BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP

THE JOURNEY

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THE JOURNEY

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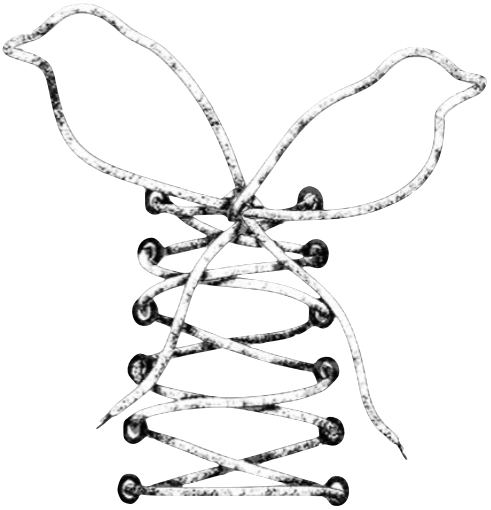

Jesus came and told his disciples,
"I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.
Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations,
Baptising them in the name of the Father, and the Son
and the Holy Spirit. Teaching these new disciples to obey all the
commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you
always, even to the end of the age." ***Matthew 28:18-20***

These notes have been complied as a teaching aid to lead each and every believer into a deeper knowledge and understanding of their faith.

Through fulfilling the commands of Jesus as stated above we are confident that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work, until it is finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. *Philippians 1:6.*

This is merely the beginning. God's Word is alive and active, take every opportunity to unlock its treasures so that you will be prepared and equipped to do every good work. The Holy Spirit will guide you and your love relationship with Jesus will grow in an amazing way.

There will be challenges but together with Jesus this journey will be incredible. Enjoy it!

HEY DAD
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SECTION 1: NEW BEGINNINGS

Life is often pictured as a journey in which we travel from one given point to another – from birth to death.

But where does this journey of life lead? Most journeys are taken in order to arrive at a hoped-for destination. If the path is going to peter out in a dead end – literally – there is not much sense in making the journey.

The purpose of travelling and the final destination are supremely important in the Christian journey of life.

This section is specially intended for those who have only just set out on the Christian journey, whatever their age may be. The road is often uphill – never easy, but always challenging. As we climb higher, the air gets cleaner and fresher, the view clearer and more panoramic and the pleasure of travel more exhilarating.

At whatever stage of the road you may be we hope you'll join us on this journey.

1.01
THE BIBLE

THE BOOK OF LIFE AND ENJOYMENT

The Bible is the most widely read book in the world. It is not a work of fiction but a record of God's dealings with real people in real history. For centuries, believers have risked their lives to make it available to others. Today, it continues to guide, correct, and inspire.

The Bible is a living book because it is God's Word. Through it, He reveals His nature, His will, and His plan for salvation. It is our compass in the Christian journey. Without it, we easily lose direction. God's Word is described as revelation (God making Himself known), inspiration (God guiding the writers), and authority (God's Word being our final guide for belief and action).

This is a book of power as it must be remembered that it is God's spoken creation, and life has come from the word spoken by God. So the power of this word is ensured by the one who has spoken it. God is very serious about what he says and we need to be serious as well when we approach it.

SOME SIMPLE FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

- The word Bible comes from the Greek word *Biblia* which means *books* thus making the Bible a collection of books a portable library.
- There are 66 books in the Bible: 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.
- The Bible was written in three languages originally: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.
- It was written by a variety of people from kings to fisherman to prophets and they had this one thing in common according to

2 Peter 1: 21 "For prophecy never had its origin in the the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

- God, by The Holy Spirit inspired the writing of the Bible which makes us a privileged people. The apostles themselves did not have the Bible as we know it now, but instead they had to rely on what is known as the oral tradition where they taught according to what they themselves had heard before whilst they walked with Christ.
- The Bible is a collection of true stories, history, poems, wisdom writings, prophetic writings, letters and law.
- For Christians the Bible is regarded as the inspired, inerrant (without error) authority in relation to **Christian Belief** and **Christian Practice** and **Action**.
- The word Testament refers to covenant, the Old Testament being God's Covenant with Israel and the New Testament being God's Covenant with all Nations through JESUS CHRIST.

REVELATION, INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY

1. Revelation

Religion is said to be man's attempt to reach God. Christianity is God's attempt to reach man. He does this through revelation: 'general' and 'special' revelation.

General Revelation: This is the testimony of all creation that surrounds us, the sky the earth, the seas, the stars etc. which calls us to recognise that there is a God somewhere who created all we see and feel. *Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:20.*

Special Revelation: This refers to divine and specific events recorded in the Bible. For example God's call to and covenant with Abraham, Paul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus and the birth life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
Amos 3:7; John 14:9; John 12:49; Galatians 1:12; Ephesians 3:3-5

2. Inspiration

This is the divine selection of the authors, and guidance to assure the trustworthiness of their testimony. Their sources were oral or written. *Jeremiah 1:9; Acts 1:16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17.*

3. Authority

It is as the inspired Christian word of God the authority relating to our beliefs as Christians, and Christian practice and action.
Deuteronomy 4:2; Isaiah 55:11; Jeremiah 23:29; John 5:24

DISCOVER MORE

1. Why is the Bible called the Word of God, and why is it important for Christians?
2. What are two ways God reveals Himself through the Bible?
3. How does the Bible serve as a guide or compass in your Christian journey?
4. What can you do this week to make Bible reading a daily habit?
5. In what ways has the Bible already begun to change your thinking or living?

I COMMIT TODAY TO GET TO KNOW GOD MORE FULLY THROUGH HIS WORD, THE BIBLE, AS REVEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THOUGHTS

1.02
GOD THE FATHER

The Bible tells us God always has been and always will be. *Psalm 90:2.* He is the Creator of life and the Sustainer of everything. God is Spirit. He is majestic, all powerful, holy, faithful and just. *Isaiah 40:28.*

Nothing is more important than what we think about God. What we think about God:-

- Shapes our moral and ethical standards
- Determines our lifestyles and controls our behaviour
- Directly affects our responses to hardship and pain
- Enables us to know what to accept and what to reject in our daily living.

His eternal existence is powerfully expressed by two words: "God is".

GODS UNIQUE ATTRIBUTES

Some of God's attributes are unique to His deity. No one else can experience the following qualities:

- Self–existence meaning complete independence
- Omnipotence meaning all powerful
- Omnipresence meaning present everywhere
- Omniscience meaning knowing all things
- Immutability meaning unchangeable
- Sovereignty meaning unlimited authority.

