



# MAKING DISCIPLES

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*A Bible study guide  
for evangelism*



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# BUILDING LIFE JESUS' WAY

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**PURPOSE-** This study was formed to help us to understand that we are all in the process of building (building our education, building companies, building careers), but many do not know how to build a life, a marriage, a family, or to prepare for eternity. Jesus showed his followers how to build.

**Discussion Leader** – Share how building life Jesus' way has helped you.

*Q: What are some things you are building right now?*

**MATTHEW 6:25-34 | DEALING WITH WORRY:** In a world where there's a tremendous amount to worry about, Jesus begins teaching his followers how NOT to worry.

*Q: What are some things that you worry about right now? How does Jesus teach His followers not to worry? What is the key?*

A: Seeking first the kingdom!

**MATTHEW 6:5-15 | LEARNING TO PRAY:** Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray.

*Q: Why do you think prayer is important?* It teaches you to begin depending on God, looking to Him for the answers, and trusting in His ways and not your own.

**MATTHEW 6:1-4 | GIVING SELFLESSLY:** Jesus teaches His disciples the importance of giving. The world is often a depressing place because it's filled with takers. The more selfishness, the more misery. Jesus teaches us to give and give in secret.

*Q: What would the world be like if we imitated how Jesus gave?*

**MATTHEW 5:43-48 | LOVING LIKE JESUS:** Jesus taught His disciples to love not just those who loved them but also their enemies! Jesus not only teaches this; He demonstrates it by dying on a cross after being brutalized by the Romans and the corrupt Jews. This shows that He loved them and forgave them from the cross!

*Q: What do you think the world would be like if we all loved more like Jesus?*

**MATTHEW 5:27-30 | LIVING PURELY:** Jesus teaches His disciples how to be pure. In a world that objectifies women and encourages lust, Jesus taught against these things! He had deep convictions about purity, though He lived in a world that treated women as property and as second-class citizens.

*Q: What would the world be like if we were more pure like Jesus?*

**MATTHEW 6:19-21 | LIVING LIKE JESUS:** Jesus taught His disciples not just how to live here on earth but also how to prepare for heaven. He taught His disciples not to run after material possessions, but rather to pursue true riches- a relationship with God, righteousness, and the kingdom of God.

*Q: What if we had an eternal perspective and not a temporary one? How would that change our lives?*

**MATTHEW 7:24-27 | BUILDING LIKE JESUS:** Jesus shows through this parable that if we build our lives on His teachings, we will stand through all of the storms that life will throw at us. His teachings are our only true foundation, and anything other than His teachings will fail.

*Q: What do you think your life would be like if you built it upon the principles of Jesus?*

### **CLOSING QUESTION**

*What areas of your life do you really need help building?*

# THE BIBLE - GOD'S WORD

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**PURPOSE** - This study is meant to consider reasons to believe the Bible is the Word of God, whether the Bible is the standard for our lives, and to help us establish it as the authority for our lives.

**DISCUSSION LEADER:** Share how you have built your life on the Word of God.

- The Bible is the greatest selling book in history.
- It contains 66 books (39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament).
- It was written over a period of about 1,500 years.
- It was written by more than 40 authors from various backgrounds (shepherds, fishermen, kings, theologians, a doctor, a tax collector, etc.).
- It contains hundreds of fulfilled prophecies.
- It is historically accurate; archaeology continues to affirm the biblical story.

#### **2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17**

- Through scripture, we learn about faith and salvation.
- The Bible is God-breathed – from God himself, communicated through the personalities of chosen men such as Moses, Paul, John, and Luke.

*Q: What does it mean for the scriptures to be “God-breathed?”*

*Q: Do you believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God?*

- The scriptures are useful – they teach, correct, rebuke, and train us in righteousness.
- The scriptures equip us – they can be used in every aspect of our lives, such as marriage, parenting, work, finances, decision-making, relationships, etc.

*Q: How do you see the Bible as relevant and useful to you?*

#### **JAMES 1:21-25**

- A call to humility – we should humbly let the Word of God expose our imperfections.
- A call to action – God expects us to look intently into His Word and obey it, and He blesses those who do this.
- A call to examine – the Bible, like a mirror, exposes who we really are.

*Q: What is the function of a mirror and how does this apply to our spiritual lives?*

**MATTHEW 15:1-9**

- Many of us have grown up learning and practicing religious traditions, some of which may contradict scripture.
- Following scripture is always more important than honoring our traditions. If our traditions contradict scripture, Jesus says we are worshipping “in vain.” God wants more than lip service and religious traditions. He wants our hearts! God is looking for hearts that value His commands over man-made traditions.

*Q: How might tradition come between us and doing the will of God?*

**ACTS 17:10-11**

*Q: What qualities listed in this passage indicate that the Bereans were of noble character?*

- Eager to hear the Word – they were eager to hear God’s Word and they examined the scriptures every day.
- Personal pursuit of truth – they did not just accept what the religious leaders were saying; they checked the scriptures themselves.
- Take the “Berean Challenge” and imitate these characteristics.

**1 TIMOTHY 4:16**

- God cares about our life (how we live and the choices we make) and our doctrine (what we believe). We need to pay careful attention to both.
- If we are to be saved and help save those around us, we must persist in knowing the truths of the scriptures and living out those truths in our daily lives.

