

Lesson One: Introducing the Bible

FRESH FAITH

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible

IOTES	In this lesson we will look at the Bible as God's word: where it came from, how it is structured, and what its general story is. In the next lesson we will discuss how to read the Bible.
	"What is the Bible?"

The Bible is a collection of 66 books.

- ► These books were written by about 40 different people over the course of about 1400 years from three continents in three languages.
 - ► The Old Testament in Hebrew (and a little in Aramaic)
 - ▶ The New Testament in Greek
- ► The Bible is God's word to us. It is where we find God's truth.

Four things that make the Bible hard to understand:

- 1. Culture: The Bible was written in particular times and places in particular languages and is therefore somewhat foreign to us.
- 2. Wording: the way the Bible speaks can be different from what we are used to.
- 3. Viewpoint: The Bible is God's perspective; not ours.
- 4. Complexity: The Bible is a network of truth about God and what He is doing in our world and that does not make for an easy read.



The Bible is a network of truth – its teachings are built from more than one place in its writings.

DOODLES

Key Terms

With the help of the video at the 10:26 mark, try defining these terms in your words. Just do your best— no need to be perfect.

Word of the Lord/God	Bible
Scripture	Passage



NOTES		Old Testament	New Testament
		Sword	Genre
	REFLECT	What do you think is your revideo?	most important takeaway from this
	REFLECT	What is the most important c something you need to think	question for you to ask or more about?
	DISCUSS	What is unique about Chr truth?	ristian beliefs about the Bible and
DOODLES	DISCUSS	What are some ways we o	can overcome the four things that iderstand?



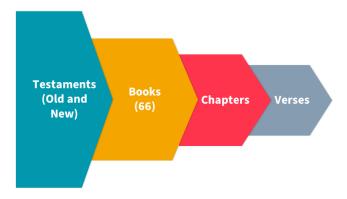
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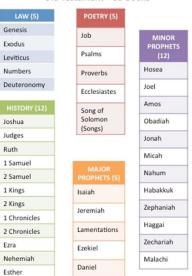
"How is the Bible Structured?"

Bible Breakdown

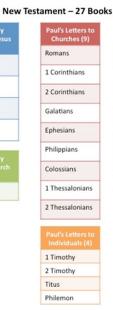


Books of the Bible

Old Testament - 39 Books









James

1 Peter

Types of Literature included in the Bible











Wise Sayings

References

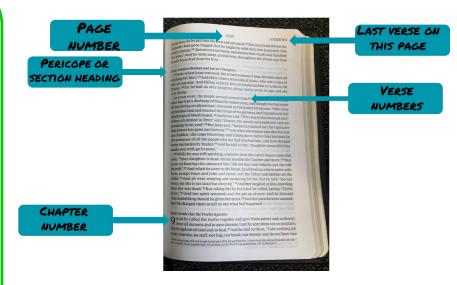
References are like an address of where to find a particular part of the Bible. Page numbers are not helpful because different Bibles will have the same thing on different page numbers.

Working with Bible references (address of a verse in the Bible) is made easier when we are familiar with common abbreviations for Bible books. If you are new to the Bible, these will become like second nature over time. There is a comprehensive chart at the end of this section.

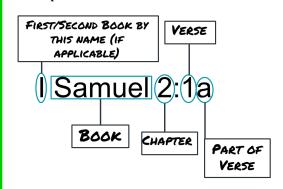
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NOTES DOODLES

Sample Bible Page



Sample Bible Reference



Practice

Write the reference out in full. The first one is done as an example. Use the abbreviation chart on the next page for help.

Write the reference for the following verse. Try using book abbreviations. The twelfth verse of the eighth chapter of John _____

First Timothy chapter two verse one _____

Romans one, verses sixteen and seventeen _____

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis

- Most common: Gen.
- Ge.
- Gn.

Exodus

- Most common: Ex.
- Exod.
- Exo.

Leviticus

- Most common: Lev.
- I.e
- Lv.

Numbers

- Most common: Num.
- N11
- Nm.

Deuteronomy

- Most common: Deut.
- De.
- Dt.

Joshua

- Most common: Josh.
- Jos.

Judges

- Most common: Judg.
- Jdg. • Jg.
- Ruth
 - Most common: Ruth
 - Rth.
 - Ru.

1 Samuel

- Most common: 1 Sam.
- 1 Sm. • 1 Sa.
- 1 S.
- I Sam.
- I Sa.
- 2 Samuel
- Most common: 2 Sam.
 - 2 Sm. • 2 Sa.
 - 2 S.
 - II Sam
 - II Sa.
- 2Sam.
- 1 Kings
 - Most common: 1 Kings • 1 Kgs
 - 1 Ki
 - 1Kgs
 - 1Kin
 - I Kgs
 - I Ki
- 2 Kings

- Most common: 2 Kings
- 2 Kgs. • 2 Ki.
- 2Kgs.
- 2Kin.
- 2K.
- II Kgs.
- II Ki.

1 Chronicles

• Most common: 1 Chron.

Lamentations

• La.

Ezekiel

• Eze

• Ezk.

Daniel

• Dn.

Ho.

• Jl.

Amos

Am.

Obadiah

• Ob.

• Jon.

• Mc.

Nahum

Na.

• Hb.

Zephaniah

• Zep.

Zp.

Haggai

• Hg.

Zechariah

• Zc.

Malachi

• Ml.

Habakkuk

Jonah

Micah

Joel

Hosea

• Most common: Lam.

• Most common: Ezek.

• Most common: Dan.

• Most common: Hos.

• Most common: Ioel

• Most common: Amos

• Most common: Obad.

• Most common: Jonah

• Most common: Mic.

• Most common: Nah

• Most common: Hab.

• Most common: Zeph.

• Most common: Hag.

• Most common: Zech.

• Most common: Mal.

- 1 Chr.
- 1 Ch.
- 1Chron • 1Ch.
- I Chron. • I Chr.
- I Ch.

2 Chronicles

- Most common: 2 Chron.
- 2 Chr.
- 2Chron • 2Chr.
- II Chron.
- II Chr. • II Ch.

Ezra

- Most common: Ezra
- Ezr.
- Ez.

Nehemiah

- Most common: Neh
- Ne.

Esther

- Most common: Est.
- Esth.
- Es.

Job

- Most common: Job
- Jb.

Psalms

- Most common: Ps.
- Psalm
- Psa.
- Pss.

Proverbs

- Most common: Prov
- Pr.

Ecclesiastes

- Most common: Eccles.
- Eccle.
- Ecc.
- Ec.

Song of Solomon

- Most common: Song • Song of Songs
- SOS.

Isaiah

- Most common: Isa.
- Is.

Jeremiah

- Most common: Jer.
- Je.

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew

- Most common: Matt.
- Mt.

Mark

- Most common: Mark
- Mrk
- Mk

Luke

- Most common: Luke
- Lk

John

- Most common: John
- Jn

Acts

- Most common: Acts
- Ac

Romans

- Most common: Rom.
- Rm.

1 Corinthians

- Most common: 1 Cor.
- 1 Co.
- I Cor. • I Co.

2 Corinthians

- Most common: 2 Cor. • 2 Co.
- II Cor.
- II Co. • 2Cor.

Galatians

- Most common: Gal.

Ephesians

· Ephes.

- Most common: Eph.

- Philippians • Most common: Phil.
- · Php.

Colossians

- Most common: Col.
- Co.

1 Thessalonians

- Most common: 1 Thess.
- 1 Thes.
- 1 Th.
- I Thess.
- I Th. • 1Th.
- 2 Thessalonians
- Most common: 2 Thess. • 2 Thes.
- 2 Th. • II Thess
- II Thes. • II Th.

1 Timothy

- Most common: 1 Tim
- I Ti.
- 1Ti.

2 Timothy

- Most common: 2 Tim.
- II Timothy
- II Tim.
- 2Tim.

Titus

- Phm.

• Most common: Heb.

- Most common: James
- Jas • Jm

- 1 Pe.
- 1 Pt.
- I Pt. • I Pe.
- 2 Peter

 - 2 Pt.
 - II Pt.
 - II Pe.

- 1 John
 - Most common: 1 John
 - 1 Jn.
 - 1Jo.

- 2 John
 - Most common: 2 John
 - 2 Jn. • 2Jn.

- 3 John • Most common: 3 John
 - 3 In. • III Jn.

Iud. • Jd.

Revelation

• Most common: Rev • Re

- 1 Ti.
- 1Tim.

- 2 Ti.
- II Ti.
- Most common: Titus
- Tit • ti

Philemon

• Most common: Philem.

Hebrews

- **Iames**
- 1 Peter
 - Most common: 1 Pet.
- 1Pe.
 - Most common: 2 Pet.
- II Pet.
- 2Pet.
- 2Pt.
- 1Jn.
- I Jn.
- 2Io. • II In.

Jude • Most common: Jude





"Bible Translation"

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The Bible is translated from Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament). It is important to understand this concept when we get to know the Bible.

Hebrew text of Genesis 1:1 בָּרָאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אַת הַשְּׁמֵיִם וְאֵת הָאָרָץ:

Greek Text of John 17:17 ἀγίασον αύτοὺς έν τῇ άληθεί α ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς άλήθειά έστιν

Translations run a spectrum from those attempting to be very close ("word-for-word") to the original language to those written "thought-for-thought" which attempt to communicate the idea of the scripture in words more easily understood.

"Word-for-word" translations may also be known as "literal translations". "Thought-for-thought" translations may also be known as "paraphrases".

Examples of more literal translations include the New King James Version (NKJV), New American Standard Bible (NASB), and English Standard Version (ESV).

Examples of more paraphrased translations include the New International Version (NIV) and New Living Translation (NLT).

Notice the differences in this example: John 1:10

- (ESV) He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.
- (NIV) He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.
- (KJV) He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.
- (NLT) He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him.
- (The Message) He was in the world, the world was there through him, and yet the world didn't even notice.



It does not matter which Bible translation you use, but if you have a hard time understanding the language of the Bible and are more comfortable with something closer to a literal translation, try the New Living Translation (NLT) or the English Standard Version (ESV).

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REFLECT

Would you benefit more from a simpler or a more precise translation of the Bible?	
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"The Bible's Authority"

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Canon: Do we have the right books?

People often ask if the books we have in the Bible are all correct, especially those who come from a Catholic background where there are more books listed in the Bible. When the early Church and believers today ask if we have included the correct books these questions have served as a test:

- Was the book written by a prophet or apostle (one who had been part of Jesus's ministry who was commissioned by Him)?
- Does the book tell the truth about God, with no falsehood or contradiction?
- Does the book have a divine capacity to transform lives?
- Was the book accepted as God's Word by the people to whom it was first delivered?
- Was the book written long after the other New Testament books?
- Does the book align with the rest of Scripture?

Revelation

Revelation means that we know God's truth only because He tells us. Some people would say that we know truth through scientific observation or artistic expression or the teachings of man-made religions; but the Bible says that God speaks to us in the Bible what we would otherwise not know.

General Revelation:

truth about God that everyone has access to whether they have the Bible or not. This can be external through observing how God designed things or internal through experiencing an understanding of morality, longing for meaning, or appreciation of beauty.

Special Revelation:

truth about God that we get only from the Bible. Specifics about God and His plan for us need to be spelled out for us in writing.

