

Beginning Your Walk with Jesus



If you haven't already, please scan the QR code below to let us know you said YES to following Jesus.



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NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version (ESV). Some of the content in this booklet has been taken from Life.Church.

INTRODUCTION

You accepted Jesus as your Savior. Congratulations! You are now part of the family of God!

You are probably full of excitement and also have so many questions. Questions like: What now? What does it mean to be saved? How do I follow Jesus?

This study will address many of the questions you may have and share some of the core teachings of Jesus. Each day will include readings from the Bible, along with a prayer guide and action steps for you to put into practice. Our hope is that this tool can provide guidance as you begin your journey of following Jesus.

This book is organized into 21 days, including 2 days of catch up, review, and response. Feel free to go at the pace that best helps you grow, whether you finish this book in three weeks, 100 days, or six months. You may even keep it on hand as a resource to read over and over again for years to come.

Be sure to write down questions as they come to you so you can follow up with a leader at your campus or small group. Following Jesus is a process of taking next steps, one day at a time. We're thrilled to join you!

WEEK 1 - THE PATH TO SALVATION

DAY 1 - HOW AM I SAVED?

You were created to have a relationship with God. However, because of our sin, we are all separated from God. Jesus made a way for you to be saved and have a relationship with your Heavenly Father. How are you saved? Let's take a look together.

THE PROBLEM

We are all sinners who fall short of the glory of God.

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

You don't have to look around for long to realize our world is in need. There is pain, hurt, and destruction all around us. This is a result of a word you've probably heard before: **sin**. The word "sin" means to "miss the mark". We miss the mark by not living up to God's glorious standards. Though some of us may consider ourselves "good people" or "better than our neighbors," the truth is we all have missed the mark, both in outward actions and inward attitudes. Because of sin, we hurt each other, we hurt ourselves, and most importantly, we hurt the heart of God. The Bible teaches that all of us are born with a sin nature, a natural inclination to rebel against God.

THE PENALTY

The penalty for our sin is death and eternal separation from God in a place called Hell.

Our rebellious sin nature separates us from God. According to Scripture, the payment our sin deserves is death. Because God is just, this payment has to be paid.

For the wages of sin is death... Romans 6:23a

THE PROVISION

God loved us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to die in our place. Through His sacrificial death on the cross, the death penalty for our sins was paid.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit. **1 Peter 3:18**

THE PARDON

God offers a free pardon from sin and eternal life to everyone who places their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

Because the Lord Jesus paid the price our sin deserved, we can receive forgiveness (pardon) from our sin. Jesus died in our place and rose from the grave, defeating death forever, so we could have eternal life. However, this is a free gift that you must reach out and accept.

...but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23b

Wondering how to accept this gift? It's as easy as ABC!

You must Admit you are a sinner, Believe Jesus died for your sin and rose from the dead, and Confess Jesus as your Lord and Savior!

Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. Romans 10:9 - 10

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13

Jesus Christ died for everyone, but not everyone is willing to accept Him as their Savior. The Lord will not force His gift of eternal life on anyone. The choice lies with you. Will you accept Jesus as your Savior and receive His free gift of eternal life?



Prayer of Salvation (ABC: Admit, Believe, Confess):

If you have not yet received the free gift of eternal life Jesus is offering and accepted Him as your Savior, pray something like this. You don't have to pray this word for word, but pray honestly from your heart to the Lord:

Lord, I **Admit** that I am a sinner. I have fallen short of Your glorious standards. I **Believe** that You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross, in my place, to pay the price for my sin. I Believe Jesus rose from the grave and defeated sin and death. I Confess Jesus as my Lord and Savior, and I ask You to forgive me of my sins. I accept the free gift of salvation and eternal life You are offering me. Thank You for saving me!

If you have already accepted Jesus as your Savior, take a minute to thank Him for the gift of salvation! Thank Him for dying in your place and paying the price YOUR sin deserved. Thank Him for rising from the grave so you could have eternal life with Him forever.

Action Step:

Accepting Jesus as your Savior is the best decision you will ever make. This is great news that should be shared with others! If you haven't yet, reach out to your Campus Pastor to let him know about your decision. Share your decision with a close family member or friend. You will want to remember and celebrate the day you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

Write down that date here:		
Questions You Want to Ask:		

DAY 2 - WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SAVED? (Part 1)

As we learned on Day 1, when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, our sins are forgiven because of His death on the cross, and we receive the free gift of eternal life. You are now saved! You may have heard that word before, but what does it really mean to "be saved"?

Salvation is a personal relationship with Jesus that includes many benefits:

PARDON

We read about this yesterday. When we are saved, our sins are forgiven (pardoned). Jesus already paid the price our sins deserve: death. When we accept His gift of salvation, this "payment" is applied to our "account," and we are pardoned of our death sentence! Our sins are forgiven and buried in a sea of forgetfulness!

Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of His inheritance? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Micah 7:18 - 19

As far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us. **Psalm 103:12**

PEACE

When we are saved, we have peace with God through the blood of Jesus on the cross!

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 5:1

When we were in sin, we were enemies of God; but because our sin has been pardoned, we are no longer separated from God! Since we have peace with God through the blood of Jesus, we are adopted as sons and daughters into the family of God!

PERFECTION

It may surprise you to learn that God now sees you as sinless! The truth is, none of us are perfect nor will be perfect until we get to heaven one day. However, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from ALL sin, and when God sees you, He sees you through the blood of Christ.

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.

Hebrews 12:23b (NLT)

We will continue to struggle against sin as we grow in our faith, but because of the blood of our Savior, we can boldly come before the throne of our God to find mercy and grace in our time of need.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16



Pray with your own words or try these:

Father, thank You for the many benefits You have given me through salvation. Thank You for pardoning my sin! Thank You that Jesus took the payment for my sin that I deserved! Thank You that I now have peace with You and can boldly come before Your throne.