*Q: Consider an airplane in flight. Which of the two wings is most important?*

**JOHN 8:31-32**

- Holding to His teachings goes beyond mere obedience – it is to “abide” or “remain” or “continue” in His Word. We hold God’s Word close to our hearts and live our lives immersed in it.

*Q: Jesus claims that His words are the source of truth and freedom. Do you see the teachings of Jesus as a source of freedom or constraint?*

**CLOSING QUESTIONS**

*Q: Are you willing to humbly let the Bible expose your heart?*

*Q: Are you willing to accept the Bible as the standard for your life?*

*Q: Are you willing to eagerly study God’s Word every day?*

# JESUS

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**Purpose** - To understand the person of Jesus Christ and the amazing life he lived so that we might follow Him.

**DISCUSSION LEADER:** Start by sharing how imitating Jesus been a blessing for your life.

**MATTHEW 16:13-16 | WHO IS JESUS?**

- Jesus' identity is hotly debated today just as it was in His day. This study will focus on who Jesus is and the amazing life He lived.

*Q: Who do you say Jesus is?*

**JOHN 1:1-4 | JESUS WAS BOTH HUMAN AND DIVINE**

- John is speaking of Jesus as "the Word." Jesus was with God in the beginning, but more than that – He *was* God. Through Him all things were made, and He brought the light of God into the darkness. Jesus spoke the very words of God.
- Jesus was also fully human. He could be heard, seen, and touched. His followers walked with Him, and their message was about all they experienced of His very human life.
- Jesus' teachings and His miracles speak to His divinity (Matthew 4:23-25).

**MARK 1:1-8 | JESUS WAS EXPECTED**

- Many scriptures written long before the time of Christ looked forward to His coming (Isaiah 40:3) God's people had expected and looked forward to a messiah for many generations!
- John's God-given role was to prepare the way for Jesus. Imagine hearing the teaching of John – the Messiah was about to arrive!

*Q: After many generations of waiting, how might it have felt to know that the Messiah was about to arrive?*

**MATTHEW 4:18-25 | JESUS CALLED PEOPLE TO FOLLOW HIM**

- Jesus called people to follow Him, to walk with Him, to learn from Him, and to imitate His life. People of all walks of life followed Him. His calling is no different for people today.
- Jesus' life and teachings inspired people to leave everything else behind and follow Him.

### **MATTHEW 7:24-29 | JESUS WAS A REVOLUTIONARY TEACHER**

- Jesus' teachings set him apart, and those who heard Him were often amazed! He taught unlike anyone else because He taught with authority.

Let's look at some of what he taught:

- About purity (Matthew 5:27-30)
- About loving your enemies (Matthew 5:43-45)
- About the love of money (Matthew 6:24)

*Q: How are Jesus' teachings still revolutionary for our world today?*

### **JOHN 4:4-9 | JESUS DREW ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE TO HIMSELF**

- According to the prejudices of His day, Jesus shouldn't even have been in Samaria, and He certainly shouldn't have been talking to a Samaritan woman!
- Jesus welcomed and spent his time with children, lepers, and social outcasts such as the Samaritans and tax collectors. He loved those who many considered to be unlovable. He was often ridiculed for the time He spent with "sinners." Jesus drew all kinds of people to Himself, and He is drawing us too.

*Q: How do you feel about the idea that Jesus is drawing you to Himself?*

### **JOHN 13:1-5, 34-35 | JESUS LOVED BEYOND MEASURE**

- Washing feet was a humble act of service, a dirty job reserved for lowly household servants. Jesus humbled Himself greatly by doing this for His disciples.
- Jesus taught a new standard of love by His actions and calls us to that same love.

*Q: How is this kind of love different than what we see in the world around us?*

### **CLOSING QUESTIONS**

*Q: What do you find most striking about the life of Jesus and who He is?*

*Q: Going back to Jesus' question in Matthew 16, who do you say Jesus is? Do you believe Jesus is the Son of God?*

**FURTHER READINGS**

**Matthew 5-7** | Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount.

**John 3:14-17** | Jesus came to save the world through his death.

**1 Thessalonians 4:16-18** | Jesus will come back for his followers.

**Hebrews 4:14-16** | Jesus was tempted as we are.

**Matthew 11:28-30** | Jesus offers rest for the weary and burdened.

**John 7:37-38** | Jesus offers to quench our spiritual thirst.

**Colossians 1:15-20** | Jesus was and is supreme in every way.

# SIN

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**Purpose-** To understand the nature of sin, what it costs us and God, and how He feels about it.

*Q: How would you define sin?*

### **ROMANS 3:21-24 | THE DEFINITION OF SIN**

- The Bible describes sin in different ways. Sin is referred to as a weight that we carry, a burden we bear, a debt that we owe, and as a stain that must be cleansed. Sin is also described as turning away from God and going our own way.
- In this verse, sin is described as falling short, a departure from the will of God. When we sin, we act in ways that oppose God and His will. We fall short in our efforts to be like God, and instead we act according to the impulses of our flesh.
- Each and every one of us is guilty of sin. We're all in this together, and every one of us desperately needs the redemption that comes through Christ.

### **ROMANS 6:20-23 | THE WAGES OF SIN**

*Q: What do you think is meant by the "wages of sin?"*

- Sin enslaves those who are living in it and results in spiritual death. Without Christ, those in sin miss the gift of eternal life.
- Sin is very costly and reaps no benefits. It is terribly damaging to every area of our lives (families, communities, relationships).

