



ἀρχή στοιχείων

(First Principles)

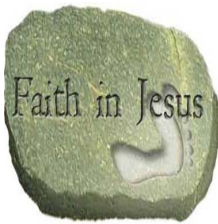
Evangelistic Bible Studies
For Leading People To Faith In
Jesus Christ



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PREFACE

Romans 15:14 *I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.*

INTRODUCTION:

- ✦ This study series was created in faith to help people seeking God come to a 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 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, **2 Timothy 2:15** "*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.*"

TIPS ON USING A STUDY SERIES:

- ✦ A study series is a guide designed to create faith! People did not use this series on the day of Pentecost. They did, however, fully understand what Jesus did, were cut to the heart (**2 Corinthians 7:1-11**/broken), repented, and were baptized because of their faith. The goal is to simply allow God to use you to water and plant!

TIPS ON LEADING STUDIES:

- ✦ **Pray before you lead studies.** Pray for the Holy 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.
- ✦ **Get to know your friends.** It is very important that you spend time together outside of studying the Bible. Have conversations about life, upbringing, hopes, dreams, family issues, careers, etc. Devote yourself to them as a caring friend. People generally don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. This can also make or break the building of their faith when it comes to tough issues involving life, doctrine or developing a correct view of God.
- ✦ **Check to see if they have a Bible.** Make sure your friend has a Bible with a good translation (NIV, NASB or the ESV) which they can readily understand. If they do not have a Bible, purchase one for them.
- ✦ **Be prepared to answer.** 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. Be humble if you do not know the answer to a question.
- ✦ **Have a friend help you.** This is where training others is vital. Studying the Bible with a friend is an incredible opportunity to train those you are mentoring to become more proficient in studying with others. Have them assist you by taking notes for your non-Christian friend.
- ✦ **Prepare your friend for personal study.** Have them study a chapter a day out of one of the gospels such as the book of John. You may even need to start out doing this with them in order to build faith.
- ✦ **Memorize what you are going to study ahead of time.** Having your copy of the study series out can be an unnecessary distraction. You may even want to memorize the scriptures you study with people as time goes on. Scripture memory helps with remembering the locations of scriptures just as much as it does memorizing the scripture itself.



Getting to Know Your Friend

PURPOSE:

- ✦ 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 conversations, seek first to understand where your friend is coming from.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS:

1. Personal Background:

- ✦ Did you grow up going to Church or reading your Bible? How would you describe your experience with churches and religion?
- ✦ When were you saved and if so, how? What churches or denominations did you attend? (Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, etc.)
- ✦ 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?

2. The Bible:

- ✦ What do you believe about the Bible?
- ✦ Do you believe it is from God or partly from man? Why or why not?

3. Jesus Christ:

- ✦ What do you believe or know about Jesus? How did you come to those beliefs?
- ✦ Do you believe that He physically resurrected from the dead?
- ✦ Do you believe He is God?
- ✦ Does **John 14:6** seem intolerant to you? If so, why?

4. The Devil:

- ✦ What do you believe or know about Satan?

5. Other Questions:

- ✦ Do you think Heaven and Hell exist?
- ✦ What does it mean to you to be a Christian?
- ✦ Do you believe the kingdom of God is the church.



The Word of God

PURPOSE:

- ✦ To show a seeker what the Bible says about itself so that they will be eager to read it in order to discover the will of God and apply it to his/her life so they can change to become like Jesus!
- ✦ **2 Timothy 3:16.** All Scripture is inspired by God! But how can we be sure that the origin of Scripture is not found in the will of men, but from God alone?
- ✦ **2 Peter 1:20-21.** The *Internal Evidence* found in prophecy is just *one* of the many examples that points to the divine inspiration of the Bible! Look at this one example: **Isaiah 44:28** (B.C.) - **Ezra 5:13-14** (B.C.) J. Barton Payne's *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* lists 1,239 prophecies in the Old Testament and 578 prophecies in the New Testament, for a total of 1,817 in all. No man could make these up! See page 9. The Messianic Prophecies.
- ✦ **2 Timothy 3:17.** All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for our lives so that we can be equipped for every good work and every spiritual challenge that will come.
- ✦ **Deuteronomy 30:11-20.** How can the Word of God *teach* us the difference between life and prosperity and death and destruction? What does God ask us to choose? *Life* Where is this life found? *In God's Word*
- ✦ **Hebrews 4:12-13.** The Word of God is relevant and can expose, and convict us of sin in our lives. It can cut us, but its purpose is to cut out the bad, so that we can be healed - just like a surgeon's scalpel.
- ✦ **John 8:31-32.** Jesus teaches these Jews that intellectual belief is not enough. He calls them to believe God enough to trust His will for their lives. This trust is demonstrated by the decision to live according to Jesus' teaching. True faith is seen in our obedience.
- ✦ **1 Timothy 4:16.** How we live and what we believe are both essential to salvation. Illustration: Which wing of an airplane is most important? So it is with what you believe and how you live out those beliefs. What is the result of careful attention to our life and doctrine?
- ✦ **2 Timothy 4:2-3.** If the Bible is so powerful and helpful, why aren't more people truly following what it says? The bottom line is, we prefer to live according to our own feelings and desires.
- ✦ **Matthew 15:1-9.** What is another hindrance to following God's Word? *Religious tradition which takes precedence over the Word of God can result in worldly solutions to spiritual issues and make our worship of God empty and pointless.*
- ✦ **Acts 17:10-12.** We are ultimately responsible for what we believe. Religious leaders can be wrong, so we cannot be lazy. Review in greater depth the lessons and sermons you hear to be sure about what you are being taught is from God. *Ref: Romans 3:4*
- ✦ **Isaiah 66:1-2.** Our attitude should be one of humility, reverence and awe for God's Word. Are you willing to *humbly* live by the Bible, taking God at His Word in your relationship with Him?

(Other Scriptures: **John 12:47-48; James 1:22-25**)



Knowing Jesus

PURPOSE: To examine the life, character and teachings of Jesus so that an individual can come to faith in Him and aspire to follow Him and come to know God through Him.

