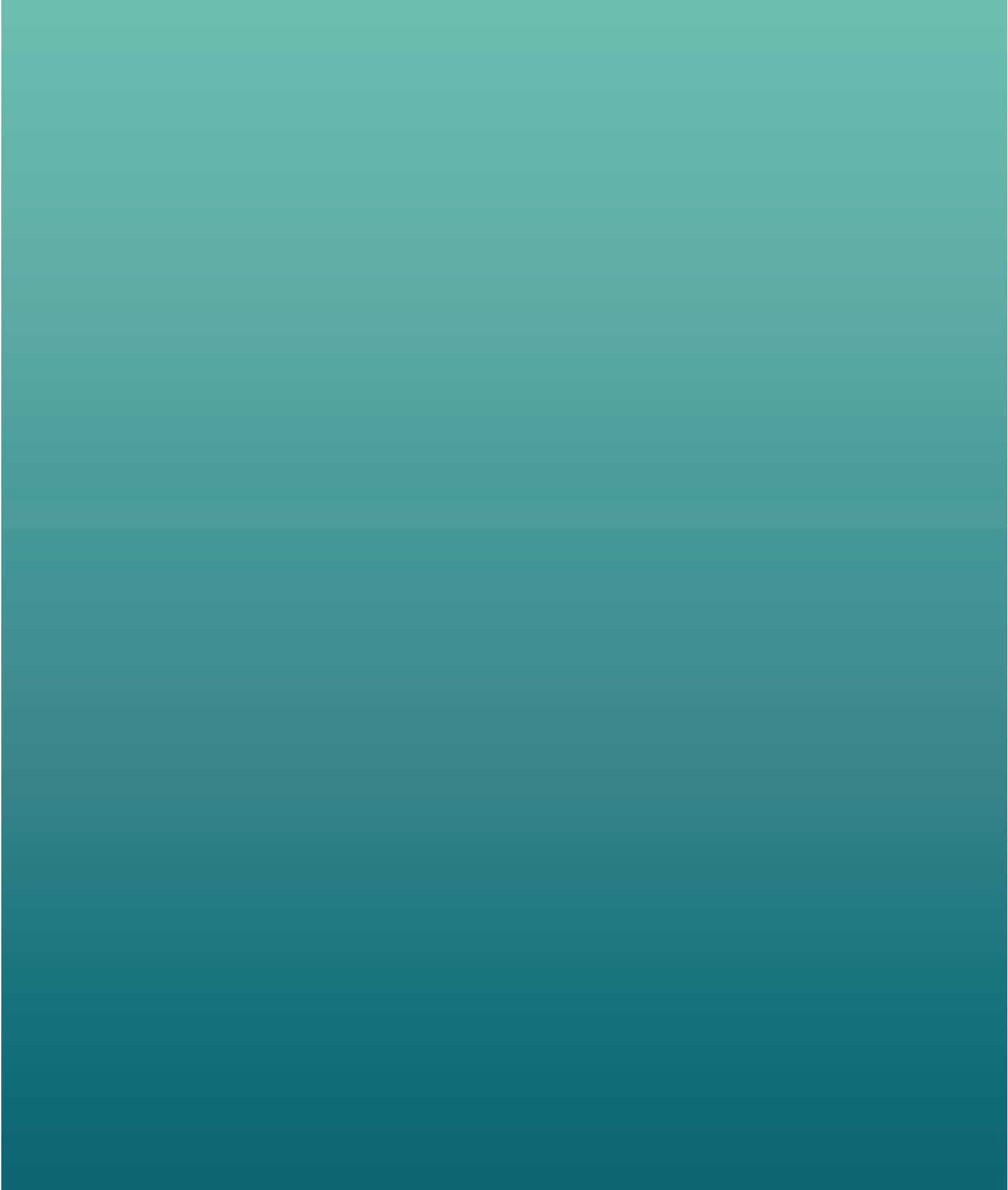


# Walking with God

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GRACE GATHERING

**Grace Gathering**

3157 Minnich Road

New Haven

IN 46774

USA

**Publisher:** Grace Gathering

**Editor:** Craig Eakright

**Cover Design:** Brian Menzie

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First Published 2018

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Breen, M. (2016) *Building a Discipling Culture*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Pawleys Island: 3DM Publishing.

