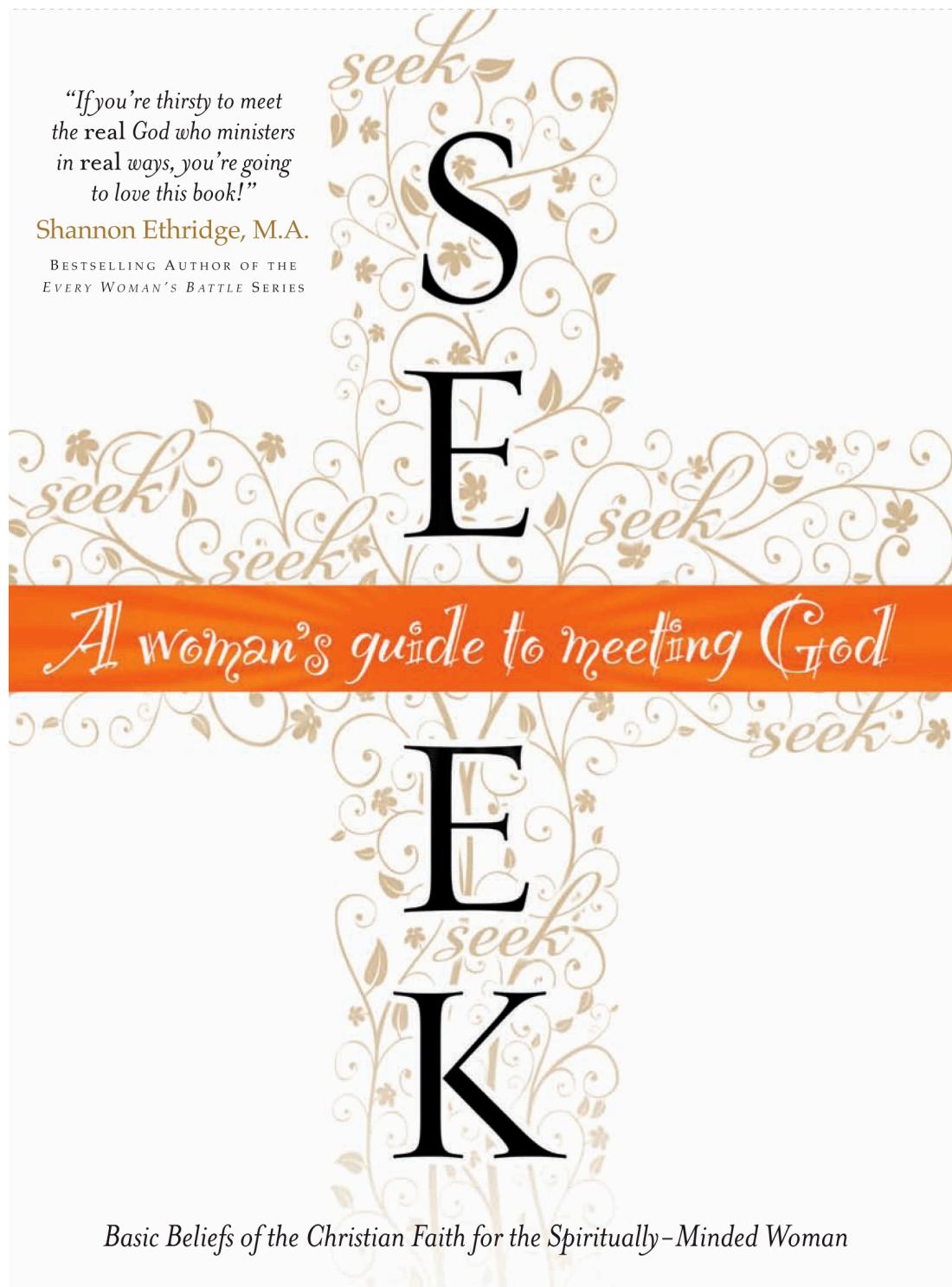


*"If you're thirsty to meet
the real God who ministers
in real ways, you're going
to love this book!"*

Shannon Ethridge, M.A.

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THE
EVERY WOMAN'S BATTLE SERIES



DONNA JONES

Seek Leaders Guide

Welcome **Seek** Leader!

I am thrilled that you have decided to lead a group for women who are new to the Bible or who want to revisit the basics. I can say with confidence, you are in for a great ride! There is nothing quite like seeing the light bulb go on for a woman when she grasps spiritual truth for the very first time. Though I don't know you, I have already prayed for you and for the women who will be in your group. More importantly though, God has ordained this. He has chosen you, with your unique background, personality and passions, to help others meet Him. And He has handpicked the gals who will sit in your living room, dorm room, boardroom, or at your church Bible study to seek God.

To help facilitate your group, I have provided the answers to the Bible study portion of **Seek**, found at the end of each chapter. The leader's guide also includes tips and suggestions for helping make your **Seek** group a great experience for you and for your members.

If you have never led a study for gals new to the Bible, you'll find that it's a bit different from leading a typical women's Bible study. Keep in mind that for many of these women, reading the Bible is new and unfamiliar territory. They may not own a Bible, so be sure to have a couple of spare ones handy for your first meeting. Many gals may not know the difference between the Old Testament and New Testament, nor will they be familiar with how to look up a Bible verse. Spend a few minutes your first week together getting them up to speed on these basics. Also, you'll want to point out that the books of the Bible are listed in order in the back of **Seek**, which will prove helpful as they work through the study.

Again, I am delighted that you have chosen to help women seek and find God.

In His love,
Donna

SUGGESTIONS FOR WEEK ONE

1. Welcome each member with a warm smile (and a hug if that's your style, as it is mine).
2. Provide name tags, extra Bibles (I like either the NIV 1984 version or the NLT version best for beginners). If they need to buy a Bible, I recommend a Bible with helpful notes, like the Life Application Study Bibles. If women do purchase a study Bible, you may want to point out that the Bible passages are located above the line at the bottom of the page, while the commentary notes are below the line. I've found that this can be confusing for women who have never read the Bible.
3. Have each member introduce herself by telling her name and something about herself (i.e. her family, where she works, etc).
4. Explain that this Bible study is a place she can:
 - a. relax and be herself (really!)
 - b. ask any question without being made to feel stupid – everyone is in the same boat as a beginner.
 - c. laugh
 - d. not say a single word, if she doesn't want to (no one will ever put her on the spot)
 - e. meet great new friends.

The single biggest factor in your first meeting together is to make your gals feel comfortable. Few women feel at ease walking into a room where they don't know anyone, and don't know anything about the topic they are expected to discuss. It can be intimidating, to say the least. Of course, some women will feel excited to be in your group. Several may have been brought by a believing friend. A few may have barely made it through your door. Warmth and a reminder that this is a place they can be themselves and ask their "God questions" will go miles in making your group dynamic one where women can meet God.

5. Pass out ***Seek*** books if your members do not already have them.
6. Explain that each week you will be meeting to discuss the lesson. Let the gals know that the Bible studies are located at the end of each chapter. Ideally, the gals should read the chapter and answer the questions before coming to the group. If they have questions as they work their way through the study (and they will!) suggest writing a big question mark next to the confusing scripture, so they will remember to have their question clarified. You should have time to discuss the entire study in your time together, although occasionally you may need to pick only the most significant portions of scripture to discuss. This is particularly true if several questions arise during your group time.

Note: If you know the content of the upcoming chapters, when a gal asks a question that will be discussed later in the book, it can help you avoid tangents.

7. For lesson one ONLY you will work through the lesson together. This will help your gals become familiar with looking up Bible verses and answering questions. In subsequent weeks, stress the importance of reading the chapter beforehand (at a minimum) and working through the Bible study prior to your meeting. Of course, if women don't do the reading or homework, they are welcome to come and soak up God's truth. However, I've found that women who dive into the Bible on their own gain twice as much as women who wait to do the Bible study with the group, so encourage women to come prepared if at all possible.

