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Introduction:

“Exploring Christ” is a bible study that looks at some of the core values associated with Christianity. This study series will be helpful for people wanting to find out about Christianity, new believers who are just starting out on their Christian journey and also for mature believers who want a firm understanding of the Christian faith to share with others. Our prayer for you is that as you grow as a Christian that God will reveal to you His plan and purpose for your life. All Christians are called to work together in God’s Kingdom. This journey is known as "Discipleship" or becoming a "Follower of Christ". This study series has been designed for you to read and reflect on each lesson – including the bible verses and questions and then discuss with a friend or in a small group discussion time including time to pray with each other.

After you have completed this booklet "Exploring Christ" we will move to chapter 2 of the journey called "Exploring Christ - Going Deeper."
Lesson 1

In the Beginning:

Whether you are doing this study because you are just intrigued to find out what Christianity is all about, you have given your life to Jesus and want to find what that means or you are an experienced Christian that wants to be confident in your faith and be able to share those beliefs with others remember that it’s a new day, a new sunrise, the beginning of a brand new adventure.

Fortunately you are not alone. God is with you each step of the way, your fellow traveller is there to assist you along the way and your church family has a vast array of life stories to encourage you by.

Respect and obey the LORD! This is the beginning of wisdom. To have understanding, you must know the Holy God. (CEV) Proverbs 9:10

“The ability to discern the essence of life begins with knowledge about God”. D.J.Louw

Hopefully throughout this study you will learn some new things about God and how His existence will impact your life. But let me assure you that Gods plan from the beginning was to have an intimate relationship with you and me. He was the one that created us with awesome abilities and purpose. You and I were Gods crowning achievement and we are encouraged to walk with Him daily. He wants you and me to be part of His life here on earth and promises that we will also be with Him when our time on earth has passed. It’s a love story that transcends time and space, it’s an eternal union.

Today you can be assured as King David was when he wrote:

“He makes me lie down in green pastures...He leads me beside still waters...He renews my soul...He guides me in His paths.” (CEV) Psalm 23:2-3

May this process enable your ‘head knowledge’ to become ‘heart knowledge.’ Your spiritual life is more than something you do but rather someone you become. May you realize that God is not only way up in heaven but that He is also with us by His Spirit and is interested in giving us a life filled with peace, direction, renewal and guidance on a daily basis here on earth.

May we live life together for the Glory of God, here, there and everywhere.

Discipleship Training Booklet

Page 4 of 39
This journey will give you **Hope.**

We put our hope in the LORD; he is our protector and our help. We are glad because of him; we trust in his holy name. May your constant love be with us, LORD, as we put our hope in you. (GNB) Psalm 33:20-22

“To anyone in any kind of suffering, Jesus Christ has earned the right to say, "Come unto me...bring your pain here to me. Together we will find a way to make use of it. I am your Redeemer. We will not waste a single tear". Eugenia Price

This journey will teach you about **Gratitude.**

I waited patiently for the Lord's help; then he listened to me and heard my cry. He pulled me out of a dangerous pit, out of the deadly quicksand. He set me safely on a rock and made me secure. He taught me to sing a new song, a song of praise to our God. Many who see this will take warning and will put their trust in the LORD. Happy are those who trust the LORD, who do not turn to idols or join those who worship false gods. You have done many things for us, O LORD our God; there is no one like you! You have made many wonderful plans for us. I could never speak of them all--- their number is so great! (GNB) Psalm 40:1-5

“My salvation does not hinge on my emotions. I have an official record. I have the Word of God: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God: that ye may know that ye have eternal life". Adrian Rogers

This journey will give you a sense of **Renewal.**

For this reason we never become discouraged. Even though our physical being is gradually decaying, yet our spiritual being is renewed day after day. And this small and temporary trouble we suffer will bring us a tremendous and eternal glory, much greater than the trouble. For we fix our attention, not on things that are seen, but on things that are unseen, What can be seen lasts only for a time, but what cannot be seen lasts forever. (GNB) 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

“What God has promised, He will accomplish--if, with His help, we are willing to set aside our fears, trust Him, and by faith take some new steps”. Gary J. Oliver

This journey will teach you about **Trust.**

“For me, the best time to pray is the very moment a tense situation or an unspiritual attitude overtakes me. God the Holy Spirit is always there, ready to help me gain victory in the spiritual battles I face--big or small”. Billy Graham.
This journey will teach you about **Truth**.

I passed on to you what I received, which is of the greatest importance: that Christ died for our sins, as written in the Scriptures; He was buried and that he was raised to life three days later, as written in the Scriptures; that he appeared to Peter and then to all twelve apostles. *Then he appeared to more than five hundred of his followers at once*, most of whom are still alive, although some have died. (GNB) **1 Corinthians 15:3-6**

Now, since our message is that Christ has been raised from death, how can some of you say that the dead will not be raised to life? If that is true, it means that Christ was not raised; and **if Christ has not been raised from death, then we have nothing to preach and you have nothing to believe.** (GNB) **1 Corinthians 15:12-14**

"*If Easter says anything to us today, it says this*: You can put truth in a grave, but it won’t stay there. You can nail it to a cross, wrap it up in winding sheets and shut it in winding sheets and shut it up in a tomb, but it will rise". **Unknown**

This journey will teach you about **Victory**.

