, “*When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. 34 Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.*”

God stands ready and willing to forgive us, but He asks that we extend that same forgiveness to others. Matthew 6:14-15 says, “*For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*”

God commands us to forgive, but it isn’t always easy. We may need to examine ourselves and ask God to heal our hardened heart. If you are struggling to forgive someone, stop and think about all the mistakes you’ve made. Don’t forget, after each one, God was there with open arms offering you forgiveness.

When we consider the magnitude of God’s forgiveness, every situation in our lives where we are hesitant to forgive becomes trivial.

Read the following verses to learn what God says about forgiveness.

MATTHEW 6:14-15 *What does Jesus teach about forgiveness?*

EPHESIANS 4: 32 *What does forgiveness look like for a Christ Follower?*

MATTHEW 18:21-22 *How many times should we forgive someone?*

Communication

The two main ways God communicates with us are through His Word (Romans 10:17), and through the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). We cannot go through life without communicating with other people. What we say, how we say it, and how well we listen is important to God. In Proverbs 18:21 He warns us that "...death and life are in the power of the tongue..."

It doesn't matter if we're speaking to a family member or a stranger, our communication should always be delivered in a loving manner. Speaking kindly, wisely, truthfully, and with love promotes positive relationships and defuses tense situations.

Having a close, personal relationship with Jesus includes modeling His behavior. Becoming more like Jesus helps us improve our communication and keeps our interactions with others positive.

Ephesians 4:2 tell us; *"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."*

What do the following verses say about our communication.

JAMES 1:19

COLOSSIANS 3:8

COLOSSIANS 4:6

BIBLICAL TRUTHS THAT WILL HELP YOU TRULY STRENGTHEN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

- Love God with all your heart, mind, and soul.
- Love your spouse.
- Love your family.
- Love your neighbors.
- Love your enemies.

Conflict Resolution

Some degree of conflict is inevitable in life. But if we manage it biblically, conflict can serve as an opportunity for positive change and spiritual growth. We should make every effort to resolve our conflicts in a loving manner, with the goal of restoring the relationship. Proverbs 15:1 says, *“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”*

God doesn't just tell us to have peace. He calls us to *bring* peace to difficult situations by being a peacemaker. He wants His redemptive, transforming love to pour out on all of our relationships. When conflict inevitably arises, God commands us to resolve it according to the principles in His Word. Jesus says in Matthew 5:9, *“Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.”*

Satan will take advantage of unresolved conflicts, especially when they contain anger, bitterness, self-pity, and envy. He will use all of them to create additional conflict. Don't let Satan rob you of the joy healthy relationships can bring! We must do all we can to resolve our conflicts and be peacemakers.

PROVERBS 19:11 *What does God's Word encourage us to do?*

MATTHEW 7:3-5 *What does Jesus say about judging others?*

PHILIPPIANS 2:3 *What does this passage remind us to do as we resolve conflict?*

EPHESIANS 4:15 *What does the passage tell us will happen as we speak the truth in love?*

As we grow and mature in Christ, our spiritual maturity is measured by an increased ability to communicate peacefully. Christ followers must be able to share difficult truths and resolve our conflicts in gentle, loving ways.

DIGGING DEEPER

- Ask Jesus to help your relationship with Him and others grow.
- Commit to resolving conflicts peacefully.
- Is God telling you to forgive someone?

Spiritual Gifts

It is important to understand that God created us in His image. In the Old Testament, God frequently intervened directly (parted the Red Sea) and sent angels as His messengers (an angel appeared to Mary). But in modern times, God uses people like us to accomplish His plans and purposes.

1 CORINTHIANS 7:7 *Does God only gift special people, or have all believers been given spiritual gifts?*

At times, we've all compared ourselves with other believers, or compared our spiritual gifts with another person's. One of the hardest sins to overcome is pride. A pastor of a small church might envy the pastor of a larger church. Someone gifted to work behind the scenes might crave the spotlight. Someone serving in the kids' ministry may envy the people who lead worship on stage.

ROMANS 12:4-8 *Do we all have the same function when we serve? Why?*

These verses describe how everyone in the church is interconnected. They also remind us that working together benefits us and God's kingdom. Our spiritual gifts aren't meant to glorify us; we must use them to bring glory to God. Remember, no gift stands alone, and none of the gifts are more important than the others.