OTHER ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

God is love
Love is an attribute of God. Love is not God, nor is it a definition of God. It expresses the way God is, just as His other qualities do. Faithfulness, goodness, mercy, justice, and holiness all express the essence of God. He is always all of these different qualities at the same time. God's love is always holy. It is always good, faithful, merciful, and just. *1 John 4:8.*

God is faithful
We can depend upon our God, for He is faithful.
He keeps His promises. We can live with hope for the future because God's faithfulness never fails. *Lamentations 3:22-23.*

God is good
Divine goodness is different from human goodness because God is perfectly good in every area all of the time. *Psalm 107:1.*

God is just
When God acts justly He is not doing it to conform to what man has set as a just action. *Deuteronomy 32:4.*

God is merciful
Mercy is an attribute of God. He is full of compassion and always merciful as well as just. Even in executing justice He is merciful.
He is always dealing with mankind with infinite and inexhaustible mercy. *2 Corinthians 1:3.*

God is holy
Divine holiness stands apart. It is unique, unapproachable, and unattainable beyond our understanding. God is pure, with absolute moral perfection.

What does God expect of Christians? *1 Peter 1:13-16.*

GOD REVEALED

God has revealed Himself to mankind through these five ways:

- Scripture. *2 Peter 1:20-21*
- Witness of dedicated believers. *Acts 1:8*
- Creation. *Romans 1:20*
- Conscience. *1 Timothy 1:19*
- Jesus, His Son. *John 1:18*.

As Christians we should ask ourselves:

- Does my life reveal the truth about God?
  Does my life reveal the love of God?
- Does my life reveal the patience of God?
- Do I forgive as God forgives?

A key factor in living for God's glory is our attitude and motivation. Each day as Christians we should reveal evidence that the Spirit of God is at home in us.

To live each day revealing what God is like makes it possible for God to use our lives to reach others and bring glory to Himself.

Let everything that has breathe praise the Lord! Psalm 150:6

DISCOVER MORE

1. What are some unique attributes of God (for example: omnipotence, omniscience, immutability)?
2. How does knowing God as Father affect your daily life?
3. What are some ways God has revealed Himself to people?
4. How can your life reflect the truth and love of God to others?
5. Take a moment to pray: Ask God to help you live in a way that reveals His character.

THIS DAY I GIVE MY WORSHIP TO THE ONLY TRUE GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, AND SURRENDER MY WILL, MY LIFE AND POSSESSIONS TO HIM. MY WORSHIP IS FOR HIM ONLY.

THOUGHTS

1.03
CREATION AND FALL AND MAN

CREATED BY GOD

People were created by God. Each time a new baby is formed we marvel at the creation of God. People were created in the image of God. They not only have an indestructible spirit like God, but they were also created to have fellowship with God. They were created to bring glory to God. God does not force men to serve Him, He wants men to choose their own hearts to love and serve him.

Genesis 1:26-30; Genesis 2:7; Genesis 2:18-22; Genesis 3:1-24 and Genesis 9:6

SOME PEOPLE BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD

God's plan for all people is to save them and make them His children. God draws people by His love so that many people will choose to become His true children. These children of God will some day go to live with Him forever.

If we examine the seeds of a certain tree we shall see that God creates many such seeds however only a few of these seeds will ever sprout, grow, and produce fruit. Likewise God has made many people. But all people will not become children of God. Only those who choose with their hearts and come to God in the way, in which He has prepared, may truly be His spiritual children.

John 17:1-3, 9, 15 Romans 8:29. 40: 2 Timothy 1:9 and Hebrews 2:10

THE DEVIL TEMPTED THE FIRST PEOPLE

Since man was created in the image of God, he could choose between right and wrong. Therefore God permitted the devil to tempt the first people. God allowed Satan to tempt Job. He allowed him to tempt Jesus. He allows Satan to tempt people today. Satan lies to us about God's truth. But Satan will be punished by God's judgment and he will be destroyed forever.

Isaiah 14:12; Genesis 3:1-5, 14, 15; Job 1:6-12: 1 Peter 5:8; Luke 4:1,2; Revelation 20:1-3,10

THE FIRST MAN, ADAM, CHOSE TO SIN

When Satan tempted the first people, they chose to obey him. So those first people could not have fellowship with God while they were obeying Satan. The Bible calls the first man Adam. All men since Adam have been born with the desire to obey Satan and to refuse fellowship with God.

Genesis 3:6; Psalm 51:5 and Isaiah 6:5

EVERY PERSON CHOOSES TO DO WRONG

Every person has chosen in his own heart to disobey God. God created all people to have fellowship with Himself. Every person has broken that fellowship with God by sin.

Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Romans 3:10-19,23

MAN MUST LOOK TO GOD IF HE IS TO FIND STRENGTH TO BECOME THAT FOR WHICH GOD CREATED HIM

No person in his own strength and wisdom can return to fellowship with God. People must look to God for restoring the broken fellowship. God's plan is found in the Bible. He explains His way for everyone to become His children. God does not desire that one person should perish. Yet God knows that some people will not accept His plan of salvation. The angels in heaven rejoice when one sinner repents and receives the Son of God as his Saviour.

Romans 3:10-26; Jeremiah 31:31-34; 2 Peter 3:9 and Luke 15:10

BECAUSE ALL PEOPLE WERE MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE WE MUST RESPECT AND LOVE ALL PEOPLE

Every person was made in God's image. Every person was created to bring glory to God. God invites each person to become a child of His. Therefore we must learn to love each person while hating the sins of that person. God has showed His love to us. He loved us while we were still sinners. He sent Jesus to die for us. We also must love all people. We should pray for them. We should witness to them. We should long in our hearts that many will become true children of God.

Psalm 8:3-6; Acts 17:26-28; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; Romans 5:5-8; Hebrews 13:1-3: John 3:16-18 and Jude 21:23

DISCOVER MORE

1. Why did God create man, and in whose image were we made?
2. What choice did Adam make, and how does that affect us today?
3. What happens in heaven when a sinner repents and returns to God?
4. Why should we respect and love all people, even when they sin?
5. How can you share God's love with someone in your life this week?

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT MY PRIMARY PURPOSE ON EARTH IS TO BRING GLORY TO MY CREATOR AND MY HEART'S DESIRE IS TO DO ALL THAT I CAN TO BRING JOY TO HIS HEART.

THOUGHTS

1.04
SATAN OUR ENEMY

His name was Lucifer in heaven, but after being cast out, he was called by his many different names:

- Accuser: *Revelation 12:10*
- Dragon: *Revelation 12:7*
- Serpent: *Revelation 12:9*
- Devil: *Matthew 4:1*
- Satan: *Mark 8:33*

For the sake of this teaching we will consistently call him Satan.

