

Foundations Bible Study

I. Who Is God? (Psalm 139)

Charles Spurgeon once stated, "The highest science, the loftiest speculation, the mightiest philosophy, which can ever engage the attention of a child of God, is the Name, the nature, the Person, the work, the doings, and the existence of the great God whom he calls Father." Spurgeon goes on to say, "Nothing will so enlarge the intellect, nothing so magnify the whole soul of man, as a devout, earnest, continued investigation of the great subject of the deity."

1. As we begin our investigation of this great subject, how do you think most people would describe God?
2. Read Psalm 1:19. What are several attributes or characteristics of God mentioned in this passage? Mention as many as you can.
3. What do each of these characteristics mean? Discuss each one.
4. What was David's response to each of these characteristics? How do you think they made him feel?
5. Even though David had been guilty of adultery and murder, elsewhere in Scripture he is described as a man after God's own heart. Is there anything in this Psalm which might indicate why David would have been described this way? Explain.
6. How can we develop a heart for God? How will this desire be evidenced in your daily life?

Assignment: Study the next lesson and memorize Isaiah 59:2. A complete listing of memory verses is in the back of this booklet.

II. Who is Man? (Genesis 1:26-31; 2:15-17; 3:1-24)

In our last study Charles Spurgeon reminded us of the importance of knowing God. In the chapter on "The Knowledge of God the Creator", John Calvin wrote in the Institutes, "Without knowledge of self, there is no knowledge of God. Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts; the knowledge of God and of ourselves."

1. Why do you suppose Calvin begins a discussion of the knowledge of God with the knowledge of ourselves? Read Gen. 1:26-31; 2:15-17; 3:1-24. What is man's relationship to God according to 1:26-31?
2. What was God's view toward man in the beginning and describe their relationship?
3. What happened to cause a broken relationship between God and man?
4. What led to their actual disobedience (3:1-6)? Explain the digression.
5. How can you recognize and avoid Satan's temptation in your own life?
6. What is the significance of God being our Creator?
7. What does it mean to be created in God's image?
8. How has sin affected this image?
9. What is the significance of Adam and Eve's immediate response after they sinned against God? How do we respond when we sin? Why?
10. What problems does man face today as a result of his broken relationship with God? What is the significance of the cherubim and the flaming sword at the entrance of the garden (3:24)?
11. Is there any hint that the relationship between God and man might be restored?

Assignment: Study the next lesson and memorize Isaiah 6:3.

III. Who is Jesus? (Jn 1:1-18)

Napoleon Bonaparte once observed, "I marvel that whereas the ambitious dreams of myself, Caesar and Alexander should have vanished into thin air, a Judean peasant, Jesus, should be able to stretch His hands across the destinies of men and nations. I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between Him and every other person in the world there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I myself have founded empires; but upon what do these creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon love; and to this very day millions would die for Him."

1. What was it about Jesus that caused Him to have such a tremendous impact upon history?
2. Read John 1: 1- 18. Who is the Word according to verse 1? verse 14? Who is Jesus according to these two verses? See also verse 18.

3. What are some other characteristics of Jesus mentioned in this passage?
4. What was the difference between Moses and Jesus?
5. What was the world's response to Jesus? Why was this their response?
6. If you were living during Jesus' day, what would your response have been? Would you have been any different from the crowd?
7. Why did you believe according to verses 12 and 13?
8. How can you get to know God personally and intimately (vs. 18)? Explain.
9. How can you follow the example of John the Baptist in verse 8?
10. In light of this passage, summarize who Jesus is and His significance.

Assignment Study the next lesson and memorize Exodus 34:7.

IV. **What Did Jesus Do?** (I Cor. 15: 1-20)

Today, many people are not only confused about who Jesus is, but there is also confusion about what He actually accomplished. Some would say that His most significant contribution was doing good, healing the sick and taking care of the poor. Others might say that it was His teaching ministry or His great political leadership which came to a premature halt as a result of a tragic death.

1. What do you think was Jesus' greatest accomplishment?
2. Read I Cor 15:1-20. What was Paul's summary of Jesus work in verses 3 and 4?
3. Why did Jesus die? Relate to the three previous studies.
4. Why is the resurrection important?
5. What is the significance of the "first fruits" (vs. 20)?
6. Why is the object of our faith important? Isn't sincere faith in anything the real issue?
7. How important was this message to Paul? Why?
8. What impact did this message have upon Paul's life? Read verses 9 and 10, and Acts 7:59-8:3. Describe Paul before and after his conversion. Why did this message have such an impact upon Paul?
9. What changes in your life has this message produced?
10. What difference does the resurrection make in your daily life?
11. Verses 55-58 give the results of what should take place in the lives of those who understand the message of Christ. What should be the results and why?
12. How can you give yourself more fully to the Lord?

Assignment: Study the next lesson and memorize John 3:16.

V. **What Must We Do?** (Eph. 2:1-10)

Martin Luther was a man who struggled in an attempt to gain acceptance before God. He worked night and day, spending hours in prayer, in confession, and in the study of Scripture, yet he never felt he could gain approval from his heavenly Father. It was not until Martin Luther understood the Person and work of Jesus Christ and the response God required of him, that he finally experienced the joy of a right relationship with God. It was at that moment that Luther felt as though the doors of Paradise swung open and he, walked through.