There are two main lists of spiritual gifts in the Bible. They are found in Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. These lists may not cover every volunteer opportunity at church, but they do describe ways God empowers us with different abilities.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE BIBLE

- *Service* is the ability to do small or large tasks as you work for the overall good of the church (the body of Christ). People with this gift often prefer to serve behind the scenes, without glory or drawing attention to themselves.
- *Giving* is the ability to increase wealth and donating more than their 10% tithe. People with this gift give to their home church to advance the Kingdom of God (supporting missionaries, mission trip giving, special projects, etc.).
- *Teaching* is the ability to study and learn from the scriptures, then communicating that understanding to other believers. People with this gift aren't just Pastors; they can also be classroom teachers and small group facilitators.
- *Exhortation* is the ability to encourage others through the written Word (using scripture) or spoken words of wisdom that paraphrase biblical truths and principles.
- *Mercy* is the ability to feel empathy and care for those who are hurting.

- *Prophecy* is the ability to boldly speak and bring clarity to scriptural and doctrinal truth, in some cases foretelling God’s plan.
- *Leadership* is the ability to organize multiple tasks and overseeing a group of people to accomplish those tasks. Good leaders don’t just delegate, they motivate!

If you are not sure what your spiritual gift is (remember, you have at least one), you can take an online Spiritual Gift Assessment at the following link:
<https://gifts.churchgrowth.org/spiritual-gifts-survey/>

Serving

Jesus is our role model when it comes to serving. Mark 10:45 tells us, “*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*” This shows us that the “attitude of our heart” for serving is more important than which gift we have, or how we are using it.

Here’s a quick heart check; what is your motivation for serving? When you serve, are you trying to feel good about yourself? Are you trying to impress others? Who should you really be trying to please?

It is important to remember Christ Followers are just like everyone else. Yes, our sins are forgiven but we still make mistakes. We must all strive to be more like Christ each day, but we are still a “work in progress” and imperfect. When we serve, we must always remain unified. This takes effort! Satan loves to divide us; God wants us to work together in fellowship and harmony.

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31 *Why should we be willing to serve?*

1 PETER 4:10-11 *How are our gifts connected to serving?*

MATTHEW 23:11-12 *According to this passage, what is our goal?*

Remember, the Church is not a building; we are the Church. Fulfill your purpose by loving God and loving others.

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Giving

Everything we have comes from God - we do not own anything. Our role is to be a good steward of all the blessings God has given us. God does not give us resources to hold tightly, only using them for ourselves. In fact, He gives them to us to share with others and expand His Kingdom. When we have a proper perspective of our purpose on earth, it is easier to trust God with our time, gifts, and resources.

James 1:17 tells us, *“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”* Now that we understand where our resources come from, let's see what the Bible says about giving. Read the following verses.

- PROVERBS 3:9-11
- PROVERBS 11:24
- LUKE 12:15
- HEBREWS 13:16
-

MALACHI 3:6-12

Who never changes?

What did they rob God of?

How much tithe were they to bring?

Who will be blessed?

Today, our “storehouse” is the church, the place where we hear and learn God’s Word. When God says “my house” it means the church, and “tithe” simply means ten percent.

For example, if you earned \$100 this week, your tithe to God would be \$10. Notice, you give it “back” to the Lord because He already owns it. God owns everything and doesn’t need our money. We are to be good managers of everything God has given us (including our money) so we can give to expand His kingdom.

Our giving is how we tell God we have faith in His promises. It also tells Him we completely trust Him to manage our time, gifts, and resources for His kingdom. Giving is a wonderful way to worship God, and tells Him how much we love Him.

Malachi 3:10 is the only place in the Bible that God says, *“Test me in this.”* This Scripture tells us that tithing is a test, a two-way test between us and God. Actually, tithing reveals the condition of our heart.

Malachi is an Old Testament book, but the New Testament also gives us principles of generosity. So, what are our guidelines for giving in the New Testament?

Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, *“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”*

What are the two principles in this passage?

In what spirit should we give?

How does God bless us?

Christ didn't give ten percent of His resources to make us rich spiritually, He sacrificially gave one hundred percent! Becoming a disciple of Jesus means imitating what Christ did. To become more like Jesus, we must become sacrificial givers too.