THE REALITY OF SATAN

It is a shame that in our era that is experiencing a greater display of satanic power and influence than in past generations, there is a general disbelief in Satan. He is presented as a figment of our imaginations or the personification of evil, but far too few people actually admit that he is a real person with conferred power and an unchanged goal. The longer he can hide his personality, the easier it is for him to work in the hearts and minds of people.

The Bible presents Satan as a very real person. It speaks of him having a heart, pride, speech, knowledge, power, desires, lusts, soul passions, and spirit faculties. Here is a list of a dozen Bible pictures that present Satan as a real person:

- Jesus taught that Satan was a real person. *Luke 10:18*
- Jesus dealt with him as He would a person. *Matt. 4:1-11*
- Jesus waged war on him as a person. *Luke 13:16*
- The apostles fought with him as a person. *Ephesians 6:10-18*
- The apostles warned against a personal devil. *James 4:7*
- Personal singular pronouns are used of him. *Matthew 4:7-11*
- Personal statements are made to him. *Isaiah 14:12-15*

- Personal descriptions are given of him. *Ezekiel 28:11-19*
- Personal names and titles are given to him. *Isaiah 14:12*
- Personal acts are ascribed to him. *Matthew 4:5*
- He is an angel with a body, soul, and spirit. *Ezekiel 28:14*
- He has been seen with a body. *Matthew 4:1-11*

Our enemy is a spirit person who is often behind these forces that seek to dominate and control our lives. We must learn to contest the devil if we want to walk a life of victory.

SOME FACTS ABOUT LUCIFER

Satan was created perfect. *"You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and exquisite in beauty." Ezekiel 28:12*, holding full authority and dominion over both heaven and earth. He took his place as the highest, most beautiful, most powerful, and wisest of all God's creatures.

Satan was in Eden, the garden of God, but not the Eden mentioned in Genesis. That garden was filled with plant and animal life, while Ezekiel's Eden was one of mineral beauty. Again, God impresses on us the magnificence of this great ruling angel. *Revelation 21:19, 20,* is a near parallel passage illuminating this one. There is a description of the New Jerusalem, the eternal dwelling place of the Lord of glory, whose foundations are the same precious jewels. It is from this city that Jesus and His saints will rule the earth together. Could it be that the jewelled city over which Lucifer ruled will be replaced by the jewelled city of the future?

"You were in Eden, the garden of God.Your clothing was adorned with every precious stone all beautifully crafted for you and set in the finest gold. They were given to you on the day you were created." Ezekiel 28:13. There are two important facts here. First, Satan was created, which put an end to the argument about the eternal duality of good and evil. Both Satan and evil had definite beginnings, and they can and will have definite endings. Secondly, he was a fully exalted authority who never knew a lesser moment. He was above all others in power, wisdom, and beauty. Only when he looked at God did he see another with more than he possessed. Verse 14 shows that God placed him there. He was blameless in his ways, even though he shared such glory with God Himself.

Apparently, there wasn't any outward evidence that shows him secretly, or openly, opposing the will of God. The universe was absent of sin, so there wasn't any example to follow.

Lucifer was created in such a way that great sounds came through him. Tambourines and flutes echoed from his voice in absolute harmony. Man's voice box, mouth, and breath can do one of two things. Bless the Lord with continuous praise or curse both man and God. If such an organ makes beautiful musical sounds, singing and communicating, what must Lucifer's have sounded like when his very breath was blown through flutes and tabrets? He was a creature of praise.

He was the anointed cherub and one of a kind (vs 14). He was the protecting cherub with spread-out wings, covering the throne and presence of the Lord. As praise, he brought the praise of the angelic creation and offered it to the Lord God. It appears that he received the worship of the entire universe beneath him and offered it to the Creator above him (vs 14). The mountain of God is the place of his presence in visible glory *(Psalm 22:3)*, where God's high priest stood before Him to minister.

On the positive side, we see that he stood between God and all creation. His authority was delegated from God, and God worked through him. Here, in Jehovah's presence, he ruled, receiving his commands directly from God and transmitting them to the rest of creation. As long as his will was God's will, there was perfect harmony, life and beauty. Yet, when the devil is first mentioned in Scripture, Genesis 3:1, he is already hateful, a liar and deceiver, a malignant being, and totally in opposition to God.

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

Continuing our study in *Ezekiel 28*, the next verse gives us an insight into the beginning of evil. *"You were blameless in all you did from the day you were created UNTIL the day evil was found in you." (vs 15).* What this iniquity was is revealed in detail in Isaiah Fourteen, but before we turn there, please note verse 17.
"Your heart was filled with pride because of all your beauty.
Your wisdom was corrupted by your love of splendour."

What we see here is that iniquity is the result of not being able to handle the "glory of God." Deep in his heart something exploded

called pride. Intoxicated with the magnificence of his beauty and power, and inebriated by the authority and position he enjoyed, he imagined himself as being equal with Deity. Here is the beginning of sin, initiated in the heart of Lucifer, and the only verse that specifically states its origin.

Turning to *Isaiah 14:13-14*, we consider his intended claims. As soon as he initiated a will that was contrary to God's, he set up a plan of attack.

"I will ascend to heaven". Isaiah14:13. He began his rebellion "on the earth" where he was ruling. *Ezekiel 28:13.*

"I will exalt my throne above the star of God." Heaven is inhabited by a great multitude whose express purpose is to glorify God. He even desired to be above them. *Revelation 19:1-3.*

"I will sit upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north." Psalm 89:5- 7 reveals there are assemblies in heaven. Satan desired to have the governmental position even over the angels who administered in heaven.

"I will ascend above the heights of the clouds," speaking of the glory of God and His very throne in heaven.

"I will make myself like the Most High." Have you ever wondered why Satan chose the title "most high" for his last arrogant challenge to God? Only when we see its usage as first indicated in Scripture is it clear. After Abram returned from the battle with the king, Melchizedek, king of Salem, who brought forth bread and wine, a covenant meal; and after blessing him said, *"Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth..." Genesis 14:18-19*. God here is El Elyon, the *"Most High God"* and possessor of heaven and earth. This is what Lucifer aspired to be and is the key to his pride. He didn't want to share God's throne; he wanted God to completely step aside; so that he would be the possessor of heaven and earth, *"like the Most High."*

WHAT CAUSED THIS?

Even though he was an angel, he wasn't created a zombie. He had a free will, volition and power of choice. That one third of the angels followed him in his rebellion reveals their ability to choose and make rational decisions *(Revelation 12:4).* Like man, he was made with

emotions, will and intellect, through which he could plan obedience or rebellion, whichever was his desire. He could have rejected that temptation, had he so desired. That not all of the angels followed him but chose freely to remain faithful to the Lord shows their power to reject. When the idea of mutiny and treason came to Satan, he could have rejected the thought, but he chose rather to mull it over, until it conceived action.

