

Beginning the Adventure

Becoming a
Follower
of Jesus Christ

Discipleship 101

Welcome

Hopefully this is the beginning of your great adventure:
A lifelong adventure of getting to know Jesus Christ, not just a name on a sheet of paper but as a real person who cares about your life. As you discover Jesus Christ you will begin to love Him.

When you increase in your love for Him you can't help but obey Him. As you obey Christ you will discover that you are becoming like Christ. What does it mean to become like Christ? Sounds kind of hard to get a handle on, doesn't it.

That is what this series of studies is all about. Take a peek at some of the qualities Christ wants to make a part of your life as they are found in Galatians 5:22-23. Sounds good, huh!

Format:

Time: You will need at least an hour a week of class time and an hour or two of study time.

Materials Needed:

A Bible, preferably New American Standard, New International Version or the New King James.

A Notebook and

Bible Dictionary. (Your church should have one in their library.)

What to Expect:

Honest sharing about life
Time to pray
Bible Verse Memorization
Digging into the Bible

What do you need:

An open heart before God.
A desire to learn and willingness to study.
Commitment to completing this study.

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Chapter One

Purpose in Life

What do you think is your purpose in life?

Kind of heavy thinking is needed for a question like that, but its important to know the answer. It is essential to discover what our purpose is in life so we don't miss out on what really matters.

Read the following verses to see what our purpose in life is from God's perspective.

Ecclesiastes 12:13

Jeremiah 9:23-24

Matthew 22:36-40

I Peter 1:15-16

Galatians 5:13

Galatians 5:22-23

Christ wants us to know Him, love Him, obey Him, and have the proper qualities in our lives as we serve others. That's great. Why doesn't everybody rush out and do it. Read on!

In **Genesis 1:27-31** it states that God made man and that His creation was good. Later in **Genesis 3:8** we find Adam and Eve, who had fellowship with God, now hiding from God. What happened? Read **Genesis 2:15-17** and **3:1-7, 14-19**. Write out your answer.

Man had a good thing going with God, but when he sinned it caused a separation between himself and God. Man chose to satisfy his own desires rather than have fellowship with God.

You might ask, what does that have to do with me? Adam sinned, not me, so why should I have to suffer? Well, Adam is the father of the human race and the entire human race was in Adam when he sinned. Read **Romans 5:12**. What came to all men?

Read **Romans 3:23**. What is the condition of all men?

Man is unable to fulfill his purpose in life because of his sin. God was aware of man's hopeless condition and because of His great love, moved to offer eternal hope. God has offered a solution to man's sin problem. **Jesus Christ** is our hope of a relationship with God.

NOTES:

For next week memorize **John 14:6** and **John 3:16**.

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Chapter Two

What's the solution? New Life - Salvation

1. What did Christ do for us?

Read **Romans 5:6-9**

1 Peter 2:24

2 Corinthians 5:21

That's great. Christ demonstrated His love toward us by dying on the cross. But what's so special about Christ? Didn't a lot of men die on the cross? Sure, but none like Christ.

Why was Christ special?

Ephesians 1:7

1 Peter 3:18 (look up the word *just*)

Hebrews 4:15

It's clear that Christ died in our place and that His death was sufficient because He was without sin, but how do you make it count in your own life? **The first step** is to admit you are a sinner and need to have help. **Acts 2:38** states that you need to repent. Look up **repent** in a Bible Dictionary and record what you discover.

Inside you have been aware of your sin and know it must be something with which God is not pleased.

Read **1 John 1:9** for the solution.

Once you ask God to forgive you of your sin, you are ready to receive Christ and His offer of life forever.

Read **Romans 6:23**. How is eternal life described?

Read **John 1:12**. When you accept what Christ did for you on the cross and believe that it is sufficient for payment of your sin debt, what do you have the right to become?