8. Turn to page 35 and begin the Bible study portion of ***Seek***, by reading the text and then having each woman share a time when she met someone who later became significant in her life. This question was designed to be a segway into the content of lesson one—the day Jesus followers met Him for the very first time—and it provides great “get to know you” time before you dig into the Bible.

9. Work through John 1:19-50, as indicated in ***Seek***. I like to read the passage in its entirety, by having each gal read one verse until the passage is complete. Then I assign each gal one verse from the study. I give the women a minute or two to find their scripture (which will be easy in lesson one since you will have just read the passage as a group) and proceed through the lesson.

10. For subsequent lessons I also assign the gals one verse each, then give them a minute to look up their verse. When everyone has found their verse, we begin. We continue in this way until the entire lesson is complete. I find that this way every woman says something, even if it's simply reading her verse. Also, this prevents the awkward moments that sometimes occurs when a leader asks someone to look up a scripture and—more importantly—gives everyone adequate time to find their scripture (a new and confusing skill for many gals).

CHAPTER ONE: MEETING GOD (FOR REAL)

Key Concept: every relationship starts somewhere – even a relationship with God. Just as Jesus invited his early followers to “come and see” he invites us to do the same.

As you begin this Bible study, take a moment to introduce yourself to the group and share about the day you met someone who later became significant in your life.

Becoming friends with someone is a fascinating phenomenon. One day you have no idea the person exists, and the next day you do. Then a series of life events—circumstance or geography or choice—enables you to spend time together. You get to know each other. You find you like one another. Over the course of time, the person who was once a stranger becomes a friend.

Such was the case with Jesus’ earliest friends, or disciples, as they are referred to in the Bible. The story of their initial meeting with Jesus is recorded in John 1:10-50. They had no idea who Jesus was – but their friend, John the Baptist – did. So John the Baptist introduced them to Jesus.

John the Baptist was an interesting guy. He lived in the desert of Israel, where the story of Jesus takes place. He was a devout believer in God, a righteous man and a really good person. In fact, at the end of John the Baptist’s life, Jesus proclaimed that there was no better man ever born than John the Baptist. That’s some compliment! John the Baptist was a preacher who taught people that the coming of the Messiah was close at hand. He preached repentance for the forgiveness of sins, and baptized those who wanted to follow God wholeheartedly - thus the nickname, John the Baptizer or Baptist. The Jews knew that God had promised a Messiah who would come to save their people. Devout Jews lived in anticipation of the coming of this Messiah. It’s in this context that Jesus meets five men who would later become five of his closest friends

Read John 1:19-50 and answer the following questions:

1. What did John the Baptist say about himself? (verses 19- 25)
I am the voice of one calling in the desert, “Make straight the way for the Lord.”
2. According to John the Baptist who was to come after him? How does John describe this person? (verses 26 -27)
I came after Him who sandals I am not worthy to untie.
3. The next day John sees Jesus coming toward him. What does he say about Jesus? (verse 29)

Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

To a Jew, the phrase “the Lamb of God” was a significant one. At Passover, a lamb was offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. Each family brought a lamb before the priest to be sacrificed as a substitute for their sins. Then the family would eat the Passover meal, including the lamb, in remembrance of God’s deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt during the time of Moses. The Passover meal served as a constant reminder of how God “passed over” the homes of those who had the blood of the lamb on their doorposts and spared them from death. The Passover meal ended with a reminder that the Messiah was soon to come. Passover is still celebrated by Jews all over the world today.

- 4.** John continues his comments about Jesus in verses 32- 34. What additional information about Jesus does John add? (verses 32-34)

I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.

No formal introductions to Jesus are made on this day. John merely describes Jesus in the way you or I might describe one friend to another. “Oh that’s Cathy, she’s the most amazing cook!” or “Have you met Holly, yet? She’s the room mom” or “There’s Julie, she’s the vice president of her company.”

But the next day, everything changes. For the very first time, they meet Jesus.

Read verses 35 – 39 and answer the following questions:

- 5.** Imagine yourself in the two disciples’ situation. You don’t know Jesus yet, but you’ve heard incredible things about him from someone you trust. What would you be feeling? Why would you be following? What is it that you would want from Jesus?

I would be intrigued and would want to know more. I wouldn’t be settling for second hand knowledge of the Son of God were accessible to me.

Although we don’t know for sure what the disciples were thinking, we do know they wanted to get to know Jesus better – up close and personal, if possible.

- 6.** What did they ask Jesus? (verse 38)

Where are you staying?

- 7.** What was Jesus’ answer? (verse 39)

Come and see.

(NOTE: The paragraph below and questions 8-10 are not included in the book. You may want to read the paragraph to your group or use the idea to further your discussion. You may also want to ask questions 8-10 to provide further clarification.)

Jesus invited these two curious men to get to know him personally. He invited them to see for themselves. In essence Jesus said, *you’ve heard what others have to say about me. Now I’m inviting you to some see for yourself. I’m inviting you to spend time with me, to see how I live, and get to know who I am.*

It was an intimate invitation. Inviting someone to come and see where you live means they’re going to get a glimpse of the real you.

- 8.** Why do you think Jesus invited them into the privacy of his home?
Knowing God is relational. Jesus wanted to demonstrate that friendship with Him is possible, and that God is accessible.

- 9.** What does this tell you about how Jesus responds to people who seek him – even from a distance?

He's inviting, open, desirous of a relationship with those who seek Him.

- 10.** How long did they stay with Jesus? (verse 39)
The rest of the day.

- 11.** After spending the day with Jesus, seeing him up close and personal, what did Andrew conclude about Jesus? (verses 40-41)
That He was the Messiah.

- 12.** What did Andrew do in response to this conclusion? (verses 41-42)
Got his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus.

Things move quickly now. Andrew and his companion are excited about meeting Jesus. And their excitement can't be contained. Jesus meets Philip, who comes to the same conclusion about Jesus as Andrew. Phillip finds his friend, Nathaniel, and wants him to meet Jesus, too.

- 13.** Who does Phillip say that Jesus is? (verse 45)
Son of Joseph. We've found the person Moses wrote about.

- 14.** How does Nathanael respond to Philip's assessment of Jesus? (verse 46)
Can anything good come from Nazareth?

Nathanael met his friend Philip's enthusiasm about Jesus' identity with skepticism. Using today's vernacular, Nathaniel's basically responded by saying, *Are you kidding me? No way. Have you gone off the deep end?*

I love Nathanael. He's a guy many of us can relate to. Our friends may be convinced about Jesus, but we're not so quick to believe. Like Nathanael, we need proof. I also love the way Philip responds to Nathanael's initial hesitancy. *Come and see*, Philip told him. *Come check him out. Don't take my word for it. See for yourself.*

- 15.** Can you remember the first time you heard about Jesus? What were the circumstances? What was your response?
- 16.** Upon meeting Jesus for the first time, Nathanael learns something that rocks his world. What is it? What does Jesus say about Nathanael? (verses 47- 48)
- a. Jesus knows his character and his actions. b. Look, an Israelite in whom there is no guile. I saw you while you were still under the fig tree.

- 17.** How does Nathanael respond? (verse 49)
You are the Son of God! The King of Israel!

- 18.** Nathanael's initial skepticism is erased. What convinced him to change his views about Jesus?
That Jesus knew him, inside and out.

Note: Women may have questions regarding John the Baptist's baptism of Jesus and how John knew Jesus was the Messiah (he knew Jesus was the Messiah because God had told him, the one you see the Holy Spirit land on as a dove is the Messiah). You may also get questions about Jesus seeing Nathaniel under the fig tree. (Nathaniel was not in eyesight when Jesus saw him, indicating Jesus' deity.)

CHAPTER TWO: THE FATHER YOU ALWAYS WANTED

Key Concept: to gain an accurate understanding who God is and what God the Father is like, because how we perceive God determines how we receive God.

