



**STRATEGIC
DISCIPLESHIP**
TRAINING RESOURCES

PHASE 1

STUDENT MANUAL

by Robert Laidlaw

StrategicDiscipleship.com

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STUDENT NOTES

Historically, a disciple was a person who studied under a master teacher to learn both his knowledge and approach to life, with the goal of passing that knowledge and lifestyle on to others. As disciples of Jesus, we long to understand everything Jesus taught, live by it, and teach others to do the same. Discipleship ALWAYS has the intent of passing what you have learned on to others.

Jesus was very clear his intention was that we would spread his teaching throughout the world so that people of all nations could enter a relationship with him and experience his forgiveness and life. So discipleship is not an accidental by-product of going to church; discipleship is to be strategic and intentional, with a kingdom-impacting goal in mind.

God has called others to disciple you, but that does not negate your personal responsibility for your growth. No teacher can make a student grow spiritually. The student needs to assume responsibility to do the hard work of learning, developing disciplines, and stepping out in faith in ministry and missional experiences.

To grow as a disciple, four areas need to be developed:

- 1) Truths you need to understand and embrace
- 2) Disciplines you will need to embed
- 3) Ministry responsibility to a local church family
- 4) Missional focus, both locally and globally

This curriculum merely raises the “issues” we believe are beneficial to address in the discipleship journey. It is your job to work on practical expressions of your growth through developing disciplines, experimenting with various ministries, and finding ways to share your faith with those in your spheres of influence.

The challenge of discipleship is learning to die to self and allowing Christ to live in and through us. This means putting an end to our expectations and priorities and learning to allow his agenda to direct our days. Living by faith takes on a whole new understanding as we follow the Spirit’s leading, not knowing the outcomes or how he will provide. We follow anyway because we have declared Jesus is Lord.

The outflow of the Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered life is an incredible sense of joy, peace, and purpose as we partner with Jesus in the adventure of reconciling the world to him. There is no life like it.

Let the adventure begin!

SESSION 1: WHO IS GOD: PART A

If God exists, then what do you think he is like? What is the first characteristic that enters your mind? Why do you think that attribute came to your mind first?

Of all of God's attributes, which one do you think is the most significant in that it will influence all the others?

How can wrath and love work together?
They must be determined by some other overriding factor.

Isaiah 6:1-5 (NLT)

¹ It was in the year King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. ² Attending him were mighty seraphim, each having six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³ They were calling out to each other, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Heaven's Armies! The whole earth is filled with his glory!" ⁴ Their voices shook the Temple to its foundations, and the entire building was filled with smoke. ⁵ Then I said, "It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the LORD of Heaven's Armies."

What characteristic do the seraphim see as being all significant? Why?

What does the word "holy" mean?

Holiness consists of two concepts:

Matthew 5:48 (NLT)

But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Why do you think Isaiah responds the way he does in verse 5?

Isaiah became painfully aware of his sinfulness as he stood before the Holy God. How would you define sin?

Hebrews 12:14 (NLT)

Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord.

How does understanding the holiness of God affect how you see your current relationship with God?

SUMMARY:

What are the positive aspects of God's holiness?

Have there been times when you have questioned the goodness/ holiness of God?

What is the negative side of God's holiness with regard to us?

What are some examples of times we tend to question the goodness or holiness of God?

Is there any concept from this study that might affect your perspective about God or self?

SESSION 2: WHO IS GOD: PART B

Last week we discussed that God is Holy, meaning he is morally pure and completely set apart from creation. When we stand before his holiness, we become shamefully aware that we are sinful and finite (limited by our humanity). Yet, it is also comforting to know that God can never do anything wrong or evil.

Are there any questions with regard to God's holiness that have been raised in your mind as a result of last week's study?

We have discussed God's holiness, but there are also a few other characteristics that we want to look at to help us better understand our relationship with him.

1) God is _____

Psalm 9:8 (ESV)

....and he judges the world with righteousness; he judges the peoples with uprightness.

What does it mean to say God is just?

If God is just, then what are the implications for us with regard to our sin?

What do you think is a proper response to sin from God's perspective?

Isaiah 59:2 (NLT)

It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.

Romans 6:23 (NLT)

For the wages of sin is death,

SUMMARY:

Review of the Implications:

God is HOLY

Good News:

Bad News:

God is JUST

Good News:

Bad News:

What is your reaction to these statements?

Fortunately, there are other characteristics of God that come into play that bring us hope. God is not merely HOLY and JUST; he is also LOVE.

2) God is _____

How is God's love different from our love?

What is God's love based on if it is not based on our performance?

Romans 5:8 (NLT)

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

1 John 4:8 (NLT)

But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

What sort of things might I do that would cause God to love me less?

What can I do to ensure God will continue to love me or to love me more?

How do you feel about the fact that you can't increase or diminish God's love for you?

There is one more characteristic of God we want to touch on quickly.

3) God is _____

Daniel 4:34-35 (NLT)

³⁴ "After this time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven. My sanity returned, and I praised and worshiped the Most High and honored the one who lives forever. His rule is everlasting, and his kingdom is eternal. ³⁵ All the people of the earth are nothing compared to him. He does as he pleases among the angels of heaven and among the people of the earth. No one can stop him or say to him, 'What do you mean by doing these things?'"

What do we mean when we say God is sovereign?

In what ways might it bother us to confess that "God is sovereign"?

If God is truly sovereign and in control, how might that affect how you approach this next week?

We may never understand why God does things the way he does, but because God is sovereign, he can ensure righteousness prevails.

Romans 8:28 (NLT)

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Does this passage comfort you in any way? If so, how?

One of the significant challenges to belief in God is the question, “If God exists, why does he not do something about all the evil in the world?” Every life tension we experience can cause us to challenge or question God’s character.

Appearance:

- God seems incapable of stopping evil
- God seems to permit evil
- God seems unwilling to judge evil
- God seems indifferent to people’s suffering

Character Challenged:

- His sovereignty**
- His holiness**
- His justice**
- His love**

Which of God’s attributes do you struggle with the most?

This series aims to show you that God does have a plan; he is working it out, and you are a part of it. God is approaching things the way he does because he is holy, just, loving, and sovereign. As you grow in a deeper understanding of God, you will begin to see more clearly how he is at work in the world and your life.

SESSION 3: WHO ARE WE

Are there any questions concerning God's holiness, justice, love, or sovereignty that have been raised in your mind as a result of last week's study?

If God is complete in every way, perfect in every way, why do you think he would choose to create people like us? What was his motivation?

God created us for two significant purposes. Read the scripture below to discover the first one.

Matthew 22:37-40 (ESV)

³⁷ 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. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

Purpose 1: TO BE IN _____

Do you tend to think God will judge you based on how you serve him, or how you love him?

Why do you think loving God is the greatest commandment?

What then, from God's perspective, is the greatest evil we could ever commit?

How is "not loving God" viler than murder, rape, genocide, etc.?

In the following verse, what is the basis for not being accepted into Heaven?

Matthew 7:22-23 (NLT)

²² On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.' ²³ But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.'

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU DO – IT'S WHO YOU KNOW!

What point are the following verses trying to stress?

Psalm 37:4 (NLT)

Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desires.

Romans 5:8 (NLT)

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT)

For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

How do you feel when you hear how much God loves you and only wants the best for you?

How could trusting these verses make a practical difference in your life?

What does the following verse indicate about our second purpose?

Genesis 1:26-28 (NLT)

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like ourselves. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground."²⁷ So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸ Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."

Purpose 2: _____

The very first statement about mankind in the Bible is that we were made in the "image and likeness" of God. What do you think that means?

Why does God say in the Ten Commandments that we are not to make an image of him?

Exodus 20:4 (NLT)

You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea.

**“As no coin is so small that it cannot bear the image of the emperor,
so no man is so humble that he cannot bear God’s image...”**

Soren Kierkegaard writing on Radical Discipleship

What do you think are some implications of having been given this incredible responsibility?

How would the world change if everyone treated each other as the image of God?

How might your relationships at home and work change if you took this approach?

Summary: As God’s Image we are his Representatives on earth, caring for creation on his behalf.

God created us for two purposes:

- a) To enjoy **RELATIONSHIP** with him and his family
- b) To **REPRESENT** him in this world

How might understanding these purposes make a practical difference in how we live our lives this next week?

FOUNDATIONS

SESSION 4: WHO IS JESUS: PART A

All of Christianity hinges on the one question, “Who is Jesus?”

It is the most vital question we can ever answer in life because the implications, either way, are simply staggering. Jesus actually raised this very question for all those who thought they would follow him.

Matthew 16:13-15 (NLT)

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴ “Well,” they replied, “some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets.” ¹⁵ Then he asked them, “Who do you say I am?”

If Jesus asked you that question, how do you think you would respond?

When trying to understand who Jesus is, the best place to start is to look at what he said about himself.

1) JESUS’ CLAIMS ABOUT HIMSELF

Read the following statements about Jesus from the Bible and discuss their importance and the implications regarding who he was.

John 8:58-59 (NLT)

⁵⁸ Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I AM!” ⁵⁹ At that point they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus was hidden from them and left the Temple.

**Did the Jews pick up stones to kill Jesus simply because he used bad grammar?
What really motivated this violent reaction to his words?**

Exodus 3:14 (NLT)

God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you.”

What is the significance of the words “I Am”?

John 10:27-33 (NLT)

²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, ²⁹ for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. ³⁰ The Father and I are one."

³¹ Once again the people picked up stones to kill him.

³² Jesus said, "At my Father's direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?" ³³ They replied, "We're stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God."

Which of the statements Jesus made led the Jews to believe he was claiming to be God?

Revelation 21:6-7 (NLT)

⁶ And he also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. ⁷ All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.

What insights does this passage give regarding the identity of the speaker?

The same person continues to speak:

Revelation 22:13-16 (NLT)

¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." ¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life. ¹⁵ Outside the city are the dogs—the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idol worshipers, and all who love to live a lie. ¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this message for the churches. I am both the source of David and the heir to his throne. I am the bright morning star."

What new insights does this passage give with regard to the identity of the speaker?

Regardless of what you have ever thought about Jesus, what does Jesus appear to have believed about his own identity?

If Jesus is speaking the truth about himself in each of these passages, what are some implications for us?

2) OTHERS' CLAIMS ABOUT JESUS

John 1:1-2 (NLT)

¹ In the beginning the Word [Jesus] already existed. The Word [Jesus] was with God, and the Word [Jesus] was God. ² He existed in the beginning with God.

(See John 1:14 to see that this is referring to Jesus)

John 1:14 (ESV)

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 20:26-28 (NLT)

²⁶ Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. "Peace be with you," he said. ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!"

²⁸ "My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed.

Isaiah 9:6 (NLT)

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. And the government will rest on his shoulders. These will be his royal titles: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Jesus is called _____

Genesis 1:1 (NLT)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

John 1:3 (NLT)

God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him.

Colossians 1:16 (NLT)

...for through him [Jesus] God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.

Hebrews 1:2 (NLT)

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 [Jesus] he created the universe.

Jesus is the _____

Is this a new insight and understanding concerning the person of Jesus for any of you?

How do these verses change the way we view the person of Jesus?

Matthew 4:10 (NLT)

“Get out of here, Satan,” Jesus told him. “For the Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.’”

Who is allowed to receive worship and why?

Hebrews 1:6 (NLT)

And then, when he presented his honored Son to the world, God said, “Let all the angels of God worship him.”

Revelation 5:11-13 (NLT)

¹¹ Then I looked again, and I heard the voices of thousands and millions of angels around the throne and of the living beings and the elders. ¹² And they sang in a mighty chorus: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered— to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.” ¹³ And then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea. They sang: “Blessing and honor and glory and power belong to the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever.”

Jesus receives _____

Is there any doubt, at least from the Bible’s perspective, that Jesus is God in human form?

What do you think about this perspective? Is it new to you? Is it difficult to believe?

If Jesus truly is God who took on human form and came to earth, what are some of the implications for us?

Personal Study: Other relevant passages to look up on your own.

Authority to forgive Mark 2:1-12

Jesus’ Glory John 12:41, Matthew 17:2

The Good Shepherd John 10:14 (see Psalm 23)

Meets Spiritual Needs John 14:1, John 17:3, Acts 4:12, John 14:6-11, Matthew 11:25-27

SESSION 5: WHO IS JESUS: PART B

Any questions resulting from the last study's discussion about the deity of Jesus?

THE HUMANITY OF JESUS

If Jesus was God in human form, wouldn't that give him an unfair advantage over all the rest of us? Can we really identify with Jesus? Can Jesus really identify with us?

Hebrews 4:15-16 (NLT)

¹⁵ This High Priest of ours [Jesus] understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. 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.

What are all the “humanly” challenges Jesus would have faced that we all face?

How might the above passage give us comfort?

How might this passage help us in times of testing and temptation?

How might this understanding of Jesus encourage us to support others when they are struggling, instead of condemning them?

Philippians 2:5-7 (NLT)

⁵You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. ⁶Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. ⁷Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.

What “divine privileges” did Jesus give up by becoming a man?

List all the things you can think of Jesus doing on earth that we would normally have credited simply to the fact that he is God.

Read the following verses:

Matthew 4:1 (NLT)

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil.

Matthew 12:28 (NLT)

But if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you.

Luke 4:18 (NLT)

“The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free,

What was the power and the drive behind all that Jesus did?

If Jesus, through his humanity, chose to limit his divine attributes and rely on “his” Spirit for all he did, then what are the implications for us if we have his same Spirit within us?

John 14:12 (NLT)

“The truth is, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.

What are the “greater works” we are told we will do?

In what ways does this excite you to know God can similarly work in you as you develop an intimate relationship with him?

Back to Philippians 2

Philippians 2:5-7 (NLT)

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 gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.

Why do we find it so difficult to give up our positions of respect and authority?

What perspective did Jesus have that freed him to humble himself in such a way?

If we were truly secure in our identity as the “Image of God”, how would that change how we approach life?

How might it affect how we serve instead of looking to be served?

Jesus is very complex. He is both fully God and fully man. What sort of other questions might this raise for you?

Understanding the full person of Jesus, how might that affect your relationship with him moving forward?