THE TROUBLEMAKER

Only by comparing his nature with Christ, as expressed in the Biblical titles given him, can we see even vaguely the hideous creature he made himself.

SATAN IS:
The accuser
Adversary
Belial
God of this world
Murderer from beginning
Hate
Ruler of darkness
Tempter
Destroyer
Liar and father of lies
Unclean spirit
Created angel
Seed of serpent
Author of sin, sickness, death
Sickness
Condemner
Nothing

JESUS IS:
Excuser
Advocate
Glory of God
Desire of the nations
Giver of life
Love
Light of the world
Deliverer from temptations
Restorer
Truth
Spirit of Holiness
Only begotten Son of God
Seed of woman
Author of eternal salvation, health, life Health
Forgiver
First, last and all in between.

DISCOVER MORE

1. What was Satan's original name in heaven? Why was he cast out?
2. Give two names or titles the Bible uses to describe Satan.
3. How do we know Satan is a real person, not just an idea of evil?
4. What caused Satan to fall into sin?
5. In what ways can you guard yourself against Satan's lies today?

I CHOOSE TODAY TO DRAW NEAR TO GOD, RESIST THE DEVIL AND HE MUST FLEE FROM ME. WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT, I WILL WALK IN VICTORY.

THOUGHTS

1.05
CHRIST THE SON

We get to know God through what Jesus did for us when He was on earth. To have an intimate relationship with God, it is first necessary to know Jesus.

WHO IS JESUS?

The Bible tells us many amazing things about Jesus. For example, Jesus was alive in eternity before the beginning of time.
Many places in the Bible explain that Jesus was present in eternity before the universe was created.

The Bible says: *"... Before Abraham was born, I Am." John 8:58.* This meant Jesus always existed. I AM was God's name.

In *Exodus 3:14,* two thousand years before Jesus was born, God identified Himself to Moses as *"I AM WHO I AM".* The Hebrew meaning of the name implies continuous existence.

THE GOSPELS

The first four books of the New Testament were not written to be biographies of Jesus. They were written by different men to certain groups of people for different reasons. These four books are called the Gospels.

Matthew wrote the Gospel of Matthew to convince the Jews that Jesus was the promised Messiah for whom they were looking.

Mark wrote to the Gentiles to tell them of Jesus and what He had done.

The Gospel of **Luke** was written by a Greek doctor who researched the facts and interviewed people who had known Jesus.

John wrote his Gospel of John to convince his readers that Jesus was the Son of God.

A Few of the Many Prophecies Concerning the Messiah:

Prophecy	**Fulfilment**
He would be virgin born *Isaiah 7:14 (742 B.C.)*	The virgin birth of Jesus *Matthew 1:22-23*
His place of birth *Micah 5:2 (710 B.C.)*	Jesus' birth in Bethlehem *Matthew 2:1a*
Rejected by his own people *Isaiah 53:3 (712 B.C.)*	Jesus was rejected *John 1: 11*
He would be betrayed by a friend *Psalm 42:9 (1062 B.C.)*	Jesus betrayed by one of His Disciples *Mark 14:10*
He'll be resurrected from the dead *Psalm 16:10 (1040 B.C.)*	Jesus resurrected after three days *Matthew 28: 5-6*

WHAT DID JESUS DO?

Mark 1:29-39	He healed the sick and spread the good news in Galilee.
Mark 3:13-19	He appointed the twelve apostles.
Mark 6:30-44	Jesus fed 5000 with five loaves and two fish.
John 2:13-22	Jesus cleared out the merchants and money lenders from the Temple courtyard and drove them away.

His Miracles

The miracles Jesus performed revealed His God given authority over all things.

Miracles	**Authority Over**
Luke 4:3-36	Demons
Luke 5:4-10	Nature
Mark 1:40-42	Disease
Matthew 15:1-9	Tradition
Luke 7:11-17	Death

WHY DID JESUS COME?

Matthew 5:1-2	To fulfil the Old Testament teaching
John 6: 35-38	To do the will of the Father
Acts 2: 23-24	To be glorified, to be raised from death to life, laying down His life as Gods plan
1 John 3:5-6	To take away our sin
Hebrews 2:14-15	His death set us free, destroying the devil and death
Revelation 3:20-21	He knocks at the door of our hearts, as we invite Him in, we receive the victory that He has received
Revelation 5:9-10	His death on the cross brings all people together to serve Him.

DISCOVER MORE

1. Who is Jesus, and how do the Gospels help us understand Him?
2. What are two Old Testament prophecies that Jesus fulfilled?
3. Why did Jesus come to earth?
4. How does knowing what Jesus did (his miracles, teachings, sacrifice) affect your daily life?
5. How does *1 Corinthians 15:58* encourage you to serve God faithfully?

TODAY I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD AND THAT HE CAME INTO THE WORLD MEET MY GREAT NEED OF A SAVIOUR.
I WILL ALSO TELL OTHERS THAT HE CAME INTO THE WORLD FOR THEM.

THOUGHTS

1.06
THE CROSS

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

GOD DEALS WITH ALL SIN

Through His Son's death on the cross, the great Creator God was dealing with every person's sin, suffering and sorrow. Jesus was dying in the place of every individual in the world. Receiving personally what He has done on the Cross brings the answer to all our needs.

1. **God Reveals His Power Through The Cross**
   "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." 1 Corinthians 1:18. Also *Romans 1:16.*
2. **God Shows His Love On The Cross**
   "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8.
3. **God Removed Our Sorrows On The Cross**
   "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted." Isaiah 53:4.
4. **Jesus Took The Punishment For Our Sins On The Cross**
   "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed...We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:5,6.
   See also *1 Peter 2:24.*

NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH THE CROSS

Because God is so holy and righteous, sin separates us from Him. No one with sin in their hearts is able to be in His presence.

So, not only by dying on the Cross did Jesus suffer for our sins in our place; but also He made it possible for us to know God personally and to experience the love, peace and joy which fellowship with Him brings.

1. **We Become Acceptable To God Through The Cross**
   "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." 2 Corinthians 5:21.
2. **We Receive Forgiveness Through The Cross**
   "For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins." Colossians 1:13,14.
   See also *1 John 2:1,2.*
3. **We Become Members Of God's Family Through The Cross**
   "Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says,' I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praise.'" Hebrews 2:11, 12. See also *John 1:12.*
4. **Racial Barriers Are Broken Through The Cross**
   "But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ. For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death." Ephesians 2:13-16.

