

LAUNCHPAD

FOUNDATIONS FOR FAITH



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INTRODUCTION

Note to The New Believer:

Did you ever embark on a new journey, thinking that you had everything that you needed for the trip? When you started out, you were excited, and confident you were heading in the right direction. As the journey progressed, it became more and more evident that you were lost. It is probably at this point that you would have wished you could go back to the beginning and start again?

The same scenario plays out in our spiritual journey. We get saved, are all excited and start running, but are we running in the right direction? We could turn to Google to guide us, but soon we are overwhelmed by all the information. As a new believer, where do you start your new journey? What are the most important things you need to know? How do you know you are heading in the right direction? What are your spiritual foundations? So many people waste days, months and years going in all sorts of directions instead of starting at point A and then moving towards Point B.

What we have discovered is that we all need the right starting point, the right 'launch pad' for our spiritual journey. Without a proper plan and map for the journey, you will launch in the wrong direction only later to discover that you are going the wrong way. We want to help you get started in the right direction.

Starting from the correct Launchpad will give you confidence in your journey, knowing you are heading in the right direction. You will discover that God has a plan for your life and He wants to launch you into a life of purpose and passion. He longs to have a relationship with you, so let the journey begin!

Note to 'Older Believers'

Even if you have been on this journey for years, it is always important to revisit the foundations of what you believe. Sometimes there are missing

building blocks that we need to reestablish. The Word of God is spirit and life. As you revisit some of these basic foundations, you will discover fresh insights and revelation. The Launchpad tool is also a perfect opportunity for you to make disciples and multiply yourself.

HOW THE MANUAL WORKS

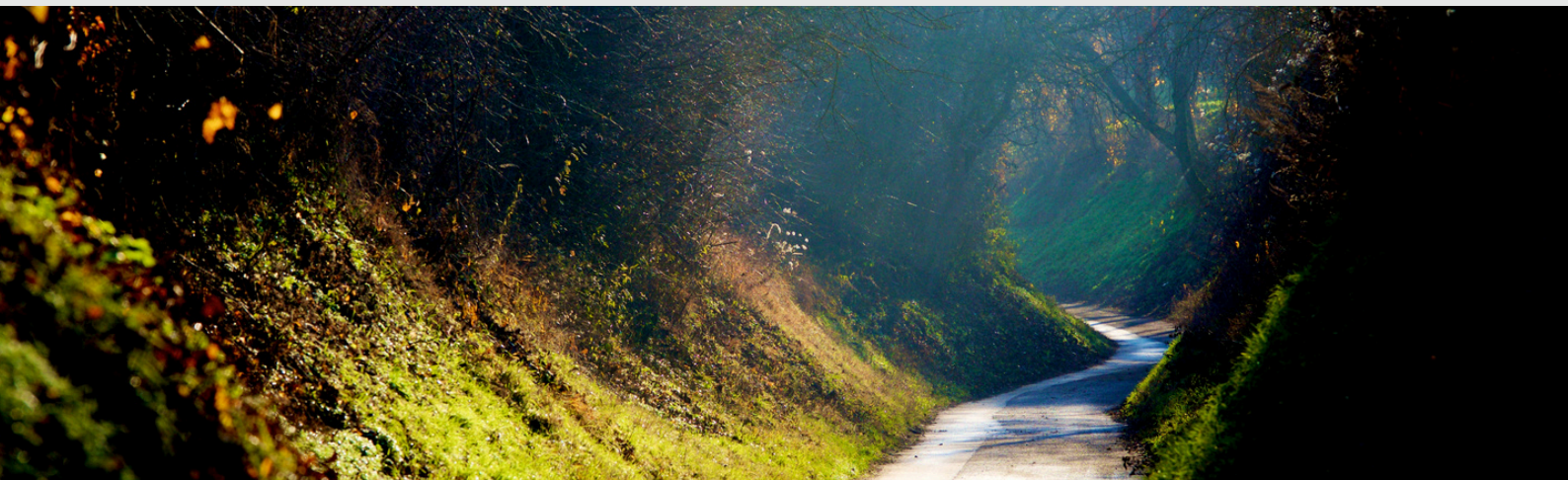
This manual works best when done together with a mentor or a friend. We cannot walk this journey alone! If you do not have a mentor or friend whom you can walk with, trust God to bring someone into your life who can help you.

The manual is not a comprehensive theological workbook, but rather an

essential starting point. The manual is divided into daily readings. Each day should take you approximately 10-15 minutes to work through. Please do not race through the content - walking with God is not a sprint, it is a journey. At the end of each day, please write down the answers to these questions in your journal and/or discuss them with your mentor when you meet. Once you have completed this manual, ask God to show you who you can assist in the journey.

Let's make disciples!

Andre and Marike von Mollendorff



PART 1- STARTING OUT

Have you ever asked yourself why is there so much pain and hurt in the world today?

Where did things go wrong and how can we fix it?

In part one we will look at the origins of sin and how God provided the solution through JesusChrist and the free gift of salvation.



DAY 1: MADE FOR RELATIONSHIPS

Key Scripture:

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace”.
(Colossians 3:12-15 NIV).

All human beings have been created for relationships. We all want to feel loved and accepted by someone. We all hate to be alone and want to belong somewhere. Often people on their death beds have been heard saying that they wish they had spent more time with the people they loved. Healthy relationships make us rich in soul and even when things are going bad, it is our relationships that give us courage.

We read that God made the earth and everything in it, and at the peak of His creation, he made a man. Adam was enjoying a great relationship with God; however, something was missing. He still felt alone. Man wanted someone just like himself. God then created Eve as close companionship for Adam. Through this we see there are three key relationships that every man and woman need in their life. Firstly, a relationship with God. Secondly, a relationship with ourselves. Finally, our relationships with others.

So he answered and said, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’” (Luke 10:27 NKJV)

We begin to encounter problems in life when any of these relationships are not functioning correctly. Anxiety; depression; violence; substance abuse; and unhealthy sexual relations are some of the signs that there is a relational challenge somewhere.

The truth is that relationships are scary, and we always stand the chance of getting hurt. However, without the right connections, we cannot function properly as human beings.

Conversation starter:

How would you describe your relationship with God?

How is your relationship with yourself? (Do you have a good self-image?)

How is your relationship with people in general?

Further Reading: Genesis 2:18-19; 1 John 4:20; Matthew 22:37-40.



DAY 2: CHOICES

Key Scripture:

***“I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live”
(Deuteronomy 30:19 NKJV).***

For any relationship to be real, there must be a choice. God has created man with free choice. God did not force Adam into a one way, ‘You have to do what I say’ relationship, but rather gave Adam the free choice to obey Him and love Him back. To demonstrate man’s choice to love God, God placed two trees in the Garden of Eden. The only request that God had was that they did not eat of the tree of the Knowledge of good and evil but they could enjoy every other tree.

Obedience to God is a demonstration of our love towards him. I obey because I know the person who I am listening to has my best interests at heart. Therefore, I obey out of love and not fear. Who I love and obey I will follow.

“But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do” (John 14:31 NKJV).

“Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?” (Romans 6:16 NIV).

Unfortunately, Adam and Eve made some wrong choices and chose to obey and follow the enemy's voice. This decision caused a separation in their relationship with God. It also created tension in their relationship with one another as Adam began to blame Eve for the problems they found themselves in. The fruit of this one poor decision was the shame, guilt and isolation from the one who loved them most.

Adam and Eve's bad choices did not stop God in the pursuit of His relationship towards them. With loving-kindness, God keeps drawing us back to himself, and He never stops pursuing us even if we resist Him and try 'hide from Him.

Psalms 139:7-12 NKJV says:

"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend into heaven, you are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me."