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## Introduction

I've made an assumption as I've prepared the following material. The assumption is that you have recently (or even not so recently) become a Christian, a believer and follower of Jesus. If that weren't the case, you would not be embarking on this journey towards walking with God. It's exciting that you have come to this point and desire to grow in your relationship with Him.

Many people approach the Bible with fear and trembling, if they attempt to approach it at all. I mean, it's such a large, complex book, right? How are we supposed to be able to follow and understand what we read? The Bible, however, is not outside a believer's grasp. In fact, it is God's word TO the believer and "Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us." (2 Tim 3:16-17 MSG)

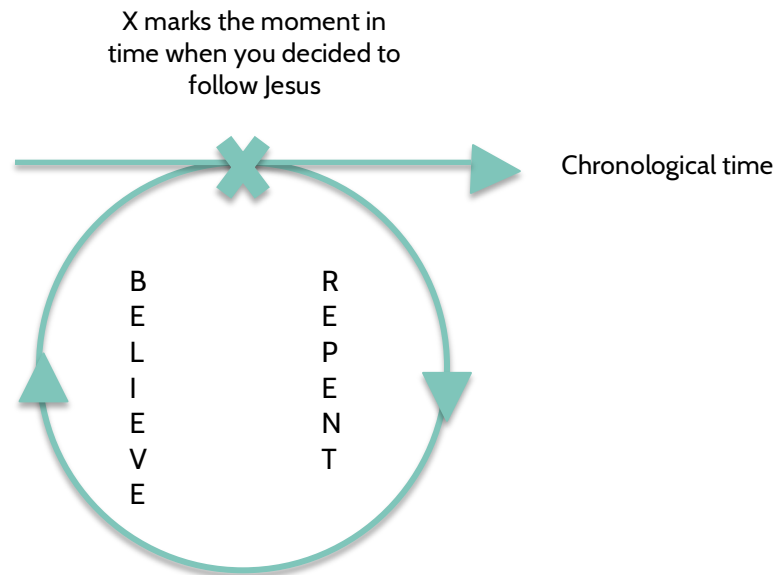
The Bible tells us that when we become a Christian, we are adopted into God's family. We actually become children of God. There is nothing else required for us to be accepted by Him. We don't have to work for that position. Jesus did all the work that was required. He has given us a new identity as a son or daughter and a new calling to continue his work in the world.

As you work through this Bible Study, and apply what you read to your life, my prayer is that you will grow in your relationship with your heavenly Father, and that He will use you mightily to impact others.

Okay. Let's get started!

## Chapter 1 - Assurance and Growth

A Christian is someone who has made the decision to turn away from his or her old way of life, turn away from their sin (REPENT) and commit their lives 100% to following Jesus (BELIEVE).



Different people do this in different ways, but for most people this has happened through a simple conversation with God that involves saying:

**SORRY** for the way I have lived my life without you, sorry for the things I've done wrong against you and against other people

**THANK YOU** that you love me, thank you that you have died on the cross to take the punishment for my sin, thank you that you have forgiven me, thank you that you have saved me from eternal death

**PLEASE** come and be Lord of my life, and make me the person you want me to be.

At the point we do this we begin a personal relationship with God. Faith is no longer about rules and religion, but is actually about having a relationship with God.

*Discuss with your study partners how this happened for you, and what has happened since that time.*

Having asked Jesus into your life you may feel different, excited, or even unsure about what you have done.

However we can be reassured by the facts: the reliability of God and the promises he makes to us.

1. What facts do I need to know? (Have a look at the following verses):

- Is Jesus in my life? (Revelation 3: 20)
  
- Has he forgiven my sins? (Colossians 1: 13-14)
  
- Will He leave me? (Hebrews 13: 5)
  
- Can I make Him leave me? (Romans 8: 38-39)
  
- Do I have eternal life? (John 5: 24)

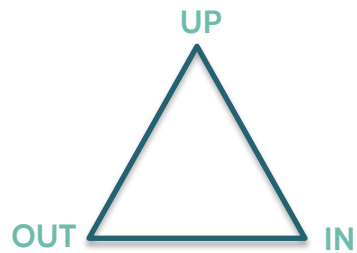
Once a Christian you cannot go back! You have started a relationship with God that will last forever.