1. Why do you think Martin Luther never experienced a sense of approval from God apart from Christ even though he worked diligently in an attempt to gain that approval?
2. Read Eph 2:1-10. How are people described in verses 1-3? Who does this include? Describe our condition in your own words.
3. What change was evident in the lives of those to whom Paul is writing (vs. 3-5)?
4. What caused this change? Why? (vs. 7)
5. Who gets the credit for this change? Why? (vs.7)
6. What is grace? How is this grace received (vs. 8, 9)?
7. Why do we think we have to work in order to gain acceptance before God?
8. Why do we boast about our accomplishments? How does the
9. Gospel diffuse boasting in ourselves (vs. 8,9)?
10. What is faith? What does it mean that even our faith is a gift from God?
11. Summarize the response God requires from us.
12. How much do we owe God? Why?

13. How can you specifically show God your gratitude for His love, mercy, kindness and grace (vs. 10)?
14. The term "gospel" means good news. By referring to the five lessons, explain the gospel and tell why it is good news.

Assignment: Study the next lesson, memorize Romans 3:23 and read the "Trusting Christ" pamphlet.

VI. **Right With God!** (Romans 4:1-25)

The word "justify" is actually a legal term which means "to declare not guilty." In a courtroom setting, the judge declares that the person on trial is just and right in their status before the court.

1. Very often we seek to justify ourselves even when we know we are guilty. Why do we struggle so with self-righteous and the tendency to try to justify ourselves? Read Romans 4:1-25. Why is it impossible to be justified before God by works (vs. 14,15)?
2. It is often believed that the Old Testament saints were justified by works. How were Abraham and David justified (vs. 18-22)?
3. Describe in your own words Abraham's faith.
4. In what ways do you need to grow in faith?
5. What is the basis of our justification and how is it received (vs. 23-25)?
6. Discuss the following statement: Justification is more than complete forgiveness of sin.
7. What is credited and to whom?
8. "Justified" has been described as "just-as-if-I'd" never sinned and lived a perfect life. How true is this statement?
9. Look up the following verses and write down the debits and credits in the appropriate places.

Before Faith in Christ

Debit

What is owed (Rom. 6:23)?

Credit

What is credited to our account (Rom. 3:10-20)?

After Faith in Christ

Debit

What is owed (Rom. 8:1)?

Credit

What is credited to our account (Rom. 4:23,24)?

How does this "spiritual bank account" help you understand justification?

10. Christ's death is often emphasized in our justification. How was His life equally important?
11. Although we continue to struggle with **sin**, what is our legal status before God? Why*?
12. Write a definition of justification.
13. Romans 5:1,2 summarizes the result of the doctrine of justification taught in chapter 4. How has justification affected your relationship to God?
14. How can you experientially grow in the peace and joy promised to those who have been justified by faith in Christ?

Assignment: Study the next lesson and memorize Romans 6:23.

VII. **How Should I Now Live?** (I Thess 4:1-10)

Chuck Colson tells the story of Mickey Cohen who was a gangster in Los Angeles during the 1940's and early 50's. During those years he experienced great success as the ring leader of the underground. However, after an imprisonment and loss of popularity in the underground world, he prayed a prayer and asked Christ to forgive him. But nothing really changed for Cohen. In fact, several months later, out of frustration, he exclaimed to a Christian, "You never told me that I had to give up my career. You never told me that I had to give up my friends. There are Christian movie stars, Christian athletes, Christian businessmen. So what's the matter with being a Christian gangster? If I had to give up all that if that's Christianity count me out!" (*Loving God*, pp. 92).

1. What had Mickey Cohen not understood about the gospel?
2. Read I Thess. 4:1-10. What kind of life does God want you to live (vs. 1,3,7)?
3. Why ought we to please and glorify God?
4. What are some specific areas of our lives that Paul mentions (vs 3, 9)? Why do you think he mentions these areas?

5. What do you think of when you hear the word "holy"? What does the typical non-Christian think? What is the biblical definition? (cf I Peter 1:15, 16)
6. What repeated phrase tells you that this is a growing process (vs 1, 10; II Thess 1:3)?
7. Why is holiness a growing process? Does this ever frustrate you?
8. This growing process is referred to in Scripture as "sanctification." How are justification and sanctification different?
9. What is the Holy Spirit's work in sanctification (vs. 8)?
10. Is the pursuit of holiness a necessary result of true conversion? Why or why not (cf Heb 12:14)?
11. What are some of the things God has given us to help us grow in holiness?
12. What are some areas in your life that you would like to see growth in this year?

Assignment: Study the next lesson, memorize Hebrews 9:27, and read "What Should We Think of the Carnal Christian?" (Banner).

