

# NEW in Christ



Helping you take your **FIRST STEPS** to  
developing your ***relationship with God***

## COURSE 1

### Leaders



# WELCOME!

*“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.” Eph. 2:19*

We are delighted you are interested in discovering more about God. This hunger for God is a treasure and will lead you to God’s plan of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ.

This course is designed to clearly communicate what is most essential to those seeking the new life in Christ. You will be introduced to some of the most essential beliefs and practices that will help establish your faith.

It is our prayer that this course will be a blessing to you, and source of glory for our Savior Jesus Christ.





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# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

## OUR PURPOSE – Understanding our existence

1 | God made me to **LOVE** and **GLORIFY** Him!

**God says, “I have loved you with an everlasting love!” Jeremiah 31:3**

*“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.” Ephesians 1:4-5*

**Additional Scriptures: Jeremiah 9:23-24** (knowing Him); **Isaiah 43:21** (made for Him and for His honor)

*“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10*

2 | We were created to be in **RIGHT** **RELATIONSHIP** with God and to **ENJOY** and **MANAGE** God’s creation. **This makes us special! Ephesians 2:10**

*“So, God created human beings making them in His image. He blessed them, and said...live all over the earth and bring it under control. I am putting you in charge.” Genesis 1:27- 28*

*“We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. Romans 3:22-24*

*Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full!” John 10:10*

## Living for God's glory and purposes benefits our life and confidence:

Clear Conscience, Life & Peace	Romans 8:1, Romans 8:6
Purpose, Confidence	Romans 8:28, Romans 8:31, Ps. 138:8
Power, Strength, & Fulfillment	Phil 4:13, Phil 4:19, 2 Tim 1:7, 2 Pet 1:3-4
Help with Weakness/Security	Rom 8:26, Rom 8:39, Ps. 27:1-2
Freedom	John 8:32, 26, Gal 5:1

## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

3 | Humans have a natural desire to **GO THEIR OWN WAY** and to ignore God's principles for living.

*"Look out for #1. Do your own thing." Scripture ref. **Romans 1:21-32***

*"If it feels good, do it – regardless of what God says about it."*

4 | The Bible calls this attitude **SIN (SELISHNESS/REBELLION)**.

*"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 53:6***

*"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." **1 John 1:8***

5 | Sin **BREAKS** our relationship with God. It causes us to hide from God and live our lives **OUTSIDE** of His will.

*"But your iniquities have separated you from your God." **Isaiah 59:2***

*"All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." **Romans 3:23***



# THE PROBLEM WITH OUR SIN

6 | When our relationship with God is not right, it causes **PROBLEMS** in every area of our lives: marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc. **JAMES 4:1-4**

7 | When people have problems, they often try many different ways of **COPING** before turning to God.

*"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." **Proverbs 16:25***

Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we often try to fill the void in our life with things that can damage us:

- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Ungodly sexual relationships
- Much more...*These are called idols, anything set in place of God to satisfy/fill our needs apart from Him. Idols always fail to deliver in their promises. God never does!*
- Read Psalms 115:4-8. Idols and our ways will never satisfy!

Ineffective ways people try to reach God:

"My mother was a Christian, so..."	"It doesn't matter what you believe, just be sincere."
"I'll give up all my bad habits."	"I'll be religious and go to church."
"I'll work really hard and earn it."	"I'll be religious and go to church."

8 | These ways of reaching God are **USELESS** because they are not what God wants.

*"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death." **Proverbs 14:12***

*"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." **Matthew 7:21***

## WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." **John 14:6***

God Himself came to earth as a human being to repair our relationship with Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have had to come. The Way of repairing our relationship with God is a Person. **Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-21**

9 | Jesus has already taken care of your **SIN** problem.

*"The wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord."  
**Romans 6:23; Colossians 2:13-15***

10 | God did this for us because He **LOVES** us and wants us to be in **RIGHT** **RELATIONSHIP** with Him.

*"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." **Romans 5:8; Ephesians 1:3-14. (list of all the adjectives given to us, i.e. blessed, chosen, holy, blameless, adopted...)***

*"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."  
**1 Timothy 2:5***

God has already done His part to restore our relationship to Him. He took the initiative. Now He calls us to receive what He has done for us. He calls us to live our lives for His glory and purposes rather than our own. In this we find our greatest joy and highest purpose.

## WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

1 | **ADMIT / REPENT** that God has not been first place in your life and ask Him to forgive your sins. **Ephesians 2:1-3**

*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* **1 John 1:9**

*"Now when they heard (Peter's sermon) they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" vs38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* **Acts 2:37-38**

2 | **BELIEVE** that Jesus died to pay for your sins and that he rose again and is alive today.

*"If you confess with your mouth that 'Jesus is Lord', and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* **Romans 10:9**

*"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven (Jesus) given to men by which we must be saved."* **Acts 4:12**

3 | **RECEIVE** God's free gift of salvation. Don't try to earn it.

*"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast."* **Ephesians 2:8-9**

Our relationship to God is restored based on what Jesus already did for us!

4 | **ASK** Jesus Christ to come into your life and be the director ("Lord") of your life.

*"Yet to all who received him, those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, not of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."* **John 1:12-13**

*"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in..."* **Revelation 3:20**

# PRAYER OF COMMITMENT TO GOD

Salvation begins when God grants you the faith to believe Jesus Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, and Lord of you. This saving faith of God (along with the scriptures and the historical record) will activate your faith to believe that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, died for your sins, and rose again, giving us the promise of eternal life through Him.

This saving faith involves the Spirit of God taking up residence in your entire being, giving you the ability to live for God and reject sinful impulses and patterns.

The following is an example of the type of prayer some people are led to pray as they are given saving faith in Jesus Christ. The primary instruction of scripture is that from our heart **we cry out to God asking Him to give us what we cannot give ourselves, forgiveness of sin, a new nature and a new life and purpose.**

## Sample Prayer

"Jesus, thank you for making me and loving me, even when I've ignored you and went my own way. I have lived for my own desires and ignored your will for my life. And I repent of my sins and I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand you and your word more. I want to follow you from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I receive your gift of salvation. Please fill me with your Holy Spirit and help me to grow as a Christian. I confess you are Lord of Heaven and Earth and Lord over me! Save me O God!"

*"Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13*

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## Testimonies

Leaders may share their testimony of how they came to faith in Christ.

# A DEEPER DIVE

This lesson is designed to provide a clear understanding of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. There was a time in church history in which no lay person had access to the word of God. At the same time **the church began adding traditions and practices that were not in line with God's word.** (*What are some of these?*) The result was that the clear, biblical teaching of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ was not being taught.

In the 14th through the 16th centuries God raised up several individuals who had a burning desire to translate the word of God into the common language of people so they could read the word for themselves. These "reformers" of the faith also articulated the biblical doctrine of saving faith in a series of short statements called the "**Solas.**" (Sola in Latin means "**only**")

The following study is designed to help us understand the doctrines of grace. And it will help us differentiate between the false doctrine of salvation by works, vs the biblical doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

## THE FIVE "ONLYS" (SOLAS)

### The Doctrines of Protestantism

#### 1 | Only by Grace

Salvation is the free gift of God to man. It is given by God's grace alone and not because we deserve it or earn it by doing good things.

**GRACE = God's Riches At Christ's Expense**

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

Important note: This is not to suggest God disapproves of good works people do. However, our good works do not pay for our past sins for which we are guilty. God's plan is to be graceful to you by offering to remove the guilt of your past sins when you place your God-given faith in Jesus Christ and His saving work on the cross.

Salvation is a result of God's GRACE and not of human perfection. Thank God for that! We all fall short of God's perfection.

## 2 | Only by Faith

God expresses His grace to us by giving us the gift of SAVING FAITH. This saving faith is a deep abiding trust and believe in Jesus Christ. Those with saving faith believe Jesus Christ came in the flesh, lived a perfect life, died for our sins and rose from the dead. Those with saving faith have a deep abiding love for Jesus Christ. This deep abiding faith in Jesus results in trusting Jesus for everything related to daily living and worship. Jesus is ALL SUFFICIENT. For everything, in everything, through everything.

Note: This saving faith was first expressed in Abraham. Abraham had faith that God would deliver on His promises and it was "credited to him (Abraham) as righteousness (good standing with God)."

**FAITH = Forsaking All I Trust Him (Faith expressed in Action)**

*"Now it is evident that no one is justified (declared holy) before God by the law, for  
"The righteous shall live by faith." **Galatians 3:11 (ESV); Hebrews 11:6***

## 3 | Only Christ

When two people cannot come to agreement, they often seek a mediator to help them negotiate peace. People are born with an inclination to ignore God live their lives in any way they please. This is insulting to God and creates a break in our relationship with Him.