- × **Hebrews 1:1-3.** Jesus is God's ultimate attempt to communicate with mankind and you!
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. *Ref:* **John 1:1, 14**

- × **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 will for your life. Here are several aspects from Jesus' life in the first chapter the Gospel of Mark:
 - ✓ **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.

 - ✓ **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 sinners. As predicted, He was rejected by His people and crucified—but He rose from the dead three days later.

- × **1 John 2:3-6.** Knowing Jesus is not just an intellectual exercise. The heart of a Disciple is to *obey* His commands and become more and more like Him: to think like Jesus, to act like Jesus, to live like Jesus.

- × **John 14:6.** Jesus claimed to be *the* way, not a way. He claimed to be *the* truth, 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? *Ref:* **Acts 4:12** - No one will come to the Father unless they come to Him through Jesus!

QUESTION: If Jesus claimed to be the LORD and SAVIOR of all mankind, and knew His claims were false, what would that make Him? *A liar.* What if Jesus claimed to be God, and did not know His claims were false, what would that make Him? *A lunatic.* But what if Jesus claimed to be God and proved it? That would make Him... LORD!

THE MIRACLES PROVE: *The Reality - Jesus is 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 RESURRECTION PROVES: *The Reality - Jesus is LORD!*

- × **Matthew 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; 9:1-2; Galatians 1:13.** Before the Resurrection, what was Paul's relationship with Jesus?
 - ✓ **Acts 9: 3-5, 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 Point:** The *Resurrection* and the *changed lives* prove the reality: Jesus is LORD!

THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES PROVE: *The Reality - Jesus is Lord!*

- × **Question:** *How can we identify the Messiah?* In order to identify *one* person out of *six billion* people, it would require nothing more than five points of identification. The country, the state, the city, the street and the person's name. Did you know Jesus Christ has *333 points of identification*, proving He is the Messiah? Prophecy is just one of the ways to do that.

- × **Psalms 22: 1, 18** (1000 B.C.). **The Prophecy:** The Messiah and the Cross.
 - ✓ **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 Point:** The *Messianic Prophecies* Prove the Reality: Jesus is LORD!



Lordship / Discipleship

PURPOSE: For the seeker to freely submit to Christ's reign and His rule in their hearts and in our lives.

- ✦ **Luke 6:46a.** What is Jesus' complaint? *No obedience.* Why is there no obedience? *Someone or something other than Jesus is Lord. The Lordship of Jesus is about hearing the words He spoke and obediently putting them into practice. To make Jesus Lord is to make Him your Teacher and Master.* How can we tell Jesus, "I love you?" *Read: John 14:15, 23-24*
- ✦ **Acts 11:25-26.** To call one's self a Christian can mean many different things to people today. The name "Christian" was applied for the first time to disciples at Antioch, about seven years after the beginning of the church. How many times is the word "Christian" used in New Testament? *Three times.* How many times is the word "Disciple" used? *Three hundred times.* What is a disciple? *A disciple is a learner who strives to conform ALL of his life: thoughts, words and actions to those of his Master.* To understand what it means to live as a Christian today, we will start by looking at Jesus' expectations for those who would be His disciples.
- ✦ **Matthew 28:18-20.** What does it mean, "All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to Me?" *Jesus is Lord!* With ALL authority, what does the Lord command ALL the world to be? *Disciples. That means they should understand Jesus as their Lord and Savior prior to being saved.*
- ✦ **Mark 1:16-20.** Calling of the first disciples: "Follow me." A disciple asks him or herself, "What would Jesus do?" Then strives to do it, regardless of the cost. A disciple of Jesus has the same purpose as Jesus: to be a fisher of men. What does this mean? What did they abandon to follow Jesus?
- ✦ **Luke 9:23-27.** Emphasize the *heart* that God wants. What are the three demands of discipleship in this verse? What does it mean to "deny yourself?" What does it mean to "take up your cross daily?" What does it mean to "follow Jesus?" How can we be ashamed of Jesus and His Words?
- ✦ **Luke 9:57-62.** Examine the issues involved with each person – thoughtless following, excuse making, procrastination and second thoughts. What is the one thing Jesus is teaching them and us? *Jesus is Lord and Jesus is always first in our lives! He plays second to no one.*
- ✦ **Luke 14:25-35.** If *anyone* would come after Jesus what **MUST** he or she do:
 - ✓ Love Jesus more than any other person, yes even their own life.
 - ✓ Surrender everything!
 - ✓ It's a decision for the rest of your life making Jesus Lord.
- ✦ **John 13:34-35.** What will disciples of Jesus be known for? *Their love for one another.* How do disciples know how to love? "As I have loved you."
- ✦ **1 Corinthians 15:10.** How did the grace of God affect Paul?
- ✦ **Luke 17:11-18.** Why did only one return and give praise and thanks to Jesus? This Samaritan's humble return to Jesus in light of His mercy is what discipleship is all about. Many want to be forgiven and healed, but not many are willing to return and let their life praise God with thanksgiving. **Romans 12:1-2**
- ✦ **Question:** Have you made Jesus Lord of your life according to His commands?



The Kingdom of God

PURPOSE:

- * There are two consistent themes found throughout the Bible from beginning to end: (1) The Kingdom of God - Which is God's eternal reign and rule over Heaven and earth. (2) Salvation - which is the means by which the sovereign God brings sinful people into His Kingdom as His willing and acceptable subjects. This study is designed to teach us to submit to the reign and rule of Christ in our hearts and lives and live out the will of God on earth just as we would in Heaven.