Suggestions for Week Two

- Move quickly through the verses on page 34-35 so you'll have adequate time to discuss the verses on page 56-58, which detail characteristics and attributes of God.
- Make sure to allow time to discuss the last question on page 58.

Just as we desire for others to have an accurate view of us, God desires that we have an accurate view of him. You can't really know God otherwise. Arnold Toynbee said it best, "Most people have not rejected God, but a poor caricature of Him."

1. Can you relate to having any misgivings about God? If so, what?
2. Look up the following passages and write down what each verse says about the existence of God.
 1. Psalm 102:25-27
Long ago you made the foundations of the earth, you are always the same, you live forever.
 2. Acts 17:24-25
He is the God who made the earth and everything in it.
 3. 1 Timothy 1:17
He is the eternal King, the unseen one who never dies. He alone is God.
 4. Hebrews 11:6
God exists and he rewards those who seek him.
3. What impressed you about the existence of God?
4. Some religions assert that there are many gods. What does God himself have to say about this notion?
 1. Isaiah 43:10-11
I alone am God. There is no other God. There never has been or ever will be.
 2. Isaiah 44:6
I am the first and the last. There is no other God.
5. People worship many “gods” and have done so since time began. According to the following verses, what types of ‘gods’ do we substitute for the one, true God?

1. Deuteronomy 4:19
Sun, moon and stars.
2. Romans 1:21-23
Idols make to look like people, birds, animals and reptiles.
3. Colossians 2:8
Philosophy
4. Revelation 3:17
Money.
5. Can you think of any other things we can substitute for God?
People, relationships, work, homes, cars, hobbies.

We worship what we love. We love what we believe will bring us pleasure. That's why so many people worship money, status, fame, popularity, relationships or success. The masses seek these things thinking *if I only have enough money, status, fame or success then I'll be happy. Then my heart will be full and satisfied.* The alluring factor is that these things do bring a measure of satisfaction - for a while. But the pleasure is fleeting. There's always one more job to land, one more dollar to make, one more deal to sign, one more thing to buy. Only God can fill the hole in our human heart.

6. How does God fill the deepest longings of our souls?
 1. Psalm 23
He is my shepherd
 2. Psalm 73:23-26
My heart may fail and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart. He is mine forever.

Note; The paragraph below is not included in the book. You may want to read it to your group for further clarification and insight.

"There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God made known in Jesus Christ."
-Blaise Pascal, French mathematician, inventor & writer

God fills our hearts in a way that other things simply cannot. However, in order to have a relationship with God, it's vital that we understand God correctly. Have you ever become friends with someone who later revealed that their first impression of you was completely different from who you really are? Maybe someone perceived you as being a snob when the truth is that you are shy. Perhaps someone thought you had your life all together, when the truth is that your background is pretty tainted, at best. We all make snap judgments about others. But if we want to move into a friendship, we must learn the truth. Our perceptions must match reality. And so it is with God. If we want to know him, we must know him accurately. We must understand His character.

7. Read the following verses and note what they reveal about God's character (or attributes, as they are sometimes called).
 3. Deuteronomy 7:9
faithful and loving
 4. 1 Samuel 2:2-3
God is holy. The Lord is a God who knows what you have done. He will judge your actions.

5. Nehemiah 9:31

God is merciful and gracious.

6. Psalm 90:2

everlasting

7. Psalm 106:1

good

8. Psalm 145:18

The Lord is close to all who call upon Him.

9. Jeremiah 9:23-24

God is the Lord, who demonstrates unfailing love, justice and righteousness to the earth. He delights in these.

10. John 4:24

God is spirit.

11. Romans 2:11

God doesn't show favoritism.

12. 2 Peter 3:9

God doesn't want anyone to perish.

13. 1 John 1:5 (NOTE: There are 4 books written by John: the gospel of John, which is the fourth book of the New Testament and 1, 2, and 3 John, which are located near the end of the New Testament, just before Revelation. This passage references 1 John, the book toward the end of the Bible)

God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all.

14. 1 John 4:16

God is love

8. Write down any new truths you learned about God and his character from these verses. If you are in a group setting, discuss your insights.

9. Which of these attributes do you find most encouraging? Why?

No doubt you've heard the cliché “to know him, is to love him.” I can’t think of anyone this phrase applies more aptly to than God. You can’t love him if you don’t know him. But when you really know him, you can’t help but love him. He’s wise and caring. He’s loving and merciful. He’s patient and forgiving. He’s sovereign and all powerful. He’s holy yet approachable. He’s your creator, your provider, your father and your friend. And that’s the truth.

CHAPTER THREE: GOD IN SKIN

Key Concept: Jesus is fully God and fully man.

Suggestions:

- The Bible study following Chapter three contains many more verses than most of the other chapters in Seek. Make sure to pace yourself so you'll have plenty of time to finish the lesson. If time is an issue, move quickly through the verses six to eight, which discuss how Jesus treated people.

1. Look up the following passages. What do these scripture tell you about the way Jesus saw people? What do these passages tell you about the way Jesus treated people?

Matthew 9:36

Jesus had compassion on the crowds because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

Matthew 23:27

He was people as they were – and told them so. He called the religious leaders hypocrites.

Mark 1:40-42

Jesus had compassion on the leper so he healed him.

Luke 5:29-32

Jesus hung out with tax collectors and sinners

Luke 18:15-17

Jesus let the little children come to him.

John 11:32-35

Jesus was moved by people's grief and felt grief himself.

What do these verses tell you about how Jesus sees you?

No one was invisible to Jesus. Jesus treated people the way people were meant to be treated – with compassion, kindness and love. He was honest with those who needed to hear the truth. He was compassionate with those who needed comfort. He was strong when defending the helpless. He was tender when healing the broken hearted.

Jesus was unique in the way he dealt with others. But more importantly, Jesus was unique in himself. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus is the unique God-man – perfectly God and perfectly man. Look up the following verses and write down the phrase that indicates Jesus' deity ("Deity" is the nature or state of God)

John 12:44-46

When a man believes in me, he also believes in the one who sent me. When a man sees me, he sees the one who sent me.

John 14:9-11

If you have seen me, you have seen the Father.

Colossians 1:15-19

He is the image of the invisible God. By him all things were created. God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.

Colossians 2:9

In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.

John 1 reveals Jesus divine nature in a unique manner. Read John 1:1-3 and answer the following questions:

Who was “in the beginning”?

The Word

In the beginning, who was the Word *with*?

God

In the beginning who *was* the Word?

God

Now, look at John 1:14. What did the Word do?

Became flesh and dwelt among us

According to John 1: 1-3 and 14 who is the Word?

Jesus

Write down any new insight you gained about Jesus’ deity.

Jesus is fully God. When the angel announced Jesus’ birth he said that Jesus would be called Immanuel, which means “God with us”. (Matthew 1:23) But Jesus was also fully human.

What do you learn about Jesus’ humanity from the following verses?

Luke 2:41-51

Jesus’ parents lost him in Jerusalem when he was 12. But he went back with them and was obedient to them.

Luke 2:52

Jesus grew is wisdom, in stature, in favor with God and with men.

John 11: 35

Jesus wept

Hebrews 4:15

He was tested and tempted, yet without sin.

What was unique about Jesus’ human birth according to Matthew 1:18-25?

His mother, Mary was a virgin.

What was unique about his human character according to 1 John 3:5?

He was without sin.

According to John 3:16 -17 why did Jesus come into the world?

To save the world because God loved the world

Read the following verses and answer why Jesus died on the cross:

Isaiah 53:4-6

He was pierced for our transgressions. He died to pay the price for our sins and take away our iniquity.