VIII. **What Is My Guide?** (Psalm 19)

We all need guidance and indeed want God's direction in our lives. In his book, *Discovering God's Will*, Sinclair Ferguson states, "When we begin to grow, our heavenly Father begins to let us stand on our feet. We begin to take our first independent steps (but not, of course, in an independent spirit). We find that there are choices to make; we find that now we have to apply God's Word to our own situation. The chief need we have, therefore is that of increased familiarity with and sensitivity to the wisdom of His Word." (P. 3 1)

1. Would you agree that this is our chief need? Why or why not?
2. Read Psalm 19. What two ways does God communicate to man (vs 1-6 and 7-1 1)?
3. What can creation tell us about God?
4. What can God's **Word** tell us about Him?
5. List all the nouns used to describe the Word (vs. 7-11). What do we learn from these different nouns concerning the Bible?
6. List all the adjectives used to describe the Word (vs. 7-11). What does this teach us? Verse 7 says that God's Law and His Word are perfect. Yet verses 4-6 speak of the sun's rising and setting. How do you reconcile this?
7. List all the verbs used to describe the work of God's Word. How does God's Word revive us? Make us wise? Give us joy? Give us light to our eyes? Warn us? (Discuss each one separately).
8. Why is God's Word important in the life of the believer (cf. Ps. 119:105; 11 Thess. 3:16,17)?
9. What is the difference between hidden faults and willful sins (vs.12, 13). How does this relate to the importance of God's Word?
10. David said, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to Your Word. I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You." How can you more effectively hide God's Word in your heart?

Assignment: Study the next lesson, review memory verses, and read the Quiet Time booklet (IVP).

IX. **How Do I Communicate With God?** (Matt. 6:5-15)

Someone once said, "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air..." Most Christians would not deny the importance of prayer, but how many of us truly experience prayer as our vital breath? Often we struggle in our prayer lives and feel frustrated over our lack of discipline and desire to constantly seek God in prayer.

1. What are some of the reasons we struggle so in the area of prayer?
2. Read Matt. 6:5-15. How does Jesus say we must not pray? Why?
3. How then should the Christian pray according to verses 5-8?
4. How do you know that Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer as more than something simply to be repeated from time to time?
5. What is so significant about Jesus beginning this prayer with "Our Father"?
6. Make a list of several categories that the phrases in the Lord's Prayer might suggest and discuss each phrase. Example: Praise and adoration is suggested in the phrase "hallowed be Thy Name".
7. How can you use the Lord's Prayer in Your daily prayer life?
8. How can you avoid praying like the hypocrites?
9. Why should we as Christians be confident when we pray?

Assignment: Study the next lesson and memorize I Peter 3:18.

X. **What Is The Church?** (Eph 4:7-16)

St. Augustine once said, "He cannot have God for his Father who refuses to have the Church for his mother."

1. What problem do you suppose Augustine was addressing? How correct was he in his assessment?
2. Read Eph. 4:7-16. Who is in charge of the Church (vs 7,11,15,16)?
3. What illustration is used to describe the Church (vs 12,16)? Why?
4. What different groups of people make up the Church (vs.11,12)?
5. Who are the "ministers" in Your local church (vs 12)? Explain.
6. What is the role of the pastor-teacher (vs 12)? In what ways can you be more effective than the pastor?
7. What is the importance of each person being active and using his gifts (vs 12,13,16)?
8. What is the purpose of gifts (vs 11-13,16)? How can you begin to discover your gifts if you have not already?
9. Respond to this statement: It is unbiblical to simply remain a "pew potato"! Why?
10. What is the importance of sound teaching (vs 13-15)?
11. According to this passage, what criteria should you use to find a good local church?
12. What can a church offer that a campus ministry cannot?
13. What is the importance of your involvement in a local church during your college years?

Assignment: Study the next lesson and memorize John 5:24.

XI. **Me. Tell Others?** (Jn. 4:1-42)

The word "gospel" literally means "good news." In other words, the very nature of the Gospel implies that it must be proclaimed to others. However, we often fail to share the Good News with others even when the opportunity arises.

1. What are some of the reasons we hesitate in sharing this Good News with others?
2. Read John 4:1-42. Who was this woman? Why was this meeting unexpected and surprising to the disciples?
3. What does it mean Jesus "had to go through Samaria" (vs. 4)? It wasn't the usual route for Jesus! What does this tell us about evangelism?
4. How did Jesus know all this about the woman? Do you find it encouraging or discouraging that He could read her heart? Why*?
5. How does Jesus share the Gospel with her? Why didn't He share it the same way throughout the gospels?
6. Why didn't her little detour throw Him off?
7. Do you think this kind of "cold turkey" encounter is the norm for evangelism? Why or why not (vs. 35-38)?
8. Why does Jesus call it "hard work"?
9. Why is evangelism a process?
10. How do you sow? Water? Reap?
11. We tend to fall into two extremes in our attempts to communicate the gospel. One is to be bold and abrasive, the other is to be so kind and considerate that we never confront others at all. Which extreme do you tend towards? Why? How can the phrase "Being aggressive in a relational manner" help?
12. How great a theologian do you have to be in order to be effective in evangelism? How much did the woman know? What did she tell her friends?
13. Most people avoided this woman. Who do we avoid? Why? What places do we avoid? Why? What can we specifically do to avoid this Problem?

Assignment: study the next lesson and review the memory verses.

XII. **Can I Be Sure?** (I John 5:11-13)

Concerning assurance of eternal life, Thomas Brooks stated, "It is the very drift and design of the whole Scripture to bring souls first to an acquaintance with Christ, then to an acceptance of Christ, and then to build in them a sweet assurance of their actual interest in Christ."

1. Why do you think this assurance is such a priority in Scripture?
2. Read I John 5:11-13. What has God given us? How is this gift obtained? Why?
3. What was the purpose of John's letter (vs 13)?
4. Is it possible to lose your salvation (John 10:27-29)? Why or why not?

