

# FOUNDATION OF FAITH

*A Foundational Bible Study Series*

for those Seeking to Know Christ and to Make Him Known.



THE  
**MEMPHIS**  
CHURCH

LOVE • GROW • SERVE

A Study of the Scriptures aimed to help a Seeker find a Changed Life in Jesus Christ.

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

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Seek God + See Need + Faith in Jesus = New Life

The Memphis Church, Memphis, TN

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# Preface

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

**Hebrews 6:1-3** “Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.”

The outlines offered here are, as **Hebrew 6** says, elementary teachings or principles. They are not the final word. Simply reading these outlines to your friend, will not guarantee salvation to anyone. Keep in mind that you are studying the Bible, not just these outlines, with your friend. If you have other scriptures – or other basics – in mind, by all means, include them! In all these things, *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”* (2 Timothy 2:15)

## TIPS ON USING A STUDY SERIES:

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

## TIPS ON LEADING STUDIES:

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

**Proverbs 20:5** “The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.”

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3. **You job is to plant and water.** You don't have to force anything – God has the power to make it grow!  
(1 Corinthians 3:5-9)
4. **Check to see if they have a Bible.** Make sure your friend has a Bible with a good translation that they can readily understand. If not, a great gesture would be to get your friend one and write an encouraging note in it for them!
5. **Be a great example yourself.**  
**1 Timothy 4:16** “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”
6. **Get a good feel for each study.** The studies are laid out in a very practical manner.
  - There is a brief note at the very top to explain the purpose of each study.
  - The box underneath the note lists all of the main scriptures in the study and the main idea for each.
  - Underneath the box is an opening question and then each scripture is listed in order with more depth.
  - The study ends with a conclusion that contains some challenges that help apply the study to our lives.
  - NOTE: There is also an additional resources section at the end that generally includes extra passages, homework and facilitation questions. You can use these resources to further bolster the power of each study!
7. **Be led by the Spirit and enjoy yourself.** God is about to do a miracle, even if we don't know how!

*Mark 4:26-29*

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

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

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

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The goal of these questions is to get to know your friend's spiritual background, beliefs, and faith. They should be asked in a conversational, non-threatening way, while sharing your own experiences. Do not use these as a list of interview questions, but in your conversation, seek first to understand where your friend is coming from.

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## Introductory Questions

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

# SEEK GOD

## Loving God and Being Loved By God

This study should convince us that God loves us and we must love God..

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**Acts 17:16-28** – Ever ask yourself: “What on earth am I here for?” You aren’t alone! Why did God create you and bring you to this very point and time in your life? So that you would seek him and find him in order to have a personal relationship with him. Who takes the initiative in seeking this relationship? Because God loves us and desires a relationship with us, he has been actively determining times and places long before we ever thought about seeking him (*Psalm 14:2-3*). Why do so few seem to be seeking today? God is unknown and the image many have of him is distorted. To seek God, we must be willing to change our ideas about who God is to match what has been revealed to us in the Bible. There is nothing more important or exciting in life than to seek and to find our Creator God.

### *What is Love – God’s way?*

- **1 Corinthians 13:1-13** – Love is a daily decision and an action, not just a feeling or emotion.

### *Why should we love God?*

- **1 John 4:19** – He loved us first.
- **John 3:16** – He SO loved us – loved us enough to give His very best to us, His Son.
- **Jeremiah 29:11** – He has great plans for us and our lives.
- **John 15:15** – He wants to be our friend – He wants a relationship with us.
- **Exodus 34:6-7** – The incredible qualities of God; He desires to forgive us.

### *What does God promise those who diligently seek Him?*

#### **Matthew 7:7-11**

- Prayer is how we talk to God. Reading the Bible is how we listen to God. It is a relationship. Do you pray?
- As you seek to know God better, take Him at His word that He truly listens and responds to our prayers as a Loving Father.

### *What does it mean to love God?*

#### **Matthew 22:34-40**

- What is God’s expectation for loving Him?
- How is this different than we usually view love for God?
  - We often view love as only an emotional feeling.
  - Loving God has emotions tied to it but it is not based on emotions.

What is the Greatest Command? Love the Lord your God

What is the Second Greatest Command? Love your neighbor.

Heart – the driving force of our decisions; the seat of your will.

Soul – the eternal side of our being.

Mind – the intellectual side of our being.

What would it mean to love God with ALL of the above?

**1 John 5:3-5** – Obey His commands – listen to Him.

- Read His Word – make a heartfelt effort to follow His commands.
- God makes commands out of His love for us.
  - Example: A parent makes rules out of love and protection for their children. Most parents want their children to enjoy life to the fullest extent.

**John 1:18** – Jesus has made God known. Where do we begin our search for God? We begin by getting to know Jesus. To the degree that we know Jesus, we will know God.

**John 20:30-31** – The Word of God produces faith in Jesus. What will we find if we seek God by coming to know Jesus through God’s Word? Finding God begins with coming to faith in Jesus which promises true life now and eternal life later! As we take a closer look at Jesus, are you willing to make a heartfelt effort to draw closer to God by praying and reading the Bible?

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## God Loves YOU!

### God is running through the fields...

**Luke 15:3-6** (Picture a man running through a muddy field.)

- This is God running after you. He loves you so much. This is who God is.
- How did your experiences growing-up shape your view of God?
- God is NOT distant, aloof, or disinterested. He is NOT angry and short-tempered.
- How is your view of God different (or still the same) as an adult?
- Think about how someone's love can draw you closer to them.
- How did God come running after you?

### God is crawling on His knees...

**Luke 15:8-10** (Picture a woman rummaging around for a lost coin.)

Is there a time when you have been the woman, or the coin?

- This is how God humbled and dirtied Himself to save one lost soul – YOU!
- Psalm 40:1-4
- From what mud and mire is God saving you?
- Sometimes we can still feel distant, ashamed, or guilty. We put on a mask.
- Why does this happen? Guilty/unforgiven conscience or “guilt”.
- How does God want us to feel? Why was the lady looking for the coin? Would she have felt the same about a piece of lint?
- Deuteronomy 7:6 – *(Person seeking should read this passage out loud, replacing the word “you” with the word “I”.)*  
You are seen as a treasured possession. You were chosen out of all the people on earth (8 billion +) to be saved. You are valuable to God! How does that make you feel?

### God is throwing open His arms...

**Luke 15:11-32**

- In what ways were you like the prodigal son?
- Describe the father's love for his son. (Unconditional – looking for him; forgiving.)
- Do you see God this way? Why or why not?
- In what ways are you like the older son? (Attitudes, bitterness, envy – toward God or people.)

### Questions:

- Do you believe that God has shown His love to you? How?
- Do you understand how important you are to God?
- How are you showing your love for Him?

### Decisions:

- Work on having a spiritual and accurate view of God.
- Take some time and write a letter about your upbringing and how it affected your view of God. Share it with a spiritual friend.
- Make a decision to have a daily relationship with God through prayer and reading His Word.

## SEEK GOD

## The Word of God

This study establishes the Bible as the inspired Word of God and that it must be the standard for our lives.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** Where does the Bible come from? All Scripture is inspired by God, and is to be applied to our lives so that we can be ready for every spiritual challenge. What is the Bible useful for? Give your friend examples of how the scriptures have affected your life and helped you to change. (**2 Peter 1:20-21**)

**Hebrews 4:12-13** Why is the Bible living and active? It is relevant today and can expose and convict us of the sin in our lives. The Word cuts (hurts), but its purpose is to cut out the bad (sin), so that we can be healed—just like a surgeon’s scalpel. It judges our thoughts and attitudes. The Bible tells us how to live out the scriptures. It shapes and molds our character.

**John 8:31-32** Intellectual belief is not enough – nor can we go by our feelings. Everyone must hold on to the teachings of Jesus to be a true disciple of Jesus. Where do we find the teachings? How do we show our faith? True faith is seen in our obedience. (**James 2:26**)

**Matthew 15:1-9** Why are religious traditions dangerous? Our loyalty needs to be to the Word NOT to traditions that supersede the Word. It’s easy to go by traditions because we are used to them and assume them to be OK. What are some examples of Religious Tradition that could get in the way of worshiping God and following the Bible? To “worship in vain” means it is so empty and hollow that God does not even see the worship.

**1 Timothy 4:16** Watch your life and doctrine closely – they are inseparable. How we live (life) and what we believe (doctrine) are both essential to salvation. Illustration: Which wing of an airplane is most important? Why is it crucial to have life and doctrine working together? To save yourself and others.

**2 Timothy 4:2-3** If the Bible is so powerful and helpful, why aren’t more people truly following what it says? Bottom line, we prefer to live according to our own feelings and desires.

**Acts 17:10-12** Why were the Bereans “of more noble character”? Who is responsible for your relationship with God? You are. We are ultimately responsible for what we believe. Religious leaders can be wrong, so we cannot be lazy.

Don’t fall for false doctrine because it sounds easy or attractive. Review in greater depth the lessons and sermons you hear to be sure about what you are being taught. Are you willing to take personal responsibility for knowing what the Bible says? Don’t follow blindly. How can we be “good Bereans”? Ask good questions to find answers.

What is the most important thing in real estate? Location, location, location. When we read the Bible, something very important to look at is Context, Context, Context. Who wrote the book? Who were they writing it to? When did they write it? Why did they write it? Etc. These types of questions help us to understand the Context of the book we are reading.

**Psalms 1, Psalm 19:7-11** The Bible is more than just words on a page. We need to develop a thirst and devotion to the word of God. How eager are you to regularly meditate on the Scriptures?