SEEKING FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD:

- * **Ecclesiastes 3:11.** According to this Scripture what has God placed within your heart? *Eternity - A desire to know what will happen after we die.* Have you ever felt that pull to find out if there *is* life after death? What is *the* eternal question? **Matthew 19:16** *What good thing must I do to get eternal life?* Have you ever asked this question? There is a better question to ask - How can I ensure eternal life? **John 17:3.**
- * **Matthew 6:33.** What is the most important thing God wants us to do? *For you to seek first His Kingdom and what is right in His eyes.*
- * **Matthew 4:12-17.** Many first - century Jews knew the phrase "the Kingdom of God." Let's look back at the Old Testament predictions about the coming of the Kingdom of God and their fulfillment found in the New Testament.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS COMING:

- * **Isaiah 2:1-4.** "*The mountain of the Lord's temple*" is where God's rule is established by His commands according to His own eternal and unchanging character. The mountain describing the Kingdom of God rises far above the hills, which is symbolic of the kingdoms of men. Who is at the center of this prophecy? *Jesus Christ.* How will people live and what will they do?
- * **Daniel 2:31-45.** The hills (the kingdom of men) that Isaiah spoke about (**Isaiah 2:2**) are now clearly seen. What are they?
 - ✓ Gold/Babylonian Kingdom
 - ✓ Silver/Medo Persian Kingdom
 - ✓ Bronze/Greco-Macedonian Kingdom
 - ✓ Clay and Iron/Roman Kingdom
 - ✓ What does the rock represent? *The Kingdom of God.* What will it do to all the kingdoms of men? What is required to be a part of this Kingdom? *Submission to reign and rule of Christ!*
Ref: **Daniel 7:27**
- * **Isaiah 9:6.** Who is at the center of this prophecy? *Jesus Christ*

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NEAR:

- ✦ **Matthew 4:13-17.** What does it mean the “*Kingdom of Heaven is near*”? *Jesus Christ, the King is before you!* Why did Jesus start with a message of repentance to usher in the Kingdom of God?

- ✦ **Matthew 4:23.** What was the good news of the kingdom of God? *Repent! The Kingdom of God is right here in front of you!*

- ✦ **Matthew 5:17.** What does the “*Law and Prophets*” describe? What is Jesus saying He will do? *What Jesus did completely fulfilled ALL the goals, dreams, shadows, types and prophecies of the Old Testament.*

- ✦ **Matthew 11:11-12. (NASB)** Jesus discusses the relationship between John the Baptist and the kingdom of God, and He says something pretty: “*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force.*” Whatever the kingdom of God is, we know this much, the kingdom of God has been forcefully advancing from the days of John the Baptist until the time Jesus spoke these words. Three years before the church was created at Pentecost/Acts 2:36-47.

- ✦ **Matthew 12:27-28.** What is Jesus saying about the kingdom of God and His power in this Scripture? *Jesus knows that driving out demons can only be performed by the Spirit and power of God, and so in Him, proving that the kingdom of God has come or appeared. This also implies that Jesus is the **King Messiah/ Isaiah 9:6** without explicitly affirming it.*

- ✦ **Mark 1:15.** What was Jesus’ main message? Was it salvation? Is this the message of the church today? Answer: *The Good News of the Kingdom of God or the Gospel of the Kingdom.*
 - ✓ **The Modern Day Gospel:** There is yet another gospel being preached today, “*What are the minimal entrance requirements for me to do in order to get into Heaven before I die?*”

- ✦ **Luke 17:20-21. (NASB)** *Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."*
 - ✓ What does Jesus mean when He says, “*the Kingdom of God is in your midst.*” *Jesus is the King and His kingdom has come.*

ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD:

- ✦ **Matthew 18:1-4.** What must you do to enter the kingdom of God? *Change and repent with great humility, like that of a little child. Why?*

- ✦ **John 3:1-7.** What must a person do to enter the kingdom of God? *Be baptized/born again.* Is baptism about changing behavior? *No! The kingdom of God as Jesus preached it was about inward transformation of people’s hearts and minds. Righteous behavior flows from within and no amount of enforcement of behavior will bring people life if they do not become new on the inside. Ref: **Romans 6:1-4***

- ✦ **Acts 2:36-38.** Peter was given the keys to open the kingdom of God to all nations. What did he tell these people to do? *Repent and be baptized, everyone of you. Connect with **John 3:1-7***

SEEK FIRST HIS RIGTHEOUSNESS:

- ✦ **Matthew 6:9-10.** What does it mean to pray for the kingdom of God to come into your life?
We are praying for God's kingdom to come and for His will to be done on earth just as it is in heaven.

- ✦ **Matthew 6:33a.** What is involved in seeking first the kingdom of God? *Firstly, the opposite of worry is seeking first the kingdom of God. It is seeing life with a singularity of purpose, and secondly, allowing the reign and rule of Christ to come into every area of our life and rejecting any and all things that would go against the kingdom of God and the King's righteousness.* What does it mean to seek first His righteousness? *To "seek first (God's) kingdom" is to desire above all else to enter into, submit to, and participate in spreading the good news of the saving reign of Jesus Christ. It is to pursue: 1. The Father and His holiness. 2. His kingdom to come into your life. 3. His will to be done on earth just as it is in Heaven.*

- ✦ **Matthew 6:33b.** What does it mean to seek first His righteousness? *To seek God's "righteousness" is not, in this context to seek justification; rather, it is to pursue righteousness of life in submission to the perfect will of God as set forth by Jesus in chapters 5-7. For anything else to dominate our minds is to walk in pagan worry. Citizens of God's kingdom should ask themselves, "Is what I am about to do or say going to advance God's kingdom and His righteousness and bring Him glory?"*

- ✦ **Matthew 6:33c.** What does Jesus mean, "And all these things will be given to you."? *God never breaks a promise! He will be faithful to you when you seek first His kingdom and His righteousness!*
Ref: Joshua 23:14

- ✦ **John 18:36.** Looking back to **John 18:10**, how does Peter's behavior show that the kingdom of God is NOT of this world? Can we seek the kingdom of God and the kingdom of men at the same time? Why not?
 - ✓ **Matthew 6:24.** Both God and money are portrayed, not as employers, but as slave - owners. Slavery involves ownership and requires full-time service; a person cannot serve two slave-owners. Why not? *God is to be served with a singular devotion, or He is not to be served at all.*
 - ✓ **Isaiah 55:8-9.** God's thoughts and ways are governed by His righteousness. It is clear when Peter turned to the sword that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of men are eternally different. Why?