Take a Look:

Psalms 19 talks about how these are both ways we see God.

DISCUSS	

What is something you can figure out about God without th	e
Bible?	

S.
REFLECT

What is something you are hoping to learn about God or your-
self that you can't find just from your own vantage point?



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Our most full revelation comes through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-3) since He lived as one of us, showing us and teaching us who God is (John 14:9). We learn about Jesus through the Bible, God's revelation to the writers of Scripture. Both Jesus and the Bible are referred to as God's Word because they reveal God to the world (John 1:1-2; Hebrews 4:12).



Let's practice looking up a verse. Find I Corinthians 1:18. What does it tell us about how we will see truth about Jesus if we are against Him?

Inspiration

Inspiration means that the Bible is "God-breathed." God directed human authors in what to write without erasing them from the process so that the Bible is both human and divine: God's Word to us through humans.

II Timothy 3:16-17

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



If the Bible is divine and human, how should we approach it?

DISCUSS



The Bible books were written in the culture of their day and speak to our culture as well. Some of the way the Bible is written seems foreign to us but would have been very natural when it was written. We are looking for the underlying truths and shouldn't get caught up in cultural ways of saying things.

Reasons to believe the Bible is God's Word

The Bible is no ordinary book. Here are eleven reasons why. Each one can be researched further if you wish. This list is by Charlie Campbell of Always Be Ready.

- 1. **Fulfilled prophecy.** The Bible contains predictions fulfilled hundreds of years before the events they prophecy.
- 2. **Archaeology.** Archaeological discoveries have consistently proved the biblical accounts to be historically accurate.
- 3. **Internal consistency.** Although compiled of 66 books by approximately 40 authors in 3 languages over 3 continents and 1500 years and addressing the key questions of life and meaning; there is a miraculously consistent message and overall storyline in the Bible.

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- 4. **Extra-Biblical writings.** Writers who lived at the same time as the Bible's writers refer to events described in the Bible as being historically accurate. The early church leaders also consistently quoted large portions of the New Testament in their commentaries and letters.
- 5. **Scientific accuracy.** The Bible contains scientifically accurate information long before those facts were discovered.
- 6. **Manuscripts.** With 25,000 handwritten portions of the New Testament and thousands of the Old Testament, there is more manuscript evidence for the accuracy and consistency of the Bible than of most ancient writings.
- 7. **Honesty about the authors and subjects.** The Bible makes no attempt to ignore the sins of its writers and characters.
- 8. **Accuracy about human nature.** The Bible shows an amazing level of understanding and explanation of the workings of human hearts and relationships.
- 9. **Testimony of Jesus.** Jesus referred to the Bible as given by God and as God's revelation to people.
- 10. **Persecution of the early believers.** The earliest Christians, some who even penned the Biblical books, went to violent deaths professing the truth of the scriptures.
- 11. **Power to transform lives.** We are evidence for the divine inspiration of the Bible in that we see our lives changed by its message of who God is.



т 3

Are any of these particularly surprising, helpful, or doubtful to you?

DOODLES



"Story and Message"

Watch

The Bible tells a long story of God creating the world, people rebelling against God and living in the consequences of that rebellion, and God giving Himself as a sacrifice to allow for peace between God and people again. When we start reading the Bible, we may expect to find a list of truth statements or maybe sayings from Jesus, but we find a story. The message of the Bible is in that story. The story is found in the totality of the Bible and takes time to be familiar with. This is a basic highlight version.



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Creation

God creates a good world with mankind made in God's image but gives mankind the ability to choose to obey God's commands. God tells the first people to have many children and oversee the earth. The plan is for a multitude of people who have a perfect relationship with God and each other as they enjoy Him and live with purpose in the world.



Fall

The first people, Adam and Eve, choose to disobey God. At the prompting of the devil, they want to put themselves in God's place by doing what they want in order to become like God. However, this causes them to experience the difference between good and evil. That experience comes with the experience of shame, guilt, and fear. Their once good relationship with God and each other is now bent and broken. Instead of punishing them on the spot, God promises that they will live lives of difficulty. Where they are still to have many children, that will now come with difficult conception and painful childbirth. Where they are to oversee the world and let it feed them, that now comes with hard labor, fruitlessness, weeds, and thorns. But one of their descendants will come who will be wounded in the process of overcoming the evil that was separating people from a full, intimate relationship with God and each other.



Flood

After the people of the world increasingly reject God's ways in favor of corruption and violence, God resets almost back to when the world was brand new by flooding the earth and saving only one family, the father of which was faithful to God. God uses this family to repopulate the world as part of His purpose of having many people to enjoy relationship with Him.



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Tower of Babel

As the population grows, the people decide to stay in one location rather than filling the earth with people and make a name for themselves rather than honoring God. The people begin building a great tower to display their power and God separates their languages in order to bring enough confusion to stop their work and spread them out by language groups.



Abraham

God commands one man, Abraham, to come out from one of these groups in order to go to a new land and promises to make his descendants a great nation through whom all the world will be blessed. Abraham trusts God and is called God's friend and deemed righteous because of his faith.



Exodus

About 400 years after Abraham, the population of Abraham's descendants (now called Hebrews or Israelites) has been subjugated under the Egyptians but through a series of punishments on the Egyptians, God releases His people in order that they may worship God freely. God miraculously leads them out of slavery in Egypt showing His power over Egypt and her gods. People from various cultures leave with the Israelites.



The Israelites in the Wilderness

After escaping Egypt, the Israelites are given God's law for how to a have proper relationship of worship with Him, as well as how to treat their fellow Israelites and those outside their people. These laws were like training wheels to help the people have a restored relationship with God and each other but also showed that external behavior is not the same as internal true change. The Israelites quickly desire tangible idols (fake gods made by human hands) to worship rather than God. They don't trust God to safely bring them into the land He had promised Abraham many years before so God has them wait in the desert until the next generation is ready to receive the land God promised.



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Conquering the Promised Land

The Israelites enter the land God had originally promised to Abraham to give his descendants. First, they had to drive out the peoples that were worshiping false gods through violence and sexual immorality. Once established in the land, the people went through cycles of obeying the Lord and then worshiping false gods and becoming enslaved to the local peoples. While they had received things God promised long ago – a multitude of people who knew Him in a blessed place where their needs were provided for - their sin was still causing them to have a broken relationship with God. This land is a temporary substitute for God's plan of having a perfect, blessed place where His people will relate with Him.



Kingdom of Israel

Instead of having God and any of His human representatives (called prophets) as leaders, the Israelites decide they want a king like other nations have. God gives them kings and instructs them to build a temple, a building where the people go to worship and make sacrifices for their sins. The sacrifices are still another way to put the consequence of sin on something else besides the people themselves. Likewise, the temple is still just a small picture of God's plan to have people relate with Him in a perfect place.

Due to strife as well as part wanting to worship idol gods, the kingdom splits in two. The northern half continually rebels against God and the southern half is mediocre. God remains very patient but the people continually move away from Him.



Fyile

God allows the foreign empires of Assyria and Babylon to take the Israelites captive and remove them from their land. The temple is destroyed. Even the temporary blessings of a place and way to worship God are taken away. However, those from the southern kingdom of Judah which was more faithful to God are allowed to return after 70 years and rebuild the city walls and temple in Jerusalem. However, this is just a return to the temporary version of relationship with God through sacrifices at a temple in obedience to external laws. God was about to relate with His people much more directly.



Memory Verse

II Timothy 3:16-17 (New Living Translation)

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

II Timothy 3:16–17 (English Standard Version)

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

LESSON ONE: Introducing The Bible



Church

The followers ("disciples") of Jesus begin expanding the message of Jesus's salvation and establishing communities of Jesush followers of Jesus. Eventually, the followers of Jesus realize God wants them to go and bring new disciples from all peoples, not only the Jesus. The community of disciples of Jesus expands to new areas. More and more, God's plan of having a multitude of people who know and love Him. We live in this period of time, looking back to Jesus' life and forward to His coming again.



Return of Jesus

While it hasn't happened yet, the Bible predicts Jesus' return to earth to collect His people (all who believe in Him) to Himself. Then will come a time of great troubles for those who have not believed in Christ. This is followed by Jesus returning with the believers to finally conquer and judge the world. Eventually He will create a new heaven and earth where all is good again. God's original purpose of having people who relate perfectly with Him in a blessed place and purpose will finally be realized.

The Message of the Bible

The message of the Bible is found in the story you just read. But we can also describe the Bible's message without telling the whole story of Scripture. The Bible's message is that God is good and glorious and the Bible describes Him to us. We are separated from this perfect God because we disobey (sin) against Him and cannot be in right relationship with Him without help. Not only that, but we must be punished for our sin. If God does not punish sin, He is not just. If He only punishes us, He is not merciful. While God gave limited and temporary means of righteousness through sacrifices and laws, these would not permanently or fully deal with our sin and change us. Because God is both just and merciful, He comes as a man, Jesus, to be punished in our place so we could be given a place of blessing as if we were as righteous as Jesus. When we give up our ways and our attempts to be perfect and be in control and put our full trust in Jesus to be all those things on our behalf, we are adopted as children of God. Our relationship with Him is always in good standing even when we remain imperfect. God lives in us, changing us to be like Him. We fall more in love with Him as we get to know Him more and more and we help other people follow Him as well until God makes all things good eternally for those who let Him be God in their lives.



Lesson Two: Reading the Bible



LESSON TWO: Reading The Bible

NOTES	In this lesson we will look at reading the Bible on your own. This can be daunting but you will begin to see God's truth now and more and more over time. Let's look at some pointers to help you see God in the Bible!
	"The Importance of Studying the Bible"
	With the help of the video at the 2:06 mark, try defining these terms in your words. Just do your best— no need to be perfect.
	Devotions Devotional
	Bible Study Exposition
	Inductive Bible Study "Live it Out"
DOODLES	Apply
	The Importance of Knowing the Bible A. Scripture forms our worldview by answering our biggest questions. Who is God? Who are we? What is important in life? How should we live?

Why are we here?

What is wrong with the world?

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LESSON TWO: Reading The Bible

NOTES	B. We can know the parts of God's will that He reveals to us.
	C. We learn God's standards
	D. We have God's unchanging message.
	Why Should We Study the Bible on our Own?
	Reading on our own allows us to:
	 Go at our own pace Focus and learn first-hand Accompany the Bible with prayer Have a time of personally approaching God in His word
	Eight Blessings of Studying the Bible from Paul Tripp
	1.God Consciousness: the constant reminder that God exists.
	2.Self-Awareness: the constant reminder of how I am and my need for God.
	3.Knowledge of God's Plan: "God works to rescue us from the claustrophobic confines of our little kingdoms of self and deliver us to his big Kingdom of glory and grace."
	4.Personal Transformation: seeing God's grace work to change each one of us.
DOODLES	5.Gospel Worldview: understanding God, yourself, and your world in order to make decisions.
	6.Street-Level Guidance: knowing how to respond to every-day issues and conversations.
	7.Commitment to Ministry: reminding us of our call to and defining our methods of redemptive ministry in the lives of

others.

plan, power, and promises.