**Christ is the only Mediator between God and man and our salvation is accomplished only through His death and resurrection. It is through Jesus Christ that we have peace with God.**  
Can there be another mediator? A Pastor? Priest? The Pope?

*"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"  
**1 Timothy 2:5 (KJV)***

In addition, every believer through the work of Jesus Christ is not at peace with God and may approach Him directly. We no longer need a priest to pray for us or mediate our relationship with God. Did you know that all believers are calls priests of God?

*"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." 1 Peter 2:9 (ESV)*

Note for deeper study: Protestants insist that no other special form of Priesthood is necessary, as opposed to the Catholic view of a ministerial priesthood being required for the administration of the Sacraments and forgiveness of sins.

## 4 | Only Scripture

Scripture alone is the only infallible source of divine revelation and the final authority for matters of faith and practice. "Only Scripture" does not mean that all truth (such as medical knowledge and physics) is contained in the Bible, but rather, all mankind needs to know for salvation and the practice of the faith is contained within its pages.

*"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)*

Protestants typically argue that scripture is clear and understandable to all people regarding the essential truths of the Christian gospel of salvation.

Note for deeper study: The Roman Catholic view of a Magisterium (or teaching office) of the church, which is required to infallibly interpret scripture; Protestants argue that through the Holy Spirit, individuals can, by themselves interpret the scriptures responsibly.

## 5 | Only the Glory of God

Every aspect of the Christian life can be lived to the glory to God. In essence, this summarizes the other four "Only-s" above.

*"Whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies- in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." 1 Peter 4:11 (ESV)*

**(Read - 1 Corinthians 10:31)**





# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM

## WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

1 | To follow the example set by JESUS.

*"At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan." **Mark 1:9***

2 | Because Christ COMMANDED it.

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

3 | It testifies that I am a CHRISTIAN. A public display of faith.

*"...many of the Corinthians who heard of him believed and were baptized." **Acts 18:8***

*We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands." **1 John 2:3***

## WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

4 | It illustrates Christ's DEATH and resurrection.

*"...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was raised on the third day according the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve." **1 Corinthians 15:3-4***

5. It illustrates my TRUE IDENTITY a Christian.

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17*

*"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." Romans 6:4*

Baptism **DOES NOT** make you a believer – it shows that you already believe. Baptism **DOES NOT** **"SAVE" YOU**, only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring – it's the outward symbol of the commitment in your heart.

*"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:8-9*

## WHY BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?

**Note:** There is a clear distinction between infant dedication (which some call baptism) and believers' baptism. This is explained in section six below.

6 | Because JESUS was baptized that way.

*"As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water." Matthew 3:16*

7. Every baptism in the Bible was by IMMERSION.

*(Examples) "...Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water..." Acts 8:38, 39*

8 | The word BAPTIZE means to be immersed in water.

**Note:** When there is not water available that is deep enough to be fully immersed an alternative to submersion might be pouring water over the head of the person seeking baptism. This was an alternative spelled out in the 2nd century new membership manual (Didache'). God is interested in your act of faith expressed through baptism even if the ideal method is not available.

## WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

9 | Every person who has **RECEIVED** Christ.

*"Those who accepted his message were baptized" Acts 2:41*

*"Simon himself believed and was baptized..." Acts 8:13*

*"But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women." Acts 8:12*

If you are a new believer and have not been baptized by immersion since your salvation experience, then we encourage you to prayerfully consider it.

## WHEN SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?

When you believe in Jesus Christ for salvation! Or when the Spirit of God speaks into your conscience instructing you to follow through with this ordinance.

*"Those who accepted his message were baptized...that day." Acts 2:41*

*"The eunuch asked Philip, 'Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?' Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?' And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him." Acts 8:35-38*

## INFANT BAPTISM/DEDICATION

Many believers practice infant baptism (others call it baby dedication). The baptism or dedication of infants does not replace the need for adult baptism. Infant baptism comes from the voice of the parents and church family who receive (through baptism or dedication) the child into the fellowship, agreeing as a community to raise this precious child in the way of Christ.

Adult baptism comes from the heart and voice of the individual believer who affirms publicly they have received the faith for their own, and have surrendered their life to the will and glory of God.