Read Matthew 6:19-21. What are your main priorities in life? Is Christ first? You may not even realize it, but are you putting yourself and your desires first? When our hearts are set on earthly things, we are usually reluctant to give. But when we realize how much God has given us, He becomes our priority. Being a cheerful giver means we want to expand God's kingdom with our giving.

We are no longer under the law of tithing (giving ten percent), but it is still a good practice. New Testament giving is not an *obligation*; we give back to God because of our *appreciation!* If you've never given to God regularly, or if giving is a brand-new concept, just start by giving a smaller amount on a regular basis. Start out at two percent, increase it to five percent, and make giving God at least ten percent your goal.

Giving is between you and God, but when He said *“test me”* it was specifically about giving. As Christ followers, we must understand that giving to God is our privilege, not our burden.

DIGGING DEEPER

- Take an online Spiritual Gifts Test to identify your gifts.
- Spend time in prayer asking God to show you how to use your time, gifts and resources wisely.
- If you are not tithing, start and see how God blesses you.

GIVING

Holy Spirit

At salvation, every believer receives an amazing gift from God. Sadly, many of them fail to understand and appreciate this gift. This wonderful gift is the *person* of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said in John 14:16-17 “*And I will ask the Father, “and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.”*

When Jesus spoke these words to His disciples, He knew He would die on the cross in just a few days. He wanted to let them know they would not be alone after He ascended to Heaven. Then Jesus told them in John 16:7, “*it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.*”

The Scriptures tell us that Jesus is now in heaven, sitting at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. But until He comes back, we have the Holy Spirit living inside of us, so it’s important to know *who* the Holy Spirit is.

As we learned earlier, God exists in three distinct persons: The Father (God), the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit. This is The Trinity. The word Trinity comes from the prefix “tri” meaning three and the suffix “unity” meaning one. Each is distinct from the others, but they are one in nature and purpose.

Read the following verses and look for evidence of the Trinity - the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Notice how they work together, then jot down a few key words from each verse.

GENESIS 1:26

MATTHEW 3:16-17

MATTHEW 28:19

Before salvation, the Holy Spirit was present, but He was walking next to us, not living within us. He comes alongside unbelievers to convict them of their sin and point them towards God. The Holy Spirit is the one who us draws us towards Jesus.

At salvation (when we repented and asked Jesus to be our Lord and savior), the Holy Spirit moved *inside* us. He becomes our advocate, equipping us to do things we can’t do in our own power, helping us resist temptation.

The Role of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit conforms us into the image and character of Christ. He leads us, guides us, and empowers us with our spiritual gifts. He comforts us, teaches us, and helps us pray. He is our helper, He leads us into truth, and He helps us understand the truths in God's Word.

The Holy Spirit begins to chip away (remove) everything in us that doesn't look like Jesus. He changes us by helping us think and act differently, changing us from the inside out. Part of being a Christ Follower is learning how to hear and obey the Holy Spirit's promptings.

JOHN 16:13 *List three things the Holy Spirit does.*

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There are hundreds of verses found in the Bible that demonstrate how the Holy Spirit helps us. Read the verses below then write down how the Holy Spirit can help you in your unique circumstances and share it with your mentor.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, *John 16:8*
- Reveals the deep things of God, *1 Corinthians 2:10*
- Transforms us into the image of Christ, *2 Corinthians 3:18*
- Enables us to obey God's truth, *1 Peter 1:22*
- Teaches us, *John 14:26*
- Comforts us, *John 14:16 KJV*

Which role of the Holy Spirit impacted you most in this exercise? Why?

Which one do you find yourself needing to put into practice the most today?

Read Galatians 5:22-23 to see the evidence of the Holy Spirit being active in our lives.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Now that we understand the Holy Spirit lives in us and equips us, let's examine another vital role of the Holy Spirit. We must be baptized in the Holy Spirit to receive His supernatural empowerment. This is different from our water baptism; it is an additional, *separate* step we must take. It will equip us to do spiritual things we couldn't do before.

Listen to what Jesus said to His disciples when He was leaving them in John 14:12; "*I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.*"

WHAT DOES THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT DO?

- Fills your mind with understanding of truth.
- Gives you gifts to serve in the body of Christ.
- Enables you to be a bold and effective witness.