- ✦ **Philippians 3:20.** How does this completely change our thinking about how to live? As citizens of Heaven/the kingdom of God, how should we view the kingdoms of men and what is our involvement or loyalty in or to them? *We do not get caught up in civilian affairs. Our hearts and minds are on things above; continually seeking the perfect will of God being done on earth just as it is in Heaven!*

REVIEW: THE KINGDOM OF GOD - *Involves Three Essential Aspects*

- ✦ **God's rule** - Which is established by His commands according to His own eternal and unchanging character. **Matthew 28:18-20**

- ✦ **God's people** - The subjects of that rule who are the people of God who freely and humbly submit to His reign and rule on earth just as it is in Heaven. **1 Peter 2:9-10**

- ✦ **God's place** - The sphere of that rule is the place where Jesus is the unchallenged Lord among His people. **Luke 14:25-33**



Prayer

PURPOSE:

- * The purpose of this study is to teach you how to pray just as Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, so that you can develop an intimate and loving relationship with God through prayer and be transformed in the process.

SCRIPTURES: Matthew 6:9-15; Luke 11:1-4

- * **Luke 11:1.** In what ways do you see humility in these disciples?
- * **Matthew 6:9.** This prayer was given by Jesus, not as a prayer mantra. This is not *what* you should pray, but *how* you should pray.
- * **Matthew 6:9.** First, always begin your time in prayer by praising God for who He is and all that He is. Second, when we pray "*hallowed be Your Name*" we are in fact praying for His holiness to become a part of who we are. In truth, we begin the day by praying away our human nature. **1 Peter 1:16; Hebrews 12:14**
- * **Matthew 6:10.** To pray, "*Your kingdom come,*" is to pray for the kingdom to come, as the Greek in this passage is an active tense... "*Come now, kingdom of God, be done now, will of God*" Ask God to use you to expand His kingdom on earth! We must also pray for humble and submissive hearts to His reign and rule in our hearts and lives.
- * **Matthew 6:10.** To pray, "*Your will be done,*" is to recognize the sovereignty of God and submit to His will on earth just as it is in Heaven! It reminds us to always bring honor, praise and glory to God before we dare to offer up requests for personal needs. We really do have this backwards! **Matthew 26:36-39** to see a living example.
- * **Matthew 6:11.** Like any parent, God, as our Father, already knows what you need and want. However, He longs to hear His children ask anyway. In the end, the greatest reward of learning to pray is prayer itself. **Proverbs 30:7-9.** What is the line between asking God for too much or nothing at all?
- * **Matthew 6:12.** We have all sinned and fall short of God's glory and holiness. Asking God to forgive us will keep us in a constant state of humility and willing to forgive others quickly. Instead of holding a grudge the next time you are hurt by someone is to look at Jesus on the Cross in **Luke 23:34** and imitate Him.
 - ✓ **Matthew 6:14-15.** If we are unwilling to forgive someone, will God forgive you? Forgiveness between people is important to God.
- * **Matthew 6:13.** As humans, can we unaided from Heaven and fueled by our own human strength be a match for the flesh or against a fallen angel whose heart and thoughts have been sharpened by malice and hate? The challenge is to pray when tempted, not after it has grown into sinful actions. (Example: You feel mad. Pray before it becomes rage.)
- * A great acronym to help us pray is: **A.C.T.S.**
 - ✓ **A:** Adoration
 - ✓ **C:** Confession
 - ✓ **T:** Thanksgiving
 - ✓ **S:** Supplication



God's Wisdom vs. Man's Wisdom

PURPOSE:

- ✦ This study will show the stark contrast between the world's wisdom and God's wisdom and help the seeker understand that he or she cannot have it both ways. 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.)
- ✦ **1 Corinthians 1:18-20.** 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. **Isaiah 55:8**
- ✦ **1 Corinthians 3:18-20.** Why does Paul say "*Do not deceive yourselves?*" Read **Jeremiah 17:9**. It is easy to convince ourselves that what we want to believe, what is comfortable, what is familiar, is right because the human heart is very deceitful and loves man's wisdom!
- ✦ **Matthew 16:13-17.** What kind of man was Peter? Was he religious? 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? *Satan!* No wonder it is the opposite of God's wisdom. Read **James 4:4**
- ✦ **Man's Wisdom Speaks:** If you asked a person who is street smart or the person on Wall Street or a person who watches a lot of television, what is at *the heart* of the world's wisdom? What would they 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!* **2 Timothy 3:2** *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 self*" **Matthew 26:34.** We renounce our old self and our old approach to life.
 2. Take up the cross (instrument of death). Die to ourselves. A perfect example of carrying our cross is found in **2 Corinthians 5:14-15**.
 3. Follow Jesus, making 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*"? For those who foolishly lose their lives for Him?
- ✦ **Final thought:** What is everything on the left side? *World's wisdom* What is it called? *Sin*. What is everything on the right side called? *God's wisdom*. What is it called? *Love*. How have you lived according to 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 living by?

The Great Question: *How Can I Really Live?*

WORLD'S WISDOM

GOD'S WISDOM



Foolish

Foolish

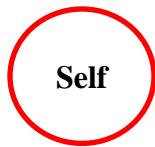
What Would Man's Wisdom Say?
Live for Self: Look out for number one. Get what you want. Get the power, the pleasure, the control you want.

Protect Yourself: It's everyone's fault but yours. Guard your rights. Maintain your independence. Resist an evil person... Never! I hate all my enemies!

Follow Your Heart: Hold on to what it is yours... get a good lawyer! Always look out for number one. Have it your way and always maintain your personal independence!

Can be very religious and still on this side.
Matthew 15: 7-9

- What Would God's Wisdom Say?**
- **Deny Yourself** - Greek: *utterly disown*
 - **Take Up YOUR Cross Daily** - *Die to self*
 - **Follow Me/Jesus** - **Matthew 5:1-12**



SAVE YOUR LIFE!

LOOSE YOUR LIFE... For My sake!