FOUNDATIONS

SESSION 6: WHY DID JESUS COME

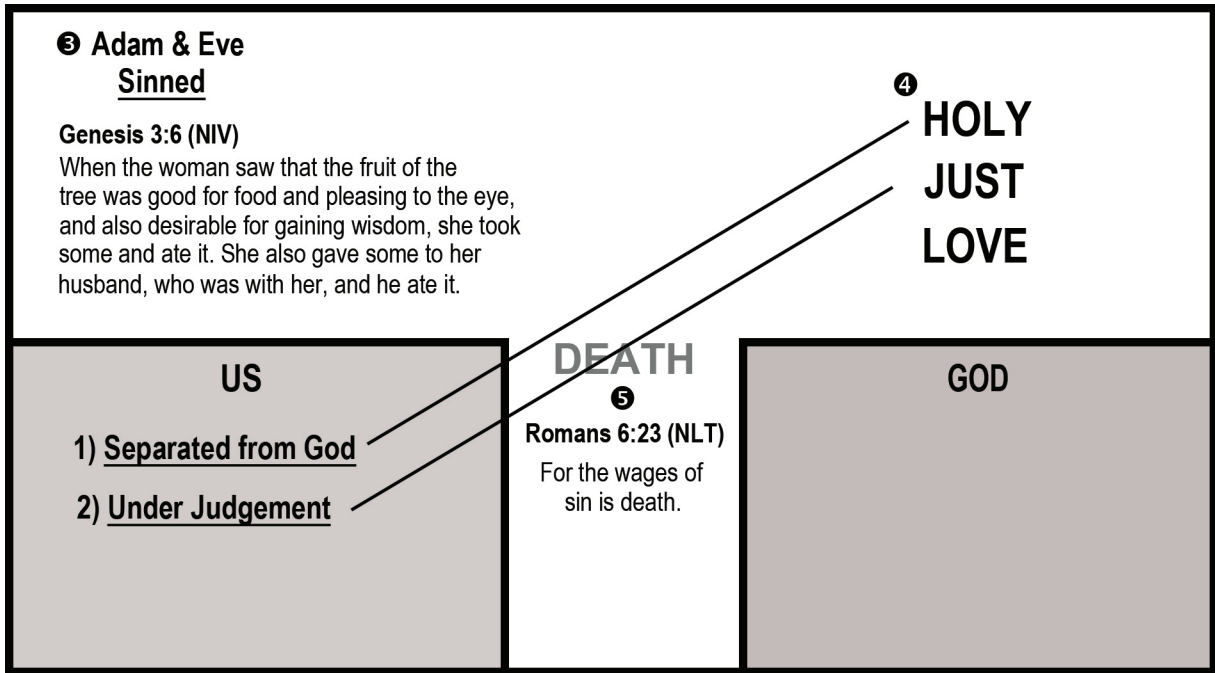
The goal of this study is to put the past five studies together in such a way that they create a big picture of what God has done to bring us back to relationship with himself.

<p>We were created:</p> <p><u>Holy</u> for <u>Relationship with God</u> to <u>Represent God</u></p>	<p>God is:</p> <p><u>HOLY</u> <u>JUST</u> <u>LOVE</u></p>

1 WHO GOD IS:

2 WE WERE CREATED:

FOUNDATIONS



3 ADAM & EVE: _____

Genesis 2:16-17 (NLT)

¹⁶ But the LORD God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—
¹⁷except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

Genesis 3:6 (NLT)

The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too.

4 BECAUSE GOD IS...

1) **HOLY:** we are now _____

Isaiah 59:2 (NLT)

But there is a problem—your sins have cut you off from God. Because of your sin, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.

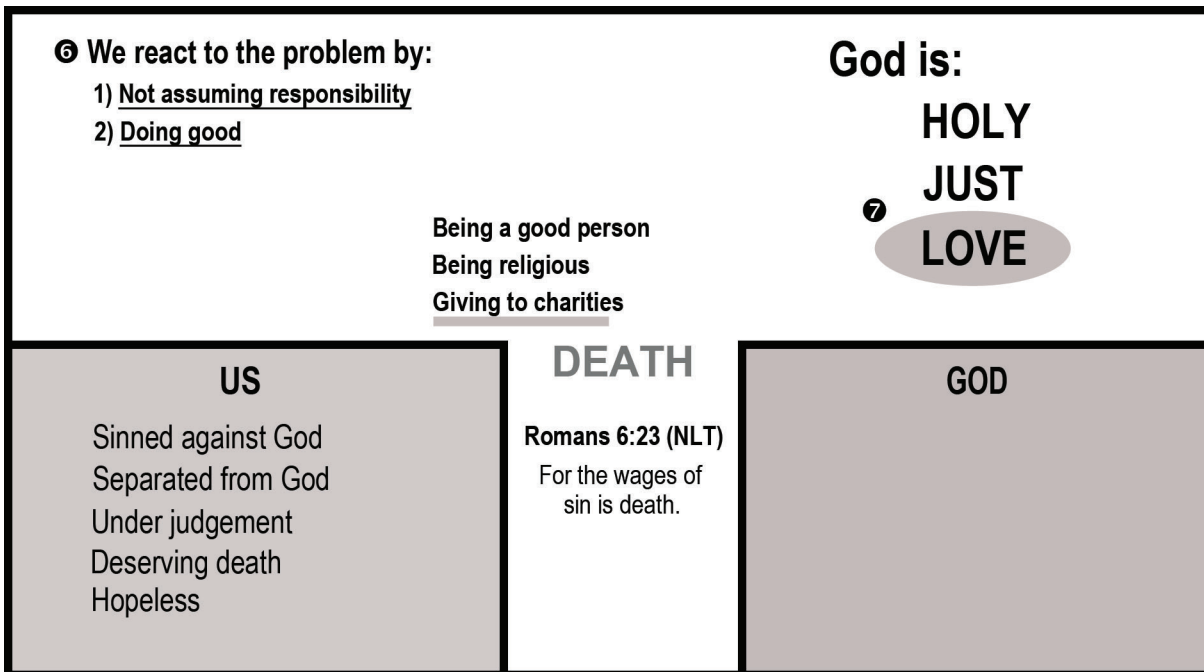
2) **JUST:** we are _____

Romans 2:5 (NLT)

But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

5 THE CONSEQUENCE: _____

Romans 6:23 (NLT) *For the wages of sin is death*



6 WE REACT TO THE PROBLEM BY:

a) _____

Genesis 3:12 (NLT)

The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it."

God's response:

1 John 1:8 (NLT)

If we say we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth.

b) _____

“If only my good deeds outweigh my bad ones, then I’m safe.”

God’s response:

Isaiah 64:6 (NLT)

We are all infected and impure with sin. When we proudly display our righteous deeds, we find they are but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall. And our sins, like the wind, sweep us away.

Romans 3:23 (NLT) *For all have sinned; all fall short of God’s glorious standard.*

Extra support verses

Romans 3:10-12 (NLT)

¹⁰ *As the Scriptures say, “No one is good—not even one. ¹¹ No one has real understanding; no one is seeking God. ¹² All have turned away from God; all have gone wrong. No one does good, not even one.”*

Matthew 7:22-23 (NIV)

²² *Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’*

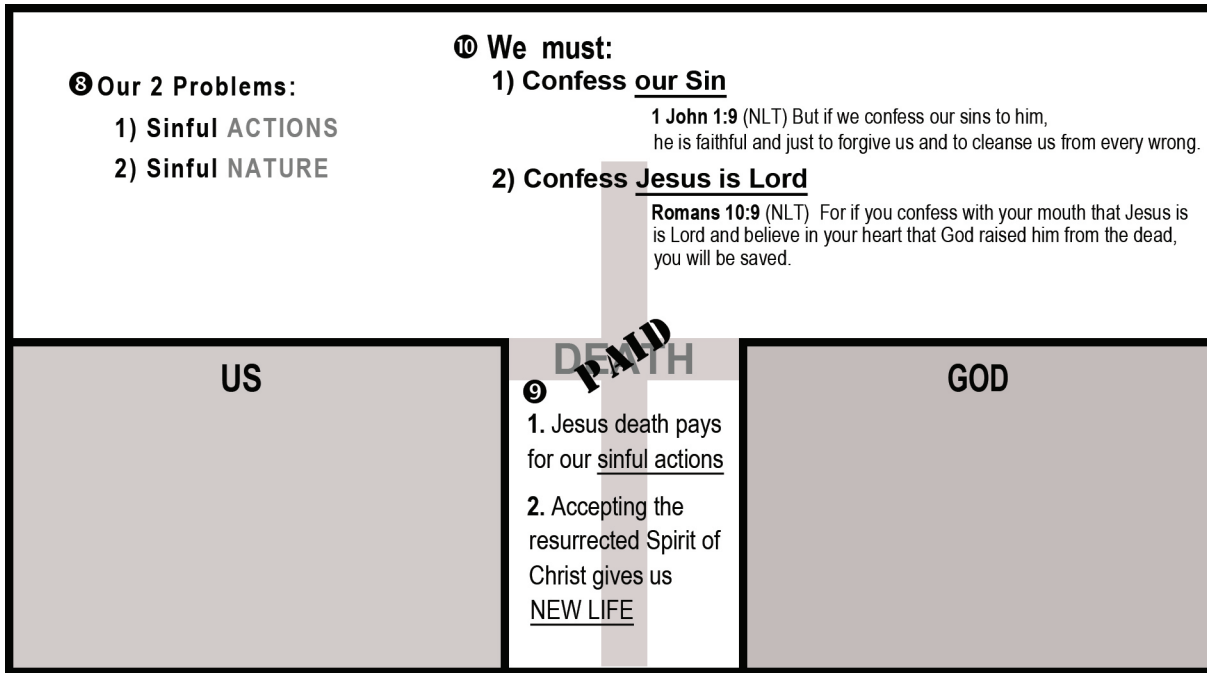
Romans 3:20 (NIV)

Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

We are entirely _____

This is the BAD NEWS...BUT

7 **GOD IS** _____



⑧ OUR TWO PROBLEMS:

⑨ GOD'S SOLUTION: _____

BY COMING TO EARTH, JESUS DEALS WITH OUR 2 PROBLEMS

1) JESUS' DEATH PAYS FOR OUR _____

PROBLEM 1 SOLVED

Romans 8:1-4 (NLT)

¹ So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ² And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. 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. ⁴ He 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.

2) ACCEPTING THE RESURRECTED SPIRIT OF CHRIST GIVES US

PROBLEM 2 SOLVED**2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)**

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

Romans 5:1 (NLT)

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (NLT)

⁵¹ But let me tell you a wonderful secret God has revealed to us. Not all of us will die, but we will all be transformed. ⁵² It will happen in a moment, in the blinking of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, the Christians who have died will be raised with transformed bodies. And then we who are living will be transformed so that we will never die.

Now that Christ has died on the cross to pay the consequence for our sin – does that mean everyone goes to heaven?

Revelation 20:15 (NLT)

And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

What does one have to do to cross over to God, to get their name written in the Book of Life?

⑩ WE MUST

CONFESS _____

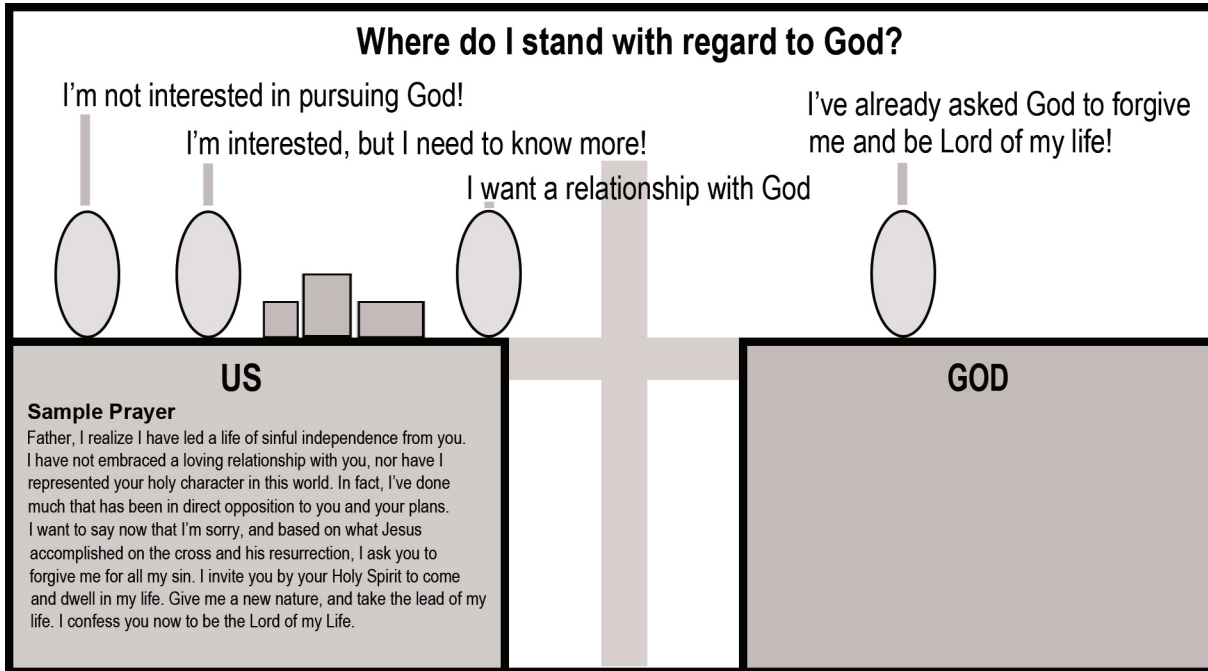
1 John 1:9 (NLT)

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong.

CONFESS _____

Romans 10:9 (NLT)

For 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.



Where do you place yourself on this diagram?

To the far left saying – “I’M NOT INTERESTED IN PURSUING GOD”

In the middle of the left side saying “I’M INTERESTED, BUT I NEED TO KNOW MORE”

On the edge saying, “I WANT TO CROSS OVER, I SIMPLY HAVEN’T DONE IT YET”

Right side – “I’ve already asked God to forgive me and be Lord of my life”

FOUNDATIONS

SAMPLE PRAYER

“Father, I realize I have led a life of sinful independence from you. I have not embraced a loving relationship with you, nor have I represented your holy character in this world. In fact, I’ve done much that has been in direct opposition to you and your plans. I want to say now that I’m sorry and based on what Jesus accomplished on the cross and his resurrection, I ask that you forgive me for all my sin. I invite you by your Holy Spirit to come and dwell in my life. Please give me a new nature and take the lead in my life. I confess you now to be Lord of my life. In the name of Jesus, I pray this. Amen”

When someone prays that prayer – all heaven stops what it is doing and celebrates that person.