2. Before you become really close friends with someone what are some of the things you would need to know?

3. Once you were friends, how would you get to know that person better?

4. Now read John 17: 3. What do you think this means?

So how can we grow in this exciting new relationship with God?



- UP** - spend time with God
- IN** - spend time with other Christians
- OUT** - spend time with people who don't yet know Jesus

If our Christian life is like this triangle then Christ is at the center of all we do (Galatians 2: 20)

5. Our lives with God will grow through getting a good balance of all 3 things. Record what each of these verses says:

- UP** Prayer (talking to God) (Philippians 4: 6-7)  
Reading the Bible (2 Timothy 3: 16-17)

- IN** Fellowship (meeting with Christians) (Hebrews 10: 25)

**OUT** Outreach (sharing God's love and good news with others) (Acts 1: 8)

6. Just like babies need to grow, so do we. Write down why you think prayer helps you to grow in your relationship with God. Repeat with Bible, Fellowship and Outreach.

7. Who is responsible for your growth? (1 Corinthians 3: 6-7 and Philippians 2: 13)

*Spend some time now praying for yourself and your study partners, that God would help you and them to grow closer to Him this week.*



## Chapter 2 - Confession and the Holy Spirit

1a. Read Romans 3: 23 and Isaiah 59: 1-4. What do you think sin is?

1b. How does God feel about it?

Sin is a barrier between God and us, a barrier between us and others and a burden in our lives.

2a. Now that you are a Christian do you still have problems with sin? Explain.

2b. Read Romans 7: 15-25. What do you think Paul means by this?

3. So if you keep on sinning why should God continue forgiving you? (1 Peter 3: 18)

As Christians all your sins are forgiven (even those you will commit) because of Christ's death.

Read Hebrews 10: 10

So your sins are forgiven but they will still be a barrier and a burden in your life. So what can you do?

4. Read 1 John 1: 9 and record what it says.

To 'confess' means:

**AGREE** with God that we have sinned against Him

**THANK HIM** that he has died for those sins and he has forgiven us completely

**TURN AWAY** from that sin and ask God for the strength not to do it again

When we confess God takes the barrier and burden away.  
Reflect upon the promise in Psalm 103: 12

*Take some time now and ask God if there's any sin in your life you should confess.*

5. Why do you think we need to confess our sins as soon as we become aware of them?

See if this illustration helps:



You must breathe out  
poisonous gas to stay alive.  
This is like confessing your sins  
to God.

However, we also need to  
breathe in life-giving oxygen.  
This is like being filled with the  
Holy Spirit.

Every Christian who repents of their sin and puts their faith in Jesus receives the Holy Spirit. Read Ephesians 1: 13-14

*Discuss with your study partners who you think the Holy Spirit is.*

But every Christian needs to keep on being *filled* (that is empowered) by the Holy Spirit. Read Ephesians 3: 16-17

We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit if we want to become more like Jesus, and to be effective for God!

We can be filled with the Holy Spirit by faith (and faith is simply asking and trusting God). He will give us the power to overcome sin in our lives.

6. Read Matthew 5: 6. What do you think this means?

How can we be filled with the Holy Spirit?

- Once you have confessed your sins, by faith thank God he has forgiven you (1 John 1: 9)
- Give each area of your life to God (Rom 12: 1)
- By faith ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit according to his command to be filled in Ephesians 5: 18 and His promise to answer prayer (1 John 5: 14-15)

*Take some time to do this now.*

## Chapter 3 - Reading the Bible

1. As you've been reading the Bible has it raised any questions or provided any answers?

2. Why do you think it is important to be reading the Bible everyday?  
Read Matthew 4: 4 and 2 Timothy 3: 16-17

3. The Bible is God's Word to us. How are these four uses in 2 Timothy relevant to our lives today?

Jesus said we must be doing more than just reading the Bible. Jesus told a parable about this in Matthew 7: 24-28.

4. What is the difference between the man who built his house on the sand and the man who built his house on the rock?

We don't just want to be hearers of the word, but also doers of the word.