8. A Deeper Love For Jesus: reminding us of Jesus's presence,



LESSON TWO: Reading The Bible

 NOTES	REFLECT	Are any of these 8 reasons surp
		isregard the study of God and you der throughout life, blindfolded, a and no understanding of -J.I. Pad
		"When You
	 REFLECT	How does the idea of studying exciting and what is intimidating
	 on our which the leads. Very by star	cessary to have a good method wown. We call our method of Bible means that we come to the text we let it build our understanding ting with the specifics of what it e or more general truth.
	 1. Prep 2. Obse	ar stages of inductive Bible study varation: am I ready to hear from ervation: what does it say?
DOODLES		ication: what does it require?

EFLECT	Are any of these 8 reasons surprising or encouraging to you?

sentence yourself to stumble and is it were, with no sense of direction what surrounds you."

cker

ı Open Your Bible"

the Bible make you feel? What is ng to you?

vhen we read the Bible, especially e reading "inductive Bible study" with an open mind and go where it g of God, ourselves, and our world says and working toward the big

are:

the Lord?

Good ways to misinterpret Scripture

- ► Expect to hear only what want to hear.
- ► Expect the God of Scripture to look like you.
- ► Expect everything you read to directly involve you.
- ► Expect the scripture to always support your decisions.
- ► Look for secret meanings only you have discovered.
- ► Accept only the interpretation you have always been comfortable with.
- ► Never study together with others.



LESSON TWO: Reading The Bible

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Observation

At first we are just looking to see what the Bible says and take in the facts that are there. We are not looking for all the meanings right away. Some questions take a little extra learning but see what you can answer from just the part of the Bible you are looking at. At this point we are asking questions like:

- Who is talking or acting here?
- Who wrote this passage?
- Who was it first written to?
- What is going on?
- When is this in the Bible's storyline?
- What is said just before and after this passage? (This is called the context and is very important).

	We will do this together in class. What do you observe in the bassage?
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DOODLES

Interpretation

At this point we can start asking questions about meaning. Later in your journey you will get comfortable asking and answering more questions but for now, focus on these:

- What does this say about God?
- What does this say about me?
- What does this say about my world?
- What does this say about what happens when any of the above meet?

Especially at this point it is important to remember that you can interpret Scripture on your own but it takes learning and is helped by others who have more experience. Don't think of the Bible as a secretive book that you are not allowed to interpret but more like a complex piece of equipment that you need to learn to use well.



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LESSON TWO: Reading The Bible

NOTES	PRACTICE	We will do this together in class. What interpretations can you make of the passage?
<u> </u>		
	Applic	ation
	At this p	point we look at what the implications of our interpretation are.
		at did you see in the passage that makes a difference in you with- you having to doing anything at all?
	peo	at are the implications of what this passage shows about God or ople, maybe something about your standing with God? This is how passage applies to you.
	• Howare	w does that standing and status mean you should respond? What the implications for your life? How would Jesus live your life in

REMEMBER!

Look for who God is and what He is doing before asking what it means for you.

We need to look for what the passage says about us before we look for what it tells us to do.

1. How does this apply to me:

your situation?

- What does this mean about me?
- Could be my identity or standing with God/how God sees me. (This concept will make more sense in a later lesson).
- 2. How do I apply this?
 - What are the implications about how I need to live?
 - How is God helping me do this?



- There is no short-cut to getting to know the Bible give it lots of time!
- Start with what they Bible says, not with what you assume it says let it guide you as it builds the picture for you.



LESSON TWO: Reading The Bible

NOTES	Try this framework for application:
	 If this passage reveals that God, I should respond by This passage shows that God commands so needs to change in my life. I can do and will ask God to in my life.
	We will do this together in class. What points of application do you see in the passage?
	If this passage reveals that God
	I should respond by
	This passage shows that God commands
	so needs to change in my life. • I can do
	will ask God to
	my life.
	What part(s) of Bible study seem most difficult to you? What are ways to make it more do-able?
DOODLES	



"Methods of Reading the Bible"



LESSON TWO: Reading The Bible

NOTES	

A "Raft" for Learning the Bible

Just as a raft is made of multiple pieces all connected together, we don't learn the Bible best through any one method. Try one of these and see what works for you.

- Preaching
- Factual study (i.e. commentaries)
- Solo reading
- Memorization
- Devotional reading
- Discussion with others in the church
- Living according to the text (this is not so much a "method" as a vital aspect of really learning Scripture. There is no teacher like experience.

Some Methods of Studying the Bible

- Journaling (Writing your thoughts or prayers on a passage)
- Books
- Quick Overview (maybe One Year Bible)
- Audio Bible (Free on YouVersion App)
- Chapter or pericope/paragraph a day
- Devotional books
- Verse memorization
- Cross Referencing
- Hand Copying

Helpful Resources

- Knowable Word, Peter Krol
- Learn to Study the Bible, Andy Deane
- Search the Scriptures, Alan M. Stibbs
- 30 Days to Understanding the Bible, Max Anders
- https://www.biblica.com/resources/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/ (Introductions to each book of the Bible)

Homework: Read a part of the Bible a little every day for a week.

Try to read in order without randomly flipping around. Don't worry about understanding everything, just get a feel for the text.

Memory Verse:

Psalms 119:15-16 (NLT)

I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways. I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word.

Psalms 119:15-16 (ESV)

I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.



Lesson Three: Who Is God?



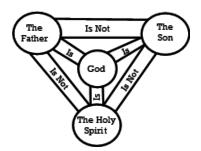
NOTES			
DOODLES			

In this lesson we will look at who God is. While this is only one lesson in the class, it is the key question you should ask when approaching the Bible. It also is a relationship you will explore throughout your life and eternity.



"The Trinity"

The word "Trinity" is not actually in the Bible. Rather, the elements of it are and we build the whole picture from the parts. The Bible says that The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God and there is one God. We understand from this that God is three persons in one. We don't understand this but that is evidence that we did not simply invent it.



- God is three persons.
- Each person is fully God.
- There is one God.

Why do we say God is three "persons"?

God has:

- Will
- Emotion
- Rationality
- Relationship

These tell us that we can have a relationship with God since we are made like Him (see video 6).

The trinity shows that God is:

- Beyond human understanding
- One in nature but different in roles.
- One Whose nature calls us to unity in diversity (I Corinthians12:12; Ephesians 2:16).
- Relational
- · A God who loves and glorifies God

What are some implications for us when we look at the Trinity?



NOTES	\	"The Father"
		er is not more divine than the other persons of the Trinity but has authority.
	DISCUSS	How does the Father having a higher authority but not a higher value mean for our human relationships?
		ner is not more divine than the other persons of the Trinity but has authority.
	 We Hel Hel Hel Hes Hes 	oes it mean that God is Father? are His children. has always had the nature of a father. has always had a Father relationship with the Son. provides. protects. sets standards, rules, and expectations. will never not be a father and is always good. is a perfect father.
	REFLECT —	Which of these is most surprising, confusing, or beautiful to you?
DOODLES	_	
		e Bible says simply, "God" it is generally referring to the Father een ll the persons of the Trinity are God.
	DISCUSS	After looking at what it means that God is our Father, what does that mean about how we relate to Him?





"The Son"

NOTES

When we talk about God the Son—or the Son of God— we usually interchangeably call Him Jesus. God the Son came to be born as a human named Jesus about 2,000 years ago. "Jesus" means "God saves". Think of Jesus being the Son of God not as a son born to a father but as a title and role—He is the Son of God more like we might say someone is the Vice President of the Board.

Jesus came to show us God's nature and heart and to accomplish God's purpose of calling people to Himself.

God the Son

- ► God the Son came as Jesus.
- ► Jesus is a real historical figure.
- ► Jesus is divine and human.
- ► He existed forever and was not created but rather He created the world.
- ▶ He is not only a good man.

Look up Jn. 1:18 and Heb. 1:3 which speak about God the Son/Jesus. What does it say He does?

DISCUSS

What does that mean for how we respond to Him?

DOODLES

GOD	MAN
He is worshiped (Matt. 2:2,11; 14:33)	He worshiped the Father (John 17)
He was called God (John 20:28; Heb. 1:8)	He was called man (Mark 15:39; John 19:5)
He was called Son of God (Mark 1:1)	He was called Son of Man (John 9:35-37)
He is prayed to (Acts 7:59)	He prayed to the Father (John 17)
He is sinless (1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15)	He was tempted (Matt. 4:1)
He knows all things (John 21:17)	He grew in wisdom (Luke 2:52)
He gives eternal life (John 10:28)	He died (Rom. 5:8)
All the fullness of deity dwells in Him (Col. 2:9)	He has a body of flesh and bones (Luke 24:39)

LESSON THREE: Who is God?

FRESH FAITH

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Iesus: Divine and Human

- He understands us and can help us because He's both completely powerful and able to relate to us.
- God works in the cosmic as well as the concrete, both outside of time and in the world He created.
- He lived as the only sinless man, thus fulfilling the law and having no sins of His own to pay for. Therefore, He was a worthy sacrifice for us.
- He could actually die as a sacrifice for our sin. A spirit cannot be nailed to a cross.
- Humans, being made in God's image (more on this later) are by nature not completely unlike God. Jesus is made like us (Phil. 2:7) and we will be made like God. (I Jn. 3:2).

What did Jesus Come to Do?

- Jesus came to show who God is, to teach His ways, to die as a sacrifice for our sins (more on that later), to overcome death by rising from the dead, and to rule over God's people.
- The Bible is the story of Jesus coming to redeem the world. We will see more of this as our course proceeds but here are some basic points of who Jesus is and what He did:

Jesus will reign on earth one day. The Bible that prophesied of His coming tells of His coming again. Then all the evil things that have been allowed will be judged and He will be gloriously in charge.

Jesus came to show who God is, to teach His ways, to die as a sacrifice for our sins (more on that later), to overcome death by rising from the dead, and to rule over God's people.

The Bible is the story of Jesus coming to redeem the world. We will see more of this as our course proceeds but here are some basic points of who Jesus is and what He did:

Jesus is God. He said He was God, the prophecies and miracles proved it, and this is what Christians believe.

Jesus is the Messiah, the one prophesied throughout the Old Testament to come rescue Israel.

Jesus came to earth for us. He was born as a human to go through all that you go through and ultimately to die in our place. Hebrews 10:10 explains that a sacrifice needed to be made to satisfy God's justice and so He had to have a body in order to die for us.

Jesus rose from the dead. This was witnessed by hundreds of people. Jesus had satisfied the requirement that sin must lead to death (He wouldn't be truly just if he just ignored wrong) and made it so that death isn't the end for us.

He did this because He loves you! Read John 3:16. You have it in writing.

Jesus taught us that we can be one with Him and how we should live. We should continually trust in Him and love one another as we wait for His return.

Jesus will reign on earth one day. The Bible that prophesied of His coming tells of His coming again. Then all the evil things that have been allowed will be judged and He will be gloriously in charge.