LOSE IT
Man's Wisdom: Sin/Death

FIND IT
God's Wisdom: Salvation/Life

According to God's wisdom... how can you find life? **John 3:1-8; Acts 2:36-38; Romans 6:1-4.**
 Do you want to live life to the full? What is required of you? *Repent and be baptized!*



Sin

PURPOSE:

- * The purpose of this study is to help a seeker come to the realization that all have sinned, and therefore, we are all desperately in need the grace of God. Thus, the passion of this study is to help the person to see themselves as God sees them: utterly sinful, separated from Him because of his/her rebellion, and in need of His mercy! This realization hopefully will bring about true humility and the desire for both forgiveness and repentance as they look towards the Cross of Christ. In conclusion, only the Scriptures can shine the light of truth on the human heart and its fatal attraction with sin, *“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”*
- * **1 Peter 2:9-10.** 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.

Darkness		Light
Not a People		People of God
No Mercy		Mercy

WHAT IS SIN?

- * **Romans 3:23.** Sin is unrighteousness - missing the mark of God’s glory, righteousness, holiness and justice.
- * **1 John 3:4.** Sin is lawlessness - breaking the accepted rules of right and wrong. The absence of moral conviction and restraint.
- * **Proverbs 17:11.** Sin is rebellion - understanding the law and commands of God and willingly breaking them.
- * **Mark 7:21-23.** Sin is your responsibility - taking ownership of our sin is hard. Why? *We are responsible for our own sin. Despite genetics, parenting, peer pressures, and socio-economic conditions, sin comes from within our own hearts and makes us unclean.* What is the consequence of being unclean before God?

WHY DOES SIN MATTER TO GOD?

- * **Genesis 6:5-7; Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 6:23a.** Sin deeply hurts God because the consequence of our sin is separation from Him. A good example is a child who has been kidnapped. How would the parents feel?

WHO CARES ABOUT SIN: *I’m a good person!*

- * **Mark 10:17-23.** This man comes to Jesus searching for what? *Eternal life.* What does Jesus tell him? *“You know the commandments. Do not...”*
 - ✓ What are the commandments Jesus is talking about? *The Ten Commandments/Exodus 20:1-17.*
 - ✓ Why did Jesus use five of the Ten Commandments? **1 Timothy 1:8-9**
 - ✓ What did this man think about himself? *I am a good person, just like you Jesus.*
 - ✓ If we took the five commandments that Jesus used, how many would you say you have broken?

HAVE YOU EVER MURDERED ANYONE? *Most people will say no! Now ask, have you ever **hated** anyone?*

- * **Exodus 20:13.** *You shall not murder.*

- * **Matthew 5:21-22.** What does Jesus say a murderer and a person who hates another have in common?

- * **Conviction:** What are you guilty of and what does that make you? *A murderer and a law breaker. 1/5*

HAVE YOU EVER COMMITTED ADULTRY? *No! Never been married. How about lust? Ever **lusted** before?*

- * **Exodus 20:14.** *You shall not commit adultery.*

- * **Matthew 5:27-28.** What does Jesus say an adulterer and a person who lusts have in common?

- * **Conviction:** What are you guilty of and what does that make you? *An adulterer and a law breaker. 2/5*

HAVE YOU EVER STOLEN ANYTHING REGARDLESS OF THE VALUE? *Have you ever **stolen** before?*

- * **Exodus 20:15.** *You shall not steal.*

- * **Conviction:** What are you guilty of and what does that make you? *A thief and a law breaker. 3/5*

HAVE YOU EVER LIED/GIVEN FALSE TESTIMONY? *Ever told a tiny white **lie***

- * **Exodus 20:16.** *You shall not give false testimony.*

- * **Conviction:** What are you guilty of and what does that make you? *A liar and a law breaker. 4/5*

HAVE YOUR EVER DISHONORED/DISRESPECTED YOUR PARENTS? *Have you ever **disrespected** your parents?*

- * **Exodus 20:12.** *Honor your father and your mother.*

- * **Conviction:** What does that make you? *A lawbreaker! 5/5*

HAVE YOU FALLEN SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD?

- * **James 2:10-11.** Of the five commandments Jesus spoke of to the man, how many have you broken? What is this Scripture telling you? *The reality is you break one, you break them ALL.*

- * **Romans 3:21-24.** Who has sinned? *Everyone.* What does this mean? *We all fall short of God.*

- * **Isaiah 59:1-2.** In light of what you have just read, what does this Scripture reveal about where you stand before God and why? *You are separated from Him because of your sin. This is why sin matters to God! Do you want to break down this wall?*

- * **Acts 2:36.** Why were the people cut to the heart? What could cause such a thing?



The Cross

PURPOSE: The world rejects people and for many reasons: the way you dress, universities say that you're not smart enough and companies say you're not qualified enough. The purpose of this study is for you to see through the Cross: the righteousness, justice, holiness and eternal love of God and all that He did to win your heart!

- × **Acts 2:36.** Why were the people cut to the heart? What could cause such a thing? *In one word... sin!*

- × **Romans 3:22-25, 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*. God loved His enemy – you. Because God loves us, Jesus died for our sins. *Ref: 1 John 3:16; 4:10*

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

- × **Matthew 26:47-56.** What *choice* did Jesus make for *you* by not calling on the twelve legions of angels?
 - ✓ **John 12:27-28.** Why did Jesus not seek to escape the Cross? *The glory of God.*

- × **Matthew 26:57-75, 27:1-14.** 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?

- × **Matthew 27:15-26.** Barabbas was a known murderer. What *choice* was God making setting a murderer free while allowing His innocent Son to die? Who does Barabbas represent? *You/every human!*

- × **Matthew 27:27-31.** 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 27:32-44.** The robbers, the chief priests, the elders of the law and the teachers 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? *See the adjoining medical account at this point to drive home the suffering of Jesus.*

- × **Matthew 27:45-56.** In Jesus' most desperate time, He cries out to God, “*My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?*” What *choice* did God make by not responding?

