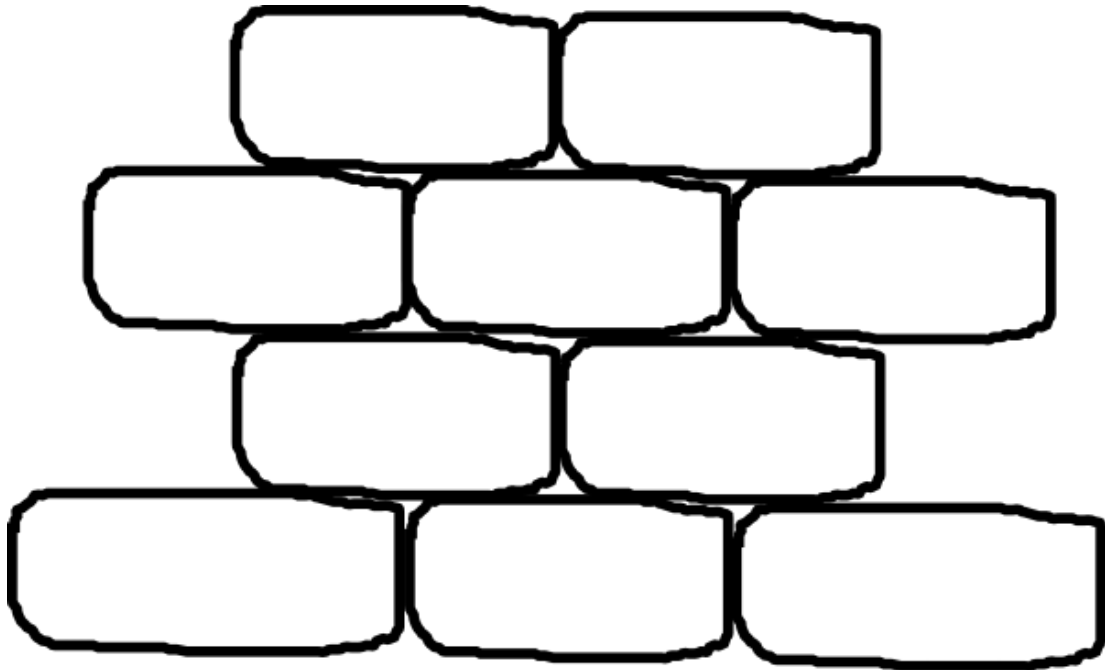

FOUNDATION STONES FOR NEW BELIEVERS



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The Word of God

“²⁴Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. ²⁵Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. ²⁶But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. ²⁷When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.” Matthew 7:24-27, NLT

Just like a house, our lives need a strong foundation. The world around us changes, but God's word - the Bible - never changes (1 Peter 1:24-25). It is the absolute foundation for our lives.

“¹⁴Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. ¹⁵Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.” Ephesians 4:14-15, NLT

The Creative Word

God says:“...¹⁰The rain and snow come down from the heavens and stay on the ground to water the earth. They cause the grain to grow, producing seed for the farmer and bread for the hungry. ¹¹It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it.” Isaiah 55:10-11, NLT

The word of God has great creative power. God created the universe by His word (Psalm 33:6,9; Hebrews 11:3) and sustains the universe by His word (Hebrews 1:3). The word of God has the same kind of creative power in our lives.

The word of God is like water

The word of God cleanses us (Eph.5:25-27). We start life in the Kingdom of God totally "washed clean" by the Spirit of God through His word (John 15:3). And as we continue to read and absorb God's word, it enables us to live a life that pleases God.

“¹⁷Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.” John 17:17, NLT

The word of God is like light

Before we knew the Lord, our lives were in spiritual darkness. Now, as we read the Bible, God's word is like a bright light, shining on areas of our lives that God wants to change, and shedding light on the path God wants us to walk with Him.

“¹⁰⁵Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.” Psalm 119:105, NLT (read also verse 130; 19:8; 2 Peter 1:3-9)

The word of God is like seed

“²³For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God. ²⁴As the Scriptures say,

‘People are like grass; their beauty is like a flower in the field.

The grass withers and the flower fades.

²⁵But the word of the Lord remains forever.’

And that word is the Good News that was preached to you.” 1 Pet.1:23-25, NLT

Read the Parable of the Sower in Luke 8:4-15. In verse 11, Jesus said: "The seed is the word of God." When we hear God's word, it is like a seed sown into our hearts, designed to bring forth life. If our hearts are hard and unreceptive, the seed is "snatched away." But if we receive it and obey it - allow it to "take root" - then God's word begins to work in our lives.

²¹ So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. ²² But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves." James 1:21- 22, NLT

The word of God is like food

⁴ "...People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4, NLT

The word of God causes us to grow spiritually. When we received Christ, we were "born of the Spirit" by the word of God (John 3:3,6; 1 Peter 1:3,23). For us to grow in the Spirit, we need to continue to feed on God's word.

The word of God is like sword

¹² For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires." Hebrews 4:12, NLT (see also Ephesians 6:17)

The word of God can cut right to our hearts, making us aware of sin (Acts 2:36-37). God's word, stored in our hearts, can also be used as a weapon against the attacks of Satan (Luke 4:1-14).

A Love for God's Word

² Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment, ³ now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness." 1 Peter 2:2-3, NLT (see also 1 Cor.3:1-2; Psalm 19:8-10; 119:103)

It is important to receive God's word regularly, so that we can grow in the Lord. We do this in three ways:

- We sit under regular teaching (Acts 2:42; 2 Tim.3:16).
- We read God's word each day (Psalm 119:9,11).
- We share God's word with each other (Colossians 3:16).

As we absorb God's word, we become familiar with God's will and God's ways. This gives us special authority in prayer (John 15:7; 1 John 5:14-15). Through the word of God, we discover God's nature, and the Holy Spirit works in our lives to change us into the likeness of Jesus (Romans 8:29).

¹³ "... until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ." Ephesians 4:13, NLT (see also Colossians 1:25,28)

This is God's plan for our lives - that we will grow up into the full likeness of Jesus Himself! God does this by changing the attitude of our mind, so that we see things the way God sees them (Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:21-24; Colossians 3:9-10).

⁴ And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires." 2 Peter 1:4, NLT

As we respond in faith to God's "very great and precious promises," His Spirit works each day to change us into the image of Christ. This is the power of God's word in our lives.

"³¹ Jesus said to the people who believed in him, 'You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. ³² And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'" John 8:31-32, NLT

The Word Become Flesh (Human)

"¹⁴ So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son." John 1:14, NLT

Jesus is called "the Word of God" (John 1:1). When He "became flesh" (verse 14), God's message took on human form in the life of Jesus. Now God wants the same thing to happen in your life. God doesn't want you to just read the Bible and learn *about* Him. He wants His words to become a part of your life - to *change* you. Then people will not just hear God's word in word form. Like Jesus, they will see the word of God as a daily reality in your life.

"¹ We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life."¹ John 1:1, NLT

The 66 Books of the Bible¹

by Mary Fairchild

Updated July 15, 2018

We can't begin a study on the divisions of the books of the Bible without first clarifying the term *canon*. The canon of Scripture refers to the list of books that are officially accepted as "divinely inspired" and thus rightfully belonging in the Bible. Only the canonical books are considered the authoritative Word of God. The process of determining the biblical canon was begun by Jewish scholars and rabbis and later finalized by the early Christian church toward the end of the fourth century.

More than 40 authors in three languages during a period of 1,500 years contributed to the books and letters which make up the biblical canon of Scripture.

66 Books of the Bible

The Bible is divided into two sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. *Testament* refers to a covenant between God and his people.

- Jews and Protestant Christians recognize 39 inspired books of the Old Testament.
- Protestant Christians recognize 27 inspired books of the New Testament.
- Roman Catholic and a few Orthodox translations contain additional books, recognizing a portion of the Apocrypha.

The Apocrypha

Both Jews and early church fathers agreed on 39 divinely inspired books as comprising the Old Testament canon of Scripture. Augustine (400 A.D.), however, included the books of the Apocrypha. A large portion of the Apocrypha was officially recognized by the Roman Catholic Church as part of the biblical canon at the Council of Trent in A.D. 1546. Today, Coptic, Greek, and Russian Orthodox churches also accept these books as divinely inspired by God. The word *Apocrypha* means "hidden." The books of the Apocrypha are not considered authoritative in Judaism and Protestant Christian churches.

¹ <https://www.thoughtco.com/books-of-the-bible-700274?print>

Old Testament Books of the Bible

The 39 books of the Old Testament were written over a period of approximately 1,000 years, beginning with Moses (around 1450 B.C.) until the time when the Jewish people returned to Judah from exile (538-400 B.C.) during the Persian Empire. The English Bible follows the order of the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) and thus differs in order from the Hebrew Bible. For the sake of this study, we will consider the divisions of Greek and English Bibles only. Many English Bible readers may not realize that the books are ordered and grouped according to style or type of writing, and not chronologically.

The Pentateuch

Written more than 3,000 years ago, the first five books of the Bible are called the Pentateuch. The word *Pentateuch* means "five vessels," "five containers," or "five-volumed book." For the most part, both Jewish and Christian tradition credit Moses with primary authorship of the Pentateuch. These five books form the theological foundation of the Bible.

The Historical Books of the Bible

The next division of the Old Testament contains the Historical Books. These 12 books record the events of Israel's history, beginning with the book of Joshua and the nation's entry into the Promised Land until the time of its return from exile some 1,000 years later. As we read these pages of the Bible, we relive incredible stories and meet fascinating leaders, prophets, heroes, and villains.

The Poetry and Wisdom Books of the Bible

The writing of the Poetry and Wisdom Books spanned from the time of Abraham through the end of the Old Testament. Possibly the oldest of the books, Job, is of unknown authorship. The Psalms have many different writers, King David being the most notable and others remaining anonymous. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs are primarily attributed to Solomon. Also referred to as "wisdom literature," these books deal precisely with our human struggles and real-life experiences.

The Prophetic Books of the Bible

There have been prophets throughout every era of God's relationship with mankind, but the books of the prophets address the "classical" period of prophecy—during the later years of the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel, throughout the time of exile, and into the years of Israel's return from exile. The Prophetic Books were written from the days of Elijah (874-853 B.C.) until the time of Malachi (400 B.C.). They are further divided by Major and Minor Prophets.

Major Prophets

- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations - Scholarship favors Jeremiah as the author of Lamentations. The book, a poetic work, is placed here with the Major Prophets in English Bibles because of its authorship.
- Ezekiel
- Daniel - In English and Greek Bible translations, Daniel is considered one of the Major Prophets; however, in the Hebrew canon it is part of "The Writings."

Minor Prophets

- Hosea
- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah

- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

New Testament Books of the Bible

For Christians, the New Testament is the fulfillment and culmination of the Old Testament. What the prophets of old longed to see, Jesus Christ fulfilled as Israel's Messiah and the Savior of the World. The New Testament tells the story of Christ's coming to earth as a man, his life and ministry, his mission, message, and miracles, his death, burial, and resurrection, and the promise of his return.

The Gospels

The four Gospels recount the story of Jesus Christ, each book giving us a unique perspective on his life. They were written between A.D. 55-65, with the exception of John's Gospel, which was written around A.D. 85-95.

The Book of Acts

The book of Acts, written by Luke, provides a detailed, eyewitness account of the birth and growth of the early church and the spread of the gospel immediately after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is considered a New Testament history book about the early church. The book of Acts supplies a bridge connecting the life and ministry of Jesus to the life of the church and the witness of the earliest believers. The work also constructs a link between the Gospels and the Epistles.

The Epistles

The Epistles are letters written to the fledgling churches and individual believers in the earliest days of Christianity. The Apostle Paul wrote the first 13 of these letters, each addressing a specific situation or problem. Paul's writings constitute about one-fourth of the entire New Testament.