NOTES		Are these different from what you expect Jesus to do and be?
	_ DISCUSS	
	-	
		Why are we so focused on Jesus?
	DISCUSS	
	-	
	-	
	- -	"The Holy Spirit"
	of deit	oly Spirit is mysterious to us and we often push Him to a lesser level y or think of the Spirit as an impersonal force. This is incorrect since irit is as much God as the Father and Son. His role, though, is one of ng to the Son and the Father. The Spirit moves in the believers to give ory.
	persor Eph. 4	nird person" of the trinity is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a plust as the Father and Son are. The Holy Spirit grieves (Is. 63:10; 30), loves (Rom. 15:30); can be insulted (Heb. 10:29); and wills and es (I Cor. 12:11).
	1:2. He at time	oly Spirit is first mentioned during the account of creation in Genesis is present in the events of the Old Testament, coming upon people es. Soon after Jesus ascended to heaven, the Holy Spirit began to in those who had been made new (more on this in a later lesson).
DOODLES		Jesus left the earth after He rose from the dead, He promised to send ly Spirit to be our guide in His place. The Holy Spirit came to the

John 3:8

since.

The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."

believers not long after Jesus went to heaven and has been with us ever

The Holy Spirit begins to live in us when we put our trust in Jesus. He guides us and over time we get more familiar with when He is leading us. Later, when we talk about the Church, we will talk about how the Holy

Spirit gives special abilities to believers.





NOTES	

As Christians, we live a life that most people cannot understand. The Bible says that we manage our lives not just by what we can see but by spiritual truth that the Holy Spirit and Bible show us (II Corinthians 5:7). Jesus said that the people who are guided by the Spirit are like the wind - others can't see what's going on and where they are going because they live by a guidance that cannot be seen by everyone else (John 3:8). Actually, the Bible says that the things of the Holy Spirit seem like total nonsense to outsiders and only if God reveals truth to us can we understand spiritual things (I Corinthians 2:14).



What does it mean to hear the Holy Spirit?

DISCUSS

What does the Holy Spirit Do in Us?

- Prays on our behalf when we have no words
- Lives in us and makes us come alive spiritually
- Comforts us
- Gives us spiritual abilities to serve the church
- Empowers us to do things we otherwise could not do
- Moves us to glorify God



How have you experienced God change you from the inside?

DISCUSS

"Attributes of God"

If you wanted someone to get to know you, you would probably not list your characteristics. Of course, God cannot fit into a list. But if you were to describe someone to someone else, you might find yourself describing their characteristics, qualities, and values. This list is an attempt to describe what the Bible tells us about God Who is—don't forget!- a person we can get to know.



God is all of these things all at the same time.

FRESH FAITH

NOTES

DOODLES

LESSON THREE: Who is God?

- Self-Existence: God does not need us or the rest of creation for anything, yet we and the rest of creation can glorify Him and bring Him joy.
- Immutability: God is unchanging_in His being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and he acts and feels differently in response to different situations.
- Eternality: God has no beginning or end, and He sees all time equally, yet God sees events in time and acts in time.
- Omnipresence: God does not have size or spatial dimensions and is
 present at every point of space with his whole being, yet God may act
 differently in different places.
- Omnipotence: God can do anything. God (and God alone) is all-powerful.
- Omniscience: God knows everything.
- Spirituality: God exists as a being that is not made of any matter, has no parts or dimensions, is unable to be perceived by our bodily senses, and is more excellent than any other kind of existence.
- Invisibility: we cannot see God but see what He does, we see His glory reflected in our world, and see His character in Jesus.
- Truthfulness: He is the true God, and that all His knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth.
- Goodness: God is the final standard of good, and that all that God is and does is worthy of approval.
- Love: God eternally gives of Himself to others. The Bible tells us that God is love.
- Grace: God's is good toward those in misery and distress and toward those who deserve only punishment. God withholds punishment for a long period of time.
- Holiness: God is separated from sin and devoted to His purpose of being glorified by His creation.
- Peace/Order: God's nature and His actions are not confused or chaotic even when He does many things at once.
- Righteousness/Justice/Wrath: This means: God always acts in accordance with what is right and just and He hates sin.
- Sovereignty: God determines what will be as He sees fit, whether He chooses to reveal all His will to us or not.
- Joy: God delights in Himself and all that reflects His character. He rejoices over His children.
- Beauty: God is the sum of all desirable qualities. He defines beauty and creates beauty in our world for us to enjoy with Him.
- Glory: God is worthy of all honor. He is awesome and of the weightiest importance.

Much of the wording on these descriptions is by Wayne Grudem.



NOTI	ES	

DOODLES

8	Are any of these surprising or difficult for you to accept?
REFLECT	

If you would like to read a more thorough description, check out A.W Pink's *The Attributes of God*.

"Every intellectual mistake, every destructive emotion [...], and every harmful behavior stems in part from not knowing or refusing or forgetting at the moment who God is." – Tim Keller

"What comes into your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you." -A.W. Tozer



"Made in the Image of God"

The first book of the Bible, Genesis, tells us that God created people "in His image." This means that people are similar to God's nature and represent Him in the world by carrying out His purposes. This does not mean that God looks like a human or has a body – except for Jesus while He was on the earth.

We share some of God's attributes more than others (e.g. we are not all-knowing but do have wisdom and knowledge).

Being made in God's image also means that:

- We are above animals and are given "dominion" of the earth.
- We are body, soul (or spirit), and mind.
- We have value and dignity.
- We are relational.
- We can relate to God.
- God can become human; a human can have divine nature.
- We can be represented by God.
- We can represent God.
- We carry God's identity with us.

We never want to try to fit God into our image – or some form we are comfortable with. Making anything our god that is not the true God is called idolatry. That includes even things about God that we made up rather than finding in the Bible.

God is more glorious and powerful and good than we can imagine but He made us like Him enough that we can relate to Him in a powerful way. While we can't understand Him, we can know Him.

LESSON THREE: Who is God?



NOTES	Genesis 1:27 So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
	II Peter 1:4 And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.
	What is a way you have seen God in a way that you invented? What is the result?
	Practice
	Do something this week that helps you enjoy God and/or reflect one of these attributes. For example: organize something since God is a God of order or create something or enjoy beauty or love and forgive someone.
	Memory Verse Exodus 15:11 (NLT) "Who is like you among the gods, O LORD— glorious in holiness, awesome in splendor, performing great wonders?"
	Exodus 15:11 (ESV) "Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?"
DOODLES	



Lesson Four: Salvation



LESSON Four: Salvation

NOTES			

Having seen a brief description of who God is, we are left to respond. In this lesson we will look at what happens when we encounter a perfect God and yet are still sinners. Examine your heart as you go through this lesson so that you can have clarity on where you stand with the Lord.



"What is Sin?"

Taking God's Place

The Bible tells us that God is our creator so His rightful place is as our source of life and our authority. We learned in the last lesson that God is the standard of good and evil. The Bible also tells us the story of the first people having a beautiful relationship with God. However, they give in to a lie and temptation to become like God through rebelling against His command to them. This brought into their nature shame, guilt, and fear for the first time. Their relationship with God and each other was now broken. This sets up our understanding of sin. Sin is any attempt to take God's rightful place. It affects our relationship with God and others and our view of ourselves.

Cause and Effect

Ultimately, we are faced with a choice in life: our way or God's way. When we pursue our way and ignore His, we are in sin. We often concern ourselves with whether or not a specific thing is sinful or not, but sin is not some external thing—it is an internal state of the heart.

Sometimes we think that something is wrong if it causes some harm. The world's moral standard is often that one should do what makes one happy as long as no one is hurt. We believe so-called "victimless crimes" are not crimes at all. In our legal system if someone attempts to kill another person and the person does not die, the perpetrator can be charged with only attempted murder. If the victim were to die from injuries even days later, the charge is upgraded to murder.

However, Jesus taught (Matthew 5-7) that God looks not at the results of a sinful heart but at the heart itself. He says that not only is adultery a sinful act, the lust that precedes it is. Not only is murder a sin, the hate that leads to it is. Sin is the status of our soul, not specific things we quibble over looking for loopholes, easy forgiveness, and ways we are not as bad as the people we've harmed.

Sin is not sin because of its effect but because of its cause and the cause is a heart that is bent to rebel against God.

Jeremiah 17:9
The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Similarly, we sometimes think of sin primarily as something that is bad for us. But that again is an outcome, not a cause. In fact, as we will see in the next lesson, Jesus calls us to sacrifice and to live not necessarily with our own best interest in mind. Things that are not what is best for us are not necessarily the problem—actually seeking our best interest above all is part of the heart of sin.





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State and Status

After Adam and Eve, the first people, sinned against God, all their descendants (everyone) is born with a passed-on state and status of sin. As a state, sin has corrupted our nature and God's original design for us. What we do now is bent, twisted from what it should be.

This does not mean that people who do not come to Jesus for salvation are not capable of doing noble or helpful things. But those things do not save that person or make them "good." Likewise, we cannot undue the effects of sin with good actions. For example, if you steal and then give money to charity, it does not undue your theft. The things we do now are tainted by selfishness, fear, pride, greed, anger, and self-preservation. Sadly, trying to be good will only lead to frustration or delusion: frustration at not being able to be good enough or delusion into thinking that we are good people.

Sin is also a status. We are either seen by God as His adopted and beloved children who are fully righteous and obedient—even though we don't always behave—or as rebels against the King of everything. If you are in rebellion against a king, trying to take the throne for yourself by force, it doesn't help you to offer to paint the castle wall.

Idolatry

When reading the Bible, especially the Old Testament, you will often hear about idols. Idols in that time were man-made statues to worship as gods. However, even if we do not worship statues, we may still be practicing idolatry by bowing ourselves to anyone or anything but the true God.



Slaves to Sin

What areas in others and in yourself do you see taking the place of God?

One of the terms that the Bible uses to describe those who are not yet saved is as a "slave to sin". This term perfectly describes our sin nature as one of bondage. Oftentimes people use the excuse that they don't want to become Christian because they like having freedom, but in actuality they have never known freedom. They do not have the strength to resist sin or temptation, they cannot do good. The heart's core motivation is for themselves. We see the true depth in this sinful perversion as we truly desired to be like God, for His very nature and core motivation is for Himself. It can be said that an unsaved person is like a wild animal. They may be able to be trained to a limited degree. They may become domesticated given enough time. But their instincts don't change. They are slaves to their desires and they act mostly off instinct. The only thing we can do apart from God is this; to indulge in our own passions and desires. There is no freedom in sin, for the only option is sin.

John 8:34

Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin."



LESSON Four: Salvation

Romans 6:20-21 (New Living Translation)

When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom.

	What is new or different to you about these descriptions of sin?
DISCUSS	



"Jesus the Savior"

Trading Places

When Adam and Eve originally disobeyed God it was to try to take on His role and be like Him. But after rebelling against Him they become separated from Him and have a marred relationship with God and each other. Our sin separates us from a holy God (Rom. 5:10). Since we failed to be like God by taking His place, God came from His place to take ours (Philippians 2:6-8). Jesus lived the life of a man but did it better than any of us, being sinless and loving others completely. He represents God the Father to us and also represents us before the Father. Jesus went to the cross not only for us but as us. He represented us on the cross as though He went there with your nametag on. Jesus takes on our identity as sinners to give us His identity as the Righteous One (II Cor. 5:21). We are given the righteous status of Christ, a standing of grace (Rom. 5:2). Our standing changes from one of sinner to saint and from rebel against the King to honored nobles ruling with Him, from slaves to beloved children.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Why Did Jesus Have to Die?

God is the source of all life and all His ways give us fuller life. Moving away from God is moving toward death. Sin is so serious that it causes death in some form—the death of all people when God did not design us to die, the death of sacrificial animals before Jesus came, empty lives when we reject God, Jesus' death as a perfect sacrifice for us, and death in separation from God and eternal punishment for those who reject Him forever.

