

Week One

“A Spiritual Journey”

I. The reasons for the Bible study.

A. Everyone is on a spiritual journey.

Options:

1- Uninformed

2- Interested

3- Ready

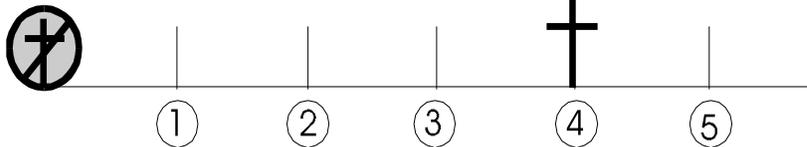
4- Committed

5- Growing

B. To help evaluate where you are on your spiritual journey.

C. To help you move forward spiritually.

D. To help you make an *informed* decision about accepting or rejecting these claims.



II. The structure of the group.

A. Jesus Christ made radical claims about God, Himself, and people. Each week one of these topics will be discussed and verses from the Bible will be read that relate to that topic.

B. The leader will sum up the discussions and illustrate the points.

C. Additional questions that individuals in the group have will be dealt with each week.

III. The information we will discuss comes from the Bible. Read this quote: “Jesus’ own testimony is that the Bible is ‘God’s Word.’ There are many other compelling facts to consider about the Bible: It was written over a period of 1500 years by more than 40 different authors in three different languages on three different continents. It tells of the beginning and end of the world. It claims to be God’s Word—a claim made by very few other writings, and substantiated by none but the Bible. It has survived innumerable attempts to destroy it. The Bible is also amazingly unified. Although it speaks on hundreds of controversial topics, it never contradicts itself. The Bible has one unfolding story from beginning to end: God’s plan of salvation. This salvation is in Jesus Christ. The Bible has enormous power to change the lives of people. The Bible is more than a human product; it is the very Word of God.”

Week Two

“Jesus’ Claims About God”

I. Discussion: How do most people view God?

A. Terminator - God

Questions:

1. How would this affect your approach to God if you viewed Him this way?
2. Why would this keep people from developing a relationship with God?

B. Santa Claus - God

Questions:

1. How would this affect your approach to God if you viewed Him this way?
2. Why would this keep people from developing a relationship with God?

II. Verses in the Bible to examine how Jesus said we should view God. How would these views shape how we relate with him?

References

A. Matt. 6:9-13

What does Jesus mean when He says that we would say to our heavenly Father, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven?”

B. Matt. 6:31-33

What expectations does our heavenly Father place on His children?
What does He promise to do?

C. Luke 11:11-13

Does a good father give all that you want or all that you need?
Who defines needs, the parent or the child?
How should a good father respond to a request He knows would be harmful to His children?

D. John 14:21

How does Jesus say that we demonstrate our love for our heavenly Father?
What is the Father’s response to those who love him?
What does God expect from His children?

III. Conclusion-God is a Father who has the best interest of His children in mind. He guides, protects, and provides for them.

How does a person become a child of God? John 1:12

What does it mean to receive Him?

Week Three

“How did Jesus View Himself”

Objective: Examine Jesus’ claims to be God and therefore the only means of salvation.

I. *Review* the first 2 weeks (Spiritual Journey / How to View God)

II. *Look up and discuss* the following verses that expound on what Jesus claimed about himself.

- A. John 14:6 - “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.’”
- B. John 10:27-33 - “‘My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.’ The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, ‘I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?’ The Jews answered Him, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God.’”
- C. John 14:9a - “He who has seen me has seen the Father.”

III. *Other evidences*

- A. Rose from the dead (I Corinthians 15:1-8)
- B. The many miracles He performed. (John 9:13-33, 20:30-31)
- C. Approximately 300 prophecies from the OT fulfilled in Christ (Ex: Ps. 16:10, Acts 13:34-38, I Cor. 15:1-8)
- D. The willingness of eye witness followers of Christ to die for Him. (Who would die for a lie? Acts 5:25-32)

IV. “Why is Christianity different from other world religions?”

Answer, “Religions of the world are man’s attempts to reach God and improve man’s well being, while Christianity is God’s way of reaching and saving man.”

V. *Read this quote*:

“Not one recognized religious leader, not Moses, Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, etc. has ever claimed to be God: that is, with the exception of Jesus Christ. Christ is the only leader who claimed He was the exclusive way to God and the only individual ever who has convinced a great portion of the world that He is God.”

VI. *Conclusion* - Christianity is different than other religions because it is God’s way of reaching man through Jesus Christ.

Week Four

Why Man Needs God

Discussion:

I. *What is a need?* A requirement, a necessity, a condition of deficiency. (Romans 3:3,4)

II. *What about people who do not sense a need for God, do they really have a need?*

III. *Can a person need something but not sense they do?* (Has cancer, but unaware of it. Need to lose weight, but still eats unhealthy, etc.)

IV. Verses that explain why man needs God.

A. *Romans 9:20* - God created man for God's purpose, if man refuses, he is resisting God. (I Cor. 10:31 states that that purpose is glorifying God. What does it mean to glorify God?)