With that said, there are many who were baptized as an infant but who come to faith in Christ later. Some sense the meaning of their previous baptism has been deepened and feel no need to be re-baptized. Others sense urgency to be re-baptized after their personal conversion. This is a matter of conscience that will be honored by Pastoral staff.

# COMMUNION

## IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNION

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth, but He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible symbols (called “ordinances”) as reminders of His death. The two ordinances are: Baptism and Communion. Communion is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth for believers.

## WHAT IS COMMUNION?

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

1 | It is a **MEAL**.

*“...The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread...” (v.23)*

2 | It is a **SYMBOL**.

*“...AND WHEN HE HAD GIVEN THANKS, HE BROKE IT AND SAID, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’” (v.24)*

3 | It is a **REMINDER**.

*“In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’” (v.25)*

4 | It is a **PROCLAMATION** (or an act of preaching).

*“For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” (v.26)*

## WHO SHOULD TAKE COMMUNION?

5 | Those who are **SAVED** (given themselves to Jesus)

*And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."* **Mark 14:22-25**

*"For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself."* **1 Corinthians 11:29**

## HOW DO I PREPARE MYSELF FOR COMMUNION?

*"Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup."* **1 Corinthians 11:27-28**

### Prepare yourself by:

1. Self-Examination (1 Corinthians 11:28)
2. Confessing my sins (1 John 1:9)
3. Recommitment to Christ (Romans 12:1)
4. Restoring relationships (Matthew 5:23-24)

## WHAT ARE THE THREE DIFFERING VIEWS OF COMMUNION?

**Discussion:** Transubstantiation (Catholic), Consubstantiation (Lutheran/Episcopal/High-Church), and Memorial/Symbolic (Evangelical-Protestant) views of communion

# YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

## INVESTING IN A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

It's exciting to know that even though we are so far from perfect, God desires to have a personal relationship with each of us. This personal relationship with God causes us to be more like Jesus and **transforms our thinking and daily living**. As cars need gas, so we need the glorious presence and interaction with God to fuel up our lives with His glory and overcoming power. Here are three specific ways to build relationships with God.

- 1 | Through Jesus (Reading His word, listening to His teachings, and looking at His life recorded in His gospels) John 20:30-31; Matthew 28:20; 2 Tim 3:16 – Study; Abide

The Bible is crystal clear that God sent Jesus, so that anyone who has faith in Him can also know God and be adopted into God's family now and in eternity.

*"Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you had known who I am, then you would have known who my Father is. From now on you know Him and have seen Him!'"* **John 14:6-7**

*"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love."*  
**John 15:9**

- 2 | Through Prayer (look at misconceptions, fears, insecurities)

God cares about us, listens to us, and answers our prayers. We can actually grow closer to God by talking with Him every day. The Bible says,

*"Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done."* **Philippians 4:6**

The word used for prayer in the Bible most is "proseuche" which means "coming face to face to present a request or to speak up about an issue" Come face to face with God and surrender your

life in exchange for His. Maintain an attitude of consecration as an ongoing part of your life and thank Him for moving on your behalf.

The best part of connecting with God is that there are no special rituals or words needed. Just be yourself.

## Different forms of prayer

1. Intentional individual prayer (a good way to begin the day) **Matthew 6:6**
2. Ongoing Conversational Prayer **1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 1 Thessalonians 5:17**
3. Congregational Prayer **Acts 4:23-31**
4. Ministry prayer (personal prayer for yourself or another person for the purpose of encouragement and healing) **Philippians 4:6**
5. Prayers of confession **John 1:8-10 James 5:16 Hebrews 4:16**
6. Intercession Prayer **Ephesians 6:18 1 Timothy 2:1 Romans 15:30**
7. Spirit led prayers of faith **Romans 8:26 Mark 11:24**
8. The Lord's Prayer (An example of how to pray from Jesus) **Matthew 6:9-13**
9. Prayer as Spiritual Warfare **2 Corinthians 10:4**
10. Listening Prayer **1 Kings 19:11-13**
11. Prayer in worship. **Psalms 108:1-6**

## 3 | Through Applying What We Learn

According to the Bible, applying what we learn is proof that we love God.

*"Those who obey my commandments are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them."* **John 14:21**

Note: Obedience flows out of love for Jesus (not mechanical actions with disengaged hearts).