5. Is it possible for a Christian to be uncertain at times about his salvation? Explain.
6. Is it possible to have false assurance? (Matt. 7:21-23) Explain.
7. What were the "things" John wrote that gives us a basis for biblical assurance? Summarize each section of verses:
 - a) I Jn 5:1,13
 - b) I Jn 1:9; 3:9; 5:18
 - c) I Jn 2:29; 3:3
 - d) I Jn 2:3-6; 3:22; 5:2,3
 - e) I Jn 2:9-11; 3:11-15; 4:19-21
 - f) I Jn 3:24; 4:1-6
8. How do you see yourself growing in each of these areas? How can you continue to grow in, Christ?
9. How should the assurance of your salvation affect your daily life in your actions and attitudes?

Assignment: Read "Are You Born Again?" by J. C. Ryle and draw the "Trusting Christ" bridge diagram with verses from memory.

Leader's Notes

Study 1. Who is God? *Psalm 139.*

Purpose: to learn more about God's nature and characteristics and to respond to Him properly.

Question 2. This Psalm reveals many attributes and characteristics of God. For example, God knows everything-He is omniscient (vs 1-6), God is everywhere-He is omnipresent (vs. 7-12), God is the Almighty Creator-He is omnipotent (vs. 13-16), He is sovereign (vs. 16), etc.

Notice also that verse 17 may reflect God's love as well. The Hebrew participle translated "to" may also be translated "concerning". In other words, the psalmist may not simply be saying that his thoughts about God are precious to him, but that God's thoughts concerning him are precious!

Question 4. Notice how David personalizes all of these attributes. He is not content to simply theorize about God, but he wants to respond to Him. For example, concerning God's omniscience, David does not simply say that God knows everything, rather he responds, "God knows everything about me." He personalizes and applies each attribute.

Question 6. Help the group think through and discuss the significance of God's attributes in their lives. What difference does it make that God is your Creator, that He is personally and intimately acquainted with you and all your ways, that He is holy and just, that He is forgiving, etc.

Study 2. Who Is Man? *Gen. 1:26-31; 2:15-17; 3:1-24.*

Purpose: To learn more about people and their nature and the separation in their relationship with God apart from Christ.

Question 5. The digression is simple: the woman doubted God's Word and His authority, believed she was convinced by her senses that he was true and deliberately disobeyed the clear command of God. Although the digression is simple, do not overlook several important aspects of the digression. Notice the craftiness and subtlety of sin and Satan (vs, 1). We are subtly convinced through our senses, emotions and rationalization that sin will not affect our lives.

Also note how the woman felt oppressed by God's command. She added, "and you must not touch it." Not realizing that God's commands are for our good, she felt that God's law was too stifling and she was already on the slippery slope toward disobedience. James 1:13-15 also gives insight into this digression.

Question 7. God has direct ownership of our lives. His authority is to be recognized by all His creatures and He is to be worshipped for His greatness.

God also grants purpose and meaning to His creatures. We are not simply products of matter plus time plus chance. But as Psalm 139 reminds us, we have been beautifully created for a purpose.

Question 8. God has created us with a capacity to be creative, to think, to love, to feel. He originally created us in knowledge, righteousness and holiness for the purpose of knowing and serving Him.

In the culture of ancient times, kings who ruled vast areas could not travel to these areas. So, in order to remind their subjects who was in charge, they would erect images of themselves. These images would remind the subjects of the king's rule and reign. God has created us in His image for that purpose as well. We are to remind the world through our lips and by our lives that God is King and Ruler of His creation. In so doing, we are being fruitful and multiplying in the greatest sense of the meaning.

Although men and women are still created in God's image, that image has been greatly marred and disfigured by sin. It is similar to looking into a shattered mirror, you can see bits and pieces of that image, but it is not as dear as it once was.

For example, people are still capable of loving but our love is often imperfect, our relationships do not always last, and hatred is often prevalent.

Question 11. Elsewhere in Scripture, cherubim and seraphim are a reminder of God's awesome holiness (Isaiah 6:1ff; 37:16). The flaming sword is a reminder that God must execute justice because He is a just God (Isaiah 27:1). As Adam and Eve are ejected from the garden the scene is bleak. No one on their own merit will be able to get past God's holiness and justice. There is no hope of restoration in and of ourselves.

Question 12. By making garments for Adam and Eve, God was demonstrating His grace, but His grace is seen even further in 3:15. There is the promise of One who will come, and even though He will be mortally wounded, He will crush the head of Satan and make a restored relationship with God a reality for those who trust in Him. This passage is often referred to as the pre-evangelistic passage and clearly points to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Study 3. Who Is Jesus? *John 1.1-18.*

Purpose: To gain a greater understanding of Jesus and to discover His significance in our knowing God.

Question 2. Jesus is God Himself in the flesh. Jesus was not simply a good moral teacher or competent political leader. He was no less than God. See also John 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Titus 2:13; 1 Jn. 5:20; Heb. 1:8; 11 Pet. 1:1. Other passages clearly imply His divinity such as Col. 1:16; Jn. 8:58-59; (Ex. 3:14); Mark 2:5, 10, etc.