*Discuss with your study partners a time when you read something from the Bible, or heard something from God's word, and then put it into practice.*

Here is one way of doing more than just reading.... First, before you read the Bible ask God to speak to you from His word.... Then watch this **SPACE**

**S**in to Avoid  
**P**romise to Believe  
**A**ttitude to Change  
**C**ommand to Obey  
**E**xample to Follow



Use this acrostic as you read the Bible and write down any notes in a journal

5. Spend a few minutes now reading Luke 10: 38-42 and apply the **SPACE** acrostic to what you read. Record your notes here.

6. Discuss with your study partners:
- any methods they use to read the Bible
  - what they read when they first came to faith
  - what they are reading right now

7. Now write out John 14: 21

8. As we give God our time and follow this command what does Jesus promise?

This week continue to read the Gospels, jotting down your reflections in a journal and applying it to your life.

*Complete the following exercise when you meet together with your study partners*

The Discovery Process is another simple way to do more than just reading when you are with a small group or with your missional community.

- a. Appoint a leader. Choose a short passage (e.g. one of the miraculous signs of Jesus in John's Gospel<sup>1</sup>)
- b. Leader asks someone to read the passage out loud
- c. Leader re-tells the passage using simple language. Be sure that the re-teller does NOT interpret, but just tells the essence of the narrative/theme/parable in about 60 seconds
- d. Leader encourages everyone in the group to answer these four questions:

1. *What do I like about this passage?*
2. *What does this passage say about God/Jesus?*
3. *What does this passage say about me?*
4. *What am I going to do about it?*

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<sup>1</sup> **7 Signs of Jesus in John's Gospel:**

The turning of water into wine (John 2: 1-12)

The healing of the royal official's son (John 4: 46-54)

The healing of the paralytic man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5: 1-17)

The feeding of the five thousand (John 6: 1-14)

The walking on water (John 6: 15-25)

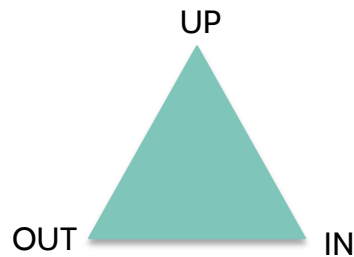
The healing of the man born blind (John 9: 1-41)

The raising of Lazarus (John 11: 1-46)

## Chapter 4 - Prayer

Reading the Bible and applying it to our lives is one way of growing in our relationship with God, getting to know Him better and becoming more like Him.

In Chapter One we talked about the importance of living a 3 dimensional lifestyle. This involves:



- UP Spending time with God through reading the Bible and praying
- IN Spending time with other Christians
- OUT Spending time with people who don't yet know Jesus

This week we are continuing to think about the UPWARD dimension of our Christian walk, by looking at the topic of prayer.

God speaks to us as we read His Word, but how do we communicate our thoughts to him?

1. Read Luke 11: 1-10 and write down anything that grabs your attention.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Many children are taught this prayer when they are young. Discuss with your study partners whether this was the case for you, and your experiences (if any) of using these verses to pray.

We can see from this passage that prayer is not just asking God for help. Prayer is talking to God about everything, as we spend time with Him – just as with a friend:



3. Read Luke 11: 2-4 and record which of the above sentences are contained in the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples.

4. How should we pray to God then? (Read Luke 11: 5-8)

Jesus said we should be very specific and persistent in our prayers.

5. Will God answer our prayers? (Read Luke 11: 9-10)

What are the three promises Jesus says will happen?

i.

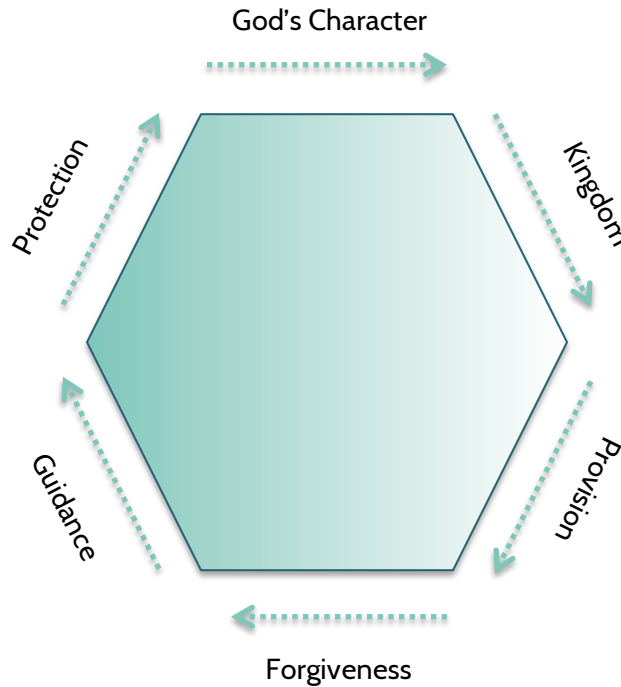
ii.

