



UNITED KINGDOM

## New Believer's Study Guide<sup>i</sup>

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

*Acts 2:42*

*"... They **received** the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day..."*

*Acts 17:11*

**W**elcome to the family of God! The moment you made the decision to put your trust in Jesus Christ, you became a member of God's family. This means that God is now your Father and you now can receive all of the privileges and benefits that come with your new family. You also have a whole lot of brothers and sisters!



These lessons are designed to help to in your new journey and encourage you to draw closer to your heavenly Father. Jesus said, "...no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." In the same way that a baby is born into the world and must breathe and eat to grow, so you must do the same. We therefore hope to help you to read and understand the bible (eat) and to learn to pray (breathe.) We would also like to encourage you to spend time with your new family as much as possible, whenever we meet together. As you continue in these things, you will grow as a Christian and become strong in the faith.

As we begin to explore the scriptures together there are only three things that you really need at this stage. First, you need a good bible. If you have trouble finding one, we will be glad to get one for you. Next, you will need a notepad or notebook and a pen so that you can write down anything that you may wish to remember from our conversations. The last thing you need to bring is an open and inquisitive heart so that God can fill you with all that He has for you. If you come with these things you will do well.

Finally, the vision of our fellowship is that people from different cultures, nationalities and backgrounds can grow and be nurtured together. Through practical teaching, based on the bible, we aim to "remove the veil" that seems to cover us from the truth that brings freedom and liberty. As we draw closer to each other, we hope that each individual member will have their needs met. God gave us this promise as a fellowship:

*"On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine - the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth."*

Isaiah 25:6-8

God bless you!  
Freddie C Roberson Jr.  
Pastor

# Lesson One: Salvation

After you have been around the fellowship for a while you may hear someone speaking about "salvation." Often Christians speak of being "saved", or of having "Jesus in my heart." What do they mean? In this lesson, we will look at this a bit closer.

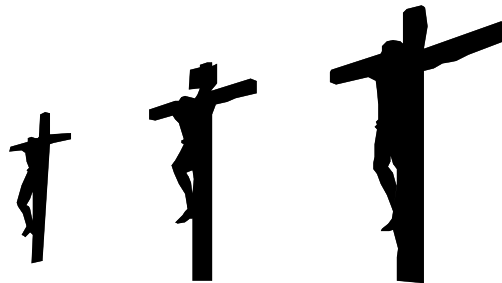
The bible teaches that all people are in a bad way without Jesus. This is what is said about us in Ephesians chapter 2, versus 1 through 3:

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions (errors) and sins (offences), in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath."

Fortunately for us, it goes on to say in versus 4 and 5:

"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved."

Therefore, when we say that we have been "saved" it means that we were saved from a life of sin and disobedience and from its eventual consequences. Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. When we put our trust in him, our sins are forgiven and we receive eternal life. When God saves us from our old life, he gives us a new one, a changed life! In order to experience this "new life", which is also called a "new birth", we must go through the process of rebirth.



The early Christians emphasised four things when they introduced persons to Jesus: Repentance, Faith in Jesus, Water Baptism, and Receiving the Holy Spirit. Here is an outline that describes each phase of the new birth:

## 1) Repentance

- i) *Definition* - to have another mind, reversal; to think differently or afterward.

- (a) Not just REMORSE - pricking of the conscience.
- (b) Not just REGRET - remember with feeling of loss or feeling of having done amiss, due to the consequences.
- (c) It is always first and foremost toward God.
- (d) It is a change in our thinking.
- (e) It is a change in our actions.

ii) *There are also three other elements of repentance:*

- (a) COGNITION - it is something that is known or understood. Plain old recognition that I did it! It's my fault! I am awful compared to God's holiness. My specific sins are sins indeed! (See also Psalm 51:3-6 for more.)
- (b) EMOTION - it is something that is felt from the heart! (See also Isaiah 6:5 and Psalm 51:9,17.)
- (c) VOLITION - it is something that I want to do.

## 2) Faith

- i) *Definition* - firm persuasion, strong and welcome belief, the conviction of the truth of anything. When it comes down to it, faith is simply putting your trust in Jesus to save you. Here are a few important things to know about faith:
  - (a) It is substance and reality (Hebrews 11:1.)
  - (b) It is a gift of God (Philippians 2:13.)
  - (c) It is based on historic fact (1 Corinthians 15:3-8.)
  - (d) It demands a personal response (Matthew 7:24; John 14:21; Hebrews 11:1,6.)
  - (e) It is practical (Ephesians 2:10; James 2:20.)
  - (f) It is ongoing (Acts 11:23; 14:22; Romans 11:22; 1 Corinthians 15:2; Colossians 1:23.)
  - (g) It is in Jesus! (John 14:6; Acts 4:12.)

## 3) Water Baptism

- i) *Definition* - to make whelmed (to cover completely, overturn, overthrow, plunge deep, submerge, overpower, overburden, ruin, destroy, to pass over in such a way as to submerge it), to fully wet.



*ii) Why be baptized?*

- (a) It is a command of Jesus - Matthew 28:19
- (b) Jesus gave us an example - Matthew 3:13-17
- (c) It is an outward sign of something which takes place inwardly - 1 Peter 3:21,22; Acts 22:16
- (d) It is an essential part of the birthing process - John 3:5; Acts 2:38

#### 4) Receiving The Holy Spirit

*i) Why should I receive the Holy Spirit?*

- (a) It is an essential part of the birthing process - Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5,8; 2:38,39; 8:14-17; 9:17,18; 10:44-47; 19:1-7.
- (b) He gives power - Acts 1:8; 2:4.
- (c) He releases gifts - 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.