FREEDOM THROUGH THE CROSS

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

1. **Freedom From Satan**
   "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the Cross." Colossians 2:15. See also *Colossians 1:13.*
2. **Freedom From Past Sins**
   "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." John 8:36. See also *Colossians 2:13.*
3. **Freedom From Present Sins**
   "For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace." Romans 6:14.
4. **Freedom From Sickness**
   "This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: 'He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases'." Matt. 8:17.
5. **Freedom From The Curse**
   "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.'" Galatians 3:13. See also *Deuteronomy 28:15-68.*
6. **Freedom From The Judgement**
   "Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgement." Hebrews 9:26, 27.
7. **Freedom From Everlasting Death**
   "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16.

LOVE AND JUSTICE MEET AT THE CROSS

The Cross is the place where the love of God and the righteous judgement of God meet. His righteous judgement demanded the death penalty for sin – the shedding of blood. His love met His own demands and Jesus, the Son of God, died in our place.

"But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God." Romans 5:8-11.

THE CROSS IS THE CENTRE OF HISTORY

The Cross of Jesus Christ is the centre point of mankind's existence on earth. From the moment the first man and woman sinned, it was pre-planned by God that Jesus would die on the Cross. From that time on, people looked forward in faith to what God promised He would do on the Cross to save them.

Today we look back and, by believing what Jesus has done for us on the Cross, receive forgiveness and new life.

DISCOVER MORE

1. What does the Cross reveal about God's love and justice?
2. How does the Cross make it possible for us to have a relationship with God?
3. What are some freedoms we receive through the Cross (e.g., freedom from sin, fear, Satan)?
4. In what way is the Cross the centre of history?
5. How does the message of the Cross encourage you personally

TODAY I PUT MY WHOLE TRUST IN WHAT GOD WAS DOING FOR ME WHEN JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS AND THANK HIM FOR THE RELATIONSHIP THIS NOW GIVES ME.

THOUGHTS

1.07
THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

The shedding of Jesus Christ's blood on the Cross was a factor in order for us to receive forgiveness for our sins and acceptance into the presence of God.

"... Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." Hebrews 9:22.

LIFE IN THE BLOOD

"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves...it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life." Leviticus 17:11

When we sin, we earn death. *"The wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23.* Jesus paid this penalty for us by shedding His blood (dying for us – in our place).

Atonement (at – one – ment) means to be made AT ONE with God. Jesus gave His life (shed His blood) on the Cross for our AT ONE MENT (atonement). This made it possible for us to be AT – ONE with God. Jesus' blood means we are no longer His enemy but His friend, His sons and daughters. By faith we accept what He did for us.

WHAT SIN DOES TO OUR LIFE

1. **Separates Us From God**
   "It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore." Isaiah 59:2.
2. **Makes Us Feel Guilty**
   "My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear." Psalm 38:4.

3. **Allows Satan To Accuse Us**
   "...the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night..." Revelations 12:10.
4. **Demands The Death Penalty**
   "...The soul who sins is the one who will die." Ezekiel 18:4.

The blood of Christ meets all of our needs.

THE BLOOD IS FOR GOD

The blood of Christ wholly satisfies God's law – which requires a penalty for breaking the law. *1 John 3:4 says "sin is breaking the law."*

The blood protects us from the penalty of breaking the law (death).

In *Exodus 12*, God commands the people of Israel to put the blood of a lamb on their door-posts to protect them from the destroyer – who would kill all the first-born.

The lamb was a picture of the Lamb – Jesus – Who would come later. God said, *"...when I see the blood, I will pass over [protect] you..." (vs13).*

1. **Fellowship Is Restored**
   "But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation." Romans 5:8, 9.
2. **We Are Redeemed (Purchased Back From Slavery)**
   " He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins." Ephesians 1:7.

THE BLOOD IS FOR MAN

The blood has satisfied God; now it is to satisfy us in the cleansing of our conscience from guilt.

1. **The Blood Cleanses From Guilt**
   "Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God." *Hebrews 9:14.*

2. **The Blood Sanctifies Us (makes us holy)**
   "And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood." Hebrews 13:12.
3. **The Blood Brings Us Close To God**
   "... and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross. This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies...Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ." Colossians 1:20-22.
4. **The Blood Gives Boldness To Enter God's Presence**
   "And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place...let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water." Hebrews 10:19-22.
5. **The Blood Perfects Us In The Sight Of God**
   "...because by one sacrifice he has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy." Hebrews 10:14.

THE BLOOD IS FOR THE DEVIL

Satan's most strategic activity in this age is as the accuser of the brethren *(Revelation 12:10)* and it is as this that the Lord confronts him in His special ministry as High Priest through His own blood. *Hebrews 9:11-14*

1. **The Blood Puts God On Man's Side Against The Devil**
   "If God is for us, who can ever be against us?...Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honour at God's right hand, pleading for us." Romans 8:31, 33, 34.
   The devil has no ground for accusation against those who have received the work of Christ's shed blood for them.
2. **The Blood Dissolves All Satan's Legal Rights Of Ownership**
   "...in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin." Colossians 1:14.

Redemption' means 'to buy back.' We are under new ownership, and the price that was paid for us was the shed blood of Jesus. *"...the church of God, which he bought with his own blood." Acts 20:28.* See also *1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; 1 Timothy 2:6.*

WHAT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST HAS BROUGHT US

1. **Purity Of Heart**
   "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." 1 John 1:7.
2. **Eternal Life**
   "Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day." John 6:53, 54.
3. **Approach To God**
   "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ." Ephesians 2:13.

DISCOVER MORE

1. Why is the shedding of blood necessary for forgiveness?
2. What does the blood of Christ accomplish for God, for man, and against the devil?
3. How does the blood of Christ cleanse our conscience from guilt?
4. How does the blood give us boldness to enter God's presence?
5. What difference does knowing the power of Jesus' blood make in your prayer life?

I NOW UNDERSTAND WHAT THERE SHED BLOOD OF JESUS MEANS TO GOD, SATAN AND TO ME. I WILL REMIND MYSELF OFTEN OF THE COVENANT GOD HAS WITH ME, TO FORGIVE MY SIN AND CLEANSE ME FROM SIN, PROTECTING ME FROM SATAN'S HARM.

THOUGHTS

1.08
THE RESURRECTION

After His death on the Cross, Jesus lay in the grave for three days. *Matthew 12:40.* Then – God raised His Son from the dead!
Read *Matthew 28*.
"...and who through the Spirit of Holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 1:4.

GOD RAISED YOU UP TOGETHER WITH CHRIST

Jesus' death was for you. So was His resurrection!

"You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world...