### **EPHESIANS 4:17-19 | THE DAMAGING EFFECTS OF SIN**

*Q: What effects of sin do we see in this passage?*

- Over time, sin hardens our hearts and desensitizes us to God.
- Sin darkens our understanding and hardens our hearts, resulting in ignorance. After a while, sin makes it difficult to even see and understand God. As a result, our sin separates us from the life of God.

### **MARK 7:20-23 | THE SOURCE OF SIN**

*Q: What is the ultimate source of our sinfulness?*

- Sin comes from within – from our hearts and not from our circumstances. We can't blame our sin on our environment, our upbringing, or our society.
- Jesus is very specific about some of the sins that come from within and make us "unclean." God wants us to be able to clearly identify the sin in our lives so that we can repent and deal with our hearts.

### **GALATIANS 5:19-21, JAMES 4:17 | TYPES OF SIN**

- Notice the different types of sin in this list: sexual sins, relational sins, and sins of indulgence. For definitions of these sins, see the pages 16-18.
- Those who live like this will not inherit God's eternal kingdom. Instead, they forfeit their inheritance.
- When we don't do the good we know we should do – that is also considered sin.

### **GENESIS 6:5-6 | GOD'S HEART IN REGARD TO OUR SIN**

- Sin isn't just breaking the rules. It grieves God when we sin and hurts our relationship with Him. Have you ever seen someone grieve? What was the experience?

*Q: Is this how you've understood God's feelings about your sin?*

### **ROMANS 7:24-25 | RESCUE FROM SIN**

- The only sufficient answer to the terrible costs and damage of sin is Jesus Christ!

### **CLOSING COMMENT**

Like Paul, seeing our own sinfulness can be overwhelming. In our next study, we'll look at God's answer to sin and how He rescues us.

A helpful practice to see our sin as God does is to read these verses and make a personal list of sins.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Colossians 3:5-10, Ephesians 5:3-7, and 2 Timothy 3:1-5

**FURTHER READINGS**

**John 3:19-21** | Facing our sin honestly can be painful.

**Proverbs 28:13** | He who confesses and renounces his sin finds mercy.

**James 5:16** | We are called to confess our sin to one another.

**Romans 1:18-32** | A look at the progression of sin.

**1 John 3:4** | The act of sin is breaking God's law.

## **LIST OF SINS (SINS OF GALATIANS 5:19-21)**

### **SEXUAL IMMORALITY:**

Fornication, any sexual union outside of marriage. Denotes ungodly sexual acts and relationships – prostitution, rape, homosexuality, petting, adultery, child abuse, bestiality.

### **IMPURITY:**

Any sinful thinking, anything vulgar, wrong thoughts, lust, masturbation, wrong motives, pornography, fantasy.

### **DEBAUCHERY:**

Any misuse of the body. Usually referring to sexual excesses, but in general it refers to a readiness to indulge in any pleasure. In this state, man is at the mercy of his passions, impulses, emotions, etc. He is completely undisciplined (i.e. gives in to gluttony, laziness, smoking, cravings, unlimited pleasure).

### **IDOLATRY:**

Worshipping anything other than God. Giving or devoting one's time, substance, talents, and/or self to anything that keeps one from obeying and following God in every way (i.e. status symbols, investments, engrossing sports or hobbies, selfish ambitions, relationships, property, possessions, pleasure and wants, school, work, pride). Also includes praying to anyone other than God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

### **WITCHCRAFT:**

Seeking or being involved in any spiritual realm other than God's. This would include astrology (i.e. the stars control – consequently, saying God does not rule), horoscopes, Satan worship, the occult, magic spells, good luck charms or pictures, praying to saints, drug use, tarot cards, palm reading, channeling (the New Age movement), Ouija Board, etc.

### **HATRED:**

Wishing ill or harm on anyone, looking down on anyone, bitter feelings, resentment, wanting revenge.

## LIST OF SINS

### **DISCORD:**

Anything that breaks up relationships, stirring up trouble, an inability to get along with people, arguing, slander, gossip, malicious talk, criticalness.

### **JEALOUSY:**

Possessiveness, not sharing.

### **FITS OF RAGE:**

Uncontrolled anger, losing your temper, temper tantrums, quick temper, angry shouting, cussing, profanity, fighting.

### **SELFISH AMBITION:**

Living to please oneself, wanting one's own way, getting what one wants at any cost, desiring to be first at any cost, overly competitive spirit. Not willing to do menial or demeaning tasks, refusing to admit being wrong, arrogance, doing things for honor or glory, wanting to look good for others, refusing to compromise, pride, and selfishness.

### **DISSENSION:**

Rebelling against authority, not submitting, habitually disagreeing, arguing, causing division, starting arguments, stirring up trouble.

### **FACTIONS:**

Feeling superior to others, cliques, refusing to associate with someone because they are different or for any other reason, wanting to be with "own" kind, prejudice, bigotry, racism.

## LIST OF SINS

### **ENVY:**

Desiring something another person has while wishing that they did not have it at all (i.e. wealth, status, ability, physical features, spirituality, relationships).

### **DRUNKENNESS:**

Anything that causes one to lose control – intoxication, alcohol, drug abuse.

