



# START RIGHT

WHAT EVERY PERSON SHOULD  
KNOW AS THEY BEGIN THEIR  
JOURNEY WITH GOD.

JAY DUQUE





Small Church Ministries

## **START RIGHT**

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**LOVE GOD,  
LOVE PEOPLE,  
MAKE DISCIPLES.**

# PROLOGUE

START RIGHT was written to establish strong biblical foundations that will help you in your journey of life! It is getting to know foundational truths to enable you to live a life of victory.

## THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

*Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*

Matthew 22:37-39

Love stands as the greatest commandment. It reflects the very essence of God's character. Scripture tells us that "*God is love*" (1 John 4:8). Through love, we reflect God's character, live out His righteousness, and build His kingdom on earth. As we abide in His love and extend it to others, we embody the very heart of Christianity and fulfill the greatest commandment given to 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Matthew 28:19-20

The Great Commission is Jesus' lifelong call to action for all believers. He is basically saying, "Hey, go out there and spread the good news!" We must share the love and hope we've found in Jesus with everyone we meet. When we obey this call, we're playing a part in God's plan to bring people into His family. Making disciples is not just about getting people to believe in Jesus—it is about helping them grow in their faith journey. When we follow the Great Commission, we are not just adding numbers; we are passing on the baton of faith to others, so they can do the same.

Obedying the Greatest Commandment and the Greatest Commission is the key to having a victorious life as you begin your journey with God. In the next few weeks, you will learn fundamental truths about God, His Son Jesus and why He came to earth. The gospel is truly liberating.

**JAY DUQUE**

# INTRODUCTION



**W**hat's the longest journey you've ever had? Life is like a journey. This life, while it is exciting, adventurous, and fun, also has its share of humps and bumps, valleys and mountains, and ups and downs. The reality is storms are part of life.

Jesus said. *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33). There will be storms. But through His Son Jesus, we can face the storms with hope and courage. He promised to give us peace and victory.

How can we be victorious in this life that is full of challenges, problems, and storms? This booklet was made to help you start right on your journey. Just like any journey, it is safer and more fun if you do it with others. The good news is you are not alone.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### GOD KNEW YOU BEFORE YOU WERE BORN

Did you know that God foreknew you even before He created you?

*"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained*

*for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”*

Psalms 139:13-16

Only our Creator know what is best for us. He has a wonderful reason and purpose for creating us, and He knows every detail about us. He loves us so much.

## **GOD HAS A PLAN FOR YOU**

*For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

Jeremiah 29:11

Believers in Christ can be confident that God has a future planned for them. Just like an engineer and architect has a blueprint for a building project, God knows every detail of our lives. He has a future mapped out for us so that we can achieve His purpose in and through us.

## **GOD WANTS TO GIVE YOU A FULL LIFE**

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

John 10:10

While the thief came to destroy our lives, Jesus on the other hand, has come to give us life to the full, a life with purpose, hope, and meaning.

Abundant life is eternal life, a life that begins the moment we come to Christ and receive Him as Savior. It is a life that consists of an abundance of love, joy, peace, and the rest of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), not an abundance of “stuff” or material things. What does an abundant life look like for you?

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# 1. WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

**W**hat causes defeated lives? In one word - **SIN**. Sin is the problem of the world. This 3 letter word has brought agony and pain to many. The word “sin” is used over 400 times in the Bible. It is the act of rebellion against God and breaking His laws.

## MISSING THE MARK

Imagine standing in front of a target, trying to hit the bullseye. The target represents God's perfect standard—His righteousness. Now, sin is like **missing that mark** entirely. It's falling short of what God expects from us.



Romans 3:23 puts it straight: ***"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*** That means nobody, not a single person, can claim to be perfect or meet God's standard on their own. We've all messed up in some way or another.

## SINNERS BY NATURE

We are sinners by nature. We are not sinners because we sin, we sin because we are sinners. Our very nature is to sin; given the choice to do God's will or our own, we will naturally choose to do our own thing. You do not have to teach a child how to lie, take what is not theirs, or be selfish. They just do.

***All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.***

Ephesians 2:3

This verse emphasizes that by our very nature, we are inclined towards sinful desires and actions, deserving of God's judgment. It highlights the inherent sinful state of humanity, underscoring the need for salvation.