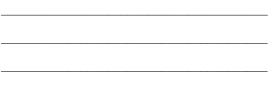
If God who is perfect ignored rebellion against Him, He would not be good. If He only punished it, He would not be merciful. Because He is both, God the Son (Jesus) allowed Himself to be punished for us.

Romans 3:26

It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

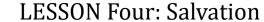
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Accounted Righteous

When God justifies us He calls us right with Him. He puts righteousness in our account and views us as though we were always obedient. While He still works on the problems in our character (more on this in a later lesson), the person who puts their total trust in Jesus is given a status of being right with God that never changes. Trusting belief is what God requires to make our account say "righteous." On the cross, Jesus said "It is finished," using a term meaning "paid in full." Not only is the punishment of our sin paid for by Jesus's sacrifice of Himself, He calls us righteous forever. We are seen by God just as righteous as Jesus is. If we say Jesus went to the cross with our nametag on, we can also say that we have His debit card.

Romans 4:5 (New Living Translation)

But people are counted as righteous, not because of their work, but because of their faith in God who forgives sinners.

Not of Us

The Bible repeatedly makes clear that our salvation is a gift from God and not something we can gain for ourselves. The Bible describes us as being dead before Christ gave us spiritual life. Nothing about our salvation is anything we can do for ourselves. A dead person cannot will themselves to life. Salvation is all about what Jesus has done for us.

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:1-2

Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.



Does anything in this lesson change how you have approached God? Do you need to come to Him on different terms now?

What we are saved from?

Damnation, Death, Separation from God

When the Old Testament talks about being saved it tends to mean being rescued from danger in this world. But when the New Testament talks about being saved (e.g. Matthew 1:21; Acts 2:21, 47) it means being rescued from spiritual death and punishment. While we still die when our bodies wear out, we are not doomed to punishment.



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DOODLES	

LESSON Four: Salvation

• Sin's Punishment, Power, and Presence

Another way to look at what we are saved from is to say that we are first saved from sin's punishment, then throughout our lives from its power over us, and when we die and enter God's presence, we are saved from sin's presence as it will no longer be a factor in our existence.

Self

We can also say that when we follow Christ we are saved from ourselves. Our natural inclination is to set ourselves up as the authority in our lives. We seek to have our way and to get glory for ourselves. But we will find that no one but God can fill that role. We will rule our lives and seek to rule in other people's lives in a tyrannical way. We even tyrannize ourselves! To be saved by Jesus is to be saved from our own brokenness in exchange for His perfect rule in our lives.



What are some things about the Christian idea of salvation that are different from what most people believe?



"Our Response

When we see the Bible's teaching on salvation we are forced to respond in some way. We may turn away or accept Jesus as our Savior from our sins against God.

DISCUSS	

What are reasons people would reject Jesus and what are reasons they would accept Him?

What do we do to be saved?

As we saw in this lesson, there is a sense in which we don't do anything to be saved, God does the saving. However, we are responsible to respond. The Bible talks about "obeying the gospel" (Rom. 10:16; II Thess. 1:8; I Pt. 4:17). How do you obey "good news"? You believe it and respond with action. Our belief of the gospel message becomes an action response when we:

Believe (John 6:29). Believing in Christ is putting a desperate trust in Him to save us. For someone to be saved they do not need to understand everything about the Bible, but to believe that Jesus is all of who He says He is (John 6:29). We trust God first for salvation but still continue to be called to trust Him with all areas of our lives.



LESSON Four: Salvation

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- Repent (Rom. 10:9-10). Repentance is the act of turning from my own way to follow the way of Christ. Our salvation comes when we first repent, but we also will have times throughout our life following Christ when we will need to turn back toward Him after straying away, whether in small or large ways.
- Confess (Rom. 10:9-10). Confession is declaring your faith in Christ openly, agreeing with God that you need His salvation, and letting others know of your new allegiance to Him. This does not mean that someone is not saved until they share with others about Jesus. Instead, it means that we acknowledge to the Lord our need for and faith in Him and are saved right away. Later, we do share with others also.

The bottom line is this: when we put our desperate trust in Jesus and what He has done for us and in nothing else, we are forgiven of our sins.

How do we show our salvation?

- **Baptism.** Baptism is a way to show others that the old us is dead and gone and God has made us new and that we want to tell the world we follow Christ now. Baptism is a form of confession since it tells others of our need for Christ. We are baptized not to be saved but to publicly proclaim how Christ has made us new creations (Rom. 6:4).
- **Works.** Good works do not lead to salvation but salvation does lead to good works (Eph. 2:10). We live a life of response to what God did for us and in us (Phil. 2:12; Col. 1:10; Matt. 3:8).
- **Words.** Our words show what is in our hearts (Matt. 15:18). Our words should be gracious (Col. 4:6).
- Character. Those who are saved are transformed into a new person (Rom. 12:2) and God develops our character so that we are more and more like Christ (Gal. 5:22-23). More on this later.



None of these is a way we get saved or a way to make us more loved by and acceptable to God. We already have that as a free gift. Instead we do these in response.

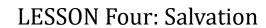
DISCUSS	Look at Luke 8:4-8. What are some ways people may go through some Christian motions but not truly accept Jesus?

Responding to Jesus requires complete surrender on our part. We lay ourselves at Jesus' feet and allow Him to do whatever He sees fit in our lives. It begins a life of following Him and responding to His work in our life. We will go over that in more detail later. For now, please reflect on whether you have fully and completely put your trust in Jesus as your Savior who forgives your sin and your Lord who leads your life. Take some time to thank Him in prayer and ask Him to help you if you are uncertain.





NOTES	Assurance of Salvation
	One of the most difficult things that many Christians grapple with is how we know if we are truly saved. When we talk about those who go through the motions and yet do not have a true saving faith in Jesus, we can become concerned that this may describe us as well. There are several ways we can be assured of our salvation. Our assurance of salvation should be a mix of these things.
	By our lives
	God is a person and when we get to know Him more and more we are changed. Our mind, words, and actions are transformed. When we are renewed by God we will see His work in our lives and others should see it as well. The longer we follow Him, the more we will see His faithfulness, answers to prayer, and changing of our character and perspective. If no one else sees the change Christ has made in your life, you should consider why.
	By trust
	In one way, we have assurance of salvation by stepping back and believing what the Bible says. Jesus tells us that we must believe in Him (John 6:29, 14:6). Do you trust Christ and His promise of salvation to the point that you have stopped trying to be acceptable to Him and simply believed what He says? If you are still holding onto your doubt, your ways, your own goodness, or even what you can see, you are not fully committed in faith in Christ. Trusting what the Bible says is extremely simple and extremely difficult. But we can rest assured in what is written in the black and white for us in Scripture.
	By the Spirit
	Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." This means that God the Holy Spirit lives in us and assures us that we are indeed God's children because He has grace for us. As we live with the Lord, we get to know His voice which affirms our relationship with Him. If you are in doubt about your salvation, ask the Lord to speak to you.
	By the resurrection
DOODLES	The Bible never asks for empty belief. Jesus' resurrection is proof to us that we also will not be demolished by death but have eternal life with God to look forward to. See the appendix for reasons why we can believe in the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection is our way of seeing that "salvation works". Otherwise, Jesus would simply have died and we would have no hope when we look at our own death.
	With the help of the video, define these terms in your words
	Grace Justification





NOTES	Mercy Repentance
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	Memory Verse: Romans 6:23 (Same in ESV and NLT)
	For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
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Lesson Five: New Life



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In this lesson we will look at the new life we live when we follow the way of Jesus. Keep in mind that these things do not work as a checklist in which we do one and move on. We grow in all these areas and continue to do so for the rest of our lives.



"Transformation"

New Creation

When we are saved, we are saved from being who we were. We are made a new creation and the old us is dead and gone. This is why Jesus says we must be "born again" (John 3:3, see also I Peter 1:3). We begin to love a new, full life that will last forever, but we don't wait until we die (John 10:10). We become human in a whole new way, by having a divine nature alongside our human nature (II Peter 1:4). God takes our personality and gives us a new purpose; making us a new version of ourselves. So being redeemed by Jesus means that we are made new in ways beyond our own power.

II Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

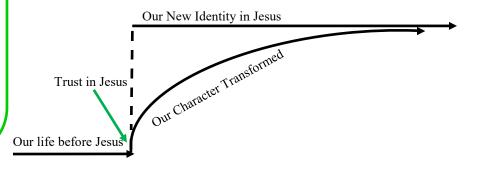


REFLECT

Do you and others see any change in you if you have started putting your trust in Jesus?

New Status, New Life

When we put all our trust in Jesus to forgive our sins, we are immediately granted a new status as fully right in God's eyes. In the last lesson we called this status "justification." We do not need to do anything to earn this status, instead we live in the light of the love God has already given us. God begins to work on our character, making us more like Jesus. We live a whole new life that comes more in line with who we already are in terms of status/ God's perspective. We call this process "sanctification" which means living for our God-given purpose.





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God will continue to work on us for our entire lives. There is no Christian who has "arrived" and is no longer growing in their life of following Jesus.

Philippians 1:6

And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

The Bible also tells us to be transformed and in the original Greek language this was first written in, we would say, "Be being transformed"

Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

This means that we are always in process.

DISCUSS

What are some implications of knowing that walking with Jesus is a process that goes on for our whole life?

The Bible describes us all in a race. Some may have been running longer than others and are further down the road. While we are not actually in competition with each other, the Bible does say that we run as though we were trying to win the race.

I Corinthians 9:24

Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win!

Running in order to win means two things: we make great effort to follow Jesus and we pay careful attention to obeying Jesus so that we "run according to the rules of the race." It does not mean that Christianity is actually a competition for who is the best follower of Jesus. If anything, we are competing against ourselves.

The topic of how we participate in what God is doing in our lives is a confusing one for us. On one hand, the Bible is clear that we do not work to earn, keep, payback, or no longer require God's grace to forgive and change us. On the other hand, we do not passively standby so that God changes us like a software update for our souls. Rather, God works in us and we respond.

Philippians 3:12

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own.



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The Fruit of the Spirit

The Bible talks about us as having two conflicting aspects of ourselves: "flesh" and "spirit". The flesh is the human-only aspect of our selves, the part that pursues its own desires. The spirit is the divine part (II Peter 1:4) that God brings to life to do His will. Read Galatians 5:16-25 to see a description of the products of living for our own desires (the flesh) and the products of living according to God's guidance (the spirit).



REFLECT

Take a look at your life through the lens of the fruit of the spirit. Ask God for help in areas you see that need change.

Replacement

We cannot simply stop doing wrong and call that spiritual growth. Rather, the Bible says we are being made holy. Holy means we are set apart from the things in this world that bring death and pain into our relationship with God and others and we are given God's good purposes in life. Ephesians 4:25-32 show us that because we now have a new life, we do not only try to stop doing things but replace them with new ways. An analogy would be that to be healthy, we do not only stop eating junk food, we eat healthy food and get exercise. We also do not need to primarily focus on what not to do. If we are busy keeping our minds on Jesus and the things that bring us more full life in Him, the things that are life-taking will be naturally less and less influential in us.

Galatians 5:16

So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.