### **ORGIES:**

Though our culture largely thinks about this sexually, the definition means living indulgently or without restraint and could include partying, sexual parties, vandalism, and carousing.

# THE GOOD NEWS

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**Purpose-** To understand God's answer to the sinfulness of mankind.

**Introduction-** God is grieved by sin (Genesis 6:5-6), but He is also moved by His love for us. In this study, we will examine the good news of God's love.

### **JOHN 3:16-18 | THE OFFER OF SALVATION**

*Q: What is God's motivation in sending his Son?*

- God's love is the driving force behind the good news!
- God gave His Son unconditionally, with no regard for what we would do with His gift. God paid an incredibly high price to give us this opportunity!
- God desires to rescue each of us from our sin and give us eternal life.

### **ISAIAH 53:5-6 | THE PRICE OF REDEMPTION**

- Jesus was pierced, crushed, and punished for our sin. As we will see, Jesus suffered terribly on the cross, and He did it all because of our sin! He took upon himself the punishment we deserved to redeem us for God.
- We are healed by His wounds. The only healing available for our sinfulness is found in Jesus. The only real peace any of us can have is in turning to Christ.

### **MATTHEW 26:36-56 | THE EMOTIONAL SUFFERINGS OF THE CROSS**

- His soul was overwhelmed. Jesus felt great sorrow and fell with his face to the ground. His stress was so great that he may have suffered from a medical condition called hematidrosis (the blood-like sweat recorded in Luke 22:44).
- He was betrayed by Judas, one of His closest friends, with a kiss.
- All the disciples deserted Him and fled. He was left to face this trial alone.

### **MATTHEW 27:22-50 | THE PHYSICAL SUFFERINGS OF THE CROSS**

- Stretched out over a tree or rock, victims were struck repeatedly – purposefully bringing them close to the point of death.
- A flagrum was used – a leather whip with pieces of metal or rock woven into the tips. Many would go into shock or even die from such a beating, which left one's back bruised, swollen, and torn into shreds.

- He was crowned with thorns. Soldiers put a crown of thorns on Jesus' head and drove the thorns deeper into His skull by striking Him with a staff.
- He was beaten, spat upon, and mocked by a group of soldiers.
- Jesus was crucified. *Note: For a detailed description, see "The Medical Account" in the appendix.*

#### **ISAIAH 52:14 | HE WAS MARRED BEYOND HUMAN LIKENESS**

- Given the beatings He received and the massive trauma to His body, Jesus would hardly have resembled a normal person.
- His head and body would have been swollen, severely bruised, and covered in blood. His back, already in ribbons from the flogging, would have been further damaged by the wood of the cross.

#### **MATTHEW 27:45-50 | HE EXPERIENCED DEATH**

- Jesus cried out in anguish to God as He faced the pain of death. Being fully God and fully man, He felt the unbearable pain of death for the first time in all eternity.
- The anguish Jesus felt was intense and He used a quote from Psalm 22 to express how He felt.

*Q: How do you feel about all that Jesus went through for you?*

#### **MATTHEW 27:51-61 | THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS DEATH**

- Nature testified- The sky grew dark in midday, and an earthquake struck the region.
- Many righteous people rose from the dead and appeared to many witnesses.
- The curtain of the temple (a 60-foot high, 4-inch thick curtain, used to separate the Most Holy Place in the temple) was torn in two. Jesus' death broke down the barrier, illustrating the opportunity for everyone to have intimate access to God (Hebrews 10:19-20).
- Even Roman soldiers took note of these extraordinary events.

### **1 PETER 2:21-24 | THE ULTIMATE SIGNIFICANCE**

- Jesus took on the sins of the world and bore them in His body as He went to the cross.
- By His wounds, we can be healed (refer back to Isaiah 53:5-6).

### **MATTHEW 28:1-10 | THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION**

- The story didn't conclude with Jesus' death, but with a dramatic resurrection!
- An angel, an earthquake, and an empty tomb brought both fear and joy.

*Q: What must it have been like to follow Jesus, watch Him die, and then see Him come to life?*

*Q: What is the significance of the empty tomb?*

### **ROMANS 5:6-10 | A DEMONSTRATION OF HIS LOVE**

- While we were still sinners, Jesus died for us when we were at our worst (weak, ungodly, sinners, and enemies of God). He didn't die for us because we are good people!
- We are justified and saved from wrath. Because of the blood of Jesus, we can be justified and saved from the wrath of God – the punishment that our sin deserves.

*Q: Why is God willing to sacrifice so much when He's receiving so little in return (John 3:16-18)?*

### **CLOSING QUESTIONS**

*Q: Given the problem of sin revealed in our last study, why is all of this good news?*

*Q: What response to the cross of Christ would honor all that he has done?*

*Note: We encourage everyone to watch "The Passion of the Christ" and to read "The Medical Account."*

### **FURTHER READINGS**

**Philippians 2:1-11** | Jesus' death was an act of great humility.

**Romans 3:21-26** | Jesus' death was a sacrifice of atonement God made.

**2 Corinthians 5:16-21** | Jesus is our sin offering on the cross.

**1 Corinthians 15:3-8** | The resurrection was witnessed by hundreds.

# THE CALL OF DISCIPLESHIP

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**Purpose** - To understand what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

### **ACTS 2:36 | CALLED TO MAKE JESUS LORD AND CHRIST**

This is the heart of the first gospel sermon.