**2 Timothy 2:15** What does God expect from people who follow Him, when it comes to His Word, the Bible?

**Isaiah 66:1-2** Our attitude should be one of humility, reverence, and awe for God’s word.

Are you ready? Are you willing to live by the Bible, taking God at His Word in your relationship with Him?  
Is it your heart’s desire to trust God’s Word above your own feelings, religious traditions, or religious leaders?  
Are you willing to live by the Word of God as your Standard and not to live by the world’s standards?  
Will you seek to understand God’s will and His ways through His inspired Word?  
(**John 12:47-50; James 1:22-25**)

*(NOTE: Resource Study “God and Man: The True Story”: Go over this study if someone needs an overview of the Bible. This resource shows how it all fits together from Genesis to the New Testament... and how we fit into God’s story. Also use “The Reality of the Bible” Resource Study if there is question about the Bible being the inspired Word of God, not written by men.)*

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This study examines the life, character and teachings of Jesus and allows us to know Him on a Heart level and be Captivated by Him.  
(See "Study Leader Notes" at bottom of page before beginning this study)

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### Hebrews 1:1-3

- Jesus is God's ultimate attempt to communicate with mankind, with us. (Illustration: Imagine trying to talk to an ant. How could you do it?) God, an all-powerful and all loving Father, sent Jesus, his Son, as the perfect representation of who He is.
- Jesus is the unique Son of God: fully God and fully man! God came to earth as a man in order that we could come to know him (**John 1:1, 14**). Jesus is the ultimate attempt by God to communicate with us. He gave us a living example.

**Colossians 2:9** All the fullness of God lives in Jesus Christ. This means that every aspect of God's character can be found in Jesus. Reading through any of the Gospels, the four books that describe Jesus' life and words, will give you insight into God's character and His will for your life.

Here are several aspects from Jesus' life in the Gospel of Mark. The first half of the Gospel tells us about the Power of Jesus while the second half of the Gospel tells us about the Servanthood of Jesus.

- **Mark 1:14-20** Jesus, preached the good news and called men to follow him.
- **Mark 1:21-22** Jesus was an amazing teacher whose words were spoken with authority.
- **Mark 1:23-28** Jesus cast out demons, showing that the power of God was present in him.
- **Mark 1:29-31** Jesus met people's needs and healed the sick.
- **Mark 1:32-34** Jesus focused his attention on others and selflessly gave of himself.
- **Mark 1:35** Jesus was dependent upon God in prayer for his strength and direction. (**Luke 11:1-4**) Jesus prayed and taught his disciples to pray. Prayer is not the repetition of words but a heartfelt talk with your Father in Heaven—a time for connection with God. How do you feel about prayer? Do you pray?
- **Mark 1:36-39** Jesus was consumed with his mission to preach the good news.
- **Mark 1:40-42** Jesus was filled with compassion for all people.
- **Mark 10:32-34, 45** Jesus came to serve, and gave his perfect life as a ransom for our sins. As predicted, he was rejected by His people and crucified—but he rose from the dead three days later (**John 13:1-5**).

**1 John 2:3-6** Knowing Jesus is not just an intellectual exercise. The goal of the Christian is to obey his commands and become more and more like Him: to think like Jesus, to act like Jesus, to live like Jesus. Are you ready to passionately commit yourself to following Him?

**John 14:6** Jesus claimed to be *the* way, not a way. He claimed to be *the* truth and not one truth among many. He said he was *the* life, not just a better life. How important is it that we put our faith, our trust, our obedience in Jesus? No one will make it to the Father unless they come to Him through Jesus! (**Acts 4:12**)

### Questions:

- What is your impression of Jesus from these passages? Is your impression different than before this study? How?
- Is this a man you want to follow?
- Are you willing to commit to reading one of the Gospels (Mark?) to get a larger picture of who Jesus really is?

*Additional Helpful Scriptures: Hebrew 1:1-3, Hebrews 2:14-18, Hebrews 4:14-16*

**Study Leader Notes:** Let people see how captivated you are by Jesus! Take time to help people connect with Jesus on a personal level – allow for more time if needed. Pray that Jesus will captivate their heart. If the seeker isn't firm about their faith in Jesus after this study, then do the "Lord, Liar or Lunatic" study in the Resources.

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SEE NEED

# The World's Wisdom or God's Wisdom

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

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**1 Corinthians 1:18-21** Everyone wants to know “How can I really live?” This passage spells out two fundamental ways to answer this question. The world's wisdom or God's wisdom. How does man in his wisdom view God's wisdom (the cross)? How does God view man's wisdom? Can we have it both ways? If you think I am a fool and I think you are a fool, what will our relationship be like? Establish the wide gulf in the two ways of viewing and living life. (Other Scripture: **Isaiah 55:9**)

**1 Corinthians 3:18-20** Why does Paul say “Do not deceive yourselves?” There is something about the world's wisdom that is deceiving. It is easy to convince ourselves that what we want to believe, what is comfortable and what is familiar, is right. (Other Scripture: **Luke 16:15**)

**Matthew 16:13-17** What kind of man was Peter? Was he religious? He certainly gets a right answer here. According to Jesus, where does this answer come from?

**Matthew 16:21-23** What does “Peter rebuked him” mean? Peter thought he was seeing things God's way, but in reality he was still on the side of the world's wisdom. We can know the right answers and still be living according to the wisdom of the world. What was Jesus' response? Where does the world's wisdom really come from? From Satan. No wonder it is the opposite of God's wisdom. (Other Scripture: **James 4:4**)

**Before we go on:** What is the “world's wisdom”? If you asked a person who is street smart or the person on Wall Street or just a person who watches a lot of TV “*What is at the heart of the world's wisdom about how to live?*” What do you think they would say? “Look out for number one.” “Get what you want.” “Get the power, the pleasure, the control you want.” “Get the money.” “Protect yourself.” “Guard your rights.” “Maintain your independence.” And so what is at the center of man's wisdom? Self! (See **2 Timothy 3:1-5**. *People will be lovers of themselves.*)

**Matthew 16:24-26** What is Jesus' message? How is it the opposite of the world's message?

1) Deny self – “disown” (**Matthew 26:34**). We renounce our old self, our old approach to life.

2) Take up the cross (instrument of death). Die to ourselves.

3) Follow Jesus. Make his life our model. Jesus' life is a demonstration of his message.

What does Jesus say will be the bottom line for those who “save their own lives”? And for those who foolishly lose their lives for him?

**Matthew 22:36-40** What does God want from you?

**Final thoughts and questions:** What is everything on the left side (world's wisdom) called? Sin. What is everything on the right side (God's wisdom) called? Love. How have you lived according the world's wisdom? Have you ever made a decision to renounce it? Which side was Peter still on (though he was religious)? Which side are you on? During the next few days pay attention to your thoughts and actions and think about on which side they fall.

**Are you eager to learn more?**

**HOMEWORK:** Do a “Spiritual Timeline” of your life to bring and discuss at the next study. This helps those seeking see where they have been, where they are now and where they want to be moving forward.

Seek God

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See Need

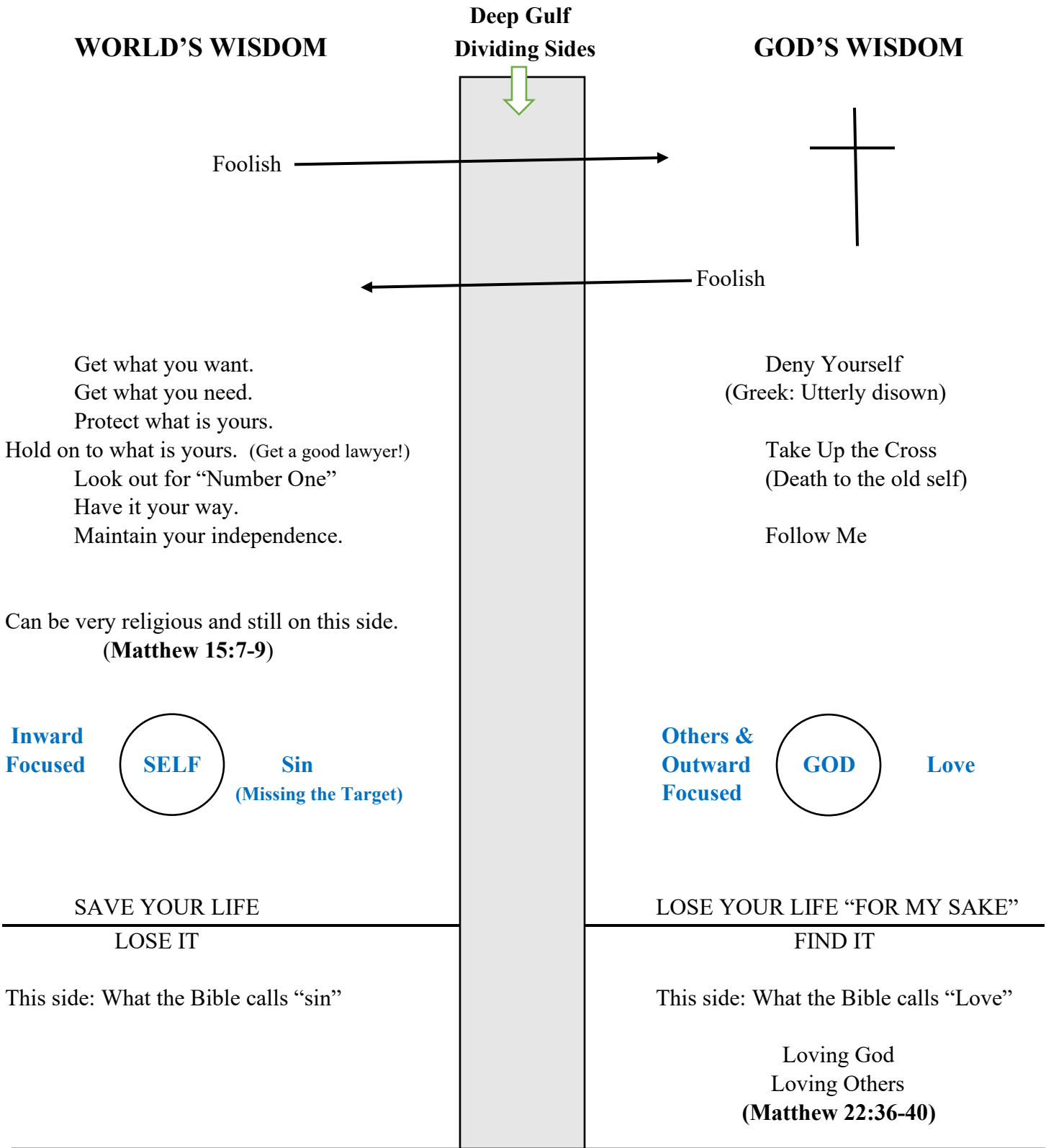
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New Life