*For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.*

1 John 2:16

All our sins fall under three categories:

1. **Lust of the flesh:** giving in to our body's urges, sexual gratification, drug and alcohol addiction, gambling, etc.
2. **Lust of the eyes:** always wanting more things and an insatiable desire for material possessions
3. **Pride of life:** thinking we're better than everyone else

Sin will always result in destruction. The problems of this world are deeply rooted in sin. Sickness and diseases, doubt and unbelief, fear and worry, loneliness, depression, hate and violence, murder, addiction, lust, envy, pride, unforgiveness, and all sorts of problems have plagued mankind because of sin.

## SEPARATED FROM GOD

Sin is not just about breaking rules. It is a bigger concern because it separates us from God. Isaiah 59:2 paints a vivid picture: *"But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear."*

Think of it like a separation between us and God, caused by our wrongdoing. It is like a barrier that blocks off that close

relationship we were meant to have with Him. Since we are dead in sin, we are completely unable to trust God or His Word. When Adam sinned, he ushered in death for all humanity.

*Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.*

Romans 5:12

Romans 6:23 lays it out: *"For the wages of sin is death."* That is not just talking about spiritual and physical death, but also eternal death—a separation from God that lasts forever.

But wait, there is hope in the midst of all this. That same verse in Romans doesn't stop there. It continues, *"but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* See, God did not leave us stranded in our mess. He sent Jesus to bridge that gap between us and Him. Sin is a problem, but it is not the end of the story. Through Jesus, we can find forgiveness, restoration, and a new life.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How do you think sin affects your relationship with God and people?

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2. What do you think are the reasons why people disobey God?

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3. How do you think God feels when we disobey his commands or sin against Him?

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**NOTES**

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## 2. WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

**A** better question would be “Who is the solution?” Jesus is the solution to all our problems. We know from our previous lesson that we are all sinners and that the penalty for sin is death. Since we are dead in our sins, we cannot save ourselves. We need a savior.

*For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.*

John 3:17

*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*

Luke 19:10

This is why Jesus came! His mission is to save you and me.

### FULLY PAID

Back in the Old Testament, a lamb, bull, or ram was sacrificed at the altar for the sins of the people (Exodus 29:10-43). However, those sacrifices are just an annual reminder of sins. Hebrews 10:4 says, *“It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”* When Jesus came, John the Baptist said, *“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29) Jesus offered up Himself one time as a sacrifice and in so doing paid for all of the sins of all of the people—He did this *“once for all when He offered Himself”* (Hebrews 7:27).

*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.*

Mark 10:45

A ransom is a payment made for the release of a prisoner. Jesus was the ransom. While God is just and cannot allow sin to go unpunished, God provided a way without being unjust. Someone had to pay the penalty for the sins of humanity.

Jesus, the only person who was without sin, paid the penalty for all our sins. He took all of God's wrath and punishment that we deserve. He took our sins so we can be put right with God.

*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

2 Corinthians 5:21

*But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

Isaiah 53:5

Jesus' sacrificial death has paid our sin debt in full and restored the possibility of communion with God. Jesus said, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"* (John 14:6). He is not just one of the ways to heaven, He is the only way.

## **FREEDOM FROM SIN**

Jesus not only frees us from the penalty of sin, but He also frees us from the power of sin. In John 8:36, Jesus makes a wonderful statement of victory. He says, *"So if the Son sets you free you will be free indeed."*

For us who believed in who Jesus is and what He has done, we can experience freedom from bondage of sin, guilt, and shame. We now can partake of the abundant life that Jesus offers and serve God freely.

When Jesus came and set us free, we do not have to hide. We now can enjoy a healthy relationship with our Heavenly Father.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How important is it to you that Jesus came and died for your sins?

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2. Now that you know that Jesus is the solution to your broken relationship with God, how has this impacted you?

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3. What areas in your life do you need to be set free?

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## NOTES

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# 3. WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

**T**he gospel is the good news that God became man. He lived a life we should have lived, a life that is perfect and holy, and He died a death we should have died, but on the third day, He rose again from the dead, proving that He is the Son of God. Today, He is offering you the gift of salvation.