Looking at Ephesians 4:25-32, think about what aspects of your former or current life need to be replaced. What new ways would replace them?

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DISCUSS

What is the difference between responding to God's work in our lives and trying to improve ourselves without Him?

REFLECT

What is an area of your character you need God to change? What can you do to participate in the change?



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	more detail

Grow

magic button to grow spiritually; it takes hard work, painful ultiple disciplines, and the transforming work of God. Here are ys we can grow.

- ct with church community
- know God in the Bible
- time in praver
- thers
- suffering
- Christian teaching

that these are ways to grow, not ways to be more accepted by is taken care of already by Jesus.

REFLECT	Which of these should/could you add into your life? How?
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Christian Maturity?

is a little vague about what we mean by maturing or growing in t is because it's not a checklist but an imitation of a person you ting to know—Jesus. However, we can describe Christian macrificial love for God and others as we live God's purpose and do the same. We often expect a checklist or clear set of rules 't what Christianity is about. If you want to assess your maturimuch your life is still about you. We will talk about this in in two later lessons.



"Prayer"

Prayer

In the second lesson, we talked about time in the Bible getting to know God. In later lessons, we will discuss suffering, serving, and connecting in church community. As part of this lesson, we will talk about prayer.

Prayer is simple yet difficult. It is simple because all it is just talking with God. It is difficult because:

- We get distracted and busy.
- We think we aren't good enough to approach God.
- We have to surrender our control over situations.
- We don't always get clear or quick answers.



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Why do we pray?

- We can. We have an invitation into God's presence and we have the ear of the Almighty. We must not take the gift of prayer for granted.
- Jesus did. We read in the Bible that Jesus was constantly praying to the Father and He regularly did so during long nights alone. If even the Son of God prays, we who have been brought into relationship with God pray also.
- We must: not in the sense that we grudgingly obey a biblical command to pray but in the sense that anyone who has been redeemed and has the Holy Spirit in them have had our very nature changed. We "must" pray in the sense that we "must" breath or "must" spend time with one we love. We have a beautiful need for communicating with our Beloved.
- God desires to answer. Jesus teaches that God, our good Father, actually
 desires to give gifts to His children and wants us to come ask Him for
 what we need. God is actually glorified when we go to Him as our
 Provider and Parent.

Modes of Prayer

There are several general ways, or "modes" of praying. Each is for a somewhat different purpose. We may use any or all of these modes in a time of prayer:

Adoration

A prayer of worship to God. This is speaking the truth about who God is, enjoying Him and reminding yourself of the nature of your God.

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is telling the truth about what God has done. It is key for healing and re-orienting ourselves and our view of our circumstances.

Confession

Confession is bringing our sin to God. It is telling the truth about our heart's condition. Confession should be specific and honest: God already knows the state of our heart and the acts of rebellion against Him we commit so when we come before Him we shouldn't hide. Remember that we need never hide from God. In confession we come to God for healing and help.

Petition

Petition is bringing our requests to God. It is telling the truth about your need. Remember that we are told to ask God for what we need and that we honor Him when we come to Him as our source. We need not be concerned that we are being selfish in asking for our own needs. We should pray for ourselves more, not less.

Intercession

Intercession is praying alongside or in the place of another person. It is telling the truth about what someone else needs. Intercession requires wisdom because sometimes what people ask for prayer for is not biblical or necessarily wise or helpful. Intercessory prayer also requires great persistence since we tend to be more motivated to pray for our own personal needs.



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Listening

A listening prayer is quieting the soul to hear from the Holy Spirit. This is probably the most difficult mode of prayer. It is difficult to quiet our minds and souls to be ready to hear from God. It is difficult to delineate God's voice from our own. Remember that God speaks to us primarily through His word in Scripture and nothing we believe He says to our heart will contradict Scripture. Also, God will not always speak to us internally during prayer. More often He will move us through understanding His word, listening to godly advice, and orchestrating our circumstances after we've prayed for guidance. God will move us over time as we pray over time more often than give us specific words of direction during prayer, however, a prayer of listening is pausing long enough to listen if He does choose to speak to our hearts.

Other types or times of prayer

Corporate

Corporate prayer is prayer together as the church community. Jesus says that wherever two or more are gathered in His name He is there with them (Matt. 18:20). Corporate prayer is often intimidating to newer believers but it is an excellent way to learn to pray and to connect with the church.

• Daily/standard prayer

We have the opportunity to spend time with the Lord in prayer each day. Don't concern yourself with a specific amount of time but rather with having a focused time where you can fully be in prayer.

Quick/emergency

Sometimes we have only a second to quickly call out to God for help. This doesn't need to be in the midst of crisis; it may be before an unexpected conversation or confusion.

Extended/dedicated

At times we feel drawn to pray for an extended period. We may need to get away and pray for an hour or part of a day. Sometimes we wake up at night and the Lord may be beckoning us to pray. Sometimes we plan to have times like this but have no daily habit of prayer. Extended times of prayer should be in conjunction with daily prayer but not replace it.

Fasting

Some are confused or uncomfortable with the idea of fasting, yet we see it as a common practice in the Bible. Jesus Himself fasted and prayed.

Fasting is the act of denying ourselves something in order to focus on God in prayer. Typically and traditionally this is the denial of food. Fasting is not magical or a mystical secret formula for more successful prayer. So what does fasting do?

• Sets aside our flesh for a time so we can to focus the spirit. This may be for the sake of time but is more so about exercising rule over our flesh so that our appetite doesn't direct us. We walk a spiritual and not a physical walk and fasting is a way to remind ourselves of that. Fasting may make someone feel physically weak and tired which can draw us into a humble place of being conscious of our need for the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ, the Father who gives us our daily bread, and the Spirit who sustains our life.

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LESSON FIVE: New Life

- Creates a constant reminder to pray. When we fast we feel constantly
 hungry, especially after awhile, it's like a ribbon tied to your finger to
 help you remember your purpose of praying, no matter how busy you
 may be.
- Serves as a spiritual mourning over a situation. At times of sin or sorrow (whether our own or someone else's) we might fast as an act of mourning and seeking God. We are not wallowing or despairing in this act of mourning but are being honest about a difficulty and are setting aside life-giving food to prayerfully address a situation that has spiritually or physically brought death in order to speak with the Life-giver.

Fasting shouldn't be done to show how spiritual you are and should be kept private in order to curtail our tendency to show off or seek sympathy (Matt. 6:16-18).

It shouldn't be done to the risk of your health. If you have a medical reason to eat a certain way, consider fasting in a way other than with food. Also, going without water for an extended time is dangerous and many people drink water during a fast.

We can fast from things other than food such as TV, social media, music, sleep, or anything that we may need to disentangle ourselves from in order to be more free to seek God.

There is not a correct amount of time for a fast, however it should be long enough to make you hungry and give you time to pray.

If you have made a decision to fast for a time, don't force that decision on others. Allow them to choose whether or not to fast along with you.

Remember that fasting is a temporary break from something that is not morally wrong but that you are exercising mastery over. Sinful activities are not to be fasted from temporarily but permanently removed from our lives.

Praying in Jesus's name

We have a custom of saying, "In Jesus's name I pray" at the end of a prayer and there is nothing wrong with that, but we need to realize that it is not a magic phrase to make our prayer "work" or just the proper way to "sign off". Praying in the name of Jesus is actually a great grace in our lives since we are welcomed in to God's presence with all the rights Jesus Himself has to pray to the Father. We should remember as we enter into prayer that we are praying in Jesus's name and we should make our requests as we see Jesus doing.

Praying in Jesus' name is like praying with His nametag on. We get to approach God with total confidence, but we also pray for things that Jesus would pray for—some requests are not within the bounds of God's will for us.

Hebrews 4:16

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.



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Spend at least 10 minutes a day praying each day this week. Don't worry about doing it "right".

Memory Verse: Philippians 2:13

(ESV) for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

(NLT) For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

DISCUSS

How should we approach God in prayer?			

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REFLECT	

How does what you've learned about prayer so far change your perspective?

Meditation

The Bible speaks about meditation in addition to prayer. Prayer and meditation are different in that prayer is direct communication with God while meditation is focused and deep thinking about the truths of God's word, His commands and promises (Ps. 119:48, 148) and His works (Ps. 77:12).

Our meditations are to be righteous ponderings on godly things (Ps. 19:14; Phil. 4:8).

Meditation in a Christian sense is not to empty the mind but rather to fix it on God, not to center our minds on ourselves but on God, not to erase the self but focus it on God, not to empty the mind but to set it on Him and His truth.

Part of meditating is what the Bible calls taking our thoughts captive, letting God bring our thinking back under His authority and exercising selfcontrol over what we think.

II Corinthians 10:5

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ

Along with taking our thoughts captive, the Bible says we keep our minds on the things of the Lord.

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

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REFLECT

What are common areas of thought that you need to have brought under submission?

The Lord has new things for you as you experience life with Him. Trust Him to do His work in your life and see what He has for you! In the next lesson we will talk about difficulties in our lives.



Lesson Six: Walking through Trials



LESSON SIX: Walking Through Trials



"The Christian's Suffering"

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DOODLES

A Question Everyone Asks

All people, and certainly all Christians ask why we suffer. Why do bad things happen to people trying to live godly lives? Why does God allow difficult things in our lives and what does that mean about His trustworthiness? Some Christians ask these questions often and some ask them seldom; some ask them early in their life with Jesus and some ask later.

A Hard Reality

It is common to think that if we start following Jesus that everything will begin to go better in our lives. However, Jesus said that if we want to follow Him, we are going to suffer since He did.

Luke 9:23

Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.

Jesus also said,

John 16:33

"I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."



What has been your view of suffering up to now? What is your response to knowing that following Jesus means suffering?

An Abnormal Normal

Suffering and death are part of everyday life for us now, yet we know they are not the way things are supposed to be. They came into our reality when people first sinned against God. Most of human philosophy and religion makes and attempt to explain and/or deal with these problems but the Bible tells us that they are not God's original design for Mankind. Intuitively, all of us understand that pain, sadness, and fear are not how our lives are meant to be. When Jesus heals and overcomes sickness, death, lies, nature, and demons, He is not doing something abnormal but giving a glimpse of God's original design for a good world. It seems weird to us because all we know is a broken world.

DISCUSS

In what ways should we say that suffering is normal	and	ın	what
ways is it not normal?			



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LESSON SIX: Walking Through Trials

The Blame Game

People are prone to think of suffering in their lives as their fault or God's fault. This is so common that the Bible speaks to it in several places. Perhaps the briefest response to this way of thinking comes from Jesus in John 9:1-5. What do you see there about moral responsibility for suffering?

However, Proverbs 10:8 and 22:3 tell us that foolish decisions can lead to suffering. I Peter 3:17 says that it is better to suffer innocently than for evil that we've done.

Pain and Purpose

Throughout the Bible, we see stories of God using pain to accomplish His purposes even though it was not His original design for our lives. The ultimate example of this is Jesus going to the cross on our behalf. This is the best and worst thing that ever happened since it is the most unfair and unjust thing for an innocent Jesus to die, but the best thing because it makes a way to restore our relationship with God.



How does knowing that Jesus suffered unfairly for God's purpose change the way we see our deserved or undeserved suffering?