Before going to the cross, Jesus told the disciples to wait until He sent the Holy Spirit to empower them. Like us, they all needed the power of the Holy Spirit before taking the message of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8 tells us, "*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*"

Being baptized in the Spirit is nothing to be afraid of, and it isn't weird or unbiblical. It isn't just for certain people or certain denominations either. Being baptized in the Holy Spirit is a vital part of the Spirit-filled life that God designed for every Christ Follower.

John tells the people in Luke 3:16, "*John answered them all, "I baptize you with[a] water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with[b] the Holy Spirit and fire."*"

HOW TO RECEIVE THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord.
- Ask Jesus for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- Receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit in faith.

To be baptized in the Holy Spirit, pray a simple prayer like this:

"Jesus, you say in your Word that the Holy Spirit is a good gift and that if I ask, I will be filled to overflowing with the Spirit. Please baptize me now in the Holy Spirit. Thank you for filling me, for empowering me to live a victorious life and be a witness for You. I receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit in faith."

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are unique skills and abilities given to us by the Holy Spirit. Christ Followers use them to serve God, His people, and the church. Simply put, the gifts of the Spirit are simply God empowering faithful Christians to do what He has called us to do. Below is a list of gifts of the Spirit referenced in the Bible and their essential meanings.

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (1 CORINTHIANS 12:8-10)

- Wisdom – The ability to apply the principles of the Word of God in practical ways to specific situations and to recommend the best course of action at the best time.
- Knowledge – The ability to discover, analyze, and arrange biblical truth for the benefit of others. Someone with this gift helps others understand scripture.
- Faith – The ability to completely trust God in all circumstances, and to confidently believe His promises are true, no matter how impossible the task may seem.
- Healing – (Uncommon) The ability to serve as a human “conduit” that God supernaturally uses to cure illness and restore health.
- Prophecy – The ability to speak boldly and bring clarity to scriptural truth, usually in a corrective manner (forthtelling). In rare cases, foretelling God’s plans.
- Miracles – (Uncommon) The ability to serve as a human “conduit” that God supernaturally uses to overcome or override the laws of nature.
- Discernment – The ability to discern spiritual truth from false doctrine, distinguishing real from counterfeit, recognizing what is from the Holy Spirit and what is demonic. In some cases, it is discerning spiritual versus carnal motives.
- Tongues – The ability to speak to God in a private prayer language. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, someone with this gift can pray and worship God using a language (or phrases) they don’t personally understand. This gift is primarily used for private, personal prayer, but it can be used (rarely) to communicate a message from God to a group of people if someone has the gift of interpretation. In other words, someone with the gift of interpretation *must* be present.
- Interpretation of Tongues – The ability to interpret a message that has been spoken out loud in tongues so everyone who heard the message can understand it.

DIGGING DEEPER

- Thank God for your gifts and ask Him for direction on how to use them.
- Identify an area in your life where you need the Holy Spirit’s guidance.
- Pray to be baptized in the Holy Spirit

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Temptation

The lifestyle of a Christ-follower is extremely exciting! But after salvation, some believers have unrealistic expectations about what their new life in Christ will/should look like.

One of the main places this happens is in the area of temptation. Some Christ Followers falsely assume (or hope) that after salvation temptation will lessen or be easy to overcome. The truth is, you may experience *more* temptation now than before your salvation, since you have a new enemy, Satan.

Satan has other plans, so temptation usually increases. Remember, Satan is not happy you have “changed teams” and become a child of God. He is a deceiver and will use any means possible to stumble our walk with The Lord. We see a strong warning about Satan in 1 Peter 5:8: *“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”*

This verse says Satan is seeking us and trying to wreak havoc in our lives. It also says he is willing and able to devour us when we succumb to temptation. If Satan wants to devour us, then what is his main goal? It is tempting us to disobey God. How does he do it? *He Lies!*

COMMON LIES SATAN USES TO DECEIVE US

- No one understands what you’re going through.
- No one will know if you do this (sin) in private, behind closed doors.
- It can’t hurt anyone else if you’re the only one involved.
- It’s ok if you just do this (sin) once.

Another one of Satan’s lies is whispering, “*you’re all alone.*” He wants us to think that nobody understands exactly what we are going through.