## GOD LOVES YOU

The gospel begins with the foundational truth of God's unconditional love for us. Despite our sinfulness and unworthiness, God initiated a plan of salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

John 1:1,14

*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

*But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Romans 5:8

## JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN

Jesus' death served as the ultimate sacrifice to atone for the sins of humanity. By taking upon Himself the punishment we

deserve, Jesus made it possible for us to be forgiven and restored to a right relationship with God.

*And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

Philippians 2:8

*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.*

Ephesians 1:7

At the heart of the gospel is Jesus coming back from the dead. He did what He said He would do. That He will suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day (Matthew 16:21). Through His resurrection, Jesus proved that He is the Son of God and conquered the power of sin and death, offering the hope of eternal life to all who believe in Him.

*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

1 Corinthians 15:3:4

## **SALVATION IS GOD'S GIFT**

Have you ever received a gift from someone? Salvation is God's gift to you.

*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 6:23

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Ephesians 2:8-9

What is grace? Grace is the unmerited favor of God. It is not something you earn or work for. It is given freely to you. It is receiving blessings you do not deserve but have anyway. Eternal life is a free gift from God.

Good works will not get us to heaven. Our good works are not enough to pay for all the sins we have committed. The Bible says that all our righteous acts are like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). To further explain, if a man commits murder, it does not matter how many good deeds he does, he still deserves to go to jail. Every good thing he has done is like filthy rags compared to the sin he committed.

*I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!*

Galatians 2:21

If you can save yourself from hell, then you do not need Christ. If all your acts of righteousness can be gained by observing the law, then Christ died for nothing.

## **JUSTICE, MERCY & GRACE ILLUSTRATION**

Assuming you were driving and beat the red light, then the cop pulls you over. He tells you, "You just beat the red light, I will have to give you a ticket and fine you." That is justice.

But if a cop pulls you over and says "Sir, you just beat the red light. I will have to give you a ticket, but for now, I won't. I will let you go. Just don't do it again. That is mercy.

Now if a cop pulls you over because you beat the red light and says “Sir, what you did was wrong, you beat the red light. You deserve to be fined but I won’t, just be careful next time. And by the way sir, your car is so dirty, I have a coupon for a free car wash. I am giving this to you, have your car cleaned.” That is grace.

- JUSTICE is when you get what you deserve.
- MERCY is when you do not get the punishment you deserve.
- GRACE is when you are given a gift you do not deserve, in this case, the gift of salvation. The acronym for G-R-A-C-E is God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense!

### **JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY.**

There is no other way to be saved other than the finished work of Jesus.

*Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

John 14:6

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How does God's unconditional love change your outlook in life?

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2. How does the truth of receiving eternal life through God's grace and mercy reshape your perspective on forgiveness and redemption?

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**NOTES**

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## 4. WHAT AM I TO DO?

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

Romans 10:9-10

**P**roclaiming "Jesus is Lord" and having faith that God raised Him from the dead is not a formula for salvation that automatically saves you. Back in Apostle Paul's time, openly declaring Jesus as Lord could literally get you killed. So when someone openly declared their faith in Jesus despite the risks, it showed they were truly committed to Christ.

### **BELIEVE IN THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS CHRIST.**

God has already done all of the work. All you must do is believe in your heart and receive by faith, the salvation God offers.

*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

### **REPENT OF YOUR SINS.**

**Repentance is turning away from what the Bible calls sin.**

Repentance begins with a heart that acknowledges that you are a sinner and that you need forgiveness for your sins.

*"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*

Mark 1:15

## GODLY SORROW VS WORLDLY SORROW

*Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.*

2 Corinthians 7:10

**Godly sorrow** causes you to realize the gravity of what you have done, and how you have hurt God. It produces a heart that truly wants to change. It is willing to face the consequences of sin because the desire to please God is greater than the desire to avoid the repercussions of sin. Godly sorrow no longer wants to cover up sin but to expose it. It is turning away from sin and turning to God.

On the other hand, **worldly sorrow** does not bring real change. It is a temporary form of sorrow. You are only sorry because you got caught and want to escape the consequences of sin. It brings condemnation.