Luke 15:10 (NLT)

In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels when even one sinner repents.

SESSION 7: THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS

Review: Everyone explain the Bridge to Life illustration with someone in the room.

What do you think it means to declare Jesus as Lord?

Matthew 19:16 (NLT)

Someone came to Jesus with this question: “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?”

If someone asked you this question, how would you answer?

Matthew 19:17-18 (NLT)

¹⁷ “Why ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. But to answer your question—if you want to receive eternal life, keep the commandments.” ¹⁸ “Which ones?” the man asked.

Why do you think Jesus answered this man’s question by saying, “There is only One who is good”?

Psalm 14:3 (NLT)

But no, all have turned away; all have become corrupt. No one does good, not a single one!

Matthew 19:18-22 (NLT)

¹⁹ And Jesus replied: “You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. ¹⁹ Honor your father and mother. Love your neighbor as yourself.”

²⁰ “I’ve obeyed all these commandments,” the young man replied. “What else must I do?” ²¹ Jesus told him, “If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” ²² But when the young man heard this, he went away very sad, for he had many possessions.

Which commands did Jesus leave out?

TEN COMMANDMENTS ON FINGERS:

1: One God _____

Hold one finger up.

2: Scissors _____

Two fingers held like scissors cutting paper.

3: W _____

Three fingers forming a W.

Don't take the Lord's name in vain - more than swearing
Don't claim to be God's child and live contrary to that name

4: Family going to church _____

Four fingers representing Dad, Mom & 2 kids going to church.

5: Hand salute _____

Five fingers together to make a salute.

6: Finger stabbing hand _____

One open hand with fingers together being stabbed by one finger of the other hand.

7: Two leaving the other five at a party _____

Five fingers in one hand, two in the other. The two leave to be by themselves.

8: Hide thumbs _____

Four fingers on each hand, with thumbs hidden. In some countries if you steal they cut off your thumbs. In other countries they put you behind bars (the 8 fingers looking like bars).

9: Pinocchio's nose grew _____

Eight fingers with thumbs hidden. As Pinocchio lied his nose grew. Gradually extend one thumb out to mimic the growing nose.

10: Hands on top of fence _____

Place all ten fingers and thumbs as if they are holding on top of a fence and you look over into your neighbor's yard.

The first four commands relate to: _____

The last six commands relate to: _____

Which commands did Jesus leave out of his list?

Why do you think Jesus left out these specific commands?

Why does Jesus respond by telling him to give away everything he has to the poor and follow him?

Why did the young man walk away sad?

Does this mean we need to give away all our money to the poor in order to go to heaven?

What might be some things we might be tempted to value more than God?

What might Jesus want to say to us in each of those examples?

If the man had been told merely to pray a prayer, asking for forgiveness for his sins, he would have likely done that and then walked away, feeling he was now secure and going to heaven. Would his assumption have been correct?

How can we be sure we trust Jesus as Lord?

Luke 6:46 (NLT)

So why do you keep calling me 'Lord, Lord!' when you don't do what I say?

Read the following scenarios and consider how Jesus challenges their perception of his Lordship.

Matthew 8:19-20 (NLT)

¹⁹ Then one of the teachers of religious law said to him, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.”²⁰ But Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens to live in, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place even to lay his head.”

Why do you think the teacher might have been motivated to follow Jesus?

How might Jesus’ response have made him think otherwise?

What are some of the costs we might face if we truly choose to call Jesus Lord?

Matthew 8:21-22 (NLT)

²¹ Another of his disciples said, “Lord, first let me return home and bury my father.”²² But Jesus told him, “Follow me now. Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead.”

What would have been so wrong with Jesus letting the man go and bury his father?

Matthew 10:32-39 (NLT)

³² “Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.”³³ But everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven.³⁴ “Don’t imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace, but a sword.”³⁵ “I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”³⁶ “Your enemies will be right in your own household!”³⁷ “If you love your father or mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of being mine.”³⁸ “If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine.”³⁹ “If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.”

Which phrases in this passage do you find hard to accept?

What point is Jesus stressing in the above passage?

Have any of you had to pay a price in your relationships because you chose to follow Jesus?

What does Jesus mean when he says to pick up your cross and follow him?

Why do we find it hard to surrender our lives to the rule of Jesus?

Two common reasons:

1) _____

2) _____

In all of the above scriptures, the question is raised, “What role will Jesus play in your life?”

To declare Jesus is Lord is to say that he is now the Owner of your life; he can do with it whatever he wishes. It is HIS! To declare Jesus is Lord requires a huge step of faith, trusting that he is HOLY, JUST and that he LOVES you fully.

If Jesus is truly Lord of your life, what aspects of your life may need to change this week?

FOUNDATIONS

SESSION 8: UNDERSTANDING BAPTISM

In the New Testament, the idea of baptism is introduced by John the Baptist, developed by Jesus, and later by the Apostle Paul. Read the following verses to determine what each explained about baptism.

What do you think is the whole meaning behind baptism?

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Mark 1:4-5 (NLT)

⁴ This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had turned to God to receive forgiveness for their sins. ⁵ All of Judea, including all the people of Jerusalem, went out to see and hear John. And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

What was the focus of John's baptism?

What do you think being baptized in water symbolized for all these people?

Focus: _____

Symbolism: _____

JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 3:13-17 (NLT)

¹³ Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to talk him out of it. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?"

¹⁵ But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires." So John agreed to baptize him. ¹⁶ After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy."

Obviously, Jesus, being perfect, didn't need to repent of any sin, so why do you think he might have chosen to get baptized?

1) What statement would Jesus' baptism have made regarding John's ministry and message?

2) Why did Jesus say he needed to do this to "fulfill all righteousness"?

3) Why would God the Father say he was pleased with his Son at this point?

Luke 22:42 (NLT)

"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

4) In what stage of Jesus' ministry did his baptism take place?

JESUS BUILDS ON THE SYMBOLISM

Mark 10:38-39 (NLT)

³⁸ But Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism of suffering I must be baptized with?"³⁹ "Oh yes," they replied, "we are able!" Then Jesus told them, "You will indeed drink from my bitter cup and be baptized with my baptism of suffering."

Luke 12:50 (NLT)

I have a terrible baptism of suffering ahead of me, and I am under a heavy burden until it is accomplished.

Jesus adds a deeper symbolism to baptism.

What do you think he is really referring to when he talks about the baptism he'll have to undergo?

APOSTLE PAUL

Romans 6:3-4 (NLT)

³ Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death?

⁴ For 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.

Colossians 2:12 (NLT)

For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to a new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

According to these verses:

What is the symbolism of being lowered into the water?

What is the symbolism of coming up out of the water?

Read the following passages. Focus on why people were getting baptized.

Acts 2:36-41 (NLT)

³⁶ “So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!”

³⁷ Peter’s words pierced their hearts, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

³⁸ Peter replied, “Each of you must repent of your sins, turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ to show that you have received forgiveness for your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ This promise is to you, and to your children, and even to the Gentiles—all who have been called by the Lord our God.” ⁴⁰ Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!”

⁴¹ Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

Acts 8:34-36, 38 (NLT)

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or someone else?” ³⁵ So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus. ³⁶ As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look! There’s some water! Why can’t I be baptized?” ³⁸ He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

Acts 16:29-34 (NLT)

²⁹ The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ Then he brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household.” ³² And they shared the word of the Lord with him and with all who lived in his household. ³³ Even at that hour of the night, the jailer cared for them and washed their wounds. Then he and everyone in his household were immediately baptized. ³⁴ He brought them into his house and set a meal before them, and he and his entire household rejoiced because they all believed in God.

According to these verses, who should get baptized and when?

PICTURE SUMMARY:

WATER: _____

GOING INTO THE WATER: _____

RISING FROM THE WATER: _____

WALKING OUT OF THE WATER: _____

SESSION 9: THE LORD'S TABLE

Matthew 26:17-20 (NLT)

¹⁷ On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover meal for you?" ¹⁸ "As you go into the city," he told them, "you will see a certain man. Tell him, 'The Teacher says: My time has come, and I will eat the Passover meal with my disciples at your house.'" ¹⁹ So the disciples did as Jesus told them and prepared the Passover meal there. ²⁰ When it was evening, Jesus sat down at the table with the twelve disciples.

What do you know about the Passover Feast?

Exodus 12:1-20 (NLT)

¹ While the Israelites were still in the land of Egypt, the LORD gave the following instructions to Moses and Aaron: ² "From now on, this month will be the first month of the year for you. ³ Announce to the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each family must choose a lamb or a young goat for a sacrifice, one animal for each household. ⁴ If a family is too small to eat a whole animal, let them share with another family in the neighborhood. Divide the animal according to the size of each family and how much they can eat. ⁵ The animal you select must be a one-year-old male, either a sheep or a goat, with no defects.

⁶ "Take special care of this chosen animal until the evening of the fourteenth day of this first month. Then the whole assembly of the community of Israel must slaughter their lamb or young goat at twilight. ⁷ They are to take some of the blood and smear it on the sides and top of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the animal. ⁸ That same night they must roast the meat over a fire and eat it along with bitter salad greens and bread made without yeast. ⁹ Do not eat any of the meat raw or boiled in water. The whole animal—including the head, legs, and internal organs—must be roasted over a fire. ¹⁰ Do not leave any of it until the next morning. Burn whatever is not eaten before morning.

¹¹ "These are your instructions for eating this meal: Be fully dressed, wear your sandals, and carry your walking stick in your hand. Eat the meal with urgency, for this is the LORD's Passover. ¹² On that night I will pass through the land of Egypt and strike down every firstborn son and firstborn male animal in the land of Egypt. I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt, for I am the LORD! ¹³ But the blood on your doorposts will serve as a sign, marking the houses where you are staying. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. This plague of death will not touch you when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ "This is a day to remember. Each year, from generation to generation, you must celebrate it as a special festival to the LORD. This is a law for all time. ¹⁵ For seven days the bread you eat must be made without yeast. On the first day of the festival, remove every trace of yeast from your homes. Anyone who eats bread made with yeast during the seven days of the festival will be cut off from the community of Israel. ¹⁶ On the first day of the festival and again on the seventh day, all the people must observe an official day for holy assembly. No work of any kind may be done on these days except in the preparation of food. ¹⁷ "Celebrate this Festival of Unleavened Bread, for it will remind you that I brought your forces out of the land of Egypt on

this very day. This festival will be a permanent law for you; celebrate this day from generation to generation. ¹⁸ The bread you eat must be made without yeast from the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month until the evening of the twenty-first day of that month. ¹⁹ During those seven days, there must be no trace of yeast in your homes. Anyone who eats anything made with yeast during this week will be cut off from the community of Israel. These regulations apply both to the foreigners living among you and to the native-born Israelites. ²⁰ During those days you must not eat anything made with yeast. Wherever you live, eat only bread made without yeast.”

What is the point of the Passover Feast?

Over the years, the Israelites added symbols to the feast to help every generation remember the dramatic way God rescued Israel from slavery. These symbols are still used in Passover celebrations today.

What do you think is the meaning of each symbol?

Roasted lamb shank bone:

3 Loaves of unleavened bread called the Unity:

Horseradish (bitter herb):

Charoseth (chopped apple and cinnamon):

Parsley dipped in salt water:

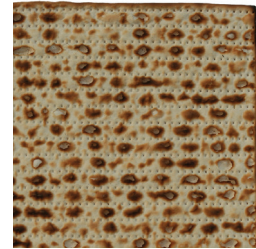
A hard-boiled egg splashed with saltwater:

Sometimes a bitter vegetable (romaine lettuce) is also used, instead of salt water, to represent the bitterness of slavery.

4 Cups of Wine:

1. The Cup of Sanctification

2. The Cup of Instruction



3. The Cup of Redemption

What does it mean to “redeem” something?

4. The Cup of Praise

Matthew 26:26-29 (NLT)

²⁶ As they were eating [the Passover Meal], Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, “Take this and eat it, for this is my body.”²⁷ And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them and said, “Each of you drink from it, ²⁸ for this is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many. ²⁹ Mark my words—I will not drink wine again until the day I drink it new with you in my Father’s Kingdom.”

Jesus, during his last supper, reinterpreted these elements as symbolically referring to himself.

Why do you think Jesus would compare his life to the Passover experience of the Old Testament?

Our modern-day church celebration focuses on two main elements: the bread and the wine.

As we take a closer look at each element, try to determine the symbolism from a “New Testament perspective.”

THE PASSOVER BREAD:

Why are there three pieces of bread called a Unity?

Why is the bread made without yeast?

What is the significance of the middle loaf being taken, broken, wrapped in a cloth and hidden behind a pillow?

What, potentially, is the symbolism of the bread having holes and stripes?

Isaiah 53:5 (NASB)

But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. [and with his stripes we are healed - . KJV]

THE WINE

The cup Jesus referred to in the last supper was the third cup called the Cup of Redemption. What is Jesus saying is the symbolism of this cup of WINE?

In scripture, wine has both the symbolism of God's wrath being poured out and in complete contrast, a picture of his abundant provision and joy. In what ways does Jesus' death fulfill both of these pictures?

1 Corinthians 11:24 (NLT)

Then he broke it in pieces and said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me."

1 Corinthians 11:26 (NLT)

For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again.

Why do you think Jesus wants us to continue to celebrate this feast?

Why do you think it might be important for a church to celebrate this together?

How often do you think we should celebrate the Lord's Table?

What do you think are some of the personal benefits you might receive from celebrating the Lord's Table with your church family?

What might be lacking in your life should this ceremony be neglected in your life?

SESSION 10: THE HOLY SPIRIT

If someone asked you to explain who the Holy Spirit is, what would you say?

Do you typically think of the Holy Spirit more as a “force/energy” or as a “person”?

What do the following verses teach us about the Holy Spirit?

Matthew 28:19 (NLT)

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Acts 5:3-4 (NLT)

³ Then Peter said, “Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit, and you kept some of the money for yourself. ⁴ The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished. And after selling it, the money was also yours to give away. How could you do a thing like this? You weren’t lying to us but to God!”

Romans 8:11 (NLT)

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.

Ephesians 4:30 (NLT)

And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he is the one who has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

Think of the idea of a person, not so much in terms of a being with a physical body, but as an individual who has personality, can think, talk and feel, etc.

SUMMARY:

Read the following passages and discuss the Holy Spirit's activity.

John 16:8 (NLT)

And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment.

The Holy Spirit _____

How does the Holy Spirit convict us?