Being able to have fellowship with God is possible when you:

- Have a change of heart about your sin and ask Christ to forgive you.
- Receive Christ's gift of life forever by believing that He died for *you* and that it was sufficient to pay for your sin.
- Realize it is all possible by the grace of God apart from any works of your own.

2. What happened?

A lot of great things happened all at the same time. You separate it only to understand them as a unit.

Read the following verses to see what happens when you repent and accept Christ's payment on your behalf.

Titus 3:5-7

2 Corinthians 5:17

Ephesians 1:17

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Philippians 3:20

Romans 8:9-11

2 Peter 1:3

A lot more has happened than what you probably realized. It is amazing what God is doing in our lives and we don't even know it.

Being a part of God's family is an exciting reality. When we consider what we were before God, while in our sin, and what Christ did to bring us out, it helps us to begin to understand the meaning of Grace.

Even though all these things happened, you may not have felt a thing because it happened in the spiritual realm, which your physical senses don't respond to. Yet many people feel a sense of freedom because their guilt has caused them to actually feel their bondage. But this is not normative for everybody.

For next week please memorize **Ephesians 2:8-9**.

Chapter Three

Loving God

Matthew 22:36-37 makes it clear that loving God is the most important thing in life. But it is imperative to know *who is God?*

There is only one God who exists in three persons. This concept is known as the Trinity of God. Man is unable to fully comprehend how God can be one, *and* exist as three persons. Yet it is clearly taught in the Bible. The concept of the Trinity of God is the major difference between true Christianity and false religions or cults.

Let's look at what the Bible teaches about who *God* is.

Isaiah 45:5

Exodus 20:1-3

Psalms 96:4

Isaiah 6:1-3

Exodus 3:14

Psalm 50:1, 7, 12

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Jesus Christ:

John 1:1-3, 14

John 5:22-23

John 8:19

John 8:58

John 10:33

Hebrews 1:8

Holy Spirit:

John 14:16-17

John 16:13

Acts 5:3,4

-10-

Matthew 28:19-20

Romans 8:6

1 Corinthians 12:11

2 Corinthians 3:17

Hebrews 10:29

There is but one God yet He exists in three persons. Jesus Christ is fully God and also fully man. This is the miracle of the incarnation, God with us. The Holy Spirit is God with all the attributes of personality as opposed to a force or display of God's power.

This is who God is. Now let's discover why it so important to love Him.

Ephesians 1:3-4

Ephesians 2:4-7

Philippians 2:5-11

1 Thessalonians 3:12

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Titus 3:3-7

1 Peter 1:3-4

1 John 3:16

1 John 4:8

Once we understand that God is the Great, Holy and Almighty Creator, and through Jesus Christ we have forgiveness of our sins and access to eternal life, and through the Holy Spirit we are made alive spiritually, transformed mentally and secured eternally, how can we help but to bow down before God and seek to worship and love Him with all our mind, heart, soul and strength.

The values of our culture should truly become less important.

Suggestion: Begin to read the Bible at least 15 minutes every day. Consider Proverbs or Luke.

Memory Verse for next time: **Matthew 22:36-37**

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Chapter Four

Beginning to Walk ~ The Fruit of the Spirit

So far we have discovered our purpose in life, our greatest problem, and God's answer to it. We've also seen just who God is and why we should love Him. But where do we go from here?

Christ said that if the Holy Spirit lives within you and empowers you, that your life will have certain characteristics. These characteristics are described as fruit. Everyone knows that fruit trees always produce fruit according to the type of tree they are, i.e. apple trees produce apples, etc. Likewise people produce certain fruit or characteristics. Christians are to produce the fruit of the Spirit as opposed to the fruit of darkness (also called the deeds of the flesh.)

Read **Galations 5:16-21** and list several "fruits" of darkness.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

6.

Now read **Galatians 5:22-23** and list the “fruit of the Spirit.”

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

-13-

8.

9.