1 PETER 5:9 Who is undergoing the same kind of suffering?

1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 What does this verse promise that God will provide?

When you are tempted, say a prayer something like this: “*God, I recognize I am being tempted by... (describe it). Please help me resist this! Fill me with your Holy Spirit and help me be more like You.*”

Spiritual Warfare

In Galatians 5:16, Paul encourages us to deny our selfish desires, *“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”* This means to live in the power of the Holy Spirit and not do what our sinful nature wants.

When you placed your faith in Jesus, chances are you didn't realize your decision included becoming a soldier. However, Salvation was your enlistment, and you are now involved in a battle. All Christ Followers are part of God's army, and we are all engaged in a Holy war. But our battle is not physical, it is spiritual.

The Bible teaches us about spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6:12, *“For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.”* *“You, and countless other believers like you, are at war with the devil today.”*

Christ Followers have three advantages in this war against the devil. We know his favorite weapons, we know how he likes to use them, and we know what he wants to accomplish. The Bible tells us in 2 Corinthians 2:11, *“... for we are familiar with his evil schemes.”*

2 CORINTHIANS 11:3 What is Satan's goal?

JOHN 8:44 How is Satan described in this verse?

EPHESIANS 5:17 What does God want us to understand?

By now, you should be aware that Satan is after your mind and that lies are his weapon of choice. Satan knows influencing our thoughts is a critical part of deceiving us. When we listen to his lies, we are no longer able to understand God's will. Remember, you are a soldier in a spiritual battle, and the war you are in has eternal consequences.

If we're honest, sometimes we are the problem! We don't resist temptation, our decisions aren't based on biblical principles, and we make excuses for our sinful behavior.

Our mind is the battlefield. When we let Satan influence our thoughts, it separates us from God's will. If we aren't careful, we may even become a casualty of war. The fallout won't be our own salvation, but the salvation of others who may not come to know Jesus through you.

With God there is always hope, and His name is Jesus! God's Word gives us a sure and certain defense against Satan's evil schemes. Read the following verses and underline them in your Bible. Best of all, try to memorize them.

- PSALM 119:105 (His Word)
- 1 PETER 5:10 (His Grace)
- 1 JOHN 3:8 (His Son)

God gives us specific instructions in Ephesians 6:10-18 on how to protect ourselves from the evil schemes of the enemy. Below, list the seven pieces of armor and a brief description of their purpose.

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DIGGING DEEPER

- Stay alert.
- Rely on God's Word when being tempted.
- Pray the armor of God over yourself each day this week.

Sharing the Gospel

The Gospel is the most important news you ever heard, and it can completely change the life of everyone you share it with!

Read Philippians 4:8. If our minds aren't focused on spiritual things, we won't be able to share our faith with anyone else. God's will is that none perish, so part of our "job" as Christ Followers is telling other people about Jesus!

The Gospel is simple: God sent Jesus to pay the price for our sins. He lived a sinless, perfect life, and died on a cross for *our* sins. Jesus was buried, but He rose again that third day to bring us new life.

That is the Gospel- or the "good news" – Jesus took our place! He willingly received the punishment that we rightfully deserved! He paid the price for *our* sin and reconciled us to God, allowing us to receive God's grace.

The Gospel isn't about us; it's about Jesus! Your testimony is important, but it's not the Gospel. Your testimony is the story of how you heard the Gospel, admitted you were a sinner, told God you were sorry (repented), and asked Jesus to be your Lord and Savior. Sharing your testimony is important, but it's never a substitute for the Gospel.

ROMANS 1:16-17 *What does Paul say the Gospel reveals?*

ROMANS 10:13 *Who will be saved and how will they be saved?*

Everyone explains the Gospel differently, but we must always include these four elements.

- TELL THEM ABOUT GOD'S PLAN (JOHN 3:16)
- TELL THEM ABOUT OUR SIN PROBLEM (ROMANS 3:23)
- TELL THEM ABOUT GOD'S SOLUTION (1 PETER 2:24)
- TELL THEM OUR REQUIRED RESPONSE (ROMANS 10:9)

People need to hear the Gospel. They also need to hear that their sin separates them from a God who loves them. They must understand that Jesus died for their personal sins, and that choosing to follow Jesus is choosing eternal life.