*I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.*

Acts 20:21

*"Bear fruit in keeping with repentance."*

Matthew 3:8

## MAKE JESUS LORD OF YOUR LIFE.

"Lord" is a term that originally referred to someone with authority, control, or power over others. In a religious context, it often denotes someone who is considered a master or ruler. When applied to Jesus, saying "Jesus is Lord" signifies recognizing Him as the ultimate authority and ruler of our lives. It is not just a phrase; it is a commitment to obey Jesus.

*“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*

Matthew 7:21

*Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?*

Luke 6:46

Jesus Himself asked why people call Him "Lord" but do not actually do what He says. If Jesus is truly our Lord, it means He is in charge, and we are ready to obey. It is not enough to know that Jesus is Lord.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Beyond just saying you believe in Jesus, how do you show it in your everyday life?

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2. Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died and rose again, and that His sacrifice has completed everything you need for your salvation? Do you want to repent of your sins? Do you want to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

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3. Would you like to receive God’s free gift of salvation?

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If yes, pray this prayer with me.

*"Heavenly Father, I repent of my sins and surrender my life. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. That he died on the cross for my sins and rose again on the third day. I accept your gift of salvation and eternal life. Thank you for forgiving my sins. Today, I accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior. From now on, be the master of my life in Jesus' name. Amen!"*

If you have sincerely prayed this prayer, the bible says that you are now a new creation. The old has gone, the new you is here! Congratulations! You have now been adopted to His kingdom!

# 5. WHAT IS BAPTISM?

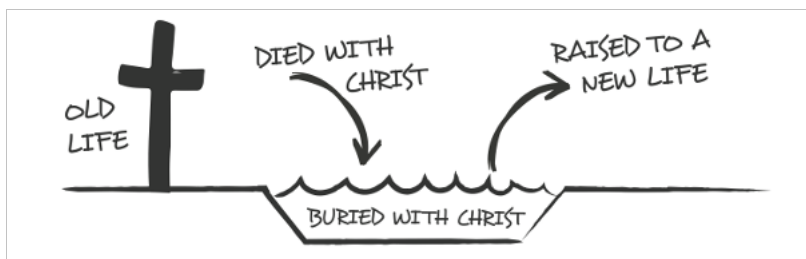
*Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*

Acts 2:38,41

**W**hen they heard the good news about Jesus being Lord and Messiah, they were cut to the heart. Then they asked “What shall we do? Peter answered repent and be baptized.

## WHAT IS BAPTISM?

The word “baptism” can be traced back to the Greek word “baptizo” which means immersion, and it signifies the act of being fully submerged in water. Baptism illustrates a believer’s identification with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.



When you are water baptized, it is a symbol of your “old self” being buried as you are immersed in water, identifying with Jesus’ death. And when lifted from the water, it is a symbol of

your rising to walk in a “new life” identifying with Christ’s resurrection from the dead.

*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just 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 is an outward symbol of the commitment you have made in your heart. It is a statement to everyone that you have placed your complete trust in Christ for your salvation and that you are committed to living for Him.

*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

## **WHY BE BAPTIZED?**

1. To demonstrate our obedience to Christ.

Water baptism is an act of obedience to the commands of Jesus.

*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.*

Matthew 28:19

2. To publicly acknowledge and declare your faith in Jesus.

Baptism declares that you are a follower of Christ. It is a public confession of your faith and commitment to Him telling people about the new life you have found in Christ.

*What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.*

Romans 6:1-5

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How important is baptism to you?

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2. Have you been water baptized? Tell us about your experience.

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3. If not, would you like to be water-baptized?

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## NOTES

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# 6. WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

**D**iscipleship is helping people follow Jesus. A disciple is a follower of Christ. A student of the word. Jesus asked His disciples to follow him. Discipleship is not complicated. Jesus asked ordinary people, fishermen, business people, tax collectors, etc., to come follow Him and learn more about God.

*Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!"*

Matthew 4:19

Jesus first wants you to be a disciple and a follower before you can make disciples. Discipleship is at the core of God's plan to reveal Himself to the world. His plan was to use people to tell others about what He has done for you.