Quite a contrast. Yet you may ask, what about the good things a non-Christian does? Aren't those good? As a matter of fact, they can be better than doing evil. But when one does good things without a desire to please God, they are of no use. However, only God knows a person's true motivation.

After looking at that list, you may think it is impossible to produce these characteristics of fruit all the time. You would be right. It is impossible. That is why Christ gave us the Holy Spirit to help us.

Read **Romans 12:1-2**. What does it say we should do?

The word transformed comes from the word which means metamorphosis, indicating a complete change. It also states this change comes by the renewing of the mind. But exactly how does this renewal take place?

The first step is to be a believer in Jesus Christ. When you become a believer, the Holy Spirit comes to live within you. Look at the following verses. What do they say about the Spirit coming to live within Christians?

Romans 8:9-11

Romans 8:16

2 Timothy 1:14

1 Corinthians 12:13

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

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The Holy Spirit gives us life and the ability to be transformed. Because the Holy Spirit lives within you doesn't mean you have lost the ability or the responsibility to exercise your will. We must still *allow* the Spirit to assist us in our obedience to Christ.

The second step is to ask the Spirit to fill us, which is a request to be "power-encouraged" by the Spirit.

Read **Ephesians 5:18**. Does it seem like the statement "be filled" is a command or friendly advice?

Being filled with the Spirit means to confess any known sin and submitting your will to the moral will of God because you desire to honor Christ, asking the Lord for the strength to overcome your weaknesses. It is the idea of putting up your sail by making the right choices, thereby allowing the wind of the Spirit to move you in the right direction.

How much of our sail we put up depends upon our willingness to confess our sins and submit to the moral will of God. The more we are honest before God and deal with our sin, the higher our sail will be. This is a process that may occur numerous times

throughout the day. Being filled with the Spirit should result in producing the fruit of the Spirit, resisting temptation, and sharing the Good News.

Look at these verses to see what people did when filled by the Spirit.

Luke 1:41-42

Luke 4:1-11

Acts 4:8

The process of being filled with the Spirit doesn't take away our responsibility to exercise our will, but rather helps our will to choose God's way instead of our own. We are still commanded to make the right choices, knowing that God will help us do it.

Read the following verses about our will in relation to obedience. What do they call us to do?

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Philippians 4:8

Colossians 3:1-2

Romans 6:11-14

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Notice how the verses talk about setting our minds on the things that are right, thinking about things that are proper and not allowing our bodies to be used for the things that are against Jesus Christ. These are all statements about the exercise of our will. Choices that we must make between good and evil on a daily basis. This is the process of walking with God. Being empowered by God to make the right choices with our will, so that we are obedient to the moral will of God.

Be filled and be transformed:

1. Confess known sin.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you (empower, encourage).
3. Set your mind on the things that are pure, wholesome, good, and proper (includes avoiding temptation).
4. Make the right choices according to the moral will of God.
5. Check for fruit.

Don't forget to set a goal for reading your Bible at least 15 minutes each day.

Please memorize **Galations 5:22-23**.

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Chapter Five

Talking with God - Prayer and Forgiveness

Praying is something most people agree ought to be done, but not many are actually doing it. The Bible has a lot to say about prayer, but most importantly, God wants to hear from you today.

Why pray? Check it out.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

1 Timothy 2:1, 8

Matthew 6:9

Luke 6:12

Colossians 4:2

We are commanded to pray, given an example of praying by Christ, and told what should be included in our prayers. But does God really hear and respond to our prayers? Isn't God sovereign and not given to changing His mind? That's true, but God knows what you're going to ask before you ask it, and already has your prayer taken into consideration. Prayer does make a difference.

Read the following verses: What do they teach about the effect of prayer?

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James 5:16

Acts 10:31

1 Peter 3:12

Matthew 21:22

It is obvious that prayer can be effective. So, why aren't all our prayers answered the way we would like? You really *believed* just like **Matthew 21:22** said to do. What happened?