Mark 10:45

To give his life as a ransom for many

Romans 5:6-10

He died for our sins to reconcile us to God

1 Corinthians 15:2-4

He died for our sins

Jesus died a horrific death by crucifixion. Although he himself did no wrong, he willingly paid the price for all wrongs done by every human being throughout time. He sacrificed himself for you and for me, and for millions of others just like us. Jesus didn't merely come to earth to be an example or a religious leader or a teacher. Jesus came to earth to be our Savior. He came to set us free. To reconcile us to God. To wipe our sins off the face of the map. Because Jesus lived a sinless life, he was a just substitute for the sins of mankind, which makes his death unique. However, his death was unique in another way, as well.

Read the following passages and note what happened to Jesus after his death on the cross.

Mark 16:1-7

3 women went to his tomb only to find the stone rolled away. The angel told them that he was risen.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

Christ was resurrected and appeared to Peter, then the 12, then to more than 500 at the same time, then to Paul.

Were there eye witnesses to Jesus resurrection? If so, how many (at least)?

514

Based on the following passages, what is the significance of Jesus' resurrection?

John 11:25-26

Anyone who believes in Jesus will live, even though he dies.

1 Corinthians 6:14

God raised Jesus from the dead and will raise us, too.

Note: The paragraphs below are not included in the book. I have included them here for you as supplemental information.

Jesus birth, life and resurrection were certainly unparalleled. No wonder no other life in all of human history has impacted the world like his life. After studying the scriptures about Jesus, I hope two things are abundantly clear: First, Jesus is unique. No other political, social or religious leader who has ever lived stands as his equal. Jesus is God in the flesh. Second, Jesus loves people. Jesus said it best, "*Greater love has no man than this, than he lay down his life for his friends.*" Jesus laid down his life because of his great love for you and for me. He laid down his life for the rich and the poor; the healthy and the sick; the educated and the uneducated; the young and the old. He gave his life for people of all races and nations and tongues and times. Why? Because no one is invisible to Jesus. Jesus sees everyone.

Sadly, though, not everyone sees Jesus. How about you?

One Solitary Life

Here was born in an obscure village. He grew up in another obscure village, where he worked in a carpenter's shop until he was thirty. Then for three years he was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family or owned a home. He never set foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place he was born. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness.

While He was still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends deserted him. He was turned over to his enemies, and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had – his coat.

When he was dead, he was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today he is the central figure for much of the human race. All the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever sailed, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of people on this earth as powerfully as this “One Solitary Life.”

1926, Dr. James Allan

CHAPTER FOUR: THE INVISIBLE GOD

Key Concept: the Holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity, whose primary functions are to help us find and follow God.

- You may find that some women have difficulty understanding how all three members of the trinity are seen in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 1:9-11. Be ready to clarify any confusion. For instance, at Jesus baptism, as Jesus came up from the water, the Father spoke from heaven and the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove and rested on Jesus, so all three persons of the trinity are present at one event.
- This chapter is not meant to delve into the different manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit, nor bring up controversial or varying views on those gifts, so guard against getting sidetracked with questions on these topics, which could prove confusing for some. If these questions arise, deal with them outside the study. This chapter is meant to help women understand who the Holy Spirit is, His primary functions and how the Holy Spirit helps each believer in her walk with Christ.

Who is the Holy Spirit? Write down what each of the following verses have to say about the Holy Spirit. The first one has been done for you.

John 4:24

The Holy Spirit is God

John 14:16-17

The Spirit of truth

John 14:26

The counselor, the one who teaches you and will remind you of what I said

John 16:13

He will guide you into all truth

Where was the Holy Spirit “in the beginning” according to Genesis 1:1-2?

He was present in creation, hovering over the deep.

Several times throughout the Bible the Holy Spirit is mentioned in conjunction with the Father and with the Son. Read the following verses and note how or why the three are mentioned together:

Matthew 28:18-20

Baptize in the name of the father, son and Holy Spirit.

Mark 1:9-11

Jesus' baptism

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity, along with the Father and the Son. It's been said that God the Father initiates salvation, God the Son accomplished salvation and

God the Spirit applies salvation. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all involved in the process of meeting God. In fact, helping us know God is a large part of the Holy Spirit's ministry in our lives. When Jesus lived on earth the human race experienced God in the flesh—God with us. But when Christ died and was resurrected He didn't leave us alone, without God in the world. The Holy Spirit was given so that God would still be with us, not in the flesh but in the spirit. In many ways this is to our benefit. One who lives in the flesh is constrained by the flesh. You can't be in Jerusalem and Rome at the same time, for instance. But the Spirit of God isn't limited by human flesh. He can be with believers in London, in Moscow, in Tokyo and in Los Angeles all at the same time. Jesus was God with us. The Holy Spirit is God in us.

What do the following verses say about how the Holy Spirit helps us meet God?

John 3:4-6

The Spirit enables us to be born again.

Ephesians 1:17-18

The Spirit gives us wisdom and revelation so we can know God better

Titus 3:4-6

God saved us because of his mercy by the renewal of the Holy Spirit.

According to Ephesians 1:13 when does a person receive the Holy Spirit into their lives?

When they believe the message of truth.

A believer receives the gift of the Holy Spirit the moment she places her faith in Christ and comes to know God as her Savior.

According to 1 Corinthians 6:19 where does the Holy Spirit dwell?

In the believer. We are His temple.

Because the Holy Spirit indwells all believers, The Holy Spirit equips us to live the Christian life. God, through His Spirit, works in and through us to help us know Him and follow Him.

Look up the following verse and note how the Holy Spirit helps us in our daily lives.

John 14:26

He will teach you all things and remind you of what Jesus taught.

Power to witness

Romans 5:5

Fills our hearts with God's love and hope

Romans 8:14

Leads us

Romans 8:16

Bears witness with our spirit that we are really God's child.

Romans 8:26-27

Helps us in our weakness by praying for us when we don't know what to pray for.

Romans 15:13

Fills us with joy and peace.

Galatians 5:13-16

Helps us overcome the desires of the flesh

Galatians 5:22-23

Fills us with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control.

Which of the works of the Holy Spirit is most meaningful to you? Why?

The Holy Spirit was never meant to be a mystery. As the third person of the trinity, He comes alongside to guide us in our relationship with Christ. He helps us, teaches us, comforts us, counsels us, empowers us, convicts us and fills us with God's love.

CHAPTER FIVE: BIBLE BASICS

Key Concept: The Bible is the inspired Word of God that is historically reliable and life transformational.

Suggestions:

- If a group member needs more information on the historicity and reliability of the Bible, consult the references used noted in the back of Seek.
- If pressed for time, instead of discussing every verse on pages 116-117, have members share the verse(s) that were most meaningful for them (see the question found on page 117, 3/4 of the way down the page). If group members have not done the homework prior to your time together, pick your favorite verses and have members look up those, if time is short.

What does God's word say about itself?

2 Samuel 22:31

God's word is flawless.

1 Timothy 3:16

All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness.

I Thessalonians 2:13

The word of God is God's word – not the words of humans.

II Peter 1:20-21

No scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, but men of God were moved by the Holy Spirit to write God's word.

Look again at the verses above, how much scripture is inspired (God-breathed)?

All

Why is this important to understand?

So we don't accept some scripture and not others. So we don't make our own interpretation of God's word. So we understand that the Bible isn't men's thoughts but God's.

According to 1Timothy 3:16-17, scripture is helpful in four ways. What are they? Write down the dictionary definition of each.

- a. teaching
- b. reproof
- c. correction
- d. training in righteousness

Many women feel that the Bible is hard to understand. But God has given us an aid to enable us to better comprehend His word.

Based on John 14:26, who is that aid and how does he help us?

The Holy Spirit will teach us and bring to mind all that Jesus said.

Look up 1 Corinthians 2:9-14. Why do we need the Holy Spirit's help to understand God's word?

Because spiritual things cannot be understood merely from a fleshly perspective, The Spirit of God helps us understand the mind of God.

Reading God's word was never meant to be merely an intellectual exercise. God's word was written to change our lives. For God's word to change our lives we must know it. To know God's word, we must read it or hear it. For many women, reading God's word can be daunting. Have you ever said or thought any of the following statements? Put a check beside any that apply to you.