iii.

So pray believing that God will answer your prayers His way!



This hexagon provides a simple illustration of Jesus' instructions in Luke 11 that reminds us how to pray:



*Spend a few minutes now with your study partners praying through each element of the hexagon.*

6. Prayer is a powerful weapon we can use in the battle God calls us to fight in. All of us at some time in our lives face a number of battles. We often hear of people 'fighting cancer' or 'battling to overcome injustice'.

*Discuss with your study partners one or two of the specific battles you, or someone you know, are currently fighting right now.*

List the strategy God gives us in Ephesians 6: 10-18 to fight these battles, and then put it into practice!

## Chapter 5 - Fellowship and Family

1. When you asked Jesus to be Lord of your life what happened to you?
2. Read John 5: 24. We have each been saved by Jesus from eternal death and given eternal life. We have been saved individually, but we each need the support of other Christians around us.

This illustration might help:



This person has been saved from drowning but it is just one person trying to survive on their own.

These people have been saved from drowning but being in a lifeboat they can travel further and, as a group, support each other.



3. How could this illustration relate to Christians meeting together?

Fellowship with other Christians means you have more direction and support in your Christian life. It is God's intention for us.

4. Read Hebrews 10: 23-25. Why should we meet together with other Christians?

5. Look at Ephesians 1: 5. What was God's plan?

God the Father sent his son, Jesus, into the world to rescue people from their sin and to bring them into His family. This was Jesus' mission. But Jesus was not an individual on mission. He called a group of disciples to be with him to become his family and they went on mission together. This meant, that in addition to spending time alone with God, and spending time with the crowds, Jesus spent a lot of time with his brothers and sisters.

6. Record Jesus' words in Mark 3: 35

After Jesus was resurrected and went to heaven the early church continued to operate as a family on mission. In Acts 2 we read that the Christians met together every day in their homes, and at the temple.

Today Christians also meet together in one another's homes, in their local community or neighborhood and at church gatherings. There are different sized spaces where Christians might meet together, such as:

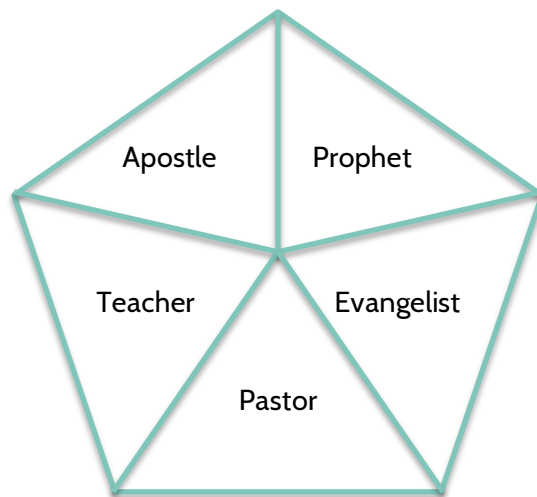
- with a prayer and accountability partner (2s or 3s)
- in a small group (4 – 12)
- as a missional community (12 – 30)
- at a larger church gathering (30+)

7. Read Acts 2: 42-47. This is a description of family on mission. This was the earliest Christian Church. Make a list of all the things they did together.

8. What does Ephesians 4: 11-16 say about fellowship?

The 'Body of Christ' is made up of different people with different gifts. If we are to become mature we all need to work together.

This illustration of a pentagon helps us to remember the 5 different gifts God has apportioned to his church.