*Q: What do you think it means to call someone Lord?*

*Q: What do you think it means to call someone Christ?*

- Jesus is both Lord and Christ. We cannot accept Him as our Savior if we aren't also willing to make Him Lord of our lives.

### **MARK 1:14-18 | CALLED TO FOLLOW JESUS**

- From the beginning, Jesus' message was a call to follow Him and be a fisher of men. Over the next 2-3 years, His disciples would learn what this meant.
- The earliest disciples left everything behind to follow Jesus!

### **LUKE 9:23-26 | CALLED TO DENY SELF**

- "If anyone" – Jesus' call of discipleship is the same for all of us.
- "He must deny himself and take up his cross daily" – following Jesus requires surrender and an absolute denial of self.
- "Whoever loses his life" – only when we surrender our lives and deny ourselves will our lives be saved – a great paradox. If we try to hold onto our lives, we ultimately lose them!

*Q: How would the audience understand Jesus' call to take up their crosses daily?*

*Q: Is this a decision that you have made in your life?*

### **LUKE 11:1-4 | CALLED TO LEARN FROM JESUS**

- The disciples looked to Jesus for instruction in prayer.
- This is a model of how we need to look to Jesus for instruction in every area.
- It is obvious that prayer should be a vital, daily part of every disciple's life.

*Q: Do you know how to pray? If so, what is your prayer life like?*

### **LUKE 14:25-33 | CALLED TO PUT JESUS FIRST**

- "Disciple" – following Jesus is to be His disciple. Jesus didn't use the word "Christian."
- Disciple means follower, learner, or apprentice.

*Q: What do you make of Jesus' teaching to "hate" our families? What does this mean?*

- Jesus before family – a disciple's relationship with Christ must come before all other relationships, even family relationships. Jesus also teaches that we should love our families and care for them, but He comes first.
- Following Jesus is an all-consuming commitment and takes everything we've got. Only total surrender is sufficient in the eyes of God.
- Jesus gives two examples to illustrate the need to count the cost of such a serious commitment. The call of discipleship is not one to be taken lightly!

#### **MATTHEW 28:18-20 | CALLED TO MAKE DISCIPLES**

- Jesus gave His followers a new purpose in life—making disciples of all nations. Just like when He initially called them (Mark 1:14-18), Jesus makes it clear that a disciple's mission is to teach others about Him!

*Q: Have you ever embraced the call of Jesus to make disciples?*

- Jesus spoke with all the authority in heaven and on earth, and every one of his teachings is important. Being a disciple is to pay close attention to and strive to obey all the teachings of Jesus.
- Disciples of Jesus are never alone because He will be with us always.

#### **MATTHEW 22:34-40 | CALLED TO LOVE GOD AND OUR NEIGHBORS**

- When asked about what matters most in all the Law, Jesus spoke of love—love for God and love for our neighbors. Love is why disciples do what they do.
- More than anything else, God wants a relationship with you. He loves you and He wants you to love Him. Being a disciple is first and foremost about loving God with all of your heart, soul, and mind. Self-denial and putting Jesus first is an outpouring of that relationship.
- Jesus loved beyond measure and He calls us to love those around us as well. Disciples of Jesus compassionately love and serve those around them, both in meeting needs and in sharing the gospel of Jesus.

*Q: Has this kind of love characterized your relationship with God and how you treat and view those around you?*

**CLOSING QUESTIONS**

*Q: Do you feel God calling you to a life of discipleship? How do you feel about that call?*

*Q: Have you ever made the decision to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?*

*Q: Are you ready to follow Jesus as his disciple?*

**FURTHER READINGS**

**Psalm 63:1-6** | David demonstrated his love for God intentionally through prayer and worship.

**John 13:34-35** | We must imitate Jesus in how He loved.

**1 John 2:3-6** | If we love Him, we will walk as Jesus did.

**Acts 11:19-26** | The first use of the word “Christian” is used to describe the disciples.

**1 Corinthians 11:1** | Imitating Jesus can sometimes mean imitating faithful followers around us.

# THE WAY OF SALVATION

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**Purpose-** To teach the biblical way of salvation.

## THE WAY OF SALVATION

### **Acts 2:36-41**

- When we grasp what happened at the cross, our response should be, “What shall I do?”
- Peter sums up the teaching about salvation: repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins.
- Peter stresses that this is for salvation.

*Q: Why do you think there was such a sense of urgency in their response?*

### **1 PETER 2:9-10**

- Called out of darkness – becoming a Christian is to move from darkness to light, and it results in a dramatic change in one’s identity.
- There is no gray area or middle ground.

#### **LIGHT**

People of God

Received mercy

Royal priesthood

Holy nation

#### **DARKNESS**

Not a people of God

Not received mercy

*Q: Are you in the light or in the darkness?*

### **REPENTANCE**

*Q: What does the word ‘repent’ mean to you?*

- Repentance is to change one’s mind, to feel remorse, to turn away from sin, and turn toward righteousness.

**2 CORINTHIANS 7:10-11**

- Repentance begins with godly sorrow, but continues beyond that. It results in real change and ultimately leads to salvation without regret. Worldly sorrow does not bring about real change.