John 14:26 (NLT)

But when the Father sends the Counselor as my representative—and by the Counselor I mean the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I myself have told you.

The Holy Spirit _____

How does the Holy Spirit teach us?

Have you ever met someone who has read the Bible, but nothing sinks in or makes any real sense to them? How is this possible?

Romans 8:14 (NLT)

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

Matthew 4:1 (NIV)

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

The Holy Spirit _____

How does the Holy Spirit lead us?

The Holy Spirit leads through:

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

d) _____

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT)

And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more.

Philippians 3:21 (NLT)

He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer everything, everywhere.

The Holy Spirit _____

Acts 1:8 (NLT)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The Holy Spirit _____

What are some of the different ways the Holy Spirit enables and empowers us for life and ministry?

To date, we have looked at the Father, the Son, and now the Holy Spirit. How might you explain the difference between the roles of all three in how they relate to us?

The Father:

The Son:

The Holy Spirit:

SESSION 11: THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery,
but be filled with the Spirit,
Ephesians 5:18 (ESV)

What happens when one is “filled” with alcohol?

What does it mean to be “filled” with the Holy Spirit?

A SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE IS A SPIRIT-CONTROLLED LIFE.

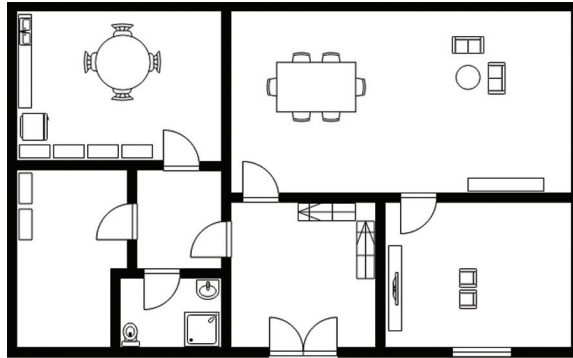
How does one become “filled” with the Holy Spirit?

Car Bumper Sticker: “God is my Co-Pilot”

Next Bumper Sticker: “If God is your Co-Pilot, you’re in the wrong seat!”

Who is on the THRONE of your life?

*You may want to watch the video: “The Stool” by One Time Blind
http://onetimeblind.com/resources_videos.html (Also on YouTube)*



THE HOUSE ILLUSTRATION

What are some areas of our life we might keep closed off to the Holy Spirit?

What are some of the results of being “filled” with the Spirit?

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

Why are these traits called “fruits of the Spirit”?

If you could experience one of these traits right now, which one would you like to experience most?

What do you think is the key to experiencing this fruit in your life?

LIVING THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

How might we relate to others if we are filled with the Holy Spirit?

Look at the remainder of the Ephesians 5 passage.
Underline what the Spirit-filled person starts doing.

Ephesians 5:18-21 (ESV)

¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Why do you think singing worship songs tops the list?

Why would we give thanks for everything?

Corrie Ten Boom:

What does it mean to submit to one another?

Philippians 2:3-5 (NLT)

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. ⁵ You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

Give some examples of how you think Jesus modeled the Spirit-filled life?

Read the following verses and discuss how Jesus modeled the Spirit-filled life.

Matthew 4:1 (NIV)

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

John 12:49 (NIV)

For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.

John 14:31 (NIV)

...but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

Galatians 5:25 (NIV)

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

How can we live in step with the Spirit tomorrow? How can we live the Spirit-filled life?

1) By _____

2) By _____

3) By taking seriously _____

4) By obeying the _____

If it is from God, it will:

Be in complete harmony with God's _____

Be a continuation of the _____

Bring _____

Require a _____

SAMPLE MORNING PRAYER

“Father, I hand over control of my life to you today. It is yours to do with whatever you wish. Help me recognize and follow your Spirit’s leading, both in what I say and what I do. I will trust that whatever circumstances I experience, you have allowed to come my way for your purposes. I will choose to be thankful at all times, knowing you love me and are watching over me. May I simply live in a way that is pleasing to you, and may I represent you well today.”

SESSION 12: THE BIBLE

How would you explain the nature of the Bible to someone else? What is it?

The goal of this study is to understand the Bible's perspective of itself.

Read the following passage together.

Underline each of the effects the Word of God can have on our life.

Psalm 19:7-11 (ESV)

*⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;
⁸ the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;
⁹ the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.*

*¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.*

*¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is
great reward.*

What do you think about these statements?

If we invented a pill that could revive your soul, make you wiser, give you joy, and give you greater understanding of life, how well do you think it would sell?

Why don't we gravitate to the Bible with the same enthusiasm as the Psalmist?

How can we claim the Bible is the Word of God, when we know it was written by people?

How do the following verses provide confidence that God’s Word actually is God’s word?

Deuteronomy 18:18-22 (NLT)

¹⁸ I will raise up a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell the people everything I command him. ¹⁹ I will personally deal with anyone who will not listen to the messages the prophet proclaims on my behalf. ²⁰ But any prophet who falsely claims to speak in my name or who speaks in the name of another god must die.’ ²¹ “But you may wonder, ‘How will we know whether or not a prophecy is from the LORD?’ ²² If the prophet speaks in the LORD’s name but his prediction does not happen or come true, you will know that the LORD did not give that message. That prophet has spoken without my authority and need not be feared.

Mark 16:20 (NLT)

And the disciples went everywhere and preached, and the Lord worked through them, confirming what they said by many miraculous signs.

2 Peter 1:19-21 (NLT)

¹⁹ Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place—until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts. ²⁰ Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet’s own understanding, ²¹ or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

What do you think it means when it says they were “moved by the Holy Spirit”?

According to the verses below, how did the Bible writers view what was written?

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NLT)

Therefore, we never stop thanking God that when you received his message from us, you didn’t think of our words as mere human ideas. You accepted what we said as the very word of God—which, of course, it is. And this word continues to work in you who believe.

2 Peter 3:15-16 (ESV)

¹⁵ And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶ as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

What is the benefit of reading the Bible?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

It TEACHES truth ----- It REFUTES false teaching.

The translated word “reproof” is better understood in this context as “refute.”

It CORRECTS ungodly behavior----- It TRAINS us to live righteously

to bring us back to righteousness and accomplish all God has prepared for us.

Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)

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.

What are the implications for anyone who purposefully distorts the Word of God?

Revelation 22:18-19 (NLT)

¹⁸ And I solemnly declare to everyone who hears the words of prophecy written in this book: If anyone adds anything to what is written here, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹ And if anyone removes any of the words from this book of prophecy, God will remove that person’s share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book.

What is the safeguard that the Bible won't be destroyed or distorted throughout history or that we won't ever lose God's Word to us?

Matthew 5:18 (NLT)

I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God's law will disappear until its purpose is achieved.

Isaiah 40:8 (NLT)

*The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands **forever.**"*

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE TIPS

Start with a Proper Attitude

View this as an opportunity to spend time with God and learn from him. This isn't like reading a textbook; it's far more relational than that. This is God writing a letter to you, and he desires to reveal to you something about himself, something about your relationship with him, and something about how to live. Read the Bible with a sense of expectation.

Select a Specific Time

General principle: Try to give God the best time of your day vs. left over time. For some, it's in the morning, for others, it's in the evening. If you're approaching God when your mind and body is tired, don't expect to get as much out of your time together – that's true with any relationship. Value this time and try not to let it get crowded out by less important things in life (i.e. TV, social media, books, etc.). Don't focus on how long you're meeting with God - don't watch the clock. Remember, some days the time will be short, other days longer; the key is to focus on the relationship.

Choose a Special Place

It's best if you can get off by yourself somewhere where you won't be disturbed or distracted. Choose a location with good lighting and a place where you are comfortable talking out loud to God (but not so comfortable that you fall asleep, i.e., bed).

Read Conversationally

We're not talking in-depth theological studying at this point. We're talking about you and God getting to know each other. As you read through the passage, dialogue with God about what you're reading. If something sounds confusing, let him know and ask him to help you figure out the meaning. If you come across a statement that hits home to you – make special note of that and spend some time talking to God about it. Some questions will drive you to a deeper theological study on the issue.

Apply it

"What am I going to do about what I've just read?"

The time you spend will only be as beneficial as the application of what you are learning to your daily life. Test God in this to see if what he says actually works. Find ways to remind yourself throughout the day of the truth you're trying to apply. This will help it sink in. Remember, if you read the Bible but don't apply it to your life, it is absolutely useless to you.

***But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says.
Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.
James 1:22 (NLT)***

Even if you're not sure what you believe about God, start off by asking him to reveal himself to you through the passage you're about to read, then read it with that sense of expectation.

BIBLE STRUCTURE (66 books)

Old Testament (39 books)			
History (17)		Poetry (5)	Prophecy (17)
The Law (5) Pentateuch		Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs	Major Prophets (5) Large
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy			Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel
Historical books (12)			Minor Prophets (12) Small
Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther			Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi
New Testament (27 books)			
History (5)	Paul's Letters (13)	Other Letters (8)	Prophecy (1)
The Gospels (4) Story of Jesus Christ	Letters to Churches (9)	Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude	Revelation
Matthew Mark Luke John	Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians		
The Early Church (1)	Letters to Individuals (4)		
Acts	1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon		

Bible Authorship

The Bible was written by more than 40 different authors over 1500 years.

Authors: Shepherds, Fishermen, Kings, Royalty, Tax Collectors, Doctors, Tent Makers, Priests, Prophets, brother of Jesus, etc.

Historical Reliability

The closer the writing to the event's actual date, the more reliable it is considered to be. The more documents that are in existence, the greater the weight that is given to the authenticity and accuracy of the documents.

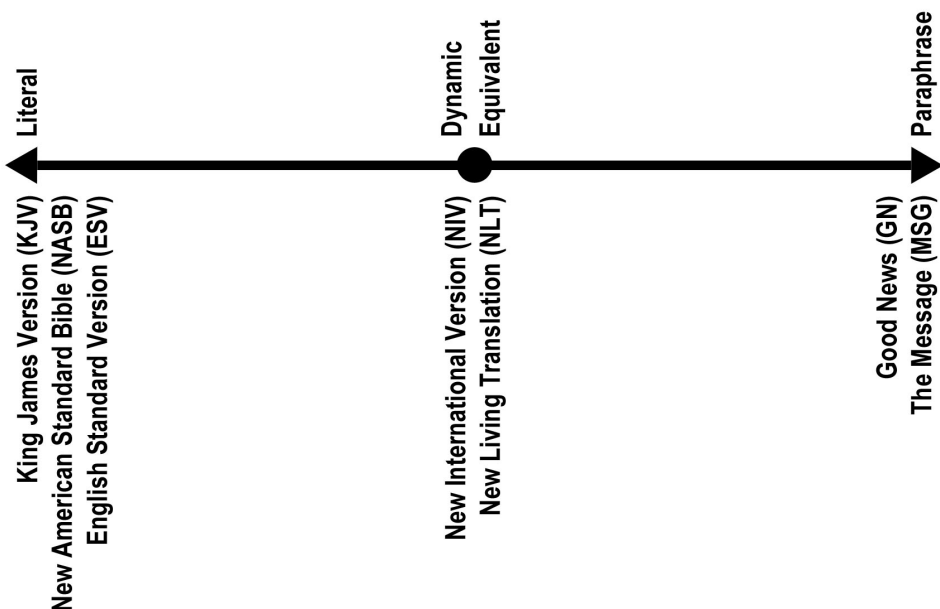
Out of the ancient historical documents that are universally accepted as reliable, the Bible dramatically outshines them all. The Bible was written within a lifespan of the actual events and has far greater numbers of documents available than any other literary works. Due to the vast number of copies written in diverse locations, it is easy to determine if and when any copying mistakes were made in a specific location.

Bible Translation

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew and a little Aramaic.

The New Testament was originally written in Greek.

When translating into English, translators have to determine whether they give the exact literal translation of the word or write the essence of what was trying to be communicated. If they write the exact translation, it may not mean the same in our present culture. If they provide the meaning, they make some decisions of interpretation and move away from the exact wording. It is a challenging balance to strike. Present-day translation of the Bible can be anywhere on that spectrum.



FOUNDATIONS

SESSION 13: PRAYER

What's the point of prayer?

Consider your best friend or any other person you spend a great deal of your leisure time talking with. Why do you speak with that person, and what does a typical conversation consist of?

If God is in control and does whatever he deems best, does prayer actually change anything?

James 4:2 (NIV)

You do not have, because you do not ask God.

PRAYER KEYS

Look at the following scriptures to discover some keys to effective prayer. Why is each key significant?

2 Chronicles 7:14 (NLT)

Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.

Key: _____

Mark 11:22-24 (NLT)

²² Then Jesus said to the disciples, "Have faith in God. ²³ I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain, 'May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and it will happen. But you must really believe it will happen and have no doubt in your heart. ²⁴ I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you've received it, it will be yours.

Key: _____

John 14:13-14 (NLT)

¹³ You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴ Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!

Key: _____

Psalm 37:4 (NLT)

Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desires.

Key: _____

PRAYER HINDRANCES

What are some things that might hinder your prayers from being answered?

Discuss why each issue raised below hinders prayer.

Psalm 66:18 (NLT)

If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, my Lord would not have listened.

Hindrance: _____

James 4:3 (NLT)

And even when you do ask, you don't get it because your whole motive is wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.

Hindrance: _____

What are some examples of wrong motives in your prayer life?

James 1:6 (NLT)

But when you ask him, be sure that you really expect him to answer, for a doubtful mind is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.

Hindrance: _____

What are some of the answers that God gives to prayers?

Prayer is not ultimately about getting things done.

IT IS ABOUT BUILDING AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

Luke 11:1 (NLT)

Once when Jesus had been out praying, one of his disciples came to him as he finished and said, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

Why do you think Jesus' disciple asked him how to pray?

Jesus responded by giving what we call "The Lord's Prayer".

Matthew 6:9-13 (ESV)

⁹ Pray then like this:

⁹ "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,

¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

How is this prayer an instruction on how to pray? Do you think this was ultimately intended to be a prayer that gets recited over and over?

If this is a model prayer, what are the concepts that Jesus is modeling for us?
What does each phrase teach us?

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:

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors:

Matthew 6:14-15 (NLT)

¹⁴ "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil:

What is a common theme that runs through the following verses?

Acts 1:14 (NLT)

They all met together continually for prayer, along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus.

Acts 2:42 (NLT)

They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, sharing in the Lord's Supper and in prayer.

Acts 4:24 (NLT)

Then all the believers were united as they lifted their voices in prayer: "O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them..."