So when this takes place, and the mortal has been changed into the immortal, then the scripture will come true: "Death is destroyed; victory is complete!" "Where, Death, is your victory? Where, Death, is your power to hurt?" Death gets its power to hurt from sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. **But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!** So then, my dear friends, stand firm and steady. (GNB) **1 Corinthians 15:54-58**

“*Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord’s service is ever useless. Heaven is more than a destination; it is a motivation. Knowing that we shall dwell in the heavenly city ought to make a difference in our lives here and now*”. **Warren W. Wiersbe**

This journey will teach you about **Perspective**.

No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below——**there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.** (GNB) **Romans 8:37-39**

“*Somehow we must reorient our lives to God. We must learn to see things from his perspective. We must allow Him to develop His character in us. We must let Him reveal His thoughts to us. Only then can we get a proper perspective on life*”. **Henry T. Blackaby**
Discussion Questions – Lesson 1

1. In one sentence write down how you would describe God?

2. What is one thing that you need hope for right now?

3. Read Corinthians 4:16-18. What does this verse mean to you?

4. Give a brief description of what you think heaven will be like?

5. “If Easter says anything to us today, it says this: You can put truth in a grave, but it won’t stay there.” Why do you think Jesus Christ dying for our sins and being raised from death is essential to the Christian belief?
Lesson 2

Sin

a) Definition of Sin a.k.a. Rebellng Against God

The New Testament was written primarily in the Greek language. The Greek word translated for “Sin” is the word "Hamartia" and it implies that when you aim at a target and are unable to hit it you “miss the mark”. Therefore, our inability to be able to obediently follow God's instruction causes us to disobey or rebel against His standards and transgress the rules set out by God.

b) * What is Meant by Original sin?

It is a moral condition of natural rebellion against God with which humans are born. Because of the sin of the first human beings (Adam and Eve, see Genesis 3:1-6), everyone since has been born morally flawed with an inherent impulse to act in disobedience / sin.

The idea of natural sin did not originate with Adam and Eve as it was a foreign concept but they were introduced to it from an external source. Adam and Eve were the cause of the fall and not temptation. There is no sin in being tempted for we have the ability to resist the temptation. But just as Adam and Eve, we also have the same leaning to suppress our inclination towards God in order to embrace the foreign concept of disobedience.

c) Consequences because of the Rebellion of Adam and Eve.

First, the natural image of God in humanity was damaged and partially lost. Human nature as it exists today is the tattered and corrupted remnant of God’s natural image. Although we have retained personality, intellect, self-determination and the other characteristic that make us human, faults (flaws) are routinely experienced yet excused as to how human nature is.

Second, the moral image of God was completely lost as Adams sin destroyed humanity’s pure and holy relationship with God. All moral and relational perfection had vanished and alas today an innate spirit of rebellion against God is common place as mankind strives to overcome their natural tendency towards evil in order to do good.

Third, sin had other practical consequences:
1) The perfect relationship with God was broken (Genesis 3:8 -- they hid from God)
2) The perfect relationship between Adam and Eve was broken (Genesis 3:12 -- He no longer saw her as his helper but rather as the one who had caused him to sin)
3) The perfect relationship with nature was broken (Genesis 3:17-18 -- man had to battle against certain elements of nature to survive)
4) Physical death became a consequence of sin (Genesis 3:19 -- death was introduced to the human experience)
5) Adam and Eve inflicted the reality and destruction of sin upon the entire human race (Revelation 20:12 -- The place once filled with peace and holiness was replaced with violence, greed, hatred, suffering, illness and death). (In the Shadow of Aldersgate, 69-80, D.L. Burnett)

d) **How does Sin affect my Daily Life?**

- Sin prevents me from enjoying God's presence.
- Sin hinders my spiritual growth.
- Sin detracts from having a meaningful relationship with God.

e) **Dead in My Sin.**

Even though God loves you and me and desires to have a meaningful relationship with us we are *separated* from Him as a result of our rebellion. It is therefore not until we repent and turn away from our sin and submit our lives to Jesus Christ that we are able to enter into God's presence. Repentance consequently opens the way into God's presence.

> We have then, my friends, complete freedom to go into the Most Holy Place by means of the death of Jesus. *He opened for us a new way,* a living way, through the curtain—that is, through his own body. (GNB) **Hebrews 10:19-20**

f) **Who can be Saved from their Sinful State?**

The redemptive work of Christ is available and accomplished when you and I respond to the offer of God’s grace for salvation that is made possible through Jesus. This salvation is available to “everyone” This gift is achievable for all people to be united with God in a fresh and pure relationship.

> God loved the *people of this world* so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die. (CEV) **John 3:16**

> God makes people right through their faith in Jesus Christ. He does this for *all who believe in Christ.* Everyone is the same. (ERV) **Romans 3:22**
g) Is there a Way Out of Sin's Stranglehold?

The Good news is that Jesus has totally overcome the power of sin and has provided a way out for you and me. He did this by coming into the world Himself and by paying the price needed to set man free from the burden that disobedience brings.

In the Old Testament God introduced the "Atonement System", whereby sins committed were covered by the shed blood of animals.