Christ has placed some qualifiers on prayer *for our protection*. Can you imagine what it would be like in our world if everybody's prayers were answered just the way they were requested.

Read these verses to find the qualifiers to prayer:

John 14:13-14

John 15:7

James 4:3

1 John 5:14

Once we understand that we should pray, that it makes a difference and that we need to meet certain conditions for it to be effective, the next question is for what should we pray?

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Glad you asked. Check it out.

Luke 22:40

Matthew 7:7-11

Luke 6:28

Colossians 1:9

James 1:5

James 5:13

Philippians 4:6

1 John 1:9

Romans 10:1

Psalm 95:1-3

Since there are so many things to pray about, it seems that we better get to it. Set aside a special time each day for prayer. It may be difficult at first, but it will soon become a real high point of your day.

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You also may want to make a list of requests or praises with which to refresh your memory each day. Don't limit yourself to prayer just during the special time. The verse "pray without ceasing" means that throughout the day we should talk to God, making requests and praising Him for our many blessings. As we go through the day, the Spirit may bring to mind sins that need to be dealt with. Just confess them to God and trust His grace for forgiveness-avoid the sin-and keep going. Confess and press on.

Always remember God is our Father, but He is also Lord. Keep the two in balance. But no matter what, He wants to hear from you.

Please memorize **Psalm 95:3-4** for next week.

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Chapter Six

Knowing God

How to study the Bible

God is a real person who is Lord of the universe, yet He is spirit and not tangibly visible to us as humans. God became man in Jesus Christ so that we could have a tangible contact with Him. Since Jesus Christ has bodily returned to heaven, we no longer see Him; but He did not leave us. He is still here through the Holy Spirit.

Christ also has provided His perspective on what life is all about through the Bible. This is not just good advice, but rather divine directions for which we are accountable. The Bible is very important for what it tells us about God. It is our tangible link with an Almighty God.

You might even call it a love letter to His children. The actual pages and print aren't critical, but what its words communicate is of utmost importance. Just like a letter from a father to his dearly loved children who are far away, the letter is cherished, not for its material worth, but for the message it carries. Let us spend time reading God's Word that we may learn to love our Heavenly Father, its author.

Read these verses to discover some principles about God's Word.

Its Validity. Why can we trust the Bible to be God's Word?

2 Timothy 3:16-17

2 Peter 1:20-21

Matthew 5:18

Its Power. How is it different from other books?

Romans 1:16

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Romans 10:17

1 Corinthians 1:18

Its Purpose. Why is it important for our lives?

Psalm 119:9-11

1 Corinthians 10:6,11

Colossians 1:10

Colossians 3:16

Psalm 119:105

How can we understand the Bible?

When the Bible speaks about the natural man being unable to accept the things of God (**1 Cor. 2:14**) it is not that he cannot understand the meaning of the words. It is that he refuses to *accept* the meaning as valid for himself.

The Spirit of God will assist us in accepting the concepts in the Bible so that we can apply them to our lives.

What do these verses relate about the Holy Spirit helping us to know God's Word (which is to know God)?

John 16:13

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1 Corinthians 2:12-13

Interpreting the Bible

God wants us to know Him. We come to know Him through the Bible. The Spirit of God assists us in understanding and accepting what we discover in the Word. But we have the responsibility of properly interpreting the words of the text.

The Bible is like any other book in the sense that it was written in a human language. The words mean specific things and one should never read into the words meanings that are not there. *If the plain literal sense makes good sense, don't look for some other sense.*

One can never state "this verse means the following because the Spirit told me." We must always base an interpretation on the normal grammatical meaning of the text.

The Bible is a book written by people to be understood by people. It is not written in a mysterious or spiritual language.

The following principles are important for interpreting the Bible.