- I can't read the Bible because I don't know where to start.
- I can't read the Bible because I don't have enough time.
- I can't read the Bible because I don't know enough about it.
- I can't read the Bible because I'm not smart enough to understand it.
- I can't read the Bible because I think I would find it boring.
- I can't read the Bible because only really religious people do that, and I'm not that religious.

According to the following verses how does God's word help us grow in our relationship with God?

Psalm 1:1-3

Helps us bear fruit and prosper

Psalm 19:7

Refreshes the soul; makes wise the simple

Psalm 119:9

Helps us keep our way pure

Psalm 119:11

Keeps us from sin

Psalm 119:28

Strengthens us when we are weary with sorrow

Psalm 119:66

Knowledge and good judgment

Psalm 119:105

A light for my feet and a lamp for my path

Psalm 119:143

Gives us delight when we are troubled or distressed

Psalm 119:165

Gives us peace; helps us not to stumble

Hebrews 4:12-13

God's word is living and active, penetrating our soul. It judges the intentions of our heart.

God's word provides God's perspective and God's provision for our needs. Which of the above verses is most meaningful to you? Why?

How long will God's word last? See Isaiah 40:8.

Forever

Look up James 1:22-25 and Deuteronomy 29:29. How should we respond to God's word?

Follow God's word; be a doer of God's word

Read Mark 4:1-20. Jesus tells a story about a farmer sowing seeds into four kinds of soil.

What are the four kinds of soil Jesus described?

Hard soil, rocky soil, weedy soil, good soil.

What does each of these four soils represent?

Responses to God's word.

To which of the soils can you most relate? Which soil would you most like to represent your life?

CHAPTER SIX: FAITH IS NOT A FEELING

Key Concept: Faith is not a feeling. Faith is believing what God says is true and acting on it.

Suggestions:

- Emphasize that our faith grows as we learn more of God's word ("Faith comes from hearing and hearing the Word of Christ Romans 10:17). Faith is like a muscle that grows when exercised.

Plenty of people in the Bible had doubt and questions about faith. Read John 20:24-29 and answer the following questions:

1. Which disciple needed proof in order to believe in Christ's resurrection?

Thomas

2. What proof did he say he needed?

"Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

3. One week later he received the proof he needed. What was it?

Jesus appeared to him and told him to put his fingers into his nail scarred hands and into his side.

4. What was Thomas' response?

My Lord and my God!

5. Jesus says a group of people receive special blessing for their faith. Who are they?

Those who believe who haven't seen.

When discussing faith it's important to define our terms. What exactly is faith?

Sometimes it's helpful to know what something is *not* in order to better understand what something *is*. Contrary to popular opinion, faith is not a blind leap. Nor is faith a feeling. The Bible reveals a working definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1.

6. Read Hebrews 11:1. What is faith? What do you think this means?

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

7. According to Hebrews 11:6, why is faith important? What two things must we believe in order to have faith?

Faith pleases God We must believe that He exists and that He is a rewarder of those who seek him.

8. Where does faith originate? (see Hebrews 12:2)

From Jesus, the author of our faith

- 9.** Hebrews 12:2 also makes reference to the fact that faith is a process. According to the following verses, how does our faith grow?

Romans 1:11-12

We are mutually encouraged by one another's faith

Romans 10:17

Faith comes from hearing the message about Christ

- 10.** Our faith also grows when we see the faithfulness of God in our lives. What do the following verses teach about God's faithfulness?

Psalm 100:5

God's faithfulness continues to all generations

Psalm 108:3-5

God's faithfulness reaches to the sky

Lamentations 3:22-24

Great is your faithfulness

- 11.** Consider your life. Although you may have never been aware of it, God has always been with you. How has God been faithful to you? Can you see evidence of God in your life, even before you had faith in Him?

Biblical faith is always coupled with action. When a person truly believes, their actions reflect their belief. Read the following verses and note how each person's faith is expressed in action.

Matthew 9:20-22

The woman with a hemorrhage touched Jesus.

Mark 2:1-5

Dug a hole in a roof to get a friend to Jesus.

Luke 7:1-10

Centurion sent his slave to ask Jesus to heal his servant. Didn't go himself, because he understood Jesus position of authority and His word could heal.

- 12.** Which of the above stories most resonates with you? Why?

- 13.** James 2:14-19 expands on the concept of faith and action. What is the relationship between faith and deeds?

Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

- 14.** In order to have true faith we must believe that God exists and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). What are the rewards of faith according to the following verses?

Acts 15:9

God purifies our hearts through faith

Romans 3:28

A person is justified by faith

Romans 5:1

Through faith we have peace with God

Ephesians 2:8-9

We are saved

Ephesians 3:12

Through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence

1 Peter 1:8-9

The salvation of your souls

15. What do Galatians 2:20 and Colossians 2:6-7 say about living by faith?

The life that I now live, I live by faith in the son of God; Continue to live your life in Him, strengthened in faith.

CHAPTER SEVEN: WHY ARE THERE JERKS IN THE WORLD, AND AM I ONE OF THEM?

Key Concept: Sin is anything we think, say or do that misses the mark of God's standard of perfection, therefore all have sinned.

Suggestions:

- It's likely that some women will have never considered actions mentioned in this chapter as "sin". Even so, move quickly through the first section, found at the bottom of page 153 - the top of page 155, so you'll have adequate time to discuss why Jesus was the unique and satisfactory payment for our sin.
1. The word "sin" evokes all kinds of emotions. What connotation does "sin" have for you? Why?
 2. Look up the following verses note and what the Bible says about sin.
 - a. Exodus 32:31
They made themselves gods of gold
 - b. Proverbs 14:21
It is a sin to despise ones
 - c. Proverbs 17:19
Whoever loves a quarrel loves sin
 - d. Acts 8:23
Bitterness
 - e. James 2:9
Favoritism
 - f. James 4:17
Knowing the good you should do, then not doing it.
 - g. 1 John 3:4
Breaking the law
 - h. 1 John 5:17
All wrongdoing

The Bible mentions many aspects of sin. Some sin is relational (like quarreling). Some sin is moral (like stealing). Sometimes we sin against God and sometimes we sin against other people.

3. Were there any actions or attitudes mentioned as sin in the above verses that surprised you? If so, which one(s) and why?

4. Who or what causes temptation and sin?

a. Matthew 4:1

The devil

b. James 1:13-15

Each person is tempted by their own evil desires

The word “sin” means to miss the mark. In biblical times, sin was an archery term. When an archer shot an arrow, the distance between the bull’s eye and where the arrow landed was called “sin”. Sin was any distance – great or small--between the arrow and the intended target. Sin then, is missing the mark of perfection.

5. Read the following verses and note how sin has affected all mankind.

a. Proverbs 20:9

Who can say, “I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin”?

b. Romans 3:23

All have sinned and fall short of God’s glory.

c. 1 John 1:8

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

6. What are the consequences of sin?

a. Isaiah 59:1-3

Separation from God; unanswered prayer

b. John 8:34

Anyone who sins becomes a slave to sin.

c. Romans 6:23

death

7. What do the following verses reveal about God’s provision for man’s sin?

a. Romans 6:23

the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

b. Isaiah 53:4-6

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all

c. Acts 13:38-39

Through Jesus we have forgiveness of sins.

d. 2 Corinthians 5:21

He made Jesus who knew no sin to be sine for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Note: The following paragraphs are additional insights not found in your book. You may choose to read it during your study time together.

Jesus came for one primary reason: to reconcile us to God by paying the price for our sins. One of the most powerful verses in the Bible is one you just might skip over if you failed to understand its significance: *The wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)* The price tag for sin is death—spiritual and physical separation from God. That's a huge price tag. Who would ever be willing to take on that kind of debt for me? Only one who loved me more than I could imagine

That person is Jesus.