*Q: What does godly sorrow produce?*

**ACTS 17:30-31, 26:20**

- God commands everyone to repent, and all will be judged accordingly.
- True repentance is ultimately demonstrated by one's deeds.

**BAPTISM**

*Q: What is your understanding of baptism?*

- The Greek word *baptizo* means "to dip, plunge, or immerse."

**ACTS 2:36-38**

- After we've repented, we are commanded to be baptized.
- What purpose does Peter give for baptism? (Forgiveness and the Holy Spirit)

**ROMANS 6:1-7**

- Baptism is our participation in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.
- We are buried with Christ in baptism and raised to live a new life.

**ACTS 9:1-19, 22:6-13 | THE CONVERSION OF SAUL**

*Note: Make a list of everything Saul (Paul) did on the way to salvation.*

Saw a light	Fasted three days
Heard the voice of Jesus	Prayed three days
Believed in Jesus	Had a vision
Confessed Jesus as Lord	Received a miracle
Obedied Jesus' command	Was baptized

## THE WAY OF SALVATION

*Q: What do we see here that demonstrates Paul's repentance?*

- Paul immediately changed from being a persecutor and murderer of Christians to a faithful Christian himself – he turned away from his sin.
- He was obedient to the instruction he received from Jesus.
- He fasted and prayed for three days – Saul's conversion was a deeply spiritual event, and he took it seriously.

*Q: When might people say that Saul's sins were forgiven and he was saved?*

### **ACTS 22:14-16**

- In both accounts, the culmination of Paul's conversion to Christianity was his baptism.
- Paul's sins were forgiven (washed away) at baptism.

### **ACTS 2:39-41, 17:24-28 | A PROMISE FOR ALL**

- This promise of salvation is available to all.
- God is calling you, too.

### **CLOSING QUESTIONS**

*Q: In what ways do you see God calling you now?*

*Q: Are you ready to accept his call to repent and be baptized?*

### **FURTHER READINGS**

**Acts 8:26-40** | This is the story of the Ethiopian eunuch's baptism.

**Acts 16:25-34** | This is the story of the Philippian jailer's baptism.

**Galatians 3:26-29** | In baptism, we become sons of God and heirs of the promise.

**Deuteronomy 30:1-10** | God promises blessings that come with repentance.

**Luke 3:1-14** | We need to bear fruit that shows repentance.

**Luke 13:1-5** | We will perish without repentance.

**Acts 3:19-20** | Repentance leads to times of refreshing.

# THE CHURCH

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**Purpose** -To understand God's intent for the church and how each of us can contribute to its overall impact.

## THE CHURCH

### **ACTS 2:42-47**

- The first disciples were devoted to God and to one another.
- They were devoted to the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer.
- They spent time in each other's homes and worshipped together.
- They were sincere and looked to meet each other's needs.

*Q: How does this picture compare with your experiences of church life?*

### **COLOSSIANS 1:15-18**

- Jesus is supreme in the universe and in the church. He is the head and the church is His body.
- In the church we strive to follow His teachings and imitate His life.

### **EPHESIANS 2:19-22**

- Here the church is spoken of as a family, as a kingdom, and as a building.

*Q: Which of these most connects with you?*

- As the cornerstone, Jesus is the one who orients and gives direction to the church.

### **EPHESIANS 4:1-6**

- God loves unity and wants His family to be unified.
- We maintain unity by being humble, gentle, patient, and full of love.
- All believers everywhere are bound together and share one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, and one Father.

### **EPHESIANS 4:11-16**

- God gives gifts and puts people in roles to build up and strengthen His church.
- God's aim is unity, maturity, and protection from false teaching.
- Through honest and loving conversation, and each part doing its work, the church grows and is built up in love.

## THE CHURCH

### **ROMANS 12:4-8**

- Just as in the human body, each member of the church is essential.
- God calls us to use our gifts to bless the church.

*Q: What do you think your gifts are, and how do you think you can use them to glorify God and build up His church?*

### **1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-27**

- We enter the body of Christ in baptism.
- We all need each other in the same way the body needs all of its parts.
- Members of the body share in each other's joy and suffering.

### **MATTHEW 6:19-21, MARK 12:42-44**

- In the church, we give generously to meet the needs of the church and to help spread the gospel.
- When we give sacrificially, as this widow did, we store up treasures in heaven— treasures that last.
- Giving is a heart matter. Our giving reflects where our hearts are invested.
- Giving is a faith matter. As we give to meet the needs of the church, we trust that God is able to meet our needs.

### **HEBREWS 3:12-14**

- In the church, we strive to give and receive daily encouragement to protect us from the deceitfulness of sin.

*Q: How has the encouragement of the church helped you in your own fight against sin?*

### **HEBREWS 10:23-25**

- The fellowship helps us to be unswerving in our commitment to Christ.
- Do not give up meeting together – consistent fellowship needs to be a priority in our lives.

*Q: What will you need to change in your schedule to make the body (the church) a top priority in your life?*

## THE CHURCH

### FURTHER READINGS

**Philippians 2:1-4** | We are called to be one in spirit and purpose.

**Galatians 6:10** | The church is a family of believers.

**Acts 4:32-35** | Members of the church help to meet one another's needs.

**2 Corinthians 9:6-9** | We give to meet needs and spread the gospel globally.

# COSTS AND BLESSINGS

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**Purpose** - This study is designed to help us follow the teaching of Jesus—to consider the cost and count the blessings that come when we follow Him.