The law says that almost everything must be made clean by blood. Sins cannot be forgiven without a blood sacrifice. (ERV) Hebrews 9:22

In the New Testament our sins are no longer covered by the blood of animals, but they are removed by the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

But if we confess our sins to God, he will keep his promise and do what is right: he will forgive us our sins and purify us from all our wrongdoing. (GNB) 1 John 1:9

Through the sacrifice and shed blood of Christ you and I have been redeemed (set free) from the consequences of our sin.
Discussion Questions – Lesson 2

1. Write down a description of sin in your own words.

2. What was the external source that introduced sin (see Gen 3)?

3. Write down what you think is the greatest consequence of sin entering the world?

4. After we repent and ask Jesus into our lives will we still struggle with sin?

5. Write down a prayer thanking Jesus for all that he went through so we could be set free from sin.
Lesson 3

**Repentance**

a) What does Repentance Mean?

Repentance draws the picture of an individual that is totally disgusted with sin itself and becomes determined to make a radical break from engaging in it in the future.

b) The Process of Repentance

How do I ask God to remove my sin?

1. **Conviction** -- God makes you conscious of your sin.

   And he, when he comes, will *make the world conscious of sin*, and of righteousness, and of being judged: *(BBE)* John 16:8

2. **Confession** -- you acknowledge your wrong doing to God verbally.

   To confess our sin means to view our acts of disobedience as God views them. We must call sin, sin and not see it as a mistake, weakness or indiscretion. You and I are to take decisive steps to live a life that is different to the one we’ve been living and ask God to help us to overcome our old rebellious ways. Like King David we are to take personal responsibility for our disobedience without any excuses or blame shifting.

   *I have sinned against you -only against you- and done what you consider evil. So you are right in judging me; you are justified in condemning me.* I have been evil from the day I was born; from the time I was conceived, I have been sinful. Sincerity and truth are what you require; fill my mind with your wisdom. Remove my sin and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear the sounds of joy and gladness; and though you have crushed me and broken me, I will be happy once again. *(GNB)* Psalm 51:4-8

   What shall we say, then? Should we *continue to live in sin* so that Gods grace will increase? Certainly not! We have *died to sin*---how then can we go on living in it? *(GNB)* Romans 6:1-2
3  Accept God’s Forgiveness and Cleansing

Remember that God is faithful and will forgive all our disobedience and purify (cleanse) us from all unrighteousness (wrong standing with God). God sincerely forgives us and because He has promised in His Word, He will not go back on His word.

God is not like people, who lie; He is not a human who changes his mind. Whatever He promises, He does; He speaks, and it is done. (GNB) Numbers 23:19

4  Thank God -- As you received Christ’s forgiveness through faith.

Each time you ask God to forgive you for sin committed against Him, thank Him for doing it. Never take His kindness, mercy and forgiveness for granted.

God did this so that his kindness to us who belong to Christ Jesus would clearly show for all time to come the amazing richness of his grace. I mean that you have been saved by grace because you believed. You did not save yourselves; it was a gift from God. (ERV) Ephesians 2:7-8

c)  How Can I Get Victory Over Sin?

Remembering that Christ has already defeated the "problem of sin", by His sacrifice on the cross, you and I also have a part to play. While we are on earth we will still have to battle with the temptation to do wrong things.

So then, submit yourselves to God. Resist the Devil, and he will run away from you. (GNB) James 4:7

As we agree to trust God and His Word (The Bible), we will be able to resist the devil. And as we live a submitted life on a daily basis, Gods Spirit will remind us of the sin we do and when we ask God to forgive our sin, He will.

d)  What Does this New Life in Jesus Mean for Me?

From the moment that you trusted in Jesus Christ for your personal salvation you instantly receive God’s gift of salvation. Through faith you passed from spiritual death to eternal life, and from the power that satan had over you to being protected by the Power of God. You are also set free from the slavery of disobedience. And as a recipient of eternal life you are declared righteous in God’s sight and made a son/daughter of God because Jesus now is your Lord, your Saviour and Deliverer.
e) Scriptures to remember:

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (ESV)

John 8:32 And you will have knowledge of what is true, and that will make you free. (BBE)

Romans 3:22 God makes people right through their faith in Jesus Christ. He does this for all who believe in Christ. Everyone is the same. (ERV)

Galatians 5:24 And because we belong to Christ Jesus, we have killed our selfish feelings and desires. (CEV)

Acts 26:18 You will make them able to understand the truth. They will turn away from darkness to the light. They will turn away from the power of Satan, and they will turn to God. Then their sins can be forgiven, and they can be given a place among God's people--those who have been made holy by believing in me." (ERV)

Romans 6:22 And now, as ye have been emancipated from sin, and have become servants to God, your fruits are holy; and the result thereof is life everlasting. (Murdock)

John 5:23 The Father wants all people to honour the Son as much as they honour him. When anyone refuses to honour the Son that is the same as refusing to honour the Father who sent him.

John 5:24 I tell you for certain that everyone who hears my message and has faith in the one who sent me has eternal life and will never be condemned. They have already gone from death to life. (CEV)
Discussion Questions - Lesson 3

1. Write down what you remember about when you first became a Christ follower?

2. Write down something you want help with in regards to temptation.

3. What must you do to break the power of Sin in your life?

4. It is important that we continually ask God to forgive our sins. (Write your name down in the space provided and read this prayer out aloud to a fellow Christian).