## THE GREAT COMMISSION

The Great Commission is not a suggestion, it is a command! Before Jesus ascended back to heaven, he gave his followers the very important task of spreading the good news. God is inviting you to take part in His mission, this is why you are commissioning with God.

*"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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Matthew 28:19-20

## LEARNING TO OBEY

A disciple is a learner. A person learns not by memorizing or accumulating knowledge but by doing, practicing, applying, and obeying what is being learned. Look at what Jesus has to say to those who want to follow him:

*“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”*

Matthew 7:21

*“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”*

Luke 6:46

Discipleship is about people becoming obedient followers of Jesus Christ who live out their faith daily. Jesus consistently teaches that those who hear his words must put them into practice. He said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples” (John 8:31). It is not how much of the Bible we know, it is how much we obey.

*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

James 1:22

## BEING A WITNESS

A witness is someone who testifies to the truth of something based on what he has seen or experienced. You become a witness for Christ when you share your personal experience about God and how He changed your life. Being a witness involves living in a way that reflects God’s character.

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

Acts 1:8

## **GROWING WITH OTHERS**

For us to grow in your relationship with Jesus, we need others. Through shared lives, we learn from one another how to become Christlike in the way we live. We share experiences that help us grow. We help each other understand the Bible and the teachings of Christ.

Discipleship happens when we interact with fellow believers in small group settings and one-on-one meetings. As we learn about God and grow in our spiritual life, we can share the good news about Jesus and help others follow Him too. Start your own discipleship small group. God promised that as you make disciples and teach people to obey everything He has commanded, He will be with you always (Matthew 29:20).

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Can you say that you are a follower of Christ? Are you being discipled right now? If not, would you want to be?

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2. What personal experiences do you have that you could share as a testimony of what God has done in your life?

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3. How can you make sure Jesus is taking the lead in your daily life? What are some areas in your life that needs to be directed towards God?

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## NOTES

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# 7. WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

**T**he Bible serves as the instructional manual for life. A common acronym for the B-I-B-L-E is "Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth." The Bible teaches us how to live according to God's plan.

When you buy a phone or laptop, it comes with a manual to guide you on how to use it. Think about it. If gadgets come with instruction manuals, how much more should you, created in God's image? He has provided a manual for you to navigate life. Sadly, many people are ignorant of His Word, turning to God only in times of trouble. What if we took the time to familiarize ourselves with God's Word before the storms of life hit us?

If we have to speak of a single purpose of the Bible, it would be to reveal God to us. The Bible is the main thing that God will use to communicate with us. Some have called the Bible God's love letter to mankind.

## JESUS IS THE LIVING WORD

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

John 1:1,14

In this context, "Word" refers to the Lord Jesus. The term translated as "Word" is "logos," which means "the expression of a thought." Jesus personified this entire message of God to humanity, which is why He is referred to as the "Word" of God.

There was a story of a man who tried to save a flock of birds in the middle of a snowstorm. He opened his garage so that the birds would come in and be safe, but the birds would not come in.



The man came near the birds and shooed them towards his garage, but they still would not come in. The more he tried, the more they flew away. Frustrated, he blurted out, "Why won't they just follow me? Don't they understand that I'm trying to save them?" Then he thought, if only he could become a bird, he would be able to communicate with the birds and save them. This is why Jesus came to the world as a human, to deliver the good news!

## GOD'S WORD IS OUR SPIRITUAL FOOD

*Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

Matthew 4:4

*Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.*

1 Peter 2:2

The Bible is necessary for every believer to grow. God's Word is our spiritual food. We have to make sure we're getting our spiritual food to stay strong and connected with God. Just like how we need regular meals for our bodies, feeding our souls regularly is key to keeping our spirits strong. The Bible often speaks of the spiritual food we need: God's Word provides milk (1 Peter 2:2); it is meat (1 Corinthians 3:2) and bread (Matthew 4:4); and it is sweeter than honey (Psalm 119:103).

## GOD'S WORD GIVES US DIRECTION

*Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.*

Psalms 119:105

Have you ever gone somewhere for the first time? You need a map. You need a GPS to give you directions. In the same way, God's Word will provide us with Biblical principles that will help us navigate through life.