Action Step:

Reflect on the three benefits of salvation you learned about today. Write these out in your own words, describing your new identity. (Example: I have been pardoned from my sin. I am forgiven, and my sins are now forgotten!)
Questions You Want to Ask:

DAY 3 - WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SAVED? (Part 2)

Salvation is a free gift from God that includes many benefits, including being pardoned from our sin, having peace with God, and being made perfect through the blood of Jesus Christ. Another benefit of our salvation is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Let's learn more about His presence in our lives.

PRESENCE

The Holy Spirit of God comes to dwell inside you at the moment of your salvation. His presence is always with you, and you are never alone! We will learn more about the Holy Spirit on Day 10.

In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 1:13 - 14

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever. **John 14:16**

The Holy Spirit will abide in you forever; He will never leave you. Once you are saved, He keeps you saved. He is the guarantee of your eternal inheritance!

POWER

Our salvation also provides us with the power to live victorious lives! The Spirit of God provides us the same resurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead. He empowers us to live like Jesus, to turn from a life of sin and to walk a new way!

If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Romans 8:11

As you begin your relationship with Jesus, you will find yourself hungering to read the Bible and spend time with Him. Your heart will desire to obey Him and His Word. You will also begin to feel conviction about certain attitudes and behaviors that the Lord leads you to change. This is the Holy Spirit of God at work in you, empowering you to live according to God's will!

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes and be careful to obey My rules.

Ezekiel 36:26 - 27



Pray with your own words or try these:

Father, thank You for the gift of the Holy Spirit! Thank You that He will never leave me! Fill me with Your power to live a life that is pleasing to You. Give me Your desires and take away any desire that is not of You. Help me understand Your Word as I read it and give me the strength and courage to obey it. Help me to glorify You and walk a new way, Your way!

Action Step: Read Galatians 5:16 - 25. List the works of the flesh found in verses 19 - 21, those things we should not do as a follower of Jesus. Next, list the fruit of the Spirit as found in verses 22 - 23. Read verse 16 again to find out how our lives can be filled with the fruit of the Spirit and not the works of the flesh. Ask the Lord to help you walk by the power of the Spirit.
Questions You Want to Ask:

DAY 4 - HOW CAN I KNOW I AM SAVED?

We can know without a shadow of a doubt that we are saved! Because of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, His victory over death, and His promises in the Bible, we can have confidence in our salvation. We have a real enemy, Satan, who will discourage us with doubts, making us wonder: "Am I really saved? Could God really save someone like me? Did I do it right? Can I lose my salvation? What if I sin AFTER I am saved?" These are all common questions that many people wrestle with after they are saved. However, by clinging to the promises in God's Word, you can put these doubts and questions to rest, standing secure in your salvation through Jesus!

SAVED BY GRACE, KEPT BY GRACE!

As we learned on Day 1, we are saved by accepting the free gift of salvation that Jesus paid for us through His death on the cross. His payment for our sin is complete. There is nothing more that can be added to it. It is paid in full!

...He said, "It is finished," and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. John 19:30b

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. **Ephesians 2:8 - 9**

We are saved by God's amazing grace! It has been said that the word "grace" can be defined by using an acrostic: God's Riches At Christ's Expense. We have been given the riches of salvation because Christ paid the price we could not pay! We receive this gift of grace "through faith." Faith is placing our trust and commitment in Jesus Christ alone. We don't put our faith in our good works, our sense of self-worth, our good intentions, or our feelings. We simply trust Jesus and what He accomplished for us on the cross.

Grace is God's nail-pierced hand of love reaching down out of heaven saying, "I love you! I want to save you." **Faith** is our sin-stained hand reaching up saying, "God, I need You! I want to be saved. I trust in Jesus for my salvation." When we place our hand of faith into His hand of grace, we are saved!

If we received the gift of salvation by grace, then our salvation can only be kept by grace.

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. **Titus 3:4 - 7**

This verse explains that we are "justified by His grace." What does it mean to be "justified"? It means to be declared righteous, innocent, and acquitted of the charges against us. We are free in Christ because of His grace. No matter how many times the enemy reminds you of your sin or makes you doubt your salvation, you must rest in this promise. We are saved and kept by the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!



Pray with your own words or try these:

Father, thank You for Your grace that saves me and keeps me saved! It is only by Your grace that I am saved. There is nothing I could do to earn my salvation, but You made a way, pouring out Your love and grace on me, even though I didn't deserve it. Thank You, Lord! I place my faith in You alone and rest in the promise that Your grace is sufficient for my salvation!

Action Step: Read Ephesians 2:8 - 9. Write out the definition of grace and faith and describe the role they each play in our salvation. If you need help, reread today's teaching.
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Questions You Want to Ask:

DAY 5 - CAN I LOSE MY SALVATION?

We learned yesterday that we are saved by grace, and therefore, kept by grace. You may be thinking, "This is great! But what if I sin after I am saved? What happens then? Is there a certain sin that will cause me to lose my salvation?" The answer is NO! You can NOT lose your salvation. Again, you couldn't earn it in the first place, so you certainly can't work hard enough to keep it after you have received it.

But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. Romans 11:6

If we put faith in Christ alone for our salvation, then we must also put our faith and trust in Christ alone to preserve our salvation. He alone is able to keep us saved until we go home to be with Him in heaven. We can't depend on our good works to save us, and we can't depend on our good works to keep us saved.

When Satan tries to make you doubt your salvation, remind yourself of these promises in God's Word:

• I am saved and secured by the power of God. No one can take me from His hand!

I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. **John 10:28 - 29**

My salvation is preserved by the power of Jesus.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever.

Amen. Jude 1:24 - 25

• My salvation is sealed by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 1:13 - 14

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Your Heavenly Father wants you to be sure of your salvation. He doesn't want you living in doubt and fear. You can know without a shadow of a doubt you are a child of God!

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. 1 John 5:13



Pray with your own words or try these:

Father, thank You that I can have assurance of my salvation! Thank You that my salvation rests on You alone, not on what I do or don't do. When Satan fills my mind with doubt and fear, please remind me of the promises in Your Word. Thank You that I am saved by Your grace alone!