But sharing the gospel isn't just for Pastors or church leaders. All Christ Followers are commanded to share God's redeeming love with everyone, everywhere.

"And then he told them, 'Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.'"

Mark 16:15 (NLT)

Sharing Your Testimony

Sharing how you came to know God is a powerful way to help someone understand how much Jesus loves them. Your testimony doesn't have to be complicated; it's just the story of how God saved you. Since it's your own personal story, it shouldn't be hard to tell. Think of it like this; whenever we discover something wonderful (a place, a restaurant, etc.) we can't wait to tell our friends about what we've found. Sharing your testimony is telling someone about a wonderful person you met named Jesus.

In Mark 5:18-19, Jesus tells the demon-possessed man He healed. *"As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. 19 Jesus did not let him, but said, 'Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.'*"

Testimonies come in all shapes and sizes, and each one is unique. Sharing your testimony isn't complicated. It's simply telling someone how you found Jesus and how your life changed after you met Him.

Your testimony story should have three parts:

1 – Before you came to know Jesus. (25% of your story)

- Be relevant. If you happen to know something about the person you are talking to, connect with them by using the part of your story that matches their situation.
- Be transparent. Explain what your life looked like before you accepted Jesus. Include past failures, unhealthy relationships, bad attitudes, sin, etc.
- Be careful not to glorify a sinful lifestyle or exaggerate your past.

2 – When you received Jesus. (50% of your story)

- This is where you want to share the Gospel, the Good News.
- Be relatable. Avoid using words or phrases that you only hear in church. If you cannot avoid these words, be sure to explain them. A few examples are, "I got saved" or "I was washed in the blood of the Lamb."
- Describe how you felt when you first believed.
- Do not boast about what you gave up for God but rather about what He gave up for you. You gave up sin, hell, judgement, guilt, and shame. God gave *everything*. Jesus was judged, made guilty, and put to shame, and died for you.

3 – Your life now after coming to know Jesus. (25% of your story)

- Don't portray the Christian life as perfect and trouble free. The bible says Christians will have trials and tribulations, but God will go through them with us. New believers must understand that life after salvation will still have difficult moments.

- Be transparent. Explain how your past struggles reveal God's character: His mercy, grace, goodness, and patience.
- Explain what changed (thoughts, behaviors, and beliefs) since you met Jesus.
- Give the other person a chance to respond. Let them think about what you've said, then allow them to ask questions. It should be a two-way conversation.

In your opinion, what is the most powerful part of your testimony?

What helped you realize you needed a Savior? Was there a specific moment it happened, or was it a gradual process?

Sharing your testimony may sound a little scary, but it's actually rewarding and exciting. At first, you'll probably be most comfortable telling it to your friends and family. But later, after you've shared it a few times, consider sharing your story with someone you don't know.

Sharing your story with a stranger might seem even more scary, but remember, God wants His story told. Your story **is** His story! Talking to strangers about spiritual things isn't as hard as it sounds, but having a plan in mind will make it easier.

SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS HAVE TWO MAIN COMPONENTS.

- Knowing how to get the conversation started.
- Knowing how to steer the conversation towards spiritual things.

STARTING A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

- When starting a conversation, be natural, not spiritual. Make eye contact, smile, and just say, "Hi." If you receive a "Hi" back, it's safe to proceed. Use something around you or the location itself to begin the conversation. Or try using current events (even a death or a tragedy) or things they are wearing (logos, sports, jewelry, tattoos, etc.) to break the ice.

REDIRECTING THE CONVERSATION

- After you've talked with them for a few moments, shift the conversation towards God by asking this simple question: "Do you have any spiritual beliefs?"
- No conversation will swing towards the spiritual by itself. This question is non-threatening, and it will deliberately move the conversation towards Jesus. If the person you are talking to has different spiritual beliefs, don't interrupt, give them a chance to finish talking. When it's your turn, roll right into your testimony.

You might be surprised how eager people are to talk about spiritual things. The more you talk about Jesus, the easier it gets, and the more natural it will become. If you have questions, or if you want to learn how to share Jesus effectively, ask your mentor for help.

We offer free evangelism classes that will teach you how to share your faith with others. If talking to a stranger about Jesus seems scary, you can "shadow" an experienced person to see how it's done.