   Father in Heaven, I ___________ confess that I am a sinner and ask that Jesus Christ will come into my life and save me from all my sin (Romans 10:13). I surrender my whole life to you. Lead me by your Holy Spirit to live a life of forgiveness and to forgive others as You have forgiven me (Mark 11:25-26). I confess with my mouth that I believe that Jesus Christ is my Saviour and believe in my heart that God has raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9-10). Thank you for cleansing me from all my sin. My name is now written in the book of life and I am a New Creation in Christ. I belong to You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen

5. Read through the verses on the previous page and comment on which one speaks to you most about repentance.
Lesson 4

Salvation

a) **What Happens TO the Believer When He/She Becomes a Christian?**

Becoming a Christian implies a process of becoming. This becoming entails being set into a new direction. The variety of components that are intertwined all take place at a single moment when saving faith is exercised and you become a follower of Jesus Christ. Here are some words to explain this process.

**Justification** is seen as God’s acquittal, or forgiveness of sin of the guilty offender. This is not merely the dismissal of charges but the full pardon of all offences. This true forgiveness is restorative for it embodies trust and acceptance as the past offences have no affect on the future relationship of the judge and offender.

Justification brings about a stance of **Righteousness (being right with God)**. This true righteousness does not make the sinner righteous because his unrighteousness is merely covered over by Christ’s righteousness. As we are cleansed by the Holy Spirit, God in His wisdom gives us a righteousness that is truly our own.

All through the process of conversion the ultimate plan of Salvation culminates in God bridging the gap and reconciling man to Him and through the atonement of Christ, we are called to cease our hostility towards our Creator and be reunited with Him.

**Reconciliation** is therefore the central feature of the entire salvation story.

The most amazing factor of the Born Again experience is this; not only are believers reconciled to become friends with God; they are actually adopted as His children. To put this in context it is important to understand both Greek and Roman culture. In ancient culture **Adoption** involved inheritance. This is the perspective that we adopt in order to understand God’s view of inheritance.

The Spirit is witness with our spirit that we are **children of God**: And if we are children, we **have a right to a part in the heritage; a part in the things of God, together with Christ**; so that if we have a part in his pain, we will in the same way have a part in his glory. (BBE)

**Romans 8:16-17**

When God looks at you He no longer stands as judge but rather as a Loving Father and likewise you now have moved from the state of a fearful servant to the state of a loved son or daughter.
b) **What Happens IN the Believer When He/She Becomes a Christian?**

Through grace, God does not simply do things for us but He also presumes the role of doing things within us. This is sometimes known as Regeneration - the fundamental mental transformation that God brings about in the new believer’s life. It is this renewal of a person’s spiritual life that makes possible continuing faith, love, obedience, growth and a radical shift in lifestyle and behaviour. This new found verve signifies a new beginning, a fresh start, a new life, a new family, new values and a new future.

Regeneration speaks therefore of an **inner change**, a change of heart meaning that man is viewed by God not as just being different but that we are actually different. Regeneration brings with it two aspects of the new birth i.e. **Cleansing** from the power of sin, and the beginning of **Spiritual growth**.

c) **The Process of Salvation (Revised)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Redemptio <strong>n</strong></th>
<th>Ephesians 1:7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cleansing</strong></td>
<td>Titus 3:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regeneration</strong></td>
<td>John 3:5, John 8:44, 2 Corinthians 5:17</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Justification</strong></td>
<td>Romans 5:1-2, 2 Corinthians 5:21</td>
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<td><strong>Adoption</strong></td>
<td>Romans 8:15</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Acceptance</strong></td>
<td>Romans 15:7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Eternal Life</strong></td>
<td>John 5:24</td>
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- **Redemption**: The penalty of your sin is paid for and the power of sin is broken in your life.
- **Cleansing**: Your sin is washed away.
- **Regeneration**: You have moved from being a citizen of the Kingdom of satan and have accepted your new citizenship as a member of the Kingdom of God.
- **Justification**: God now sees you as if you have never sinned before and now you have peace with God.
- **Adoption**: You have become one of Gods own children.
- **Acceptance**: You are received by the Father.
- **Eternal Life**: You have received the gift of Eternal Life.
Discussion Questions - Lesson 4

1. What did you do to become a Christian?

2. What caused you to realise that you needed Christ?

3. How has your life changed since becoming a Christian?

4. If you were to die right now, will you go to heaven?

5. Write down a list of things you would like to change in your lifestyle.
Lesson 5

Water Baptism

a) A Brand New Life

The decision to follow Jesus is a life changing experience. Your perception of God changes, where before He was far away you are now entered into a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and have the Holy Spirit as your constant companion.

Where before we were in spiritual darkness and bondage we are now loved and part of His amazing family.

A further way to identify yourself with Christ is through water baptism. This is a powerful act of obedience through which believers publicly express their faith and commitment to Christ.

b) What Does Water Baptism Mean?