1. We should interpret the Bible in its normal grammatical sense.
2. We should always keep a passage within the context of its chapter, the book, and the overall flow of the Bible.
3. We should take into consideration that God is communicating a timeless principle within a cultural setting.
4. Be aware of the different styles of grammar that may be used such as figurative language, similes, metaphors, etc.
5. Know who wrote the book, to whom the book was written and what the purpose was in writing the book.
6. Always interpret scripture with scripture, using clear passages to clarify confusing passages.
7. Be aware of principles that are clearly taught in the Bible, but beyond man's capacity to comprehend. They can't be fully explained (Jesus Christ fully God and fully man, free will/election, etc.).

When we consider that man's knowledge of God is primarily dependent upon knowing the Bible, it is easy to see the importance of understanding it properly.

To know God is to love God; to love God is to obey Christ. When we obey Christ we become like Christ, and the more we are like Christ the more we want to know God.

Spend time getting to know God every day.

Please memorize **2 Timothy 3:16-17** for next week.

Chapter Seven

Obeying God

Call to Servanthood

In our world we are encouraged to love ourselves, promote ourselves, and look out for number one. But Christ calls us to a lifestyle that is totally different from that of our world. The concept of life that Christ advocates is in fact just the opposite of the world.

Look at the following verses. What is Christ teaching?

Matthew 16:24

Matthew 6:31-34

Matthew 6:19-20

Philippians 2:3-4

Philippians 3:8

Not quite the prosperity and selfish philosophy that is advocated in our world. Christ commands us to deny ourselves, seek to promote others and seek after eternal riches. The things done for Christ are the only things that will last. As Paul records in **Philippians 3:8**, he considers all his earthly achievements to be nothing in comparison to his knowing Christ.

Obviously Christ wants us to excel in all that we do. We should be the best, but we should do it for one motivation—that it may be for God’s Glory Alone. It is not enough to do right; we must do right for the right reasons. No matter what career you choose, you can be an effective servant if you are the best you can be for God’s Glory.

Look at the following verses. How inclusive is our responsibility to Glorify God?

Colossians 3:17

1 Corinthians 10:31

Christ wants us to honor Him in all areas of life by denying ourselves, seeking after the things of God, looking to encourage others, and excelling in our professions—all with the right motivation.

It is so easy to talk about how much we love God or seek God or want to honor God. It’s not exactly popular to advocate *hating* God. But “talk is cheap” the old saying goes.

How does a person really prove that he loves God? Read these verses to find out.

John 14:15, 21, 23

1 John 2:4-5

The true test of commitment or love for God is shown by a life that is *increasingly* obedient to the moral will of God, motivated only by a desire to please God. Not in order to obtain salvation, but grateful for the salvation already received. It is important at this point to identify exactly what is the moral will of God that we are to obey.

What is the moral will of God? Check it out.

1 John 4:11

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Ephesians 4:29

Ephesians 5:18

Galatians 5:15, 22-23

Galatians 6:2

Galatians 6:10

1 Corinthians 6:18

1 Corinthians 10:14

Matthew 28:19-20

Romans 13:14

2 Corinthians 9:7

2 Peter 1:5-9

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Christ has promised that if we seek Him and are filled with the Spirit, our lives will be transformed. Believers never arrive at perfection, but they should be getting closer every day. As we make the right choices every day, this is our act of worship to God. Worshipping God is a lifestyle of obedience to the moral will of God. It is being the right person on the inside as we do the right things on the outside.

Remember-

- **Know God**
- **Love God**
- **Obey Christ** (ministry to our world)
- **Become like Christ**

Memorize **Matthew 16:24** for next week.

Chapter Eight

Loving People

Call to Action

If you asked ten different people to define “love” you would probably get ten different answers. It is close to being the most overused and misused word in our language.

The Bible uses the word love in several different ways. In reference to man *loving* God it is always the Greek word **agape**. Agape could be defined as a demonstration of attitudes or actions which are in the best interest of others from God’s perspective, from a heart of joy, even if they don’t deserve it or appreciate it, expecting nothing in return.