But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus." See *Ephesians 2:1-6; Colossians 3:1-3.*

1. **To Give You New Life**
   "God...has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus. And now he has made all of this plain to us by the appearing of Christ Jesus, our Saviour. He broke the power of death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the Good News."
   2 Timothy 1:9, 10.

2. **To Give You New Birth**
   "All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead." 1 Peter 1:3.
3. **To Give You A New Beginning**
   "...anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" 2 Corinthians 5:17.
4. **To Give You**:
   A. Victory Over Satan. *"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome the world, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world [Satan]...for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."*
   1 John 4:4; 5:4-5. See also *Colossians 2:13-15.*
   B. Authority Over Satan. After His resurrection, *"Jesus Christ...has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand – with angels, authorities and powers [this includes Satan] in submission to him." 1 Peter 3:21,22.* Also *Luke 10:17-19.*
   C. Power Over Satan. *" I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand...the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honour at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself."*
   Ephesians 1:18-23. See also *Mark 16:15- 18, Acts 1:8 and 4:33.*
5. **To Make You A Son And Heir In God's Kingdom**
   "So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children."
   Romans 8:15-17.

THE RESURRECTION MEETS EVERY NEED OF LIFE

1. **It Is Your Deliverance From The PAST**
   Your old sinful life was put to death on the Cross with Jesus, and buried with Him in the grave. Then, when Jesus was raised to life again, you were raised with Him as a new creation – leaving behind your old life in Jesus' grave!
   "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life...the death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." Romans 6:4-11.
   See also *Ephesians 2:1-7 and Colossians 2:12-15*.

2. **It Is Your Power For The PRESENT**
   Because Jesus is ALIVE we have now received the power of His Spirit to live a life of victory over sin and all Satan's attacks against us.
   "What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things:
   Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? Shall God who justifies? Who is he that condemns?
   Will Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – who is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loves us." Romans 8:31-39.

3. **It Is Your Hope For The FUTURE**
   The resurrection of Jesus gives us great hope for the future. He is called *"the firstborn from the dead." Colossians 1:18.* In His resurrection, he was opening the way for all those who would believe in Him to follow after Him – to also be raised from the dead!

One wonderful day in the future, Jesus Christ will return to the earth again – not as a baby this time, but revealing to the whole world Who He really is – the glorious God and Ruler of all Creation. At that time all those who have died, believing in Him, will be raised to life again!

"...if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died. So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back. 1 Corinthians 15:17-23.

See also *1 Corinthians 15:50-57* and *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*.

DISCOVER MORE

1. Why did God raise Jesus from the dead? Give at least two reasons.
2. What victory does the resurrection give believers over Satan?
3. How does the resurrection affect your past, present, and future?
4. What hope does the resurrection give us about life after death?
5. How can you share the message of the resurrection with others?

BECAUSE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, I MAKE A COMMITMENT TODAY TO RECEIVE THE FULNESS OF MY NEW LIFE AND LIBERATION IN HIM. I WILL STAND FAST IN THIS TRUTH AND SHARE IT WITH EVERYONE.

THOUGHTS

1.09
REPENTANCE

Repentance is the first step we take to receive the salvation that God offers to us in the Lord Jesus Christ.
'"God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do? 'Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven.'"
Acts 2:36- 38. See also *Acts 17:30.*

WHAT REPENTANCE IS NOT

1. **Not Just Feeling Guilty**
   Feeling guilty about our sin comes before repentance, but is not repentance itself. No one repents unless they first feel guilty about their sin, but not all who feel guilty actually repent. As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self control, and the judgement to come, Felix was afraid and said *'That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you.'" Acts 24:25*
   Felix felt guilty but did not repent.
2. **Not Just Being Sorry For Your Sin**
   Some people are very sorry because of the consequences of their sin, or because they have been caught. Many people are sorry, not for what they have done wrong, but for the penalty they receive in being caught. *"Godly sorrow leads to repentance that brings salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death." 2 Corinthians 7:10*
3. **Not Just Trying To Be A Good Person**
   Many people try in their own strength to become a better person and change their way of life. Any self-effort has a root of self-righteousness in it, which does not acknowledge the need of repentance from sin.

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

4. **Not Becoming Religious**
   The Pharisees in the Bible were extremely religious in behaviour and practice. They fasted and prayed and had many religious ceremonies, yet never repented. "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptising, he said to them; you brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.
   "And do not say to yourselves, 'we have Abraham as our father' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit' will be cut down and thrown into the fire." Matthew 3:7-10. See also *Matthew 5:20.*

5. **Not Just Knowing The Truth**
   Having an intellectual head-knowledge of truth does not necessarily guarantee that the truth has become a living reality in one's life. Believing with the head and believing with the heart are different (see *Romans 10:10*).
   "You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless?" James 2:19, 20

WHAT TRUE REPENTANCE IS

1. **Being Sorry To God For Your Sin**
   True repentance is a sorrow not just toward one's self, or toward another person, but first and foremost it is true sorrow toward God.
   "Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognise my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say." Psalms 51:1-4. See also *Psalms 38:8.*

2. **Being Truthful About Your Sin**
   "Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord' and you forgave the guilt of my sin." Psalm 32:5. See also *1 John 1:9.*

3. **Turning Away From Your Sin**
   "People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy."
   Proverbs 28:13.

4. **Hating Sin**
   "You love justice and hate evil. Therefore, O God, your God has anointed you" Hebrews 1:9.
   'and you will loathe yourselves for all the evil you have done..." Ezekiel 20:43, 44.

5. **When Possible, Paying Back To Others What You Owe**
   "Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"' Luke 19:8.
   See also *Leviticus 6:1-7.*

WHAT REPENTANCE INVOLVES

1. **Turning From Sin**
   "Don't be like your ancestors who would not listen or pay attention when the earlier prophets said to them, 'This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: Turn from your evil ways, and stop all your evil practices.'" Zechariah 1:4
   See also *Galatians 5:19-21* and *Ephesians 5:5.*

2. **Turning From The World**
   "Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you, for when you love these things you show that you do not really love God." 1 John 2:15. See also *James 4:4.*

3. **Turning From Yourself**
   "He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them." 2 Corinthians 5:15
   See also *Luke 14:26.*

4. **Turning From The Devil**
   "... to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God's people, who are set apart by faith in me.'" Acts 26:18
   See also *Col 1:13*.
5. **Turning to God**
   "Therefore, say to the people, 'This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of Heaven's Armies." Zechariah 1:3.
6. **Turning To Right-Living**
   "Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God." Romans 6:13.

DISCOVER MORE

1. What is the difference between feeling guilty and truly repenting?
2. What five things must we do to truly repent?
3. How does repentance change our relationship with God?
4. Why is repentance the first step in receiving salvation?
5. Spend time in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to show you areas where you need to repent.