We are given examples from Christ who was baptised by John the Baptist in the Jordan River as well as numerous times that people were baptised by the disciples in the early Church, as noted in the book of Acts.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River. He came to John, wanting John to baptize him. But John tried to stop him. John said, "Why do you come to me to be baptized? I should be baptized by you!" Jesus answered, "Let it be this way for now. We should do whatever God says is right." Then John agreed. So Jesus was baptized. As soon as he came up out of the water, the sky opened, and he saw God’s Spirit coming down on him like a dove. A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the one I love. I am very pleased with him." (ERV) Matthew 3:13-17

The Greek word for baptism is the word "Baptizo", which means to be fully immersed under water. In baptism the believer identifies themselves with the death and resurrection of Jesus. The water signifies a grave and is symbolic of death of the old sin-nature and a resurrection into a new life and walk with Christ. Baptism is therefore the outward sign of an inward grace.
c) **Who Needs to be Baptised?**

We can see that Jesus puts a very high priority on Water baptism. We can further agree that Salvation **precedes** Baptism. As a Christian you need to consider this outward sign of your commitment to Christ.

| Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. (GNB) | Mark 16:16 |

d) **What are the Requirements for Baptism?**

- **Repentance**
  
  Acts 2:38
  
  You have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Saviour

- **Faith**
  
  Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12,37; Acts 16:31,33
  
  You believe that Jesus is the Son of God

- **Confession of faith**
  
  Romans 10:9-10
  
  You have prayed the prayer of Repentance

e) **Does Baptism Need to be Done Publicly?**

Baptism in the New Testament was mostly done in public. It is a joyous **celebration** for the Church Family when someone is baptised and therefore they will want to be part of your celebration. This public declaration will also be a reminder to you and others that you have begun your new life as a Christian with a clear conscience before God.

f) **Who Can Baptise?**

According to Scripture **any Believer** can baptise. In a Church context we have regular baptism services and it is normally the Pastor that does the baptising.

g) **What happens at a Baptism Service?**

In the Baptism ceremony you will be asked to publicly confess your decision to follow Christ. You may also give a short talk on how you became a Christian. You will then be taken through a brief ceremony using water to symbolise your cleansing and celebrated new life. Before this ceremony, the Pastor will discuss all requirements with you.
Discussion Questions - Lesson 5

1. What does Water Baptism mean to you?

2. What are some of the benefits of getting Baptised?

3. Why do you think that Jesus was Baptised (Matthew 3:13)?

4. What are the requirements before you consider getting Baptised?

5. What does the Greek word ‘Baptizo” mean?
Lesson 6

**Beginning Your Relationship**

When you become a Christian you also become part of a **huge family**. Your relationship with God and your Christian family are both very important as they will help you develop and grow in your Christian walk.

We are telling you about what we have seen and heard because we want you to have fellowship with us. *The fellowship we share together* is with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. (ERV) 1 John 1:3

God has created us to **fellowship** with Him as well as with one another. When you were Born Again, the love of God has entered into your heart and now you also have a responsibility to let this love flow out towards other people around you.

**a) When Did This Relationship With God Begin?**

It **began** the day you received Christ as Lord and Saviour of your life. The Bible tells us that:

And **this is the testimony**: that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life; he that does not have the Son of God does not have life.

(EMTV) 1 John 5:11-12

You become God’s love extended, you belong to Him and His Spirit lives in you.

Don’t you know that **your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit**, who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves but to God; he bought you for a price. So use your bodies for God’s glory. (GNB) 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Obtaining Eternal Life is the beginning of the spiritual journey and relationship with God. The more we prayerfully study and obey the Bible the more we get to know Jesus and the more He reveals Himself to us. This relationship teaches us trust and understanding with a person that we cannot see.

**b) My Relationship with the Holy Spirit**

Through the Holy Spirit, God reveals Himself in a wonderful and dynamic way? He becomes our Counsellor, our Teacher, our Guide, our Helper and Comforter. He gives us His Spirit to lead us in all situations that we may find ourselves in.
Those who are *led by God’s Spirit* are God’s children. For the *Spirit that God has given you* does not make you slaves and cause you to be afraid; instead, the Spirit makes you God’s children, and by the Spirit’s power we cry out to God, "Father! My Father!" God’s Spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God’s children. (GNB) Romans 8:14-16

God wants all believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that He can take us to a new level of victory in our Christian walk. This infilling will enable you to have freedom over the power of sin and a power to witness boldly for Christ.

But I am telling you the truth: it is better for you that I go away, because if I do not go, the *Helper* will not come to you. But if I do go away, then I will send him to you. (GNB) John 16:7

c) Learning More About God

A practical way to learn more about our relationship with God is to read *The Bible*.

The best way to start is to read the Four Gospels first, (the first four books of the New Testament). We know that a relationship between two people is built when good communication is a priority. There is time for sharing and for listening both with words and feelings.

This is made possible when you spend time with God in reading the Bible and prayer. It is during these times that you can ask the Holy Spirit to reveal His purpose and plan for your life.

A simple yet effective way of getting the Bible to make sense when you read is to apply the following acronym: **S.O.A.P.**

- **S.** Read a SCRIPTURE verse in the Bible
- **O.** OBSERVE what it says in a historical context
- **A.** Look for a way to APPLY it in a practical way in your life
- **P.** Through PRAYER ask God to help you implement His Word in your life

It is also a good idea to have a Journal in which you can record thoughts and scriptures as you talk to God. This will enable you to develop a rhythm and pattern that will help you to understand how God speaks to you daily.
Discussion Questions – Lesson 6

1. Describe how you see your relationship with God?

2. What can you do to improve your relationship with God?

3. Who is the Holy Spirit?

4. Share a bible passage that God has shown you a practical application for?

5. What do you think the verse “use your bodies for God’s glory” (1 Corinthians 6:20)?


Lesson 7

Growing in God’s Word

Every day you and I are bombarded with negative propaganda forcing us to think with a secular mindset or worldview. Romans chapter 12 clearly warns us of the dangers of not having a worldview that is based on the teachings of the Bible.