THREE THINGS A PERSON NEEDS TO DO TO RECEIVE GOD'S GIFT OF SALVATION

- Recognize - Admit they are a sinner, and that Jesus died on the cross for their sins.
- Repent - Ask forgiveness and be willing to turn away from their sins.
- Receive – Ask Jesus to be their Lord and Savior and commit to follow Him.

Sharing your testimony is not about accomplishing a task. It is about sharing God's love with someone He loves and wants a relationship with.

DIGGING DEEPER

- Ask God to show you who He might want you to share Jesus with.
- Share your testimony with someone you know.
- Attend an Evangelism class to learn how to share your faith with others.

Building a Strong Faith

Faith is the key to the God's Kingdom. The closest that the Bible comes to offering an exact definition is Hebrews 11:1 – *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."*

Now that you are following Jesus, you can no longer reply on your five senses or your feelings. Instead, you must believe the promises found in God's Word. This requires strong faith.

Faith is like muscle, if not used regularly it becomes weak. Imagine how Moses' faith grew each time he saw the different plagues God sent Egypt in Exodus 7. Now imagine how much stronger his faith was when he crossed the Red Sea in Exodus 14.

Being a Christ Follower does not exempt you from life's storms. When a storm is raging, we need to trust God's promises more than our circumstances. The key to having peace in the middle of a storm is strong faith!

In Matthew 14:29-31, Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he never noticed the raging storm all around him. But when he took his eyes off Jesus, he started sinking in those stormy waters. *"Come,' he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, 'Lord, save me!' 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. 'You of little faith,' he said, 'why did you doubt?'"*

God is bigger than our biggest obstacle. When life gets stormy, you might feel like you're fighting a giant with a slingshot like David did in 1 Samuel 17. When David faced Goliath, he didn't look at the size of Goliath, he focused on the greatness of God.

1 SAMUEL 17:45-48 *What did David say to Goliath? Did his faith influence his victory?*

In order for your faith to grow you must trust God for guidance, wisdom, and direction. The more you *seek* and *obey* God, the more He will strengthen your faith. The stronger your faith becomes, the more dependent you become on God. As you trust Him more for truth and direction in your life, your relationship with Him will naturally grow stronger each day.

Someone once said; "Know Jesus = Know Peace" but "No Jesus = No Peace."

HEBREWS 11:6 *What pleases God?*

Praying in Faith

We know God listens to our prayers, so it makes sense to combine that privilege with our faith. Look what God's Word says about our prayers in Philippians 4:6 (NLT), *"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done."*

This means instead of wasting time worrying, we should ask God to help us! Then, in faith, we must be sure to thank Him in advance for answering our prayers.

To pray with faith, our prayers should be based on the principles found in God's Word. Some people include God's Word in their prayers. A perfect example of this is when Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness. Matthew 4 tells us that each time Jesus countered Satan's temptation He replied with, *"It is written"*. This shows us how powerful God's Word really is!

When our prayers begin with "God, you said...", the spiritual world shifts. For example, *"God, please help me with _____, because your Word says you will help us in our time of need. Thank you for the many blessings you have given me, in Jesus' name I pray, Amen."* This type of prayer includes thanksgiving, the Word (Philippians 4:19) and faith all in one!

Praying out loud can also be a faith builder. It affirms our faith, and for many people it helps their faith grow stronger. Romans 10:17 (ESV) says our faith and our hearing are connected. *"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."*

If you have never prayed aloud just start praying the same way you would begin a conversation with a friend.

Write a prayer request according to Philippians 4:6. Then pray it out loud.

How was your faith strengthened after praying it aloud?

Believing Who You Are in Faith

In John 8:44, Jesus says Satan is the father of lies. In Revelation 12:10, a voice from Heaven calls Satan “the accuser of our brothers and sisters.” How does Satan accuse us? By trying to convince us that we aren’t who God’s Word says we are.

1 Corinthians 1:30 says on the cross, Jesus became our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. This doesn’t mean Christ Followers are perfect; it means God sees us as perfect. How is that possible? It’s hard to imagine, but because of Jesus’ sacrifice, when God looks at us, He doesn’t see us, He sees Jesus! Jesus’ death on the cross made us righteous, holy, and redeemed. An important part of faith is believing this biblical truth, then walking in it confidently, by faith.