The Epistles of Paul

- Romans
- 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians - Prison Epistle
- Philippians - Prison Epistle
- Colossians - Prison Epistle
- 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians
- 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy - Pastoral Epistles
- Titus - Pastoral Epistle
- Philemon - Prison Epistle

The General Epistles

- Hebrews
- James
- 1 Peter and 2 Peter
- 1 John, 2 John and 3 John
- Jude

The Book of Revelation

This final book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, is sometimes called "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" or "The Revelation to John." The author is John, the son of Zebedee, who also wrote the Gospel of John. He penned this dramatic book while living in exile on the Island of Patmos, around A.D. 95-96. At the time, the early Christian church in Asia faced an intense period of persecution.

The book of Revelation contains symbolism and imagery that challenge the imagination and bewilder the understanding. It is believed to be a culmination of end times prophecies. The interpretation of the book has posed a problem for Bible students and scholars throughout the ages.

Although a difficult and strange book, no doubt, the book of Revelation is certainly worthy of study. The hope-filled message of salvation in Jesus Christ, the promise of blessing for his followers, and God's ultimate victory and supreme power are the prevailing themes of the book.

²If you're new to the Bible, the best place to start is the Gospel of John. This book (the fourth book in the New Testament) is John's eyewitness account of the life of Jesus. As one of Jesus' closest disciples, John's account is both riveting and informative.

John's purpose in writing is to help us believe, making it the ideal place to start. *"These things were written to help you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name"* ([John 20:31](#)).

If you read one chapter of John a day, (which will take no more than 5-10 minutes) you'll read John in its entirety in 21 days.

After reading John, move on to the other gospels – Matthew, Mark or Luke. Next read Philippians, Ephesians and Colossians, which provide practical encouragement and instruction for living the Christian life. Romans is jam-packed with essential doctrine. Genesis explains how everything began. Psalms is filled with heartfelt prayers that offer encouragement for every season of life.

Work your way through one book at a time, and you'll never find yourself fumbling for where to read again.



What are three ways we receive God's Word?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____



What five things is God's Word compared to in this lesson?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Rather than merely teaching us *about* God, what is the Word of God supposed to do in our lives? _____



How many books are in the Old Testament? _____



How many books are in the New Testament? _____

² <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/bible-study/the-beginner-s-guide-to-reading-the-bible.html>

What is God Like?

⁶“You alone are the LORD. You made the skies and the heavens and all the stars. You made the earth and the seas and everything in them. You preserve them all, and the angels of heaven worship you.” Nehemiah 9:6, NLT

Everything in the universe was created by God's hand (Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 11:3). This is not just the stars, the sun and the earth. This also includes you.

¹³“You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.” Psalm 139:13-14, NLT

God is far too great for us to fully understand. He has no beginning and He has no end. But what is God like? The Bible reveals that God is:

All-powerful

¹⁷“O Sovereign LORD! You made the heavens and earth by your strong hand and powerful arm. Nothing is too hard for you!” Jeremiah 32:17, NLT (see also Matthew 19:26; Ephesians 3:20)

God's power is without limit. But even more than this, God has the right to use that power in any way He sees fit. This is what the Bible means when it says God is sovereign (Isa.40:10-29).

Everywhere

⁵You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. ⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! ⁷I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! ⁸If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. ⁹If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, ¹⁰even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me.” Psalm 139:5-10, NLT

God is everywhere. His presence is not just limited to a church or cathedral. He is with you at home, at work, wherever you are.

All-knowing

¹O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. ²You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. ³You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do. ⁴You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD.” Psalm 139:1-4, NLT (read the whole Psalm; also 1 John 3:20)

God knows everything. His knowledge, like His power, is without limit.

¹³“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.” Hebrews 4:13, NLT

God is absolute in knowledge, absolute in power and absolute in presence. But if God knows everything, then He knows every sin I have committed. If He is everywhere, there is no place I can escape His hand. If He is all-powerful, He can judge and destroy me. If all we know is the attributes of God, and know nothing of His nature, we have every reason to fear Him.

²⁹“For our God is a devouring fire.” Hebrews 12:29, NLT

The Nature of God

The Bible reveals two special parts to God's character:

God is holy

"²No one is holy like the LORD! There is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God." 1 Samuel 2:2, NLT (read also Isaiah 6:1-5)

God is absolutely holy. This does not just mean that God cannot do evil. It also means that nothing evil is allowed to enter into God's holy presence (Exodus 33:20).

God is love

"¹⁶“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16, NLT (see also 1 John 4:10)

God is not only perfect in holiness; He is also perfect in love. He is moved by compassion for His creation (Psalm 145:17-18). He is a Person we can get to know (James 4:8).

"¹⁶ We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them." 1 John 4:16, NLT

A Balanced Nature

"⁶The LORD passed in front of Moses, calling out, ‘Yahweh! The LORD! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. ⁷I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations.’” Exodus 34:6-7, NLT

It is important to see God's whole nature, not just focus exclusively on one part. God is a God of love, but He is also a God of holiness. He is a God of compassion, but He is also a God of justice (read Jeremiah 9:23-24). When mankind sinned, God was faced with a problem. He loved us, but His holiness demanded judgment be sentenced against us. He could not turn a blind eye to our sin.

Immediately after mankind's first sin in the Garden of Eden, this two-fold nature is seen by God shedding the blood of an innocent animal (judgement) to cover the nakedness of Adam and his wife (love/mercy). This event set in motion the sacrificial system of the innocent dying for the guilty, and was a foreshadowing of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross:

"²¹ And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.” Genesis 3:21, NLT

In His wisdom, God eventually sent Jesus to die in our place. Instead of punishing us, as He has the right to, God took on Himself the punishment His holiness demanded. The Cross was where the love of God and the holiness of God met.

"⁸ But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.” Romans 5:8, NLT (see also 1 John 3:1)

Seeing the Unseen God

God is unseen (1 Timothy 1:17), but He has revealed Himself in two special ways to mankind:

In His creation

"²⁰For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God." Romans 1:20, NLT

Creation reveals the attributes and character of God. This is like a rough sketch of the image of God.

In His Son

"¹⁸No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us." John 1:18, NLT (see also Col.1:15).

In Jesus, we see the nature of God expressed. He is the perfect image of God - not a rough sketch, but an exact likeness. In Christ, we see everything that God is - His love, His holiness, His wisdom and His power - all in perfect balance.

"⁶For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Corinthians 4:6, NLT (see also Hebrews 1:3)



What are the two ways God has revealed Himself to mankind?

1. _____
2. _____



What are the two special aspects about God's character?

1. _____
2. _____



What key thing did God do to bridge these two aspects of His character as it relates to the sin of mankind?



Where did the love of God and holiness of God meet?

The Gospel

The Gospel means "the good news." It is not like any religion or philosophy in the world. Many religions teach people to be good. But the Gospel is different: it focuses through a single person, Jesus. This can be a stumbling block to some people.

²² "It is foolish to the Jews, who ask for signs from heaven. And it is foolish to the Greeks, who seek human wisdom.²³ So when we preach that Christ was crucified, the Jews are offended and the Gentiles say it's all nonsense. ²⁴ But to those called by God to salvation, both Jews and Gentiles, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God." 1 Corinthians 1:22-24, NLT

To understand how the Gospel works and why it focuses solely through Jesus Christ, we need first to understand the human situation. To appreciate the good news, we first need to know the bad news.

In the Beginning

When God created the first man and woman, He tailor-made them for His presence. They were totally God-centered, God-conscious and God-dependent. But there was one part of God's creation that had rebelled against God - an angel that we now know as Satan (Revelation 12:9; Ezekiel 28:12-19). He tempted Adam and Eve to rebel in the same way he had (1 Timothy 3:6).

⁴ "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. ⁵ "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil." Genesis 3:4-5, NLT

Satan's temptation was not just to eat of forbidden fruit. It was for Adam and Eve to rebel against God's command and set themselves up as the gods of their lives. When they sinned, they became self-centered, self-conscious and self-dependent. From that time on, self became the center of everything. The "knowledge of good and evil" - of rights and wrongs - became the basis of human life. Sin had cut mankind off from God.

¹² "When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned" Rom.5:12, NLT

All the generations following Adam have inherited Adam's fallen nature (2 Timothy 3:2-5). All have come under the power and dominion of Satan (1 John 5:19). Because of sin, we were also under God's judgment (Romans 1:18-31). We were "objects of wrath," waiting for the verdict to be passed (Ephesians 2:1-3). There was no way we could help ourselves because even the best of us fell far short of God's glorious standard (read Romans 3:10-12,23).

⁶ "We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds, they are nothing but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind." Isaiah 64:6, NLT

The Good News

⁶ "When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners." Romans 5:6, NLT

The good news of the Gospel is that God sent Jesus to take our judgment for us. If there was any other way to save us, God would not have sent His Son to suffer the agony of the Cross. But there was no other way. We were not only sinners, but *powerless* sinners - powerless to save ourselves or change ourselves. And so Jesus became for us everything that we could not be. He didn't just save us. He *became* salvation for us. This is the essence of the Gospel message.

³⁰ "God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin." 1 Corinthians 1:30, NLT

The Power of the Gospel

¹⁶ "For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile" Romans 1:16, NLT

The Gospel is the salvation of God in action. It describes how we enter into God's salvation and how that salvation continues to work in our lives.

"¹⁷This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, 'It is through faith that a righteous person has life.'" Romans 1:17, NLT

This verse reveals three things about the Gospel:

It is from God

The Gospel reveals a righteousness which is "from God." These two words summarize the whole orientation of the Gospel. It is a God-to-you direction, not the other way around. The Gospel sets the compass-needle of our lives to a "from-God" bearing, not a "from-me" bearing. The Gospel returns our lives to the orientation that God created us for.

"⁶But for us, there is one God, the Father, by whom all things were created, and for whom we live. And there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things were created, and through whom we live." 1 Corinthians 8:6, NLT (see also 2 Corinthians 5:17-18; Romans 11:36)

It is by faith

The Gospel reveals the way we receive this gift of righteousness - "by faith" (Philippians 3:8-9). God has designed the Christian life in such a way that as we release our faith toward God, He releases His power to work in our lives. It is faith that reverses the original rebellion and returns our life to God-centeredness, God-consciousness and God-dependence. This faith sets the pace for the rest of our life in Christ.

"⁶And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him." Hebrews 11:6, NLT (see also 4:2)

It is from first to last

The Gospel embraces the whole Christian life from start to finish. We begin as a Christian by faith in the saving power of God and we live as a Christian by faith in that same saving power. The Gospel does two things:

- It *introduces* us to Christ (Ephesians 1:13) - "*from first*"
- It *establishes* us in Christ (Romans 16:25) - "*to last*"

Satan works hard to deceive Christians into thinking that after receiving the Lord, we must try to live the Christian life in our own strength (read Galatians 3:1-3). But self-effort puts us back into self-centeredness. No, the Christian life is *all* by faith and *all* by grace. The Gospel is a "from first to last" experience.

"⁶This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace" Colossians 1:6, NLT



When Adam and Eve sinned, what became the center of everything? _____



The good news of the gospel is that God sent Jesus to take our _____ for us.



What three things does Romans 1:17 reveal about the Gospel?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Jesus Christ

"¹Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. ² And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe." Hebrews 1:1-2, NLT

Two thousand years ago, Jesus appeared on the scene of history. He was born into the world and grew up just like every other person, but He was no ordinary man. He was called the "Son of God" (Luke 1:26-38) and the "Word of God."

"¹⁴ So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son." John 1:14, NLT

The Coming of Jesus

"¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost." Luke 19:10, NLT (see also Colossians 1:13)

Jesus was sent into the world to fulfill the wonderful plan of God for our lives. His mission was:

- To give His life as a ransom for us (Matthew 20:28)
- To destroy Satan's works (1 John 3:8)
- To give us eternal life (1 John 5:11-12; John 3:15-17)
- To give us birth into God's family (John 1:12; John 3:3)
- To restore fellowship with God (2 Corinthians 5:18; Romans 5:1-2; 1 John 1:3)

The coming of Jesus changed our lives forever. He was the door through which heaven was opened to us (John 10:9).