*ii) How can I receive the Holy Spirit?*

- (a) Believe that the promise is for you - Acts 2:38,39.
- (b) Ask in faith - Luke 11:9-13; James 1:6-8 (in quiet confidence that your Father will do it.)
- (c) Thirst - John 7:37-39.
- (d) Expect something tangible - Acts 8:14-17:
  - 1. Tongues (languages) Acts 2:4.
  - 2. Praises - Acts 10:46.
  - 3. Prophecy - Acts 19:6.
  - 4. Miracles - Acts 9:17,18.
  - 5. An overflow - John 7:38.
- (e) Remember, it is a gift - a gift is not to be worked or bargained for, only received.

*iii) Hindrances to receiving the Holy Spirit:*

- (a) No conversion.
- (b) Unbelief or negative attitude.
- (c) Reliance on feelings and emotions.
- (d) Fear.
- (e) Sin.
- (f) Ignorance concerning the purpose of the gift of Tongues



## Discussion

- What is the difference between remorse and regret?
- Does repentance mean that a person has no desire to sin anymore?
- Is it the amount of faith that one has the most important issue? See also Matthew 17:20
- What difference do you think the Holy Spirit makes in the life of every believer?

## Assignment

Answer these questions:

- Is there anything in your life that you feel guilty about and perhaps need to repent of?
- Are you prepared to follow Jesus' example of obedience by being baptized?
- Would you like to receive the Holy Spirit?

## Lesson Two: Growth

When a baby is born, everyone usually gets very excited and desires to see and sometimes hold the little bundle of joy. Those little tiny feet and hands are so cute! However, there is an expectation from everyone that the child will eventually grow up. In fact, if after 21 years this person were still a little baby, something would be drastically wrong.

A new believer in Jesus is the same. God expects all his children to grow to maturity. It is explained this way in Ephesians chapter 4 and verses 13 through 16:

"...Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work."



In this lesson, we are going to look at four things that we can do that will help us to grow.

### Reading the Bible

This is one of the most important things that a Christian can do because when we meditate on God's word, we are allowing Him to speak to us. When God's word gets into your heart, He begins to change you into His image. Here are a few verses that describe the importance of God's word:

- I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:11

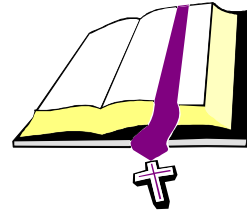
- Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Psalm 119:105

- Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

1 Peter 2:2,3

- Jesus answered, "It is written, 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"



Matthew 4:4

- Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Hebrews 5:13,14

Notice the progression in the last three verses. First spiritual milk was mentioned, then bread and finally solid food. When you first begin reading the bible there may be parts that may not be easily understood. But as you grow, you mature and are able to handle more. Here are a few tips to help you in your reading:

- Read a bit each day, morning and evening, and ask God to speak to you and give you understanding each time you read.
- Don't hop all over the place when you read. Work through the New Testament in the morning and through the Old Testament in the evening.
- Get a Christian friend to answer any questions that you may have.
- Attend a home group so that you can get in on any teaching or discussion.

## Prayer

Another one of the most important things that Christians do is to pray. In fact, prayer is not about fancy or religious words, but simple communication with our loving Father. There are so many examples in the bible of prayer, but here is one that I find particularly helpful:

"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men.

I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."





Here are a few tips to help you to pray:

- Don't try to pray like someone else, just talk to God the way you would talk to a friend.
- Be honest when you pray, tell God exactly how you feel.
- Find a quiet place to pray each day.
- Talk to God about everything; don't hide anything from Him.
- Use the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 as a guide in prayer.

### Fellowship

Ever light a bar-b-que? If so, you'll find that if a single coal gets separated from the others it will soon go out. In the same way, when we get out of the habit of gathering together with other believers, we usually find that we begin to slip back into our old ways and sins. It's been said, "You don't have to go to church to be a Christian!" This is true, but you will find Christians in church. The bible has something to say on this issue.

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24,25

This is what was written about the believers during the days of the Apostles:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were



done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 2:32-47

## Sharing With Others

One of the best ways to grow as a Christian is when you tell others about what Jesus has done for you. I'm not talking about becoming a preacher or evangelist, but instead simply sharing with those around you all about what God has done for you. A good example of this is in John chapter 4 where Jesus talks to a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. After Jesus ministers to her needs, the bible says that she went back to her home town and said to the people "...Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did..." It goes on to say that many of the Samaritans "...believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I ever did.'"

Here are a few other verses about sharing with others about Jesus:

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...

1 Peter 3:15

"...But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Acts 1:8

Here are some pointers as you witness:

- After prayer, look for opportunities to share of the change in your life with your close friends and relatives, particularly those who notice the change in your life.
- Don't try to preach, but simply say what God has done for you.
- Invite your friends and workmates to special events that take place in the church. This may be an opportunity for them to hear the good news.
- Pray that God will lead you to those who are open to the things of God.

## Discussion

Have you ever tried reading the bible regularly and then stopped? If so, what seemed to be the problem?

What have your times of prayer been like up to now?

Have you been coming to church regularly since you became a Christian?

Have you attended any of the home groups or other regular gatherings in the church?

Have you told anyone about what God has done for you lately?

## Assignment

Try to establish a regular time to read the bible and pray this week. Start at least 15 minutes to pray and read, and then see if you can work your way up to one half hour each morning and evening every day.

See if you can attend a home group this week. If there is not one available to you, perhaps you could see someone in the church about starting one up in your home or near you.

Ask God to give you at least one person to share your testimony with this week.

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*Written by Freddie C Roberson Jr.*