- * **Isaiah 53:3-7.** Written roughly 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 entire chapter. Points of emphasis:
 - ✓ **v. 1-3.** The Messiah would be despised and rejected. **Matthew 27:15-26; 41-47**
 - ✓ **v. 4-6.** The Messiah would be pierced for our transgressions; crushed for our iniquities; by His wounds we are healed. **Matthew 26:67; 27:26-30; 35; John 19:33-34**
 - ✓ **v. 7-9.** The Messiah 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.*
 - ✓ **v. 10-12** The Messiah would be a guilt offering; but after His suffering, He would receive satisfaction in His resurrection. **Psalms 22**

- * **1 Corinthians 1:18.** People who do not see their sin will view and hear the message of the Cross in one of two ways. What are they?
 - ✓ For those who are perishing, the message of the Cross is *foolishness*. Why?
 - ✓ For those who are being saved, the message of the Cross is the *power of God*. Why?

- * **Luke 23:39-43.** Records two thieves hanging on a cross. What was their personal response in light of **1 Corinthians 1:18**? Why did one see Jesus and the Cross as foolishness and the other as the power of God?

- * **Luke 23.** Once on the Cross, all three would die. However, the question is not *if* they would die, but *how* did they die? What does this mean to you?
 - One died *in* sin! Lost
 - One died *to* sin Saved
 - One died *for* sin! Savior

- * **Acts 2:26** Why were the people cut to the heart? What could cause such a thing? What impact does the Cross and the grace of God have on you?

- * **2 Corinthians 5:14-15.** How does the love of Christ found in the Cross change us? What must we be? *Convinced. When you are convinced that Jesus loved you enough to die for you, there is nothing you cannot overcome. This is the power of the Cross. His love, mercy and grace!*



The Medical Account of the Cross

Truman Davis, M.D., M.S.

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The physical trauma of Christ begins in Gethsemane with one of the initial aspects of His suffering - the bloody sweat. It is interesting that the physician of the group, Luke, is the only one to mention this. Luke's biblical account tells of Jesus' suffering, "*And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.*"

Though very rare, the phenomenon of *He-ma-ti-dro-sis*, or bloody sweat, is all documented. Under great emotional stress, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can break, thus mixing blood with sweat. This process alone could have produced marked weakness and possible shock.

After the arrest in the middle of the night, Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas, the High Priest. One of the soldiers struck Jesus across the face for remaining silent when questioned by Caiaphas. The palace guards taunted Jesus to identify them as they each passed by, spat on Him, and struck Him in the face. In the early morning, Jesus, battered and bruised, dehydrated, and exhausted from a sleepless night, is taken across Jerusalem to the Praetorium of the Fortress Antonia. It was there, in response to the cries of the mob, that Pilate ordered Bar-Abbas released and condemned Jesus to scourging and crucifixion.

Preparations for the scourging are carried out. Jesus is stripped of His clothing and His hands tied to a post above His head. The Roman legionnaire steps forward with the flagrum in his hand. This is a short whip consisting of several heavy, leather thongs with two small balls of lead attached near the ends of each. The heavy whip is brought down with full force across Jesus' shoulders, back and legs thirty-nine times.

At first the heavy thongs cut through the skin only. Then, as the blows continue, they cut deeper and deeper into the *sub-cu-ta-neous* tissues, producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles. The small balls of lead first produce large, deep bruises, which are broken open by subsequent blows. Finally, the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue. When it is determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner is near death, the beating is finally stopped.

The half-fainting Jesus is then untied and allowed to slump to the stone pavement, wet with His own blood. The Roman soldiers see a great joke in the provincial Jew claiming to be a king. They throw a robe across His shoulders and place a stick in His hand for a scepter. A small bundle of flexible branches covered with long thorns is pressed into the scalp of Jesus. Again there is copious bleeding (the scalp being one of the most vascular areas of the body). After mocking Him and striking Him across the face, the soldiers take the stick from His hand and strike Him across the head, driving the thorns deeper into His scalp. Finally, the soldiers tire of their sadistic sport and the robe is torn from His back. This has already become adherent in the clots of blood and serum in the wounds, and its removal, just as the careless removal of surgical bandages, causes excruciating pain - almost as though He were again being whipped, and the wounds again begin to bleed.

Jesus is then led off to be crucified. The heavy beams of the cross are then tied to His shoulders, and the procession of the condemned Christ, two thieves and the execution detail, begins its slow journey. The weight of the heavy wooden beam, together with the shock produced by copious blood loss, is too much. Jesus stumbles and lacerates the skin and muscles of His shoulders. Jesus tries to rise, but His human muscles have been pushed beyond their endurance.

At Golgotha, the beam is placed on the ground and Jesus is quickly thrown backward with His shoulders pressed against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He then drives a heavy, wrought iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly, he moves to the other side and repeats the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexion and movement. The beam is then lifted in place at the top of the posts and the titulus reading "*Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*" is nailed in place.

The left foot is pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each. As Jesus pushes Himself upward to avoid the stretching torment, He places His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there is the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the *me-ta-tar-sal* bones of the feet.

As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in a deep relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by the arms the pectoral muscles are paralyzed and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but not exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order get one short breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, Jesus is able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen. Hours of this limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain, as tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins. A deep crushing pain deep in the chest as the *par-a-car-di-um* slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart. The compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissues - the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues send their flood of stimuli to the brain. Jesus gasps, "*I thirst.*"

Jesus can feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues. With one last surge of strength, He once again presses His torn feet against the nail, He straightens His legs, takes a deeper breath, and utters His seventh and last cry, "*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.*" Apparently to make doubly sure of death, the legionnaire drove his spear through the fifth interspace between the ribs, upward through the *par-a-car-di-um* and into the heart. Immediately there came out blood and water. We, therefore, have rather conclusive postmortem evidence that Jesus died, not the usual crucifixion death by suffocation, but of heart failure due to the shock and constriction of the heart by fluid in the *par-a-car-di-um*.

Thus we have a glimpse of the manifestation of evil which man can exhibit toward man and toward God. This medical description of what Jesus endured on the cross is apt to leave you hopeless and depressed. How grateful you can be that, "*He Did This Just For You*" showing you a glimpse into what God did to win your heart

Acts 2:37 *When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"*



Repent and be Baptized

PURPOSE: When we understand the magnitude of our sin and the great love and mercy of God, the only true response of faith is to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of our sins (**Acts 2:36-38**). This study is designed to show a seeker what biblical repentance entails and the meaning of baptism into Christ.