Conversation Starter:

What are some of the good, and what are some of the bad, choices you have made in your life?

What have been the consequences of those choices?

Further Bible Study: Jeremiah 31:3; Deuteronomy 30:15-20.



DAY 3: SEPARATION FROM GOD

Key Scripture:
“For the wages of sin is death”
(Romans 6:23 NKJV).

When Adam and Eve chose to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden, it was the beginning of independence and separation from God. They had fallen for the lies of Satan and started doubting God’s heart towards them. How then did Adam and Eve’s decisions affect me?

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because all sinned”
(Romans 5:12 NKJV).

Because Adam and Eve sinned, all mankind are born into sin. Sin is missing the mark, falling short of God’s original design for man to be in perfect relationship with God.

The result and the consequences of sin is death. Death is not only physical, but it is also a spiritual separation from God. Therefore, when Adam and Eve fell for the lies of Satan, they cut themselves off spiritually from the life of God.

Death began to filter through to all areas of their lives. They found themselves running from God, rather than enjoying an unbroken relationship with Him. They began to fight with each other and blame each other. Mankind’s lifespan was shortened. Poverty; sickness and disease became the norm as Satan controlled the earth. These symptoms are the result of bad choices, which lead to death filling the earth.

The weight of separation from God is felt in every aspect of life. Without Him, mankind is left searching for meaning in a world that cannot satisfy. Emptiness, fear, and despair take hold, and no amount of success or pleasure can fill the void. Relationships fracture, loneliness grows, and the soul longs for something more. Humanity was designed for connection with God, yet in His absence, we wrestle with a deep and aching void.

This separation has unleashed suffering—violence, sickness, and death permeate the world. Creation itself groans under sin's weight, as hearts grow cold and darkness prevails. Striving replaces peace, and burdens become unbearable. The pain of this disconnect is undeniable, a stark reminder of what was lost in the garden and the devastating impact of sin.

Conversation Starter:

Can you see how your separation from God has influenced your life?

In which areas of your life (Spiritually, marriage, family, health, friendships, finances) do you feel things are not working for you?

Further Bible Study: Genesis 3:1-10; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 5:12-21.



DAY 4: NOT GOOD ENOUGH

Key Scripture:

***“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”
(Romans 3:23 NKJV).***

For any relationship to be real, there must be a choice. God has created man with free choice. God did not force Adam into a one way, ‘You have to do what I say’ relationship, but rather gave Adam the free choice to obey Him and love Him back. To demonstrate man’s choice to love God, God placed two trees in the Garden of Eden. The only request that God had was that they did not eat of the tree of the Knowledge of good and evil but they could enjoy every other tree.

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Conversation Starter:

What are some of the good, and what are some of the bad, choices you have made in your life?

What have been the consequences of those choices?

Further Bible Study: Jeremiah 31:3; Deuteronomy 30:15-20.



DAY 5: THE GREATEST GIFT

Key Scripture:

***“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, but it is the gift of God”
(Ephesians 2:8 NKJV).***

Imagine a courtroom scene...

You are guilty, and all the evidence is against you. The accuser has done a great job of proving your guilt. You know there is no way out of this, and your sentence is the death penalty.

Then something unusual happens, your advocate, the son of the judge, steps in and takes the full blame, and the responsibility for your sentence upon himself. The Judge turns to you. Instead of condemning you to death, he pronounces you free. Right there in front of you, he destroys all records of your wrongdoings. The whole courtroom gasps and suddenly there is great rejoicing. Tears are flooding down your face as you are trying to come to grips with what just happened. As you turn around to walk out, you realize that you are free, completely free.

This, my friend, is what God did for you! You were sinful, guilty, condemned to death. You were a prisoner and carried the yoke of slavery. Jesus came and paid a high price with His life. When you receive Him as Lord and Savior, He takes the judgment of sin upon Himself, so that you can be free. You are legally free!

"God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21NIV).

You did nothing to deserve this, it is called Grace. Grace is God's unearned, unmerited favour. Grace is God giving to us what we don't deserve! The only thing you need to do is believe and receive it through faith. This is NOT a work of yourself, but a gift from God. Through grace and by faith is the only way we can be saved. When you trust in His grace, Jesus makes you righteous, so that you can be in right standing with God. All you need to do is receive it!

Ephesians 2 is clear that salvation is a gift. You can't do anything to earn it. All you must do is confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus is the Lord and that He is your Savior (Romans 10:8-9).

Conversation Starter:

Have you made a decision to receive the gift of righteousness, and to confess Jesus as your saviour?

If you have made that decision, where and when did you make it?

Further Bible Study: Romans 5:15; Romans 10:8-9; Titus 3:5.



DAY 6 – BORN AGAIN

Key Scripture:

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “ Most assuredly, I say to you unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again’ (John 3:4-6 NKJV).

If you respond to the gift of salvation extended to you by believing in your heart and confessing with your mouth, you will be born again. Just as we are physically born by the womb of a woman into this natural world, so we are also spiritually born again into the Kingdom of God. When you receive Jesus as your saviour, your spirit is made new. This means you are an entirely new creature.

***“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new”
(2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV).***

New creation means brand new, as if never used. Your past sins are washed away as far as the east is from the west, and you have a clean page to start on. Everything that you need to live an overcoming, victorious lifestyle is yours. You can never be the same again!

There is nothing more beautiful than a newborn baby. When you look at those perfect little feet that have never been used before, your heart melts.

This means that you have a new identity, and new life is breathed into you. Your desires will begin to change as you are given a hunger for God and the things of the spirit. Being born again enables us to see, and be partakers in, the Kingdom of God!

Conversation Starter:

How has your life changed after being born again?

If you have not yet made the decision to be born again, what is stopping you?

Further Bible Study: Psalms 103:12; Colossians 2:13.



DAY 7: ADOPTED AS GOD'S CHILDREN

Key Scripture:

***“Long, long ago He decided to adopt us into His family through Jesus Christ (what pleasure He took in planning this!)”
(Ephesians 1:5 MSG).***

Think back to that courtroom scene where you were found guilty. God not only forgave you, but it was His great pleasure to bring you into His family! He adopted you as a son and a daughter and now calls you His own. This is more than incredible; our minds can't even fully comprehend this love. To be called a son and daughter of the living God is the highest call that you can ever have. This is true redemption!

Paul describes our relationship with God as that of a Father with His children. When we receive Christ, we are adopted into God's very own family. It says that God chose us and picked us out for Himself as His very own.

Adoption is a process whereby the adopted child becomes legally part of a family and takes on the surname of that family. This means that the child is also now a legal heir of the family. This is what happens to us. The moment we receive Jesus, those adoption papers are signed, and we have legally and formally been declared as a son or a daughter of God. We now share in all the privileges, position and inheritance of the King. We are heirs, together with Jesus, to everything that is our Father's.

“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16 NKJV).

When we are born again, there is a witness in our spirits that we are His children (even if on some days you don't feel like it). There is prompting in our hearts, an AFFIRMATION and a 'knowing that you know' that you are indeed a son and a daughter of God.

Through adoption, God changes our position from being orphans and slaves to being sons and daughters. Adoption is a 100% legitimate, legal and lawful contract signed by the blood of Jesus. It is a done deal! The enemy might still try to remind you of your slavery and your old identity, but it's vital that you know that he has NO legal rights to your life anymore!

Conversation Starter:

Do you sense the witness in your heart that you are a child of God?

How does knowing that you are adopted into God's family change the way you see life?

Further Bible Study: 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 5:10; Romans 8:14-16.



DAY 8: KINGDOM CITIZEN

Key Scripture:

“...giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love...” (Colossians 1:12-14 NKJV).