Jesus Represented God

"³ The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command..." Hebrews 1:3, NLT (see also Colossians 1:15-17)

Jesus is called "the Word of God" (John 1:1-4,14). He existed eternally before He took on human nature (Philippians 2:6-7). As the Word, He communicated the heart of God to mankind. In Jesus, we see what God the Father is like.

"⁷ If you had really known me [Jesus], you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!... ⁹ ... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father!... ¹¹ Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me..." John 14:7-11, NLT (see also 1:18)

He showed us God's love, holiness, wisdom and power.

Jesus Represented Man

"³ The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins." Romans 8:3, NLT

In Jesus we not only see the perfect image of God, we also see the perfect image of man, as God intended us to be. He didn't just take on human form; He completely identified with life as we know it. He shared totally in our humanity.

"⁶ Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. ⁷ Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross." Philippians 2:6-8, NLT

During his life on earth, Jesus experienced all the troubles of life that we face, and so He understands how we feel (Matthew 8:17). In this way Jesus became the example for us. In His words, His actions and His character He showed us how to live a life pleasing to God (1 Peter 4:1-2; 2:21-25).

"¹⁵This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin." Hebrews 4:15, NLT

Jesus Died for Us

"⁹What we do see is Jesus, who for a little while was given a position 'a little lower than the angels'; and because he suffered death for us, he is now 'crowned with glory and honor.' Yes, by God's grace, Jesus tasted death for everyone." Hebrews 2:9, NLT

Wicked men took the Lord Jesus and executed him by nailing him to a wooden cross like a common criminal (read Mark 15:16-39). He could have saved himself, but he did not for it was through his death on the Cross that God was going to save the world. Jesus died for us!

"²⁴He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed." 1 Peter 2:24, NLT (see also Isaiah 53:5-6)

Jesus Rose for Us

"⁴But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) ⁶For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:4-6, NLT (see Romans 6:4; read also Matthew chapter 28)

Jesus Opened Heaven

When His work on earth was completed, Jesus returned to Heaven to be with His Father. But this too was for us, for He opened the way into God's presence, where we can live now and forever!

"¹⁹And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. ²⁰By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. ²¹And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, ²²let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him..." Hebrews 10:19-22, NLT (see also 4:16; John 14:1-3)

The Name of Salvation

"¹²There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12, NLT

The Bible tells us that there is no other way to be saved except through the name of Jesus. This is because only the death of Jesus on the Cross deals with the barrier between us and God - sin. Jesus is the only way back to God. This is why Jesus said:

"...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me." John 14:6, NLT

When you accepted Jesus into your life, God linked your life with Jesus. Now, as a Christian, you are forever linked with Jesus - with His righteousness, with His authority, with His character, with His life (see Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:1-4).

"¹⁹This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. ²⁰Jesus has already gone in there for us..." Hebrews 6:19-20, NLT



The Son of Man came to seek and save what was _____.



The Bible tells us that there is no other way to be saved except through the _____ of _____.



In Jesus we see the perfect image of _____ and the perfect image of _____.

The Cross

"⁵ You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. ⁶ Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. ⁷ Instead...he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross." Phil.2:5-8, NLT

When Jesus Christ was put to death by being nailed to a wooden cross, wicked men thought they were just executing a man who was disturbing their way of life. They did not realize that the Cross was planned by God from the beginning of the world (Revelation 13:8).

"⁴ Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! ⁵ But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. ⁶ All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all." Isaiah 53:4-6, NLT (see also 1 Peter 2:24)

The Cross dealt with every person's sin, suffering and sorrow. Jesus died in the place of every person. Personally receiving the work of the Cross brings the answer to all our needs.

The Cross demonstrates God's power

"¹⁵ In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" Col. 2:15, NLT

Jesus was crucified in weakness (2 Corinthians 13:4), but even the "weakness" of God is stronger than man's strength (1 Corinthians 1:18,24). The Cross totally disarmed Satan's control over mankind (Revelation 1:18).

The Cross demonstrates God's love

"⁸ But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners." Romans 5:8, NLT

The Cross demonstrates God's holiness

"¹⁴ He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross." Colossians 2:14, NLT

The Cross fully satisfied God's holiness. The written code - the standard of God's holiness revealed in the Old Testament - was cancelled at the Cross by a "new and living way" (Hebrews 10:19-20; Romans 7:6) - the holiness of Jesus Himself.

The Cross demonstrates God's wisdom

"⁷ No, the wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God—his plan that was previously hidden, even though he made it for our ultimate glory before the world began. ⁸ But the rulers of this world have not understood it; if they had, they would not have crucified our glorious Lord." 1 Corinthians 2:7-8, NLT

God's love and holiness intersected at the Cross. His righteous judgment demanded the death penalty for sin. But His love met His own demands. Only the Cross fully satisfies God's righteous requirements. This is the wonderful wisdom of God.

"² For I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified. ⁵ I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God." 1 Corinthians 2:2,5 NLT (see also 1:17-18)

The Barrier of Sin Broken

"³The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. ⁴He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit." Romans 8:3-4, NLT

Because God is holy, our sin separates us from Him. When Jesus suffered on the Cross, He received the punishment for our sins. He died in our place, so that God's judgment would be satisfied. Through the Cross...

- God accepts us (2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:4-6).
- God forgives us (Colossians 1:13-14; 1 John 1:9; 2:1-2).
- We enter God's family (Hebrews 2:11-12; John 1:12).

Victory of the Cross

Jesus' death on the Cross won a great victory for us. Because God dealt with our sin on the Cross it means also that all the misery and suffering which is a result of sin was also dealt with. The Cross has won great freedom for us!

- Freedom from Satan's power (Colossians 1:13; 2:15).
- Freedom from past sins (John 8:36; Colossians 2:13).
- Freedom from the old self (Romans 6:6-7,14,17-18).
- Freedom from sickness (Matthew 8:17).
- Freedom from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13).
- Freedom from judgment (Hebrews 9:26-27).
- Freedom from everlasting death (John 3:16).

The Center of History

The Cross of Jesus Christ is the center-point of human history. From the moment that Adam sinned, it was pre-planned by God that Jesus would die on the Cross. From that time on people looked forward in faith to what God promised He would do.

"¹⁰This salvation was something even the prophets wanted to know more about when they prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you. ¹¹They wondered what time or situation the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in advance about Christ's suffering and his great glory afterward." 1 Peter 1:10-11, NLT

Today we look back and, by believing what Jesus has done for us on the Cross, receive forgiveness and new life. The Cross is the center of human history and the center of our lives.

The Old Has Gone

"²⁰My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So, I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20, NLT

When Jesus died on the Cross, God counted His death as your death. Your old life was nailed to the Cross together with Jesus. The Cross of Christ is the turning point of your life. You have died with Christ and have begun a new life with Him as well.

"¹⁷This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" 2 Corinthians 5:17, NLT

On the Cross, God dealt with your old life once for all. You are not trying to kill your old life off - God has already done that on the Cross (Romans 6:2-11). You just receive it as a fact by faith. As a Christian, you too can say:

"¹⁴ As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died." Galatians 6:14, NLT



The cross dealt with every person's _____, _____, and _____.



What four things does the Cross demonstrate about God?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



Only the Cross satisfies God's _____



The Cross of Christ is the _____ of human history.

The Blood of Christ

"²³ You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect. ²⁴ You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel." Hebrews 12:23-24, NLT

The shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ on the Cross was the essential condition for us to receive forgiveness for our sins and acceptance into the presence of God.

"⁷ He [Jesus] is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. ⁸ He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding." Ephesians 1:7-8, NLT

The Effect of Sin

Sin has four effects in our lives:

- Sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2).
- Sin makes us feel guilty (Psalm 38:4).
- Sin allows Satan to accuse us (Revelation 12:10).
- Sin demands the death penalty (Ezekiel 18:4).

"²³ For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴ Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins." Romans 3:23-24, NLT

The Reason for the Blood

The blood of Christ wholly satisfies God's holiness. When God rescued the people of Israel from Egypt, He commanded them to put the blood of a lamb on their door-posts.

"¹³ ...When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Exodus 12:13, NLT

When God saw the blood of the substitute lamb on the doorposts of a home, He passed over them and did not judge that household. This was called "the Passover." The sacrificial lamb was a picture of the coming Lamb of God - Jesus.

"⁷ ...Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us." 1 Corinthians 5:7, NLT (see also John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18-19)

There are three words which the Bible uses to describe the effect the blood of Christ has on our lives:

Justification

"⁹ And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation." Romans 5:9, NLT

To be justified means that we now have peace with God (Romans 5:1). It means that the court records against us in heaven have been wiped clean. Because of the blood, we can stand before God with no judgment hanging over our heads.

"¹¹ ...But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Corinthians 6:11, NLT

Redemption

"⁷ He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins." Ephesians 1:7, NLT

To redeem means to "buy back." Because of disobedience to God, mankind had sold itself out to Satan's power. The blood of Christ was the price God paid to buy us back (1 Cor.6:20).

"¹³ For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, ¹⁴ who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins." Col.1:13-14, NLT (see also 1 Peter 1:18)

Reconciliation

"¹⁹ For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, ²⁰ and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross." Col.1:19-20, NLT (read v.21-22; Rom.5:8-9)

To be "reconciled" means that we are brought back into relationship with God. All the barriers between us and God have been broken. Fellowship with God is restored.

"¹³ But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ." Ephesians 2:13, NLT (see also 2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

The Effect of the Blood

The blood of Christ not only satisfies the holy requirements of God. It also meets the innermost need of every person.

The blood cleanses from guilt

"¹⁴ Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins." Hebrews 9:14, NLT (see also 1 John 1:7)

The blood gives confidence before God

"¹⁹ And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. ²⁰ By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place... ²² let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean..." Heb.10:19-22, NLT (see 4:16)

The blood makes us worthy

"³³ Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. ³⁴ Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us." Rom.8:33-34, NLT

Satan is called the "accuser" of God's people (Revelation 12:10). He will try to use guilt to stop people from feeling worthy to enter God's presence. It is true that in ourselves we are totally unworthy. But the blood of Christ makes us worthy in Him. The blood wipes out every accusation that Satan may bring against us.

The blood makes us holy

"¹² So also Jesus suffered and died outside the city gates to make his people holy by means of his own blood." Hebrews 13:12, NLT

The cleansing effect of the blood of Christ is the basis for a holy walk with the Lord.

The Seal of the Covenant

"²⁰ After supper he took another cup of wine and said, 'This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you'" Luke 22:20, NLT

The blood of Christ was the seal of a covenant God has made between you and Him. That covenant is everlasting and is the basis by which you can now come close to God.

"¹² With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he [Jesus] entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and *secured our redemption forever...* ¹⁴ Just think how much more the blood of Christ will *purify our consciences from sinful deeds* so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins..." Heb.9:12-14, NLT (read also 13:20-21)



What four effects does sin have on our lives?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



What three words describe the effect of the blood of Christ on our lives?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



In what four ways does the blood of Christ meet the innermost needs of every person?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Resurrection

"⁴ and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord" Romans 1:4, NLT

The resurrection is an inseparable part of the work of the Cross. When Jesus was raised back to life, the Gospel was shown to be complete. The resurrection proved that sin had been dealt with once and for all, and that a new life has been opened to every believer.

"²⁵ He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God." Romans 4:25, NLT

The first Christians went everywhere declaring the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. So dynamic was their message that they "turned the world upside down" in their day (Acts 17:6). Understanding what the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ means for you will dynamically affect your life too.

"³³ The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all." Acts 4:33, NLT

Raised with Christ

"¹² For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead." Colossians 2:12, NLT

When Jesus died, God counted His death as your death. You died in Him. But that was not all. You were also raised in Christ. His resurrection gave you five things:

- A new life (Romans 6:4; 1 Peter 1:3).
- A new focus (Colossians 3:1-4).
- A new confidence (Romans 8:34,37; Ephesians 3:12).
- A new position of authority (Eph.2:6; 1 Peter 3:21-22).
- A new hope for the future (2 Timothy 1:10).

Power of the Resurrection

"¹⁷ asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. ¹⁸ I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can...understand *the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him*. This is the same *mighty power* ²⁰ that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms." Eph.1:17-20, NLT (read verses 22-23)

Something happened at the resurrection of Christ which changed your life forever. The Bible calls the power of the resurrection "incomparably great." That means there is no other power on earth, or even in the universe that can compare with the power God released in the resurrection of Jesus. When we have a revelation of the power of the resurrection, every problem and every difficulty take on a new perspective.

"¹⁴ His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were like flames of fire. ¹⁵ His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves ¹⁶...his face was like the sun in all its brilliance." Revelation 1:14-16, NLT

John had known Jesus before the Cross (1 John 1:1-3), but now he saw Him in His full glory (see John 17:24). This was the full glory of the risen Christ and it knocked John to the ground.

"¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, 'Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸ I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.'" Rev.1:17-18, NLT

When Jesus died, the Bible says He went into the depths of the earth (Ephesians 4:8-9) to a place called Hades - the place of the unbelieving dead. Satan thought He had destroyed the Son of God, but three days later, God raised Jesus back to life. The full glory of the risen Christ - the same glory that knocked John over - exploded in the depths of the earth. And Jesus walked up to Satan and took from him the keys of death and Hades - which represented the authority Satan had over your life. Paul prays that we will understand that this same all-conquering power is available to us each and every day!

"⁴ But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world." 1 John 4:4, NLT (see also 5:4; Hebrews 2:14-15; Ephesians 6:10)

Firstborn of the Resurrection

"¹⁸ ...He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So, he is first in everything." Colossians 1:18, NLT (read also 1 Corinthians 15:17-23)

Jesus is called "the firstborn from the dead" because His resurrection opened the way for our physical resurrection! This is the wonderful future that every believer has. One day Jesus Christ will return to the earth. At that time all believers who have died will be raised to life (read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Our bodies will be transformed (1 Corinthians 15:51-54). We will have an immortal resurrection body just like the Lord Jesus (1 John 3:2).

"¹⁴ We know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus, will also raise us with Jesus and present us to himself together with you." 2 Corinthians 4:14, NLT (see also John 5:24-29)

The resurrection of Jesus is not only the foundation for our salvation now. It is also God's personal guarantee for our future. The Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead is now living in us. He is the "down-payment" for the full effect of the resurrection in our lives.

"²¹ It is God who enables us, along with you, to stand firm for Christ. He has commissioned us, ²² and he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first installment that guarantees everything he has promised us." 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, NLT (see also 5:5; Ephesians 1:14)

Resurrection Life

"²⁵ Jesus told her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. ²⁶ Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die...'" John 11:25-26, NLT (see also Philippians 3:10)

The resurrection of Christ is not just for the future, but for our lives now. The power that is available to us each day is *exactly* the same power that brought Jesus back from the dead! The Spirit of the Resurrection, who lives in us, empowers us to live for God (Ephesians 3:16,20; Philippians 4:13).

"¹¹ The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you." Romans 8:11, NLT



What five things were provided by Jesus' resurrection?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Jesus is called the _____ from the dead.



The Spirit of the _____ empowers us to live for God.

Repentance

"⁹The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed but wants everyone to repent."
2 Peter 3:9, NLT

Repentance is the first step we take in personally receiving the salvation that comes through Jesus Christ. Repentance is the gateway into all the blessings God has prepared for us.

"¹⁹Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away. ²⁰Then times of refreshment will come from the presence of the Lord..." Acts 3:19-20, NLT

Repentance causes great joy in heaven (Luke 15:7). But before we can understand true repentance, we need to understand what repentance is not.

- Not just feeling guilty - feeling guilty about our sin comes before repentance, but is not repentance itself. No one repents unless they first feel guilty about their sin, but not all who feel guilty actually repent. (read Acts 24:25).
- Not just being sorry for your sin - some people are very sorry because of the consequences of their sin. They are not really sorry for the sin, but for the penalty they receive in being caught (2 Corinthians 7:10).
- Not trying to be a good person - many people try in their own strength to become a better person and change their way of life. Any self-effort has a root of self-righteousness in it, which does not acknowledge the need of repentance from sin (Isaiah 64:6).
- Not becoming religious - the Pharisees were extremely religious. They fasted and prayed and had many religious ceremonies, yet never repented (Matthew 3:7-10; 5:20).
- Not just knowing the truth - having an intellectual head-knowledge of truth does not guarantee that the truth has become a living reality in one's life (James 2:19-20; Matt.3:8).

True Repentance

Genuine repentance is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Several things mark this kind of repentance:

- Being sorry to God for your sin (Psalm 51:1-4; 38:8).
- Being truthful about your sin (Psalm 32:5).
- Changing focus to the Lord (2 Chronicles 7:14).
- Receiving the forgiveness of God (1 John 1:9).
- Taking responsibility before God (Luke 19:8; Lev.6:1-7).

To repent means "to turn around, to change direction." Repentance means turning from four things:

- Turning from sin (1 Peter 3:10; Gal.5:19-21; Eph.5:5).
- Turning from the world (1 John 2:15; James 4:4).
- Turning from yourself (2 Corinthians 5:15; Luke 14:26).
- Turning from the devil (Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13).

But just turning *from* these things is not enough. It is what we turn *to* that makes the difference.

- Turning to righteousness (Romans 6:13).
- Turning to God (Acts 20:21; 1 Thessalonians 1:9).

Revelation and Repentance

"³⁶...God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!' ³⁷Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said'...what should we do?' ³⁸Peter replied, 'Each of you must repent of your sins...' Acts 2:36-38, NLT

When Peter preached the Gospel on the day of Pentecost, the response his hearers made was to repent. Repentance was their response to the work of our God in their lives.

First comes revelation

Notice that Peter did not preach repentance. He preached Jesus. The Bible says that his hearers had such a revelation of Jesus (verse 36) that they were "cut to the heart" and asked: "...what must we

do?" (verse 37). Then Peter told them: "Repent!" Without a revelation of God, there can be no repentance.

Then comes repentance

Repentance is our response to a revelation from God. Every time we confront a revelation of God's word, our response should be repentance. For example:

Revelation - Repentance

Romans 6:6-7 - Romans 6:11-13

Galatians 6:14 - Romans 12:2

Romans 8:5-8 - Galatians 5:16

Romans 11:36 - 1 Corinthians 8:6

"²¹ So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. ²² But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves." James 1:21-22, NLT

A Command from God

"³⁰ God overlooked people's ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands *everyone everywhere* to repent of their sins and turn to him." Acts 17:30, NLT

Repentance is a decision that we make, a "turning around" away from the world, to face God. There are two kinds of repentance that God requires, pictured in Jesus' parable of two sons (read Luke 15:11-32):

Living separate from God


The younger son walked away from his father, just as most of mankind has walked away from God. This son finally "came to his senses" (revelation) and returned to his father (repentance). Like this, our initial repentance is a decision to turn around and come back to God.


Turned away from God


The older son never left his father, yet he was not with his father. The separation he experienced was not physical, but it was just as real. In the same way, many Christians have not left God, but they are facing away from Him. Their eyes are on the world. Repentance, for them, means a turning around to face God, not the world (read Zechariah 1:3; James 4:8).

Repentance means responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, as He pinpoints areas in your life He wants to change (Ephesians 4:30). Repentance is the gateway into the fullness of life God has planned for you! (John 10:10).

"¹⁵... Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved. In quietness and confidence is your strength..." Isaiah 30:15, NLT

 Repentance means to _____

 Repentance means turning from these four things:
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

 Repentance means turning to:
1. _____ 2. _____

Faith

Faith has always been the mark of a disciple of Jesus. The early disciples were known as *believers*. Jesus said:

“²³Anything is possible if a person believes.” Mark 9:23, NLT

When Adam sinned, he stepped out of God dependence into independence. This is the reason God has placed such a high priority on faith. Faith presupposes total dependence on God. This dependence on God is expressed in every step of faith.

“¹Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.”
Hebrews 11:1, NLT

Faith means having trust, assurance or confidence in another person or that person's words. Having faith in God involves an exchange of trust from self to Him, from relying on one source of knowledge to a higher source.

Sources of Knowledge

There are two ways we can receive information about our life:

Sense knowledge

All knowledge that comes to natural man comes to him through the five senses-seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching. This is limited knowledge, described as "man's wisdom".

Revelation knowledge

This knowledge is not based on the five senses, nor on natural reasoning, but on an alternative source - the *truth* of the word of God. This knowledge is received through man's spirit, and is described as "God's wisdom".

“⁷For we live by believing and not by seeing.” 2 Corinthians 5:7, NLT (see also 1 Corinthians 2:4-16).

We are challenged by the word of God to advance beyond our five senses, beyond our past experiences and beyond our past capacities. This is the life of faith which each one of us is called to - where "nothing is impossible" (Luke 1:37; Matt.17:20).

The Basis of Faith

Our faith in God is based on three important realities:

The Nature of God

Abraham is given as the greatest example of faith at work (Romans 4:16-22; Hebrews 11:8-12). He and his wife were beyond child-bearing age, yet God promised him a son. Even more, God promised that through that son Abraham would become the "father of many nations."

In believing God for his son, Abraham's faith was in three aspects of God's nature:

- God's promise (Romans 4:20).
- God's character (Hebrews 11:11).
- God's power (Romans 4:21).

Abraham's faith was strong because he knew God's nature:

- God cannot change (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; Heb.13:8)
- God cannot fail (Job 42:2; 1 Chronicles 28:20)
- God cannot lie (Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2).

The finished work of the Cross

²“We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God’s throne.” Hebrews 12:2, NLT

Christ has become the source of our faith in God. His death and resurrection provides the ground for our believing.

The Trial of Faith

Faith is the lifestyle of a believer. But faith is not faith unless there is an obstacle involved. This is what is called a "trial of faith" and it works in the following way:

A word from God

Firstly, God encourages us with a word relevant to our circumstances. This may come through the Scripture or by the inner voice of God's Spirit, which is always in line with the written word of God.

¹⁷“So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ”. Romans 10:17, NLT (see also Joshua 1:8)

Obedience to the word

For faith to operate in our situation, we must obey that word. Faith is *active*, not passive. Most of God's promises are conditional - He will do His part, if we do our part.

¹⁷“So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless”. James 2:17, NLT (see also James 1:22-25; Genesis 15:6; Matthew 7:24-27)

The crisis of faith

This is a period of testing. Everything that happens appears contrary to what God has said. At this point, our faith rests completely on God's word. This is true faith in action.

⁶“So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. ⁷These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.” 1 Peter 1:6-7, NLT (see also Romans 4:16-21; Psalm 105:17-19)

The outcome

The end result is always victory on the part of the believer, bringing glory to God (see James 1:2-4,12; Hebrews 6:13-15). God is looking for faith as our response to each trial we face. Many times we have faith, believing God for *something* - healing, provision, an answer of some kind - and then wonder why God does not respond immediately. But God is at work in our lives. Even though He has promised to answer, God will sometimes delay the answer to give opportunity for our faith to *really* work. Once the answer comes, we don't need faith any more. Faith *itself* produces something in our hearts which has greater eternal value than even the answer we are believing for.

⁴“For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith.” 1 John 5:4, NLT

Faith *itself* is the victory. Even while we are going through a trial of faith, with the answer not yet in sight, our faith itself is the victory which sustains us. Faith is the foundation for the whole Christian life (Romans 1:17; Galatians 2:20).



What are the two ways we receive information about our life:

1. _____
2. _____



Our faith in God is based on these three important realities:

1. The _____ of God
2. The finished _____ of the Cross
3. The _____ of faith



The biblical definition of faith is found in the Book of _____, Chapter ____, Verse __

Grace

³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all" Acts 4:33, NIV

The grace of God was very important in the life of the early Christians (read Acts 14:26; 15:40). The word "grace" has two meanings. We must understand both aspects in order to experience the fullness of grace in our lives.

Unmerited favor

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it." Ephesians 2:8-9, NLT

Grace is God's mercy at work. Even though we were sinners, deserving of judgment, God forgave us and saved us in Christ.

⁴ But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!)... ⁷ So God can point to us in all future ages as examples of the incredible wealth of his grace and kindness toward us, as shown in all he has done for us who are united with Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:4-5,7, NLT (read the whole of chapter 1)

Enabling power

But the second part to the meaning of grace is just as important. Not only does grace make us *accepted* into the family of God; it also *enables* us to live the Christian life.

¹⁰ But whatever I am now, it is all because God poured out his special favor on me—and not without results. For I have worked harder than any of the other apostles; yet it was not I but God who was working through me by his grace." 1 Corinthians 15:10, NLT

In salvation, the fullness of God's grace is at work. Through God's unmerited favor we receive forgiveness and restored relationship with Him even though we don't deserve it. But more than that, God's enabling power is also at work. It is only by God's grace that we are transformed (Eph.3:20), born again (John 3:3,6) and become a new creation (2 Cor.5:17). Grace simply means that God does what we cannot do ourselves. We could not save ourselves, so God saved us by His grace. Neither can we live the Christian life in our own strength, so God's grace gives us the ability to do what we cannot do ourselves. Both aspects of God's grace - His unmerited favor and His enabling power - come to us because we are in Christ.

¹⁸ Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18, NLT (see also John 1:14,16-17)

Daily Grace

"Timothy, my dear son, be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 2:1, NLT (see also Romans 5:1-2)

The two parts of grace are available to us on a daily basis:

Forgiveness of Sins

²³ For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴ Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins." Romans 3:23-24, NLT

Power to Overcome Sin

¹¹ For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. ¹² And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God,” Titus 2:11-12, NLT

If we only understand one of these truths without the other, we can seriously misunderstand God's grace.

“¹Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? ²Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?” Romans 6:1-2, NLT

The first misunderstanding of God's grace is to think that it doesn't matter if a Christian sins, because God's grace is always available to bring forgiveness (read Jude 4). But no, God's forgiveness is only one half of the work of grace. God's plan is for us to overcome sin through the power of His grace.

“¹⁴ Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace.” Romans 6:14, NLT (read also 1 John 2:1-2)

The second misunderstanding of God's grace is to think that a Christian cannot sin. John wrote about this clearly:

“⁸ If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth.” 1 John 1:8, NLT (see also verse 10)

God's grace works only when we realize our need of God's help. It is in the midst of our weakness that grace comes to do what we cannot do ourselves (Romans 8:3-4).

Missing the Grace of God

“¹⁵ Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God.” Hebrews 12:15, NLT

As Christians, we have been called to continue in God's grace (Acts 13:43). We can miss the grace of God through:

- Self-effort (Galatians 2:21; 5:4)
- Self-gratification (Galatians 5:13; Romans 13:14).

Grace is so important in God's plan for our lives because only grace changes the focus of our lives from self to God. If we could save ourselves, the result would be pride and boasting. If we could live the Christian life in our own strength, the result would be the same.

“⁶ And since it is through God's kindness, then it is not by their good works. For in that case, God's grace would not be what it really is—free and undeserved.” Romans 11:6, NLT

We experience God's grace in our lives through humility - a revelation that we cannot save ourselves or change ourselves. We can only rely on the wonderful grace of God.

“⁶ And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” James 4:6, NLT

Grace in Action

“¹⁶ So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.” Hebrews 4:16, NLT

Foundation Stones for New Believers

As we walk with God each day, we constantly meet new trials of our faith (1 Peter 1:6-7). Our response to God is faith, which is believing what God's word says *despite* what the circumstances might indicate. God's response to our faith is His grace.

“⁸ And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.” 2 Corinthians 9:8, NLT

Like Paul, we too can discover the daily outworking of God's grace in the midst of our weakness and inability.

“⁹ Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness...”
2Corinthians 12:9, NLT (read also verses 10; 11:23-30)



The word “grace” has two meanings”

1. _____ 2. _____



The two parts of grace that are available on a daily basis are:

1. _____ 2. _____



Grace changes the focus of our lives from _____ to _____.

Water Baptism

“¹⁹Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Matthew 28:19, NLT (see also Acts 2:38-41)

To be "baptized" means to be "totally immersed". When a person believes in Jesus as Savior and Lord, they are to be baptized or immersed in water. Why would Jesus command that his believers do such a strange thing?

Baptism is a Picture

Understanding water baptism is the key to a victorious Christian life. The act of going under the water and rising up from it again is a picture of what has happened to the Christian. In baptism, the four stages of Christ's redemptive work on our behalf are enacted out:

He died...I died in Him

“⁶We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin.” Romans 6:6, NLT

He was buried...I was buried in Him

“⁴For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.” Romans 6:4, NLT

He rose...I rose in Him

“⁴For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.” ⁵Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was.” Romans 6:4-5, NLT

He ascended...I ascended in Him

“⁶For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus.” Ephesians 2:6, NLT (see also Col.3:1)

Water Baptism is...

My funeral service!

A burial service is not designed to kill someone off. It is only performed when a person is *dead already*. And so, because you have "died" in Christ, you bury your old life in water baptism. Baptism is a declaration to God, to the world, to Satan and to yourself that the old life is dead and gone. The old you - which was an enemy of God (Colossians 1:21) - has been buried.

My resurrection to new life!

You rise out of the water demonstrating and declaring you are a new creation in Christ!

“¹⁰When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. ¹¹So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.” Romans 6:10-11, NLT

The Two Kingdoms

“¹³For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, ¹⁴who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.” Colossians 1:13-14, NLT

Every man and woman born into the world is born into the dominion of darkness - as slaves of Satan's power. There is no way out of this spiritual kingdom except by *death*, and there is no way into the

Kingdom of God except by *birth*. On the Cross and in His resurrection, Jesus became both our death and our new birth. This is what we declare in baptism!

“²² Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life.” 1 Corinthians 15:22, NLT (see also Romans 5:12)

In God's sight, the world has only two kinds of people - those who are "in Adam" and those who are "in Christ."

In Adam

Adam was a representative Man. He was the father of the human race. When Adam sinned, he opened the door to death and judgment for every generation to come. Every person born into the world was born "in Adam."

In Christ

God did not try to patch up fallen humanity. Instead, He put an end to that race on the Cross and began a whole new race in Christ. Like Adam, Jesus was a representative man. He was called the "last Adam." When Jesus died, He hung on the Cross as the *last* of Adam's race. But in His resurrection, Jesus rose not as the "last Adam" but as the "second man", the beginning of a whole new race of humanity - the New Creation.

⁴⁵ The Scriptures tell us, “The first man, Adam, became a living person.” But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit. ⁴⁶ What comes first is the natural body, then the spiritual body comes later. ⁴⁷ Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth, while Christ, the second man, came from heaven” 1 Cor.15:45-47, NLT (see Rom.5:12-19)

In baptism we are declaring that we are no longer part of Adam's fallen race but are a part of the New Creation in Christ.

“¹⁷ This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” 2 Corinthians 5:17, NLT (see also Eph. 2:10)

Two Old Testament stories illustrate what baptism means to us:

The Exodus

“I don’t want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. All of them were guided by a cloud that moved ahead of them, and all of them walked through the sea on dry ground. ² In the cloud and in the sea, all of them were baptized as followers of Moses.” 1 Corinthians 10:1-2, NLT (see also verse 11)

For the people of Israel, the Red Sea was a barrier between the old and the new. When they passed through, they left the armies of Pharaoh drowned in the sea. But although they came out of Egypt, God had great difficulty getting Egypt out of them (read Exodus 16:3;17:3; Numbers 11:4-5; 14:2-4). Baptism for us not only testifies to our personal "exodus" from the world; it also marks the taking of the world out from us!

“¹⁴ As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world’s interest in me has also died.” Galatians 6:14, NLT

The Flood

“¹⁹ So he went and preached to the spirits in prison— ²⁰ those who disobeyed God long ago when God waited patiently while Noah was building his boat. Only eight people were saved from drowning in that terrible flood. ²¹ And that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a response to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 3:19-21, NLT

The Flood was God's judgment against a race of men who were beyond help. In the same way, baptism marks the cutting off of the old creation and the start of the new creation life in Christ!

¹¹When you came to Christ, you were “circumcised,” but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature. ¹²For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.” Colossians 2:11-12.



To be “baptized” means to be “_____”



In baptism, these four stages of Christ’s redemptive work are enacted out:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



In baptism we are declaring that we are no longer part of Adam’s _____ race but are a part of the _____ in Christ.



These two Old Testament events serve as illustrations/foreshadowings of baptism:

1. _____
2. _____

The Holy Spirit

When a person has started a new life by faith in Christ, they are not left on their own power to walk out this life. God has provided the power of the Holy Spirit to enable believers to live and be witnesses for Him. In Acts 2 Peter speaks of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the last days. We are still living in that period of time and the ministry of the Spirit continues. There has been much confusion about the person and work of the Spirit in the life of the believer. In this study we hope to clear up some of the confusion on the work of the Spirit in the life of the believer.

The Holy Spirit is a *personality*, not a mere influence or power.

The Holy Spirit is spoken of as He. Jn 16:13,14

Attributes of personality ascribed to Him:

1. Knowledge - 1 Cor 2:9-11 The Spirit knows the thoughts of God.
2. Will - 1 Cor 12:11 The Spirit distributes gifts according to God's will.
3. Mind - Rom 8:27 Whoever knows the mind of the Spirit, He intercedes for the saints.
4. Love - Rom 15:30 Paul urges the church by the love of the Spirit.
5. Intelligence - Neh 9:20 God gave the Spirit to instruct them.
6. Grief - Eph 4:30 Don't grieve the Spirit.

Biblical symbols for the Holy Spirit: These symbols often describe various operation of the Spirit.

1. Fire - Isa 4:4; Acts 2:4; Mt 3:11
2. Wind - Jn 3:8; Acts 2:2,3
3. Water - Jn 7:38,39; 1 Cor 10:4
4. Oil - Mt 25:3; Ps 89:20; 1Jn 2:27
5. Dove - Mt 3:16

The purpose of the Spirit in the life of the believer:

1. Power to be witnesses.

Power - dunamis - force, strength, might, power, strength, ability

Lk 24:49. They were to wait for the Spirit.

Acts 1:8; 4:31-33

2. Inspiration for true worship. Jn 4:24; 1 Cor 14:15

3. Help in our prayer life. Rom 8:26-27

4. Understanding of the Scriptures. Jn 16:13; 14:26

5. Guidance from God. Jn 16:13; Mk 13:11; Rom 8:14

6. Ability to bear fruit. Gal 5:22

7. Ability to operate in Spiritual gifts. 1 Cor 12:7,11

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Questions that cause most of the controversy over this issue:

1. *Do we automatically get filled with the Spirit at salvation, or is there something more?*
2. *Is there any accompanying manifestation in those who are filled with the Spirit?*
3. *What is the procedure, or how is one filled with the Spirit?*
4. *Is being filled with the Spirit a one-time thing like water baptism?*

In answering these questions, we simply need to look at the Biblical accounts.

Biblical accounts:

Acts 2:1-11 The Spirit fell on them while waiting in prayer before God (vs 1-4). The initial result was speaking in tongues about the mighty deeds of God (vs 4,11).

Acts 2:14-17 Peter speaks of the ministry of the Spirit in the last days. He lists manifestations of the Spirit in the lives of believers with prophecy, dreams, and visions.

Acts 4:8 The Scripture makes a distinction that Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit in speaking.

Acts 4:31 The same believers who were filled in Acts 2 were filled again while praying. The result here was speaking the word of God with boldness.

Acts 6:3 When choosing men to serve, one requirement was that they were full of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:12-24 A period of days elapsed between the time they received the word and were later filled with the Spirit (vs. 12-17). They were filled with the Spirit as hands were laid on them (vs. 17). Something observable happened as a result of them being filled with the Spirit (vs. 18).

Acts 9:1-17 A period of 3 days elapsed between Paul's Damascus road experience and being filled with the Spirit. He was filled with the Spirit as hands were laid on him (vs. 17-18). We do not know what the initial manifestation of the Spirit was in Paul's life but we do know that he later operated in gifts of the Spirit, especially speaking in tongues. 1 Cor 14:1-40, 18.

Acts 10:43-48 The Holy Spirit fell on them while Peter was speaking. The initial manifestation was speaking in tongues and exalting God. (vs. 45-46). This event occurred before they were baptized in water (vs. 47).

Acts 19:1-6 Something in their experience gave Paul the indication that they hadn't received the Spirit when they initially believed (vs. 2). They were filled with the Spirit as Paul laid his hands on them. (vs. 6). The initial manifestation was speaking in tongues and prophesying.

Answers from the Biblical accounts.

- 1. There is no automatic assumption that one is filled at salvation.*
- 2. There is very clear accompanying manifestations when one is filled, such as tongues, prophesy, exalting God, and boldness.*
The most common manifestation is speaking in tongues. We should expect accompanying manifestation when filled.
- 3. People were filled at times when hands were laid on them, when praying, and when listening to the word being preached.*
- 4. It is obvious that being filled with the Spirit is not a one-time only thing.*
These accounts, along with the exhortation in Eph 5:18 to be continually filled with the Spirit, shows us that it is to be a continual experience.

Receiving the Spirit.

- 1. Like everything else in God it is to be received by faith. Gal 3:2; Rom 10:17.*
- 2. We must be convinced that the baptism of the Spirit is Biblical, necessary, applicable for today, an experience distinct from salvation, and evidenced by speaking in tongues or other biblical manifestations.*
- 3. Make Jesus your focus. Mt 3:11*
- 4. Ask for it based upon a hunger in your heart. Lk 11:9-13; Jn 7:37-38*
- 5. Expect to receive, and act in faith to respond in Biblical manifestations.*
As in Acts, they spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave the utterance.



God has provided the _____ of the Holy Spirit to enable believers to live and be _____ for Him.



There are five Biblical symbols for the Holy Spirit:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



The most common manifestation of being filled with the Holy Spirit is _____.

Temptation

"¹¹Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil."
Ephesians 6:11, NLT (see also 2 Corinthians 2:11)

Satan attacks the Christian in order to distract him away from his focus on Jesus (2 Cor.11:2-3; Heb.12:2). Although he can attack through persecution, discouragement and other ways, one of his most powerful weapons is temptation. Satan uses two ways to bring temptation to a believer:

The desires of the world

Satan seeks to tempt a believer to become absorbed into the world's system:

- To make the material things of the world a central desire.
- To make the honor and recognition of this world an important goal.
- To make the comfort of being a part of this world our basis for security.

"¹⁵Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you." 1 John 2:15, NLT

The desires of the flesh

Although a Christian - through Christ's work on the Cross - is delivered from the results of sin, and from the enslaving power of sin itself (see Romans 6:6-14), he still lives in a physical body that is subject to natural appetites and desires. Satan will focus on the flesh to distract a Christian from the promptings of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:5-9; James 1:14; Ephesians 2:3).

The First Temptation

Satan won his original victory in the areas of the *world* and the *flesh* (read Genesis 3:1-6) and these are still his tactics today." 1 John 2:16, NLT

"¹⁶For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions..." 1 John 2:16, NLT

"¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh (craving for sensual gratification), and the lust of the eyes (greedy longings of the mind) and the pride of life (assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things)..." 1 John 2:16, Amplified

Genesis 3:16

Good for food

Pleasing to the eye

Desirable for gaining wisdom

1 John 2:16

"Lust of the flesh"

"Lust of the eyes"

"Pride of life"

Since the fall of Adam, all mankind has been governed by their flesh, which is now corrupted by a sinful nature (Gal.5:19-21).

The Victory Won by Christ

Jesus came to the earth to reverse the effects of Adam's fall (Romans 5:12-19). He did this in two ways:

Through His life

Jesus was tempted in everything, exactly as we are, "yet was without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

Luke 4:1-13

Stones to bread

Kingdoms of the earth

Pinnacle of the temple

1 John 2:16

"Lust of the flesh"

"Lust of the eyes"

"Pride of life"

Jesus defeated every temptation from Satan. He opened the way for us to experience the same victory.

Through His death and resurrection

The Cross released us from sin's death grip (Rom.8:1-4,9). We are now free to walk in obedience to God (Rom.6:11-14).

The Daily Victory

Because of this great victory won for us by Christ, the Christian can now confidently face any attack from Satan. Here are six keys to continual victory:

Know the victory is already won

Satan was totally defeated at the Cross (Col.2:14-15). His schemes now only work through our ignorance (Hosea 4:6; 2 Cor.2:11). We must understand that our victory is not because of our own ability, but because we are in Christ (Romans 8:37). We are not trying to get victory. We live, through the power of the Holy Spirit, in the victory that Christ has already won.

Walk in step with the Spirit

A new power is placed within the Christian - the Holy Spirit Himself. We are to walk in obedience to His inner promptings day by day (see Galatians 5:16,22-25).

Recognize the temptation for what it is

Temptation is *not* sin; *yielding* to temptation is! (see James 1:15; Genesis 4:6-7). Even Jesus - the sinless Son of God - was tempted, but He never gave in.

Know the way of escape

"¹³The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure." 1 Corinthians 10:13, NLT

In the midst of every temptation, God is right there with you. He wants you to rely on His power, not your own. We do this not by trying to resist in our own strength, but by escaping into the presence of God. The Lord Himself is our way of escape.

Live a life of daily submission to God

"⁶And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'" James 4:6, NLT

This is the simple secret to resisting temptation. Firstly, we are called as Christians to live in the submission of daily fellowship with God. Then when temptation comes, we have the authority of that submission to resist. And Satan will flee!

Avoid obvious areas of temptation

"³I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar..." Psalm 101:3, NLT

We must never think we are invincible to Satan's temptation. He is "*like* a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8-9). We must always be alert and responsive to the promptings of God's Spirit (1 Timothy 6:9-12). Above all, the secret to victory over temptation is in keeping our focus on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2). If we maintain this daily focus, overcoming temptation will be an automatic result of our walk with God (Col.3:1-4; Phil.4:8; Gal.5:16).

"⁴For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith." 1 John 5:4, NLT



There are three primary areas of temptation:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____



Because of the great _____ won for us by _____, we can now confidently face any attack from _____. The Bible provides six _____ to continual victory.



The secret to victory over temptation is in keeping our _____ on Jesus.

Fellowship

²⁰“I am praying... ²¹that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

²²“I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. ²³I am in them and you are in me...” John 17:20-23, NLT

The prayer of Jesus reveals God's plan for true fellowship:

The Quality of Fellowship

“...just as you are in me and I am in you.” Our fellowship together is linked to the quality of fellowship experienced by the Father and the Son. The depth of this love and unity is outworked by the Holy Spirit as we meet in regular fellowship. Christian fellowship then becomes a reflection of the fellowship of the triune Godhead.

The Basis of Fellowship

“...I in them and you in me.” Christian fellowship only works because we have the same Spirit, making us one body (1 Cor. 12:14,20). This fellowship is based on:

- Common commitment (Romans 12:10).
- Common love (John 13:34).
- Common focus (1 John 1:3; Philippians 2:1-2).

¹²The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. ¹³...we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, NLT

Meeting Together

²⁵And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.” Hebrews 10:25, NLT

Regular fellowship between Christians is very important for it is through our fellowship that...

The believer grows in Christ

¹⁶He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” Ephesians 4:16, NLT (read also verses 12-15)

God is glorified to the world

³⁵Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” John 13:35, NLT (see also 17:23)

Walking in the Light

⁶So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth. ⁷But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.” 1 John 1:6-7, NLT

Our fellowship embraces the need to be open with one another. This is not something that is a prerequisite for fellowship. Rather it is a result of the trust that develops out of fellowship. This openness includes:

Removing the pretenses

So much of the world's fellowship is hypocritical - acting out a role. We can only know people to the extent to which they are prepared to reveal themselves. As we take off the social masks that we put up as barriers between each other, true fellowship begins to have an effect on each person. The love of Christ can then be expressed, not just in word, but from the heart.

"²² You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart." 1 Peter 1:22, NLT (see also 1 John 4:7,11-12)

Confessing our sins to others

"¹⁶ Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed..." James 5:16, NLT

Part of our fellowship to one another is a mutual sense of responsibility. When we confess our sins to each other, this is the highest level of trust. We can then become the instruments of God's forgiveness and cleansing to one another.

Forgiving each other

For us to experience the continual flow of God's forgiveness into our lives, we must forgive one another.

"¹³ Make allowance for each other's faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others." Col. 3:13, NLT

Encouraging one another in obedience

Walking in the light means walking in obedience to the Lord (John 15:10). Fellowship has been designed by God so that each believer is continually encouraged not just to hear the word, but also to do it (James 1:21-22).

"²⁴ Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works." Hebrews 10:24, NLT

A genuine concern for one another

No hidden motives of self-gain should underlie our fellowship. Our desire should be to give, not to get.

"³ Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too." Philippians 2:3-4, NLT

A laying down of one's life

"¹² This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. ¹³ There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends." John 15:12-13, NLT

Life involves more than physical life. It also includes our material possessions, our personal interests and preferences (James 2:15-16). This means a willingness to share one's self.

"³² All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had." Acts 4:32, NLT (see also 2:44-45)

This was a description of the New Testament Church. Their unity in fellowship was expressed on three levels:

- One heart - a bond of love
- One mind - a bond of purpose
- All things in common - a bond of concern

This is the outworking of true fellowship - not of outward rules and regulations. This depth of fellowship is a result of "walking in the light," and is the answer to the prayer of Jesus:

"²¹ I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you..." John 17:21, NLT



Fellowship is based on:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



Christian fellowship becomes a reflection of the triune _____.



In the New Testament Church, their unity of fellowship was expressed on these three levels:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Generosity and Giving

"⁶ Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop." 2 Cor. 9:6, NLT

Just as God has set physical laws to govern the physical universe, so God has also put into motion spiritual laws which govern human life. One of these is the *law of generosity* - the principle of sowing and reaping.

The first step in understanding the law of generosity is to see material things as God sees them (Luke 9:25; 12:16-21). As Christians we are now partners with God, but it is important for us to know where our different responsibilities lie:

Ownership is with God

All ownership is with God (Psalm 24:1; 89:11; Job 41:11; 1 Chronicles 29:10-14). Every single created thing, living or not, ultimately belongs to Him, including everything material or immaterial that we may personally have in this life - possessions, careers, families. He is our Master, but this also means He has responsibility as Provider.

Stewardship is with us

We are not owners, but stewards who have been given special responsibility before God for how we use the things He has given us (Matthew 25:14-30). When we understand this owner-steward relationship we have with God, then it becomes easy to give. Generosity is part of our stewardship responsibilities. Our stewardship covers every single thing that "belongs" to us:

- Our life (Acts 17:25; 1 Cor.6:19; Gal.2:20; Job 33:4).
- Our time (Psalm 90:12; Eph.5:15-16; Col.4:5).
- Our talents and abilities (1 Peter 4:10; 1 Cor.12:4-7,11).
- Our possessions (Matt.6:19-21; Col.3:1-2).
- Our finances (1 Tim.6:6-10,17-19; Matt.6:24).
- The Gospel (1 Cor.4:1; 9:16-17; 1 Tim.6:20).

The key that releases a believer into the full responsibilities of stewardship is *surrender* - the unreserved giving of one's entire life and purpose into God's hands. Only when we give *ourselves* do we learn what it means to give of what we have.

Importance of Generosity

"⁴ And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires." 2 Peter 1:4, NLT

Amongst all His "great and precious promises," God has given us promises of provision (see Phil.4:19). This promise is not given so that we can "spend what you get on your pleasures" (James 4:1-4). The promises of God cannot be separated from the purpose of God. This "great and precious" promise has been given to us so that we can "*participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world* caused by evil desires."

The Divine Nature

"³⁶ You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate." Luke 6:36, NLT

God's plan is for us to be like Him (Eph.4:24). God is generous (Matt.7:11; Rom.8:32; 1 Cor.2:12; James 1:5,17). The Lord wants us to express the same kind of generosity in our lives.

The Corruption of the World

"⁹ But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is the

root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows." 1 Timothy 6:9-10, NLT (read verses 5-8)

One of the reasons God places such an emphasis on generosity is because the material lure of this world is a destructive trap. We cannot be both alive to the world and alive to God (Gal. 6:14). We are either alive to the world and dead to God or we are dead to the world and alive to God (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15).

"²⁴No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money." Matthew 6:24, NLT

The Grace of Giving

"⁷Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also *in this gracious act of giving*." 2 Corinthians 8:7, NLT (see also verses 8-15; 1 John 3:17-18)

Generosity is part of the grace of God that flows into our lives. Some guidelines can help us in our "grace of giving":

- Give systematically and regularly (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
- Give cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- Give without seeking recognition (Matthew 6:2-4).

Giving follows a certain order of expression: **tithes** (the beginning of our giving), **offerings** (giving for particular needs) and **sacrifices** (giving that "hurts").

Firstfruits

"¹⁰'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,' says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, 'I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!'" Malachi 3:10, NLT

Tithing is an important lesson in giving. But there are three things we need to understand before our tithing pleases God.

- Under the New Covenant, everything now belongs to God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).
- Tithing must not be under law (compulsory rule) but under grace (the response of our heart to God's goodness).
- Tithing is the firstfruits of our income - not just one-tenth.

The firstfruits is the first and the best. If we bring a tenth of our income to the Lord, but it is the "leftover" tenth, this is not a true tithe (Proverbs 3:9-10). In the Bible, the firstfruits of a harvest was accepted by God on behalf of the harvest. This is why Jesus is called "the firstfruits" (1 Cor. 15:20,23). He represented the whole harvest before God and was accepted by God on behalf of the rest of the harvest. In the same way, our tithe is given as a representative of our whole income and our whole lives.

Our generosity brings great pleasure to God. It was the sacrificial giving of the Philippians (read 2 Corinthians 8:1-5) that brought with it a promise of God's certain provision:

"¹⁸...They are a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to God. ¹⁹And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:18-19, NLT (read also Luke 6:38)

Foundation Stones for New Believers



Every created thing ultimately belongs to _____.



Rather than owners, in God's view we are _____ of what we possess.



Only when we give _____ do we learn what it means to give of what we have.



No one can serve two _____...you cannot serve both God and _____



Giving follows a certain order of expression:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The Kingdom of God

"⁹ But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people... God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light." 1 Peter 2:9, NLT (see also Colossians 1:13)

We have been snatched from Satan's rulership and are now under a whole new authority - that of the Lord Jesus. The keystone of living in God's kingdom is being in *relationship with Jesus, the King* (Ephesians 1:17; Philippians 3:10). This relationship takes two distinct forms:

Savior

This is the very first relationship we can ever have with Jesus. We cannot know God as Father or Friend until we first have had a revelation of Jesus as Savior - the One who died for us and rescued us from Satan's kingdom. Jesus saved us from:

- God's judgment (1 Thess.1:10; 5:9; Rom.5:9).
- Satan's power (Acts 26:18; Heb.2:14; 1 John 3:8).

"⁹...he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him." Hebrews 5:9, NLT (see also 2:10)

Lord

"⁶ And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus *as your Lord*, you must continue to follow him. ⁷ Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness." Colossians 2:6-7, NLT

Knowing Jesus as Savior brings us into God's kingdom, but that is not where our relationship with Him ends. Once we are inside His kingdom, that relationship takes on dramatic new changes. Now we know Him not merely as Savior, but as Lord - *our* Lord!

"¹⁸ Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All glory to him, both now and forever! Amen." 2 Peter 3:18, NLT (see also John 13:13; Romans 1:4; 1 Cor.8:6; 2 Cor.4:5)

New Citizenship

"¹² always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light.¹³ For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son" Colossians 1:12-13, NLT

When we enter the Kingdom of Light, we enter a relationship for which we were created - a relationship between the Lord and His creation. When Jesus becomes Lord of our individual lives, we find that our lives begin falling into place (Col.2:9-10; 1 Cor. 8:6). The Lordship of Christ in our lives changes our whole lifestyle into that of a citizen of the Kingdom of God.

The Model Citizen

"⁵ You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had." Philippians 2:5, NLT

Jesus, though King of the Kingdom, became the servant of all. He is the example for us of the true citizen of His kingdom.

"¹³ You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. ¹⁴ And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. ¹⁵ I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you." John 13:13-15, NLT (read also John 13:5-17; Matthew 20:26-28; Luke 22:26-27)

As members of God's kingdom, we have entered into a master-servant relationship with the Lord (Matthew 6:24). Jesus came specifically to do God's will (Hebrews 10:5-9). Every day He displayed what the lifestyle of the kingdom is all about: living to please God (Ephesians 5:8-10). We are to have a servant's heart, just as He had a servant's heart (Matthew 20:26-28).

Paradoxes of the Kingdom

Many Christians don't like the concept of servanthood because it seems to make one person inferior to another. But in the Bible, we find four interesting paradoxes:

- In slavery, there is freedom (Romans 6:16-23).
- In serving, there is greatness (Mark 9:35; 10:43-44).
- In humility, there is exaltation (Luke 18:14; 1 Pet.5:5-6).
- In submission, there is authority (Luke 7:3-10; Jam.4:7).

The lifestyle of the kingdom of God is an attitude of *submission* and *obedience to God*.

"¹Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God, as we have taught you. You live this way already, and we encourage you to do so even more. ²For you remember what we taught you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. ³God's will is for you to be holy..." 1 Thessalonians 4:1-3, NLT (see also Matthew 12:50; Ephesians 6:6; Hebrews 13:21; 1 John 2:17)

We submit ourselves to God's will *not* reluctantly - because of fear or duty - but rather we seek to please Him:

- **Because of all God has done for us** (Romans 12:1; Ephesians 4:1; Titus 3:4-7).
- **Because in doing so we find fulfilment** (Psalm 40:8).
- **Because of love** (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3).

Fruit of the Kingdom

"¹¹And you know that we treated each of you as a father treats his own children.¹²We pleaded with you, encouraged you, and urged you *to live your lives in a way that God would consider worthy*. For he called you to share in his Kingdom and glory." 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12, NLT (see also 2 Thess.1:5)

In Matthew 21:43, Jesus said that the kingdom would belong to those who "produce its fruit". The fruit of the kingdom is summed up in a number of scriptures:

- Love, joy, peace (Galatians 5:22-23).
- Goodness, righteousness, truth (Eph.5:9; Jam.3:13-17).
- Righteousness, peace, joy (Rom.14:17; Heb.12:11).

"¹⁰Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit..." Colossians 1:10, NLT (see 2:6-7; Eph.4:1; 6:7-10)

Since we were created by God, we were also made for His kingdom and its lifestyle. The fruit of that kingdom is simply the natural outworking of rebirth that the Holy Spirit has performed in us (Galatians 5:22). Our responsibility as citizens of God's kingdom is to live like the people we now are!

"¹¹Dear friends, I warn you as "temporary residents and foreigners" to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls.¹²Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world." 1 Peter 2:11-12, NLT



Being in relationship with Jesus the King takes two distinct forms:

1. Jesus as _____
2. _____



The lifestyle of the Kingdom of God is an attitude of _____ and _____ to God.



We seek to please God because:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Praise and Worship

Praise and worship hold a very important place among God's people. The Bible gives us a thorough coverage of praise and worship. There has been a great hunger among God's people to return to a more Biblical expression of praise and worship. We believe that God desires us to worship in a Psalmic pattern, which is a genuine, heartfelt, expressive praise and worship desired by God and described in detail in the book of Psalms. Let us look at part of the Biblical pictures of praise and worship and pattern ourselves after them.

The Importance of praise and worship

Satan knew the value of worship. He offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory if He would fall down and worship him. (Mt 4:8-11)

The importance of praise and worship lies in the relationship it establishes between the worshiper and the object worshiped. We tend to become like what we worship.

Example - a fan and an athletic team.

Real worship and praise are the characteristics of true Christianity

- Phil 3:3 "for we are the true circumcision; who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh."
- Jesus in talking to woman at the well explains that the time has now come that true worshipers will not be set apart by outward form. True worshipers will worship God in Spirit and Truth. (John 4:21-24)

Distinctions between worship and praise

- **Praise** - to commend, to applaud, to express approval or admiration of, to extol in words or in song, to magnify, shine, boast, rave etc. It is an outward expression.
- **Worship** - The Greek word carries the meaning to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand. Also, it means to do reverence to, adore, fawn or crouch, worship etc. It is difficult to get a simple definition of worship because real worship defies definition. It is something to be experienced. It is the result of a divine encounter that involves the feelings that are born out an intimate communion with God. It is a response to a revelation of God.

Praise and worship are so closely related and affect each other so much that it is difficult to completely separate them into narrow boxes of definition.

How are we to worship God?

Jesus tells us how to worship in John 4:24.

1. *Worship in spirit* - Jesus here is showing that worship is not to be bound to certain time or place, but it was going to be a function of the spirit of man reaching out to the Spirit of God. Worship isn't just outward ritual. Worship is our spirit corresponding with God's Spirit.
2. *Worship in Truth* - Jesus Christ is the truth (John 14:6). Jesus intends that we worship in accordance with the truths of God's word (John 17:17, Ps 119). The doctrinal content of our songs determine their real spiritual value.
3. *Worship with our whole heart.* Ps 111:1; Ps 9:1 - It includes our emotions.

Praise and worship signify our priestly ministry

1. *The Bible teaches that we are all priests unto God. (Rev 1:6; I Pet 2:5)*
2. *God has shown that He is to be approached by sacrifice and spiritual sacrifices (I Pet 2:5)*
 - Sacrifice of ourselves. Rom 12:1
 - Sacrifice of our possessions. Phil 4:18; Heb 13:16
 - Sacrifice of praise. Heb 13:15
 - Sacrifice of thanksgiving. Ps 116:1 7; I Thess 5:18; Eph 5:20
 - Sacrifice of joy. Ps 27:6

Why we are to worship

1. *God has ordained worship/praise as a way to come into His presence. Ps 100:4*
2. *Worship/praise is a sign that God is in the midst of us (Ps 22:3). God inhabits our praise (Jer 33:11).*
3. *God has given us worship as a way of glorifying Him. Ps 50:23*
4. *Worship/praise is part of our priestly ministry. Heb 13:15*
5. *God is worthy to be praised. Ps 18:3*

When are we to worship?

1. *At all times - Ps 34:1*
2. *Continually - Ps 34:1, Ps 35:7, Heb 13:15; Eph 5:18,20; Lk 24:53*
3. *While I have my being - Ps 146:1-3; 45:17; 71:6; 119:164*
4. *Every day - "Everyday will I bless Thee" Ps 146:1-3*

Where we are to worship?

1. *In our homes - Ps 149:5*
2. *In the congregation - Ps 22:22; Ps 35:18; 100:2,4; 111:1; 134:2; 135:1*
3. *Before the unbeliever - Acts 2:46-47; Ps 40:3; Ps 126:2; Acts 16:25-34*

Who is to worship?

1. *The Lord's servants - Ps 113:1*
2. *Those who fear the Lord - Ps 22:23*
3. *Those who seek Him - Ps 22:26; 145:10*

What is the manner in which we are to worship?

Controversy stirs when we begin to discuss the manner in which we are to worship God especially the outward expressions. We believe in "Biblical Psalmic Worship" which means a genuine, heartfelt, expressive praise and worship desired by God and described in the Bible, especially the book of Psalms. This is part of worshipping Him according to the word.

Biblical expressions of praise and worship.