The Believers prayed _____

Why do we ask others to pray for us? Is it because the more people we can get on our side, the more God will pay attention and perhaps answer our prayer?

SESSION 14: THE FAMILY OF GOD

What is a church?

Historical use of the word “Ecclesia” (We translate “church”)

MILITARY:

POLITICS:

OLD TESTAMENT:

NEW TESTAMENT:

What does church never refer to?

What do you think about the statement, “You don’t have to go to church to be a Christian”?

Reflect on these scriptures to understand the significance and role of the church.

Matthew 16:18 (NASB-U) (Jesus speaking to his disciples)
I will build my church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

How might this passage affect our view of the church?

How might that affect how we speak about the church?

How does Jesus accomplish building his church?

What does it mean when it says the gates of Hades will not overcome it?

Ephesians 5:25-27 (NLT)

²⁵ And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her ²⁶ to make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and God's word. ²⁷ He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.

In light of the above verse, how important is the church to Jesus?

Colossians 1:18 (NLT)

Christ is the head of the church, which is his body. He is the first of all who will rise from the dead, so he is first in everything.

What is the significance of Christ being the head of the church?

What role is church leadership to play?

According to the following verses, what are the purposes of the church?

Romans 15:5-6 (NLT)

⁵ May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. ⁶ Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NLT)

¹¹ He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹² Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, ¹³ until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ.

Matthew 28:19-20 (NLT)

¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

What is the future of the church?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NLT)

¹³ And now, brothers and sisters, I want you to know what will happen to the Christians who have died so you will not be full of sorrow like people who have no hope. ¹⁴ For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus comes, God will bring back with Jesus all the Christians who have died.

¹⁵ I can tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not rise to meet him ahead of those who are in their graves. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the call of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, all the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. ¹⁷ Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and remain with him forever. ¹⁸ So comfort and encourage each other with these words.

As a spiritual family we will be _____

Revelation 22:4-5 (NLT)

⁴ And they will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. ⁵ And there will be no night there—no need for lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever.

As a spiritual family we will _____

Ephesians 3:20-21 (NLT)

²⁰ Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope. ²¹ May he be given glory in the church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever through endless ages. Amen.

As a spiritual family we will _____

Why do we need to be a part of the church?

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (NLT)

⁷ A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church. ⁸ To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another he gives the gift of special knowledge. ⁹ The Spirit gives special faith to another, and to someone else he gives the power to heal the sick. ¹⁰ He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and to another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to know whether it is really the Spirit of God or another spirit that is speaking. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, and another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. ¹¹ It is the one and only Holy Spirit who distributes these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

Why doesn't the Holy Spirit give each of us all the needed gifts?

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NLT)

¹¹ He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹² Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, ¹³ until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ.

What happens if we cut ourselves off from the giftings within the local church?

What happens if I sit back and don't use my giftings in the local church?

How would you respond now to the person who says they don't need to be part of a local church to be a Christian?

SESSION 1: JESUS IN GENESIS

Explaining Jesus from the Old Testament

Luke 24:13-32 (NLT)

¹³ That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. ¹⁶ But God kept them from recognizing him.

¹⁷ He asked them, "What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?" They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. ¹⁸ Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days."

¹⁹ "What things?" Jesus asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth," they said. "He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. ²⁰ But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago. ²² "Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. ²³ They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! ²⁴ Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said." ²⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. ²⁶ Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?" ²⁷ Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. ²⁸ By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, ²⁹ but they begged him, "Stay the night with us, since it is getting late." So he went home with them.

³⁰ As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared! ³² They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?"

What Old Testament scriptures might you use to teach about Jesus?

How do the following passages reveal Jesus?

Genesis 3:15 (NLT)

And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

How did Satan strike the heel of Jesus?

How did Jesus strike Satan's head?

What is the one danger for a serpent when it bites a heel?

Colossians 2:15 (NLT)

In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

How does it impact you to realize God had this all so thoroughly planned back in the garden?

In Genesis 5, there is a genealogy listed that covers a family line from Adam all the way to Noah's sons. Why do you think God may have included this genealogy in the Bible?

Name meanings often carry significance in the Bible. Write down each of the meanings below.

NAME	MEANING
Adam	_____
Seth	_____
Enosh	_____
Kenan	_____
Mahalalel	_____
Jared	_____
Enoch	_____
Methuselah	_____
Lamech	_____
Noah	_____

*For an explanation of some of the names: <http://www.bible-codes.org/Names-Bible-Prophecy-Code-notes.htm>

Can you see anything significant about the order of the names?

What are some of the implications of this passage?

- 1) God has _____
- 2) You can have confidence in God's plan due to _____
- 3) _____ are the plan

Abraham and Isaac

Genesis 22:1-18 (NLT)

¹ Some time later, God tested Abraham's faith. "Abraham!" God called. "Yes," he replied. "Here I am."

² "Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you."

³ The next morning Abraham got up early. He saddled his donkey and took two of his servants with him, along with his son, Isaac. Then he chopped wood for a fire for a burnt offering and set out for the place God had told him about. ⁴ On the third day of their journey, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. ⁵ "Stay here with the donkey," Abraham told the servants. "The boy and I will travel a little farther. We will worship there, and then we will come right back."

⁶ So Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them walked on together, ⁷ Isaac turned to Abraham and said, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "We have the fire and the wood," the boy said, "but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?" ⁸ "God will provide a sheep for the burnt offering, my son," Abraham answered. And they both walked on together.

⁹ When they arrived at the place where God had told him to go, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. ¹⁰ And Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice.

¹¹ At that moment the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Yes," Abraham replied. "Here I am!" ¹² "Don't lay a hand on the boy!" the angel said. "Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son."

¹³ Then Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So he took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering in place of his son. ¹⁴ Abraham named the place Yahweh-Yireh (which

means “the LORD will provide”). To this day, people still use that name as a proverb: “On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.”

¹⁵ Then the angel of the LORD called again to Abraham from heaven. ¹⁶ “This is what the LORD says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that ¹⁷ I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies. ¹⁸ And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed—all because you have obeyed me.”

What are some of the parallels of this story to the life of Christ?

Isaac’s birth was miraculous (Genesis 15:1-6)

Matthew 1:23 (NLT)

“Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’”

Take your son, your only son whom you love so much

John 3:16 (NLT)

“For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

The sacrifice is to take place on Mount Moriah

2 Chronicles 3:1 (NLT)

So Solomon began to build the Temple of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah,

Mount Moriah is where Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem, the same region where Jesus was to be crucified as the ultimate sacrifice.

Isaac carried the wood that would bring about his death

John 19:17 (NLT)

Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, Golgotha).

God himself will provide the lamb for the sacrifice

John 1:29 (NLT)

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Isaac was bound

Matthew 27:2 (NLT)

Then they bound him, led him away, and took him to Pilate, the Roman governor.

Isaac gave no apparent struggle when Abraham bound him

Isaiah 53:7 (NLT)

He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth.

Matthew 27:12 (NLT)

But when the leading priests and the elders made their accusations against him, Jesus remained silent.

God provided a substitute sacrifice

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT)

For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

What impact does seeing all these parallels have on you?

How do these prophecies provide strength to your faith?

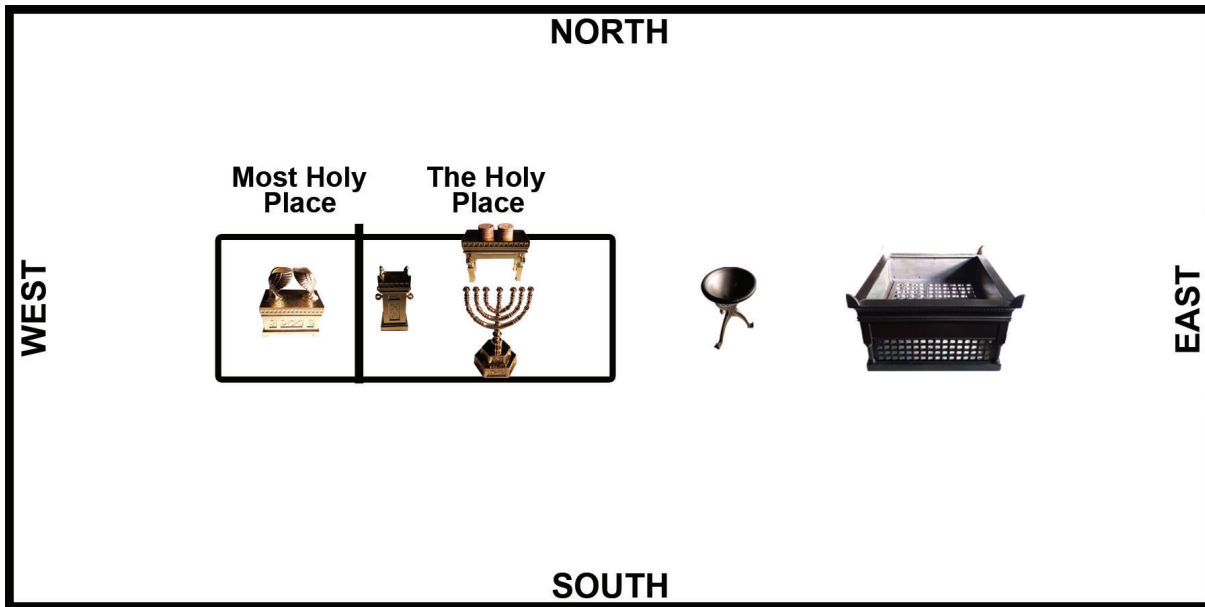
**The entire book of Genesis reveals the person of Jesus Christ in many ways.
In fact, all of the Old Testament scriptures point us to Jesus.**

How might this awareness change your perspective as you read through the Old Testament?

LIFE OF JESUS

SESSION 2: THE TABERNACLE

What was the Tabernacle?



The ultimate goal is to enter the Holy of Holies, the throne room of God. However, between us and the throne room are many barriers that need to be dealt with in order to make access to the presence of God possible.

As you come to each aspect of the tabernacle, discuss the barrier it represents, the hope it provides, and how Jesus Christ fulfilled this hope.

THE TABERNACLE as a whole: Exodus 25-30

BARRIER: _____

HOPE: _____

Jesus is _____

John 1:14 (ESV)

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.

THE COURTYARD WALL & GATE (150' x 75' x 7')

BARRIER: _____

HOPE: _____

Jesus is _____

John 10:9 (NLT)

Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures.

John 14:6 (NLT)

Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

THE ALTAR (9' x 9' x 6')

Why do you think the altar is the first thing an Israelite encounters as he enters the tabernacle?

BARRIER: _____

HOPE: _____

Jesus is _____

John 1:29 (NLT)

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

1 Peter 3:18 (NLT)

Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.

LIFE OF JESUS

THE WASHBASIN

BARRIER: _____

HOPE: _____

Jesus _____

Hebrews 10:22 (NLT)

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, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

Ephesians 5:25-27 (NLT)

²⁵ For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her ²⁶ to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. ²⁷ He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.

THE LAMPSTAND

BARRIER: _____

HOPE: _____

Jesus is _____

John 8:12 (NLT)

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

THE SHOWBREAD (3' x 1.5' x 2'3")

BARRIER: _____

HOPE: _____

Jesus makes _____

John 6:35 (NLT)

Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

1 Corinthians 1:9 (ESV)

God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE ALTAR OF INCENSE (1.5' x 1.5' x 3')

BARRIER: _____

HOPE: _____

Jesus is _____

Hebrews 7:25 (NLT)

Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf.

THE VEIL

BARRIER: _____

Hebrews 12:14 (NLT)

Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord.

HOPE: _____

Jesus removes _____

Mark 15:37-38 (NLT)

³⁷ Then Jesus uttered another loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸ And the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

Hebrews 10:19-20 (NLT)

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.

THE HOLY OF HOLIES (15' x 15' x 15')

BARRIER: _____

HOPE: _____

Jesus brings us _____

Hebrews 4:16 (NLT)

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.

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

What is an ark?

What is a covenant?

What was the Ark of the Covenant?

What does the word “atonement” mean?

BARRIER: _____

HOPE: _____

Jesus provides _____

1 John 2:1-2 (NLT)

¹ My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. ² He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

CONTENTS OF THE ARK

1) Manna:

What was manna?

Barrier: _____

Hope: _____

Jesus is _____

John 6:48-51 (NLT)

⁴⁸ Yes, I am the bread of life! ⁴⁹ Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. ⁵⁰ Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die.

⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh."

2) Aaron's Budding Staff:

Barrier: _____

Hope: _____

Jesus is _____

Hebrews 6:19-20 (NLT)

¹⁹ This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. ²⁰ Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

3) Stone Tablets:

Barrier: _____ (Exodus 32)

Hope: _____

Jesus offers us _____

Hebrews 9:15 (NLT)

That is why he is the one who mediates a new covenant between God and people, so that all who are called can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.

What strikes you most about how God established the Mosaic Law and specifically the tabernacle?

We have not had time to reflect on other aspects of tabernacle worship (priesthood, offerings, laws, etc.), but every one of these are pictures that reveal the barriers to and the hope of a restored relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

How might this affect how you read through the Old Testament?

LIFE OF JESUS

SESSION 3: THE PROMISED MESSIAH

If you were to describe Jesus to your friends, what words would you choose to use? What picture would they draw in their minds using your description?

Would your description more reflect someone they would “like” or someone they would “revere”?

What are the dangers of leaning too far in either direction?

Dangers of Likeability:

Dangers of Reverence:

The Jews of the Bible were looking forward to the day of a coming Messiah. Unfortunately, they tended to focus on only one aspect of the Messianic prophecies, and as a result, had a distorted picture when Jesus came on the scene. In this study, we will attempt to show how the prophecies paint two images of the same Messiah.

THE PROMISED MESSIAH

What does each of the following passages reveal about the Old Testament promise of a coming messiah? Underline each description.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 (NLT)

“For the time is coming,” says the Lord, “when I will raise up a righteous descendant from King David’s line. He will be a King who rules with wisdom. He will do what is just and right throughout the land. ⁶ And this will be his name: ‘The Lord Is Our Righteousness.’ In that day Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety.

He will be called: _____

Description:**What is the significance of this prophecy?****Isaiah 9:6-7 (NLT)**

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven's Armies will make this happen!

Description:**What is the significance of this prophecy?****Isaiah 11:1-10 (ESV)**

¹ There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. ² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. ⁶ The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. ⁹ They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

Description:

What is the significance of this prophecy?