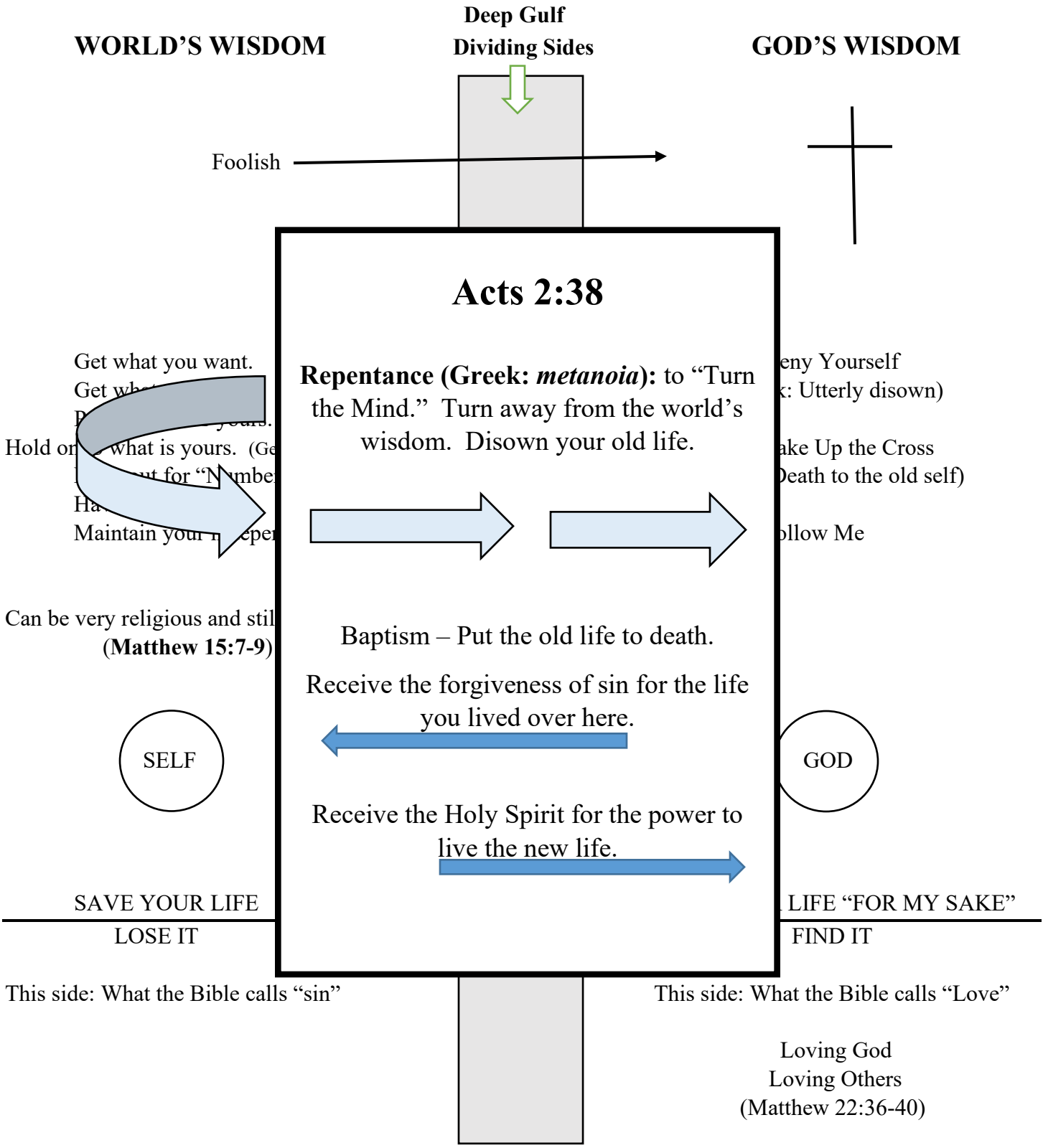
# How Can I Really Live?



**How have you lived according to man's wisdom? What are your greatest tendencies in this direction?  
Have you ever made the decision to renounce man's wisdom and commit to following God's plan?  
Which side was Peter on? Which side would Jesus say you are on today?  
Which side do you want to be on?**

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**How Can I Really Live?**  
 (Additional material for extended or future study.)




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## SEE NEED

## The Concept of Sin

This study helps us see ourselves as our Holy God sees us: utterly sinful and separated from Him. This realization brings about a desire for both forgiveness and repentance. Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal things and convict hearts in this study (**John 16:8**).  
(Also use the "Sin Definitions" study located in the Resources to clarify and discuss as needed.)

<b>1 Peter 2:9-10</b>	Darkness	<b>Sin</b>	Light
	Not a People		People of God
	No Mercy		Mercy

Every person is either in the darkness or the light. This study will show us that outside of Jesus we are all in the darkness. Sin builds a wall (dark rectangle above) between us and God.

**Isaiah 59:1-2** What is the consequence of sin? Sin hurts others, hurts ourselves, but ultimately sin hurts us and separates us from God. God is light. As long as the wall of sin remains, we are in the darkness. In order to have a relationship with God, the barrier of sin must come down.

**Romans 3:21-24** We will come back to other ideas in this text later, but focus on v23. Who has sinned? (Use illustrations to show that some are better than others, but all sin and fall short. Examples: Swimming to Hawaii, or graph showing piles of sin.) Who is more lost? There is no "good person" who is without sin. To reach God with our own righteousness is impossible and we all fall short. Only through Jesus can we reach God.

**Mark 7:14-23** Sin is not simply wrong actions, but a problem of the heart. Who is responsible for our sin? Despite genetics, parenting, peer pressure and socio-economic conditions, we are responsible for our own sin, which comes from our own hearts and makes us unclean. What is the consequence of being unclean before God? (Discuss these sins.)

**Galatians 5:19-21** (Emphasize "and the like.") These are some of the more "obvious" sins. Sin is the fundamentally "un-God-ward" orientation of our "flesh" or "sinful nature" and finds expression in many different ways. What is the common element in all these things? Self-Centeredness. (Be as specific as necessary to explain and share from your own life about the sins listed.) How do you see yourself in these verses? What sins have been characteristic of your own sinful nature? (Additional scriptures that catalog sins: **2 Timothy 3:1-5, Colossians 3:5-11, Revelation 21:8, Romans 1:21-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11**. Use additional study "Sin Definitions" to explain sins.)

**Romans 1:18-32** What is God's attitude toward sin? Why are men "without excuse"? How do you know there is a God? What things here are sinful in God's eyes?

**James 4:17** We are sinful and in need of forgiveness not only as a result of those sins we have committed, but for failing to do the good that we know to do. These are often called "sins of omission". Is there something here that you didn't really view as a sin? (**James 2:10-11**)

**Romans 6:15-18** How does sin enslave? Note that sin is a *power* that must be defeated as well as *specific acts* that **must** be repented of. Who alone can set us free from sin? (**John 8:31-36**)

**Romans 6:23** What are the eternal consequences of sin? Why be urgent to learn about receiving the gift of God that comes through Jesus Christ? Review these verses as honestly as you can to get in touch with the *bad news* about your own sinfulness. In the next couple of studies, we will look at the *good news* of God's solution to our bondage of sin. Now that you know what sin is according to God's Word, and you understand the definitions, please take time to make a list of the sins you have committed. This is for reflection purposes unless the person has not been open with their sins. (Note: In some instances it is important to have the person articulate how he or she was saved or forgiven of sin before examining the Bible's teaching about salvation.)

**Additional Helpful Scriptures:** *Confessing Sins: James 5:16 and Acts 19:18, Listen to God: Jeremiah 26:2-6*

Seek God

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Faith in Jesus

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New Life

This study helps us better understand the love of God and the cost of purchasing our forgiveness as seen in the death of Jesus. (This study may be more compelling when done in connection with watching a movie like “The Passion of the Christ.” You will also use the Study “A Medical Account of the Crucifixion”. Other Resource Study: “Saved by Grace Through Faith”.)

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**Romans 3:21-26, 5:6-8** The cross is a demonstration of God’s *justice* in the face of sin. God would not be righteous if he simply looked the other way in the face of sin and evil. At the same time, the cross is the greatest demonstration of God’s *love*. Because God loves us, Jesus Christ died for our sins. (Notice the parallel between Justice and Consequences, and Grace, love and sacrifice.) Why did Jesus fulfill the punishment we deserved? Because we have no power to remove our own sins.

**Mark 10:42-45** Jesus understood God’s plan for him to give himself as a ransom for us – to die for our sins. He could do this only because of his sinless life and His love for us.

**Matthew 26:36-46** What choice did Jesus make for *you* that night in the garden? Read **Matthew 20:17-19**. Jesus knew this day would come!

**Matthew 26:52-54** What choice did Jesus make for you by not calling on the twelve legions of angels? He could have called them at any point. **John 12:27-28** Why did Jesus not seek to escape the Cross?

**Matthew 26:59-64, 27:11-14** False witnesses as well as false evidence were brought against Jesus. What choice did Jesus make for you by remaining silent and not defending Himself? He gave them the evidence to convict Him when he said “I AM the Christ.” (blasphemy).

**Matthew 27:27-29** Jesus as a king could have chosen a crown of glory, but instead He chose the crown of thorns. What choice did Jesus make for you by choosing the crown of thorns?

**Matthew 27:38-44** The robbers, the chief priests, the elders and teacher of the law all mocked Jesus and said, “Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” What choice did Jesus make for you by staying nailed to the Cross? Read the Additional Study “The Passion of the Christ from a Medical Perspective” before going further to understand the extent of the suffering Jesus endured for you.