Apostle – visionary and pioneering, enjoys dreaming, extends the Church

Prophet – one who hears and listens to God, who understands the times

Evangelist – one who brings good news and shares the message readily

Pastor – one who shepherds God's people, caring for others with a tender heart

Teacher – one who holds forth truth and is excited about it

9. Which one of these 5 gifts do you think you may be strongest in and why?

You can take the following survey to help you <http://www.fivefoldsurvey.com>

10. God has a very special part for you to play in His Church. What does 1 Corinthians 12: 14-18 say?

You need the church and the church needs you!

*Discuss with your study partners how you might become more like family on mission with your Christian brothers and sisters (both at gathered church and in smaller sized groups and communities).*

## Chapter 6 - Baptism and Telling Your Story

At the beginning of this study we learnt that for a person to be saved and to grow in their relationship with God he/she needs to repent (turn away from their sins) and believe (have faith in Jesus as Lord). Baptism is an outward sign of this inner change.

There are numerous verses in the New Testament that refer to baptism. The common practice of baptism usually refers to being immersed in water. Baptism in water is a symbolic representation of dying to an old life and having your sins washed away, and then rising to a new life in Jesus.

1. What does Jesus say about baptism in Mark 16: 15-16 and Matthew 28: 19?

3. What are the implications of this for us?

4. What does Paul remind the early Christians of in Romans 6: 3-4?

Acts 2 tells the story of the day of Pentecost when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and Peter stood up in front of a crowd and told the people the good news about Jesus.

Read what happened next in Acts 2: 37-41.

5. How did the crowd respond?

6. How did Peter respond?

7. What was the promise?

The Book of Acts records several occasions of individuals and families turning to Christ and being baptized. Read the verses below and then answer the following questions:

Acts 8: 12

Acts 16: 33-34

Acts 18: 8

Acts 22: 16

8. Does anyone ever get baptized apart from believing in Jesus?

9. When does baptism take place? Is it before or after someone believes?

10. How much time elapses between belief in Jesus and baptism?

According to Matthew 28: 19 baptism is not an option for believers; it is one of Jesus' commands.

*Discuss with your study partners*

- a) if you have watched somebody being baptized*
- b) if you have been baptized yourself since your conversion to Christ*
- c) If you haven't been baptized, would you be ready to get baptized now?*

If we are to follow Jesus' command to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit" then it is important that we are able to tell the story (or testimony) of what God has done in our lives to people who don't yet know Him, as well as those who come to watch our baptism.

Have a look at Acts 22 for an example of a testimony. Paul's story falls into 3 parts:

v. 1-5 Paul's life before he became a believer

v. 6-11 Paul's explanation of how he became a believer

v.12-21 Paul's explanation of how becoming a believer changed his life

Use the three prompts below to write out your testimony. It is helpful to:

- keep the language informal - write the way you speak
- keep it short (no longer than 3 minutes)
- make sure that God is the hero of your story, not you!

A. This is how I lived and what I thought before I came to Christ



B. This is when, why and how I made the decision to become a follower of Christ

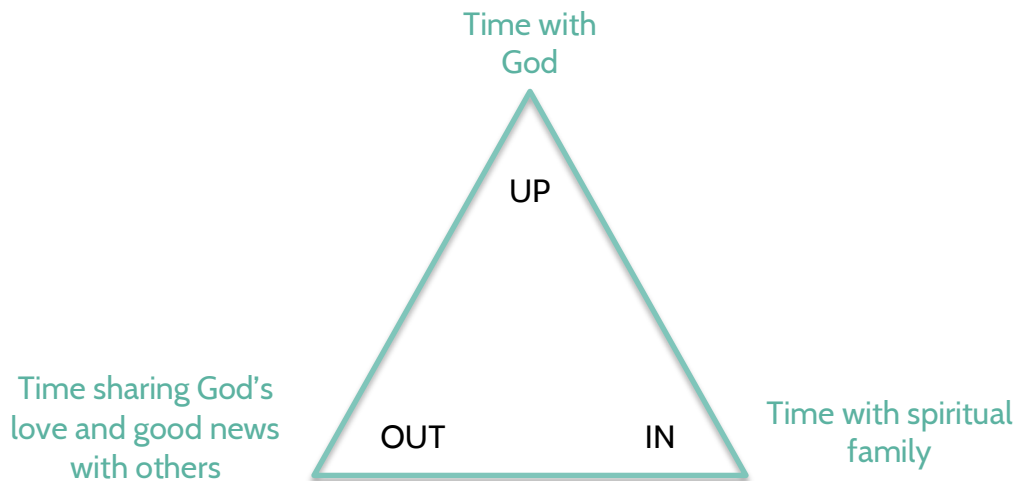
C. These are the changes I have seen since committing my life to Jesus