Based on these passages, describe what you believe Old Testament Jews would have been anticipating with regard to the promised Messiah?

They would be expecting a man who would:

How are we to understand these prophecies in light of Jesus' life and ministry?

In the following passage, underline the ideas that contrast with the “mighty, righteous king” motif.

Isaiah 53:1-12 (ESV)

¹ Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. ⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? ⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

How could all the above passages possibly come together – the Righteous King and the Suffering Servant?

When is Jesus going to appear fully, as the Righteous King?

Which description do you most relate to, the Suffering Servant or the Righteous King? Why?

How might embracing a deeper understanding of both dynamics affect your life?

The Israelites focused on their expectation of a Righteous King, and as a result, many misunderstood Jesus' role as the Suffering Servant.

What are some ways you may have limited your perspective of Jesus?

What are some ways you could gain a greater balance in your perspective of Jesus?

Personal Reading: Additional Passages that focus on Jesus' dual roles.

Righteous King:

Daniel 7:13-14
Ezekiel 38:17-23
Revelation 1:12-18
Revelation 19:11-16

Suffering Servant:

Isaiah 49:1-7
Isaiah 50:4-9

SESSION 4: THE BIRTH OF JESUS

The Christmas Story Quiz: How much do you really know?

1. How did Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem?

- a) Walked
- b) Mary rode a donkey, as Joseph walked alongside
- c) Joseph piggy-backed Mary
- d) Who knows?

Answer:

Luke 2:4-5

2. What did the innkeeper say to Mary and Joseph?

- a) "I have a stable in the back."
- b) "No babies allowed."
- c) "There is no room in the inn."
- d) None of the above

Answer:

Luke 2:7

3. The baby Jesus was born in a _____.

- a) Cave
- b) Manger
- c) Stable
- d) Who knows?

Answer:

Luke 2:7

4. What is a heavenly host?

- a) An angelic army
- b) An angelic choir
- c) An angelic greeter that shows you around heaven
- d) Who knows?

Answer:

Luke 2:13

5. What did the heavenly host sing?

- a) The Hallelujah Chorus
- b) Glory to God in the highest
- c) Silent Night
- d) They did not sing

Answer:

Luke 2:13

6. Who were the “Wisemen” that brought gifts to the baby Jesus?

- a) Kings
- b) Astrologers
- c) Smart men who created the first GPS
- d) None of the above

Answer:

7. How many Wisemen came to see Jesus?

- a) 3
- b) 2
- c) There is no such thing as a “wise” man.
- d) None of the above

Answer:

Matthew 2:1

Jewish scholars for centuries anticipated the arrival of the Messiah. By examining Old Testament prophecies, determine exactly how much information they could have gathered regarding the Messiah’s birth.

PASSAGE

Genesis 3:15 (NLT)

And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.”

Luke 1:30-31 (NLT)

³⁰ *“Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “for you have found favor with God!*

³¹ *You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.*

Isaiah 7:14 (NLT)

All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us').

Luke 1:34-35 (NLT)

³⁴ Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

³⁵ The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God."

Luke 2:6-7 (NLT)

⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born.

⁷ She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

Isaiah 11:1 (ESV)

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

Genealogy in Matthew 1:6

Jeremiah 23:5 (NLT)

"For the time is coming," says the LORD, "when I will raise up a righteous descendant from King David's line. He will be a King who rules with wisdom. He will do what is just and right throughout the land."

Genealogy in Matthew 1:6

Luke 1:32 (NLT)

He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High.

The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David.

Isaiah 9:6 (NLT)

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Hebrews 1:8 (NLT)

*But to the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever.
You rule with a scepter of justice.*

Micah 5:2 (NLT)

*But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah.
Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past.*

Luke 2:4-7 (NLT)

⁴ And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David’s ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. ⁵ He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was now obviously pregnant. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. ⁷ She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

Hosea 11:1 (NLT)

“When Israel was a child, I loved him, and I called my son out of Egypt.

Matthew 2:13 (NLT)

After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,” the angel said. “Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

Jeremiah 31:15 (NLT)

This is what the LORD says: “A cry is heard in Ramah— deep anguish and bitter weeping. Rachel weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted— for her children are gone.”

Matthew 2:16 (NLT)

Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men’s report of the star’s first appearance.

Isaiah 9:1 (NLT)

Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory.

Matthew 2:19-23 (NLT)

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. ²⁰ “Get up!” the angel said. “Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead.” ²¹ So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother. ²² But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod’s son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee. ²³ So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

Malachi 3:1 (NLT)

“Look! I am sending my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. Then the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies.

Luke 2:22 (NLT)

Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

What do you think about the odds of one individual fulfilling even two, three, or four of these prophecies?

Would it be possible for simply anyone to come along and fulfill these messianic prophecies? Explain.

Why do you think God provides all these prophecies (and many more) about the person of Jesus Christ? Why not just have Jesus appear and accomplish what he needed to accomplish without all the prophecies?

How do these prophecies impact your level of confidence in the Bible and Jesus Christ?

LIFE OF JESUS

SESSION 5: THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS: PART A

If Jesus is God, was it really possible for him to be tempted to sin?

Hebrews 4:14-15 (NLT)

¹⁴ So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. ¹⁵ This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin.

Did not Jesus have an unfair advantage, dealing with temptation due to the fact that he did not have a “sin nature”?

The Bible describes three types of temptations we all face in 1 John 2:15-17.

1 John 2:16 (NLT)

For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world.

Describe these three temptations in your own words.

1) Physical Cravings:

2) Cravings of the eyes:

3) Pride:

Luke 4:1-13 (NLT)

¹ Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ² where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry.

³ Then the devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, change this stone into a loaf of bread.” ⁴ But Jesus told him, “No! The Scriptures say, ‘People do not live by bread alone.’”

⁵ Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ “I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them,” the devil said, “because they are mine to give to anyone I please. ⁷ I will give it all to you if you will worship me.” ⁸ Jesus replied, “The Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.’”

⁹ Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off! ¹⁰ For the Scriptures say, ‘He will order his angels to protect and guard you. ¹¹ And they will hold you up with their hands so you won’t even hurt your foot on a stone.’” ¹² Jesus responded, “The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the LORD your God.’”

¹³ When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came.

How do Jesus’ temptations correspond to the ones listed by John?

Stones to Bread: _____

Authority over all the kingdoms: _____

Jumping off the temple: _____

What was Jesus’ secret to consistently resisting temptation throughout his entire life?

TEMPTATION 1

Luke 4:3 (NLT)

Then the devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, change this stone into a loaf of bread.”

Explain the nature of this temptation and why it would have been wrong for Jesus to give in.

Would it have been “sinful” for Jesus to turn a stone into a loaf of bread to avoid starvation?

Why was Jesus in the wilderness in the first place?

Why did Jesus respond with the words, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone’?”

Deuteronomy 8:2-3 (NLT)

Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would really obey his commands. ³ Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people need more than bread for their life; real life comes by feeding on every word of the Lord.

Why did God allow the Israelites to go hungry at various points in time?

How are we often tempted in a similar way?

Can you share a time when you were mad at God because he didn’t meet your expectations? Did you question God’s love for you during this time?

Have you ever tried to take control of a situation yourself because God didn’t seem to care?

Have you ever tried to shortcut God’s purpose for your life simply because it wasn’t comfortable?

What was Jesus’ key to resisting this temptation? What statement did he make to Satan?

LIFE OF JESUS

SESSION 6: THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS: PART B

TEMPTATION 2

Luke 4:5-7 (NLT)

⁵ Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ “I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them,” the devil said, “because they are mine to give to anyone I please. ⁷ I will give it all to you if you will worship me.”

The Bible describes Satan as the ruler of this world.

1 John 5:19 (NLT)

We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one.

Explain the nature of this temptation, and why would it have been wrong for Jesus to give in?

What are the problems with this temptation?

a) It would require _____

b) The freedom offered was not the freedom _____

Why did Jesus respond with the words, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only’”?

Deuteronomy 6:10-15 (NLT)

“The Lord your God will soon bring you into the land he swore to give your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is a land filled with large, prosperous cities that you did not build. ¹¹ The houses will be richly stocked with goods you did not produce. You will draw water from cisterns you did not dig, and you will eat from vineyards and olive trees you did not plant. When you have eaten your fill in this land, ¹² be careful not to forget the Lord, who rescued you from slavery in the land of

Egypt. ¹³ You must fear the Lord your God and serve him. When you take an oath, you must use only his name.

¹⁴ "You must not worship any of the gods of neighboring nations, ¹⁵ for the Lord your God, who lives among you, is a jealous God. His anger will flare up against you and wipe you from the face of the earth.

Why did Jesus refer to this passage? What temptation did God warn the Israelites not to give in to?

How are we often tempted in a similar way?

Have you ever done anything "wrong" in order to accomplish a greater "good"? Share.

Have you ever felt that something or someone could provide you with more contentment in life than God? Explain.

What was Jesus' key to resisting this temptation? What statement did he make to Satan?

TEMPTATION 3

Luke 4:9-12 (NLT)

⁹ Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! ¹⁰ For the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect and guard you. ¹¹ And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'" ¹² Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD your God.'"

Explain the nature of this temptation and why it would have been wrong for Jesus to give in.

What are the problems with this temptation?

a) This was not _____

- b) Jesus did not need to _____
- c) This approach called into question _____
- d) The goal of Jesus' ministry was not to gain the approval of others but to _____

Why did Jesus respond with the words, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'?"

Deuteronomy 6:16-19 (NLT)

Do not test the Lord your God as you did when you complained at Massah. ¹⁷ You must diligently obey the commands of the Lord your God—all the stipulations and laws he has given you. ¹⁸ Do what is right and good in the Lord's sight, so all will go well with you. Then you will enter and occupy the good land that the Lord solemnly promised to give your ancestors. ¹⁹ You will drive out all the enemies living in your land, just as the Lord said you would.

Why did Jesus quote this passage? What temptation did the Israelites give in to?

How are we often tempted in a similar way?

Can you recall a time when you distrusted God's plan and provision and felt you needed to take control, as opposed to simply being content with who you were and what God called you to do? How did that turn out?

What statement was Jesus making to Satan? What was his key to resisting this temptation?

APPLYING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED

What can we learn about Satan's strategy to make us fall spiritually?

What can we learn from Jesus about resisting temptation?

**Discuss your thoughts about each of the following verses.
How does each one give you hope or strength?**

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

The 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.

Hebrews 2:18 (NLT)

Since he himself has gone through suffering and testing, he is able to help us when we are being tested.

James 1:13-14 (NLT)

¹³ And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. ¹⁴ Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away.

What are some steps you can take to avoid giving in to temptation?

SESSION 7: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

How would you summarize the message and ministry of Jesus into just a few words?

JESUS' MISSION

Mark 1:14-15 (NLT)

¹⁴ Later on, after John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, where he preached God's Good News.

¹⁵ "The time promised by God has come at last!" he announced. "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!"

Acts 1:3 (NLT)

During the forty days after his crucifixion, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God.

According to the above passages, what was the focus of Jesus' message?

What is the kingdom of God?

What do the following passages teach us about the kingdom of God?

Luke 17:20-21 (NLT)

²⁰ One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, "When will the Kingdom of God come?" Jesus replied, "The Kingdom of God can't be detected by visible signs. ²¹ You won't be able to say, 'Here it is!' or 'It's over there!' For the Kingdom of God is already among you."

Luke 18:17 (NLT)

I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.

Luke 11:20 (NLT)

But if I am casting out demons by the power of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you.

What are the three focuses of Jesus' ministry?

Luke 8:1-2 (NLT)

¹ Soon afterward Jesus began a tour of the nearby towns and villages, preaching and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom of God. He took his twelve disciples with him, ² along with some women he had healed and from whom he had cast out evil spirits. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons;

1) _____

Luke 4:42-43 (NLT)

⁴² Early the next morning Jesus went out to an isolated place. The crowds searched everywhere for him, and when they finally found him, they begged him not to leave them. ⁴³ But he replied, "I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other towns, too, because that is why I was sent."

2) _____

Luke 9:10-11 (NLT)

¹⁰ When the apostles returned, they told Jesus everything they had done. Then he slipped quietly away with them toward the town of Bethsaida. ¹¹ But the crowds found out where he was going, and they followed him. He welcomed them and taught them about the Kingdom of God, and he healed those who were sick.

3) _____

Matthew 12:28 (NLT)

But if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you.

Underline what Christ's disciples were to do as they went through the towns preparing the way for his ministry.

SENDING OUT THE 12

Luke 9:1-2 (NLT)

¹ One day Jesus called together his twelve disciples and gave them power and authority to cast out demons and to heal all diseases. ² Then he sent them out to tell everyone about the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

SENDING OUT THE 72

Luke 10:1,10 (NLT)

The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places he planned to visit... Heal the sick, and tell them, 'The Kingdom of God is near you now.'

Luke 10:17-20 (NLT)

¹⁷ When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, "Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!" ¹⁸ "Yes," he told them, "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning! ¹⁹ Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. ²⁰ But don't rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven."

Why does Jesus say he saw "Satan fall like lightning from heaven"?

What does Jesus mean by verse 19?

Why does Jesus tell the disciples to "not" rejoice that the spirits submit to them?

Why do you think each of these three focuses were so important to Jesus' ministry?

a) Preaching

Romans 10:14-15 (NLT)

¹⁴ But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? ¹⁵ And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"

b) Healing

c) Deliverance

This ministry approach was consistent in Jesus' ministry when he sent out the twelve and the seventy-two, and among the disciples through the book of Acts. Do you think these focuses should also be part of our present-day ministry?

Do you struggle with any one of these emphases?

What are the dangers of neglecting or over-emphasizing any one aspect of Christ's ministry?

Neglecting Preaching:

Over-emphasizing Preaching to the neglect of the others:

Neglecting Healing:

Over-emphasizing Healing:

Neglecting Deliverance:

Over-emphasizing Deliverance:

What are the implications are for you as you represent Christ?

Have you had experience in preaching, healing, or spiritual deliverance (whether something you did or something you benefitted from)?

Pray that our church would be effective in all areas of ministry Jesus calls us to.

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SESSION 8: KINGDOM CHARACTER

The world's values are often very different from God's values. Can you think of some examples?

Listed below are some "kingdom of God" values, as described by Jesus. Think about what Jesus is saying in each statement and describe how it conflicts with what the world says.