When we are born, we become citizens of our country of origin. This is what gives us our nationality. When we are born again, we are born into God’s Kingdom. We are now Kingdom Citizens.

How does the Kingdom of God work?

There are two main unseen Kingdoms in this world: the kingdom of darkness (Satan’s kingdom) and the Kingdom of light (God’s Kingdom). Every single human being on the planet lives in either one of these two Kingdoms. The word Kingdom means: “The Kings Domain” or the area/land a King rules over. Before we were born again, we submitted to the Kingdom of Darkness and his domain. After being born again we transfer our citizenship from the Kingdom of Darkness to the Kingdom of Light. Now as Kingdom of God citizens we need to learn how to submit to our new Lord, Jesus Christ, and His domain. How do we do that?

By yielding our lives to the King's values and submitting to His ways. His ways and values are all expressed in the Word of God. For example, the bible says in Romans 12:18, "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men". When we begin to apply His values and ways for living, the Kingdom gets established in our hearts. This change of values and ways takes time, but as we journey we will slowly see how we begin to live for Him and not for ourselves. As you are faithful with submitting your own life to God's rule, He will give you more territory to rule over.

Being a citizen of a Kingdom also means that you get specific benefits. It is important not to forget your benefits your benefits (see Psalms 103:2).

- Protection (Psalms 91)
- Provision (Psalms 23:1 and Matthew 6:31-33)
- Health (1 Peter 2:24)
- Peace (John 14:27)

Conversation Starter:

Have you experienced the blessings of being a Kingdom Citizen?

Does the King rule and reign over every area of your life? What areas do you still need to surrender?

Further Bible Study: Phil 3:20; Luke 17:21; Matthew 6:24



DAY 9: BECOMING PART OF THE FAMILY

Key Scripture:

***“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of His household”
(Ephesians 2:19 NIV).***

Not only are we adopted into God’s spiritual family, but this is also demonstrated practically by being part of a local church family. The same way that babies are not meant to be born and then left outside, without the safety and protection of a family, so it is with God’s spiritual children. As a Child of God, you need a spiritual family around you to help you grow. Your local church is a household of faith with spiritual fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters that can help you grow to maturity.

Psalms 92:13 says: “Those that are planted in the house of the Lord will flourish.” Only trees that are planted can bear fruit. If you keep uprooting a tree, it will never grow to its full potential. It is essential for your spiritual growth that you are correctly ‘planted’ in the house.

To put your roots down will mean not just attending a few meetings, but actually getting involved and taking responsibility. This might be in small groups, serving teams or wherever the opportunity presents itself.

The church is a family and God places you in a family where it pleases Him (1 Corinthians 12:18). A church family is like any other family; it is a place where people can get to know you for who you really are. Brothers and sisters have the tendency sometimes to rub one another up the wrong way. It is the same with the church family. Some people you will connect with and they will bring the best out of you. Others will just push every button and bring out the worst in you. God uses people to shape and mold us, to build our characters so that we can become more like Christ.

God made us for relationship with Him and others. We cannot grow to our full potential in isolation. It is therefore important to plan to get connected into a family somewhere today! This is vital for your spiritual growth.

Conversation Starter:

Are you part of a local church family? Which church family do you belong to?

Have you joined a Connect Group? If not, what is preventing you from doing so?

Further Bible Study: Psalms 68:6; 1 Corinthians 12:1-18; Hebrews 10:25;



DAY 10: WATER BAPTISM

Key Scripture:

"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved"(Mark 16:15 NKJV).

Being baptized in water is an exciting day for every believer. Why do we need to get baptized? When we surrender to Christ we are giving our lives over to obey Him. One of His commands is that we get baptized in water. Being born again means that something has changed on the 'inside' where no one can see, our Spirit has become alive to God. Water baptism is the 'outward' step we take in obedience to His Word (Mark 16:16). This act demonstrates our commitment to following Christ and calls all those present to witness our desire to serve God.

"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so, we also should walk in newness of life"(Romans 6:3-4 NKJV).

Water baptism is not what saves us, but it is a testimony that you as a new believer are declaring. You are declaring that as you go under the water your "old man," – your old sinful life - is buried with Christ, as Christ was buried in the grave. As you come out of the water, you are declaring that you are raised to new life just as Christ was resurrected from the grave. Water baptism is, therefore, a declaration of you identifying with Christ by laying down your old life and choosing to walk in your new life with Christ.

Believer's baptism

Water baptism is a believer's baptism, as nowhere in Scripture do we find that infants were baptized. In reading the Further Bible Study section you will notice that all those who were baptized had an opportunity to hear the Word of God and respond to the Word preached before they were baptized.

Conversation Starter:

Have you been baptized? If not, what is preventing you?

What steps do you think you can take towards being baptized?

Further Bible Study: John 3:23; Acts 8:36-38; Luke 24:47; Acts 16:32-33.



DAY 11: COVENANT OF GRACE

Key Scripture:

“For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28 NKJV).

Everything that you have learned about salvation thus far has shown you that salvation is a gift of Grace that we receive by faith. When we are born again, we come into the New Covenant, or as some call it, the covenant of grace.

It is called the covenant of grace because grace means undeserved, unearned and unmerited favour. Through Jesus’ Blood we get to be a part of this beautiful new covenant of grace. We receive the benefits from this covenant, not because of anything we do, but because we believe in Jesus.

You will notice that your bible has both an Old Testament and a New Testament. Why is that? In the Old Testament, the Old Covenant was operating. This covenant was known as the covenant of Law. What this meant was that you would only be blessed if you obeyed all the requirements of the law and you would be cursed if you did not keep your side of the covenant (See Deuteronomy and Leviticus). Everything was therefore dependent on your works, what you did and didn’t do. The Old Covenant was all about doing! Do good get good, do wrong get punished. As we know, it is impossible for man to keep all the law perfectly. Thus, one of the purposes of this Old Covenant was to help man realize that he can’t keep the covenant. He needs a saviour, someone who can fulfill the covenant on his behalf (Galatians 3:24-25; Romans 3:20). This is where Jesus, our savior, steps into the picture. We were unable to meet the requirements of the law under the Old Covenant. Jesus stood in our place and fulfilled all those requirements on our behalf. He did the work! By doing this, He then did away with the Old Covenant as it was now completed perfectly (Matthew 5:17).

Jesus ushered in a New Covenant between Himself and God. When we believe in Jesus, we are invited to be a part of it. The New Covenant is described in the New Testament of your bible. This covenant would not be based on works, but on belief in Jesus Christ and His works. Christ is perfect therefore all we need to do is believe in Jesus, the perfect covenant keeper, and in His blood that has made it possible for us to partake in the new covenant.

For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant (Hebrews 9:15 NIV).

This is like receiving an inheritance. When you inherit a vast amount of land or money from your parents, you did nothing to earn it and are directly benefiting from their hard work. That is what Jesus did for us by inviting us into the blessings of the New Covenant and giving us an inheritance. Abraham was our example of how to receive our inheritance by faith and not by works.

‘It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith’ (Romans 4:13 NIV).

Does this mean then that I don't do anything anymore as everything is done? No, of course not. I still do things, but my motivation is not from having to earn favour and try and keep my side of a covenant. I am part of the New Covenant because I believe in Jesus. I already have favor, and from that place of favor I do what the Holy Spirit tells me to do. These are called good works and will be discussed later.

Conversation Starter:

In what areas do you still have Old Covenant thinking? Do; do; do before I am blessed.

Further Bible Study: Romans 8:3-4; Hebrews 10:16-17.

PART 2 - GROWING STRONG

The wonderful thing about Christianity is that God is a personal God. He is not distant and detached like the gods of other religions.

God wants to get to know you and He wants you to grow in your relationship with Him.

In part two we will discover how you can grow in your relationship with God.



DAY 12: SPENDING TIME WITH YOUR FATHER

Key Scripture:

“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent”. (John 17:3 NKJV)

Being part of God’s Kingdom and being a child of God is all about relationship. To ‘know’ in the bible is far more profound than just being acquainted with someone. It means to know them intimately. Jesus came to earth and modeled to us what it looks like to have an intimate relationship with the Father. He said: “I tell you, the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can do only what He sees His Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does” (John 5:19 NIV).

Jesus was utterly dependent on hearing from the Father and doing what He tells Him to do. Jesus often had to draw away to a quiet place to pray and so should we (Luke 5:16). Prayer is not a religious thing we do just before we eat a meal. Prayer is the continual conversation we have with our Father as we walk through life with Him.

You might be asking “How do I spend time with God?” You can spend time with God anywhere and at any time, because He lives and dwells in you! Talk to Him in your heart about anything big or small. He is very interested in every detail of your life. However, even though He is always with you, it is also important to sometimes find a quiet place and set aside some time to be alone with Him.

But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly (Matthew 6:6 NKJV).

It takes time to work on a new relationship. At first it might seem awkward. When you spend time with God, you also might be easily distracted. Do not worry, before long you will love spending time with your Heavenly Father.

Here are three things you can do during your time with Father.

1. Worship

Begin by putting on some worship music. Worship will also open your heart to God so that you can hear Him more clearly. The Bible says we come into His presence with thanksgiving and praise. Allow the worship to calm your heart and anxious thoughts.

2. Read the Word

When reading the Word don't try and read too much, just read one scripture at a time and sit and think about it again and again. Thinking deeply on scripture or about God is called meditation. This is not the same as Eastern Meditation, which is about emptying your mind. This is about filling your mind with the Word of God. (More about the importance of this later).

3. Journal your prayers

It is also essential to get yourself a journal for this time. Write down any thoughts or questions you may have. Write your prayers and frustrations down. Try to be as real as possible with your Father. See the example below:

Conversation Starter:

In what areas do you still have Old Covenant thinking?

Do; do; do before I am blessed.

Further Bible Study: Romans 8:3-4; Hebrews 10:16-17.

Journal entry example: Date: 21 July 2013

Father, thanks for this beautiful day, you have been so good to me. Father, I'm feeling frustrated with not being able to change fast enough, help me overcome my anger problem.

Another thing Father, that scripture I read this morning in John 15:5.

What does it mean to remain in you?

Next, write down what you feel God is saying to you:

My child, remain in Me, stay in Me, stick close to Me, and you will bear much fruit. It will be good fruit. You don't have to try to produce good fruit, but if you remain in Me, you will naturally bear fruit. Remain in My love. Know My love, receive My love and feel My love for you.



DAY 13: HEARING GOD'S VOICE

Key Scripture:

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me"(John 10:27 NKJV).

As children of God, one of the highest privileges we have is to hear the voice of our Heavenly Father. On the day you were born physically you had all your senses - hearing, tasting, seeing, feeling and smelling. As we grow, we need to learn how to use these natural senses. A baby can't see great distances and things are a little blurry at first. As they mature, they begin to see more clearly. The same applies to us spiritually. Being born again means that your spirit man can hear and see in the spirit, but these senses need to be developed.

How do we hear the voice of God? God created man spirit, soul and body. The Spirit is the part of man that communicates and dialogues with God. We can have this interaction with God because after being born again our Spirit is alive to God. That is why after being born again the Bible seems to come alive and we see verses we have never seen before. Our Soul is our mind, will and emotions and has thoughts, feelings and desires. Our body is the part of us that has the five senses. Touch, seeing, taste, smell and hear. My body responds to the information received from the Soul.

So how do we hear Gods' voice? God's voice is not an audible, deep voice that you will hear out of heaven. God's voice is more like a thought or an impression that you get. Thus, God speaks to you through your spirit, and it comes up in your soul (mind) as thoughts. Learning to tell the difference between God's thoughts and your thoughts is how you learn to discover the voice of God.

The more you come to know God the more you begin to recognize His voice. It is like when a good friend phones you, you immediately know who is on the other side, and you don't have to ask who is speaking.

There are three main types of voices and thoughts that you can have in your mind.

1. God's Voice

One thing that you will notice is that as you learn to listen to God's voice is that God speaks in line with His Word. The Word of God is the way God speaks! The more you know the Word of God, the easier it becomes to hear God's voice. God's voice sounds like this: "I love you (John 3:16), I have a plan for your life (Jeremiah 29:11), don't worry, just trust me (Matthew 6:25)."

2. The enemy's voice

Satan's voice is negative and leaves you feeling shameful, discouraged, fearful, and insignificant. Satan usually likes to plant negative thoughts in our minds, especially about things that are out of our control. The enemy's voice sounds like this: "There is no way you are going to make the end of the month, you are going to go bankrupt and get sick."

3. Your own voice

Our own voice is usually neutral. Neither positive nor negative. It has to do with natural desires, like sleeping, eating and sexual desires. If we do not learn to discipline our physical desires, they can also run wild and try and control us. Our own voice sounds like: "I'm tired, I'm hungry, I'm cold, and I'm frustrated!"

Conversation Starter:

Are you able to hear God's voice?

What have your predominant thoughts been in the last while? Which voice do you think is speaking to you?

If you are not sure of the voices, ask your mentor to help you discern which voice you have been hearing.

Further Bible Study: 1 Kings 19:11-13; John 16:13.



DAY 14: GROWING IN THE WORD

Key Scripture:

“Like newborn babies crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it, you may grow up in your salvation” (1 Peter 2:2 NIV).

In the same way that a newborn baby needs to grow physically, so you too now must grow spiritually. Physically you may be 24 years old, but if you were born again one month ago then spiritually you are only one month old. The first thing that a baby needs to grow up with is milk. Without milk, a baby will starve to death.

The milk needed for spiritual babies is the Word of God. You may be asking, “Where do I start reading the Word?”

Here are a few steps that will help you.

Firstly, find yourself a version of the bible that is easy to read, like the NIV (New International) or NLT (New Living Translation).

Secondly, start by reading the specific scriptures in this manual under the ‘Further Bible Study’ sections. After that, begin by reading through the Gospels. Start with Matthew and read through to John. Do this a couple of times, and then carry on through the rest of the New Testament. Or if you want to read the Old Testament, begin with Psalms and Proverbs. It is important to keep reading the bible even if you feel you don’t understand everything. The reason for this is that the Word of God is feeding your spirit even if you do not understand what you are reading.

Avoid opening your Bible in random places every time you sit down to read. This can become discouraging and leave you feeling like you are not moving in a direction.

Topical Bible study is also a great place to start. If you want to know about the love of God, then look at the back of your concordance under the topic of love. There you will see all the scriptures that speak about love. It is also easy to use the internet to search key terms like: 'The Bible and God's love' or whichever theme you desire to know more about.

Just as a baby goes through different stages in development and growth, so you too will go through various steps in your spiritual growth. Don't get frustrated with yourself. You will grow as you learn to feed yourself on the Word and hang out with other family members who can teach you how to become a mature Christian.

Conversation Starter:

Do you have a Bible that is easy to understand? If not, what is stopping you from getting one?

Do you have someone who can explain the Bible to you and to whom you can go to if you have questions? Who is that person?

What is your reading plan at the moment?

Further Bible Study: Mathew 4:4; Psalms 119:105.



DAY 15: FATHER; SON & HOLY SPIRIT

Key Scripture:

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen” (2 Corinthians 13:14 NKJV).