*Share your testimony with your study partners.*

## Chapter 7 - Mission and Outreach

1. How have people reacted to you since you have become a Christian?

In Chapter 1 we said that if we want to grow in God we need to follow Jesus and live like Him. Jesus lived a balanced life.



This chapter is about the OUTWARD dimension.

Two sessions ago we began to think about Jesus forming a family and going on mission with them. Jesus' mission was to make God's love known to the world so that people might have a relationship with God and become part of His family.

2. Read John 3: 16-18 and explain why Jesus' mission is so important.

In John 17: 18 Jesus says "In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world, I give them a mission in the world" (Message Translation). The word mission means 'sent'.

3. Record what Jesus says in John 20: 21

The mission Jesus had on earth with his disciples, is the same mission we have today, since we are now the Body of Christ. God is at work in the world and He wants us to join Him in His mission, not on our own, but with our Christian brothers and sisters, sent by the power of the Holy Spirit.

So what is this mission? God's mission could be summed up in what has been called the 'Great Commandment' and the Great Commission'.

4. Read Matthew 22: 36-40 and explain what the Great Commandment means to you.

5. Read Matthew 28: 19-20 and record the Great Commission

The word 'disciple' means learner. Jesus calls us to introduce people to Jesus so that they can learn to live and lead like him.

Jesus invites us to follow Him as His disciples, so that we can then make disciples, who go on to make other disciples.

*Discuss with your study partners how the Great Commission applies to you in your context.*

6. Who has God sent you to?

Having looked at Jesus' mission, we are now going to look at His strategy. We can find His strategy in Luke 10 where Jesus sends his disciples out to find 'people of peace'

7. Read Luke 10: 1-11 and answer the following questions:

a. How did Jesus send out his disciples and why is this significant? (v.1)

b. What is the promise and what is the challenge? (v.2)

c. Why does Jesus warn them they might feel like 'lambs amongst wolves'? (v.3)

d. What advice does he give them in verse 4 and why?

In verses 5-7 Jesus tells his disciples to be on the lookout for a Person of Peace. In the culture of the day if a Jewish person was traveling through a town and needed somewhere to stay for the night he could knock on any door and say 'Shalom' (which means 'peace'). If the person who answered the door replied 'Shalom', (as they should according to Old Testament Law), they would invite you in to stay.

We can recognize a 'Person of Peace' because they:

- i. **Welcome you** (into their home and life)
- ii. **Listen to you** (to what you have to say)
- iii. **Serve you** (food, drink, acts of kindness)

8. Write down any 'People of Peace' in your life right now, who may not know Jesus personally yet, but who display all 3 indicators.

9. Once you've found a Person of Peace what should you do, and what should you not do? (v. 7)

10. What else should you do? (v. 8-9)

10. How can you tell if someone is *not* a Person of Peace (v. 10)?

Verse 11 is very interesting. Jesus says if a person is not open to you (and to Jesus in you), '*wipe the dust from your feet*'. In other words he is saying, 'walk away, don't go chasing after them'.

This is very liberating, as we are not trying to force anyone to follow Jesus, we are simply trying to find those people who are open and who want to listen.

*Spend a few minutes praying for your person of peace.*

*Now spend a few minutes asking God 'What's the next step I could take with my person of peace?' and 'Who could do this with me?'*

11. Write down whatever the Lord brings to mind.



## Conclusion - What's Next?

As you continue on your journey of walking with God, sharing life with other believers, and reaching out to those who don't yet know God personally, there are a few things you can do next.

- Continue to put into practice the things God has shown you during this study
- Attend Sunday church gatherings with your study partners
- Participate in a missional community or midweek group

Further information can be found at: <http://www.gracegathering.com>

*Discuss your next steps with your study partners and then pray for each other.*





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