## How Do We Apply Scripture to Obey Christ?

Many of us have formed values based on family and cultural norms. Hollywood bombards us with secular morals and values that exalt the individual to the highest place. Many of the morals and values we are tempted to embrace are not pleasing to God.

Biblical morals and values are often counter to the way many people think and act. Here are examples of values and morals espoused by our culture that are contrary to the will of God. The key is to examine the values and morals espoused by others before receiving them as our own.



**\*\*Notice how the following values and morals have been engrained in our culture and perhaps in us.**

Examples of Worldly Values: Do what is right for you / Follow your heart / Marriage is just a piece of paper / Each person decides their own gender / Living up to your potential is a highest lifegoal / All faiths are the same / My political party has the answer to the problems we experience / I don't need to go to church to be a Christian / Have sex when "the moment is right" ...

"There is a way that seems right to man but the end leads to destruction."

***Proverbs 14:12***

How Do We Obey Christ?

1. Consult the scriptures and get input from godly believers
2. Ask God to align our heart, minds and impulses with His will
3. Feed your mind things that are pleasing to Christ
4. Resist advise that is contrary to scripture
5. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit daily
6. Delight in God and receive His great supply of joy for your life
7. Remember that if your relationship with Jesus fades, something will seek to fill that void

\*\*\*And when you encounter the truth, repent and obey God's Spirit's leading. Don't try to excuse your behavior when it is exposed. And do not misinterpret the word for your own benefit. And lastly, stop feeding yourself the wrong stuff\*\*\*.

Note: Remember our faith is a relationship first, everything else flows from that relationship. We obey Jesus because He is our first and greatest love.

**Question:** what does it take to strengthen and nurture any healthy relationship?

- Quality time together.
- Listening, taking time to get to know the other person's interests, likes, dislikes, etc.
- Investing time by serving, giving, helping, sacrificing.
- And lastly, respect, honor, trust, holding the other in higher esteem.



# LIVING OUT OUR PURPOSE

## Living Out Our God-Given Purpose as Followers of Jesus

The bible claims the evidence of our salvation is seen in the way we follow and obey Him. Jesus calls us with two words; "Follow Me." (Matthew 5:19). That is not always easy, but following Him increases our faith and joy. And it involves leaving our old self behind.

We can take our next step in following Jesus by living out the Biblical purposes that God has gifted each Christian. The following acronym helps us remember our purposes: "**W**hat **E**very **C**hristian **S**hould **D**o". The first letter of each word in the phrase helps us remember the five purposes.

### 1 | WORSHIP

We celebrate God's greatness and enjoy His presence as we worship in a biblical focused vibrant church. Worship services are meant to inspire you to grow closer to God. That's important because God tells us to "not neglect our meeting together." (Hebrews 10:25)

Additionally, we are called to treat every area of our lives as worship. We can treat our work, rest, play, relationships and even our hobbies as worship, doing them all to the glory of God.  
(1 Cor 10:31)

**Question:** What are practical ways our work (or rest) can be done as an act of worship?

**Question:** What does it mean to worship in "Spirit and truth?" (see John 4:24)

### 2 | EVANGELISM

Jesus and His first followers were committed to spreading the Gospel throughout the world (and starting new churches). Jesus tells us to do this in **Acts 1:8**

*"But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere – in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

Each of us also has a personal responsibility to share our faith with our friends. The Bible says, "If someone asks about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it," (1 Peter 3:15). Each of us can be prepared to tell a friend about their faith and excited to invite them to receive Christ and begin attending a church at which they can grow in their faith.

**Question:** What are some of the practical ways we can share our faith with others?

**Question:** How can we share our faith without forcing our faith on others?

**Assignment:** At the end of this teaching guide is a tool that will help you tell the story of how God granted you saving faith in Jesus Christ. Fill out each section as brief as possible.

### 3 | COMMUNITY

In Romans 12:5, Paul says, "Since we are all one body in Christ, **we belong to each other**, and each of us needs all the others." You and I were created by God to be in relationships. We need each other to encourage, support, challenge, and help each other grow as followers of Jesus.

**Question:** What are some of the things that draw our focus away from fellowship and community?

**Question:** How has God used other believers to strengthen you?

### 4 | SERVING

We are uniquely created by God to serve Him and make a difference in the world. He's given each of us a unique set of spiritual gifts, talents, and abilities and He wants to use them to impact other people's lives. God highlights this for us in **Ephesians 2:10**:

*"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago."*

So, we invite everyone to serve in a "no-fail" atmosphere because we know that God loves seeing you serve.