B. *Romans 3:23* - Man cannot accomplish his purpose on his own. He falls short of what God expects. (Refer to Matthew 5:48)

C. *Romans 6:23* - Penalty of sin is death.

D. *Romans 5:8* - God is loving and just. Since sin's consequence is death, someone must die for everyone's sin. His love makes Him desire to forgive us and restore the relationship, but his justice demands the penalty to be paid for our sin (II Peter 3:9-10).

V. Conclusion - Whether a person senses his need for God because of failures and frustrations, or if a person ignores or is unaware of his need, all men need God or they fail to fulfill their purpose, and remain separated from God. Jesus said, the only way to God was through him.

Week Five

The Necessity of a Decision

I. Why become a Christian?

- A. Quantity of life -- John 3:16, John 17:2
- B. Quality of life -- John 10:10, Jeremiah 29:9-11

A verse or two to look up about God's Gifts:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| 1. John 3:16 | His love |
| 2. II Corinthians 5:14-15 | His life |
| 3. Jeremiah 29:11 | Purpose, plan |
| 4. Isaiah 53:6 | Forgiveness |
| 5. Philippians 4:7 | Peace |
| 6. Romans 6:23 | Eternal life |
| 7. Isaiah 41:9b-10 | Strength |
| 8. Romans 8:32 | Provision |
| 9. James 1:5-6 | Wisdom |
| 10. Galatians 5:22-23 | Joy |
| 11. Joshua 1:8 | True Success |
| 12. Matthew 6:19-20 | Eternal Impact |

II. Objections to Making a Decision

- A. "I'm growing into it."
Becoming a Christian is an event, not a process.
--John 3:1-8 - Birth; John 1:12 - Adoption; Ephesians 5 - Marriage
- B. "I am a Christian, just not a good one."
--Baseball illustration. "Sincerely Wrong"
--Matthew 7:20-23
- C. "I couldn't stick with it"
--II Corinthians 5:17 - God gives you the power
- D. "I'm not ready yet."
--You will never be good enough, it is a gift.
-- Ephesians 2:8-9