TODAY I DECIDE TO REPENT AND WILL KEEP TURNING FROM SIN AS GOD REVEALS WRONGDOING TO ME.

THOUGHTS

1.10
FAITH

Faith has always been the mark of a disciple of Jesus. The early disciples were known as BELIEVERS. Jesus said: *"Everything is possible for him who believes." Mark 9:23.*

Faith means total dependence on God. When Adam sinned, he stepped out of God-dependence into in-dependence (which is unbelief). This is the reason God has placed such a high priority on faith. Faith is the way we come back into relationship with God (God-dependence). This dependence on God is called faith. Faith advances you beyond your five senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching. Faith releases you from your limited capacities. By faith you move from in-ability to His-ability. This is the walk of faith to which all of us are called – where *"nothing is impossible." Matthew 17:20.*

WHAT IS FAITH?

Faith is obedient action in response to what God has said. True faith is expressed in 1) Obedience and 2) Action, in response to 3) Hearing God's word (voice). *"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see". Hebrews 11:1.* Faith means having trust, assurance or confidence in another person or that person's words. Having faith in God involves an exchange of self-trust for God-trust. We stop trusting in our selves and trust Him. We abandon reliance on our limited source of knowledge and start receiving from His unlimited source.

TWO KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE

"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your

faith might not rest on MEN'S WISDOM, but on God's power. We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing." No, we speak of God's SECRET WISDOM, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began." 1 Corinthians 2:4-7. Also *vs 8-16*.

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

2. **Revelation Knowledge**
   This knowledge is not based on the five senses, nor on natural reasoning but on an alternative source – the TRUTH of the Word of God. It is received through man's spirit, and is described as 'God's Wisdom' – *"We live by FAITH not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7.*

THE BASIS OF FAITH

The basis of having faith in God is in three important realities:

1. **The Nature of God**
   "When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself." Heb. 6:13.
   - He cannot change. *"I the Lord do not change..." Malachi.3:6.* Also *James 1:7.*
   - He cannot fail. *"I know that you can do anything, and no one can stop you." Job 42:2.* Also *1 Chronicles 28:20.*
   - He cannot lie. *"God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfil?" Numbers 23:19*. Also *Titus 1:2.*

2. **The Redemptive Work Of The Son Of God**
   "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" Hebrews 12:2. Christ has become the source of our faith in God. The fact of His death and resurrection provides ground for our believing. *"Christ Jesus...has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption." 1 Corinthians 1:30.* Also *Romans 5:1, 2.*

3. **The Word of God**
   "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." Matthew 24:35. See also *Isaiah 40:8.*
   "The Lord said to me 'I am watching to see that my word if fulfilled.'" Jeremiah. 1:12. His Word stands true forever; Faith comes when God brings a specific word – out of all He has ever said – directly to us in our circumstances. Spoken in this way, the Word of God comes alive in us, releasing our faith.

HOW FAITH WORKS

The principle of faith *(Romans 3:27)* is to operate in our lives continually, no matter what the circumstances (see *2 Corinthians 5:7, James 1:-6*). It works in the following ways:

1. **God gives us Faith**
   "For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by (HIS) faith'"
   (compare *Romans 1:17* and *Habakkuk 2:4*).

   The righteous live by HIS faith that is the faith HE gives us as a gift.
   "God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God" Ephesians 2:8:9.
   "According as God has dealt to every man...faith." Romans 12:3.

2. **Faith Comes By a Word From God**
   Firstly, God encourages us by speaking a "word" relevant to our circumstances. This may come as you read the Bible or by hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit inside your spirit.
   "...faith comes from hearing the word and is heard through the word of Christ." Romans 10:17.
   See also *Genesis 15:3-5; 17:15-21; Joshua 1:8.*

3. **Obedience To The Word**
   For faith to operate in our situation, we must obey that word, Faith is ACTIVE, not passive. Most of God's promises are conditional – He will do His part, if we do our part. *"faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." James. 2:17.*
   See *1:22-25; Genesis 15:6; Matthew7:24-27.*

4. **The Crisis Or "Trial Of Our Faith"**
   This is a period of testing. Everything happening around us appears contrary to what God has said, and there seems to be no natural evidence for our believing. At this point, our faith rests completely on God's word (what He has spoken to us).
   "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed"
   1 Peter 1:6-7. See also *Romans 4:16-21; Psalms 105:17-19.*

   In faith we cast ourselves on HIS FAITHFULNESS. In our times of doubt and struggle, God is faithful and does not abandon us.
   "If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny who he is." 2 Timothy 2:13.
   He was faithful to Thomas and Peter when their faith was tested. Jesus didn't abandon them. *"He will never leave us nor forsake us." Hebrews.13:5.*

5. **The Result**
   The end result is always victory on the part of the believer, bringing glory to God (see also *James 1:2-4,12; Genesis 21:1-3; Psalms 105:19-22; Acts 3:16; Hebrews 6:13-15*).
   "For everyone born of God has overcome the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4.

DISCOVER MORE

1. What is faith, and how is it different from relying on our senses?
2. What three realities form the basis of our faith in God?
3. How does faith grow in our lives?
4. What is an area in your life right now where you need to trust God more fully?
5. How can you encourage another believer to walk in faith this week?

TODAY I DECIDE TO LIVE BY FAITH AND TRUST GOD IN ALL AREAS OF MY LIFE; I ACKNOWLEDGE MY NEED TO BE TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON GOD - WHICH IS FAITH IN ACTION. GOD'S RESPONSE WILL BE HIS GRACE.

THOUGHTS

1.11
GRACE

"With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and MUCH GRACE was with them all." Acts 4:33.

"From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been COMMITTED TO THE GRACE OF GOD for the work they had now completed." Acts 14:26.

Why was the grace of God so important in the experience of the early Christians?

Why did the church in Antioch pray that the GRACE of God would be upon Paul and Barnabas, and later on Paul and Silas, as they set out on their missionary journeys?

THE MEANING OF GRACE

The most common understanding of the word "grace" is "God's unmerited favour" – in other words, even though we were sinners, deserving of judgement, God looked upon us in love and forgave us. This, however, is only half its meaning. It also means "God's enabling power."

" Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal comfort and a wonderful hope, comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say." 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17.

Not only does His grace make us accepted into the family of God, but it also provides the power we need to live the Christian life. Two scriptures indicate the two aspects of God's grace in every believer.

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

2. **God's Enabling Power**
   "In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will - to the praise of his glorious grace (enabling power), which he has freely given us in the one he loves." Ephesians 1:4-6

Read the whole chapter which describes all that we have received by grace.

