

Developing Your Life in Christ: Understanding the Foundation of Faith

Welcome to the Journey of faith. *My prayer is that you will know God in your life and make him known throughout your lifetime.*

Your journey is a journey toward maturity in Christ Jesus. It will not be easy. Difficult obstacles may stand in your way, but that is why God created the church and why He gave you the Holy Spirit, you will be victorious. Let's begin the journey and never turn back. Let's pursue our fullest potential in Jesus Christ.

Now that you have decided to follow Christ the first question that may come to your mind is "now what?" These lessons will now help you understand some of the fundamentals of the Christian faith and develop your potential to be the Christian God wants you to be.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to help you develop your foundation in Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

Goal:

The goal of this study is to help you understand the basics of what Christianity is and where Christ wants to lead you. Furthermore your development as a Christian will depend on what disciplines you put in your life to ensure that you are growing and maturing in Christ. These studies will help you to lay the foundations for the disciplines that you need to put into your life in order to ensure growth and maturity.

Objectives:

The key objectives to accomplishing anything in the Christian life are:

1. Unconditional love
2. Undying hope
3. Unfailing faith

Lessons:

1. Finding Assurance
2. Authority of Scripture
3. Experiencing Forgiveness
4. The Joy of Prayer and Worship
5. Developing your Quiet Time
6. Knowing God
7. The Lord Jesus Christ
8. The Ordinances of the Church
9. Living According to Position

Finding Assurance

God wants you to know he is committed to you. *Memorize Hebrews 13:5b.*

When you find Christ and commit your life to him you join a family. You have become part of God's family. You along with others have experienced the forgiving power of Christ. You have experienced him adopting you into his family. You now have a relationship with Christ.

Your relationship with Christ is like getting married. In fact the church is symbolized as a bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:23-27). You and he become committed to each other. Yet you know that marriages fail and suffer. Will your relationship with Christ ever fail? Can you be divorced from God? We will answer that question in this study.

1. How is God's love demonstrated to you from the following verses?

John 3:16 _____

Romans 3:23-26 _____

Romans 5:6-10 _____

1 John 4:9,10 _____

Read Romans 8:31-39

2. Identify the key questions asked by Paul:

3. What do these questions say to you about your relationship with God?

4. What word or words will answer each question?

5. Based on these verses how secure is your relationship with God?

6. How is your relationship symbolized with God in these verses?

Psalm 23 _____

John 10:27-30 _____

7. How do these two passages in Psalm and John describe God's loyalty to you?

God has done so much for us. He not only created a world for us to live in, but also gave us His only Son, so we could have a relationship with Him. First John 4:9,10 essentially says that God's love is not based or founded on our love for him. In fact He doesn't wait for us to love him before he will love us. Actually we are at war with God. We spurn God, and Despise him. Read Romans 8:5-7. These verses describe our inability and our desire to not serve God. Yet God loved us anyway! He took the initiative. He took the steps necessary to love us and for us to love Him. *He desires to know you.* He desires to have a relationship with you.

8. How do you know that you belong to God?

1 John 5:11-13 _____

9. Based on those verses what are you guaranteed?

You may ask, "How do I know I have Christ?" The Bible is very clear when it says, "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" (Romans 10:9,10). In addition the Bible says, "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (Romans 8:16). If you have confessed Jesus as Lord and believe that he arose from the dead, then you are saved and belong to God.

10. Have you done what Romans 10:9,10 says to do? _____

11. Have you sensed that Holy Spirit's assurance based on Romans 8:16? _____

When you come to Christ, it is not the words that you necessarily say that are important, but what you believe in your heart.

12. According to these verses, what matters to God? What pleases Him?

1 Samuel 16:7 _____

Hebrews 11:6 _____

These verses do not say anything about your occupation, economic status, color of skin or even your gender. You are welcome to the throne room of God and you may approach him with confidence (Hebrews 4:16), not worrying about those other things, as long as you approach through Christ (John 14:6). In fact God desires that you seek him continually and approach him daily.

13. What is God committed to accomplish in you?

Philippians 1:6 _____

Romans 8:29 _____

14. What has God done to identify you as His?

2 Corinthians 1:21,22 _____

Ephesians 1:13,14 _____

That seal talked about is like a copyright symbol you see in books and other publications. What a copyright indicates is ownership. God owns you and you belong to him. You are copyrighted by God.

15. Based on what you have learned in this lesson, have you gained a new sense of security that you have with God? Explain.

16. Now there is a danger in security. There is a danger with you knowing God is loyal to you. List the dangers associated with security.

Galatians 5:13,14 _____

James 2:14-17 _____

17. How can you keep from allowing those dangers from becoming part of your life?

One way is to continually remember what it cost God to give you life and a relationship with Him. When you forget what God gave you, then you lose your zeal to serve and love God.

Authenticity and Authority of the Bible

The Bible is the most remarkable book ever written because the Bible is God's written revelation of His will to men. Its central theme is salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. The Bible is the only rule and standard by which Christians find direction and God's will for their lives.

The Bible is really an anthology of books. There are 66 books separated into two major sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word Testament means covenant or promise. In the Old Testament there are 39 books and in the New Testament there are 27. They are broken down into several categories.

The Old Testament

The Old Testament is broken down into four major categories or sections. The first category is called the Law or Torah. The Torah consists of the first five books of the Bible, which is also called the Pentateuch. The books of the Torah are: *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*. Genesis is the book of beginnings describing how God created the world and the first humans. This book shows the journey of humanity as it walked away from God. It is also here that Abraham was called and the Hebrew people were born. From Abraham came the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). The patriarchs carried the promise of God to their children. The promise was that God will increase his people who will live in a land flowing with milk and honey.

The books of Exodus through Deuteronomy describe how the Hebrew people survived under slavery in Egypt for several centuries were miraculously and wonderfully delivered and set free by God. They journey from Egypt through the desert for forty years while God revealed the law to his people through Moses. The book of Deuteronomy was made up of Moses' three major sermons reminding the people before they enter the Promised Land to obey God and live according to his statutes.

The second category is called history. There are twelve books in this section: *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1, 2 Samuel, 1, 2 Kings, 1, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther*. The history books describe how the Hebrew people took control of the Promised Land (known as Canaan) in the book of Joshua and their subsequent history in that land. The history revealed the story of how the Hebrew people although warned several times mostly by prophets and some by kings of staying true to God and following his word end up losing the land. In this section of books particularly in Kings it described how the one kingdom became two: the Northern tribes (Israel) and the southern tribes (Judah). The Northern kingdom was exiled first, then 150 years later the southern kingdom. The land was taken away since the Hebrew people refused to live for God forgetting God had given them this land. The books of Chronicles describe the acts of the southern kings, no mention of the northern kings. The book of Esther describes the Jews while under the rule of a Persian king. Ezra and Nehemiah told the story of the Jews returning to the land after a 70-year exile. The word Jew comes from the southern kingdom Judah.

The third category is called poetry or wisdom literature. There are six books: *Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs and Lamentations*. These books of poetry discuss life people experience God through difficult, trials, celebrations and victories. Job told the story

of the man name Job of how wealthy he is and yet how he lost everything. His friends do not really help him, as there are several cycles of dialogue between Job and his friends. This book deals with the question of suffering and God's character.

Psalms is a collection of songs over a 1000-year period. There is a song from Moses (Ps 90); Several songs of David (Ps 20-23); and a song from the time of the exile (Ps 137). There are different types of songs. There are lamenting songs (Ps 3, 22). There are Thanksgiving songs ((65, 107); songs of praise and worship (Ps 145-147); a recitation of the Hebrew's history (Ps 78, 105, 106). There are royal or coronation Psalms (Ps 2, 18, 144). There are wisdom Psalm (Ps 36,37,133) and there are angry Psalms (Ps 109).

Proverbs is a wisdom book of wise short and pithy sayings. It is mostly King Solomon's words revealing the wisdom given to him by God (see 1 Kings 3:4 – 15). In 1 Kings 4:32 we are told that Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs, it is in this book we get a sampling of those proverbs. The book of Ecclesiastes was also written by Solomon. Ecclesiastes is king Solomon's private journal. Ecclesiastes means teacher or even preacher. It is here that Solomon looked at life seeing it as pointless and meaningless unless it is centered on God. It is his wisdom again demonstrated. The book of Song of Songs is another work by Solomon, this is his best song that he wrote which is about love between a man and a woman. It is said in 1 Kings 4:32 that he wrote 1,005 songs.

Lamentations is also part of the wisdom literature although it is found after the book of Jeremiah. This book is about the Jeremiah's grieving as he looks at Jerusalem having been destroyed by the Babylonians and its inhabitants sent away to exile. It described his grief and sadness over the loss of life and promise. Although God will restore his people to the land, the tragedy and devastation was overwhelming.

The fourth category is called prophecy. There are sixteen books of prophecy but there are two sections of prophetic books. The first four books are called Major Prophets because they are larger books and the prophet is more influential in the history of Jews. They include: *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel* and *Daniel* (they are in chronological order). Isaiah speaks primarily to the Southern kingdom but also to the surrounding nations. He is the most prominent of prophets and one of the most quoted in the New Testament. Jeremiah prophesied how Judah would be exiled by the Babylonians, but how God would restore them. He also saw the destruction of the Jerusalem. Both Ezekiel and Daniel were prophets who prophesied while in exile. These books look to the hope of restoration and renewal.

The less influential prophetic books are call the Minor Prophets. There are twelve of them and they include: *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah* and *Malachi*. They too are in chronological order. The prophetic books described and illustrated the theological signs of the times for the nations of Israel and Judah. These are probably the least read and understood by Christians today.

The New Testament

The New Testament continues the story of the Jews after a 400 years of silence since Malachi. Similar to the Old Testament the New is broken up into categories. The first major category is called the Gospels. There are four Gospels: *Matthew, Mark, Luke* and *John*. These four books tell the story of Christ, primarily his three-year ministry, his sermons, parables, miracles and challenges with the Jewish leadership. The primary focus of all four Gospels is

the death and resurrection of Christ. *Matthew, Mark and Luke* are similar in how they tell the story of Christ with certain differences. They are called the Synoptic Gospels. *John* is different both in style events, and tradition.

The second category is called history. There is only one book: *Acts*. The book of *Acts* is the story and events of the early church after Christ ascended to heaven described in chapter 1. *Acts* is about the Holy Spirit working in the life of the early church showing how it grew radically and significantly. The early church challenged the power structures of the day and spoke without equivocation the Gospel of Christ, regardless of what it cost the disciples. In *Acts*, we are introduced to a man named Paul, who came to Christ through a vision and became one of the church's most vocal evangelist and hard-working church planter.

The third category is called teaching. This category makes up the majority of the New Testament with twenty-one books. The teaching section consists of letters, where men wrote letters to churches. Paul is the main character in this section because we have thirteen of his letters: *Romans, 1,2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1,2 Thessalonians, 1,2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon* (the books are in order of length and prominence). The non-Pauline letters (also called General or Catholic letters) are: *Hebrews, James, 1,2 Peter, 1,2,3 John and Jude* (the books are in order of length). These letters are usually filled with commands, theology, teaching and promises.

The fourth category is called prophecy. There is only one book: *Revelation*. This book consists of the apostle John's visions of the last days. *Revelation* described the coming of Christ, the end of evil and the future and eternal heavenly home. This book is also a book of worship.

The Bible is unique

Here are some interesting facts concerning the uniqueness of the Bible:

- The Bible was written over a 1500 year span and over 40 generations
- It was written by over 40 authors from every walk of life including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, and scholars.
- It was written in different places. It was written in the wilderness, dungeon, prison, and on an island.
- It was written in times of war and peace.
- It was written on three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe.
- It was written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.
- It has one theme: God redeeming man and woman.

In the following verses describe how careful the writers were in putting together Scripture and how the Bible is its own witness.

Luke 1:1-3 _____

John 19:35 _____

Acts 26:24-26 _____

2 Peter 1:16 _____

1 John 1:3 _____

The Bible has Authority

In the following verses describe where the Bible originated.

2 Timothy 3:16,17 _____

2 Peter 1:20-21 _____

In the following verses describe where the authority of the Bible resides and the responsibility of those who speak the word of God.

Numbers 22:38 _____

Deuteronomy 18:18-20 _____

Jeremiah 1:9 _____

Ezekiel 2:7-3:3 _____

What did Jesus think of the Bible?

Matthew 4:4 _____

Matthew 5:18 _____

Matthew 24:35 _____

How do we know the Bible is truthful?

John 17:17 _____

Titus 1:2 _____

Hebrews 6:18 _____

How do we know the Bible is without error?

Psalm 12:6 _____

Psalm 119:89 _____

Proverbs 30:5 _____

How do we know that the Bible is the Word of God?

John 10:27 _____

1 Corinthians 2:13,14 _____

What is the purpose of the Bible?

2 Timothy 3:16,17 _____

Hebrews 4:12 _____

Experiencing Forgiveness

God knows you will fall, but He isn't expecting you to stay down.

Memorize 1 John 1:9.

Imagine having a debt too large to pay. Each and everyday the debt rises due to interest. Each day you go further into the hole. Then you are told one morning that the debt is gone. Someone paid it for you. How would you feel?

Similarly we are in debt to God. Yet God through Christ has paid the debt. Sin was our master, and our slave driver. Now Christ through his death has set us free from our master sin, and now Christ owns us (1 Cor. 6:19,20). Christ removed the debt.

1. What does sin do?

Isaiah 59:2 _____

Galatians 5:17 _____

Ephesians 2:1,2 _____

2. What do we deserve as sinners?

Romans 6:23 _____

Ephesians 2:3 _____

2 Thessalonians 1:8,9 _____

3. What is the condition of your heart before Christ saved you?

Jeremiah 17:9 _____

Romans 3:10 _____

4. Can good works remove our sins? Why or why not?

Titus 3:5 _____

Ephesians 1:7 _____

Colossians 1:13,14 _____

5. What has sin done to our good works?

Isaiah 64:6 _____

6. Where does sin originate?

Mark 7:20-23 _____

Sin cannot simply be eradicated by good behavior or change of habit or even a change of environment. Sin exists in your heart. Regardless of where you go, what you say, or what you do or don't do sin is still there. Sin cannot simply be wiped away by what you do. It has to be wiped away or taken away through Christ and his blood. Only Christ can do it.

7. Does God want to forgive? Why or why not?

2 Peter 3:9 _____

Luke 19:10 _____

John 3:17 _____

8. How does God show that he is a forgiving God?

Read 2 Chronicles 33:1-20 and you hear about the evil king Manasseh. He entered the world as a prince, fathered by king Hezekiah. King Hezekiah was a great man of faith who loved God passionately. Manasseh was the opposite of his father. He went against all that his father must have taught him. He built altars and bowed down to them. He sacrificed his sons to the god of Molech. He made idols. He practiced all kinds of evil. He even set up an idol in the temple of God himself. He went beyond sacrilege. He made that which was sacred common and secular. He worshiped the stars and the sun. He violated all that God had said. He angered God. In 2 Chronicles 33:11-13, Manasseh is captured and taken away. All that he had was lost. In a foreign jail cell he calls out to God and God forgave him. Not only that, but he was given back all that he lost.

In Jonah 4 the prophet reluctantly tells the people of Assyria they are to repent, and to his dismay they repent. Jonah hates the Assyrian people. The nation itself had a reputation on being brutal, especially in their methods of warfare. The army was powerful and strong and able to conquer anyone who came against them. They became the symbol of oppression as they insisted countries around them pay a tribute tax. Deep-seated prejudice existed between them and the nation of Israel. Yet God wanted to forgive them, regardless of how oppressive and brutal they were. God wanted them to repent so he could forgive and bless them. Read Jonah 4:10,11.

David wrote Psalm 32 after he confessed the horrible sin he committed against God with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11). He took Bathsheba and slept with her, then killed her husband so he could get away with it. David sinned, yet God weighed heavily on his heart. He was crushed under the weight of God's hand until he confessed. This demonstrates that God wanted to forgive David. If he didn't care, he would not have pursued David.

Yes God does want to forgive.

The conditions for receiving forgiveness from God:

Humility

When you realize you have done wrong, it is humbling to admit it. The Bible says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6). In order to receive forgiveness you must admit your sins.

Confession

As you can see in 1 John 1:9, confession will accomplish something. Confession is the admitting to God the wrong you have done or the right you should have done.

Repentance

Confession is admitting you are wrong, repentance is getting rid of it. It is one thing to know something; it is another to do something about it. Repentance is turning 180 degrees. It is going toward Christ. Christ said, “...Unless you repent, you too will all perish” (Luke 13:3).

Submission

The Bible says, “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Your submission to God is an invitation for the devil to leave. As you submit to the authority and absolute Lordship of God, God’s love will flow over and through you.

What must you do to experience God’s love and forgiveness on a day-to-day basis?

- A. When you sin, admit it immediately. Keep your confessions up to date. If you let sins lag without admitting you were wrong, you become dull to the Spirit. Your desire to read and get into the Word wanes. If it is a sin that is haunting you like David’s in Psalm 32, the Lord will put his hand on you.
- B. If you hurt or harmed someone, ask his or her forgiveness (Matthew 5:23,24).
- C. If you can’t think of any sins ask God to reveal to you any sins that you may have committed (see Psalm 139:23,24). You may want to write out the sins God reveals to you.
- D. Ask God to forgive you the sins you have committed because of the promise of 1 John 1:9 and Colossians 2:13,14. Tear up the paper where you wrote out your sins. Remember this very important fact: *1 John 1:9 is always true.*
- E. Forsake the sins you’ve confessed. If you feel a particular sin is difficult to deal with you will need to get an accountability partner.

The Joy of Prayer and Worship

The Lord invites His children to regularly communicate with Him through prayer and worship. We can have constant access to God, lifting our burdens and problems before his throne. Prayer puts believers in touch with the resources of heaven for power, protection and provision. Worship reminds us who we are before God, as we give God his due through honor glory and praise. As we pray, and as we worship, our relationship with Christ grows even stronger. Together, let us learn to communicate with God as the Bible teaches.

Memorize James 5:16.

Prayer is talking to God

1. Why do we talk to God?

Psalm 56:3,4 _____

Philippians 4:6 _____

1 Peter 5:7 _____

2. What is the result of prayer?

Philippians 4:7 _____

Romans 10:13 _____

Read Luke 18:1-11

3. What was the reason Jesus taught his disciples this parable? _____

4. What is the theme of the parable? _____

5. What will God do when we pray? _____

6. When we pray how should we approach God?

Hebrews 4:15,16 _____

John 14:6 _____

7. How often are we to pray?

1 Thessalonians 5:17 _____

As a follower of Christ, you are to develop a lifestyle of prayer, where prayer is constantly on your lips. You can do this because God is not geographically bound. You don't have to go anywhere in order for Him to hear you. He is with you always wherever you go (Matthew 28:20).

8. Why are some prayers not granted?

Isaiah 1:15-20 _____

James 4:3 _____

2 Corinthians 12:8,9 _____

Types of Prayer

A. **Worship:** In worship, you are occupied solely with God, ascribing to Him all the virtues of His attributes and giving to him what he deserves (Psalm 29:1,2).

1. **Praise:** In praise, you consider what God has done and who he is (Psalm 8; 145:1,2).

2. **Thanksgiving:** This is similar to praise, but it involves the recollection of what God has done and what he is doing now. This includes thanking God for the good and the bad (Psalm 105:1,2; Ephesians 5:20).

3. **Adoration:** In adoration, you tell your feelings toward God (Psalm 18:1; Psalm 73:25).

4. **Devotion:** In devotion, you commit your life to God for lifelong service (Psalm 73:28; Romans 12:1,2).

B. **Confession:** In confession, you are concerned with the condition of your heart and you desire to be fully reconciled to God. Confession is a prerequisite for approaching God in worship and prayer (Psalm 51:3,4; 1 John 9,10).

C. **Communion:** In communion, you are involving yourself with God by being aware of His presence and allowing Him through Scripture and by His Holy Spirit to impress upon your heart the thoughts of God (Psalm 94:18,19).

D. **Petition and Supplication:** In petition and supplication, you are asking God for personal needs and even wants, but they should be offered for the glory of God (1 Chronicles 4:10; Matthew 7:7,8).

E. **Lamentations:** When you are going through an experience that seems to contradict the promises of God, you can cry out to him (Psalm 88). If there is a person or an organization that has hurt you terribly, you can tell God how you feel and what you wish would happen to them for what they did (Psalm 109:6-15). Being truthful to God brings healing and victory (John 8:32).

F. Intercession: In intercession, you are deeply concerned for someone other than yourself. Intercession is the present ministry of Christ at the right hand of God on mankind's behalf and is perhaps the greatest expression of love on the part of Christians for one another (Colossians 1:10-12; 4:2,3; Romans 8:34).

Developing a Quiet Time

Our walk with God is a relationship, and like all relationships it takes time to develop. Our journey is a journey with God guiding us and leading us. As we journey we mature in God and our relationship with him becomes stronger. In all relationships, trust is a vital and important element. A quiet time is a way to develop your relationship. A quiet time is an intimate and personal time with God. *Memorize Psalm 73:26.*

1. A quality quiet time begins with what type of attitude?

1 Peter 2:2 _____
(See also Psalm 42:1; Psalm 63:1; Matthew 5:6)

2. How are you to view the Bible in regards to your relationship with God?

Psalm 119:9-16, 105-112 _____

3. What does God command you regarding His Word?

Joshua 1:6-9 _____

(See also 2 Timothy 2:15)

4. What does God command you regarding prayer?

Luke 18:1-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:17 _____

5. The ingredients to a healthy quiet time.

A. Find a place.

1. A quiet area/A secluded area
2. A comfortable area

B. Prepare yourself.

1. Ask God to help you spend this time in a way that is powerful and real.
2. Allow God to speak to you.
3. Declare your utter dependence on him and your willingness to obey.

C. Bring resources.

1. Bible
2. Notebook

3. Hymnal; worship praise book; ipod; mp3 player
4. Handbooks, commentaries, devotional books, etc.

D. Three ways to enter God's presence (which way do you best enter God's presence?).

1. Prayer
2. Reading the Bible
3. Personal Worship

E. Have a plan (See below).

F. Remember consistency is the key.

Four Devotional Plans

The S.T.O.P plan

Silence: Begin with quiet stillness before the Lord.

Thankfulness: Praise God for who he is and what he has done.

Openness: Read a section of God's Word, reflecting on its truth.

Prayer: Using an outline such as the Lord's prayer, petition God for what you need.

The A.C.T.S plan

Adoration: Begin your quiet time praising God by telling him why you adore him.

Confession: Open your heart to God and let him clean house.

Thankfulness: Give God all the glory for what he has done in your life.

Supplication: Ask God for your needs and the needs of others.

The McNeel plan (*2 different ways to study Scripture*)

Eight steps to gaining insight from Scripture:

1. Pray, asking God to guide you.
2. Read the selected passage of Scripture.
3. Mark the significant verse that catch your attention as you read.
4. Review the marked verses and select the one that stands out the most.
5. Put that verse into your own words.
6. Give the verse a one-word title.
7. Memorize the verse.
8. Make an application of the truth to your own life.

Four steps to meaningful Scripture meditation:

1. Memorize a key passage of Scripture (become familiar with the passage).
2. Personalize the message.
3. Apply the passage to your own life. Base your decisions on what God says.

4. Next week pick up in the passage where you left off and repeat the cycle until the whole passage is covered.

The Devotional Journal plan

1. Guidelines: (1) Prayer and praise
 (2) Read and reread
 (3) Observe and write
 (4) Obey by doing the Word
2. Facts: What does the passage say (copy verses or phrases for meditation)?
3. Meaning: What does the passage mean to me, personally?
4. Response: What am I specifically going to do about this truth?
5. Evaluation: What did I do and when did I do it? What was the result?

Develop your own

Maybe none of these works for you, so develop a plan that will help you read and pray on a daily and weekly basis. Your creativity is your limit on how you can devote time to God.

Meditate on the following passages to get you started:

Romans 8

Psalm 27

Psalm 145

Ephesians 1-3

Ephesians 4-6

Knowing God

Our God is an awesome and wonderful God. He is above all that we can think or imagine. He is infinite; we are finite. He is eternal; we are mortal. He is strong; we are weak. As we study the character of God we come to a point where we realize how big he truly is. God wants to be known. As we learn more about him the more trust we give to him. Though our journey can never end, it certainly can begin. So let us begin the journey of discovering the greatness of God. *Memorize Exodus 34:6,7*

I. The Attributes of God

A. What does God need? Is his existence dependent on anything or anyone?

Acts 17:24-25 _____

Psalm 50:10-12 _____

B. Will God become better? Why or why not?

Psalm 102:25-27 _____

Malachi 3:6 _____

(See also: James 1:17; Psalm 33:11; Isaiah 46:9-11)

C. How long will God live? Did God have a beginning?

Psalm 90:2 _____

Deuteronomy 33:27 _____

(See also: Jeremiah 10:10; Isaiah 45:21)

D. Where is God?

Jeremiah 23:23-24 _____

1 Kings 8:27 _____

Hebrews 4:13 _____

E. Attributes Describing God's Being

1. Is God a human being with arms and legs?

John 4:24 _____

2. Can you see God?

1 Timothy 1:17 (1 Timothy 6:16; John 1:18) _____

F. Mental Attributes

1. How much does he know?

Matthew 10:29-30 (See also: 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; Psalm 139:1-2,4,16; Proverbs 16:33) _____

2. What kind of advice can he give you?

Romans 11:33 (See also: Romans 16:27; Psalm 104:24; 1 Corinthians 1:30) _____

3. What kind of standard does God's word have?

John 17:3 (See also: 1 John 5:20; John 17:17; Titus 1:2) _____

4. What do these verses say about God?

Deuteronomy 7:9; Deuteronomy 32:4; Lamentations 3:22,23 _____

G. Moral Attributes: Using the verses, give a one or two word attribute for the 8 blanks.

1. _____
Psalm 100:5; Psalm 106:1; Luke 18:19

2. _____
1 John 4:8-10; Jeremiah 31:3

3. _____
Exodus 34:6; Psalm 103:8

4. _____
Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 99:9; 1 Peter 1:15,16

5. _____
1 Corinthians 14:33; Romans 15:33

6. _____
Psalm 97:2; Psalm 7:9; Isaiah 45:21

7. _____
Deuteronomy 4:24; Deuteronomy 5:9; Exodus 20:5

8. _____
Exodus 32:9-10; Romans 1:18

H. Attributes of Purpose

1. What can God do? _____
Psalm 115:3

2. What can stop God? _____
Luke 1:37; Ephesians 3:20

I. Summary Attributes: Give a one-word statement to the 4 blanks.

1. _____
Matthew 5:48

2. _____
1 Timothy 6:15

3. _____
Psalm 27:4; Revelation 4:3

4. _____
Romans 3:23; Psalm 24:10; Revelation 21:23

II. Names of God

Though the Bible does give several names and titles to God, there are some names that are intimate and personal.

A. List the names or titles mentioned in these Scripture passages.

Genesis 17:1 _____

Exodus 3:14,15 _____

Isaiah 40:28 _____

Matthew 28:19 _____

B. What name did Jesus use when referring to God?

Matthew 6:9 _____

John 17:1-5 _____

C. What is God's personal name?

Exodus 3:14,15 _____

Romans 8:15 _____

III. Our Responsibility

Read Ephesians 5:1,2

A. What are you commanded to do according to these two verses? _____

B. What would imitating God look like in your life? _____

C. How have those around you demonstrated imitating God? _____

The Lord Jesus Christ

The central message of the Bible is the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ Jesus is the fullest and most complete revelation of God. He is the center of faith for the Christian. He is the source of all that is good and right. He is the One who helps you overcome addictions. He is the One who liberates the captive, destroys the strongholds, heals the sick, and saves the sinner. Without Christ we live in a hopeless and futile world. *Memorize Matthew 3:17.*

I. The Person of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man in one person, and will be so forever.

A. The Humanity of Christ

1. How did Jesus Christ enter the world?

Luke 1:29-37 _____

Matthew 1:18-25 _____

2. What human characteristics did Jesus have?

Luke 2:40,52 _____

John 12:27 _____

Mathew 13:53-58 _____

Luke 24:39 _____

Matthew 26:38 _____

3. Did Jesus Christ sin?

2 Corinthians 5:21 _____

Hebrews 4:15 _____

1 Peter 2:22 _____

4. Why did the Lord Jesus Christ need to be human?

Romans 5:18-19 _____

(See also: Hebrews 2:14, 16-17; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:6; 1 Corinthians 15:42-49).

B. The Deity of Christ

1. What is Jesus Christ called according to these verses?

John 1:1,14; John 20:28 _____

(See also Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8)

2. What is Jesus Christ called according to these verses?

Luke 1:35; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews 1:10-12 _____

3. What did the Old Testament think of Christ?

Isaiah 9:6 _____

Micah 5:2 _____

4. What did Jesus think of himself?

Mark 2:27,28 _____

John 5:17,18 _____

John 8:58 _____

John 10:27-30 _____

Revelation 1:17,18 _____

5. What divine attributes did Jesus have?

Matthew 8:23-27 _____

Matthew 28:20 _____

John 2:19-21 _____

John 2:25 _____

John 10:17-18 _____

Hebrews 13:8 _____

Revelation 22:13 _____

6. Why is Christ God?

Colossians 1:19; 2:9,10 _____

II. The Work of Christ

A. The Atonement is the work that Christ accomplished on the cross. What atonement means is that Christ was put in our place. Instead of us dying, instead of us receiving the wrath of God, He did. He took the punishment for it, and he satisfactorily and adequately completed the job.

1. Why did Christ have to die?

1 John 4:9-10 _____

Romans 3:23-26 _____

2. What did the atonement do?

Isaiah 53:5,6 _____

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 _____

Ephesians 2:3-5 _____

Colossians 2:13-15 _____

B. The Resurrection

1. Did Christ rise from the dead?

Luke 24:5-8,34; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4 _____

2. Did Christ rise with a body or a spirit?

Luke 24:36-43; John 20:24-27 _____

3. Why is Christ's resurrection so important?

1 Corinthians 15:14-18 _____

4. What has the resurrection of Christ accomplished for you?

Romans 4:25 _____

Romans 6:8-11 _____

Romans 8:11 _____

2 Corinthians 4:14 _____

Ephesians 2:3-6 _____

1 Peter 1:3 _____

C. The Ministry of Christ

1. What did Christ do?

Colossians 1:15-17 _____

2. What is he doing now?

Matthew 28:20 _____

Romans 8:34 _____

Colossians 1:18-20 _____

Hebrews 7:24,25 _____

3. What will Christ do?

Matthew 25:31-33 _____

Acts 1:9-11 _____

1 Corinthians 15:24-26 _____

Philippians 2:9-11 _____

Revelation 19:11-21 _____

D. The Attitude of Christ

Read *Philippians 2:5-11*

1. What are you commanded in this passage to do? _____

2. What is the attitude of Christ? _____

3. What would the attitude of Christ look like in your life? _____

4. What ways have you seen the attitude of Christ demonstrated in others?

The Ordinances of the Church

A. The Lord's Supper

The act of eating with someone in ancient times was a sign/symbol of reconciliation or restoration (cf. Exodus 24:9-11; Dt. 14:23,26). In New Testament times Jesus becomes the meal between God and you. The purpose of the Lord's Supper is to remind you of your friendship that you have with God.

The Passover meal was instituted in Exodus to commemorate the day God freed the Israelites from Egypt. As the Passover was a meal to celebrate freedom for the Israelites from the bondage of slavery so the Lord's Supper is a celebration of freedom for you from the bondage of sin. The Lord's Supper is the Passover of today. Your freedom is now assured. Your slavery in sin is now broken. You are now free.

1. What does the bread and cup represent?

1 Corinthians 11:23-25 _____
(See also: Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:20; Matthew 26:28)

2. What does participating in the Lord's Supper do for you?

John 6:53-57 _____

3. What is accomplished when you participate in the Lord's Supper?

1 Corinthians 11:26 _____
(See also: Acts 2:42)

4. What are the rules of participating in the Lord's Supper?

1 Corinthians 11:27-28 _____

5. What are the dangers of participating in the Lord's Supper?

1 Corinthians 11:29-32 _____

6. How does participating in the Lord's Supper bring unity?

Ephesians 2:4-7 _____

(See also: John 15:1-5)

B. Baptism

Baptism without faith in Christ is worthless. Those who have acknowledged that Christ is their Lord and Savior are to be baptized. When you are baptized you are

dying to your own way of life and being raised to a new life in Christ (see Galatians 2:20).

1. Why should you be baptized?

Matthew 28:18-20 _____

Mark 16:16 _____

Acts 2:38,39 _____

2. What does our baptism represent?

Romans 6:3,4 _____

(See also: Colossians 2:12; Titus 3:5; Acts 22:16)

3. Can baptism save you?

1 Peter 3:21,22 _____

4. When is baptism to happen?

Acts 8:34-38 _____

(See also: Acts 10:44-48; 16:31-34)

5. How are you to be baptized?

Matthew 28:19 _____

The best mode of baptism is through immersion (or dunking). There are three modes: sprinkling, dunking, and pouring. The reason dunking or immersion is better is that it best symbolizes your death and resurrection as a believer in Christ.

Baptism, like Christ, is an act of submission. It is publicly declaring your faith and declaring your complete and total dependence on God and obedience to Him.

C. Tithes and Offerings

What is a tithe? A tithe is the king's share. It's the first part of the blessing God gives us, which we return to Him. Based on Abram's (later Abraham) actions in Genesis 14:20, most Christians generally accept that the tithe is 10%.

Anything above and beyond our tithe is called an offering. It's a special gift, usually for a special purpose. In your study of spiritual gifts, you will learn about one of the gifts, the gift of giving generously, and how it relates to your finances. For people with this gift, the tithe is just a starting point.

1. Why do you tithe? (Malachi 1:6-14; 3:6-12)

a. Because _____ (1:6-9)

b. Because _____ (1:7,10-11)

c. Because _____ (3:6-12)

2. Tithing is a faith statement.

a. God you are big enough to take care of me (Matthew 6:31,32).

b. It shows where my _____ is (Matthew 6:19-21).

c. It shows who my _____ is (Matthew 6:24).

d. It shows there are greater things to pursue than money (Matthew 6:33).