The focus is on the commitment of the one expressing the love, rather than on the worthiness of the one being loved.

How easy it is to say “I love you” without realizing what that should really mean.

Read **1 John 3:16**. How do we know when we truly love someone?

Read **Romans 5:8**. What did God prove?

Agape is also used to describe the love that should exist between a husband and wife and toward our enemies. This is significant since it is the same type of love shown to us by God. The Bible speaks of a second meaning of the word “love” which is **phileo**. This type of love involves feelings—as in having a tender affection for someone. It is used to describe the relationship of a father to a son, Christ to His disciples, and believers to

believers. (Philadelphia—a variation of phileo refers to people caring for others such as brotherly love.) If we truly have agape (committed love) it should develop into phileo (tender affection). One can have tender affection without agape, but one cannot have agape without tender affection. Love (agape) can only be shown by the action or attitudes it produces. Let's look at some verses to see what actions or attitudes will be shown if we truly love (agape).

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1 Corinthians 13:4-8

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

g.

h.

i.

j.

k.

l.

m.

n.

o.

1 John 2:5-6

1 John 4:21

1 John 4:7-8

1 John 5:3

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If these actions and attitudes are increasingly shown in our lives, we can be assured that we are moving toward becoming more loving toward God and others.

In our society, it is popular to present oneself as a loving, caring person. But the test of love is not what you say, but what you do (**1 John 3:18**), even when no one is looking. Some people put on a deceitful front in order to appear loving, but don't be fooled.

In **Jude 4, 12, & 16** what does Christ warn us about?

According to **Jude 21** , what should our response be?

Christ has called us to love others whether they are worthy or not. That sounds a little impossible, especially when someone is directly mistreating us. Immediately one may think of an abusing spouse, a rebellious child, or a self-seeking fellow employee that doesn't deserve love after what they have done. That may be true, but remember- loving someone is not dependent upon the worthiness of the one being loved.

Read **1 Peter 2:20-24**. What example did Christ give?

Read **1 John 4:10-11**. Why should we love an unloving person?

Loving someone doesn't mean you allow them to use you for a doormat. It may include a confrontation in order to correct the problem. It may also include staying away from someone to avoid conflict until the offending party is willing to accept correction.

Read **Colossians 1:28**. What is necessary for one to be complete in Christ?

Admonishing comes from the word "nouthetic" which means *confronting someone in order to correct them, motivated by your love (agape) for them*. Admonishing someone may be the most loving thing you could do.

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It is impossible to love someone who doesn't love you. That's why Christ has given us His Spirit that our will might be empowered and encouraged to love—even our enemies. Ask the Lord to fill you with His Spirit each time you are faced with the opportunity to love the seemingly unlovable.

It is not enough to just do right. We must do right with the right motive—agape love.

Please memorize **1 John 4:10**

Chapter Nine

Sharing your Faith

Spreading Hope

It's one thing to trust in Christ's finished work on the cross as the payment of our sin debt and our guarantee of life forever, but to tell someone else about it...*who me?*...you must be kidding. Probably one of the most difficult responsibilities of a disciple of Christ is to share one's faith with others. Since it is so difficult, why even worry about it?

Consider the following verses to see why.

Matthew 28:19-20

Acts 1:8

Romans 10:13-14

1 Thessalonians 2:5-9

There isn't room for doubt. We are commanded to share the **Good News**. It is important to understand this command as a privilege, not a burdensome task. What a great opportunity--sharing the greatest news in the universe. Since we are commanded to share the Good News, we better discover what exactly is this Good News.

Read these verses to find out.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

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Hebrews 9:14

John 20:31

So, why aren't Christians enthusiastically sharing the Good News? There are several reasons:

- Some of us just don't naturally socialize with others easily. Some find it difficult to begin conversations, much less sustain one.
- Some people are professing Christians, but don't truly possess eternal life. They have nothing to share--it's not real in their life.
- Culturally we have attached a stigma to any attempt by someone to convert another person. That is partially because of high pressure tactics, trickery, and fear used by various groups and cults in the recent past.