In salvation not only is God's unmerited favour expressed (in that we receive forgiveness and restored relationship with Him even though we don't deserve it), but so also is God's enabling power - for it is only by HIS power that we can be transformed. *"This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" 2 Corinthians 5:17.*

This principle of grace continues throughout our walk with God. In every area of our Christian lives, it is God's grace that causes us to grow and be strong - God's enabling power given to us without any merit on our part. *"grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18.*

GRACE GIVEN THE HEROES OF FAITH

This operating force of grace is revealed in the lives of men and women through- out the whole Bible. Every hero of faith began his walk with God aware of his own weakness and inability.

It was only through him allowing God's grace - His enabling power - to work in his life that he was able to become the kind of person that God wanted him to be, and to fulfil the plan and purpose God had for his life.

- GRACE IN THE LIFE OF MOSES: Read *Exodus 3:11-13; 4: 1-13*
- GRACE IN THE LIFE OF GIDEON: Read *Judges 6:1-24*
- GRACE IN THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL: Read *Acts 15:40*

GRACE RELEASED IN OUR LIVES

In our relationship with God - as we walk with Him each day - we constantly meet situations that would try to overwhelm us.
Our response to God is to trust His Word. We express our trust through obedience.

This proves we believe what God's Word says despite what the circumstances might indicate. God's response to our faith is His grace - His enabling power, which causes us to triumph in every situation.

TWO IMPORTANT PROMISES

1. **We Have Bold Access To The Throne of Grace**
   "Let us then approach the THRONE OF GRACE with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and FIND GRACE (divine enablement) TO HELP US IN OUR TIME OF NEED". Hebrews 4:16.
2. **God Is Able**
   "And God is able to make ALL grace ABOUND in you, so that in ALL things at ALL times having ALL that you need; you will ABOUND in EVERY good work." 2 Corinthians 9:8

DISCOVER MORE

1. What is grace, and how is it different from our own works or efforts?
2. Why is grace necessary for salvation?
3. How does God's grace change the way we live daily?
4. What does it mean to you personally that God's grace is a gift?
5. How can you show grace to someone else this week?

TODAY I DECIDE TO RECEIVE GOD'S GRACE - HIS ENABLING POWER - INTO EVERY AREA OF MY LIFE, AND TEACH OTHERS TO DO THE SAME.

THOUGHTS

1.12
EXTRA ASSIGNMENT

All the teachings establishing our faith are found in the Bible.
This extra assignment, spaced over a week, is designed to help you discover more.

DAY 1: The Bible

Assignment: Read Acts 15 & 16.
Memorise 2 Timothy 3: 16, 17.
Familiarise yourself with books of the New Testament.

1. What was the Bible called by its writers?
   1 Corinthians 15:3, Ephesians 6:17

DAY 2: Christ is the central person of the Bible

1. What did Christ say of the Scriptures in *John 5:39,40?*

2. Read *Luke 24:25-27,44-48*

- How many teachings concerning Himself in the Old Testament did Jesus claim to fulfil?
- What parts of the Old Testament did Christ say referred to Him (verse 44)?
- What, in verses 26 and 46, indicates that Christ taught that His death and resurrection were a fulfilment of Old Testament teachings?
- What did Christ say was to be preached in His name according to the Old Testament writings (vs 47)?

DAY 3 Authority of the Old Testament

Assignment: Read Acts 19 & 20. Memorise 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

1. Write out the statements concerning inspiration made by the following writers: a. David *(2 Samuel 23:2)* b. Isaiah *(Isaiah 8:1,5,11)* c. Jeremiah *(Jeremiah 1:9)* d. Ezekiel *(Ezekiel 3:4)* e. Micah *(Micah 3:8)*
2. What two statements of Moses in *Exodus 31:18* and *32:16* show that God actually wrote the Ten Commandments?
3. What statement made by David shows that the pattern for the temple was dictated by God *(1 Chronicles 8:19)*?
4. What did Christ call those who did not believe the Old Testament prophecies *(Luke 24:25)*?
5. Into what three parts did Christ divide the Old Testament *(Luke 24:44)*?
6. How much of the Old Testament did Christ believe and accept?

DAY 4: Authority of the New Testament

Assignment: Read Acts 21-22. Memorise Matthew 24:35.

1. What four things did Christ say the Holy Spirit would do for the apostles *(John 16:12-15)*?
   - At that time, did the apostles know all the truth? Would they in the future?
   - Did Christ authenticate their teachings beforehand?
2. What authority did Christ give the apostles *(John 17:18; 20; 21)*?
3. On what basis did Christ select the apostles to bear witness of Him *(John 15:26, 27; Luke 24:46-48)*?
   Whom had Paul seen according to *Acts 9:3-6; Acts 26:13- 15* and *1 Corinthians 15:7-9*?
4. How important did Jesus Christ consider the truths he was teaching the disciples *(Matthew 24:35)*?
5. What authority did Christ give Paul *(Acts 26:15-18)*?
6. From whom did Paul receive what he preached *(1 Corinthians 11:23, Galatians 1:11 and12)*?

DAY 5: The Power of the Word of God

Assignment: Read Acts 23 and 24. Memorise Hebrews 4:12

Tell what God's Word is or what it does, or both, according to the following Scripture references (use dictionary for definition of key words if needed):

1. *John 17:17*
2. *John 8:31, 32*
3. *1 Peter 1:23*
4. *Hebrews 5:13*
5. *Philippians 2:16*
6. *1 John 2:5*
7. *Hebrews 4:12 (5 things)*
8. *John 12:48*
9. *1 Peter 2:2*
10. *Ephesians 1:17*
11. *Romans 10:17*
12. *John 15:3*

1. What should we first know in order to understand the Word of God *(2 Peter 1: 20, 21)*? Read *1 Corinthians 2:14*
2. Why can we not understand the Word of God by our natural ability?
   - What do spiritual things mean to the natural man?
   - What is his attitude toward it?
   - How must one come to understand the Word?
   - What must have occurred in one's life before he can hope to understand *(John 3:3)*?
3. Who is our teacher *(1 Corinthians 2:10-12)*?
4. According to *Romans 8:9,* does one who has experienced the new birth have this great teacher?

DAY 6: The need for the Word of God

Assignment: Read Acts 25 & 26. Memorise Psalms 119:105

1. Read *Psalms 119.* What does the psalmist call God's Word in the following verses of *Psalm 119: Vs 7, 43, 72, 91 and 12*
2. The psalmist found that respecting and learning God's Word resulted in?

DAY SEVEN

Assignment: Read Acts 27 & 28.
Memorise Colossians 3:16a and 17

THOUGHTS

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