He came to pay the price for my sins and for yours. He came to die in your place, for your sins. Why? Because he loves you that much

Realize this: when you allow Christ to pay your debt by accepting what he did for you on the cross, your debt is paid in full. You are free! You are no longer a slave to sin and it's vice grip around your life.

8. According to the following verses, what are we to do when we realize our sin? With what result?

a. Psalm 32:1-5

When I confessed my sin to you, you forgave the guilt of my sin.

b. Proverbs 28:13

Whoever confesses and renounces their sin finds mercy.

c. Luke 5:31

I have come to call sinners to repentance.

d. Acts 2:36-39

Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

e. 1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins he will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

9. Look over your answers above. To whom are we to confess our sins?

To God.

10. For some women, the notion of confession brings back memories of guilt and shame, and perhaps even the feeling of being cornered into admitting something they would rather forget or explain away. Can you relate to any of these feelings? If so, how?

11. Is there anything in your life that you need to confess right now? Take a moment to write down a prayer of confession below. Then write down 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

12. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What insights do you find regarding how to handle temptation and sin?

No temptation is unique to me and God won't let me be tempted beyond what I can bear.

Sin hurts.

It hurts me. It hurts those around me. And it hurts God.

But God has provided a remedy for the disease that affects all of humanity. Jesus died for our sin. Make no mistake, his death hurt Him. But He willingly bore your hurt and mine because His death was the antidote for the poison of sin. His death brings us life. His Spirit allows us to resist the temptation to sin and live a life filled with love. Joy. Peace. Patience. A life filled with kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control.

Yes, indeed, sin hurts. But God is in the business of taking hurt, broken and sinful people and making them whole.

CHAPTER EIGHT: TALKING WITH GOD

Key Concept: Prayer is simply talking with God; it's a vital way we connect to Him and learn from Him.

Suggestions:

- This is a great week to introduce conversational prayer and/or prayer for one another. You may want to have your group members write down a prayer request that they can trade with another group member so each gal can pray for the other during the upcoming week. Or try one sentence prayers like “Thank you God that.....”. Praying out loud can be intimidating to say the least, so be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit on whether or not to introduce corporate prayer.

Up to this point in your life, what has been your perspective on prayer?

1. According the following verses, why should we pray?

- a. Psalm 6:9

The Lord hears my cry for mercy, the Lord accepts my prayer.

- b. Psalm 116:1-2

Because God hears me.

- c. Jeremiah 29:11-13

Prayer enables us to find God.

- d. James 5:16

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

2. The prayer recorded in Matthew 6:9-13 is often referred to as “The Lord’s Prayer”. Have you ever heard anyone recite the Lord’s Prayer without really considering its meaning? Have you ever been guilty of doing this yourself? How does praying a rote prayer, without sincerity of the heart, relate to Jesus’ warning in Matthew 6:5-7 not to pray to be heard by men or to babble meaninglessly?

3. What did Jesus tell us about prayer according to the passages below?

- a. Matthew 21:22

If you believe you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer

- b. Mark 11:25

If you are praying, forgive anyone you have against anyone.

- c. Luke 18:1-7

We should pray and not give up.

- 4. Why do you think faith, forgiveness and perseverance are key components to prayer?

Jesus taught that we are to pray believing God. God hears the cries of our heart. He knows every spoken and unspoken prayer. But sometimes our prayers seem to go unanswered. Why is this? Does the Bible address this dilemma?

- 5. Read the following verses and note any factor that can hinder our prayers.

- a. Psalm 66:18

Praying with an unclean heart.

- b. Matthew 6:5

Praying with selfish motives

- c. James 1:6-7

Praying without confidence that God will answer

- d. James 4:2-3

Praying with wrong, selfish motives.

- 6. Did any of the above hindrances to prayer surprise you? What new insight did you learn about unanswered prayer?

It's been said that God answers prayer in one of three ways: "Yes." "Not yet." Or "No, because I love you too much."

- 7. You may have never considered this before, but Jesus received a "no" to one of his prayers. Mark 14:32-42 records Jesus' prayer the night before his crucifixion. After reading the account of his prayer answer the following:

(Note: reading Mark 14 in its entirety will give you a better picture of the events that took place the night before Jesus died. If you have time, read all of Mark 2)

- a. How did Jesus feel?

Deeply distressed Overwhelming sorrow to the point of death.

- b. What did Jesus ask?

If it is possible, let this cup be taken away from me

- c. Ultimately, what did Jesus want?

God's will

- d. After praying 3 times, what did Jesus do?

Got up and let himself be arrested to be crucified

8. Read the following passages and list other things we are encouraged to pray for.

a. Psalm 90:12

Teach me to number my days aright that I may gain a heart of wisdom

b. Psalm 90:17

May the Lord's favor rest upon us; Establish the work of our hands

c. Ephesians 1:16-18

Give thanks, pray that you would have the spirit or wisdom and revelation so you can know Him better That the eyes of your heart would be opened to know the hope to which He has called you

d. Ephesians 3:14-21

Pray that they would be strengthen with power through the Spirit so that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith Rooted and grounded in love and know the depth of God's love To have power, together with all the saints To be filled with God.

e. Ephesians 6:18-20

Pray for the Lord's people; pray that I will declare the gospel fearlessly.

f. 1 Timothy 2:1-3

For those in leadership and government

g. Hebrews 4:16

Let us then approach^A God's throne of grace with confidence,^B so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need

h. James 5:13-14

When someone is in trouble

When someone is sick

9. Which of these passages was most meaningful to you? Why?

10. When are we to pray?

a. Psalm 55:16-17

Morning, noon and evening

b. Philippians 4:6

When we are anxious

c. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Pray continually.

11. At times we may find ourselves in circumstances where we don't know how to pray or what to pray. In moments like these, what does God do for us through His Spirit?

a. Romans 8:26

He prays for us with groans too deep for words.

Prayer is talking with God. Not talking to God. Not talking at God. Not talking about God. Prayer is a conversation between friends. The one who made the sun, the moon and the stars wants to talk with you. When you talk to Him, he listens. When He talks to you, you listen.

And that, my sweet friend, is prayer.

CHAPTER NINE: ATTITUDES COUNT

Key Concept: The only thing that can stop someone from meeting God is pride. A person must humble themselves to know God. Pride is having a big view of yourself; humility is having a big view of God.

Meeting God requires meeting the holy author of life on His terms. We don't have to clean up to meet Him, but we do have to bow down. In other words, we have to come with a measure of humility.

1. Read Luke 18:9-14 and answer the following questions.

a. With what kind of attitude did the religious person approach God?

Prideful. I'm God's gift to the world.

b. What kind of attitude did the tax-collector have?

Completely and totally humble.

c. Which one did Jesus commend?

The tax collector

d. What surprises you or impresses you about this story?

Being religious means nothing to God.

e. How does this story encourage you?

When I come to God sincerely humble I find mercy and grace no matter what my sin.

f. How does this story convict you?

2. According to the following verses what kinds of attitudes are necessary to enter into the presence of God?

a. Psalm 51:17

A broken and contrite spirit

b. Isaiah 57:15

One who is contrite and lowly.

c. Isaiah 66:2

Humble and contrite

d. Matthew 18:1-4

One with childlike faith

When we come to God with a contrite spirit—a heart that's sorry, remorseful and repentant—God welcomes us into His presence. This kind of attitude takes humility. In God's economy, the way up is the way down. And the way down is the way up.

3. Read Matthew 23:11-13 and 1 Peter 5: 5-7.

- a. What do these verses tell us about God's upside down economy?

God exalts the humble and humbles the exalted.

- b. What attitude is the opposite of humility?

Pride

- c. How does God respond to the proud?

He is opposed to the proud.

4. According to the following scriptures what other attitudes are necessary in order to meet God?

- a. Psalm 42:2

My soul thirsts for God

- b. Isaiah 55:1-2

Come because we are thirsty

- c. John 7:37

Be thirsty

- d. Matthew 11:28

Be willing to come to him.