After salvation, we will still wrestle with sin (Romans 7:15). That means we can’t look inward to find out if we’re righteous. Instead, we must look outward and examine God’s Word. It doesn’t matter what we think, or what Satan says, what matters is *who* God says we are!

As we work to strengthen our faith, we need to remind ourselves *daily* who God says we are in Jesus.

WHO GOD SAYS WE ARE

- We are chosen and holy, *Ephesians 1:4*
- We are children of God, *John 1:12*
- We are redeemed and forgiven *Ephesians 1:7*

And yes, we will all occasionally “miss the mark” and make mistakes. But Romans 8:39 tells us nothing we do or think can separate us from the love of God, “*neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

If God can take Saul who persecuted the early Church, and change him into the apostle Paul, just imagine what He can do for us!

DIGGING DEEPER

- Memorize Galatians 2:20 as a reminder of who you are in Christ.
- Pray out loud privately to build your faith.

7 Discipleship Values

These 7 values found in Scripture helped the disciples turn their world upside down! They are the heart and soul of what Christ Followers are called to do.

SPEND TIME WITH JESUS

We believe that it's through God's Word that we learn His will for our lives. When we spend time with Jesus, through reading the Bible and prayer, we see our need for a savior and the individual purpose God has given us.

GATHER TO WORSHIP

We believe in the transformative power of worship in the life of the believer. We were made to worship God, and when we gather together in His presence and lift up our voices to Him in praise, it's then that we experience all that we were created to be.

CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY

We believe that true transformation happens when you get connected in a small group. Whether it's a home group or Bible study, groups provide you with the opportunity to build relationships, grow in your walk with Jesus, and of course, have fun!

FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

We believe in the power of God to break chains and remove strongholds in your life. Through support groups and Biblical counseling, you're able to connect with others going through the same struggles as you and those who've come out of life's storms victorious.

JOIN A SERVE TEAM

We believe that we were created to serve God and serve people. Whether you serve within the church in one of our ministries or serve outside of the church through local outreaches, you'll be fulfilling your purpose as you make God known.

LIVE ON MISSION

We believe in carrying out the great commission to make Jesus known throughout our community and the world. When you support one of our missionaries, you are supporting the mission of Jesus within the community where they serve, and when you go on a mission trip, you get to personally be the hands and feet of Jesus in communities around the world.

INVEST YOUR RESOURCES

We believe God has gifted each of us with the ability to invest in His Kingdom through financially supporting the ministry of the church. As you generously give your tithes and offerings to the church, you're helping to further the advancement of the gospel and establish a firm foundation for future generations to know and serve God.

WEEK 10
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DISCI-
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Checklist

- Get water baptized.
- Attend church on a regular weekly basis.
- Join a Bible Study or Homegroup.
- Personally connect with someone for encouragement and support.
- Have quiet time with God each day.
- Worship God.
- Start a journal.
- Pray for your relationships with God and others.
- Resolve conflicts peacefully.
- Take a Spiritual Gifts test online.
- Use your time, gifts and resources wisely.
- Begin tithing.
- Be baptized in the Holy Spirit.
- Stay alert.
- Rely on God's Word when being tempted.
- Pray the armor of God over yourself daily.
- Take an Evangelism class
- Share Jesus with someone.
- Share your testimony with someone.
- Pray out loud to build your faith.

Congratulations

We hope this guide has helped your faith grow and deepened your commitment to Christ. We pray you will set aside time each day to spend with God and study His Word. Remember the things you have learned on this journey will *only* help you if you apply them to your daily life.

In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus gave *us* the Great Commission, “*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*”

We start out as spiritual infants, but we must keep growing until we become mature followers of Christ. Every Christ Follower must *be* a growing disciple, then help *make* other disciples.

Next Step

Now it's your turn. Think of someone you know that you could share this material with. Then ask your mentor to help you get started.

Thank you for your commitment to grow spiritually. May God richly bless you as you continue to seek Him and serve Him!

Resources From Feather Sound Church

At Feather Sound Church, we offer a variety of resources to help you grow in your relationship with Christ. Feel free to explore and use these tools—just scan the QR codes below to access FREE devotionals, Bible study guide, How To Have a Quiet Time and more.

Guide to Studying the Bible



Primary Purpose of Prayer



How to Have a Quiet Time



Media Library