### **LUKE 14:25-33 | COUNT THE COST**

Jesus teaches us to count the cost of following Him.

- He uses two parables to communicate His concerns – the tower builder and the over-matched king.
- We must be prepared to surrender completely to Jesus.

*Q: Why do you want to become a disciple?*

### **LUKE 8:11-15 | THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER**

- People respond differently to God's Word:
  - Some reject it without considering it.
  - Some receive it with joy but do not last as they lack depth.
  - Others receive it but are choked out by life's worries, riches, and pleasures.
- The key to persevering in our faith is to hear, retain, and obey the word.

### **THE COSTS**

Note: In this section, we will do a quick review of key points from each of the seven previous studies.

*Q: Do you believe that the Bible is God's Word? Are you willing to make it the standard for your life from this point on?*

*Q: What are some of the things that you most admire about Jesus?*

*Q: Is there any sin of which you are unwilling to repent? What will be your most daunting challenges in this area?*

*Q: What was your takeaway from studying the cross of Christ?*

*Q: Are you prepared to walk the narrow road and follow Jesus in specific ways? What do you think will be most challenging to you?*

*Q: What is your understanding of the significance of baptism?*

*Q: Are you prepared to be fully committed to God's family, the church? Do you have any questions or concerns about the normal church schedule?*

### **THE BLESSINGS OF FOLLOWING CHRIST**

*Q: What do you see as the greatest blessing of following Christ?*

#### **ACTS 2:36-39**

- In baptism, we receive the complete forgiveness of every sin ever committed.
- We also receive the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit, who gives us the power to live a new life.
- We can experience the immediate presence of God within us.
- We receive the gift of eternal life.

#### **ACTS 2:42-47**

- We learn priceless truths from God's Word— inspiration and practical direction for all aspects of our lives.
- We enjoy worship corporately and individually— praising God, communion, and fellowship.
- We embrace daily relationships with God's family— deep, meaningful, and lifelong friendships.

*Q: How have your relationships with disciples been a blessing up to this point? How do these relationships compare with those you have outside the church?*

- We receive a clear mission in life— helping other people to find God.

*Q: Who are the people you'd like to share the good news with?*

#### **1 CORINTHIANS 15:50-57**

- Another blessing is the promise of resurrection from death – the hope of eternal immortality; a perfect, imperishable body.

# A MEDICAL ACCOUNT OF THE CROSS

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**Read Matthew 27:27-56 and Luke 22:39-46**

### **Gethsemane**

The physical passion of Christ began in Gethsemane. Of the many aspects of His initial suffering, the one which is of particular physiological interest is the bloody sweat. Interestingly enough, the physician, St. Luke, is the only evangelist to mention this occurrence. He says, "And being in an agony, He prayed the longer. And His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground" (Luke 22:44 KJV).

Every attempt imaginable has been used by modern scholars to explain away the phenomenon of bloody sweat, apparently under the mistaken impression that it simply does not occur. A great deal of effort could be saved by consulting the medical literature. Though very rare, the phenomenon of hematomidrosis, or "bloody sweat", is well documented. Under great emotional stress, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can break, thus mixing blood with sweat. This process alone could have produced marked weakness and possible shock.

Although Jesus' betrayal and arrest are important portions of the passion story, the next event in the account which is significant from a medical perspective is His trial before the Sanhedrin and Caiaphas, the High Priest. Here the first physical trauma was inflicted. A soldier struck Jesus across the face for remaining silent when questioned by Caiaphas. The palace guards then blindfolded Him, mockingly taunted Him to identify them as each passed by, spat on Him, and struck Him in the face.

### **Before Pilate**

In the early morning, battered and bruised, dehydrated, and worn out from a sleepless night, Jesus was taken across Jerusalem to the Praetorium of the Fortress Antonia, the seat of government of the Procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate. We are familiar with Pilate's action in attempting to shift responsibility to Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch of Judea. Jesus apparently suffered no physical mistreatment at the hands of Herod and was returned to Pilate. It was then, in response to the outcry of the mob, that Pilate ordered Barabbas released and condemned Jesus to scourging and crucifixion.

Preparations for Jesus' scourging were carried out at Pilate's orders. The prisoner was stripped of His clothing and His hands tied to a post above His head. The Roman legionnaire stepped forward with the flagrum, or flagellum, in his hand. This was a short whip consisting of several heavy, leather thongs with two small balls of lead attached near the ends of each. The heavy whip was brought down with full force again and again across Jesus' shoulders, back, and legs. At first the weighted thongs cut through the skin only. Then, as the blows continued, they cut deeper into the subcutaneous tissues, producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin and finally spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles.

The small balls of lead first produced large deep bruises that were broken open by subsequent blows. Finally, the skin of the back was hanging in long ribbons, and the entire area was an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue. When it was determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner was near death, the beating was finally stopped.

