

GOSPEL, DISCIPLE & NEXT STEPS

WHAT WE BELIEVE: THE GOSPEL

Whether you are a pastor, historian, skeptic or someone still figuring out what you believe, it is impossible to deny that Jesus of Nazareth is the most influential and important person in human history. For more than two thousand years, people across cultures, religions and generations have wrestled with the same question:

Who is Jesus, really?

Because of the incredible things He did, people were drawn to Him. And wherever He went, the crowds followed Him. They wanted to understand Him. Jesus didn't merely present Himself as a rabbi, teacher, prophet or moral guide. He claimed to be God.

God is real, and He created you on purpose for a real relationship with Him—your life has meaning beyond just getting by. But we've all chosen to live our own way instead of trusting Him, and that separation shows up as brokenness in us and in the world. The Bible calls that sin, and it leaves us unable to fix what's wrong on our own. So God came to us in Jesus, who lived perfectly, died in our place, and rose again to defeat sin and death. Through Him, forgiveness and new life are possible—it's the rescue we couldn't achieve ourselves.

For further reading: The book of "John" in the new testament is a great place to start!

WHAT YOU'VE BECOME: A DISCIPLE

Now what? If Jesus has saved me, who am I now? What kind of life am I meant to live? The answer is simple and life-changing: you have become a **disciple, or a follower, of Jesus**.

What is a disciple? Someone who follows Jesus, is being changed by Jesus, and is on mission with Jesus. What is discipleship? The ongoing spiritual process of **becoming more like Jesus** and helping others do the same. In other words, making disciples who make disciples. It is a lifelong journey of walking with Jesus and learning to live like Him.



That means your life now has a new direction. All of life is a spiritual journey to become more like Jesus. Your job, your friendships, your thought life, your habits, your words, your money, your suffering, your decisions, your home life, your free time—none of it is outside that journey. Jesus is not just becoming one important part of your life. He is becoming Lord over all of it.

So what have you become? In Jesus, you have become a new creation, a beloved child of God, and a disciple of Jesus—someone who follows Jesus, is being changed by Jesus, and is on mission with Jesus.

For further reading: Matthew 4:18-22, Matthew 28:16-20

SCRIPTURE READING: A CHAPTER A DAY

For a brand-new follower of Jesus, the Bible can feel exciting, confusing or intimidating, or all three at once. The Bible is God's Word, given through human authors, and it tells one big, unified story that leads to Jesus.

One of the most life-giving, and life-forming, habits you can build as a new disciple is a regular personal time in God's Word.

A simple way to begin is to read a chapter a day. Read slowly. Read prayerfully. Read expecting God to speak. Then respond to Him. One helpful way to do that is the **SOAP** method:

SCRIPTURE

Write out one verse from the chapter that stood out to you.

OBSERVATION

(Receive) Look carefully at what the verse says. Think about the context, meaning, tone, and purpose. Then ask, "What is God saying to me?"

APPLICATION

(Respond) How does this truth connect to your life today? What needs to change? What step of faith or obedience is God inviting you to take?

PRAYER

Turn what you read into a personal prayer. Ask Him to help you live out what He has shown you. This is where Bible reading becomes personal: not just hearing God's Word, but receiving it, responding to it, and letting it shape your life. Now, the question remains... "What is Prayer?"

HOW TO PRAY

Prayer is one of the most basic and important practices in the life of a disciple. At its heart, prayer is simply talking with God. Prayer is the natural conversation of a relationship. When someone becomes a Christian, they enter into a relationship with God as their Father, and prayer is how that relationship grows.

For those who are new to prayer, a simple pattern can sometimes help. One helpful model is the word **P.R.A.Y.**

PRAISE

Begin by thanking God for who He is and for what He has done. Gratitude reminds us of God's goodness and shifts our focus away from ourselves.

REPENT

Honestly admit the ways you have sinned and ask God for forgiveness. Repentance means turning away from sin and turning back toward God, trusting His grace to cleanse and restore you.

ASK

Bring your needs and the needs of others to God. Jesus encouraged His followers to ask their Father for help, trusting that God gives good gifts to His children (Matthew 7:7-11).

YIELD

Finally, take a moment to be quiet and listen. Surrender your plans to God and ask Him to guide your next steps.

This pattern is not a rule it is simply a guide to help you learn the rhythm of prayer.

SPIRITUAL FAMILY, NEXT STEPS

YOU'RE PART OF A NEW FAMILY

When you put your faith in Jesus, you didn't just begin a personal relationship with God. You were welcomed into a spiritual family. At Bay Area, we often say: **we are better together**. The church is not a place you attend, but a people you belong to. Together, we are becoming more like Jesus and helping others do the same.

Scripture describes the church as a body, a family, a household, a temple, and a flock. Each image reminds us that we are deeply connected and that every person has a meaningful part to play. As brothers and sisters in Christ, here's what life together looks like:

WE WORSHIP GOD

We gather weekly to worship, learn from the Bible, and celebrate what He is doing among us. Here we stay connected to one another on a regular basis.

WE SERVE LIKE JESUS

Jesus came to serve (Mark 10:45), and we follow His example. Each of us has been uniquely gifted, and when we step in to serve, we reflect Him and build up our church.

WE GROW AS DISCIPLES

Discipleship is not a solo sport. It is in relationships that we are known, encouraged and formed to become more like Him.

WE LIVE AS GOOD NEWS PEOPLE

We show and share the good news of Jesus where we live, work, play and learn. Together we represent Jesus to a world that needs hope.

For further reading on spiritual family: Acts 2:42-47

NEXT STEPS

As you start your journey of faith, connecting to other believers is essential. There are a few ways to connect here at Bay Area:

- 1 Share your faith decision with someone
- 2 Begin to regularly attend weekly gatherings
- 3 Serve on a team
- 4 Connect in community (Bible studies, community groups or life groups)