- ✦ **Acts 2:36.** Why is the Lordship of Jesus mentioned here by Peter of the greatest importance? *Everyone wants to be saved but not everyone wants Jesus to be Lord!* What was the impact of their sin and the Cross on their hearts? *They were cut to the heart.* **2 Corinthians 7:8-11**

- ✦ **Acts 2:37-38.** Why is this such an important passage? What two responses did Peter call for them *to do*? Why do we need to look at both repentance and baptism?
 - ✓ Note, Peter told them *to do* something... repent and be baptized. This is no more a work than reading your Bible and praying.

- ✦ **Luke 13:1-5, 6-9.** Jesus preaches that without repentance, we will all perish. He likewise expects to find fruit every time there is true repentance. 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 now makes God the center of our love and devotion, our faith and our complete obedience.
Romans 12:1-2

- ✦ **Luke 3:7-14.** The tangible fruit of repentance is the evidence of a changed mind and heart! 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 does it mean to be cut to the heart? *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 mean in your life? Where does worldly sorrow lead?

- ✦ **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; 16:29-34; 22:12-16.** What is happening in all these events? People are putting their faith in Jesus and His salvation. In each passage:
 - ✓ What was preached?
 - ✓ What was the person’s (people’s) response to the message?
 - ✓ How long did the person (people) take to make the decision?
 - ✓ What was their response after baptism?

- ✦ **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.
- ✦ **John 15:3.** Why were all the Apostles except Paul NOT baptized? *They were physically united with Jesus while He walked the earth with them.*



- ✦ **Galatians 3:26-29.** We are baptized “*into Christ*”. Note that Paul did not consider faith and baptism to be contradictory. Baptism is a tangible expression of faith that places us “*in Christ*” where salvation occurs.
- ✦ **Acts 22:16.** What question was Paul asked? What would you say if asked the same question?
- ✦ **Matthew 16:16.** What do you see in this Scripture that is so very important?

FURTHER STUDY IF NEEDED: False Doctrines

- ✦ **Colossians 2:11-12. Infant Baptism:** 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.
- ✦ **1 Peter 3:21. Sinner’s Prayer:** 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*” 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**.
- ✦ **Baptism is the First Act of Obedience (AFTER) a Person is Saved!**
 - ✓ Before a person can be saved they must know Jesus as both Lord and Savior. **Ref: Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:26.** You can NOT have one without the other. This comes from the modern day gospel, “*What are the minimal entrance requirements that I must do to get into Heaven before I die?*”
 - ✓ **Mark 10:17-23.** Was the man saved by throwing himself at Jesus’ feet and asking, “*What must I do to inherit eternal life?*” *No!* Why not? *Because he walked away from the Kingdom of God in sadness.*
 - ✓ **The Point:** Everyone wants Jesus to save them, few want Him to be Lord!

FURTHER STUDY IF NEEDED: False Doctrines

- ✦ “*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 6:4** 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. Also, while on earth, Jesus had the power to forgive sins. **Matthew 9:2-6; Romans 6:2-4**

SIX PLACES WE FIND BAPTISM: Baptism is not the most important subject in the New Testament, 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 wants them to do.
- ✦ **John 3:1-8.** Baptism shows up right before the most famous Scripture of all.
- ✦ **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.** 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 seeker to become a saved Disciple of Jesus.



The Church: *Living a Life of Devotion*

PURPOSE: To help an individual understand God's role for us in His church and to see that they will become a part of the body of Christ, a member of God's family.

- ✦ **Acts 2:42.** What is the difference between devotion and commitment? Which one do you think the early church lived? *The church lives in a consistent state of complete devotion to Jesus!*
 - ✓ **Devotion:** A deep love, great dedication and loyalty, strong enthusiasm, unyielding passion for something.
 - ✓ **Commitment:** Something that takes up time or energy, especially obligation to family or work commitments.

- ✦ **Acts 2:42-47.** The Bible records this tiny outpost of Heaven on earth. What do you see about the early church? What do you notice about their lives? Why was there such devotion to God and towards one another? We see that they are devoted to:
 - ✓ Apostles' teaching - Discuss the importance of devotion to our personal Bible study.
 - ✓ Fellowship - Discuss the importance of devotion to our times together.
 - ✓ Breaking of Bread - Explain our devotion to Communion every Sunday.
 - ✓ Prayer - Prayer helps us to stay devoted and connected to God and to one another.

- ✦ **Colossians 1:15-18.** What is the church? *It is the body of Christ.* What does the head do for the rest of the body? *Jesus should always be the one who guides the church.* Ref: **Colossians 2:18-19.**

- ✦ **1 Corinthians 12:12-27.** We are baptized into the body of Jesus, His church. The church consists of distinct yet unified parts, just like a human body. We are the church; each of us must actively look for the distinct yet unified ways we are to support the body. How will you help build up the body of Christ?
Romans 12:4-8

- ✦ **Hebrews 3:12-14.** We each have the charge and the responsibility to "*See to it that no one has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.*" Daily encouragement helps everyone stand firm until the end.

- ✦ **Romans 12:1-2.** Every area of our life as Disciples is to be offered to God as a living sacrifice that is holy and pleasing. Now read **2 Corinthians 8:7** - we can learn here from the Corinthian church that they excelled in many areas but were encouraged to excel in giving. Why? Our giving supports the body as we reach out to a world in need of Jesus. **1 Corinthians 16:1-2**

- ✦ **Ephesians 2:19-22.** What does it mean to a person "*You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household.*?" What does "*Members of God's household*" mean? What is the foundation of God's church?
 - ✓ The Apostles + The Prophets + Jesus Christ = *The Word of God*
(NT) (OT) (NT)

- ✦ **Hebrews 2:10-11.** When we are made holy we become brothers to Christ and we can approach God with confidence because of Jesus. How does this make you feel knowing that you can be a part of God's family in this way?