5. Humility and Obedience go hand in hand. Read Philippians 2:5-11. How did Christ model humility? With what result?

His humility led him to obey, even to the point of death. As a result God exalted him above every other name.

6. Now read Philippians 2:3-5. How are we to follow Christ's example?

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Your attitude should be like Christ's.

7. According to the following verses what is the relationship between our love for God and our obedience to Him?

- a. Deuteronomy 11:1

We are commanded to love the Lord and keep his requirements.

- b. John 14:23

Whoever loves me will obey my teaching.

8. What are the benefits of obeying God?

- a. Joshua 1: 7-8

Obedience leads to success in our endeavors to follow God.

- b. Jeremiah 7:22-24

Obey me that it may go well with you.

9. Even though God's commands and laws are given with our best interest in mind, we sometimes still find it difficult to obey. Why do you think this is so?

10. People have a host of reasons or excuses for why they choose to do their own thing rather than what God wants them to do. Put a check beside any of the reasons listed below that have factored into your obedience or disobedience:

- a. I'm scared to do what God wants me to do.
- b. I don't know what God wants me to do.
- c. I don't care what God wants me to do.
- d. I think I know what's best for my life, so why ask God?
- e. I'll do part of what God wants me to do.
- f. God's commands don't make sense to me.
- g. God's commands seem too hard to keep.
- h. Following God's ways would make my life boring.

11. Which of the above factors has been the most influential in your life up to this point?

12. Would you like that to change? If yes, how?

God's laws are sometimes called precepts, ordinances, commands, instructions or decrees. Obedience to God's instruction is both a choice and a learned response. We decide to obey or disobey. If we obey, God is pleased and we are blessed. If we don't, sooner or later we bear the consequences.

13. The Psalmist (King David) wrote most of the Psalms) asked God for help in following God's laws. According to Psalm 119:33-35 what did David pray?

Teach me Lord, the way of your decrees so that I may follow it. Give me understanding so that I may keep your law. Direct me in the path of your commands for there I find delight

14. How can asking for God's help to obey His word encourage you in your life this week? Is there an area where you need God's help in particular? If so, write out a short prayer asking God to enable you to do what He wants you to do.

CHAPTER TEN: THE REALLY GOOD NEWS

Key Concept: God loves you and wants to have a relationship with you. God loved us so much that He sent Jesus to live among us, die on the cross and be resurrected to pay the penalty for sin so that we – sinful, imperfect people—could have a friendship with a holy, righteous and loving God.

In the midst of a world filled with bad news, every one of us longs for good news. This week we'll be discussing what the Bible refers to as "good news". And it's *good*.

1. Share one piece of good news you've received in the last twelve months.

2. In the Bible the word gospel means "good news". Read Romans 1:14-16 and note:
 - a. How Paul felt about the gospel
unashamed
 - b. Why he felt this way:
Power of God for salvation
 - c. Complete this sentence: I am not ashamed of the gospel because it
is _____.

The good news of the gospel is that all people can be saved. Saved from sin, from death, from judgment, from performance oriented religious works, from hypocrisy, from shame, from guilt, from fear and from separation from God.

In love, God reaches down to save us because He has a purpose and plan for our lives.

3. What is God's purpose and plan for you, according to the following verses?
 - a. John 3:16
God so loved the world that He gave his son so that I could have eternal life.
 - b. John 10:10
Abundant life
 - c. Romans 5:1
Peace with God

God wants all people to know Him—including you. He wants a relationship with you. God's purpose and plan is that you would experience eternal life with him in heaven, but also experience abundant life with Him now.

If this is God's purpose and plan, why don't most people experience this plan? The problem isn't with God. The problem is with us. We are our own worst enemy.

4. Look up the following verses and note the problem faced by all people.
 - a. Isaiah 64:6

All my righteousness is like a filthy rag

- b. Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked

- c. Romans 3:10

There is none righteous, no not one.

- d. Romans 3:23

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

5. What is the consequence of this problem?

- a. Isaiah 59: 2

Separation from God

- b. Romans 6:23

Death

Our sin separates us from God. The Bible is clear on this fact. But even without the biblical explanation, we know it intuitively. Need proof? The last time you did something you are ashamed of, did you feel like opening your Bible or praying afterward? Would you want God sitting beside you as you did it? Of course not! Why not? Sin causes us to hide from God.

Sin separates. It has since it first entered the world.

6. Read Genesis 3:1-10.

- a. Before Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, they walked and talked with Him freely in the Garden of Eden. According to verses 8 -10, what did they do after they sinned?

They hid from God.

- b. According to verse 9, what did God do after they sinned?

He called to the man, where are you?

- c. What does God's response tell you about God's desire for relationship with man?

He pursues us, even when we have sinned.

Note: The following paragraph is not included in the Seek book. I have included it here for your use as a leader.

Sin causes a gap between man and God. In order for the relationship to be restored, the gap must be bridged. Man's best effort at bridging the gap is called religion. Religion says "be good enough to be accepted". *Do this. Don't do that. Work your way to God.* Religion is man trying to reach God. Christianity is God reaching man. Religion is about rules. Christianity is about relationship. There's a world of difference.

7. Based on the following verses, what is God's remedy for man's sin problem?

a. Romans 5:8

God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"

b. 2 Corinthians 5:21

God made his who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him

c. 1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

When I was in college I had a friend who wondered why Jesus had to die on the cross. Wouldn't it have been enough for Christ to come to earth and live among us as an example? Death seemed so gruesome to her. Surely it wasn't necessary. Or was it?

8. According to Romans 6:23, what is the price tag of sin?

Death.

9. Read Romans 5:6-10.

a. Who paid the price for our sin?

Jesus

b. Why?

His love.

c. With what result?

We are reconciled to God and saved.

10. What does the Bible say about Jesus being the one and only way to God?

a. John 14:6

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, but by me.

b. Act 4:12

There is no other name by which we must be saved.

c. 1 Timothy 1:5

There is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Jesus Christ.

d. 1 John 5:12

Whoever has the son has life, whoever does not have the son does not have life.

11. Look up Ephesians 2:8-9.

a. Can a person earn their way into heaven ?

no

b. Why or why not?

So no one can boast

c. How is a person saved?

By grace, through faith

d. If a person offers you a gift, what must you do to receive it?

You must accept it.

Entering into a relationship with God is a choice. God wants to meet you; you must also want to meet Him. Jesus died to bridge the gap that separates sinful man from Holy God. When a person accepts the gift of salvation by believing that Jesus died on the cross to pay the price tag for her sins, she becomes connected with God in a brand new way. What God offers is not religion. God offers a relationship with Him through his son, Jesus Christ.

12. Read the following verses and write down the phrase that indicates a choice, decision or action.

a. John 1:12

Receive, believe

b. Acts 10:43

Believe in Him

c. Romans 10:9-10

Declare and believe

d. Romans 10:13

Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

13. God's offers the free gift of salvation for all who would believe in Him and receive Him as their Savior and their Lord.

a. Do you believe that Jesus is who he claimed to be, and that he died on the cross for your sins and rose again?

b. Would you like to receive his gift of salvation and have the assurance of eternal life?

c. If you answered yes to the above questions, take a moment right now to talk to God. Remember, God isn't as interested in your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. All you must do is believe and call upon Him to save you. You may want to pray something like this:

Lord Jesus, I need you. I believe that you are the Son of God who died on the cross and rose again to pay the debt of my sin. Please forgive my sins. Come into my life. I want to know you as my God and my Lord. I want to follow you all the days of my life and be your friend.

Amen.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: AFTER THE INTRODUCTION

Key Concept: Because salvation is based on what Christ did for on the cross, not our good works, when we trust Christ to forgive our sins we have the assurance of our salvation.

1. Read 1 John 5:11-13 and answer the following questions.

Who gives eternal life?

God.

In whom is eternal life found?

The Son – Jesus.

Who has eternal life?

He who has the Son has life.