We should not stop sharing our faith just because it is sometimes seen as unacceptable. But we should keep in mind several principles:

- a. We are called to share the Good News in a loving, gentle manner with anyone who has a desire to listen.

1 Peter 3:15

2 Corinthians 5:20

- b. Our lives should be examples of Christian living so that it backs our verbal witness.

1 Peter 2:11-12

Philippians 1:27

- c. We are not responsible for making someone trust Christ-that is the work of the Holy Spirit. We present; the Spirit converts. It takes the work of the Spirit to change a man's heart.

John 6:44

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John 16:8

Romans 10:9-10

- d. We are to be sensitive to the many opportunities we have every day to share the Good News, even if it is only our encouragement for someone to seek the truth. Never feel obligated to share *all* of the Good News if it is not appropriate. Share as much truth as the person seems able to accept.
- e. Ask God to help you to care for people who are without hope. Don't be so caught up in your own life that you lose sight of the fact that God wants us to love the lost. Invest your time in things that will last forever. Truly love the lost whether they accept Christ or not.

How did Paul feel about the lost sheep of Israel?

Romans 9:2-3

How does God feel about the lost?

1 Timothy 2:3-4

John 3:16

- f. Feel free to change the way you present the Good News, but never change the Good News. Be creative without compromise.

1 Corinthians 9:22

Jude 3

This is the greatest responsibility as well as the greatest privilege for every Christian. But how do we start to get motivated for the task?

1. Take time to think and meditate about who Christ is and what He has done for you.

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Romans 8:1-2

Romans 6:23

Galatians 3:13

Philippians 4:14-19

2. Consider the destination of those who are lost and without hope.

Ephesians 2:12

Matthew 25:41

Hebrews 10:26-27

3. Think about what activities in your life interfere with you being available to be used of God for evangelism. How enduring are those activities? Will they be important to you 5, 10, 15 years from now?

Matthew 6:33

Matthew 6:19-21

4. Remember the exhortation in **John 14:15**. Let us not love the world for it will cause us to consider Christ's commands to be burdensome rather than joyful.

Hebrews 12:1-2

Always keep in mind that the closest thing to the heart of Christ is the redemption of lost people. Is it the closest thing to our hearts as well?

1 Timothy 1:15

Ask God for an opportunity to share the Good News this week. Record it and share it with the group.

Please memorize **Matthew 28:19-20** for next week.

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Chapter Ten

The Reliability of the Bible

Some of the most common questions you will hear are:

- How can you really trust the Bible-it was written by men?
- What makes it so special?

Obviously the Bible was written in a human language by almost 40 different human authors. But it alone is the most unique book ever written.

The Scriptures claim to be inspired by God. Inspiration doesn't mean the writers were inspired, but what they wrote was inspired. Inspiration in the biblical sense is "God-breathed" which means the Scriptures are the words of God recorded in human language.

The writers did not get "inspired" to write the Scriptures, but rather God used them, and their particular styles, to record God's words.

In our society someone may say “I felt inspired to write a song.” This is not the biblical sense of inspiration. That inspiration is from within the human spirit and is not the same as being inspired by God. It would be wrong to assume God prompted a particular song or book because you felt a special urge or prompting to write it.

Inspiration by God can only be claimed by those who were selected by God to write the Scriptures. No further Scripture is being written, therefore inspiration “God-breathed” is not occurring today.

What do these verses state about the Old Testament being the words of God?

Exodus 32:15-16

Jeremiah 1:2

2 Peter 1:20-21

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Notice that the ones to whom God spoke were already recognized as God’s special servants or prophets (Moses, Jeremiah). Prophets of God were known as the mouthpiece of God.