Action Step: Memorize one of the Scripture passages in today's reading. When you begin to have doubts about your salvation, quote that verse to yourself to remind you of the assurance you have! Write out the verse you plan to memorize below:
Questions You Want to Ask:

DAY 6 - A PICTURE OF MY SALVATION: BAPTISM

After we make the decision to accept Jesus as our Savior, His first command to us as new followers is to let our family, friends, and others know of our decision by being baptized.

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Baptism is a picture of Jesus buried in the tomb and raised to new life. We are buried to our old self, we repented, and are raised to follow Him. However, baptism is NOT a requirement for salvation. Remember, we are not saved by works, but by grace alone through faith. Baptism is simply an outward expression of what's already taken place on the inside. A great illustration of this is a wedding ring. The ring itself does not make someone married, but it is a symbol to others of the commitment they have made to their spouse.

WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

In Scripture, we are taught that baptism is to be our next step in following Him. It is our testimony to the world of our decision to be saved and follow Jesus!

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Matthew 28:19

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." John 14:15

WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

In the Bible, baptism always follows salvation, often immediately after a decision is made.

And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. **Acts 16:33**

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. Acts 2:41

HOW AM I TO BE BAPTIZED?

Jesus was baptized by immersion. Immersion means to go completely under the water. Baptism by immersion is a picture of what Jesus did (death, burial, and resurrection) and what happens when we first become a believer (we are dead in sin, saved, and raised to new life). Following Jesus' baptism, every baptism recorded in the Bible was by immersion. He set the example for us, and we follow Him.

And when Jesus was baptized, immediately He went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him. Matthew 3:16

...and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water... Acts 8:38b - 39a



Pray with your own words or try these:

Father, thank You for saving me! Thank you for the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus! Help me to have the courage to take my next step in following You by being baptized publicly. Let my baptism be a testimony of the commitment I have made and inspire others to follow You!

Action Step:

If you have never been biblically baptized (by immersion AFTER salvation), then contact your Campus Pastor or leader to set up a time in the near future so you can show the world a picture of what Jesus has done in your heart and life!

Questions You Want to Ask:		

DAY 7 - REVIEW & RESPOND

Take time today to catch up on any readings from this week and/or review this week's teaching. Pause to meditate on the verses and truths the Lord brings to your attention. Write down anything He reveals to you and write out your own prayer to the Lord today:

Prayer:	
Next Step: What one next step does the Lord want you to take today?	
Questions You Want to Ask:	

Grace is God's nail-pierced hand of love reaching down out of heaven saying, "I love you! I want to save you." Faith is our sin-stained hand reaching up saying, "God, I need You! I want to be saved. I trust in Jesus for my salvation." When we place our hand of faith into His hand of grace, we are saved! For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8 - 9

WEEK 2 - HOW TO GROW MY HEART FOR GOD

DAY 8 - HOW DO I READ THE BIBLE?

The Bible is the living, inerrant Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for "inspired" literally means "God-breathed." The Bible is our source for absolute truth, our authority in every situation, our guide for daily life, and our comfort during times of sorrow.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16 - 17 (NKJV)

The Bible is divided into two main sections, the Old and the New Testament. Each Testament is divided into books and organized by chapters and verses. The Old Testament was written before the birth of Jesus and is full of prophecies foretelling His coming. It contains 39 books. The New Testament was written after the death and resurrection of Jesus and contains 27 books. The entire Bible, both the Old & New Testaments, come together to tell the whole narrative of the gospel of Jesus - Creation, the Fall of Mankind, Redemption, and Restoration.

Most of the Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language (with a few passages in Aramaic), while the New Testament was written in Greek. There are many English translations today. You will notice in today's teaching that we reference three translations (NKJV - New King James Version, NASB - New American Standard Bible, & ESV - English Standard Version).

The Bible is more than just a textbook or novel to be read. Because it is God-breathed and the source of absolute truth, it is to be studied and obeyed. In a world full of deception, the Word of God is the standard by which we must measure everything. If what we have been told or taught does not line up with what God has taught in His Word, then it must be dismissed as false.

HOW TO STUDY GOD'S WORD EFFECTIVELY

1. Start With Prayer

Quieting our hearts and minds is one of the greatest battles we face every time we sit down to engage with God's Word. We must enter into our time with a heart that is ready to both listen and obey. Prepare your heart by starting with prayer, asking God to remove any distractions, to cleanse you from any sin that keeps you from hearing His truth, and to illuminate His Word, giving you ears to hear and eyes to see what He wants to reveal.

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" Luke 8:8b (NKJV)

But a natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Corinthians 2:14 (NASB)

2. Interpret & Apply the Scriptures

Good Bible study involves more than quickly reading through a passage as you would any other book. Take your time, read the passage carefully, and reread as the Holy Spirit begins to reveal its meaning.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:20 - 21 (NKJV)

Context is critical when studying the Bible. Scripture always interprets Scripture. This means you must always read Scripture in light of the entire Bible, not just picking and choosing certain verses to say what you want to hear. The Bible can never mean what it never meant.

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a worker who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB)

3. Commit to Obey God's Word

Bible study is more than an intellectual exercise solely for the purpose of increasing our head knowledge. Reading God's Word should be a life-changing experience. As the Holy Spirit begins to reveal how the passage you are studying applies to your specific situation, be prepared and committed to obey whatever He tells you. If we do not take steps to apply and obey what we have learned, we have missed the whole purpose of reading God's Word!

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. **James 1:22 (ESV)**



Pray with your own words, or try these:

Father, thank You for providing us with Your inspired, inerrant Word. Give me spiritual discernment as I read it to understand what each passage is saying and how it applies to my life. Help me build my life on the firm foundation of Your Word. In Jesus' name, Amen!

Action Step:

Study Matthew 22:34 - 40. Begin with prayer and ask God to help you understand the passage. Then slowly read the text a couple of times. Commit to applying it to your life.