**Note:** The next course is designed to help you discover your spiritual gifts and identify how and where God is calling you to serve Him by serving others.

**Question:** How have you observed the special presence of God in your serving? Could this be related to your spiritual gift?

### 5 | DISCIPLESHIP

God desires that we continually grow in our faith, becoming more and more like Jesus in the way we think, speak and act so that we will experience the abundant life God created us to live.

**Question / Discussion:** Read the great commission (Matthew 28) and discuss what it means to make “disciples” rather than settling for making “converts.”

## **Additional Reflections (optional and time permitting)**

### **TREATING PEOPLE LIKE JESUS TREATS PEOPLE**

We believe that Jesus set the standard and is our model for how to love God and treat others. Here are some ways we can treat others like Jesus treats them:

#### **1 | By reaching up and reaching out**

When Jesus was asked what commandment was most important, He replied:

*"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself." **Matthew 22:37-38***

#### **2 | By being real, relevant, and relational**

Jesus was known by His first followers to be someone who truly cared for them. We attempt to model that by being real, relevant and relational. It's our goal to “be real” by trying to live out what we say we believe. Our teaching is described as “relevant” because it addresses real-life issues and can be applied throughout the week. When it comes to being “relational”, Jesus invited everyone to follow Him and so do we. Come as you are!

#### **3 | By offering forgiveness, not judgement**

God commands us to love others just as they are. We do that by meeting people where they are at on their own spiritual journey and walking with them as they take steps to grow closer to God.

The Bible says to, “Be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32). This is a basic concept described in scripture, so we try to forgive each other like Jesus does.

The Bible is also very direct when it comes to judgment. It says, “Do not judge” (Matthew 7:1). Judgment is for God alone. Instead, our goal is to encourage and support each other and help each other grow closer to God.

Note: This doesn't mean we cannot or should not call out sin, disobedience or false teaching when the Spirit shows us. If any of these is present in the church, or with a brother or sister, we are told to speak the truth in love. It always boils down to our heart and attitude when doing it. It needs to flow out of love and righteousness, but that of God, not our own.

## 4 | By caring for our community

All people are important to God; therefore, they need to be important to us. The Bible says, "Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others too, and what they are doing." (Philippians 2:4) That's why churches reach out to their own community through Outdoor and sports ministries, AWANA, Family Care and Counseling, Clothing drives, benevolence programs, and various ways of expressing love to one's neighbors and acquaintances.

**Question:** What are some of the ways your church cares for its community?

**Question:** Which way of caring for your community seems to personally connect to you?

# PERSONAL COMMITMENTS

The following biblically based commitments are designed to strengthen and protect your church. These commitments will also guard your heart.

## FELLOWSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES FOR BELIEVERS

### 1 | I will protect the unity of this fellowship:

- By acting in love toward others
- By refusing to gossip, lie, or fault-find
- By making every attempt to follow the leaders (as they accurately teach scripture & display servant leadership)

*"So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together." **Romans 14:19***

*Have a sincere love for other believers; "love one another deeply from the heart." **1 Peter 1:22***

*"... do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate" **Titus 3:1-2***

*· Deal with disagreements in person, face to face; "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you." **Matthew 18:15***

*"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you." **Hebrews 13:17***

## 2 | I will share the responsibility of this fellowship:

- By praying for its message to be clearly proclaimed
- By inviting others to attend
- By warmly welcoming those who visit

### Paul requests prayer for their message to spread:

*"... And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ..." **Colossians 4:2-5***

*"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." **Matthew 9:37-38***

*"The Master said to the servant, go out to the roads and country lanes, and urge the people there to come so my house will be full." **Luke 14:23***

*"So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified." **Romans 15:7***

## 3 | I will serve the ministry of this fellowship:

- By discovering and using my gifts and talents to serve Christ, His body and the world
- By being equipped to serve by the equippers
- By developing a servant's heart

*"Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you."  
(1 Peter 4:10)*

*"God gave...some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up." (Ephesians 4:11-12)*

*"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who... (took on) the very nature of a servant." (Philippians 2:3-4, 7)*



## 4 | I will support the testimony of this fellowship:

- By attending faithfully
- By living a godly life
- By prayerfully considering how God instructs me to spend my time, energy, and financial resources

*"Let us not give up meeting together...but let us encourage one another." **Hebrews 10:25***

*"Whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ." **Phil 1:27***

*"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." **2 Corinthians 9:7***

### Important Note on Commitments

These commitments listed above are the actions that those living by The Spirit will naturally desire as an expression of love for Jesus Christ.