Question 3. Some of the characteristics mentioned include: Almighty Creator (vs. 3), holiness (vs. 5), revealer (vs. 9), glorious (vs. 14), eternal (vs. 15), gracious (vs. 16), etc.

Question 5. One reason for the people's rejection of Jesus was their expectations. Many Jewish people of Jesus' day were expecting the Messiah to come in military might and free them from the Roman oppression. Another reason for the rejection of Jesus is given later in John 3:19. Jesus' holiness confronted people's sin. His very presence calls for repentance. But people by nature love their sin too much to turn from it simply on their own. In fact, the word used for love is *agape*, the same Greek word used to describe God's strong abiding love for the world in John 3:16!

Question 7. Note how John clearly points to God's sheer grace. Our believing did not stem from our heritage, our volition in and of itself, or from any human origin, rather, as Nicodemus discovered, our believing and being born into the family of God was a result of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-8). We therefore, cannot proudly take credit, but most humbly thank God for His grace in opening our eyes and hearts to the truth of the Gospel.

Question 9. As John the Baptist grew in his understanding of *who* Jesus was, he could only humbly point others to Jesus' greatness. Notice how this is seen in John the Baptist's life in John 1:20,26, 27, 29, 30, 36; 3:30.

Study 4. What Did Jesus Do? *1 Cor. 15:1-20.*

Purpose: To understand not only the Person, but the work of Jesus Christ.

Question 3. Studies 1 and 2 taught us that God is not only loving, but He is holy and just and we are therefore separated from God as a result of our sin and rebellion against Him. Jesus Christ, the perfect God-Man, died in order to pay the penalty for our sin. Christ's death, burial and resurrection were necessary in order to satisfy the Father's divine justice and to provide forgiveness for those who trust in His completed work on behalf of guilty sinners.

Question 4. The resurrection is a testimony that Jesus is indeed who He claimed to be the Lord and Giver of life. His resurrection also demonstrates that the Father accepted His sacrifice on behalf of guilty sinners.

Question 5. The term "first fruits" is a word people in an agricultural setting would readily understand. At the beginning of harvest time, the first fruits of the crop would appear; this guaranteed that there would be more to follow. As the first fruit of the dead, Jesus, by His resurrection is guaranteeing that there will be more *who* follow more *who will* experience the resurrection life, a resurrection body and eternal life with God Himself.

Question 6. Although sincerity is certainly essential in saving faith, the object of that faith is crucial. It is faith in the Person and work of Jesus Christ that provides salvation from sin's penalty and power. Someone may sincerely believe that a variety of man made religions may bring salvation, but they are nevertheless sincerely wrong.

It is also important to bring out that it is not necessarily the strength of one's faith that provides salvation. Some Christians may demonstrate an unflinching conviction, while others may wrestle with doubts from time to time. Those who struggle are no less secure because it is Christ who saves, not the maturity and strength of their faith.

Study 5. What Must We Do? *Ephesians 2:1-10.*

Purpose: To understand clearly that salvation is a free gift of God which cannot be earned. It is received by grace through faith.

Question 3. Notice the past tenses of verse 3. In the past they were godless and slaves to their own sinful nature. They were by their very natures deserving of God's wrath. Verse 4 introduces a radical break, "But..." Rather than receiving God's wrath, they become recipients of His grace and it changed their lives and their destinies!

Question 6. Grace is totally unmerited favor. Rather than receiving God's wrath as they justly deserved, they received complete forgiveness and eternal life. Grace is something, therefore, that by its very nature cannot be earned. It is received by faith, not by works.

Question 7. Almost everything in this life is obtained by works. Good grades, money and success do not come easy to most people. We have to work. We even have to work at our relationship with others. So we are accustomed to working for things. However, in God's economy of grace, salvation cannot be earned. We cannot in our own sinfulness work hard enough to obtain it. Rather it is a gift received by faith and not by works. The Gospel leaves no room for boasting in ourselves (Jer. 9:23,24).

Question 8. Faith means to trust, to lean on, to adhere to. Saving faith consists of three parts: Recognition of my need for Christ; repentance a change of mind and direction; and reception of Christ and His finished work on the cross on my behalf.

To magnify God's grace, the Apostle points out that even our faith is a gift from God. Without the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we would have remained in our sin and unbelief. Paul elsewhere reminds us that repentance also is a gift from God (II Tim. 2:25).

Question 9. Paul tells us in Acts 20:21 that he proclaimed faith and repentance during his stay at Ephesus.

Question 12. Because of God's holiness and justice, and because of our sinfulness and rebellion, we are deserving of God's wrath and punishment. However, the good news is that Jesus took upon Himself the wrath and punishment of sin for those who in faith turn to Him. Refer to the bridge outline in the back of this booklet.

Study 6. Right With God! *Romans 4.1-25.*

Purpose: To learn about the justification which Christ has accomplished for those who trust Him and to experience more fully the reality of that justification.

Question 2. Seeking to be justified by observing the law only points out our sin and failure more clearly (3:20) and it has no power to cleanse past sins (8:3).

Question 3. The Old Testament saints were saved by looking forward in faith to the coming Messiah (Christ), just as we look back in faith upon His finished work. No one has ever been saved by obeying the law.

Question 5. The basis of our justification is in Christ's finished work His life, death and resurrection.