Who does not have eternal life?

He who does not have the Son

2. Why did John say he wrote these things?

So that those who believe would know they have eternal life..

3. If you have sincerely prayed to accept Christ Jesus as your Savior, several things are now true about you. According to the verses listed below, what are they?

John 10:28

God gives eternal life and no one can snatch a believer out of His hand.

John 15:14-15

I am now God's friend.

2 Corinthians 5:17

if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new is here!

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

Ephesians 1:13-14

When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption(F) of those who are God's possession

Philippians 1:6

He (God) who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Romans 5:1

I have peace with God.

Romans 8:1

There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:38-39

Nothing can separate me from God's love.

Hebrews 7:25

Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through Jesus, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Hebrews 13:5 and Deuteronomy 31:6

God has said, "I will never leave you and I will never forsake you" God will never leave or forsake me.

4. Which of these truths are most meaningful to you? Why?

5. Which of these truths are hardest for you to embrace as true?

6. What impact will these truths have upon your confidence in your relationship with God?

7. Read the following verses and note what character quality distinguishes someone who possesses authentic faith.

John 13:34-35

Love. Everyone will know you are my disciple if you love one another.

1 John 4:7-12

Love for others.

8. According to the verses below, what is the relationship between knowing God and obeying God?

Deuteronomy 11:1

Love the **LORD** your **God** and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always. Love of God results in obedience to God.

John 14:23

If I love Jesus, I will obey Jesus and God will reveal Himself to me.

1 John 2:3-5

We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, “I know him, but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person 5 But if anyone obeys his word,(F) love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him.

True believers keep God's commands and follow Him.

If you are doing this study in a group, ask a group member to pray for you this week. If you are doing the study alone, take a moment right now and thank God for all the blessings that are yours, now that you are a child of God.

CHAPTER TWELVE: GROWING TO KNOW THE GOD YOU SEEK

Key Concept: We grow in our relationship with God to the degree that we cultivate our relationship with God; God has given us some specific ways we can cultivate our relationship with Him.

Talk to anyone with a successful marriage and you'll find their secret of success has something to do with staying connected throughout the changing seasons of life. What's true for a healthy, growing marriage holds true for a healthy, growing relationship with God. To grow in your relationship with God you must stay connected to God.

1. In John 15 Jesus compares our relationship with God to one of a vine and a branch.
Read John 15:4-5.

- a. What does Jesus tells us to do?

Remain in Him.

- b. With what result?

We will bear much fruit

- c. What will happen if we don't stay connected to Christ?

We won't bear fruit. We can't do anything apart from being connected to Him.

- d. According to John 15: 9-11, how do we stay connected to Christ?

Remain in His love by keeping His commands. His command is to love one another.

In order to be a fruitful, productive Christian, all we have to do is stay connected to Christ. If we remain in Him, he produces fruit in us and through us. We stay connected to God by following His commands, which are found in His word.

2. According to Joshua 1:7-9 the word of God help us be prosperous (or fruitful) in our relationship with God. List the ways we are to incorporate God's laws into our life.

- a. Be careful to obey, do not turn from it to the right or to the left, keep this book of the law on your lips, cer diss
rmeditate on it day and night,

3. How can you put these principles into practice in your own life?

We get God's word into our life six ways:

- Reading it
- Listening to it
- Studying it

- Meditating on it
- Memorizing it
- Applying it.

The more we get into God's word, the more God's word gets into us. And the more we are changed.

4. Write down one way you will get God's word into your life every day this week.
Share with your group.

5. How does God's word help transform us?

- a. Romans 12:2

It helps transform us because it renews our minds and thinking, and then I can know God's perfect will for my life.

- b. Romans 15:4

Teaches us, gives us encouragement and endurance so we might have hope.

- c. 1 Peter 2:2

Helps us grow in respect to our salvation

- d. 1 Peter 3:17

Don't be carried away by error but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

God uses His word to renew our mind, transform our life, and help us grow. God also uses His people. In fact, when we place our faith in Christ not only do we begin a new relationship with Him, we also begin a new relationship with other believers. We are brought into the family of God, sometimes called the body of Christ

6. How does God use other believers to encourage us in our walk with Him?

- a. Romans 1:11

We mutually encourage each other

- b. 2 Corinthians 13:11

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

- c. Ephesians 4:15-17

We grow as we speak the truth in love and as every body part does its work.

- d. Colossians 2:1-3

My goal is that they would be encouraged in heart and united in love so that they would have complete understanding of Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

- e. Hebrews 10:23-25

Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds and let us not give up meeting together.

7. How has God used another person to encourage you in your relationship with him?
Be as specific as possible.
8. Some people contend that since their faith is a personal matter, they don't need to be part of a church. Based on the scriptures above, how would you answer this objection?
9. Jesus warns us about the importance of correct doctrine and personal accountability to ensure that our faith remains growing and strong. Read Matthew 24:11-13. What is Jesus' warning?

Because of false teaching, deception and wickedness, the love of most will grow cold.

Being part of a local body of believers where the Bible is taught and where you can find encouragement and accountability is essential to your Christian growth. You need other believers and they need you.

The moment you trust Christ as your Savior you are given a spiritual gift which makes you an integral part of the body of Christ. Your gift is more than a talent; it is a unique skill set given to you for the express purpose of helping others grow in their relationship with God. Each believer is to serve the other members of God's family so that each of us can continue to grow in our knowledge and love of Christ.

10. Read the following passages and list all the spiritual gifts mentioned.

- a. Romans 12:3-8

Prophecy, serving, teaching, giving, leading, mercy, encouraging

- b. 2 Corinthians 12:4-11

Wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, tongues, interpretation, prophecy, discernment

11. Read 2 Corinthians 12:11-31.

- a. Who gives spiritual gifts?

The spirit

- b. Why are the gifts given?

For the common good.

- c. Are some gifts better than others?

no

12. According to 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, what is the most important thing to keep in mind when using your spiritual gift?

Love

13. How can you begin serving other people in Jesus' name?

14. What is easiest for you—being in God’s word, gathering with God’s people or serving others in God’s name? Which is most challenging?

15. If you are doing this study in a group, have one person pray for you this week regarding the area you find most challenging to your spiritual growth.

When we read God’s word we connect with Christ. When we fellowship with other believers, we connect with one another and with Christ. When we serve using our spiritual gift, we bless others and connect with Christ. Spiritual growth and spiritual health is all about connection.

If you remain in me, Jesus said, *you will bear much fruit.* You will grow. You will become more like Christ. We connect with God through His word, His people and His service.

Do you want to continue to grow in your relationship with God? Stay connected to Christ. And you will.

Dear Sweet Friend,

The day I finished writing this Bible study I knew I needed to end with a word to you. But what? We've already discussed God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We've tackled difficult issues like sin, obedience and humility. We examined the foundations of prayer, faith and how to grow as a follower of Christ. But in my heart I knew something was still missing—one more thing I wanted to communicate. While riding the bike at the gym (remember, I'm one of those crazy people who likes the gym) I turned to the book of Colossians and began reading Paul's letter to the new believers there.

Instantly I knew that Paul's message to the Colossians was my heartfelt message to you. How I wish I could reach across my computer screen, give you a big hug, and tell you that I pray for you and for your continued relationship with God. I hope you met Him sometime during the weeks we have studied His word together. If not, continue your search. He loves you and wants you to know Him more than you can possibly imagine.

Continue to seek and you will find.

You are loved,

Donna

I want you to know how much I have agonized for you and for the church at Laodicea, and for many other believers who have never met me personally. I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

I am telling you this so no one will deceive you with well-crafted arguments. For though I am far away from you, my heart is with you. And I rejoice that you are living as you should and that your faith in Christ is strong.

And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

Colossians 2:1-10

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BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Old Testament

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther
Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
The Song of Solomon
Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

New Testament

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John
Acts
Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
James
1 Peter
2 Peter
1 John
2 John
3 John
Jude
Revelation
:

