

# Going

## Basics of the Faith

### Leader's Guide

Note:

This study guide assumes that you have already read and or reviewed the basic of discipleship at Breesport Baptist Church and the fundamental considerations when using this material that was presented in the “Knowing” study guide. If you are not familiar with that material, please see Pastor Doug and he can get it to you.

Topic One – A Disciple Serves

Page 6, Question 1

It is important that your disciple understands the relationship between faith and good works. Some uniformed people try to pit Paul and James against one another because of their statements regarding faith and works. This tension is not only unnecessary, but it is unbiblical. Consider the following texts:

Romans 3:21–25 (ESV)

<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— <sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

Paul is clear to say that a believer is justified, declared judiciously innocent with respect to the Law, by faith apart from works. In fact, just prior to this statement in Romans 3 Paul says that the Law, rule keeping, can only condemn. It cannot save. The purpose of the Law is to convince us that we can't keep it. It is our tutor that prepares us for the Gospel (Galatians 3:21-29).

James 2:14–17 (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? <sup>17</sup> So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

James isn't saying that a person is justified before God by works. He is saying that saving faith is made evident to others through good works. His primary argument is this, can a faith that does not result in a changed life, evidenced through good works, save a person? The answer to that question is no. Verse 14 can read, “Can that [kind of] faith save him?” He is warning against a faith that doesn't bear fruit in good works. Jesus speaks of this in the Parable of the Sower in Mark 4:1-20. Good soil that's receives the Gospel seed always bears fruit in good works. Paul himself makes this very argument in Ephesians 2.

Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

This passage perfectly reconciles James and Paul and enables us to see that they are saying the same thing. We are saved by grace through faith and genuine saving faith will evidence itself through the good works that God has already prepared for us to do.

Note:

This lesson demonstrates that every believer should be receiving from others on one hand, and passing that along on the other hand. Page 14 gives provides a very practical list of ways people can begin to serve those around them according to people’s needs and their own spiritual gifts and opportunities.

Topic 2 – Worship

Page 17

The last sentence on the page says this, “We must never let a good thing become ultimate things in our heart.” Another way to say the same thing would be, “Even good things become bad things when they’re allowed to be ultimate things.” The author, on the same page, provides a list of common things people allow to become ultimate things in their heart. Ezekiel 14 is the first place in the Bible where God speaks of people taking their idols into their hearts. Notice...

Ezekiel 14:1–5 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Then certain of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me. <sup>2</sup> And the word of the Lord came to me: <sup>3</sup> “Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their hearts, and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I indeed let myself be consulted by them? <sup>4</sup> Therefore speak to them and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Any one of the house of Israel who takes his idols into his heart and sets the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and yet comes to the prophet, I the Lord will answer him as he comes with the multitude of his idols, <sup>5</sup> that I may lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel, who are all estranged from me through their idols.

Dr. Ed Welch, from the Christian Counselors Education Foundation, has identified twelve primary idols of the heart:

Pleasure	Power	Freedom/Autonomy
Peace	Love/Intimacy	Happiness
Significance/Reputation	Comfort	Respect/Admiration
Meaning	Success	Control

Ezekiel 14 is clear that our idols often run in packs and no one is bothered by just one. These idols get into our heart through our spiritual bents, examples, fears, insecurities, and mediations.

The reality is that all idolatry is sinful and ultimately unfulfilling because God loves us too much than to allow us to give our highest affection or find our highest satisfaction in anything or anyone less than Himself. He will not condone our idolatry. Augustine said it best when he said this, “For you made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you (Confessions, Book 1, Chapter 1).”

#### Page 19, Question 3

The question asks, “Why did God create us?” The answer is ultimately for His glory, but we glorify Him, we reveal His weight and worth, through the worship and celebration of Him. Consider the doctrinal teaching of Perichoresis.

“Perichoresis is a term rooted in early Christian theology to describe the mutual indwelling and interpenetration of the three Persons within the one divine essence. The word itself is derived from two Greek components: “peri” meaning “around” or “surrounding” and “chōreō” meaning “to make room,” “to move,” or “to contain.” Early theologians employed this concept to articulate the profound relationship shared by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Although sometimes rendered poetically as “the divine dance,” the central idea stresses a complete unity without losing the distinctiveness of each Person within the Godhead (Biblehub.com).”