The Bible speaks of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The Bible calls this the Godhead (Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9). God is three persons, but ONE God. This is where we get the word, Trinity from. Tri, meaning three, and unity, meaning one. Although Trinity is not a word used in the Bible, it is a foundational theological term that we need to understand.

In our Statement of faith, we say this about the Trinity: “We believe there are three Persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.” This means that God’s personality is expressed through the three persons of the Trinity. Thus, they are different in personality, but equal in power.

By now you would have already experienced the presence of all three persons in your life, whether you realize it or not.

Jesus is our wonderful saviour. He is our deliverer, our healer and so much more! Jesus is the One who has made a way to the Father. Through Jesus, our relationship is restored to the Father. Father God is called father because that is what He is. The One who is patient, kind and slow to anger, and abounds in love. He is a good Father that has a plan for your life (Ps 103:8). The Holy Spirit dwells within us gently leading, guiding and comforting us. The Holy Spirit is the one who speaks the thoughts and voice of God into our Spirit and that voice comes up into our thoughts as described earlier (more about the Holy Spirit later).

There is so much more to get to know about God. A relationship with God is like any other relationship. As you spend time with Him, He will begin to reveal Himself to you and this will change your life in ways that are mind-blowing. Knowing God and being loved by HIM is all you need in this life to be successful and victorious.

Conversation Starter:

How would you describe your experience with the Trinity thus far?

Which one, Father, Son or Holy Spirit, is the easiest for you to understand? Why do you think so?

Bible Study: Matthew 11:27; John 14:16-18.



DAY 16: YOUR MOST POWERFUL HELPER

Key Scripture:

“However I am telling you nothing but the truth when I say it is profitable (good, expedient, advantageous) for you that I go away.

Because if I do not go away, the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengtheners, Standby) will not come to you [to be in close fellowship with you]” (John 16:7 AMP).

As Jesus was preparing His disciples for His ascension, He promised them that they would not be left alone. He would send the One who would take His place. Therefore, the moment we are born again not only is our spirit made alive to God, but the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us! The Holy Spirit is a person and not a spiritual force. He wants to have fellowship with you. This means He wants you to get to know you intimately, like a friend.

It is our aim as believers to develop our relationship with the Holy Spirit through close fellowship. He will lead and guide us in the ways we should go. If you need help, He is with you and will show you what to do. If you lack wisdom, He will teach you. If you are alone, feel misunderstood or depressed, He is the best counsellor. He comforts like no other, and His presence wipes away all fear, anxiety and worries. As we learn to depend on the Holy Spirit, His power is released in our lives and we learn how to live effectively in the Kingdom of God.

As you get to know the Holy Spirit you will discover that He wants to tell you about your true identity as a son of God. He wants to teach you what it means to call your heavenly father, “Daddy!”, so that you can discover that you are no longer an orphan, but a son (Romans 8:14 - 17).

The Holy Spirit also loves to talk to you about Jesus. He will show you the wonders of Jesus and His marvelous grace. He likes to boast about Christ, and we can ask Him for a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ.

The Holy Spirit's role in our lives is to be our Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor and Strengthener. Remember the Holy Spirit is not a 'force' but a real person and therefore it is essential to work on your relationship with Him daily. Ask Him, daily, to help you in whatever situation you find yourself. A relationship with the Holy Spirit is essential to living a life of victory and overcoming!

Conversation Starter:

Have you begun to develop a relationship with the Holy Spirit?

What was the last thing you spoke to Him about? How did he help you?

Further Bible Study: John 14:16-18; Romans 8:14 -17.



DAY 17: THE BAPTISM OF HOLY SPIRIT

Key Scripture:

**“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.”
(Acts 1:8 NKJV)**

As we saw yesterday, when we are born again the Holy Spirit comes to live in us. There is another experience with the Holy Spirit called the “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 3:11).

The word “baptize” means to immerse or submerge. To be covered entirely, saturated, and absorbed. To be baptized with the Holy Spirit is to be completely saturated with the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Why is this so important?

Jesus instructed His disciples not to go anywhere until the Holy Spirit had baptized them with the power to be witnesses. What happened next was amazing. As the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples they begun speaking in new tongues and boldly declaring the message of Jesus, and immediately people were saved. The Holy Spirit gave them the power to do what they couldn’t do by themselves. It made them bold and courageous. They were able to preach the gospel with power!

“And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name, they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues” (Mark 16:17 NKJV).

In the book of Acts we see that those who were baptized in the Holy Spirit began to speak in other tongues (Acts 2:1-4; Acts 2:32; Acts 8:14-24; Acts 10:44-48; Acts 19:1-7).

From the above scriptures we can see that speaking in tongues is one of the signs of being filled with the Holy Spirit. The purpose of the Baptism is for power, but the evidence is often the speaking in tongues.

Why do we pray in tongues?

Praying in the spirit is like our own 'personal' prayer language. There are times and situations when we do not know how to pray for someone or something. It is during these times that the best thing to do is to pray in the language of the Spirit (Romans 8:26).

When we pray in the Spirit, our minds do not understand what we are saying. Praying in the Spirit will strengthen your inner spirit man. In 1 Corinthians 14:14 and Jude 19-20 the Bible explains that speaking in a tongue edifies you, meaning you are 'building yourself up'.

For us to live a victorious, overcoming life and to walk in boldness and courage, we need the power of the Holy Spirit.

Conversation Starter:

Have you been filled with the Holy Spirit? Describe your experience?

How has this changed your life?

Further Bible Study: Joel 2:28-29; Luke 24:49; 1 Corinthians 14:2; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 5:18-21.

PART 3 - OVERCOMING THE ENEMY

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled” (2 Corinthians 10:4-6 NKJV).

We are all in a war whether you recognise it or not. The devil hates us as believers and will try everything in his power to destroy our lives and our faith in God. We therefore need to learn how to overcome him and the attacks he has assigned against our lives. This is not about becoming devil focussed, but rather intelligent and alert believers. In this section we will learn how you can overcome the enemy and become more than a conquerer.



DAY 18: RENEWING YOUR MIND

Key Scripture:

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2 NIV)

One of the most amazing things to see is how a caterpillar goes through the process of metamorphosis into a butterfly. At first the main aim of the caterpillar is to eat as much as possible to grow. Eventually, he becomes big enough and then begins to spin himself closed into a cocoon. From here the caterpillar goes into a time of hibernation. On the outside, it looks like nothing is happening, but on the inside, he is busy transforming into a beautiful butterfly.

To be transformed means to change and to go through metamorphosis. This transformation is a process of our mind being renewed.

From the moment we are born into this world our mind is being programmed. Your mind is like a computer. All the information you have gathered over the years has taught you how to process, think, feel and react. Some of this programming is good, but a lot of it is built on secular values, worldly systems and lies from the enemy.

Often, we want to change our behavior before we have changed our belief systems. To behave the right way, we need to change how we think. As a believer the way we need think is in accordance with the Kingdom of God and the Word of God. This is a process of renewing our minds. Just like the caterpillar, WE NEED TO EAT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE to grow! We need to eat the Word of God so that we can be CHANGED and transformed in our thinking! When our minds are renewed, and our thinking is in line with God’s Word, our lives will also work. We will begin to walk as God designed us to live.

How do I do this practically?

For example: When I sin, the enemy will come and lie to me and tell me what a failure I am, how shameful I should feel and how bad it would be if people know this about me. This is not the truth! The truth is what God's Word says. I need to renew and transform my mind with the Word of God. The Word says my sins are forgiven, that I am the righteous in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21). I am victorious. That I can run boldly to God's throne of grace, because Jesus has paid a high price for me and that instead of shame, He gives me a double portion of blessing and honour.