My Plan of Action for Applying This Truth to My Life:	
Questions You Want to Ask:	

DAY 9 - WHAT IS MY PURPOSE?

"What is my purpose in life?" You have likely asked this question many times, pursuing various paths in the quest for meaning in life. Some look for their purpose in a career, some in a relationship, and others in pleasure. However, none of these things will ever satisfy the longing that has been placed in our hearts to know our Creator. You and I were made for so much more!

The Bible teaches us that everything, including you and me, was created by and for the Lord.

The Lord has made everything for His own purposes... Proverbs 16:4a (NLT)

For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through Him and for Him. **Colossians 1:16**

Our purpose can be summed up in this one statement: to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen. **Romans 11:36**

You were created to have a relationship with God: to know, to love, to serve, and to glorify God!

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him. Yet He is actually not far from each one of us, for 'In Him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are indeed His offspring.' Acts 17:24 - 28

It is in God alone that we live, move, and have our being. A life lived apart from a relationship with Christ is an incomplete life. Your life has purpose and value. Don't settle for less than what you were made for!



Pray with your own words, or try these:

Father, thank You for creating me and designing me with a holy purpose in mind. Thank You that I am made in Your image and that my life has value! Show me how to live a life of purpose as You designed it. Help me to come to know You, love You, glorify You, and find complete joy and peace in Your presence. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen!

Action Step: Reflect on how your life will look as you live out your purpose of glorifying God and enjoying Him forever. What will change? What will stay the same? What steps can you take today to live out your God-given purpose?
Questions You Want to Ask:

DAY 10 - WHO IS GOD?

Yesterday, we learned that our purpose is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. If we are created to know and love God, then it is important to know who God is! You may be wondering, "Who exactly is God? Is He God the Father? Jesus the Son? The Holy Spirit? All three in one?" The answer is YES!

When you choose to follow Jesus, it is a three-in-one decision! You are accepting the invitation through **Jesus** (the Son of God) to become a child of God the **Father**, filled with the **Holy Spirit**, and empowered to live as a son or daughter of God. **God is three in one.** This is what we refer to as the Trinity.

UNDERSTANDING THE TRINITY

Throughout the Bible, we see God reflected as the Trinity. The Trinity consists of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. While the Trinity can be a confusing concept to wrap your mind around, it is essential to our understanding of who God is. There are three distinct persons of the Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit), yet they are all one.

One illustration that is helpful in grasping the Trinity is a triangle. A triangle has three unique, equal sides, yet it comes together to make one single, unified shape. In the same way, God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), & God the Holy Spirit are three distinct persons, yet they are all part of the whole, God. Each person is fully divine.



THE ETERNAL EXISTENCE OF THE TRINITY

The Holy Spirit of God has always been present with God the Father. We read of His presence at the beginning of Creation, as seen in the first two sentences of the Bible.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. **Genesis 1:1 - 2**

In the Gospel of John, we also read of the presence of Jesus at the moment of Creation. John refers to Him as "the Word". Jesus didn't just come to be when Mary gave birth to Him on this earth. He existed with God the Father before the world began. He has always been and always will be the Son of God.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. John 1:1 - 3

By studying these passages, we now understand who God is referring to in Genesis 1:26 when He says, "Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, after **Our** likeness." The words "Us" and "Our" are referring to God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit - all one, all eternal, and all present at the beginning of Creation.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF THE TRINITY

Jesus revealed the glory of God the Father in human flesh on this earth. He was and is both fully God and fully man.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

We see all three members of the Trinity present at the baptism of Jesus.

And when Jesus was baptized, immediately He went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:16 - 17



Pray with your own words, or try these:

Father, thank You for revealing all three persons of the Trinity to us in Scripture. Help me to understand and get to know You as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen!

Action Step:

Read Chapter 1 in the Gospel of John. Underline and make note of every reference to the members of the Trinity (God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit). Keep in mind that "the Word" is referring to Jesus.

Questions You Want to Ask	c :			

DAY 11 - WHAT IS PRAYER?

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is the habit set forth in Scripture for communication and communion with our Heavenly Father. It is simply having a conversation with God. Though a simple concept, there are many misconceptions surrounding the habit of prayer. Before we look at what prayer is meant to be, let's take a quick look at what it is not.

PRAYER IS NOT:

- Approaching God as a genie, asking Him to grant all of our desires and wishes
- An eloquent performance to impress God and others
- A repetition of meaningless, thoughtless phrases
- A passive, meditative experience or reflection

"And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him." Matthew 6:7 - 8

WHO DO I PRAY TO?

Many folks are confused regarding which member(s) of the Trinity they should be praying to. While it is perfectly acceptable to express worship, love, and adoration to all members of the Trinity, the typical pattern for prayer as found in Scripture is to pray:

- > TO God the Father We are addressing (praying and talking to) God the Father. Jesus gives us this example in the Lord's Prayer, directing us to address our prayer to "Our Father in heaven." (Matthew 6:9 13)
- > IN THE NAME OF Jesus, the Son of God You will hear many folks end their prayer with the phrase "In Jesus' name." This means we are praying on the basis of what Jesus has done for us in making a way for us to approach God the Father. Because Jesus died for our sins, rose again, and saved us through His blood, we now have access to the Father. (Ephesians 2:18, Hebrews 10:19 22)
- > BY THE POWER OF the Holy Spirit We are to pray "in the Spirit," relying and depending on the help and power of the Holy Spirit. He resides in us, guiding us in how to pray and what to pray. (Ephesians 6:18, Romans 8:26 27)

Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus, we have direct access to God the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is essential to living out our purpose of glorifying God and enjoying Him forever. As we spend time with Him in prayer, both listening and sharing our hearts and thoughts, we will grow in our love of Him and knowledge of His will.

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Pray with your own words, or try these:

Thank You for being a loving Father I can come to with my needs and requests. Thank You that Jesus made a way for me to come before You by saving me from my sins through His death and resurrection. Thank You for the gift of the Holy Spirit who helps guide me in prayer. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen!

Action Step: Read the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9 - 13. We will be studying this passage tomorrow to get a better understanding of how to pray. Spend some time in prayer, both talking to the Father and simply listening to what He wants to say to you.					
Questions You Want to Ask:					

DAY 12 - HOW DO I PRAY?

So how are we to pray? The disciples asked Jesus the same question, and He gave them this model for prayer, which we know as the Lord's Prayer:

"Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Matthew 6:9 - 13

This is not meant to be a repetitive prayer we recite without thinking. Rather, it is a guide for how to approach our Father in prayer.

PRAISE

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name." Matthew 6:9b

Jesus teaches us to begin our prayer with praise. To "hallow" means to "set apart, to deem as special." We start by praising God for who He is and thanking Him for all He has done. As we begin to praise and worship Him for who He is, we remember who it is we are praying to, the One who is both able and willing to provide everything we need and whose will is perfect.

SURRENDER

"Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10

Next, we are to pray for God's Kingdom to come and will to be done, on earth just as it is in heaven. This involves surrender of our own will and submission to our Father's will. Before we submit our needs and requests to Him, we must make sure our heart is aligned with His Kingdom-purpose. Remember, our purpose is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

SUPPLICATION

After we have praised our God and surrendered to His will, we are then ready to bring our needs and requests before Him. "Supplication" means "request or petition." There are three types of supplication found in the Lord's Prayer:

1.) PROVISION

"Give us this day our daily bread" Matthew 6:11

We are to ask and depend on God to meet our daily needs. Notice that Jesus teaches us to pray for our "daily" needs, not our weekly, monthly, or yearly needs. We are to come to Him each day, asking for the strength, wisdom, and resources we need to fulfill His purpose for us that day.

2.) CONFESSION

"and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." Matthew 6:12

A habitual lifestyle of sin hurts our walk with the Lord, brings destruction in our lives, and negatively affects those around us. When we sin and God convicts us of unholy attitudes or actions, we must be quick to confess those to the Lord, repent, or turn from them, and accept His forgiveness. Through daily confession, we keep "short accounts of sin" with God.

Not only are we to receive forgiveness for our sins, but we are also to grant forgiveness to others. If while we are in prayer, God brings to mind someone we have not forgiven, we must also confess that and make it right. We cannot allow bitterness to reside in our hearts, or it will negatively affect our walk as a disciple of Jesus.

3.) PROTECTION

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Matthew 6:13

As Christians, we face a spiritual battle every day. Satan wants to defeat us through temptation and fear. Jesus teaches us to pray for protection so we will have the confidence to face every situation that comes our way. We read in 1 John 4:4 that "...He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

The Lord's Prayer is a great model to follow as we talk with our Father. In addition to the Lord's Prayer, there are many other types of prayers modeled in Scripture. Prayer is meant to be a conversation with the Lord that transforms our thoughts and actions to be more like Christ.



Action Step: Prayer

Today's Action Step is Prayer! Take a few quiet minutes to talk to the Lord and to listen to what He is saying to you. You can use the Lord's Prayer as a guide, starting with praise, then surrendering to the Lord, and ending with supplication (your needs and requests). Remember, don't just say the Lord's Prayer as a mindless reading, but simply have a conversation with your Heavenly Father from your heart.

Questions You Want to Ask:						

DAY 13 - WHAT IS WORSHIP?

What does it mean to worship something? It is to place it above everything else, treating it as the highest priority and as most worthy of your devotion and time. The truth is that anything can be worshiped, and that we all worship something. If someone spends all their time and money working on, customizing and improving their vehicle, you could say they worship their car. The same can be true of careers, relationships, or even your reputation on social media platforms.

The word worship comes from "worth-ship," giving something its due respect and honor. While anything or anyone can be worshiped, God is the only one who is truly worthy of our worship. To worship God means to put Him in His rightful place, loving, serving, and praising Him above everything else.

WORSHIP FROM THE HEART

True worship originates from the heart. In a passage referred to as the Great Commandment, Jesus answers a lawyer who had asked Him what the greatest commandment in the Law is:

And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment."

Matthew 22:37 - 38

You can say and do all the right things, but your heart still be far from the Lord. Jesus explained this to a group of religious folks called the Pharisees who were *doing* all the right things, but in their hearts, they were not worshiping God.

"This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me; in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

Matthew 15:8 - 9

While worship will always express itself outwardly, it must begin inwardly, with a heart that loves and reveres God above everything else. When you love God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength, it will overflow in your daily life - in your actions, your attitudes, and your conversations.

EXPRESSIONS OF WORSHIP

Worship has been described as "an outward expression of an inward affection." There are many ways we can outwardly express our love for God. Singing is usually the first way people think of worshiping Jesus, but this is only one of many ways we can worship Him. We are to worship the Lord corporately (together with other believers at church) and privately (throughout the week in our time alone with the Lord).

Seeing a sunset, witnessing the birth of a child, or experiencing an answer to prayer can overflow into moments of praise and worship. Reading God's Word and obeying His commandments are other ways we can show our love for the Lord. Worship can happen in the guiet moments at the end of the day, when you are lying in bed reflecting on the goodness of God, thanking Him for His blessings. Let your heart overflow with worship of our great God!



Pray with your own words, or try these:

Father, I worship You because You are worthy to be praised above everything else in this world! You are holy, mighty, all-powerful, and all-knowing. You are ever-present, guiding me, comforting me, loving me, and providing the grace I need each day. Help me to love You with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, and all my strength. Reveal to me anything in my life that I have placed above you as an idol or object of worship. Help me to glorify Your name each and every day in my attitudes, actions, and words. Thank You, Father! In Jesus' name I pray, Amen!