1. *Lifting our hands.*
 - Ps 28:2 "Listen to my prayer for mercy as I cry out to you for help, as I lift my hands toward your holy sanctuary." (NLT)

- Ps 63:3-4 “Your unfailing love is better than life itself; how I praise you! I will praise you as long as I live, lifting up my hands to you in prayer.” (NLT)
- Ps 141:2 “Accept my prayer as incense offered to you, and my upraised hands as an evening offering.” (NLT)
- Ps 134:2 “Lift your hands toward the sanctuary, and praise the Lord.” (NLT)
- 1 Timothy 2:8 “...I want men to pray with holy hands lifted up to God, free from anger and controversy.” (NLT)

Note that children lift their hands when they want adults to pick them up. Lifting of the hands is also a form of surrender.

2. *Clapping hands.*

- Ps 47:1 “Come, everyone! Clap your hands! Shout to God with joyful praise!” (NLT)

3. *Playing musical instruments.*

- Ps 149:3 “Praise his name with dancing, accompanied by tambourine and harp.” (NLT)
- Ps 150:3-5 “Praise him with a blast of the ram’s horn; praise him with the lyre and harp! Praise him with the tambourine and dancing; praise him with strings and flutes! Praise him with a clash of cymbals; praise him with loud clanging cymbals.” (NLT)
- Ps 81:2 “...Beat the tambourine. Play the sweet lyre and the harp.” (NLT)
- Ps 98:5-6 “Sing your praise to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and melodious song, with trumpets and the sound of the ram’s horn. Make a joyful symphony before the Lord, the King!” (NLT)
- Ps 33:2 “Praise the Lord with melodies on the lyre; make music for him on the ten-stringed harp.” (NLT)

God has given us music and singing to help lift our hearts.

4. *Singing.*

- Ps 81:1-2 “Sing praises to God, our strength. Sing to the God of Jacob. Sing!...” (NLT)
- Ps 33:3 “Sing a new song of praise to him; play skillfully on the harp, and sing with joy.” (NLT)
- Ps 95:1 “Come, let us sing to the Lord!...” (NLT)
- Jas 5:13 “...Are any of you happy? You should sing praises.” (NLT)
- Eph 5:19 “singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, and making music to the Lord in your hearts.” (NLT)
- Col 3:16 “Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.” (NLT)
- Ps 149:6 “Let the praises of God be in their mouths...” (NLT)

5. *Shouting.*

- Ps 47:1 “Shout to God with joyful praise!” (NLT)
- Ps 66:1 “Shout joyful praises to God, all the earth!” (NLT)
- Psalms 95:1 Come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.” (NLT)
- Psalms 98:4 “Shout to the Lord, all the earth; break out in praise and sing for joy!” (NLT)
- Psalms 100:1 “Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth!” (NLT)

6. *Standing.*

- Ps 122:2 “And now here we are, standing inside your gates...” (NLT)

Standing speaks of respect and alertness.

7. *Dancing.*

- Ps 30:11 “You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing...” (NLT)
- Ps 149:3 “Praise his name with dancing, accompanied by tambourine and harp.” (NLT)
- Ps 150:4 “Praise him with the tambourine and dancing; praise him with strings and flutes!” (NLT)
- Ex 15:20-21 “Then Miriam...took a tambourine and led all the women as they played their tambourines and danced.” (NLT)

8. *Bowing or kneeling.*

- Ps 95:6 “Come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker, for he is our God.” (NLT)
- Rev 19:4 “...fell to their knees and worshiped God on his Throne, praising, Amen! Yes! Hallelujah!” (MSG)



We tend to become like what we _____.



Real worship and praise are the _____ of true Christianity.



How are we to worship?

1. Worship in _____
2. Worship in _____
3. Worship with _____

Prayer

"¹⁵ When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. ¹⁶... and give them my salvation." Psalm 91:15-16, NLT

The time we spend with the Lord in prayer can release the most dynamic, history-changing power this world has ever known. The Bible describes many different kinds of prayer. But the most important kind starts in the hidden place of our homes.

The Secret Place

"⁶ But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you." Matthew 6:6, NLT

We have been invited into intimate prayer by none other than the Lord Himself. This kind of "secret" prayer presupposes:

- The right motives (Matthew 6:5).
- A right relationship with God as Father (Luke 11:11-13).
- A real trust in the Lord (Psalm 55:16-17).
- A dispensing of false fronts (Mark 7:6-7).

Dimensions in Prayer

"¹⁸ Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion..." Ephesians 6:18, NLT

As we express our feelings and burdens in conversation with God, it can be in the form of adoration (Psalm 34:1-4), confession (1 John 1:9), request (Matthew 7:7), thanksgiving (Ephesians 5:4,20) or intercession (1 Timothy 2:1).

An Example of Prayer

Elijah is given to us as an example of a praying man:

"¹⁶ ...The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. ¹⁷ Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! ¹⁸ Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops." James 5:16-18, NLT

Elijah's prayer was:

Effective: Based on God's word (Deuteronomy 11:13-17; 1 Kings 18:36).

Fervent: Based on God's character (1 Kings 18:36-46; Matthew 15:21-28).

Righteous: Based on relationship with God, not on his own worthiness (James 5:17; Proverbs 15:8,29).

Five Commands to Pray

- Watch and pray always (Luke 21:36; Mark 13:35-37).
- Pray lest you fall into temptation (Matthew 26:41).
- Pray for harvesters (Luke 10:2).
- Pray for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-2).
- Pray for your enemies (Luke 6:28).

When to Pray

The Bible gives many examples of people who prayed (1 Chronicles 4:10). Many of the heroes of faith had regular times of the day set aside specifically for prayer, often three times a day - at morning, noon and evening.

"¹⁶ But I will call on God, and the Lord will rescue me. ¹⁷ Morning, noon, and night I cry out in my distress, and the Lord hears my voice." Psalm 55:16-17, NLT (see also Daniel 6:10)

The best example of a daily pattern of regular, whole-hearted prayer can be found in the Lord Jesus Himself:

- Early in the morning (Mark 1:35).
- All night (Luke 6:12).
- Before each meal (Mark 6:41).

What to Pray For

- For ourselves (1 Chronicles 4:10).
- For one another (James 5:16).
- For ministries in the Church (2 Thessalonians 3:1).
- For the sick and distraught (James 5:14-16).
- For those ensnared by sin (1 John 5:16).

Aid in Prayer

"²⁶And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words." Romans 8:26, NLT

Part of the Holy Spirit's purpose is to teach us (Luke 12:12), guide us in prayer (Romans 8:27), and to help us in our faith (Ephesians 3:16-17). The Holy Spirit will sometimes anoint a believer's prayer in a special way, and this is called "praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20; Ephesians 6:18). To help us in prayer, the Holy Spirit has also provided a special gift to the believer: the gift of tongues - speaking in an unknown language to the Lord in prayer (see 1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

Praying Together

Whenever Christians pray together in agreement, there is special authority. For example, Jesus gave a special promise for two believers joining together in prayer:

"¹⁹I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you." Matthew 18:19, NLT (see also Eccl.4:12)

If there is tremendous power when two people pray, what about the whole assembly of God's people praying in one accord?

"²⁴...all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God: 'O Sovereign Lord... hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. ³⁰Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus.' ³¹After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness." Acts 4:24-31, NLT

Joining the Lord

The Bible says that Jesus "always lives to intercede for [us]" (Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34). One of His great ministries now is that of prayer. The Holy Spirit is searching for those who will join Jesus in His ministry of prayer for individual people, for the Church and for the nations.

"⁴⁰ ... 'Couldn't you watch with me even one hour?'" Matt.26:40, NLT



Elijah's prayer life is provided as an example to follow in James 5. Elijah's prayer life was:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____



What are at least three things we should pray for:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____



Who or what helps us to pray? _____

Eternity

"¹¹ Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end." Ecclesiastes 3:11, NLT

God created us as creatures of eternity. Even though our physical body dies, our spirit continues to live forever. God has prepared an eternal dwelling for us called heaven.

Heaven

"...God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore stand in awe of God" Ecclesiastes.5:2,7

We do not know fully what heaven is like, but the Bible does tell us a little about what it is:

- The dwelling place of God (Job 22:12; Deut.26:15).
- The throne-room of God (Psalm 103:19; Isaiah 66:1).
- The place of God's full glory (Daniel 7:9-10; Acts 7:55).
- The home of believers who have died (2 Corinthians 5:1).
- The future home of all believers (Revelation 7:9-10).

Heaven is a place far beyond anything we can possibly conceive (1 Corinthians 2:9;13:12). But though the Bible doesn't paint for us a totally clear picture of what heaven is like, it does give us some clues as to its nature. Heaven is:

A place of great glory

"⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father's Kingdom..." Matthew 13:43, NLT

A place of continual worship

"¹ After this, I heard what sounded like a vast crowd in heaven shouting, 'Praise the Lord! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.' ⁶ Then I heard again what sounded like the shout of a vast crowd or the roar of mighty ocean waves or the crash of loud thunder: 'Praise the Lord! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.'" Revelation 19:1,6 (NLT) (see also 5:11-12)

A place that will never end

"¹¹ Then God will give you a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:11, NLT (see also 1 Peter 1:4)

A place untainted by evil

"²⁷ Nothing evil will be allowed to enter, nor anyone who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty—but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." Revelation 21:27, NLT (see also Ephesians 5:5)

The Book of Revelation describes the New Jerusalem, coming out of heaven, as a place without night (22:5), without curse (22:3), without pain (21:4), without crying or sorrow (21:4) and without death (21:4). This is because the nature of heaven is a product of the nature of God. Heaven is the full manifestation of His presence. That means that what God is like, heaven is like: a place of holiness, full of glory and without end.

Our Link with Heaven

As believers, we now live our lives in a special relationship with heaven, because:

- We belong to heaven (Heb.12:22-23; Philippians 3:20).
- We are seated in heaven (Ephesians 2:6).
- We have our source of life in heaven (Ephesians 1:3).
- We have our names written in heaven (Luke 10:20).
- We have been sent from heaven (John 17:16,18).
- We have our eyes fixed on heaven (Colossians 3:1-4; 2 Corinthians 4:17-18; Hebrews 11:9-10,14-16).
- We have our treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:19-20).

- We are being called back to heaven (Philippians 3:13-14).

Hell

"⁴¹ Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.'" Matthew 25:41, NLT

Heaven is not the only eternal place prepared for people. There is another place called hell (Luke 16:19-31). This place was not originally prepared for people, but for Satan. But when Adam sinned, all of mankind aligned itself with Satan and became enemies of God (Col.1:21). For all who refuse God's offer of salvation, their destiny is to join Satan in eternal separation from God (read John 3:17-21). But the wonderful news of the Gospel is that Jesus became the escape route from eternal judgment in hell. He became our passport to heaven.

"¹⁶ For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16, NLT

Eternal Life

"²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23, NLT

Eternal life is part of the total package of salvation that has been presented to us in Jesus Christ. This eternal life is certain because we are now in Christ (John 5:24; 6:40; 10:28).

"¹¹ And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." 1 John 5:11, NLT

Jesus himself, before returning to heaven, made a very special promise to every believer:

"¹ "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. ² There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am." John 14:1-3, NLT (see also 17:24)

The Eternal Purpose

"¹¹ This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord." Ephesians 3:11, NLT (see also 1:9-10; Romans 8:28)

We have not just been saved from God's judgment. We have also been saved to the eternal purpose of God. This purpose includes four things:

- We are being conformed to the image of Jesus (Rom.8:29).
- We are being trained as heirs of God (Rom.8:14-19).
- We are being prepared to contain and reveal God's full glory (2 Cor.3:18; 4:17; Rom.8:17-18; 2 Thess.2:14).
- We are being prepared as a bride for Christ (Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:7; 21:2).

"¹⁷ All honor and glory to God forever and ever! He is the eternal King, the unseen one who never dies; he alone is God. Amen." 1 Timothy 1:17, NLT



Heaven is a place:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



Eternal life is part of the total package of _____. _____ was not prepared originally for people but for _____. Those who refuse God's offer of _____ will have this as their destiny.



We have not only been saved from God's judgment but to the eternal _____ of God.