The New Testament also speaks about its authority. Read the following verses to discover its claim.

2 Timothy 3:16

Revelation 22:18-19

1 Thessalonians 2:13

Galatians 1:11-12

Some may state that it is not proper to use a book's own claims to prove the validity of the same. Taken alone, that would be true. But there is a process whereby the Bible has become accepted as being authentically the word of God. This process is called the test of canonicity. "Canon" means the rule by which something is measured or evaluated. The Scriptures have passed the test of evaluation and thus have become the ultimate rule by which everything else is measured.

The process of developing the Canon of Scripture:

A. Inspired by God.

Must be claimed by the material and show evidence of inspiration (without errors, contradictions, etc.).

B. Recognition by men of God and written by recognized men of God.

Prophets, apostles, those delegated by same.

C. Collection and preservation by the people of God.

Material that was accepted as being of proper authorship and accurate in content

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was preserved by the people and honored as Scripture.

A major dispute is ongoing between those who accept the Bible as God's inspired, inerrant and infallible Word and those who claim it just contains the Word of God or that it isn't the Word of God at all.

The original manuscripts on which the writers actually penned the scriptures are inspired by God and 100% without error. We believe, based on solid evidence, that the Bible we have today (New American Standard, New King James, etc.) are copies of the originals with an accuracy of 99.9%. Thus we justly declare the scriptures to be our only rule for faith and holy living. The one tenth of one percent that is debatable concerns aspects of the copies that affect no major doctrine and are mostly grammatical.

This solid evidence which we referred to is the over 20,000 ancient manuscripts containing all or parts of the Bible. By comparing manuscripts, it is possible to discover any discrepancies due to recording errors or intentional text corruption.

The earliest New Testament manuscripts are dated around 117 A.D. which is only 27 years after the death of the Apostle John. This counters the claim that the New Testament was passed down by word of mouth and corrupted. This is impossible due to the short time span between the time of the Apostles and the first copies of scripture thus far discovered.

The scriptures verify their authenticity and completeness. Read the following verses to discover what is taught about the scriptures.

Jude 3

John 5:36-39

John 5:45-47

John 19:33-37

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Titus 1:13

There are three areas which indicate the supernatural quality of the Bible, miracles, fulfilled prophecy and its unity.

The miracles were performed before thousands of eye witnesses and have never been shown to be false. (**John 10:37-38**)

The hundreds of prophecies about Christ that He fulfilled were humanly impossible to control, such as His virgin birth, location of birth, type of death and location of death.

The unity of the Bible, even though written by nearly 40 authors over a period of 1600 years with most not having access to what the others wrote, is nothing short of miraculous. The alleged contradictions are really just our own lack of understanding about what occurred that long ago. For example, the Bible talks about an ancient people called the Hittites. Some scholars scoffed at this saying there is no record of the Hittites ever existing. Yet recently an archeologist discovered these people.

The bottom line is that most people haven't really investigated the reliability of the Bible. The problem is the scriptures are the light which reveals man's sin and most would rather not deal with their sin, so they discredit the light.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

Hebrews 11:6

Please memorize **Matthew 5:18**

Now that you have completed this course, don't forget:

“Be a doer and not just a hearer.” James 1:22

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Beginning the Adventure Bible Memory Verses

Chapter 1 - John 14: 6

Jesus said to him: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me.”

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Chapter 2 - Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no none should boast.

Chapter 3 - Matthew 22:36-37

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”

And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the great and foremost commandment. And a second is like it “You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

Chapter 4 - Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Chapter 5 - Psalm 95:3-4

For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In whose hand are the depths of the earth; the peaks of the mountains are His also.

Chapter 6 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17

All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Chapter 7 - Matthew 16:24

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”

Chapter 8 - 1 John 4:10

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

Chapter 9 - Matthew 28:19-20

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Chapter 10 - Matthew 5:18

For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.