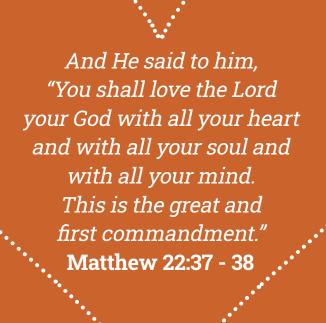
Action Step:

Write out your own prayer of worship to God. Praise Him for who He is. Thank Him for what He has done in your life. Tell Him how much you love Him. You may want to start by reading a Psalm such as Psalm 145, 146, or 23. You may also turn on your favorite worship song and sing it as a
prayer to the Lord. Let your worship come from your heart, not just your lips.
Questions You Want to Ask:
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DAY 14 - REVIEW & RESPOND

Take time today to catch up on any readings from this week and/or review this week's teaching. Pause to meditate on the verses and truths the Lord brings to your attention. Write down anything He reveals to you and write out your own prayer to the Lord today:

Prayer:	
Next Step: What one next step does the Lord want you to take today?	
Questions You Want to Ask:	



WEEK 3 - HOW TO GROW MY HEART FOR OTHERS

DAY 15 - MY NEW FAMILY

When you are saved, you become a part of God's family! You are now a child of God, with many brothers and sisters in Christ. A key part of your growth as a follower of Jesus is meeting regularly with your church family. Let's take a look at what it means to be a "child of God" in "God's family."

THE MOMENT I RECEIVE SALVATION, I AM BORN AGAIN!

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be **born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1:3

To be "born again" may sound like a strange concept at first, but it means that we have been "born from above," spiritually transformed. When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we receive new life and a new heart. As Jesus teaches in John 3:3 - 16, when we are "born again," we receive eternal life.

Being "born again" also means that we become children of God when we trust in Jesus for salvation.

But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. **John 1:12 - 13**

THE MOMENT I RECEIVE SALVATION, I AM ADOPTED INTO GOD'S FAMILY.

God decided in advance to **adopt** us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure. **Ephesians 1:5 (NLT)**

The moment you're born again, you automatically become a part of God's family, the universal family of all His believers in the whole world. However, you don't become a part of a specific, local church, like Highlands or any other church, until you choose to join. Though there are many individual "local families" of Christians in the world, we are all on the same team and united as one body for the glory of God.

Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all. **Ephesians 4:3 - 6 (NLT)**



Pray with your own words or try these:

Father, thank You for adopting me into Your family! Thank You that I have been born again, transformed and made new. Help me to make it a priority to meet regularly with my church family and to get to know my brothers and sisters in Christ. Help us to encourage one another to grow in our walk with You!

Action Step:

Questions You Want to Ask:

It is important to meet regularly with other brothers and sisters in Christ. Make a plan to attend a church gathering this week and introduce yourself to some new folks!

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DAY 16 - WHY WE NEED ONE ANOTHER

As we learned yesterday, the church is a family, and we belong to one another. God created us for community, and we need each other to effectively live as disciples that look like Jesus. This is why fellowship is so important. Fellowship comes from the Greek word, *koinonia*, and means shared participation within a community.

As we take time to fellowship with one another, our hearts will grow in love for one another, as well as for our Lord Jesus. Our love for one another is actually proof of our love for God.

"By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." **John 13:35**

THE IMPORTANCE OF FELLOWSHIP

As a member of God's family, it is important for us to gather together regularly to worship God and help each other grow. As we lift up the name of our Lord together in worship, our hearts are encouraged and reminded of the greatness of our God. As we hear the Word preached and pray with one another, we are inspired to continue following our Lord faithfully, being fruitful in every good work.

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And 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 10:24 – 25 (NLT)**

We see a beautiful example of *koinonia*, or fellowship, when the church was first birthed in the book of Acts.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Acts 2:42 - 47

Notice that the believers in the early church did not live out their faith in isolation, but rather, they followed Jesus in community with other Christians. God designed us to grow and learn in our faith together, to pray together, to serve one another, and to worship God together. We are better together!

THE BODY OF CHRIST

The Bible teaches that the church is the body of Christ. We are a body, not a business. We are an organism, not an organization. Jesus is the Head of the body.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 1 Corinthians 12:27

And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent. Colossians 1:18

The church is one body, made up of many members who belong to each other.

...so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Romans 12:5



Pray with your own words or try these:

Father, I am so grateful for my brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank You that You didn't create us to live out our faith alone. Please show me how I can grow in relationship and fellowship with other believers in our church body. Help me to make church attendance a priority. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen!

Action Step:

Continue to make attending church a priority in your weekly schedule. Find some other believers in the church you can study God's Word with, pray with, and encourage. Consider joining a small group or spiritual formation course to go deeper in God's Word with other Christians.

Questions You Want to Ask				

DAY 17 - HOW TO LOVE LIKE JESUS

How did Jesus relate to other people? How did He make people feel? And how did He use His words and actions to accomplish His purpose?

Let's check out an argument Jesus chose to break up. It happened between a few of His friends and followers:

An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by His side and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great."

Luke 9:46 - 48

The disciples had the wrong idea of how to achieve greatness as followers of Jesus. Maybe they thought the greatest was the one who performed the biggest miracles or knew the Bible best. But Jesus has a different definition of greatness.

Jesus said that the person who welcomes a child is the greatest. What? Why does that make someone great? Jesus explained, "He who is least among you all is the one who is great."

In other words, Jesus said that the greatest in God's eyes is the person who isn't seeking prestige, power, or a platform. Instead, they're seeking to humbly serve.

Jesus gave us the greatest example of love and humility.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. **Philippians 2:3 - 7**

That's why He tells us the way to be the greatest in the kingdom is to consistently do good and love one another without seeking attention or praise. Service levels playing fields. It helps us see one another as God sees us—all equals, made in His image. And it helps us see God—great and powerful and wonderful and deserving of all praise—as the One we serve as we serve others.

If we want to love like Jesus, we need to pursue His version of greatness. Jesus lived an others-focused life that led Him to hospitality, service, love, forgiveness, generosity, and sharing the hope of salvation.