### **Mockery**

The half-fainting Jesus was then untied and allowed to slump to the stone pavement, wet with his own blood. The Roman soldiers saw a great joke in this provincial Jew claiming to be a king. They threw a robe across His shoulders and placed a stick in His hand for a scepter. They still needed a crown to make their travesty complete. Small flexible branches covered with long thorns, commonly used for kindling fires in the courtyard, were plaited into the shape of a crude crown. The crown was pressed into his scalp, and again there was copious bleeding as the thorns pierced the very vascular tissue. After mocking Him and striking Him across the face, the soldiers took the stick from His hand and struck Him across the head, driving the thorns deeper into His scalp. Finally, they tired of their sadistic sport and tore the robe from His back. The robe had already become adherent to the clots of blood and serum in the wounds, and its removal, just as in the careless removal of a surgical bandage, caused excruciating pain. The wounds again began to bleed.

### **Golgotha**

In deference to Jewish custom, the Romans apparently returned His garments. The heavy beam of the cross was tied across His shoulders. The procession of the condemned Christ, two thieves, and the execution detail of Roman soldiers headed by a centurion began its slow journey along the route which we know today as the Via Dolorosa.

In spite of Jesus' efforts to walk erect, the weight of the heavy wooden beam, together with the shock produced by copious loss of blood, was too much. He stumbled and fell. The rough wood of the beam gouged into the lacerated skin and muscles of the shoulders. He tried to rise, but human muscles had been pushed beyond their endurance. The centurion, anxious to proceed with the crucifixion, selected a stalwart North African onlooker, Simon of Cyrene, to carry the cross. Jesus followed, still bleeding and sweating the cold, clammy sweat of shock. The 650-yard journey from the Fortress Antonia to Golgotha was finally completed. The prisoner was again stripped of His clothing except for a loin cloth which was allowed the Jews.

The crucifixion began. Jesus was offered wine mixed with myrrh, a mild analgesic, pain-relieving mixture. He refused the drink. Simon was ordered to place the beam on the ground. Jesus was quickly thrown backward with His shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire felt for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drove a heavy, square wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly, he moved to the other side and repeated the action, being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexion and movement. The beam was then lifted into place at the top of the cross, and the sign reading "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" was nailed into place.

The left foot was pressed backward against the right foot. With both feet extended, toes down, a nail was driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees moderately flexed. The victim was now crucified.

### **On the Cross**

As Jesus slowly sagged down with more weight on the nails in the wrists, excruciating, fiery pain shot along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain.

The nails in the wrists were putting pressure on the median nerve, large nerve trunks which traverse the mid-wrist and hand. As He pushed himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He placed His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there was searing agony as the nail tore through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of this feet.

At this point, another phenomenon occurred. As the arms fatigued, great waves of cramps swept over the muscles, knotting them in deep relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps came the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by the arms, the pectoral muscles, the large muscles of the chest, were paralyzed and the intercostal muscles, the small muscles between the ribs, were unable to act. Air could be drawn into the lungs, but could not be exhaled. Jesus fought to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally, the carbon dioxide level increased in the lungs and in the blood stream, and the cramps partially subsided.

### **The Last Words**

Periodically with much difficulty, He was able to push Himself upward to exhale and bring in life-giving oxygen. It was undoubtedly during these periods that He uttered the seven short sentences that are recorded.

The first - looking down at the Roman soldiers throwing dice for His seamless garment: "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do."

The second - to the penitent thief: "Today, you will be with me in Paradise."

The third - looking down at Mary Jesus' mother, He said: "Woman, behold your son." Then turning to the terrified, grief-stricken adolescent John, the beloved apostle, He said: "Behold your mother."

The fourth cry is from the beginning of Psalm 22: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

He suffered hours of limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, and searing pain as tissue was torn from His lacerated back from His movement up and down against the rough timbers of the cross. Then another agony began: a deep crushing pain in the chest as the pericardium, the sac surrounding the heart, slowly filled with serum and began to compress the heart.

The prophecy in Psalm 22:14 was being fulfilled: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint, my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels."

The end was rapidly approaching. The loss of tissue fluids had reached a critical level; the compressed heart was struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood to the tissues, and the tortured lungs were making a frantic effort to inhale small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues sent their flood of stimuli to the brain. Jesus gasped His fifth cry: "I thirst." Again we read in the prophetic psalm: "My mouth is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death" (Psalm 22:15). A sponge soaked in posca, the cheap, sour wine that was the staple drink of the Roman legionnaires, was lifted to Jesus' lips. His body was now in extremis, and He could feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues. This realization brought forth His sixth words, possibly little more than a tortured whisper: "It is finished."

His mission of atonement had been completed. Finally, He could allow His body to die. With one last surge of strength, He once again pressed His torn feet against the nail, straightened His legs, took a deeper breath, and uttered His seventh and last cry: "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit."

### **Death**

The common method of ending a crucifixion was by breaking the bones in the legs. This prevented the victim from pushing himself upward; the tension could not be relieved from the muscles of the chest and rapid suffocation occurred. The legs of the two thieves were broken, but when the soldiers approached Jesus, they saw that this was unnecessary.

Apparently, to make doubly sure of death, the legionnaire drove his lance between the ribs, upward through the pericardium and into the heart. John 19:34 states, "And immediately there came out blood and water." Thus there was an escape of watery fluid from the sac surrounding the heart and the blood of the interior of the heart. This is rather conclusive post-mortem evidence that Jesus died, not the usual crucifixion death by suffocation, but of heart failure due to shock and constriction of the heart by fluid in the pericardium.

*Q: Knowing that Jesus went through this pain and suffering for you, what do you want to do for Him?*