- ✘ **Ephesians 1:22-23.** What is the purpose of the church? *To be the fullness of Christ to one another and to all the world!*
- ✘ **Matthew 9:35-37.** The church is the *fullness of Christ* and we must *reflect* the Lord and His light to this dark and dying world, more than our programs and meetings! What do you see in Jesus that the church must do to reflect His fullness in this world?
- ✘ **Hebrews 10:23.** What does the Bible call the church to hold to? *“Hold unswervingly to the hope we profess.”* What purpose do Disciples play in helping one another to do this? And why would a *“Lone Ranger”* not survive spiritually? .v **24-25**
 - ✓ Our relationships within the Church are essential for spiritual growth and maturity!
- ✘ **John 13:34-35.** How are disciples to define their relationships with one another? *We love one another as Christ loved us!*
- ✘ **Matthew 18:15-17. (NASB)** What are the *four steps* Jesus gives us in dealing with one another when there is sin involved?
 - ✓ **Step #1:** *“And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.*
 - ✓ **Step #2:** *But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.*
 - ✓ **Step #3:** *And if he refuse to listen to them, tell it to the church.*
 - ✓ **Step #4:** *And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile or tax - gather.”*
 - ✓ **Move Beyond Belief to Conviction:** There is no room in the Church for gossiping!
- ✘ **Hebrews 12:14-15.** Why is it *essential* for a disciple to forgive when they have been sinned against *If you are unwilling to forgive your brother or sister, (because of bitterness) in light of how God has forgiven you, God will not forgive you.* **Matthew 6:14-15**
- ✘ **Ephesians 4:1-3.** What does it mean to live our lives in a manner worthy of our calling? Is God talking about our relationship with Him or one another? The end goal is to above ALL protect the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. How can we do that and live Heaven on earth?
 - ✓ Be completely humble!
 - ✓ Be completely gentle!
 - ✓ Be completely patient!
 - ✓ Bear with one another in love, just as Jesus does with you!



Counting the Cost

PURPOSE:

- * This final step is designed to see if the seeker has humbly considered if they are willing to freely submit to Jesus, His reign and rule in their heart and life, freely obeying ALL that He would command. This should be born out of a sincere gratitude and love for Him, simply because He called them “*out of the darkness and into His wonderful light!*”

COUNTING THE COST: *When do you want to be baptized?*

- * **Acts 8:36.** *Their answer will reveal if they have understood God's message of reconciliation.*
- * **Matthew 16:16.** *Why do you want to get baptized? Hopefully because they have a deep reverence for Jesus!*

COUNTING THE COST: *The Two Sons*

- * **Matthew 21:28-31.** *Which of the two did what the father wanted? The first son said no, but later changed his mind. What did he show? The second son said yes, but never went. How can you be like him?*
- * **2 Peter 1:20-21.** *What are the dangers of being like the second son.?*

COUNTING THE COST: *The Parable of the Soils*

- * **Mark 4:16-20.** *What is your greatest cost in becoming a disciple?*
 - ✓ **Mark 4:17.** *Desires for other things.*
 - ✓ **Mark 4:18.** *Allowing your heart and so your life to backslide. Why do we backslide? Because of the worries of this life - No time with God. **James 1:14-15***
 - ✓ **Mark 4:18.** *We backslide because of the deceitfulness of wealth: Money - Is more important than being with Jesus. **Tithing: Matthew 6:19-21, 24; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8***
 - ✓ *We backslide because of the desires for other things: What would that be for you?*
The World: *Are you willing to be different even if your husband , wife or relatives turn on you?*

COUNTING THE COST: *Jesus is Lord!*

- * **Luke 9:57-61.** *Of all the three men... what is Jesus telling them and you? **I am first! Revelation 2:1-4** What does it mean Jesus is Lord? **He reigns and rules over ALL of your heart and life! Luke 14:31-33***
- * **Luke 14:25-27.** *Who is the most important relationship?*
 - ✓ *If someone you loved, mother, father, brother, sister or yes, even your own heart, told you to renounce Jesus , stop following Him and stop being devoted to the church (**Acts 2:42-47**)... what would you do?*
 - ✓ *How would you prioritize your relationships from now on?*

COUNTING THE COST: *Becoming a Contagious Christian*

- ✘ **Matthew 28:18-20.** Jesus has authority in Heaven and over the earth, what does that make Him? .v **18 Lord**
 - ✓ Therefore, Jesus as LORD tells you to “go” and make what of all nations? .v **19 Disciples**
 - ✓ **1 Peter 2:9-10.** What is a New Testament Disciple? Does Jesus mention race, creed, hearing, deaf, blind or not? *Jesus came to seek and save the lost! All of mankind!*
 - ✓ **Mark 1:14-20.** Why was it so important for them to leave their nets and even their father to follow Jesus. *It’s easy to love those you are comfortable with. However, the world is made up of many different races and backgrounds. You must learn to win on both sides!*
- ✘ **Matthew 22:34-39.** What is the greatest commandment and how much does God want of your love? What is the second commandment?
- ✘ **1 John 5:2-4.** How does Jesus feel our love for Him? *Obedience*

COUNTING THE COST: *The Word of God*

- ✘ **2 Peter 1:20-21.** Do you believe the Bible is inspired from **Genesis 1:1** to **Revelation 22:19**? If so, why?
- ✘ **Matthew 11:28-30.** Why read and study God’s Word throughout your day? Read **Job 23:11-12.** The Word of God is like your daily meal.
 - ✓ **Memorize** - The Word of God
 - ✓ **Examine** - The Word of God
 - ✓ **Apply** - The Word of God
 - ✓ **Live** - The Word of God
- ✘ **John 8:31-32; 17:17.** Is there ANY other “holy” books *outside* of the Bible that are equal truth to that of the Bible?

COUNTING THE COST: *The Kingdom of God*

- ✘ **Matthew 13:44.** What is the treasure? What are you joyful about?
- ✘ **Matthew 13:44.** What did the merchant set out to find? Instead, what did he find and how did he react? Is Jesus worth everything to you? Why?
- ✘ **Matthew 5:1-12.** Are you willing to follow Jesus and live this out, knowing what will happen in v. **11-12**?