Remember that this takes time. Just because you might see some of your old nature popping up, don't despair. God is guiding you through a process of TRANSFORMATION, and He will complete the work He has started.

Conversation Starter:

In what areas do you think your mind is still unrenewed?

What scriptures are you using to renew your mind with so that you can begin to believe right?

Further Bible Study: Ephesians 4:23-24; Proverbs 23:7.



DAY 19: IDENTITY IN CHRIST

Key Scripture:

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new”(2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV).

If we are born again, the Bible says we are New Creations in Christ. This is our true identity! We cannot change our behaviour by trying harder. The only way we can improve our behaviour is through believing the right thing about our true identity. We need to see ourselves the way that God sees us. This, in turn, will cause us to live right. Our focus needs to be not on who we were, but on who we are. Putting on the New Man, and our new identity, is about focusing on who God says we are. God sees us as righteous, even when we mess up and get it wrong. God sees us as His children, as new creations in Him.

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:22-24 NIV).

Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him (Colossians 3:9-10 NKJV).

The Bible also speaks of our Old Man and our New Man. The Old Man is our old nature, the part of you that used to like sinning. When we are born again, we have a 'New Man' or our 'New Identity'. This new identity wants to obey God and do what pleases Him. The challenge for a new believer is that over the years the old nature has formed bad habits that we will need to put off.

Therefore, even though you were saved, you might still find yourself wanting to do wrong things. We need to realize what is going on in our lives when this happens, otherwise we will begin to doubt our salvation.

Conversation Starter:

What are the areas of your old nature trying to get the better of you?

How does it help you to focus on your new identity in Christ, instead of focusing on your old identity?

Further Bible Study: Romans 7:21-23; Romans 8:1-17; Galatians 5:16-17.



DAY 20: DEALING WITH THE OLD SELF

Key Scripture:

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin(Romans 6:5-8 NKJV).

We have just learned about our new identity in Christ, but how do we deal with the Old Man and our old habits? We need to know that we cannot do this in our strength. We need to discover what Christ has done for us. The good news is that Jesus took our Old Man and nailed him to the cross. Jesus has dealt with the old nature. Therefore, all I need to do is believe that the Old Man is dead and has no more authority to control our lives.

Here are two ways we can begin to deal with the old nature.

1. Set your mind on the things of the Spirit

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit (Romans 8:5 NKJV).

Where we focus is where we go! If we focus on the things of the flesh, we will go there. If we focus on the things of the Spirit, we will go there.

2. Feed your spirit

Make it a point to feed and spend time giving to the spirit. That's why Galatians 5:16-17 encourages us to walk by the Spirit so that we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. In other words, starve your flesh. Don't feed it with the old sinful stuff it used to enjoy. Feed your spirit by reading the Word, worship and hanging around people that will encourage you in your walk with God.

Conversation Starter:

Where is your focus? What do you think about most of the day?

How are you planning to focus on the things of the Spirit?

Further Bible Study: Galatians 5:16-26; Galatians 5:24; Romans 6:14.



DAY 21: AUTHORITY AS A BELIEVER

Key Scripture:

“Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it” (Colossians 2:15 NKJV).

Have you ever seen an epic battle acted out between good (Jesus) and evil (Satan)? Right towards the end, good defeats the bad and “Jesus” is the winner. It is important to know today that Jesus overcame Satan at the cross. There was no fight needed. Satan is NO match for God.

What went wrong in the garden?

In the garden, God gave Adam and Eve authority and dominion over the garden. The garden was their delegated portion to rule over and multiply. Satan, the ‘king’ of the Kingdom of darkness, did not like that Adam and Eve had relationship with God, and that they were given dominion and authority. Therefore, by lying to Adam and Eve and getting them to mistrust God, and His goodness, Satan deceived them. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they forfeited their ‘dominion’ over the earth. Satan now took that authority as their new master. Remember you are a slave to whomever you obey (Romans 6:16; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2).

When Jesus conquered Satan on the cross the authority that Adam lost was restored back to us.

Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you (Luke 10:19 NKJV).

Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18 NKJV).

How do I overcome?

Speak the Word

We overcome the enemy by knowing the Word of God and our authority as believers. The Word of God is the truth! The only way we can confront lies is when we know what the Word says and what the Truth is. Whenever the devil confronted Jesus, Jesus never tried to argue or debate with him. He just told him what the Word said, and therefore Satan had to flee. Mathew 4:4 "the enemy comes and tempts Jesus, but this is what Jesus said " "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Do you know what the Word says concerning your health, finances, family, and identity? Remember it is okay to feel weak or vulnerable and ask for help. As you grow in God, you will come to a place where you too will be able to help other new believers overcome the enemy.

Share your Testimony

Another way to overcome is to share our testimony. The Bible says we overcome by the blood of the Lamb (remembering that Jesus already defeated Satan on the cross) and by the Word of our testimony. Your testimony is a public statement to others of what God has done in our lives. The more you share with others of what God has done for you in the big and small things, the easier it is to overcome! The enemy will do everything to keep you silent and from sharing about God's goodness in your life.

Conversation Starter:

What are some of the areas in your life where the enemy has been lying to you?

What scriptures can you use to counteract those lies?

When last have you shared your testimony?

Further Bible Study: James 4:7; 1 John 4:4; 1 John 2:12-14.



DAY 22: WORSHIP & BREAKING BREAD

Key Scripture:

“You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance” (Psalms 32:7 NIV).

What is worship? Most of us think of worship as only something we do on a Sunday when there is an excellent band playing. Corporate worship (worshipping together) is undoubtedly a crucial part of worship, but not the sum of it. Worship is far more than that!

Our English word “worship” comes from the word ‘worthship’ or ‘worthiness’. Worship is the inner attitude of the heart when we revere, honour and ascribe Worth to God. We can place priority on who God is in every area of our lives. Worship is therefore something we do every day, in everything we do. Even the way I do my work, as unto God, is worship.

Worship is being God-conscious in all we do. When we turn our focus from ourselves to Him, we worship. When we praise God, we magnify the Lord (Psalms 34:3). Magnifying means to make God big in our lives. The moment we do that, the difficulties and fears the enemy would harass us with begin to fade as we see how big God is. One of the best ways to deal with the attacks of the enemy is to worship. In the Bible we see examples of how when the people of God worshipped, God went before them and dealt with their enemies (2 Chronicles 20:21).

We don’t only worship God by singing we worship him with by dancing, clapping, twirling, praising, and raising our voices (Psalms 98:4; Psalms 47:1). We worship not because we do or don’t feel like it, we worship because of WHO God is. He deserves all praise and worship, regardless of our feelings. This is true and proper worship! (John 4:24)

The Power of Breaking Bread

“They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42 NKJV).

Another powerful act of Spiritual warfare is the breaking of bread. When we break bread, we are reminding ourselves that we trust and rely entirely on the finished work of Jesus Christ. As we eat of the bread, we are declaring that his broken body and stripes heal us. As we drink of the wine, we declare that His blood has cleansed us from all our sins. Breaking bread is something we should do often, not only corporately, but also privately in our homes, remembering what Christ has done for us on the cross.

Conversation Starter:

How and when do you worship?

When last did you break bread?

Further Bible Study: Ephesians 5:18 -19; Psalms 29; 86; and 99.



DAY 23: TAKING A STAND

Key Scripture:

“When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say”(Luke 12:11-12 NKJV).