The Biblical foundation of this can be found in John 10:30, John 14:10-11, and John 17:21. It speaks to the fact that the eternal Father loved, gloried in, and celebrated the Son and the Spirit. The Eternal Son loved, gloried in, and celebrated the Father and the Spirit. And the eternal Spirit loved, gloried in, and celebrated the Father and the Son. Therefore, God did not create out of any sense of loneliness or need. He created out of the overflow of divine love with an invitation to mankind to join the “dance” and love, glory in, and celebrate the eternal Triune Godhead. This sets Christianity apart from the rest of the world’s religions which often picture creation resulting from cataclysm and conflict.

#### Page 20

The author speaks of developing a lifestyle of “moment-by-moment practice of looking to God...”. The Latin expression for this is *Coram Deo* or living before the face of God. Right living and right worship is built on the understanding that we are seen, known, and loved by God and He knows every thought, every word, and sees every action because we live in His presence. Consider Psalm 139...

#### Psalm 139:7–12 (ESV)

<sup>7</sup> Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?

<sup>8</sup> If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

<sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

<sup>10</sup> even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

<sup>11</sup> If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,”

<sup>12</sup> even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

The result of that ought to be a desire to glorify God or live in such a way as to reveal and proclaim the weight and worth of God in all that we do (1 Corinthians 10:31).

### Topic Three – Solitude and Silence

#### Page 26, Question 1

It's important that your disciple understands the difference between narrative texts and the epistles (Romans through Jude). A guiding principle of Bible study is the narrative is not normative. It is descriptive, not prescriptive. Jesus is shown to routinely spend significant time alone with God. This is a good thing, but we are not commanded in the epistles to climb mountains alone to pray. The goal in narrative portions of text is to identify the principle at work in the example given and then consider how to apply that in the disciple's life. To that end, carving out times and even seasons of silence and solitude to seek the Lord can be very beneficial and we ought to be encouraged to do so.

#### Page 30, Question 3

What does Jesus mean by the expression, "whoever has ears, let him hear (Matthew 11:15)"? Jesus isn't speaking of the physical act of hearing His words. Presumably everyone in the crowd had ears and were capable of hearing what He said. That isn't the same thing as saying that everyone was spiritually able to receive His words and apply them to their life. Consider 1 Corinthians 2...

#### 1 Corinthians 2:12–14 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. <sup>13</sup> And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. <sup>14</sup> The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

This passage speaks to what theologians refer to as the Noetic Affect of Sin or the fact that the natural unregenerate person does not think rightly about life or spiritual things. We need the Spirit's help so not everyone is willing to hear the truth when it's offered to them. Jesus often used the expression after a hard teaching in order to expose unbelief and an unwillingness to believe.

### Topic Four – Bible Reading and Study

#### Note:

We have addressed the importance and the process of reading, studying, and applying the Word of God in previous sessions. Consider Topic 6 in the Knowing book for more information.

#### Page 35, Applying God's Word

A good application will be a "therefore" statement that is built upon and in response to a truth, principle, or commandment found in the text. It should be measurable, discernable, and doable.

Consider the following questions:

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about me?
3. Is there a command for me to obey?
4. Is there an example for me to follow?
5. Is there a sin to avoid or a sin for me to confess?
6. Is there a promise for me to claim?
7. How do I take that information and live it out in my daily life?

Note:

On page 39 the author rightly instructs us to use the whole of Scripture to help interpret the parts of Scripture. It is important for your disciple to understand that his or her interpretation of one part of the Bible must support the full weight of the rest of Bible for it to be considered Biblical. He or she cannot create a contradiction with any other part of the Bible when interpreting any other part of the Bible.

Topic Five – Prayer

You can supplement this topic with the following two subjects.

One:

Pastor Doug has often taught that God answers all prayers in one of four ways. Sometimes He says yes right now and in the way that we are asking. Sometimes He says no, but God never says no for the sake of saying no. He knows His best plan for your life. He says no to keep us from hurting ourselves or others and to position us for the good He has in store for us. Sometimes HE says yes, but not right now and sometimes He says yes, but not that way. Most of us struggle with interpreting “yes, but now” and “yes, but not that way” as no answers. So, some Christians think that God is bent toward saying no. We want to encourage our disciples to see God as being bent toward saying yes. He is both rich and generous to His kids.

Two:

You can take your disciple to Philippians 4:6-7 and teach through the four aspects of prayer that Paul outlines there. Consider...

Philippians 4:6–7 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- Prayer – this is a general word for prayer. I would encourage you to begin your prayers with a focus on God, His Personhood, attributes, promises, and accomplishments. The goal is to “right-size” God in your heart and mind. The bigger someone sees God the smaller they will see their problems.
- Supplication – this has the idea of humbling yourself before God. Not only do we want to right-size God and our problems, but we also want to right-size ourselves as well.