**Isaiah 53** Written about 700 years before Jesus, this chapter predicted what the Messiah would do at the cross and why. (Note: In **Luke 22:37**, Jesus quotes from **Isaiah 53** and says it was about him.) Read the entire chapter. Points of emphasis:

- **Verses 1-3** The Messiah would be despised and rejected.
- **Verses 4-6** The Messiah would be pierced for our transgressions; crushed for our iniquities; by his wounds we are healed. Re-read this passage inserting your own name.
- **Verses 7-9** The Messiah would be led like a lamb to the slaughter; for the transgressions of my people he was stricken. You may want to remind the person of the sins he/she described in earlier study.
- **Verses 10-12** The Messiah would be a guilt offering; but after the suffering of his soul, He received satisfaction (resurrection).

**1 Peter 2:21-25** Why did Jesus die on the cross for us? So that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. This is our whole-hearted response to the cross.

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

**Additional Helpful Scriptures:** (Advise person to study these out on their own). Mark chapters 14 & 15; Psalm 22; Acts 2:22-38; Colossians 2:13-14; Ephesians 2:1-10; Matthew 10:17-19; 1 John 3:16 & 4:10; John 12:27-28; James 2:14-18; Titus 3:3-8; Luke 15:11-31; 1 Corinthians 1:18; Luke 23:39-43; 1 Peter 2:21-25

Seek God

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See Need

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Faith in Jesus

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New Life



# Saved by Grace Through Faith

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

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**Psalms 103:1-18** In this psalm, David talks about the heart of the Lord toward weak and sinful people: He is a compassionate, gracious, loving father. How deeply does God love those who fear him? What is he willing to do with their sins (transgressions)? Is this the way you see God?

**Luke 15:11-31** Jesus taught many things in parables; short stories created to teach spiritual truths. What does this story tell you about God's attitude toward us when we repent and turn back to Him? Why did the older brother have such a hard time with his father's attitude? In what way did he fail to understand the father and his grace?

**Luke 18:9-14** In this story, we see two vastly different ways of viewing ourselves and God. How did the Pharisee approach God? How did he view himself? On what basis did he presume to be righteous? (His goodness, religious activities, his own efforts). By contrast, how did the tax collector see himself? What was his appeal to God based on? (God's mercy). Who went home justified (pronounced and considered "not guilty")? Jesus taught that a person can never be good enough to be saved through his own efforts. The only basis of our salvation is the mercy and grace of God.

**Ephesians 2:1-10** What condition are we all in? We are *dead* in sins and transgressions. How much can a dead man do to improve his own condition? What then is the only way we can be saved? What do you learn about God in his passage? His love? His mercy? His grace? What is the condition of receiving what God has done on our behalf? We are saved *by grace through faith*. Faith is obedient trust in God (James 2:14-18). Here we trust what God has done in Jesus as the grounds of our salvation and commit our lives fully to him. While we can never do enough good works to save ourselves, what are we saved *for*? Saving faith is "worked out" in ways that bring glory to God and attest to a Christ-centered life.

**Romans 3:21-26** Having shown that Gentiles (non-Jews) are sinners in Romans 1 and Jews are no better off in Romans 2, Paul summarizes his argument here. Is it possible for anyone to be "good enough" to be saved? Illustration: a plane goes down halfway between Hawaii and California. Everyone must swim for the coast. Can some swim much further than others? But what eventually happens to them all? So with us, no one's own efforts are enough. All fall short. So how are we saved? God justifies those who "have faith in Jesus" (v26). Saving faith is not in ourselves but "in his blood"—that is, in the death of Jesus on our behalf (v25).

**Titus 3:3-8** When we humbly consider our own sinfulness, it becomes obvious that we are saved because of God's mercy, not because of righteous things we have done. Those who have trusted God for salvation, however, will devote themselves to doing his will. God's grace is AMAZING! He generously accepts us as a result of Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf. To enter into this saving relationship with God, we must be washed of our sins and renewed by the Holy Spirit. We will look more at the conditions of accepting God's grace in the coming studies.

Additional Helpful Scriptures: *Psalms 51:1-17, Ezekiel 18:21-32, Matthew 18:21-35, Romans 4:1-8, 18-25, Colossians 1:21-23, 1 Timothy 1:12-16, 2 Timothy 1:8-9, Titus 2:11-14*

Seek God

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Faith in Jesus

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New Life

## Repentance & Baptism

When we understand God's grace, the response of faith is to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sins (*Acts 2:36-38*). This study is designed to show a seeker what biblical repentance entails and the meaning of baptism into Christ.

(See Resources for "Baptism Additional Study" and/or "Saved by Grace Through Faith" if the person is not convinced of the need.)

**Acts 2:36-38** Why is this such an important passage? What two responses did Peter call for? We need to look at both repentance and baptism.

**Luke 13:1-9** Jesus preaches that without repentance, we will all perish. He likewise expects to find fruit every time there is true repentance (**Galatians 5:22-25**). The Greek word for repentance, *metanoia*, signifies a "turning," a "change of heart and mind." In this case, we turn from a life where self has been at the center to a life that makes God the center of our devotion, our faith, our obedience. *Remember the world's wisdom and God's wisdom.* (**Romans 12:1-2**)

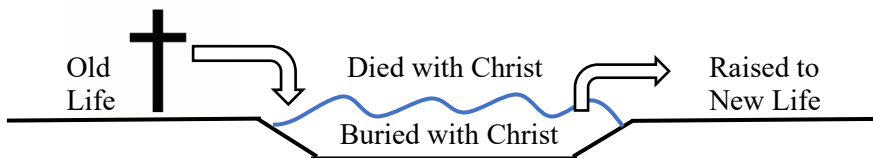
**Luke 3:7-14** The tangible fruit of repentance is the evidence of a changed mindset. John the Baptist insisted on repentance before baptism. If you were to ask John, "What should I do?" how would he respond to you?

**2 Corinthians 7:8-11** What is the difference between "worldly sorrow" and "godly sorrow?" What kinds of attitudes characterize godly sorrow? Why does it lead to repentance? What would you say your attitude right now is toward your sin? What will godly sorrow look like in your life? What does it look like long term?

**Ephesians 4:20-24** Repentance is turning from an old life to a new one. What must be "taken off"? What is to be "put on" in place of the "old self"? What do you need to "take off" and "put on"? (**Acts 3:19-20**). What will be the result of repentance? How will it be refreshing?

**Acts 2:38-40; 8: 34-39; 16:25-34, 19:1-5, 22:12-16** What is happening in all these events? People are putting their faith in Jesus and his salvation. In each passage: [1] What was preached? [2] What was the person's (people's) response to the message? [3] How long did the person (people) take to make the decision? [4] What was their response after baptism? (**Mark 16:16**)

**Romans 6:1-4** What happens when we are baptized with wholehearted faith? We are united with Jesus in his death, burial, and resurrection.



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

**Galatians 3:26-29** We are baptized "into Christ." Note that Paul did not consider faith and baptism to be contradictory. It's more than just "belief". Belief/Faith alone does not save us. Baptism is a tangible expression of faith that places us "in Christ" where salvation occurs. (**Ezekiel 18:20**)

**Ephesians 1:3-10** An important New Testament teaching: every spiritual blessing from God is found "in Christ." What are some of those blessings listed here? (Sonship, adoption, grace, redemption, forgiveness...) So how does a person enter "into Christ" according to Romans 6 and Galatians 3?

**Acts 22:16** What question was Paul asking? What would you say if you were asked the same question?

**Homework:** Do you understand who the Holy Spirit is? Give a copy of "The Holy Spirit" Study from the Resources.

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New Life



# Lordship and Discipleship

This study teaches the expectations Jesus has for anyone who wants to follow him.

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**What is a disciple?** A learner or apprentice who follows a master or lord. **Luke 6:46-49.** What is Jesus' complaint? What is the example He gives of someone who listens to Him? What about the person who hears and does not put them into practice? Lordship of Jesus is about hearing the words He spoke and putting them into practice. To make Jesus Lord is to make Him your master.

## Acts 11:25-26

- Which is the more popular term today: disciple or Christian?
    - The word "Christian" appears three times in Bible; "disciple" more than 270 times
    - The two terms are interchangeable; identify same person.
- Jesus defines the term disciple throughout his ministry.*

## Matthew 28:18-20

- One of the last commands of Jesus
  - What does Jesus want everyone to become? What does Jesus command everyone to make?
  - Go is an action word; go make disciples [Disciples>>>Disciples>>>Disciples, etc.]

## Mark 1:14-18

- What does Jesus call these men to do?
  - Follow Him and be His disciples.
  - To be "fishers of men"
    - A new mission in life.
    - Allow Jesus and others to teach us how to be fishers of men.
    - Fishing takes persistence, patience, and passion.
- What was the response of these men?
  - Immediate followers
  - Discipleship is a radical new life; left behind careers and family

## Luke 9:23-26

- Who does this Scripture apply to? "If anyone would come after me..." It's the same commitment for all.
- What does it mean to "deny self"?
  - Jesus loved others more than Himself; selflessness
  - Decisions not based on your sinful desires and emotions
  - *In order to follow Jesus, I must deny myself of \_\_\_\_\_. What will you have to deny yourself of?*
- Carry the cross daily: denying yourself and crucifying your sinful nature DAILY
- Verse 24: What two choices do we have in life?
  - Gain world ... forfeit soul – OR – lose your worldly life for Jesus ... save your soul.

## Luke 14:25-33

- Verse 26: We must love Him much more than anyone, including ourselves.
  - Hate is a strong word
  - Jesus uses hyperbole (exaggeration) to illustrate a crucial discipleship principle.
  - Why do you think Jesus picked these people?
    - They have the most pull on our hearts.
    - He does not want them to damage our relationship with Him.
- Verses 28-30: Count the cost; do not make an emotional decision
- Verses 31-33: We are fighting a war against Jesus we will NOT win.
- Verse 33: We must be willing to give up everything
- Key Point: **JESUS MUST BE THE LORD (KING) OF OUR LIVES!**

## John 13:34-35

- Being a disciple means loving others like Jesus did. How did Jesus show his love for us?
- What affect will "loving like Jesus" have on others?