Matthew 5:3-11 (ESV)

³ *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

⁴ *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

⁵ *"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

⁶ *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*

⁷ *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.*

⁸ *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

⁹ *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*

¹⁰ *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

¹¹ *"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.*

Jesus Says: Blessed are	What this means!	Who the World says is blessed.
The poor in spirit		
Those who mourn		
The meek		

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Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness		
The merciful		
The pure in heart		
The peacemakers		
Those who are persecuted because of righteousness		

What are the some of the benefits of kingdom character?

Jesus Says: Blessed are	The Benefit & Why?
The poor in spirit	
Those who mourn	
The meek	
Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness	

The merciful	
The pure in heart	
The peacemakers	
Those who are persecuted because of righteousness	

How can we live each of these characteristics out in our lives?

	Jesus Says: Blessed are	How?
Relationship with God Spiritual Need	The poor in spirit	
	Those who mourn	
	The meek	
	Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness	

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Relationship with Others Spiritual Abundance	The merciful	
	The pure in heart	
	The peacemakers	
	Those who are persecuted because of righteousness	

Do you really believe it makes sense to live according to these kingdom value statements?

If the whole world operated according to these values, how would the world be different?

Why does the world struggle to embrace these values? Or better yet, why have you struggled to embrace these values?

What one kingdom value do you want to focus on this week?

SESSION 9: JESUS' DISCIPLESHIP STRATEGY

Answer: Not at All / A Little / For the Most Part / Absolutely

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4
I am interested in knowing Jesus Christ better <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I am trying daily to consciously walk with Jesus <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I understand how to share my faith with others and am doing so <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I know the major biblical themes of the Bible <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
I desire to have a deeper relationship with God <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I belong to a small group that helps me grow as Jesus' disciple <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I understand the nature of spiritual warfare <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I know how to study the Bible to get answers for myself <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
I regularly attend church <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I have developed regular habits of bible study, prayer, worship, evangelism, & giving <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I understand my authority in Christ over the spiritual realm <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I know how to discuss controversial topics in ways that show love to the other person <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
I have decided to trust Jesus Christ as my God and Savior <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I know the books of the Bible and where they are placed <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I know how to discern God's leading in my life <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I understand Jesus' style of leadership and am trying to imitate that in my life <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
I trust the Bible as God's Word <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I understand the major lies that trap me and the truths that can set me free <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I try daily to submit to Jesus' leadership <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I am continuing to share Christ <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
I have been baptised as a believer <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I am experiencing increasing freedom in my walk with Christ <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I strive daily to submit to others to build them up in Christ <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I understand our church's strategy for Missions <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
I understand the "need" for studying the bible, prayer & being part of a church in order to grow spiritually <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I am committed to serving in the local church <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I can maturely handle criticism and rejection <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I understand the biblical principles of servanthood <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
I understand the basic teachings regarding Jesus, God & the Holy Spirit, forgiveness & salvation, and the purpose of the Church <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I am assuming more responsibility for helping the church be what it should be <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I am willing to lovingly deal with conflict <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I try to serve practically in ways that reflect Jesus' love for people <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
I understand God wants me to be continually growing as his disciple and I am committed to this journey <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I am a Partner/Member of my church <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I am willing to lovingly confront sin in the life of another believer <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I am helping others in their walk with Jesus <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
I am beginning to understand God's desire for my ministry involvement <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I am involved in my area of ministry passion <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I am willing to be confronted about an issue in my life by another believer <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I am helping train others for more effective ministry <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
I am beginning to understand that God wants me to represent him wherever I go <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>		I am learning to walk by faith, not by sight <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	I am bearing much spiritual fruit in my life <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
		I understand what it truly means to live a life of worship to God <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	

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According to this survey, I am currently in:

PHASE 1

PHASE 2

PHASE 3

PHASE 4

I have been following Christ for _____ yrs.

JESUS' STRATEGY

Why did Jesus draw a team of 12 men around him?

What are the types of things Jesus would need to teach his disciples to ensure they mature to this point of responsibility?

Read the following passages and identify the different stages Jesus progressed through creating mature disciples. The following four phases have been adopted from Bill Hull's book, *The Complete Book of Discipleship* (NavPress Publishing, 2000).

PHASE 1 (Jesus: approx. 3 months)

John 1:43-49 (NLT)

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Come, follow me."⁴⁴ Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's hometown. ⁴⁵ Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, "We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth." ⁴⁶ "Nazareth!" exclaimed Nathanael. "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" "Come and see for yourself," Philip replied.

⁴⁷ As they approached, Jesus said, "Now here is a genuine son of Israel—a man of complete integrity."⁴⁸ "How do you know about me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus replied, "I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you."⁴⁹ Then Nathanael exclaimed, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God—the King of Israel!"

PHASE 1: _____

This phase embraces the skeptic and helps them move to the point of **belief and baptism**.

What was Nathaniel's initial reaction to the idea of checking out Jesus? Why do you think this was his view?

How did Philip persuade him to explore the idea of Jesus further?

Were you initially skeptical about Jesus? What made you decide to check him out further?

What do you think would be essential to build into people's lives during this initial phase? What do they need from you to help them move forward?

PHASE 2 (Jesus: approx. 9 months)

Matthew 4:18-22 (NLT)

¹⁸ One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. ¹⁹ Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” ²⁰ And they left their nets at once and followed him. ²¹ A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. ²² They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.

Matthew 9:9 (NLT)

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth. “Follow me and be my disciple,” Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.

PHASE 2: _____

Jesus had not yet set people apart as “Apostles” at this point. Why did he invite them to “follow him,” and what did he mean by that?

What are some of the things you think would be important to teach or demonstrate in this phase?

What are some practical indicators that someone desires to grow in their faith beyond initial belief and baptism?

PHASE 3 (Jesus: approx. 2 years)

Mark 3:14 (ESV)

And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach

PHASE 3: _____

Jesus had just selected twelve men to be with him constantly wherever he went. Why do you think he did this?

What was so important about this phase of Jesus' ministry?

Jesus was not interested in merely creating followers; he wanted to create kingdom influencers and leaders. He had two years left to establish a team of men who could lead the church into future growth.

What specific teachings do you think he wanted to instill in his disciples during this phase?

PHASE 4 (Disciples: rest of their lives)

John 15:4 (NLT)

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

PHASE 4: _____

What is the result of remaining in Jesus according to this verse?

What does it mean to “bear much fruit”?

Why is having a strategic discipleship process essential for the follower of Jesus?

How long have you been following Christ? If your church's ministry was left in your hands, would you be ready to lead it effectively? Why or why not?

What is the goal of discipleship?

When you realize Jesus took only three years to move his disciples from Phase 1 to Phase 4, how does that make you feel about how far you've come in the years you've been following Christ?

STRATEGIC DISCIPLESHIP has mapped out four years of teaching that will help someone move from a skeptic position to a kingdom influencer. Content and teaching themselves do not grow disciples, but it is one aspect of the discipleship process. Actively assuming responsibility for your spiritual family and embracing mission is essential for continued growth.

Below is a summary of the four-year strategic and intentional plan to help you grow as a disciple.

PHASE 1

1) Belief

Who is God?	The Lord's Table
Who are we?	Who is the Holy Spirit?
Who is Jesus?	The Spirit-filled Life
God's plan for salvation	The Bible
The lordship of Jesus	Prayer
Baptism	The Church

2) Life and Ministry of Jesus

Jesus in the Old Testament	Jesus' transfiguration
Jesus' birth	Parables of the kingdom
Jesus' temptation	Jesus' death and resurrection
The Kingdom of God	The Great Commission
Jesus' strategy for discipleship	The promised king

PHASE 2

1) Spiritual Disciplines

- Bible Study
- Prayer
- Stewardship

2) Spiritual Freedom

- God loves you
- God justifies and accepts you
- God changes you
- God respects you

3) Kingdom Responsibility (Ministry Membership/Partnership)

- Ministry Partnership
- Partner commitment

PHASE 3

1) Evangelism

- The mission
- The core message
- Knowing your story
- Salt, Ambassador, Image, Light
- Strategic and intentional mission

2) Spiritual Warfare

- Satan's strategy
- Jesus' victory
- The authority of believers
- Exercising freedom
- Maintaining freedom

3) Living your Faith

- Discerning the Spirit's leading
- Submission to God and others
- Handling relationship conflict

4) Worship

- Worship in Spirit and in truth
- Worship and integrity
- Worship and praise

PHASE 4

1) Going Deeper

- Why study the Bible?
- The priority of context
- What to look for
- The main principle
- Biblical tension
- Application
- Narrative passages

2) Kingdom Rule

- The nature of God's rule
- Restored rule
- Ruling courageously
- Ruling strategically

3) Living Grace

The grace tension
The scorecard
Grace and obedience
Sharing grace

4) Godly Sexuality

Image of God
Sexual purity
Boundaries

5) Church Leadership

Church offices
Leadership ministries
Struggling with authority

6) The End Times

Hope
End time events
Understanding judgement
Understanding Heaven

In what ways is it encouraging and exciting to know there is a strategy in place to help deal with all these issues?

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SESSION 10: THE TRANSFIGURATION

Jesus asked his disciples what they thought about his identity. Read Peter's response and a conversation that followed afterward.

Peter's Confession

Matthew 16:16-17 (NLT)

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."¹⁷ Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being.

Peter's Rebuke

Matthew 16:21-23 (NLT)

²¹ From then on Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead. ²² But Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. "Heaven forbid, Lord," he said. "This will never happen to you!"

²³ Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's."

What contrasts do you see between Peter's two responses to Jesus?

In what way did Peter have in mind the things of men?

In what ways might we, similarly, lose perspective about what our lives should focus on?

How does having "the mind of men" sometimes cause us to miss out on what God wants to accomplish through our lives?

Jesus' Transfiguration**Luke 9:28-36 (NLT)**

²⁸ About eight days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John up on a mountain to pray. ²⁹ And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was transformed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³⁰ Then two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared and began talking with Jesus. ³¹ They were glorious to see. And they were speaking about his exodus from this world, which was about to be fulfilled in Jerusalem. ³² Peter and the others had fallen asleep. When they woke up, they saw Jesus' glory and the two men standing with him. ³³ As Moses and Elijah were starting to leave, Peter, not even knowing what he was saying, blurted out, "Master, it's wonderful for us to be here! Let's make three shelters as memorials—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ³⁴ But even as he was saying this, a cloud came over them, and terror gripped them as the cloud covered them. ³⁵ Then a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, my Chosen One. Listen to him." ³⁶ When the voice finished, Jesus was there alone. They didn't tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

What do you think was the point of this whole experience?

**What was the significance of Moses and Elijah appearing with Jesus on the mountain?
What was unique about the ministry of these two men?**

Moses: _____

Moses is representative of _____

Elijah: _____

1 Kings 18:21 (NLT)

Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, "How much longer will you waver, hobbling between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!" But the people were completely silent.

Elijah is representative of _____

Matthew 5:17 (ESV)

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

God authenticated both of these men's ministries through miraculous signs.

What was the topic of Jesus' conversation with Moses and Elijah?

Departure - literally: _____

Why did Luke refer to Jesus' departure as an "exodus"?

What are some ways the story of Moses and the Israelites' exodus foreshadowed Jesus' ministry and our spiritual journey?

If you had been there with Peter, James, and John on that mountain, how do you think you might have reacted?

Luke 9:33 (NLT)

As Moses and Elijah were starting to leave, Peter, not even knowing what he was saying, blurted out, "Master, it's wonderful for us to be here! Let's make three shelters as memorials—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

Why do you think Peter blurted out his response about building shelters for Jesus, Moses and Elijah? What was wrong with his response?

Why did the Father speak at this point in time?

Have there been times when you felt you needed to instruct God on what he should do?

Let's return to the question of why this scenario needed to have been played out? What was the point?

How do you think this experience might have impacted Peter, James and John?

John 1:14 (ESV)

And the Word became flesh and dwelt [tabernacle] among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

2 Peter 1:16-18 (NLT)

¹⁶ For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes ¹⁷ when he received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice from the majestic glory of God said to him, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy." ¹⁸ We ourselves heard that voice from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.

Have you had any powerful, personal experiences with God? How did it affect and change your life?

Why do encounters with God always seem to have an impact on mission, and how we reach out to others?

SESSION 11: KINGDOM PARABLES

Matthew 13:34 (NLT)

Jesus always used stories and illustrations like these when speaking to the crowds. In fact, he never spoke to them without using such parables.

What is a parable?

When studying parables, you need to consider:

- 1) The Context:**
 - To who is the story being told?
 - What circumstances evoked this teaching?
 - Was there a question raised or a problem encountered?
 - Was there a teaching that needed correcting?

- 2) The Story:**
 - What are the key elements of the story?
 - What tension is experienced or addressed?
 - What is the climax of the story?
 - What is the main lesson learned from the story?

- 3) The Follow-up**
 - What reactions did the people have to this story?
 - What explanation did Jesus provide, if any?
 - Were there any other stories or teachings that accompanied this parable?
 - What is the deeper spiritual application of the story?

Caution: there is one main point, and every statement in the story drives to this point. However, not every detail necessarily has a deeper significance or spiritual comparison.

Matthew 13:10 (NLT)

His disciples came and asked him, "Why do you use parables when you talk to the people?"

Why did Jesus speak in parables that were often hard to understand? Why did he not just explain things clearly?

Jesus' Reply:

Matthew 13:11-13 (NLT)

¹¹ He replied, "You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not.

¹² To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them. ¹³ That is why I use these parables, For they look, but they don't really see. They hear, but they don't really listen or understand.

Did Jesus' explanation help or make things more confusing? What does he mean?

Jesus had two main reasons for using parables:

- 1) To _____ truth
- 2) To _____ truth

What are some other advantages of using parables to teach?

What are some modern-day examples of parables or allegories?

SECULAR EXAMPLE:

BAA, BAA, BLACK SHEEP (original version)

Baa Baa Black Sheep
have you any wool?
Yes, merry, have I,
three bags full.
One for my master,
one for my dame,
one for the little boy
who lives down the lane.

What was the point of this poetic parable?

Bag 1: Master:

Bag 2: Dame:

Bag 3: Little boy down the lane:
Frustrations of being "fleeced"!

What were the "secrets" of the kingdom Jesus was talking about?