And *let not your behaviour be like that of this world*, but be changed and made new in mind, so that by experience you may have knowledge of the good and pleasing and complete purpose of God. (BBE) Romans 12:2

a) Reading the Bible Transforms the Way I... THINK

The most powerful way of not succumbing to this everyday pressure is by reading God’s Word. God through His Word gives you and me the ability to reprogram our thinking and to realign our values with Biblical truth. This reprogramming will challenge your old way of thinking and will enable you to think the way God thinks and act in a manner that is pleasing to Him.

*Putting an end to reasoning’s*, and every high thing which is lifted up against the knowledge of God, and causing every thought to come under the authority of Christ; Being ready to give punishment to whatever is against his authority, after you have made it clear that you are completely under his control. (BBE) 2 Corinthians 10:5-6

b) Confessing the Bible Transforms the way I... SPEAK

*Words have great power*. They can either build up or they can destroy. Our words are able to encourage or break down and therefore as we read the Bible we will experience a change in our vocabulary. Our old way of thinking produced words that ensnared us, but when we speak Gods words they produce victory and life.

You will have to live with the *consequences of everything you say*. What you say can preserve life or destroy it; so you must accept the consequences of your words. (GNB) Proverbs 18:20-21
c) Implementing Biblical Principles Transforms the Way I ACT

**What we read has an influence on how we act.** As the saying goes, "that which you gravitate towards, you become." Reading the Bible will have an impact on the way you act. As you spend time daily reading your Bible you will be challenged to change some of your negative mindsets you have. So it is important to start acting in a way that corresponds to what you read in the Bible – God’s Word. Putting our faith into action is when we read what the Bible says and then apply what we read in a practical way in our daily life.

> So get rid of every filthy habit and all wicked conduct. Submit to God and accept the word that he plants in your hearts, which is able to save you. Do not deceive yourselves by just listening to his word; instead, put it into practice. (GNB) *James 1:21-22*

Find out what God says about your situation. Start speaking God’s Word into your situation. After reading the Bible think deeply about what you've read and ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what you need to do. The Bible calls this deep thinking, "to meditate on the Word." The Hebrew word meaning for meditate literally means to "Speak God’s Word over your life."

> So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (EMTV) *Romans 10:17*

**d) Reading the Bible can Help to Know GOD’S WILL For Your Life**

God has given us the Bible so that we can know His will for mankind. Therefore, when you start making time to study the Bible and pray, you will discover what God has to say concerning your life too. Every word in the Bible was put there for a purpose and for our benefit. Applying these truths will teach you how to live a successful life.

**e) What Bible Should I Read?**

There are many different versions of the Bible that you can choose from. The King James Bible is a good study Bible. The NIV is a popular Bible for reading. If you want to get into the meanings of the text with reference to the original Greek and Hebrew text, the Amplified Bible (paraphrase) is great. Another Bible called The Message is great for light reading as it is written using modern metaphors and parables (stories).

Remember, the more you read the Bible the more God’s Word will become part of you and change you. It will become part of you as you sleep, work and rest. The Word of God will guide you in your daily living.
Discussion Questions - Lesson 7

1. List 4 benefits that you get by reading the Bible.

2. Share any good Computer or phone Bible programs that you may use or have heard other people using.

3. Read Proverbs 3 and write down some of the effects that God’s word can have in your life?

4. Why can words have such a negative effect on people?

5. How does the Bible help you make important decisions?
Lesson 8

Prayer - Talking to God

So far we have seen how to get to know God more by reading His Word (The Bible). Remembering that God is relational, we see that He created mankind to have meaningful relationship and fellowship with Him. Like a good friend He wants to have a dialogue with you, as you talk to Him, He will talk with you.

This two-way communication is vital for your spiritual growth.

**a) How Do I Approach God in Prayer?**

As we have seen in previous parts of this booklet, God is your heavenly Father and you need to learn to approach Him in much the same way a child would an earthly Father. You could also approach prayer as you would talk to you best friend. No matter what the content of the conversation is, it could be good news or a problem that you’re facing, your Heavenly Father wants to listen to you. He’s never short of time to listen to you, and remember there is nothing about you that He does not already know about, or does not want to hear you tell Him about. Jesus taught his followers this prayer.

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Our Father in heaven, help us to honour your name.
Come and set up your kingdom, so that everyone on earth will obey you, as you are obeyed in heaven.
Give us our food for today.
Forgive us for doing wrong, as we forgive others.
Keep us from being tempted and protect us from evil.
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(CEV) **Matthew 6:9-13**

**b) Approaching God Using the P.A.R.T. Prayer Process**

**P - Praise** God at all times.
When you start your prayer time, always begin by worshipping Him for who He is. This can be followed by you thanking Him for all the good things that He has done for you.

**A - Admit** your sins to God.
It is vital that you name your sin to God as regularly as you can. This will keep the communication lines open between you and God, and therefore satan will not be able to put a feeling of shame and guilt on you and thus keep you away from spending time with God and growing as a Christian.
But if we confess our sins to God, he will keep his promise and do what is right: he will forgive us our sins and purify us from all our wrongdoing. (GNB) 1 John 1:9

R - Request your need from God.
It is God's desire that we approach Him in faith and ask Him to meet our needs. Believing releases faith for God to move on our behalf. It is important to remember that when Jesus taught His disciples to pray in the book of Matthew chapter 6, He made it quite clear that He will meet our daily needs and not our selfish greed's.

Don’t worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. (GNB) Philippians 4:6

Like a true Father, He will not give us those things that He knows can hurt us. For example, when God asked King Solomon what he (God) could give him, he asked for wisdom. This wisdom enabled him to acquire many other things. So be very honest in your prayer and don't ask for those things that you know are not necessary to have. Prayer is a powerful tool but must be used with an unselfish attitude. As you pray for other people, you see God work in your life too.

T - Thank God for all things.
The Bible tells us that we must give God thanks in all things. Remember, life has its trials, temptations and tribulations everyday, so do not feel abandoned and overwhelmed. In the book of James we are told to give thanks in amongst good and bad days.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you are involved in various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. (ISV) James 1:2-3

God encourages us to not be concerned about things but to take it to Him in prayer.

   c) How Will I Know If God Speaks to Me During My Prayer Time?

Most of the time, God does not speak in an audible voice. When God speaks to you, He will usually speak to your spirit, in a small still voice. For this reason it is important to spend time reading your Bible as much as possible after you have given your life over to God.

Reading the Bible will enable you to distinguish His voice. God says that His children will know His voice. The challenge is to be able to discern the difference between God’s voice, satan's voice and your own thoughts.
A sure way of knowing that it is God speaking to you is that it will never contradict what the Bible says. Most times you will find that God will say things that you do not necessarily think of yourself. He can speak through thoughts, feelings, impressions or even a vision when He speaks to you. He will often bring up scripture in your mind for you to go read.

**God merely speaks to you and leaves you to use your free will to respond.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. But I came to give life—life that is full and good.</th>
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<td>(ERV) John 10:10</td>
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Whenever you pray and you feel that God is speaking to you, measure that which has been said with John 10:10. Ask yourself, "Is this what I am hearing going to steal from my life, kill through my life and destroy in and through my life". If you answer "yes" to anyone of those words, more than likely it is satan or your thoughts speaking to you. But if you measure the thought with this scripture and it will produce life, positive growth, peace and faith, more than likely it is God speaking to you.

d) **Important Scriptures on Prayer**

Discussion Questions - Lesson 8

1. Why do you think that prayer is important?

2. Write out a short "thanksgiving" prayer, thanking God for your Salvation.

3. What are some of the things satan wants to steal from us?

4. Read the book of Psalms chapter 34 and write down how David spoke to God.

5. Find "your private place" where you will spend your prayer times with God. Write down what you feel He is saying to you right now.
Lesson 9

**Working Through Forgiveness**

a) **Why Must I Forgive?**

Remember that Christ wants to give you life in abundance, but the devil wants to steal, kill and destroy this abundant life in you. We can help the devil destroy our lives by walking around in resentment and un-forgiveness.

When you are praying and you remember that you are angry with another person about something, forgive that person. Forgive them so that your Father in heaven will also forgive your sins. But if you don't forgive others, then your Father in heaven will not forgive your sins. (ERV) Mark 11:25-26

b) **What is Forgiveness?**

**Firstly,** forgiveness is not calling down God’s judgement on a person that has hurt or offended you, but it is releasing them and relinquishing the right to hold a grudge against them. We set them free from the wrong they have done to us.

**Secondly,** forgiveness is a choice and not a feeling. Feelings are futile as they come and go, but making a dedicated decision to forgive is what Jesus taught us to do. When He was crucified he did not call God’s judgement down upon his enemies, He cried out publicly.

When the soldiers came to the place called "The Skull," they nailed Jesus to a cross. They also nailed the two criminals to a cross, one on each side of Jesus. Jesus said, "Father, forgive these people! They don't know what they're doing." While the crowd stood there watching Jesus, the soldiers gambled for his clothes. The leaders insulted him by saying, "He saved others. Now he should save himself, if he really is God's chosen Messiah!" (CEV)

Luke 23:33-34

Another example is found when the disciple Stephen was being stoned.

As they were throwing the stones at him, Stephen was praying. He said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" He fell on his knees and shouted, "Lord, don't blame them for this sin!" These were his last words before he died. (ERV) Acts 7:59-60
Wanting to not forgive will come to you every time you feel that you have been badly treated by someone. Be proactive with the attitude that I will expect people to fail me, but I have the ability to not hold it against them. When you take this stance it will still be difficult but because you have already made up your mind to forgive it will be more possible.

**Thirdly,** forgiveness must be a priority because if you don’t **take control** of un-forgiveness it will lead to bitterness, resentment and anger. Many people become stressed and even physically ill because they refuse to forgive. Giving in to un-forgiveness cuts us off from the presence of the Holy Spirit.