- Thanksgiving – this is an opportunity to say thankyou to God for His many blessings. It’s hard to complain and be thankful at the same time. It’s hard to sin and be thankful at the same time. You should encourage your disciple to give thanks for as many things as he or she can or as many things as it takes for them to be encouraged in their present circumstances.
- Make your requests known to God – this is the part of prayer where, after we have right-sized God, right-sized our problems, right-sized ourselves, and given thanks, we can not give God the list of things that concern us. It is when we follow this pattern of prayer that we are promised that the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard both our heart and mind (our desires and our thoughts) in Christ Jesus.

### Topic Six – Fasting

#### Page 56, Question 3

Fasting is meant to humble us and to expose our “creatureliness.” We were designed with built-in needs including for food, water, shelter, fellowship, and God. The act of fasting is referred to as “afflicting” oneself in the Old Testament. It is meant to remind us of our weaknesses and our dependency upon God. Fasting should remind us to hunger for God and to find our satisfaction in God and His faithful provision. Fasting allows us, in our busy and often noisy lives, to intentionally carve out time to seek Him. Fasting allows us to repent of sin and it can prepare people for what God is going to do next.

Note:

Prayer and fasting are often linked together and to the extent that one is able, I would recommend that times of solitude (topic three) can also be times of fasting.

Note:

On page 60, Life Application #2 the author encourages the disciple to read Isaiah 58:6-7. I would encourage you to read the entire chapter and discuss it together.

### Topic Seven – Giving

#### Page 65

The author says in the first sentence of the final paragraph, “Since God owns it all, every money decision is a spiritual decision.” How we spend our money is a reflection of our trust in God, our gratitude toward God, our humility before God, and our desire to glorify God in all that we do.

I would encourage your disciple to think of money not primarily as a means of transaction and acquisition, but as a means to express love.

Note:

There is much that is rightly said about giving and Gospel-driven and grace-driven generosity in this chapter, but I think is also good to talk about the Old Testament concept of the tithe and its potential place in a Believer’s relationship with their money. Notice Malachi 3...

Malachi 3:6–12 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup>“For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. <sup>7</sup>From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, ‘How shall we return?’ <sup>8</sup>Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions. <sup>9</sup>You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. <sup>10</sup>Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. <sup>11</sup>I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts. <sup>12</sup>Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts.

The tithe is, by definition, a 10<sup>th</sup> of one’s income. This can be a lofty and potentially unattainable goal for someone, but this is the only place in Scripture where God challenges us to test Him to see if He will not do as He says. It is worth noting that there is nowhere in the New Testament where God revokes this challenge. The Law actually required the Jews to give up to 20% or more of their income to various offerings throughout the year (the Levitical tithe, the Festival tithe, the Poor tithe, Temple tax, etc.). We are not under the Law any longer so, this is not commanded. No one should feel a compulsion to do so, but that isn’t to say that God no longer blesses this way of trusting Him.

Note:

Giving and generosity are often tied to the rest of a person’s financial obligations. Therefore, learning to budget can be a crucial skill to allow someone to be as generous as they desire to be and to fully glorify God in their finances. I have included a sample budget in this packet for them to fill out.

Topic Eight – Spiritual Gifts

Page 74

Most Common Christian Understanding of the Gifts

As an orthodox and historical Baptist church Breesport Baptist holds to a Cessationist view of the miraculous sign gifts. Please see the following excerpt from the church’s constitution regarding spiritual gifts under the doctrinal statement concerning the Holy Spirit:

We believe that the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance) is the evidence of His indwelling rather than the speaking in tongues and other spectacular demonstrations. Therefore, we affirm the belief that the “sign” gifts (miraculous healing through human agency, prophetic utterances, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues) associated with the ministry of the apostles ceased with their passing and are no longer normative for the church (John 14:16-17; John 16:8-11; Acts 5:30-32, 1 Corinthians 13:8, and Hebrews 2:2-4). (11/13/2022)

1 Corinthians 13:8 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

As regular Baptists we believe in the literal, historical, grammatical, and normal reading of the Scriptures. We also believe in the verbal plenary inspiration of the Scriptures through the agency of the Holy Spirit alongside the human authors He employed. That means that things like voice, tense, and mood matter in how we interpret the Bible.

The ramification of that is that we note that the word “cease” is in the future tense and the middle voice. That’s significant because it means that tongues would cease or come to an end of their own accord. Dr. John MacArthur speaks to the fact that God designed these miraculous sign gifts (tongues included) with a built-in timer so they would cease at a predetermined time. We see that in the book of Hebrews where the sign gifts are spoken of in the past tense. Notice...

Hebrews 2:2–4 (ESV)

<sup>2</sup> For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, <sup>3</sup> how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, <sup>4</sup> while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

The two main verbs in this passage, “declared” and “attested” are in the aorist tense which indicates a past completed event. So, the writer of Hebrews is looking back on a time when the Gospel was declared and confirmed with miraculous signs, but that time was in the past. As historical Baptists we conclude that the Word of God and the Gospel are now self-authenticating and the greatest sign that confirms the truthfulness of the Gospel is your changed life not speaking in tongues or other such signs. With that said, our doctrinal statement says that these gifts, “...are no longer normative for the church.” That isn’t to say that God can’t use these things as He sees fit, but if He does, we will call that a miracle.

I have proved an article on Cessationism from the Got Questions website for further consideration but it should be noted that some people will want to go deeper in this consideration than others, depending on their theological background. Use wisdom when deciding how far to go down this path your disciple. Less may be more with many people.

Note:

The author provides a spiritual gift questionnaire on page 78. I have included one from Lifeway Publishing that we have used over the years. These can be beneficial, but the best way to determine if someone possesses a certain spiritual gift is through service and the input of trusted and mature advisors who can discern the presence of giftedness in them. It should also be noted that the Holy Spirit gifts the believer in conversion (1 Corinthians 12), but every gift needs to be cultivated and practiced in order to achieve maximum effectiveness.

## Topic Nine – Evangelism

Note:

The author provides a helpful process to construct a Biblical and effective testimony. You should encourage your disciple to follow those guidelines and write their salvation testimony, if they have not done so in the past. At a bear minimum, every testimony should have three parts:

1. Some information concerning the person's life before they came to faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. They can limit details while giving people a sense of their struggles and attempts to fix their problems on their own.
2. How they came to faith in Jesus Christ for their forgiveness of their sin. This is the most important part of the testimony. One needs to be clear to talk about Jesus, the Cross, and His resurrection. They should include some information like age, time, location, include other influential people, etc.
3. How their life has changed since coming to faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sin. If Jesus has saved you, then He has changed you in some way. This is the time to glorify God by expressing the fact that before Christ they were one thing, and because of faith, they are a new thing.

Note:

I do not believe that it is effective to ask people when they were saved. We have moved so far away from the Gospel that the language does not clearly communication what we are wanting to know from the question. People will talk about being saved from a sickness, from an accident, from a difficult situation, but none of those things reflect Biblical salvation from sin and the wrath of God. I would argue that we need to clearly ask people when they put their faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sin?

Note:

Lifestyle evangelism is the idea that as Christians we are called to live like Christ before unbelievers in such a way that they see Jesus in us. That is important but it can never become a substitute for verbal evangelism. Lifestyle evangelism allows us to share the Gospel with people and not be dismissed as a hypocrite when we do so.

Note:

I have included a copy of the “Bad News / Good News Presentation of the Gospel” with this study guide. Every believer should know at least one way to systematically, logically, and Biblically share the Gospel with an unbeliever.

## Topic Ten – Missions

Note:

I do not have a lot to add to this final topic in the entire 30-week journey other than to encourage you to share a story with your disciple about a mission's experience that you may have had and how it benefited those you went to serve and how it changed you in some way. I would then encourage you to invite them to participate in a mission's experience with you in the future. The personal benefits of getting involved in mission's work are considerable.

- Your faith is tested along the way.
- You will see and experience God in new ways as you step outside of your normal routines.
- It often involves some kind of sacrifice, which is a good thing.
- You are stretched to serve in new ways.
- You get to know the people on the team in a deeper way.
- You experience the inward satisfaction of knowing that you were used of the Lord in a significant way.
- You get to meet people that you would never have otherwise met.
- Your purpose in life can be expanded.
- Your heart can be knit to a group of people in such a way that it could result in future ministry opportunities.
- You will get to encourage others through your experience to get involved in mission work as well within their local church, their community, and beyond.

Note:

With this being the final topic in the entire 30-lean study it would be good to rehearse the journey you've taken together. The following questions could be helpful:

- What 3-5 lessons stood out the most to you and why?
- What lingering questions do you still have about any of the subjects we've considered together?
- What do you think your next step is from here?
- Who could you potentially lead through this same study?
- How will you use your spiritual gifts in service to the Lord, this local church, and mankind in general and how can I help you with these efforts?
- How can I serve you moving forward?