## 1 John 2:3-6

- In order to be a Christian (disciple), what must we do?
  - Christianity is not simply a label or religion, it's a lifestyle.
- Is Jesus the Lord (the king) of every area of your life? Why or why not?
- Do you consider yourself a disciple? Are you a Christian? Why or why not?

**Additional Helpful Scriptures:** *Loving with All: Matthew 22:34-40, Prayer: Luke 11:1-4, The Vine & Branches: John 15:1-12, Crucified with Christ: Galatians 2:20, Courage to Live in Christ: Philippians 1:20-21, Mindset of Christ: Philippians 2:5-11, Gratitude: 1 Corinthians 15:10, Luke 17:11-18, Romans 12:1-2, The Great Commission: Matthew 28:18-20.*

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New Life

# The Church

This study defines the church and our role(s) within the church.

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*What do you think of when you think of church?*

## Colossians 1:15-18

- The church = the body of Christ
- Christ is the head and we are the body.

## Ephesians 2:19-22

- The church is God's household.
- God's family – Christians are brothers and sisters.
- What is the foundation of the church?
  - Jesus is the cornerstone.
    - Cornerstone: the indispensable, unifying part of a building
  - Apostles and prophets – the authority (based on the Bible)

*How do I join the church?*

## 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

- Anyone baptized into Christ is a part of the church
- God's expectation?
  - Every member of the body must contribute.
  - Be a giver, not a taker.
- What role(s) will you play in the body?

*What does membership in The Memphis Church mean?*

## Hebrews 10:24-25

- Each member is expected to work within the habits of the local congregation.
  - Our driving force: reconcile \_ mature \_ mobilize
  - Verse 24: Active discipling relationship(s)
  - Verse 25: Commitment to church meetings
    - Sunday & midweek services
    - Small group meetings
  - Hebrews 13:17 – Submit to leadership of local congregation

## Mark 12:41-44

- What lesson do we learn here about giving?
  - God's expectation is that we give of our finances sacrificially.
    - It's a Heart issue. Giving because it pleases God and helps His church should be our motivation.
  - 10% of gross salary is a good starting point (Old Testament principle).
  - The Memphis Church collects offerings on a weekly basis, once a month for Hope Worldwide, as well as an Annual Special Contribution.

**Questions:** ~ How will it change your lifestyle to be committed to this kind of church?  
 ~ What do you see getting in the way of this type of involvement?

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New Life

# Counting the Cost

This final study is more than just a review of what you have learned. This should be a challenging discussion about your new life as a Christ follower. It may benefit you and your bible study partner(s) to invite another experienced Christian to join you.

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## Luke 9:57-62

- This passage challenges our “arms wide open” view of Jesus. How many of these people actually became followers of Jesus?
- What kinds of things kept them from dropping everything and living for God?
- Is there anything holding you back from completely giving your life to become a follower of Jesus Christ?
- What are some things that you have given up or changed as you’ve studied the bible and built relationships at church?

## Deuteronomy 20:1-9

This powerful passage illustrates the protocol for the Israelite army before going to war. Like many of the great battle scenes in movies, the army was given a rousing speech by their leader. Unlike the movies of our day, this speech almost seems de-motivational, as the army would have been inevitably thinned out before the battle even began. We can see a great truth about God in this: Whether it’s an ancient battlefield, a first century house church or modern discipleship, God desires that his people be completely devoted to him.

The result of this speech can be applied to the church today. When one of those soldiers looked to their left or their right they knew that their neighbor was just as committed to God as they were.

**The discussion you have right now should serve the same purpose.**

## Review and Discuss

- Conviction, Conversion and Commitment
- Anticipated obstacles of challenges
- Implications of this decision for your life (big picture)
- Dating/Marriage/Parenting
- Contributing to the needs of the church
- Anything else that has come up regularly in discussion

## Key Questions:

- Do you really think you can live as a follower of Christ for the rest of your life?
- What will be the most challenging part of your life as a disciple?
- What are you the most excited about? Who do you think you will be able to impact?
- Do you have any questions about anything you’ve studied or experienced?

**What’s Next?** Are you ready to be Baptized? After your baptism you will begin your Follow Up Studies.

Finishing this bible study series and becoming a follower of Christ is only the very beginning of your growth as a Christian. Talk to your bible study partner(s) or house church leader about our next series of studies that are designed to help new Christians grow and have impact right away.

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## Resources

*for the Foundational Bible Study Series*  
for those Seeking to Know Christ and to Make Him Known.

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New Life

The Memphis Church, Memphis, TN

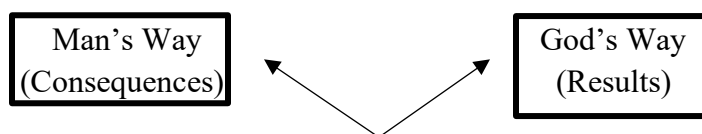
## SEEK GOD

## God and Man: The True Story

This study gives an overview of the Bible and shows how it all fits together from Genesis to the New Testament. Take a look at the greatest story in human history and see how we all fit into it.

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

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



**Genesis 2:4-7; Genesis 2:15-17** Man's way or God's way. What were the results of man choosing his way? (3:16-19) What would have been the result of obeying God?

**But God had a plan to deal with man's sin and lost-ness.**

**Genesis 22:17-18 – Abraham**

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

**Genesis 25:22-26 – Israel**

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

**Exodus 3: 1-8 – the Exodus**

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

*Books of the Bible:*  
 1-5: The Law  
 6-17: Historical Books  
 Job – Song of Solomon: Wisdom Literature  
 Isaiah – Malachi: Prophets  
 > Isaiah – Daniel = Major Prophets  
 > Hosea – Malachi = Minor Prophets

**Deuteronomy 6:4-9 – Loving God with ALL**

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

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## 2 Chronicles 33:1-3 – Israel’s Unfaithfulness

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

## The Prophets – Calling Back; Looking Forward (show this section of the Bible)

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

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

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

## New Testament – the Fulfillment of the Ages

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

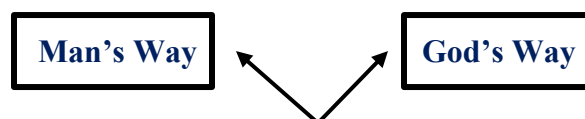
## Jesus – The One

- A. God in the flesh – **John 1:1-14**
- B. God’s revelation to us – **Hebrews 1:1-2**
- C. God’s effort to embrace us – **Luke 13:34**

*"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!"*

## Our Story

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



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$$\boxed{\text{Seek God}} + \boxed{\text{See Need}} + \boxed{\text{Faith in Jesus}} = \boxed{\text{New Life}}$$

# The Reality of the Bible

This study will help build a foundation for a person's faith that the Bible is completely inspired of God and not man!

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**2 Peter 1:20-21** How can we be sure that the origin of Scripture is not found in the will of men, but from God alone? Would you record your most embarrassing moments in your life in a history book for all to see? Why not? If you would never record something that made you look bad, why wouldn't the characters found in the Bible do the same?

- **Noah and the Flood:** Nearly every civilization with a religion more than a few thousand years old has a record of *the* great flood and that only a few survived. The difference is how the hero was reflected. The Babylonian hero was rewarded with immortality, honor, and treasures. While the Biblical character, Noah, had his sins exposed. **Genesis 9:2-23**
- **Abraham:** Is one of the greatest men within the Bible, best known as a friend of God, a man of incredible faith, and also a coward and a liar. **Genesis 12:10-20**
- **King David:** The Kings of old were always remembered with great honor and glory, never mentioning their flaws, mistakes and sins. However, the Bible records its greatest king with all of his adultery (**2 Samuel 11:2-5**), deception (**2 Samuel 11:6-13**) and murder (**2 Samuel 11:14-18**). Compare that to the Pharos in Egypt.

**“No prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.”**  
**Because of the Bible's *Impartiality Towards its Characters***

The Bible, between the Old and New Testament is made up of 66 books, written over 1,500 years, by more than 40 writers from all walks of life. Some were fishermen, kings and peasants, generals, shepherds, and historians. They wrote from dungeons, in temples, on beaches and on hillsides during peacetime and war. These writers were from three different continents. The Bible is written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. Most amazing was that these writers wrote on hundreds of controversial subjects, and yet, they wrote with complete agreement and harmony. Consider just 10 people today who can't write on one controversial subject and agree! God chose 40 different people to write the Bible – which has stood the test of time perfectly! From Genesis to Revelation the theme is the same... God's salvation of mankind.

**“No prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.”**  
**Because of the Bible's *Continuity***

**Isaiah 20:1** records the Assyrian King Sargon attacking Ashdod. The Assyrian king and his empire were not known by any historical record to date. In 1845 to 1857 in Khorsabad, Iraq, an English Assyriologist named Austen H. Layard, dug up the entire city of Nineveh with its temples and palaces. Layard discovered Sargon's palace and recorded on the palace walls was the capture of Ashdod, which was recorded first in **Isaiah 20:1**. History was confirmed!

**“No prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.”**  
**Because of the *External Evidence found in Archaeology***

**The Prophecy:** Isaiah 44:28 (700 B.C.) Isaiah named King Cyrus as the one who would allow Israel to rebuild. The Fulfillment of Isaiah's Prophecy: Ezra 5:13-14

**“No prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.”**  
**Because of the *Internal Evidence found in Prophecies***

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## Jesus: Lord, Liar or Lunatic?

If Jesus claimed to be the LORD and SAVIOR of all mankind, and knew His claims were false, that would make Him a liar. What if Jesus claimed to be God, and did not know His claims were false? That would make Him a lunatic.

But what if Jesus claimed to be God and proved it? That would make Him... LORD!