**Fourthly,** the main reason that we need to forgive is because when we were still enemies of God He forgave us our sin. If God’s grace is able to extend to you, surely **His Grace in you is able to extend to the person that has harmed you?**

> We should **live in the light,** where God is. If we live in the light, we have fellowship with each other, and the blood sacrifice of Jesus, God’s Son, washes away every sin and makes us clean. (ERV) **1 John 1:7**

Remember, vengeance belongs to the Lord and in His time He will judge the situation with mercy that might lead to repentance.

c) **A Prayer for Forgiveness**

“Dear Heavenly Father,
I thank you for forgiving me of all my wrong deeds. I know that I do not deserve your forgiveness Lord but when I ask you to, you forgive me. I pray that you will help me to forgive ____________ (Write down the names of people you know you need to forgive).
I forgive them, release them, and bless them into your care.
In Jesus Name I Pray, Amen”.

d) **Some Scriptures Regarding Forgiveness**

Discussion Questions- Lesson 9

1. Why must we forgive people who hurt us?

2. Whose example must we follow when we forgive and how did He forgive?

3. Write down any people’s names that you are struggling to forgive right now.

4. What does Mark 11: 25 say about forgiveness?

5. What does “forgiveness is a choice and not a feeling” mean?
Lesson 10

Jesus As Lord of Your Life

Have you ever asked yourself the question?
"Who is really controlling my life?"

What would your sincere answer be? If we are really honest with ourselves we will acknowledge that we are in control of fewer things then things we are in control of? Think about your birth date or you hair colour, life or death. When we give our lives to God we really are giving it back to the One who is able to control our lives and lead us in the way He knows best anyway. Therefore when we say yes to Jesus we do not only get saved, we also give Him control of all we think, plan and do.

He died for all so that those who live would not continue to live for themselves. He died for them and was raised from death so that they would **live for him**. (ERV) 2 Corinthians 5:15

a) **Is Jesus Lord of my life?**

By accepting Jesus as your Saviour you received Salvation. This gives rise that you now live your life according to a new set of values and rules. These Kingdom rules are set out to **empower us** to live in a manner that will bring glory to God. These rules are planned so that by doing them God is able through the Holy Spirit to guide and care for us every step of our Christian journey.

*Firstly, Jesus has the right to be Lord of your life because of who He is.*
Remember He is the Lord of creation and therefore the whole universe is subject to His authority, and that also includes you and me.

God made us free from the power of darkness. And **he brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son.** The Son paid the price to make us free. In him we have forgiveness of our sins. No one can see God, but the Son is exactly like God. He rules over ever thing that has been made. Through his power all things were made: things in heaven and on earth, seen and not seen--all spiritual rulers, lords, powers, and authorities. Everything was made through him and for him. The Son was there before anything was made. And all things continue because of him. He is the head of the body, which is the church. He is the beginning of everything else. And he is the first among all who will be raised from death. So in everything he is most important. God was pleased for all of himself to live in the Son. And through him, God was happy to bring all things back to himself again - things on earth and things in heaven. God made peace by using the blood sacrifice of his Son on the cross. (ERV) Col 1:13-20
Think of your life, every aspect of it and ask, 
"What areas have I not given Jesus access to?"

Is He in charge of the way you think about your...career, your entertainment, your finances, your marriage, your time, etc? Remember He can only act when you relinquish your rights and give Him your undivided commitment.

He was like God in every way, but he did not think that his being equal with God was something to use for his own benefit, instead, he gave up everything, even his place with God. He accepted the role of a servant, appearing in human form. During his life as a man he humbled himself by being fully obedient to God, even when that caused his death--death on a cross. So God raised him up to the most important place and gave him the name that is Greater than any other name. God did this so that every person will bow down to honour the name of Jesus. Everyone in heaven, on earth, and under the earth will bow. They will all confess, "Jesus Christ is Lord," and this will bring glory to God the Father. (ERV) 

Philippians 2:6-11

God is committed to you. Are you committed to you too? Is He Lord of your whole Life?

b) Am I Willing to Serve as Jesus Did?

Jesus has the right to be Lord of your life because of what He has done.

You should know that your body is a temple for the Holy Spirit that you received from God and that lives in you. You don't own yourselves. God paid a very high price to make you his. So honour God with your body. (ERV) 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Jesus paid the price for your deliverance, this deliverance was paid by Him dying on the cross and shedding His Blood. Rightly He should judge and condemn us for our sin but Jesus paid the full price and wiped away the judgement and gave us eternal life.

Through this action He adopted us and made you and me sons and daughters in His family.

The second decision after making Jesus Lord of your life that needs to be pondered is the decision to become His servant.

As He came to earth to serve, so the invitation is made to you and I, "Will you be my Servant?" This servant-hood must not be confused with slavery. Before you accepted Christ into your life, you were a slave to sin. You were ruled by your carnal appetites and lusts that made you slaves of satan.
Serving Jesus in the Kingdom of God is quiet different. We don't aspire to be something we're not. We give Jesus the place of honour, because without Him we will still be without direction, having no purpose to live for and lost in a myriad of confusion. Will you be a servant of Christ?

And Jesus made them come to him, and said to them, you see that those who are made rulers over the Gentiles are lords over them, and their great ones have authority over them. But it is not so among you: but whoever has a desire to become great among you, let Him be your servant: And whoever has a desire to be first among you, let him be servant of all. For truly the Son of man did not come to have servants, but to be a servant, and to give his life for the salvation of men. (BBE) Mark 10:42-45

Remember the greatest way you get to know Christ is through spending time with Him.

**Let Him be Lord of your Life, be His servant, love God.**
Discussion Questions – Week 10

1. As a Christian who should we live for?

2. What is the difference between Slavery and Servant-hood?

3. Make a list of things that have you have learnt or that have stood out to you as you have done this study series.

4. Write a prayer asking God to help you release your right to control your life today. Make a commitment to others in your group to check up on each other about how they are doing in their Christian walk.
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   f. MURDOCK – James Murdock New Testament
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