When you read the Bible, you need to read it prayerfully and systematically. Instead of picking up verses here and there, it is better to read it book by book, chapter by chapter so you will have direction. Make note of the things that speak to your heart.

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

2 Timothy 3:16-17

God breathed on His Word which is why it is so life-giving. It corrects and trains us to be righteous. It provides warnings about sin and promises when we obey. That is why he commands us not to let this Book of the Law be far from us. He instructs us to meditate or "chew" on His Word day and night. This will bring success in every area of our lives.

*Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*

Joshua 1:8

## GOD'S WORD IS OUR WEAPON

To be a victorious Christian, we need His Word daily in our lives. Ephesians 6:17 says that the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. A Christian who does not learn to meditate on His word will find it hard to win in this life.

Jesus met every temptation of Satan with a quote from the Old Testament, and that without a scroll in hand. Like Jesus, we need to treasure the Word in our hearts so that we may not sin against Him (Psalm 119:11).

*For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

Hebrews 4:12-13

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is your favorite verse and why?

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2. How has God's Word helped you in your walk with Him?

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3. Think about your typical day. How can you make reading and meditating on God's Word a regular part of your routine? What are the things that are hindering you from reading His word?

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# 8. WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

*And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.*

John 14:16-18

**B**efore Jesus was crucified, He told the disciples that the Father would send them a Helper, Comforter, and Advocate, who would be with them and in them forever. Since Jesus would no longer be physically around, He promised not to leave them like orphans. Instead, He promised to be with them through the presence of His Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a person. The bible declares that the Holy Spirit is God. He is the third person in the Holy Trinity. He is a divine being with a mind, will, and emotions. We must understand who He is and what He does for us.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDES US INTO ALL TRUTHS

*But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*

John 16:13

When we read our Bible and we do not understand it, the Holy Spirit can guide us and make us understand what God is trying to say to us. He helps us hear the voice of God as we read through the pages of the Bible.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT BRINGS CONVICTION

*And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.*

John 16:8

The Holy Spirit convicts us by making us aware of our sinfulness, our need for repentance, and our need for a relationship with God. This conviction is not meant to condemn us but to lead us back to God. It is the still small voice in our hearts that directs us to do God's will. The Holy Spirit is the one who leads our steps into the life God has for us. He is the one who can influence our thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions as we follow His lead.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US TO BECOME EFFECTIVE WITNESSES

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

Acts 1:8

A witness is a person who has a personal knowledge of something that has taken place. In Christianity, a witness is one who has received Jesus as their Lord and Savior and testifies to the truth of the gospel. It is about telling others what you have personally experienced in the Lord Jesus and how He has changed your life.

Part of being a witness to Jesus is bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Holy Spirit, as mentioned in



Galatians 5:22-23, includes qualities like *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*. When you bear the fruit of the Spirit, you create a distinctive and attractive lifestyle that draws people to Christ. It's not just proclaiming the gospel verbally but also living a life that reflects the character of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## HOW DO WE RECEIVE THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

We receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. By simply receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, the Holy Spirit indwells or takes up permanent residence in us. The Holy Spirit is the seal of salvation for all who believe.

*And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.*

Ephesians 1:13

*Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.*

1 Corinthians 6:19

The Apostle Paul said, *"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit"* Ephesians 5:18

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we "walk by the Spirit" (Galatians 5:16). Every day, we can be filled with the Holy Spirit by surrendering our will to God and obeying His Word. The key

is to allow Him to fill and govern every aspect of our lives—our thoughts, emotions, bodies, and actions.

The believers at Pentecost were *“filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them”*

Acts 2:4

When one is baptized in the Holy Spirit, it goes hand in hand with the manifestation of spiritual gifts. More often than not, it is accompanied by the gift of tongues.

*The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.*

1 Corinthians 14:4-5

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does the Holy Spirit's role as a Helper, Comforter, and Advocate help you in your walk with God?

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2. What are the things the Holy Spirit convicts you of?

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3. How does the Holy Spirit empower you to be Christ's witness?

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# 9. WHAT IS MY PURPOSE?

In a man's heart is the desire to know what his purpose is for living. Scripture points out that man was created by God so that he could give God honor while enjoying a relationship with Him. To honor means to regard with great respect, to esteem, to admire, to put a high value on and to prioritize.