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

Parable	Matthew	Mark	Luke
Lamp Under a Basket	5:14-16	4:21-22	
The Wise & Foolish Builder	7:24-27		6:47-49
New Cloth on Old Garment	9:16	2:21	5:36
New Wine in Old Wineskins	9:17	2:22	5:37-38
The Four Soils	13:3-23	4:1-20	8:4-15
The Tares	13:24-30		
The Mustard Seed	13:31-32	4:30-32	13:18-19
The Leaven	13:33		13:20-21
The Hidden Treasure	13:44		
The Pearl of Great Price	13:45-46		
Fishnet	13:47-50		
House Owner	13:52		
The Lost Sheep	18:12-14		15:3-7
The Unmerciful Servant	18:23-35		
Workers in the Vineyard	20:1-16		
Two Sons	21:28-32		
The Wicked Tenants	21:33-44	12:1-12	20:9-18
Wedding Feast	22:1-14		14:16-24
Fig Tree	24:32	13:28-29	21:29-30
Faithful and Wicked Servants	24:45-51		12:42-48
The Ten Virgins	25:1-13		
The Talents of Money	25:14-30		
Secretly Growing Seed		4:26-29	
Servants keeping watch		13:34-37	
The Two Debtors			7:41-43
The Good Samaritan			10:30-37
Friend at Night			11:5-8
The Rich Fool			12:16-21
Waiting Servants			12:35-40
Barren Fig Tree			13:6-9
Lowest Seat			14:7-11
Wise Planner			14:28-33
The Lost Coin			15:8-10
The Lost Son/Prodigal			15:11-32
The Shrewd Manager			16:1-9
The Rich Man and Lazarus (parable?)			16:19-31
Humble Servant			17:7-10
The Persistent Widow			18:1-8
The Pharisee and Tax Collector			18:9-14
The Ten Minas			19:11-27

PARABLE OF THE FOUR SOILS

Mark 4:1-9 (NLT)

¹ Once again Jesus began teaching by the lakeshore. A very large crowd soon gathered around him, so he got into a boat. Then he sat in the boat while all the people remained on the shore. ² He taught them by telling many stories in the form of parables, such as this one: ³ “Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed. ⁴ As he scattered it across his field,

1: *some of the seed fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate it.*

2: ⁵ *Other seed fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seed sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But the plant soon wilted under the hot sun, and since it didn’t have deep roots, it died.*

3: ⁷ *Other seed fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants so they produced no grain.*

4: ⁸ *Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!”⁹ Then he said, “Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand.”*

THE CONTEXT:

What is the context of this story? Who is Jesus speaking to?

What do you think some of the various motives might have been?

THE STORY:

Draw pictures illustrating the four types of soil and their effects.

1

2

3

4

What do the following elements represent?

The Sower:

The Seed:

The Path:

The Birds:

The Rocky Soil:

The Sun:

The Thorns:

The Good Soil:

The Crop:

THE FOLLOW-UP:

Mark 4:10, 13-20 (NLT)

¹⁰ Later, when Jesus was alone with the twelve disciples and with the others who were gathered around, they asked him what the parables meant.

¹³ Then Jesus said to them, "If you can't understand the meaning of this parable, how will you understand all the other parables?" ¹⁴ The farmer plants seed by taking God's word to others.

¹⁵ The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away.

¹⁶ The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy.

¹⁷ But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word.

¹⁸ The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word, ¹⁹ but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced.

²⁰ And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"

What is the overall message Jesus was trying to get across?

What are the implications for each person in this story?

Have you seen people as represented by these four soils? Without sharing names or specifics, can you give insights as to what you saw happening?

Which kind of dirt are you, or more tactfully stated, where do you place yourself in this story?

Do you see any influences that could potentially cause you to fall from the spiritual journey you have started?

How can we ensure we represent the productive soil?

The parables of Jesus contain many thought-provoking truths about the nature of the kingdom of God: what it is like, when it will fully come, who will be accepted into the kingdom, who won't be, how to prepare for its arrival, and the signs of its coming.

We encourage you to read through the parables carefully, reflecting on each truth Jesus is mysteriously presenting as a riddle, and consider how they relate to you right now.

SESSION 12: THE RESURRECTION

Understanding the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NLT)

³ I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. ⁴ He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. ⁵ He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷ Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him.

We understand the death of Jesus was necessary to pay the death price for our sinful actions, but why was the resurrection of Jesus so essential?

In the Corinthian church, some were arguing that there was no physical resurrection of believers. Paul responded by arguing that if there is no resurrection of believers, then even Jesus was not raised. He argued that the resurrection of Jesus prepared the way for us to be physically raised with new bodies as well.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19 (NLT)

¹² But tell me this—since we preach that Christ rose from the dead, why are some of you saying there will be no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ For if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. ¹⁵ And we apostles would all be lying about God—for we have said that God raised Christ from the grave. But that can't be true if there is no resurrection of the dead. ¹⁶ And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. ¹⁸ In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! ¹⁹ And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.

In this passage, what are all the implications for us if Jesus was not raised from the dead? In each case discuss your thoughts as to why this is significant?

1) vs.14 The Apostles' preaching is _____
Why?

2) vs.14 Your faith is _____
Why?

3) vs.15 The Apostles are _____
Why?

4) vs.17 Your faith is _____; you are _____
Why?

5) vs.18 Those who have died are _____
Why?

6) vs 19 We are to be _____
Why?

Through the indwelling of the Spirit of the resurrected Christ, our standing with God changes in several ways. Discuss each theological term and what you think it means.

1) Propitiation

1 John 4:10 (ESV)

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

What does propitiation mean?

2) Justification

Romans 5:18 (ESV)

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

What does justification mean?

3) Sanctification

1 Corinthians 6:11 (ESV)

And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 (ESV)

³ For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, ⁵ not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;

What does sanctification mean?

Two expressions of sanctification:

a)

b)

4) Regeneration

Titus 3:5 (ESV)

...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...

What does regeneration mean?

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

The above terms are dependent on both the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave.

1 Corinthians 15:20 (NLT)

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.

What does it mean when Paul says Jesus is the first of a great harvest?

What do you think our new bodies will be like at the final resurrection?

What was Jesus' resurrected body like?

1 Corinthians 15:35-37, 42-44 (ESV)

³⁵ But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" ³⁶ You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.

⁴² So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

What are some advantages of this new body?

The new body:

- 1) It will be raised _____
- 2) It will be raised _____
- 3) It will be raised _____
- 4) It will be raised _____

The following passages are directly related to the message of the hope of Jesus' return and our resurrection.

1 Thessalonians 4:18 (NIV)

Therefore encourage each other with these words.

How might the hope of the resurrection be an encouragement to us in the present?

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NIV)

Therefore [in light of the resurrection], my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

How might the hope of the resurrection help us to stand firm?

How might the hope of the resurrection motivate us to give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord?

What is the most exciting thing to you about the resurrection?

What may be a disconcerting reality about the hope of the resurrection?

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SESSION 13: THE GREAT COMMISSION

After Jesus' death and resurrection, he appeared to his disciples to declare that their work was just beginning. Jesus made reconciliation with God possible, and now it was up to the disciples to spread the news.

Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

What is the significance of Jesus being given "all authority"?

When Satan tempted Jesus, he claimed that the authority over the world had been given to him, and he would be willing to give it to Jesus if he worshiped him (Luke 4:6-7). Jesus refused.

On what basis is the authority over the world taken from Satan and given to Jesus?

What is a "disciple"?

How does one become a disciple?

Why are we to go to all nations?

What do these following passages reveal to us about God's intent all through Scripture?

Genesis 12:2-3 (NLT) God's Blessing to Abram

² *I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others.* ³ *I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families [nations] on earth will be blessed through you."*

Psalm 67:1-2 (ESV)

¹ *May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us,* ² *that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.*

Mark 11:15-17 (NLT)

¹⁵ *When they arrived back in Jerusalem, Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the people buying and selling animals for sacrifices. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves,* ¹⁶ *and he stopped everyone from using the Temple as a marketplace.* ¹⁷ *He said to them, "The Scriptures declare, 'My Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations,' but you have turned it into a den of thieves."*

Why was Jesus angry in the Temple?

THE END PICTURE

Revelation 7:9-10 (NLT)

⁹ *After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands.* ¹⁰ *And they were shouting with a mighty shout, "Salvation comes from our God who sits on the throne and from the Lamb!"*

What excites you about this picture?

What will it take for this to become a reality?

When will Jesus return?

Matthew 24:14 (NLT)

And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come.

Luke 24:46-47 (NLT)

⁴⁶ And he said, “Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. ⁴⁷ It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: ‘There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.’

We are told in the Great Commission to teach people to obey everything that Jesus commanded us. What is everything Jesus commanded us?

Romans 10:14-15 (NLT)

¹⁴ But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? ¹⁵ And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”

What does this passage say is the key to others coming to faith?

How often do the people around you hear you TALK about God and a relationship with him? Share.

What fears do we have about sharing the good news of Jesus with others?

Have you ever had the privilege of leading someone into a relationship with Jesus? Share.

Start praying that God will show you how to invest in someone’s life so that he/she could enter into a relationship with God as well.

EVERY BELIEVER IS CALLED TO MAKE DISCIPLES.

This requires **intentionality** and **strategy**.

Acts 1:8 (NLT)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

What was Jesus’ discipleship strategy for the early church, according to this verse?

How can you start fulfilling this mandate through your life?

Questions for consideration:

- Does every believer play the same role in reaching others?
- Does every believer make disciples on his own?
- What role does the “church” play vs. your personal role?

SESSION 14: THE COMING KING

Acts 1:6-11 (NLT)

⁶ So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?”

⁷ He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

⁹ After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. ¹⁰ As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them.

¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!”

What was the point of the angel’s rebuke?

In what way did the angel imply Jesus will return?

Matthew 24:30-31 (NLT)

³⁰ And then at last, the sign that the Son of Man is coming will appear in the heavens, and there will be deep mourning among all the peoples of the earth. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send out his angels with the mighty blast of a trumpet, and they will gather his chosen ones from all over the world—from the farthest ends of the earth and heaven.

Why do you think it is taking so long for Jesus to return?

2 Peter 3:8-9 (NLT)

⁸ But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. ⁹ The 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.

What was Peter’s rationale for Jesus taking so long to return?

Matthew 24:14 (NLT)

And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come.

How many nations (people groups) have yet to hear the gospel preached to them?

Have you ever heard someone predict when Christ is going to return?

What is your opinion about how close we might be to Jesus' return?

Mark 13:32-33 (NLT)

³² However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. ³³ And since you don't know when that time will come, be on guard! Stay alert!

In the following passage, quietly read and underline the signs evident right before Christ returns. Share what you discovered.

Matthew 24:3-51 (NLT)

³ Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives. His disciples came to him privately and said, "Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign will signal your return and the end of the world?"

⁴ Jesus told them, "Don't let anyone mislead you, ⁵ for many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah.' They will deceive many. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately.

⁷ Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world. ⁸ But all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.

⁹ "Then you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers. ¹⁰ And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other. ¹¹ And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people. ¹² Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold.

¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come.

¹⁵ "The day is coming when you will see what Daniel the prophet spoke about—the sacrilegious object that

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causes desecration standing in the Holy Place.” (Reader, pay attention!) ¹⁶ “Then those in Judea must flee to the hills. ¹⁷ A person out on the deck of a roof must not go down into the house to pack. ¹⁸ A person out in the field must not return even to get a coat. ¹⁹ How terrible it will be for pregnant women and for nursing mothers in those days. ²⁰ And pray that your flight will not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ For there will be greater anguish than at any time since the world began. And it will never be so great again. ²² In fact, unless that time of calamity is shortened, not a single person will survive. But it will be shortened for the sake of God’s chosen ones.

²³ “Then if anyone tells you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah,’ or ‘There he is,’ don’t believe it. ²⁴ For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God’s chosen ones. ²⁵ See, I have warned you about this ahead of time. ²⁶ “So if someone tells you, ‘Look, the Messiah is out in the desert,’ don’t bother to go and look. Or, ‘Look, he is hiding here,’ don’t believe it!

²⁷ For as the lightning flashes in the east and shines to the west, so it will be when the Son of Man comes. ²⁸ Just as the gathering of vultures shows there is a carcass nearby, so these signs indicate that the end is near. ²⁹ “Immediately after the anguish of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will give no light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ And then at last, the sign that the Son of Man is coming will appear in the heavens, and there will be deep mourning among all the peoples of the earth. And they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send out his angels with the mighty blast of a trumpet, and they will gather his chosen ones from all over the world—from the farthest ends of the earth and heaven.

³² “Now learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches bud and its leaves begin to sprout, you know that summer is near. ³³ In the same way, when you see all these things, you can know his return is very near, right at the door. ³⁴ I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass from the scene until all these things take place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear. ³⁶ “However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows.

³⁷ “When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah’s day. ³⁸ In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat. ³⁹ People didn’t realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes. ⁴⁰ “Two men will be working together in the field; one will be taken, the other left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding flour at the mill; one will be taken, the other left. ⁴² “So you, too, must keep watch! For you don’t know what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would keep watch and not permit his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.

⁴⁵ “A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them. ⁴⁶ If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward. ⁴⁷ I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns. ⁴⁸ But what if the servant is evil and thinks, ‘My master won’t be back for a while,’ ⁴⁹ and he begins beating the other servants, partying, and getting drunk? ⁵⁰ The master will return unannounced and unexpected,

⁵¹ and he will cut the servant to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

What are some of your reactions to the above passage?

What are some of the “birth pains” that you see already increasing?

What are some of the signs we are still waiting to see unveiled?

Revelation 19:11-16 (NLT)

¹¹ Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war. ¹² His eyes were like flames of fire, and on his head were many crowns. A name was written on him that no one understood except himself. ¹³ He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his title was the Word of God. ¹⁴ The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed him on white horses. ¹⁵ From his mouth came a sharp sword to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will release the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a winepress. ¹⁶ On his robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords.

What reactions does this description of Jesus evoke in you?

How does the picture of Jesus in these verses contrast with how you perceived him in the gospels?

In what ways might this passage complete the picture you have of Jesus?

What role will believers play after Christ returns?

2 Timothy 2:11-12 (NLT)

¹¹ This is a trustworthy saying: If we die with him, we will also live with him. ¹² If we endure hardship, we will reign with him. If we deny him, he will deny us.

Revelation 22:4-5 (NLT)

⁴ And they will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. ⁵ And there will be no night there—no need for lamps or sun—for the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever.

How should we live in light of the fact that Jesus will be returning and we will reign with him?

2 Peter 3:14-15 (NLT)

¹⁴ And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight. ¹⁵ And remember, the Lord's patience gives people time to be saved. This is what our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him—

What might you need to adjust in your life to align yourself with the truth that Christ is going to return?

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