**Acts 2:22** How do we know Jesus was accredited by God?

**John 10:38, 14:9-11** What did Jesus challenge the Jews and Philip to believe in?

**Matthew 11:2-5** What did Jesus tell John to focus on in order to strengthen his faith?

The Miracle: The blind receive sight. **John 9:1-7**

The Miracle: The lepers are cleansed. **Mark 1:40-42**

The Miracle: The dead are raised. **John 11:1-4, 37-44**

The Miracle: The deaf hear. **Mark 7:31-37**

➤ ***The Miracles Prove the Reality: Jesus IS LORD!***

**Matthew 16:21, 20:17-19** What did Jesus forewarn His disciples was going to happen to Him?

**1 Corinthians 15:3-8** Why is this scripture so very important to you?

**John 20:24-25** Before the Resurrection, did Thomas believe Jesus had risen?

**John 20:26-28** After the Resurrection, what are some differences you see in Thomas?

**John 18:17** Before the Resurrection, what was Peter afraid of?

**Acts 4:8-13** After the Resurrection, what are some differences you see in Peter?

**Acts 8:1-3, Galatians 1:13** Before the Resurrection, what was Paul's relations with Jesus?

**Acts 9:1-5, 8, 18-20 & 1 Timothy 1:12-16** After the Resurrection, what are some differences you see in Paul?

**Mark 3:21** Before the Resurrection, what was James' view of Jesus?

**James 1:1** After the Resurrection, what are some differences you see in James?

➤ ***The Resurrection and the Changed Lives Proves the Reality: Jesus IS LORD!***

How can we *identify the Messiah*? In order to identify *one* person out of *6 billion people*, we would only need *5 points* of Identification: Country, state, city, street, name. Did you know that Jesus Christ has **333 points of identification**, proving He is the Messiah? Prophecy is just one of the ways to do that.

**The Prophecy:** The Messiah and the Cross. **Psalm 22:1, 18** (1000 B.C.)

**The Fulfillment:** **Matthew 27:35-46** (33 A.D.)

**The Prophecy:** The Darkened Skies. **Amos 8:9** (787 B.C.)

**The Fulfillment:** **Matthew 27:45** (33 A.D.)

➤ ***The Messianic Prophecies Prove the Reality: Jesus IS LORD!***

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## Sin Definitions

*Please note: All definitions here were derived from a combination of the “Strong’s Concordance”, “HELPS Word-studies”, the “Miriam-Webster Dictionary” and basic common sense. Definitions listed are for key words in the below scriptures. HCSB bible version was used and cross referenced with NIV and NLT versions as well to expand the definitions.*

**Mark 7:14-23 (HCSB)**

<sup>14</sup> Summoning the crowd again, He told them, “Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: <sup>15</sup> Nothing that goes into a person from outside can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him. [<sup>16</sup> If anyone has ears to hear, he should listen!]” <sup>17</sup> When He went into the house away from the crowd, the disciples asked Him about the parable. <sup>18</sup> And He said to them, “Are you also as lacking in understanding? Don’t you realize that nothing going into a man from the outside can defile him? <sup>19</sup> For it doesn’t go into his heart but into the stomach and is eliminated.” (As a result, He made all foods clean.) <sup>20</sup> Then He said, “What comes out of a person—that defiles him. <sup>21</sup> For from within, out of people’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, <sup>22</sup> adulteries, greed, evil actions, deceit, promiscuity, stinginess, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. <sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within and defile a person.”

**Galatians 5:19-21 (HCSB)**

<sup>19</sup> Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, <sup>21</sup> envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar. I tell you about these things in advance—as I told you before—that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**2 Timothy 3:1-5 (HCSB)**

<sup>3</sup> But know this: Difficult times will come in the last days. <sup>2</sup> For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, without love for what is good, <sup>4</sup> traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup> holding to the form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid these people!

**Colossians 3:5-11 (HCSB)**

<sup>5</sup> Therefore, put to death what belongs to your worldly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> Because of these, God’s wrath comes on the disobedient, <sup>7</sup> and you once walked in these things when you were living in them. <sup>8</sup> But now you must also put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self. You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator. <sup>11</sup> In Christ there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all.

**Revelation 21:8 (HCSB)**

<sup>8</sup> But the cowards, unbelievers, vile, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars—their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

**Romans 1:28-32 (HCSB)**

<sup>28</sup> And because they did not think it worthwhile to acknowledge God, God delivered them over to a worthless mind to do what is morally wrong. <sup>29</sup> They are filled with all unrighteousness, evil, greed, and wickedness. They are full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, God-haters, arrogant, proud, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful. <sup>32</sup> Although they know full well God’s just sentence—that those who practice such things deserve to die—they not only do them, but even applaud others who practice them.

**1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (HCSB)**

<sup>9</sup> Don’t you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God’s kingdom? Do not be deceived: No sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, or anyone practicing homosexuality,<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>10</sup> no thieves, greedy people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, or swindlers will inherit God’s kingdom. <sup>11</sup> And some of you used to be like this. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

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## Sin Definitions, cont...

**Adultery:** See Sexual Immorality.

**Anger/Fits of Rage:** This is the expression of quick bursts of rage or anger. This may be through an explosion (outward expression visible to others), or an implosion (more deceitful of the two – a.k.a. “passive aggressive behavior”). With “implosions” the person hides his rage while it is manifested through anger, criticalness, negative statements or bad attitudes. Passion-driven behavior, i.e. actions emerging out of strong impulses or intense emotion.

**Arrogant:** Someone "damaging" others by lashing out with a nasty spirit. This kind of individual is insolent (delights in wrongdoing) – finding pleasure in hurting others.

**Blasphemous/Abusive/Speaking Against God:** Love of insult against God and man alike. Blasphemy reverses spiritual and moral realities. (Also see: Slander.)

**Boastful:** A statement in which someone expresses too much pride in themselves or in something they have, have done, or are connected to in some way. This kind of person *claims many things they can't really do*, so they must always keep moving on to new, naive listeners.

**Brutal:** Fierce and savage behavior. Having No sensitivity, sympathy or empathy.

**Conceited:** Thinking too much of oneself. Having an inflated sense of their own importance. Moral blindness resulting from poor judgment which brings further loss of spiritual perception.

**Coward:** Someone who is too afraid to do what is right or expected: someone who is not at all brave or courageous. Describing a person who loses their "moral gumption (fortitude)" that is needed to follow the Lord. Afraid to do what is right according to God's word. A fear-driven response.

**Debauchery:** See: Promiscuity.

**Discord/Strife:** Having a spirit that is ready to argue or quarrel. Affection for dispute. A rebellious nature. This person usually has an issue liking or accepting authority. Lack of agreement between people, ideas, etc.

**Dissension:** Standing apart, to *wrongly* separate people into pointless (groundless) factions. This is taking a position or stand that is apart from the unified position.

**Drunkness:** This is intoxication due to substance abuse. It could be through alcohol or drugs. A good standard for determining drunkness is when the substance leads you to do or say something you would not otherwise do or say.

**Evil Desires:** Passion built on strong feelings (urges) that are NOT inspired by faith/God.

**Envy:** This sin does not want what others have, it wants to *destroy* what they have, or *destroy* the person who has these things. The miserable trait of being glad when someone experiences misfortune or pain. A grudge that one holds over the good fortune of others.

**Factions:** This refers to the formation of groups or sects apart from the unified position. It is funded on dissension or discord to destroy unity.

**Filthy Language:** Foul, filthy or abusive language. Swearing or cursing.

**Fits of Rage:** See Anger.

**Folly:** Foolish thoughts of actions.

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## Sin Definitions, cont...

**Gossip:** A person who habitually reveals personal or sensational facts about others. A rumor or report of an intimate nature. A whisperer; a sneaky gossip (a "back-stabber"); a backbiter, quietly (secretly) destroying another person's character.

**Greed:** A selfish and excessive desire for more of something than is needed. Lusting for a greater number of temporal things that go beyond what God determines is eternally best. Coveting.

**Hatred:** It is the exact opposite of the word agape, which is God's unconditional love. It may be in the form of intense hatred manifest in rage, violence or intense emotion. To a more subtle degree it is also prejudice, discrimination and moral apathy which leads to a lack of concern for the lost. (Also see: Anger/Fits of Rage)

**Homosexuality:** See Sexual Immorality.

**Idolatry:** Putting material things or wants before God. Worship or service of/to something other than God. The pursuit of wealth, material goods, relationships, power, popularity, etc. all lead to idolatry when these are put before God.

**Jealousy:** This is covetousness, or being discontent with what one has or distraught over what one does not have. This leads to grumbling, complaining and general dissatisfaction despite God having given us all we need (**2 Peter 1:3**).

**Lewdness:** Obscene or indecent – including language and/or behavior.

**Liars:** A person who does not tell the truth. Can include cheating, manipulation, embellishing or “stretching the truth”, or not telling the whole truth. A person who is false, deceitful, lying, untrue.

**Lovers of money:** Someone (literally) in love with personal gain (having money). Pursuit of money is an idol. “Work is god”.

**Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God:** Loving fun instead of loving God. Worshiping themselves instead of God.

**Lovers of self:** Someone preoccupied with their own selfish desires (*self-interests*). Divine and human relationships are destroyed.

**Lust:** Raw, strong feelings (emotions) which are not guided by God. Strong feelings or sexual desires.

**Malice:** Desire to cause pain, injury, or distress to another. Intent to commit an unlawful act or cause harm.

**Moral Impurity:** That which makes one unfit to stand before God. Could include: lustful thoughts, masturbation, viewing pornography, coarse joking or any evil thought or deed.

**Murderer:** The crime of unlawfully killing a person especially with malice. Committing unjustified, intentional homicide. Killing any form of human life, including an unborn child. (It is destroying a soul/body that God created.)

**Orgies/Carousing:** Something that is done too much and in a wild way. This refers to the “party spirit”. It is the “living for pleasure” mentality. Excessive indulgence in something especially to satisfy an inordinate/intolerable appetite or craving.