Questions 6-8. Justification not only deals with the subject of complete forgiveness, but it also emphasizes the fact that Christ's perfect righteousness has been credited to the believer. Therefore God sees us clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

Question 9. Christ's life was equally important on at least two accounts. First, His life of perfect obedience was necessary in order for Him to offer Himself as a perfect sacrifice for sin. Second, His life of perfect obedience was necessary in order for that righteousness to be credited to you by faith.

Question 10. Experientially we continue to struggle with sin. However, justification is a legal declaration based on Christ's performance and not on our own. When we sin, we confess that sin in confidence knowing that our justification before God is complete.

Question 11. To borrow from the Westminster Shorter Catechism #33, "Justification is the act of God's free grace by which He pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in His sight. He does so only because He counts the righteousness of Christ as ours. Justification is received by faith alone." We may also say that our standing before God is "Just-as-if-I'd never sinned and lived a perfect life because of Christ's perfect life, death and resurrection which I have received by faith alone."

Study 7. How should I Now Live? *I Thess. 4:1-10.*

Purpose: To see the impact that the Gospel has upon the lives of believers in Christ.

Question 3. First of all we recognize who Christ is He is our sovereign, and living to please God is His command. The apostle taught by God's authority, that we should live to please God (vs. 2), it is God's will (vs 3), there are consequences in not doing so (vs. 6) and failure to do so is rejection of God Himself (vs. 8). He is God and therefore, He is worthy of our affections. After all, the greatest commandment is to love God with all of our being (Matt. 22: 37- Second, we should live to please God out of gratitude not only for who He is, but what He has done for the believer in Christ. God calls us to a grace-motivated pursuit of pleasing Him.

Question 5. The word "holy" literally means "separated." That is, we, as Christians, are to be ethically separated from the sinful lifestyle of the world. Notice how the word holy is contrasted to the "impure" lifestyle of the world in verses 3-7. The pursuit of holiness involves more than the avoidance of evil. It also involves growing in character and conforming more into the image of God (I Pet. 1:15, 16; Rom. 8:29).

Question 8. Justification is a one time declarative act of God whereby He declares us righteous because of Christ's finished work on the cross. Sanctification is a process. Our acceptance before God is based on justification.

Sanctification deals with our response of gratitude for God's acceptance of us in Christ, and it is evidence of the

Holy Spirit's work in our lives. There is a danger in slipping into the idea that God somehow accepts us based upon our sanctification (i.e., consistent devotions, etc ...). This could not be further from the truth! Our acceptance before God never was, or never will be based upon our performance. It is only and forever based upon Christ's performance and faith in His finished work on the cross.

Question 9. The Holy Spirit motivates the believer toward godliness and holiness as His name suggests the Spirit of Holiness. He helps us to understand the Word, brings conviction and correction, and empowers us more and more to say "no" to sin and "yes" to the things that are pleasing to God.

Question 11. Paul mentions prayer (3:10ff), instruction in the Word (4:12), and fellowship in the context of the Church (4:9ff). Historically, theologians have referred to these as the means of grace. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper also encourage us to continue to grow.

Study 8. What Is My Guide? *Psalm 19.*

Purpose: To grow in our understanding that God has given us His Word in order that we might know and follow Him.

Questions 2-4. Verses 1-6 deal with the natural or general revelation. Creation teaches everyone that there is a God, that He is powerful and great. It reveals that He indeed exists. Supernatural or special revelation (i.e., the Bible) is necessary for salvation because it not only reveals the nature and character of God, but it also reveals God's redemptive plan through faith in Christ.

Question 6. To interpret the Bible literally is to interpret it in its literary context. Psalm 19 is poetry, and the author is simply making a poetical observation from the human vantage point. This is not meant to be a scientific observation. This is very similar to what we read each day in the newspaper regarding the times for "sunrise" and "sunset", or when we speak of the beautiful "sunset" at the beach.

Question 9. Because of our sinful nature, there is often sin in our lives of which we are not even consciously aware. To sin not only involves willful violation of God's law but also falling short of His glory. Honest evaluation in light of God's Word often reveals that sin of which we may be totally unaware. God graciously reveals to us this sin in order that we might repent and grow even more into the likeness of His Son.

Question 10. HEART may prove to be a helpful acrostic:

- Hear God's Word faithfully taught on a regular basis (Acts 2:42).
- Examine God's Word carefully and study it diligently (Acts 17:11; 11 Tim 2:15).
- Apply God's Word to your daily life (James 1:22-25).
- Read and remember. Read through the Bible on a regular basis and seek to memorize verses and portions of scripture (Ps. 119:9,11).
- Think through the meaning and implications; meditate upon His Word (Josh. 1:8).

Study 9. How Do I Communicate With God? *Matt. 6:5-15.*

Purpose: To emphasize the importance and privilege of prayer and to provide some Practical guidelines to help each person grow in their prayer life.

Question 6. Very rarely in the Old Testament and other Jewish literature do we find God being addressed as father. The Old Testament saints so revered God that they feared to utter His name Yahweh or LORD). Jesus encourages them to pray "Our Father". (Rom. 8:15 "Abba" was the very personal Aramaic term for "father"). By reminding us that God is indeed the father of those that trust Christ, He also reminds us of God's care, concern and desire to see us ask of Him through prayer (Luke 11:5-13).