Growing through Difficulty

If God accomplishes His overall purpose through suffering, we should expect His people's suffering to always have purpose. Suffering has meaning and accomplishes God's purpose in His children, not in everyone (Romans 8:28). For the person who does not follow Christ, suffering may teach some life lessons and the Lord may use it to show them their need for Him. But for the believer, suffering is to be expected (John 16:33), rejoiced over (James 1:2); endured (I Corinthians 13:7). Trials produce Christlike character and are a part of our sanctification process (James 1:3-4; Romans 5:3 -4.) It is important to remember that for the believer, God will allow suffering in our lives sometimes to discipline us as a loving Father must (Hebrews 12:7). We can think of ourselves not as victims but as patients suffering as we are healed and made whole.

A Christian's Suffering:

- Leads to gratitude (Ps. 107)
- Brings us closer to Christ (Phil. 1:29; 3:10; I Pt. 2:21; 4:13; Rom. 8:17-18)
- Builds our character (Matt. 5:12; James 1:2-4; I Pt. 1:6-7; 5:10; Rom. 5:3-5; Prov. 20:30)
- Is for the good of others (Col. 1:24; II Cor. 1:6; II Tim. 2:10; Eph. 3:13) In our suffering, remember that God is our Healer, Teacher, Strength, Father, Head of the Church.

"We can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

-C.S. Lewis in *The Problem of Pain*



NOTES

DOODLES

LESSON SIX: Walking Through Trials

Unanswered Prayer

While we learned about prayer in general last time, this time we should address the question of how we deal with our prayers seem to go unanswered.

- Sometimes we wait a long time but God still answers (Lk. 8:41-56).
- God may be showing us that His grace is enough (II Cor. 12:7-10).
- Even Jesus got a "no" to a request but submitted to the Father's perfect will (Mark 14:36).
- God may be doing more than we see (Jer. 29:1-23).
- Persistent prayer keeps us looking to God (I Chron. 16:11; Lk. 18:1-8).
- Ask if you are praying for something in God's will (I Jn. 5:14–15; Mk. 14:36).
- Some things we pray for God to do can be done by us (James 4:17).
- God may be answering "no" or "wait" but those are still answers (Acts 1:7; Ps.27:14).
- Sometimes God answers yes and we never notice or remember (Lk. 17:11-17).

The God Who Cares

God can seem distant or aloof when we are suffering. This can be an even stronger notion among committed Christians because we believe that God is real and all-powerful and wants a loving relationship with us.

As you proceed in your knowledge of the Bible, be on the lookout for how Jesus went through the same kinds of trials you listed. You can also see people in the Bible who dealt with these things. Watch for how Jesus responded and ask Him for help in your trials.

8	What about Jesus is shows that God cares about our suffering?
REFLECT	

All's Well that Ends Well

The Bible tells us what God is going to do in the future when Jesus comes back to rule the world. While until then we will have difficulties, Jesus will one day take care of all our pain. In the meantime we wait patiently and hopefully knowing that God will make it all right.

Revelation 21:4

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

Various Trials

The book of James 1:2 and I Peter 1:6 use the phrase, "various trials". "Trials" is another way to talk about difficulty and involves the idea of being tested.



LESSON SIX : Walking Through Trials

 NOTES	REFLECT	What different types of trials can you think of?
	DISCUSS	What are some implications of the fact that there are various kinds of trials?
	The Bil suffering suffering or at leglimps when F	What is the difference between wanting more of God in your life and wanting your difficulty to go away?
DOODLES	REFLECT	At the close of this section, reflect on why you think the Bible (James 1:2) tells us to rejoice when we find ourselves in trials.
	Take a	moment to ask God for help and to help you trust Him and know

Him more closely through your current trials.

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LESSON SIX: Walking Through Trials



"Spiritual Warfare"

Spiritual Warfare

You will hear Christians use the term "spiritual warfare" from time to time. This is not a term from the Bible and different people mean different things by it. Some mean the activity of fervent prayer over a serious matter. Some mean processes of spiritual growth or healing.

Most mean a struggle against demonic influence in our lives or our world. This becomes a complex topic but here are some basics.

- The Bible says that demons and the devil are real.
- Demons influence people and are given a measure of power in our world (Ephesians 6:12.
- We struggle against demonic influence through prayer, sticking to Biblical truth, and using Jesus' authority over them.
- The Bible says there is a difference between demonic influence, physical sickness, and mental illness (Matthew 4:24).
- Demons always cause harm. They can oppress people emotionally and physically (I Samuel 16:14; 18:10; 19:9; Mark 5:2-5; Matthew 17:14-18; II Corinthians 12:7).
- God might allow demonic influence in peoples' lives but God is always in charge. The devil or demons are not equal to God. They are bound by space and time (Daniel 10:12-14) and are not all-powerful or all knowing.
- The Bible does not say that demons read our thoughts. They, like angels can observe our actions and communicate things (I Timothy 4:1).
- Different Christians and Christian groups have different beliefs on this topic. Some have attempted to explain away demons as something unreal the Bible authors believed in or something only symbolic of evil. Others have come up with teachings and methods of dealing with demonic influence that are not in the Bible. We should be careful to not either see the work of the devil and demons everywhere or nowhere. We should also be careful to see what the Bible does and does not say.

This is not meant to scare you – or make this class more interesting!- but to make you aware of one cause of suffering. Remember that we can pray to the God who oversees the whole universe and who will one day cast Satan and demons away forever into the "lake of fire".



"Knowing God's Will"

Something that is very difficult for followers of Jesus is knowing what God's will for us is. This can be a trial all its own when we feel that we just cannot seem to figure out what God would have us do in our situation.

FRESH FAITH

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MEMORY VERSE: James 1:2-3

(ESV) Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.

(NLT) Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.

LESSON SIX Walking Through Trials

Revealed and Unrevealed Will

Finding God's will for us is mostly a difficulty when we are trying to find God's will for a specific question that the Bible does not address. Should you take a certain job? Should you confront that person who hurt you? What school should you apply for? While these are good things to handle reflectively, it will be very difficult to know God's specific will for them. We often feel that we are being asked to choose the right prize behind several doors, knowing that we will suffer great failure or punishment if we choose incorrectly.

Deuteronomy 29:29

The Lord our God has secrets known to no one. We are not accountable for them, but we and our children are accountable forever for all that he has revealed to us, so that we may obey all the terms of these instructions.



Drawing from what you know of God and the fact that you are His child, how can you respond to concerns about God punishing us for not figuring out His secret will?

We actually can know God's will since He has revealed it to us in the Bible. But this is His will in general, not in every particular situation. As we get to know God's heart and what He tells us about His purpose for us and what it means to follow the way of Jesus, we will find that we are able to discern what God would have us do. By focusing on God's "revealed" will, we can use wisdom to make godly choices.

Principles on knowing God's will:

- Do what is clear (Deuteronomy 29:29; James 4:17)
- Trust God to be in control (Proverbs 3:5)
- Ask for wisdom from God through the Bible and the Spirit (James 1:5)
- Ask for advice from others (Proverbs 11:14; 24:6)
- Look for what gives abundant life (John 10:10; Deuteronomy 30:19)
- Know that you cannot plan everything (James 4:13-17; Proverbs 16:1)



The Bible says that we are to rejoice even in our trials (James 1:2-3; I Peter 1:6-7). Having completed this lesson, why do you think the Bible tells us that?



How does this lesson change your perspective on the difficulties of the Christian life? What do you need to do as a result? We will discuss some possibilities in class.



Lesson Seven: Life in the Church



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In this lesson we will look at the new believer's new home and family: the church.



"What is the Church?"

Family

The church is not like other organizations. The picture the Bible gives is of a large family, or, we could say, a family of families.

This means that

- The church is the people, not the building or a business.
- Those without families in the church get a family to share.
- Those with families in the church share with other families.
- We have a responsibility to each other.

₽	How could you receive from and give to the church family?
REFLECT	
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The Bible describes the church in other ways as well. You may hear people use some of these terms.

- Body of Christ (Romans 12:5). This means that while Jesus is no longer on earth, we are His hands and feet to do the things He did.
- Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25; Revelation 19:7). This means that Jesus loves the church and is coming back to be with us forever.
- Temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19). The temple was always the place where God met with people. Jesus said that He was where God and people met, and now God's presence is in the whole church. The Holy Spirit lives in us.

Global and Local

We also talk about the global church and the local church. The global church is made up of all true believers around the world and throughout time. We are all part of a shared heritage, identity, and mission. We do not always know who within a church community is a true believer (and therefore truly the church) but we do share with all who are. When we live honorably or dishonorably, we raise or lower the reputation of the whole church. Also, the church is not tied to any one culture—rather, any culture brings something to the world's understanding of the Gospel and shapes the church. Likewise, each culture has things about it that the Gospel needs to change.



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The Invisible Church

How are we to make sense of the idea that the global Church is one church and yet we sometimes discuss other churches almost as though they are of a different faith? How do we make sense of people we meet in our own local church that may not show any fruit of a relationship with Christ?

Remember that our definition of the Church is all true believers for all time. As we learned in a previous lesson that we are saved through faith in Christ, anyone in any church who has faith in Christ is part of the global Church.

We use the term "invisible church" which means the true believers in Christ inside any given church organization or version of Christianity.

- Not all in a church truly have faith in Christ and not all in a given church do not.
- Which church one belongs to is not the definition of salvation, faith in Christ is.
- We cannot judge individual souls.



How do these descriptions and definitions of the church change the way you see it and your part in it?



"What Does the Church Do?"

Principles over Practices

The Bible gives surprisingly little detail on how church should look. Rather, we learn more general principles. Some practices discussed in the Bible meant something different at the time it was written and merely copying those practices would miss the point beneath them.

Sometimes the Bible tells us only the principle and we are forced to figure out what that looks like in our culture. When you look at different church practices, think about the principles or values they are trying to carry out.

Sacraments

There are two things in the Bible that we make sure to include as church practices, although even these are done differently in different churches. These are baptism and communion (also called "The Lord's Supper").

Baptism

- Baptism is a symbol of the death of our old self and our rebirth as a new creation in Jesus. The water is a picture of a grave and coming out of the water a symbol of resurrection.
- Baptism also carries the symbolism of being washed of our sins.
- Baptism is done once as we originally declare our faith in Jesus publicly.



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Communion

- Communion commemorates Jesus' sacrifice for us (the cup of wine or grape juice represents His blood) and making a promise to us. The bread represents His body that was also broken for us and how Jesus provides us all our needs in Him.
- Communion looks back to the cross and forward to Christ's return when we will eat and drink together with Him.
- Taking communion identifies us with Christ and the church.
- This is done over and over. Some churches take communion weekly and some less often.



REFLECT

It is common to have questions about baptism and communion. Be prepared to ask yours in class if you have them.

What makes a healthy church?

- Proper doctrinal teaching
- Proper use of sacraments
- Proper use of discipline
- Genuine worship
- Effective prayer
- Effective witness
- Effective fellowship
- Spiritual power
- Biblical church government
- Holy lives of members
- Care for the poor
- Love for Christ

From Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology

The "One-Anothers"

These are some simple things the Bible tells us to do to or for one another in the church.

- •Love (John 13:34-35)
- •Serve (Galatians 5:13)
- •Bear burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- •Forgive (Ephesians 4:31-32)
- •Confess to (James 5:16)

Variety in the Church

The church has a variety of styles, people and cultures, strengths and weaknesses, passions and priorities, ministries, and spiritual giftings (to be described below). Different churches, and different individuals within churches, do different things well.