**Outward form of godliness but denying its power:** Righteousness without convictions. Going through the correct motions and maintaining all the external forms of religion, but not loving the power that can change their lives.

**Promiscuity/Debauchery:** Outrageous conduct, conduct shocking to public decency, a wanton violence, wantonness, lewdness. The absence of restraint or readiness to sin. This then leads to excessive behavior; in thought, which leads to immorality or impurity; in attitude, which leads to laziness (over sleeping, too much media/computer, etc.); or in action, which leads to addiction (over eating, smoking, drugs, alcohol or anything that can become a compulsive behavior and an idol to a person).

**Proud:** Proudful, arrogant. Trying to be *more* than what *God* directs. Thinking more highly of himself than he ought (**Romans 12:2-3**). Having contempt for everyone but yourself. It's a heart issue.

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## Sin Definitions, cont...

**Reckless:** Acting out or speaking without thinking. Impulsive, rash or harsh. Being swept away by passion and impulse to such an extent that he is unable to think sensibly. Being led by emotions only.

**Selfish Ambition:** This is the person who seeks position, relationships or material possessions for the good that these things will do *for them*, not the good that they can do *with them*. Pride. Rivalry, self-seeking; a feud, faction.

**Sexual Immorality:** Greek – *Porneia* – where we get the word *Pornography*. *Porneia*, which is derived from *pernaō*, which means "to sell off" – a *selling off* (surrendering) of sexual purity; promiscuity of any and every type. Fornication, idolatry, whoredom. Includes any sexual act outside the bonds of marriage; impurity, secret or open; flagrant (too bad to be ignored) breaches of public decency. Includes adultery, homosexuality (sodomy), bestiality, incest, rape, masturbation. (Breaks a covenant – either with God or Spouse. Self-seeking/selfish.) (Also see: Ephesians 5:3-7; 1 Corinthians 6:13-20, 10:8 & 5:1; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Jude 7; Acts 15:20; Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Hebrews 13:4.)

**Slander:** Greek - *blasphemia*. The act of making a false spoken statement that causes people to have a bad opinion of someone. Being slow to call something good (that *really is good*) – and slow to identify what is truly bad (that *really is evil*). Being verbally abusive toward someone.

**Slandering:** A false accuser; unjustly criticizing to hurt and condemn to sever a relationship. Evil tongued. Gossiping, malicious; defamatory statements or reports. ("The Slanderer" is another name for the Devil).

**Strife:** See Discord.

**Treacherous/Traitors:** Those who go against God. Those who are not true to God or their friends.

**Unfaithful:** Not adhering to vows, allegiance, or duty. Not faithful because they are unpersuaded/not convinced by God. Describes someone who rejects God even though "people are without excuse" (**Romans 1:20**).

**Unforgiving:** Bitterness to the point of hatred. Not willing to be bound by a truce.

**Ungrateful:** Without God's grace (favor) which results in un-thankfulness (literally, "ungraceful"). Refusing to recognize the debt they owe to God for what He has done for them. Or refusing to recognize the debt they owe a person for something done in kindness.

**Unholy:** Utter disregard of what is sacred, i.e. willful or arrogant disrespect of the things of God; impious; wicked. Men will go beyond breaking the written laws and offend against the laws which are part of the essence of life (**Romans 1:28-32**). Seeking pleasures that are abnormal (i.e. marrying a sibling, etc.)

**Unrighteous:** A violation of God's standards (justice) which brings divine disapproval.

**Vile:** Morally despicable or abhorrent. Very bad or unpleasant. Physically repulsive. Foul. Mean.

**Wickedness:** See Malice.

**Witchcraft/Sorcery:** The use of any type of medium to gain spiritual insight or guidance. This can include: Seeking out a "Psychic"; use of: Tarot Cards, Runes, Ouija (Spirit) Boards, palm reading, astrology, sorcery, black magic, Wicca, horoscopes, séances, etc. It is a sin because the person is not relying on God for such guidance. Instead the person uses gimmicks or magic or some satanic force.

**Without Love/Unloving:** Devoid of affection. Being so into yourself that no one else matters... i.e. not loving your own child.

**Without love for what is good:** A *hater of good* describing someone who is hostile to the things of God – i.e. an active opponent (enemy) of God's kingdom (good). Will often avoid good people and good things.

**Without Self-Control:** Lacking self-control, self-discipline or self-restraint. Powerless. A slave to a habit or desire.

**Wrath:** Strong vengeful anger or indignation (Indignation: anger aroused by something unjust, unworthy, or mean).

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By: Douglas Jacoby, July 2013

Hanging, electrocution, knee-capping, gas chamber: these punishments are feared. They all happen today, and we shudder as we think of the horror and pain. But as we shall see, these ordeals pale into insignificance compare with the bitter fate of Jesus Christ: crucifixion.<sup>2</sup>

No one is crucified today. For us the cross remains confined to ornaments and jewelry, stained-glass windows, romanticized pictures and statues portraying a serene death. Crucifixion was a form of execution refined by the Romans to a precise art. It was carefully conceived to produce a slow death with maximum pain. It was a public spectacle intended to deter other would-be criminals. It was a death to be feared.

#### *Sweat like blood*

Luke 22:24 says of Jesus, "and being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground."<sup>3</sup> The sweat was unusually intense because his emotional state was unusually intense. Dehydration coupled with exhaustion further weakened him. (Note: the scriptures nowhere say that Jesus was sweating blood.)

#### *Beating*

It was in this condition that Jesus faced the first physical abuse: punches and slaps to the face and head while blindfolded. Unable to anticipate the blows, Jesus was badly bruised, his mouth and eyes possibly injured. The psychological effects of the false trials should not be underestimated. Consider that Jesus faced them bruised, dehydrated, exhausted, possibly in shock.

#### *Flogging*

In the previous 12 hours Jesus had suffered emotional trauma, rejection by his closest friends, a cruel beating, and a sleepless night during which he had to walk miles between unjust hearings. Despite the fitness he must certainly have gained during his travels in Palestine, he was in no way prepared for the punishment of flogging. The effects would be worse as a result.

A man to be flogged was stripped of his clothes and his hands tied to a post above his head. He was then whipped across the shoulders, back, buttocks, thighs and legs, the soldier standing behind and to one side of the victim. The whip used – the flagellum – was designed to make this a devastating punishment, bringing the victim close to death: several short heavy leather thongs, with two small balls of lead or iron attached near the end of each. Pieces of sheep's bone were sometimes included.

As the scourging proceeds, the heavy leather thongs produce first superficial cuts, than deeper damage to underlying tissues. Bleeding becomes severe when not only capillaries and veins are cut, but also arteries in the underlying muscles. The small metal balls first produce large, deep bruises which are broken open by further blows. The fragments of sheep's bone rip the flesh as the whip is drawn back. When the beating is finished, the skin of the back is in ribbons, and the entire area torn and bleeding.

The words chosen by the gospel writers suggest that the scourging of Jesus was particularly severe: he was certainly at the point of collapse when he was cut down from the flogging-post.

#### *The mocking*

Jesus was allowed no time to recover before facing his next ordeal. Made to stand, he was dressed in a robe by jeering soldiers, crowned with a twisted band of thorny twigs, and to complete the parody, given a wooden staff as a king's scepter. "Next, they spat on Jesus and struck him on the head with the wooden staff." The long thorns were driven into the sensitive scalp tissue producing profuse bleeding, but even more terrible was the re-opening of the wounds on Jesus' back when the robe was torn off again.

Further weakened physically and emotionally, Jesus was led away to be executed.

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*The crucifixion*

The wooden cross used by the Romans was too heavy to be carried by one man. Instead the victim to be crucified was made to bear the detached crossbar across his shoulders, carrying it outside the city walls to the place of execution. (The heavy upright portion of the cross was permanently in position here.) Jesus was unable to carry his load – a beam weighing around 75 to 125 pounds (approximately 35-55 kg). He collapsed under the burden, and an onlooker was ordered to take it for him.

Jesus refused to drink the wine and myrrh offered him before the nails were driven in. (It would have dulled the pain.) Thrown down on his back with arms outstretched along the crossbar, nails were driven through Jesus' wrists into the wood. These iron spikes, about 6 inches long and 3/8 inch thick, severed the large sensorimotor median nerve, causing excruciating pain in both arms. Carefully placed between bones and ligaments, they were able to bear the full weight of the crucified man.

In preparation for the nailing of the feet, Jesus was lifted up and the crossbar fixed to the upright post. Then with legs bent at the knee, a single nail was used to pierce both feet, one foot being placed over the other. Again there was severe nerve damage and the pain caused was intense. It is important to note, however, that neither the wounds to the wrists or feet caused substantial bleeding, since no major arteries were ruptured. The executioner took care to ensure this, so that death would be slower and the suffering longer.

Now nailed to his cross, the real horror of crucifixion began. When the wrists were nailed to the crossbar, the elbows were intentionally left in a bent position so that the crucified man would hang with his arms above his head, the weight being taken on the nails in the wrists. Obviously this was unbearably painful, but it had another effect: It is very difficult to exhale in this position. In order to breathe out, and then take in fresh air, it was necessary to push the body up on the nailed feet. When the pain from the feet became unbearable, the victim would again slump down to hang by the arms. A terrible cycle of pain began: hanging by the arms, unable to breathe, pushing up on the feet to inhale quickly before again slumping down, and on and on.

This tortured activity became more and more difficult as Jesus' back was scraped against the upright post,<sup>4</sup> as muscle cramps set in because of the inadequate respiration, and as exhaustion grew more severe. Jesus suffered in this manner for several hours before, with a final cry, he died.

*Cause of death*

Many factors contributed to Jesus' death. A combination of shock and suffocation killed most victims of crucifixion, but in Jesus' case acute heart failure may have been the final trauma. This is suggested by his sudden death following a loud cry, after only a few hours: a quick death, it seems (Pilate was surprised to find Jesus already dead). A fatal cardiac arrhythmia, or perhaps cardiac rupture, are likely candidates.