The early Christians really had a different understanding of what it meant to 'take a stand' for Christ. They knew that the moment they would preach the message of Jesus, they would either be put to death, persecuted or imprisoned. Times were tense. The religious leaders and authorities were against Jesus and everyone associated with Him. Jesus' consoling words to them were, "Don't worry about what you will say, the Holy Spirit will teach you." (Luke 12:12)

One of the 'challenges' you will face as a new believer, will be taking a stand for your faith in front of friends or family. The early Christians put our modern day 'standing for our faith' into perspective. We will probably not be killed for taking a stand for our faith, although ultimately that is what we should be willing to do if it came to that.

To take a stand for Jesus requires a conviction in your heart and courage. There is always the possibility of losing relationships with loved ones and friends because of the decision that you have made. Our family and friends are a huge part of our life, and you will need to figure out which friends are right for you and which will have a bad influence on you.

1 Corinthians 15:33 says: "Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character" (NIV).

This does not mean that you need to reject your friends, however, the sooner you can tell them about the decision you have made to follow Christ the easier it will be for you. This will be a defining moment for you, because true friends will respect the choice you have made.

At this crossroads in your life, you will probably find that you might lose some friends. Don't be discouraged, you will make new ones again. Make sure that the friends you spend most of your time with are the ones who will build you up and encourage you in your faith. This is why it is so important to belong to a new family.

Jesus says in Luke 12:8-9 "Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, the Son of Man will also acknowledge in the presence of God's angels. But everyone who denies me here on earth will be denied before God's angels."

What a privilege it is to acknowledge Jesus, our Saviour, here on earth. What a privilege it is when we are given opportunities before people, friends, family and authorities to testify of what Jesus has done for us!

Conversation Starter:

How did your friends and family respond when you told them you had decided to follow Christ?

Who do you need to still tell that you have decided for Christ?

Have you identified friends who are right for you? What will you do to make new friends?

Further Bible Study: Luke 14:28; 1 Peter 3:15. Colossians 4:5-6.



DAY 24: GUARDING YOUR HEART

Key Scripture:

***“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it”
(Proverbs 4:23 NIV).***

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If you have experienced any form of a physical heart condition, you will quickly realise the effect that it has on your whole body. When your heart is not well, everything gets affected. In fact, the heart is our life source. If we have heart problems, it needs serious attention, because it can be life-threatening and result in death.

It's the same with us spiritually. If the condition of our soul (mind will and emotions) is not healthy, it affects every part of our lives and we need to sort it out. It could be 'life-threatening' if we chose to ignore it.

Living in this fallen world means that somewhere we are going to get hurt. People do things intentionally or unintentionally that hurt us. Things happen to us that cause pain and brokenness. This results in un-forgiveness and offence in our hearts. Unresolved unforgiveness or offence will develop into bitterness and anger.

Before we realise it, other people and the things that have been done to us, begin to rule our lives. The enemy uses offence to keep us in prison. The prison of our minds, isolated from people, locked up in our fears, rejection, anger and pain.

How do you know if there is unforgiveness in your heart?

Usually, un-forgiveness reveals itself as anger. Do you sometimes snap for no reason? Is there any person that you are avoiding or hoping never to see? This almost always means that deep down there is something that you have not yet been able to forgive.

It is almost impossible to even think of forgiving anyone unless we can learn to receive forgiveness. We have received an abundance of grace and mercy from Christ, and once we realise this, it will help us to extend grace and forgiveness to others.

“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times”(Matthew 18:21-22 NIV).

Forgiveness is not a feeling, but rather a decision that you make by the grace of God. Even after you have forgiven, it might not feel like anything has changed. If we have a problem with someone, the Word says we need to go and work it out with them (Matthew 18:18). Don't push things under the carpet and delay. Act now against the offence and don't allow a bitter root to develop.

Conversation Starter:

Is there someone in your life who you are battling to forgive? What is your action plan to deal with this unforgiveness?

Have you learnt how to receive God's unconditional love, grace, mercy and forgiveness?

Further Bible Study: Matthew 18:15-20; Proverbs 4:23; Luke 7:36-50



DAY 25: WALK BY FAITH

Key Scripture:

“For we walk by faith, not by sight ”(2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV).

Most people live by ‘crisis management faith’. When things are getting difficult they call on God to step in and rescue them. This is not how God designed us to live.

The Bible teaches us that we are saved by grace through faith. Not only are we saved by faith, but now as a new believer, we need to learn to walk by faith. It is so easy to get distracted by what is happening around us. Relational problems, financial challenges and health challenges. When we start looking at these circumstances we begin to panic. It is at this point that it is tempting to have faith in ourselves and our own abilities. We feel we can solve the problem by working harder or making a loan at the bank or calling a friend. When we do this the focus of our faith moves from God back towards self. When we put faith in ourselves, things just seem to get worse. It is at this point that I need to put my focus back on hearing my Father’s voice.

Romans 10:17 says: “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (NKJV). When I know what the word says about my circumstances, that releases faith in my heart towards God.

Walking by faith means that each day I turn my attention and focus to Jesus. I hear what He is saying. I have confidence towards Him and not towards my connections, my experiences, my finances or anything else that would tempt me to trust it.

I need to have faith in God not only when things are going bad, but also when they are going well. I don't need to just walk by faith when there is a crisis in my life. Walking by faith means that I include God in everything daily. I am continually aware of His presence, and I talk to him about my life and thank him for wisdom in all things

Conversation Starter:

What circumstances are you facing that you need to have faith towards God in?

What scriptures have brought faith to your heart regarding those circumstances?

Explain how you daily include God in your big and small decisions.

Further Bible Study: John 15:5; Mark 11:22-24.

PART 4 - WHAT IS MY PURPOSE

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations " (Jeremiah 1:5 NIV).

Have you ever wondered why you are on the earth? Why were you born? What is the purpose and meaning of life? Every single one of us has been born for a specific purpose, with good works for us to accomplish! For us to achieve these works, God has placed within each of us unique gifts, talents and abilities. In this section, we will look at how we find our purpose, and why it is so essential to fulfilling what God has for our lives.



DAY 26: ADVANCING HIS KINGDOM

Key Scripture:

Pilate, therefore, said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause, I was born, and for this, cause, I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice" (John 18:37 NKJV).

Jesus made it clear that the cause he lived for is the Kingdom of God. Our priority in life should also be to advance God's Kingdom. When we understand the bigger picture of God's Kingdom, we will know where we fit into the grand scale of things. I need to make God's priorities my priorities. That's why Matthew 6:33 says: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you".

How do I put the Kingdom of God first?

The Word Kingdom is divided into two words. King and Domain.

The King is the one who rules, and the domain is the area he rules over.

The first 'area' the King wants to rule over is the domain of my personal life. Luke 17:20-21 says: "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." Thus the Kingdom works from the inside out.

We need to seek to establish the Kingdom of God within our own personal lives before we can establish it anywhere else. When we give our lives to Christ, He becomes our Lord. The word Lord means owner or master. There can only be one master or Lord of our lives. Thus as I submit to God's plans for my life, I allow the Kingdom of God to be further established in my heart. For example, if I plan to go study architecture, but I feel the Holy Spirit is leading me to go study business and I yield to the Holy Spirit above my preferences I have then submitted to the Lordship of Christ.

Jesus showed what it means to allow the Kingdom of God to be the priority in His life.

“...I seek not my own will, but the will of Him who sent me” (John 5:30 NKJV).

Laying down our own wills and agendas can be difficult, but the Word promises much fruit when we do so. Jesus again said about this process of yielding to his Lordship.

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life”(John 12:24 NKJV).

Just like Jesus, in letting go our rights and dying to our own will, we find life in abundance. When I surrender to God’s will for my life, I begin to walk in my purpose and destiny. Allow God to turn your ‘no’ into a ‘yes’ as you surrender to his plan for your life.

Conversation Starter:

What do you think God’s will is for your life?

What is stopping you from living out God’s will for your life? What areas of your life still need to be surrendered?