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What ar	e some imp	lications of t	he variety in	the church

Gifts

When we talk about variety in the church, one aspect is the variety of abilities in the believers. Christ's people are driven by the Holy Spirit. While all people have talents, abilities, and skills, and you had these before you came to Christ, God gives spiritual abilities to His church. These may change in a person, be short or long-term, and different people will have different ones. They are mysterious even to those who have them. We should ask God to give us whatever gift He will. Remember that they are always for the purpose of serving the Church. This may be a new—and very odd—idea for you but that's how God works: His ways are bigger than we are often ready for. You should understand that there are different opinions on spiritual gifts but ask God to give you what He has in store for you!

Spiritual Gifts

Holy Spirit-given abilities for communing with God and serving the Church. E.G. Speaking in tongues

Natural Gifts or Strengths

Broad ways you tend to function best in your world; capabilities you will apply in any given situation in which you find yourself.

E.G. Learning

Abilities

General talents you are born with. E.G. Learning languages

Skills

Specific capabilities that must be learned and practiced. E.G. Speaking French

Gifts described in the Bible:

- Apostleship (1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11): Originally meaning "sent ones". Refers to the special ministry of founding the church given to the 12 apostles from Jesus. Some also include those who go as missionaries.
- **Prophecy** (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:10; 14:1–40; Eph. 4:11): the ability to speak from God on the future or present, in accordance with the Bible.
- Miracles (1 Cor. 12:28) and Healings (vv. 9, 28, 30): abilities to do things otherwise impossible to help people.

FRESH FAITH

LESSON SEVEN: Life in the Church

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- Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues (1 Cor. 12:10): The ability to speak in or interpret a language one has not learned in order to either communicate with God in a special manner or to speak things to the church, showing God's power.
- **Evangelism** (Eph. 4:11): Ability to connect the message of God with those who do not have the Spirit of God in them.
- Lead/Shepherd/Pastor (Eph. 4:11): The ability to disciple others to follow Christ in their lives.
- Serving (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:12): The ability to help others in a broad sense.
- **Teaching** (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11): The ability to connect the things of God to those who lack understanding of Him.
- **Faith** (1 Cor. 12:9): The ability over and above the measure of faith held by all believers to trust God.
- Exhortation (Rom. 12:8): The ability to encourage, stir, comfort, or admonish the church.
- **Distinguishing Spirits** (1 Cor. 12:10): The ability to discern between true and false spiritual messages.
- Mercy (Rom. 12:8): The ability to comfort and care for those in need.
- **Giving** (Rom. 12:8): The ability to give selflessly and generously.
- Administration (Rom. 12:8; 1 Cor. 12:28): The ability to bring order to God's work.
- **Wisdom and Knowledge** (1 Cor. 12:8): The ability to understand spiritual or biblical truth apart from learning.



Do you think God has given any of these abilities to you? What would others say?

Ministry

Ministry is another word for service and it is core to life in the church. We are all called to serve each other in some way. We have a responsibility to receive what we need, and give what we have.

Serving others is one of the greatest ways we grow as a Christian. It is also one of the most difficult.

"Basic to Christian life, whether of leaders or other Christians, is service. To be a Christian is to minister, and that means "to serve."

-James Boyce



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What makes	serving hard?	What about it n	nakes us grow?

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REFLECT	

What do you need to receive from the church? What do you have to give?

Worship

Sometimes in church we talk about singing as "worship" and it is. However, worship is all the activities of the Church community, anything we organize ourselves to do in order to glorify God. Ultimately, the life we live following and serving Christ is a life of worship. We can and should live in such a way that we are worshiping God every day.

- Worship is an encounter with the living and holy God (Ex. 3:1-6)
- Worship is reserved for God alone (Ex. 34:14)
- In worship, we ascribe to the Lord the glory due him (Ps. 29:1–2)
- We can worship because of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf (Heb. 10:1–10)
- We should worship with reverence for God (Heb. 12:28)
- When we draw near to God, he draws near to us (James 4:8)
- Worship honors God for who He is and what He does (Dt. 10:21)
- Worship brings us to God's presence (Ps. 100:2,4)
- Worship takes us outside ourselves (I Pt. 4:10)
- Worship brings us together (Ps. 122:1)

If we were to use a short definition of worship, we could say that worship is enjoying God and letting Him know.

There is not just one way to worship God. We glorify God in all these ways.

- Enjoyment (Neh. 8)
- **Obedience** (I Sam. 15:22-23)
- **Singing** (Ps. 100:2)
- **Service** (Heb. 13:16)
- **Giving** (II Cor. 9:7)
- **Learning** (Ps. 19:7-11)
- **Prayer** (Ps. 16:2)



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How the church grows together

- **Reflection:** we get to know ourselves most fully when we know how we reflect God and affect others.
- **Accountability:** we find healing as the church speaks the truth in love.
- Learning: We can experience and obey God's word only in relationship.
- **Opportunity:** We are molded by the community when we use our gifts to serve the church.
- **Identity:** We identify with Christ when we identify with His church body.

The Mission of the Church

In the next lesson, we will look further at what we call "The Great Commission", Jesus' final instructions to His followers before He ascended to heaven. This is what we are to be doing until He comes back again. Jesus told us to take the Gospel to every nation, baptize people into His teachings and to live in obedience to Him. The mission of the church is to expand so that more and more people will have a saving relationship with Jesus. This is done locally and globally and, as part of the church, you have a part in accomplishing it.



A. Use an index card from class to write down the name of an individual or category of people who needs service. Strategize how you could help and pray for them. Instructions will be given in class.

B. Look at the list of modes of worship on page 7. Choose one and worship God that way this week.

Memory Verse: I Corinthians 12:26-27

ESV

If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.

NLT

If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.



Lesson Eight: Reaching Out



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DOODLES

In the last lesson we talked about life in the church. As part of that we say how being a part of church community means that we serve others.



"Ministry"

Church and following Jesus is not only about getting what we need as much as is about making sure others are taken care of. This is not the job of only pastors or church staff but of all believers. Jesus demonstrated how humble service is at the very core of being made like Him as we grow spiritually. Just before He died, He stopped an argument among His students about which one was the greatest. Jesus quietly began washing their feet and taught them that greatness among Jesus' people means serving, not being served. You can read this story in John 13:1-20.

Philippians 2:4

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Giftings

Each of us has different things we are good at and passionate about. We you looked at various gifts and talents in the church in the last lesson. You will continually understanding and growing in your areas of strength and spiritual gifts.

I Peter 4:10

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:
God has crafted you to be able to do what He has prepared for you.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

DISCUSS

What has God made you able to do for the church?				

Basic Ministry Principles

- Get comfortable being uncomfortable. Ministry is full of awkward and uncomfortable situations, but you choose how you will act.
- You are there for them, not for you. Ministering is not about our needs, attention, or way of doing things. It is about serving others.



NOTES	• We a	is the only true hero. You cannot save people, change people, or y all needs and expectations. re part of a family and team. Each person has a different personality et of abilities. We all do something well. We need each other and do eed to compete with one another. We serve for God's glory (Matthew
	5:16)	What do you think your greatest challenge would be in serving others? How can you serve through the challenge?
	DISCUSS	
	Disciple	ship
	need to be them to lot tions on a 28:19). A believer to we tend to we grow i with Christmark of m	nip is helping others join us as we follow Jesus. As a believer, we helping others move forward in their walk with Christ, teaching took to Him and, in turn, training others to follow Christ. This function individual, group, and even national level (Titus 2:3-6; Mt. believer can disciple a non-believer toward Christ or disciple a of follow Christ more fully. When we begin our walk with Christ, to focus primarily on ourselves and our wants and needs. But as in Christ, we become ready to help another person in their walk st. Discipling another person helps both parties grow and is a naturity as a Christian.
	formal an or book o observing	nip will look differently for different people. Sometimes it is more d structured and often involves going through a Christian book f the Bible together. Sometimes it more informal and involves a g and conversing about matters of life as they arise. Styles are not apportant – helping others join us as we follow Jesus is.
		I Corinthians 11:1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.
DOODLES	DISCUSS	How could we go about finding someone to disciple you? What kind of person would you look for and what kind of process would be best for you?



"Evangelism"

Evangelism

"Evangelism" comes from the Greek word for "good news" or "gospel". It means to tell the good news about Jesus to someone else. Some find this very exciting and some find it very intimidating.



NOTES	How do you feel about sharing the Gospel (or even just the idea of sharing it)?
	 Styles There is not one correct way of sharing the Gospel. Here are several style See if one sounds more like you. Confrontational (Acts 2:36-39): sharing possibly uncomfortable spiritual truth directly. Intellectual (Acts 17:16-34): using logic to compare worldviews Testimonial (John 9): sharing what Christ has done in your life Relational (Mark 5:1-20): building friendships with the hope of engaging Invitational (John 4:29-30, 39-42): offering someone to your home or with you to a church gathering Serving (Acts 9:36-43): taking care of someone needs to show Jesus's heart. Not only are there different styles of sharing the Gospel that fit different people's delivery, we also need to be able to share the message in a way that will make sense to different listeners.
DOODLES	Think of someone in your life who needs to know the Gospel. Which of the above styles would be best to share with them? What sort of person would best reach them?
DOONTE2	The Great Commission

After Jesus died and rose from the dead He appeared many times to His followers. In several of His last conversations with the group of 12 men who had lived and travelled with Him as His students He gave some final instructions before He went up to heaven. Before He returned they, and we, are to go out telling people about who Jesus is and what He did for us. We are to teach them to obey His ways. This command to evangelize is a fundamental purpose of the Church. While evangelism is a blanket term for sharing the good news about Jesus and we can evangelize to our neighbors, Jesus specifically says that we are to go to make disciples (student-followers of Jesus) in all nations (or all cultural groups). Evangelism is both local and global. This does not mean that every believer will travel the world, but we should all find a part in taking the gospel to places that have never heard it.



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DOODLES	

Things you can do as part of the Great Commission to all nations

- Pray. There are many resources to help you know what to pray for internationally. Try PrayerCast YouTube videos, joshuaproject.org, operationworld.org, or our monthly missions prayer night.
- Send. You can support those who go by encouraging or giving money or other practical help.
- Welcome. Build intentional relationships with those in your own city who have come from places where they have not heard about Jesus.
- Go. Whether on a short visit or longer trip, be open to the possibility of God sending you to meet people who need Him.

Matthew 28:19

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



"What's Next?"

As this class comes to a close, you should remember something we said in the beginning: this is a first step, not the only step. In general, you will continue to learn and grow for the rest of your life, but it is best to end the class with a more specific plan for your next phase of your walk with Jesus. This does not mean that you will know where God will be taking you in your life—in fact He will definitely take you to places, people, and experiences you never expect.

Some Next Steps

We will discuss specific options and plans in class.

• Continue to learn.

How?

Continue to adopt the practices of prayer, worship we've talked about.

How?			



LESSON EIGHT: Reaching Out

NOTES		nect in with church community How?
	• Serv	How?
		ngelize How?
	REFLECT	What will you do first as you move forward?
		Please take this anonymous survey to help improve the class.