Question 7. Each of these phrases may serve as a category for prayer. Example: "Hallowed be Your name" Reverence, revere, Praise His name (His character).

- "Your kingdom come" How does it come? Evangelism, missions, and personal submission to His rule in my life.
- "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" Society and individuals should conform to His will.
- "Give us today our daily bread" - Physical needs as well as spiritual nourishment (John 6:35).
- "Forgive us our debts" - Confession.
- "As we forgive our debtors" - Interpersonal relationships (Matt. 5:23,24).
- "And lead us not into temptation" - What is the difference between this petition and forgiveness? Wisdom and strength to avoid tempting situations.
- "But deliver us from the evil one" - strength and protection from Satan (I Pet. 5:8).

Question 8. Regularly cover each category in your prayer life. You may want to alternate days when you concentrate on a specific category or categories.

Study 10. What is the Church? *Eph. 4:7-16.*

Purpose: To see that involvement in a good local church is essential for continued maturity in Christ and ministry to others.

Questions 5 and 6. Most people consider the pastor the minister of their local church. However, Scripture is quite clear - it is the people, not the pastor who are the ministers. The pastor's responsibility is to teach and train the people so that they may become effective in the ministries that God has given them. In many respects, the individual members can be much more effective in ministry than the pastor because they rub shoulders with people in the community every day at work, home and in routine daily activities.

Question 8. Gifts are given to every believer in order to build up the Body of Christ and to strengthen the Body so that it may be more effective in reaching out to the world. Discovering your gift is not only important to this end, but it is also important to you *as* an individual in order to help you experience an even greater sense of belonging in the Body and to help you find your "match" the kingdom.

In order to discover your gifts 1) study God's Word concerning gifts (I Cor. 12; Rom. 12; Eph. 4:2) ask the questions, "What do I enjoy doing?" and "In what areas have I seen a measure of success?", 3) seek out opportunities to serve in those areas or potential areas, and 4) ask for objective evaluations of your performance in those areas. Remember, God has given each member gifts and the primary means to discover those gifts is through ministry and service to others.

Question 11. Worship and recognition that Christ is the Head (vs. 15; Jn. 4:23-26), sound teaching and instruction (vs. 14, 15; 11 Tim 4:2), fellowship and unity (vs. 13, 16; Jn. 13:34,35; 17:22,23), a vision and training for ministry to others (vs. 12; Matt. 28:19,20), and biblical church discipline (vs. 15; Matt. 18:15-17).

Question 13. The New Testament reflects nothing of the individualistic Western mentality we often demonstrate in our lives. It is important that we submit ourselves to God's instruction and come under the authority and oversight of godly officers whom God has ordained. God has indeed established His Church and raised up local congregations for His glory and our good.

Study 11. Me, Tell Others? *John 4:1-42.*

Purpose: To demonstrate the life-changing power of the Gospel and show that we can be a part of its proclamation.

Question 3. Because of centuries of hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans, the normal route taken by the Jews was to go around Samaria in order to avoid becoming "unclean". Jesus purposefully determined to take the Good News to a person who was a social outcast and shunned even by her own people. By doing this, Jesus challenges us to break out of our comfort zones.

Question 4. Jesus possibly used His divine insight to read this woman's heart. While our inability to do this may be discouraging, we should be encouraged that this same Jesus has given us His Word and Spirit which give, great insight into the nature and desires of the human heart.

Questions 5 and 6. Jesus begins by being personal and relating the Gospel in a manner which she could begin to understand (living water). He clearly but lovingly pointed out her sin and revealed Himself to be the Savior.

As we study the gospels, Jesus rarely explained the Gospel the same way. While the basic content remained the same (repentance and faith in Christ), His approach often varied depending upon the individual and circumstances. Because Christ did not use a prepackaged or canned approach, her detour did not hamper Him in the least. He patiently responded to her question and pointed her toward salvation.

Questions 7-10. No, "cold turkey" encounters do not appear to be the norm because Jesus emphasizes what took place prior to this "reaping" which the disciples observed. Jesus taught that evangelism is most often a process of sowing, watering and then reaping (cf. I Cor. 3:6). Jesus calls the process prior to conversion the "hard work" because it involves developing relationships, patiently answering questions, being personal and compassionate, and demonstrating day after day the life-changing power of Jesus Christ in our own lives.

At the same time, we must remember that there are other people around us whom God has prepared for that one-time encounter through prior preparation by the Holy Spirit. However, to approach everyone as if they are ready to trust Christ can increase their levels of resistance if we are insensitive to the Holy Spirit's previous work. Therefore, we must be willing to do the hard work by being sensitive and personal in our own lives.

Question 13. Learn how to clearly communicate the basic content of the Gospel. Begin to pray for individuals who do not know Christ and look for opportunities to share the good news with them. Seek further training in the area of evangelism by reading books such as *A 30-Day Evangelism Plan* by Andyshak, *Tell the Truth* by Metzger, or *Out of the Salt Shaker* by Pippert (IVP).

Study 12. Can I Be Sure? *I John 5: 11-13.*

Purpose: To provide a clear biblical basis for the assurance of salvation.

Question 2. Through believing in the Person and work of Jesus Christ. The word to "believe" in the New Testament is the same word for "faith". Salvation is a free gift from God received by faith, never by works.