After learning about all that He is and all that He has done for us in the previous lessons, we can say that God deserves all the honor.

## WE ARE CREATED TO GLORIFY HIM

Through faith in Christ, God gives us the ability to give Him the glory He deserves. And as His people, we do this by seeking to know and love Him each day and pointing others to the good things He has done.

*Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."*

Isaiah 43:7

*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

1 Corinthians 10:31

*Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!*

Psalms 150:6

In John 15:8, Jesus says, *"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."*

To bear fruit refers to a changed life rooted in faith and obedience to God. This could include displaying the fruits of the

Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control - Galatians 5:22-23).

*In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

Matthew 5:16

## **WE ARE CREATED TO PROCLAIM HIS NAME.**

God declares that He has a purpose for each one of us telling Pharaoh through Moses -

*"I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."*

Exodus 9:16

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

1 Peter 2:9

When we submit our lives to God's plans, He works through us in ways we never thought possible. When we tell people about the hope and joy we've found in Christ, we're bearing fruit that leads to more people coming to know and love God. Whether it's through our words, our actions, or even just our attitudes, we have the opportunity to be ambassadors for Christ and share His love with the world. Every interaction in every day is an opportunity to show God's power in our lives.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What are some ways you can honor him?
2. What is God telling you to do now in this season of your life?
3. How can you share what Jesus has done in your life with your family, friends, and people around you?

**NOTES**

# 10. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

**T**he beginning of the church can be found in the Book of Acts written by Luke. The original church began on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover when Jesus died and rose again.

When the Holy Spirit visited the disciples at Pentecost, they became the body of Christ, the very first church.

The word “**church**” comes from the Greek word “**ekklesia**” which means “the called-out ones” or “a called-out assembly or congregation.” The word is used throughout the Bible to refer to all those who have received salvation through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

*If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.*

Romans 10:9–10

## ON THIS ROCK

The word “church” was first mentioned in the bible when Jesus asked the disciples who they thought He was.

**“Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”**

Matthew 16:16

*And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*

Matthew 16:18

The “rock” here is the statement Peter made: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Peter was not the rock. This truth about Jesus is the foundation of the church that has grown for over two thousand years. Anyone who makes this truth the core of his or her life becomes a part of the body of Christ, the church.

### **THE BODY OF CHRIST**

The word church, when referring to believers everywhere, is synonymous with the term “Body of Christ” and it does not refer to it as a church building. Christ is the head of the body, the church.

*Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

*And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

Ephesians 1:22-23

Whether you are at home or the workplace, you bring God there. You are to be God’s hands, mouth, and feet in this world as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. We are to be doing the things that Jesus Christ would do if He was physically here on the earth.

## CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS

*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

2 Corinthians 5:20

When the Bible refers to believers as "Christ's ambassadors," it means that we are representatives or messengers of Jesus Christ on earth. Just as an ambassador represents their country's interests in a foreign land, you represent Christ to the world. You are His ambassador. You represent God wherever you go.

He designed it this way so that the gospel will be known throughout the world through you and me. We are called to reflect His character, teachings, and love to others, inviting them to enter into a relationship with God. It is a role that carries a weight of both privilege and responsibility, as it involves living out the values and principles of the Kingdom of God while engaging with the world around us.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does "church" mean to you?

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2. Are you part of the church?

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3. What do you think is your part in the Body of Christ?

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# 11. WHAT DOES A VICTORIOUS LIFE LOOK LIKE?

*But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Corinthians 15:57

**T**o be victorious in this life, we believe you need to be healthy in 4 critical areas.

1. SPIRITUALLY
2. RELATIONALLY
3. PHYSICALLY
4. FINANCIALLY

*Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.*

3 John 1:2

While some people are healthy physically, they may still experience defeat in other areas of their lives. Maybe they are lonely, depressed, or worried. Maybe they are in financial debt which can cause a lot of relational and spiritual stress.

We find it necessary to teach and disciple people about what God has to say in these vital areas in order to have a prosperous and victorious life.

When one part suffers, every part suffers. When all parts are healthy, the whole human experience becomes better. One cannot do without the other.

The good news is when we have areas in our lives that are suffering, God's grace is there to fill the parts that are missing. His grace and favor are abundant.

*But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

2 Corinthians 12:9

He works for our good. He loves us. We are all needy people wanting a savior to save us in areas that we are unable to cope with in life.

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

Romans 8:28

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What areas of your life do you think need to improve?

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2. What challenges are you experiencing lately, so I can pray for you?

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## 12. HOW DO I BECOME SPIRITUALLY STRONG?

**W**e are not just physical beings floating around in flesh and blood. We are spiritual beings created in the image of God. As such, we need to be strong not just physically but also spiritually. This verse teaches us how to.

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer.”*

Acts 2:42

It tells us to be devoted to the apostle’s teachings which tells us to know His Word. It is summed up in the word - “meditate”. It also tells us to “fellowship” which means to connect with fellow Christians on a regular basis. The breaking of bread tells us to “proclaim” what Christ has done for us which is the gospel and last but not least is “prayer”. These 4 items are the key to growing in your relationship with God.

## MEDITATE. PROCLAIM. FELLOWSHIP. PRAY.

**M**editate. This word was originally used to refer to sheep when they are eating. It means “to chew or to regurgitate”. When the sheep would eat grass, they would chew on it, swallow it, and bring it back out to chew again. This is how we should approach meditating on the word of God. We should not just read it; we should chew on it. That way, we can understand what it is saying. This was commanded by Joshua.

*Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*

Joshua 1:8

He didn't just say to read it, he said to meditate on it day and night. By doing so, we can be careful to do everything written in it. This command comes with a promise, that if you do so, you will be prosperous and successful.

It is important that you meditate on God's word, the Bible, day and night. If you do not have one, get one. Do you find it hard to read the Bible? What are some practical steps you can do to get started?

**P**roclaim. Be reminded of the gospel daily. Proclaim it to yourself and to others. This will bring inspiration to you in your walk with God. Proclaiming the gospel will remind you of how much God loves you. It will remind you that you are a new creation in Christ - forgiven. It will remove any guilt and condemnation that the devil will throw at you. God has already won the victory for you.

*But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Corinthians 15:57

**F**ellowship. The word fellowship is derived from the Greek word "**koinonia**". Koinonia can be defined as "holding something in common."

*Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.*

Philippians 2:1-2

Paul encourages us to be like-minded, one in spirit and mind. We can do this through fellowship with other believers.

*If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

1 John 1:6-7

**Koinonia** is an expression of spiritual unity that comes from common beliefs, convictions, and behaviors. Biblical fellowship happens when Christians that share similar biblical guidelines come together to accomplish God's work and God's will for the world. It comes with the sharing of lives while fulfilling God's mission on earth.

**P**ray. This is one of the most basic commands of God to His people but it is the one most neglected. It is one of the greatest weapon to win against the schemes of the enemy, but the enemy has made it into a religious ritual you have to do. The apostle Paul commanded the believers to pray.

*"Pray continually"*

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Prayer is communication. It is a conversation. We don't just talk to God; we listen to Him! We speak from the heart and tell him how we feel. We don't pray out of obligation but out of a desire

to have intimacy with God. God speaks to us primarily through His Word, the Bible. This is how you will know Him personally. And just like in any relationship, regular communication will strengthen and grow the relationship.

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

Philippians 4:6-7

*“This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”*

Matthew 6:9-13

In Matthew 6:7–16, Jesus instructs on praying privately, emphasizing sincerity over repetitive or empty words. He taught the Lord's Prayer where we should address God as our Father in heaven, seeking His will on earth. It also teaches us to include our requests for daily provisions, forgiveness, and protection from temptation and evil.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How did you understand prayer before? How do you view prayer now?

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2. Are you in fellowship with other people who can help you grow in your walk with God?

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3. Do you think fellowship is important? If so, would you like to join a group where you can be encouraged as you go through this life?

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**NOTES**

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# START RIGHT



**JAY DUQUE**

Pastor, Small Church Ministries

*But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss  
for the sake of Christ. What is more,  
I consider everything a loss  
compared to the surpassing greatness  
of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord,  
for whose sake I have lost all things.*

*Philippians 3:7-8*

## START RIGHT

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