## The Trinity: Father, Son & Spirit

### GOD IS NOT...

1. **an impersonal force** (optional self-study article from CARM <https://carm.org/is-god-personal>)
2. **bound BY time and space** God is beyond time; He did not come into existence at some point within time. Instead, He claims that, rather than having a beginning, He *is* the Beginning and the End (*Revelation 22:13*).
3. **one of many gods**  
Isaiah 43:10 ESV  
“You are my witnesses,” declares the LORD, “and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.

### GOD IS...

#### 1. Eternal

Psalm 102:25-27 ESV

Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end.

Revelation 1:8 ESV

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

#### 2. Holy (God’s holiness is His highest and most strongly emphasized trait in Scripture)

Psalm 99 ESV

[ *The LORD Our God Is Holy*] The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake! The LORD is great in Zion; He is exalted over all the peoples. Let them praise your great and awesome name! Holy is He! ...

Revelation 4:8

And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” (Also see Isaiah 6)

**Question:** how does the holiness of God affect the way we approach God in worship?

**Question:** Why might some take for granted the holiness of God?

**Question:** How does it shape our behavior knowing that God’s holiness is His highest attribute?

### 3. All knowing (omniscient)

1 John 3:20 ESV

For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.

Isaiah 42:9 ESV

Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.”

Psalms 139:16 ESV

Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

**Question:** How could learning that God is all-knowing affect the way we can rely on Him and trust Him?

### 4. Present everywhere (omnipresent)

Psalms 33:13–14 (ESV):

<sup>13</sup> The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; <sup>14</sup> from where he sits enthroned, he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth,

Omnipresence Defined: God is present everywhere. Although God is not totally immersed in the fabric of creation (pantheism), He is always present everywhere.

God’s presence is continuous throughout all of creation, though it may not be revealed in the same way at the same time to people everywhere. At times, He may be actively present in a situation, while He may not reveal that He is present in another circumstance in some other area.

**Question:** How does it affect you to know that it is impossible to be truly alone?

### 5. Revealed perfectly in Jesus Christ

Hebrews 1:3 ESV

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the **exact imprint of his nature**, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

John 1:14 ESV

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

### 6. Unity and diversity (**Trinitarian**)

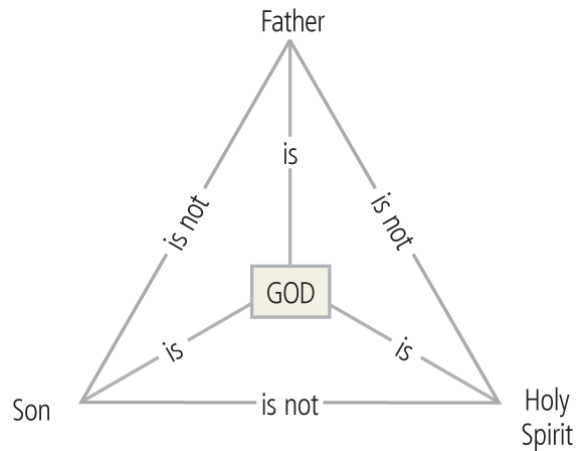
Matthew 3:16

“After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him.”

Matthew 28:19

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit . . .”

## Illustration of God as “one and three”



**Question:** How does creation reflect God’s unity and diversity? (example: different people groups who are part of the human race / the body of Christ with many different parts etc.)

### 7. Love

1 John 4:7-8 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Romans 5:8

but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**Question:** What does it say about God that Jesus died for us before we showed any sign of concern or love for Him? (and how does this personally affect your heart?)

**Question:** If God defines Himself as the perfection of love, how do we experience this great love of God?

**Question:** What are some reasons people do not experience God’s love?



# SHARING YOUR FAITH STORY

Briefly describe what your life was like before you decided to trust Christ, how and when you decided to trust Christ alone for your salvation, and how this decision has made a difference in your life.

1 | Before Christ:

2 | My salvation experience:

3 | How my faith makes a daily difference: