

# Life in Christ

## Discipleship Series

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[www.PeterLundell.com](http://www.PeterLundell.com)

This discipleship training series is designed to make good followers of Christ rather than good church members.

In turn, good followers of Christ make good church leaders.

The textbook is the Bible.

The method is personal reflection, interaction, and putting into practice.

These studies are intended to guide and keep things on track.

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## **Life in Christ Studies**

### **Experiencing God**

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PDFs of *Life in Christ* are each two pages. You may print them out and copy single sided or double sided. Or you may keep them in digital form and use an electronic pen on a tablet.

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Discipleship studies can either be done with a discipler or as an individual self-study.

Disciples should truly engage with the content of each lesson, not just fill in the blanks.

If done with a discipler, complete each study as preliminary homework, then meet to discuss. This yields the best experience and results.

## Experiencing God

The best thing you can have in life is a hunger for God  
because you will always have more of him.

Knowing *about* God is one thing.  
Knowing God *personally* is to *experience* him.

Before you launch into this discipleship training, take some time to reflect on your personal experiences of God.

How have you known ***about*** God versus how have you known God ***personally***?

**Perhaps you sense you haven't experienced very much, or not enough, of God.**

Describe that lack of experience and what life was—or is—like.

**The entire Bible is a record of experiences with God.** They range from terrifying to wonderful. And they're always redemptive and for the good of God's people.

In Exodus 33:15 Moses says he doesn't want to go anywhere without God's presence. In Psalm 42:1–2; 63:1–8; and 84:1–2, the authors express a consuming thirst for God. In Mark 9:15 the people were “overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet Jesus” (NIV). Why would people desire God so much and be overwhelmed with wonder?

**Reflect on *your* desire** to not just know or understand but also *experience* more of God in your life. Honestly describe your desire to experience God.

We experience God through his **Word**. How have you experienced this?

We experience God in **prayer and worship**. How have you experienced this?

We experience God in **daily life**. How have you experienced this?

**Human suffering** is the number one way through which people grow personally and spiritually. It's no wonder then that the poor and the persecuted tend to have such strong faith. Even hardship or when things don't go the way we'd like are valuable situations through which we can grow—when we give God our attention.

What have you gone through?

Did you grow? If so, how?

What are you going through now?

Are you growing? If so, how?

Experience of God and a hunger for more of him energizes our move toward a strong grasp of Christ and our salvation, and then what it means to be his follower.
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# 1. Jesus' Crucifixion & Resurrection

*Memory verse: Romans 3:23–24*

**Everything in the Christian life is founded upon Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Without this there is nothing.**

The crucifixion was Jesus' ultimate reason for coming to earth, to be the sacrifice we could not be ourselves. The resurrection breaks open the power of eternal life in covenant with God.

For further growth, go to [Discipleship](#) on PeterLundell.com, scroll to the Discipleship Library, and see "**The Cross**" and "**Salvation Transaction.**"

## Jesus' Crucifixion

**God is Holy**—God is completely set apart and totally pure without sin of any kind. We are separated from God because of our sin and imperfection.

What does **Isaiah 6:1–5** tell us about God?  
Where do *you* fit in this picture?

**God is Righteous**—God requires justice and takes sin more seriously than does any other belief system. Sin destroys our whole nature. We can't make it to heaven on our own because all our good deeds are still human and leave us in our sinful state, separate from God, dead.

**Leviticus chs. 1–7** express that for a person to receive forgiveness, a sacrifice must be made in their place.

As you scan through the five main types of sacrifices, what overall observation or sense do you get?

**God is Love**—God loves us so much and wants to have relationship with us. So after centuries of Old Testament animal sacrifice, he gave us Jesus Christ, who was both God (eternal) and human (validly identified with us), which is why he was incarnated as a person. Jesus died in our place for the sins of all humanity, so we could connect with God.

What does **Romans 5:8** show us about God's character and how he relates to us?  
What does it personally say to *you*?

Jesus' death on the cross brings forgiveness and reconciliation with God. We call this the **atonement**, which means to *reconcile by paying a price*. In what specific ways does **Romans 3:23–26** express the atonement?

As a human, Jesus fully identifies with us. How does **Hebrews 2:14–17** express this?  
As God, Jesus' atonement is valid for all ages. How does **Hebrews 7:24–25** express this?

God chose to free us from life under the Law—and bring victory over evil.  
How does **Colossians 2:13–15** express this?  
Describe how you have experienced this new life.

Christ's sacrifice on the cross is not simply atonement for our *individual sins* but for our ***entire sinful nature***. Express **2 Corinthians 5:21** in your own words.

Christ's righteous identity becomes ours by faith—and then by practice as we grow.  
Where do you see yourself in this picture?

### **Jesus' Resurrection**

**Romans 6:4–5** says in parallel ways that if we identify with Jesus' death and resurrection, what will happen to us?  
Do you personally identify with Jesus' death and resurrection? Tell about it.

What does **1 Corinthians 15:13–17** tell us if Christ was not actually resurrected?

What does **1 Corinthians 15:21–24** tell us will happen because of Christ's resurrection?

The resurrection is the foundation of what three promises (two in this life, one in the next) in **1 Peter 1:3–4**?  
How does this affect the way you see—and live—your life?

Would you make a commitment or a higher commitment to Christ?

## 2. Living out Our Salvation.

**Memory Verse:** *Colossians 2:6–7*

Receiving Christ as **Savior** (the One who saves us from sin and judgment as well as from ourselves) and as **Lord** (the Master of our lives and of the Universe), is the beginning of a lifelong walk of faith.

For further growth, go to [Discipleship](#) on PeterLundell.com, scroll to the Discipleship Library, and see “**Will Christians Be Judged?**”

**Romans 3:20** makes clear that we cannot be righteous before God by way of legalism. We are saved through faith in Christ and by his sacrificial, substitutionary atonement. Each verse of **Romans 3:21–26** contains a particular point about this. Identify each one.

What three clear affirmations does **John 5:24** make?

What expectations does **John 10:27–30** state in verse 27?  
What absolute affirmation does it make in verses 28–30?  
How real is this to you?

What does **James 2:14–17** say about faith and action?  
In your own words, how would you describe faith *without* action?  
How would you describe faith *with* action?

In **Philippians 2:12b–13**, what does verse 12 tell us to do?  
What does verse 13 say that God does?  
Describe how you have experienced both sides of this dynamic in your life.

**Colossians 1:21–23** speaks about once being alienated from God but now being reconciled. The first part of verse 23 makes a very important distinction. What is it? How do you see that happening, or not happening, in people’s lives—and in *your* life?

Describe how and why **Colossians 2:6–7** is the way to pursue a Christian life.

In the great end-time judgment scene, **Matthew 25:31–46**, describes the contrasts between verses 31–40 and 41–46. This passage is not a denial of salvation by faith. Rather, in harmony with the Book of James, it expresses the importance of action—action we will only do if our faith is real. What things does it tell you? At a deep level, how do you respond to this?

True believers are saved through Christ and do not face any judgment regarding salvation. But true believers are judged regarding *how they lived out their salvation*. When we stand before God for judgment of how we lived out our saved lives, **1 Corinthians 3:10–15** describes what the differences will be like. One verse at a time, explain this passage in your own words. Where do you think you fit in it? What, if anything, would you do to change?

Biblical Christianity is the only belief system in the world that says we do not do good works *in order to get saved* (or whatever the ultimate goal), but rather we do good works *because we are saved*.

In **Ephesians 2:8–10** what do verses 8–9 clarify about earning versus receiving salvation?

What three things does verse 10 tell us about ourselves and about doing good works? Identify one way in which you would live out verse 10.



### 3. Our Identity in Christ

**Memory verse:** *John 1:12*

Our identity—who we are in our covenantal relation with Christ—is foundational to everything that we think and do in our Christian life.

As believers we have one basic right (also translated as “authority”). But this one right, or authority, opens the entire Bible to us. How does **John 1:12** describe it?

For further growth, read *Victory over the Darkness* by Neil Anderson. And go to [Discipleship on PeterLundell.com](http://Discipleship.onPeterLundell.com), and in the Discipleship Library see “**Who I Am in Christ.**”

“In Christ” is shorthand for “in a covenantal relation with Christ,” which means we have all he is and all he promises—and he expects us to fully give ourselves to him. The part of us that is instantly changed is our “spirit”—from dead to alive. Previously we were not spiritually *evil* but rather spiritually *dead* because we were separate from God, the source of spiritual and eternal life. Read **Ephesians 2:1–5**. What do verses 1 and 5 say about our spirits?

**2 Corinthians 5:17** speaks of our spirit, the deepest part of us that is eternal and in God’s image. What does it say about a person who is “in Christ”?

The part of us that takes time to change is our “soul”—our mind, will, and emotions. What does **2 Corinthians 4:16** say about the ongoing growth we experience as a new creation?

What does **John 3:30** say about our egos?  
How does your life fit this?

What does **Luke 9:23** tell us about what Jesus expects of those who follow him?  
Note that this is not carrying a burden, but death to self, to ego.  
How close are you to this reality?  
What hinders you? What helps you?

As an actual reality—not theory—what does **Galatians 2:20** challenge you to be or do?  
How seriously do you take it?

What does **1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19–20a** say that we are?  
Think about, pray about, set your mind on, and discuss what it means to be an actual living temple of God's Spirit.

What does **Ephesians 2:6** say about our having heavenly authority?  
How are you living, or would you live, this out in your life?

Who are you as a believer? (Think seriously and thoroughly about this—and the implications.)

*Whose* are you as a child of God? (Think seriously and thoroughly about this—and the implications.)

Do you truly believe God loves you as **1 John 3:1** describes?  
How do you respond to that?

## 4. Forgiveness and Inner Healing

**Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 2:10–11**

For individuals or churches to flourish, they must be spiritually and emotionally healthy. Forgiveness and inner healing are essential to this.

### Forgiveness

For further growth and healing, on PeterLundell.com click the [Library](#) dropdown menu and read two articles under **Healing Damaged Emotions**. Also click [Discipleship](#) and scroll to the Discipleship Library then click “**Healing Damaged Emotions**.”

Forgiveness means to face up to a wrong that was unjustly perpetrated and (1) release anger and resentment, (2) release any desire for revenge. Forgiveness does NOT mean that an offense was okay. It means letting go and leaving it in God’s hands, who promises to judge, either in this life or in the life to come. How do **Romans 12:17–21** and **2 Thessalonians 1:6–7** describe all this?

What does **Matthew 6:12, 14–15** tell us to do? Why should we do it?

Unforgiveness is emotional cancer. It’s like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die. How does **Hebrews 12:15** describe this? Have you experienced this?

**2 Corinthians 2:10–11** describes another reason why forgiveness is so important. What is that, and how does it work?

When you forgive someone, you set a prisoner free. Then you discover that the prisoner was yourself. Have you experienced this? Describe the experience.

Forgiveness does not mean restoration. Restoration means to reinstate to a previous position or relation. Describe this distinction in **Numbers 14:20–23**.

Three big points in forgiveness—which do you most need to forgive?

- God (that is, releasing anger against God)
- Others
- Self

## Inner Healing

Unresolved hurts, bitterness, confusion, and damaged identity can block or subvert our personal growth such that the promises of the Christian life dangle out of reach. Occasionally God works supernaturally to bring healing to people without any other therapy, counseling, or intervention. A lot depends on the person, and a lot depends on the damage that was done.

Most people benefit by going through some kind of guided healing process. If you sense you need to go through more of this, let your discipler know.

What do **Psalms 34:17–18 / 146:7–9 / 147:3** say that God does?

Emotional healing is painful. But better to endure a short period of intense honesty, pain, and healing than a lifetime of emotional sickness or physical sickness that comes from emotional sickness.

Emotional problems do *not* mean someone is unspiritual. They're wounded and need healing. How does **Psalm 42** express the emotional pain of a mature believer?

These are two primary areas of inner healing—and they need to be done very specifically and thoroughly. Which do you need most?

- **Forgiveness** (which heals the soul)
- **Identity in Christ** (which redeems a broken identity)

In your own words, what do **Romans 12:2** and **Ephesians 4:22–24** tell us to do?

In most cases, it is important to **renounce** and **affirm**. To renounce means to reject something, especially by making a declaration of refusing to follow it. To affirm means to make a positive declaration of agreement. This is an effective practice to help anyone who has had negative elements impressed into their self-identity. Thus you would say with conviction, “I renounce \_\_\_\_\_,” and in place of what you renounce, you refer to Scripture or a positive replacement, “I affirm \_\_\_\_\_.” This should usually be done repeatedly for a while because a negative identity pressed into your mind over a long period takes a while to change.

Similarly, it is important to **let go** of our pain or corruption and **receive** God’s healing and renewal. Start with what you need and are ready for. . . .

## 5. Living in the Kingdom of God

**Memory verse: John 18:36**

The Kingdom of God is the future and eternal reign of God that has invaded this present age and the earthly reign of Satan.

The Kingdom of God should define a believer's primary (1) identity, (2) allegiance, and (3) way of seeing the world.

Only by identifying with and prioritizing the Kingdom of God can we avoid "churchianity" and rise above the noise of pervasive political and social agendas—from both the right and the left. It is this approach that will enable believers to live the Christian life as God intends and to best influence the world around us.

What does **Matthew 6:33** say about prioritizing the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, over all other concerns and interests in our lives?

For further growth, go to the [Library](#) on PeterLundell.com for articles in the series "**Living in the Kingdom of God.**"

Jesus stood before Pilate and said the words of **John 18:36**. What are they? What do they mean?

Though the church does not equal the kingdom, what does **1 Timothy 3:15** say the church is? And what distinction does the church have related to God's truth?

Jesus' giving us the "keys" means giving us delegated authority. We are God's team players as he operates on earth. What does **Matthew 16:18–19** say about this delegated authority?

### **The Upside-Down Kingdom**

In the eyes of the world, God's kingdom is upside-down. In the eyes of God's kingdom, the world is upside-down. Which way will you see things?

Among many upside-down aspects of the Kingdom of God, consider the Beatitudes of **Matthew 5:3–12**. Describe how each one is upside-down.

## **Signs of the Kingdom**

What happens in each passage below?

Which ones have you experienced?

- Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, is in our midst – **Luke 17:20–21**.
- The gospel is preached and ministered – **Luke 4:18–19 / 7:21–23**.
- People come to faith – **Romans 1:16**.
- Exorcism of demons – **Mark 1:21–28**.
- Healing and nature miracles – **Matthew 8 / Acts 3**.
- An alternate godly community – **Acts 2:42–47 / Galatians 5:22–26**.
- Suffering – **Matthew 10:22 / Philippians 1:29**.

Actively or passively, you will choose what you believe and do—it's unavoidable.

With which of the above signs of the Kingdom do you most identify?

Toward which ones are you ready and willing to grow?

## 6. Connecting with God through Prayer

**Memory Verse:** 1 John 5:14–15

To connect with God in prayer, you have to *want to*. No amount of methods or techniques can make up for your heart's desire. What does God promise in **Jeremiah 33:3**?

For further growth, read Peter Lundell's *Prayer Power: 30 Days to a Stronger Connection with God*, rev. ed.

*WHY* would you personally want to connect with God in prayer?

When you come before God, remember your identity in Christ. How is it described in **John 1:12**?

**CATS/ACTS** – a helpful approach to prayer

**C**onfession. Honest confession, and receiving God's forgiveness, clears the junk out of the way of our relationship with God.

What kinds of things do you often need to confess?

**A**doration (Praise). Praise superimposes God's thoughts upon ours. It lifts our heart and mind to a higher level. And through it, God becomes to us what we praise him for. Page through some Psalms, and note things you might praise God for.

**T**hanksgiving. Thanksgiving—especially as a deliberate choice of faith when things aren't great—leads us away from self-oriented, negative thinking and lifts us into a mindset in harmony with God. What might you thank God for? Or in spite of?

**S**upplication. After we've done the above three, we're in far better shape to make requests, seek guidance, or intercede.

What kinds of things do you mostly seek from God?

**Prayer guides**. Lists or topics can go a long way toward giving substance and organization to your prayer. What might you include in creating your own?

**Two important practices in an effective prayer life**

**A set time** – A regular, set time for prayer is the best practice for an effective prayer life. When is the best regular time of day for you to pray (preferably earlier than later)?

**A set place** – Praying in different places can be stimulating, but a particular place designated for your prayer time goes a long way in a successful long-term prayer life. What is the best location for you to regularly pray?

**The following verses depict important aspects to effective prayer.**

1. What is the main principle in each verse below?
2. In which are you strong?
3. In which could you grow?

**1 John 5:14–15**

**Mark 11:22–25**

**Philippians 4:6–7**

**Ecclesiastes 3:1–8**

**Luke 11:5–13; 18:1–8**

Let's do it. What two or three steps will you take toward developing a consistent, effective habit of prayer?



## 7. Getting a Hold on the Bible

**Memory Verse:** *Psalm 1:1–3*

Did you know that **Genesis 1** is perfectly compatible with what science has discovered and theorized about the creation of the earth? It was humanly impossible for Genesis 1 to be written—yet it was. Read it carefully, or do the discipleship study on Genesis 1. How does this impact your view of the Bible?

For further growth, purchase and use *Zondervan Handbook to the Bible*.

**Psalm 1:1–3** expresses the joy and value of Scripture—opposite that of a stiff book of rules. What is the main value expressed in the metaphor of verse 3? Is this a reality in your life?

What happens in **Luke 24:45**? Ask God to open your mind or speak to you when you read his Word—and expect it.

**Background:** It helps tremendously to know

- Who wrote the book
- To whom he wrote it
- Why he wrote it

**Think in terms of context** This enables you to interpret or understand what you read more accurately and meaningfully.

- What is the context historically?
- What is the context in the chapter and book of the Bible?

**Questions to ask of a passage**

- What does it really say? And are there any key words?  
Carefully read the text for what it actually says—rather than what we might assume it says. Background study of Scripture and biblical times is also helpful.
- What does this passage tell me about God?
- What is the spiritual dynamic or timeless principle?
- How I can apply this to my life?

### **Questions to ask of yourself**

- What do I see that I did not know or realize before?
- What is the most meaningful verse to me?
- How should I respond to this?

### **Review**

- Avoid reading just once and hurrying off.
- Review cements the Scripture in your mind; the more the better.
- During the day challenge yourself to remember something from what you read. Review it if you don't.
- Memorize verses that are important to you. Write them down for review.

Now let's do it. Apply the above topics and bullet points, as appropriate or useful, to the following Bible passages. What do you find?

#### **Matthew 4:4**

#### **Matthew 5:18**

#### **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

#### **Psalm 119:9-11**

Daily Bible reading is food for your soul. What Bible reading plan do you use? If you don't have one, what would you use?

## 8. Overcoming Temptation

**Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 10:13**

It sometimes seems that when you choose to grow closer to God or grow in faith, temptations increase. Why do you think that happens?

For further growth, cultivate the habit of pre-deciding what to do when tempted in a particular way.

### **Facing Temptation**

According to **1 Peter 5:8–9**, what is one side of temptation? Describe how you have experienced this.

According to **James 1:13–15**, what is the other side of temptation? Describe how you have experienced this.

Is temptation a sin? **Hebrews 4:15** distinguishes the two. From your own experience, how would you say they are different?

What does **1 John 2:5–17** say about temptation and sin—especially three big areas of sensual cravings, greed, and pride? How have you personally encountered these?

Consider and discuss these three points:

Sinning breaks God's law. → I break covenant with God.

Sinning grieves God's heart. → I damage my relation with God.

Sinning hinders what God is doing in my life. → I hurt myself (and maybe others).

How does **Hebrews 12:1–3** apply to you?

On a separate sheet **write down a full paragraph of a positive vision for your life** that's more compelling than the problem behavior.

On a separate sheet **write down a full paragraph of a counter vision** that frightens you if you don't change.

What specific area are you most commonly tempted in?

## **Overcoming Temptation**

**Remember your identity.** Remember who you are—and *whose* you are. In the light of **1 Corinthians 6:19–20** and **2 Corinthians 5:17 & 4:16**, describe your personal Christian identity.

**Be receptive to God’s grace.** Describe in your own words what **1 Corinthians 10:31** is saying. If we fall to temptation, what is happening? What should we do to overcome?

**Wholeheartedly pursue God.** What does **Psalms 119:9–10** advise to overcome temptation? How would you do that?

**Reprogram your mind.** What does **Psalms 119:11** advise to overcome temptation? And what does **Philippians 4:8–9** tell us to do? How would you do that?

**Remove yourself from a vulnerable place.** What does **2 Timothy 2:22** advise to overcome temptation? How would you do that?

Consider and apply this strategy:

**Anticipate the temptation and *pre-decide* what you will do.**

How do you intend to overcome your most common temptation?

How do you intend to overcome your second-most common temptation?

## 9. Living in Holiness

**Memory Verse: Matthew 22:37-40**

Holiness starts with God's initiation, by his grace, as the intended continuation of what begins in salvation.

Holiness culminates in our response of a new nature with a new way of thinking and behavior—the fulfillment of salvation.

For further growth, commit yourself to

- being set apart
- loving God fully
- maturity in Christ

Holiness is intended not to make you legalistic. Rather, holiness is intended to free you and keep you from all the destructive things that would ruin your life or draw you away from God.

“A life of holiness is its own reward.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain why.

### Why does God want us to be so holy?

God is holy, and he calls us—who are in covenantal relation with him—to also be holy. But why? **1 Corinthians 3:16** and **6:19–20** tell us. How would you express this in your own words? How do you respond to this?

### Three ways of understanding holiness that all work together

• **Being set apart** – to be “set apart” is the essential meaning of “holy.”

This means to be set apart *from* all that is ungodly—and set apart *to* God—or consecrated to God.

This is how a person subsequently becomes pure or has a cleansed heart.

**Leviticus 19:2** and **1 Peter 1:16** express God's call to this. What is it?

How much are you set apart? Identify one way you would change.

• **Love** – loving the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, and strength.

Read **Matthew 22:37–40** (it comes from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 11:44–45).

Describe the two loves in Matthew 22:37–40.

How does the first influence the second?

How do you see yourself in each of the two loves? Identify one way you would change.

• **Perfection / Christian Maturity** – “Perfection” describes our state of completeness in faith, total commitment, the maturity of our Christlikeness. We are not sinless or absolutely perfect.

**Philippians 3:12** and **15** use the same above Greek root word, but the full word in verse 12 implies a finished state, and the full word in verse 15 implies a mature state. Where do you see yourself in this dynamic? Identify one way you would change.

**All biblical approaches to holiness are both substantive and relational**

By **substantive**, we view sin as an act and as a condition, even a power. Christian life is substantive because we are a new creation. Sin is forgiven. We are cleansed. God does a work in us.

How does **Galatians 5:24** describe this?

Describe how this has happened, or needs to happen, in *your* life.

By **relational**, we view sin as brokenness, or a violation of a relationship, and the condition that results: separation from God. Christian life is relational because we are adopted as children of God. We grow in this relationship. We do well or badly. We surrender, love, follow, and mature. How does **Galatians 5:25** describe this?

Describe how this has happened, or needs to happen, in *your* life.

True holiness is passionate, dynamic, joyful, and reaches outward to touch other people. Visualize how that might ideally happen in your own life.

Identify one thing that you will do in pursuing that holy life.

## 10. Living by Faith

**Memory Verse:** *Mark 11:22–26*

God is always with us, but when it seems he is not, it's often because he is testing us or having us live by faith.

Think about and describe the difference between uncritical, simplistic “just believe” faith versus faith that works through the hard issues and decidedly chooses to trust beyond one's doubts.

For further growth, take the faith challenge of either giving up something you have or believing God for something you don't have.

Consider the meaning of **Hebrews 11:1**, and in your own words rephrase or express it in at least two different ways.

What does **2 Corinthians 5:7** mean?

Give one or two examples of how you would apply it in your life.

Read the story of the father in **Mark 9:17–25**. Explain the contrast of his statement in verse 22 with Jesus' statement in verse 23.

In your own words, describe his struggle of faith in verse 24.

What is Jesus' ultimate response?

How do you personally relate to this story?

What does Jesus say in **Matthew 9:29**? How can this principle work both ways—if we believe and if we don't believe?

What does **James 1:6** say about a person who doubts?

Describe what this means and how it may happen in real life.

Read the story of Abraham and Isaac in **Genesis 22:1–19**. What insights do you find in the story?

This test puts Abraham between two challenges: Which takes more faith? (1) Belief and trust that God will provide. (2) Willingness to give up what God has previously provided. How might the answer vary in different situations? How does it apply to you?

**Mark 11:22–26** provides one of the greatest single passages on faith in the Bible. Overall, what does it say about faith over circumstances?

**Verse 23** – The first phrase is a solemn oath that what follows is absolutely true. Why do you suppose it's important to directly speak to an issue?

Even if you doubt in your mind, believe in your heart. How does this work? Give an example in your own life.

**Verse 24** – Believe before you receive. Can you—will you—actually do that? What helpful qualification does **1 John 5:14–15** give?

**Verses 25–26** – Why is forgiveness so important here—as in the whole Christian life?

What will you trust God for?



## 11. Humility and Servanthood

**Memory Verse:** *Mark 10:43–45*

How many times have you experienced or heard of Christians who were proud or rude or insisting on having their way—and turned others off from the faith? Lack of humility is destructive to relationships with others and with God. Humility is a vastly underrated, and important, aspect of Christian character.

For further growth, do a notable act of service to someone who has not deserved or earned it (not paying them back).

How does **Job 40:8** express lack of humility before God?  
Give examples of ways people commonly do what this verse talks about.

The attitude of humility toward others, as a follower of Jesus, is expressed in **Philippians 2:3–4** and **2:5–11**. How would the world / church life / your personal life change if 2:3–4 were common practice?

Identify at least one way to practice 2:3–4 in your own life.

What is Jesus' attitude described in 2:5–11?

How would we practice the same attitude?

How does **Matthew 18:3–4** describe humility in your personal identity?

What does this mean—particularly in the difference between *childish* and *childlike*?

Identify as many characteristics as you can.

Discuss how they ironically help you grow in Christian maturity.

What does **Matthew 19:28–30** say about humility in lifestyle and vocation—that of giving things up to serve God?

What does God promise to do?

Give examples of who might be considered “first” in this world. Who might be “last”?

**Galatians 3:28** speaks of a whole new social order based not on politics, or even rights, but on our relation to Christ, which compels us to be humble among others. Applied to the world you live in, describe these three areas in which no one is to be superior to another.

In what radical way does **Mark 10:42–45** describe how followers of Christ are to be different from the world around us? Give examples in the world or your life.

In what two ways does Jesus serve?

Discuss whether you really want to follow this guy.

Discuss and give examples of characteristic of these two contrasting attitudes. Where have you fit in the past? What might you change for the future?

**Servitude**

“I have to”

Serves without love

Seeks approval of others

**Servanthood**

“I want to”

Serves because of love

Seeks harmony with God

**John 13:1–17** depicts how Jesus shows the “full extent of his love” (**verse 1**).

In **verse 3** Jesus knows his source, his power, who he is, and where he’s going.

So what does he do with that in **verses 4–5**?

Note that in **verses 6–11** even as a servant he still takes charge.

In **verses 12–17** what is Jesus’ expectation of his followers? How do you respond?

Name at least one different way you could practice this same principle.

What four things does **2 Chronicles 7:14** tell us to do?

What does each one mean?

What is God’s promise in return?

How does this take humility and servanthood to a whole new level?

What part will you take in this?

## 12. Loving Others with God's Love

**Memory Verse: John 13:34–35**

The Bible never says we have to *like* anyone (are you glad?). Jesus makes clear in John 13 that the hallmark of a Christian is to express God's love. The original Greek of the New Testament uses four different words for "love": *Eros* – sensual or romantic love. *Philos* – sibling/friendship love. *Storge* – parental love. *Agape* – God's love for humanity.

For further growth, do something that tangibly expresses God's love through you to someone you don't like.

Agape love is not based on emotions but on selfless compassion and the value of doing what is needed or best for another person, regardless of who they are.

Can you give an example?

Love does not diminish the need for correct doctrine or anything else. The dynamic is expressed in the second half of **Galatians 5:6**. What is it? Express it in your own words and give an example.

Jesus identifies the two great loves in **Matthew 22:37–40** from which all of God's laws and expectations flow. Express verse 37 then verse 39 in your own words.

Verse 38 is clear that loving God is the primary love. Loving our neighbor must be secondary. With God's love in us, we are able to love others in the best ways—filled with God's love—not just our own. What kinds of things might happen when we put loving others at a higher priority than loving God?

In **John 13:34–35** Jesus identifies love as the hallmark of a Christian. In your own words, describe what verse 34 means. Describe what verse 35 means.

If applied, how will John 13:34–35 change things for a follower of Christ? How will it change *your* thinking and practice?

**1 Corinthians 13** is often called the “love chapter.” It expresses God’s agape love in contrast to other attitudes and behaviors. Instead of theorizing about love, Paul describes what love does—and what love does not do.

Look carefully at each point in **13:4–7**. For each point replace “love” or “it” with your name. What does this exercise show you? How do you respond?

How does **1 John 3:16–18** cut through spiritual lip service about loving others?

In your own words, how do these verses apply in *your* life—both now and in possible future situations?

What does **1 John 4:19–21** say about people who claim to love God, yet are bitter, nasty, uncaring, or prejudiced toward others, particularly brothers or sisters in Christ? What does this mean for you—or anyone—who does not love others?

In **Luke 6:27–31** Jesus tells us to love the people who hate us. It has nothing to do with liking people. Demonstrating God’s love in these ways takes us way beyond what’s considered normal. It’s easy to give spiritual lip service to these things—but to actually think and act this way? Really? This is part of Jesus’ radical call to his followers. What will you think and do in response?

Pastor Rick Warren has famously said, “Our culture has accepted two lies: The first is if you disagree with someone, you fear or hate them. The second is that to love someone means you agree with everything they believe or do. Both are nonsense. You don't have to compromise convictions to be compassionate.”

Give an example of each lie.

Give an example of a believer doing something in contrast to each lie.

Give an example of what *you* yourself could do in contrast to each lie.

## 13. Giving and God's Economy

**Memory Verse:** *Malachi 3:10–11*

A person's heart can largely be revealed in how they spend their time and how they spend their money. Most of these studies relate to what we do with our time; this one relates to money.

For further growth, take the Malachi 3:10–11 challenge and tithe your income.

What does Abraham do in **Genesis 14:20** and Jacob do in **Genesis 28:22**?

This demonstrates that tithing is a *principle* in place *before* the Old Testament law of tithing. What does that mean for us here and now?

As an expression of law, what does **Leviticus 27:30** say?

**Malachi 3:8–9** says that not tithing robs God. In **Malachi 3:10** God offers us a challenge. What is it? And what is God's promise to those in need?

In **Malachi 3:11** what is God's promise in today's terms to those who have plenty?

If you're not yet tithing, will you take on this challenge? Why or why not?

Some say that tithing is Old Testament, and we're now in the New Testament, so we don't need to tithe. But what standard of giving do we see in the New Testament?

See, for example, **Luke 12:33–34** and **Acts 2:45**.

What do you make of this, and how do you respond?

Describe in your own words the overall message of **2 Corinthians 8:1–8**.

What are the two complementary points of **2 Corinthians 8:12**?

What is the principle of **2 Corinthians 9:6**? Have you seen this in reality?

What is the principle of **2 Corinthians 9:7**? Do you give cheerfully?

What is the principle of **2 Corinthians 9:8–11**? Do you believe this and practice this?

Paraphrase the way of thinking in **Philippians 4:11**. Regardless of wealth or poverty, this contentment comes when we know we are in God's hands.  
Do you genuinely have this?

**Philippians 4:19** is written to people who give. Do you truly believe and practice this?  
What is your experience in this?

Explain the meaning of **Matthew 6:24**.  
How have you experienced this in your own life?

Reading **Matthew 6:31–34**, describe all the things you should *not* do in your life.

Rephrase the incredible promise of **verse 33**.  
Do you honestly believe this?  
If so, name one practical step you would take in putting this belief into practice.

## 14. Witnessing Our Faith

**Memory Verse: Acts 1:8**

Witnessing our faith is different from evangelism. Witnessing our faith is telling others about Jesus and our faith the way we would as a witness to something. Evangelism is a more structured thrust, whether one-to-one or preaching to a crowd.

We are not necessarily all called to evangelize, but we are all called to witness.

Identify anything that hinders or helps your witness of your faith.  
What would you do about it?

For further growth, prepare how you will convey your witness of faith. Then do it.

What is the situation of Jesus' meeting the woman in **John 4:1-26**?

Describe the principles in **John 4:31-38**.

Describe the woman's witness in **John 4:27-30** and **4:39-42**.  
Have you ever done or seen anything similar to this?

Describe the church's witness and its effect in **Acts 2:42-47**.  
What part of that do you most resonate with?

In **Acts 1:8** what is the first important thing to receive as a witness?  
What are the four expanding spheres of engagement?  
Where do you fit?

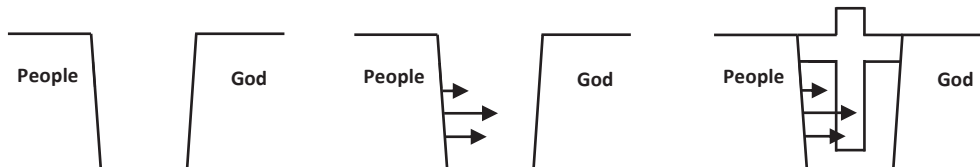
Considering **John 14:6**, why should our witness center on Christ?  
What is the significance of “I am the way . . .” versus a doctrine or program?  
What is the significance of Jesus’ claim to exclusivity?

What does **1 Peter 3:15** say about our readiness to witness our faith?  
What will you do to always be prepared?

What does **1 Peter 2:12** say about the importance of lifestyle in our witness?

### **The Cross Bridge**

One diagram that helps in witnessing faith is to draw out the cross bridge diagram step by step. Ask the person where they see themselves on the diagram. Go from there.



### **BC / + / AC**

One helpful way of organizing and remembering your personal life testimony is a three-part structure of your life Before Christ – Conversion – After Christ (or conversion). Relate each part as much as you can to the one listening.

Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you as you interact with people.

Among the people you know, to whom would you witness?