*The spear wound*

Jesus was already dead as the executioners broke the legs of the criminals crucified alongside (in order to speed their deaths). Instead, we read that a soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear. Where on his side? The word chosen by John suggests the ribs, and if the soldier intended to make Jesus' death certain, a wound to the heart was the obvious choice.

From the wound came a flow of "blood and water." This is consistent with the spear blow to the heart (especially from the right side, the traditional site of the wound). Rupturing the pericardium (the sac surrounding the heart) released a flow of watery serum, followed by blood as the heart was pierced.

*Conclusion*

The detailed accounts given in the gospels combined with the historical evidence on crucifixion bring us to a firm conclusion: modern medical knowledge supports the claim of the scriptures that Jesus died on the cross.

(For further notes please see [www.douglasjacoby.com](http://www.douglasjacoby.com))

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## Baptism: Additional Study

**Infant Baptism? Colossians 2:11-12** Baptism is an immersion in water (from the Greek *baptizo* meaning “plunge, dip, immerse”—see **Acts 8:38-39**), but it does not operate “magically” apart from the faith of the one who is baptized. Can an infant believe? Repent of sin? And what sins need to be forgiven? **Ezekiel 18:20**: Contrary to the widely held doctrine of “original sin,” guilt for sin is not inherited from our parents. We are guilty for *our own* sins and saved by grace through *our own* response of faith.

**Sinner’s Prayer? 1 Peter 3:20-21** Some claim that baptism does not save, and instead propose that a person has only to call upon God through a “sinner’s prayer”. The Bible teaches that baptism does indeed save us, as a result of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Further, baptism is the biblical “sinner’s prayer” when we make our “appeal to God for a good conscience.” (Note: “Calling on the name of the Lord to be saved”, aka “Pray Jesus into your heart”, in Romans 10:9-13 does not negate Paul’s teaching about baptism in Romans 6:1-4, and it was on the occasion of his own baptism that Paul “called on his name” for forgiveness; see Acts 22:16.)

### Other Issues

*“Baptism does not save you”*: 1 Peter 3:21 says that baptism *does* save you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Acts 2:38 teaches that sin is forgiven at baptism—one is saved at the point sin is forgiven.

*“Baptism is a work—yet we are saved by faith”* (Ephesians 2:8): Colossians 2:12 teaches we are saved by *faith*—in the working of God at baptism.

*“Baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace”*: Romans 6:24 states that baptism is an actual participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. It is not merely a sign, seal or symbol.

*“Baptism isn’t important, after all, look at what Paul said about it in 1 Corinthians 1:17”*: Paul does not diminish the importance of baptism here. (Paul himself was baptized to have his sins forgiven in Acts 22:16.) In context (read 1 Corinthians 1:10-17), he makes the point that he does not want people following men (denominationalism). He mentions baptism several times in the passage.

*“The thief on the cross was not baptized and Jesus told him that they would see each other in paradise”*: Jesus had not even died yet, and baptism is participating in his death (Romans 6:2-4); also on earth, he had the power to forgive sins (Matthew 9:2-6).

### Six Places We Find Baptism

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

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

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

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## Baptism Broken Down even further:

1. **Jesus SAID it. Jesus COMMANDED it. Jesus EXPLAINED it.** Who are we supposed to be following? If Jesus *said* it, *commanded* it, and *explained* how to do it = we should **obey** and **DO** what he says.
  - **Mark 16:16** in the Great Commission “*16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*”
  - **John 3:1-8** Jesus explains it to Nicodemus, a Pharisee and part of the Jewish High Counsel. What he says in vs 18 about believing, does not negate what he explained in vs 5. This is all part of one conversation about one topic.
  
2. **Jesus DID It.** He was obedient to his Father and set an example that his disciples should follow. Jesus received the Holy Spirit at this time as well. This is in **Matthew 3:1-16**
  - John the Baptist baptized with water so the people could show repentance. That was the Jewish custom. Jewish water baptism = person showing repentance and willingness and desire to CHANGE their ways. The Jewish people were still required at that time to provide a Blood Sacrifice for the forgiveness of Sins.
  - When Jesus came, he made a new contract that said His Blood would be the last blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins and we must **die** to our sinful nature, or repent and be **born again of water**, which is baptism – participation in Jesus’ death – being covered with his blood to represent our own blood sacrifice) and be **born again of the Spirit** (we do not receive the Spirit of God until we are cleansed and forgiven first.
  
3. **His Disciples TAUGHT it.** Here are several examples.
  - In **1 Corinthians 15:1-2** we see Paul telling the church (full of already baptized believers/followers of Christ) that they should remember what he already taught them before. Which would have **included** what Jesus said in **Mark 16:16**.
  - **Acts 2:37-38** we see the Paul teaching people about what happened to Jesus and that proclaiming Him as their chosen one, the Messiah, the one the Jewish people have been waiting for whom God had promised. When they heard and understood what happened, they immediately believed, were repentful (wanting to change their ways “brothers what shall we do?”) and they are told to repent, be baptized = forgiveness of sins + gift of the Holy Spirit. They wanted to know how to be saved from death (separation from God).
  - **Acts 8:26-40** we see Phillip teaching the Ethiopian in vs 35 “*Then Phillip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.*” This would have **included** what Jesus had taught Phillip while he was with Him (**Mark 16:16**) or why else would the man be so eager to be baptized in vs 36?
  - **1 Peter 3:21** we see the disciples teaching that baptism saves us. This is living out and teaching what Jesus taught in the Great Commission. “*21...and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also...*”

There are more examples in the Baptism study that show people understood what baptism meant (Greek word “baptismo” meaning to submerge) and then their desire to follow through with the command.



## Baptism: Additional Study, cont...

**There are many “Man Made” ideas and thoughts about Baptism through different denominations. Here are some examples of false teaching:**

The Word of God says: “He who believes and is baptized will be saved “ (**Mark 16:16**)

- Denominations falsely teach: He who believes and is saved, should be baptized.  
>> This falsely teaches that belief is what saves us. Baptism is what saves us according to scripture.

The Word of God says: “Repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins” (**Acts 2:38**)

- Denominations falsely teach: Repent and be baptized because your sins have already been forgiven.  
>> This falsely teaches that your sins are forgiven when you repent. Scriptures teach us that our sins are forgiven at Baptism.

The Word of God says: ‘Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’ (**John 3:5**)

- Denominations falsely teach: Baptism is not essential for salvation. This “birth of water” is just natural childbirth.  
>> This falsely teaches that that we do not receive the Holy Spirit at Baptism, but when we repent or believe instead. The Holy Spirit is received at Baptism, as a gift, according to scripture.

The Word of God says: “We were buried therefore with him by *baptism* into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.” (**Romans 6:4**)

- Denominations falsely teach: We were buried with him by *belief* into death...  
>> This falsely teaches that belief or faith is what allows us to walk in a new life. Scripture clearly teaches that Baptism is required for a new life.

The Word of God says: “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (**Ephesians 4:4-5**)

- Denominations falsely teach: There are many baptisms and many bodies, and many faiths.  
>> This falsely teaches that baptism has no power and no gift of the Holy Spirit. It also falsely teaches that there are many ways to the Father when Jesus said He is the ONLY way, etc. Don’t be fooled by religions or denominations that say there are many faiths or truths. There may be some truth in other religions or denominations – but we are called to teach and live the whole truth. Be wary of false teachers. (1 Timothy chapters 1, 4 & 6, 2 Timothy chapter 2, Titus chapter 2. )

# The Holy Spirit

This study explores how we receive the gift of God's Holy Spirit. And how we are sustained and helped by the Holy Spirit after baptism. He works powerfully in the life of every disciple of Christ.

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**Acts 2:36-38** At baptism, we are not only forgiven by Jesus' death to begin a new life, we are also filled with the Holy Spirit.

**John 3:1-8** Jesus taught that we must be born again via water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God.

**John 7:37-39** After Jesus' glorification (crucifixion, resurrection and ascension), God sent his Spirit to flow from within us like streams of running water. Previously (Old Testament), the Spirit came *upon* people. Now, he dwells *within* us.

**John 14:15-17** Holy Spirit = Counselor, Intercessor & Advocate for us, to God.

**John 16:5-15** One of the primary roles of the Spirit is to convict us (and the world) with regard to sin, righteousness, and judgment. He does this in harmony with (though not exclusively through) his Word, which he gave to the Apostles as they were guided into all truth.

**Ephesians 1:13-14** The Spirit is God's mark of ownership on his children and a "deposit" of the blessings of the age to come. (This is a protective, providing "ownership"). We are sealed to show we belong to God.

**Ephesians 3:14-21** We are strengthened with real power through the Spirit who dwells within us. We cannot live the Christian life on our own strength, but God himself provides us with the power to live as followers of Jesus. Understanding Jesus' amazing love for us is a source of that strength.

**Ephesians 4:29-32** How do we "grieve" the Holy Spirit? Why is anger and anger-related sin so devastating? How is disharmony in our relationships incompatible with having the Spirit of God in us?

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-20** How do we "put out the fire of" the Holy Spirit? Why is a life of faith the only one that is in keeping with God's Spirit living in us? What influences in the world around us can keep us from having a faithful, God-centered outlook?

**Romans 8:5-17, 26-27** A Spiritual mindset brings life and peace, and obedience to God's Word. The Spirit frees us from fear and confirms that we are fully God's children. The Spirit also aids in our life of prayer and devotion to God.

**Galatians 5:22-23** The fruit of the Spirit: Expect it! Pursue it! This is the best "evidence" that you have received the Holy Spirit, who is transforming us to become like Jesus. Decide to live according to the Spirit—and keep affirming that decision!

*Additional Helpful Scriptures: Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekiel 36:24-28, Acts 1:4, 2:15-18, 32-33, 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, Galatians 3:26-29, 4:6-7, Titus 3:3-7*

Seek God

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See Need

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Faith in Jesus

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New Life