III. When should you become a Christian?

Mark 1:15 -- The time is NOW

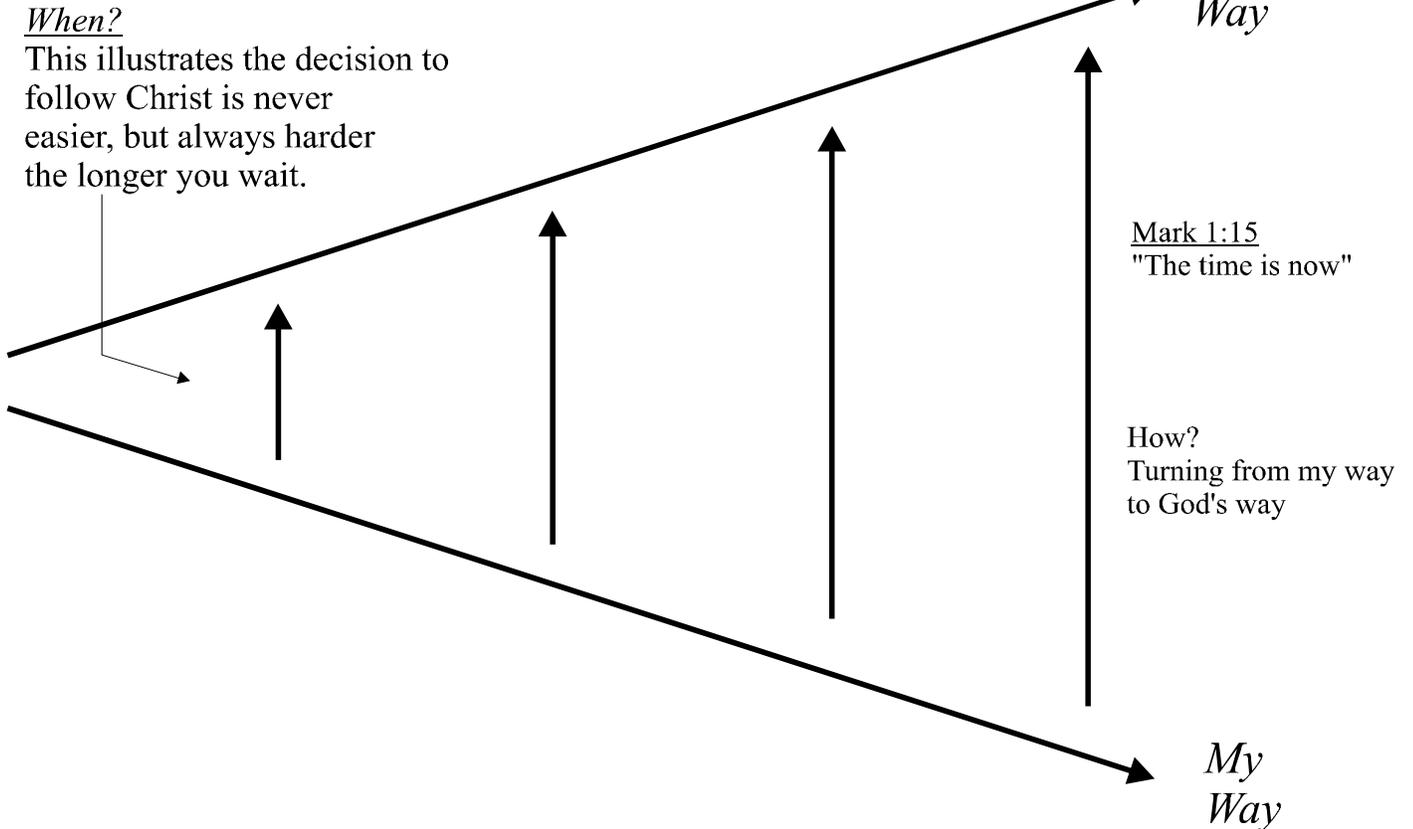
3 Reasons Why the Decision is Urgent

- A. Hell is real - Matthew 10:28
- B. We are not promised tomorrow - Luke 12:16-17
- C. The decision will only get harder to follow Christ not easier - Romans 1:21-23

IV. How to Become a Christian. Mark 1:15

- A. Repent: Turn from going your way to go God's way / 180° turn.
- B. Believe: Trust.

God's
Way



Resources

Back to God by Frank Barker
One Verse Bridge by Randy Raysbrook
No Mere Man by Bill Bright
Baseball Illustration by Clint Watson
Is the Bible Really God's Word? by Calvin Beisner

Books for Reference

Know Why You Believe, Paul Little
Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis
More than a Carpenter, Josh McDowell
A Ready Defense, Josh McDowell

Spiritual Baseball

This illustration was designed to communicate Lordship salvation to a generation that has been taught that believing there is a God is the same as true Faith and Repentance.

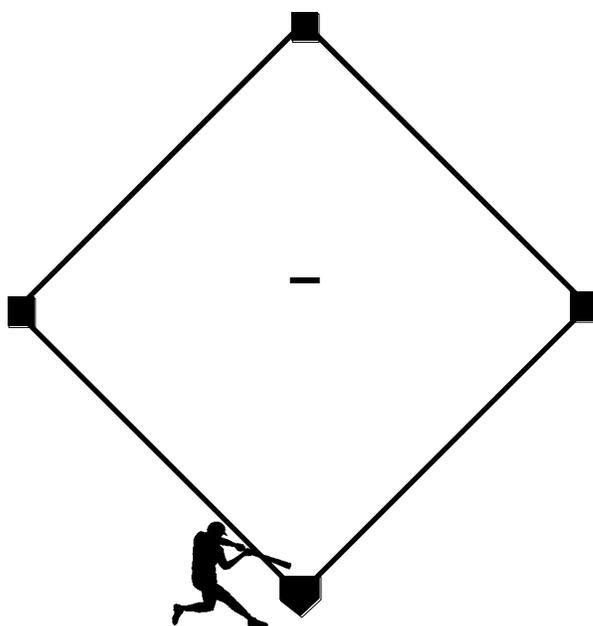
Becoming a Christian can be compared to hitting a home run in the game of Baseball. The Bible teaches that the game of life starts with the score: hell - one and heaven - zero in regards to our salvation and how we enter this world (Rom 3:23). In the Bible, this is known as man's "sin problem." If you are reading this illustration or hearing it, you have an opportunity to remedy this sin problem by hitting a spiritual home run.

In the game of baseball, we must know the rules to compete successfully and win. This is also true with our spiritual life. Suppose a batter did not know the rules of baseball and after hitting the ball and reaching first base he began to shout "home run!" while standing on first base. Everyone would think he was a fool. This is often the case in regards to our spiritual life. For example, someone goes to church and has an emotional experience without a basic intellectual understanding of the person and work of Christ. Nor do they truly place faith in Christ and repent of their sin. This would be the same as the person who would stand on first base and scream "home run!" Though sincere, this person would not have scored a home run and would be "sincerely wrong" in regards to their relationship with God. An emotional experience without a basic intellectual understanding of the person and work of Christ and a surrendered will is insufficient to enter into saving faith.

Now let's let an intellectual understanding of the person of Christ represent second base. Another might hit the ball so to speak, and cross first base, heading for second. Upon reaching second he might again begin to stand on the bag and scream "home run!" This too would be inaccurate because it takes more than emotions, or intellect to hit a home run spiritually.

Let's let third base represent the will. A decision for Christ is required to receive Him. Some would say or believe that to give intellectual assent to Christianity or God would be enough to experience saving faith. Mark 1:15 teaches that we must repent and believe to become children of God. Someone may reach third base with emotions and intellect satisfied but still possess reluctance to place faith in Christ to be the controller of their life. This leaves them stranded at third base without biblical grounds for true saving faith.

In Luke 18:18ff, we see the story of the Rich Young Ruler. In this story, Jesus clearly teaches it is necessary to say to Christ "anything, anytime, anywhere." This is the heart indication that we have truly come to Christ with a surrendered will, and therefore have spiritually hit a "home run." Then and only then does the score actually change to Heaven - one and Hell - zero.



Score: Heaven Hell