DAY 27: STEWARDSHIP OF HIS RESOURCES

Key Scripture:

“He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own?” (Luke 16:10-13 KJV).

God is very interested in every area of our lives, including our finances. In fact, God uses our finances to teach us things about our character. Trust and integrity are two areas that are often the most tested when it comes to our finances. It is important that we understand the way that God has designed money to work. When we apply the principles that God has given us regarding finances, this creates favour and flow in our lives. This does not mean that if we obey all the principals perfectly that God now owes us. On the contrary, in the New Covenant, I am blessed because of Jesus. However, God has principles by which He governs His Kingdom, and when we apply His ways to our finances we will see the fruit in our lives.

There are clear guidelines for our finances in the Word. Let’s take a brief look at them:

Stewardship

“And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own?”(Luke 16:12 NKJV)

Stewardship is the first principle we need to learn in the Kingdom. God looks at how we handle other people resources to test our trustworthiness and integrity. We need to make sure that when it comes to our character that we are found trustworthy with finances.

Offerings & Sowing and Reaping

Whatever you sow you will reap. This is a principle of the Kingdom of God (Galatians 6:7). God wants us to be a channel of blessing to other people, and finances are meant to flow and not get stuck with us. As we live generous lives, we represent our father and sow seeds for a future harvest. Farmers understand this principle of sowing and reaping, and we can apply it to every area of our lives.

Conversation Starter:

Have you started applying Biblical Principles to your finances? If not, what is hindering you?

What have been the results of applying biblical principles to your finances?

Further Bible Study: Malachi 3:10; 2 Corinthians 9:6.



DAY 28 – LAYING ON OF HANDS.

Key Scripture:

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35 NKJV).

We are the body of Christ here on earth. God wants to use you to demonstrate His love and care to a hurting world. A hug, a kind word or a prayer can change someone’s life forever. You might be the only “Jesus” that people encounter. That is why we need to be deliberate and intentional when we get a chance to influence peoples’ lives.

Hebrews 6:2 talks about the “Laying on of hands”. The laying on of hands is when we intentionally ‘touch’ peoples’ lives. If we look at the New Testament we see 6 reasons for the laying on of hands:

1. Healing

“They will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well” (Mark 16:18 NIV).

2. Receiving the Holy Spirit

“Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit”
(Acts 8:18).

3. Imparting Spiritual gifts

“Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you” (1 Timothy 4:14 NIV).

“For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established— that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me” (Romans 1:11-12 KJV).

4. Commissioning of workers

“So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off” (Acts 13:3 NIV).

5. Appointing deacons and elders

This act of laying hands on the deacons serves to publicly acknowledge these men to fill this office, to publicly commit them to God for the task and to transmit to the men the spiritual grace and wisdom that they will need to fill the office.

“They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them”
(Acts 6:6 NIV)

6. For blessing

“And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them”
(Mark 10:16 NIV).

The Bible speaks of using hands to bless. When disciplining our children, the Word says specifically not to use our hands to slap or hit our children. Our hands should be symbols of love and nurture.

In conclusion, when we lay hands on people, it should be for a specific spiritual purpose. We cannot be casual about it. Neither should we allow people to lay hands on us casually.

“Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands” (1 Timothy 5:22).

Conversation Starter:

Have you ever laid hands on someone and prayed for them?

What did God do through you as you obeyed Him in praying for someone?

Further Bible Study: Acts 28:8; Luke 4:40; Acts 9:17; Titus 1:5; Proverbs 22:15.



DAY 29: PREPARE FOR ETERNITY

Key Scripture:

***“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment”
(Hebrews 9:27NKJV).***

What happens to a believer who dies?

As a believer, when you die your body will return to dust, but your Soul and Spirit, the eternal part of you, will immediately be in the presence of God (2 Corinthians 5:6-8). At judgment day all people will stand before Christ for Judgment. We will all receive a resurrected body at that time that will be joined again with our Soul and Spirit, thus we will stand before God Spirit, Soul and Body.

We as believers do not need to fear this judgment as our sins have already been judged at the cross of Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21). We can look forward to this time, as we will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to receive rewards for our good works.

What are Good Works?

“If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward ”(1 Corinthians 3:12-14 NIV).

Good works are the things we have done here on earth out of obedience and in a relationship with Jesus. These good works will be rewarded at the final judgment. When all our works are tested by fire at the end, only the good works will survive and be rewarded. Every work that is burnt up by fire is called ‘dead works’. Dead works are those works not done out of obedience, but by our flesh and own efforts. Unfortunately, these works cannot be rewarded.

What about non-believers?

Non-Believers will also face judgment, but their judgment is different to the believer's judgment. It will be called the 'Great White Throne Judgment' (Revelations 20:11-15). Unfortunately, people who don't know Christ will be condemned to death and hades. Death is eternal separation from God. Therefore, it is so important that we make every effort to tell people about the wonderful gift of eternal life in Christ.

Conversation Starter:

How do you feel about dying?

Can you identify some dead works in your life?

Can you identify some good works in your life?

Who could you introduce to Jesus?

**Further Bible Study: Hebrews 2:14-15; Hebrews 9:27-28; 1 Corinthians 4:5;
1 Corinthians 3:12-14; Revelations 20:11-15.**



DAY 30: MAKE DISCIPLES

Key Scripture:

Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen (Matthew 28:19-20 NKJV).

When Jesus called the first disciples, it was such a simple, yet life-changing moment. Peter and Andrew were fishermen. They had probably been fishermen their whole lives. Being on the sea WAS their life. Yet, they had this encounter with Jesus, and with a simple 'Follow me', they dropped their nets and followed Jesus. No convincing needed, no explaining, just a life-changing encounter!

What is a disciple? A disciple is a disciple maker. Jesus said: "follow me and I'll make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). We see three key aspects of a disciple maker in this scripture.

1. Disciples follow (They are teachable and want to learn and grow).
2. Disciples imitate (They become like the one they are following).
3. Disciples repeat the process (They make other disciples).

Many people just follow Jesus, just like I can follow someone on Twitter or Instagram, but it stops there. To be a disciple is to become like the one I am following, to become Christlike. I learn how to become Christlike by allowing a more mature mentor to model what Christlikeness looks like. Thus, when I follow Christ, I can't do this in isolation. I follow Christ by allowing someone to speak into my life. I then imitate the parts of their life that accurately represent Christ (Hebrews 13:7). The next step after imitation is to repeat the process and pour our lives into someone else. In this manner disciples follow, grow, imitate and reproduce.

Making disciples is not always easy. That is why so few people do it. Most people like to be discipled and receive, but few like to give. Jesus laid down His life for us. We, in turn, should lay down our lives for others. To disciple someone means that you will need to come alongside them and purposefully help them on their journey in knowing Christ. We disciple people to be followers of Jesus and not followers of us. We aim to help people connect with God and have a relationship with HIM.

Disciples that make disciples, that make disciples, that make disciples is the way that God's Kingdom is advanced. That's why Paul says to Timothy: "What you have learnt from me pass onto others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

The benefit of being discipled and discipling others is that as we give to others we begin to grow. There is nothing more satisfying than helping others grow closer to Christ. When you have met Jesus, the cost of following Him is no cost at all. Without a doubt, we can drop our nets, and leave what we thought was important to us, because we have met THE ONE that brings meaning to ALL of life.

"His last command should be our first priority!"

Conversation Starter:

Are you being discipled? Who is your mentor? How is it going with your relationship with that person?

How is your mentor helping you become more Christlike?

Who are you discipling? If no-one yet, have you identified someone you would like to disciple?

Further Bible Study: Mark 8:34-35; 1 John 3:16; Luke 6:40.