Question 4. Many passages support the fact that the true believer in Christ cannot lose his or her salvation (cf. John 10:27-29; Rom. 8:29ff; Phil. 1:6. etc ...). Hebrew 6:4-6 often casts doubt in the minds of many people. However, an understanding of this passage helps tremendously. Jesus Himself taught concerning the condition of the people mentioned in Hebrews 6 when He taught the parable of the sower and the seed (Matt. 13:1-23). There are those who outwardly appear to be converted for a time, but the true nature of their hearts are revealed when they fail to produce fruit and do not continue after Christ. John explains it this way: "They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us" (I Jn. 2:19). What might appear to be the loss of salvation never was genuine conversion in the first place.

Question 5. Yes. Although the true believer in reality is no less secure, the emotional comfort may vary drastically. Doubt may accompany the falling into sin or overwhelming temptation. Satan, whose very name means, "accuser," may cast doubt and cause us to ask, "How can a true believer think or do such things?" But by God's Spirit, the sense of assurance may return as the believer continues to appropriate the means of grace.

Question 6. Yes. False assurance may be very common according to Matt. 7:21-23 where we are told that many will be deceived even up until the Day of Judgement. Presumption and false assurance may be very prevalent. However, this need not be! John has written a letter that we might know that we have eternal life.

Question 7.

- a) Faith in Jesus Christ alone for one's salvation.
- b) Confession of sin and a growing hatred of that sin. The verb translated "sin" or "continue to sin" is in the present active tense signifying a continuous, habitual, unrepentant lifestyle. It does not mean that the believer no longer struggles with sin, but that he or she is truly repentant and remorseful over their sin.
- c) A growing pursuit of holiness and righteousness.
- d) A growing desire for obedience.
- e) A growing desire for fellowship.
- f) A reliance upon the Holy Spirit to work these graces in our lives. Ultimately it is the Holy Spirit who works out that assurance in our hearts.

Notice how many times John says, "If anyone claims..." John is not interested in the mere verbal ascent, but the fruit that must be born out in the lives of true believers. Possession of these fruits, not mere profession is the key to biblical assurance.

Also remember that this is still a growing process. No believer immediately and fully manifests all these qualities. Sanctification is a process (cf. II Pet. 1:8).

APPENDIX

Trusting Christ

"Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you" (Isaiah 59:2).

I. Who is God?

God is holy. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord Almighty" (Isaiah 6:3).

God is just. "He does not leave the guilty unpunished" (Exodus 34:7).

God is very loving. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

II. Who is man?

Man is sinful. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

Sin's penalty is death. "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

Judgment is certain. "Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

III. Who is Christ?

Jesus Christ died as a substitute for sinful men. "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit" (1 Peter 3:18).

IV. What is the response?

Man must respond to the good news. Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (John 5:24).

3 Promises: 1) eternal life; 2) no condemnation; 3) crossed over from death to life.

2 Conditions: 1) hear; 2) believe

The 3 R's of Belief. 1) Recognize; 2) Repent; 3) Receive

Personal Testimony

Your personal testimony can be greatly used by God, not only before audiences, but with individuals as well. As an ambassador for Jesus Christ, pray that God would use you in seeing His Kingdom advanced. To help you prepare your personal testimony, note the following highlights taken from Paul's testimony in Acts 26:

I. Gracious Introduction (26:2,3).

"I appreciate this opportunity", "Thank you for this privilege", etc. Think of several introductions that you could use. Always take into consideration your audience and be personable.

II. Background

General Information (26:4,5). Let people know a little about yourself (birthplace, home, education, etc.).

Conflict with God (26:9-11). Explain how you lived and thought as a non-Christian. Avoid the "gory" details. Also, don't think if you grew up in a Christian home or became a Christian at an early age that your testimony is boring. Rather thank God that He spared you of much of the pain and anguish that a sinful lifestyle produces.

III. Circumstances of Conversion (26:12-15).

What were the circumstances surrounding your conversion? Be specific. Also, clearly explain the gospel in a nutshell (Cf. 26:18,20,123). For example:

I realized that I had been living a life of rebellion against God (sin) and that I was guilty and deserved punishment from our holy and just God. But God in His infinite love provided Christ as a substitute for my sin. I turned from my sin and put my faith in Christ as my personal Lord and Savior.

Avoid using terminology without explaining it. Also avoid being vague about the gospel by saying things like "I asked Jesus into my heart" and leaving it at that. Seek to clearly communicate the gospel so that a non-Christian can understand the good news.

IV. Results of Conversion (26:19-22).

Describe the changes that took place in your life (thoughts, desires, actions, new goals, etc.). How has God changed your life? Show how Christ Lordship has impacted you. Be careful not to present the Christian life as a "bed of roses", void of all problems since you trusted Christ. Be real.

V. Personal Appeal (26:27-29).

Demonstrate that you are concerned for those *who* do not know Christ. Urge and encourage non-Christians to embrace Christ by faith as He is freely offered in the gospel. Do this prayerfully, remembering that it is only God's Holy Spirit *who* ultimately brings about conversion. Also, be sure to be God-centered in your approach. Personal peace, joy and happiness are not the primary reasons we encourage people to trust Christ ... His glory and the fact that He is worthy must be the primary motivation.

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