So, what are you pursuing in life? The world invites us to be "great" by pursuing personal goals that lead us to influence and comfort. Jesus invites us to a different kind of greatness—one focused on raising others up and putting others' needs ahead of our own, all for His glory!



Pray with your own words or try these:

Father, thank You for Jesus who has given us the greatest example of love and humility. Help me to see others as You see them and to love them as You love them. Forgive me for pursuing greatness simply for myself and my "kingdom." Help me pursue greatness in Your Kingdom by serving others, sharing the good news of salvation, and bringing glory to Your name! In Jesus' name I pray, Amen!

Action Step:

My Person:

Prayerfully choose at least one person you can love like Jesus this week, putting their needs ahead of your own. Pray and ask the Lord to help you to see them and love them as He does!

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Questions You Want to Ask:		

DAY 18 - HOW TO SERVE LIKE JESUS

Throughout all of the Gospels (the New Testament books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), we are given many examples of Jesus serving others.

Jesus is brilliant at noticing needs. Dozens of stories in the Bible begin with Jesus walking somewhere and noticing someone in need. Sometimes their need was visible and physical. Other times it was under the surface or spiritual. Either way, Jesus saw the needs of people around Him. Once Jesus noticed a need. He would meet it!

Jesus explained in the book of Matthew that He did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a sacrifice to save all who would believe in Him!

"But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." Matthew 20:26b - 28

As followers of Jesus, we're called to follow His example by serving others. We serve others when we notice their needs and use what we have to meet those needs. That often looks like using our time, skills, and resources to help others.

Sometimes, we can't meet a need on our own, but that doesn't mean we can't help. Instead, it's an opportunity to ask for God's help to meet a need that's beyond us. Remember that as a follower of Jesus, you have the Holy Spirit living in you. One of the most powerful ways we can serve one another is by praying for each other.

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. **James 5:16**

On the night before His execution on the cross, Jesus gathered His disciples and washed their feet. Foot washing before meals was a common practice in that day and, as you might imagine, was a task for the lowest of servants. But Jesus, God in human form, chose to wash the feet of His flawed human followers.

Here's what He said after He washed their feet:

For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

John 13:15 - 17

Followers of Jesus seek to serve others. We notice needs and, with God's help, we meet them. So keep your eyes open today. Who around you might need an encouraging word, prayer for physical or spiritual healing, or help with a task? As you live an others-focused life, you'll experience greater closeness with God.

Action Step:

Be prepared to serve someone who is in need. Pray the following prayer, asking God to show you someone you can serve this week.



Pray with your own words or try these:

Father, help me serve others like Jesus. Open my eyes to the opportunities around me as I encounter others this week. Empower me by your Holy Spirit to meet their needs, either through an encouraging word, prayer, providing resources, or helping them with a task. I will follow You wherever You lead me! In Jesus' name I pray, Amen!

Questions You Want to Ask:		

DAY 19 - HOW TO FORGIVE

Forgiveness is a big deal to God. He loves to forgive. That's why, throughout the Bible, God generously offers forgiveness and second chances to all kinds of people.

As Christians, we know what it's like to be forgiven. We've all made mistakes and hurtful choices. But God offers us forgiveness through Jesus—not because we earned it, but because God loves to forgive.

It's no surprise that Jesus forgave a lot of people during His ministry. The Gospels tell us He forgave people's sins. At the end of Jesus' ministry, He was beaten, humiliated, and hung on a cross to die. Despite all of the pain He experienced, some of His last words were:

... "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."... Luke 23:34

That's how much Jesus loves to forgive. What does this mean for followers of Jesus? You've probably already guessed it: Followers of Jesus forgive others.

One of Jesus' followers, Peter, asked Jesus about forgiveness. He wondered how often he needed to forgive someone who kept messing up. Relatable question, right? Matthew 18 tells us:

Then Peter came up and said to Him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times." Matthew 18:21 - 22

Now, this doesn't mean Jesus wants us to count how many times we forgive someone and then cut them off after seventy-seven times. Instead, He's encouraging us to pursue forgiveness no matter what.

When someone does something to upset us, it can be hard to let that go and move on. Our usual reaction is to think of ourselves – my hurt, my loss. We seek to withhold forgiveness because we think they're wrong, and I'm right. However, we are to forgive as Christ forgave us.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. **Ephesians 4:32**

Forgiveness doesn't mean forgetting what was said or done, and it doesn't mean excusing what someone's done. Instead, it means letting go of the need to get back at them, to get even. Forgiveness is a declaration that you refuse to let anger, hurt, or betrayal control your mind and actions.

Forgiveness can also include boundaries. Sometimes we need to forgive and love people from a distance for the health of ourselves and others.

We are a forgiven people—so we forgive others. It's not always easy, and it might feel impossible sometimes, but it's one of the best ways we can be like our forgiving God. If we are willing to obey our Lord's command to forgive, He will empower us through His Spirit to do so.



Pray with your own words or try these:

Heavenly Father, thank You for forgiving me, even when I don't deserve it. Will You show me someone I need to forgive and give me the strength to forgive like You? In Jesus' name, Amen.

Action Step: If the Lord has revealed to you someone who you haven't forgiven, write out a prayer below				
expressing your forgiveness. If appropriate, reach out to the person to let them know you forgive hem and to seek reconciliation.				
Questions You Want to Ask:				

DAY 20 - HOW TO BE GENEROUS

Generosity is returning part of what God has given to us – our time, talent, and resources. Everything we have comes from God. He owns it all; we are simply the managers.

For "the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." 1 Corinthians 10:26 (NLT)

Giving is an act of worship, reflecting our trust in God to provide all we need and our gratitude for all He has given us. When we give cheerfully and sacrificially of our resources, time, and talent, God is glorified and pleased with our gift. Paul described the gifts given to him by the Philippians in this way:

...They are a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable and pleasing to God. Philippians 4:18b (NLT)

Our time, gifts, and talents: We each have gifts and talents that were given to us to be used to serve in the Kingdom of God. Our talents are what we are naturally good at doing, our strengths. Spiritual gifts are special abilities given to followers of Jesus to meet the needs of others. Giving of our time, the most precious gift we have, is also a form of generosity.

Our resources: Often, our greatest struggle in our walk with Christ is our finances. All of our lives revolve around money – making it, spending it, giving it, sharing it. Putting God first in our finances is the only time we're given permission to "test" what's written in the Bible.

"Would anyone rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings...Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and put Me to the test now in this," says the Lord of armies, "if I do not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows." Malachi 3:8, 10 (NASB)

The word "tithe" means a tenth. Scripture teaches us that we are to give the first tenth, or ten percent, of our income to the Lord. Tithing the first part of our income expresses our trust in God with everything we have, including our finances.

An offering is anything we give to the Lord above our tithe. This could be to the church, a charity, or to someone in need. We should always be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit as we look for opportunities to give an offering beyond our tithe, with a cheerful heart. He may burden your heart for a special need or a specific person. It is always more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35)!

God doesn't need anything we have; His desire is to see that we are following His commands by putting Him first and loving our neighbor as ourselves. As we give generously to the Lord, His church, and others in need, we live out our purpose of glorifying God and enjoying Him forever.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. 1 Timothy 6:18 - 19

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Luke 12:34



Pray with your own words or try these:

Father, thank You that everything I have comes from You! Thank You for the spiritual gifts and talents You have given me. Thank You for providing me with the material and financial resources I need to live life each day. Help me to put You first in my finances. Show me opportunities where I can share my time, resources, and talent with others and bring You glory!

Action Step:

Prayerfully consider how God is leading you to be generous with your resources, time and/or talents this week. Write down what He has impressed on your heart. Be ready as He leads you.	
Questions You Want to Ask:	

DAY 21 - HOW TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT JESUS

We are called to join God as He builds His kingdom by sharing the hope of the gospel and making disciples. In a passage referred to as the Great Commission, Jesus gives the following command:

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Matthew 28:19 – 20a (NIV)

Jesus' desire was for everyone to know the Father, the One who had sent Him. As Jesus explains in John 3:16 (NKJV), a verse most everyone knows, "...God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." We are to share this hope, the gospel of Jesus, in our local communities, our region, and our world.

The greatest need of every man, woman, boy, and girl in this world is to have their sins forgiven so they can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and live with Him forever. We have the privilege of sharing this amazing hope with those who don't know Jesus.

Many folks don't share their faith with others, either because they don't know how or they expect the pastor to do so. However, Jesus commands ALL of us to make disciples in His Kingdom. We must always be ready to share a reason for the hope that lies within us with those around us.

But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

It is important to know the gospel as taught in Scripture in order to be able to share it with those who are searching for the truth. You may have heard this word before, but what exactly is the gospel? The Greek word for "gospel," *euaggélion*, literally means "God's good news." The gospel is clearly laid out for us by Paul in the book of 1 Corinthians.

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

1 Corinthians 15:1 - 5

The gospel is the good news that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose from the grave on the third day. As we learned in Week 1, this is the hope of our salvation. Only through Jesus' death and resurrection can we be saved.

A great tool for sharing the gospel with others is using the outline we studied together on Day 1 in Romans. The four "P" words (Problem, Penalty, Provision, & Pardon) are easy to remember and explain to those who don't know Jesus, along with the Scripture verses that go with each of them.

It is also helpful to have your own personal story of salvation ready to share as a witness to those who are curious about your faith and what is different about you.

Using both of these tools, the gospel as presented on Day 1 and your own personal testimony of salvation, you will be able to tell others about the love of Jesus in hopes that they too will come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior!

Action Step:

To be able to tell your story with simplicity, sincerity and clarity, you should write it down and practice sharing it with a group of friends. Here's a simple outline you can follow:

- **1. What my life was like before I met Jesus** (What was life like apart from God? Be brief, don't dwell on the past.)
- **2. When I accepted Jesus as my Savior** (This is a great place to include the gospel. You may want to use the salvation plan we talked about on Day 1 to describe how you recognized you were a sinner and received forgiveness of sins through Christ's death on the cross. Be specific.)
- **3. What my life is like now** (How has Jesus transformed your life for the better?) NOTE: Use this link for a tool to help you write it out: https://hf.church/story

Pray with your own words or try these:

Father, thank You again for saving me from my sins! Thank You for the beautiful story of the gospel, that Jesus came into this world to die on the cross and rise from the grave so we could be saved and have a relationship with You! Give me an opportunity to share the gospel and my story with someone who doesn't know You this week. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen!

Questions Yo	ou Want to Ask:			

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

You're almost finished reading this book, but your journey of following Jesus is just beginning. We're so proud of you for going through this study and growing in your understanding of what it means to be saved and follow Jesus.

Today, we'd like to share these words from an early Jesus follower named Paul:

And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. **Philippians 1:6**

We are so excited that you have given your heart to Jesus and received the free gift of salvation. We are confident that God has started a good work in you, and that He will continue His work of transformation for the rest of your life until you meet Him face to face!

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations on finishing this booklet! We hope it gave you some clarity, confidence, and direction as a Jesus follower.

So, what now? The best thing you can do now is continue taking the daily steps you've been reading about in this book: reading your Bible, praying, worshiping God, regularly gathering with other believers at church, loving, serving, and forgiving others, being generous, and sharing the love of Jesus with those who don't know Him.

We hope you'll read through these common steps and talk with your Campus Pastor or a ministry leader about what's next for you:

- Getting baptized
- Finding a mentor
- Taking The Path Discipleship Study
- Joining a small group
- Attending a spiritual formation course
- Sharing your decision to follow Jesus with a friend or family member
- Starting to serve in a ministry
- Seeking counseling
- Inviting someone to church
- Sharing your faith with others
- Giving back to your church and community
- Or some other step God's Spirit is leading you to take.

Once again, congratulations on finishing this booklet! It's yours to keep or share with someone who might find it valuable.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

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