3. The requirement of giving.

a. What two requirements does Paul mention in relation to giving?
2 Corinthians 9:6,7

i. Each of us should give _____.

ii. God loves it when we give _____.

Living According to Position

You have a new identity in Christ. Live by who you are in Christ. *Memorize Galatians 2:20.* When you give you life to Christ, you become his. You are given a new position, a new life, and a new job to do. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Your new life is founded on and in Christ. In fact, your new life in Christ gives you three things.

1. Identity: Everyone is wondering who they are. People in the world find their identity in many things, occupation, economic status, materialism, religion, accomplishments, and so on. Yet all those things can give a false indication of who you were created to be by God. Only God can give you an identity. Picture the whole world as if it were filled with orphans. You wander around with no identity or family. Then God picks you up and says, "I'm adopting you. You are now part of my family. You now have my identity." That is how God sees you. Now you are asked to live by who you are in Christ and not by what others may think of you or what your circumstances have called you. You are not what you do; you are not what your family was; you are not where you live; you are not what you wear. You are what Christ has made you.

2. Direction: If you don't know who you are then you won't know what direction to choose, what path to follow, or what choices to make. But when God bring you out of the orphanage, he provides for you a place to go. You are no longer like a tumbleweed blown about by the wind, as Isaiah said, "but the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. There is no peace, 'says my God,' for the wicked" (Isaiah 57:20,21). You now have a solid sense of direction.

3. Freedom: Since God has given you identity and direction; you are now on your way toward freedom. One of the lies that you so readily believe is that God's way leads to bondage and "my" way leads to freedom. Actually the reverse of that is true. The boundaries God sets and the rules he gives are to keep you free. Your desires, if left to themselves, would oppress you until you died. It is God who gives freedom. Being part of his family is a life of freedom.

Read Ephesians 4:17-20

1. Where do those who don't know Christ walk? What does that mean (put it into your own words).

2. How is the direction of those who don't follow Christ described?

3. What consequences do you see in verse 18?

4. What is the result of living a life without God?

Christ is a lifestyle as seen in verse 20. Christ-like living is a lifestyle, which demonstrates who He is and what He can do. Our position in life is founded upon the person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

5. Who are you now that you have Christ?

Matthew 5:13 *I am the salt of the earth*

Matthew 5:14

John 1:12

John 15:1,5

John 15:15

John 15:16

Romans 6:22

Romans 8:15-17

1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19

1 Corinthians 6:17

1 Corinthians 12:27

2 Corinthians 5:17

Ephesians 1:1

Ephesians 2:10

Philippians 3:20; Ephesians 2:6

Ephesians 5:30

Colossians 3:3 _____

Colossians 3:12 _____

1 Thessalonians 1:4 _____

Hebrews 3:1 _____

Hebrews 3:14 _____

1 Peter 2:5 _____

1 Peter 2:9,10 _____

1 Peter 2:11 _____

1 Peter 5:8 _____

Because you're in Christ, every one of those characteristics are completely true of you, and there's nothing you can do to make them more true nor is there anything anyone can do to make them untrue. I suggest that you go back and read the list of who you are in Christ aloud as a prayer every week. Read it when you feel Satan is deceiving you. Read it when you are feeling low and the circumstances of life seem worse than ever.

There are other words you should be familiar with. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. In those verses God warns that sinful people cannot inherit the Kingdom of God because of the sinful acts they commit. However, many in the church of Corinth were people who were steeped into those kinds of lifestyles. What Paul is saying here is that there is a break between lifestyles of who you once were to who you are now because of Christ. The two words that are important are found in verse 11.

Justified: Justified is a word that is used in the court system. A person who is charged with a crime is justified when the evidence against him proves to be invalid. You on the other hand are guilty, but because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross you are no longer guilty for the sins you committed. We have been cleared of all charges. You are now called and declared righteous by God through Christ.

Sanctified: This word simply mean holy. Holy means set apart. God has set you apart for his work and service. In the Corinthian church the members came from very immoral lifestyles, but Christ made them holy, as he did you.

6. Can anything or anyone take away who you are in Christ?

Romans 8:38-39 _____

John 10:27-29 _____

7. Knowing this, how can you then live?

Galatians 5:1,13 _____

8. What is it, then, that God wants you to do?

The Great Commandment. Matthew 22:34-40 is often referred to as “The Great Commandment.” When asked, of all the laws, traditions, and other rules that the Jewish people kept, what was the greatest, this was His response.

Matthew 22:34-40 _____

The Great Commission. Just before ascending into heaven, Jesus gave us what could be called our “job description” or “marching orders”. We are called to “make disciples of all nations,” not just by telling them the good news of Christ and moving on, but by teaching them, helping them to mature, and then to reproduce themselves by making even more disciples in the same way.

What does Matthew 28:18-20 call us to do? _____

We believe Christ can! We believe Christ will!